

Abbey Rd Update. Sept 29th. 2022.

We had a Volunteer's WP on 17th Sept. 9 Volunteers took part this time (see pic)

Jobs included:

- All the pathways around the site were trimmed back of brambles and nettles. Also included some hedge cutting.
- We attended to the items in the Tree Report Ref# G23 to G26 "to prune branches that encroach the pathways". This took 4 volunteers most of the 2hr session as many Weeping Willows at the back of the site needed cutting back.
- Grass was strimmed around all the new tree planting.

We will clear the space for the Queen's Jubilee Tree at our next session on 17th Oct if the exact location is marked.

I've just reviewed our ARCVs distribution list, as there are a few that we've not seen for a while. Two have dropped out, but we've added 2 more residents who live in Church Mead. Some volunteers help with specific tasks like bird and botany surveys, so do not come to the Volunteer Work Parties. We currently have 16 active volunteers at Abbey Rd.

A few weeks ago, I came across two ladies peering intently into the grassy meadow. They were from the Sussex Botanical Recording Society doing their 3rd and final survey of the Abbey Rd Village Green. Unbeknown to us the SBRC have a project to survey all the Open Spaces/Village Green in Sussex, and this year Abbey Rd was one of them. They have offered to share their findings with us, so it will be interesting to compare it with our own surveys. They described the site as lovely and very interesting.

Unfortunately, we've lost contact with the contractor who said he could do some more pond work for us. Simon A lives close to him and will try and talk with him. As soon as we get appreciable rain, the pond will start to fill, and we'll lose the chance to work on it until next year.



July/Aug 2022. Abbey Rd Conservation Area Update.

Walk on the Wild Side.

This walk in July was part of 'Visit Steyning's' Walking Festival and included a walk around the Abbey Rd Village Green.

"A gentle guided walk exploring one of Steyning's attractive 'Wildlife Corridors'. Takes in St Andrew's Churchyard, Abbey Road Village Green, the new Community Orchard, and the Abbey Road Conservation Area being managed on behalf of the Parish Council by local volunteers."

The walk was sold out with 20 participants. After an intro from Steyning Greening's Ronnie Reed, we went over to the Churchyard where Christine Aubrey spoke about the Church Eco Group. I then took the group over to Abbey Rd and spoke about the orchard and toured the conservation area. (Pics from Steyning Greening attached)

Pond.

Once again, we had a long dry spell in the Spring, and the pond had dried up completely by 23rd April. Last year it had gone by 9th April. So, the work done in the pond last Autumn made some difference, but not enough to keep water for long enough for amphibians, such as frogs, to complete their life cycle.

Our Advisory Group suggested levelling out the banks of clay removed last year, to allow the pond to spread further when full, and to take out another 6" depth in the middle of the pond. I'm pleased to report that Joe Lean (PileTech) has again agreed to provide his digger to do this work for no charge. I hope that this will take place on Saturday 17th Sept. This would be our next Volunteers

Working Party, so we will have plenty of marshals to keep the area clear while the digger is working. When the date is confirmed, I will let John know.

Trees

The 6 Silver Birch and 5 Alder trees planted last Autumn; all survived the summer drought thanks to regular watering. The Black Poplar saplings collected from Wakehurst earlier this year were potted up and should be ready to plant out next Autumn.

Meadow

After consulting with the Advisory Group, it was decided not to cut and remove the meadow grass this Autumn. The original idea of creating a flowering meadow by cutting twice a year and sowing a wildflower seeds mix failed to suppress the vigorous grass growth that swamped our attempts to introduce wildflowers. A few Yellow Rattle did flower this year, but not in the numbers needed to check the grasses. So we will now concentrate on introducing plants that can cope with competition from grasses. Purple Loosestrife, Meadowsweet, Marsh Ragwort, Water Mint, Yellow Iris and Water Mint already grow on this and other parts of site, so we will try to introduce more of these and other plants to the grass meadow in the next few years.

A 'cut and remove' will still take place, but just once a year in early Spring, to remove all the previous year's growth and help the new plants to establish.

Working Parties

Work scheduled for this Autumn/Winter work parties include:

- clear more fallen Goat Willow in the glade area.
- cut/trim excess growth in the glade area.
- trim back vegetation around the paths.
- keep the mound with the 6 Silver Birch, and around the 5 Alder trees clear of vegetation.
- continue to cut back Willows growing in pond area
- keep access open to the Tanyard stream in-stream baffles installed last year.
- Investigate with OART possibly adding more baffles further downstream (these create eddies and gravel areas important for invertebrates and Trout).



Greening Steyning's post

Another wonderful Nature Ramble today - exploring one of Steyning's rich wildlife corridors - connecting Cuthman Field, through the churchyard, all the way to Abbey Road and the By-Pass.

A big thanks to the knowledgeable Rog Brown for leading it and **Christine Aubrey** for talking about what St Andrews is doing to rewild their churchyard. It was a revelation to see all the wonderful wildlife on our doorstep!

There's still one place left on the Mumbles walk on 10 Au but quite a few on the Early Bird walk on 1 Sept - you can book here: <https://greeningsteyning.org/rambles/>



