

Happy New Year!

This is the first of what we hope will be a periodic update of what is happening in Greyfield Wood.

2023 was another busy year in the wood and many thanks are due to our band of volunteers and Directors who regularly give their time and muscles to do the various tasks necessary to keep the wood in good order and ensure that our contract commitments are met.

In November, and for many of us, the highlight of the year, saw 230 saplings planted. A mixture of broad leaf trees, all protected against deer and other potential assailants. Many thanks to our regular volunteers, Green Gym and Mott MacDonald for your splendid work in this endeavour.



December saw the final actions of the year, which included the annual felling and extraction of the Beenham village Christmas tree, prior to it being erected and lit outside the village school.

This was followed by the establishment of a new “winter” footpath in the wood that provides an alternate route away from the stream path that gets very boggy, especially in prolonged periods of wet weather.

2024 promises to be another busy year....

### **Withy Copse - Ash die-back felling**

The continuing campaign to rid the wood of trees affected with Ash dieback is in full swing. This year we are felling in Upper Withy Copse. As I write we have already felled over 60 diseased trees. We expect to fell over 100 affected trees before Spring. All felling is Forestry Commission approved and the felled areas will be cleared and then replanted with broadleaf trees later in the year.

Whilst mentioning Withy Copse it is worth mentioning a ditch which runs right down through the middle of it. It is around 300 meters long, running from up near the substation to where it joins the stream at the north corner of the wood. The ditch is known as the “Withy Copse drain”. Following the heavy rain that we have been recently experiencing, this drain has been carrying a regular heavy flow of water. It confirms that the work that we did during the autumn to clear the drain of woodland debris was necessary and timely. We do this work annually, clearing both the stream and the drain to ensure good drainage across the wood.’



### Board Changes

We have seen some changes in the board during December/January, with Mike Weston stepping down, following ten years of dedicated commitment to the wood. We are sure that he will still be volunteering as and when he is able... Many thanks Mike! Simon Chippendale and John Hammond, both regular volunteers, were welcomed onto the board. With Mike's departure, John has taken over responsibility for communications.

### Open Day

Our Open Day will, this year, be held at the wood on **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May from 2pm – 5pm**. Let's hope it is a good year for Bluebells!

### Call for volunteers!

Volunteers are the essential part of the Greyfield Wood Community Interest Company. Be it: scything the fern and bramble in more recently planted areas, clearing paths and streams, clearing storm damage, extracting cordwood (logs) to be sold, clearing the ground where trees have been felled or planting saplings, there is always plenty to do. The woodland never stops growing and evolving. Infact, left to nature, most of the UK would revert to woodland.

Our volunteers meet on the third Saturday morning of each month, February -November, and an active and rewarding social time is enjoyed by all.



If YOU would like to join our group of volunteers, we would love to see you and you would be made most welcome!

If you know someone who would like to get involved, please pass on this Newsletter. Our volunteers help out when they can. We are not expecting a monthly commitment....

As health and safety is an essential part to working in Greyfield Wood, it is essential for all volunteers to attend an "Introduction to woodland safety" session, prior to getting to work. **To this end we have scheduled two such sessions on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> February and Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March, both starting at 7.30pm at The Six Bells pub.**

If you would like to attend one of the above evenings, or have any questions about the work the volunteers do, please contact me, John Hammond on 07818 400440.

We look forward to welcoming you to our band of volunteers.