

2016 Quarter 3 Update from the Nonsuch Voles – as at 2nd Oct.

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

In and around the Mansion House:-

- There has been further planting and maintenance of the new permanent planting scheme in the eight beds. The beds have filled out nicely and we have received several appreciative comments from members of the public.

- We continue the regular programme of weeding, edging and watering of the bedding plants and other beds and borders.

- In conjunction with the Park staff, we made an extra effort to prepare the garden for the South and South East In Bloom judging. We were very pleased with the Silver award, and Voles representatives attended the results event with Peter Steel in September.

- The Voles have continued attempts to make fence repairs around the Pinetum. In some cases this has been successful, but other areas have been damaged by people trying to get in or out of the garden.

In the woods:-

- At the end of July we carried out a wildflower survey in the area of Boundary Copse which was coppiced in Winter 2014/15. We counted over 43 different species of ground plants. This compares with far fewer species in the darker un-coppiced areas, and helps to increase the variety of vegetation and environments along this stretch of woodland.

- We assisted Nonsuch coppice worker John Armitage in clearing some fallen trees in the Pinetum.

- In late Summer, we carried out the annual summer pruning back of paths in The Wood, and scythed the main woodland track.

- We added wood-chip to the path near the wood yard to provide a good walking surface in the Winter season.

Other activities:-

- The Walnut Copse trees were weeded, and we watered them several times, particularly during dry spells.

- Further improvements were made to the approach to the Oak Bridge, which should make it far less muddy in the Winter.

- We helped Park staff to make fence repairs around the Cheam dog-free area. Unfortunately these were subsequently vandalised.

- We checked over 500 metres of the main drainage ditch which leads to the Balancing pond and removed blockages and debris to improve water-flow during the wet season.

- In order to help our neighbours at Warren Farm, the Voles spent a very hot day in late August scything a substantial area of goldenrod. This was at the invitation of Alissa Wilson from the Woodland Trust.
- We also worked with Park Staff to scythe about 1000 square metres of meadow at Cherry Orchard Farm, as recommended in the Habitat Management Plan.
- The Voles held stalls at the Carshalton Environmental Fair and Nonsuch Awareness Day.
- Vandalism: unfortunately, further cases of vandalism have occurred in the area around the Mansion House gardens and nearby woods since the last report. We have provided photos to the JMC and Surrey police.

Volunteer hours:

January to the end of September 2016:

Garden group 1480 hours

Woodland group 1430 hours

Total 2910 hours.