

# Friends of Brandon Wood Newsletter February 2022



## Woodland Management and Climate Change

We have all heard so much about climate change and global warming from many media. There are anticipated changes which will affect Brandon Wood and are expected to accelerate in the coming years. We will need to take steps to cope, and to adapt our plans accordingly, in fact the Forestry Commission has issued new guidelines on this subject.

The weather effects will be:

- Heavier rain and stronger winds in winter
- Warmer winters and hotter summers, with extended periods of drought in summer and autumn
- Higher CO2 levels

From these changes, there are expected to be:

- Increased growth rates
- Increased wind damage
- Increased likelihood of disease and bark beetle infestations
- Increased length of growing season, coupled with linked species changes. (eg. Butterflies, moths and birds)

Any replanting needs to be considered carefully and regular inspections made to detect disease and hazards. Natural regeneration is to be preferred, and any trees to be planted should come from local sources to the south of us. Our emphasis is on bio-diversity of trees, plants, age and all species. The wood helps the environment by retaining rainwater and releasing it slowly, minimising flooding elsewhere. Soil erosion is minimised by trees.

But why do we leave open spaces instead of planting trees there? This is to encourage wildflowers as pollinators, as well as woodland plants to enhance the diversity of the myriad of bee, beetle, fly and also bird species which should be found in ancient woodlands.

The pine thinning programme which initially looks destructive in the affected areas, does show permanent improvements in subsequent years. The resultant return to mixed broadleaf

trees gives a much healthier appearance. The pines that remain will be less likely to attract disease, and deciduous trees absorb much more carbon dioxide.

Public access is maintained with continual path improvements. The All-Ability path, culverts, bridges and benches are just a few examples of work done recently. Potential veteran trees are being haloed to allow them to flourish; thus retaining more carbon and reducing CO2. Big trees do much more of this.

There is more interest in woodlands now which the media promote, and the wood can give appreciable mental health benefits.

We have a strong team in the work party groups and our 180-plus acres are in good shape. I would like to thank fellow Trustees, our volunteer work parties and our members for continued support – all essential for us to function.

**Andrew Ireland**

## Paws for Thought

Many well-disciplined dogs regularly enjoy walking in the woods with their owners. A very big 'thank you' to all of you who keep your dogs under control and pick up after them.

Unfortunately, there are a few thoughtless individuals who allow their dogs to rampage around the wood totally out of control. These few dogs disturb the resident wildlife and frighten visitors to the wood. Dog excrement is left on paths or pushed to one side where children can still step in it. Some individuals leave bags of dog dirt on paths or even hung in trees – another inconsiderate act. We hope these few people will think again and keep their dogs under control.

There have been reports of dogs stolen in the wood. The unwary dog walker is approached and distracted while a second person grabs the dog. Please be vigilant, especially if you have an expensive dog. Sale of the dogs is easy money for these despicable gangs.

## Forwarding Wagon



The beautifully rebuilt forwarding wagon, completed by our dedicated team, is now back at home in Brandon Wood. If you have walked along the Main Ride you will have seen it in all its splendour beneath a large oak. An information board outlining its history will soon be placed beside the wagon.

We would like to thank all our sponsors for their valuable support in this project.



## Membership

During the past year and a half, membership of the Friends of Brandon Wood has dropped considerably. This can be attributed largely to the pandemic. It has not been considered safe for our Collectors to do door to door cash collections during this time.

At a recent Committee Meeting it was decided that we do need to move toward cash free collections in the interest of safety of our Collectors. However, we are aware that many residents are a little wary of using Standing Orders. The decision has now been made that we will write to all residents explaining that the 2022/23 season will be the last season we will endeavour to make cash collections. Thereafter, we will ask residents to pay for membership either by Standing Order or by Bank Transfer.

As members, you already pay by Standing Order or Bank Transfer and we thank you very much for that. It would be very helpful if you could perhaps talk to neighbours who have only paid by cash in the past and help reassure them of the safety of electronic methods.

**Vivien Wood**

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## Nature Notes

In general it has been a disappointing autumn with a few highlights, ours being the daily visit to our garden of a Hedgehog with her hoglet. They came close to our patio window and were present from June until she hibernated in November, using a box we had provided.

Other animals reported in the woods this year included a Slow-worm (a legless lizard), a badger and a Roe Deer. There were many sightings of Muntjac. Frog spawn was present in Spring in Dell Pool and Peter's Pond.



*Roe Deer*

Birds were quiet with what appeared to be a major reduction in summer migrants. However, much of this may be connected with my restricted mobility. This also applied to butterflies. However, I was pleased to identify an over mature Common Darter, a dragonfly that turns black with age.

Fungi were present in low numbers, the majority growing on wood. There was a neat ring of six Stinkhorns forming a hexagon near the Ferndale Gate. In Saxon Close a large ring of fifty Roll-rims attracted attention. Dead Moll's Fingers, Warty Knight, Wood Blewit and The Goblet were further finds. A very large Lumpy Bracket was growing on a rotten stump near the Green Pond.



*Roll-rims*



*Dead Moll's Fingers*

A new record for the farm field was maize, a very tall plant which spoiled the view when walking to the Brandon Little Wood. A partridge was heard calling from here.



*Partridge*

The regular plants appeared in their usual sites and the Heath Milkwort returned to the Jubilee Pond. Yellow Rattle adopted the new wildflower meadow. There were 108 Common Spotted Orchids on the west landfill and 3 Bee Orchids nearby. Viper's Bugloss is a striking plant growing near the farm gate.

**John and Jane Sells**

