

CORTON WOODS PROJECT - REPORT TO ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – MAY 2021/MAY 2022

With Covid still rife and lockdown rules in place at the start of this year, we were all being encouraged to get outside and exercise, and this meant that we were able to carry on with our work parties in the woods, though we had to be careful to keep social distancing, and not work too closely together.

Many more people were also using the woods for their daily exercise, and we made it a priority to maintain the paths – topping them up with woods chippings, and cutting back overgrowing brambles and nettles. Unfortunately because of the increased numbers visiting the woods, we did have a problem with people straying from the main paths, and creating their own individual paths – trampling down the undergrowth and undoubtedly disturbing the wildlife. There was also a problem of people lighting fires – which in some instances also meant the fire brigade had to be called out. Those lighting fires also left a lot of litter at the sites. Litter also continues to be a problem throughout the woods and along the roadside edge. Thankfully we have one dedicated volunteer who continued picking litter throughout this whole period, otherwise the woods would have been awash with litter, including discarded dog poo bags. However for very many people during the difficult time of Covid restrictions, it was immensely beneficial to be able to visit the woods, and thankfully most visitors were respectful of the place and the wildlife.

Earlier this year we lost several mature trees during storms, and inevitably there will be more losses as many trees are now past their peak. During the early part of the year we reinforced part of the bank of the pond, planted wild roses in the meadow area, planted infill trees alongside the road, and also created temporary hedges to stop people from straying from the main pathways. It is important that we do not forget that the woods are a registered Local Nature Reserve, and that some areas of the woods should remain as undisturbed as possible.

Special thanks must go to all the small team of volunteers who meet each week to try to keep our local woods a haven for its wildlife, and a haven for local people.