

Fairfield Association
Flora, Fauna and Orchard Management Group [FFOG]
Effective date of meeting: 5 November 2020

Participants: Graham Brandwood, Glenys Ferguson (Mins), Tony Finn, Oliver Fulton,, Sue Nieduszynska (Chair), Ian Procter, Hilary Short, Peter Tilley, Chris Workman

1. **Apologies:** Dave Brookes, Steve Bullen, David Elliott, Clio Graham, Mick Short
2. **Minutes of last meeting:** Approved.
3. **Matters arising from Minutes: Neighbours update:**
 - 3.1. **Letter: Hilary** has forwarded the proposed letter to the Orchard and Aldcliffe Road neighbours to Ian. Although some members felt it should be sent out sooner rather than later, delivering letters in the current Covid circumstances seems inappropriate. **Glenys** will put a reminder in the Arrangements for it to be dealt with in January.
 - 3.2. **Brash disposal:** Communication with the neighbour has not yet taken place. Graham (5.1) indicates that dumping is still taking place. As 3.1, action will be deferred until January (**Glenys**).
4. **Management:**
 - 4.1. **Arable update:** The first cut of the wildflower margins took place on October 5th. There was no disagreement with Sue's view that it is now too late for a second cut. By mistake, the contractor also cut between the northern margin and the hedge (in practice, possibly a good thing - see 4.7). Cut of the four beetle banks was delayed by an unexpected boulder, but completed on 4th November (cuttings not cleared – task for Volunteers, **Ian**). Sue notes that the FA has been billed for this work (see 7.2) which has not been the case in the past when the margins were done at the same time as the crop. This payment could not be challenged as the margins are not specified in the contract. **Sue** will take this into account when she redrafts the contract for next year (see also 7.1).
 - 4.2. **Grazing matters:**
 - 4.2.1. **Cattle monitoring:** A bullock and 3 adult females left the herd at the start of October, and the bull on loan was returned on 25th. Current herd size is 22 animals. By 5th November, when all of this year's calves will be over six months old, this translates to 1.41 livestock units/per hectare. The cattle had access to Carr House Meadow for a few days at the end of September to graze the haymaking aftermath. NE's winter prescriptions for stocking density take effect on 1st December (see 7.1).
 - 4.2.2. **Graziers' meeting follow up:** At the Trustees meeting on 8th August, **Dave** agreed to re-investigate the possibility of getting a water supply to the top of the Gun Range.
 - 4.3. **Woodland and hedges:**
 - 4.3.1. **Tree Surgeon: a) commissioning of survey:** **Hilary** has contacted the Tree Surgeon about a November inspection.

b) TPO for oaks: Hilary has pointed out that the oaks are not in the Orchard but down the path, close to Alder Pond. The Tree Surgeon has advised there is no need for a TPO, so no further action.

c) Aspen: The Tree Surgeon met Ian to review the safety of the aspen in the Orchard at the bottom of the Towneley Close path. He immediately recommended felling the tree, which promptly took place with the help of the Rapid Reaction Force (see 6.4). (Ian notes there are four aspen on order for Pony Wood - 7.2.)

4.3.2.Environment Agency tree planting offer: Still to no response to any form of contact. **Peter** will persevere from one more month.

4.3.3.RPA permission for West Field corners (P19A): No report (**Dave**). In anticipation that permission will eventually be granted and with approval from Dave, Volunteers have been creating these (see Ian's Volunteer reports appended).

4.3.4. Flailing in West Field: The neighbouring farmer has already flailed his own hedges, ignoring the West Field work. Ian is relaxed about this as he intends laying the northern hedge later in the season and considers the FA has the labour power to trim back the west hedge. This item will remain in the Arrangements Calendar in case help is needed in future..

4.4. Whiteboard for sightings: The sightings board is now in place on the path by Little Wood. FFOG members conveyed their thanks to Winston and Peter, and commented that it looks great. Ian and David have discussed its ongoing management. They have decided this would be facilitated by appointing a "Whiteboard Monitor" whose duties would be a weekly visit to 1) record the sightings and 2) oversee the maintenance of the board (cleaning, ensuring the felt tip pen has not been nicked etc!). **David's** offer to take this role on will be accepted to establish the system. He is also asked to consider how the sightings are 'captured' for monitoring/dissemination (e.g. reported on the FA blog and/or spreadsheets). David is also advised to arrange a second monitor either as a back-up or to take over if he does not want to continue once the system is in place. (This could be done by advertising to the FA membership.)

