



GiGL

Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC
the capital's environmental records centre

Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC

ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21



A Year of Achievement and Growth



Mandy Rudd
Chief Executive

It was another year of achievement and growth for GiGL in 2020/21, in spite of the pandemic, as Londoners became more aware and appreciative of access to the natural world around them, particularly during the lockdowns.

There was an endless stream of advice and guidance from the professional networks we are part of as we all adjusted to remote working, and ensuring we were doing all that we could to keep GiGL going. We were heavily involved in national initiatives that supported our work and that of our stakeholders, including leading a project on behalf of the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres (ALERC) to collate and share its members' data search report stats to act as a proxy for how CIEEM's members' activities in London and other areas of the UK had been impacted.

As the year wore on, we got busier and busier with 'business as usual' as well as being able to provide additional support to our contacts in other organisations whose colleagues had been furloughed. We were involved in several projects related to biodiversity net gain, both as GiGL and on behalf of ALERC. We were interviewed during the research phase of the species data pathway report, which was written by a consortium of experts on behalf of the Geospatial Commission (part of the Cabinet Office). We participated in research into the importance of good design for social enterprises, and were interviewed for 'Wild City', a book by Florence Wilkinson that has recently been published. Many other projects are outlined for you later in this report.

We had a few changes in the Team during the year too. Our Community Manager and Database Officer both left to pursue new adventures. We were able to offer a promotion within the team and invested in two new Database Officers to help us keep up with the increased interest in and demand for our services from our stakeholders. By the time our new colleagues joined our dedicated and hard-working team, we had settled into a routine of starting each day with a 15 minute 'team tea' via video call. The Team's partners, kids and pets all joined in at some point, including a lamb called Gerry. Amongst a range of topics we shared stories of engaging with nature and were schooled in astronomy by a 2-year old. It's a privilege to work with such an enthusiastic team.

Our Vision and Mission

GiGL Vision

London's natural environment is appreciated, understood, considered and improved.

GiGL Mission

Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC (GiGL) is the capital's environmental records centre.

GiGL mobilises, curates and shares access to data that underpin our knowledge of London's natural environment, in order to enable our stakeholders to make informed decisions in policy and practice.

We aim to raise awareness of the benefits the natural environment provides to the capital and to ensure the protection and enhancement of London's natural environment are at the heart of the services GiGL provide.



Our Services



Data Curation

We are data custodians. We digitise records, ensure their high quality and safe storage, and make them available for active use. We also provide mapping tools and tools for data collection, survey forms, recording spreadsheets and more.



Data and Insight

We use data to uncover the truth about the world around us. From quantitative facts about recorded wildlife and green infrastructure, to audits of available data, to gap analysis and green infrastructure modelling, statistics & analysis.



Advice and Consultancy

We provide expert advice, signposting and advocacy as well as partnership and collaborative working. We help identify and demonstrate priorities for public policy and aid policy compliance; as well as providing a wide range of training, mentoring and academic support for our community.



Visualisation

Charts, graphics, maps and infographics. Our visual tools are used by consultants, partners, the media and the arts for any number of purposes. Through mapping data and the creation of visualisations and infographics, we help to tell a richer story about London's ecology and environment.

Ancient Woodland Inventory Update

Ancient Woodland Inventory

The Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) in England identifies and classifies areas that have been continuously wooded since at least 1600AD on relatively undisturbed soils. These areas cover only 2.6% of England, making up less than a third of our total woodland resource. They are our most important woodlands for their rich wildlife and cultural heritage, creating a link with the past as ecological touchstones in a changing landscape. Once lost they cannot be recreated. The existing Inventory has grown to become an essential reference tool for planners and developers, policy makers, landowners, foresters, conservationists, landscape historians, and many others keen to protect and restore these special wooded habitats. Originally developed during the 1980s, when computerised mapping was in its infancy, the Inventory is now recognised to have many omissions and inaccuracies. In some cases, this has meant ancient woodland has been lost or damaged by development or inappropriate management simply because they are not recorded on the Inventory – this is particularly true of smaller sites.

