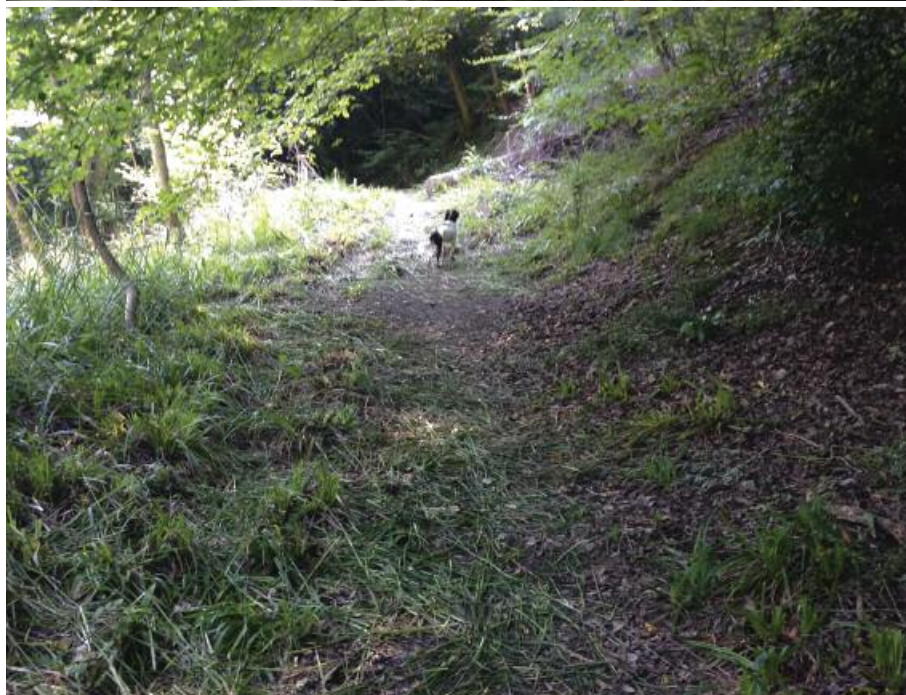
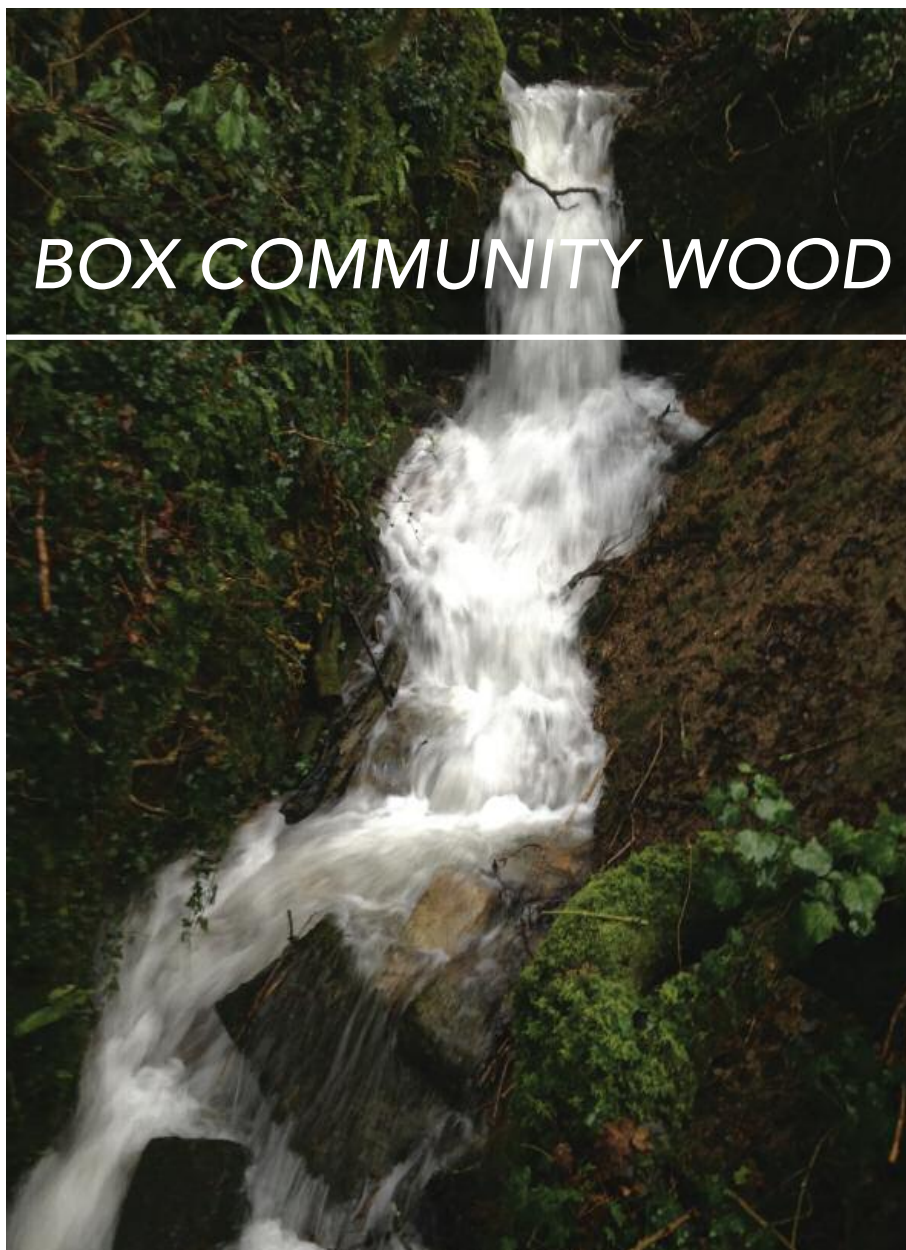