4.5. Bamboo control: Graham has produced a paper (circulated) assessing each stand of bamboo in Upper Sowerholme in terms of difficulty of treatment and options for control. **Graham, Sue** and Ian N. will look at the bamboo on site to identify stands near neighbouring gardens before any decision on action is taken. [Update – Meeting took place on 9th November.] Ian P. and Graham are sceptical about eradicating the bamboo without resort to chemical methods. Use of chemicals, including white vinegar, requires approval by FFOG.

Bundles of canes created as a result of the earlier chain-saw work are to be offered to the public (donation box) at the Christmas pop-up stall to be held at the shed (**Ian**). Date currently deferred to 5th December.

4.6. Ponds:

4.6.1.Lancashire Wildlife Trust pond improvement project: Hilary has been approached by John Lamb of Lancashire Wildlife Trust. LWT is looking for sites for an NE-funded project to create or improve ponds as habitat for Great Crested Newts, with work completed by March 2021. Hilary, Mick and Sue met John on site in late October to discuss his proposal:

- One new pond created by merging two scrapes in Flora Field (grid reference SD 4701 6061)

- One new pond in Flora Field (SD 4697 6054)
- One new pond created by enlarging and deepening the scrape in West Field (SD 4668 6071)
- Enlarging and deepening Cromwell's Pond in the Hay Meadow (SD 4716 6099)

After consulting the other Trustees, Hilary, Mick and Sue have accepted the proposal. They consider that the FA has “nothing to lose and much to gain”: the Flora Ponds will be engineered with regard to the needs of lapwing chicks (4.6.2) and enlarging and deepening the West Field scrape may result in the smashing of further land drains (see 5.1). LWT will not only pay for the work but organise it as well. John will confirm that the work is compatible with the FA's NE Agreement and there will be no new targets (**Hilary**).

Dan Haywood has been notified as this work overlaps with the lapwing project (4.6.2) and **Sue** will invite him to attend when the work is done. **Peter** has offered to “act as lines-man”.

There has been no objection to the project from FFOG members and it was accepted that there was time pressure on the decision. However, there was still some criticism of the process. Ian felt FA and FFOG meeting members should have been consulted in some way, especially as a decision on the area around the Flora Ponds had been deferred by FFOG in May (item 8, P 12) recognising there were different views on its development. Graham felt that his involvement would have been beneficial given that he has been maintaining the reserve's ponds for several years [post meeting – David echoes this view]. He notes that he would expect to be involved in future meetings as the project develops.

Graham also makes a specific point about developing the scrape in West Field into a pond. He argues it is not a suitable environment for GCN as it is surrounded by closely cropped grass. ‘Scrubbing up’ the surrounds and immediate pond environment is not currently allowed under the NE agreement. Glenys is concerned about the lack of detail on the size and depth of the new ponds. Although they will have muddy margins suitable for lapwing, how suitable will they be for other wildlife? **Hilary** to raise these points with LWT.

4.6.2. Flora Field lapwing project:: The work planned on the Flora Field ponds (4.6.1) will also modify them for the needs of lapwing chicks, so there is no need for the FA to find a contractor for this job. Decisions are still required on a) the location of the nesting scrapes and b) whether a pond on the northern boundary is required and, if so, how feasible this is. **Sue** will arrange site visits to consider these outstanding matters.

4.7. Nettles and thistles in Flora Field: Sue, Ian N., Ian P, Dave and Graham inspected the site on 25th September, Their report with suggestions was re-circulated to FFOG for this meeting. Actions taken following the inspection:

- The margins have been added to Graham's inspection reports

- **Sue** has emailed the FA's former NE adviser, who is now a consultant, to requesting a visit for advice. No response to date.

Sue's intention to ask the contractor to cut along the gap between the margin and the fence was thwarted when he returned to cut the beetle banks without informing anyone,

Note that Graeme Skelcher's report (5.2.2) did record nettles and thistles in the margins. although they were not present to a significant extent becoming a problem later. **Sue** suggests that the feasibility of 'weeding' the margin is considered following Graeme's next visit.

