



**SPRING / SUMMER 2009** - Greetings from your committee members

**FoKW AGM Tuesday June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009 at Stockgrove Park at 8:00pm.**

All are welcome to join us on Tuesday June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 8pm in the restaurant at Stockgrove Country Park for our Annual General Meeting. The evening will begin with reports from the Chairman and the Treasurer, after which the election of a new committee will take place. The evening will conclude with a talk by David Alderman, Arboricultural Officer for Central Bedfordshire, entitled "The Trees of Knolls Wood". David has extensive knowledge and experience of Knolls Wood and surrounding areas. His talk will enlighten everyone about our ancient woods. This is a chance to appreciate the value of the environment to our local community and question David on the new County Council organisation.

It will be good to see new faces and we warmly welcome new members, so why not come along and share your ideas with us; how do you think we can best maintain and preserve this special area of natural beauty? We look forward to seeing you there. Your opinions are invaluable.

**Work party, 8 March 2009**

This was the first work day of the year, postponed from February on account of snow. By contrast, Sunday morning was sunny and there was a very good turn out of committee members and volunteers. The team worked mainly on the paths in Redwood Glade and at the entrance, which had become very overgrown. There was plenty to do, pruning back bushes and scraping moss and weeds back to the original edges of the paths. However, with the good turnout of volunteers, eleven in all, the work was finished in less than two hours, with all necessary tools provided by the Greensand Trust.

Afterwards the team planted some hazel and hawthorn whips in an open glade at the southern end of Knolls Wood, by which time the weather had changed; it poured with rain and the work was completed in a hurry.

We thank you all for your assistance. It makes it all worthwhile..

**Next Working Party Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June 09 – with a Barbeque**

Bring the whole family, meet your neighbours / friends, enjoy your local woodlands and assist in its maintenance. We will be meeting at 11:30am outside 55 Redwood Glade.

For the working party, food and beverages will be supplied. Please use the website to confirm that you are coming and wish to participate in the barbeque, plus any food preference (not fillet steaks!). This is to thank all those neighbours and local helpers, who, over years, have given their assistance and support.

We also welcome other neighbours and friends who wish to join in the fun and enjoy a light bite and refreshment. Bring your favourite barbeque food and we will cook it for you, i.e. chicken portions (not frozen) sausages, spare ribs, burgers etc. Please bring disposable plates, knives, forks and cups. Children welcome. If you wish to eat sitting down, please bring tables chairs (and umbrellas if it is raining).

## Chiffchaffs in Knolls Wood



As you can tell from the photo, the chiffchaff is a pretty inconspicuous bird (or even a pretty, inconspicuous bird). In fact it's a typical 'little brown job' with a greenish hue, but it does have one definitive feature – the pale stripe above the eye, with a dark line beneath. From our point of view, it begins to make its presence felt in early spring, usually March, when it returns from the Mediterranean area or West Africa. Then it starts singing – 'chiff-chaff-chiff-chaff-chiff-chaff.....', or perhaps 'chiff-chaff-chaff....', or, for a change, 'chiff-chiff-chaff.....'. This can get a trifle wearing. In spite of that, though, it has a real claim to our affections as a harbinger of warmer weather. The song is one of those sounds that can make you think that summer must be on its way.

## The demise of a proud Scots Pine.



A fungal infection at the base of an otherwise apparently healthy trunk and crown indicates that it had reached a stage where the tree was no longer safe and must be felled. Once such decay has exceeded one third of the diameter of the core, which can be determined by ultra sound or micro drilling, the strength of the trunk is compromised and strong winds can cause a tree to fall. This tree was bordering the public highway and therefore safety considerations were paramount.

It was felled in sections from the top down. A tree cutter undaunted by the unsafe appearance of the base climbed the tree with a power saw hanging from a belt on his waist and cut sections away until the trunk was reduced to a 20 foot standing section. This was then felled in the classic manner of taking a vee section out of one side and allowing the weight of the remainder of tree to topple it. A tree which will have taken many decades to grow disappears from the landscape in not much more than an hour.

Sadly, increasing numbers of the pines in and around Knolls Wood will be succumbing to old age or disease in the not too distant future. Replacing these trees is difficult as ideally they need to be planted in an open space with plenty of light and as they currently grow in areas populated by other mature species this is not easy.