

Friends of Park Wood Newsletter Spring 2024

Planning Ahead for our silver anniversary

Next year 2025 will be the 25th year since the Friends of Park Wood was started and I hope that members can feel that 25 years of hard work by local residents to protect and improve the wood for the local community to enjoy is something worth celebrating.

So next year we thought it would be good to hold some special events to highlight what has been achieved by the Friends. If any one in the group would like to contribute ideas or help, we are setting up a 25th Anniversary working group to come up with ideas for activities for the local community to enjoy the wood and encourage more people to care for it and enable the Friends to continue to improve the wood for the of all.



If you want to contribute to the working group and help make our 25th year something to celebrate please contact Pete on 07565 058965 or speak to Pete at one of the work parties.

Dates for your diary

- Wednesday 3rd April* - Work party in the wood meet at 10 am
- Sunday 28th April* - Work party in the wood meet at 10 am
- Wednesday 1st May* - Work party in the wood meet at 10 am
- Sunday 9th June* - Greenwood activity have a go at bodging in the wood from 10 am
- Monday 10th June* - AGM at 7pm in Waterlooville Baptist Church
- Wednesday 12th June* - Evening woodland guided walk at 7pm
- Sunday 30th June* - Work party in the wood meet at 10 am followed by a barbecue social for volunteers from 12 pm
- Wednesday 3rd July* - Work party in the wood meet at 10 am
- Sunday 28th July* - Work party in the wood meet at 10 am
- Wednesday 7th August* - Work party in the wood meet at 10 am
- Sunday 25th August* - Work party in the wood meet at 10 am
- Sunday 29th September* - Work party in the wood meet at 10 am

Work parties all begin at 10 am and go through until lunchtime. Everybody is welcome to come and help. Tools, gloves, and refreshments will be available with supervision from experienced

volunteers to ensure your safety. Please wear suitable clothing and stout footwear such as boots (preferably safety boots if you have them) for working outdoors in a woodland environment and appropriate for the weather.

During the early spring and summer months our work parties will involve clearing ditches and paths, managing brambles and bracken and other work to improve the habitat for bluebells and other native plant species growing in the wood. Later summer work parties will involve cutting and raking the remnants of meadows in the wood to keep the rich diversity of flowers and grasses found in these parts of Park Wood which would be lost without the appropriate management.

Please let us know if you intend coming to the BBQ after the Sunday work party in June.

Annual General Meeting 2024 **Monday June 10th at 7 p.m.**

This year we return to the Baptist Church hall for our AGM. Our guest speaker will be Sarah Pocock of the Hampshire Forest Partnership. The partnership has been set up to encourage more tree planting around the county in order to help meet an ambitious target of a million new trees in Hampshire by 2050. The partnership is working to achieve this with the help of a variety of different organisations and many local volunteers, They are planting trees on land where the public have access or where the trees will improve the landscape for the benefit of the public.

Schemes include creating new mini-forests, orchards, hedges, and shelterbelts. During the last planting season, the partnership has planted several thousand trees in our borough as well as many more around the county. Sarah will be telling us about the achievements of the partnership so far and what they hope to achieve in the coming year.

The AGM is also your chance to decide on the committee and direction of the group over the coming year. At the time of going to press all the current committee members have indicated that they are willing to stand again. There are still vacancies on the committee for anyone who would be prepared to contribute to the running of the Friends of Park Wood.

Committee members attend our committee meetings which are held every two to three months and last around 1 - 2 hours depending on what we need to discuss in a relaxed setting. Most the reasons for the meetings is to plan our work days or any other activities that we might have such as training or a guided walk as well as listening to reports by the officers – chair, membership secretary and treasurer about anything that might impact on our group or the wood.

If you feel able to join the committee or would like further information, please contact Maureen Nye our secretary or Pete Hodges our chair before the AGM.

I hope you can join us at the AGM on the 10th of June.

Bluebell time

From the end of March into early May, our native broadleaf woods will be carpeted blue, with the flowering of the native Bluebell, one of our greatest British wildflower spectacles.

