



Plantation Newsletter

2nd June 2020

The last Plantation newsletter was sent out back in March, when the world was a very different place, so this one is to update you on what has been happening over the spring.

One positive of the current situation is that the local footpaths, and especially the Plantation, have had a lot more use than usual, being positively busy at times. It has been especially great to see families walking together and investigating the wildlife as they go. It has clearly been a valued resource for home schooling as well as for exercise and pleasure. However, I realise that for many of you, going out at all has not been possible, so this is particularly to update you.

If you can remember far enough back, last winter in the plantation was very wet and we had a constant struggle to keep the paths useable. The final straw was the rotting of the supports on two of the bridges to the point where they became dangerous, so they had to be removed. Plans for their replacement had been in place since the previous summer but it had not been possible to get them fixed. The committee, of course, has not met since March either and making new plans for them will be a priority when we do.

One positive about the wet winter is that the ponds are still fairly full and a family of moorhens has taken up residence. One adult and a couple of chicks have been seen several times. If you see them please let us know, or better still take a photo - that would be great for our archives. The birds in general have been singing loudly and not apparently concerned by the increased footfall, so we hope for many youngsters. It will be interesting to see how many of the nest boxes have been used when they are cleaned out in the winter.

Following on from the snowdrops, aconites, violets and bluebells, we were pleased to see that several of the plants we had introduced are now producing flowers. The primroses, wild garlic, foxgloves and wild daffodils are spreading and snowdrops are now becoming established in new locations. The red campion has been a particular success, colonising the bank by the steps and by the Springfield entrance with enthusiasm. The wildflower area at the Charnwood end has been less successful and will need re-seeding, probably with a different seed mix. We can but try! The cow parsley has been thick but not especially tall this year and is just going over now.

It was a particular pleasure to see that several of the wild cherry trees we planted a few years ago, and which we thought we had lost in the following dry summer, came into flower this year. Several of the rowans and dog roses we planted at the same time seem also to have survived.

There have been good conditions for butterflies, brimstones were seen earlier and speckled woods are quite prolific at the moment. Remember you can log the flora and fauna you see in the Plantation by registering on Nature Spot <https://www.naturespot.org.uk/> This site collects natural history records for Leicestershire and feeds them into national data bases. It is important to log quite common species so that accurate distribution statistics are available nationally. It is also a great site for helping you identify what you see in the Plantation.

Well – that’s it until next season. We start our volunteer programme again in September (date to be confirmed but probably 6th). In the meantime, our thanks as ever for your support. Keep well and enjoy the summer.

Lyn Cooper
Plantation Volunteer Co-ordinator