

26th March 2020

Friends of Castle Pulverbatch

Report on 2019/20 Activities

As with the previous year 2019/20 has largely been one of keeping on top of maintenance of both the Knapp and the Wokken together with some minor enhancements.

Due to a falling off of active members due to ill health, advancing years and people moving out of the area activities remain dependant on a small core group of volunteers. We have however recently managed to recruit some younger volunteers and some people who have recently moved to the Village.

Once again the most important achievement was probably the successful management of the grass on the Knapp solely by the group's volunteers as happened in 2018. Due to last summer's extremely good conditions a portion of the arisings were able to be saved and baled by the Marches Meadows Group. This hay was sold to a local horse owner to cover the cost of the baling. The remainder was composted on site to avoid the use of burning as had been done in previous years. It is hoped that a larger area can be made into hay this year, depending on volunteer resources and the weather, although we may have to resort to burning for the residue as there are limits to the amounts that can be regularly composted on site.

The network of paths around both sites has continued to be improved with stone surfacing on the steps and the construction of additional steps. There has also been cutting back of encroaching vegetation in particular the bracken to enhance the views of the Knapp and also to enable better conditions for the snow drops and bluebells on the Wokken. Following the two major storms at the beginning of 2020 significant cutting back of fallen trees and some felling of potentially dangerously damaged trees was undertaken. All this work has continued to be rewarded with significant use of the paths around the site by the general public.

On the 15th March 2020 a tree planting day was held during which 50 Oaks were planted on the lower slopes of the Knapp (outwith the Scheduled Ancient Monument area) and on three locations on the Wokken. This is the first of further planting days which are planned to enhance tree numbers in a natural way, utilising native local species in a way that replicates the existing tree cover.

In addition to the 18 organised work days individual members have also worked many additional days strimming footpaths, cutting back encroaching vegetation, burning grass and on administration.

The White Horse supported the Friends by hosting, free of charge, five formal Friends meetings in 2019

As reported last year the Friends of Castle Pulverbatch continues to run on a (small) deficit budget as the grant from the Parish Council, wayleave income from Western Power and donations in kind of materials and fuel from group members do not fully cover outgoings.

Paul Taylor,

Chairman,

Friends of Castle Pulverbatch