

## **2016 Quarter 4 Update from the Nonsuch Voles.**

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

### **In and around the Mansion House:-**

- The Voles have completed pruning the 87 roses on the rose arch.
- We have spent several weeks improving the appearance of the Pinetum by weeding the bases of the trees and areas of brambles. In addition some pruning of shrubs and wind-damaged trees was undertaken.
- We assisted the Park staff in planting tulip bulbs in the formal bedding and a drift of crocus bulbs in the turf in the Pinetum.
- In order to enrich the soil in the garden beds, we helped the staff to spread several tonnes of composted manure.
- As part of the winter maintenance plan, we have trimmed a number of conifers in the formal bedding.

### **In the woods:-**

- This Winter, the Voles have re-visited the first area of The Wood which was coppiced back in Winter 2010/11. We have selectively re-coppiced Sycamore, some of which had re-grown shoots to over 20 ft in height.

This repeated coppicing cycle will allow more sunlight into the woodland, which has been shown to encourage a greater diversity of flora and fauna.

The cut Sycamore poles will be used to make chair and stool legs, walking staffs and kindling.

We also thinned some areas of bramble and checked the hazels which were planted 5 years ago.

We have supplemented the tree stock by planting about 50 saplings of Rowan, Oak, Sweet Chestnut and Hawthorn.

- Also in The Wood, we have carried out the annual clearance of the drainage ditches from leaf debris and other obstructions.

### **Other activities:-**

- On 9<sup>th</sup> December, the Voles were joined by fifteen 6<sup>th</sup> form students and 2 teaching staff from Ewell Castle school. After a briefing about the work that the Voles carry out, they enthusiastically helped us to clear Cherry Laurel along the Avenue, in accordance with the Habitat Management Plan. Each student also planted an Oak tree in Boundary Copse. This planting for the future was intended to provide the students with a sense of ownership in this part of the woodland.

- As last year, the Voles were invited by the Woodland Trust to coppice a small number of Hazel trees at Warren Farm. This is part of their woodland management plan.

The work was accomplished in 2 days and the harvested poles will be used to make rustic fencing and wood-craft items at Nonsuch.

- The Voles held a stall at the Glyn School Christmas Fair this year and sold items of wood-craft to raise funds.

**Volunteer hours:**

January to the end of December 2016:

Garden group 1973 hours

Woodland group 1939 hours

Total 3912 hours (this is the highest annual total in the 5 years that the Voles have been active).