

Briefing for Corsley Parish Council Annual Meeting – 8th July 2024

Estates

Over the last 12 months, we have seen some changes with the arrival of Sarah Butler (Estates Director) and Hugh Hitchings (Assistant Estate Manager) to join myself (Estate Manager), strengthening the Estates team. Working alongside the Property and Forestry teams the emphasis has been on getting to understand the workings of the Estate and all that it encompasses.

Future Events

We are delighted that the Longleat Hot Air Balloon event is returning from Thursday 12th - Sunday 15th September with a new name 'Icons of the Sky', which includes the introduction of a new air display and fireworks.

In terms of traffic management - letters will be sent to all residents with the event schedule and will include information on the improvements being made for traffic management this year and up-coming road closures. If any further information is required before the circulation of the resident letters, please don't hesitate to contact the events team at events@longleat.co.uk.

The Festival of Light will celebrate its 10th anniversary this year and will run from 9th November to 5th January 2025 with a journey through time theme.

We are aware of issues with some sat nav systems guiding Longleat visitors to the wrong entrance point. The Longleat website sets out the following 'How to Find Us' information which guides them to the tolls at Pickett Post:-

Address for Sat Nav users: BA12 7JS. Please ignore the Sat Nav voice as you approach Longleat and follow the brown tourist signs. Some Sat Nav systems send you to a dead end. **What3Words** ///streetcar.vies.payer

Bridleways and Footpaths

Update provided courtesy of Nigel Linge. Rights of Way Volunteer.

Bridleway Corsley 2 – Destination signs and widened by Forestry in 2023.

Bridleway Corsley 6 – Application by a local resident to reduce it to a footpath. Now news yet but a 60 year back log in Definitive Map Modification applications.

Footpath Corsley 7 – Diversion has gone out for consultation. The Open Spaces Society has made a number of observations and a site meeting is to be held with a date to be confirmed.

Observations mainly concern about widths of gates must now have 1100 mm gap. The Somerset bridge is only 900mm wide. Nigel Linge has asked Somerset if they plan to modify their design to be compliant with the new regulations. The Ramblers

were due to brush cut the permissive path this week. Destination signs & posts for the project already bought.

Bridleways Corsley 8 & 10. Already have smart new destination signs, Plan to scrape off mud & detritus (may already have been done). To cut back some branches to let light in.

Wilts Council has agreed to provide road shavings but must wait until road works in local area (normally 10 miles), makes them available.

Footpath Corsley 9 was given improved signage last year.

Obstruction of paths by crops. Corsley 11 (south from Sturford Lane & 12, 13 & 14 off of Frome Road told to open up paths & sent the Wilts Council Flyer.

Last year trees on bridleway Corsley 20 (bridleway to Warminster) were opened up by Forestry.

Bridleway Corsley 49 (Cannimore Road to Warminster) is due to have some improvements, mainly widening and already has destination signs.

Suggest the PC bids to the Local Highways & Footways Improvement Group (LHFIG) for self-closing pedestrian gates for footpaths as they provide access for the less able and are easily installed. You can claim the labour as the parish contribution. Nigel Linge can advise. Horningsham has received 11 & Maiden Bradley 6.

Woodland Management

Update provided by Jim McConkie – Longleat Head Forester.

Looking at the woodland within the Parish the following may be of interest.

Norridge Wood, Western part of the woodland (non-permissive access) has received selective thinning to remove the trees with ash dieback. Nutball and Cannimore Forest (permissive access) has received silvicultural thinning over the last winter to encourage the recruitment of naturally regenerated trees and has received RPA funding under the WD2 scheme.

Activity this summer will be to remove and control rhododendrons and to introduce signage in accordance to WS3 access for people, this woodland signage will be placed at the entrance points to Cannimore Forest and is aimed at providing great access, location and emergency information.

Dertford Wood (non permissive access, other than a footpath on the eastern edge) has responded well to last year's thinning with some strong responses from the young naturally regenerated beech trees in this area.

Woodlands in the parish have received a large amount of detrimental damage to the trees carried from grey squirrels bark stripping activity, this has been the highest level of damage for 10 years, (grey squirrels are actively controlled).

Early investigations are being made on how to improve the surfaces of the PROW / byway south and east of Dertford Wood.

In terms of hedges and verges, where the Estate has responsibility, it is happy to respond to areas that are thought to cause a risk. If this occurs in the nesting bird season (1st March to 31st August) when restrictions are in place, then certain exemptions do allow works to take place. An initial assessment by the Longleat Forestry team will be undertaken for signs of nesting before a works plan is agreed and instructed.

Future briefings

The Estate would be prepared to provide more regular briefings to the Parish Council as required and would welcome hearing from you as to what you would like included in this and please contact the Estate team properties@longleat.co.uk and Wendy Best in Longleat Marketing on wendy.best@longleat.co.uk with your thoughts.