

A photograph of a field of yellow wildflowers with green foliage, used as a background for the newsletter title.

SPRING NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS OF BRAMCOTE RIDGE

WORKING SESSIONS REPORT: FEBRUARY to APRIL 2016

On all three of these days we have been lucky to have fine sunny mornings despite plenty of rain just before and after our sessions. Over the three months we have had good support from over ten members each session. In February we replaced some of the edging to the path alongside the wildflower area in front of the wooden seat near the Sandy Lane entrance. Two very muddy sections on the main pathway were also cleared and half the group cleared the worst of the mud and tree debris from the path that runs the length of the Markham Road site.

In March two additional sections of path edging were installed. A large amount of mainly dead gorse was cleared from the area just as you approach the rocky outcrop and burnt on the wildflower area. Those involved thoroughly enjoyed the bonfire! Later that day the wood ash was removed from the site to avoid affecting the fertility level of the soil here. As this day coincided with the beginning of the “Clean for the Queen” weekend, sponsored by Keep Britain Tidy and many others, we decided as our contribution to have 5 people on litter picking duty and as well as doing the two reserves we included seven local streets and between us collected 8 large bags of rubbish.



April's session was mainly very productive with a large area of bramble and five smallish trees being cleared from the area just below the rocky outcrop which is now much more visible from the bridle path. Very annoyingly though two of the edging sections that had been replaced in our earlier sessions had been removed so new sections of tree had to be cut to replace these and this time we used longer supporting pegs so let us hope these last.

WILDFLOWER AREAS

As you know, for several years we have had two separate annual wildflower areas which have had a mixture of five native wildflowers. On the whole these have been reasonably successful but the flowering period has been relatively short. This year, as an experiment, we are sowing a different seed mixture in the site near the Sandy Lane entrance. This includes some non-native plants but none of these is vigorous. The advantage is that because they germinate and flower later than the native plants there should be a much longer and more colourful period to enjoy. As this is a Local

Nature Reserve we did first check with the Council and by coincidence they are trialling the same seed mix in four of their other sites so were quite happy for us to give it a go. We shall decide at the end of the year whether to continue with this in 2017. The area near Brookside Avenue will have the same seed mixture that we have always used. The plan was to sow seed in both areas at the last working session (3rd April) but because the ground was still so cold and because the area had still not been rotovated we decided to postpone this by two or three weeks. By the time you read this newsletter the seed should have been sown so hopefully we can look forward to a very colourful display soon.

LOOKING AHEAD

We have been fortunate to receive from one of our members some suggestions for changes/improvements that might be considered over the next year or two. We have had a walk around the reserves with Chris Riley, from Broxtowe BC, and he seems quite positive about these ideas. More details later. One suggestion was that we should clear an area approaching the rocky outcrop, and also the area beneath it, to make this more of a feature. This we have almost completed at the last two working sessions and one of the benefits is that it improves access to the area beneath the rock making it easier to collect litter (see photograph below). The amount of litter regularly found below the rock makes this one of the worst spots we have to deal with.



The newly cleared area at the bottom of the outcrop

SUMMER WALK

Enid has once again said she will be happy to organise a walk for any member interested. These walks have been very enjoyable in the past and for those interested this year could you please contact Enid either by email at enid_swetnam@yahoo.co.uk or phone at 9256341. At this stage no dates or venues have been decided.