



HARROW NATURE CONSERVATION FORUM

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2017

Chairman's report

Our sites continue to do well under the hard working tutelage of our volunteer wardens.

At Roxbourne Rough we are sorry that Gary Garland, who took on the mantle of warden, resigned in December 2016. This leaves the site in the hands of Yvonne Kerchoff, supported I hope by the Friends of Roxbourne Park.

We are working hard to advertise the Old Dairy, the visitor centre on Wood Farm, as a venue for school and other activities. We had a set of flyers printed and I sent one to all Harrow schools. On April 4th it will be used by "Little Explorers", a home schooling group; Simon Braidman will take them on a nature walk and then they will use The Old Dairy for follow-up. To enquire about booking the Old Dairy contact Tosh Padhiar at tosh@ligphotography.com or 07976 304 333.

Prior to our taking over responsibility for Wood Farm, the developer installed a set of waymarker bollards that are mostly OK but in some cases downright misleading. We have installed four additional bollards, and David Winton and I will install fourteen new roundels in the next few weeks which should allow visitors to navigate around the site more easily. Next he and I need to create a leaflet for the site.

I am hopeful that we will get some cattle on to 40 Acre Field on Stanmore Country Park. Cattle grazing is better for grassland biodiversity than an annual cut, so this would be a definite plus. Jonathan Chapman, whose herd grazes Bentley Priory, would like to put some cattle on Stanmore Country Park, and I hope that we can get the council to set up the necessary paperwork. Once I know for sure that the cattle are coming I will spend a day repairing the fence, which is definitely not cattle-proof in some places right now.

Dingles Wood is a small area of woodland at the northeast end of Montesole Recreation Ground in Pinner Green. It has a large badger colony with setts in the walls of an old quarry. The quarry was for clay, but the site is of historical interest because underneath it is an extensive network of tunnels used to mine chalk in the 19th century. Anyway, the Herts and Middlesex Badger Group is worried about the welfare of the badgers, and following site visits on January 22nd and March 1st that included Dave Corby and Mark Richardson of Harrow Council we have agreed that the badger group should register as a park user group. The Harrow Nature Conservation Forum would then welcome them into our fold. Karen Pillai is the local representative of the badger group who will be our eyes and ears at the site.

Gareth Ryman began work as Harrow Council's new biodiversity officer on October 24th 2016. He has met with many of us and visited most of our sites. He is keen and knowledgeable and will be a great asset to Harrow's natural environment.

HARROW NATURE CONSERVATION EVENTS FOR SPRING 2017

Mar 18th	Sat	Newton Farm	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Leslie Bolsover	The big tidy up - a major attack on litter
Mar 22nd	Wed	Stanmore Common	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Simon Braidman	Tasks for March include tree felling and scrub bashing
Mar 25th	Sat	Newton Farm	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Leslie Bolsover	Regular tasks include new species planting
Mar 26th	Sun	Stanmore Common	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Simon Braidman	Tasks for March include tree felling and scrub bashing
Mar 29th	Wed	Bentley Priory	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Sue Kabel	March tasks include surveying the adders tongue fern
Apr 1st	Sat	Bentley Old Vicarage	10:00AM-12:00noon	James Mercer	Regular tasks include clearing back ivy and bramble from the paths
Apr 1st	Sat	Newton Farm	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Leslie Bolsover	Regular tasks include bramble bashing, rubbish pickup and new species planting
Apr 3rd	Mon	Wood Farm	10.30AM-12:00noon	Simon Braidman	Bug Hunt. This is a school holiday event. Refreshments afterwards.
Apr 5th	Wed	Stanmore Common	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Simon Braidman	Tasks for April include selective tree removal to improve bat access
Apr 8th	Sat	Newton Farm	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Leslie Bolsover	Regular tasks include bramble bashing, rubbish pickup and new species planting
Apr 8th	Sat	Roxbourne Rough	10:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Yvonne Kerchoff	Spring and summer tasks include cutting grass along the paths, clearing back bramble and planting around the new pond
Apr 9th	Sun	Stanmore Common	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Simon Braidman	Tasks for April include selective tree removal to improve bat access
Apr 10th	Mon	Blackwell Hall, Uxbridge Road, HA3 6DQ	8:00 PM	Margaret Huitson	Harrow Natural History Society: Dormice and other woodland mammals. Free to members, £2 for non-members.
Apr 11th	Tue	Stanmore Common	10.30 AM - 12:30 PM	Simon Braidman	Bug Hunt. This is a school holiday event.
Apr 12th	Wed	Stanmore Common	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Simon Braidman	Tasks for April include selective tree removal to improve bat access
Apr 15th	Sat	Newton Farm	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Leslie Bolsover	Regular tasks include bramble bashing, rubbish pickup and new species planting
Apr 15th	Sat	Pear Wood	2:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Claire Abbott	Bluebells and other Wildlife in Pear Wood. Leaders Claire Abbott and Rosemary Etheridge. 020 8954 0439 or 07410933370 .
Apr 15th	Sat	Wood Farm	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	David	Regular tasks include coppicing willow around the pond and creating paths

