



Chair's Newsletter Update March 2021

Dear Friends and Supporters,

I thought you might be interested to hear about what has been happening since I sent out my December newsletter.

Firstly, Caroline Gellor, our Environmental Education Manager, has now moved to Wales. We held a short, very informal, socially distanced 'leaving ceremony' on a Monday afternoon in mid-February and presented Caroline with a lovely photo album (created by Jim Jenkins) of her time at the Centre. We wish Caroline all the best for the future – she is already making links with the Radnorshire Wildlife Trust so she will be continuing with her environmental work. We have asked Sam McCabe, who has covered some of Caroline's work over the last 18 months, to continue teaching for us this summer and he has agreed to do that. We have several school bookings for May and June and there may be more for later in the summer.

Secondly, the resurfacing work on our main paths on the Reserve has been delayed again, this time because it has been found necessary to fill in the attenuation ponds beside the Centre garden, as they have been causing a lot of flooding on the site. This work should happen within the next few weeks and the paths will hopefully be re-laid soon after Easter in time for our summer teaching season. The newly refilled area will become an extension of the Centre garden and the current plan is to have a silver birch glade at one end and a mini orchard at the other, underplanted with meadow flowers. We also look forward to being able to hold some open days over the summer and autumn so that people will have an opportunity once again to explore our wonderful site. There will eventually be a new sensory trail (complete with numbered posts and trail leaflet), a new tree trail with labels and linked leaflet and a garden leaflet so plants may be identified.

Thirdly, it is lovely to see the Reserve springing into life again and this has been helped by the great amount of work that has been carried out over the course of lockdowns/Covid pandemic. Although our regular working parties have been on hold for the past year, volunteers have been visiting the site to carry out the necessary programme of maintenance. We have taken the opportunity to ensure that the trees are in a safe condition, to keep the meadow developing well, to keep the machinery well maintained, to work on the pollinator corner and the teaching ponds, to keep the paths clear and generally to keep the site safe and looking good.

Finally, FoBEC made a full response to the draft Chipping Barnet Community Plan which is full of exciting developments to make Barnet a better place to visit. The Barnet Environment Centre was mentioned on several occasions in the draft so there may be even more interest in the Centre in the future. This may present the organisation with a few extra challenges which we will all have to discuss.

If any of you would like to become a Trustee, we have some vacancies on the board. You would start formally in September, though do get in touch before then to find out what is involved.

May I again take this opportunity to send our best wishes to you from the FoBEC Trustees and hope that you continue to stay safe as we, hopefully, move back towards more 'normal' times.

Bernard Johnson,
Chair of Trustees, Friends of Barnet Environment Centre