

Notes of a site meeting at Chilswell Copse, Thursday 18th July 2019

Present:

Andy Gunn, Berkshire Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)

Christine Chater (South Hinksey parish councillor)

Maggie Rawcliffe (South Hinksey Parish Council Woodland Committee)

Geoffrey Ferres (Clerk, South Hinksey Parish Council).

1. At the start of the site meeting, we encountered paper and polystyrene waste left over from a takeaway meal. Andy kindly gathered it and removed it.
2. The Council has paid BBOWT £275.85 for 2019 (representing consisting 25% of the 2018-19 Farm Woodland Payment and 75% of the 2019-20 Farm Woodland Payment).
3. Andy put forward two Saturday afternoon dates for bramble cutting work parties and suggested they follow Saturday morning Chilswell Valley work parties: **12th October** and **14th December**, both starting at 1pm; the first finishing at 4pm and the second at 3pm. Andy would provide basic equipment and refreshments.

Action: Clerk to arrange publicity via Shinfo.

4. Andy said he would arrange other dates with a colleague to undertake additional bramble cutting and to drop down some of the self-seeded willows to create nesting sites.

Action: Andy

5. Andy and Maggie had met Sanny, who is now kindly cutting less of the grass and less often. All agreed that the impact was already visible.

Actions: Maggie to speak to Sanny when he is back; Clerk to thank Sanny on the Council's behalf.

6. Andy has spoken to the Forestry Commission's Sam Riley and is looking at the Fund Sam has mentioned as a possible source of money to replace the large number of ash trees likely to be lost due to ash dieback.

Andy is considering linking any bid with Chilswell Valley to address the concern that the Commission may consider the woodland too small a site on its own.

Action: Andy to pursue

7. Andy said BBOWT is trialling cardboard tree guards which are claimed to last ten years before falling off and decomposing. He proposed to try these here.

It was agreed to look at fitting some of these early in 2020 and ideas were discussed as to how to engage volunteers in the work, such as schools (for example, North Hinksey Primary School) or organisations for young people (such as the Woodcraft Folk).

It was agreed to give this further thought and to discuss it again at a future meeting.

8. Andy said the Freshwater Habitats Trust has a new Project Officer, Ellie Mayhew. BBOWT is already working with the Trust at Chilswell Valley to dam the water so as to re-wet the fen. He will arrange a site meeting and take her to see the possible site for a pond for great crested newts in the boggy area.

Action: Andy to forward to the Clerk a copy of the “What’s happening at Chilswell?” poster; Clerk to forward the poster to Maggie and arrange for it to be circulated via Shinfo.

9. It was agreed to discuss signage again at a further meeting.

Chris and the Clerk agreed to have a look after the site meeting at the old wooden sign directing walkers to the village over the bridge, which is now almost illegible.

10. SSEN’s contractors had undertaken work to protect the lower set of electricity cables near the road. It was agreed the piles of branches could be left where they are as habitat piles.

11. Andy requested help identifying the owner of a field on the other side of Chilswell Path which he hoped to include in a possible extension of the Local Wildlife Site.

Action: Maggie to enquire of the Marsdens and to introduce Andy to Nick Frearson when he was likely to be less busy.

12. The next site meeting was fixed for 9am on Thursday 17th October 2019.

Geoffrey Ferres
Parish Clerk
Friday 19th July 2019