

Agenda Item 8.D

Meeting of Leicestershire Parks, Open Spaces & Countryside Network, 25 June 2015 at Market Harborough.

In 'Updates' there was a brief report & discussion on the training day at Oadby for John Law's disabled access programme which seemed to have gone very well.

The Harborough Open Spaces Strategy is going to Committee on 30 July

I mentioned the LLAF's current pre-occupation with Lost Ways and the meeting with Charnwood Roots which was of interest to the person concerned with the proposed Charnwood Regional Park.

Foxton to Mkt Harborough links are being explored and I suggested it might be helpful to liaise with the HOFF Access Group re funding.

We then had an illustrated presentation from Lisa Smallwood of the Welland Rivers Trust re the "re-wilding" of the Welland through Mkt Harborough, followed by a walk up the nearest section during which we learnt more about technical problems (e.g. drain outlets and riparian landowners). The river now forms a green ribbon thru the town and, where space allows, has a more interesting channel with shallow "riffles" and deep pools providing a variety of habitats. Given that work was only finished earlier this year, the vegetation is already providing significant cover. We finished our walk at the site of the old 'rubber factory' where the Welland is in a concrete channel, but there was the most glorious burst of mid-day birdsong that I have heard in a long time. It is not clear how much impression the improvements have made on Harborough residents but, apparently, the amount of litter is now much smaller, which presumably indicates that it is appreciated (and litter is regularly collected).

The re-wilding experience here will be used to advise the project for re-wilding the Soar valley.

When the minutes are to hand I will circulate them to LLAF members.

Vicky Allen, 29 June 2015