

# BURSLIEDON WOODLAND PARK ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

## INTRODUCTION

The area of land known as Woodland Park is situated in Bursledon, located in the Hungerford valley between the rear of the Fox and Hounds car park and Pilands Wood housing estate. It has a site area of about 1.7 hectares (4 acres) and falls within the Old Bursledon Conservation Area and Special Policy Area and is a Site of importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The land was acquired from The Winchester Diocesan Board of Finance in July 2002, so has now been in ownership of Woodland Park Community Group (WPCG) charity for just over 20 years.



The charity's aim is to conserve and improve the Woodland Park for public benefit. If the footpaths are maintained and accessible, the Park provides a very useful direct link in the green network, which includes public rights of way, public open space, allotments, village greens, and leads to necessary community facilities such as schools, post office, shops, community centre, play areas etc. The Park is currently managed by Trustees who are appointed at annual general meetings and supported by Bursledon Rights of Way and Amenities Preservation Group.

## 2021-2022 ACTIVITY

In the past year 2021/22 with the gradual easing of Covid restrictions, programmed quarterly workdays and other ad hoc work sessions and inspections were carried out. The specific programmed workdays were held on 3 October 2021/ 5 March 2022/ 12 June 2022 / 4 Sept 2022 / 13 Nov 2022. Committee meetings took place following on from work sessions. Work days were held on Sunday mornings and have involved volunteers for an hour or so to carry out routine maintenance, any repairs needed and litter

picking. Attendance at work days was primarily by committee members and trustees, mainly as there has not been advertising of such days beyond trustees.

It is hoped that by becoming involved with other forms of electronic social media messaging, other persons will become interested in participating with maintenance of Woodland Park. More substantial works on the footpath link from the Fox & Hounds car park to the boardwalk were undertaken during April

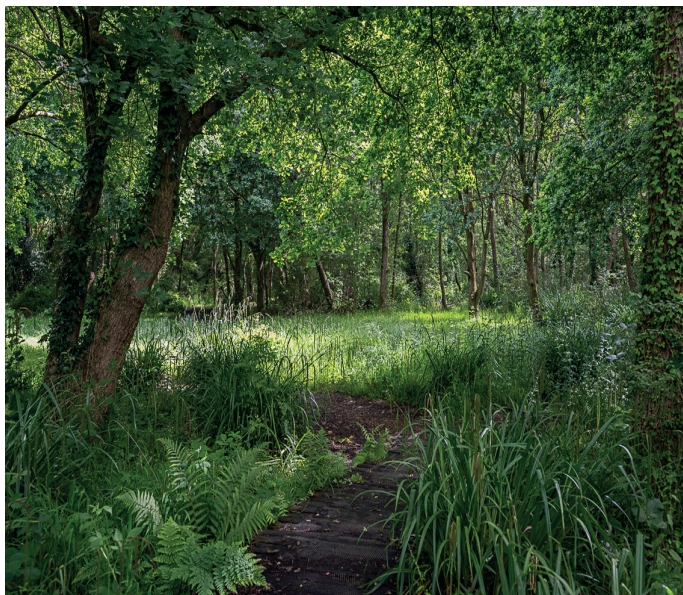


2022. Free hardcore arising from a building project was collected in buckets and transported to the site by car in multiple visits. The material was then carried down and used to fill in and level up a somewhat undulating section of the dirt path which had previously



become muddy and difficult to use in winter months. In addition, natural gravel from the garden of the same building project was then transported to the site and spread over the hardcore to create a more user friendly surface, particularly for persons such as parents from Pilands Wood pushing youngsters in prams and pushchairs to and from schools. Other mesh repairs on the boardwalk were undertaken in August. More mesh has been obtained for free

from Eastleigh Ramblers, which was leftover from a project supplied by HCC. This will be used to replace some old mesh removed which was beyond repair. Cherry laurel clearance at the northern end of the park was undertaken in accordance with the “Woodland Management Advice” report prepared by Arcadian Ecology in 2020. The report recommended removal of non-native species such as Japanese knotweed; Himalayan balsam and montbretia. Fortunately growth of these non-native species was not so prodigious this year. The time spent removing these plants last year may have helped reduce growth this year. No planks were replaced on the bridges in the last year, but work is likely to be needed in 2023.



The Group have been endeavouring to maintain Woodland Park in a safe condition for the benefit of the public to use, whether it be for movement or recreation. The Group have also been mindful of other recommendations in the said Woodland Management Advice report and the “Arboricultural Report” produced in July 2021 by Peter Yeates Arboriculture. In terms of the immediate future we are looking to maintain the boardwalk and footbridges for as long as possible before replacement becomes necessary. Other work needed will be to help control drainage to prevent waterlogging of the woodland glade and to keep invasive species under control. Illegal fly tipping of rubbish has fortunately not been significant in the past year and hopefully this will continue to be the case. New works being considered are to create a more level link path between the southern boardwalk and the link path to the Fox & Hounds, for which we will seek potential funding contribution by way of a grant from the Bursledon Hamble & Hound Local Area Committee.

## **BIRD COUNTS**

Periodic bird counts have been undertaken by “friends” of Woodland Park, Mike and Lynne Watts who have reported their findings for inclusion on the Woodland Park website. Their sightings indicate that Woodland Park is a good home for birds, with more species observed than might be found in surrounding urban gardens.

## **WOODLAND PARK COMMUNITY GROUP STRUCTURE**

Consideration was given to the possibility of changing WPCG structure from an unincorporated association to becoming a Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO). Following meetings with Charlotte Walker of One Community about the work involved and the incapacity of the Honorary Secretary following two strokes, this matter has not progressed. It is proposed to defer any decision until later next year on changing the structure.

## **FACEBOOK AND WEBSITE**

A WPCG Facebook group was set up in March 2022 by Alan Mather, in addition to the existing WPCG website managed by Steve Porter. Items have been added to each of these media to raise awareness of Woodland Park and WPCG activities.



## NEW POLICIES

In order to apply for funding grants from Eastleigh Borough Council, it has been found that as well as submitting annual accounts and the group constitution, a specific policy on equality and a policy on safeguarding need to be submitted as part of the grant application process. Therefore motions on adopting these new policies are proposed.

Eric Reed, Chair

Diane Andrewes, Hon. Secretary

November 2022

