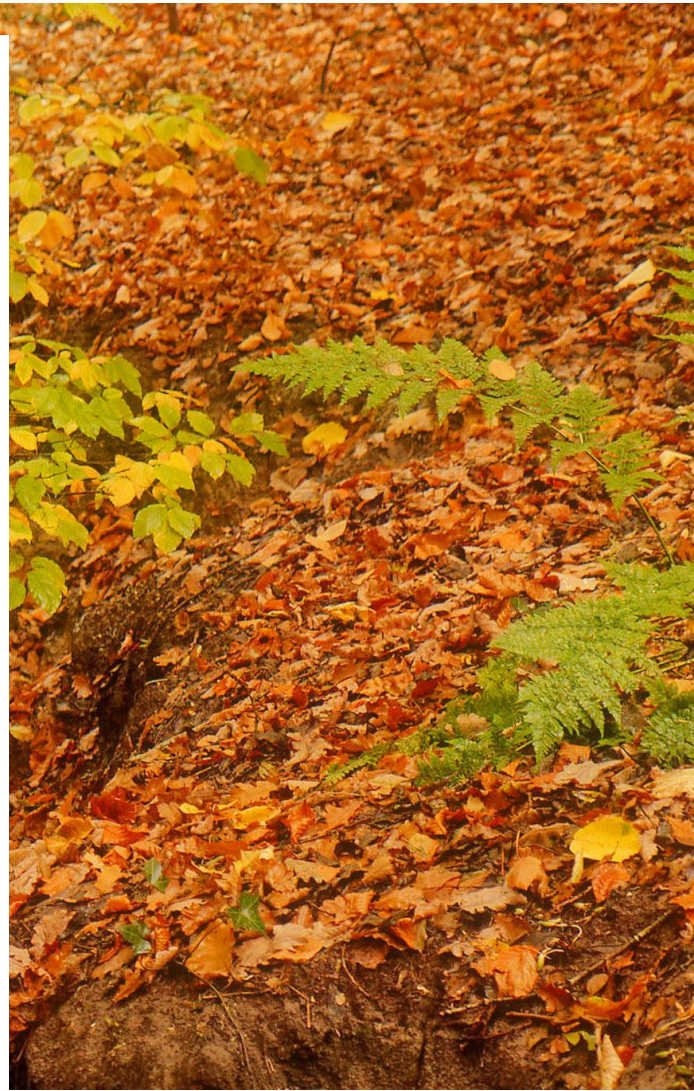

HOB HEY WOOD FRIENDS GROUP ANNUAL REPORT



2022

Mark O'Sullivan
05th January 2023



Summary

- Over 200 volunteer hours
- Planted 210 trees
- Two guided walks and three talks
- Repairs to steps, boardwalks, fences and paths
- Fallen tree clearance
- Other maintenance tasks, litter picking, invasive species control
- 2023 calendar produced and sold
- Hosted stall at Climate Action Frodsham event
- Very active on social media
- Regular feedback to FTC Amenities Committee



Small copper butterfly

Volunteer activities

Eleven volunteer days were completed in 2022, same as in 2021. Several members performed solo tasks in the wood during the year.

210 trees obtained free of charge from the Woodland Trust's 'Free Trees for Schools and Communities' scheme were planted. These were all native species that will enhance the biodiversity of the woodland. The trees were used to fill areas cleared of

invasive sycamore and bramble as well as being used to build hedges to delineate paths in the wood (in an attempt to keep visitors to the paths), providing homes and food for the wildlife that lives here.

Many other varied activities were performed by the volunteers. These included the removal of several trees that fell across paths during storms. Repair of boardwalk mesh and boards. Cleaning of paths and steps of fallen leaves and soil. Litter picking. Invasive sycamore saplings were again tackled (these grow fast and can overrun an area leading to poor biodiversity). They were replaced with native trees.

One significant activity that took several months was the repairs to the stone steps from the bridle path to the meadow.

The group, with training from Tom Blundell, took on the task of pruning of the orchard's trees.

The noticeboard erected in 2021 was kept up to date with seasonal highlights provided. Feedback indicated that this was appreciated by visitors and several volunteers were recruited by seeing the volunteer dates on the board.

Bluebell seeds were once again collected in summer and scattered over suitable areas during autumn.

To encourage wildflowers to the orchard, a 'hay cut' was performed in autumn, paid for by Frodsham Town Council. Several tonnes of cuttings were then removed by the group during a volunteer morning.

Lots of other tasks were carried out making good use of the over 200 volunteer hours.

The year ended with the fantastic news that Tom Blundell, Tree Warden and founder member of Hob Hey Wood Friends Group had been awarded the British Empire Medal for services to Frodsham over the last 30 years!



Autumn in Hob Hey

Social media and ‘outreach’ activities

The group maintains a website (hobheywood.wixsite.com/friends) which contains a huge amount of information on the wood and the group’s activities including maps and directed walks. This was maintained and updated in 2022.

