

*The latest 'lockdown' restrictions especially impacted upon our use of volunteers over the past quarter and whilst we have been busy continuing to deliver as much activity as possible ourselves, not least in successfully completing all of our agreed outputs for the 'Boost for Biodiversity' project, we are pleased to now look forward to welcoming back the various groups of community, corporate and Social Forestry programme volunteers we work with. In the meantime, we have been busy assessing the impact of what we do (which included the overseeing of a staggering 5,000 volunteer hours in 2019/20!) in preparation for how we can continue forward in delivering better community engagement with improved woodlands for health, wellbeing and nature alike...*

Following on from our support for the establishment of the Oak tree nursery area at Dothill LNR towards the end of the year, with the 'friends' group and local XR group, we have been busy preparing a site on the reserve for their planting later on in the year... The Oaks are being temporarily accommodated and kept alive by the 'friends' over summer at a nursery area. By gradually creating small clearings in the young Ash, which is susceptible to disease, for replanting with the Oaks, and other trees, the woodland cover will hopefully be maintained. Bluebell and snowdrop bulbs have also been planted in the green in the clearing.

Delivery of our holiday club activities has continued marking the completion of the development of a full year's worth of seasonal activities being delivered remotely due to the pandemic! Having now delivered over 400 activity kits to families throughout the year we are now looking forward to resuming face-to-face delivery of woodland-based activity sessions which are being planned for the Summer with a number of our community-based partners.

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*Coupe-fell of Ash at Millenium Wood, Dothill LNR: the wood was due for its first thinning anyway, but the threat of Ash Dieback where 60% of trees are Ash would mean a potentially complete loss of cover and if the trees were allowed to get much bigger, they would be increasingly dangerous to fell manually. Creating a clearing will allow more sunlight in and encourage the growth of ground flora and the 'restocked' trees.*



*'Easter Basket'-making: our most popular activity delivered to date, utilising willow harvested from the 'withy beds' we have worked to restore in the Town Park.*

'Telford Woods' will be delivering a brand new 'Social Forestry' activity programme specifically designed to benefit the wellbeing of veterans of the Armed Forces thanks to being successful in attracting initial funding for a year-long programme. Following Small Woods recent signing up to the 'Armed Forces Covenant' we are pleased to introduce the first wellbeing programme to be specifically targeted at veterans of the armed forces, supported by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund. 'Out of the Woods' will work with veterans to explore activities that could help alleviate the physical and mental health challenges they may face.

Finally, our work to help influence the development of the wider roles for 'Social Enterprise' in the woodland sector, and nature-based activity in the improvement of health & wellbeing, respectively, continues. We are facilitating 'Action Learning Sets' as part of our involvement in the National Academy for Social Prescribing's 'Learning Together' programme for the Midlands. Hopefully this will lead to a greater understanding of the role for nature-based activity in helping individuals improve their wellbeing and the needs of organisations involved in delivering such work. We are also delighted to announce that we have been successfully accepted onto the School for Social Entrepreneur's 'Community Business Trade-Up' Programme. This will build upon the learning developed through our involvement in the Environmental Entrepreneur's programme last year and specifically assist in the development of trading income generation – exciting times!

Tristan Haynes – Social Enterprise Officer