

Gunton Woodland Community Project

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NEWSLETTER

Apr – Jun 2018

Gunton Wood

April, May & June have been very busy, with lots of regular spring/summer jobs and a lot of maintenance work that had been building up during the winter.

The ladies have split the snowdrops and Alan has waged his annual war against the Spanish & hybrid bluebells. Alexanders have been dug up in the wood and along the pavement on Gunton Church Lane, beside the church. We have also cleared growth from around new trees that were planted along GCL and at the back of the church. We are constantly pulling nettles from the path edges and have cut back the overgrowth along the Murrillo Drive pathway, to make it easier for mothers and children walking to school.



Andrea & Geoff took on the task of painting all the notice boards and most of the benches. They had to clean and sand them down first, and then apply two coats of preservative, which kept them busy for many Thursday mornings. However, the job is now complete and was well worth all the effort – well done!

In April, Waveney Norse came along to do some of the tree inspection work that had been allocated to them (including some left over from the 2016 inspection!), which mainly consisted of reducing the height of several large sycamores.

In May, more of the willows on Moore's Lane were brought down by exceptionally high winds. Colin came out with the chainsaw and we soon had them cleared and cut up into logs.



All the logs from WN work and the willows created a lot of work for the tractor, the trolley dolly, the log tongs and our enthusiastic team of lumberjacks, shifting them and laying path edges.

A small team of men have reinforced the fence around the pond with willow cuttings, which



we hope will grow to create a living hedge, some hawthorns will also be added later.

Hopefully, this will deter those silly people who think it's fun to dismantle the fence and throw logs into the pond – we can but hope.

The dipping platform has been cleaned, some rotting boards have been replaced, a new cross-joint has been added and the whole platform has been given a coat of preservative. It should now be perfectly safe for the children when they come to do pond dipping.

The ladies have spent several Thursdays trying to clear dock weeds from the B&B area – it feels like a never-ending task, but with so much effort put in this year, fingers crossed it may

not be so bad next year?? In the wild flower meadow, the dock weed problem was even worse, so we had to resort to strimming as much as we could, taking care to avoid the orchids.

And finally, the main ditch has been dry enough for the sump to be fitted at the dam, which should help the flow of water into the pond. The pipe for the sump had been laid several months ago, but we had to wait for a dry ditch before the sump could be concreted in. We have installed some pipes and a sump in the ditch at the top of Moore's Lane, where we had considered building a bridge. We then decided to try the pipes under a pathway first to see if that would be good enough – watch this space.

Also, David & Andrew have cleared underneath the bridge at the bottom of the main path near to PwH, in readiness for some more pipes to be pushed through to help alleviate the blockages that we always get down there.



Foxburrow Wood

In May, a team spent one Thursday morning in Foxburrow Wood, where they repaired/replaced some broken boards in the board walk. They also strengthened the barrier at the bottom of the steps near the ditch and gave it a coat of preservative.

Social Events

21st AGM – Wednesday April 18th 2018

Forty-six members and friends, including Cllr. Graham Parker, attended our 21st AGM at St Benedict's church. The guest speaker Tony Brown gave a very interesting and informative talk with slides, entitled "The Living Woodland".

Four members of the committee, including the current chairman and secretary, stood down. However, six committee members were elected including a new secretary, Peter Smith. No nominations were received for the position of chairman.

After the general business of the meeting, Mike Field gave a vote of thanks on behalf of all the workers and members, to the committee for this year's work. He also thanked David for all his work over the last 20 years, both as secretary and as chairman, and presented him with a cut glass whisky decanter and set of glasses, along with a bottle of single malt whisky. David then thanked Mo & Chris who were retiring from the committee and gave them a personal thank-you gift.

A few weeks later, after a change in the GWCP constitution had been approved, a new position of Honorary President was created. This position is currently held by David Briggs until a new Chairperson is elected.



Lake District – Friday April 30th to Monday May 4th 2018

There were 46 of us who set off from a soggy Gunton Church Lane at 7.15am, in the pouring rain. The rain had ceased by the time we paused for a comfort stop just after Kings Lynn. We stopped for lunch at Ferrybridge before continuing to Appleby Manor hotel where we would stay for the next 4 nights. Arriving early, we had time to unpack before enjoying a welcome cocktail on the patio in the sunshine. Our first impression was that the hotel was very grand and comfortable, this proved to be correct. The staff, the food and the weather were all excellent.

Our first full day was spent at Muncaster Castle where we were treated to an owl and raptor flying display, we then had a free flow tour of the castle which is a home as well as an exhibition building.

