



# CELEBRATING COVE BROOK



Thanks to everyone who came to our Fun Day and made it such a fabulous event. See inside for a report and pictures.

One of the best things about events like this is that people come and talk to us about the brook. As always, we heard opposing views. Some of you think it's far too untidy and overgrown. Others think it's a wonderful that nature has this space in the middle of a built up area. Our aim is to find a balance: keeping paths clear, making viewing points, and stopping the scrub from taking over, but also remembering that brambles and nettles are essential refuges and food sources for birds, butterflies and other wildlife.

We're now looking forward to our late summer and autumn round of work parties. Everyone is welcome to join in – our volunteers range in age from very young to 93, and there will always be a job that's right for you. We down tools for drinks and biscuits half-way through the morning, so work parties tend to be sociable events. If you just want to come for a chat, that's fine too.

In August, we are working at Birchbrook Reserve, near the wooden footbridge by Houseman Road. Besides management work to stop the brambles taking over, we will take a look at some of the plants and other wildlife there. In September, we have a similar work party at Cheyne Wood, the open space tucked beside the motorway off Cheyne Way. October, November and December are always litter picking months, and that can mean anything from picking up crisp packets to hauling motorbikes out of the brook. The last work party of the year always ends with mulled wine and mince pies (oh dear – is it too early to talk about those?)

## CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER- *Hilda Anscombe*

We have had a busy year so far, the main event being our environmental Fun Day. I'd like to say a big thank-you to the committee and all the marshals for their hard work, and a special thank you to Mary Harris who co-ordinated the planning and event.

'Stop press: We have just heard that Rushmoor Borough Council is holding a public consultation on a proposal to turn Southwood golf course into a natural park. It will run from 7th August to 22nd September. See council website (Cabinet meeting, 25th July). We will send out more details as we get them .

## COVE BROOK GREENWAY GROUP FAMILY FUN DAY, 18TH JUNE 2017

The weather couldn't have been better (well actually it could have been cooler!) for our Fun Day on Blunden Green. More than 1000 people of all ages came to enjoy everything from pond dipping to eating ice creams. Local groups were there to share their passions, whether that be for canals, scouting, archaeology, bees, bats or ferrets. As usual the horse and cart rides were a great success and an arena display with a young sheep dog herding geese also went down well. The Scouts ran an excellent BBQ and activities, and the tea and homemade cakes were also popular.

All the feedback was positive 'it was so good to see so many families enjoying the event together', 'a great local community event with a good range of activities', 'a very worthwhile day, hope to come again in 2019!' We'd like to thank all those involved, and especially our volunteer marshals without whom the event would not be possible. Perhaps we will do it again in 2019, provided of course that someone can guarantee the weather!



## POLLUTION INCIDENT

On 1st June, the Environment Agency was alerted to a pollution incident in the brook near Hazel Avenue. Several dead fish were found, but the problem doesn't seem to have spread. This was an unusual event: despite its murky appearance, Cove Brook is quite clean and supports several sorts of fish: chub, dace, perch, pike and stone loach, and a huge number of smaller creatures such as damselfly larvae.

If you see dead fish or other signs of pollution, call the Environment Agency pollution hotline 0800 80 70 60.



## WORK PARTIES – *Paul Sanders*

May 13th

On this work party we mostly cleared vegetation from the paths near the Curly Bridge footbridge. Some of this was really restricting the width of the paths. Now you can cycle by without getting low branches in your face or having to divert off the path when walking by. There is more to do but the eight volunteers accomplished a satisfyingly and surprising amount.

June 17th

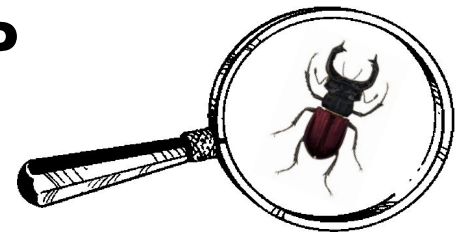
We prepared Blunden Hall and the green for our Fun Day. The Sea Scouts had done a great job of litter-picking the evening before, so we were able to mark out the site, put up signs and trim back willows to keep the entrances clear.

