

13 March 2020 Meeting on site at Abbey Road re Winter Pond Project

Present: -

Craig Daters (SDNPA)

Jo Gordon (Steyping for Trees)

George Gordon (Steyping for Trees)

Roger Brown (WP Member and Orchard Group)

Sarah Sullivan (SPC)

Paul Campbell (SPC)

Pond

Craig was impressed with the pond as a valuable ecosystem which probably hosts much amphibian life etc. Frogspawn Identified by Roger. His photo at the foot.

Even when apparently dry in summer the habitat is likely to be valuable.

The margin edges are very important. Try to deter dogs from entering the water. Interpretation board might be a good educational aspect of this (by the road, not in the unspoilt habitat)

Original idea to deepen the pond as well as taking out the trees not considered necessary or desirable (probably). Identify what is there first.

Trees will be taking out a lot of moisture and will lead to drying out completely in time so desirable to take out the small trees within the pond now and have a management plan ongoing.

Cut to ground level in summer when dry and treat stumps with Glyphosate. Probably do around 1/3 to 1/2 in each of first two/three years.

Remove non-native plants at water edge

Probably take out some of the bigger water-edge willows as well to assist in keeping wet. They will re-grow. Perhaps just the biggest one in the first year,

Cut willow branches tend to sprout and self-plant into new trees so remove from immediate area and make a dead hedge along by-pass slope.

Undertake a bio-blitz to see what pondlife we have. Roger agreed to speak with those doing a blitz re the Downland scheme with a view to seeing if others are interested in doing a pond blitz, hopefully this year or early next. Craig advised that the Freshwater Habitats Trust could be a good source of information.

Roger also agreed to do a first draft of the management plan which Craig said he would be happy to feed into.

All-weather access boardwalk and dipping platform would be good for the community and grant funding could be available. Craig will send Paul some leads.

Hedging/ Willow/ Alder

Would be good for stream edge, particularly on the other side of the road where recreational activities are being encouraged.

Uncut/ rarely cut margins around the weekly mown areas would be good.

Craig not keen on plastic tubes for new hedging as unlikely to be needed in this location and they discourage low-level shoots which provide valuable protection for shrews etc.

It seems there is concern that dogs might be a problem without, due to urine (!?)

Agreed that probably best to protect only the outer ones and leave the inner unprotected. Also leave a length completely unprotected as it will provide interesting experimental data as to need/efficacy.

Location of specimen tree to be planted by Julia Donaldson

Position as previously agreed

Sponsored Tree Scheme

Steyning for Trees had moved away from the original idea of sponsored trees for fear of treading on the toes of the Community Orchard Group which has a similar scheme. Instead, trying to raise funds by voluntary carbon off-setting donations.

Paul thought this unfortunate as SPC has just written to a local family who had been provisionally promised a memorial tree on the MPF asking them to consider a tree at Abbey Road as the MPF has no suitable location.

Jo will speak with Roger to make sure that the two schemes are complimentary and subject to that will set up a similar scheme for Abbey Road specimen trees.

Fletcher's Croft

Jo was asked to hold off on this for a year while SPC awaits the outcome of confidential negotiations with HDC.

Village Green Status

Sarah reminded those present that the area enjoys village green status because Paul had led a group of residents who applied successfully to WSCC after the then parish council had tried in 2014 to prevent this happening. The Council had erected statutory notices having not at any stage resolved at any meeting to do so. The Open Spaces Society website gives more information

<https://www.oss.org.uk/abbey-road-open-space-at-steyning-is-a-village-green/>

V4 Paul Campbell

16 March 2020

Roger Brown's Lovely Photo of Frogspawn

