

Marlot Conservation Group (MCG)

Work report to Whixall Parish Council meeting 13 July 2022

Period 4 May - 6 July 2022

Ground work during this period has been kept to the minimum to ensure the least disruption to the spring and summer growth in the meadow areas and around the ponds. Pathways in both areas have been strimmed regularly to ensure clear walking around these areas. Work has also been carried on in the back meadow with the laborious, but essential task of “bracken bashing”. It is hoped that by bruising the young bracken shoots early on that it will reduce further growth in the following season as it has not had time to establish itself. Many of the wildflowers are now in abundance in the Marlot and insect life around the ponds is prolific with many species of butterflies and damselflies in evidence. There have been no newt surveys during this period due to various changing circumstances (availability/weather etc), however the final newt survey of the year will be conducted in early July.

Administratively it has been a productive period for both the MCG and members of the Parish Council. On Monday 16th May the first meeting of the Marlot Steering Group (MCG/WPC members) convened at the Bull and Dog to discuss the “way ahead” for the Marlot – this included looking at future strategic aims and equipment requirements that are considered necessary to move the Marlot LNR into its next phase. A useful meeting which resulted in several actions for both parties to look at and take forward – particularly in equipment requirements (tables and benches/fingerposts); Public Relations and Communication (Note: |A local Facebook post by the MCG over the Jubilee weekend to encourage visitors to the Marlot was well received) and ways to provide the visitor with on-site information about the Marlot. On Wednesday 18th May the MCG were asked to provide a presentation on the Marlot for the Whixall Parish Meeting. A power point presentation was given and a general discussion/question and answer session followed. It was disappointing that no members of Whixall Parish turned up and the presentation was only given to the Parish Council members.

On Monday 22 May MCG representatives, together with Peter Bowyer of Natural England, met with the new owners of Plantation House (Mr Guy and Mrs Katie McAllan), whose land lies adjacent to NE and Marlot boundary. They had concerns about flooding on their horse grazing fields from adjacent land. Most of the concerns emanated from flood water from NE fields and Peter Bowyer agreed to work with the McAllans to look at solutions to ease/stop future flooding of their land. With respect to the Marlot there is one small area along the boundary between the Marlot and a field where the earth bank has slightly collapsed and caused the ingress of gully rain water from the Marlot onto the adjacent field. The MCG agreed with Mr McAllan that they would build up the collapsed bank high enough so that the gully water does not overflow into the field.