

## **Work Party at Sharphill Wood 26<sup>th</sup> September 2011**

This was the first Autumn work party, and we were no longer under the summer restrictions which we apply to avoid disturbing birdlife. The weather was typical September, misty but warm and by 2 pm the rain was on its way. However it was a productive day. The trees are showing signs of drought stress, with the leaves browning and falling prematurely, but it still looked like a summer wood.

The work party was a nice mix of new and old trusty volunteers. We had three young people on their first work party, two of whom were volunteering as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. The other attends a local secondary school and is just interested in learning more about conservation. There were ten of us in total.

Some got on with the (by now) tedious job of edging the paths although it is rewarding as you can see what you have achieved by the end of the day! We noticed that there is some damage to the parts that were done a while ago, so we are hoping it is not going to be a Forth Bridge job! Our DoE volunteers took on the strenuous job of moving wood chip from the never decreasing pile on to the spinal path where it is beginning to become muddy already – before long there will be the usual winter quagmire on some of the paths.

A party worked on the eastern edge where there is the requirement to reinforce the boundary against intrusion, for when eventually the new housing arrives. It is important that new paths are not allowed to intrude on areas where wildlife have made their habitats. The planting of some new crops by the farmer seems to make it unlikely that building is imminent. Two years ago we planted hundreds of new hawthorn, dogwood, blackthorn and holly trees along the boundary, and these needed to be found and the surrounding earth and overhanging branches cleared to give them light. Many have survived a very dry summer and two very cold winters.

Apart from this there was the collection of the usual large bags of litter and where possible the plastic bags of dog poo that some owners insist on leaving behind them. The party season seems to be nearly over, although some may take advantage of the warm weather expected this week, to light fires and leave glass, cans and other rubbish.

Anyone wanting to come along and have a look at what we are doing is very welcome – just give us your details..... or see us on Facebook.