- 4.8. Approved plant access routes:** No report. The point was made that given the likelihood of vehicles on site in the near future (e.g. 4.6.1) this should be expedited (**Dave**).
- 4.9. 'No entry' & 'Emergency' notices:** Phone numbers on the 'emergency' notices have been updated and the notices are being laminated. A 'no entry' notice produced by **Sue** and **Hilary** has been sent to the FA meeting for comment and will come to FFOG in January. Disappointment was expressed about the delay in replacing notices removed at the end of March and that the revisions did not come to FFOG first.
- 4.10. Final cut of Long Pads path:** Done by Lancashire County Council.
- 4.11. Crab apple collection request:** Hilary has received a message from Lancaster Brewery via the FA website. They would like to take crab apples that would otherwise rot on the ground to make seasonal brandy. In return they would make a donation to the Orchard. The consensus of the comments is that there may be scope to offer some of the crab apples, subject to leaving enough for the benefit of wildlife and preserving the spectacle of the Golden Hornets, in particular. **Hilary** to explore further with Lancaster Brewery,

5. Monitoring:

- 5.1. Maintenance and HLS habitat inspections:** Graham is now reporting on a monthly basis so a total of four reports were circulated, covering his October and November inspections.

Graham has measured the density of the reeds in Upper Sowerholme. In two 1m quadrants within the established seedbed he estimates that it has thickened to well over 100 stems, if not quite the 150 of the NE target. Also in Upper Sowerholme, a Crimson Glory Vine has been identified by Peter – a garden escapee, which can potentially effect its host trees. There were no objections to Graham's proposal that its spread is monitored and no further action taken at this point.

Although, there was a large area of water in West Field when inspected on 2nd November, the scrape does not appear to be holding water as well as it did. Graham is continue to investigate (see also 4.6.1).

Extensive clearing work has been done in the ponds and channel in Upper Sowerholme and Graham intends to continue this elsewhere on the reserve over the winter. Ian comments that it may well be time for a digger to clear the water areas of Upper Sowerholme next year (**Glenys** to add note to Arrangements).

There have been various problems with the gates. There was no objection to Ian's proposal to shift the checking and oiling of locks and bolts from Graham's monthly inspection to a dedicated annual one (problems developing in the interim to be dealt with as appropriate to keep the gates secure). **Glenys** to add annual reminder to Arrangements Calendar.

On 1st November, there was a delivery of hay (a donation of unwanted feed) which was scattered at the northern end of Big Meadow. Hilary has reminded the Graziers that supplementary feeding in the reserve fields contravenes the Grazing Agreement as it is not permitted by Natural England..

5.2. Progress with surveys:

5.2.1. Odonata: Two reports from Phil Hendry have been circulated since the last meeting.

5.2.2. Meadow, Woodland and Arable Margin survey: Graeme Skelcher's report circulated.

Although the diversity and abundance of key species within the wildflower meadows meadow continues to increase steadily, it is still fractionally short of meeting the criteria for herb-rich 'lowland meadow'.

Graeme considers that Pony Wood has the potential to develop into a well-structured woodland, but that a substantial spread of desired herbs, development of a proper shrub layer, and establishment of a recognisable woodland in the expansion area will still take several years. He recommends some control of the denser areas of grass to encourage further herbs: an autumn or winter cut (cuttings removed) to provide a more open sward in the spring or some creation of bare ground around existing key plants to encourage natural spread. **Ian** considers this could be done by scything. Graeme also noted widespread, if sparse, self-seeded sycamore (an NE undesirable). **Ian** intends to accompany Graeme next year to identify and discuss the grass and sycamore problems, as well as identify for removal the Spanish bluebells in Little Wood (and also consider margin 'weeding' see 4.7) **Glenys** to note.

The bird seed and floristically enhanced grass margins in the arable field have again met NE targets for cover of key species. The continued presence of purple ramping-fumitory in the bird seed margin also adds to the site's biodiversity value.

5.2.3. Breeding Birds and winter bird surveys: The Breeding Birds survey report and field notes were received too late for consideration at this meeting and will be circulated for January (**Glenys**).

5.2.4. Flush counts: These winter counts started in October, with team size limited to 6 and other mitigations adopted in the light of Covid 19. The first count was very encouraging: 50 snipe flushed (all from Big Meadow and favouring the new regrowth rather than the older denser rushes). The second count on 2 November put up 46 snipe, this time 12 of them from School Pond.

5.3. Beehives in Flora Field: Keith Taylor reports that none of the hives in Flora Field have active colonies, having died out during the poor spring and April /May drought. He will

rejuvenate the frames and hopes to recolonise from his other hives after a queen rearing programme next May.

