

Subject:	Wigwell Report
From:	Peter Kenrick
Date:	20 th January 2022
For information See report below	
Summary of decisions or actions requested: Confirm support for the Analogue Beaver Dam project and help to promote associated community engagement.	
Financial implications: [please explain any costs associated with decisions or actions, and whether these have already been budgeted for] None beyond approved grant to Wychwood Forest Trust.	

Wigwell Nature Reserve Report for Charlbury Town Council January 2022

- Analogue Beaver Dam Community Project.** I am delighted to report that the proposed community project to install beaver analogue dams into the Wigwell stream has now been launched and a series of work parties will be held on Wigwell during the next few weeks to carry out initial work before the bird nesting seasons starts. The project will be publicised within the community by the Wigwell Friends via the Charlbury Chronicle and the town website. This publicity will keep local people informed about the project – what is being done and why – and will also invite and encourage residents to get involved. In particular we aim to involve young people in the town. The Charlbury Scout Group are already aware and we will be seeking to engage with other local youth groups including the primary school.

Funding for the project has been granted by the Evenlode Catchment Partnership as part of the Evenlode Smarter Catchment Plan. The natural “leaky” dams will help to regulate water flow and will also create new wetland habitat areas to improve biodiversity. Before the project started, a survey of the stream was carried out which showed that it is currently very “species poor”.

The location for the first dam has been chosen just upstream from the eastern bridge that forms part of the permissive path.

2. **Meadow Clary (*Salvia pratensis*)**. Management and monitoring of the meadow clary is continuing. Sheep are currently grazing this area of the reserve and the cages have been opened to allow the sheep to crop the vegetation inside the cages. It is planned for the sheep to be taken away from this area during March or April for the summer meadow flowering season.
3. **Permissive Path**. Parts of the path again became very muddy and difficult during the wet weather over the Christmas/New Year period. The condition of the path is being monitored and further work will be carried out as appropriate. An alternative “wet weather” diversion will be signed for one short but problematic section. Other options are being considered including the installation of additional steps and the possible laying of a hardcore base along difficult stretches. These options will be kept under review with action taken as deemed appropriate.
4. **Reptile Basking Area**. Last year’s reptile survey identified a stretch of south facing bank as a favoured basking area for grass snakes, slow worms and common lizards. Some careful targeted work will be carried out to enhance this area as a reptile habitat.