

Chairman's Report for Jubilee Field Trust AGM 10th June 2024

There has been plenty of activity on the Jubilee Field in the past year, in addition to the usual ongoing maintenance. After the felling of the central poplar near the pond last April it became obvious in the autumn that the other two now had various unstable branches and the decision was taken in January to have these felled too. This now leaves the southern area around the pond open and light, and ideas have been sought from residents in the village as to what they would like to see there. Suggestions have been made for more trees, an open grassed area with wild flowers, a bench, possibly using one of the stumps, and a willow "hide" for children. The first task will be to eradicate as many of the brambles as possible while levelling the area. Additional beech hedging has been planted along Upper Common Lane in that area, thanks to a kind donation Future Trees organised by Jo Clark. This was done during the spring working party on the Jubilee Field, when amongst other tasks more wood chippings from the poplars were laid around the pond to improve the path.

These twice yearly working parties are essential for keeping the field in good order and we are very grateful to those who turn out for a couple of hours or more on a Saturday morning to help with the various tasks, including having a bonfire of accumulated wood, brambles and other debris. The Sports Club continue to mow the central area, under particularly difficult circumstances this spring.

Although much of the field may appear "unkempt", this is intentional for the benefit of wildlife, but still requires ongoing maintenance. We are particularly thankful to those who give their time strimming, weeding and ditch clearing, but being conscious of the increasing age of this team the Parish Council has appointed GW Countryside Management to take on some of this essential outdoor maintenance work! We will still of course welcome offers of help for specific tasks around the Jubilee Field

An oak tree was planted by Anthony Parsons in the area of trees behind Craven Common in memory of Stefan Plant who died last year

The pond has not been dredged this year; the ground around it was too wet to allow the heavy equipment required to get near, but this winter we will plan to remove a quantity of the silt that has built up near the incoming stream as well as some of the rather invasive reeds.

Following much discussion and local consultation, the Parish Council decided to place an order with Kompan for 2 new pieces of play equipment to be sited on the southern side of the Jubilee Field: a 5.2m tall pyramid spacenet, for which we had to obtain planning permission because of its height, and new swings comprising 2 standard swings and a birdsnest swing suitable for disabled children. These replace the very popular but ancient swings which had been there for many years. The majority of the funding for this project has come from S106 monies remaining from the building of Jacksmeadow, as well as a grant from the White Horse Show Trust, and a contribution from Parish Council funds. This work is started on 13th May and completed at the end of the following week, in time for the Bank Holiday and half term, and has already proved to be very popular with children of all ages, but particularly the older ones. We are now planning an official opening ceremony on Tuesday 11th June at 3.30.

As with much of the land in and around Uffington the Jubilee Field has been very wet since last autumn and all through the winter, and at times much of it under water. It is fortunately drying out well now, and we have been careful to choose the driest area possible for this new equipment. A football goal has also been purchased during the year, which has proved popular, and has the advantage of being moveable in order to mow and to prevent muddy patches from overuse in one area.