Project Update

In November 2020, GiGL entered a collaboration with the Woodland Trust, working in partnership with Natural England, to update the Ancient Woodland Inventory for Greater London. This project is part of a wider multi-partner Programme across England with an estimated cost of £2.3M, over 3-5 years. London has been identified as a priority location for the AWI updates due to development pressure and as updating the Inventory features is a key goal for the London Urban Forest Partnership Action Plan. The London Urban Forest Partnership (LUFP) (<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/parks-green-spaces-and-biodiversity/london-urban-forest-partnership>) is a network of organisations that collaborate to protect, manage and enhance the capital's



Hatter's Wood, Havering

Photo Credit:

Amy Palmer-Newton

trees and woodlands, and GiGL is a member of the partnership.

The first step for GiGL is the recruitment of an AWI Officer to join the team. They will lead the update of the Inventory in Greater London following a consistent and quality-controlled methodology defined by Natural England. The outcome will be an accurate record of ancient woodland and ancient wood pasture in Greater London which will act as a robust evidence base on which better informed decisions can be made.

Data Mobilisation

In March 2021, GiGL were successful in applying for a project grant from the LUFP. It allowed us to digitise and mobilise some paper survey sheets from ancient woodland surveys undertaken by the former London Ecology Unit. Whilst the surveys were undertaken in the 1980s, they will still be a very useful resource for the Ancient Woodland Inventory update as they locate sites which may still be in existence and provide evidence as to their historical longevity with supportive evidence that they have the correct character and species to indicate they are ancient woodland.

Species Heatmaps for London Borough of Lambeth

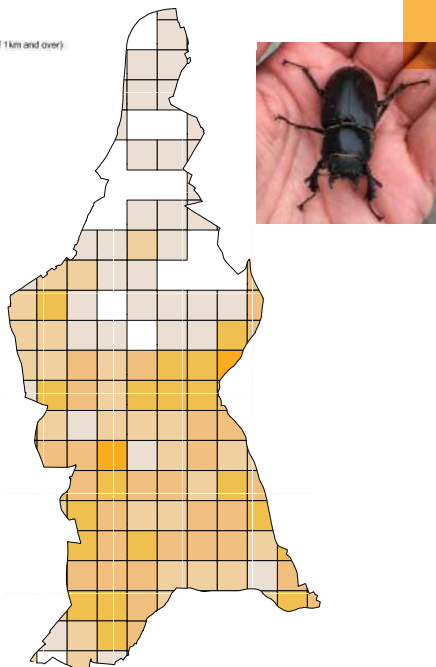
Stag beetle records in LB Lambeth

Produced by Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC on behalf of LB Lambeth 16 July 2020

Number of Stag Beetle (*Lucanus cervus*) records in the GiGL database



(excludes records recorded to grid squares of 1km and over)



Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC
The Greater London Authority's environmental data service

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GiGL prepared a series of heatmaps for priority species in LB Lambeth's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). These were used by our partner to highlight the effect of differential recording effort to community groups and other stakeholders or organisations. For example, the stag beetle heatmap shows how well recorded this group is, due to the effort of citizen science projects such as those organised by London Wildlife Trust. On the other hand, the Lepidoptera and Hymenoptera (i.e., butterflies, moths, ants, bees, sawflies, and wasps) heatmap shows how records for these under-recorded groups are mostly clustered at the areas experts usually visit.

Dr Iain Boulton from Lambeth Parks and Open Spaces said: "These heatmaps were extremely useful because they allowed us to get key messages across to our community partners and other stakeholders about why we needed their involvement in obtaining more and better field data on key protected and Lambeth BAP priority species.

It also proved a useful tool in demonstrating where in the borough we needed this increased effort to be focused, for example to help 'fill in' missing gaps in datasets and species distribution maps, as well as in those areas where such species were more abundant, but we wanted to see if there had been recent changes in population density. We want to continue the use and development of both species' distribution and species heatmaps in our ongoing ecological projects and delivery of the BAP.

