



Meeting held at Mary's Thurs Sept 12th at 7pm

1. Those present were: - Mary, Angie, Pete, Denis, Mike, Andrew and Ian,
Apologies sent were from: - Leonie and Owen
2. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and are on the website.
3. There was an update by Pete: -
Work carried out since the last meeting.
276 hours have been worked since January.
Owen Richards from AXA has been providing support. 16/9/2024 and 14/10/2024
will be Owen's last sessions this year. His help has been much appreciated.

The Activities since January 2024 include: -

- a) Maintain and plant hedge with willow pruning's.
- b) Orchard path on the left-hand side, work includes removing branches, brambles etc. to increase daylight.
- c) Orchard trees had their annual prune.
- d) Snowdrops were split and planted out around the valley.
- e) Litter picking on the ground and in the stream especially from impromptu leaky dams. Paths were tidied and seats washed.
- f) Trees were maintained and crowns raised, and all were mulched.
- g) Nursery areas were weeded regularly.
- h) Coppicing and sedge removal.
- i) Bramble and nettle management.
- j) Brush cutter activity.
- k) Primroses planted and foxglove seed harvested.
- l) Apple thinning.
- m) Woodland management course.
- n) New bench installed.
- o) Invasive Floating Pennywort removed from the pond.

Current Activities over the coming weeks to include : -

Tidy and remove litter from impromptu dams. Brush cutter and hedge trimming work. Coppicing, sedge removal, weeding and management of bramble and nettles.

4. Future workdays and the way to manage them going forward was discussed. Recognising that we do need to encourage younger people to support our ageing group is essential. We will put a request for help in the Downend Voice and on social media platforms such as Heathboard, as well as on our website. With less able members and the possible loss of a very valuable member of the team, some of the regular activities will prove very difficult to carry out in the future. Monday mornings are the preferential time for work at present, but we may try the occasional weekend activity when larger jobs necessitate. Courses held by South Glos will have to be undertaken to ensure there is always someone with the relevant qualifications at these activities. Pete will identify dates and a plan of specific jobs relative to the time of year for us to follow.

A need to assess the tools we currently hold will be undertaken very soon. Their storage is a problem and there may be duplicate tools that we can offer to other groups or indeed sell, to allow money to be spent on things needed for the valley.

5. Although the Orchard had its annual cut last week the valley hasn't. We hope this will be carried out very soon.
6. The wetland project is an ongoing saga. Two years ago, trenches were cut in the wetland and a new bund constructed as the start of a project to help hold back flood water into the Frome river and hence help with flood management. This was not followed up with any more of the activity the council were planning. Subsequently there have been visits by SGC officers and a project officer from Bristol Avon Rivers Trust and on August 30th another BARTS officer with more plans. Bristol Avon Rivers Trust Team now plan to come into the valley in Jan/Feb to create a series of differing ways, including leaky dams, to slow the flow of the water upstream of the stone bridge and to create ways to allow more water to flow into the wetland downstream of the bridge as per the management plan. We very much look forward to this finally taking place.

Mary will contact Kirsty to see if there are plans to cut one third of the wetland per management plan as usual. It usually occurs in Sept, but we haven't heard yet if that is to be so.

7. Pete has kindly agreed to attend the Wetland Management Course to be held in the valley on Oct 10th.
8. The Bird Box Survey is planned for Monday 14th of October.
9. The trees in the Orchard have produced a lot of fruit this year and there are still many apples to be harvested. We need to contact South Glos to ask yet again for Mulch to go around the trees. Angie will see what tree labels are missing and re-label them. Ian tells us that The Bristol Botanical Garden will be looking for sites for Bristol Whitebeam to ensure their continuation in the area. We will offer our Orchard, which has some stony areas where they may thrive.
10. Ian gave us a view into the latest stats of visits to The Website. 500 in July, 200 in August 257 in October so far. Ian has updated the website with history of Baugh Farm which sits at the edge of the Orchard.
11. Sadly, no-one was able to go to the SG Green Spaces Forum latest meeting. The South Glos Volunteers Thankyou evening was excellent. Good networking opportunities, excellent relevant speakers and a wonderful buffet.
12. The Downend and Bromley Heath Parish Council Local Nature Action Plan is available on the Parish Website. Our group is mentioned several times as stakeholders but to date we have not been contacted by the councillors involved.
13. The news of wildlife was not remarkable. Nothing unusual had been spotted in the valley. The Heron was seen often after heavy downpours even out on the grass in the middle of the valley floor. A Buzzard observed quite often, and a member spotted a newt in the seasonal pond.
14. Any Other Business Our current bank balance was given to the group by the Treasurer. We were very lucky to be awarded a sum from Gallaghers which was put to good use. The new bench was installed with money donated from the Downend Round Table Firework display for which we were very grateful, and the seat is much appreciated by those walking in the valley.
15. The date of our next meeting which will be the AGM has been set for the 16th January 2025