



National
Trust

Residents' newsletter
April – June 2022

Sherborne & Bibury

National Trust Images



Spring is here

I can't think there can be many nicer places to be in the world than the Cotswolds in springtime.

With the days lengthening and blossom and new life around us, it reminds me how lucky I am to be living and working here.

This edition of the newsletter comes with it lots of ways for anyone interested to get more involved.

From volunteering to monitor the wildlife around us, to checking the paths while you exercise, or sharing stories of the watermeadows – it would be great to hear from you.

I love the article by Hedgehog Class at the school. Thank you for sharing that! I love it especially as it is such a great example of everyone coming together in an easy and gentle way for an important moment.

The trees were kindly donated by the Parish Council, planted by the fab school along with the National Trust and with immediate support from the Summers at Stones Farm. It couldn't be much better. Thank you all.

Do enjoy these glorious sunny evenings everyone.

**Jonny Loose, General
Manager – Cotswold
Portfolio**

Where's the time gone?

National Trust/ Georgina Lindsay



by **Georgina Lindsay, Area Ranger**

I have now been with the National Trust for six months and it's been a great experience so far!

I have tackled the backlog of compliance tasks, attended some training courses and have a couple of new certificates under my belt, finished setting up some exciting volunteer groups and finally feel like I am familiar with most areas of the estate.

The ranger team is now transitioning from winter to spring tasks with this years' tree works at an end as we now head into breeding bird and bat season.

The wildlife at Sherborne is also transitioning. Some of our winter birds are now leaving while we welcome back spring visitors like the swallows. The flowers on the estate are blooming and the bees and butterflies are flying.

Spring is here at last.

Science surveys

National Trust/ Georgina Lindsay



The scientist in me is really enjoying the number of surveys, audits and assessments I get to do and if there is an app to record it – even better.

From flora and fauna surveys, outdoor furniture and bridge audits to tree safety and post-storm assessments, the data nerd in me is very content.

I am especially excited for spring and summer here at Sherborne and all the glorious wildlife it will bring.

Our local bird expert, Anna Field joined me recently to put up a few more owl boxes.

Georgina Lindsay, Area Ranger

Volunteering opportunities

Georgina has been busy working with our GIS team to set up a new wildlife monitoring app.

Now that the app is up and running we're looking for volunteers to help us monitor our visiting and resident wildlife.

We also need some help with checking the network

of paths and permissive routes.

If you have a few hours to spare each week and want to help us care for the estate and its wildlife, then please get in touch or you can apply on-line:

<https://myvolunteering.nationaltrust.org.uk/opportunity-search>



Jubilee tree planting

by **Sherborne C of E Primary School**

Hedgehog Class from Sherborne C of E Primary School were recently invited to take part in some Jubilee tree planting with the National Trust.

They had a wonderful time digging tree holes, learning

about the trees being planted and finding the soil full of worms!

They were awarded a National Trust sticker at the end of their hard graft and are looking forward to seeing the trees grow and thrive from the school playing field over the years.

Our thanks to Georgina Lindsay from the National Trust for a wonderful morning.

The children particularly enjoyed *'meeting Georgina and seeing what she does, doing the digging, all of it, and finding lots of worms!'*

More trees for Conygree Farm

Mel and Jonty Brunyee have just finished planting phase 2 of the woodland creation project at Conygree Farm.

They added just under 4,000 trees to the 7,000 they planted last year – a

herculean effort.

This not only provides shelter, shade and browse for livestock but adds greatly to the habitat value across the farm.

It also links woodland habitat across the south of the estate, providing connectivity and more space for nature.



Old Park update

National Trust Images/ Chris Lacey



by **Simon Nicholas,**
Countryside Manager

You won't have failed to notice that we sadly lost some of our old trees during Storm Eunice. There were three casualties in Old Park. We also had other big trees come down elsewhere across the estate.

The ranger team have been working with contractors to attend to those trees which posed safety or access issues. Contractors will then turn their attention to the larger and more complex trees that do not pose any safety concerns.

The Parish Council have asked for a couple of rings from the stem of the fallen Turkey Oak for a village history project. The size of the tree and the precarious nature of it resting on its branches make it particularly difficult to deal with so specialist contractors

have been commissioned.