Apr 19th	Wed	Stanmore Common	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Winton Simon Braidman	Tasks for April include selective tree removal to improve bat access
Apr 22nd	Sat	Bentley Priory	2:00 PM - 4:30 PM	Simon Braidman Leslie	Bluebells at Bentley Priory Nature Reserve. Note: Meet in Stanmore Common car park.
Apr 22nd	Sat	Newton Farm	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Bolsover	Regular tasks include bramble and new species planting
Apr 23rd	Sun	Harrow Recreation Ground	10.30AM-12:00noon	Simon Braidman Simon	Bug hunt. Refreshments in the pavillion afterwards. Meet at the park entrance in Hindes Road HA1 1RS.
Apr 23rd	Sun	Stanmore Common	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Braidman	Tasks for April include selective tree removal to improve bat access
Apr 26th	Wed	Bentley Priory	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Sue Kabel Leslie	Spring tasks include controlling himalayan balsam
Apr 29th	Sat	Newton Farm	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Bolsover John	Regular tasks include bramble bashing, rubbish pickup and new species planting
Apr 29th	Sat	Stanmore Country Park	11:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Hollingdale Simon	Stanmore Country Park for Butterflies and Bluebells.
May 3rd	Wed	Stanmore Common	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Braidman Margaret	Summer tasks include bracken bashing
May 4th	Thu	Bentley Priory	9:30 AM-12:00 noon	Huitson	Morning Walk for Spring Birdsong at Bentley Priory. Meet at the top of Masefield Avenue. Leader Brian Hunter 07754499858
May 5th	FRI	Stanmore Common	8:30 PM - 10:30 PM	Simon Braidman James	An evening walk for our furry flying friends . Suitable for beginners and children welcome (accompanied by adult).
May 6th	Sat	Bentley Old Vicarage	10:00AM-12:00noon	Mercer Leslie	Regular tasks include clearing back ivy and bramble from the paths
May 6th	Sat	Newton Farm	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Bolsover	Regular tasks include bramble bashing, rubbish pickup and new species planting
May 7th	Sun	Harrow Recreation Ground	10.30AM-12:00noon	Simon Braidman Simon	Tree walk led by John Wells. Refreshments in the pavillion afterwards.
May 7th	Sun	Stanmore Common	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Braidman Margaret	Summer tasks include bracken bashing
May 8th	Mon	Wood Farm	7:30 PM - 9:30 PM	Huitson Simon	Wood Farm. Meet outside the Visitor Centre at Wood Farm for a short walk to see wildlife and views followed by refreshments.
May 10th	Wed	Stanmore Common	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Braidman Leslie	Summer tasks include bracken bashing t
May 13th	Sat	Newton Farm	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Bolsover	Regular tasks include bramble bashing, rubbish pickup and new species planting
May 13th	Sat	Stanmore Common	10:30 AM - 1:00 PM	Simon	Bugs! And the places they live in. Bring bug pots and hand lens if you have them.

