

# **Minutes from the Latest Meeting Sept 2022**

## **Minutes from the Friends of Leap Valley meeting held on Wed 14th Sept 2022 at Angie's 35 Aintree Drive.**

**Present:** Mary, Angie, Pete, Denis, Mike, Fred and Isabella.

**Apologies:** Andrew, Sarah, Leonie, Ian, Louise, Julia Lettey, and Ann Bevan.

### **1. Attendees were welcomed and apologies read.**

### **2. Monday Workday update**

Pete gave an update of work achieved on the Monday workdays from May 30th.

The back path to the church has been cleared to maintain accessibility.

Small dead trees on the path between Beverley Avenue and the main road were removed to allow easy access.

Nettle and bramble management over the site.

Stream cleared of blockages.

In the orchard excess fruit was removed to produce better quality and larger specimens. The surplus was scattered for wildlife.

The two nursery areas have been regularly weeded and watered.

Crowns have been raised on some trees and fallen timber removed from the valley floor and added to the spoil area.

Young trees have been maintained.

A path was cut to help the SGC visit to the Wetland area to assess the future plans for the area. More on that later.

Species Daffodils have been planted and foxglove seed scattered.

There have been a number of visits from the SGC Friends Group Co-ordinator who is very enthusiastic and ready to join in practically with tasks being undertaken and brings biscuits too.

### **3. SGC**

On 26th August three officers came to look at the Wetland with a view to helping bring water back into the dried-out areas. The southern end has considerably gained height thus stopping water from the Leap Stream entering the area as it used to. There is also the need to look at whether the Bund, put in place when the estate was built, is still fit for purpose. The plan is to engage a contractor to cut the vegetation at the northern end, which is on the annual management plan, and this will allow visibility of the Bund for further consideration. It may need to be repaired or replaced.

The levels of the wetland are to be measured. Three ditches are to be dug by a digger that will enter via the old fence at the southern end to slope away from the stream. The fence to be renewed after work complete. The spoil to be deposited into the original hand cut trenches no longer functional. Care must be taken that any work does not impede on neighbours whose boundaries abut the wetland.

CPRE (The Council for the Protection of Rural England) Avon and Bristol have partnered with South Gloucestershire Council to restore hedgerows along footpaths in the countryside so that they can thrive. The 'Hedgerows Heroes' project will see South Gloucestershire hedgerows

improved through laying, coppicing, and planting up gaps throughout winter 2022-23.

Pete met with Sonia Parsons on Sept 9th who is leading the project at present. She came to look at our site to see if there were any areas that can be addressed. Areas were identified where some work would benefit the overall quality of Leap Valley whether it be establishing or maintaining hedgerows, planting, coppicing and/or general conservation tasks.

We will be informed if and when the 'heroes' are to visit Leap Valley. It would be on a Tuesday. If anyone would like to volunteer to be involved in this project, please let one of us know and we can put you in touch with Sonia. There will also be a notice on the Beverley Avenue end noticeboard.

The mower has now been into the valley on three occasions. Unfortunately, not always with the grass collection attachment and the robo-mower is apparently needing repair. Last autumn the mowing of the area in the orchard that had been expensively sown with wild flower seed was far too early not allowing seed to be dropped and hence this year we have very few wildflowers present.

On 26th September Angie and Denis will be attending an Emergency Outdoor First Aid Course arranged by SGC.

On 22nd September South Gloucestershire Green Spaces Forum meeting is being held at The Bean Tree Café, Page Park. This is a great networking opportunity for community groups to meet and share ideas.

On 20th October there is a Celebratory Event for community groups working in open spaces being held at Winterbourne Medieval Barn.

#### **4. Future Monday Workday jobs.**

Possible Hedgerow Heroes visit. If the wetland project is carried out there will be friends group participation. Tidying around the site after the mower has finished. Paths to be kept clear of leaves. Coppicing, planting relaying hedges. Create new dead hedges. Relocate bug hotels. Undertake bird box survey and clean out and repair/replace where necessary. Nurseries to be weeded and maintained. Trees to be maintained and where appropriate pruned and crowns lifted.

#### **5. Trees**

Unfortunately, Ian was unable to attend the meeting and so we were unable to move forward with the Tree survey possible weblink. We don't however envisage this will be used in conjunction with SGC as first thought, as due to Ash die back disease the council have made their own very thorough interactive map of trees. We would like however to be able to link it to our website for the interest of viewers.

If anyone sees trees on the site that look dangerous in any way, please report to SGC directly.

#### **6. Finance update**

Unfortunately, our treasurer Andrew was unable to attend the meeting and we were unable to discuss with him our financial position. He plans to further us with this information asap. We were very grateful to the Parish Council for a grant of £290 for a Pruning saw, Cordless extendable hedge trimmer and Wild Daffodil Bulbs.

## **7. Wildlife News**

A wildlife camera has been deployed in the valley to ascertain what is out there at night. Nothing remarkable seen to date. Female sparrow-hawk has been around but the Great Spotted Woodpecker seen and heard a lot earlier in the year isn't evident. There are several foxes but sadly over the last month two have been killed on the ring road. We are sure a Marbled White Butterfly was seen soaring in the summer. Some fish were seen in the stream but unidentified.

## **8. Website**

There has not been a lot to report lately on the website but it will be updated with these minutes and an autumn theme adopted.

## **9. AOB**

Isabella Browne, Downend and Bromley Heath Parish Councillor who kindly attended our meeting, will be going to a meeting regarding The Local Nature Action Plan on Sept 23rd and she will provide feedback to us.

There was no other business and a date of the next meeting wasn't set. It may well be that now most of the committee are of a certain age a daytime meeting may be favoured.