July 8th

On a warm morning eight of us returned to one of our regular locations in Southwood Meadows. We split into groups to tackle a few jobs. The noisy chaps took their strimmers into the woodland to trim the network of paths in the northern section, also known as West Bridge Wood. Previously we had cleared the small triangle between the paths near the noticeboard, now we hand cleared any bramble regrowth. We also cleared litter from all around the site, and we cut out the small oaks trying to take over the grassland in south part of the area (Chatterne Meadow on old maps). So quite a lot was accomplished in just two hours.

## WILDLIFE CLOSE UP

### STAG BEETLE (LUCANUS CERVUS)



Stag beetles are a fairly common sight around Cove in summer.

They look fearsome but are completely harmless. Males are 35–75mm long, with antler-like jaws ('mandibles'). Females are 30–50mm long, with no mandibles. They can't bite, but they sometimes take a drink from fallen soft fruit.



They spend most of their lives as larvae, munching rotten wood underground for anything from three to seven years. Adults emerge from mid-May onwards. By the end of August, most of them have died. They don't survive the winter. Once they have mated, the females return to the spot where they emerged, if there is enough rotting wood to feed their young, and dig down into the soil to lay their eggs. Males tend to be seen flying around at dusk searching for a mate.

The stag beetle is in decline across Europe. They need wood decaying in soil, so ways to help them include making log piles partly sunk into the ground, and (if possible) leaving stumps in the ground when cutting down trees and shrubs.



This information comes from <https://ptes.org/campaigns/stag-beetles>, where you will find more details on ways to help stag beetles in the garden.





# Cove Brook

## GREENWAY GROUP



### CONTACT DETAILS



[www.covebrookgreenwaygroup.co.uk](http://www.covebrookgreenwaygroup.co.uk)



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Find us on Facebook



**07510 881939** Please leave a message and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

### TALKS, MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Tuesday 8th August	7.30pm	<b>ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING</b> Margaret Taylor will give an illustrated talk on 'Cove 100 Years Ago'. Our AGM follows, with refreshments, raffle and plenty of time for questions and chat. All welcome. At: Blunden Hall, Blunden Road, Cove, GU14 8QP
Tuesday 24th October	7.30pm	<b>HALLOWEEN QUIZ</b> Our horribly hospitable annual event. Test your knowledge, enjoy great company and eat delicious homemade cakes. At: Blunden Hall, Blunden Road, Cove, GU14 8QP



### WORK PARTIES

*Work parties are usually on the second Saturday of the month. Volunteers are welcome. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult. We provide gloves, tools and refreshments. Please dress for rough ground and brambles.*

Sat 12th August	10 am	<b>BIRCHBROOK</b> <i>Path clearance and scrub management at Birchbrook plus informal plant survey.</i> <b>Meet at:</b> Blunden Hall, Blunden Road GU14 8QP, or at Birchbrook (near Houseman Road foot-bridge)
Sat 9th September	10 am	<b>CHEYNE WOOD</b> <i>Path clearance, scrub management at Cheyne Wood, plus informal plant and pond survey.</i> <b>Meet at:</b> footbridge by Cheyne Way, GU14 8SA (near Curly Bridge and Scout Hut)
Sat 14th October	10 am	<b>BLUNDEN HALL</b> <i>Clearing brook bank at viewing and dipping areas, and path clearance.</i> <b>Meet at:</b> Blunden Hall, Blunden Road GU14 8QP
Sat 11th November	10 am	<b>LITTER PICK</b> <i>Clearing rubbish from the brook, banks and surrounding open spaces</i> <b>Meet at:</b> Footbridge by Cheyne Way, GU14 8SA (near Curly Bridge and Scout Hut)
Sat 9th December	10 am	<b>CHRISTMAS SPARKLE LITTER PICK</b> <i>Clearing rubbish from the brook, banks and surrounding open spaces. Mulled wine and mince pies for our fantastic volunteers!</i> <b>Meet at:</b> Blunden Hall, Blunden Road GU14 8QP

