

Shipton Wildflower Woods.

AGM May 22nd 2025

Chairman's report.

As I write this report in mid-May, the field is a haze of pink visible from the A19. Pink Campion are everywhere, and Ragged-Robin are building strongly through the old stems from last year. Patches of white and yellow are starting to show.

Many of the trees are bursting out of the top of the tubes in particular the Common Alder, Field Maple and Goat Willow. It is amazing to think that they were only planted thirteen months ago!

During the summer we built some protective cages around the six hybrid Elms, and the two special Oak and Birch saplings to guard against the local deer family.

Pathways have been marked out by volunteers and the public are welcome to walk through the woods along these defined routes. Other pathways have been made by animals going about their business, we should avoid adopting these tracks as our own. The winter of 2024 was one of drizzle and a few days of settled snow producing some artistic photographs in our Google album. Water-logged areas in the field were a feature that lasted all through January, February and March. We had decided at committee to cut down some of the old growth from last year's flowers, but the field simply was not dry enough to get the work done. Our volunteers did manage to remove some rogue thistles, clean out the drains redefine the pathways and survey the tree stock.

We have started a regular volunteer event on the first Saturday of each month (April to September 10.30 till 12am.) which has been well attended.

Our friends at the Forest of Flowers – Huby have advised us wisely since we started this project and throughout have cautioned against too much intervention. With that in mind, we have come to terms with the rather untidy appearance of the old stems. To make things more colourful next spring we plan to sow some more annuals like corncockles and poppies.

I am pleased to announce that only a small number of trees and shrubs have failed to thrive in the first year. We have lost 27 out of 740 plants, about 3.6%.

As spring turns to summer insects and birds are back enjoying the habitat and even though we have not received any rain for four weeks the Wildflower woods are busy photosynthesising as if life depended on it!