Our partnership with GiGL has consistently proved highly beneficial in helping us to visualise data and providing it in a format that is easy to understand and to use in improving the management and conservation of Lambeth's priority wildlife species and habitats. **It remains a partnership we're proud to support and for them to support us".**

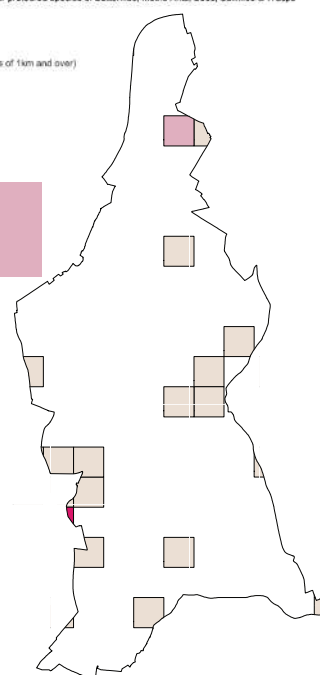
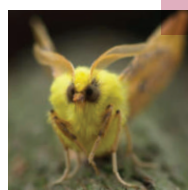
Protected lepidoptera and hymenoptera species records in LB Lambeth

Produced by Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC on behalf of LB Lambeth 16 July 2020

Number of records in the GiGL database for protected species of Butterflies, Moths, Ants, Bees, Sawflies & Wasps



(excludes records recorded to grid squares of 1km and over)



Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC
The Greater London Authority's environmental data service

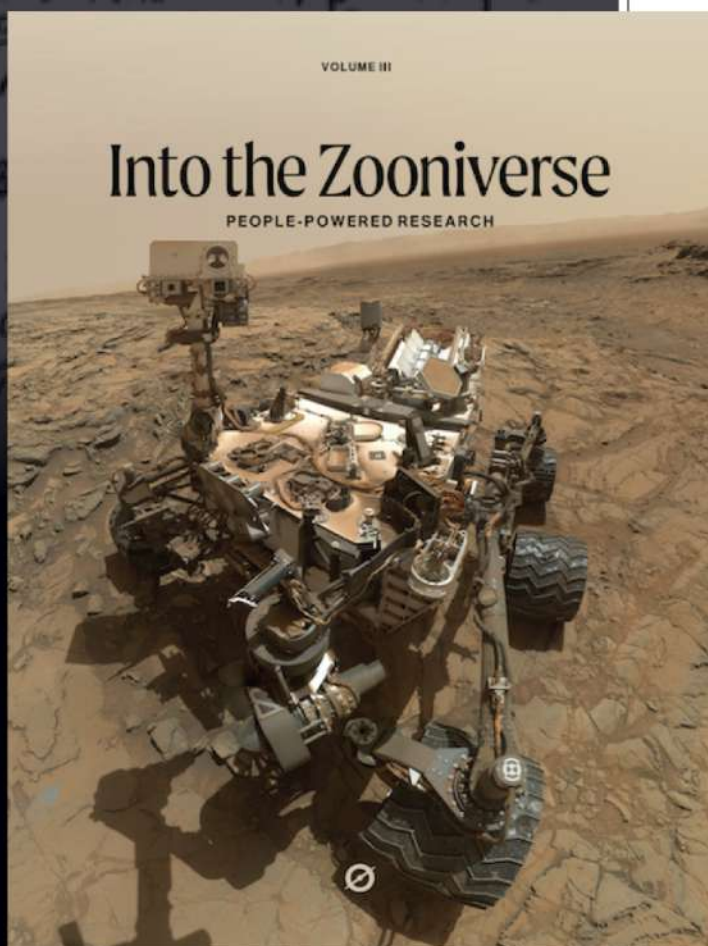
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iRecord

GiGL made a big leap forward in 2020/21 in terms of how we process data. A new system and schedule for downloading and incorporating data from recording apps means that GiGL now has access to many thousands of records, many for rarer and difficult to record species. These advances also mean GiGL can offer the many people who record using apps a direct pathway to feed their work into GiGL's data resources.

