

Friends of Pelaw Wood 2015 Secretary's Report

Like 2014, this year has been a quiet one for the group because the landslip has continued to dominate the wood and prevent everyone from enjoying it to the full. But the work to reopen the area is now well underway, so for me that has been the best news of the year!

Once again, we have struggled at times to entice volunteers out and have therefore been unable to fully implement our plan for the year. Without the wonderful help of the Durham University Conservation Volunteers we would have really struggled with many of the heavier tasks. I think we need to consider how we can improve this situation.

This was my first year as secretary, following Martin Dancey's retirement, and I'd like to thank Martin for showing me the ropes and providing advice. Alison and Martin have now left Durham and moved to Cornwall, so the group has lost two stalwart volunteers in them and of course they are both much missed. Elaine Crow, a funding contact at the council who was always an absolute pleasure to deal with, also retired this year.

Thank you to everyone who has been involved with the group – your efforts really are appreciated.

Sarah Wheeler, Secretary

Publicity

- David Crutcher kindly took over updating of the website during 2015.
- Our Facebook group now has 47 members and we have 39 followers on Twitter.
- We have publicised work sessions in The Durham Times.
- Handouts have been given to people diverted through the wood.

Liaison with other groups

- Durham University Conservation Volunteers have enthusiastically supported us on a couple of occasions during the year
- Van Mildert College Environmental Conservation Committee are in contact about volunteering with us in 2016
- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) through our affiliation and their website support
- Friends of Flass Vale and Witton Gilbert Dene

Liaison with the County Council

- John Bragg as the landowner's representative
- Parish Paths Partnership for funding
- Rights of Way officers about the landslide

Members' activities

- New Year's Day stroll
- Extending the hardcore up the path from the Silver Link Bridge
- Digging out the drain at the top of the steps down to the glade
- Repairs to steps
- Litter picking
- Laying planings on many muddy paths
- Cutting back fallen trees
- Clearing brambles, bracken and fallen leaves
- Pond clearing
- Caring for trees we planted
- Updating the ecological survey
- Himalayan balsam pulling
- Creating temporary paths around large fallen trees
- Planting cowslips
- Relaxing in the Queen's Head after working in the Wood

Acknowledgements & thanks for their practical and financial support

- John Bragg for his active support & encouragement
- Elaine Crow & the Parish Paths Partnership for funding
- Durham University Conservation Society for their enthusiastic help – especially the barrowing!
- Tony & Barbara for the bonfire & refreshments
- The Queen's Head for all those plates of chips!