

Roger Brown's 25th September update.

Item 8.1.15

1. Abbey Road Conservation Volunteers. (ARCVs) There are now 13 people who have volunteered to help manage the area. (including 3 nearby residents)

I hope we can hold our first session in early October to clear the regrowth on the willows and cut back overhanging vegetation on the paths. According to current HMG guidance 'the Covid19 rule of 6' does not apply to 'voluntary or charitable services'.

So as long as we maintain social distance and do not share tools, we should be able to operate. We will plan to have a working party every month from then on.

2. Grass cutting of the meadow area took place last week. A few areas were left uncut, but we can take a decision whether to finish the cutting by hand or leave to see how they regrow next year.

3. Once cut, we will look at sowing some Yellow Rattle seed as advised by our experts, to begin the process of flowering meadow establishment. If agreed, can we buy up to £50 worth of seed? (this will buy approx. 100gms enough for 100sq m). The ARCVs can sow this in November. (It seems that stocks are very low - been lots of publicity recently. I have some seed that I collected from the SDS this year that we could use)

4. Tanyard Stream management. Glyn Wells (EA) and Rachel Paget (OART) are discussing plans for what in-channel work they might carry out next month. One suggestion is to clear just half the length rather than all of it. I will let everyone know what they decide.

5. Bob Platt and myself suggest we get an Abbey Rd report from the Sussex Biological Records Centre based at the Sussex Wildlife Trust HQ at Woods Mill. Tony Whitbread also mentioned this when we met him.

All the records that are collected by professional and amateur naturalists are compiled there.

The PC can get a 50% reduction on a full biological report for AR. (So 50% of £185 + VAT)

It may not show very much, as it is a newish site that may not have been visited much, but we don't know, and wouldn't want to do work that might eliminate something significant that we ought to be protecting.

I think this report would show that we are proceeding in a professional and data-led way, and the report would become the starting point of the monitoring that Craig, Tony, and Rachel suggested we do. We can add the things we have found this year and then maintain it as a live record of the flora and fauna at AR.

Steyning Greening's 2030 project has four main elements streams, one of which is looking at improving Biodiversity/environment. The Abbey Road Open Space could become an important part of that, as it is important as a green corridor for nature, linking the open countryside and the Adur into the centre of the town by the Church.

The discussions we have already had suggest that we could improve the biodiversity of this area even further.

It would be good to see SPC put its support behind the 2030 project. I notice that Geoff Barnard suggested that a Cllr from the SPC Climate action group join each of the project streams in an email that was on the last full council meeting. I gather there was not time to discuss it. I hope this can be addressed quickly out of committee.

Roger Brown