

National Trust monthly brief: September 2024 (Andrew Danson)

Subject (add as appropriate)	Comment & update	Milestone dates (e.g. start work / completion)	Main NT contact	OK to share via PC website?
Big Nature, Better Access	Lodge Park will be open for the final time this year on the 27th, 28th and 29th of September Final details for autumn walks to be confirmed but will include a walk along Sherborne Brook towards Windrush village, a walk around Stones Farm and a walk in Old Park. We have received some questions from Defra regarding the funding bid we submitted to Water Restoration Fund (Defra) for feasibility funds to consider options for creation of 83 hectares of wetland and improved habitats on Sherborne Farm. This would suggest that the bid is seen as viable. The Forestry Commission are visiting Lodge Park in September to discuss potential future phases of the Bridgeman restoration project. Funding from National Highways for grassland creation on Sherborne Farm has fallen through. Fields have now been topped and we are working on alternative sources of funding so that the project can proceed.	Ongoing	Andrew Danson	Yes

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	Community volunteering day to be held on Sunday September 29th. Tasks will include verge management and wildflower seed sowing. Badger Vaccinations: The Sherborne Badger vaccination scheme is back for 2024. We are working with an external supplier rather than this being managed exclusively by NT staff this year. There will be increased vehicle activity (the team (Russ, Shane and Adrian) are using land rovers and quads) as well as activity at dawn and dusk. Good progress being made on provision of Bus stops on the A40 within the boundary of the estate.			
Conservation Management Plan	Recently received correspondence has been passed on to consultants for them to review prior to publication of the CMP.	Summer 24	Andrew Danson	Yes
Sherborne Brook / Broadwater	JBA consultants still working on final detailed design for Sherborne Brook Management option. Currently exploring options for disposal of waste materials within the impacted area. Community events will be held this autumn when the plans are complete.	September 24	Simon Nicholas	Yes
Boathouse / Turbine	Have received Arborist report on impact of reinstating elements of Lady Sherborne's Walk on the trees within the area. Will carry out Heritage impact assessments and Environmental impact assessments over the autumn.	Ongoing	Andrew Danson	Yes

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Tree Planting	Ground preparation is now complete on the Sherborne Farm scheme in readiness for planting to take place this autumn. Working with the contractor to confirm volunteer and community tree planting days.	Planting on Sherborne Farm scheme will begin this autumn.	Andrew Danson	Yes
SANG Funding	Have received unofficial confirmation that our CDC SANG fund bid was successful. Minutes on CDC website from cabinet meeting are also positive.	Delivery of 2023 funding will be complete by end of the year. We expect to hear from CDC on status of 2024 bid by the end of September	Andrew Danson	Yes
Walling	The restoration of the North Wall at Lodge Park continues.		Simon Nicholas	Yes
Wildlife	Highlights this month included a surprisingly large common lizard from Matt at Sandy Hill, hobby fledglings at Woeful Lake (which is the first record we can find of them on that side of the A40) and the return of the great white egret to the broadwaters. September brings change and already bird populations are moving through; osprey has been spotted around Bibury and Northleach and we wouldn't be surprised if one appeared back on the broadwaters in the next few weeks. The redwing and fieldfare will be with us before we know it.		Luke Hunter	Yes
Ash Dieback	The arrival of September marks our chainsaw season – in late August, we were able to make a start on some dangerous sticks of ash on the Eastington Road – next, we'll work our way along the A40 woodlands as a	Ongoing	Luke Hunter	Yes

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	priority, tackling trees which are within our capability and capacity. Working with contractors, we'll also remove some of the more challenging trees including within the Sherborne Conservation Area and our busier roads. We have also sadly had to condemn a lime tree in the village near Sherborne Farm which is infected with brittle cinder fungus – attempts to save this tree (crown reduction) were unfortunately unsuccessful.			
Volunteering	Ollie, and the team tackled a busy August – ragwort pulling, fence removal, bridge repairs and woodchip spreading as well as gates and fences. In addition, we fixed some tree guards at Lodge Park and cleared the footpaths in Ragged Copse. The Cotswolds Wardens also joined us at the start of the month to help remove a fence in the double hedgerow – which they'll be working on again next week. They joined Ben a second time to repair a gate near the Cotswolds Fly Fishers beat. In September we have plans to fix a breach on the Sherborne brook, repair some fencing, verge maintenance and enhancement through cut/collect and seed sowing, as well as some ride management as we move into the cutting season. We also have corporate groups at Lodge Park including a team from Painswick Rococo gardens and UCAS.	Ongoing	Luke Hunter	Yes
Surveying	The Sherborne Estate Farms Wildlife Monitoring project: The volunteers will be out at Woeful Lake one last time this summer surveying for butterflies – as has been widely reported this has been a dreadful year for invertebrates – and it will be interesting to see how our	Ongoing	Luke Hunter	Yes

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	data stacks up locally and nationally - especially in the long-run as the good things happening on that side of the estate develop. Nevertheless, August did finally start to pick up with what appears to be a better second butterfly brood; we also enjoyed our final moth trapping session of the year which revealed a grey chi moth in Snowbottom Belt, near a lovely arable margin – only one was recorded in Gloucestershire last year so kudos to Nick and the team. The volunteers will return twice more this year in November and December to record winter birds and next year we are scheduled to visit Stones Farm. Water Voles: At the start of summer, we commissioned a water vole survey with the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust; across the estate, GWT surveyed the lengths of the Sherborne Brook, Windrush and Leach. Water voles were recorded in 22 of the 28 surveyed areas with the highest levels of density recorded on the River Windrush between Windrush Mill and the Sherborne Brook, on the Sherborne Brook between River Windrush and Laughcroft and on the Sherborne Brook at The Broadwaters. Water vole was absent from the River Leach. Fundamentally this data reveals absence/presence and helps direct our conservation activity which can range from increasing water course margins to flow deflectors – American Mink control remains pivotal; however, no signs of mink were recorded which reiterates the importance of regular monitoring. Otters were recorded on the Sherborne Brook and River Windrush.			

