Attendees: Paul, Rita, Janet, Dawn, Shirelle, Jem, John, Jean, Gabby

Apologies from Carol, Fran, Karyn, Duncan, Jan

1. Balsam Bashing.

Members were asked to share any dates they could offer to support volunteers in balsam bashing/pulling within the agreed area of Zone 7. They can notify a date/time that they intend to be on Hell Wath to pull some Balsam (to Jem) which will then be publicised for drop in volunteers.

John Pearse asked that the path running from the pulling area towards the Fairy Steps be included in the pulling as there are some fungi of interest that grow in that area. This was agreed.

Grass Cutting: taking grass away. Could waste material could go down there.

John: irecord training session. Community House. Protected species.

2. Grass Cutting.

Gabby will be on Hell Wath with Open Country next week on the Friday 16th June from about 10am, likely to 2:45pm. If anyone wants to come and join in she will be Balsam bashing for the day.

SVP volunteers will be on Hell Wath on Thursday 22nd June for Balsam and grass removal and repair the steps beside the river Sat 8th July for Balsam removal. Members are welcome to join these dates.

Members discussed grass cutting strategy. Some reservations about recent sites chosen for scything and disposal of the waste were raised.

It was agreed that Jem and Paul would work together to draft a proposal for a strategy document for use from 2024 that considered the various strategies available for grass a management, including the handling of waste material.

The members also discussed depositing waste material in the area know as ‘The Quarry’. It was agreed that some careful monitoring of this area was needed to ascertain what already grows/lives there before any further discussion on this matter.

Members would be asked to undertake this monitoring.

3. Cycling strategy.

Shirelle shared the recent challenges in other areas in enforcing cycling bans. She also raised the legal difference between official footpaths and other routes created by walker. Enforcement was possible on official footpaths but more difficult on unofficial footpaths created by walker (which are equally damaging to the ecology of the site).

It was agreed that no cycling roundels can be put up on the entrance points to the offices footpaths.

It was also agreed that dead hedging should be explored further to restrict both new cycling routes and walkers routes being created.

It was also agreed that members would start to collate evidence of such routes for strategic planning going forward.

4. Bat boxes. John confirmed that 30 bat boxes have been donated for installation on Hell Wath. 3 colour specific boxes (catering for different varieties of bats) will be installed on 10 trees. Evidence suggests that boxes are better used by bats when placed in small clusters.

All boxes will be installed following national guidelines and risk assessments to ensure they are installed safely and securely. Jem and John will ensure that all correct procedures are in place to ensure FOHW Insurance requirements are met.

5. Woodmeadow Trust update:

Jem gave a brief update on the application to the Woodmeadows Trust and the potential benefits. We are waiting on an outcome of the application and more details will follow once this is known.

6. Projects updates.

Wildlfowers: Yellow Rattle seems to be taking off in some areas but not much impact is evident yet in the designated area. The best results so far seem to be from Paul collecting and distributing seeds on site.