

**Its been a while since the last newsletter, but in the meantime we've been able to have a sustained run of work parties following the lockdown ending. If the coronavirus pandemic doesn't get worse, we should be back to normal over the winter.**

## **News from our woods**

### **Natterer's Wood**

We have been hard at work removing Clematis from the hedge around the bat meadow. Clematis supports a large number of insects, and is a 'good wildlife plant'. It can also look attractive in bloom. However, it will overwhelm the hedge and until the hedge is big enough to cope we will continue to control Clematis. We will never be able to eradicate it!

In the summer we again failed to make hay in Natterer's Wood. Last year the grass was not cut in time for the work party, and then was cut too late with the wrong mower for hay. This year, although we asked the Council's team to resume a hay cut as in previous years / decades, nothing happened. We hope to continue negotiating with the Council for next year.

### **Pond Covert**

After our outdoors AGM, the first outdoors general meeting we have had, we were able to rake hay at the Pond Covert orchard. Thanks to Owen Green for cutting the grass for us this year, despite mechanical issues with our brushcutter. This management is creating a good grassy sward around the trees. There was good fruiting this year, with many people enjoying the apples.

In our March newsletter, we reported that some trees in Pond Covert had been marked up for safety works, including a combination of felling, coppicing and removing deadwood from the canopy if it is a danger to people or property. The works were paused until the bird nesting season ended, and we look forward to it proceeding. We are hopeful that there may be some logs left from the felling which can be used for the long-needed refurbishment of the log seating area.

### **Home Covert**

We were asked by the Moreton Hall Women's Institute to provide an environmental event as part of a Great Big Green Week coordinated action campaign. We provided an interesting and informative walk through Home Covert, discussing its formation 250 years ago and looking at Woodland Ways' management. We also saw a dead oak log, virtually unchanged in 20 years, which may have been planted as one of the first trees in Home Covert. The walk culminated in the planting of four hazel trees by the WI members, in an area where the tree canopy allowed enough light in. These will be watered in summer drought, and weeded, by the WI members. We hope that they will survive the shade, root competition, muntjac and vandals to develop into superb small trees enriching the woodland diversity.

### **Woodland Ways Pond**

We failed to cut the grass and make hay at Woodland Ways Pond this year. Owen Green kindly offered to, but the mechanical fault which developed with the brushcutter at Pond Covert orchard got so bad it was not possible to move on to the grass cutting at Woodland Ways Pond. Owen, we



appreciate your effort to do as much as you could! By the time the machine was fixed, it was too late to proceed and so the grass was left to be cut next year. It may look a little unkempt until next summer. The frogs and newts which live in the pond will be unaffected.

## Wildlife news

There was a report this summer of a great crested newt in Oak Plantation, on Mount Road. Woodland Ways does not manage this wood. When visited by Woodland Ways' Nick Sibbett, the newt had gone and could not be re-found. The ponds in Pond Covert, woodland ways Pond and by the Moreton Hall pub all seem unsuitable for great crested newts, so it a mystery where it came from . If the report was accurate, and there's no reason to suppose otherwise, it is the first record for this species in Moreton Hall. Great crested newts are our rarest newt and receive the highest level of protection given to animals in the UK.

Suffolk Naturalists' Society's newsletter also featured plants in Moreton Hall, following an article about elm in Moreton Hall in its annual Transactions in January. This summer, the newsletter included a mention of the scarce Mossy Stonecrop and the cudweed which grow in the industrial estate's popular drainage basin. Mossy Stonecrop is typically found in the sandy soils of Breckland and in other heathland areas, so its discovery in Moreton Hall was a great surprise. Cudweed is declining nationally, as are most plants of disturbed soils, so it is great to see it doing well here.

## Assistance needed

There is an opportunity at Woodland Ways to help manage and up-motivate the group. If you have experience at leading small and happy teams, and have an enthusiasm for our work to make Moreton Hall's woods better for people and wildlife, do get in touch.

## Work parties are usually on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month

All welcome, and no experience necessary  
For more information please contact us (see front page for details)

Date	Activity	Meeting Point
<b>Sunday 11th October</b> 10.00 - 12.00	<b>Natterer's Wood</b> Hedge survival	Natterer's Wood Kingsworth Road entrance
<b>Sunday 15 November</b> <b>(3rd Sunday)</b> 10.00 - 12.00	<b>Home Covert</b> Path maintenance	Woodland Ways storage unit Pond Covert, Sebert Road
<b>Sunday 13 December</b> 10.00 - 12.00	<b>Pond Covert</b> Path maintenance	Woodland Ways storage unit Pond Covert, Sebert Road

Weather, new needs etc sometimes means we change plans at short notice. Check our website or Facebook for the most up to date information

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