

GOAT WALK LAND TRUST

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2018/9

It was very pleasing that there was almost no ragwort in the fields this year after all the hard work by volunteers last summer. However, this year, having cleared the thistles, we found that we had also grown an excellent crop of docks in the top field.



Before

Some species are able to take better advantage of the fertility of the soil and take over the meadows, crowding out even the grasses. These are often not the most attractive of our native plants and if we wish to encourage the development of a wild flower meadow, then their growth will need to be minimised. Another working party was

organised at the end of October and in just over an hour and a half 18 volunteers managed to clear a mountain of seed heads from the field.



After

The thistle and the dock seed head removal will help reduce the spread of these plants but we will need to see whether it will have such a major effect as the ragwort removal did in 2017. Seeds can remain dormant for several years and we must expect further intervention will be necessary if we are to produce a wild flower meadow.

Working parties have also been held during October continuing the clearance of undergrowth in the existing woods to allow more light to reach the woodland floor. This will also need to continue during 2019, starting in the Spring.

On Thursday 7th February the Trust will be having its third Annual General Meeting. It will be held in the Matthews Hall, Fore Street at 7.30pm. We have invited John Freeman to give a talk at the start of the AGM on Great Trees of the Clyst Valley. As in previous years non-members are welcome to attend but they will not be able to vote on any of the formal business of the AGM. If you would like to join the Trust as a member then membership forms will be available at the AGM or are on the Trust's Web Site (<http://goatwalklandtrust.org/>).

Under the terms of the Trusts constitution three Trustees should be appointed by the members in addition to those appointed by the Topsham Community Association and The Topsham Society. One of our existing Trustees, Mark Dant, who has chaired the Management Committee since the start of the Trust, is due to retire this year and will not be seeking re-election. We will be very sorry to lose Mark who has provided such sterling service in setting up the Management Committee, developing the

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Management Plan and overseeing the change from furrowed, weed-strewn fields to the meadows and woods we have today. We are hoping that he will continue as a member of the Management Committee where his experience has been so valuable.

There are now two Trustee vacancies and voting will take place at the AGM. If you wish to stand for election, please forward your name to the Trust by noon on 10th January together with a brief statement of up to 80 words about yourself which we will send to members, with the formal notice of the AGM. If you need any further details about what is involved in acting as a trustee please contact the Trust at our email address (info@goatwalklandtrust.org) or at our postal address, Mathews Hall, Fore Street, Topsham EX3 0HF.

Members are also entitled to submit resolutions for consideration at the annual meeting. If you wish to have a resolution put to the AGM you should also submit it to the Trust by noon on 10th January at the above address or by email and these too will be circulated with the notice of the AGM. The Annual General Meeting is your opportunity to hear what has been happening and have your say about what you would like for the future so please do come along. The Trustees and the Management Committee will also be happy to answer any questions at the AGM and notice of these is not required.

We look forward to seeing you on 7th February.

Chris Buckingham
Chairman