

## Highwood Management Conference

**1 February 2021**

### Countryside Service Rangers Review

#### 1/ Management Tasks

- Scrub removal from Heathland Compartment.
- Rhododendron removal from compartment 4.
- The Scraping of a larger section of Heathland has taken place with excess topsoil/leaf litter/ materials being removed from site .After the success of the 2017 area, a compartment will be programmed in every year.
- The Final £18.5k of footpath improvements was carried out in March before Covid restrictions were in place. Our Highwood access improvement budget has now been closed.

#### 2/ General Ranging

- General work including cutting back footpaths, strimming and removing hung-up trees. (monthly visits between April and October)
- Removing 5 incidents of fly tipping, garden waste.
- Litter picking.
- Cleaning out of the Kingfisher ditch.
- The replacement of the railway sleeper bridge access from High Tree Drive with a surfaced culvert.
- Tree surgeon spent 1 days making safe dangerous trees on site.
- Respond to 3 incidents of illegal camping on site.
- 1 reported incidents to the Countryside Service regards aggressive cycling on the site.
- BTCV have been monitoring the regeneration of areas cleared of Laurel reporting a positive colonisation by native species.
- A large area of large Leaved Periwinkle was removed that was becoming established after some garden fly tipping had taken place.

#### 3/ Volunteer Involvement

- The Friends group has continued to support The Countryside Service, by walking every day helping to patrol the site, litterpicking, reporting of problems and directing us on site to location of jobs.

- 89 volunteer workdays (excluding Friends visits) have been carried out this year; including volunteers from CROW (conserve Reading on Wednesdays), Thames Valley Conservation Volunteers, BTCV and Community Services.
- Two students from Addington School have also spent 8 days working on the site alongside staff.
- 3 days Himalayan balsam/ scrub pulling from Heathland compartment.

#### **4/ Next year (this winter)**

- Coppicing compartment 4.
- Rhododendron/ Laurel control in compartment 6.
- Scrub removal from Heathland Glade.
- 1 days Heathland scraping as part of the regeneration project.
- Reed bed establishment on Southlake (not technically Highwood but CS staff and volunteers managed project).
- CROW (Conserve Reading on Wednesdays) have been commissioned in for several dates to carry out conservation work on the Heathland after a donation was made to improve the area.