

Acres Update as at 30th March 2012

Funding

The budget for this phase of the project was £90k – with £45k coming from leader, £35 from EA and £10k from GPC. Environment Agency and Leader have both been on-site recently and are very happy with the project.

Final Works

Most of the remedial works have been completed. The allotments track was re-graded and 40 tonnes of limestone spread – there would have been more, but at least 20 tonnes was stolen from the car park. We had intended installing drainage on the access route to alleviate possible flooding, but the limited budget means we'll have to wait until the next phase.

The remaining hedgerow saplings were planted by John Hall and a wildflower mix sown on the allotments new embankment.

Most of the fencing has been completed. Because of the cost of moving the unwanted soil heaps from the allotments, we were a little short on funding to re-fence the entire length of the main access track. There are still two outstanding tasks on the project;

1. The stretch next to the silt-trap needs to be moved as it's currently not as per contract. This will be sorted shortly.
2. The oak gate from the allotments is yet to be installed.

Rubbish/Litter

The popularity of the boardwalk & benches has surpassed even our initial expectations. Unfortunately, we have lost the round concrete bins at both car parks as an unforeseen consequence of the works. Until we have a warden and further funding for bins in place, it looks like we will have an issue with litter. SBC has been contacted and hopefully we can get some temporary bins in place.. BKV and Gnosall Parish Council have also been carrying out litter picks.

Hopefully the fencing (when moved) at the silt-trap pond will deter the building bridges by the large oak. Unfortunately, the plastic weir has been vandalised – this will be discussed with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to see what can be done.

Water

Environment Agency have been out to monitor a few reported pollution incidents that happily have been false-alarms – probably due to the severely low levels of flow left in the system. They did however witness a blue-water (detergents) problem last week from the culvert outfall by the bungalows. They will be discussing this with Severn Trent Water.

Severn Trent Water have installed a brand new sealed lid to the sewage chamber in the brook, which should make it more difficult for surcharges of sewage to enter the brook.

Dogs

It was agreed to adopt a strict dogs on-lead policy across the boardwalk and new wetland area. Temporary signs have been installed and will be replaced as necessary. Dog's off-leads are so well established on the main Acres field that it would be difficult to enforce more control without wardening. However, the next phase of works will include a specific fenced dog-free area.

Opening - An official opening is being planned shortly.

Second Phase - Work on bids to the Esmée Fairbairn Fund, Staffordshire Environment Fund and the Lottery will commence soon.