Zooniverse Highlights

Since 2007, Zooniverse projects have led to many unexpected and scientifically significant discoveries and many peer-reviewed publications. All of this would have been impossible if it weren't for the global community of Zooniverse participants, including those volunteers who have engaged in GiGL's London-based projects alongside the research teams in the past, as well as in 2020/21.



SURREY 1966		KINGFISHER		258
NEW HAW AREN. THORPE PARISH.	1st 1st.	breed 4 young } both successful	} G.H. GUT.	
" G.P.	20 AUG	breed 3	}	
" "	21 AUG	first year ♂ ringed.	}	
" "	4 SEP	adult female	}	
DISTILLERS SPORTS GROUND, E.MILBURY	20 MAR	Observed under the stone house that	} P.T. STRANFORD	
CHIST MEREBOY.	12 MAR	1st 2 here has seen. No dates.	} P.T. OLIVER.	
RICHMOND PARK	23 OCT	Alcon 4 TERT.	} M. J. WELLS.	
		(see next card)	}	
BROOK LANDS.	JAN	1-2 present 21 APR - 1. R.Way.	} C.O.	
BROOKLANDS.	6 JULY	on R.Way.	} C. OGDON.	
GODSTONE.	2 SEP	Also on 16 + 23 OCT, + 5 NOV.	} A.J. HALLCOMBS	
TRULHAT. of SYNK.	13 JAN.		} K.J. HERRICK.	

London Bird Records

Through crowdsourced transcription of its handwritten bird observation cards, the public is helping the London Natural History Society uncover historic biodiversity data from the 1900s.



THE LONDON NATURAL History Society (LNHS) has collected boxes upon boxes of record cards of bird sightings spanning the last century. The handwritten record cards include the species and locations

of birds, as well as the name of the observer. After transcribing the record cards covering the 1980s, the LNHS team quickly realized that it would take them over seventy years to digitize all the cards at their current rate. Harnessing the power of the crowd through the London Bird Records project, the team is making its way through the decades in record time. Because most of these record cards haven't been examined since they were first written by the original recorder, there is ample opportunity to discover surprises within the cards, including the diverse and idiosyncratic handwriting of the bird observers.

Once digitized, these data are then uploaded into the Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL), the environmental record center for Greater London. GiGL mobilises, curates and shares access to data that underpin our knowledge of London's natural environment. Ecologists, scientists, students, community groups, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), artists, interested residents and journalists all utilize GiGL for research and to inform decisions in policy and practice.



London Friends Group Network

In 2020/21, GiGL created a working relationship with the London Friends of Green Spaces Network (LFGN) - the voice of the dynamic and inspirational grassroots movement of over 700 local Friends of Parks groups. GiGL attended LFGN's biodiversity working group meetings and extended the offer of bespoke data search reports for LFGN's sites. These reports are freely publishable, contain summary statistics on species, habitats, and designations, and are fully customisable to suit the individual group's needs. So, as part of this relationship, GiGL has been able to expand on how its services can be used for the benefit of the Friends groups and their sites and has encouraged them to make full use of what GiGL can offer.



