

July 2023

Dear Member,

We have talked before about how important our volunteers are to the maintenance of the Garden and earlier in the year, we had a request from Ridge & Partners in Woodstock to see if they could hold a social volunteering day in the Garden as part of their Corporate, Social Responsibility policy. We needed to think about a project that they could help with and it was decided that the relaying of the path from Dog Kennel Lane around the Upper Pond would be of great help.

For our part we ordered all the materials needed, which included coffee and flapjack as well as 5 tonnes of gravel and provided guidance and the tractor and driver for the session.

Ed Moss from Ridge & Partners has sent this article and feedback from some of the volunteers who attended.

"I lead the environmental Champions at our head office in Oxford and we were tasked with arranging a social volunteering day to support local causes with an environmental link. Ideas were discussed for options and I identified your garden as a possibility. I had several fond family experiences at the garden and have visited several times as I live locally. Following sharing the idea with my team and information on your website, it was agreed that I reached out to see if you could support on one of your projects.

Mike responded and I coordinated the detail and discussed activities our team of 10-15 could support with.

Once details and dates were agreed, I communicated the event to the office to invite people to support.

On the day of the event, the team gathered on the main strip and had a pep talk by Mike. Initially there were issues with starting the tractor, but once going we quickly got to work depositing the gravel across the footpath for our raking crew to spread. Our enthusiasm made swift work of the 5 tonnes of gravel and some moved onto pulling weed from the ponds.

Our efforts were rewarding with some tasty flapjacks which received many positive comments, hot drinks, and snacks. Mike gave some insight into the garden's history, pointed out the squirrel guarding its nuts which made us all laugh and the owl in the treetops, this led to a walk to the bottom sluice gates. Everybody had a fantastic time and mentioned they'd like to return with family and friends.

I'll take this opportunity to thank the garden for hosting us, it was a great experience."

Please find below some feedback from our participants:

It was so nice to get out in the open and help a community of volunteers who so obviously take such pride in the gardens.

I learnt so much from the guys there, and it was heart-warming to hear of the village coming together to buy the piece of land that they have transformed into an oasis of calm for everyone to enjoy.

It was also nice to be with colleagues from differing units and get to know them on a different level. I had so much fun, and I worked muscles I didn't know that I had!! 😊 Niki

I absolutely loved it. I usually shy away from things like this using the excuse 'too busy' etc, but as I'm going to be entering my 60's this year, I thought it was time to awaken my old self.

It was great to get to know other people within the organisation, some of which I knew very well over email, and especially lovely to spend time away from my screen. Fresh air, sunshine, happy faces and fabulous flapjacks – what more could you want! Gaynor

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I enjoyed myself very much, it was such a great morning with such a nice group of people from our office. It was a nice opportunity to chat with other employees, help a great cause and take a short break from an office environment to be around nature.

We had so much laughter and it was a good physical exercise, we all felt it in our muscles the day after. I was driving from the office and we've had a full car, which was also a great bonding exercise and a nice time with others.

I had so much fun and I found a new place for a Sunday afternoon walk 😊

For their volunteering day the Oxford office volunteers visited the Wychwood Wild Garden, supporting a local charity with improving accessibility to the tranquil woodland. Armed with shovels and a delivery of 5 tonnes of gravel, the volunteers got to work resurfacing pathways so that more people can access and enjoy the garden.

*"It was a really rewarding day and great to see what impact a group of us can have on a community in just half a day when we chip in together."
– Josh Wavish*



Thank you to all who took part and made such an impact on the task.

A quick update!

For those who regularly walk down Dog Kennel Lane and may have noticed the flooding that occurred at the bottom of the sheep field. The water feed for the Wild Garden comes from a spring in the field the other side of Dog Kennel Lane. From the water trough it is piped under the lane to a large manhole in the Garden and from there into the Upper Pond.



Over the last few months, the pipe under the lane has become blocked, probably with a combination of stones and roots, suggesting the pipe is actually broken at some point. However with a little professional help with rods and jets of water the pipe has been cleared and the water flow resumed. Although the flow has resumed this will, no doubt, need further investigation and repair.

I hope that the 7 ducklings who were thriving in their new pond have found a new home and are still together as a family!

Caroline Trevers

**Caroline Trevers
Trustee**