



Friends of Ashenground and Bolnore Woods

Conservation – Protection – Enhancement – Enjoyment

Update from FoABW Chair:

We are pleased to welcome our new editor of the FoABW Newsletter - Michelle Thomasson (also our new Secretary and a member of our Conservation Volunteers!)

In this edition you will find our upcoming events, **all events are Free to members and non-members**. We are pleased to introduce a new event this year, a Woodland Art Class and a welcome return to the Bird of Prey Afternoon, Children's Bug Hunt, Bat Walk and a Fungi Hunt. We also mark the 21st Anniversary of Bolnore Village.

Thank you for your continued support of FoABW.

Lorraine Maynard

This year saw the 21st Anniversary of Bolnore Village



Common lizard photo by Kim Berry

In 2001 JFA Landscape Ecology, together with The Conservation Volunteers, carried out their final wildlife survey of Phase 1. The invertebrates and reptiles (newts, common lizards, grass snakes) found within the area of Phase 1 were collected and relocated prior to commencement of construction work.

Wildlife Sighting Reports taken by FoABW since then have shown we still have healthy populations of newts, common lizards and grass snakes.



Grass snake photo by Kim Berry

Comparing a recent bird survey by FoABW with a survey carried out by JFA in 2001, it would seem that the numbers of birds visiting and residing in and around the woodland is still as diverse.

2001 JFA Final Bird Survey – Phase 1

Blackcap, Bullfinch, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Common Buzzard, Coat Tit, Long Tailed Tit, Marsh Tit, Willow Tit, Garden Warbler, Grasshopper Warbler, Willow Warbler, Goldcrest, Goshawk, Goldfinch, Greenfinch, Green Woodpecker, Hobby, Honey Buzzard, House Sparrows, Jackdaw, Jay, Kestrel, Linnet, Magpie, Mallard, Merlin, Moorhen, Pheasant, Snipe, Sparrowhawk, Tawny Owl, Whitethroat and Woodcock.

With the exception of the *Linnet, Snipe, Woodcock and Honey Buzzard*, all of the above can still be seen or heard in Ashenground Wood today.

New Event for Summer 2023!



Sunday 30th July 2pm-3.30pm

Free woodland art class led by Laura from Mindfull Art Sussex, only 10 places available, contact Laurafoabw@gmail.com to secure your spot.

Meet at Ashenground Railway Bridge, easels, equipment, acrylic paint, brushes and an A4 canvas will be provided for free on the day, equipment will be returned at the end of the session, but you can take your artwork home. *If you would like to bring other mediums or your own canvas, you are welcome to do so.*



Please note under 18s and vulnerable adults must be accompanied by an adult at all events.

Other nature inspired events scheduled for 2023



THE CHILDREN'S BUG HUNT SUNDAY (FREE EVENT)

Sunday 13th August 2023 at 2.30pm until 4.00pm

Meet at Ashenground Railway Bridge, Haywards Heath

Mid Sussex Ranger & Debby Martell will lead the bug hunt.



BIRDS OF PREY AFTERNOON - FALCONRY-UK (FREE EVENT)

Saturday 19th August 2023 from 2pm to 5pm

Join us in Weavers Meadow - via the Boundary Path (follow the arrows from the railway bridge) or via Weavers Mead, Bolnore Village.



THE EVENING BAT WALK (FREE EVENT)

Please BRING A TORCH! Children Welcome

Friday 1st September 2023 at 7.30pm to 9.00pm

Meet at the Railway Bridge, Ashenground Road. A member of Sussex Bat Conservation Group will lead the walk around the woods.

**FUNGI WALK (FREE EVENT)
Saturday 7th October 10am to 12 noon**

Meet at the Railway Bridge, Ashenground Road. Walk with Daniel Greenwood a woodland project manager at the London Wildlife Trust.

If there is inclement weather the events will be cancelled and rescheduled to later dates. More information please contact **Lorraine Maynard** email: lorrainemaynard04@gmail.com or Tel: 0780 2162275



Conservation Activities Report

Our conservation activities are guided by the FOABW Conservation Management Plan. The aim of the Plan is to:

- ‡ [Improve biodiversity](#) by creating a more varied age structure among standard trees in the woodland by means of coppicing and restoring the meadows through a mowing regime.
- ‡ [Encourage appropriate recreational use of the woods and meadows](#) by creating open places, paths with wide scallops and seats.
- ‡ [Maintain paths](#) to counter erosion and path-widening, and to discourage the creation of ad hoc paths.

Over the last twelve months, we made good progress delivering the Plan. We had 12 weekend sessions (1 per month) and put in around 30 hours work as a group. We averaged just under 7 volunteers per session (between 4 and 11) equating to around 210 person hours.

- ‡ In March/April 2022, we finished coppicing hazel near the tool container and chestnut coppicing in Catts Wood.
- ‡ In May/June 2022, we woodchipped the entire path through Pond Meadow.
- ‡ In July 2022, we cut back brambles overhanging the paths around Pond Meadow.
- ‡ Between August and December 2022, we mowed Pond Meadow, Weavers Meadow and the buffer zones around Renfields, Trubwick Avenue and Quarry Hollow.
- ‡ So far this year, we have focussed on cutting back some of the holly in Ashenground Wood.

We also did litter picking and removed on average 1-2 bags of rubbish per session. Last year we noted unusually high levels of litter in the buffer zone off Trubwick Avenue.

Highlights for the last twelve months include a noticeable increase in the number of orchids seen in Pond Meadow last summer and receiving a special **Haywards Heath in Bloom award** from Councillor Sandy Ellis.

Looking ahead, we have submitted an entry for this year's South and South East in Bloom competition under the category, 'It's your neighbourhood'. This category looks at local community participation, environmental responsibility and conservation achievement. Judging will be between 12 June and 14 July 2023.

We would like to thank all our hard-working and dedicated volunteers for their time and Mid Sussex District Council for its ongoing support.

Patrick Burke, FoABW Conservation Leader – March 2023

Membership and conservation activities:

The Conservation Volunteers meet at 10.00 am on the 3rd Saturday of each month, we meet at the **Thatched Cottage in Bolnore Village**, where the Bridle Way crosses the road called Renfields, members and non-members are very welcome, but please note under 18s and vulnerable adults must be accompanied by an adult.

If you would like to become a member of FoABW and support our conservation activities, please contact our **Treasurer Laura** email: laurafoabw@gmail.com

Laura can give you information on how to become a member, membership is only £5 per year, per family. If you would like future newsletters, please email Laura and you will be added to the newsletter list.