

National Trust monthly brief: November 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	30 disease resistant elm trees being planted this November up at Lodge Park as part of the Bridgeman Restoration Project. We have applied for a felling licence to remove some beech trees at Lodge Park as part of the Bridgeman Restoration. If this is successful then the trees will be removed this, Winter. We are working on an expression of interest for a further £200k imminently and, if invited to submit, and successful with, a full application will see us deliver a significant chunk of work for the 300-year anniversary of Bridgeman's first visit to Lodge and the production of his plan for the park: 1725 and 1729. DEFRA funding bid re-submitted for feasibility study across 80ha of floodplain meadow and 3km of river. BNG baselining carried out and drone footage shot to inform work and provide us with a 'before' picture. Over £100,000 of funding has been requested. Cotswold District Council have recently informed us that work is still ongoing regarding the update of their local plan and that a working group to discuss Policy EN18 is unlikely to take place until after Christmas.	Ongoing	Andrew Danson	Yes

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	The Cattle Corral beside the Sheafhouse in Old Park has been restored. This cattle-handling facility is a vital infrastructure addition for management of the registered park. Community volunteering day to be held on Sunday December 1st. Tasks will include verge management, mowing, and ivy removal from park wall on the road up to Northfield Barns. Badger Vaccinations: A total of 41 badgers were vaccinated this year, of which 29 were Adults and 12 were Cubs. This is lower than previous years which we mainly attribute to sources of natural food at this time of year (e.g. – harder to trap). Bus stops have now been installed on the A40 meaning that we now have public transport connectivity to the estate from Cheltenham and Oxford.			
Conservation Management Plan	We expect the CMP to be published before Christmas.	Autumn 24	Andrew Danson	Yes
Sherborne Brook / Broadwater	JBA consultants still working on final ecological survey requirements before final proposal is ready for submission to the relevant authorities. Currently exploring options for disposal of waste materials within the impacted area. Community events will be held when the plans are complete.	November 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	Ongoing	Andrew Danson	Yes

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	and Environmental impact assessments over the autumn.			
Tree Planting	Planting has now started on the Woodland creation scheme on Sherborne Farm. Community tree planting on this scheme will take place in February. Discussions taking place to carry out planting on Ancestor oaks planting this, Winter. We have also been dotting around some hazel through October as an unexpected bounty arose from another volunteer task.	Planting on Sherborne Farm scheme will begin this autumn.	Andrew Danson	Yes
SANG Funding	Still awaiting 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 - we're about 2/3 through the 75m we were aiming for this financial year.		Simon Nicholas	Yes
Wildlife	Jack and Common Snipe numbers have been steadily increasing which is exciting – We've been getting reports from across the estate – wet meadows with rushes, bogs and marshes are their preferred habitat so wherever these features exist the snipe will appreciate		Luke Hunter	Yes

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	it. Wigeon and teal continue to filter back in along the brook and the egrets (both small and great white) have started to appear back down there again. Luke had a lovely moment at Sandy Hill earlier in the month where 100+ goldfinch exploded out of Matt and Laura's pasture – finches have had a tough time of late, but goldfinch seem to be doing well on Sherborne. Likewise, Starling, who have been darting around Lodge Park, Woeful Lake, and Home Farm on the South of the A40 – again, a bird in decline, but anecdotally we seem to be getting good numbers on that side of the estate. Redwing and fieldfare have returned in their droves this month;			
Ash Dieback	Ash Dieback: Dangerous (and mostly dead) ash trees were felled in Langott Hill woods this month adjacent to Sherborne Farm; We plan to schedule work mostly along the A40 through November; simultaneously Rangers Ollie and Ben, and Luke, will be chipping away elsewhere on the estate. Other tree work: Lime, laurel and willow in the vicinity of Sherborne village and Sherborne Farm were worked on this month – a dangerous lime tree at the Windrush end of the village was significantly reduced whilst we re-pollarded a willow that has fallen out of cycle; both of these, We hope, will preserve these trees for many years to come. We will also be working on dangerous sycamore, squirrel damaged beech limbs and coppicing through November. October is our tree safety survey month, and the Rangers have been almost entirely devoted to this cause for the last six weeks – we have surveyed every	Ongoing	Luke Hunter	Yes

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	tree within striking distance of the A40, tenancies and local roads and some of our footpaths; this is a huge undertaking and not much else happens during October! We have recorded 186 trees/areas of woodland to work on – these tasks range from ivy cutting to aerial inspections to hulking (or monolithing) – ensuring the tree is safe and/or providing conservation value is of course our aim... it is a challenging month, but a great opportunity to explore the estate and there really are some absolutely incredible tree specimens on Sherborne. The main takeaway for all of us was this is the year of the squirrel – We have never, ever seen squirrel damage quite as widespread and without prejudice as this before – every species of tree, of every age, seems to have taken a battering from their bark stripping tendencies; this will cause many headaches for rangers over the next few years.			
Volunteering	We continued work on restoring a small lost orchard in Sherborne Farm; stock-proofing this to utilise sheep as biological lawnmowers before planting. The team were also on loan to Bibury (another of our sites!) – we did some wildflower seeding in the Lodge Park meadow, ride management in Snowbottom belt, tidying and seeding of verges in Sherborne village and some work on a footpath diversion. In November, we have tree planting, coppicing, dangerous tree work, replacing and fixing benches in the Pleasure Grounds and removing/repairing fences and gates along Sabrina Way.	Ongoing	Luke Hunter	Yes

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Surveying	The Sherborne Estate Farms Wildlife Monitoring project: Our Volunteer Wildlife Monitors will be returning to their Woeful Lake zones once in November and once in December to survey for overwintering birds; including Luke in Snowbottom Belt – overwintering birds are an exceptional indicator of habitat health so this will be really interesting and something we have done only in small quantities before, rather than across an entire farm. We are also introducing some camera traps along the Windrush and the brook as we try to record some otter and water vole movements. We are gradually starting to pool the data that we have collected this year, before our attention turns to Stones Farm next year.	Ongoing	Luke Hunter	Yes