6. Volunteer activities:

6.1. Reports for September & October and proposed tasks: Sue as Chair, thanked Ian for his very informative reports (attached). The Dispersed Groups protocol that the Volunteers have been operating under to stay safe under the pandemic conditions was slightly revised in early October. Ian considers that this has worked well: Volunteers have followed the rules and feel safe.

There is considerable discussion, research and advice-taking on-going as the Trustees try to decide whether regular volunteering sessions can continue during the month's lockdown from 5th November. [Post meeting: The Trustees' decision is that regular sessions will continue using Ian's established protocol, with groups of up to six to assemble and disperse to work singly or in pairs. There will be no work undertaken along the footpaths or in the playground.]

Proposed tasks have only come to FFOG for approval in relation to the Saturday session immediately following a meeting. Starting from January, **Ian** will switch to submitting plans covering both Saturday and WWG sessions over the two month period until the next FFOG meeting.

6.2. Annual First Aid kit review: Contents of the First Aid boxes have been reviewed and updated. **Ian** will remind Volunteers at Saturday and Wednesday sessions of the First Aid procedures as soon as coronavirus restrictions permit. A new battery pack and pads were fitted to the defibrillator in September (for replacement by December 2022 – **Glenys** to note).

6.3. Attendance at Saturday sessions: This was low during the summer months. Ian contacted regular Saturday volunteers via the email list to identify their reasons for non-attendance. Responses confirmed his suspicion that some thought there would be too many volunteers and so did not put themselves forward. Ian hoped that his enquiry would itself stimulate people to attend, and this was indeed the case, with 16 volunteers for the October session.

6.4. Rapid Reaction Force: This formalises previous arrangements for calling upon volunteers at short notice if something needs attending to immediately on the Reserve or playground. Seven Volunteers have given permission for their contact details to be shared with Ian, Hilary and Sue (the main post holders contacted by members of the public or contractors when an issue arises). Four members of the RRF have already sprung into action. (see 4.3.1c).

7. Standing items:

7.1. Arrangements:

Glenys will:

- Prepare the annual cattle access timetable (including maximum days allowed in the winter period) for issue to the Graziers before the change to the winter regime on 1 December.
- Initiate an update of the Contacts List

Ian will:

- Arrange nestbox monitoring for annual review (note: Ian N. has pointed out that it is not possible to access all the nest boxes whilst maintaining a 2m distance and will discuss this with Ian P.)
- Prepare report on tools and materials fund for January FFOG

Sue will:

- Contact arable farmer and establish (in writing) agreement, herbicide regime & timings for coming year.
- Volunteers' Buffet preparation for January FFOG

Dave will:

- Present revised annual financial spreadsheet to January FFOG

Graham will:

- Prepare update on John Muir Awards for January FFOG
- Review the bee hotels and duck nesting platforms for January FFOG (4.8 May 2020)

7.2. Financial control:

Hilary notes that there has been some great work on the reserve and wants to give a gentle reminder that all projects must be costed and all expenditure agreed beforehand with either her or Sue (**Meeting Members**).

Wildlife Sightings Board construction materials £107 – item 4.4 (Ian)

Upgrade of the First Aid Boxes contents £80– item 6.2 (Ian)

Wild service tree £26 – October item 4.3.3 (Ian)

Aspen and alder buckthorn £34 – October item 4.3.4 (Ian)

Hay making and margin cutting £820.80 to date – September item 4.2.2/November 4.1 (Sue)

Breeding bird survey £150 – 5.2.2 (Sue)

7.3. Organised events: Current restrictions prevent an FA event to celebrate *Tree Charter Day*. Instead, meeting members have been advised of an online event organised by the Woodland Trust on November 28th.

7.4. Morecambe Bay Facilitation Fund partnership: Via MBFF, the FA has been approached to help Lancaster City Council create more wildflower-rich grasslands around the district, a project that will continue for several years. Donors of seed and green hay are being sought. FFOG members are keen to support this, particularly as the Hay Meadow was kick-started with donations and is currently an excellent source of yellow rattle seed. It was felt that provision of green hay would be more problematic than seed: can any be spared from the hay crop? would margin mowings be suitable?

Sue participated in a Zoom meeting on 5th November convened by MBFF to link up potential donors and LCC. She reports that seed collection is preferred to green hay as it is more targeted. Several members of the group can lend a “seed hoover” (which was advocated by Chris). There was also some discussion about monitoring e.g. butterflies

and moths. A plant list of target species will be circulated and a map of sites produced after which a second Zoom meeting will be held, probably in December (**Sue**).

