



Witney Woodland Volunteers
Newsletter 4 - August 2024

Hello All,

Welcome to the fourth WWV Newsletter which will, hopefully, keep you up to date with some of the on-going activities within our group.

WWV Committee Meeting Update - Thursday 29th August 2024

- Reviewing of the WWV leaflets and website
- Replace and re-site the black corrugated sheets for monitoring mice and reptiles within DPW following a reptile input from WODC to one of our members
- Damage caused to trees and bushes within DPW and the issue of fires at the outside classroom (Fire brigade called out on one occasion recently)
- Arrange WWV visit to Gibbets Hill (Wychwood Forest Trust site) in Witney for 09/09/2024
- Colwell Brook – Testing
- Meet and liaise with Rachel Crook's WODC replacement

DPW and DP South

The squirrels in DPW North have been very busy stripping the bark off some of our trees and seem particularly partial to the silver birch trees. They feed on the nutritious sap beneath the bark, unfortunately severe damage can be caused which can kill the tree or provide an entry point for other tree pests and diseases.

Our notice board message which states 'Protect wildlife, take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints', is being well and truly ignored at the moment. Litter is a daily problem at the seat at the south end of the wood. A 'No Litter' sign lasted less than thirty six hours before being destroyed. A large camp / hide was built at the north west end of the wood causing damage to trees and bushes nearby and finally we have problems with fires again at the outside classroom which, on one occasion, resulted in the fire service being called out. Hopefully once the summer holidays are over and the weather changes, these issues will resolve themselves.

The animals, despite the above issues, continue to be active within the wood, with our fox and the badger, who now appears to be a regular visitor to DPW. The three legged muntjac has found a new partner, a young doe. Unfortunately his previous partner, the muntjac with only one eye, has not been seen now for many months. The mice, rabbits and squirrels are also keeping busy.

We have also been very busy over the last few weeks with cutting back prior to the arrival of the grass cutters, path clearing and litter picking. Within DP South the path through to the small grass area was almost impassable (As can be seen below) as was the path round the dip, so a great deal of work has been undertaken to open up the paths again and to ensure that all paths are accessible.



There have been many 'Lords and Ladies' within DP South this year and they are quite striking with their bright red berries. Also within the wood we have seen a great deal of new growth following our coppicing of hazel and the cutting back of dogwood over the last two years, as shown below.



If you have been to DP South during August, early in the morning, you may well have heard a rather strange sound, similar to a loud squeaking noise. The noise emanates from two sparrow hawks chatting to each other and getting rather upset at the close attention they are receiving from the local magpies. Below are some lovely photographs of them, taken recently.



In early August two of our members, Tony and Pete, undertook 'Kick Sampling' water testing within the Colwell Brook to ascertain whether there was much life within the stream and to see how healthy the stream is. Tony has circulated the results which were most interesting showing there is life within the stream which, hopefully, will give us something to build on and to now monitor on a regular basis.



If you walk along the bride path, next to DP South, part of a round concrete structure has been uncovered following the path improvements (See above right photograph) and we wondered whether anyone has any idea what it is? The location is just outside the old Deer Park wall boundary and would have been on the edge of the old Witney airfield.

Wishing you all well

WWV Committee