

Brent Island Trust

Newsletter, October 2019



WILD ABOUT FLOWERS

Our ambition to create a natural wildflower meadow is moving forward steadily after the annual mowing. John Severn brought his tractor down once again in early September to cut the grass, and a couple of weeks later members of the Brent Scout Group turned out in force, together with parents and leaders, to rake up the cuttings and move them to the side of the Meadow. This reduces the fertility of the land and helps wild flowers to flourish. The patch of Yellow Rattle at the lower end of the Meadow bloomed profusely this Summer, but that at the top end was less in evidence, so we will be sowing more seed there this Autumn. Yellow Rattle is a parasite which weakens the roots of coarse grasses, giving wild flowers a better chance of competing with them. You may have noticed that an area near the centre of the Meadow has not been cut. This is part of our management policy of leaving different areas to grow longer for a couple of years on a rotational basis. This helps with the diversity of plants in the Meadow, and also creates patches of tufty grassland which is good for small mammals – and the animals which prey on them.



Working Party – Saturday 23rd November

We always give a warm welcome to new volunteers so do think about coming down to The Island to give a hand at our next Working Party. This is on Saturday 23rd November, starting at 9.30am. Bring gardening tools such as shears, secateurs and rakes, and don't forget strong gardening gloves. Tasks planned include clearing willow growth near the apple trees, inserting willow stems into the riverbank repairs, pointing the setts behind the lincay, filling holes dug by dogs in the meadow, brush cutting at the edge of the meadow and cutting back brambles etc. along the path. We'll be finished before lunchtime and coffee and biscuits will be provided as a reward!



Working party activities from 2016 and 2017

Christmas Stall

Our traditional Christmas Stall and carol singing outside the Village Shop will be on Saturday 7th December between 10.00 and 12.00. We will have all the usual features, including the sale of cakes and a tombola, so do please start thinking about possible contributions now. We will have a box in the Mare and Foal charity shop for you to leave tombola prizes nearer the day. More details on the event in our next edition.



Safeguarding

Your committee has followed good practice and adopted a Safeguarding Policy, including a complaints procedure. The purpose of this policy is to protect people from any physical or mental harm that may be caused due to their contact with The Brent Island Trust (BIT). Some of the regulations surrounding children and vulnerable adults do not apply to the Trust's activities, as we do not work with these groups unless they are accompanied by those responsible for them, but we do want members who volunteer for us in any capacity to feel comfortable with the behaviour of others. The full policy has been posted on our website and if you ever have concerns feel free to contact any member of the committee, but we also have two nominated persons with specific responsibilities in this area – Felicity Ferry and Phil Dean. They can be contacted by email at felicity.bitsafe@gmail.com and phil.bitsafe@gmail.com.

So far so good

You may have read in previous newsletters about the riverbank erosion just upstream of the linhay and subsequent repairs by the Westcountry Rivers Trust. We're pleased to report that despite the recent heavy rain and high flow the bank is holding fast and is successfully starting to collect silt and leaves as planned. The photo shows the scene on 16th October.



Membership

The number of trust supporters is looking healthy, with a total of 149 individual and family memberships. That equates to about 290 individuals. The renewal payments have worked well this year – Standing Orders make it so much easier to collect subscriptions, so do think about using this method if you don't already. Those who pay by cash have also been highly efficient with their subs, so thanks all round to our members.

Donald McDonald

We are sad to report the death of one of our former committee members, Donald McDonald. Donald was a great enthusiast for the Trust and a delight to work with. We remember the Trust barbecues at his home in Noland Park with particular affection. Think of Donald next Spring, when the native daffodils he planted among the oaks at the top of The Island will flower again.



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