

Abbey Rd update - Feb' 2nd 2021 SPC Communities Cttee

Wildlife Corridors

In the last week there have been a number of zoom meetings that have all mentioned creating wildlife corridors in our local area. The SDNPA, HDC (Wilder Horsham), Greening Steyning (Biodiversity Action Group :Nature Map), Wiston Estate, Bramber Brooks and Knepp have all covered this in various presentations. Nick Mills, with local wildlife photographer David Plummer, hopes to establish a series of wildlife stepping stones from Bramber to Knepp along the Adur valley. Richard Goring then described a potential 'golden triangle' through the Wiston Estate to Knepp, down the Adur valley to Bramber and back to Wiston.

I mention this because, small as it is, Abbey Rd is ideally located to be one of the stepping stones in this triangle.

Site update

1. No further Volunteer sessions since the December report. The January session was cancelled due to the Covid restrictions.

2. Abbey Road Environmental and Management Report.

The draft of this Report was circulated widely, and apart from a few typos, has been welcomed and supported by everyone who has commented on it.

Therefore, this final version is submitted to the Committee for discussion and (hopefully) adoption.

3. The willow trees with fractured branches reported last month have been assessed by Simon Zec, tree surgeon and SPC Tree Warden, and the most hazardous has been removed. The other branch is considered to be hanging over the bypass boundary fence, so does not constitute a danger to users of Abbey Rd.

4. Rachel Paget from the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust has confirmed they have the necessary Environment Agency work permits to do the Tanyard Stream in-channel work scheduled for next summer. This will be primarily to create spawning areas for Brown Trout.

She has asked that we keep some material back from our clearing to use for this work.

5. I'm pleased to report that local resident Colin Holter has agreed to join the AR Cons Vols to be our bird recorder. Colin is one of the SDS bird recorders and is a recognised bird expert in WSx. On his first walk around he reports Blue Tit, Great Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Robin, Blackbird, Song Thrush and Wood Pigeon.

6. The recent rains have again prevented us from being able to sow the Yellow Rattle seed this month. The seed needs to have a period of frosty weather in order to break its dormancy, so we really need to be able to do this in the next few weeks. As a contingency, we have sown some seed in seed modules and place

these outside to get frosted. We can then plant these out as plug plants in early Spring if needs be.

7. Another local resident has joined the volunteers. 20 yrs ago Sheila used to live in Farnefold Rd, when she used to visit the Abbey Rd Open Space often. She now lives in Fairs Field. In recent years she has been 'rescuing' frogspawn from the rapidly drying out AR pond and putting it in her own garden pond. Hopefully she won't need to do this for many more years if our work to re-establish the pond succeeds.

8. I also had a chat recently with Pat Marshall, whose late husband Cllr Gordon Marshall together with Cllr Gill Ness-Collins, worked on the first development of Abbey Rd after it was given to the PC by the developers. She remembers seeing large numbers of ducks on the pond and also remembers school children sowing wildflower seed on the 'hump' in the middle of the grassy area. Unfortunately, this failed to establish, probably because of poor subsequent management. I hope to get Pat to the site when the weather improves, to see what else she remembers.

Roger. Brown 27thJan 2021