



April 2024

Dear Member,

## April Newsletter

I have held off writing this newsletter until I felt that Spring really had sprung (well a little bit at least!) but now I can see that the green shoots are really appearing and many trees and plants in the Wild Garden have that beautiful palette of fresh green foliage that can only mean one thing – summer is on its way!

A huge thank you to all the wonderful volunteers who came last Saturday for the Working Party, we really appreciate all of your assistance to keep the Wild Garden looking at its best, whatever the weather has to throw at us.

As a board of trustees, we always have our aims front and centre of everything we plan and do, one of those is the pledge of continual restoration and conservation in the gardens. We are fully aware that our custodianship of the area is to ensure that we have a safe, ecologically healthy space to hand on to the next generation.

In the past few years, we have already re-dredged and re-banked the three canals, the round pond has been restored to its original Victorian condition by dredging, removing self-seeded trees from the banks and rebuilding the wall. The bottom sluice has been repaired and the dam coping stones restored.

### Restoration of the Upper Pond

The next major project is the restoration of the Upper Pond, which is roughly 85 metres by 30 metres with a small island in the middle. The pond has progressively silted up and already the area around the island has minimal water depth. The stone wall around the island is now failing, further eroding the area that acts as a sanctuary for the wild life.

We have a number of challenges, the main one being the draining of the pond to allow the build up of silt to be removed. It is estimated that there is around 600 cubic metres to be removed. The restoration of the upper pond will involve diverting the water flow by installing a new low level drain down pipe and dredging the pond to a depth of roughly 65 cm.

This work, as I am sure you can imagine, will need the expertise of outside contractors alongside our wonderful Tuesday morning volunteers. There will be a huge amount of silt which will be retained on site behind the original bund wall to the east of the pond under the Environment Agency D1 exemption. There are countless other elements to ensure that the Upper Pond is restored. As a result of the works, we recognise that the paths will need improving, knowing how much rain we have had this year we will need to resurface and re-gravel many areas.

**Shipton-under-Wychwood Wild Garden and Woods**  
A company limited by guarantee

Registered Office: New Beaconsfield Hall, Station Road, Shipton-under-Wychwood Oxfordshire OX7 6BQ  
Company Registration No. 7030839 Registered Charity No. 1133334

We have discussed how to finance such a great undertaking and are already making applications to charitable trusts and local organisations asking them to support us in this venture. We have had a number of local pledges and donations of funds and are able to use some of our own funds but there will be a funding shortfall. We are planning a membership drive in the Wild Gardens on the 27 May Bank Holiday.

The total costs of the Upper Pond Restoration project are estimated at just over £35,000, currently we have pledges of £8,000 from parish council funding, private trusts and pledges and are able to use £15,000 from our own reserves, leaving a shortfall of around £12,000. As a board we are working towards reducing this figure and would like to extend the opportunity to members who felt they would like to support us with financial donations. Cheques can be made out to the Shipton-under-Wychwood Wild Garden and Woods or our bank details are HSBC Bank plc, Sort Code: 40-17-19 Account Number 61472496 for a direct transfer. All pledges and donations would be very welcome.

Based on advice received from the Trust for Oxfordshire it was decided to delay the restoration work until the autumn to avoid damage to the aquatic environment and to give us time to raise the required funds.

## Our chance to help

This message came from the  
1<sup>st</sup> Wychwoods Scout Group

*“Many thanks to everyone at the Wild Garden for the kind donation of logs for our campfire circle in Milton allotments. We had 38 Cubs happily toasting marshmallows on Tuesday!”*

*Best wishes Jonathan, 1st Wychwoods Scout Group*



*Caroline Trevers.*

**Caroline Trevers**  
Trustee

P.S. If you would like to receive this newsletter by email in the future, please let us know and we will add your email address to our database.