

Healthy Living Walk on Jolly's Field progress report 22nd March 2013

This project has turned out to be far more of a challenge than expected due to the waterlogged ground conditions, but substantial progress has been made and hopefully the ground will start to dry out soon.

We are of course extremely grateful to Warwickshire County Council for the grant in the first place that allowed this project to start, and to Rugby Borough Council for the huge amount of help they have given us; also to our colleagues at Warwickshire Wildlife Trust for their help, guidance and consultation.

The work kicked off with the WWT local group marking out the route and getting posters done to inform the local residents what was happening and what would be achieved. Work started on site in mid-January.



Cyril marking trees to be cleared

The next part was to meet on site with the contractor and agree the way forward. As soon as he started on site in mid-February it became apparent that the ground conditions would make this a far more demanding task than first recognised. It became necessary to bring a tracked vehicle on site to cope with the waterlogged ground.



Dave Whitlock making progress through the scrub

Once the route was cleared and the brash mainly chipped to create the path, field drain pipes were installed in some of the French drains to facilitate drainage, but more remains to be done on this was the ground dries out somewhat. The chips were then spread to create the path. However since the chips were spread the weather has continued very wet and the water table remains very high at present, so we have more chips waiting to be applied to the path once the weather turns. At present the path remains very soft but we have been digging out the drains by hand to alleviate the issue and of course once the area starts to green up and the plants begin to grow the moisture will reduce quickly.



The path begins to take shape



Phil digging in the French drains

The local group have been out in all weathers working to improve the area and a huge amount of progress has been made.



Margaret clearing the scrub

We still have much to do and will be out again this coming Sunday to erect some barriers to try and stop the local kids using the path as a quad bike track, as well as some further work on the drains. We have also enlisted the support of our colleagues in Nature Force from WWT to help and will have a larger task force on site on Tuesday and Wednesday May 7th

and 8th. Neil Sandison has also kindly agreed to arrange a community litter pick, as sadly there are a lot of bottles and cans discarded in the area, as well as a considerable amount of garden refuse and other items dumped over the fence by local residents.

To the future then we have also secured an additional £1000 to spend on wildflower seed and plug plants which will greatly enhance the area in due course. We have also collected a lot more chips for the path from another project to clear Pytchley Marsh and as stated previously these will be spread once the ground is a little drier.



Steve observes the poles for barriers and chips for the path

We will then arrange a community planting day to put in the wildflower seed and plugs. We have had a huge amount of interest from the local residents, and the many users of the Cutting and some have joined us to help with this walk. The vast majority of comments are hugely positive and very appreciative of what we have and will achieve here, one or two naturally have concerns about potential anti-social behaviour, but agree over all it will be great for locals, wildlife and flora once it settles down which may take a while before it looks at its best.

We have now spent all the grant monies and more! I will let WCC have copies of the relevant invoices etc. with my final project report in due course.

Steve Batt – on behalf of the Rugby Group of Warwickshire Wildlife Trust 22/3/2013

*Various blogs and further photographs can be found on our website
<http://rugbywildlife.info/> as will be progress updates in due course*

All photographs copyright Steve Batt and Phil Parr



One of the local migrants loving it already – all spawned out!