

## Common & Pond Project Plan 2021-22

### Bridges

Two bridges are planned to be constructed the first being the replacement one at the top left corner by the pond. Four 12 foot beams have been acquired for the two bridges. The walkway on top of the beams will be decking the specifications of which have yet to be determined. The decking will be cut on site and village helpers will be invited. In the next edition of the Village newsletter a briefly worded request and description of the task will appear. Construction to be completed by the end of September. The second bridge which will be at the entrance to the common on Barrack Hill opposite Jubilee Cottage will be constructed next year.

*In August last year a boardwalk measuring 9m by 1.2m was built on the path opposite Jubilee Cottage on Barrack Hill. Our thanks go to TCV and a number of village volunteers for helping in the construction. Further down this path the bridge at the top end of the Common by the small pond was rebuilt in January. Two 12 foot beams have been used to support the decking. Again villagers gave their support assisted by TCV. The width of the walkway is wide enough to allow wheelchair access.*

### Benches

Two benches will be constructed with a target date of end June. One will be a replacement of the old bench to the right of the picnic area at the top of the common and the second by the bridge at the top left hand corner by the pond. The correct timber needs to be used and felled timber available in the woodlands needs to be assessed. Two volunteers with carpentry experience have offered to help in the construction and a meeting with the CMC needs to take place soon.

*Graham Thorne built a bench to replace the old bench to the right of the picnic area. Construction of a second bench did not materialise because Bucks Council will not accept work done by untrained volunteers.*

### Paths

For 2021 we have targeted two path areas for improvement, the first being the one down from Village Road/Windmill Hill. The work will be at the bottom of the path on the left hand side leading to the picnic area. The suggestion from TCV is a boardwalk with a width of 1.2m and a length of 30-33m. Another alternative is a path built up over a membrane. The CMC is waiting quotes from TCV to decide what to do. The second area will be both ends off the new bridge at the top left hand end of the common. Completion of the work to be by end September before winter weather arrives. CMC has been allocated £2500 in the 2021/22 budget, but first we need to see if TCV can obtain a grant that are becoming available for encouraging use of open spaces.

*Towards the end of January an all-weather surface was laid on a section of the path down from Village Road. At the same time an all-weather surface was laid either side of the bridge at the top end of the Common. Again villagers helped in the construction supported by TCV.*

### Tree Survey

A survey will be completed shortly identifying which trees need attention on safety grounds. In the budget there is an allowance of £1000, but it remains to be seen if this is sufficient.

*Pete Whipp completed a tree survey in June and there was no immediate need for a tree surgeon. CMC will action minor work identified.*

### Chiltern Rangers Conservation Day

The yearly rotation of the woodland edge management plan will commence this year with an objective of managing the scrub encroachment on the grassland. The principal benefit is to promote biodiversity. The plan divides the woodland edge into ten sections and lasts for ten years. The work is to be undertaken by volunteers supervised by Chiltern Rangers. CMC to follow up with CR to get more details and timing.

*In October the first section on the right hand side of the Common was cleared and coppiced by Chiltern Rangers*

### Bioblitz & Surveys

The definition of Bioblitz is a communal citizen-science effort to record as many species within a designated location and time period as possible. Bioblitzes are great ways to engage the public to connect to their environment while generating useful data for science and conservation. Bucks Berks Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) will provide several experts to conduct our first annual Bioblitz looking at plants and bugs and we need as many families as possible to come to find out what is on the common. Timing has yet to be finalised with BBOWT but sometime in July would be good. There are other surveys of particular categories of wildlife such as small mammals, bats, moths and fungi that can be arranged with interested villagers.

*In August our first ever Wildlife Explorer Day was held on the Common organised by BBOWT and supported by Bucks Mammal Society. Activities included a site scavenger hunt, bug hunt, basic plant survey and site guided walk. Village attendance considering limited publicity was reasonably good.*

Depending on what sort of summer we have a survey of the Village pond listing the plant species now growing around the pond margins. Frogs and newts are known to be in the pond.

*In March villagers and the CMC undertook vegetation clearance in the village pond on the bank and the margins. The aim was to balance the vegetation*

*conserving some species which are attractive like Purple Loosestrife and Greater Willowherb. Also with the help of Jon Herbert and some of his machinery we managed to fell and remove the large fallen stem of willow, which was threatening to root into the floor of the pond*

### The Middens

Located in the woodlands near the Common pond have been opened up by a few people who search them for interesting and potentially valuable items. In doing so they have exposed broken glass making the area hazardous. The CMC will attempt to remove as much of the broken glass as possible in June. The Bucks Archaeological Society have expressed an interest to dig some test pits this summer.

*Frustratingly weather conditions prevented any chance of starting a dig because of too much ground water.*

### Chalk Hill/Windmill Hill Corner

This area goes from being very wet with standing water to very dry and difficult to add new plants without watering. CMC plan to regularly trim the banks and the basin to keep the weeds down so that grass can grow, as if it is well grassed and managed it will look attractive. Consideration is being given to transplanting in the Autumn Greater Willowherb and Purple Loosestrife from the Village pond where it is overgrowing.

*At the time of these thoughts and ideas we did not realise more ground work would need to be done in this area through which electrical cabling service tunnels run which need to be upgraded. This work has recently set back these plans. The sites damage is going to be rectified and then we can recommence our original plan*

### Forest School

Close to Barrack Hill a clearing was made last winter when some tree safety work was done and the CMC is considering in the autumn continuing to clear the area making it suitable for a second Forest School site.

*Unfortunately the Covid pandemic halted the momentum and no further progress has been made so far.*