

DONINGTON & ALBRIGHTON LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

We may not have been able to have our monthly Volunteer Thursdays but things have not stood still in the Nature Reserve. Almost weekly a small socially distanced core group of volunteers has been mending, maintaining and in the case of Himalayan Balsam murdering in an effort to keep things ticking over.

In the Meadow a smart new gate has been hung at the entrance opposite the Fire Station, more docks have been beheaded to remove seed heads and the steps leading down to St Cuthbert's Pool have been repaired.

The Dipping Pool was in dire need of dredging and clearing when two groups of Primary School children from Newhouse Lane came to examine the pond life within it. Despite this they all seemed to have a great time.

On the other side of Rectory Road the chestnut piling that was erected to prevent people disappearing into the huge quantity of sludge that was removed together with the majority of the willow carr was vandalised and so removed. People can now disappear into the sludge at their own risk.

Within the Conservation Area a lot has been going on. The Bird Hide has had a couple of coats of preservative, our smart new Container has been painted and some storage units and chairs added. Our recent energies have been directed towards removing as much of the afore mentioned Himalayan Balsam before it sets seed.

Fly tipping has increased noticeably during lockdown. Unfortunately this is not a new phenomenon along one boundary of the Conservation Area and we are working hard trying to control this.

Covid restrictions willing our Volunteer Days will be returning very soon. In the mean time a restricted band has dredged the Dipping Pool as best it could without mechanical help. The long vegetation has been cut back and the resulting hay, or arisings, gathered into piles. The reason for this is the flowers have now set seed and we give them room to fall to the ground and germinate. The arisings offer shelter for overwintering organisms and also reduce the area of surface contact of rotting vegetation. We have given Nature a helping hand by adding some Yellow Rattle seeds the Severn Valley Nature Reserve kindly allowed us to gather.

One of our Volunteers is so much more than just a willing pair of hands. Bob Watson is the Albrighton Parish Council Tree Warden and an extremely knowledgeable Naturalist. He will be making an occasional contribution to this magazine alongside my more mundane "to do" and "done" lists.

Our Conservation Area will be open 5/6th September and 3/4th October. Hopefully you will come along and see NO Himalayan Balsam

Any enquiries re volunteering or anything else to do with the Nature Reserve please contact Paul Fallon (paulfallon6@gmail.com)