

Hoppit Report to Parish Council – May 2026

Key initiatives in the development in the last year have been the finalising of our management plan in which we have sectioned off parts of the wood for selective timetabled attention. Mike Challis has been instrumental in all this and thanks go to him.

James Peck approached us to see if we would be able to relocate slow worms from another site in the village on Little London Hill to enable James to go ahead with a building project. A successful suitability survey has taken place by a specialist firm and slow worms have been moved and more will follow. James has pledged to help develop our wood, including giving support from a tree surgeon. Already with this help, four hibernaculas have been created for the slow worms to hibernate.

We have carried out extensive work on the old pond in the south west corner of the wood. We did this last summer whilst it had dried out. We obtained advice from Cathy Smith from the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. This involved digging out by hand some of the reed mace and silt etc. as well as opening up the south side of the pond to let in more light. Many smooth newts are in the pond and we aim to enable a range of pond life to flourish.

Improving the path leading from the cemetery gates to the lake will be carried out soon, so access is less difficult for wheelchairs etc as the surface is very uneven. We will also repair some areas of the path around the lake. Thanks go to the PC for a recent grant to pay for the self-binding gravel and plate whacker hire.

We continue to raise the profile of the Hoppit. Last summer we printed and distributed 200 copies of a threefold double-sided leaflet. There has been a reprint since. Thanks to Mick Evans who did all the design work. The leaflets are to be found in two special holders at entrances to the wood and lake as well as in Websters, the library & DLC. In addition, Mike continues to add excellent blogs to the relatively new website, to inform readers on all activities and developments. He has also organised Bird Song Walks and Dawn Chorus events at 4am. Our 2026 calendar, the third we have produced, sold well and made a profit of about £475 towards funds.

As always thanks to all steering group members and any others who have played their part this year in maintaining this special place.