



Chair's Annual Report to the AGM – 30th March 2026

As usual, I shall structure this report with regard to the aims of our group as stated in the constitution. With much current news about the decline of biodiversity, protecting and maintaining our bird sanctuary has never been more important.

Aim 1) To ensure that Selsdon wood is maintained for the benefit of the flora and fauna so that no one species shall threaten the survival of another and for the enjoyment and well-being of the public

Formal work sessions are scheduled monthly in the summer and twice a month in the winter. Informal activities also take place at times suitable to members of the work team. We continue to liaise with Council officers for guidance & support.

Work has included:

- a. **Clearing Fallen Trees** – As in most years, several trees that had fallen across paths were cleared. Any falls too difficult or too dangerous for us to tackle were reported to the Council Tree Officer and cleared quickly by Council operatives.
- b. **Maintenance of the Butterfly Bank** – One of our team took responsibility for clearing the grass from areas of the Butterfly Bank and planting butterfly friendly plants. These areas were maintained and watered regularly throughout the year and the whole enclosure was given a strimming in the Autumn. Many thanks to Valerie & her team for their work. A QR code was attached to the fence around the Butterfly Bank to explain its purpose. Thanks to Neale for this.
- c. **Maintenance of the Bird Feeding Station** – Weed was cleared from the Jubilee pool on several occasions and vegetation encroaching on the area around the pool cut back. Thanks to David Brown for this. The feeders were refilled on a regular basis and replaced if they got damaged. Many thanks to Ruth & Steve for this work.
- d. **Maintenance of the Linden Glade pool** – Invasive Duckweed & Blanket Weed were removed from the Linden Glade pool and the pool was regularly topped up with water. A few suitable plants were added to the surrounds.
- e. **Outreach Support Work** – As last year, we welcomed Grow Wild Outreach, a service that supports people with disabilities and mental health needs to help them contribute and take part in local environmental projects. The Croydon Outreach Team visit our wood on Tuesdays. The participants were shown how to clear path overhangs and Laurel, Bracken & Brambles. They also helped clear away litter and arisings cut back by our team. Many thanks to Linda and Jim for their work with these volunteers.
- f. **Removal of Invasive Species** - Invasive Laurel was cut down by the team on many Work Sessions and on other occasions by the Grow Wild group. The cut material was placed in trees above ground level to prevent the possibility of re-rooting and left to die back.
- g. **Clearance of Paths and around Name Boards and Seats** - In the summer months, vegetation around the car park, paths and many seats in the field perimeters was cleared.
- h. **Replacement and Repair of Fences, Signs and Boxes** - A sign in Greenhill Way was replaced, a new leaflet dispenser box was put up in the car park and a sign in Beech Grove was realigned. Sadly, the dispenser box was later destroyed, and we also had to remove graffiti from some of the notice boards. Fences around the Juniper saplings and the Butterfly Bank were also repaired.
- i. **Maintenance of the Wood Carvings** – The carvings created in Selsdon Wood in the last 2 years were maintained with a sprayed coat of linseed oil plus turpentine. Thanks to Jim for that work which needs to be done at least annually. Encroaching vegetation was also cleared.
- j. **Planting of Patches** – Patches of Marjoram, Kidney Vetch and Horseshoe Vetch plants were planted in the fields to encourage butterflies. These were kept watered during the height of the summer. Many thanks to Valerie for this work.
- k. **Replacement of seats** – A decaying seat installed many years ago and dedicated to Nicola Jane Bailey was removed and replaced by a new seat made by Jim. Thanks to Jim for this work.
- l. **Cleaning of the Toilets** – The toilets were given a deep clean in August but remain badly in need of major repairs and redecoration. A few repairs were made to the flushes and the water supply was turned off during the winter months to prevent possible bursts and leaks. Thanks to Jim, Neale and Karen for their work.
- m. **Creation and Installation of new Nesting Boxes & Repair of Existing Boxes** – Several bird and bat boxes were built and fitted throughout the wood and several other boxes were repaired. A map showing the location of all the boxes was created and is available on the Nesting Boxes page of the website. Many thanks to Jim for this work.
- n. **Litter Picking** - Several Friends continue to do this on a regular basis as part of their daily walks.
- o. **Erection of No Cycling notices** – After we received a number of complaints about inconsiderate cyclists, we put up No Cycling notices at the main entrances. Cycles are banned from Selsdon Wood under National Trust bylaws. The notices do seem to have had an effect as we have heard of no problems with cyclists since. Thanks to Steve and Ruth for this.

