

Trustees' Report for period 6.8.2024-5.8.2025

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 2024 – August 2025 was another busy year with good progress made by the regular conservation volunteers.

The new footbridge was completed and professionally installed – a really substantial improvement and an achievement of which everyone is immensely proud.

In early autumn 2024 Helen Middlemas confirmed the presence of Brown Hairstreak butterflies (*Thecla betulae*).

The serious impact of planning issues on various sites adjoining the wood remained a major area of focus.

Lucy Quinnell attended a report of raw sewage leaking into the Rye Brook close to the main Teazle Wood entrance on the south-eastern corner. She had been contacted by staff from the Leatherhead Motor Company who had seen this issue – the network built up since the community took on the stewardship of Teazle Wood is extremely valuable and this is a perfect example of why it is important. Lucy then reported it to Thames Water and the Environment Agency.

Autumn saw a spectacular 'hatching' from what looked like big off-white bird eggs of the remarkable fungus *Clathrus ruber*. It is bright scarlet and looks like loose-knitted cages or baskets. We learned that it is bioluminescent, so a volunteer came to see it at night with specialist equipment to illustrate the bioluminescence and enable good photographs for our records. Two local primary school groups were able to visit and see this inspiring ecological event.

Our Ukrainian opera-singing duo returned to sing again for Teazle Wood at our Heritage Open Days event in September 2024.

The conservation volunteers located a single mature horse chestnut tree in Teazle Wood, on the top western end of the ridge. This is to the best of our knowledge the only one, but we are planning a new tree survey to check for any others. This was identified as the volunteers created a new discreet path to enable ecological survey access. In the same area a volunteer found the strikingly and incongruously turquoise fungi *Chlorociboria aeruginascens*.

It is notable that we have not found any evidence of Oak Processionary Moth in this time period, despite it being reported in the wider local area. We have recorded large numbers of Blue and Great tits, which have emerged as OPM predators.

Litter has been manageable, although there is a tangible increase in Macdonald's litter since the new Macdonald's restaurant opened in Leatherhead town centre.

An anomalous spike in local fox deaths beginning in December 2024 became a major cause for concern, especially as our local authority advised members of the public to dispose of fox carcasses in countryside (including woodland). We took this on as a project: establishing the cause; forming partnerships with all who do or should be involved; collecting fox carcasses ourselves; and lobbying for clearer communication and a better-informed and better-advised general public. Responses were generally very disappointing, but our MP (Helen Maguire - Epsom & Ewell) visited and we had excellent help from Natural England's Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (WIIS). WIIS collected fox carcasses for sophisticated tissue sample testing, and confirmed that rodenticide was present and that its potential misuse or abuse formed part of their investigations into why so many foxes were dying in similar circumstances. This is an ongoing investigation and no final conclusions have yet been drawn.

The volunteers did a day of hazel coppicing in the winter, to keep up our routine of getting some of the hazel back into rotation. They routinely now top up the brash barrier at our vehicular entrance at Tesco – it has worked perfectly at deterring fly-tippers and litterers since we first built it, so it a great success story of simple intervention that *works*. It's a nice, satisfying task for volunteers, too, and they can see that their efforts are worthwhile.

There were further sewage leaks from the same place on the Rye Brook, so we repeated the reporting process and Thames Water raised the manhole edges with cement. We are keeping a close eye on whether this latest measure works.

Several spent helium balloons were removed from the woodland – all of them this year were the very large letters and numerals that are currently popular.

Ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) remains a huge feature of the Teazle Wood landscape, and it is of course changing the landscape very dramatically. It makes monitoring and managing the woodland's public footpath very important, and we carry out weekly visual checks and safety tree surgery as required. We have introduced detailed warning signage at the entrances. We regularly seek advice from experts and review our policies, and we visit other local sites to observe their approaches to the problem. We cancel conservation activity on windy days, in line with our risk assessment. We have noted the Forestry England's list of 30 tree species most adaptable to future climate changes and most resistant to pests and diseases; we already have a third of these and are prioritising them in our volunteer activity. Summer 2025 was exceptionally hot, and we provided a clean water source for wildlife and observed signs of stress in trees.

Teazle Wood Trust

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Financial Statement for the year ending 5 August 2025

Cash balance at start of year 06/08/2024

Lloyds TSB Treasurers Account	£21,589.65
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L&DCPS	£ 2,924.96*
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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	£ 2,813.86
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Expenditure

Nil	£ 0,000.00
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Cash balance at 05/08/2025	£24,403.51
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Lloyds TSB Treasurers Account

L&DCPS	£ 2,924.96*
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Signed by the Treasurer John Adam Boydell:

John Adam Boydell

Signed by the Chair of the Trustees Lucy Elizabeth Quinnell:

Lucy Quinnell