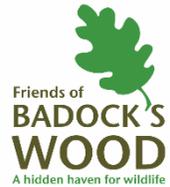


Friends of Badock's Wood Annual Report 2020

The Friends of Badock's Wood annual reporting year runs from 1 March 2020 – 28 February 2021.



When the year started, Greta Thunberg had just visited Bristol and Covid-19 had yet to be recognised as a global pandemic. However very soon into March 2020 it was clear that it was very serious and the pandemic was declared.

What that meant for many of our Friends of Badock's Wood was that the nature reserve became an even more valuable place to visit when everywhere else was out of bounds, and for many people who were shielding, it was the only place they could visit.

We put up notices reminding people of the need to social distance and whilst it was difficult in some parts of the wood, and the wood got very busy at certain times of the day / week, in general people were careful. The wood became extremely popular and lots of people who had never even realised it was on their doorstep found that they needed to visit the wood to get fresh air, exercise and play with their children, or just a break from whatever else they were doing.

It has proved extremely popular with people of all ages and we have received a lot of compliments from visitors especially those who have not visited much, if at all, before.

With the restrictions on meeting up, working together in groups, and the ongoing need to social distance our volunteer work on site was put on hold. Although we have not been able to undertake events or projects in the wood we have been using the time to continue to evaluate the situation and plan for the future and fundraise accordingly.

Badock's Wood Management

The Friends of Badock's Wood has continued to work closely with the City Council Parks Department to manage and enhance Badock's Wood.

We had previously been told that the river bank of "Beehive Brook" along the path from Lakewood Road would be repaired in the financial year 2020/21, but the pandemic put both a hold on that and also a financial reappraisal. We know that there are still plans for some shoring up of the banks and bridge replacement over the brook near where it meets the River Trym, but we have no details nor timescales. When we know more we will let everyone know.

The bridge over the waterfall was damaged by vandals last Summer (and sad to say it's been damaged again recently). The Council does repair the damage done as soon as possible but it would be so much better if we could stop it happening in the first place of course.

The full Management Plan has still not been rewritten / updated. Our volunteers only have so much time to spare, however the action plan from the old Management Plan continues to be regularly reviewed and updated. We meet at least annually with the Parks Department to review these actions, as well as being in regular email contact.

There have been staff changes at the Parks Department, most notably the retirement of Jerry Coles with whom we have worked on Badock's Wood matters since our group started. We are very grateful for all the support and advice Jerry and his colleagues have given us and the work that they do in the wood and wish him well in his retirement.

We have also been very lucky to have had two school students volunteer with us for their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award. Harry has mapped the small copse on the recreational field for us so that we know what trees are there and we are now planning their future management. Maren has mapped the hedge between the footpath and the recreational field on the Greenway Centre side of the field. Again this lets us know which species are there and which are thriving and how we can plan for the hedgerow management long term.

Our thanks to them both for undertaking this work independently for us.

Grass management, the mowing regime and hay cuts, is a perennial point of discussion both between ourselves and other users of the wood, and the Council Parks Department. The Bristol Parks Forum (the network of Parks groups) has been asking groups for our views, concerns, aspirations in terms of grassland management and took the outcome of these discussions to a meeting with Parks management. We will continue to liaise with the Parks staff on this, but it is also noted that there will be changes to some mowing regimes as a response to the Ecological Emergency and as Council machinery comes up for renewal different replacement mower options, for example ones that can collect the grass if required rather than just "cut and drop" are being considered. Discussions are continuing as to the best regimes for different sites, the range of options possible, and getting these published online so that everyone is aware why some parts of the site are cut short – e.g. the Bronze Age Burial Mound, and others only mowed once a year by a farmer who does

a “hay cut” and removes and bales the grass. After some complaints that Badock’s Wood’s hay cut took place in July rather than August, it then proceeded to be very wet in August and it would have probably not been possible then. Typically there are early hay cuts (late July / early – mid August) and late hay cuts (late August – September) and which sites have which is being discussed as well.

