

Quinton Meadows Consultative Committee
Report to Quinton Ward Forum/Halesowen North & South Community Forum/
QMCC and supporters
September 2020

All QMCC meetings suspended since March 2020 due to Covid 19.

One positive impact of the virus has been the significantly greater use by members of the public of Quinton Meadows (both Howley Grange Recreation Ground owned by Dudley MBC, and the Local Nature Reserve owned by Birmingham City Council), especially during the original lockdown period. So many local residents discovered QM for the first time. HGRG was used not just for dog walking, but by local young football teams (who brought their own goal posts and other equipment for training sessions), and also for family games and picnics, golf practice and karate classes. There were far more walkers and runners using the LNR than previously.

During the spring and early summer, people particularly appreciated the LNR meadows with their vast array of wild flowers (it was the best display in a long time) and insects. It was really pleasing to see how the orchids near the swales ('ponds') had spread. There was uproar when Birmingham City Council went and cut the first meadow for hay before the end of June. This was inappropriate as many flowers were still in bloom and had not had chance to set seed. Following liaison with relevant officers (which included forwarding unsolicited emails of complaint), an apology was issued. We are still waiting on a proposed meeting to discuss when it would be best to cut the meadow in future.

The LNR suffered an invasion by travellers on 19th July 2020. This was quickly reported by members of the public both to QMCC and BCC officers. BCC acted swiftly to remove the travellers off site and undertook a cleanup operation afterwards. As well as the usual rubbish etc., the travellers also left piles of chopped down conifers near the path beyond the first meadow (presumably a "gardening job").

For some time we have wanted to improve the facilities on HGRG and increase the biodiversity of the site. We are planning on submitting a funding application to Halesowen North & South Community Forum for items such as benches and dog bins. Volunteers recently strewed green hay on an un-mown corner of the ground in order to try and improve the range of wild flowers. We have also raised the issue of invading tree seedlings in this area, and are awaiting a response from DMBC and approval to remove them.

We are proposing applying to the Woodland Trust for some (free) native tree saplings to use on the boundaries both of the LNR (particularly the southern meadow) and HGRG.

A longstanding concern is the state of fencing on the HGRG side of the footpath next to the Business Park, part of which collapsed and became a health and safety issue. For the time being, DMBC have cordoned off the stretch of fencing concerned. The only viable option may be for this section of fencing to be removed.

As far as we are aware, monitoring/testing of the water quality of the Bourn Brook within the LNR was last carried out in 2004 so is long overdue.