The next day we travelled to Windermere where we had a cruise on the lake followed by a ride on the Lakeside & Haverthwaite steam railway and finally a visit to the Lakeland Motor Museum.

Thursday took us to Keswick for free time to explore, on the way we enjoyed the spectacular scenery of Kirkstone Pass. Afterwards we were taken for a tour of the Lakes Distillery where we were split into two



groups. One group were served complimentary tea or coffee whilst the other did the tour and vice versa. At the end we were offered samples of their whisky, gin and vodka (some did not want the samples but their lucky partners made sure they weren't wasted!).

We were so pleased with the hotel, we had a collection for the staff which we presented to them at our final dinner, and thanked the owner-chef for a superb stay. Also, the group presented David and Rosemary with some bottles of excellent red wine as a thank you for another wonderful trip. Some say the best ever!



Bury St Edmunds Day Trip – Wednesday July 18th 2018

We have organised a day out to Bury St Edmunds and Fuller's Mill Gardens where we will have lunch (optional). Including an optional tour of the Green King brewery or time to just wander around the famous gardens or the town which has a large market on Wednesdays.

Future Events –

Bingo, Fish & Chips evening - Friday 7th Sept 2018 - £8 pp.

Day Trip to Bury St Edmunds Christmas Craft Fayre – Saturday 24th Nov 2018 - £12 pp.

Snape Christmas Show – Saturday 8th Dec 2018 - £27 pp.

If you are interested in any of the above events please contact Rosemary or David either by phone on 01502 515944 Or by email to rosemarybriggs.65@btinternet.com and we will let you have a flyer to fill in unless you are able to print your own which would be helpful.

All the above are on a first come first served basis after consideration to the work party.

Look Out For – by Janet Field

Yellow is the colour! As we approach the start of another football season some may think this refers to Norwich City. However our yellow flowers are doing us proud this year. We have had an abundance of primroses in the B & B area followed by the much more rare cowslips which we are lucky to have in our East Anglian Woodland.

This was followed by a May/June “yellow-out” of meadow buttercups in the wild flower meadow. Yellow rattle, as usual, has been attacking the roots of grass by stealing some of its needed minerals and water. This reduces the amount of competition for food by grass and enables the more delicate flowers to thrive.

Yellow iris, also known as yellow flag, has given a wonderful show along the ditch in the Burial Park. Dog walkers have probably noticed this and some flowers also appeared around our pond.

Not to be outdone the evening primrose, whose seed was originally harvested from one plant in SWT’s Gunton Meadow Nature Reserve, is making an impact and will continue flowering well into the autumn. And if you’re a Tractor or Trawler boy or girl we may find some blue flowers in the future.

Nature Notes Pollinators (Val and Barry Shimmield)

Last week we took the opportunity to stay for a couple of nights at a leisure hotel beside the River Thames. Evening dining al fresco in idyllic weather was a treat, with the added bonus of NO BUGS. Back in Lowestoft, as we parked the car, we noticed that the windscreen was spotless, not a single squashed bug. What a change from a couple of years ago when we would have needed a squeegee mop and lots of water to clean the screen after a long drive. Sitting in the garden as the afternoon sunshine faded we saw a few house martins wheeling over the woods compared with the same scene years ago when dozens would be feasting on clouds of bugs rising from the trees.

Worldwide, there are 200,000 different species of bees, bats, butterflies, moths, beetles, flies and all the other creatures known collectively as Pollinators but their populations are shrinking at an alarming rate. In this country more than 35 species of bees, out of 250, are facing total extinction and we have lost two-thirds of our butterflies in recent years. The reasons are well understood. Climate change, intensive farming leading to habitat loss and pesticide spraying are the main causes. Pollinators play a crucial role in plant reproduction and if nothing is done to arrest their decline the outlook for the whole planet is very bleak indeed.

One of our Members of Parliament, Ben Bradley, has taken up the challenge to do something about this by promoting a Private Members Bill called “Protection of Pollinators”. This places a duty on Government and Local Authorities to deliver a National Network of Pollinator Corridors which will join up spaces across the country which are rich in wild flowers. This will generate so called B-lines, or insect pathways, a road network for insects. Here in Gunton we have already taken a step towards this by creating a continuous wild life corridor around North Lowestoft from the North Denes beach to Foxburrow Wood. To ensure that the Bill passes its Second Reading in October 2018, on its way to becoming law, wide public support is essential and one way you can help is to ask your local MP to vote for the Bill.



And finally...

A special thank you to our photographer, Wally Crowther, for a very generous donation to the group. This will be used to purchase new tools as and when needed.

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