Meadow 1 – the first seeded meadow near the school boundary - had its first hay cut for 3 years last July. It then had a cut and drop mow a few weeks later which wasn’t ideal. On the plus side, it appears to be a good year for cowslips now (April 2021) which are growing not only in our seeded wildflower meadows but have also spread into the grassland that has never been seeded but just left to “do its own thing”. We will be looking to see how the cowslips fare in different strips of the meadow and whether there might be anything that can be deduced regarding impacts of trampling, mowing etc.

During the past year we have had some very wet spells, including some heavy rain in August as well as over the winter months, and coupled with the extra use of the wood by more visitors taking their daily exercise, particularly during the pandemic restrictions, the paths and adjacent areas have had some heavy wear. This meant they became very wet which has led to two issues:

- Where paths are bounded by slopes the mud has travelled down the slopes and made the paths narrower
- Where they are flat and not hard surfaced the paths have become muddy and puddled and visitors have spread across the meadows with some impact on those areas.

We are hoping to do some reparatory work on the paths with volunteers – scraping back the mud and we will be asking the Parks Dept for more scalplings to bed into the particularly muddy and puddled areas. We will be seeking strong volunteers to assist with this work during the year.

Due to the pandemic not much organised volunteer work has taken place in Badock’s Wood but we do have plans for the coming year. We have been grateful to individuals who have litter picked whilst out walking in the wood to help keep Badock’s Wood lovely.

The Bamboo at the Triangle was cut back by volunteers to make the path easier to use.

The Council's rules on volunteering in their Parks and Green Spaces reflects national pandemic restrictions and takes a precautionary approach. At the time of writing (April 2021) group volunteering is being allowed again but only in groups of up to 6 people, including the leader, and with good social distancing from each other and the public. We will be gathering details of people who wish to volunteer this year. There is a link to a form for volunteers to complete in our latest newsletter and on our website.

Wildlife

Wildlife continues to thrive alongside the human and canine visitors.

Our **Bird Group**, led by Roger Moses, managed to conduct nearly all the monthly bird surveys last year, in spite of Covid 19 .

Roger reports that the picture for 2020 is similar to recent years, 35 species in all, 564 records. From outside the surveys, Roger is pleased to report that a female sparrowhawk was seen doing a courtship display over the wood in the spring; we normally only record their presence by rings of plucked prey feathers, and reports of sightings from surrounding gardens. Again outside the surveys, we know that the tawny owls bred, producing 3 fledged chicks (see Matt Hobbs' photo), and they have been actively calling over the winter. It is rewarding that our little urban patch of wooded river valley can support healthy avian predators.



Invertebrates

With no walks possible we missed our Bugs and Butterflies walk that Tony Smith or Jon Mortin usually lead. There were lots of sightings of butterflies and many other invertebrates including a dark green, well camouflaged, longhorn beetle, *Stenocorus meridianus* (see photo). Identified for us by Ray Barnett from Bristol Naturalists' Society who advised it was "A good record for Badock's Wood. Quite localised around here."



Himalayan Balsam is an invasive non native plant species that grows along water courses. Thanks to Sian Parry for tackling the HB in Badock's Wood in Summer 2020. For 2021, the Trout in the Trym Network of which, we are part, is planning a Himalayan Balsam removal project along the length of the Trym from Southmead to Sea Mills.

Roger Moses is our representative on this network. We have little Himalayan Balsam growing along the river banks in the wood as it prefers sunny sites, but the network will be seeking volunteers to work in small groups along the length of the Trym this Summer.

Trees

A number of trees in the reserve fell during 2020 and where necessary the Council's Tree Officer has arranged for them to be cut back or removed. High winds and higher than usual rainfall (both of which are expected to increase due to climate change) impact particularly on the trees that are shallow rooted along the limestone banks of the rivers and the path between the Triangle and the Stile.

The Friends will be looking at the potential for active management of some parts of the wood, particularly the small copse which includes some dead ash, and the nearby hedgerow has elm, some dead, some suckering which are being investigated.

