



Bramford Open Spaces

BRAMFORD MEADOWS MEMBERS AND FRIENDS NEWSLETTER 1-2020

I must have written four different starts to this newsletter, but things change around us so fast that each has been overtaken by events. The weather has had a huge impact this winter and now we have to cope with the necessary restrictions on movement caused by the virus outbreak. It is not likely that anything of significance will be happening over the next three months, so I will not attempt to write further until things have improved.

Working with the virus:

Maybe because of the four starts, this newsletter is a bit behind time. I had intended to write asking for more help, but now is not the time to ask more people to join committees.

The committee has agreed that it will no longer hold formal meetings, but will conduct business on-line. It also agreed that work parties may continue, but this has also been overtaken by events and we will not hold any more until the danger has passed.

If you spot anything untoward on the meadows, please let us know as usual. Unless it is a priority we will take action only when the public health situation permits it, but it will be noted for that happy day.

The rain:



It was in December that we heard of a tree fallen from Fraser Road into the river. The Environment Agency looked at it on the Wednesday, but could not clear it and by Saturday it had diverted the swollen river onto the bank and eroded it beyond the actual towpath. Signs have since been erected to warn people of the danger and they hope to repair it when the weather improves. The picture shows the damage in its early stages and it has worsened since then

Since then the river has been across the meadows on many occasions and the picnic tables were almost completely covered at one time. The bench below the lock was covered for a while and both meadows were inundated.

Flower meadow:

The planting of the flower meadow has taken a big set back. The late cutting of the meadow meant that it was not possible to start ground preparation until late in the last year and the wet weather since had precluded any further work in 2020. One good thing is that some of us managed to plant seed in the area that was dug over. We have also put a small sign near the entrance to inform visitors. Let's hope that enough of these seeds actually produce plants. We do not intend to cover the whole field with new plants. The final batch will go in south of anything we have already done rather than toward the railway line.



Repair work:



A small team of members have repaired the bridge across the entrance to the backwater (Bill's Bridge). Thanks to Charlie and the others involved.

A work party was held on the last Saturday in February - making use of the four yearly extra day. Despite horrible weather early in the morning eight people turned up and removed this tree leaning against the railing, cut back a couple of other problem trees, checked the saplings growing in the small area beyond the picnic site and cleared the river bank of all the branches left over from last year's willow tree fall. Thanks to all who turned out for this



Road drain:

This picture is of the road drain which runs across the South meadow in a concrete channel. Once again it is badly contaminated with oil and this picture shows it running out into the river when the flow was fast.



We have asked highways to try and trace the culprit in what is almost certainly illegal tipping of waste oil, but they say that there are so many branches feeding into this drain that it would be nigh on impossible. We have also informed the Environment Agency of the problem.

I hope that you can continue to enjoy the meadows during the difficult days ahead of us. Keep your distance and stay safe.

Best wishes,

JOHN HOOKER

Chairman

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