May 14th	Sun	Roxbourne Rough	10:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Braidman Yvonne Kerchoff Contact	Cutting grass along the paths, clearing bramble and planting
May 17th	Wed	Not yet assigned	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	HNCF Leslie	
May 20th	Sat	Newton Farm	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Bolsover David	Regular tasks include bramble bashing, rubbish pickup and new species planting
May 20th	Sat	Wood Farm	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Winton Simon	Regular tasks include coppicing willow around the pond and creating paths
May 21st	Sun	Stanmore Common	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Braidman Simon	Bracken bashing to maintain a species mix in the open areas
May 24th	Wed	Stanmore Common	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Braidman	Summer tasks include bracken bashing again
May 26th	Fri	Stanmore Country Park	9:30 PM - midnight	John Hollingdale Leslie	Moth Evening at Stanmore Country Park. Meet Dennis Lane car park.
May 27th	Sat	Newton Farm	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Bolsover	Regular tasks include bramble bashing, rubbish pickup and new species planting
May 31st	Wed	Bentley Priory	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Sue Kabel	Spring tasks include controlling himalayan balsam
Jun 1st	Thu	Grimsdyke hotel	2:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Jane Skelly James	Bee walk at the Grimsdyke Hotel . Meet in the front car park.
Jun 3rd	Sat	Bentley Old Vicarage	10:00AM-12:00noon	Mercer Leslie	Regular tasks include clearing back ivy and bramble from the paths
Jun 3rd	Sat	Newton Farm	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Bolsover Simon	Regular tasks include bramble bashing, rubbish pickup and new species planting
Jun 4th	Sun	Stanmore Common	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Braidman Simon	Bracken bashing to maintain a species mix in the open areas
Jun 7th	Wed	Stanmore Common	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Braidman Leslie	Bracken bashing to maintain a species mix in the open areas
Jun 10th	Sat	Newton Farm	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Bolsover Yvonne	Regular tasks include bramble bashing, rubbish pickup and new species planting
Jun 10th	Sat	Roxbourne Rough	10:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Kerchoff Simon	Spring and summer tasks include cutting grass along the paths, clearing back bramble and planting around the new pond
Jun 11th	Sun	Stanmore Common	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Braidman John	Summer tasks include bracken bashing to maintain a species mix in the open areas
Jun 14th	Wed		10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Hollingdale Leslie	Regular tasks include clearing invasive scrub and improving drainage
Jun 17th	Sat	Newton Farm	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Bolsover	Regular tasks include bramble bashing, rubbish pickup and new species planting

Jun 17th	Sat	Pear Wood	2:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Claire Abbott David Winton	Wildlife at Pear Wood. Meet at the Wood Lane entrance to Pear Wood. Leaders Claire Abbott and Rosemary Etheridge. 020 8954 0439 or 07410933370 .
Jun 17th	Sat	Wood Farm	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Simon Braidman	Regular tasks include coppicing willow around the pond and creating paths
Jun 18th	Sun	Stanmore Common	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Simon Braidman	Bracken bashing to maintain a species mix in the open areas
Jun 18th	Sun	Stanmore Common	10:30 AM - 3:00 PM	Simon Braidman	The Great Plant Hunt.. Please bring pack lunch BOOKING ESSENTIAL .
Jun 21st	Wed	Stanmore Common	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Simon Braidman	Bracken bashing to maintain a species mix in the open areas
Jun 23rd	FRI	Bentley Priory	2:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Margaret Huitson Leslie Bolsover	Walk for flowers at Bentley Priory. Meet at the entrance at the top of Masefield Avenue at 2pm. Leader Joanne Colthup. 07516689289.
Jun 24th	Sat	Newton Farm	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Simon Braidman	Regular tasks include bramble bashing, rubbish pickup and new species planting
Jun 25th	Sun	Stanmore Common	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Simon Braidman	Bracken bashing to maintain a species mix in the open areas
Jun 28th	Wed	Bentley Priory	10:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Sue Kabel	Summer tasks include ragwort control

Meeting point and contact details

Events are open to all and are free - just turn up. Children under 16 years should be accompanied by an adult. If possible, contact the warden before attending a moth evening or working party for the first time so that they know to look out for you and bring the necessary equipment. If you cannot reach the warden or other contacts listed below, contact Steve Bolsover (chairman of Harrow Nature Conservation Forum) as listed at the bottom of the page.

The Wednesday working parties always meet in the Stanmore Common car park, off Warren Lane. From there we walk or arrange transport to the site we are working at.

