



Residents' newsletter
Spring 2023

Sherborne and Bibury



Looking forward to spring

**By Jonny Loose, General
Manager Cotswolds
Countryside Portfolio**

It is a jam-packed edition of the newsletter this February as we look towards the spring ahead of us.

I am really impressed with the team we are building. Their

passion for Sherborne Estate and Bibury, as well as their skills and their openness to hearing from all the communities we work with is clear to me every day.

We will continue to invest in the properties and landscape in our care throughout 2023, and I recognise from many of the other charities I interact

with what a fortunate position it is for us to be able to do so.

As you flick through the newsletter, do note all the ways you can get in touch with us. I hope you all have a very enjoyable spring when it comes. The new shoots and snowdrops show it's on its way!

Let Estate update

By Emma Guthrie, Rural Surveyor

2022 was a busy year for the Let Estate team as we made good progress on the backlog work and dealt with the many repairs reported via the tenant repair line. In total across Sherborne and Bibury in 2022, we spent over £480,000. Some of the larger pieces of work included roofing work at Bibury, installing 4 new kitchens, 1 new bathroom and secondary glazing in several houses, replacing leaking water pipes, and reletting 3 properties.

Looking ahead to this year, we will be continuing with the external decoration and timber works that started last year and we will have a big focus on keeping on top of compliance and repair work. We will also soon be installing more secondary glazing at 12 properties across Sherborne and Bibury.

We appreciate that this has been a tough winter for many people with the cost of living crisis affecting us all. We suggest that everyone visits the Government's "Help for Households" webpage to check if you are eligible for any support. This includes support for the cost of living, household costs, a warm home discount plus more. Please also check if you have received the Alternative Fuel Payment from your electricity supplier.

Finally, I am pleased to confirm that following Andy's retirement at the end of last year, we have successfully recruited a full time Building Supervisor as his replacement. Noel Bennett started at the end of January and has lots of experience in building maintenance, so we are really excited to have him in the team. I am sure he will soon be meeting many of you as he makes his way around all our properties.

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

Bridges and benches

By Georgina Lindsay, Area Ranger

Bridge inspections have been carried out for this year with improvement works planned over the next few months.

We have even had structural engineer out to look at more significant stone bridges at Lodge Park and along the Broadwaters where scouring

could become an issue.

We also have a volunteer now leading on our Outdoor Furniture Inspections using the National Trust Outdoor Furniture app. This is a new volunteer position we are trialling as a dedicated volunteer will hopefully allow us to keep on top of our gates, signs, benches etc.

How winter weather impacts work

By James Bradford, Ranger

My first Winter here at Sherborne has been a rather picturesque spectacle, particularly with the snow that fell in December. Work was certainly hindered in many respects, however, weather like that does remind us to stop and enjoy our surroundings and realise what a lovely part of the world we find ourselves in.

Stereotypical British winter weather has now resumed, and the multiple high winds and storms brings me back to work carrying out tree safety management surveys. This annual task has us inspecting zoned areas to ensure there are no obvious hazards or threats to anyone enjoying the estate. Unlike Ash dieback

surveys, we are looking at all the trees that might have signs of decay, limb or basal splits, or any other signs of endangerment and are near a used zone area. Remedial work comes in many different forms, it may be a felling job, or could be something less final such as a crown reduction or removing individual limbs to help the trees longevity and safety. It's a rewarding task that has helped me to get to know the estate more intimately, and it's just a bonus for me that I find trees fascinating.

I have finally finished the recruitment of the Cotswolds Heritage and Archaeological Ranger team (HART) which is very exciting. We will be starting with surveying Lodge Park and Sherborne estate,

looking at the condition of all the Archaeological features found here. This will help ensure that we continue to preserve them for the future.

I have saved the best piece until last. Over the last couple of months, we have had multiple wall breaches across the estate. This was due to the extremely cold weather we had (lows of -13) followed by the thaw that took less than 24 hours. The speed of the thaw created a slippery surface between the stone, causing the wall to collapse. As a team, we have been corresponding with our Wallers who have been quick to react. There are still a few breaches around, however they have all been noted and are due to be repaired going forward.



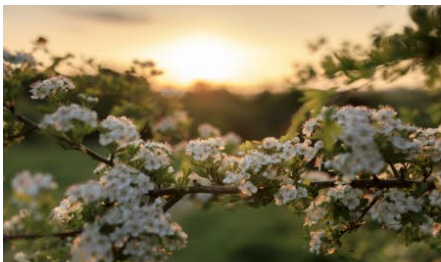
Looking after stone walls

We have several long-term volunteer-driven projects, one of which is stone wall maintenance around the village. We're conscious that the stone walls are a quintessential aspect of Sherborne's character, as well as offering a plethora of benefits for wildlife – including acting as micro-climates for overwintering insects and dark

linear highways that assist bats with their navigation. Our aim is to increase their longevity and appearance by keeping the ivy, elder and bramble back – the volume of walls we need to cover means this is only possible with the help of volunteers – look out for areas we have cleared heading between the village and Ewe Pen car park.



