

Marlot Conservation Group (MCG)

Work report to Whixall Parish Council meeting January 2025

Reporting Period 11 Nov 24 – 6 Jan 25

A surprising amount of MCG volunteer was conducted during this reporting period. Although we experienced 2 storms and copious amounts of rain we were able to work during the dry and colder days. After the culvert/bridge repair by NE it was decided to concentrate work on the meadow side ditch and banks. Work started with a full brush cut of the meadow side bank to ensure a clear and safe working space along the ditch. This included cutting down all the close willow trees that had grown along the bank and into the ditch causing an obstruction to the water flow. This allowed MCG volunteers to start removing built up silt along the length of the ditch; particular attention was paid to the grate and exit flow area at the end of the ditch (close by the road at James' farm). There is still much work to be done in clearing more silt and this will continue in the next few sessions. We also started work on clearing the roadside bank of the heavy areas of bracken and dense grass. This has opened up that bank and allows for a clear view into the Marlot from the road – again some work is still required to finish this off.

During this period we experienced two storms which caused some trees in the Marlot to be uprooted and fall. One dangerous uprooted tree came down across the path at the terrace area of the ponds. On inspection by MCG volunteers it was decided that the positioning and size of the tree was too dangerous and a little beyond our abilities/expertise and therefore we asked Natural England for assistance. Steve Dobbin and Ellie Williams from Natural England came down for a couple of hours and removed the tree. Later on after the second storm another tree along the pathway in the woodland area came down – this was not so difficult or dangerously positioned and so the MCG volunteers carried out the work and cut the tree down.

The "old" information board that used to be situated inside the Marlot has now been attached to the pond side fence at the entrance. Unfortunately the sign structure was accidentally destroyed when NE were conducting work on the culvert/bridge. Its new position is visible and adds to the new clear entrance area – complementing the Marlot leaflets box and new "Welcome" sign.

Further winter work will concentrate on the meadow ditch and banks, but again all subject to weather conditions and volunteer availability.

Graham Turnbull
Marlot Conservation Group
6 Jan 25