

Work Party 24th July 2011

This Sunday was a perfect day for working in the wood – stunning weather, not too hot and the butterflies making the most of the sunny spots along the paths, mostly tortoiseshells and cabbage whites. The fields are full of corn and rape crops which are due to be harvested during August – then the Developers will no doubt start work on the planting for the new community park. This will create a more diverse environment for wild life with native species of plants and shrubs and some more hedging to replace the arable land which is of limited use to wild life.

It was quality and not quantity today as far as numbers were concerned – only five of us, so we concentrated on continuing with edging the main path with saplings, secured with stakes. It's a slow job and surprisingly hard work. We had hoped to tackle some of the sites where people having been lighting fires and leaving litter but that will have to wait until another day. There was one fire/party site just off the main path, with the remains of a picnic, featuring pot noodle. Why anyone should take a can of "Nivea for men" up there is quite beyond us, but there may be a simple explanation!

Bird wise things were fairly quiet except for the green woodpeckers that like to keep an eye on what people are doing in their wood. I did disturb a wren. The main nesting season is almost over. There will be no main work party in August, however there are always people willing to collect litter and keep an eye on things in the meantime. In the Autumn we will be making a determined attempt to encourage understorey, by planting brambles and other native plants to create cover. The recent removal of unwanted sycamore trees has created more light in many places, so these should thrive. There are plans to apply for funding for appropriate shrubs and whips for planting.

Sharphill is under attack at the moment from people lighting fires everywhere, for picnics and parties, which is a real danger as it is quite dry up there. There is a huge quantity of rubbish always associated with these parties. Also there is repeated vandalism to the kissing gate at the South entrance, which was put there to deter motorbikes from doing further damage to the paths and undergrowth. We noticed too that many people pick up their dog poo in plastic bags, and then leave them lying beside the paths. We leave the desirability of that to your judgement!

Article by Chrissie