

Village green and pond update

The green is now growing away well since the recent rain and warmth has encouraged growth, including some of the grass seed sown last autumn, presumed lost to flooding.

Brian Brazington has been confirmed for this year's grass cutting, timings dependent upon weather and availability over the summer.

Three manhole covers require soiling-in and levelling before Brian cuts again later this summer, using topsoil kindly donated by Andrew Ransom. The work is reliant on a contractor's availability, but once underway, we may seek volunteers for a work party.

Further resowing and over-sowing is required in various places across the green, notably around the twin pipes and manhole covers. We have sourced a species-rich, native grassland mix from a local supplier, who advised on the best mix for resilience in both damp conditions and drought, and for biodiversity. It will be sown when conditions are favourable and monitored for its survival rate in temperature extremes – with the area at the lowest point of the green, close to the hedgerow adjoining College Farm's field, likely to have the highest attrition rate.

POND

High temperatures in April brought on a rapid emergence of green algae in the pond, which councillors have been physically removing as far as possible to prevent it spreading. The clumps of algae are being left for a few days alongside the pond, to enable any creatures within to return to the water, before being added to the compost pile at the back of the pond to rot down, with the existing pile of composting rushes.

Algae can be a sign of high levels of nutrients in the water, but a recent water sampling test, provided by the Windrush Against Sewage Pollution group, showed normal levels of nitrogen and phosphates – indicating that chemical run-off is not the trigger. Other causes can be rotting vegetation and detritus from fish.

Cllr Hall has sourced and added 3 bales of organic barley straw to the pond edges, as there is some evidence that this can help inhibit algal growth over time, but there seems little compelling evidence for further treatment beyond physical removal, with as little pond-floor disturbance as possible.

We continue to monitor for the return of water primrose – which is listed as an invasive weed under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 – as occurred last summer prior to its removal by an environmental protection team from DEFRA.

The fence around the pond is rotten in some areas and needs replacing, for which Cllr Gorton is sourcing quotes.

The water level in the pond remains high and will be monitored for outflow blockages.