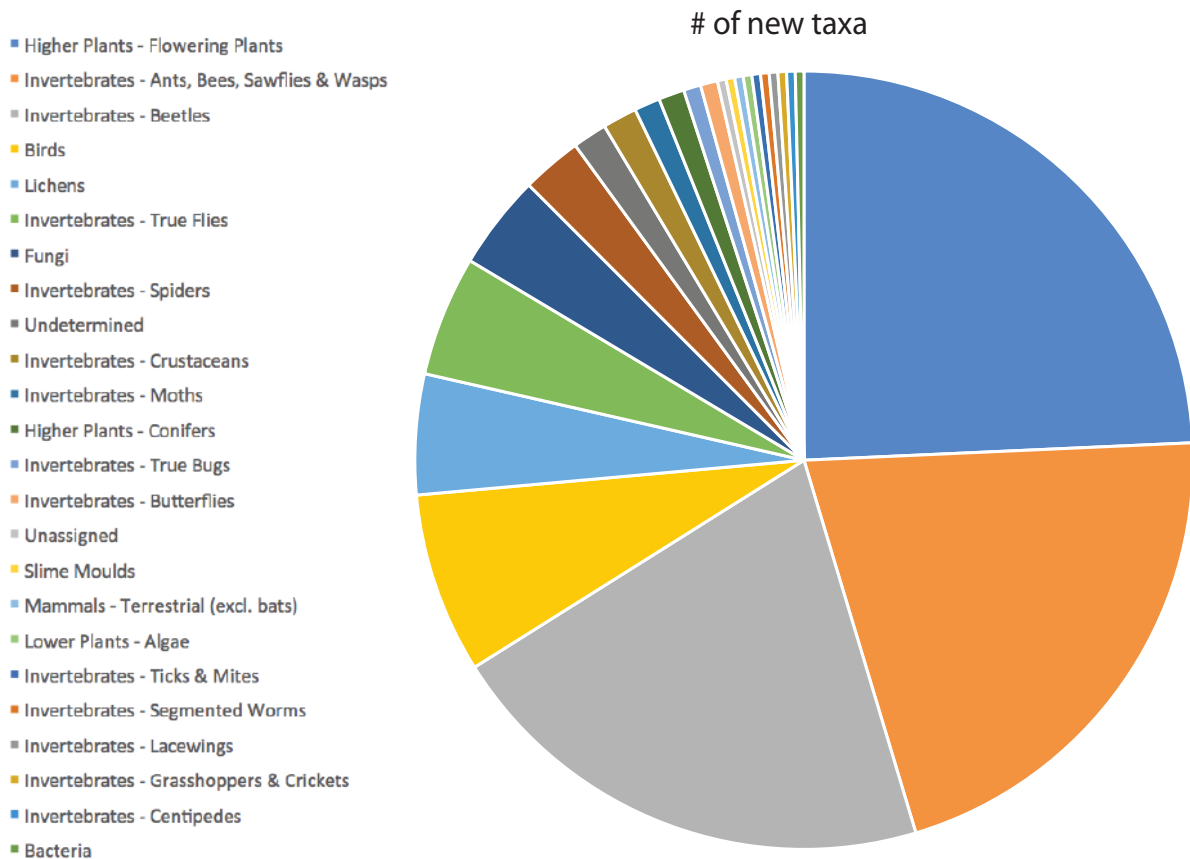
Recording nature where it matters

DECIDE Project

In 2020/21, GiGL provided expert advice to the DECIDE project. The Project is working towards encouraging a more even geographical coverage from recording efforts across the country, with the DECIDE app signposting recorders to areas that need the most attention. GiGL advised on the app's design and user interface, and how it can integrate with GiGL's work. We also carried out stress testing on the app. GiGL's unique point of view has been invaluable for providing an industry perspective to a working group that consists mainly of academic researchers from environmental and social disciplines. Moving forward, GiGL will be heavily involved in the co-design of the end-user product and will help conduct testing during the field season - more news of this in next year's annual report.

Species Breakdown

In 2020/21, **235** surveys were uploaded, containing **194,474** records! A total of **280** new taxa were added to GiGL's database, of which **212** were new species, the most common new group being Flowering Plants.



Spaces to Visit Dataset

In April 2020, as part of GiGL's commitment to provide a benefit to our community, we created the Spaces to Visit dataset as a source of information on the locations of open spaces in Greater London that are available to the public as destinations for leisure, activities, and community engagement. The dataset does not include sites that require a payment for access, but does include green corridors that provide opportunities for walking and cycling. The Spaces to Visit dataset is available for free to anyone who is interested in the Capital's open spaces.



