



WINTER NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS OF BRAMCOTE RIDGE

Welcome to this issue and good wishes to everyone for a peaceful and healthy new year.

GREEN FLAG COMMUNITY AWARD 2015/16 (ANOTHER UPDATE!)

The last newsletter stated that we had not had a formal inspection and no judge's feedback report. We were amazed therefore to see on the website in November an assessment by a judge that had been carried out on 20th October which was 3 months after being told we had passed! The report was very detailed but there were a few negative comments. One with which we agree was regarding the amount of dog fouling, especially on Alexandrina Plantation, The judge also commented on the absence of any brown directional signs to the site. We feel these are totally inappropriate. Apart from costs, (between £8000 and £20000), we see our reserves as a local green space for local people to enjoy. Also recommended was that we should have site plans at all main entrances in addition to the two we have. These signs are expensive and we could not expect the Council to fund these, especially in the present economic climate. The report was, however, mainly positive and concluded with the comment, **“Alexandrina Plantation and Sandy Lane LNR's are a credit to the Friends of Bramcote Ridge who must put many hours of work into its care and maintenance”**.

We have just submitted our application for 2016/17 and will receive a full inspection which we are pleased about between March and May this year.

WORKING SESSIONS REPORTS NOVEMBER 2015 to JANUARY 2016

The November session had 8 members turning up on what was a perfect autumn morning. We cleared and disinfected all the bird boxes on the Sandy Lane reserve and removed two for repair (we had done all the boxes on Alexandrina Plantation two weeks earlier). At the same time we erected the insect and wood mice boxes that had been made by the local scout group. We also cleared a large amount of broom that had begun to re-grow in the perennial wildflower area as well as bramble and couch grass from an area adjacent to the established heathers. December saw a good turnout of thirteen members and we concentrated on Alexandrina Plantation. Once again we swept the bridle path and removed the leaves and tree debris. The steps leading from Thoresby Road were also cleared. Both our annual wildflower areas were raked to remove the thatch after being mown by the Council earlier. Two of our group cleared litter on both these sessions. In January the usual big clear up of litter and the heavier and bulky items that have been dumped was completed by ten hardy souls on a very wet morning. The Council collected this rubbish the following day. We also cleared a few very muddy sections on the main paths and added gravel to level off some of the steps



.Next working session dates are: February 7th, March 6th, April 3rd, May 1st and June 5th.

HEATHER

About a year ago you may recall I reported on the heather brash collection from Hollinwell Golf Course. It was not a great success as the brash had been harvested the previous year and was heavy and very wet to transport. It was even heavier to scatter and the result was some rather large clumps being raked over a small area.

I did not know whether to laugh or cry when Norman Lewis from the Sherwood Forest Trust contacted me suggesting a further collection. There were many phone calls and postponements due to bad weather but eventually John and I set off on a beautiful, sunny, December morning. We allowed an hour plus for early morning rush hour traffic and duly arrived half an hour early. We parked in the arranged meeting place in a woodland area and immediately noticed a huge mound of, yes you guessed, very wet looking brash. The Head Green Keeper had spotted us and verified that said heap was the brash but to try burrowing to find some dry seeds. We were off like a pair of badgers and a large builder's bag, two garden barrels and a sack were filled and in the car in no time at all. Norman Lewis, who had arrived on time but later than us, then demonstrated the ratio of seed to a square metre. We realised we now had enough brash to cover the entire new grassland area and some to spare!

As the day was so perfect on our return to the Ridge we decided to scatter the seed straight away. This took some time as you can imagine, even with Clare helping, but at the finish we had almost covered the new area and also the perennial wild flower area on the Alexandrina site.

It is a case of watch this space, folks; keep looking and, who knows, it may really be a blaze of purple one day.

By Special Correspondent Norman Clyde-Watson

MEMBER'S PHOTOGRAPH



This issue's photograph is provided by Norman and captured this scene of the bridle path living up to its name as these two ladies use it fairly regularly when out with their horses. Thanks, Norman, for sending this. **Please keep sending your photographs to me for future issues.**