

Keston Common, Ravensbourne Open Space and Padmall Wood Site Report

Friends of Keston Common AGM 2021

It has been a turbulent couple years since I last had to write a report of this nature and I wish to thank you all for the support both myself and the site has received from you during the pandemic.

I wish to give special thanks to Bob Harrop, Judy John, Ishpi Blatchley, Grant Hazlehurst and the Copps Botany group for undertaking detailed species surveys of the site as well as thanks to Diane Muir whom has picked up the reigns to the butterfly transect.

Since the return to regular workdays following pandemic restrictions at the beginning of 2021 the friends of Keston have undertaken in excess of 500 volunteer hours and it is great to see some new faces on work days. Additionally the site has seen support from the Bromley Countryside Volunteers.

Most of the work has focused on the jewels in Keston crown, Darwin's Bog and the Lowland heathland with significant gains having been made in the southern section of the bog with the upkeep of the leaky dams to retain more water and continued woodland thinning on both sides of fishponds road to increase water levels and reduce the desiccation risk. This has also been added by some contractor operations.

I am conscious that there are many outstanding property issue which persist on the site. I will shortly be meeting with the newly appointed parks officer from London borough of Bromley that will be covering the Keston area to discuss the matters such as pond three, the dam leaks, bankside erosion and tractor bridge renewal and hopefully obtain resolutions.

Additionally access management is still a problem as a result dead hedging and fencing is being used more to steer the public out of areas of sensitivity and allow the natural restorative process to take place, please do politely remind people to stick to the paths if safe to do so. If you see any enforcement matters such as horse rider and cyclist in the wrong places please continue to report this via the usual channels.

Looking to 2022 there is a plenty of work to be getting on with including: further gorse control, management of holly and holly regrowth, scrub management, scoping further coppicing works in Padmall wood, woodland thinning, expanding restoration works on the bog and repair of infrastructure.

I look forward to continuing to steer the sites management in 2022 and having you all along on the journey.

Steven Lofting

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