

Woods Report

August 2023

Key outcome:

- Maintain the all-access pathways through the woods and improve drainage

Last quarter

All the timber that was stacked in Station Yard has now been collected.

Fence repairs have been done on the boundary with Gifford Bank. Richard Austin has confirmed that he is very pleased with the work.

Plans

Some areas of the paths will need to be sprayed to reduce/halt encroaching vegetation. Nev will cover this, hopefully with some volunteer assistance as we now have a second backpack sprayer. Some areas also need further maintenance to remove surface mud.

Ash tree felling and other tree safety work will continue this quarter

Key outcome:

- Manage the woodland to make the forest more resilient, including wildlife surveys and pond creation
- Ensure the safety of the woodland by removing hazardous trees

Last quarter

Tree inspection.

Remaining ash tree felling.

Plans

The Welcome Sign at the entrance to the woods is to be updated. Additional information about the location of benches and poo bins will be added. Details about the pond, including some health and safety information, will also be added. A section of the boundary by Broadwoodside will be redefined. There will be some additional information about how to financially support the woods, including a QR code.

Key outcome:

- Eradicate rhododendrons from the woods

Progress

Rhododendron clearance was paused during the bird nesting season, but will start again with Lothian Conservation Volunteers on Sunday 20th August.

Plans

Further LCV dates are scheduled for 10th and 23th September. We have also arranged for the East Lothian Police Scotland Youth Volunteers to come on the 22nd September to do some rhododendron clearance. A further 5 dates for LCV have been booked between October and the end of December

Key outcomes:

- run volunteer days for skills development and social opportunities

Progress

We ran a 2nd Family Volunteer Day in June to weed the recently planted trees in Fawn Wood. We welcomed back The Green Team Youth Volunteer group for a 2nd visit. Volunteers assisted with a 5-day Forest School Summer Camp.

4 volunteers will attend a chainsaw training course in September and 2 volunteers will attend a felling course.

One of our volunteers is nearing completion of her Forest School Leader training. A second volunteer will start her Forest School Leader training at the end of August.

Plans

Tree inspection training for 2 volunteers to be arranged.

Key outcome:

- develop youth group events shaped by young people for skills learning supported by training providers

Progress

As mentioned above, we held a 2nd Family Volunteer Day in June. We are now working with a youth volunteer group, The Green Team, and we have also agreed a date with the East Lothian Police Scotland Youth Volunteers (PSYV) to come and do some rhododendron clearance in September.

We have set a date for an outdoor woodland cinema event on Saturday 30th September.

Plans

We will continue to engage with youth volunteer groups to provide practical woodland volunteering opportunities.

- offer school and nursery trips to enable children to learn about natural heritage and how to care for it

Progress

We completed an 8-week block of Forest School sessions with the school's Nurture Group in May/June.

Plans

We have agreed with Yester that we will run 3 more 6-week blocks of Forest School sessions during the next academic year. There will be 2 blocks for the P2 class, and then it is likely that the 3rd block will be for the school's Nurture Group.

Nev has also agreed 7 dates in September/October for other Yester classes to visit.

Key outcome:

- provide events for local community groups to benefit from the woodland, increase wellbeing and enjoyment
- develop adult learning events to increase skills and knowledge that will help us care for our woods

Progress

We ran an Information stall at the Church Fete in June.

A Silent Walk and Meditation session was arranged by a local resident in July with 12 people attending. A 2nd session is planned for 11th August.

Plans

Nev has scheduled his annual woodland fungi foray for the 9th of September and tickets are now available via Eventbrite. The woodland cinema event has been scheduled for 30th September. This is normally informally advertised within the local community.

Key outcome:

- to ensure the sustainability of Gifford Community Woodland for future generations and find ongoing ways to cover the costs of woodland management and community engagement activities

Progress

Area Partnership Funding. We applied to the Haddington & Lammermuir Area Partnership for funding for a log splitter, but the application was not successful.

Forest School Summer Camp. We ran a 5-day Forest School Summer Camp for 15 children in July. Feedback forms were sent to participating families and the results will be sent to our external evaluator. Camp places were sold on a 'donation' basis, generating revenue of £750.

Use of the Welfare Area for children's parties. A policy on woodland children's parties has been agreed. The welfare camp can be booked for a maximum of 1 party per month from March to September for up to 15 children. No drop

offs/transport allowed in the woods. Woodland staff member must be booked to supervise any fire at a cost of £50 per hour.

Plans

A cost/benefit spreadsheet is being compiled showing the costs of each woodland activity/task. The spreadsheet will show the number of hours each task/activity requires, the cost, the revenue potential, the benefits and it will show the priority rating.

AOB

Trustee Vacancies. Applications have been received for the trustee vacancies and trustee Roger Wilson is overseeing the next stage of the process.

Storage of Woods Equipment. The trustees have agreed terms with Nev and Helle Kilkenny for the longer-term storage of woods equipment.

Housekeeping Schedule

DUE DATE	TASK	ADDITIONAL INFO
January	Agree dates for Trustees Meetings, Open Woods Meetings, AGM and intended newsletter publication dates.	Quarterly meeting cycle is currently Feb, May, August and November
March	Annual Confirmation Statement due 28th March annually (with 2-week window for completion)	Online via Companies House (c.£13 pa). Reminder email goes to Roo.
April	Woods Insurance Policy Renewal (current policy expires 24/4/24)	Email renewal. Policy currently with Keegan & Pennykid. Encompass Charity Scheme: Policy No - RKK958436. Reminder email goes to Graeme.
June/July	Tree Inspection	Completed bi-annually (June/July & Dec/Jan).
August	Give notice of AGM	Courier Advert and noticeboard
August/September	Update Directors details to reflect any changes made at AGM	Online via Companies House
December	Trustees Annual Report to be submitted to OSCR	Currently done by Roger

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