

Golden Autumn

So much happens these days on the hill and in Cooper's Wood and Field that I have to use our Facebook page as a diary, so I can look back and refresh my mind.

The most memorable thing has been the lovely sunny days and dry conditions, which has helped no end with our flower meadow project.

The other thing that has stuck in my mind is the annual problem, of after cutting the meadow, what to do with all the hay. It also takes a lot of manpower (and lady power) to rake and shift it off the meadow.

None of us are getting any younger and for some reason this year, although the yellow rattle has reduced the growth of grass, we seemed to have more than ever.

We are going to be pro-active and research different options to the collection and disposal of the hay. If it could be used in a bio-mass burner to generate power that would be a good sustainable way of using the end project.

The local community are bursting with ideas for forth coming events and how the area could further benefit people within the Bridport area. Several events have taken place after different people and organisations have asked permission from the Woodland Trust and Allington Parish Council.

We mustn't forget the wildlife. There has been up's and down's for many wildlife species. Butterflies have had the worst year and conservation groups are scratching their heads, as for many species this years weather has been perfect, so what has happened?

Much to some peoples dismay we do have a good crop of nettles. Despite this the small tortoiseshell butterfly which is dependant on this plant was a very rare sight. In fact when we completed our butterfly surveys, we counted none.

On the plus side there was an abundance of insects and small mammals to be found in the flower meadow. There are a few less mammals now, as when a Buzzard sees Duncan (the tractor) it immediately sits in one of the trees and patiently watches as we mow. My problem is that I can't steer Duncan and take photos at the same time, as the Buzzard lands only feet away from us and then flies off with his prize catch.

We are looking for people who would be happy to drive the tractor. At the moment we have only four people. With work and family commitments it does mean that we are not using the tractor to it's full advantage. If you would like a test drive, please contact us and we will can arrange a taster session. Ladies are welcome too. You need to be over 25 and have a clean driving licence to be covered under our insurance.



Postcode Lottery

Thanks to the Postcode Lottery we have been able to fund two projects this year, the flower meadow and hedge restoration as well as helping to purchase Duncan.

With funding also from Allington Parish Council and private donations we were able to purchase a good quality tractor earlier than expected. This meant we were able to do a lot of the work ourselves. This left us with a surplus of funds originally set aside for the flower meadow. We are very grateful to the Postcode Lottery for agreeing to transfer the balance of funding over to the hedge restoration project. This means we can now afford to lay the rest of the hedge along Hospital Lane, as well as plant new hedging where required.



Beavers on the Hill



No, don't worry we don't have Beavers gnawing away at our trees. These were the 1st West Bay Beaver Group asking me some very difficult questions about the trees and wildlife on the hill.

It was heart warming that these children had a good knowledge of trees and often spent time outdoors with their families. Many had log burners at home and understood they couldn't just take wood. They also helped forage for Blackberries. Several weeks later I met up with one of the boys who was proudly showing Granddad around the hill. Things like this are so heart warming it makes it all worth while.

Dog Show

The Bridport Hospital League of Friends celebrated the 25 anniversary of Bridport Hospital by holding a Fete in their grounds and a Dog Show on the community area of Cooper's Field.

Although the weather running up to the event was awful, they braved the weather, making a small profit on the event. The money raised going towards the hospital.

Fun was had by all and I believe that they would like to hold the event again next year.

If you wish to raise funds which would help the local community and feel the field would be an ideal venue, please contact Allington Parish Council or use our email address allingtonhill@gmail.com and I will pass the details on.

News in brief...

The field is becoming popular for children's birthday parties. One asked permission from A.P.C to erect a small gazebo for their event and the other was held in the five-a-side football pitch.

News in brief...

Beyond Events held their first running event on the hill. We saw approximately 30 runners and it had a very low impact on the area. Low impact activities such as these are welcome.

Allington Hill Calendar 2107

There is a new look to our calendars this year. We took on board comments from people who had previously bought our calendars and we have a new shape, metal hanger and photographs on a white background. This year they come cellophane wrapped for better presentation for a gift. We have been able to keep the price the same as last year, £7.50. All the funds raised will go towards a project chosen by the local community for the hill. Last year a bat detector and wildlife camera were purchased.

Thank you to the kind generosity of those that put their photos forward to be included in the calendar. It was hard work to choose the final few that reflected the area at it's best.



Lisa Butchart, Christine Bell, Roy Fursman, Taz Moores, Elaine Wells and me! with our photos. Sadly Rob Cook and Defoe Smith were unable to make the photo shoot. The calendars will be on sale direct from us, Washingpool Farm and the Oddfellows Arms, North Allington from early November.

Working Parties



Many of you will recognise this picture. We have been using it on our Facebook page to advertise the next working party for over a year. We are still told that we do not give enough notice. For the first time we are going to trial having a working party on a set day of the month. The first Sunday of the month from 10am.

This means that there will be a working party on **Sunday November 6th from 10am**
Sunday December 4th from 10am

There will always be other working parties during the month any day of the week. With only two people who are willing to run working parties, it has to be to their convenience.

Forest School Area

We have been contacted by local resident Defoe Smith on the possibility of providing a story telling/ forest school area within Cooper's Wood. Interim talks have taking place and we are in principle happy to support this idea. Several small villages locally have such areas, yet Bridport does not have such an amenity.

