

## **Newsletter November 2024**

### **Chairman's Report**

The agreed regular meeting was held on the 25th of September 2024 with GCA and representatives from the City Parks and Green Spaces, to discuss the progress of outstanding issues on the common.

#### 10-year plan, commencing 2025.

City representatives advised that the 10 year programme of maintenance for the Galleywood Common was underway, following a new member joining their team, adding the plan would include the amendments submitted by GCA of the previous plan.

#### Lane entrance leading to the Heritage Centre and the Common

GCA re-emphasised the state of disrepair to the lane leading to GHC and the Nursery, City Parks again advised that no funds were available to produce a detailed design scheme for the lane, and that it was unlikely for a successful bid for the funds for the project to be achieved for the next foreseeable years. It was agreed that the representatives will visit the area, with a view to tidying up the entrance. Date to be arranged.

#### Signage Progress for the four Noticeboards

City Parks produced a further draft of the display boards which was discussed and agreed that copies be sent to GCA representatives for comments.

#### Footpath /Cycle Path

City Parks agreed to liaise with the County Council to arrange the clearance of overhanging Branches, along Stock Road.

#### Damaged Bench near Horse and Groom Public house

GCA tabled photo of a remaining bench support and it was agreed that this be removed as there was a further bench nearby.

#### Cleaning of racecourse rails

Following a request by GCA for the racecourse rails to be cleaned, City Parks again responded that they do not have the resources to clean the rails, however they accepted that they have a responsibility to repair damaged posts or rails if found necessary and that replacements for rotting wooden rails would be recycled plastic material.

#### GCA Wardens insurance cover as volunteers

City Parks have produced the necessary paperwork and given tools to the nominated Wardens ensuring that they are fully covered for insurance.

#### Wood Farm Car Park entrance

GCA advised that the highlighting of the posts of the framework at the entrance to the carpark is still outstanding. It was also reported that deep potholes are present on the path leading to the car park (photo given). City Parks to follow up.

#### Additional dog bins

GCA requested that additional or the frequency of emptying the dog bins be considered, as the existing bins are overflowing, (photos shown)

City Parks advised that this issue was raised by the Galleywood Parish Council, and the City response, being that if others provided the cost of the bins and installation, again reiterating they do not have the funds, they would arrange for the additional bins to be emptied along with the existing bins

#### Mill Pond

The broken safety fencing between FP 49 passing above the Mill Pond has been renewed by City Parks,

#### Buzzard v Crow - By John Laidler

Two members of the GCA committee independently witnessed a fracas low above the trees on the common in the spring. Common buzzards (*Buteo buteo*) are now a frequent sight above the common. They are attractive birds, mostly brown, wings lighter with darker finger like tips and edges underneath. Most days they can be seen slowly spiralling up thermals without flapping their broad wings which are held in a slight v shape. They soar to a great height for a good view, often making a repeated short, mewing cry. Birds of prey, they eat a lot of carrion and also hunt live prey ranging from worms, rodents and birds up to rabbits. They are big birds with a wingspan up to 1.2m and can weigh over 1kg. This makes them significantly larger than a crow.

The carrion crow (*Corvus Corone*) is also a familiar bird with its all-black colouration and powerful black beak. Their wingspan can be 1m and they weigh up to 650g. Not to be confused with rooks, which are gregarious, crows are usually seen in pairs or alone. Crows are highly intelligent birds that can learn quickly and pass on this knowledge to their descendants.

So how and why does a confrontation start? Surprisingly, it is usually the smaller crow that starts the trouble! They employ a tactic called 'mobbing' in which they caw loudly and repeatedly approach and make darting attacks in flight on birds of prey like buzzards. They may start to do this on their own, despite the size disadvantage. This may warn of the predator and attract other birds to join in, hence mobbing. This allows teams working together to distract and annoy the predator and chase it away. The cause is not completely clear. It may be because they perceive a threat to their eggs or offspring, or just because the predator is a rival for food supply in the territory. Sometimes the crow appears to mob by instinct or even possibly for fun. So, who won? As usual the crow was successful in chasing the buzzard away!



### Bird walk on The Common – By Suan Wilson.

Every year the Galleywood Heritage Centre organises two bird walks on Galleywood Common, both led by Andrew Stroud who is a very knowledgeable member of the Essex Bird Watching Society. The first is held in the Spring in the height of the breeding season and when our resident birds are joined by a large number of migrants many of whom have travelled thousands of miles to get here. The second is held in the Autumn when the summer visitors have departed to warmer climes and many residents have dispersed to other parts of the country. These are replaced by flocks of mixed thrushes including fieldfares and redwings, many from Scandinavia. At the last walk on 29<sup>th</sup> September around 33 species were seen or heard highlights being a Greater Spotted Woodpecker and a Nuthatch. The picture shows the walkers about to set off from the Heritage Centre .



### New Notice Boards – By Janette Potter

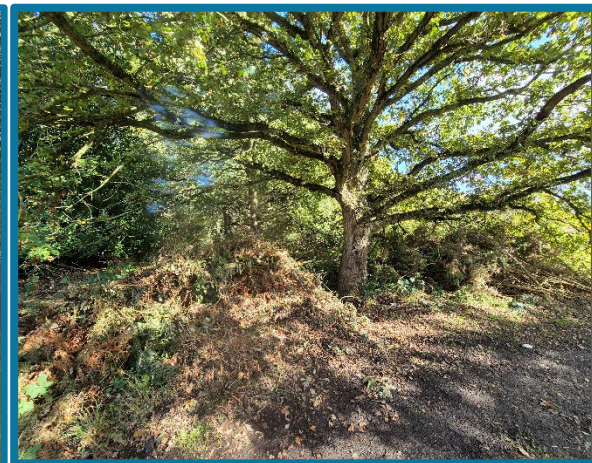
As the Galleywood Common Liaison Officer I arranged meetings with officers at Chelmsford City Council, to discuss the new Notice Boards, together with Bob Villa and John Turkentine.

The first proofs have been received by us and alterations, spelling corrections have been administered,

The proofs are now back with officers to officially finalise the final proof before a presentation to the Galleywood Common Association for final consideration.



Recent Cutting Back of Trees – Photos - John Turkentine







Photograph acknowledgements:

Amethyst Deceiver and the Scarlet Elf Cap, both very striking indeed : courtesy of Lucy Driver and Susan Wilson

Giant Puffball and Bracket Fungus:  
John Turkentine.