*Report on Activities
1st January 2020 to
31st December 2020*

*Registered Charity
Number 1169429*

BOX COMMUNITY WOOD



BACKGROUND



Box Wood had traditionally been used by Box residents and visitors for a variety of recreational purposes over many years. Walking, educational activities for local children, exercising dogs, the indigenous wildlife and access to neighbouring villages are benefits that we can all enjoy.

Box Community Wood (BCW) is an independent charitable body, established specifically to own the Wood and protect and manage it as an amenity for the foreseeable future.

BCW raised funds locally and acquired the Wood on behalf of the community, in order to make it available for the enjoyment of the public in general, to conserve and manage the woodland and protect it from any possible future development.

It was recognised that the trustees of BCW would not have the necessary expertise or resources to manage the Wood in the longer term, and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (GWT) agreed to enter into a 99-year lease as our tenant to manage and conserve the Wood. This includes the development of an ongoing, medium-term Management Plan, obligations to manage its sustainability and insurance against probable risks.

Between February 2017 and the date of this report extensive wildlife audits have taken place and a programme of scrub clearance, footpath clearing and general management begun, organised by GWT and manned by their team and supported by enthusiastic local volunteers.

The Wood is now fully open to the public, and footpaths, fencing and gates, signage and general access have been massively improved. The intense activity around the purchase of the Wood has raised local awareness, and its use by villagers and the local community in general has increased greatly in the period since its acquisition by BCW.



CHARITABLE PURPOSES



1. Box Community Wood acquired Box Wood on behalf of the local community, in order to preserve the integrity of the woodland into the future, and to protect Box Wood from future development. Box Wood is an area of natural beauty contained within the Cotswold A.O.N.B. Under the ownership of Box Community Wood, Box Wood has been made wholly accessible to all members of the public, attracting local people to the great outdoors so that they can enjoy and appreciate this unique piece of Gloucestershire's natural countryside. Box Wood is carefully managed for the benefit of all wildlife, flora, fauna and the general environment.

