

LONG LANE PASTURE NEWSLETTER

No. 41 Winter/Spring 2019

It is with sorrow that we begin with the sad news that Ann Pepper, a great friend of the Pasture & stalwart volunteer, passed away in January. Our thoughts and condolences go out to our past Chair, Dennis Pepper and his family at this time.

Welcome to another newsletter. So far this winter we've had two days when snow covered the Pasture. The second fall that began on the evening at the end of January continued off-&-on throughout much of Friday, the first day of February. Luckily I was able to get access to the Pasture early before work, and although it



wasn't properly light, the photos show a wonderful Narnia like vista that a decent covering of snow always brings; and that eerily muffled sound everywhere.



Like many snowfalls over recent years, it doesn't stay around for long (who remembers the winter of 63?) & there wasn't much left a few days later. Redwings were very much in evidence around the Pasture, picking off the red berries, upsetting the miffed local blackbirds; &



many garden birds were seen eagerly visiting the bird feeders. There were fox tracks everywhere, and they

always follow the same line as the mown grass paths! During my jaunt around the Pasture I had to keep wiping the camera lens as the blowing snow eagerly stuck to everything; and we can see from where it adhered to the tree trunks and fencing, it was coming in from a north-easterly direction, & it was stingingly cold!



The main pond looked frozen & was covered in a layer of translucent slush, but I'm not sure it would have withstood the weight of a fox, let alone anything heavier! Thankfully over the next few weeks the weather did not get that much colder, and the soil always seemed wet & soft enough for ground feeders like robins and blackbirds to easily lift worms.

Armistice at Long Lane Pasture

Before we look towards the spring, I want to return to last November, and this article that first appeared in The Archer newspaper:

On the 11th day of the 11th month 2018, 100 years after the signing of the Armistice and ending of the First World War, the entire day was marked with ceremonies and programmes commemorating this rightfully significant occasion.

Most people you know will have had a family member who was involved, and the many tributes and sombre memories that have been recalled over the preceding weeks, must have touched everyone young and old.



At Long Lane Pasture, we decided to have a Beacon of Light, along with a thousand more beacons lit across the UK, in a coordinated 'Battle's Over' ceremony. The beacons were to signify the light of peace that emerged from the darkness of four years of war. The allotment holders at the adjacent Pointalls site were invited to join us, and the large beacon did not disappoint.

A few of us laboured hard over the preceding days, collecting the heaps of dried cuttings and a lot of old bramble; but the success of the beacon belongs to Wayne Armsby, who skilfully built a safe and effective bonfire that roared magnificently into life at the allotted time, despite hours of rain earlier in the

day! As the fire sent up its flames, a myriad of embers soared into the celestial heights and a lady next to me expressed the poignant thought that the thousands of tiny glowing sparks represented, each one, a life that was lost before its time.



As the fire died down, guests were treated by Wayne and Elsie to delicious warming pumpkin soup, and a drink to honour those brave souls who gave their lives unselfishly so we could have our tomorrows.

Linda Dolata

Minister Visits the Pasture

In January the Pasture had a surprise visit from Rishi Sunak MP, Under Secretary of State for Housing and Local Government. The visit, arranged by his office in association with Keep Britain Tidy, was about their Green Flag Award scheme (Long Lane Pasture being the only green space owned by Barnet Council to win the award each year) and its role in the community.



Rishi toured the Pasture, in suitable footwear, and was very interested in what we have achieved with our loyal band of volunteers; seen here being greeted by our treasurer and Community Award winner, Wayne Armsby.

The Pasture was saved from development in 2002, and has become a wonderful oasis of wildlife: a sanctuary for birds & butterflies, and a green lung for the local area that is dominated by the adjacent North Circular Road.

Please consider volunteering at the Pasture; we carry out maintenance each week on a Saturday, 10am-noon. We'd love to see you! We would also like to thank all those who generously give us donations, with special thanks to the **Panton Trust** whose contributions have greatly assisted in keeping our site a Green Flag winner.

Spring Comes to the Pasture

As February came to a close, the signs of spring were very evident. The snowdrops have come & gone, while crocus and daffodils are looking lovely in the welcome warm sunshine. We are getting ready for the new

season, and fortuitously we never had any bad flooding issues this winter, meaning fewer volunteer days were lost due to the Pasture being too wet underfoot.



In the ponds, frogs have produced spawn & many newts have been seen coming up to the surface to take a quick gulp of air before swimming back down, their brightly patterned underbelly giving a flash of colour to their murky world.. The next obvious sign of warmer days is the frenetic activity from the birds as they eagerly gather twigs and moss to build new or repair their nests. Colourful jays have been seen and heard noisily sparring with other corvids on territorial disputes.



The moorhens are actively building a nest, & the mallard ducks are also regular visitors, & a magnificent red kite was seen circling overhead. Each day more trees and shrubs are coming into bloom, so here's hoping late frosts stay away and we get a wonderful early summer!



That's all for now; enjoy spring, cheers! Donald
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