Site	Contact name(s)	Contact email(s)	Contact phone(s)	Standard meeting point for walks and working parties
Bentley Old Vicarage	James Mercer (warden)	jamesjmercer@mac.com	020 8954 0247	No specific location - just look for us inside this very small site.
	Jane Skelly	jvskelly@yahoo.com	020 8863 9714	
Bentley Priory	Peter Peretti (warden)		020 8954 2918	The meeting point for guided walks and other educational and fun activities is at the north end of Old Lodge Way. Working parties: see above
	Sue Kabel (deputy warden)	suekabel@yahoo.co.uk	07759 781592	
Roxbourne Rough	Yvonne Kerchoff	forp2016@yahoo.com Put "Roxbourne_Rough" in subject line		The meeting point for all events is beside house number 2 on Stirling Ave, off Cannon Lane.
Stanmore Common	Simon Braidman (chief warden)	simonbraidman@hotmail.co.uk	020 8386 2502	The meeting point for all events is the Stanmore Common car park, off Warren Avenue
	John Winter (Deputy warden)	johnswinter@virginmedia.com	020 8863 5957	
Stanmore Country Park	John Hollingdale (chief warden)	hollhu@yahoo.co.uk	020 8863 2077	The meeting point for guided walks and other educational and fun activities is the Stanmore Country Park car park, off Dennis Lane. Working parties: see above
Stanmore Little Common	Robert Stone (warden)	robertstone@gmail.com	020 8954 3869	No standard meeting point, contact warden
Wood Farm	David Winton	wardenwoodfarm@gmail.com	0779 049 0200	The meeting point for guided walks and other educational and fun activities is the Wood Farm car park off Wood Lane. Working parties: see above

WARDENS' REPORTS

Bentley Old Vicarage (BOV) and All Saints' Churchyard Warden's Report

Jane reported that new volunteer has been recruited. Most of the volunteer time at the Working parties is spent on clearing leaves and litter. The Forest School is continuing to thrive.

Bentley Priory Warden's Report January 2017 Peter Peretti and Sue Kabel

1. Grazing

A system has now been structured successfully into the management plan requirements and we are indebted to Jonathan Chapman for his constructive advice and co-operation. The number of cattle grazing in 2017 will rise to approx. 50 which should be ideal.

2. Main Work areas

Upper Spring Meadow – most of the areas of bramble have been cut with the flail, thereby increasing the grazing and wild flower areas

Lower Dragonfly Pond- invasive Canadian Pond Weed was removed and this needs to be continued and monitored. The Goat Willow also needs to be coppiced.

Lower Spring Meadow has now been linked physically and visually with the middle area by cutting back scrub and small trees in this area. This work was carried out by Alan Scott. There was also some protective cutting to protect Fleabane in the same vicinity.

Dell Valley cleared and some coppice work carried out to expose Wood anemone, this is an annual task carried out by the TCV.

Glenthorne over hanging laurel cut back.

Aylmer Meadow – bramble cut with the flail

Weald Path – flooding to be monitored and drainage solution considered. A second bramble cut is envisaged late May before the cattle return. It is suggested Spring Meadow be divided into smaller compartments to facilitate management of this area.

Newton Farm Ecology Park (Newton Park East)

Mowing and cut grass removal in the dry and wet meadow during October was successful although time consuming in the grass raking stage! As well as myself, I had help from volunteers Michelle and Aaron one workday and Steve. Special thanks to Fraser D. who was overjoyed to get cut grass for his allotment and hauled most of the grass away in his trailer. Fraser has also taken on the apple tree upkeep. He wants to remove the ivy from them' I'd appreciate any comments about pros and cons of doing this.

Over the winter the focus of working parties is on removing ash saplings and bramble where they aren't wanted (primarily the old Healing Garden) and tackling some of the more buried archival rubbish dumps.

There is an ongoing investigation regarding oil pollution in the waterways, especially the small

pond. However, this investigation takes in the surrounding area as I am not the only one to have reported and asked for an investigation. Harrow has contracted Ebsford Environmental to remediate the contaminated wet pond in Newton Farm Ecology Park.

3. Went into Newton Park – across the road from Newton Ecology Park. During my first visit after Christmas on January 14th the absorbent socks were gone however I have not yet been updated about the outcome of the investigation.

I now have the original plan and planting list for Newton Farm and will be using it to assess what is still there and finding out what has disappeared from the site in the intervening years during the next year.

Leslie

Pear Wood Nature Reserve Report January 2017

1. We held an Apple Afternoon on 1st October.

This is the second time that we have had this event and again it was very successful and enjoyed by all who came. Seats were provided and (orchard related) refreshments were served. Claire gave a short talk about Heritage Orchards, why they are important and what we are doing with this one. Everybody went home laden with apples.

2. We led a Fungus Foray on 8th October. A good time was had by all who came.

3. Rosemary gave a talk to Harrow Natural History Society about mosses on 9th Jan. It was very well illustrated and there were lots of specimens on show and passed around. Well attended and appreciated. We will be leading a walk about mosses on Saturday 11th March. All are welcome.