By the end of February this year, the leaves of the Bluebells were very obvious in Park Wood particularly under the hazel stools by the beech grove. Bluebells are associated with our native broadleaf woodlands. I remember my parents having a picture on the living room wall of my childhood home which showed a Chilterns beech wood with drifts of bluebells in flower.

Bluebells are considered by many to be Britain's national flower, abundant across the whole of the Britain (although it is less frequent in Ireland), it favours undisturbed sheltered shady habitats and is considered one of the indicator species for ancient woodland. However, Bluebells are not just confined to woodland habitats, they are also found in places with the right degree of humidity and continuity of habitat such as on hedge-banks or upland pastures or on cliffs and in ravines where there has been little disturbance due to inaccessibility.

The name Bluebell didn't come into common use for the flower until it was popularised by the romantic poets of the 19th century. *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* is the accepted scientific name nowadays, although this name has varied three times since the 1980's from *Endymion non-scriptus* to *Scilla non-scripta* to *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* as recently as 1991.

The native Bluebell flower is characterised as nodding, cylindrical with petal tips recurved and anthers yellow unlike the introduced Spanish Bluebell (*Endymion hispanicus*) which is a larger plant, erect, paler; petals more open, tips not recurved and anthers purple. The Spanish Bluebell is a garden escape in the UK and poses a real threat to our native bluebell not least because it can cross pollinate with our native species forming a hybrid *Endymion hispanicus* x *non-scriptus* this is commonly grown in gardens but has also been found in our native woodlands.

The native bluebell doesn't do well under dense dark conifer plantations where the litter of pine needles over time increases the acidity level of the topsoil.

Bluebells have been found to persist provided the right conditions are met and where conifer plantations have been cleared and the litter removed then restocked with broadleaf species the bluebells have begun to flourish once more.



One worry has been the wholesale stripping of woods of Bluebells when bulbs are dug up ironically to meet public demand for planting natural wild gardens. This demand has led to both legal and illegal harvesting of bulbs in woods. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 makes it an offence to uproot any wild plant without permission of the landowner but does allow landowners to legally sell the bulbs in their woods to commercial diggers.

So please enjoy the Bluebells in Park Wood this spring and remember not to pick the plants but leave them to seed and spread giving other people the chance to enjoy their beauty.

BIG GREEN WEEK 8th to the 16th of June 2024



The Havant Climate Alliance is co-ordinating a series of activities around the borough as part of a Nationwide Big Green Week which aims to highlight what is being done and can be done to protect our wildlife and nature as well as combat climate change and other environmental challenge. The theme for this year is about swapping skills and to this end we have 3 activities planned for Park Wood.

Our first is a green wood day in the wood on Sunday June 9th when anyone can come along and have a go at using a pole lath or a shave horse to work wood in a sustainable and traditional way.

The second activity is our Annual general meeting on Monday 10th June at 7 pm in the Baptist Church where our guest speaker Sarah Pocock will be talking to us about the work of the Hampshire Forest Partnership and how they are enabling the planting of thousands of trees around our borough and the rest of Hampshire.

The third event is an evening walk in Park Wood and the Queens Inclosure looking at the way our native woods are managed for timber, conservation, and people.



There will be other activities around the borough during the week. For more information look up the Havant Big Green Week on the Havant Climate Alliance website: <https://havantclimatealliance.com>

Pete Hodges
Chair of the Friends of Park Wood

Membership

Just a reminder that membership of the Friends of Park Wood runs from the 1st of April to 31st March each year.

Membership Application

Membership is due annually on 1st April each year. It is open to all those who are interested in or care for Park Wood. All friends will receive regular Newsletters with updated information on Park Wood.

NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE **TELEPHONE No**

E-MAIL

I / we support the objectives of the Park Wood Project and apply to join The Friends of Park Wood. Membership covers everyone living at the same address. I enclose a donation towards the Friends of Park Wood; a minimum donation of £5.00 is suggested.

Signed

Please return this form to the Secretary:

Maureen Nye, 6 Deanswood Drive, Waterloooville, PO7 7RB. Mobile: 07894 015041 Email: maureenye@ntlworld.com
