

Friends of Oxleas Woodlands

March 2023 NEWSLETTER



Volunteering Dates

March

Friday 17th, 10am-noon Woodland Conservation
Saturday 18th, 10am-noon Rose Garden
Saturday 25th, 10am-noon Litter Picking
Friday 31st, 10am-1pm Woodland Conservation

April

Saturday 8th, 10am-1pm SHWWP*
Friday 14th, 10am-1pm Woodland Conservation
Sunday 16th, 10am-noon Rose Garden
Friday 21st, 2-4pm Rose Garden
Saturday 22nd, 10am-noon Litter Picking
Friday 28th, 10am-1pm Woodland Conservation

*Shooters Hill Woodlands Working Party

For all the Volunteer sessions and events planned for 2022 please see the calendar circulated in February's newsletter.

Hello Friends,

A big thank you to all the volunteers who join our group litter picking sessions or do their own thing to remove rubbish from the woodlands. In 2022, we clocked up nearly 300 volunteer hours on litter picking, which plays an important role in keeping the woodlands safe for the plants and wildlife.

It is a surprisingly satisfying activity with some unexpected finds - frequently just one shoe, tyres, and on one occasion a safe. There is some good news - that there has been a reduction in the levels of littering than we saw during the pandemic years, and the number of Halloween pumpkins left in the woods this year was significantly less. However, garden and builders' waste remains a problem. Although some people believe that their dumped garden waste will harmlessly rot down in the woods, it actually represents a serious threat to the woodland, changing the pH levels of the soil and introducing potentially diseased and invasive plants to the habitat. Why not join us at a litter picking session - all equipment is provided and you can enjoy a couple of hours with a friendly group of people in the fresh air, while also playing your part in protecting the woodlands.

Sue Reeve,
FOW Secretary



Need to Know

You can be a Friend of Oxleas Woodlands, a volunteer-run community organisation.
For more information see our website or email oxleas.friends@virginmedia.com

www.oxleaswoodlands.uk

For More Information

@OxleasFriends

Friends of Oxleas Woodlands

FOW AGM

Tuesday 21st March, 7:30pm

Steve Bolton from Big City Butterflies will be our guest speaker at this year's AGM.

His talk will be followed by our Annual Report and Accounts, plus confirmation of the appointment of Steering Group members.

We hope you can join us at Shrewsbury House.

FOW Walks

Family Explorer

Sunday 26th March, 10:15

Families with primary-aged children are invited to join Sue Houghton to explore the woods around the Castle.

Woodland Conservation Walk

Sunday 26th March, 2pm

This walk will highlight some of the problems facing the flora and fauna of the woods and discuss what we are doing to protect them.

Spring Bird Walk

Sunday 23rd April, 9am

In spring we can see resident species and summer visitors as they look for partners & defend their territories.

Spring Flowers Walk

Sunday 30th April, 2pm

The spring flowers should be at their peak from the cuckoo flower to the bluebell and many others.

Booking is essential for all walks. Please contact Mike

oxleas.events@gmail.com

Walks are free, donations are welcome.

Being a Litter Picking Volunteer

I first joined in the litter picking sessions a few years ago, to contribute to the improvement of the local areas and do my bit for the community. I find it very rewarding to do. I get a bit of exercise and I appreciate the better, cleaner environment. Also, we often have people who are passing by who thank us for doing so. It's nice to know it doesn't go unnoticed.

It can become quite addictive, and it's hard to stop at the end of a session as there's always another piece of litter that you notice hiding under a bush, or in the gutter, or around the next corner. Some litter can be deeply-hidden in the undergrowth or in the middle of brambles, or even buried in the soil; often just a little corner is poking out and it needs a bit of digging and heaving to extract it, so a workout is a bonus! We usually end up with many bags full (approx. 10-20), quite a few tyres, and other odd items; fly-tipped waste as well.

Wherever I see litter now, on a roadside or in a car park, or anywhere, it really bothers me. A lot of litter gets blown around by the wind, but it is often so carelessly and thoughtlessly discarded, and I think it is such a shame that some people are so disconnected from the environment they live in.

Litter can also affect wildlife, with birds and animals ingesting plastic, using it to make their nests, or getting caught up in it, all of which can affect their wellbeing. Litter also pollutes streams and other waterways, which can affect the ecology by creating water pools/flooding or blocked drainage. I have also done river and beach cleans (along the Thames and when I'm on holiday) and it is shocking the amount of plastic and other materials found (bags, bottles, food boxes/trays, ropes, fishing line, balloons, etc.). I feel that if I do all I can then I feel more positive about the future of our precious green spaces, our own local environment and beyond: we all need to do our bit for our wonderful world.

Julia Holland,
FOW Litter Picking Volunteer



Shepherd Leas Development

Members who commented on the proposed development at Shepherd Leas may have received notification that this is now going to appeal.

FOW will be resubmitting our ecological objections and commenting on the applicant's supporting evidence where appropriate.

Members wishing to submit their comments can do so in writing by **6th April** directly via acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk or by email to east3@planninginspectorate.gov.uk ref: APP/E5330/W/22/3308233

If you would like to join us as a volunteer please contact us on
oxleas.volunteers@gmail.com