

Ore Community Land Trust

Saving and enhancing green spaces in the upper Ore Valley

NEWSLETTER Autumn 2022

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We are also on Facebook and Twitter



New Chair elected

Earlier this year, Jim Breeds, our Chair of the past few years, stood down due to health and time issues. During his time in the position, Jim was very active and contributed enormously to the progress of the Trust and its work. We're sure that all members would like to join the Trustees in thanking Jim and wishing him well in the future.

At the last meeting of the OCLT trustees, Peter Chowney was elected as the new Chair of the trust. Peter is a former leader of Hastings Borough Council. He served as the councillor for Tressell Ward from 2016 until last May, when he retired as a councillor. Peter was also the cabinet member with responsibility for producing the last local plan, which redesignated Speckled Wood as protected open space. It had formerly been designated as land for housing development.

Peter said: *" From the time I was first elected as a councillor for Tressell Ward, I was determined to get the woodland designated as protected open space, to make sure this valuable public resource could not be built on. I'm very pleased I was able to play a part in achieving that. When I stood down as a councillor, I volunteered to be a trustee of OCLT, and am now pleased to have been elected as Chair of the trust. I will use my knowledge of the area, and my contacts on the council to do all I can to maintain Speckled Wood as a public open space, and to promote access to it for local people to enjoy. As much of the land is in private ownership, we cannot however be complacent. There are still pressures from the landowners to develop the land, so we must be vigilant and ensure that doesn't happen. With the help of our volunteers, we can keep the woodland as an accessible and valuable resource for local people, as well as a natural space to enhance biodiversity in an urban environment."*

The photos show outgoing Chair, Jim, and incoming Chair, Peter with founding trustee, Ian Sier.



Stream Bridge Replacement Work Now Complete

Construction of the new bridge at the Victoria Avenue end of the Speckled Wood stream (Bridge 5) was carried out in September by our team of volunteers. This replaced the previous bridge that was broken by vandals earlier in the year and is made of railway sleepers. It was a more difficult task than the other bridges due to the wider gap between the stream banks and the distance that the very heavy sleepers had to be moved but the expertise of the volunteers and the use of a heavy duty trolley made the task achievable.



Progress with the eradication of Japanese Knotweed

We have finally had significant success with our programme of treating the Knotweed that was covering our land next to Church Street. Most of the previous growth has not returned this year, leaving only a small area to treat in September as shown in the photo.



We plan to clear this large area of land of the remaining rubble and weeds next year and plant grass with meadow flowers and some trees. However the knotweed growing beside the stream along the valley floor, which is not on our land, will be a much more difficult task to deal with.

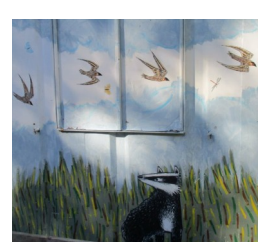
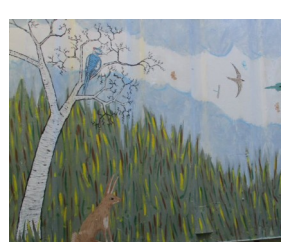
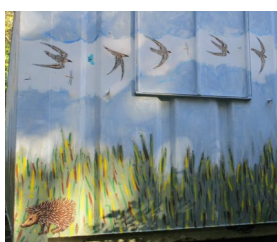
Forest School

With thanks to Big Local North East Hastings, our Parent and Child Forest School sessions have been able to continue for free this term. Local families from the TN34 and 35 areas have been attending the sessions each week in the Community Garden. They have been learning and engaging in nature, trying out new skills and cooking delicious food on the camp fire. They have been making great use of Speckled Wood and the wonderful autumn leaves for their stories and crafts. For more information about these sessions, contact Jo engagement@oreclt.org



Cabin Painting

A recent improvement to our Community Garden is the fantastic painting of our cabin. With thanks to the Chalk Cliff Trust for their funding and the amazing artistic skills of Mark Daniels, the cabin now blends into the woodland backdrop of Speckled Wood. There are badgers, foxes, hedgehogs, rabbits, birds, butterflies and much, much more. If you are in Ore Village pop down to have a look.



There's been lots going on in Speckled Wood since our Spring Newsletter

Our Open Day in May was very successful with lots of people coming along to find out about Speckled Wood and our future plans as well as buying plants to help raise vital funds to support our work. Here are a couple of photos from the day.



In July, our volunteers helped repair and replace the damaged steps leading up to the community garden and Ore Village. A couple of steps have been widened to make them easier to navigate.

In September, the pond was repaired after some vandalism and re-established and some plants added around it. Third time lucky! Keeping fingers and toes crossed it lasts this time! If you are passing the community garden pop by and check on it for us please. We've laid some sticks across to hopefully stop the badger digging up the plants!



In September, we won the Best Edible Garden section in Ore in Bloom's annual competition.

We need more volunteers

Ore Community Land Trust is entirely run by a small group of volunteers. If you care about Speckled Wood and agree with us that its survival as publicly accessible green space is vital to the well-being of our community, please think seriously about giving up some time and joining our committee. We are a friendly group and could really use your skills and experience especially in finance, legal, woodland management and many other areas.

Membership Renewal

Membership of our Trust runs from January to December, so don't forget to renew your membership at the end of the year. If you're not already a member, please join us via our website. Memberships taken out from now, will count for 2023. The more members we have, the louder our voice and more likely we will be to achieve our aims to ensure Speckled Wood remains accessible as open green space for all to enjoy.