

Green Infrastructure Group November 2021

Introduction

The meeting planned for the 18th October was postponed as we thought we should meet after receiving the Biodiversity Report which was due at the end of October

Ouse Valley Way

The following communication was sent to the Ouse Valley Trust

I am writing to you as Chair of the Buckden and Diddington Parish Council and also as Chair of its Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Group, to highlight certain issues with the Ouse Valley Way (OVW) as it passes through our Parish. I am sure that you are aware of some of these but I felt I needed to write to you formally on behalf of the village.

The first issue concerns use throughout the year. Despite the fact parts of the path have been cleared back due to the long time intervals between the cutting back of vegetation, in particular of the nettles, the path becomes impassable for many weeks if not months during the summer. The route is a key part of our footpath network and its unavailability at what would be a time of high usage is particularly disappointing. There is a definite need to improve the control of nettle growth regularly during the summer months.

The second issue is the condition of the path at several points. Bank erosion and steep inclines down towards the river have combined to render the path hazardous. There is an urgent need to survey these points and to find solutions to address the continued degradation of the path. It is envisaged that soon certain sections will be too dangerous for general use to continue.

In 2019, with support from the A14 Legacy Fund, we instituted a circular walking route that includes the OVW. The response from residents was extremely positive and we have evidence that many families undertook the walk, enjoying and discovering the OVW for the first time. Unfortunately we have now had to advise our residents that there are difficulties with the paths, in particular for children. We really regret the benefits that our 'Round About Buckden' route were delivering have been undermined.

We would ask you to engage with us to find solutions to these issues that allow our residents to return to the OVW; a sentiment that I am sure is totally in line with your organisation's core values.

They have said they will discuss this at their next trustees meeting which is at the beginning of November. In addition they have updated us on their continued negotiations with National Highways about the erosion of the footpath on the riverbank under the A14

Trees

- The Tree warden and I and Cllr Ashwell met with representatives from the Forestry Commission about woodland planting the key issue is that there is a minimum area that is required to enable us to benefit from the tree planting support that they offer. We will discuss this further at our next meeting.

- We have also liaised with the Friends of Buckden Towers and both the Council and the Friends will be planting an english oak tree in the grounds to celebrate the Queens Jubilee next year.
- We will be putting information into the Roundabout about National Tree Week. National Tree Week is the UK's largest annual tree celebration, marking the start of the winter tree planting season (November to March each year), it will take place from Saturday 27 November – Sunday 5 December.
- We have produced a leaflet giving advice on planting trees.

Footpaths

We had, in 2019, tried to set up a Friends of Buckden Footpaths group. Events obviously meant that this did not happen, so we are relaunching the initiative in November. The following will be placed in the Roundabout.

Can you help us care for our footpaths?

You may remember that in 2019 we asked residents if they would like to join a group that would keep an eye on and care for our network of footpaths. Then of course Covid19 hit and we had to put everything on hold. We now feel that the time is right to try again. So if you would like to be part of our group and adopt a section of the footpath network, then please get in contact. Any level of help you can offer would be appreciated. In the first instance please could we ask you to contact the Parish Clerk by phone (01480 819407) or by email (clerk@buckdenpc.org.uk) or through the contact form on the Buckden Parish Council website (<https://buckdenpc.org.uk/contact/>) to give her your contact details so we can start to get the group organised.