

Notes of a quarterly site meeting at Chilswell Copse, Thursday 17th October 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 noticed a roe deer among the trees, a reminder of the issue of protecting trees from deer that the Forestry Commission's Sam Riley has highlighted.
2. Four parishioners attended the afternoon work party on Saturday 12th October. Andy explained he had to switch his own focus in the morning from Chilswell Valley to Grandpont, so the idea of Chilswell Valley volunteers moving on to the woodland didn't happen.
3. Andy said he wanted to change the date of the next working party from Saturday 14th December to a date in January 2020.

Action: Andy to suggest new dates

4. Andy said he would arrange to come before the next working party with brush cutters with two colleagues to clear some of the diseased ash trees to enable restocking.

Action: Andy

5. The working party dropped down some of the self-seeded willows to create a thicket that would provide nesting sites and improve the chances for the trees at the edge of the woodland. It was accepted the result looks messy.
6. Andy felt this experiment could be extended and a wood chipper would be a good idea to eliminate the need to remove material from the site. Instead, the material would be used in appropriate places in the woodland.

Action: Andy

7. Maggie suggested an article in the next issue of Echo explaining what is happening. The Clerk queried whether it was too late to submit an article as the copy deadline had passed.

Actions: Maggie to contact Nadeen to see whether an article can be accepted; Andy to write a short piece, if Nadeen agrees

8. The long grass that has grown thanks to Sanny cutting less of the grass and less often was admired. There will, of course, need to be one full cut before the winter.

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

9. Andy now believes that the Fund mentioned by the Forestry Commission's Sam Riley is not a promising avenue for funding replacement of the large number of ash trees likely to be lost due to ash dieback: the woodland is simply too small.

10. Andy suggests carbon offsetting is a better route to explore.

Action: Andy to pursue

11. Attention was paid to the fringes at the northern and southern edges of the site. The Clerk confirmed these are part of the woodland.

Action: Clerk to check the status of the track on the other side of the bank at the northern edge of the site

12. It was agreed it would be best to leave the fringes alone but to look for a future opportunity to remove plastic guards which remain on many of the trees. Andy said he would see whether some of these can be recycled.

Action: Andy

13. Andy said he is still keen to try to work with the Freshwater Habitats Trust to explore the possibility of a pond for great crested newts in the boggy area.

Action: Andy to pursue

Geoffrey Ferres
Parish Clerk
Friday 18th October 2019