When the Spaces to Visit dataset was first released in April 2020, there were concerns that it could be seen as encouraging people to visit open spaces at a time when many local authorities were struggling with the demands on local parks during the coronavirus pandemic. Therefore, at the Greater London Authority's (GLA) request, the open version of dataset was initially called 'GiGL open space data sub-set (beta version)' instead of Spaces to Visit.

In December 2020, GiGL received permission to release the dataset as Spaces to Visit, and that, along with some enhancements to the Open Space dataset, led us to review and revise the criteria used to select sites for Spaces to Visit.

The Spaces to Visit dataset provides the boundaries for the GoParksLondon map. It has been recommended to individuals interested in developing apps to promote London's greenspaces, and to members of the public wanting to map routes between greenspaces. Students have used Spaces to Visit to test initial ideas and analysis techniques in advance of making formal applications for GiGL's Open Space dataset. GiGL expects community groups and the public to make even wider use of this dataset now that it is easier for people interested in a source of information on London's publicly accessible greenspaces to find and make use of.

Planning for Better Biodiversity Outcomes Training

The “Biodiversity Evidence – Better Outcomes from Planning” project, which is hosted by Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC and supported by the Mayor of London, aims to support London’s Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to achieve better outcomes for biodiversity through the planning process.

Although the pandemic did not allow us to have training in person, GiGL organised an online training event, which took place on 23rd September 2020. The aims of the London-focused event were to raise awareness about why planners need to take biodiversity into account, how they can do so,

and what the common pitfalls are in relation to biodiversity in planning.

Highlighting the appetite for this kind of training, the event was very popular and over 50 LPA staff registered from 24 LPAs. GiGL was able to use its networks and long-standing presence in the field to assemble a great team of external presenters, all with many years of experience working on biodiversity matters in London. We were privileged to have sessions delivered and supported by London LPA in-house ecologists, representatives from the Greater London Authority, the Metropolitan Police’s Wildlife Crime Unit, and GiGL.

Financial Summary

	20/21	19/20
TURNOVER		
Service Level Agreements	146,946	176,537
Pay As You Use Services	266,790	236,468
Grants	21,514	30,257
TOTAL TURNOVER	435,250	443,262
EXPENDITURE		
Employment Costs		
Salaries, pensions, recruitment, training, travel	381,934	348,017
Hosting (office, HR and finance support)	67,416	76,032
Systems and Kit		
Hardware, software, website, IT support and depreciation	9,383	16,840
Other		
includes legal fees, business advice, subscriptions, insurance and accountancy	16,864	9,724
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	475,597	450,613
OTHER OPERATING INCOME	-7,351	-14,876
Job Retention Scheme	6,766	-
OPERATING DEFICIT	-33,581	-7,351
Other interest receivable and similar income	27	-
DEFICIT BEFORE TAXATION	-33,554	-7,351
Tax on Deficit		
includes corporation tax charge and deferred taxation	5,972	4,120
DEFICIT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR	-27,582	-3,231

Working With Us



GiGL Partners

If you feel that your organisation would benefit from becoming a partner, gaining regular access to reliable and up-to-date information about London's natural environment and GiGL's services and expertise, please contact the team for an initial discussion of your needs and to arrange a demonstration of our products and services, or for more information go to <https://www.gigl.org.uk/contact/>



Clients

We also provide services to clients, including environmental consultants, developers and potential partners. For more information go to <https://www.gigl.org.uk/working-with-us/clients/>



The Public

We actively encourage Londoners to tell us about the wildlife they have seen in the city via our online form and to collaborate with our partners that run campaigns to learn more about particular species, habitats and open spaces. For more information go to <https://www.gigl.org.uk/working-with-us/the-public/>



Recorders and Recording Groups

We provide a range of services to support London's recording experts, from gap analysis and mobilising data through to data validation, analysis and visualisation. For more information go to <https://www.gigl.org.uk/how-gigl-can-help/>



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