

# Friends of Knolls Wood

## Newsletter

partnership  
with  
The Greensand Trust

**SUMMER 2017 - Greetings from your Committee Members**

**Dates for your Diary:**

**Next Volunteer Session: Sunday 25 June 2017, 10:00 – 12:00hrs  
Meet at the Sandy Lane Entrance (by the Notice Board) at 10:00.**

**FoKW Annual General Meeting:  
Wednesday 5 July 2017, Rushmere Park, at 20:00 hrs  
*Chris a local naturalist will be talking about Fungi***

**Children's Event: Wednesday 25th October 2017 'Identify Trees' and 'Leaf Drawing'**  
In October half term every year we hold a free children's activity. Please watch our Facebook page and noticeboards for more information. Last year the children, parents and volunteers had fun building bug hotels, stick men and playing leaf bingo. Thank you to everyone who came and supported us.

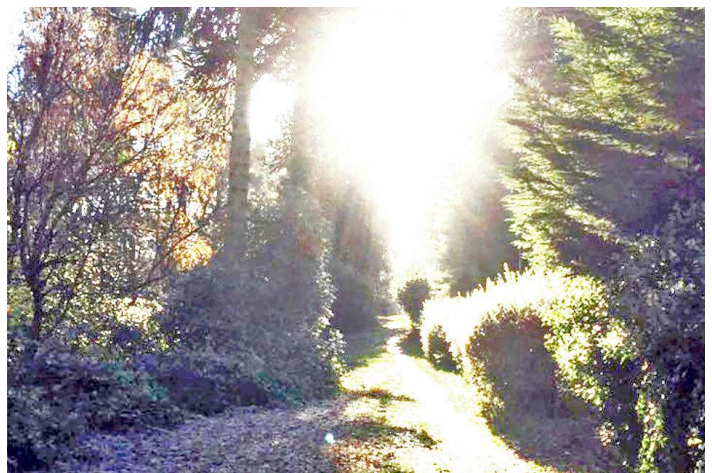
### **Volunteer Sessions**

Everyone is welcome at our volunteer sessions. If you can help in any way with our events, or would like to join our committee please contact us by e-mail: [Friends@knollswood.com](mailto:Friends@knollswood.com) or send a message to our Facebook page: Knolls Wood



### **FoKW Online**

On the first of every month we take a photo from the same spot so you can see how the Woodland changes through the seasons (See below). Once we have completed a full year we will post them on our website; [knollswood.com](http://knollswood.com)





## Bluebells

Bluebells are iconic Woodland plants with delightful nodding blue flowers. We are lucky that we have rare Albino British Bluebells - which only occur in one in every 10,000 flowers - growing in Knolls Wood. The albino flowers lack the pigment that gives bluebells their traditional purplish blue.

## Recent work in the Wood

The Greensand Trust and the Friends organise four volunteer sessions on Sundays during the year and Gary Peach, our Greensand Ranger, returns for occasional sessions in the week, again helped by volunteers. Two years ago the Friends did a tour of the wood with Gary to look at what needed to be done, taking photos at every stage on the walk. The main task identified was to open up the footpaths that had become overgrown with holly and laurel, particularly the lower, east path, and that work has continued up to the present. Another aim was to lay chippings on that path, which tends to be boggy in the winter months. As we removed the holly, laurel and sycamore saplings from that area, they were put through the Greensand's chipper and used to great effect. Some of the holly had grown into full trees, and removing these means that more light is coming through to the lower wood, helping to dry out the paths there. Once the unwanted saplings have been cut down, the stumps are treated with a chemical which is harmless to animals, to prevent regrowth, meaning we're not having to revisit the same areas every year.

The plantation was started in the 1840s so it's not surprising that we have lost some of the old trees. Over the years new specimen trees have been planted to replace those that have died. Visitors to the wood will notice the young monkey puzzles growing along the top avenue, which are doing very well. We clear the ground around young trees and lay down chippings to prevent them being swamped by the encroaching undergrowth. At the time of our survey two years ago Monkey Puzzle avenue was overhung more by laurel than holly and this has been cut back in several places.

Another regular task is to mow and clear the verges along Monkey Puzzle Avenue of nettles and brambles to encourage grass and wild flowers. At the south end of the wood, in the patch adjoining Redwood Glade, this has been particularly successful, and large clumps of Herb Robert and Willowherb have grown up since the nettles have been cleared. Daffodils and bluebells have increased in that area too.

Now that so much undergrowth has been removed we can see more of the layout of the original plantation, and are also more able to appreciate the majesty of trees which are the better part of 200 years old. Another benefit is that Gary can drive the Land Rover and chipper down to the lower path. Previously, all the cut saplings had to be dragged uphill to Monkey Puzzle Avenue for chipping.

Our four volunteer sessions usually last about two hours and we are always pleased to see new faces. Obviously, the more people who turn up to lend a hand, the more can be achieved. Dates and times of sessions are shown on the What's On page of our website at [www.knollswood.com](http://www.knollswood.com)