Hedgerow habitats



By Georgina Lindsay, Area Ranger

This winter we have carried out a hedgerow survey looking at how many kilometres of hedgerows we have and their conditions. Across Sherborne we have more than 25.5km of hedgerows and we are monitoring these hedges to see whether they are declining or improving.

Many wildlife species rely on hedgerows in good condition for navigation, foraging, nesting and they help to link up the landscape, so they are a vital habitats for the Estate's wildlife.

Bibury and the Rack Isle



By Martin Jones, Area Ranger

Bibury and the Rack Isle is a quiet place at the moment, there are a few hardy visitors scurrying to miss the rain showers.

The waterlevels in the river Coln and the mill stream are very high, not quite flooding the rack isle but probably higher than the floors in some of the nearby cottages of Arlington row.

The burrows of the water voles adjacent to the water will be flooded and they will have moved to higher ground. There are no shallow edges for

the Grey wagtail to probe for invertebrates so they too are absent. The Kingfisher will have a hard time, with such a flow, the water it is very cloudy and therefore difficult to spot any fish.

Snipe could well be working across Rack Isle, unseen, probing the soft wet ground with their long bills' unless they are disturbed and take to the wing there is little chance of seeing them.

It is very atmospheric but bring on the longer days, sunshine and the return of our iconic wildlife.

Welcome to Luke

By Luke Hunter, Ranger

Hello! I'm the newest addition to the Sherborne Park Estate having joined the Ranger team in November – it has been an enriching two months familiarising myself with the site, the team and more broadly the National Trust.

I am a lifelong birder and that is my default 'specialism' - but my background is not exclusively conservation having originally worked in marketing – I am a keen writer and photographer, and so the two did lend themselves quite well to marketing. That career path eventually sent me to Australia, where circumstance led me to volunteer regularly with a conservation organisation working on endangered species including the Eastern barred bandicoot and the orange-bellied parrot.

Returning to the UK and driven to forge a career in a sector that I was passionate about, I swapped rainy Manchester for sunny Cheltenham and began an Ecology and Environmental Science degree with the University of Gloucestershire. This was intertwined with two summer seasons at the Wildfowl and Wetland trust in Slimbridge, as well as extended periods volunteering with the



RSPB, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and Cheltenham Borough Council.

After completing university, I accepted a full-time role as a Warden at Slimbridge where I was able to develop the practical and field skills which are so integral to the Ranger role I have recently accepted -

this is very much a dream job for me, and I have found myself blown away by not only the beautiful estate we are working across, but also the passionate and experienced team based here.

Please do come and say hello if you see me out and about.

Watching winter wildlife



By Luke Hunter, Ranger

In November, myself and Area Ranger, George, headed to the Sherborne Common area to complete a winter bird survey as a part of a wider project run by the Gloucestershire Naturalist Society. There is a tendency in the birding community to overlook winter birds and many of our monitoring schemes are developed around breeding birds, thus conservation activity tends to follow suit – surveys like this are therefore very important for our overwintering species.

We recorded some interesting species of farmland bird including yellowhammer and stonechat, as well as impressive abundances of fieldfare and redwing. Goldcrest was also heard along with some of the more common tits and finches. The star of the show, however, was

a beautiful song thrush singing loud and proud.

In my first few months at Sherborne, I have realised quite quickly that the wildlife, and in particular the bird life, is very special across the Sherborne Park Estate. The mosaic of habitats across a relatively small area drives exciting, diverse and ever-changing opportunities which can be just as exciting in winter as the trees reveal what many of the other seasons keep hidden.

One of the more conspicuous sightings I have noticed is the abundance of marsh tit – a red listed species and not common across the estate by any means, but impressive numbers relative to their decline (80% lost since the 1970s) and crucially I've spotted them on either side of the A40. This is especially important as marsh tit (to their

detriment) are incredibly loyal to their territory and struggle if they're forced to abandon their home woodland – a woodland that must include a dense understory – they're picky little birds, but wonderful indicators of woodland health.

Some of my other birding highlights have included a male shoveler and little grebe, as well as impressive numbers of wigeon and teal on the broadwaters – a male kingfisher was holding territory prior to the latest cold snap and hopefully he has continued to thrive. The stunning population of red kites have also impressed me daily.

