

DONINGTON & ALBRIGHTON LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

It's that time of year again when our gardens, or at least mine, start to look an unruly mess, and we are extremely grateful for the advice to leave parts of our gardens non-manicured for the benefit of overwintering wildlife. I embrace that advice wholeheartedly and my whole garden is non-manicured. We take a slightly more professional approach to preparing for winter in the Nature Reserve.

As has been explained before it is essential to remove a lot of vegetation before it rots down, increasing the fertility of the soil and so discouraging wild flora, with its accompanying specialist habitats and foods, to thrive. We gather this dead material, brash, into piles which provides shelter and safety for overwintering species. In order to maintain a range of habitats in the Reserve this clearing and tidying is not carried out throughout the Meadow, and does not happen at all in the Conservation Area. In that area only the paths are kept clear to allow access.

Humphreston Brook runs through the Conservation Area. It was this Brook that was dammed in the 17th century by a miller at Rectory Road and Donington Pool was formed. Unfortunately the Brook was blocked again during one of the days the Conservation Area was open. This time it was an act of vandalism and the blockage was the rowing boat we keep in that area. Had it not been spotted flooding of the properties around Barrington Close could well have occurred, again.

We are closing the Conservation Area for the Winter. We are hoping to open it again in the Spring and the completed Bird Hide can be put to good use. In the meantime its progress can be followed via our Facebook page, where a lot of other interesting information and photographs can be seen.

We are hoping very much the forest of willow which is expanding at an alarming rate on the side of the Pool will finally be cleared this month. This takes a deal of organisation and depends on clement weather so bear with us on this one.

The tree labels have now appeared and can be seen on selected trees along the green path. Let us know if you would like to sponsor any more.

We had a most successful day in the Meadow last month when a large group of Albrighton Primary children from Newhouse Lane came to see us in order to gather information about the Vikings for their science module. We don't have any actual evidence the Vikings ever visited the Reserve but we do have a lot of the natural resources the Vikings would have used to eat, drink or support their way of life. It was also a great opportunity to introduce the children to a large green and open space of which some of them had no previous knowledge.

Bob Watson's Natural History Courses have begun and take place in the Methodist Church Hall on some Monday afternoons and Saturdays. They are very well worth attending and details of them can be found on the Parish Notice Board, our Notice Board, the Library and the Red House.

Our next Volunteer Day is Thursday 7th November. It would be great to see some new faces as well as the old faithfuls so just get in touch with Paul (paulfallon6@gmail.com) for more information