

Ashplats Conservation Group

Chairman's Report 2024

Looking back on 2024

Jan – Feb – Coppicing by Badgers Path.

March – Cancelled due to rain.

April - Litter pick.

September – Meadow raking, ½ day due to heavy rain.

October - Cancelled due to illness (Neil, Katherine and many others)

October – An extra mini-task was held to finish the meadow. It rained.

November – Cancelled as N + K had Covid.

December – Rhododendron removal, in the rain.

A year of rain and cancelled tasks. The Highlights are the litter pick finding less litter every year, and the surprising effectiveness of a small team removing rhododendron before it becomes a problem.

Looking Forward

This year Rutland meadow will be mown and collected by MSDC, we will monitor the health of the meadow to be sure the biodiversity remains. MSDC have also been felling diseased ash in the woods, this may allow us to safely work on Owl Path.

Volunteer numbers have remained low, possibly due to the constant bad weather, but also continuing on from the general reassessment of priorities after Covid lockdowns. Attending the Community Volunteer Fair at Chequer Mead may help.

Coppicing, particularly around Badgers and Pines path will continue. We will remove more of the returning rhododendron. Survey work might involve sampling some of the overlooked taxa, such as duckweeds and mosses. We hope to place some dormouse tunnels in the woods to confirm their continued presence.

Thanks and Appreciation

Thanks to all our volunteers, old and new. In particular I'd like to thank:

- Michael Diebel for his work as group Treasurer. We are sorry to see you leave us.
- Louise Collett and Brian Akehurst for running the bush-cam and taking photos for social media and the website.
- Steve Metcalfe for again arranging the AGM venue, and for the Mergin Maps app to record where things are in the woods.
- Elaine Griffith for lots of enthusiasm and good ideas for additional events.

Trail camera

The Highlight on the trail camera were fox cubs running through the woods. A Grey Heron was photographed stalking around a woodland pond.

iNaturalist

The Ashplats iNaturalist project is starting to fill out with a good cross section of species. I look forward to seeing it become a useful document of the current biodiversity of the woods.

Neil Hancock
ACG Chair