

Update on Apostle's Meadow for May 2026 Annual Meeting

We have made good progress on managing the woodland and meadow improvements. We were successful in obtaining a second Nature Networks grant for just over £5,000 towards tree coppicing, field access improvements, meadow seed and ecotone trees. The parish council has to contribute 30% to the project costs.

Dave Smith won the 3 year tender to coppice ash trees suffering from ash dieback. This creates space in the woodland for natural light, letting the other trees recover and self seeded trees to find a space. They have created some natural bat bird nesting spaces with creative tree surgery and left woodchip for us to use.

The access road suffers from deep mud causing difficulty for pedestrians to use the public footpath so some of the surface soil was scraped back with some recycled scalpings/aggregate to reduce the mud. It is likely that this will need to be topped up at some stage in the future. A wide wooden gate for machinery access and a pedestrian gate has been installed.

The Ecotone trees along the top edge of the field were planted with help from the Apostle's Meadow Support Volunteers. These are a mixture of native trees and some shrubs to create a connecting habitat between the field and woodland for wildlife. The intention is to leave these areas to grow wild and coppice if necessary in the future.

Lastly we have sown some yellow rattle in the autumn and wildflower mix in the spring to try to start a meadow. We have dug out some of the re-emerging thistles and we'll cut these areas if there are too many.

We did have some problems with dog waste in the crescent shrubby zones already planted when the school group were helping, so we will now ask all dog owners to respect that the space is for everyone. The school would like to use the space for activities and dog waste is a nuisance to volunteers and is a health hazard to children. All dog waste should be collected and put in the bin at the road entrance and keep dogs under control or on a lead on the paths. We will be putting some signs up to request this and explain why.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank all our volunteers and the children and teachers from Abberley Primary School who have helped plant trees and maintain the new hedges. Thanks to Julie Grainger for help liaising with the school and leading a group to plant trees and spread seed. The Abberley Preservation Society have also kindly donated a cherry tree - a site still to be chosen. We are also grateful to receive some funding from The Bell Community Fund for £900 which we will put towards benches or other items needed.

Looking ahead I will be looking for more funding opportunities to help with meadow seed, coppicing work and other jobs. We still need to purchase benches and maybe picnic benches where the land is suitable. Hopefully this summer we can enjoy the space and benefit from some meadow flowers. I have seen owls and a red kite hunting above the new hedge.

If anyone wants to volunteer or just know what's happening please ask to join the Volunteers' group on Whatsapp. We still need help with a few thistles and spreading the woodchip for mulch! Thanks to everyone – it's great to see the paths and space used so widely.

Cllr. Cathie Eberlin