

Friends of Middle Street Meadow

Newsletter September 2021

After a pretty wet summer the vegetation in the meadow, like everywhere else, has had a massive growth spurt with trees and bramble spreading across the paths and the grass much taller than last year. The wildflowers have done well with orchids increasing in numbers, especially the bee orchids which have spread more widely across the western end. All this will give us lots of work to do over the coming autumn and winter season.

Mike has been keeping an eye on the invasive Himalayan Balsam in the reed beds by the river over the summer and we have been removing it when required. There have been far fewer plants so our work over the last two summers seems to have paid off.

The meadow continues to attract more and more visitors, especially young people in the evenings who light barbecues and fires but they seem to keep these under control, rubbish hasn't been a major problem, it is sometimes piled up round the litter bins but the Council respond quickly when informed.

We had a successful 'Nature Walk' round the meadow as part of the programme of activities organised by the Harnham Community Network. As a result, we can welcome four new Friends to the group.

Our season of work days will re-start in September. There is no restriction on numbers at the moment but we will need to continue to abide by certain Covid rules. As we are outdoors and the meadow is big enough to spread out, social distancing won't be a problem. We will need to ask you to sign in for 'track and trace' purposes should the need arise, to bring your own gloves and not to share tools unless wearing gloves. Mike and Jean will bring refreshments but **please bring your own mug**.

Our work days will continue to be once a month, alternating between Friday and Saturday mornings as this has always worked well.

Dates until Christmas:

Friday 17th September

Saturday 9th October

Friday 12th November

Saturday 11th December

Time: We will be in the meadow from 9.30 am ready to start work at 10.00 and finish at 12.30. Please come anytime that suits you.

If you are new to the group or coming along for the first time, please can you complete the volunteer agreement attached and bring it along with you. This allows us to work on Salisbury City Council land and gives us insurance cover. I will then pass these on to Mark Annetts, Parks officer.

Our first task will be brush cutting the regrowth of bramble on the cleared areas beside the river at the western end. While the brush cutters are at work the rest of us will need to keep a safe distance and paths will be closed to the public along that section. We will then rake off the arisings and remove them so if you have a rake, it would be helpful to bring that along. We will provide loppers and saws but if you have your own tools and prefer to use them, please do bring them along.

Look forward to seeing you whenever you are free to join us.

Pam Rouquette and the team. 1.09.21.