

# Castle Point Wildlife Group



People working for a better environment

## February 2016 Newsletter - Issue 10

Welcome to the latest newsletter from Castle Point Wildlife Group. The Group are a registered charity and manage West Wood and North Benfleet Hall Wood under a Licence granted to us by Castle Point Borough Council.

We are working to a management plan to restore the wood and maintain it as an environment for wildlife and for use by members of the public. As a local resident or woodland user we are sure you will agree that the wood is a valuable asset and a great place to walk and enjoy. Hopefully, this newsletter will update you as to what is happening and how things are progressing.

We are currently coming to the end of our Winter Season work plan which has seen us complete a number of projects in both woods. In Westwood these include replacement of the main bridge across Prittle Brook, pathway works throughout the wood to improve walking access, some new fencing to enclose some areas of non-intervention to allow wildlife habitats to develop and some further coppicing just North of the brook. We still have some works to complete over the next few weeks and these include repair works to the main fence along Rayleigh Road and some general clearance works to remove bramble and to burn off the brush from the felling works. This work follows on from the major path works undertaken last autumn when a new track was laid through the northern part of the woods. Whilst providing a new walking track this has also allowed us to get vehicle access to the previous unmanaged area of the wood. There is still some works to be done to finish resurfacing the path right at the Northern end of the woods where a new path has been cut to divert the existing path away from a badger sett. We also have some more drainage works to complete by recreating the scrape close to the boundary at Daws Heath which holds water at time of high rainfall slowing the run of water down to the brook. This will be the 4th scrape created to store potential flood waters.

We will also be carrying out some works to the butterfly conservation area just north of Prittle brook.

Some of you may have seen some work going on down the main track from the Rayleigh Road entrance. We call this the turning circle, and here we are creating a log store compound where we will store felled timber prior to it being processed. This will vastly improve the look of the woods by having all the timber stored in one place and prevent stacks being damaged and strewn around the woods.

It is not just Westwood that has been worked on. We have also held work sessions in North Benfleet Hall wood where we have cut down the growth from last summer in 4 glades to allow the wild flowers to come through again this year, and we have also replaced one of the old bridges and repaired 2 others.

All our work sessions are open to everyone and details are published on the calendar on the website.

As in previous years we will be attending the annual RSPB event on Canvey West Marsh in May and later in the summer we will be at the Castle Point Show.

There is no doubt this winter has generally been milder than a normal winter, and this has certainly shown through in both woods. The Bluebells broke through very early, we saw butterflies throughout the winter and saw the first Bumble Bee flying in mid February as well as large amounts of Ladybirds. The birds have been active looking for nesting sites. It is looking good for spring so lets hope we get a good spring and summer!

We welcome everyone to help us and all details of our work sessions appear on our website [www.castlepointwildlifegroup.co.uk](http://www.castlepointwildlifegroup.co.uk) where you will also find information about the group and both of the woods we look after. If you have any comments or queries please contact us by email [castlepwg@aol.com](mailto:castlepwg@aol.com)

Neal Warren - Group Secretary