



VOLUNTEERING - Keeping In Touch

November 2020

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Dear Volunteers,

Sadly, there have been no visits from schools and youth groups, but we are already taking bookings for the summer term of 2021. We hope we will be able to welcome visitors back to the Environment Centre at that time at which point we will be hoping that you can still continue with your support for school visits, Open Days and, of course, working party activity!

One positive during this period is the development of the path resurfacing project and the associated sensory trail. Under the leadership of Dick Elms, the paths to be resurfaced were identified, the surface was decided on, the positions of the 'Pause and Ponder' points have been marked out and cleared and the sensory trail has been created. We are immeasurably grateful to the hours of research and discussion by those involved in advancing this important project. The contract for the job has been awarded, sensory trail markers and benches for the Pause and Ponder points are being ordered and there is a chance that work will start at the end of November. There are, however, preliminary drainage works to be carried out before the paths can be laid, so timing depends partly on that and partly on the weather!!

Another positive is that informal and Covid-safe volunteering has been taking place at the Centre over recent month to keep the site as safe and tidy as possible. We appreciate the dedication and hard work of our volunteers for this help. Keeping the nature reserve safe has been a necessity as Noah's Ark families and groups have been benefiting from walks in a peaceful natural green space. From the outset, this was an important part of the first vision of the then CEO of Noah's Ark, sick children and families under pressure able to benefit from the proximity of a nature reserve.

The main jobs are: the Centre Garden, the ponds, the meadow, the Pollinator Corner, keeping paths clear, preparatory work for the perimeter path, resurfacing work and sensory trail, machine maintenance and mowing the grass. Some household groups have also taken on projects, including tree work, meadow and pond work and redesigning the area around the Monterey Pine.

Just before the current lockdown, we had a very successful Make A Difference Day (MADD) on 24 October and completed some important jobs: the willow tree in the Centre garden was pollarded, blackthorn was removed from an area on the west side of the meadow, the path edges in the Wiggly Tree trail were re-laid and a start was made on clearing out/relining Murky Pond. We were all very pleased with the amount of work that was done on the day.

The current lockdown, sadly, will continue to affect our activities until 2 December. Please contact Dick Elms or Bernard Johnson for further information. [Send to info@fobec.org.uk with FAO Dick or Bernard in the subject line.]

With best wishes and thanks for your continued commitment,

Sue Bird
Trustee