



Heathland Restoration Update

Phase 1 Work Complete

As those of you who use the Common regularly may be aware, the first phase of the Heathland restoration work has now been completed. Three areas have been cleared of trees, heather, bracken, gorse and bramble, and the top 1.5 inches (approx 4cm) of top soil removed and levelled. This stripping removes the nutrient rich topsoil produced by the leaf litter and plant debris, whilst allowing the existing underlying heather seed stock to recover. Parts of these areas have been reseeded with the heather brash cut from areas across the Common, but most will be allowed to recover naturally until late Autumn when Phase 2 will begin and more active reseeded activities will be undertaken.



Area 1, which borders Beech Road, has been cleared both sides of the main path and linked to the existing open area which has also been partially stripped. The old gate from the middle of the path has been relocated to the entrance on Beech Road. Despite its bare appearance, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of birds and the level of birdsong heard in this area already. Users of the Common are asked to keep to the paths while these areas are allowed to recover.



Area 2, which borders Coach Road from the track opposite Beech Road, has been cleared and linked to the existing large area of heath. A few large oaks have been retained, along with some areas of scrub to provide a variety of habitats for birds, insects and invertebrates.



Area 3, which is at the other end of the large area of heath, and straddles "The Avenue",

creates a gateway through to the adjacent large area of heath which includes the Manchester University research (fenced) area. A new Stumpery has also been created in this area that will be developed and planted with ferns and native flora over the coming months.

All major works have now been suspended to allow the normal bird nesting, etc until October / November when work will begin on Phase two in Areas 4 & 5 at the Oulton Park end of the Common. The timber from the trees that have been cleared has been sold, creating a fund which will be used by FoLBC, in conjunction with the Ranger, to finance other activities on the Common for the benefit of the users.

The Friends will continue to hold working parties to revitalise and improve the Common and to encourage greater use of this amazing natural resource. Everyone is welcome to come and help - we have jobs for all ages, skill sets and capabilities.