



Friends of Island Pond Wood Ltd

Report for Launton Parish Council Annual Meeting 2022/23

It has been another busy year, with lots of new projects undertaken by excellent volunteers and local contractors. Full details of the projects and maintenance activities were presented at the March AGM with 20 members in attendance.

New projects completed in 2022 included:

- Purchase and installation of the Information Board
- Quiet area created - plants, shrubs, cherry tree planted and benches installed
- TOE phase 1 application made, with successful funding for year one to thin trees, install a new wildlife pond, meadow restoration, biodiversity baseline survey, planting and hedgerow coppicing by Vale Conservation Volunteers
- EWR provided additional Bird and Bat boxes and 140 tons of material to lay the footpath around 2/3rds of the woodland
- Felling License application and re-application
- Education boards designed and installed
- Bob and Maureen "Thank You Bench" ordered, installed and celebrated

As I reported last year, the board and I wanted to make the woodland accessible for everyone, every day of the year. With the installation of the footpath and the disability gate to follow, this will have been achieved. As a board and committee, whilst we had probably too many projects going, we have taken the opportunities where they were presented to us. 2023/24 will be a lot quieter in terms of projects but we should see more visual progress with the TOE works.

Three successful events were delivered with funding support from the parish council:

- Bee Happy event in May with Brambly Hedge pig willow weaving, Bicester Face Painting, Stagecoach Performing Arts, Bicester Concert Band, Muddy Feet Forest School, Caulcott Honey and the Hummingbird Centre.
- Apple Day in October with Muddy Feet Forest School, Peekaboos music and play, Launton village players, Paul's apple pressing and Unicorn Club Ltd coffee van.
- The Halloween Trail in October with the decorated spooky trail and Muddy Feet forest school making broomsticks and potions

The pond is well stocked with fish and 18 members hold fishing licenses. The current visitors include moorhens with chicks, geese nesting and a number of ducks and the occasional heron.

In 2022 we had significant expenditure not covered by grants (£5000) due to the tree safety work after the storms (£1140), and the unplanned ground works for the path installation (£3380). After a few years of prudent savings for a future path project we were able to fund these unplanned activities, but this has left funds low (membership income circa £1000 per year but also needs to cover insurances, etc).

We thank Launton Parish Council for continuing to fund the grass cutting of the paths and access areas.

We have 112 members in 2022/23, compared to 116 in 2021/22. 24 of these are new members signed up at the AGM, the Bee Happy Event and Apple Day.

Plans for 2023 include, applying for Year 2 funding from TOE to continue the wood enhancements started last year, regular volunteer work sessions to maintain the wood and the installation of new bat and kestrel boxes. We will attempt to secure funding from various sources to invest in enhancements to the wood and pond.

One major event is planned for 2023 in October with a number of smaller focused events such as the Dawn Chorus or Guided Bat walks in May. All activities and events are published in Launton Lines and on social media.

We are always delighted to welcome new volunteers to our activities. If you can offer a little time and are interested in taking part, please come along to any of our work sessions or events and discover more about what we do.

Do contact us on fipwlimited@gmail.com if you would like to become a member or you would like to become more actively engaged with your local wood.

Rob Dowman (Chair of FIPW Ltd)