

Work Party Sunday 26th February 2012

Today we were privileged to be joined by members of the 4th West Bridgford Scout Troop, 22 in total with 2 leaders and a parent. We also had another new volunteer and 9 of the regulars. There was a lot to catch up on, and there were four main tasks.

Firstly, although the weather was dry and mild, the woodchip has been very thin on the paths, just waiting for a bit of rain to make them very muddy again, so the scouts did a brilliant job of relaying some of the worst areas. In addition, we are attacking the young sycamores again, at the north east end, before they get out of hand and block the sunlight from the ground, where we are trying to encourage understory for insect, invertebrate and small mammal habitat. Also the sycamores compete with the native oak, beech, elm etc. for space.

Next we planted about 15 oak whips, grown from acorns originally from the Wood – they take a long time to grow, but that is what conservation is all about, patience and persistence!. We also cleared and removed some old fencing comprising wire and chicken wire and carted it away. Unofficial paths are still being made apart from the formal Rights of Way so we try to block those off where we can. This is so that feet, paws and bikes don't disturb the wildlife in their habitats. Finally, we did a check on the stakes and guards from the recent planting to make certain they are still all secure.

The Friends Officers have recently attended Health and Safety/Risk Assessment courses. You would not think that there are many hazards involved in working in the Wood, but you would be surprised what can happen (and has in other places). However what we are about is to minimise risks with a bit of sensible planning, and making sure that people know how to use tools safely and effectively, wear protective shoes and gloves and that we all know what to do if there is a medical emergency. We had one last year when someone's head got in the way of the point of a spade, so we can't be too careful!

The birds were noticeably noisier this Sunday. The bird surveys will start soon, and we will find out what spring bird activity is happening. We also have plans to increase the number of bird boxes, as the usage of the existing ones is steadily increasing year on year. Some of the old ones have been damaged so they will also be repaired.

Thanks so much to the Scout party – you did a great job!