

Friends of Knolls Wood

Newsletter



SUMMER 2018 - Greetings from your Committee Members

Dates for your diary:

**Next Volunteer Session: Sunday 24 June 2018, 10:00 – 12:00hrs
Meet at the Sandy Lane Entrance (by the Notice Board) at 10:00.**

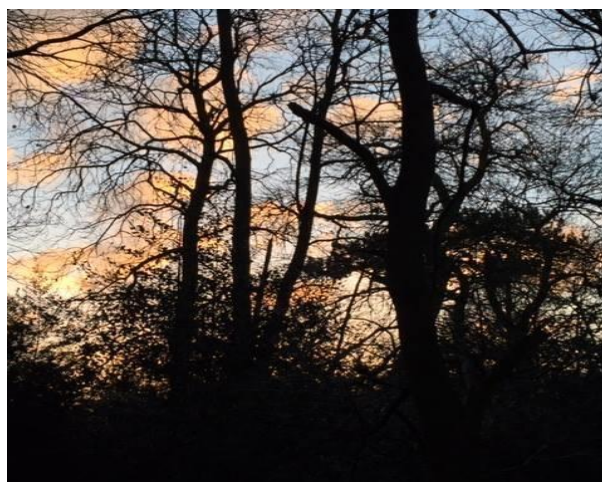
**FoKW Annual General Meeting:
Wednesday 4 July 2018, Rushmere Park, at 20:00 hrs
Chris Christoforou *will be talking about 'The Wildlife Garden'*
*Free Parking Tokens will be available***

Volunteer Sessions / FoKW Committee

Everyone is welcome at our volunteer sessions. If you can help in any way with our events, or would like to join our committee please contact us by e-mail: Friends@knollswood.com or send a message to our Facebook page: **Knolls Wood**

FoKW Online

Please check our website: knollswood.com or Facebook page: **Knolls Wood** for information and dates of working parties. If people could spare just one hour of their time it would make a huge difference.



Come and join our FoKW Committee

The Friends are a group of local residents who work alongside the Greensand Trust to look after this special site. The Knolls Wood Association, as it was first called, was formed back in 1986 and we are now in our 32nd year, so it is not surprising that the committee membership has changed over time. In recent years, a few people have retired or moved away, so we are keen to recruit new members.

A bit of history

Before the 1840s this area of Leighton Buzzard was part of Leighton Heath, and local people had various rights to graze sheep and cattle, to collect wood and stone etc. In 1844 an Act was passed to enclose the Heath, which was then divided up into plots. About 30 of these were sold in public auction and one area of about 60 acres was bought by John Dollin Bassett, a local Quaker banker (Bassetts Bank is now Barclays in the High St). This area straddles what is now Plantation Road, covering the whole of Redwood Glade and Knolls Wood, plus a similar area on the other side.

Having acquired this area of heathland, Mr Bassett soon took an interest in creating a woodland. The plantation was started in the autumn of 1844 and the initial planting was finished the following spring. Scots Pine, Larch and hardwoods formed the bulk of the planting, but more exotic species such as the Redwoods were also grown. These are now some of the largest in our region and possibly among the very first to be imported.

The plantation east of Plantation Road was sold for development in the late 1960s and the houses that form Redwood Glade were built. In the early 1980s there were two campaigns by local people against further development plans and, following a three-day Public Enquiry, the woods were brought into public ownership as amenity woodland. In his report, the Inspector commented that the management of the wood would be “best handled on the basis of a partnership between the local authority ... and the Knolls Wood Protection Association [as it then was], a well-founded association of local residents who have a genuine interest in the care and use of the woodland.”

What we do now

In the mid 1990s the Council appointed the Greensand Trust to maintain the woods, and the Friends have worked with the Rangers ever since. Together, we have two aims: first, to implement the management plan in order to preserve this old plantation. Sometimes trees have to be removed because they are dead or dying, in which case we replace them with the same species if possible. We also remove invasive plants such as holly and sycamore, which would otherwise choke the young saplings. Our second role is to check no harm is done to the wood. Vandalism is rare, but on occasions people have lit fires, sprayed fences with graffiti and damaged young trees. Litter is not much of a problem but, sadly, garden refuse is frequently dumped, most recently in the north east corner where the bluebells grow. People may believe this does no harm, but in fact it affects the balance of the natural environment and encourages the wrong sort of growth, e.g. nettles.

We hold a meeting every three months, an AGM in the summer, an event for children in the autumn, and we produce newsletters to keep local residents informed. We also organise four volunteer sessions a year when we carry out tasks proposed by our Greensand Ranger, Gary. As the title suggests, we call on help from volunteers on these days and have been much encouraged by the numbers who have turned up.

Joining the Friends will not take up much of your time, and if you're new to the area, you'll have a chance to meet other locals. We have a website – www.knollswood.com – where you can read about our activities and see photos. There's also a link if you'd like to email us, or if you prefer, you can call Roger on 07805 805423 to find out more about joining the committee.

www.knollswood.com