**Friends of Stara CIO AGM 24 November 2021**

**Working Party Report**

Sadly we lost 2 working days to Covid lockdown and also 2 to inclement weather but there were 3 mid-month replacement days so nearly a full quota over all.

Looking back over my notes there are 4 areas of the woods that have used most of the working party hours in 2021.

* Plantation above the workshop in Broadwood – no surprises here, bracken bashing, TLC for young trees and boundary work were regular tasks in the spring and summer. Hopefully most of the young trees are getting tall enough to overshadow the bracken so maybe this will be less of a challenge next year.
* Surprisingly bridge maintenance features often in my notes but usually I’ve noted only a couple of volunteers working away from the main group- next month will be the anniversary of Laurence’s death defying struggle with the tree lodged in the bridge!!!
* The riverside path through Broadwood has probably been the biggest absorber of time this last year but what a difference the new routing, away from the river bank, has made. We will need to repair/replace the brash over the coming year but this is not as big a task as setting it up has been, so well worth doing. I have had a camera trap on the new route for the last month and footfall is consistent with previous surveys I have taken (outside of Covid related peaks) of on average 10-12 groups of walkers per day using this path.
* Cutting back of self-seeded trees in Colquite and Broadwood was the major winter task and will feature again in the next few months but it has provide a lot of material for the brash fences which we have been putting up this year so  a double win.

Looking forward to next year, it looks like more of the same with perhaps a couple of new undertakings to spice things up.

* There is the last section of the Broadwood riverside path we need to work on which includes the challenges of a spring and the narrow stretch where the river and path are side by side below steep banks – a bottleneck where we may just have to accept that it is going to be difficult to prevent stubborn visitors and their dogs going into the water. It is a fast flowing stretch of the river which may be mitigation in winter at least.
* The area around the entrance to the footbridge on the Colquite side needs attention – there are erosion hotspots and the bankside undergrowth needs some help to regenerate.
* I’m interested to gather views about creating a wetland area between the new path in Broadwood and the river – it could be fed by reopening the Treovis stretch of the leat and would create another environment in our woods – worth some thought in 2022!!!

Happy wooding!!!

Piers Freeman