

Blofeld & District Conservation Group (BADCOG)

Annual report for Strumpshaw PC

Over the course of the past year, the volunteers of the Blofeld & District Conservation Group (BADCOG) have undertaken 25 main work parties, in and around the local area. In addition to this, we have also undertaken much more work in between, totalling 80 occasions when volunteers have been out in the field working. BADCOG carries out practical wildlife conservation management at 15 sites, ranging from a 3.7-acre fen at South Walsham, to a small pond in Blofeld Heath.

Within the Parish of Strumpshaw, BADCOG manages 3 sites, the east section of Buckenham Woods, Strumpshaw-Stone Pit and Railway Wood, the latter of which is owned by BADCOG.

At Buckenham Woods, we generally undertake 3 to 4 work parties a year. As there is no management plan for the wood, we mainly concentrate on keeping the recognised path network open around the site. This work means that the public can enjoy the wood unhindered by overgrown vegetation. This can be a challenge some years, particularly after a period of warm, wet weather, when the vegetation has a rapid growth spurt. We also pay for a farmer to 'top' the large glade area each year. If this wasn't carried out, then this area would quickly be choked by sycamore, bramble and buddleia. This open area is an important part of the site, and the best place to see butterflies and dragonflies. Volunteers also try and keep the permissible footpath alongside the allotments open, by cutting back the hedge and mowing the path. One area that we would like to undertake more work on, this the bramble in the bluebell areas of the wood. Unfortunately, some areas of the woodland are now overgrown with bramble, hiding the bluebells and wood anemone that once dominated the woodland floor.

At Strumpshaw Stone-pit, BADCOG only undertakes one work party a year here. However, volunteers have been involved with the Community Apple Tree project, by helping clear around the trees in the summer. Bob from the Shoulder of Mutton Pub coordinates this, and BADCOG members are always on hand to help with this project. The main BADCOG work party at Strumpshaw Stone-pit is held in the autumn, and each year we cut, rake and clear the whole site and carry out some coppicing and pollarding around the area.

Once a year we have a work party at Railway Wood, normally in December. Here volunteers do a bit of a tidying up of the understorey, giving space for the snowdrops and primroses to grow. We also carry out any coppicing and pollarding that maybe required, and check of any hazards alongside the footpath, keeping it safe and accessible for walkers. This small bit of woodland acts as a wildlife corridor and is a haven for many creatures.

BADCOG also uses the excellent facilities at the Strumpshaw Community Hall for its winter talks and members evening.

Details for all BADCOG Work Parties and events can be found at www.badcog.co.uk