

## **WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS 2016/17**

As previously discussed, herewith our suggestions for woodland management for the 2016/17 winter season:

Most of the work over the past couple of decades has concentrated on the Upper Pleasure Grounds, including the thinning of trees, coppicing, rhododendron clearance, glade creation and footpaths. This year we should turn our attention to the woodlands along the Danes Stream primarily in the Lower PGs. These proposals fall within the agreed ten-year management plan.

Here are our suggestions for the PCs consideration for 2016/17: (See Plans)

**Selective thinning (10 trees - Lower PGs):** We have marked up ten trees with small yellow pins. The selected trees are mainly too densely populated in various locations along the Danes Stream footpath. The trees are in four sites and would help open up canopy cover to allow ground and stream flora to establish and flourish.

**Logging & Deadwood:** MCV to continue extracting felled logs by hand, split for sale and deliver to the local community. We are also conscious of leaving some standing pollarded trees and laying deadwood for invertebrate diversity.

**Glade Creation (Lower PGs):** This site has been selected to complement the area opened up on the western side (awaiting strimming out) of the Mill Meadow bridge footpath. It would also provide views downstream and might include a natural rustic log seat. Opening up the canopy next to the Danes Stream will help green-up the river. We shall also complete the work started this year along the path leading to the Boardwalk in the Upper PGs.

**Pond-dipping platform (Lower PGs):** We suggest that this small platform be included along the short boardwalk at the MEG Pond. The Lower PGs site has the benefit of being close to youth facilities i.e. the school, community centre and guide hut.

The pond-dipping platform will have low safety rails around it as per the following photograph. The size of it would be about 2m wide x 1.5m deep.



A small sign can be placed on the rail to warn of deep water. (The water depth is about 3 foot in the centre of the pond. The edge drops away quickly from about 1 to 2 foot out from the boardwalk).

**6-12 Retained Holm Oak at maximum of 1-2 per compartment (Upper & Lower PGs):** It was agreed that 1 to 2 Holm Oaks would be retained in each of the six compartments. We have marked the suggested trees to be retained on the plan enclosed and on the trees themselves with small blue pins at head height facing away from the nearest footpaths.

**Coppicing area (Upper PGs):** The area suggested for this winter is shown on the enclosed plan and will cover an area of about 30m x 20m overall.

**Non-native invasive Rhododendron work (Upper PGs):** We suggest that the next rhododendron area to be cleared be along each side of the path leading down from the Common towards the woodland interpretation board. The path is heavily overgrown and in removing the rhododendron from this area it will also free up the adjacent overgrown ditch that takes water down from the common into the woodland and on towards the Danes Stream. The ditch itself is an attractive habitat, but is currently completely overgrown.



***Path leading up to Studland Common***



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***Shaded ditch running down & under path from Studland Common***

**Record, monitor, remove and report other non-native invasive species:**

Continue to record Turkey Oak, Laurels, Bamboo, Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsom, Gaultheria, Spanish Bluebell, Montbretia, Skunk Cabbage and Bay. Remove species which can be hand-pulled or cut with a bowsaw.

**Reed bed restoration (Upper PGs):** This needs to be undertaken, possibly by Jason using a brushcutter. The MCV could support this work with labour to help Jason clear away the resultant brush to be chipped or burnt on site.

**WORK OUTSIDE OF WOODLAND MANAGEMENT REMIT**

**Footpath work (Upper & Lower PGs):** The three primary areas most in need of urgent winter attention are:

1. In the Upper PGs running alongside the old BMX track

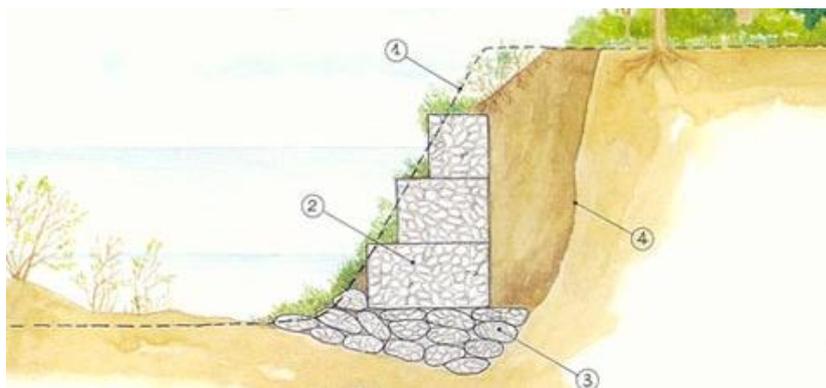
2. The Lower PGs between Mill Meadow and New Valley Road and
3. The Lower PGs closest to the village centre end of the footpath

Again, MCV would be happy to support Jason and Graham in this work as per last winter's work.

**Danes Stream River Revetment work:** The site most in need of attention is upstream of the Boardwalk by the next bend. Dangerous corrugated rusting iron and unsightly bricks and rubber car tyres (used in previous river bank revetment repairs) have already been partially removed by MCV to make the site safer and a little less unattractive.

The revetment here is being undermined by river flow force following heavy downpours and by youngsters using the bank and tree/s to hang a rope and swing across the stream. This activity is not particularly dangerous now that some of the sharp objects have been removed. Renovation is needed to the undermining bank to stop further major erosion.

The preferred method would be to place two or three rows of gabions to a suitable height (similar to illustration below & sketch-plan at end of report) and fill them with rocks and backfill with earth behind.



***The Danes Stream would run above the dotted-line to the left of the gabion wall***

The wall would follow the bend in the river. This will not be a cheap option, but can work successfully if neatly constructed and the gabions allowed to green-up over time. This would require funding in the order of say up to £2,000 (TBC) for materials, and the cost of tyre disposal but could last a very long time. It would be easier on the eye than the mess that was and is currently there. The rocks will also provide suitable habitat for invertebrates. We hope to experiment by incorporating a suitable pipe through the gabions to the earth backfill to the rear to encourage Kingfisher to nest. The concept of incorporating a ready-made tunnel for kingfishers to nest would be unique if it proved successful!

## **SUMMARY**

These actions continue the work undertaken by the Parish Council in partnership with MCV over the past 12 months. The PC and MCV has received many compliments from the public for the work undertaken. The proposed works are all part of the agreed management plan and aims to keep within the budget set by the Council for 2015/16. We request that the PC continues with the present level of funding for the winter 2016/17 works.

Your agreement to the proposed works above would be appreciated so that we can start to plan our work schedule for the next twelve months.