

Parish Council Annual Meeting

Hoppit Wood & Lake Steering Group Report

- We celebrated 20 years of the establishment of the Hoppit.
- Activities included - open morning & bird song walk in June 2024 (about 40 attended the latter) and we had an information stall at Debenham Day last July. A dozen or so came and listened to the dawn chorus on April 27 at 4am led by Mike Challis, whose input in the last year or so has been invaluable. Another bird song walk is on Wed May 28 at 8pm.
- We carry out ongoing maintenance (path repairs, lakeside trimming & flailing thanks to Joe Westrop). We are developing a management plan, to ensure the wood is thinned appropriately and is managed to encourage wildlife. Richard Parmee (Mid Suffolk Biodiversity Officer) visited and gave advice. We are giving new life to the ancient pond plus old pond in the SW corner of the wood. Cathy Smith from Suffolk Wildlife Trust has advised on future development for the pond.
- Bridleway surface improvements are now complete, thanks to SCC. It was done to improve access during muddy weather, particularly at the pinch point at the SW top corner of the wood.
- Partnerships - not off the ground yet, but possible ones could involve Suffolk Rural College at Otley. We also want to involve our schools more in the future.
- Reptile survey- this is being carried out at our wood, as a landowner wants to move some slow worms and needs a survey carried out first to see if our wood is suitable. A professional firm are doing this, laying dozens of mats etc. down.
- Fund raising - donations and calendars have made us some money as we no longer receive an annual grant. We received a recent locality budget grant however to buy 3 new picnic tables. Thanks to our district councillor, Teresa Davis for this.
- Publicity - things have improved with the establishment of a website www.hoppit.uk + dedicated email, thanks again to Mike Challis. Also we're working on a small information leaflet to have available at the wood and around the village.
- Our AGM Wednesday September 3 in Dove Cottage @ 7pm. All welcome especially any new steering group members.