

Subject:

Abbey Rd Agenda items for Comms Cttee 6th April - Item 6.2

Abbey Road agenda items for April 6th Communities Cttee Item 6.2

1. Requested amendment to Grass cutting contract. (email to Hazel/John 17th March refers)

Confirmation that that the first meadow grass cut this year was done on 26th March.

The second cut currently scheduled for May to be cancelled. Many flowering plants will be putting on strong growth by then, and we want these to flower and set seed.

So can the Idverde contract for the central meadow area of Abbey Road North please be amended to state that cuts will be made in late March and late September each year? Risings to be stored on site.

2. Proposal for an Abbey Road Open Space Advisory Group

The Abbey Rd Open Space Management Plan was agreed 2nd February 2021.

The first Management Recommendation was to:

1 Maintain the current balance between habitats

- Ensure that each of the existing habitats are kept in balance by having an Action Plan for each one.

- Intention is to make small changes, then monitor the effects of those changes before making further changes. This is a new mostly unrecorded Site. We don't want to damage any habitat and possibly lose what species might be there, in an effort to improve another habitat. Softly, softly should be the approach.

I would like to request Council approval to set up a small Advisory Group to help with these Action Plans. This would comprise 4-5 local people with experience in ecology, fauna and flora. We would meet 3-4 times a year on site to assess those habitats and advise what actions (if any) need to be taken to meet the objectives of the Management Plan. We would cover the woodland, scrub, pond and meadow areas. (The Tanyard stream will be managed separately under the guidance of the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust/Environment Agency) I have sounded out a few people already and had positive responses from them.

The Actions Plans and any subsequent amendments to them will be presented to this Committee before any work is carried out on site.

3. Abbey Road. March 2021 report.

Work days

As I understand the current 'roadmap' regulations, the 'rule of 6' will apply to outside volunteer groups from 29th March until 17th May. So I will set up some work days from mid April to early May so that we can involve as many of the 22 volunteers that want to take part as possible. I will let John know when these will be.

Pond

The pond continues to respond rapidly to rainfall. Full to its maximum level at the end of January, drying out quickly in February as reported last month, filling again in early March, but now going down again. But the good news is that the trench we dug last year has held a good depth of water since last October. So it is looking as though we can plan to dredge more of the pond late this summer to continue the pond restoration.

Frogs..

I'm sure you will be pleased to hear that the AR frogs are thriving (well, their tadpoles are!)

There was so much frogspawn that even though I collected a lot, many hundreds of tadpoles hatched into the shallow water. I will return most of the tadpoles I have in tanks at home to AR once they develop into froglets over the next month or so.

Birds

I reported in January that Colin Holter, a local bird recorder, had joined the Conservation Volunteers and would be carrying out regular bird surveys at AR.

Here is a summary of his report for January to March.

You will see that he reports an impressive 27 bird species from just 5-6 visits over the last 3 months.

I would pick out these as notable sightings: Pond/wet grass area : Heron, Moorhen, Mallard and Little Egret, Woodland/scrub : Siskin, Redwing, Goldcrest, Jay

Regards Roger Brown