

Newsletter special

Allington Hill Volunteer Group (Allington Hillbillies)

March 2013

Play Trail update



After everyone's support to provide a play trail to encourage young children to play outdoors and get up close to nature, we now need to look forward to the future management of this area and the way forward.

1

Five year plan

5yr

The Woodland Trust five-year plan is put in place to look after the hill.

We look at the way it affects the hill, the volunteer group and the community as a whole.

2

Steps Fundraising



Do we raise money to install good quality steps at a depth suitable for all walkers, good drainage and handrail on the steepest climb?

3



Have your say

These three topics affect the future of the hill and the committee has been working hard with the Woodland Trust to ensure that the local community has a say.

Allington Hill site was purchased by the Trust with money raised and donated by the local community. The Woodland Trust has a duty of care, to look after the hill, Coopers Field/Wood and the wishes of the local community. The volunteer group has been working with the Woodland Trust to ensure the community's voice is heard. This is to update you on all the details of the three main topics concerning the hill, Cooper's Field/Wood. We need you to give us feedback and support, so we can continue to be a voice for the community.

PLAY TRAIL THE FACTS



One of the pieces of play equipment that has been so well used by the children in the local community

Allington Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday 9th April
7.30pm

An important opportunity
for the Parish of Allington

Community Hall, Cherry tree
North Allington.

With the support of the local community, businesses and the Woodland Trust, money was raised to install the play trail. Children and adults alike have embraced the trail and it is very well used. It has given families the opportunity to explore and get up close to nature.

The area of Coopers Field/Wood has developed into a much needed community area for the parish of Allington, leaving the rest of the land managed by the Trust on the hill, to nature, to mature into prime woodland.

This has opened up the question; do we want to continue to use Coopers Field/Wood as a community area and how is the best way to move forward?

The Woodland Trust now realizes that with "formal" play equipment and the long established football pitch, (an area already leased by the Parish Council) the area does not sit comfortably within the Woodland Trust's policy on play facilities. Therefore the Trust will be offering the local community the opportunity to lease the area of Coopers Wood/Field. This would give the community more scope to develop (or not) this area to suit the needs of the community.

We are supporting the Woodland Trust in approaching Allington Parish Council with the offer of taking on the lease of the area. The Allington Hill Volunteer Group (Allington Hillbillies) would continue to care for both the hill and Coopers Field/Wood and raise funds to, wherever possible provide cost neutral benefits for the Parish. There would be very little extra financial burden to the Parish.

Representatives from the Woodland Trust will be present at the Allington Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 9th of April to discuss the idea. We would like as many people as possible to attend the meeting to listen to the proposal and support the Volunteer Group. Your support by attending will say more than any words.

We feel this is an opportunity that will have huge benefits for the local residents and regular users of the Coopers Wood/Field area.

Allington Hill five year plan



At the end of last year I sent out an attachment, which was the draft copy of the new five-year plan of the hill. One of the main changes for the hill is the involvement of the volunteer group.

The Volunteer Group has had the opportunity to work with the Woodland Trust to put in place the plan for the hill.

We feel the key area is access to the hill. We have listened to people's concerns with the steps, which many find hard to negotiate. Many people's aspiration is to once again be able to reach the top of the hill. The shortest route is the steepest and many find the longer route along the drive too far to walk.

The Trust has included supporting the volunteer group as one of the key aims of the plan for the next five years. We hope that the local community acknowledges having the group, which has direct contact with the Trust almost on a daily basis, has benefitted the hill.

The benefits of the five-year plan are that there is a clearer understanding between the volunteer group and the Trust on the management of the hill. It also commits the Trust to manage the site to the standard that the community requires.



1. The Trust's management of its woods is certified to the highest standard, and an essential element of this is having a clear management plan for each site. These plans are reviewed every 5 years.
2. We consult as widely as possible at each update to ensure our management is informed by the desires of the community who use the wood.
3. The plan details what work we commit to do on the site over the planned period and states how this helps guide the woods towards our stated long - term aims.
4. At this update I have taken the opportunity to include support for the volunteer group who had not formed at the time of the last update.
5. Our other key aims are
 - a) To provide free public access and to improve it where required and
 - b) To ensure the trees, woodland and other habitats remain healthy, flourishing and full of wildlife.

Jonathan Burgess

Woodland Trust site manager

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Improving access



The main problem with the steps on the hill is the clay soil, which has poor drainage qualities and turns steps into a muddy, slippery mess.

The ideal situation would be to rip them all out and start again.

A very expensive project, but it can be done. The Woodland Trust is keen to improve the steps and we are keen that the best quality materials provide the best long-term solution and it is installed to the highest quality of workmanship.

Over the next few months we are going to be working together to look at every aspect of the task ahead from funding, materials and contractors.

The main criteria to be discussed

1. The best materials to use, to provide a long-term solution
2. Ensure suitable depth of tread, spacing and hand rails
3. Construction of steps
4. Drainage
5. Environmental impact
6. Inviting local contractors to bid for the contract.
7. Fund raising
8. Local community involvement

This will not be a quick fix project and we want local people to put their ideas forward on what they feel would be the most appropriate solutions to any of the above.

If you wish to suggest materials that should be used, have concerns about environmental impact, can recommend contractors to approach for quotes or wish to help with fund raising, we need to know now.

Please contact the group now.

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