



Witney Woodland Volunteers
Newsletter 6 - December 2024

Hello All,

Hope you are all keeping well. Another newsletter to keep you up to date with all the comings and goings of Witney Woodland Volunteers, which we hope you will enjoy. The recent WWV committee meeting was held on the 12th December and some of the issues discussed included the following matters:

- The design of the new WWV Leaflet to include DP South and up to date photographs
- The deployment of ten corrugated reptile survey sheets into the woods
- The purchase of a Bat Detector for the group to monitor bat activity within the woods
- Liaison with WODC over tree thinning, signage and the removal of certain overhanging trees.
- Progress the path hardening on the east side of DPW in early 2025
- The planning process to change and update our WWV website

It's been a very busy couple of months within DPW and DP South. Although we tried to have the grass cut, unfortunately, as the ground has been so wet the tractor got stuck, resulting in the grass cutting being cancelled. Not to be beaten, however, our members set about the task of scything the worst areas and removing the cut grass. A job that took a number of weeks but one that hopefully will benefit the wild flowers next year, so well done to all concerned. We have also continued with the cutting back along the fence line which, as can be seen below, is progressing well.



The weather in early autumn was rather pleasant with little wind, the result of which has been the sight of some lovely autumn colours within the woods. The leaves, rather than being blown all over the place, have just dropped to the ground forming a circle around the trees. If you didn't manage to visit the woods then the photographs below give a good idea of how lovely the woods looked.



At the end of November and the beginning of December, however, we were hit with two storms which caused damage to a few trees in both woods, with the debris causing a blockage within the

Colwell Brook. We have now cleared the stream and taken down and cut up fallen trees and branches, following an extra small work session this week.



Unfortunately we have had a third pollution incident within the Colwell Brook, during mid November, which has been reported to the Environment Agency (EA) and WASP and we await the EA response. We will continue to monitor the brook and report any further pollution, however, any substances within the brook would have been washed downstream with the extremely heavy rain that came with storms and, in fact, our stream looked more like a river, as can be seen above. During mid November the night time camera was deployed within DPW and was activated all night long with over 200 hits. This was the most that has ever been recorded and was the result of activity by three foxes, our three legged muntjac, mice and our badger. What was also interesting was the mix of fox with muntjac, mice with muntjac, fox with badger, the three foxes together, etc. all at the feeding station on and off throughout the night.



For those of you that have visited DPW during the autumn you may have noticed that the willow arch looked like a giant hedgehog and was in need of a bit of attention. During late November a few of our volunteers set about the task of weaving the willow into the arch and, despite six inches of water beneath their feet, did an excellent job as can be seen above.

Finally a most enjoyable time was had at the WWV Christmas lunch, which took place at The Fleece Hotel in Witney last Monday, with a splendid turn out of volunteers. A big thank you goes to Christine for arranging the event and it was very well received by all who attended.



It only leaves us to thank you all for your great support throughout 2024 and wish you all a very Happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year, when hopefully we will see you all again and continue our work for the benefit of the Witney community.

Happy Christmas

WWV Committee