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Ludwell Life

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Ludwell Valley Park



Photo credit: Rose Bushell

Ludwell Life October 2024 Newsletter

Autumn has certainly arrived!

We start with news from Devon Wildlife Trust where the big and rather sad story is that Chris Moulton, our park ranger, is moving on.

The Community Orchard is doing well and about to get a fine new information board. The scrape however is looking rather sad and we need to arrange some conservation work. And talking of work, do you fancy following David's example in clearing nettles and brambles from the kissing gates?



Thank you Chris!



Devon Wildlife Trust update

The big news is that we are losing our park ranger, Chris Moulton. We met up with him recently at the Community Orchard to present him with a coveted Ludwell Life T-shirt ... no, it was really all about saying our goodbyes and thanking him.

Chris has been looking after not just Ludwell but all six Valley Parks in Exeter for many years but is now moving on to manage DWT reserves in mid Devon. DWT will be replacing him, and he will still be around some of the time until the new person is in place, but we will miss him. We owe Chris a great deal, he

has been a tireless advocate for Ludwell, a good friend to Ludwell Life and has never been afraid to get stuck in to the many conservation tasks needed - hedge laying, tree planting, and just generally clearing up and caring for the Valley. So once again, thank you Chris.

On a very different note, the cattle will be also be leaving sometime between the middle and end of this month.



The State of the Scrape

As it was in the summer of 2023:



As it was last winter:



And as it is now!



The Scrape

The scrape (pond) in Butcher's Field is in need of some attention. Some, but not many, of the marginal plants we put in a couple of years ago are doing ok, the loosestrife is well established and its purple flowers have looked great, but, as you can see from the photos, marsh grass is starting to take over - and it is a very thirsty plant! We need to set a date for a group of Ludwell Lifers to remove some of the invading plants, so please watch out for more on that.



Community Orchard

The orchard trees have done really well this year and the ones planted earliest - nearly 7 years ago - are rapidly outgrowing their protective cages. (But we won't be removing those until we are confident the trees are strong enough not to be pushed over or damaged by the grazing cattle.)

As we mentioned in August's newsletter, we have agreement with DWT to plant four more trees in the Community Orchard this coming winter, probably in January. Details in December's newsletter.

And for one other story about the orchard, read on!



The Community Orchard Noticeboard

If you've walked along past the orchard recently, you will no doubt have noticed the large wooden frame that's been attached to the fence. Well, here's the story.

A few years ago, we put this frame, complete with an information panel, down near the Panny bridge. Unfortunately it got vandalised beyond repair. After much thought as to what to do with it, someone came up with th bright idea of relocating it up by the orchard to replace the little, rather careworn one already there.

Easier said than done, as the pictures below show! But we did it. Although we could have managed without the invaluable help of park ranger, Chris. Then we had to clean it up, woodstain it and finally commission a new panel, which is being designed by Toby Denn of Imaginaire and produced by that great little local company, Brightsea. It is nearly ready, but the picture above gives you a sneak preview of roughly how it will look. Hope you like it!







Clearing the Nettles

Back in the days when it was warm enough to wear shorts (remember them?), David rather bravely set out to clear the stinging nettles making it all but impossible to get through the kissing gate and steps between Little Three Acres and Beam Wood.

If you are in the Valley and come across other gateways where nettles or brambles are encroaching, do consider taking some secateurs or shears to clear around them. But only if you feel safe to do so without getting scratched or stung. DWT needs our help to keep the many routes around the park accessible.

Ludwell Life is an independent community group, set up to protect and enhance Ludwell Valley Park

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