

2016 Quarter 2 Update from the Nonsuch Voles – as at 11 June

The Voles have carried out the following activities in the last Quarter:

In and around the Mansion House:-

We planted hundreds of bulbs in the formal garden – mainly daffodils, crocuses and hyacinths and continued with ongoing weeding and pruning.

- After the Spring storms, we cleared a large number of branches which had been blown down in and around the gardens.
- The Spring bedding plants have been cleared, the beds dug over, and the summer bedding planted. The Box and Pittosporum shrubs were given their first clipping.
- We have grown-on and planted approximately 300 plants for the eight beds, as part of the sustainable planting scheme. The cost of these plants will be covered by a kind donation from the Sutton Runners. Their race director, Lorraine Martin, presented us with a cheque on 9th June. The plants are being selected for their flowering characteristics and value for pollinating insects.
- Vandals are repeatedly pulling down the old fence at the back of the Pinetum, so we started work on strengthening it by replacing broken posts and weaving in yew prunings to add strength.
- We assisted Park Staff in installing a solar-powered fountain in the garden pond and also in creating a grass maze in the accessible area of the lawn.

In the woods:-

- We have completed the Voles' tasks associated with the woodland management work in this year's coppice area in The Wood. Over 50 hazels have been planted and several oak saplings. A dead-hedge was built to protect saplings planted last year, which were being damaged as members of the public cut-through the wood.
- We also cleared patches of Snowberry in The Wood, as recommended in the Habitat Management Plan.
- Some of the Sycamores and Ash which were coppiced in the first area (5 years ago) have now re-grown multiple stems almost 20ft high and are casting denser shade on the woodland floor.

Other activities:-

- The Voles held a stall at the Cheam Charter Fair in May.
- We had a walk around the Park with Peter Howarth in May to discuss some of the items in the Habitat Management Plan.
- We have weeded and started a summer watering plan for the Walnut Copse.

A couple of the trees have somehow been snapped, but appear to be growing anyway – we will monitor their condition through the growing season.

- We regularly check the Wickham Rd culvert and cleared debris after the wet spell in May. The lower part of the ditch and culvert were nonetheless flowing well. Another culvert, in the main ditch to the Balancing Pond, was blocked so we cleared it from accumulated leaf debris.
- In April, a member of the public reported very muddy conditions near the Oak Bridge. The Voles inspected the site and have recently improved drainage in the immediate area and created a short gravel path to the bridge.
- Vandalism: The Voles have been very disappointed with recent vandalism in the area around the Mansion House gardens and nearby woods. We have written a separate report containing photos of the damage we have come across.

Volunteer hours:

So far in 2016:

Garden group 718 hours

Woodland group 864 hours

Total 1582 hours.