



Spinney Wood

A report of activity July to September 2022

Ranger work and volunteer tasks

This period has seen an increase in anti-social behaviour in the woods, including a rise in the number of fire sites, littering and flytipping. There has also been an increase in motorbikes on the site. Where appropriate, all incidences noted by the Rangers are reported to the relevant authorities.

In response to the increased use of the wood by motorbikes and volunteers worked with Jason to install a barrier using materials from last year's coppice plot at the Wilcox Close entrance until a more permanent solution can be put in place. Unfortunately, the barrier was vandalised the following week and had to be repaired and reinforced by the team.



Volunteer, David, cutting wood to be used as stakes to hold the bigger logs in place.

Three volunteer tasks have taken place throughout this period and, in addition to creating anti-motorcycle barriers, we have been busy maintaining paths, clearing litter and creating 'dead hedges' using material from last year's coppice plot to thicken the boundary around it and provide an ideal habitat for woodland wildlife.



(Photos overleaf: (left) Volunteer, David, adding to dead hedge in the coppice plot. Plants like the Enchanter's nightshade (Circaea lutetiana) appeared in great abundance this spring, taking advantage of the increased light. (right) Lush regrowth forming in last year's coppice plot.)

Volunteer numbers have remained low, but we are anticipating a rise in numbers with the commencement of winter work; nevertheless, we will do more over the next few months to promote volunteering opportunities at the site.

Other Ranger work

In addition to the volunteer tasks and regular site visits, litter picking and checks, in mid-July a hazardous ash tree leaning over of the footpath was felled by Jason to reduce the risk to the public, and we've been collecting materials from last year's coppice to use for a den building event with the local Scout group.



Community Engagement

As part of the WCCP Big Summer Festival, a Bird and Wildlife identification walk was held in the woods. Five people attended the event, and we focused our efforts on identifying birds by sight and sound, as well as looking for any other interesting wildlife and plant life.

We have continued to build our relationship with the local cub and scout group, planning work for the autumn to fulfil the children's Environment badge criteria. We are still trying to engage with the local schools to perhaps get them out in the wood but without success so far; however, St Joseph's school are interested in us giving a talk on the wood and its wildlife.



Looking at the majestic and beautiful, Nettled-leaved bellflower. This species is found each year in the woods but is not often in great abundance.



Nettled-leaved bellflower (Campanula trachelium)

Looking ahead

Woodland works

We will be coppicing several smaller areas this winter, in accordance with the management plan and coppice cycle.

We will also arrange for the removal of the large metal hanging structure in the woods, subject to the receipt of an acceptable quote for the parish council.

Access works

We will install another log barrier to deter motorbikes from accessing the bridleway at the Adisham Road entrance.

A gate will be installed at the Spinney Lane roadside, to allow site access for staff vehicles but inhibiting other vehicles, such as motorbikes and vans fly tipping but allowing horses or bicycles to access the bridleway.

Community engagement

Broaden the range of community groups we engage with to promote use and the care of Spinney Wood.

Develop a strategy and increase promotion of volunteering opportunities etc.

Possible events and activities

- Offer an illustrated talk about Spinney Wood to BeChange participants to encourage them to get involved in winter coppicing tasks
- Further Foster Group activities and task
- In autumn, Tree seeds & nut gathering and growing event – getting the local community involved to help grow tree saplings to plant up native hedgerows along open areas of the woodland edge.
- Community groups coppicing and tree planting event(s).
- Dawn chorus April 2023

- A big litter sweep - working with locals and volunteers to clear all litter from the woods.