Sherborne Brook

Meanwhile, we've received quotes to get the sluices on the Sherborne Brook weirs operational again. The successful contractor will be completing the works during the summer.

We're also expecting the repair to the breached bank to take place as soon as the ground conditions allow access for large, heavy machinery.

As I said in the last newsletter, we have been researching a sustainable method for creating a ribbon of water through the park. Unfortunately, the recent flow modelling work concluded that it was not possible to increase the velocity of Sherborne Brook enough to create a clear channel by deflecting the flow of water. This is due to the limited drop

in gradient and the effect of the weirs.

We've fed back to Historic England who appreciate the constraints and support our ongoing work with the Environment Agency and others to find a way to achieve a ribbon of water through the parkland and acknowledge that this will be "compromised to a degree by the various environmental factors currently at play".

Alongside this, we're increasing the surveying we're doing in the area to ensure we know everything we need to about the ecology of the brook and continue to add to the historic research we've done.

North Park walls

We recently rebuilt the latest collapsed section of the North Park wall along Clapton Road. We also put up some fallen sections along the A40 at the same time.

Rent reviews

Residential tenants received a letter at the start of the year informing them that we are re-starting rent reviews this year.

After four years, a rent review can seem daunting, especially with the other increased costs all households are currently experiencing.

However, we need to get back into the process of

reviewing rents every two years.

We have a few different types of tenancy agreements in place at Sherborne and Bibury, which have different methods of reviewing the rent. Some use a set formula while others are based on open market rent.

Where a set formula is in place, we will need to follow this, but we will consider people's individual circumstances when we can.

Open market rent reviews will always be a conversation and tenants will be given the choice of

how and where they would like to have the review.

Again, we are happy to look at people's individual circumstances and may ask for evidence to support an agreement.

Please remember that if you don't think the rent proposed is an appropriate market rent, you can refer this to the rent tribunal.

If you would like a reminder of when your next review will take place, please contact Kathryn who will confirm it with you – Kathryn.alsbury@nationaltrust.org.uk.

The Belties return to Bibury

by **Martin Jones, Area Ranger**

For what some people think of as a tranquil meadow, there's been quite a lot going on at the Rack Isle in Bibury.

Volunteers from Chedworth have been helping me with some rotational coppicing of the willow on the Isle.

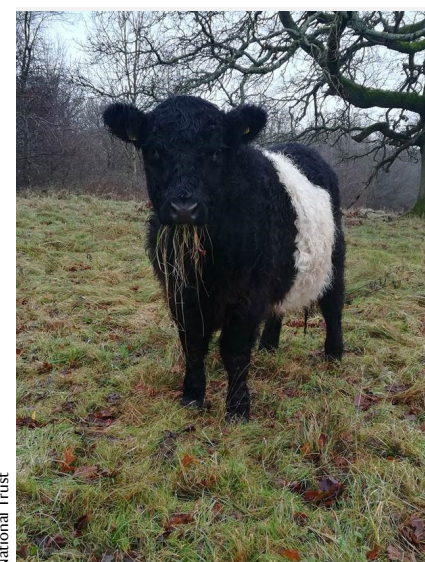
This process indulges nest sites and songbird perches while not allowing the willow to become too dominant.

All of the resulting cut material is then bundled up and carried off-site to naturally rot down in a woodland environment.

We're also planning for the return of the National Trust's Belted Galloway cattle during May.

To prepare the Isle for their arrival, the boundary fence is being replaced and volunteer cattle checkers are being recruited to be our eyes and ears on the ground.

These natural lawnmowers ensure that the more invasive plants are kept in check and the cow's slow pace of grazing is more sympathetic to the amphibians and mammals on the Isle than any mechanised cutting.



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The resulting stubble left by the cattle is a very good protective habitat for all wildlife and over-wintering birds such as snipe.

Collaborative repairs

National Trust Images/ Derek Hutton



People and nature on the estate are benefiting from the hard work of the Cotswold Wardens and corporate volunteers.

A large team from the Wardens joined forces with volunteers from Superdry to help me and Martin to re-bark the path from Ragged Copse to Ewepens.

