

FODW AGM

Chair's annual report

Membership

Currently we have seven volunteer members, one more than this time last year. Six of the volunteers are committee members: Sonia, Jim, Nick as Chair, Adrian as Secretary, Ken as Quartermaster and Becky who has joined the committee as our Social Media Representative.

Angela has stepped back both from the committee and as a regular volunteer but remains a FODW member. We gained Becky and Rob as volunteers this year plus we currently have Rebecca who is giving us a try out as a volunteer.

Training

Jim completed his Medium Trees felling and also went on a Veteran Tree training course.

Key events

- Thinning of trees in Compartment 5a by LCTC contractor took place early in the year and the timber was removed from site. A site meeting was held in August to discuss the second phase of thinning in this compartment and also to start thinning in Compartments 5b and 1b. It was agreed to fell a total of 13 trees this Autumn/Winter, at the site meeting all these were clearly marked with a red cross.
- Several large ash trees, with ash-dieback, were removed by LCTC contractor from the town end of Goat Field, unfortunately two of the tree-trail trees were badly affected during the work: the oak had been tidied up to a stump at about chest height, it will probably regrow but we also plan to plant another in front of it as a potential replacement. The willow was completely flattened but at the last workday the ash brash was carefully removed and the young tree was found, has been trimmed and put upright.
- Growth of the wildflower meadow was sparse due to a very dry spring, the majority of the plants survived but growth of these and from the grass and wildflower seed was checked due lack of water. Several watering visits were made in the driest weeks and it was decided not to cut the meadow this year. A few cornflower plants grown from seed were added once the drought had passed. It's hoped that the meadow will be fully established next spring.

- With the guidance of Deri Morris of Severn Rivers Trust, we rebuilt the leaky dam, which unfortunately received minor vandalism soon after - which we repaired.
- We rebuilt and extended the dead hedge near the car park using brash from the small beech trees that we thinned from Compartment 1b.
- We tried out weldmesh on one of the bridge decks, as a more robust alternative to chicken wire. This was very successful and the aim is to use this on all bridge decks when the chicken wire is next replaced.
- Ken and Nick did an audit of timber needs and a stock take of what we had in store. This was followed by a significant purchase of timber by LCTC so that we should be able to repair most items of infrastructure from timber held in the store. The plan is to replenish this stock as we run out of particular items.
- As usual the majority of our time has been spent on a range of maintenance tasks.

Next year

Nick, Adrian, Ken and Sonia have one year to go as Committee Member but can be re-elected to serve for 3 more years at the 2024 AGM. Jim has two years to go.

A draft Work plan for 2024 has been produced and will be looked at at the committee meeting.

We also hope to see further thinning in the areas covered by the felling licence in accordance with the Ancient Woodland Restoration Plan.

Thank you

My thanks to all the volunteers for their work and their company and to Ken, Adrian and Becky for their support in running our small group. Thanks also to our partners LCTC and MWT and to Hywel from Llais y Goedwig and Dewi and Lois from the Severn Rivers Trust for their support. I hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.