

Friends of Leap Valley Meeting

May 10th 2021 11.00 – 12.30

Held in Angie's garage at 35 Aintree Drive

Present: Mary, Angie, Pete, Mike, Ian and Lou
Apologies from Dennis, Sarah and Leonie

1) Updates on Sept 14th 2020 Minutes
This is covered in the contents below.

2) Workdays update from Pete

The Monday morning team continue to do excellent work for us and 224 hours have been worked since Sept 2020.

- 5 trees planted with a grant from SGC. All 5 have survived the winter and have been weeded and mulched.
- Rowan and Silver Birch saplings planted (10). 9 remain and they have survived the winter. They will be replanted later this year.
- All recently planted trees (over the last 2 years) survive and they have been weeded and mulched.
- Species daffs were planted last Autumn and provided a good show.
- Snowdrops were planted and some were moved from the wetland area along with donated primroses.
- An area by the main path was cleared to increase safety and to enhance the view. Now planted with Daffs and Snowdrops.
- Wildflower seed was planted in various locations.
- Usual jobs of litter picking, keeping the stream flowing, bramble management, keeping paths clear and light and maintaining the hedge into the wetland area were all carried out on a continuous basis.

3) Tree survey from Ian

Ian showed us a map of the survey so far. This is from the Spatial Data Base GIS that he uses. It was most impressive and we are all keen to help Ian survey the whole patch eventually. To achieve this end, each Friday morning at 10 am for the foreseeable future, starting this **Friday 14th May** 'Friends' will go out with Ian for 2 hours to identify the trees in a chosen area. He will then take this information and enter it into QGIS. He is hoping to be able to publish this survey online and to link it to our Website.

4)SGC Work

- There had been **no annual mow** of the valley this year. It should, according to the management plan be in late August early Sept. This caused our team a lot of work dealing with all the saplings that had to be manually dealt with. Mary will contact SGC and get them to ensure this will not be missed this season.
- **The Wetland** third was cut, but very late. This needs to be carried out Sept to mid Oct before the vegetation falls. We have noticed a change in the biodiversity of the wetland. We have an abundance of Hemlock water-dropwort. This is of a concern of a user of the valley knowing it to be a highly poisonous plant.
- **The Bund** is badly in need of repair. We have observed an increasing drying out of the wetland. As this construction is essential to the success of the wetland, which is recognised as being unique in South Glos, we hope to get some advice and funding to achieve this. Mary will email SGC and hopefully get one of the officers to respond to our request.
- **The asbestos sheets** reported several times has still not been removed by SGC.
- **The triangular area** between the Orchard and Bury Hill View that was cut back by SGC when an incident occurred, has started to become overgrown again. The area between this and backing the houses in Fouracre Crescent is also of concern being full of waste having been dumped there. We will review these areas in the Autumn and decide if they are too big for our team to manage and whether we need to ask for SGC help.

5)Trees

- SGC contractors have been cutting down trees with Ash dieback disease in the woodland bordering the Badminton Rd. There is a further tree there now to be removed. At the northern end of the valley bordering the bridlepath a very large Ash was cut, but this was due to a fungus called Innanotus not Ash dieback.
- Work has also been carried out on 2 Willows, an oak, a poplar and an aspen which had fallen/suffered damage in the winds.
- In the Orchard during the winter, one of the Oak trees was used as a Wishing Tree. During the dreadfully depressing period of the Covid 19 lockdowns people were asked to write a wish and post it on the tree. A lovely gesture by a Bromley Heath resident.

6)Bird and Bat Boxes

Bird box survey was completed in January. All boxes are now clearly numbered. There are 12 in all and we suggest 10 would be an adequate number going forward. We have two spares currently in stock. If a box is unsuccessful for two seasons we will relocate them.

7)Wildlife news

We have placed a camera by the main Badger set and hope to once again get some footage of the new seasons young and their activities. Foxes are seen regularly. There are numerous Grey Squirrels. Newts have been seen in the seasonal pond and a threesome of Mallards are regularly seen there. A pair of Small White Egrets have been seen although only one recently. A Buzzard is a regular visitor and is instantly set on by a Crow patrol. A Kestrel and a Sparrowhawk have also been seen.

8)Woodland

The Monday team removed some barbed wire and fence posts that seem to have been unearthed by the tracks of the vehicle used while cutting the Ash trees. SGC picked up what had been removed very promptly.

9)Pond

The pond suffers badly from wood being thrown into it. It is a horrid job to remove but this has been done. The Floating Pennywort has started to increase again and this has been checked back. Duckweed has covered the pond, something we didn't used to see. Some new bog plants have been introduced around the pond margins and Water Mint in deeper water.

10)Further planting

We intend to plant more bulbs and primroses. Whether or not there are free trees on offer we will acquire more trees. We have plenty of open areas and with the Ash dieback disease requiring us to lose more of our trees we hope to compensate for their loss.

11)Website

The Website continues to have many viewings and has been invaluable in keeping the community in touch with the latest news and happenings in the valley. It has served us well in bringing new members to our group.

12)AOB

Funding is needed to replace the fence around the southern edge of the wetland at the stone bridge area.

The cutting down of a large ash tree at the Baugh Farm bridle path end of the valley has damaged the drystone wall boundary and we would love to have it reinstated as that is a heritage area. We would hope to be able to get a SGC officer to meet with us and walk around the valley and give their views and help on achieving these tasks. NB Mary has already achieved this on the day of the meeting and Elinor Kershaw who is the new Open Spaces Volunteer Groups Coordinator is indeed happy to do this and will be meeting with us on **Monday 17th May at 11am.**

Date of possible next meeting **September 6th 2021 at 7pm.**