

Marlot Conservation Group (MCG)

Work report to Whixall Parish Council meeting April 2025

Reporting Period 12 Mar – 7 Apr 25

The good weather over the past month has enabled volunteers to carry out a lot of work in the front meadow. Having cut down most of the willow in the meadow in previous sessions, three sessions this month has concentrated on processing the cut willow. This has entailed cutting the willow into logs, stakes and batons and chipping the brash for further use in and around the Marlot.

We have also carried out work at the main entrance to the Marlot. The side gate ground has now been levelled out to make access easier for disabled users. The ground to the left of the entrance has been cleared of old willow brash, tilled and levelled and wild flower seeds have been sown. The ground to the right of the entrance has been levelled and prepared ready for the new Parish Council bench to be placed in position. A second fence (post and fencing supplied by Natural England) has also been built on the right hand side for safety purposes and more wild flower seeds will be sown along the right hand side bench area. We have also built two small barrier fences using re-conditioned willow wood and brash which adds a nice natural look to the entrance. Tim Lamb has received more grass seed from Natural England to further seed the main entrance. This work on the main entrance will hopefully provide a more welcoming experience for visitors – many of whom are unsure as to whether this is a public access or the entrance to farmer's land.

Natural England have advised the MCG that no work in the ponds should be carried out this year as individual digging to reduce the reed mace is ecologically disturbing the ponds with very little gain. Further negotiations will be carried out with Natural England to hopefully look at a programme of machine digging out some of the ponds later in the year. It is still intended to carry out newt surveys starting in May with Nicki Hunter and this should act as a baseline as to how much effect to the newt and other pond dwellers the past years flooding of the ponds has been caused as a result of the blocked culvert.

Work sessions in the coming weeks will concentrate on a full brush-cut and clear up of the front and back meadows in preparation for the summer. We will also be carrying out reconstruction work on the pond terrace area – repairing the hedge fence and repairing the pathway and steps in the area.

Graham Turnbull
Marlot Conservation Group
7 Apr 25