By providing good footing, this will encourage people to stay on the path, leaving the conservation margins between the crops and paths for wildflowers and ground nesting birds.

by **Patrick Brown, Ranger**

Arnold's Spring

National Trust Images/ Anapurna Mellor



Volunteers from Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust have been helping us to improve the watercourse through Arnold's Spring.

This narrow strip of woodland was planted with ash around 25 years ago. The tree guards had become degraded and needed removing. Our Thursday Group did excellent work removing them from the trees and helping to clear the watercourse of litter and rubbish.

Afterwards, GWT staff and volunteers spent a day building leaky dams and other natural flood management structures. During normal flow the stream passes under these dams unimpeded, but in peak flow the higher waters are partly dammed.

This holds water in the upper reaches of the catchment for longer. The cumulative effect of many leaky dams can significantly reduce downstream flooding.

Lodge Park open weekends

Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 April saw the first of six exclusive open weekends at Lodge Park.

We're once again using a booking system, giving visitors access to bespoke volunteer-led talks of the grandstand building and walks of the Charles Bridgeman landscape.

The next open weekends are;

- 7-8 May
- 4-5 June
- 2-3 July
- 6-7 August
- 2-3 September

You can keep up to date with all the latest news from Lodge Park and the restoration of the Bridgeman landscape by visiting our [webpage](#). You'll also find details of all the 2022 opening weekends and how to book your visit.

National Trust Images/ James Dobson



Planting for the future

by **Patrick Brown, Ranger**

Conygree Farm recently hosted a number of tree planting days. Volunteer groups from across the National Trust, as well as external organisations, helped farmers Jonty and Mel plant thousands of native broadleaves including beech, lime and oak, as well as scrubby species like hawthorn and dogwood.

In time these will form woodland clumps, shelter belts and wide hedges with great benefits for wildlife connectivity and livestock welfare.

Although there are challenges in the short term, with some losses from browsing, it's important to look to the long-term benefits of planting trees and persevere.

The need to plant for the future is underscored by the unfortunate loss of some significant trees during Storm Eunice.

At Conygree, a large beech fell across a wall and fence line. Martin led the clear-up to safely dismantle the windblown timber. Despite the violence of the fall, the damage was quite minor, and we were able to make the field stock-proof fairly quickly.

National Trust Images/James Dobson



We also lost the large poplar which grew next to the Upper Weir. Although very sad to see this giant fall, we were all grateful that it missed the cascade, weir and most of the estate fencing.

Our priority has been to make the tree safe and provide access to the farmer, cutting a large section from the trunk to allow him to take his quad bike through to care for his sheep.

Once the ground has dried, we will be clearing the rest of the

branch wood.

Contractors have also been working on the estate to make the trees safe in West and East Belts as well as Ragged Copse.

The losses have demonstrated the importance of successional planting. Indeed, I was very happy to plant some young oaks at Sandy Hill Farm recently, helping to ensure the parkland will remain studded with impressive trees long into the future.

Let Estate update

by **Emma Guthrie, Rural Surveyor**

The whole Let Estate team came together recently for a productive meeting where we discussed all outstanding repairs required in the cottages at Sherborne and Bibury. These repairs had either been reported to Kathryn on her visits or reported directly to the Tenant Repair Line.

We have now allocated all of this work to either contractors or Pat and Terry. There will therefore be significant progress on this backlog by the summer.

Consequently, any new repairs reported to the Tenant Repair Line can be actioned quickly and efficiently.

We have also created work lists to undertake several kitchen and bathroom refurbishments this year, as well as installing secondary glazing at a number of properties.

As most cottages are Listed, secondary glazing will be subject to receiving Listed Building Consent. We are working closely with the Council's Conservation Officer to ensure the best solution is found for each property.

Finally, we are planning to do external decoration at 25 properties this year. The properties on the list have already had surveys completed for the works. Tenants will be contacted when we have a schedule of works in place.

How to report repairs

Reporting repairs couldn't be easier. Simply;

- Call **0345 646 1311**
- Use the online portal, Fixflow <https://nationaltrust.fixflo.com>
- Email tenantrepairs@nationaltrust.org.uk

Bridgeman landscape walks

We're bringing back guided walks of the Bridgeman landscape.