8. **Date/place of next meetings:** on or around Thursday 14th January 2021, Thursday 4th March format and location tba

Ian Procter's Report on Volunteer Activities:

2nd September 2020

The Wednesday Work Group (WWG) met under the continuing 'dispersed group' protocol designed to keep people safe from Covid19. On a morning which threatened rain but remained dry until just after we had finished the following tasks were achieved.

- Four volunteers took on the mowing of the orchard grass using both machines and turn taking. Peter is going to take a look at the Torro machine which is not working at 100%.
- Two volunteers
 - Gathered the knapweed seed taken from the hay meadows.
 - Replaced the bungee guarding the gap in the stock fence behind the Cromwell Road notice board.
 - Trimmed the hedge along the Fauna path where it was overhanging.
 - Dug out flowering ragwort in the School Field.
- A volunteer retrieved the dismantled redundant wire fence from Pony Wood and carted it back to the shed.
- Four volunteers continued the raking and removal of machine cut soft rush from Big Meadow.
- Three volunteers continued the scything of winding rides through the Big meadow soft rush and cutting back the soft rush at the field edges.

9th September 2020

The WWG convened on a lovely morning and split into teams

- Five scythers continued to cut rides through the Big Meadow rush and scythe around the perimeter of the field that had been missed by the machine. Some clearance was also done around School Pond.
- Fiver rakers continued the clear the machine cut rush which had not been baled back onto the soft rush so that it did not compost down into the cut area.
- Six volunteers formed a team in the Orchard
 - Trimming the path between the south end of the Orchard and Lucy Brook, as requested by a member of the public.
 - Removing a redundant 4 x 4 post and renewing it as Orchard Orienteering Post 8. This and orienteering post 5 were replaced in their correct positions.
 - Felled two rowan trees near Orchard House as agreed with the Martins, clearing away the brash.
 - Cleared a section of the ground between the apple trees and Orchard House where growth had encroached too near the fruit trees.
 - Cleared dock from the area behind the fruit circle where we are to soon plant shrubs.
 - Retrieved the now redundant fruit tree signs. Once again I think these have been effective as I haven't noticed the premature stripping of the fruit trees.

12th September 2020

On a dry but blustery morning four volunteers formed the Saturday volunteer session. A very disappointing turnout which must be followed up. The main task was to sow yellow rattle seeds alongside the Pony Wood path and within open sites in the adjacent woodland. We also sowed the brown knapweed collected from the hay meadows. In addition, three self-seeded sycamores were removed from Pony Wood in accordance with Natural England's requirements.

16th September 2020

On a beautiful, warm and sunny morning the WWG met under the stricter Government regulations of the 'rule of six'. As we have been operating such a rule for some time it did not mean fundamental changes but we introduced staggered assembly time and different teams having separate breaks. This all becomes a little bit more bureaucratic as people have to confirm attendance beforehand and be allocated to groups / times. This all worked well on this first occasion.

- Team A included 3 volunteers who mowed the Orchard grass.
- Team B included 6 volunteers who began the hedge trimming work starting with the hedges along the Fauna path.
- Team C including 6 volunteers began the clearance of the Upper Sowerholme ponds and channel to maintain clear water. It quickly became clear that the spread of the reeds has continued and this work will need a digger next year to re-establish the edges and depth of the ponds and channel.

22nd September 2020

Five volunteers met with the Hanafins delivery truck at the bottom of Sunnyside Lane and helped the driver move the fencing timber down to the shed.

23rd September 2020

The rain stopped just in time for the WWG so we had a dry morning.

After staggered starts.

- Team A included 4 volunteers who completed the clearance of Upper Sowerholme ponds and channel.
- Team B included 6 volunteers who built the first of our post and rail fences.
- Team C included 6 volunteers who loaded and unloaded Keith's truck with timber at the shed, Knowsley Close and Little Wood. Many thanks to Keith for making the truck available.

30th September 2020

Heavy and persistent rain forced the cancellation of the WWG which was a shame as this was to be the first of our sapling planting sessions.

Associate volunteers in September

- Replaced a broken fence post adjacent to the Fauna ash tree corner.
- Cleared the land under the Fauna ash tree for wild flower seed planting.
- Serviced the Torro mower.
- Cleared and cleaned Anna's Stone.
- Prepared bamboo rods and transported them for drying out in the shed.
- Sowed the remainder of the yellow rattle / knapweed seed in the bed at Howson's Gate.
- Cleaned and oiled the scythes and packed them away.
- Two volunteers mowed the Orchard grass.