Our Facebook page, updated almost daily with photos and stories about the wood and its inhabitants has once again proven very popular with many appreciative comments about the wood and the group. The page now has over 930 members.

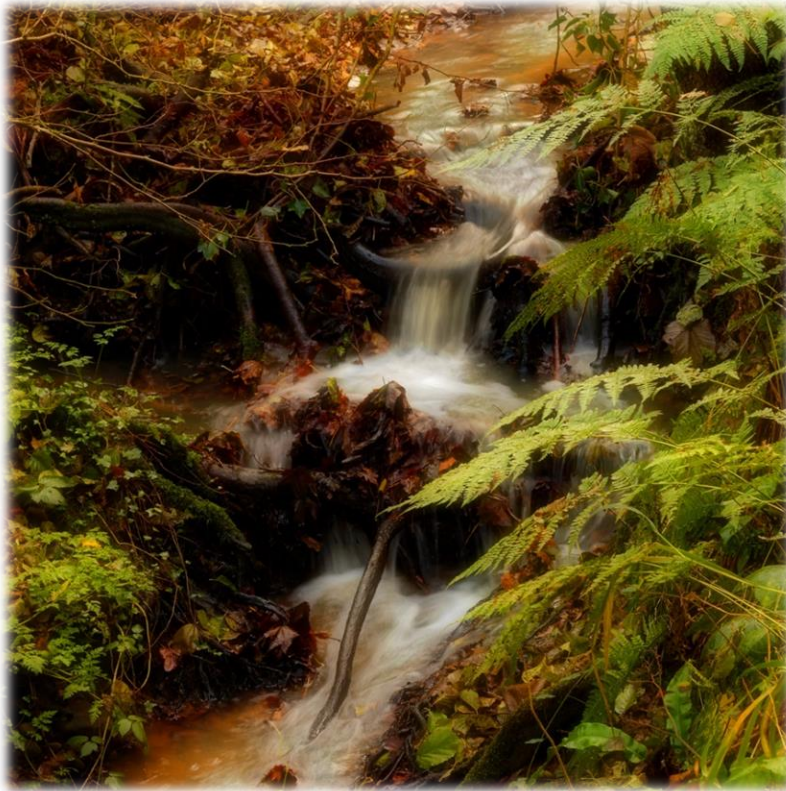
Our social media efforts did result in us welcoming several new volunteers to the group. Hopefully, this will continue into 2022.

Our ‘Flickr’ page now has over 200 pictures of the wood.

The group led a guided walk as part of the Frodsham Festival of Walks. This was attended by fifty members of the public and appeared to be well received. Two other guided walks, with smaller groups were held.

Mark O’Sullivan gave three talks during the year: to the Rotary Club, part of the Local Heroes Event, and to the men’s group of Frodsham Methodist Church.

Once again, when talking to people, many had never heard of Hob Hey or knew where it is. Our work has increased the number of people visiting the wood (and hopefully, the number of people who care about it).



Mini waterfall

Finances

The main source of income for 2022 was the sales of the 2022 Hob Hey Wood Friends Group calendar. By year end this had brought in £402 (sales through Dandelion will be forthcoming shortly).

FTC paid for materials to effect repairs to paths (£351.71).

FTC paid for the supply of bat boxes (£900)

We also had a £50 donation from a member of the public.

Expenditure was as follows:

Trees	£14
Materials for boardwalk repairs	£351.71
Fencing	£80.99
Bat boxes	(To be invoiced in 2023)



Siskin

Wildlife recording

As ancient woodland, Hob Hey Wood, is an incredibly biodiverse place. Despite this, little formal recording has been performed and, until 2021, knowledge of the species living here was scant. In 2021, a project commenced to record as many species as possible and input them into the biological recording database 'iRecord'. By the end of 2021, over 400 species had been recorded. This effort was continued in 2022 and over 500 species have now been identified.

This is 'the tip of the iceberg' as many species are difficult to identify, but it does show just how biodiverse the wood is, given its size. Further efforts will continue in 2023.



Bluebells in spring

Plans for 2023

In 2023, Hob Hey Wood Friends Group reaches its fifth birthday! We are looking at celebrating this milestone in some way, perhaps an open day.

With help from a local ecologist, and financial support from FTC, we are looking at setting up a bat monitoring programme in Hob Hey Wood. This exciting project will help the wood's bats, add to the scientific knowledge of bats in Cheshire and, eventually, allow the public to get close and view these enigmatic mammals. More information will follow as the programme commences.

We will continue with a similar programme of work as with 2022 including:

- Leading a walk as part of Frodsham Festival of Walks.
- Giving talks on the wood to interested groups.
- South west path construction.
- Biological recording. Maintenance tasks: boardwalk repair; drain clearance; invasive species removal; litter picking; step clearance; step repairs; pruning overhanging branches.
- Tree planting.
- Bluebell seed collection and planting.
- Promotion of the wood via social media.
- Regular feedback to FTC.
- 2024 Calendar to raise funds.

Mark O'Sullivan
Secretary of Hob Hey Wood Friends Group