

## CPC Meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023 – Agenda Item 8, Portfolio Report, by Martin Fairlie re Yarningale Common

### 1.0 Parish Council Training:

- I attended an on-line *'Introduction to Parish Councils – Off To a Flying Start – Basic Information to Get You Started'* on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023.
- An excellent handout.

### 2.0 FoYC Bids:

- I have submitted three small bids of £350 each to the 'WCC Councillors' Grant Fund 2023-2024 Round 1', for gorse plants, bluebell plants & wildflower meadow plugs & seeds.
- Should hear in 4 weeks, 16 July 2023.

### 3.0 CPC Bid:

- I have submitted a bid of £1,500 to the 'WCC Councillors' Grant Fund 2023-2024 Round 1', for help with **Breach Lane Footpath Improvement**.
  - Should hear in 8 weeks, 13 Aug 2023.

### 4.0 FoYC held a very successful **Open Day** for the Coronation, on Mon 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023:

- over 60 visitors despite the rain;
- display boards showing what FoYC have achieved;
- guided walks round the Common;
- refreshments & cupcakes by Sue Bicknell;
- oak tree planted by Hugh Taylor, the oldest member of FoYC;
- a commemorative wooden plaque carved by Ian Bowater;
- a small area of wildflower meadow planted, near the oak tree, opposite the car park, now fenced off to keep the rabbits out, and our first native orchid.

### 5.0 **Community Involvement** following Open Day:

- possibly guided walks for Claverdon Church Youth Club, including help with; some invasive holly clearing, collecting Yellow Rattle seeds;
- possibly a Glow Worm 'Safari', spotting glow worms in June / July, when it's dark.

### 6.0 **FoYC Constitution** as a "Volunteer Community Group, an Unincorporated Association" sent to Ken Flood, Tue 13<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

### 7.0 **Acid Grass Cleared Area** by Meadowcare has produced a magnificent display of Fox Gloves that were dormant in the soil.

### 8.0 **Ongoing FoYC Actions:**

- remove / spray thistles & docks on the Mound;
- picnic bench repairs in the Mound;
- ongoing clearance if invasive species; holly and laurel after the nesting season;
- ongoing clearing and making safe footpaths;
- removal of fallen trees from the main pond, beside Dinglebury, Ossetts Hole Lane;
- possibly hedgehog boxes;
- possibly wild bee boxes;
- a "Year on the Common" a pictorial Journal, possibly for the Doctor's Surgery etc.;

- a village ecological / biodiversity photography exhibition.

## **9.0 Meadowcare and “Grass Cutting on the Common:**

Meadowcare do far more than just cutting the grass on the Common. In accordance with the WCC Biodiversity Offset Management Plan, Meadowcare:

- “cut and collect” the meadow grass and wildflowers and then deposit the cuttings in designated sites on the Common;
- the areas of the Common that get cut are highlighted in the Biodiversity Offset Management Plan and amount to a several acres;
- they scarify the soil in preparation of sowing seeds;
- they procure and sow Yellow Rattle seeds, #;
- they removal areas of scrub;
- all with a view to improving the biodiversity, eventually producing wildflower meadows in certain areas, all in accordance with the WCC Biodiversity Offset Management Plan.

**9.1** Meadowcare also use specialised equipment. Due to it being a large scale ‘cut and collect’ operation they use a flail mower with a collector.

**9.2** When we discussed the Yarningale Common ‘grass cutting’ with the current Claverdon contractor (Thomas Fox) they explained they would have to cut the grass with a conventional machine, leave the grass to dry on the surface and then collect the dried grass manually (no price was given for this). And leaving the cut grass in situ will not help produce wildflower meadows.

**9.3** The WCC Biodiversity Offset Management Plan budget covered one cut per year during mid/late Summer. However, after consultation with David Cole, WCC’s Ecologist, it was agreed an extra Autumn cut would be beneficial if the grass is too long going into Autumn/Winter. However, this additional cut was not in the original budget.

**9.4** This year's "cut and collect" will be charged at a rate of £460/day and each cut takes two days.

**9.5** Meadowcare do not charge VAT.

## **10.0 Evidence of the Success of the Meadowcare Approach and FoYC Working Saturday Mornings:**

- you only have to walk around these areas on the common to see the initial ecological and biodiversity benefits:
- yellow rattle is growing well and suppressing the unwanted grasses;
- these areas are alive with grass hoppers, spiders’ webs, butterflies;
- wild garlic in growing where FoYC have cleared footpaths.