

‘FRIENDS OF THE TOWANS’

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2016!

I hope you are all really well and enjoying the journey between Christmas and the New Year. Have you all enjoyed lots of festive fare, not cooked this time in foil in a bonfire?? We had a 5 bird roast for the first time – it was great! Maybe not doing my bit for bird conservation, but certainly laying down some calories for the scrub-bashing to come...

New Year is also often a time for looking back, as well as forward, and I'd like to take the opportunity to **‘thank you’** all very much for your great efforts on the Towans in 2015. This time last year our group didn't even exist, so it's pretty amazing to think back on both the number of people who've got involved as well as all the work we've got through. Around **25 different people have worked on about 7 different sites**, if you include our Towans-wide litter pick in September. Well **in excess of 500 hours of labour** all given to help make the Towans an even more wildlife-rich, attractive place for everybody to enjoy – thanks again!

Our group may be only at the fledgling stage compared to some others we know, but just take a minute to reflect on the links we each have with other ‘hats’ we each wear. These include: Cornwall Butterfly Conservation, Cornwall Wildlife Trust Penwith members, South West Coast Path Assoc., Tehidy Conservation Volunteer Red River Rescuers, Save Our Sand and Duchy College. That's pretty impressive! Let's try to promote ourselves within these groups to recruit more volunteers. I will improve the website and e-communications this year, but success often comes down to making personal contacts anyway – **so go for it!**

A note on weather, times and logistics

Always fun trying to plan outdoor events months ahead....I'm going to suggest that this coming year we go ahead with our planned Thursday meetings if at all possible, leaving the **NEXT DAY** as a reserve in case Thursday forecast is terrible. Trying to scabble around at the last minute finding another day that suits most people, then letting them all know, is quite tricky. I know you're all tough, but it's not much fun out there in torrential rain, plus it gets a bit more ‘slip-hazardy’ and unsafe.

I'm also planning to clump outings in the same area a few times running, as it's easier for directions and maybe gives more of a sense of completion to each job.

As before, we **start at 10am and work on until 2-2.30**, depending if the rain has stopped...

Outings from January to end of April 2016

Thurs Jan 7th – Lethlean Towans

We'll be clearing up cut privet, brambles and clematis in the area east of Mexico Towans. Meet on the private road to Beachside Holiday Park SW 565/388.

FRIDAY Jan 22nd – Lethlean Towans

As previous task. Meet on the private road to Beachside Holiday Park SW 565/388.

Thurs Feb 4th – Gwithian Towans

Clearing away brambles, clematis etc cut by CORAMC contractors. Meet in the small car park off the sharp bend on the B3011 south of Gwithian SW 582/406.

Thurs Feb 11th – Gwithian Towans and beach

We'll leave our rakes and cutting tools behind and instead carry out a pre-half term BEACH and DUNES clean. Depending upon numbers of helpers, we'll clean the areas around Gwithian beach and towans as well as Upton. Meet at same car park as on 4th Feb.

Thurs Feb 25th and Thurs March 3rd – Gwithian Towans

Same details and task as 4th Feb.

Thurs March 17th, 31st and April 14th - Gwithian Green

We will be undertaking various tasks here, including stream clearance, willow clearance and scrub removal. Meet in the lay-by just north of Gwithian Church SW 587/413.

Thurs April 28th – Gwithian and St Gothian Sands BIRDWATCH

Let's give ourselves a break and go for a walk to observe spring migrants, listen to birdsong and enjoy the first flush of dune flowers in some of the places we sweat over all winter! Meet in lay-by north of Gwithian Church again.

I will bring tools and gloves, tea/coffee and biscuits to all events but please bring your own suitable outdoor clothing, especially boots.

I will run through a risk assessment before each task, but you should be aware that the Towans is an open, exposed environment. We may have to contend with sun from above and adders from below on a good day, and with rain and wind when it's not so good....

It would be useful but not essential if you could indicate to me via text, phone or email if you do plan to attend, just to give me an idea of numbers of tools, tea bags etc.

I look forward to seeing you soon!

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