2. Box Community Wood, in cooperation with local educational organisations, will maintain and develop opportunities within Box Wood for educational purposes. One trustee of Box Community Wood is specifically nominated to ensure that educational opportunities are considered in all aspects of the wood's maintenance and development.

Box Community Wood has a strong interest in working with young people, as well as disadvantaged and hard-to-reach groups, with a particular interest in the health and well-being benefits of being outdoors. Box Wood is available to play a part in educational organisations' outdoor curricula.



PRACTICAL AIMS OF BCW

- Ownership of Box Wood, on behalf of the community
- Year-round access to Box Wood for everyone
- Protection of Box Wood from future development
- Ongoing care and maintenance of the woodland
- Footpaths will be kept open and maintained
- Protection and encouragement of indigenous wildlife
- Preservation and/or restoration of ancient woodland
- Insured against probable risks

PUBLIC BENEFITS OF BCW'S ACTIONS

- Box Wood is now protected from development
- Box Wood is now fully open and accessible to the public
- Footpaths are open and maintained
- Wildlife is protected and encouraged

Box Community Wood has complied with its duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by The Charities Commission in exercising its powers and duties.

**PRACTICAL
CONSERVATION
PROJECTS
UNDERTAKEN
DURING 2020**

Although 2020 has been a very difficult year the Box Wood Volunteer Group has made excellent progress on a number of fronts whilst the public has benefited from the work carried out in 2018 and 2019.

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust

GWT has continued to manage Box Wood as far as the Covid19 restrictions have allowed, organising well-attended volunteer sessions. The wildlife corridor between the clearing in Box Wood and the National Trust's Iron Mills Common was extended and further widened early in the year by the Box Wood Volunteers, bringing more light and air into the area. Increasing the coppiced areas of the woodland adjacent to Iron Mills Common, together with clearance of the shrubby growth on the Common by the National Trust, has created more open access and hence diversification of wildlife habitats between Box Wood and Iron Mills Common.

The coppicing produced many long staves which were bundled and tied and then transported to the River Frome where they were used in a GWT project to stabilise the river banks. This was a large effort which took the majority of the sessions before the first lockdown. This also coincided with the start of the nesting season when the coppicing efforts were due to end.

The trustees of Box Community Wood and the Box Wood volunteers were sorry to hear of the departure of George Griffiths from Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. George was GWT's local Reserves Manager and had organised and directed all the excellent work carried out by the teams of volunteers over the last three years. We wish George well in his new employment, and look forward to working more closely with his successor once the Covid restrictions allow.

The lockdown and the beautiful spring weather saw a dramatically increased footfall throughout the woodland. The

work done in extending the clearing gave visitors a beautiful show of spring flowers, especially the primroses on the bank around the edges. The coppicing and clearing in 2019 ensured that the wild garlic and bluebells were at their best throughout the wood and were much admired. In June and July the long dormant Moon Daisy seeds in the clearing gave a spectacular show, and demonstrated how the increase in light and air enables a greater diversity of flora and, with it, an increase in opportunities for a greater diversity of wildlife.



As we moved into autumn, the rather wetter weather proved that the 'leaky dams' installed in 2018 were slowing the flow and erosion from 'the pond'.

Two generous private donations were given which together allowed for the rebuilding of the Cotswold drystone walls each side of the kissing gate to Iron Mills Common. This work, together with improved signage, is now complete.

Throughout the summer, whilst taking their exercise, volunteers took on smaller tasks such as checking for fallen branches and litter picking. Two intrepid volunteers once again waded into the pond to clear the Himalayan Balsam that had grown back.

GWT started an 'ash dieback' programme, marking those trees thought to be dangerous to visitors. A number were felled before the forced cessation of work.

Autumn saw an all too brief resumption of small teams of volunteers. It was gratifying that on every occasion the team spaces available were oversubscribed. Despite the limited time and volunteer sessions between lockdowns, a second 'coppice coup' was created below the clearing to encourage even more new growth on the woodland floor for 2021.

