

FRIENDS OF THE TOWANS

AUTUMN 2021 NEWSLETTER & EVENTS

Hi everyone, I hope you are keeping well, enjoying the gentle warmth of September and feeling a little more space around us now that the intensity of the 'tourist season' is (maybe?) behind us. Two strange seasons in a row; I wonder what 2022 will be like?



The calm before the storm – our group clearing cuttings on the coast in front of Haven Holidays, across from the G7 site, in the sunny peace that was April 2021

Friends of the Towans becomes a Charity!

Very exciting news: following a meeting of a number of potential trustees on 23rd August, we have proposed that on **Monday 13th September, 7pm at Paradise Park**, we will hold the Inaugural AGM of the new Charity, Friends of the Towans! You know we've been working towards this for a few years, well now it's reality time...!

Assuming it's agreed at the AGM, the objectives of the charity are as follows:

- Protect, manage and enhance the Towans and adjacent land between Hayle and Godrevy through direct action or in co-operation with other individuals, groups or organisations;
- Raise the profile of the Towans and its protection and conservation needs within the local and wider community;

- Assist in the monitoring and recording of flora, fauna and heritage within the area;
- Deepen understanding, through education and training, of the Towans – its plants, wildlife and history;
- Propose, conduct and support research into all aspects of the Towans;
- Oppose activities harmful to the natural environment or heritage of the Towans;
- Maintain and support a group of volunteers to assist in meeting these objectives.

We are only at this point due to your support, commitment and hard work over the last few years, for which I wholeheartedly say ‘THANK YOU’!

Given how much pressure we are seeing along our coasts now, it’s really important that community groups like ours are in place to do what we can to look after our little but IMPORTANT patch of Cornwall, so it feels very timely to be creating this official charity right now, and to seek to develop wider support as time goes on.

We need to build on the great momentum we’ve developed since 2015. I think that much more can be achieved through raising the Towans’ profile even further. Crucially, Covid seems to have given many people a greater awareness of the health and well-being values of nature – some people perhaps for the first time; we need to harness this and be available to provide opportunities to meet this realisation and demand locally.

We are likely to suggest that all volunteers become *members* of the charity. This means two things: firstly, you can have a vote on various proposals at special or annual meetings, and secondly, it enables us to state within funding bids etc how many members support our aims. This will give us more influence as time goes on and the membership grows. It will also enable people who aren’t able to carry out the physical work to still support our work.

Regarding the AGM, it would be lovely to see as many of you there as possible. It’ll probably only be for an hour or so. If you CAN’T make it, please could you send me a message, so we can record these as ‘apologies’ and so start to gather data on our membership numbers – thanks. I promise nobody will be voted into committee roles in their absence...!

Many of you have enlisted friends into our group recently, which is brilliant. Please carry on, and also promote our website too: www.friendsofthetowans.org.uk

Other news

1. The Thomas family, who own Godrevy Warren, also own the lovely old thatched **Methodist Chapel in Gwithian**. They are renovating this in order for it to be utilised more widely by community groups. We hope to be able to use it as a base for some of our activities in the Gwithian area – pop in and have a look if you’re passing.

2. **New Towans owners.** Several parts of the Towans have changed ownership, or have new management this year. We will do all we can to develop a positive relationship, and encourage practical conservation action with these new owners. The new owners of Gwithian Towans have expressed their desire to work with us and will be developing some plans to discuss over the next few months.
3. I want to make a real push this autumn to **foster more links with local schools,** primary and secondary. This has always been a struggle on my previous one day/week, so while we've got the extra capacity with Andy, from the Dynamic Dunescapes project, we need to give this a bigger push. I'd love to think that in a few years' time, many of them were regularly using the amazing outdoor classroom of the Towans for many different lessons. So, if you have any contacts with a school that I could follow up, please let me know – introductions are often the key.

PRACTICAL CONSERVATION SESSIONS

Sept-Nov 2021

All events **start at 10am and run until about 2pm.** I will bring tools, gloves and biscuits of varying quality..., but please could you bring your own drinks and lunch and appropriate clothing and footwear suitable for working in the exposed Towans' environment.

For insurance reasons, groups must not exceed 15 people, so it is essential that you contact me in advance to book a place. martinrule@talktalk.net; mobile - 07854 123 877

Gwithian Green Local Nature Reserve

Thurs 9th Sept

A nice bit of habitat creation – we'll be transplanting native dune plants from St Gothian Reserve across the road into the old Cornish hedge we cleared of weeds last spring. Meet in car park just north of Gwithian Church at SW587/413.

Upton Towans Nature Reserve

Tues 14th Sept

Working with a team from Cornwall Wildlife Trust, we'll be removing some of the encroaching privet and brambles from dune grassland areas. We'll also probably have our first bonfire of the season!

Meet at Upton Towans main CWT reserve entrance, near the tall chimney SW 579/397

Lethlean Towans

Thur 16th & Tues 21st Sept

Some lovely grassy clearings require our help to cut back the approaching bushes, including non-native cotoneaster and sea buckthorn – possibly some berries to crop first!

Meet on private road to Beachside Leisure SW 566/388, which is alongside the work site.

Godrevy Warren

28th & 30th Sept, 5th & 7th October

Last winter, contractors carried out a lot of blackthorn clearance in the SE corner, trying to uncover over-grown archaeology close to the Bronze Age houses. We'll continue their work here, and who knows what we might find? Meeting point will be advised upon booking with me – it's a bit tricky parking nearby here.

St Gothian Local Nature Reserve

Tue 19th & Thur 21st Oct

Our scrub cutting focus this visit will be alongside the Red River on the northern boundary, where scarce bryophytes are becoming shaded, as well as to create a larger grazing area for ponies later this winter closer to Gwithian.

Meet in the roadside lay-bys north of Gwithian village SW 587/416.

Godrevy Warren

Tue 26th & Thur 28th Oct

Another visit to the Warren, helping to burn more cuttings left by this year's contractors in the SE corner. Meeting point will be advised upon booking with me.

Upton Towans Nature Reserve

Tues 2nd & Thur 4th November

Precise details not known as yet, but we'll meet at Upton Towans main CWT reserve entrance, near the tall chimney SW 579/397, and definitely be usefully employed....

St Ives Bay Holiday Park

Tue 9th & Thur 11th Nov

We'll be removing old fencing and non-native plants from some areas of previous dune-stabilisation works, as well as removing ragwort rosettes etc from a large area cleared of scrub last year above the camping area. Meeting point will be advised upon booking with me – it'll depend on the Park's visitor situation at the time.

From here on I haven't fixed up specific work, as it'll partly depend on the progress of various contractors we can follow after. But if you pencil in each **Tuesday and Thursday**, I'll give more details nearer the time.

As always, the odd day might get swapped to dodge bad weather, but I hope this gives you something to plan around and look forward to.

Thanks for your continued work and company, and I hope to work with you again very soon!

Martin Rule

Towans Ranger

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