4. A second week-long session of live trapping small mammals (part of the Vole Patrol Project) was done from 18th - 26th September. Pear Wood is the only one of the nine sites taking part in the survey that has all six small mammal species present. The six small mammals that we were looking for and caught by live trapping were; wood mouse, yellow necked mouse, bank vole, field vole, common shrew and pygmy shrew. The pygmy shrews are unbelievably tiny and beautiful and the presence of the rare yellow necked mouse increases the chance that we may have dormice. Dormice cannot be live trapped. We also have hedgehogs and because of this, we have built and installed a hedgehog house in the orchard

5. Fourteen apple trees were planted in the orchard. These are all old English varieties (on M25 rootstock) in keeping with a traditional orchard. Heritage orchards are a BAP (Biodiversity Action Plan) Priority Habitat. They are great specimens and the planting went well.

6. We sowed some wild flower seeds in the orchard (some sown in autumn and some in spring).

7. The barn owl box was taken down, cleaned and repaired and put back up. The box had been

previously inspected and no signs of owls were found, however they have been seen on Wood Farm during the past year.

8. Some 'draining boards' have been added to the water butt in the orchard and we have also made a second water collection device, using an old tank and some sloping, covered boards. This water supply should greatly help the survival of the newly planted apple trees.

9. Some large hollies surrounding the hazel coppiced area of the wood have been cleared. This will be an ongoing job.

Ten Acre Field.

1. Last year's Japanese knotweed was cleared and burnt on 18th Jan. Thank you to Steve and the Wednesday volunteer group.

The Scrape.

1. The path going around The Scrape has been re-routed and a new crossing over the stream made. This makes it easier for dog walkers and others to bypass the fenced area if they wish to do so. Thanks to David Winton for this.

Rosemary and I would particularly like to thank Peter Elton for all the help he has given us, it is greatly appreciated.

Roxbourne Rough

The possibility of holding working parties on alternate Saturdays at Newton Farm and Roxbourne Rough was discussed. A Wednesday Working Party could be held at the site. And a TCV day has been offered. Gareth indicated that he could provide assistance.

Cllr Keith Ferry raised the matter of a memorial for Dave Bolton. It was agreed that the new pond should be named Bolton's Pande and a brass plaque on wood put up. It would be good to have an opening Ceremony.

New developments are planned for the area including Newton Farm and Leslie asked that she be copied in where appropriate.

Roxbourne Rough: Warden's report January 2017

The report for the Roxbourne Rough is of a mixed bag, the new pond is filling up nicely.

There have been reports that parts of rotting fox have been found throughout the rough, and it is my fear that this is the reason that men have been reported breaking into the new pond area. Their activities have been reported to the police but as it is in a wooded area, accessible only through bramble and gorse, they are unlikely to be seen or caught.

All attempts to protect the area have resulted in the destruction of the barriers on a daily basis.

Last time we expected volunteers I was alone but managed to rebuild the barrier using gorse, bramble and some very spiky and sharp plant stems. I have no idea what plant it is, however it did delay the dismantlement over the period of two weeks.

The memorial tree that was chopped down by the council mower was replaced this morning by an

ornamental cherry tree by Harrow Council, placed more centrally so that it is more obvious to the gardeners.

Yvonne Kerchhoff

Stanmore Common

Simon reported that a walk round the site with Gareth Ryman, John Dobson and John Winter. The site was in generally felt to be in good condition. Work is continuing to control scrub on the Acid grassland areas. It was reported that a feral pig has been seen (and smelt) on the site. A fungus has been sent to Kew of investigation and interesting species, in general are being recorded.

In October 2016 Ebsford Environmental released their report on Brewers Ponds. Steve reported that it is too big to circulate generally but if anyone would like a copy they should contact Steve. It was noted that the pond will need attention.

PRACTICAL CONSERVATION WORK

From September 11th 2016 work progressed during the rest of the month on the management of the acid grassland clearings. On the 18th September work started on the clearance of bracken and saplings from Hollybrook Rise (Management Compartment (MC) 17.

In total 98 hours (9 work parties) was spent on cutting grass, bracken and saplings, the material was raked off and transported to arising piles. Some of this time was spent extending the clearing to the north by removing trees from the northern edge. Hopefully the grassland will extend into the woodland here.

Hollybrook Rise is now in good condition. Work also started on the largest clearing, Bluebell Heath and the associated areas of New Heath, New Scrape and Flushing Glade (Management Compartments 20a, 20b, 20c, 20d, 21.)

