

# GOAT WALK LAND TRUST

## SPRING NEWSLETTER 2020

Well there won't be any working parties on the land for a while. The Trustees have discussed at length how we should respond to the Government's instructions on keeping safe. Parks have been closed but we are able to take exercise once a day, walking from our house. Our land, and it is the community's land, has always been fields rather than a park and has generally been used for quiet exercise rather than as a meeting place. There are problems walking along the Goat Walk but many people are walking along the foreshore to maintain social distancing. It is also possible to walk to the land via Bowling Green Road. The Trustees have decided that, on balance, the land should be kept open for exercise at present although we will, of course, keep this under review. Where any work is necessary we will use contractors, who can work alone, but not where the work can be delayed until after the restrictions are lifted. Consequently the refurbishment of the path has been postponed.

In order to facilitate social distancing, we have arranged for our contractor to cut paths across the fields to encourage visitors to use the whole of the fields and reduce the risk of meeting those walking around the edge. The Trustees cannot stress strongly enough the absolute necessity of maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres between yourself and everyone who is not someone with whom you are living.

At the end of January we held our fourth Annual General Meeting at which Peter Gray was again elected as a Members' Trustee. Peter has been an invaluable Trustee from the start and we are pleased that he is prepared to serve for another term on the Trust. The meeting was well attended and in addition to the formal business of the accounts and the annual report we were fortunate to have Greg Townend to give a talk on old apple trees. Greg gave a fascinating tour through the history, botany and horticulture of apples in Devon. Topsham was for many years a centre of apple growing and some old varieties of apples were developed in the Topsham orchards. The apples trees which we have now planted on our land are all old Devon varieties including eating, cooking, juice and cider varieties to which we hope to add further trees next winter. Thank you once again to all who attended and made it such a successful evening.

The dry weather of the last two weeks has resulted in the water level in the two scrapes falling, leaving some very muddy banks for children and dogs to play in: so do be careful if you have one or the other under your control and don't fancy dealing with some very muddy tearaways. We had hoped that, over time, the banks of the scrapes would be colonised by a greater variety of plants than has been the case. The Trust has therefore decided to sow some locally sourced seeds of marginal plants in the soil at the edge of the scrapes to increase the diversity of the habitat.

During our enforced layoff the Trust is seeking to update its website and we have realised that we do not have any photos of the start of the Trust, the first public meeting or the land before we took ownership. If anyone has any photos and is

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**Registered Charity No 1162973**

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happy to have them on our website please contact Peter Gray at ([info@goatwalklandtrust.org](mailto:info@goatwalklandtrust.org) ). We are also very keen to keep our records up to date. If you are a volunteer or a member of the Trust, are you receiving the notices of the AGM and our newsletters? Have you changed your email address recently? Please help us to keep you informed by letting us know your up to date contact details, particularly your email address if you have one, as this is the simplest (and cheapest) way to contact our members.

Before the restrictions resulting from Covid-19 came into force, the Management Committee had set out a programme of works that we were intending to undertake during the year. Clearly these have had to be postponed. The docks which were such a problem last year have reappeared but are much less evident thanks to the sterling work by our volunteers last year. However, they will need to be dealt with if we are to have an acceptable crop of hay this summer. Volunteers are always welcome, but unfortunately not just at the moment. Please see the Trust's Web Site (<http://goatwalklandtrust.org/> ) or contact the Trust at our email address ([info@goatwalklandtrust.org](mailto:info@goatwalklandtrust.org) ) or at our postal address, Matthews Hall, Fore Street, Topsham EX3 0HF if you would like details. We will be calling on our volunteers again as soon as we are able but, for the meantime, stay in and stay safe.

Chris Buckingham  
Chairman