**BCW TRUSTEES –
UPDATE**

In 2019 Leonie Lockwood, BCW's trustee and secretary, moved out of the area and was replaced by a new trustee and secretary, Martin Smith. Similarly in 2020 John Storey resigned as he now lives in Rodborough and Roger Ogle took his place as trustee and Treasurer. We are very grateful indeed for the service given by the two resigning trustees, and offer a warm welcome and our thanks to Martin and Roger for taking on those roles.

PLANS FOR 2021

A donation was made to enable a simple but very robust English oak bench to be fitted within the area known as "The Clearing", and this will be constructed and fitted early in 2021. There have been a number of further donations during 2020, and the trustees would like to express their gratitude for all of these. In 2021 we are hoping to continue improving ease of access to Box Woods with steps onto Pensile Road at the Devil's Elbow, offering easier access for less nimble visitors, as the stone stile is attractive but can be tricky to negotiate. This is a significant project which may require some further fundraising as it progresses.

The 'ash dieback' cutting is also planned to recommence and the Health and Safety signage will be renewed when required.

New tree plantings have been proposed and funding provided to GWT to repopulate the areas cleared of Cherry Laurel. A variety of native species suitable to the terrain and wildlife will be planted but as we are unable to do this in the spring it is likely to now happen in the autumn.





**EDUCATIONAL
PURSUITS**

by Tim Makaruk,
Novalis Trust

Students from Cotswold Chine School attend a weekly Forest School in Box Woods. This is with kind permission from Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. Through a mixture of woodland crafts, ecology and conservation, exploring, playing games, campfire cooking and supported risk-taking our sessions aim to develop resilience, self-confidence and independence skills as well as building self-esteem and belonging. Students are also able to work towards the John Muir Award, which aims to protect and preserve wild places.

We start each session by making a small, raised fire. Students work together to find tinder, collect fuel, take the role of safety monitor and use a flint and steel to create a spark. We then meet around the fire to discuss the aims for the session – these decisions are fair and take into account the voice of each student. Each week is different and activities can range from damming the stream, pond dipping, identifying and preserving species, whittling, green woodwork projects and den building, to name a few. Towards the end of each session we meet around the fire for a hot drink and a campfire snack.

Our students find Forest School sessions very rewarding. The woodland environment is by its very nature a calming one. Students are able to see the rhythm of the changing seasons and they appreciate a new and different learning style. They return to school each week really feeling like they have had an adventure!

**FINANCIAL
SUMMARY**

BOX COMMUNITY WOOD – FINANCIAL SUMMARY								
1st January 2020 to 31st December 2020								
	DATE	CASH AT BANK		INCOME			EXPENDITURE	
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
		Current Account	Reserve Account	Donations	Misc. Income	Bank Interest	Repairs	Miscell.
Opening Balances	1/1/20	1924.79	12205.66					
Insurance		-392.20						-392.20
Wayleave Payment			61.17		61.17			
Annual Brochure Printing		-56.60						-56.60
Donations (4)		800.00		800.00				
Repairs to Wall		-500.00					-500.00	
Bank Interest			58.54			58.54		
Closing Balances	12/31/20	1775.99	12325.37					
				800.00	61.17	58.54	-500.00	-448.80
Total Income					919.71			
Total Expenditure					-948.80			
Net Deficit for year (Income less expenditure)					-29.09			

RESERVES BCW trustees have decided that it would be prudent to retain a modest cash reserve against any future management expenses that may be incurred. A proportion of this has been invested in an accessible interest-bearing account in the short term, and the Reserves policy will continue to be monitored at the discretion of the trustees.

**ACCOUNTING
POLICIES** Box Community Wood is a CIO* and its income is less than £500,000. It has therefore prepared its accounting records on the 'Receipts and Payments' basis. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in notes to the accounts and comply with the charity's governing document, the *Charities Act 2011 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice* applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities published on 16 July 2014.

* Charitable Incorporated Organisation

