

## **Trustees' Report for period 6.8.2023-5.8.2024**

Teazle Wood Trust, Registered Charity no. 1160532

**The object of the Teazle Wood Trust CIO is:**

**To promote for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment of woodland known as Teazle Wood in Leatherhead, Surrey.**

August 2023 – August 2024 was a full and highly satisfying year with a growing band of regular conservation volunteers and plenty of positive progress.

On 6 August 2023 community members gathered at Teazle Wood to participate in the Big Butterfly Count. For our official hour of spotting it rained and we recorded just one Holly Blue, but then the sun came out and we noted Peacock, Red Admiral, Gatekeeper, Green-veined White, Small White, Purple Hairstreak and Speckled Wood butterflies (and a Ruddy Darter dragonfly). We have sensed greater numbers of butterflies now that light has been let into so much of the woodland and we have more flora.

Our youngest volunteer found a modern stainless steel teaspoon on the ridge, which led to an interesting group discussion about an Trefid spoon stamped A N E that was also found in Teazle Wood and is possibly Elizabethan or thereabouts. Ann and Nicholas Elliot have a connection to Teazle Wood, so perhaps this was their spoon?

We are pleased to be one part of what is now a growing network of groups focused on river health, and this year we benefitted from access to the local testing results from the new charity River Mole River Watch. The Rye (along the bottom edge of Teazle Wood) flows into the Mole, and its improved health has long been our aim and the focus of much of our conservation work. We are glad to have allies.

The Teazle Wood volunteers continued to do a superb job and achieved: the establishing and re-establishing of pathways and old cart tracks, another group of coppiced hazel; surveying of flora and fauna; expansion of the history archive; and major improvements in the litter situation (both through clearing and education). There has been a significant reduction in litter at the back of the Tesco store (achieved by continuous liaison with managers and the staff on the ground). The staff are tending to be much more aware and interested in the ecology, and were thrilled to find a Great crested newt in the store! We recognise that this work is ongoing and that we need to keep reaching out and reinforcing the messages to keep the good practice active.

It was wonderful to see a growing number of very young volunteers attending with their families this year.

In September, Teazle Wood participated in Heritage Open Days and two young Ukrainian opera singers and refugees Oleksii Zasiadko and Daria Moskaliuk asked to do a fundraising concert for Teazle Wood, performing on the edge of the woodland itself with musical friends made here in Surrey and London. This was a magical moment in the Teazle Wood story of community and networks.

Winter enabled us to remove a great deal of brash that had been a fire-risk concern in the hot summer months. We need to continue this work every winter. We also built some new habitat piles in areas of Teazle Wood's Ancient Woodland where we have not done this before, and we have positioned and designed these carefully so that they are not a fire hazard.

A volunteer identified a single Spindle tree (*Euonymus europaeus*) in the north part of the wood – and this species has not previously been recorded in our tree surveys.

By February 2024 Teazle Wood was particularly waterlogged. We were joined by volunteers from the Lower Mole Partnership to get some substantial path-clearing tasks achieved and we were grateful to have their help.

Spring saw two adjacent planning proposals to the north-west and to the east of Teazle Wood. The former Queen Elizabeth's Foundation for Disabled People buildings at Dorincourt are to be replaced by a distribution centre, and 48 homes are proposed on the land east of Teazle Wood and immediately north of Tesco (this is the Green Belt land which suffered from scraping, unlawful clear-felling, unpermitted tarmacking and the illegal importation and burning of waste). We have major concerns

regarding both of these projects, and Trustees Hilary Livesey and Lucy Quinnell worked very hard to liaise with developers, study proposals and applications and write responses. We consider this detailed work to be definitely worthwhile in terms of protecting the woodland and raising the quality of any neighbouring activity when development is permitted. Of particular concern are missing reports and erroneous reports which would clearly cause harm to Teazle Wood if left unchallenged. A good example is an official newt report now attached to both sites which show *no ponds at all* in the whole of Teazle Wood – there are well over 20 major ponds in Teazle Wood. A required Archaeological Impact Assessment was not provided with the Dorincourt application. This is unacceptable. Teazle Wood was badly affected by breaches of planning control on its western edge, and we are committed to ensuring to the best of our ability that further damage is limited.

Oak Processionary Moth infestations have been absent this year (we have not sprayed but have recorded large numbers of Blue tits which have emerged as a key predator of OPM, and we also have Wrens, Great tits and Nuthatches which we understand are also proving to be predators).

Ash dieback (*hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) is a major concern and we continue to regularly monitor the situation and to seek advice.

We monitored our growing copse of Wild Service trees, which is doing well, and planted some local yellow flag irises in one of the ponds on the advice of one of our expert ecologists.

In July 2024, Lucy Quinnell's story 'Acorns – The Fairytale' was announced as one of 'The First Ten Stories' chosen by the National Trust to celebrate 30 years of Heritage Open Days. This story describes the moving arrival of the Ukrainian refugees in the Teazle Wood landscape and their efforts to support the woodland. Lucy was invited to Stationers' Hall in London to hear the announcement of the story as a winner.

Trustee Phil Wessell launched the new website he had designed, featuring all of the Teazle Wood Newsletters from the beginning of the community stewardship.

In July and August 2024 the focus of the volunteers was the ambitious building of a new bridge at the entrance to Teazle Wood. This was built off-site over several weeks ready for installation in the autumn.

# Teazle Wood Trust

Registered Charity no. 1160532

## Financial Statement for the year ending 5 August 2024

### Cash balance at start of year 06/08/2023

Lloyds TSB Treasurers Account £14,793.15

L&DCPS £ 2,924.96\*

*\*A grant of £5,000 from the **Leatherhead and District Countryside Protection Society** has been made to Friends of Teazle Wood, with conditions regarding expenditure (the money can only be spent on goods and services associated with the constitutional objects of the L&DCPS - ecological and archaeological surveys, tree work, signage, projects concerned with litter clearance, etc.). These funds will be held by the L&DCPS for use as required, and the balance shown here.*

### Income

Donations £ 6,796.50

### Expenditure

Nil £ 0000.00

### Cash balance at 05/08/2024

Lloyds TSB Treasurers Account £21,589.65

L&DCPS £ 2,924.96\*

*\*A grant of £5,000 from the **Leatherhead and District Countryside Protection Society** has been made to Friends of Teazle Wood, with conditions regarding expenditure (the money can only be spent on goods and services associated with the constitutional objects of the L&DCPS - ecological and archaeological surveys, tree work, signage, projects concerned with litter clearance, etc.). These funds will be held by the L&DCPS for use as required. Nothing was spent in the financial year 2023-2024.*

Signed by the Treasurer John Adam Boydell:

*John Adam Boydell*

Signed by the Chair of the Trustees Lucy Elizabeth Quinnell:

*Lucy Quinnell*