Defoe will be making a presentation to Allington Parish Council at the next council meeting on Tuesday November 8th at the Cherry Tree Community Hall. You are very welcome to come along in support. The meeting starts at 7.30pm

He would be grateful for letters of support for his proposal. They can either be sent direct to Allington Parish Council clerk@allingtonparishcouncil.co.uk or myself allingtonhill@gmail.com and they will be presented at the meeting. There will also be a post on our Facebook page where you can back the idea.

If successful these will also be used in any funding bid, to help fund the installation and to fund events throughout the year. Your support would be very much appreciated.

Family Activity Event

The next event will be held on Saturday November 19th from 10am. The venue will be Cooper's Field, with lots of activities for the children and adults alike. The activities are run by Dan from Magdalen Farm.

We also feel that it is the golden opportunity for Mum to go off and do some Christmas shopping while Dad has some " Dad " time with the kids.

The event is sponsored by funds raised by Aiden's Amble and Dorset Area of Outstanding Beauty, Sustainable Living fund.

Place are Free,
booking essential.
Book your place by
emailing:
allingtonhill@gmail.com
For more details visit
our Facebook page:
Allington Hillbillies.



Hedge Restoration

We will be having more saplings arriving to complete our hedge restoration donated by the Woodland Trust.

These will be ready to plant the same weekend as the family activity event.

Weather permitting we hope to plant them Saturday 19th or Sunday 20th from 10am.

We will hold working parties on both days to ensure the job gets done.

The saplings will be planted along the East side of Cooper's Field.



Another species recorded on the hill

One of our regular volunteers does not like moths. She did though go out of her way to save this little caterpillar from being squashed by a dog. It will turn into a Knot Grass Moth. I have done my research and they eat Plantain which is now growing really well in within flower meadow, that's why it was there.



Jubilee Wood

Last winter every opportunity we had to do a working party on the hill, it rained. So it was a relief to be able to get back up to Jubilee Wood and clear the bracken away from the trees. Sadly the undergrowth had choked several trees and some replanting will need to be done.

We have secured some Dog Wood saplings from the Woodland Trust, that will produce a dense thicket and hopefully shade out the bracken. Everything that is planted on the hill has to have a certificate to prove that it was grown in this country under strict conditions ensuring diseases such as ash die back are not introduced on to the hill.



Badger Damage

We like to think that we own this space, but in fact it belongs to those that live there and they are the badgers, foxes, deer, many birds, butterflies and insects.

To them the whole area is like a huge salad bowl of food and now and again you have to dig to the bottom of the bowl to get the most juicy bits.

I am not sure how you tell a badger "do not dig here." How do you tell them it is a five-a-side football pitch and they have made a right mess of the whole area?

Perhaps it's just their way of saying " this is our home, we graciously let you share it. But don't abuse it otherwise will dig the whole of it up." Ok, we have got the message, but please dig the other side of the fence.

Photo: curtesy of Kay Joy

Returning by popular demand

Some things almost become a tradition and people would be sad to see them go. This means that our big red poppy will be back in the field again this year as will our Christmas Star.

With the latter we hope that local children will also make smaller willow stars to hang in the trees.

Our Christmas tree for the Christmas Tree Festival this year will be a little different. The Christmas tree festival starts on Wednesday 7th of December. We always welcome your comments about the tree and of course your donations.



Autumn Weather

This is the first time for a few years that we have had any real autumn colour on the hill. The autumn storms usually strip the trees of their leaves before they have time to change. This year, light winds, sunny days and cold nights has made all the difference. I wonder if the weather will stay the same after the clocks have changed?

Chat on the hill.

I have a tree which was grown from seed and has outgrown it's pot, can I plant it on the hill?

Sadly not. All trees need a certificate of origin which proves that it has been grown in the UK under strict conditions which ensure that they and the soil they are grown in are free from disease, such as Ash die back. The tree must be native, which means rooted Christmas trees also are not permitted on the site.

Are you planning any events for next year?

We have been asked by Bridport Museum Trust to take part in " Bridport Season of Heritage." This will be held during May and June next year. Aides wishes to do his fun run again and we hope to have more family activity days.

I have just come back from holiday and I was walking in an area which has ash dye back. There were warnings on all gates to scrub your shoes before walking elsewhere. Should you not make people aware of this.

We would hope that people do regularly clean their boots. Dirty jackets and trousers, vehicle tyres etc will also carry spores. It is likely that animals, wind and even insects will spread the disease just as quick as human activity. We have no plans to ask people to wash the boots before entering the area.

The areas around the children's play equipment is looking very unkept. Why has nothing been done?

We have made every effort to find a new supplier for sawdust to go around the play equipment. One of the next projects, is to clear the areas around them. We would be very grateful for your help.

I am concerned about the number of dogs that seem to be let loose in the area with no owner in sight.

Dogs should always be kept under strict control, even off the lead. Farmers often have sheep in adjacent fields. If your dog is out of sight, it is not under control. Please have respect for other walkers and the wildlife in the area. I personally do not appreciate muddy dog paws all over my clothes.

The area always seems to have very little litter, do you have litter pick events.

The area is very well respected by the local community. Many people take a small bag on their walk around and collect any litter they find. You could do the same too.

allingtonhill@gmail.com

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