

A Shamley Green Matter

Duck Pond Report, 1 January 2022

DUCK POND

Ducks: The 9 ducklings from the second brood in 2021 have dispersed; but a small number have returned(?) to the pond. Under the watchful eye of Claire Jenkinson a total of 23 ducklings successfully fledged in 2021.

Vegetation management: Apart from a few isolated bits the much feared *crassula* did not reappear in any quantity in 2021.

In December I commenced cutting vegetation around the pond assisted by Chris Blizzard who has countersigned the Volunteer Engagement letter regarding Parish Council concerns of management of risk. Soft vegetation was cut to a couple of inches. Woody growth (grey/goat willow?) of alternate plants was cut to the ground to re-grow as coppice, other plants left to grow on for a year; but excessively tall stems trimmed. The intention is to alternate the treatment each year. All cut vegetation was stacked roadside and collected by Mark Chapman within 48 hours. The latter assistance has been invaluable during the year.



There are very dense clumps of Pendulous Sedge on the roadside edge of the pond. Next year some will be allowed to grow and the rest strimmed.

The large area of bramble needs to be trimmed, vegetation on the island cut and the decomposing pile of *crassula* examined and disposed of. The small test planting of yellow flag iris was successful, more will

be planted.

Timber Edging Maintenance: Timbers on the roadside edge of the pond are in the final stages of decay. However the clumps of sedge referred to above, see photograph, are providing some stability. Ed Carpenter visited the site before Christmas and has been asked to investigate and advise on maintenance action to be taken on this boundary. The timbers have been inserted in vertical installation of an H section steel beam. The wooden edge is very similar, and condition, to that along the stream to the rear of The Court House, probably about the same period and the same workman.



Ditch Maintenance: The exit ditch was unfortunately cleared of all vegetation by a contractor about 6 weeks ago. Such may be appropriate for some general drainage ditches; but the outflow of the pond needs to be obstructed to slow the flow following a heavy downpour on the pond itself, to avoid erosion. Small obstacles are encouraged to impede the flow and vegetation must be managed accordingly next year.



Mowing: The area around the seat, which has been well frequented this year, is regularly close mowed as is the footpath across the Duck Pond Green, as public access to these areas is the priority. The rest of the margins are less frequently and less severely cut to avoid obliteration of smaller forms of wild life.

Pond Life: Sampling of the pond to record what aquatic wildlife is present will be carried out at least quarterly during 2022. Visitors to the pond will be asked to report on dragonflies or other transient wildlife visitors. It is however a Duck Pond and ducks are recognised to be disruptive to aquatic wildlife. As with all matters affecting wildlife the situation requires compromise.

Albeit that it caused some debate, early in 2021, Egyptian Geese showed interest in occupying the pond, these were discouraged in the interests of the traditional Mallards. The Duck Pond is small and there are a number of other larger ponds in the area which can accommodate the geese. Geese, including Canada Geese foul the area they occupy and are not encouraged in the sitting/picnic area by the pond.

Water inflow. The small flow from a spring into Eve's ditch feeding into the pond ceased several months ago. It was caused by a pipe feeding the ditch being blocked by tree roots on land owned by the Parish Council. The blockage caused the water to flow out of a surface drain onto a driveway near the Malt House. Because the focus was on preventing the water flow out of the drain and the risks associated in particular with imminent freezing conditions, the Parish Council were unfortunately advised that the appropriate action was to dig a ditch. The Pond Working Group had not been advised of the discussions and plans until after a decision had been taken.



If more emphasis had been given to the common law responsibility of the Parish Council to restore the original spring water flow, the large scale excavation could have been avoided. Dyno-Rod could have cleared the blockage, immediately stopping the flow on to the driveway and restoring the flow to the pond. The subsequent longer term solution would have been to install a smaller bore new pipe, impervious to tree roots, using the old large bore pipe, which can be seen in the photograph, as a conduit. I have asked Ed Carpenter to quote for installation of a pipe to restore the original quality of the water flow. This would also enable the ditch to be filled in and the surface of the common restored.

To prevent such a situation in the future, I have asked the Parish Council and the Environment Group for assurance that in the case of any future issue relating to the Duck Pond or Bricklayers Pond the Pond Working Group would be advised and have the opportunity to contribute to the discussion and decision to the extent that it affected either of the ponds.

Patrick Mannix