Clearance of bramble, bracken and saplings took place in the north east of the area during September and October. In 2017 work has continued on Bluebell Heath, another 90 hours or 3 work parties.

In all 154 hours (7 work parties) were put on the Bluebell Heath complex between September 11th and the 27th November 2016.

In 2017 work has continued on Bluebell Heath, another 90 hours or 3 work parties.

Work is still needed in Parcel 8a and 8b and a bit at the bottom of parcel 5 but the clearing is in fairly good shape.

Work on Oakmead was started at the end of August and beginning of September and was resumed on the 4th December. In total 138 hours. 6 work parties were carried out in Oakmead. This clearing still requires at least one more work party.

Witling Ride (MC 16a) was widened on the 16th November and the scrub just south of Hollybrook Rise was thinned on the 20th November. Helping

us were 4 guys from Hendon Synagogue. Witting Ride still needs some work.

OTHER PRACTICAL WORK

A bit of woodland thinning has taken place in Dyke Wood (MC9).

The footbridge at Pynding Mersc was repaired by John and Neville.

The solar lighting to the tools lock-up was installed by John Winter and what an improvement, a big thanks to John.

Ivy and Bramble were pulled away from the Sheep's Sorrel colony just east of Great Brewer's Pond.

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

Besides the work done by Hendon Synagogue we also had our regular visit by Hatch End Masorti Synagogue for Mitvah Day on 27th November 2016. Nine volunteers came and helped dig up saplings from New Heath.

On 14th December 4 people from the energy company Contour Global came to help remove scrub from Oakmead. They did a great job. It was a good attendance. Only 5 people work for their UK branch.

The Pinner WI (9 people) had a guided walk around the reserve on the 20th October.

They really enjoyed the walk and we saw a few nice fungi such Common Yellow Russula and Purple Brittlegill.

NEW VOLUNTEERS

We have had some nice new volunteers such Michelle and Aaron and Taneth and the Torres and Davis Families.

CAR PARK

The anti-social behaviour in the car park came to a head in October after an incident with possible charity clients. A forceful email to the council has resulted in the future installation of CCTV and camera traps.

Stanmore Little Common

An uneventful, bleak mid-winter on Stanmore Little Common: One new development is that some evidence is emerging that local foxes may be playing a role in the reduction of our residual rat population. Best regards, Robert

Stanmore Country Park

Following the Work Party on Jan 11th Simon was thanked for his work on identifying fungi and lichen species Saira Gregory has produced a draft management plan in Forestry Commission approved format and Steve will be working on this. SCP Warden's report Jan 2017

OCT

Peter Elton has been cutting back bramble in 40 Acre Field at the bottom of John's ride. He has also mown the paths in this field to a width of five feet and also cleared the Central Path. Thank you very much Peter.

Steve has been brushcutting Upper Blue Pond. The Sewa day group raked up and moved the arisings into the nearby woodland. Thanks to all of them too.

John and Margaret have been concentrating on Six Acre Field. We are cutting back overhanging branches to enable the cut next year to be more extensive and cutting back bramble canes. The grass is too wet for scything so will have to wait for Spring.

Nov

Peter Elton removed bramble around an Oak in 40 Acres and widened the end of John's path at the S/E end

We cut back o/hanging willow by the balancing pond and started cutting back an invading rose. The Wednesday group (what would we do without them) finished cutting two roses by the balancing pond, cleared the end of the gas ride at the Wood Farm end and then went onto cut bramble in Ant City.

DEC

One visit; we removed some overhanging branches, recharged the leaflet boxes and inspected the National Grid work.

JAN

The monthly working group came and did some work in 40 Acre field. Sue lopped off low branches from one birch tree with the pole saw to enable the mower to get a bit closer. Simon and Marion were removing intruding Blackthorn and everyone else was cutting back bramble; except for the supervisor who did his best to interrupt everyone by chatting.

Wood Farm

David Winton is now the vice-chair of the Greater Stanmore Country Park Committee. He visits Wood Farm at least once a week. The site appears to be appreciated and looked after by users. Steve agreed to write to the Green Grid Committee to see if the work needed on the path leading to Stanmore Country Park and Stanmore Station could be put forward.

Kestrels and Linnets were seen regularly on the site.

Wood Farm Report 22 January 2017

David Winton

New Appointment

I was appointed the new Head Warden (to be ratified by the Greater Stanmore Country Park management committee) at the end of October 2016.