I am naturally inclined to be bias to birds, but I have also thoroughly enjoyed the changing states of the beech trees since I started – a wonderful reminder of whatever season we find ourselves in.

Sherborne Big Nature, Better Access project update



By Andrew Danson, Project Manager

Throughout the autumn and winter period a lot of the project focus has been on delivering the latest phase of the Bridgeman landscape up at Lodge Park and assisting the Conservation Management Plan consultants during the initial phase of the evidence gathering across the estate. A highlight of the Bridgeman works would be the morning we hosted Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP and members of the Parish council for a morning of tree planting and a walk through the parkland. The sun shone and we had an enjoyable morning.

We have successfully painted the boathouse and the team have been busy clearing the area around the turbine house as part of the Ash dieback works. We have started to work on our plans for the structures going forward and how they can be enjoyed in the future.

Walk and Talk sessions

Since the last newsletter update, I have been very grateful to everyone who contacted me to find out more about the Sherborne Project. I really enjoyed meeting everyone and hope that people also found it useful.

As part of my ongoing efforts to hear from the community I will be taking a series of walks throughout the spring and welcome anyone who wishes to join me.

The walks will take roughly an hour or so and should provide us with an opportunity to share information and knowledge while enjoying the estate.

There is no need to pre-book. Just turn up on the date and time below and I will be waiting for you.

Saturday 18th February 10.30 am – Meet at Lodge Park car park. We will then have a walk through the landscape with particular attention on the Bridgeman planting works and future access plans.

Thursday 16th March 16.30 pm – Meet at the Sherborne Estate offices. We will then have a walk-through Old Park spending some time in the Turbine house area and have a look at the Sheafhouse.

Thursday 20th April 16.30 pm – Meet at the Watermeadows car park. We will have a walk along the Sabrina Way, along the River Windrush and then back through the woods to the carpark.

Please free to contact me at anytime on Andrew.Danson@nationaltrust.org.uk

Lodge Park update



By Claire Forkes, Senior Visitor Experience Officer

It's been a busy winter at Lodge Park. From developing the visitor offer to refurbishment works to keep the building looking and feeling its best, there's been a lot going on.

We've been reviewing the visitor offer at Lodge to see how we can make it a more enjoyable and inclusive experience for all our visitors. For this year we are making a

few tweaks to how this works. We have removed the booking system so visitors can turn up at times that work for them and not have to worry if they get caught in traffic. We are also reinstating the card machines so visitors who are not members of the National Trust will have an easier and more straightforward way of paying admission. We hope these little changes will have a positive impact to the start of the visit.

For the past few years, Lodge has only offered guided tours. This year we will be trying something different by reinstating room guides in addition to offering guided tours on a more flexible basis. This offers visitors the opportunity to have more of the visit they wish to have and suits their needs better. We are continuing to work on developing the offer for visitors at Lodge Park, helping visitors to understand this fascinating little building.

A key focus for this year is getting more people involved with Lodge and bringing in new volunteers to support the visitor offer. If you'd be interested in finding out about the roles on offer and how you can be part of delivering and developing amazing experiences at Lodge Park, please get in touch – Claire.Forkes@nationaltrust.org.uk.

There are some great refurbishment works going on at Lodge at the moment too – a new kitchen is being installed in the staff area, and the toilets are getting a much-needed upgrade. There is also now

consistent Wi-Fi across the building. These are great improvements and will make Lodge a better place to work and visit. The toilets in particular will improve the experience at Lodge for visitors, volunteers and staff as they will have better access and look much smarter.

Other works that will be happening over the coming months include work to the balustrades on the roof and installing a man-hold system to make access for cleaning the gutters and undertaking any conservation work much easier. The work to the balustrades in particular will

mean that visitors are once again able to venture on to the roof and take in the expansive views of the estate and surrounding countryside. The inside of Lodge will also see some activity with the entrance hall, video room, stairway and landing area being painted. A lot of hard work has gone into getting the colour and painting techniques right for this to go ahead, and it'll be great to see these areas looking fresher.

It's a busy year ahead at Lodge and I'm looking forward to sharing the updates with you all!

Ash dieback

By Georgina Lindsay, Area Ranger

Ash Dieback and tree work has been a large focus of the last few weeks. Tree surgeons have been on site dismantling Ash Dieback on road sides like the A40. Track work has begun around Ewe Pen car park to improve access for forestry contractors that will be

removing Ash Dieback from West Belt, East Belt, Quarry Wood and Tight Lane over the next few weeks. It will be sad to see so many trees removed due to disease but their removal will open up the canopy and allow more light to reach the ground which should hopefully improve the ground flora and increase biodiversity in our woodlands.

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

sherborneestate@nationaltrust.org.uk