

Common Management Committee Annual Report April 2023-March 2024

In April the first CMC open meeting was held in the village hall topics included the updated Articles of Association, which originated in 1992 and had been adopted by the Parish Council. The Articles of Association stipulate that at least two open formal meetings must be held each year. In September the activity plan for the following year will be produced and work costed so that a budget can be agreed and sent to the Parish Council for approval. Once approved it will be sent to Bucks Council for final agreement. Members of the public have the opportunity at both meetings to raise concerns and suggestions regarding the Pond and Common. Four members of the village attended the first meeting.

Following an incident at a work party requiring an ambulance a safety system has now been set up. This comprises posts at six entry points to the Common similar to wayfinder posts with each post having a plastic plaque attached giving the What3words identification coordinates for that area. The plaque says in the event of an emergency dial 999 and give the What3words individual location coordinates, which will be recognized by the ambulance service.

In June Gabris Tree Care pollarded both willow trees by the pond and in the same month David Flack cut the grassland in the middle of the Common across from the oak tree in so doing widening the short grassed area.

In August Future Nature WTC undertook a habitat survey of the west end Common grassland area and advised on habitat management measures which would be ecologically beneficial. The cost of the survey was paid by Bucks Beds Oxford Wild Trust. The conclusion was that the grassland represents a botanically valuable habitat distinct from the surrounding woodland. If left unmanaged it would transition to scrubland and eventually woodland. The primary management objectives in terms of providing ecologically valuable habitat are to maintain the meadow as open grassland, whilst giving due consideration to the floral diversity and associated invertebrates and other fauna which utilise this habitat.

The ideal time to cut the western end grassland is early to mid-September and on the 8 September Chiltern Rangers used their Kubota cutter. The devils-bit scabious close to the oak tree and nearby yellow flag iris were left uncut to preserve butterfly eggs.

In September an open meeting was held with Dr Kristin Thompson an Ecologist with Bucks Mammal Group. Explanation was given on how ecologists survey for small mammals and why this is important. The methodology was explained and how humane small mammal traps are placed to catch mice, voles and shrews. That evening all who attended (8 children plus parents) placed the traps. The next morning at 08.00 a larger gathering of 12 children plus parents met to check the traps. Regrettably all the traps were empty. A second meeting will be arranged which hopefully will be more successful.

The remaining aggregate left over from the Wheatsheaf path was used up to extend the path either side of the bridge next to the Common pond. This will make winter walking a lot easier as the muddy area has now been reduced.

In December Cedar Park Tree Care completed the tree work to open up the "Ride" from Barrack Hill to the Common pond and grassland, which will let in more light for the wildlife that thrive in dappled light shade.

Following Ridgeway Woodland's Common tree survey felling of the damaged and dangerous trees was completed in March.