

## SEDGWICK PARISH COUNCIL CANAL REPORT

### Canal Inspection October 2022

#### The Wildlife Area is looking more autumnal!

**Vegetation:** The grass either side of the path is still short at the aqueduct end but nettles and grass are much longer past the easy path junction and will possibly need a trim before winter. You can see that Ash Die Back has flared up as some trees at the aqueduct end look moth eaten at the tips but other look good. The stray ash in the canal bed looks to be affected. The skeleton dead tree at the apex of the gentle path will need removing in the next round of felling. The goat willow stumps definitely need attention over winter it is time contact JP after the next meeting to quote for a general clean up of goat willow and any low skeleton trees. As there hasn't been a big deterioration and given that our Woodland Management Consultant gave the all clear earlier in the summer, I propose we review the situation when they come back into leaf in June and have it reinspected then or in late September when the next cycle of ASD has arrived.



**Benches:** The two older benches and the Stoker Seat are fine. The large seat at Hill bridge is inundated by stinging nettles and is so wobbly it should be removed – needs approval this meeting.



**Paths:** The paths are sound but beginning to get muddy, especially in the repaired sections. It will soon be welly weather.

**Boundaries, Walls and Fences:** all look sound.

**Usage:** High levels of use – evidence of cycle tracks

**Signage:** The no cycling sign near Stoker Seat is still standing. It looks like attempts have been made to dislodge it but it is still firmly in. All other signs look fine. The Queen's canopy sign looks good.



**Boards:** The notice boards still need a varnish soon and I have replaced the faded footpath signage.



**Canal Trust;** The aqueduct steps were so overgrown that a kind resident, Mr Henderson cleared them single-handed. It looks brilliant and it means the leaf litter isn't collecting as much. Dorinda's garden looks lovely too. The aqueduct will need clearing before installation of the signage - no progress on planning permission for this but a planning notice has gone up about an extension of the closure until March 2023.

#### Action

- Thank you letter to Mr Henderson and Dorinda
- We need to decide what to do about the Queen's Canopy sign opening – possibly combine with coronation commemorations?
- Remove ancient bench
- Late year trim of second section?
- JP – contact now to organise winter goat willow clearance and apex skeleton removal

## COUNCIL NEWS OCTOBER 2022- District Cllr R Bingham

Firstly, I have again 'got on' to the District Council about the long delays (caused allegedly by the COVID Crisis) to respond to our requests for road signs for Back Lane. I have directed that part of my £1000 member's project fund should be allocated to provide them, hopefully before I retire on the demise of SLDC at the end of March. We'll see!

Without recent full District or County Council meetings we have been busy with wider concerns. Cumbria's Development and Regulations Committee received a satisfactory safety report on sports grounds providing for 500 spectators. But we were reminded that local committees and Parish Councils must keep up to date with monthly inspections of village playing fields.

I have asked for help from a £600,000 Environment government grant towards combating Ash Tree Die Back, but I was told that no assistance could be provided to private owners of contaminated trees even though, I argued, that the costs of felling them may be beyond the means of many owners and so die-back trees would be left standing. I am also bothered about the 'drowning' of trees on the mosses following rises in water level caused by climate change. Here The Environment Agency is the monitoring authority but, similarly, the costs have to be met by landowners.

Socially we have had discussions on poverty following reports that inflation in costs of food and non-alcoholic drinks have risen by 12% since June. We were worried that some users of food banks found it difficult to access the agencies responsible for issuing the necessary tokens. I also wondered how far national 'poverty statistics' took into account Rurality and Sparsity. I pointed out that unless one has car (and can afford to run it) it is almost impossible to be green in the countryside to obtain an all-year-round supply of fresh fruit and vegetables. Already, the local Committee has contributed £20,000 to relieve child poverty.

I remain busy as Vice-Chairman of The Police and Crime panel and am pleased to report an uplift to 1, 349 officers, the highest number in the force's history. Plans to integrate the Fire and Rescue service with the Police Force are going ahead. Best wishes and in the meantime we can but try to do our best and hope for a mild winter.

Regards Roger.