

Friends of Knolls Wood

Newsletter

environmental partnership
with
The Greensand Trust

SPRING 2015 - Greetings from your Committee Members

Dates for your Diary:

Sunday 15 March, Working Party, Meet at Sandy Lane Noticeboard, 11:00-13:00hrs
Wednesday 1 July, AGM, Rushmere Park, 20:00hrs

Children's event, October 2014

Last Year's children's activity, organised with the Greensand Trust, was to make bird boxes. Around 20 youngsters turned up with their parents to construct the boxes, which were supplied as flat packs with all necessary nails and screws. Under the shelter of gazebos the young people hammered away enthusiastically, taking about 15 minutes to complete each box. They wrote their name on the underside so they will be able to recognise their own box once it is put up.

Gary Peach of the Trust supplied the boxes, plus gloves, hammers and screwdrivers, and the Friends provided workbenches and refreshments.

Once their boxes were finished, the children went on a woodland bird trail to identify the birds shown in pictures pinned up on trees.

Nineteen boxes were built, a very productive session, enjoyed by children and adults alike.



Garden Waste

We have noticed piles of garden waste dumped in the Wood. This upsets the ecology, allowing unwanted and potentially invasive species to spread.

Perhaps those doing it don't realise they will be fined if caught.

Dogs love to chase them, bird feeders attract them, some people love to hate them.

Grey Squirrels

Grey squirrels were introduced from North America about 130 years ago, they have been very successful at increasing their numbers as we can readily see in Knolls Wood.

They breed twice a year December to February and May to June; the first litter is born February to March and the second June to July. There are normally 2 to 6 in a litter raised in an untidy nest or drey high in the trees, the drey is lined with moss, thistledown, dried grass and feathers. The gestation period is 44 days; they are weaned at 7 weeks and leave the nest at 10 weeks.

In the wild squirrels are mainly herbivorous eating acorns, hazel nuts, berries, fungi and even bark, however when this food is very scarce they will eat insects, smaller rodents, birds eggs and nestlings.

In the garden we know they are attracted to seeds and nuts intended for birds, and can be very acrobatic in their persistent attempts to get to them. They have also been known to eat strawberries and apricots.

Squirrels are also famous for "caching" their food in autumn; they have a highly-developed spatial memory and acute sense of smell which enables them to find their caches weeks or even months later. However the fallibility of their system is responsible for spreading a good many trees through woodland and gardens.

We would all love grey squirrels were not for the fact that they have largely displaced our native red squirrel. The fact is that they are just more adaptable and have out-competed the red. They may also carry a virus that is fatal to the reds but does not affect the greys.

Love them, or loathe them we should all be able to admire their climbing ability, and their sheer cheek; they can be quite cute with their antics.