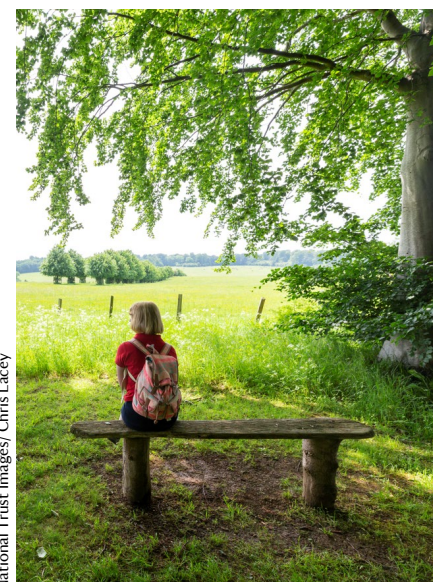
Visitors to Lodge Park can find out more about this unique and fascinating space, and the story of the man behind it.

The volunteer-led walks will bring past and present to life as visitors discover more about Charles Bridgeman's vision and how the Trust are

working hard to turn that vision into reality.

The guided walks will be available on the same open days as the grandstand building.

All this wouldn't be possible without the support of our fabulous team of volunteers. If you want to know more about joining the team, please contact claire.forkes@nationaltrust.org.uk for more information.



National Trust Images/ Chris Lacey



Sherborne social history project

by **Lauren Palmer, House and Collections Manager**

I'm starting to progress an exciting new social history project, so I'd like to invite you to share your knowledge about specific parts of the estate.

As information is gathered and this resource grows, we will make sure it is available to the community in the long term, possibly through the Gloucestershire Heritage Hub.

If you have any photographs or family stories about the watermeadows on Sherborne Farm that you'd be happy to share, then I'd love to hear from you.

A 1993 archaeology survey wrote, 'Sherborne has an example of a 'floating' water

meadow, where a thin sheet of water was kept flowing continuously over meadows for periods in winter and early spring. By this method the meadow was enriched with nutrients contained in the floodwater, the grass was protected from winter frosts, and a source of nourishing food for livestock was provided during early spring when fodder was generally scarce'.

Sherborne's watermeadows have a distinctive sluice gate system and broad ridge and furrows, aligned north to south.

A large double sluice is dated 1844, which we believe to be the approximate date the meadow system was constructed, and anecdotal information suggests it fell out

of use around 1965

The National Trust restored one area of the meadows in the 1990s, informed by surveys from the National Rivers Authority and archaeological advisers.

We'd love to understand more about how the watermeadows were managed, and what part they played in the running of the estate.

If you have anything you'd like to share with us, please email sherborneestate@nationaltrust.org.uk with 'social history' in the title.

Alternatively, you can call the estate office on 01451 844257 and we can arrange for a mutually convenient time to meet.

Lodge Park walls

The end is in sight for the completion of the park wall at Lodge Park.

An impressive 2-metre-high structure, this section spans 180m between the Coach House and the Slaughter Barn.

It became a bit of a focal point during Springwatch thanks to a resident family of stoats.

Our waller, Andy, has built 'stoat holes' along the length. Some provide passage, some nesting sites and some for caching food.



National Trust Images/ Paul Harris

Wildlife volunteers



National Trust Images/ David Levenson

You can now sign up to be a wildlife monitoring volunteer.

The role is designed for any level of survey and ID experience, so everyone is welcome to join in.

As a wildlife monitoring volunteer, you'll get to visit areas of the estate that are not on your usual walking routes.

Full training will be provided, and Georgina will be on-hand to help.

Later in the year, Georgina will also be setting up a HART group for surveying the heritage sites across the estate. Watch this space.

To apply to become a wildlife monitoring volunteer, simply [register your details here](#).

Getting trained up



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by **Georgina Lindsay, Area Ranger**

The National Trust has been encouraging me to develop my skills further. From chainsaws, tractors, and ATVs to management and finance training. I now have a wealth of new knowledge.

In my spare time I have also been logging hours for bird ringing and bat surveys in the hopes that I can get my licences in the future and do more research with these species on the estate.

