

FOYC Presentation to CPC

Objective

Present a clear message about Biodiversity, community and partnership covering the following:-

- Yarningale Common as a Parish Asset
- Biodiversity Management
- Formation of Friends of Yarningale Common
- Progress to date
- Future goals
- Value of Community / Parish Council Partnership

The Common

One of very few unenclosed Commons left in the country and designated a Local Wildlife Site

The Common covers 20 Hectares or about 50 acres [a map to be shown]

The full history is available in the handbook. [a copy to be shown]

It was grazed under Commoner's rights until 1965 and images from the early 1900's show a very different, open heath with extensive heather and gorse

Without grazing, over the past 60 years trees, shrubs and many invasive plants have taken over the Common and would continue to do so if left unchecked.

In 1950 the Common was handed over to the Parish Council 'for the benefit of the village of Claverdon'

Between the 1970-2000 and the present day volunteer groups formed to carry out ad hoc management of the Common

Biodiversity Management

In 2000 Warwick CC carried out a survey and prepared a management prescription and in 2015 a Habitat Management Plan which formed the basis of our the 2019 Biodiversity Offset Management Plan

The significance of the Biodiversity Management Plan is it attracts funding from developers who are building on sites of a similar type

The Parish receives annual funding from WCC over a twenty year period to deliver a range of prescribed biodiversity projects over the next 30 years

FoYC

As part of the scheme, WCC Ecology encouraged participation by community groups and as part of that aim in 2018 the WCC Ecologist met with two of what are now founding members of FoYC when the plan was being presented to the community.

I came along later, unaware of Offset schemes etc but keen to see the Common cared for and was connected with Shirley and Yvonne. Shortly afterwards, together with each of our other halves the six of us formed FoYC very soon the muscle that is Steve to the crew.

So What do we do?

We volunteer and wrangle others in the community to volunteer with us our aim being to deliver the Biodiversity Management Plan and to maintain the Commons footpaths [Photos from Volunteer days to be shown]

The Management Plan is fairly prescriptive ie it specifically addresses areas of the Common amounting to about 5 acres ie 10%

The projects break down into the following three target habitats -

Restoration of Acid Grassland
Reestablishing Meadow
Managing pond habitat

Progress to Date

Part of our activity is to schedule the annual meadow grass cuts a once a year cut and collect to allow yellow rattle and then other wildflower seeds to flourish

The role of Yellow Rattle is to inhibit grass as it's a parasite plant to grass

We are in Year 6 of 30 years and last year we saw much improved coverage of Yellow Rattle but there's still a long way to go.

The vast majority of our volunteer activity across the Common is prevention of invasive species taking over we like to call getting rid of thugs.

Volunteer Mornings are scheduled on Saturdays normally the last Saturday of the month, last for just a few hours.

Although not part of the funded work, we also carry out woodland management - removing deadwood and opening up the ground to light to let ground cover return.

It is a constant surprise and pleasure to recognise how nature waits patiently in the ground to make an appearance when conditions are right.

The results are there to be seen

More wildflowers

Recognisable improvement in wildlife Slo worms, bats and bird life in particular
In addition to having accessible footpaths

To promote a sense of community around the Common we have also received grants and donations to do a whole host of things:-

Purchased all necessary equipment
Build a Commemorative sign marking the Queens Jubilee
Repaired and replaced benches
Set up an experimental wildflower growing area
Marked the Kings Coronation with a tree planting
Communicated with the neighbours via a Newsletter and posted on social media
Seeking to run talks for the School to encourage the next generation of biodiversity activists

For those of you interested in being part of our Merry Band we post Volunteer dates on noticeboards around the Common and Claverdon Community Shop

Future Goals

So what next?

Nature doesn't get held back and so every season brings with it the need to manage growth to encourage diversity

The task of stretching the budget of the offset plan is already challenging at year 6 of 30 so we are seeking funding through donations and grants to close the gap.

We would like to encourage greater participation from within the community and share the lessons we have learned

Team up with similar initiatives to share ideas and experience

Increase the scope of the biodiversity management to woodland - seek an additional Offset scheme

Community Partnership

I want to finish by talking about the importance of 'Partnership' to this initiative

The success so far is down to the support WCC has given to the CPC and in turn how the CPC has supported FoYC.

The energy these partnerships has generated I hope can be replicated across other initiatives in the parish

In my humble opinion, we need to banish the thoughts of a Vicar of Dibbly style Parish Council and recognise we have a modern, progressive, forward thinking Parish Council keen to sponsor community initiatives and we should be grateful for this.

When we hear about issues in society we may often think "But What Can I do?" - FoYC have chosen to answer this by moving the dial just slightly yet multiplying this across a community is making a real difference.

Thanks you.