

PC Environment Group Meeting 14.09.16

Present: Hermann and Liz, Claire, Jane, Mary and John
Apologies: Tony, Julie

Community Litter Pick on Sunday 9th October 10-12noon

We planned the publicity of the event: posters, website, Westmorland Gazette, parish database and Community News notices. Mary will organise the equipment delivery from SLDC and liaise with Selside and the Cenacolo Community. The Hall is booked for 12-2pm..

The usual provision of food: Mary and Liz will make soup and we hope Sue and Tony will cook bacon butties again.

Claire suggested that it should be a litter week, so that people could do their bit during the week if they couldn't attend on Sunday.

Claire's Suggestions

1. *Wildflower Seeds*: Publicise www.growwilduk.com to encourage take up of free wild flower seeds to sow in the parish: database, website and Community News
2. *Bat Boxes*: A Saturday morning before Feb 14th, a public event workshop making bat boxes. John will investigate this idea.
3. *Winter talk / Summer Walk*: Let's find a good speaker on a wildlife topic for a Wednesday evening in January at the Hall. Mary will approach Jen Aldous Cumbria River's Trust. Could others please research speakers?
4. *Woodland Workshop* for the Hall or woodland to take place in April eg making garden structure or willow basket.
5. *Skelsmergh Home Grown or Sown Show* combined with a coffee morning at the Hall in September. Excellent ideas, we need to find out if they would be popular at the planned Community Hall meeting to discuss its future.

Verge Spraying

Following an unsatisfactory reply from Mr Huck, the PC has agreed to request more information. Mary will send draft letter to the Parish Clerk. Claire suggested small signs to be placed on verges in late spring "Please do not spray our verges". Mary will send email to NFU asking for their comments about verge spraying by farmers. Spring survey of vulnerable verges would be a good idea to highlight the habitat.

Himalayan Balsam Report

The newly discovered area of balsam on both sides of the Sprint below Thorneyslack Farm has been cleared by an extended team, but will need more attention next year. We cleared the rest of the Sprint down to the confluence with the Kent. The River Mint was cleared as far as the aqueduct which marks the parish boundary. We then worked upstream as far as Patton Bridge removing many small patches. John explored the Flodder Beck as far as Low Lodge Bridge where other patches were found. This out of parish information will be passed on to the River's Trust. We hope they will take it on next year.

Footpath Survey

Hermann and Liz, Julie, Mary and John have completed their sections. We have more to complete.

Hermann reported problems with the PRow leading from Mealbank. He will be visiting the landowner to discuss a fallen tree which blocks the path. The first workparty to deal with other PRow problems in Mealbank will be on Wed. 12th October, weather permitting. Meet at Mealbank by the noticeboard at 10am. There are many tasks to be tackled especially cutting back brambles and replacing way markers. More waymarkers are needed from ACT and work parties to keep all the footpaths open.

Next meeting

Wednesday 11th January 7.30pm at Oakbank House.