7th October 2020

The Wednesday Work Group (WWG) met under a revised 'Dispersed Group' protocol to maintain safe working during the Covid 19 emergency. This includes working in segregated teams of up to six volunteers with staggered start times.

- Team A included 4 volunteers who
 - Delivered plants, saplings and tools to the Oak Circle
 - Delivered fence posts across West Field for ramming.
 - Completed the transport of fencing materials to West Field
 - Planted up the NE fenced corner of West Field with 20 'scrubby' saplings
- Team B included 6 volunteers who built the second West Field fence in the SE corner
- Team C included 5 volunteers who planted up
 - 75 saplings in the area behind the Fruit Circle to create a more diverse habitat. The species are: hawthorn, rowan, blackthorn, hazel, crab apple, hornbeam, wild cherry and dog rose.
 - Over 30 wild flower plants, kindly supplied by John Payne, around the oak canopy in the Oak Circle. They include fox and cubs, cowslip, primrose, melancholy thistle and wild carrot
- Team D include 2 volunteers, both from the same household, who made a start to ramming in the fence posts in preparation for the West Field northern boundary hedge.

10th October 2020

Volunteers gathered for the Saturday volunteering session on a fine and pleasant morning. We continued to use the revised Covid protocol.

- Team A included 6 volunteers who trimmed back the overhanging hedge along the track between Sunnyside Lane and the Orchard, including clearing out weeds growing on the path. All cleared away. The Team also made a start trimming back the Paddock / allotments hedge.
- Team B included 8 volunteers in two subgroups trimming back the hedge alongside the fauna path and that between Carr House Meadow and the Gun Range. All cleared away.
- Team C included 2 volunteers who completed the ramming in of posts in West Field for new hedge.

14th October 2020

The WWG met on a pleasant, dry morning.

- Team A included 3 volunteers who continued to work on the new wire fence in West Field, northern boundary.
- Team B included 6 volunteers who built the third of the West Field corner fences, his one in the South West corner.
- Team C included 4 volunteers who trimmed the new hedges alongside the Pony Wood path and in Little Wood. This was just a light trim to encourage bushiness.
- Team D included 2 volunteers who planted up the South East corner of West Field with 23 scrubby saplings. They then joined Team C.

21st October 2020

The forecast heavy rain held off and the WWG easily coped with a bit of drizzle.

- Three volunteers finished off the barbed wire fence needed to protect the hedge planting along the north western edge of West Field.
- The pump and its pipe were also retrieved and taken to the shed for the winter,
- Five volunteers agreed a Site Specific Risk Assessment for the safe use of a chain saw in the linear copse between Lower Sowerholme and Flora Field. A start was made to clearing space within the copse for planting up with more diverse species.
- Five volunteers began the clearing of excess cut vegetation after the contractor mowing of the Flora Field bee friendly margins.

28th October 2020

A blustery morning but with only one sharp shower for the WWG.

- Six volunteers planted the new hedge along the northern flank of West Field behind the new protective fence. 42 metres and 250 mixed saplings.
- Two of these volunteers also planted the South West West Field corner with 22 saplings. All of these West Field saplings are protected by new fencing. We have thus not used plastic protectors but have marked each sapling with a cane to ease location next year for weeding and clearing.
- After agreeing the SSRA for chain saw use, six volunteers continued the clearance of the linear copse between Lower Sowerholme and Flora Field, preparatory to planting.
- Five volunteers completed the clearance of grass cuttings from the Flora Field bee friendly margins.

Associate volunteers in October:

- Repaired bolt on north eastern West Field gate.
- When the opposite gate into Lower Sowerholme required the identical repair Fraser and I realised that the bull had learnt how to pressure the gate to lever open the bolt. Checking gates and locks are part of the monthly inspection but expecting the inspector to open every lock and gate would add substantially to the time, at least an hour, and be disproportionate. Therefore, I propose that we take this out of the monthly inspection and make it an annual task to check and oil the locks and bolts.
- The bolt fixings on the three gates giving access from the Long Pads to pasture land have all been strengthened.
- Fixed a chain and padlock to the gate between the Gun Range and Carr House Meadow. This is a temporary measure. The gate supporting gate post has gone. It can be repaired by two reinforcing fencing posts.
- Placed a marking post at the boulder in the Flora Field beetle bank.
- Constructed and erected the Wildlife Sightings noticeboard