GOATWALKLANDTRUST

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2024

Welcome to the first of what we hope will be a regular series of newsletters about the work of the Goat Walk Land Trust.

One of the most noticeable changes we have made in the last month is to erect three signs near the entrances to the fields explaining what the Trust does. These signs also have our website address and a QR code that will take visitors directly to the donation section of that site. However, our website would benefit from an upgrade. If you think you can help with this, please email info@goatwalklandtrust.org

In the last year, our volunteers have been busy maintaining the gravel path in the lower field, pruning the apple trees, preventing brambles and other invasive plants from extending too far into the meadows, stripping ivy off the wall between the woodland and the Goat Walk so that we can ensure the wall is sound, and dealing with the mud around the small gate between the two fields. They've just finished some work to try to prevent the bottom corner of the upper field from turning into a quagmire, as it did last winter. If you'd like to work with us as a volunteer, please email goatwalkvolunteers@gmail.com

Some of you may have noticed that the signs explaining which of the two fields can be used for dog walking mysterious disappeared in September. This wasn't a change in policy: we've refurbished them to make them more legible and they're now back in place.

Two of our largest trees fell over this year. The leaning lime tree near the pond in the upper field collapsed during the summer without causing any real damage and we have decided to leave it in place. But the huge turkey oak in the hedge between the two fields that was blown over in October brought down some of the telephone lines to the houses at the end of Bowling Green Road. We were able to have the largest branches moved aside so that BT Openreach could reinstate the lines. However, we will probably have to do more work on the larger trees in our hedgerows during the coming year to protect the phone and power

lines that run across our land. The Trust's Management Committee needs more expertise in hedge and tree management so that we can do this in a way that's consistent with the Trust's objectives. Please do get in touch if you can help with this.



The fallen turkey oak in the lower field. Photo by John Bryant

Many of our long-term Trustees stepped down this summer. We're very grateful for the tremendous job they've done since the Trust was set up and delighted that they will stay on as members of the Management Committee. The new Trustees are still finding their feet and you will get a chance to meet them at our next Annual General Meeting, which will take place at the Matthews Hall on 6 February.

Under the terms of our constitution one of our existing Member Trustees must stand for re-election each year at the AGM. We also have one other vacancy for an additional elected Trustee. If you wish to become a trustee, now or in the future, please get in touch with the Trust, either by email to info@goatwalklandtrust.org or by letter to our postal address Matthews Hall, Fore Street, Topsham EX3 0HF, by noon on 31st December. The chair will then be able to explain the process which includes submitting a brief statement of up to 80 words about yourself which we will send to members with the formal notice of the AGM.

Members are also entitled to submit resolutions for consideration at the annual meeting. If you wish to have a resolution put to the AGM please get in touch as soon as possible with the chair of the Board of Trustees by email or letter to discuss it.

John Harwood

Chair, GWLT Management Committee