**Thanks to our Workdays organiser, Ted Forsyth, and to all the other volunteers for their dedicated efforts. As last year we have also had several youngsters helping with our work as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Awards. We thank them too and hope that they will continue to work with us in the future.
We could do with more help so please join us if you are able.**

Aim 2) To carry out programmes of practical work, especially sustainable conservation and restoration work

- a. **Repair of Muddy Paths** – This never-ending project was continued with the laying of many more trolley loads of ballast on Farleigh Border and the removal of some surface mud. Ballast was also laid in the path from David's Crook to Greenhill Way. Two of the boys who cleared the litter as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award work (see above) cleared surface mud from a section of Avis Grove. Additionally, donated wood chip was deposited along muddy sections of many paths.
- b. **Recutting of Paths in the Gorses** – The Gorses area has become overgrown over the past few years without any cutting from us or the Council. A few of the youngsters on the Duke of Edinburgh scheme helped us to make a start on clearing paths through the area. Thanks to Linda for leading this project.

Aim 3) To educate volunteers of all ages in the principles and practices of nature conservation and encourage the public interest in Selsdon Wood

- a. **Scheduled Walks** - All our scheduled walks were well attended, and the presenters have provisionally agreed to come back in 2026 when we plan to run a similar programme. Thanks to our external group leaders - Malcolm Jennings, Daniel Bound and Roger Hawkins and to all the FSW leaders.
- b. **Information Leaflets** - To support users of the wood, we continue to produce three main leaflets (Membership Application, General Information, Red & Green Walks) as well as a pocket-sized map. All are available to download from our website. Dispensing boxes for the maps at some main entrances are kept stocked by committee members. A QR version of the information booklet is available and the QR code is posted on all the dispensing boxes and also at minor entrances which do not have the dispensers.
- c. **Calendar** - As in previous years we have published our annual calendar. These were advertised with posters at entrances to the woods and in other places around the community.
- d. **Selsdon Community Fair 2025** – We held our last Open Day in 2024 as Linda stepped down from the task of organising the event after many years and there were no volunteers to take on the job. However, we did have an informative display and our annual photo competition at this year's SRA event. Thanks to Linda and all who participated.
- e. **Newsletter** - FSW members continue to receive an illustrated newsletter each month, circulated via email.
- f. **Calendar Photo Competition** - As we have done since 2010, we had a lovely selection of photographs to be shown at the Selsdon Community Fair on 7th September 2025, in the quest to find a selection for the calendar. Twenty-two people entered their photographs, many sending several shots. It was thus necessary to draw up a shortlist. These were shown at the Community Fair with all visitors invited to vote for their three favourites. Cash prizes were awarded to the photographers of the three receiving the most votes. Winners are: First Prize - £50 - 29/11/24 - Robin by Lorna Wall. Second Prize - £20 - 11/1/25 - Selsdon by Moonlight by Steve Budd. Third Prize - £10 - 9/1/25 - Snowy Owls by Joanne Barker. Cash prizes were funded by an anonymous benefactor - to whom sincere thanks!

Aim 4) To act as a forum for discussion on issues that may affect the aims and activities

- a. **Meetings** - The AGM was held in March 2025 and Committee Meetings were held in February, May, August, and September. In addition, the committee kept in constant contact by email.
- b. **Website & Facebook Group** - The FSW website is regularly updated and provides a rich source of information about the wood. In addition, there is a FSW Facebook group which is a popular resource for the sharing of information about the wood, especially interesting sightings. Thanks to the managers of the Facebook group, Steve Budd and Chris Green, and to all participants who share photographs and experiences.
- c. **Liaison** - FSW liaise with other local groups through the Association of Croydon Conservation Societies.

Aim 5) To raise money as necessary for the carrying out of its work

- a. **Selsdon Community Fair** - This was our main money raiser this year - see the Treasurer's Report for details. Many thanks to Karen, our treasurer for her work throughout the year.
- b. **Membership** - This exceeds 200 and most memberships are eligible for Gift Aid, which adds to our funds.
- c. **Just Giving & Easy Fund Raising** – These two on-line platforms are used to raise money for projects & activities.

We have had a busy and successful year. My thanks to all members of the management group for their commitment to the FSW and for all the work they have done throughout the year.