

National Trust monthly brief: December 2024 (Andrew Danson – 13/12/2024)

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 have been planted up at Lodge Park as part of the Bridgeman Restoration Project. 2000 whips are to be planted in early February within the Woodland blocks. We have received feedback from Cotswold National Landscape on our expression of interest for a further £200k of funding. We are looking to respond to this feedback and then submit a full application by the end of January. This will enable us to deliver further 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. We'll be reintroducing hedge laying to Sherborne Farm throughout the winter, starting with the double hedge row to the northeast corner of the estate in January.	Ongoing	Andrew Danson	Yes
Conservation Management Plan	We expect the CMP to be published early in the new year.	Winter 24	Andrew Danson	Yes
Sherborne Brook / Broadwater	Final designs received from consultants and shared with internal colleagues for approval.	December 24	Simon Nicholas	Yes
Boathouse / Turbine	Initial concept design work on access to the Turbine/Boat House area of Old Park will commence in January.	Ongoing	Andrew Danson	Yes

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Tree Planting	Over 30,000 trees have been planted as part of the Sherborne Farm Woodland creation scheme. We have 15,000 trees left to plant which will be completed in the New year. A week of community tree planting will be held from February 10 th to 16 th to complete this planting. Discussions taking place to carry out planting on Ancestor oaks planting this, Winter.	Planting on Sherborne Farm scheme taking place this planting season.	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.	Ongoing	Simon Nicholas	Yes
Wildlife	Luke has have covered some of our best sightings in his surveying section – some other interesting things of note: a stoat on the Eastington Road to Northleach. A second swan has appeared on the brook; a juvenile first-winter. Whether our resident male is happy about it remains to be seen. Redwing and Fieldfare numbers have been steadily increasing. Again, a kingfisher is overwintering on the brook – I'm desperate for it to nest down there! The fallow deer have returned in numbers; a white doe has been very conspicuous north of the brook. A sparrowhawk has been regularly hunting over the village allotments. Long-Eared and Short-Eared	Ongoing	Luke Hunter	Yes

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	Owls have been both recorded locally. A merlin was recorded in late November – the first record I can find on the estate. Wigeon and teal numbers have steadily climbed, with many likely riding the winds we've seen in recent weeks south.			
Ash Dieback	November and the early part of December has seen the team removing dangerous ash along the A40, West Belt and around Sherborne Common. This week has been difficult following Storm Darragh last weekend; Sherborne was absolutely battered and unfortunately, we have lost more than 50 trees; Sandy Hill Copse has been most badly hit, with Ragged Copse and The Pleasure Grounds not far behind. We were braced for some losses as this was the most significant North Westerly we have had for some time, but were quite shocked as we checked the estate on Monday and it has been a very, very busy week keeping the roads and paths safe. We have cleared three larch, three ash, one western red cedar and partially cleared one humongous leylandii and a plethora of smaller trees and branches. Please let Luke know if you have any trees down on fences/tracks and we'll get to them as soon as we can.	Ongoing	Luke Hunter	Yes
Volunteering	We have been working hard to replace the fencing and gates that have long been an issue on Sabrina Way – it is the first example on Sherborne Farm of chestnut fencing as we aim to restore more traditional methods of fencing where hedges in isolation are not suitable; we have also taken advantage of the opportunity to fence out veteran oak trees and increase the margin on one of our spring fed streams – providing a safer	Ongoing	Luke Hunter	Yes

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	environment for the stock, whilst also finding conservation gains where we can – the volunteers helped myself and the team at the start of the month by removing the defunct sections of the old fence. In addition, Ollie led sessions in Budgehill Bank repairing fencing, removing old fencing on the double hedgerow and coppicing in Quarry Wood. December tends to be a little quieter, but we have sessions booked for more fencing and a session before Christmas to process brash.			
Surveying	The Sherborne Estate Farms Wildlife Monitoring project: Our Volunteer Wildlife Monitors have been across their Woeful Lake zones once in November and once in December to survey for overwintering birds; so far we have recorded vast flocks of gulls, winter thrushes and waders; all of which the team would have been very unlikely to record in a farmland environment in summer. Gloucestershire Naturalist Society Winter Bird Survey: Luke headed out in November to record a square for GNS that straddled around Woeful Lake and through Snowbottom Belt; He was absolutely ecstatic with the results having recorded peregrine, 200+ golden plover, corn bunting and marsh tit in a two hour window plus many more; corn bunting and marsh tit were both in scrub on the perimeters of Woeful Lake Farm's arable margin and the woodland Belt; We've only really known the buntings be isolated to Windrush Camp and Conygree so giving them a safe and fruitful corridor to move between the two helps minimise fragmentation and grow the population which remains one of those that we should be most proud of on the estate.	Ongoing	Luke Hunter	Yes

	Sherborne Brook Duck Monitoring: We are working with the University of Gloucestershire to conduct some monitoring (under license) of wigeon and teal on the Sherborne Brook; for those that are eagle eyed you might spot a small duck trap along the bank at the moment; this is currently 'unset' and myself and volunteers are the midst of baiting this for two weeks; if the ducks take the feed we'll then come in one early morning before Christmas to set the trap and hopefully catch some of the target species – we can ring them and safely release - in the hope that they are then recaptured when they return to their (currently unknown) breeding grounds in the summer – amongst other things, we also stand to learn much about their health and wellbeing on the overwintering grounds – it also demonstrates our capability to conduct similar experiments in the future.			
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