Thank you, Sherborne

by **Georgina Lindsay, Area Ranger**

I have really enjoyed getting to know some of the local villagers and farmers on my travels around the estate.

From brief chats while walking through the woods, you've been helping me with storm related issues and contractor access, to the Jubilee tree planting with the local primary school, you've all been absolutely fantastic.

It has been great to feel so welcomed. I have also enjoyed

hearing your top-tips of where to see some really special flora and fauna and what to look out for across the estate. I look forward to searching for them in the coming months

I am enthusiastic about making positive changes at Sherborne and the support and feedback has been amazing.

Patrick and I still have quite a way to go but bit by bit, we're heading in the right direction.

Thank you everyone for being so patient and welcoming.



National Trust/ Georgina Lindsay

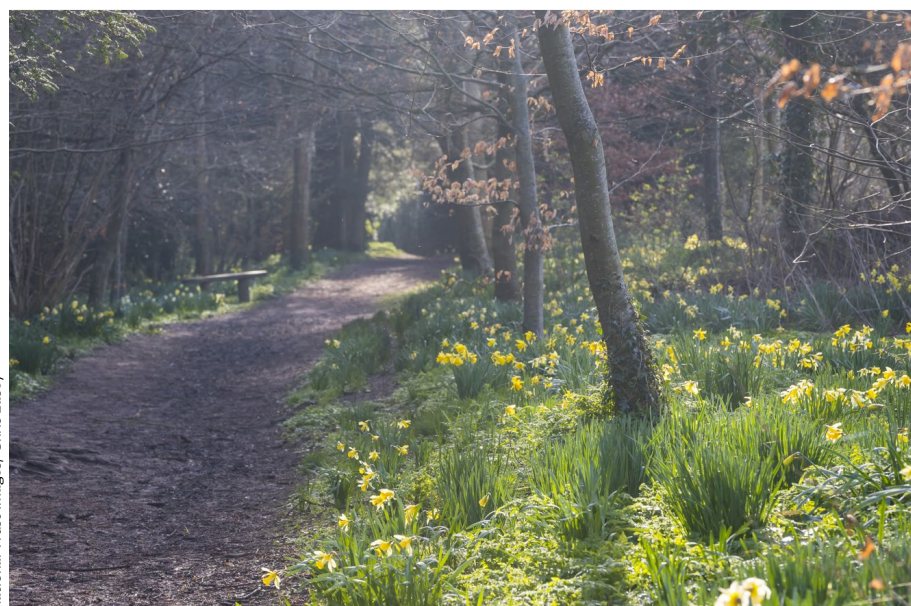
P.S. I thought I would give you an Alfie the Ranger Dog update – I have not been able to fully steal him from Simon yet, but he has been coming out on more and more ranger trips with me!

And thank you from me too...

by **Patrick Brown, Ranger**

It's been great to be part of the ongoing cycle of work, with so many people giving their time and energy to support us in maintaining and improving the estate.

As the weather warms and the buds break in the sunshine, I'm looking forward to the seasons to come and learning more about this very special place.



National Trust Images/ Chris Lacey

Lambing time

With the arrival of spring, there's so much for you to see as you walk along the estate's network of permissive paths and tracks.

The coming months are a great time to spot brown hares and new-born lambs frolicking in the fields.

If you look up you might see a kestrel, red kite or buzzard as they circle overhead.

If you're wandering through the woods listen out for the tap, tap, tap from the greater spotted woodpecker or if you tread carefully you could come across a roe deer grazing in the shade.

Wildlife and livestock can easily be disturbed so please help us support the estate's farmers by picking up your dog's litter and keeping your four-legged friend close by and on a lead if you're around livestock.



If you'd like to receive these newsletters by email, please contact the Sherborne Park Estate office –

sherborneestate@nationaltrust.org.uk

Key contacts

Eleanor Baxendale
Estate Manager
Eleanor.baxendale@nationaltrust.org.uk

Simon Nicholas
Countryside Manager
Simon.nicholas@nationaltrust.org.uk

Credits

Newsletter contributors
Sherborne C of E Primary School
Jonny Loose
Simon Nicholas
Georgina Lindsay
Patrick Brown
Emma Guthrie
Lauren Palmer
Claire Forkes