

SUMMER NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS OF BRAMCOTE RIDGE

COVID-19

We hope this newsletter finds you and your families well. The last few months have indeed been difficult for everyone, especially those largely confined to home because of age or vulnerability. The lockdown introduced on March 23rd prevented the production and distribution of the spring newsletter and caused the suspension of our monthly working sessions.

Now that these severe restrictions are easing, even though uncertainty and fear of a possible second spike of new cases remain, it is hoped that working sessions will soon be able to resume. I would really like to have feedback from regular volunteers as to when you would feel comfortable about coming back to these so that we can make a collective decision about when to return.

WORKING SESSIONS REPORT JANUARY 2020 to JUNE 2020

Our January session was attended by 15 members, 3 volunteers from Practical Conservation Volunteers, Chris Riley from the Council and the Mayor of Broxtowe, Councillor Michael Brown. This special session was to celebrate our 20th anniversary, which occurred last year, and to plant 20 hazel trees to commemorate this milestone. These were planted in an open area within the woodland not far from Thoresby Road. In the future they will be managed as a traditional hazel coppice providing an important resource for local wildlife. Around each tree a drift of wildflower bulbs was planted; these included snowdrop, bluebell and wild daffodil which will further add to the attractiveness of the woodland for both wildlife and visitors.

The trees and bulbs were provided by Broxtowe Borough Council as part of its "Clean and Green" initiative.



Also in January, on a separate Sunday, a group of 8 of us met to plant 100 hawthorn and other hedgerow saplings in a weaker section of the hedge that was layered five years ago on the Markham Road site. We also cleaned out all the old nests from the 14 bird boxes on that site and disinfected these ready for this season's use. We did replace two that were very worn and starting to rot with two new boxes.

The February working day was very grey and light rain was falling all morning but 6 hardy souls still turned up and they managed to clear the whole of the bridle path of tree etc debris.

In March we had 9 volunteers and decided to concentrate on the Markham Road site and do a general clear up following the strong winds and rain we had in the previous two weeks. We cut down and removed four trees that were partly blocking the main path between the play area and Devil's Steps. We also cut back a section of hedgerow and cleared some of the worst of the mud from the main path. Litter picking was again completed.

After this the sessions had to be suspended.

WILDFLOWER AREAS

This year has been a disaster for our two wildflower areas. Both had been due to be rotovated at the end of March but the Coronavirus outbreak prevented that. We had been given the seed free this year as it was part of Broxtowe's unused stock from last year but still viable. At the beginning of May, Helene and Andy raked the dead stuff off the areas and raked over some of the ground and as we had nothing to lose we decided that they should sow the seed we had. After that we had over a month without a drop of rain and, combined with woodpigeons having a good meal on the areas, it was no surprise that hardly anything survived. The Thoresby Rd site is now completely overgrown with grass and weeds so it will be a case of starting from scratch again next spring.

One positive to mention is that during February the crocus we planted in November 2017 alongside Thoresby Rd looked superb and were soon followed by the daffodils.

VERY SAD NEWS

We are sorry to report the deaths of two of our founder members.

Maureen Snow died in March after a short illness. Maureen had also been a committee member for many years and even though we knew she had undergone surgery a couple of years ago she had been a regular volunteer at our work sessions right up until this January and her death was totally unexpected. Although a fairly private person Maureen was always very concerned and caring about our reserves and their wildlife. She was a pleasure to work with and we shall always remember her.

We also heard very recently that Geoff Smith had died. He and his late wife Doreen, who died a few years ago, had both been founder members. Geoff was on our first committee for several years. In recent years Geoff could be seen most days travelling up Sandy Lane on his mobility scooter on the way to the Bramcote Lane shops and he was well known locally. If I was in our front garden he often stopped for a chat. He was renowned for his dry sense of humour.

Both will be sadly missed but remembered with affection.