

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY SEPT 14TH IN ANGIES GARAGE

Those present were:- Mary, Angie, Pete, Denis, Fred and Peter.

1. Mary welcomed everyone and gave apologies from Julie Windsor and Mike Bettel.

2. Updates on things raised at the January Meeting and since

a) The gate at the bridle path end of the valley is not locked and that was deemed not to be a problem.

b) No mulch has been delivered yet from South Glos but there is sufficient for now from the sawn up willow tree branches created after the tree split down the middle. Unfortunately, it has to be moved from down near the pond to where it is needed. The Czar plum in the orchard was replaced and another plum donated to us has been planted in the kick about area.

c) Pete has purchased 2 long rakes to complement our tool collection.

d) The new gate that replaced the old stile at the top of the Orchard has made exiting the Orchard onto the blind bend less hazardous. A No Through Road sign was discussed with the council but could not be justified. The gate would benefit from some rubber buffers to lessen the noise of it shutting.

e) Hedge laying was carried out in January with 6 Friends and there was also bird box activity.

3. Workdays

Since the last meeting 193 hours have been worked by our stalwart workforce up to and including 31 August. There was a gap between 16/3 and 18/5 due to the pandemic but then work reconvened with extra measures being put in place. i.e. bringing of own gloves, refreshments, hats and phones.

SGC offered gloves, hand sanitisers and tool cleaning materials which were gratefully accepted. The team are working somewhere between curbing enthusiasm and being too gung ho and Pete tells us by and large this is being achieved and that the team have a Covid compliant agile working model.

The valley was very busy during the lockdown and thanks to everyone who did the litter picking while out walking. Some damage occurred to trees during this time but it was only minor. It was a joy to see so many people appreciating our beautiful open space and getting such a benefit from it both physically and mentally. Many people discovered the valley for the first time and they were all very complimentary of the way it was so very well looked after. Very well-done guys.

Much of the work done involves keeping the valley tidy and includes: - Bramble management, keeping the paths clear, keeping the stream clear, crown raising of trees, weeding nursery areas etc.

Additionally, a new log seat has been installed, trees removed, bug hotels installed, pruning and maintenance and watering of new trees some of which were donated by local people. The pond has been cleared of the invasive Floating Pennywort. There had to be extensive clearing up when one of the large willow trees split taking out half of one of the lovely oaks.

4. Future work to be done

Tidy up after grass cutting. Rake grass from the wildflower bank. Clear paths of leaves. Clear blockage and remove litter from the stream. Create seat/ benches from fallen timber. Harvest discarded fencing materials. Pruning. Sowing of wildflower seed. Reinstate notice boards with adapted metal posts. Bulb planting. Angie will order 100 species daffodils. Bird box installation. There are 4 new boxes to go up.

Enough for an army but our dedicated team will as always do an excellent job and we are so very grateful to them.

5. Tree Survey

Ian Knight is going to work with the team to survey and log all the mature trees we have in the valley starting at the Baugh Farm end. We will inform SGC of this and discuss GPS devices.

6. SGC work.

John Morris informs us that the wetland will be cut at the end of this month (Sept). Mary is contacting Lee Hayward to inquire about the annual mowing of the valley. It gets later every year and we feel this is having an adverse effect on the biodiversity of the valley as a whole. The management plan is to be challenged. The inside of the hedge bordering the Orchard and Bury Hill View was not cut this year. The triangle at the front of Baugh Farm opposite this hedge was cleared to keep an open habitat for safety of those walking the paths. It has become very overgrown again and needs attention.

7. Bird and Bat Boxes

Fred gave us a report that he and Ann had achieved by surveying and cleaning all the boxes. There were several missing and also several badly damaged but there had been successful breeding in many. It was proving very difficult to get into the new boxes whilst up the tree and Fred discussed his ideas on making the opening of the boxes easier. Denis will pass this info onto the In-Bloom guys who make the boxes. Pete has 4 new boxes awaiting erection and it was decided that the work team would undertake this job.

8. Wildlife news

Many healthy foxes have been seen. Cubs also. Badgers too. The Sparrow hawks have been seen defending their territory from the Buzzard. Great Spotted Woodpeckers seen and heard frequently but not the Green Woodpecker that we used to hear.

9. Ownership of the woodland area at the Badminton Road end.

This is still an ongoing inquiry. Peter Davey brought along to the meeting old maps and conveyancing documents of 1944 and we have a map for 1924 to help us establish ownership. Downend Estates still appear to be the owners but although they have been contacted, they are still saying that they have no paperwork evidence of this. There have been two trees felled by SGC recently there due to Ash dieback but that was for reasons of safety along the path. Damage done to Mr. Baker's house at the Badminton road end by a fallen branch from an ash tree is causing the owner personal financial loss.

10. Website

Angie continues to update the website.

11. AOB

A new very smart Dog bin / Litter bin has been installed but is not in the place we wanted it. Apparently SGC deemed that site too much of a slope and installed it at the bottom of the middle path. We feel this may make it difficult for the mower to get through and the hedge to be cut. Mary will discuss this with the appropriate people at SGC.

12. Date of next meeting

This was not set due to the uncertainty of the Covid 19 restrictions. We will hope to be able to meet in January for the AGM but this will be arranged nearer the time.