

Beckford Nature Reserve

Now spring has arrived, the Nature Reserve has started to reveal a different face, with plenty of new growth and increased activity on the lake and its margins. Unfortunately, the swans, after two or three false starts, have decided not to nest with us this year. However, the Canada geese are filling the void, keeping vociferous company with the other wildfowl. Enthusiasts from local wildlife organizations have shown very positive interest, with one declaring that the Reserve was the best habitat in the county for his individual interest.

The Cotswold Voluntary Wardens have kindly installed a gate to allow disabled access to the Reserve from Rabbit Lane. This is adjacent to the new stonework recently put in place by Hunstmans. The Trustees are in the process of obtaining quotations to install a suitable path and base for a hide, enabling access by wheelchair users. It is expected that this work will be completed by late summer.

Thanks to an excellent turnout of volunteers, we have had three very successful working parties during the winter. The alders in front of the hide were coppiced to improve visibility over the lake. Barriers were constructed from brash to encourage nesting wildfowl and to discourage access to the edge of the lake in front of the hide and behind the post and rail fence. About a dozen hazel and rowan saplings were planted and, when mature, these will provide a useful food source in the autumn for birds and small mammals. Scores of snowdrop bulbs have been planted amongst the trees on the north and east side of the lake, and sterling work was carried out to remove some of the sycamore saplings as these are great colonizers and their spread should be discouraged. More wood chippings were laid on the paths and work was carried out to tidy up the stones at the new entrance. Some more steps have been installed at the upper Court Farm Lane entrance as a safety precaution, using round timber obtained when the white poplar saplings were removed in the autumn.

We have had another bench donated to us, which has been placed on the north side of the lake to take full advantage of the fantastic summer we are going to have! This has been very much appreciated by visitors. Two very nicely made bird boxes have been installed as a memorial to a local resident, and we hope to see tenants for these in the coming months. Additional life saving equipment in the form of throw lines have been purchased, two of which are already in place.

We would like to remind visitors to the Reserve that, with the nesting season upon us, dogs should be kept under control to avoid disturbance to wildlife.

Beckford Nature Reserve Open Day 16th May, 12pm onwards

Make a day out of it at Beckford and visit us at the Reserve before or after Beckford Market where the trustees will be on hand to discuss progress and future projects.