I work full time as an IT Project Manager but spend time at the weekends at Wood Farm.

Meadow Grass and Copses

As you can see above, the 'winter' meadow grass cut had taken place in September. The site looks good and is enjoyed by many local residents, who continue to state how much they appreciate the reserve.

During the winter meadow grass cut, one of the Copses close to the view point on the east side was

not seen by the cutter, which resulted in the saplings being flailed.

However we have managed to locate about 50 more saplings, which have been staked and flagged so hopefully are now extremely visible. However a lot of these were quite badly damaged or cut off close to ground level. How many will actually survive is unknown and it is a wait and see situation.

(I greatly appreciate the assistance of Claire Abbott, Warden Pear Wood, Simon Braidman, Warden Stanmore Common and Josh Kalms, Assistant Warden Stanmore Common.)

We are planning to purchase in the next financial year a number of saplings including Wych Elm to encourage White-letter-hairstreak butterflies, which are within

ection 41 species of principal importance under the 2006 NERC Act in England and are estimated to have suffered a 99% population decline over the last 25 years in the UK. Also Alder Buckthorn the only food source for the yellow brimstone butterfly.

Main Gate

The Main Gate into Wood Farm closes at 16:30 during the winter. However there has been a few occasions where cars have been locked in. During one of these occasions the Main Gate was damaged by (we presume) the car owner. This resulted in the gate dropping to the ground and the bottom beam was cracked. Josh Kalms assisted in making a temporary repair to the gate so it would again swing on the hinges. There is a plan to replace the wooden gate with a metal gate in the next financial year.

I have put up many new signs stating the opening and closing times during the winter and summer months.

Pond

The chestnut paling fencing around the pond had been vandalised. A lot of fencing had collapsed. I have made

temporary repairs to the fencing and created two gates. I have added signs on both gates asking for the gates to be kept closed, no dogs and explaining it is a conservation area. So far the gates have always been closed on inspection, however the signs have been vandalised a couple of times. Currently the Pond is frozen over.

The plan in the next financial year is to replace the chestnut paling fencing, which was always seen as temporary fencing, with Post and Rail fencing incorporating a wire mesh to stop dogs gaining access and two self-closing gates.

Fencing and Gates

I have repaired fencing and gates throughout the reserve. There are however fencing and gates that require to be repaired professionally in the next financial year. We have received a quote from TRIMLOCK SERVICES LTD for this work.. We have received a quote from TRIMLOCK SERVICES LTD for this work. This includes adding self-closure mechanisms to a few gates, a

pedestrian gate into the field opposite The Old Dairy, fixing the kissing gate which goes into Stanmore Country Park (which does not kiss anymore), Post and Rail fencing and gates with wire mesh into Skylark Meadow and an additional bench to be located at bottom of the reserve on the Wood Farm Loop.

The path leading to Stanmore Country Park and Stanmore Station which is used by many members of the public is in a bad state and extremely muddy. This needs to be fixed as soon as possible.

The Old Dairy – Visitors Centre

This now has mats outside and inside to try and keep the floor clean. A fridge has been purchased to be used by the centre as well as storage for any water samples being analysed from the reserves under the Stanmore Common Conservation Forum control.

A new bookcase has been put up in the second room and there are plans to add cupboards to the 'office' area in the main room above the fridge and water sampling equipment.

Junk

A fair amount of junk has been discovered in the wooded area near The Old Dairy.

This includes old baths. Most of this will be disposed of. However the baths may be kept to be used as small ponds on the reserve.

Wood Farm into Pear Wood

I have added builder's planks over the ditch down from the scrape, leading to the entrance of Pear Wood.

This will hopefully encourage pedestrians to use the path created by the public from the View point to Pear wood. This path bypasses the scrape entrance gate and ideally will keep the traffic into the scrape area to a minimum as this is the location of many reptiles including grass snakes.

Side Gate from The Cloisters

This side gate from Unit, The Cloisters development into Wood Farm reserve may have been added without any planning permission. This needs to be investigated further.

Bat Boxes

I have now found the location of all the bat boxes in Wood Farm as stated in the 106 agreement.

I have agreed with the Hertfordshire and Middlesex Bat Group to undertake a Bat Box check in March / April time. We will also check the loft space in The Old Dairy which has a Bat access tile in the roof.

I also plan to undertake Bat surveys at Wood Farm once the weather is warmer