Conservation work we are hoping to do in the wood in small groups this year:

- Bluebell management – removing non native bluebells to help native bluebells thrive
- Pond area management – improving the planting around the pond area and regularly clearing the “hitching posts” and platform area to make them usable by visitors
- Mosaic paving – removing grass from between the paving so that herbicide is not needed
- Path management (as outlined earlier in this report)
- Copse management – dealing with trees in the copse on the recreational field – generally an autumn / winter activity
- Wildlife monitoring – e.g. sampling of areas on the meadows (i.e. counting numbers of species in a set area)

Projects

As many of you will know we lost two of our wonderful Hidden Treasures sculptures to nature this year. The Green Man at the Wildlife Park end of the woodland had been carved in a hollow standing tree trunk and so always had a limited life and the sculpture had been decaying for some time. In June 2020 the tree trunk finally collapsed after the fungi that was living on it started to produce fruiting bodies and it had finally rotted through.



Similarly, the spider carving in the horse chestnut is also rotting away – but continues to be host to other wildlife such as fungi and invertebrates and some plants.



Projects we hope to take forward in the coming year:

- Sculptures and Benches – commissioning new / replacement wood sculptures and benches in the wood
- Steps refurbishment – refurbishing the decaying steps
- Community Routes signpost project – signposting footpath routes through the wood towards local areas such as Southmead, Henleaze, Westbury and the Greenway Centre and its facilities.



Litter Pick Group

FOBW Litter Group has not met since the first lockdown. However despite a brief increase in litter in Spring / Summer 2020, litter has not been excessive. We are grateful to all those visitors to Badock's Wood who both use the litter bins but also those who bring litter pickers and bags and litter pick as they walk around, walk their dogs and even as a family fun activity! We don't know who most of you are but we see what you do – thank you.

Events

Although we haven't been able to lead any walks in Badock's Wood since March, the local GP surgery, Greenway Community Practice, asked us for some self guided walks in the wood so that individuals could enjoy a walk in the wood. We updated a couple of leaflets that had been produced with the Council and these can be downloaded either from our website or from the Practice website.

Financial Report and Accounts

With projects on hold and events not taking place there was very little movement of money into or out of our current account and just a few pence interest on our savings account. However, with the projects that we are planning in mind, we set up a GoFundMe site which during the year reported on has received £409.41 in donations (and more since). We are very grateful to be able to add this to our already committed funds so that we can get cracking on projects as soon as it is possible this year.

Martin Firth has been Treasurer for a number of years but he has now decided that he wishes to hand on this role and we are seeking a new Treasurer.

Thank you to Martin for your work as the Friends of Badock's Wood Treasurer.

Financial accounts on the following pages.

Accounts Financial Year March 2020 - February 2021

FRIENDS OF BADOCK'S WOOD

Statement of Accounts to 28 February 2021

PROFIT AND LOSS

Income

Treasurer's Account (Current account)

Donations

Individual	50.00
GoFundMe - crowdfunder (AydenNV)	409.41
Westbury WI	30.00

Sales

Greetings Card	24.00
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Treasurer's Account Total Income **513.41**

Expenditure

Bristol Parks Forum Subs	10.00
Birdboxes	99.80
Safety Gloves	48.68
Bristol Naturalists Society Subs	25.00

Treasurer's Account Total Expenditure **183.48**

Surplus/Loss **329.93**

Business Account (Savings / Reserves)

Business Account income

Interest	0.38
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Business Account total income **0.38**

BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS	as at 28 February 2021	as at 29 February 2020
Treasurer's account	4,365.48	4,035.55
Business account	1,295.75	1,295.37
Petty Cash	0.00	0.00
Total Assets	<u>5,661.23</u>	<u>5,330.92</u>

RECONCILIATION

Treasurer's account Opening Balance	4,035.55
Profit/loss	329.93
<u>Treasurer's Account Closing balance</u>	<u>4,365.48</u>

Business Account Opening Balance	1,295.37
Interest	0.38
Business Account Total Income	0.38
<u>Business Account closing balance</u>	<u>1,295.75</u>

Commitments

Triangle Bench	1,120.00
Clear Up Poster	320.00
Donation Project	1,000.00
What's On leaflet	200.00
Total (estimate)	<u>2,640.00</u>

<u>Assets net of Commitments</u>	<u>3,021.23</u>
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Notes to the Accounts

Income consists of donations and card sales