**Waterfoot Meadow Update**

The Waterfoot meadow has continued to develop nicely this year. Thank you to everyone who has encouraged us to do this and given such lovely feedback.

The yellow rattle we sowed to supress the grasses has established really well and produced thousands of plants this year. This has opened up the sward and allowed lots of wildflower seeds to germinate. These have grown strongly and I expect them to be in flower next year to provide colour and nectar for our insects. The meadow was oversown with a native wildflower mix in the autumn of 2020 and includes plants such as Sanfoin, Scabious, wild carrot, Kidney vetch and Toadflax, all of which have established this year. We have also had another species of orchid pop up - the Common Spotted Orchid which is growing fairly near to the Bee Orchid that came up last year. These must have been in the existing lawn for many years and are now taking the chance to flower and set seed for the first time. I am expecting these to spread over the meadow in the next 5 years and I wouldn't be surprised in other species such as Northern and Southern Marsh Orchids also appear.

We have also started to see increasing numbers of insects appear as the flowers are establishing. The Common Blue Butterfly has successfully bred on the Birds Foot Trefoil plants in the meadow which was lovely to see as it exists at very low numbers in Rossendale. We have also seen Meadow Brown butterflies and several species of bumblebee. There have been Kingfishers feeding in the river alongside the practice, along with Grey wagtails and Dippers.

We have now established a seating area around the back of the practice for staff and patients, sited within the meadow and overlooking the river - please feel free to come and take a seat and enjoy the peace. The next project is to plant some small tress around this area to create a glade and offer some more privacy. We are also putting up bat boxes and insect hotels.

**Dr Cowdery – November 2021**