

Gunton Woodland Community Project

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NEWSLETTER

Jan – Mar 2018

The AGM will be at
**St. Benedict's
Church Hall.**
Apr 18th 7pm.

Gunton Wood

The first three months of 2018 have been largely dominated by the weather. Two work parties had to be cancelled, one because of rain and high winds and one because of heavy snow.

The storms caused a lot of damage, with numerous trees coming down. On Moore's Lane four large willows came down in one day, along with a lovely silver birch outside David's gate and a holly tree near to the Stubbs Wood entrance. At other times, two sycamores came down near to the coffee area, a small ivy-covered tree fell into the B&B area and a large ash fell over the ditch at the side of the main path leading to PwH.

The snow, on the other hand, transformed the wood in a much more peaceful way. A beautiful white carpet of snow covered everything and the branches of the trees had inches of snow clinging to them, creating a real fairyland scene. Lots of people took advantage of the enforced school holidays to bring children out with sledges, to have snow fights and to build snowmen in various places.



Of course, all the storm damage created a lot of work. Most of the trees were cut into logs to replace rotting path edging and to create extra log seats at the coffee area. The trolley dolly, the sack barrow and the tractor and trailer were all in use for several weeks, transporting the logs to where they were needed.

With all this tree work going on we had to buy more hard hats and safety goggles, and we also bought some log tongs to help with the lifting. The trolley dolly and both of the tractors felt the strain, with a flat tyre, a faulty ignition switch and gear box problems, but it seems that the workers all held up quite well!

The large ash that came down over the ditch proved to be a very difficult task. The Saturday gang cut it through and cleared what they could, but part of it was too large to be hauled out of the ditch by the smaller group. So the following Saturday a much larger team went down with block & tackle and managed to get it out. A large part of the main trunk was too heavy to move, so it has been turned into a seat at the side of the path.

The small tree that fell from the wild wood into the B&B area was cleared by the ladies – yes, we do know how to use a saw!! As well as the storm damage in Gunton Wood, we were asked if we could help PwH by clearing the debris outside their main gate. This had been caused by a very large tree crashing down from Gunton Hall. The Saturday gang and some of the Thursday workers spent two Saturdays sawing, lopping and clearing. PwH had no use for the resultant wood, so it was available for workers to take away. Pleasurewood Hills have kindly sponsored us for a few years now, so we are always happy to help them out if we can.



As well as clearing trees and shifting logs, the annual clean and repair of the bird boxes has been completed and we hope to have the survey results ready for the AGM on 18th April.

We had a report that Vinnie's bridge needed repairing. After an initial inspection, a small team went down and replaced some rotten boards, attached a new crossbeam to one of the side rails to strengthen it and put new netting onto the boards. Hopefully it is safe and sound again now. We also had a request for the path from Gunton Church Lane to Murrillo Drive to be chipped, because it has a lot of footfall from mothers and children going to school and had become very muddy. We hadn't had any chippings for a while, but luckily, the very week we had the request, WN delivered two large loads, so the path was done straight away.

The Woodland Trust sent 160 tree whips which we had ordered, so the ladies cleared an area in the nursery and heeled them in. They will be transplanted into the wood later in the year. The ladies have also spent some time clearing the ditch. The storms had deposited a lot of debris in the ditch, which caused quite a difficult blockage at the bridge. It took two Thursday mornings and some help from one or two of the men to clear away the branches, leaves and sand. Finally, the water was flowing freely through the bridge again. Some smaller blockages further upstream were also cleared. This is an on-going job, but the ladies say they enjoy it.

At the last work party in March WN turned up with their large wood chipper, so it was all hands to the deck to gather up all the old path edgings, the debris from the storm and the tops of some of the largest habitats, to keep the chipper busy. It was a good morning's work, with everyone involved, including Will who always comes along during the school holidays. Wheelbarrows, the trolley dolly and sack barrows were all in use and some workers stayed on after coffee to help with the last few heaps. We now have three heaps of chippings which should mean that the paths can be kept in good order - "A good job well done".



Tesco "Bags of Help" Project

GWCP has been accepted for Tesco's "Bags of Help" scheme which helps raise funding for local good causes by charging for the sale of carrier bags. You will be able to vote for GWCP in three local Tesco outlets between Tues May 1st and Sat June 30th. The three stores are Tesco Superstore in Leisure Way, Tesco Metro in London Rd North and Tesco (Esso) Express in Oulton Broad. Recently, the Gunton Woodland Burial Park raised nearly £4,000 for their "Bags of Help" appeal. Please ask for your blue token as they are not always offered.

GWCP Website

At the start of February our website underwent a complete transformation as the system software behind it was brought up-to-date. This was done by Community Action Suffolk who manage websites for many charities, clubs, groups, parish councils etc. within Suffolk. CAS provided a free course for the new system and we sent two of the committee members on the course. Hopefully, you are finding the new layout easier to use. It's not perfect yet but we are getting there. Please let us know if you have any ideas about what content you would like to see on there.

Social Events

Christmas Dinner – Thursday Jan 25th

The dinner for our regular Woodland Workers was attended by 44 members back in January. We had decided to try a new venue, The Victoria Hotel and this proved to be quite a success. Most members thought it was a good venue with good service, excellent food and, as always, superb company! We think we'll be back next year.



21st AGM – Wednesday April 18th 2018

All members and friends are warmly invited to attend our 21st AGM to be held on Wednesday 18th April 2018 at **St. Benedict's Church Hall, Hollingsworth Road**. Refreshments will be served from 7 pm and the meeting starts at 7.30 pm. Minutes of previous year's AGMs can be downloaded from the "ABOUT US" tab on the GWCP website.

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

This is now full but we do have a waiting list. A 4 night - 5 day trip to the Lake District through Belle Coaches Holidays. Staying at the Appleby hotel. The cost is £423pp with a single room supplement of £60pp.

Look Out For – by Janet Field

In autumn we rake up the grass during mowing of the wildflower meadow. Each time small frogs are rescued and carefully placed at the bottom of a safe hedge, well away from the mowers.

However mowers are not the frogs' only enemy. As frogspawn and tadpoles they are predated by mammals, birds, grass snakes, dragonfly nymphs and adult newts. Each year mallard fly over from the Gainsborough Drive pond to our woodland pond and feed on the frogspawn. As adult frogs they provide a tasty meal for larger birds, particularly herons - and the French are well known for their culinary love of frogs' legs. The life span of a frog is approximately 5 to 6 years.

Considering that females lay roughly 2,000 eggs - it is amazing only about five of them survive to become adults. Frogs are such an important part of the food chain, devouring invertebrates which feed on plants, thereby becoming one of nature's great fighters in biological pest control. As the frog population is in decline due to filling in of ponds, climate change, pollution etc we are attempting to help redress this. We are creating log piles to provide a safe refuge and resting place for frogs and many other small inhabitants of the wood. So please do not climb on, disturb or dismantle the log piles.

To paraphrase Baroness Margaret Thatcher and acknowledging Christopher Fry's 1948 play - "The logs are not for burning".



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