

FOLW AGM – 7th April 2017 – Site Wardens Report

1. DURING 2016 – We started the year with nine Site Wardens working as Greensand Trust Volunteers, but ended the year with only eight due to one leaving on health grounds - we made over 300 patrols, involving around 700 hours of volunteer time.

The Wardens Dealt with:-

a. Litter – We collected around 10 black plastic bags of litter. This figure was lower than previous years which we were thankful for. Fortunately with frequent patrols, the woodland usually appears free of litter.

b. Incidents we dealt with included:-

- 6 bonfire sites, more than last year, dealt with by checking the ashes and tidying up.

- Four tree shelters or dens, dismantled by the Wardens. All these structures are deemed unsafe for other users. We do not want other young children to enter them when the den may fall onto them.

- We again had several tree problems, many in the old wood due to the high winds, but also in the new wood as those trees are getting sizeable now. There were 16 small branches cleared from paths, and one larger branch which the Ranger cleared.

- We had a few incidents of graffiti around the woodland nothing serious but none the less annoying, taking time to remove it. In October some kind soul poured old engine oil over the old bench in the new picnic area and along several areas of paths. John Creasey eventually managed to sort out the bench seat with some difficulty.

3. CONTRACTORS ACTIVITY - We had Network Rail Contractors working over the North Bound Railway Tunnel due to a problem with the tunnel. They started in July and finished this year in February. During this time the Public Footpath was closed alongside the tunnel. They did however provide a large quantity of wood chips which they laid over some of the worst areas of muddy paths in the woodland.

During September and October contractors for O2 mobile phones changed their radio mast. This required cutting back of foliage along the radio mast track and the laying of a temporary rubber road, to allow access for a large crane to handle the masts.

4. WILDLIFE - The Rookery reached its peak of 54 nests in 2009, before the shooters arrived in the bio mass field. But following their departure, the much reduced Rookery has made a good recovery and 34 nests were built in 2016. We continue to have sightings of deer, mostly Muntjac. The Badger activity continues to decline. Sparrowhawks successfully bred again in the old wood.

The Old Bluebell Woodland is already a County Wildlife Site, but in 2015 I suggested designating it a Conservation Area. I also asked Steve Halton of CBC to look into getting Local Nature Reserve status for it. Last year the Conservation Area idea was approved by CBC, and in May appropriate signs were obtained by John Creasey. I made and donated the timber backing boards for them, and along with John Creasey, who also provided the posts,

we erected the signs to raise attention to this new status. Hopefully it will reduce the number of paths being created in the old wood, in an effort to prevent the remaining flora being damaged further. It is hoped that this Ancient Woodland will gain Local Nature Reserve status in the near future to give it further protection.

5. VISITORS - My wife Sue and I have counted the number of people we have seen during our visits since 2007. The results in the table below show the number seen per visit averaged over each year :-

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Adults	2.7	3.5	6.4	6.0	9.2	8.72	8.41	8.54	9.15	9.11
Children	0.9	0.3	1.0	0.6	1.5	0.74	1.63	1.77	1.49	1.94
Dogs	2.0	3.0	3.9	4.5	5.7	5.76	5.39	4.9	6.54	6.0

The increase in the number of adults and dogs visiting the woodland since CBC brought the wood in 2009, has continued, mainly dog walkers who seem happy to contend with the increasingly muddy paths. It is good to see the number of children continuing to increase, particularly well behaved ones.

Overall another busy year.

Could I finish by thanking John Creasey for his patience, sense of humour and support throughout the year to his volunteer wardens.

Presented to the 2017 AGM by Dave Booth