

Bassetts Mead

Quarterly Report for Q3 (October - December 2021)

To be delivered by Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
on behalf of Hook Parish Council



Prepared by Ciara Askin
December 2021

The cows have returned to Bassetts Mead slightly late this year, but they have made quick work on the Water Meadow and are already on to grazing Otters Acre and Athoke Meadow. They even helped me out a bit by highlighting some weak areas in the fenceline (in other words, they pushed it over. And a gate).



The fence along the river path seems to be failing quite badly this year, despite being heavily patched up last autumn. There is also a gate post apocalypse happening at the moment, so we have replaced a lot of those. I'm thinking that there will be a few large fence orientated volunteer tasks in the summer to address the riverside fence. The rest of the reserve is holding on for now, probably because the ground is drier away from the river.

On the topic of fences, I am making frustratingly slow progress in getting quotes for the bund bramble clearance and refencing task. Contractors are extremely busy at this time of year and struggle to find time just to look at jobs. We have had one quote so far, which is very expensive. I might suggest allocating certain parts of the job to volunteers and staff, such as ripping out the old fence instead of the contractors doing that part. That should bring the cost down. I think using the contractors to build the new fence is still the best idea because the standard will be a lot higher than the volunteers can produce, which is important for an external fence.

In other news, we moved the bench from on top of the bund to a nice spot in Rede's Meadow where visitors can sit down and look at the buttercups and butterflies in summer, or rest and watch the cows after Christmas. I personally think that this is a much nicer spot to sit down than on the bund, because in spite of a slightly better view on the bund, it wasn't any nicer than being down in the meadow itself and people don't have to scramble up a slope to reach it.

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