

Gunton Woodland Community Project

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NEWSLETTER

January – February 2017



Gunton Wood



The last two month's work has mostly been about trees – not surprising in a wood! - but although some was planned, quite a lot was unexpected.

The Saturday gang were out several times, to help with finishing off the work identified at the annual tree inspection. Three dead elms had to be removed from the area at the back of the church and two other dead trees within the wood had to be removed, as well as several large overhanging branches. The trees were cut into manageable logs and then transported to where they were needed, using the "trolley-dolly".

Sadly, when we arrived one Thursday we found that a lot of new trees which had been planted along Lime Avenue had been ripped up and the stakes and shields broken. We tidied the mess and will replace the trees at a later date. Several new trees have been planted at the back of the church where the dead elms were removed and also a few small trees that had died were replaced with new limes and silver birch. We found that the ground at the back of the church was so dry, we had to water and mulch the new trees – this must be a first in the middle of winter!

We have coppiced the elders and have mulched around the trees in the B&B area.

Then along came Doris. The work party on Thursday 23rd Feb. was cancelled due to storm Doris and when we saw the results the next day, it was clear that we had made the right decision. At least nine trees had come down. A small group went out on Friday morning and cleared two trees that were blocking paths, but one very large branch was too difficult so they cordoned off the path until it could be dealt with. On Tuesday 28th a larger group went out with the chainsaw and managed to open up the path again. The next work party it was all hands to the deck, to clear several trees that had come down in Moore's Lane and to sort out the large amount of branches that had come down throughout the wood. Everything was made safe and only one tree, which was overhanging the school fence, was left for another day.



The general maintenance jobs have continued.

The ladies have been in the ditch a few times, to ensure that it is kept clear and running free.

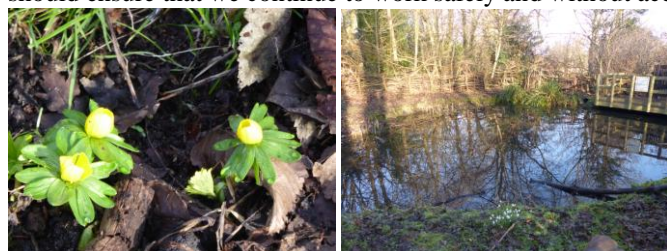
They have also been over to the "bomb-hole" and cleared the litter.

The sheds have been tidied and David finally got round to putting up a shelf that had been waiting for twenty years! Two of the men also installed a solar-powered light so now we don't have to stumble around in semi-darkness looking for tools.

Some of the fencing around the wild wood and at the bottom of Moore's Lane has been repaired and the old 'No Admittance' signs around the wild wood have been replaced.

And of course, we have been chipping the paths.

Copies of the risk assessment document, which the committee have been working on for several weeks, were issued to all work party members. The document covers all aspects of the work we do in the woods, with details of what risks are involved and how to avoid injuries. This, along with the emergency leaflets that are taken out by each group working in the woods, should ensure that we continue to work safely and without accident.



David, Chris & Mo had a meeting with Adam Nobel, the new manager at PwH, to discuss their sponsorship. Adam was very enthusiastic about the work we do and confirmed that there would be no problem with PwH continuing with the sponsorship.

Foxburrow Wood

There has been quite a lot of work done in Foxburrow wood. A new path has been laid across the grass at the end of Gainsborough Drive, leading to the top of the steps. This was an area that was always muddy, so hopefully the new path will be welcomed by walkers. The remainder of our tree inspection work has been completed, so all that is left is the work assigned to WN which we hope they will complete before the birds start nesting. On Thursday 16th February we held a work party in Foxburrow wood, to tackle several jobs that had been accumulating. Of course, the ladies were in the ditch clearing debris and overgrowth. They did a good job, but the retaining fence is in a bad state of repair and will soon cause more blockages. GWCP have spoken to the council several times about this but, currently, with no success. Some of the mesh on the boardwalks, which had become broken and worn away, was replaced, but there is still some work to be done. Some of the men cleared mud, leaves and debris from the two small ponds. Ken's grandson Will, who was on half term holiday, had great fun throwing the grapple attached to a rope to clear branches from the middle of the pond. Two areas, where old dead trees had been removed, were cleared of scrub in readiness for new trees to be planted. It was a lovely sunny day and Jenny & Yvon had kindly provided chairs for us on their lawn, so coffee time turned into a picnic in the sunshine – a lovely end to a good morning's work.



Look Out For – by Janet Field

Walking through Gunton Wood one may have noticed the plethora of new molehills in Gunton Primary Academy's sports field. Molehills have been in the wood for years. Moles do not hibernate and can tunnel up to 20m of soil each day, which is ejected every few metres. No wonder there are so many molehills.

Tunnels provide moles with their food comprising of leather jackets, wire worms, caterpillars, insect larvae and centipedes. Earthworms, their staple diet, are bitten and paralysed by the mole then stored in their larder for later consumption. Up to half their body weight can be eaten each day.

They have a highly developed sense of smell and touch which helps when collecting food that has dropped into their tunnels. Their eyesight is not great. The tiny tail, pointing upwards, acts as a sensitive feeler, especially when running backwards.

About 30 million individuals live in Britain, mating in February/March, and have one litter each year with 3/4 offspring arriving April/May. In the summer the young move from their birthplace to dig their own tunnels. This is potentially a dangerous time for them as they can be predated by tawny owls when surfacing.

Although moles are generally detested by gardeners, park keepers, golf club owners and farmers because of the damage caused, there are a few positives. Molehills soil is good for scattering on lawns and flowerbeds. Their tunnels help to drain the soil and moleskin has been much prized for many years for men's waistcoats.

And finally...one little mole was responsible for changing our history. King William III was out riding when his horse stumbled on a molehill and he was thrown from the saddle. William died as a result of this fall and for many years after his Jacobite enemies raised their glasses to toast...."the little gentleman in the black velvet waistcoat." So watch where you walk!!

Social Events

Christmas Dinner – Thursday Jan 26th

A dinner for our regular Woodland Workers at the East Restaurant Lowestoft College and this year 44 members attended. The evening went very well with excellent food and good company – always a recipe for success!



AGM – Wednesday April 19th 2017

Our 20th AGM will be at Gunton Primary Academy, Gainsborough Drive.

There will be refreshments at 7pm and the AGM will start at 7.30pm. The guest speaker will be Chris Brooks, who will give a talk with slides entitled "Lowestoft Then and Now", he is scheduled to start at 8pm.

Spring Litter Pick – Saturday April 22nd (provisional date to be confirmed)

Provisional date for the Spring litter pick, more details to follow.