



# Newsletter

Bracknell Conservation Volunteers

Newsletter No. **105**

24 October 2019

## What we've been doing

**8 October 2019**

**Westmorland Park**

The task was coppicing hazel stools and cutting back encroaching vegetation within 2m of the path. Coppiced material was piled by the path ready for chipping at a later date. Larger logs were placed in separate piles, and hazel branches suitable as binders for hedging were collected.

21 volunteers attended. The weather was overcast but quite warm.



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A fruiting tree, believed to have been a bullace, was found. The bullace resembles a large sloe, but there is some doubt about whether it is a species in its own right, or a variety of the domestic plum (*Prunus domestica*):

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bullace>

Some cyclamen flowers (probably *Cyclamen coum*) were present by the path. Although attractive, this is a non-native species.

Volunteers found a group of about 14 shaggy parasol fungi (*Chlorophyllum rhacodes*)

<https://www.first-nature.com/fungi/chlorophyllum-rhacodes.php>



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## 15 October 2019

## Englemere Pond

Volunteers were asked to clear a strip of reeds (*Phragmites australis*) from the pond in accordance with a rotation pattern. Another task was clearing vegetation on the shore of the pond. Cleared material was burnt on a bonfire. Water from the pond was used to douse the bonfire at the end of the task.

22 volunteers attended, and we were very glad to welcome a new volunteer.

The weather was dry, overcast and warm. We were very lucky to have a dry day since it had been raining almost continually for the best part of a week.



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## 22 October 2019

## The Parks

We parked at the Community Centre, which proved difficult to find for some volunteers. We had a beautiful day, with bright sunshine and a mostly cloudless sky. It was quite warm in the sun, but remained cold in the shade. 19 volunteers attended.

The single task today was removing tree guards. These were the heavyweight rigid plastic kind, not the flimsier spiral ones. Volunteers used Stanley knives or scissors to remove the guards. Most trees had stakes, attached to the tree guards with plastic ties, which were rescued and kept for re-use. Once removed, tree guards were rolled up with other guards to make a compact package and loaded into the trailer for subsequent disposal. Stakes were also trailed away for disposal.

We had removed the guards from an island of woodland by about coffee time, then moved on to clear more of them from the strip of woodland along one edge of the Parks green area. This area proved more difficult to access, with dense hawthorn, hazel and guelder rose undergrowth. We managed to clear this area by about 14:00, in time for a slightly early end of task.

Some volunteers left the task early to continue with extracurricular work at Wykery Copse (see page 5) making mud and log dams to raise the water level.

## Coming up next

**29 October 2019**

**Caesar's Camp**

Heathland scrub clearance.

Street parking near to 107 Northcott. Parking can be limited, if possible please car-share or come by bike/on foot/public transport.

<http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=486323&y=166258&z=106>

**5 November 2019**

**Wildmoor Heath**

Heathland scrub clearance.

Park in the designated car park. There is usually just enough room here.

<http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=483846&y=163059&z=110>

## The unpleasantness of litter picking

Litter pickers encountered dog poo bags and discarded nappies, among other items, in Winkfield. The Big Litter Pick event was held at Forest Park. Winkfield parish councillor Nikos Polydorou took part, together with other Bracknell councillors, and Winkfield residents.

The group filled seven bags of rubbish in only 90 minutes. Councillor Polydorou has posted on social media to express his concern at the amount and nature of the litter.

BCV members are quite well used to picking up dog poo bags and nappies.

See: Bracknell News 15 October 2019

<https://www.bracknellnews.co.uk/news/17969376.outraged-bracknell-councillors-discover-nappies-dog-poo-forest-park/>

## Improving wetland habitat at Wykery Copse

Some of our volunteers have contributed their free time to working at Wykery Copse, which BCV last visited on 24 September 2019. The aim is to prevent the copse from drying out and becoming just another dog walking area, with diminishing biodiversity. Wykery Copse is a rare example of wet woodland, now a nationally scarce habitat.

Although there is almost always a stream running through the Copse, there is evidence that it is drying out. In efforts to prevent this, a dam was built at the outfall. Now, volunteers working about 60m upstream of the outfall dam have built a low-tech-mud-split-stake-dam, which took about 2.5 hours to build. Already the water level upstream is about 150mm higher.

The volunteers plan to build a series of low-tech dams in Wykery, working upstream. The best time to do this in Autumn/Winter, to retain the wetness.

The dams will be built solely with materials from the site and using few hand tools.

If you want to join in this work, volunteers are welcome, so please get in touch.

## What's on

### ***Wildlife in Ascot***

Small Mammal Survey in South Ascot.

**Friday 25 October 2019**

**17:00**

**Saturday 26 October 2019**

**09:30**

An opportunity to get up close and personal with some of our native small mammals with expert Pat Morris.

Meet at the railway bridge where St. George's Lane meets Oliver Road, SL5 9DG

*[Note: will be cancelled if the weather is bad]*

See: <https://sites.google.com/site/wildlifeinascot/home>

### ***Nightingale Triangle Project***

Work party

**Saturday 2 November 2019**

**10:00 – 15:00**

Street parking in Firlands

### ***Contact Bracknell Conservation Volunteers***

On-site mobile phone: **07986 707 448**

Programme enquiries telephone Trevor Scott on **01344 628 602**

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