



Friends of Uddens & Cannon Hill Woodlands

June 2013 Newsletter

Dear Friends,

Since our last newsletter in January a great deal has been achieved. From the obvious woodland work in February and March to some less obvious background work in April and May.

Please see below for a round-up of our achievements and what's to come!

Work Parties

In February & March we had two really great work parties in the woodland where up to 55 volunteers turned up.

The first one was in conjunction with Dorset Countryside Ranger Service who are responsible for the Castleman Trailway that runs through the woodland.

We concentrated on cutting back the vegetation along the bridleway in Cannon Hill South and cutting and burning the invasive Rhododendron.

With the additional labour we were also able to scrape back a section of track, almost doubling its width.

A rather back breaking task, but as they say, many hands made "fairly" light work of it and a large section for cleared.



The second work party, again in Cannon Hill South was this time with the Forestry Commission who kindly donated 2 picnic tables and 5 bird boxes.

The tables were installed by a crack team of volunteers and are now being regularly used (weather permitting!) by workers from the Uddens Trading Estate and weary travellers on the Castleman Trailway.

The bird boxes which are all named after the children who chose the locations for them were hung up and are awaiting residents. It may be a year or so before they are used once the birds get used to them.

If you do see any activity with them, please let us know.

The remainder of the volunteers cleared back some more paths and cleared a lot of brash and deadwood to create habitat piles for the wildlife. This time we failed miserably in starting a bonfire!!

See more photographs on the website.

The numbers of volunteers took us and our partner organisations rather by surprise, which has given us some learning points for future tasks.

What and where would you like us to focus next?

Website

You may also have noticed that our e-mail and website name has changed. www.cannonhillfriends.org.uk

This is a reflection of the move away from a hastily put together pressure group to stop one particular threat, to an organised charity whose aim is to protect and improve the woodland in the longer term for the wildlife, the local community and users of the Castleman Trailway.

Our Website has been sponsored this year by **A.C. Scaffolding Services Ltd.** Who have most generously covered all the online running costs.

Membership

We have recently launched a membership scheme and would love for as many of you as possible to join. We have no plans at present to have an annual membership fee, so all that is required is the completion of a membership form and a donation.

The amount of the donation is completely at your discretion, so please don't let that put you off!

There is no obligation to attend work parties or meetings (although we would love to see you of course), you are simply showing you care about the woods and would like to be kept informed of what is happening with them. Each household (limited to the first 100) will get a unique woodland postcard and everyone will receive a membership card.

The membership Scheme has been sponsored by La Fosse at Cranborne, Restaurant with Rooms www.la-fosse.com Who have kindly covered all the costs of the membership scheme as well as offering a special Friends deal.

A large membership is another way of showing how many people are serious about protecting the woodlands, so please consider joining.

More details including an online application form, or one you can print are on the website at <http://www.cannonhillfriends.org.uk/membership.html>

We can also supply paper copies of the application form, so please get in touch if you need a hand.

Grant Success

We have been successful in a grant application for £1,700 from the Dorset County Community Fund.

The funding is for picnic tables and seating for the woodland. We are keen to hear suggestions for locations on both sides of the A31.

We intend doing the work ourselves to make the money go further, so if you have any skills or interest in heavy duty wood work of hole digging please get in touch!



Public Meeting

We will be holding a public meeting at **7:30pm on Friday 28th June** at Colehill Memorial Hall

We have 4 guests who have generously agreed to speak to us –

Councillor Janet Dover (County Councillor for Colehill & Stapehill) will give a councillor's view on the Gypsy & Traveller Transit Site proposals and the possible gravel extraction plans.

Mr David Ayre (Head of Countryside and Business Development for Dorset County Council) will give a progress report on the Gypsy and Traveller Site Plan for Dorset.

Mr Mike Hirsch (Planning Consultant) will talk about what is involved and what action can be taken if the woodland goes through to the next stage of the consultation or a planning application is submitted.

Mr Andrew Norris (Forestry Commission) will give a presentation about the wildlife in the woodland.

We will have some static displays from **Su Powner** of Dorset Dogs (goody bags for dog owners), the Urban Heaths Partnership and ourselves.

It will also be a great opportunity to become a "Friend" if you have not already done so.

June Work Party



Another date for your diary **Saturday 22nd June**

We have been asked for our assistance by the Forestry Commission with clearing an invasive plant along Uddens Water.

Although this is slightly outside our current primary area of focus, it is in Uddens Plantation and running alongside the Castleman Trailway.

Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) is a relative of the busy Lizzie, but reaches well over head height, and is a major weed problem, especially on riverbanks.

It grows rapidly and spreads quickly, smothering other vegetation as it goes. (*Source RHS*) In the winter it dies back leaving bare earth which as well as being unattractive is also susceptible to erosion.

It has very shallow roots, so is very easy to pull out. This means it is a fun task for all age groups and abilities and the more people the better!

The area affected is between the path and the river, so it is possible to work on without leaving the path if you would rather.

The task is very reliant on the plant being at the right stage to pull out (i.e. big enough to get hold of, but before it flowers and spreads its seed). Therefore we will confirm this task nearer the time.

More details to follow!

We welcome your views and feedback on any of the above, or the woodland in general so shortly will be sending out a questionnaire to give you an opportunity to influence what we focus on.

Looking forward to seeing you at the Public Meeting and maybe even the Work Party.

Michael Gorse

Chairman

We have no wish to send anyone "junk" mail, so if you would rather not receive information from us, please just reply to this e-mail with UNSUBSCRIBE in the Subject.