

Folly Wood Members' Meeting, 8 October 2022

Present: Nigel Westaway (chair), Dominique Shead (minutes), Ruth Illingworth, Andy Freedman, Paul & Clare Sheridan, Tom Sykes, Larena Soper, Graham Russell, Lachlan McLellan, Mark Harrison, Frances Dathan

Apologies: Jack Richardson, Barbara Imrie, Wendy Gerard, James Seigel, Carolyn Buckley, Sean Nolan, Richard & Helen Keating, Ben Spencer, Nick Weir, Carol Mathews, Grace Bermingham, Simon Arundel

Welcome and apologies

Wildflower survey 2022

Every month from April till October members of the wood (chiefly Ruth Illingworth and Jackie Rowanly) have been conducting surveys of flowering plants and shrubs in the wood and along the verge, following and adding to the list that former member John Rees made in June 2016. The findings are recorded on the 'Nature Notes' page of the website for anyone who wants to read them. We've had some surprising finds, like the Ploughman's spikenard and Bird's nest orchids. We will repeat the inspections next year, and maybe try to incorporate grasses and sedges.

Ecology Group feedback

Alan Sumnall, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust manager of all GWT sites in the Five Valleys, came and walked round the wood with Nigel and Dom. He liked the diversity of trees in the wood, and felt we were managing it on the right lines. He said dead trees left standing had their uses for wildlife – and sure enough, a spotted woodpecker landed on top of a dead larch as we were looking at it! Nigel proposed the idea of creating a woodland pond a little below the campfire area, and Alan was extremely positive, explaining how good it would be for wildlife. He said we would need a liner and possibly a barrier if the pond is near a path. We talked about felling a few larch on the south side to create more light, plus a small sycamore. Alan will email over some advice about making ponds, and details on how we might tap into some funding sources. This would make a great job for the winter!

AOB

1. Andy or Frances will get in touch with Eddie at Wades Farm to find out if he has a wood mizer (to make planks) and if it can be brought up to the wood.
2. We talked about having a water butt by the compost loo (gutter along the roof) to collect water for the pond.
3. The social/events committee want to finalise an agreement about how many people should be allowed in the wood for gatherings, and how often (i.e. not to disturb any wildlife). They will come up with a proposition. We also need to decide if it's best to spread the impact of human gatherings around the wood, or concentrate it in one area.
4. Ruth would like to offer to bring people from the Uplands Community Hub to the wood and cook for them, and the meeting agreed that this would be fine.

After the meeting, members cleared the path by the compost loo, cutting up the trunk that was blocking it and moving the logs and brush to one side. Also, the tarpaulin was removed from the pile of elm logs. Thanks to all those who helped.