



MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER

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Summer
2019

THIS MAY OR MAY NOT be the final edition of the Malago Valley Conservation Group *Newsletter*. We will certainly be in touch again about the formal winding up of M.V.C.G. but that may not be in ‘full’ *Newsletter* format.

That’s bad news and it’s good news. There’s quite a bit which M.V.C.G. has achieved, and there is no shortage of things it could still usefully do if the volunteer effort was available. But the good news is that M.V.C.G.’s replacement – the Manor Woods Valley Group – is now up and running as an independent, properly constituted, voluntary organisation. And the even better news is that it has lots of volunteers and lots of exciting work planned.

You can read about the work done recently – still officially by the M.V.C.G. Manor Woods Valley working group, but that’s now a distinction without a difference – in Martin’s report starting on page 2. And on page 5 you can read about the very positive public meeting on 11 June which inaugurated M.W.V.G.

M.V.C.G.’s final public event will be our Summer Outing on Sunday 28 July. Very appropriately, as we hand over to M.W.V.G., it will be a guided tour of Manor Woods Valley Local Nature Reserve. See the details on page 8, and, while you’ve got your diaries out, you can also note the next full meeting of M.W.V.G. on Wednesday 11 September.

M.V.C.G.’s constitution requires an irritatingly complex, two-stage winding-up process. We are currently thinking about how to make that as painless as possible and how to make the final General Meeting a suitable celebration of what M.V.C.G. has done over nearly a quarter of a century. We’ll be in touch about that. In the meantime, please ‘sign on’ to show your support (no charge!) for Manor Woods Valley Group by e-mailing them on manorwoodsvalley@gmail.com.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

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NEWS FROM MANOR WOODS VALLEY L.N.R.

EARLY SUMMER is normally a quieter time in the conservation calendar. Birds are busy nest-building and plants are getting on with the business of growing, so it's usually best to let them get on with it and just sit back and enjoy it. Not so in Manor Woods Valley Local Nature Reserve however!

With the help of Bristol GoodGym and a growing band of local volunteers, we continued with the work in the Orchard, cutting back new-growth brambles and sowing wildflower seeds.

Digging up bramble roots with GoodGym's help



With the help of the Forest of Avon Trust Wellbeing project, we cleared the Riverside Path, opened up a glade in the woods and removed some very old chain link fencing left over from the long-abandoned allotments.

Clearing the Riverside Path with the help of the Wellbeing Group

This year, for the first time, we joined the Bristol Walking Festival in May and ran two guided tours of Manor Woods Valley, led by Peter. 27 people enjoyed his fascinating account of the history of the Local Nature Reserve and the many and varied wildlife habitats. Such was the success of the tours that we have decided to run them on a more regular basis in the future.



Bristol Walking Festival guided tour

Also in May, we carried out our annual survey of the invasive plant, Japanese Knotweed, assessing the effectiveness of last year's treatment by the Council and pinpointing the locations of any new and untreated growth. The results were passed on to the Parks Team to inform the next treatment cycle.

The Slow-worm population in the Orchard area is currently being surveyed; initial results indicate a record number this year.

Following the very successful soil research projects carried out by Bristol University geography students in the autumn, we are now in discussion with the School of Biological Sciences about potential research projects for their students this coming autumn. Also on the theme of 'learning', we had a 'discovery' stall at the Zion Children's Festival.

*All eyes on the pond life tank at the
Zion Children's Festival*





Litter picking

In June we carried out a litter clear-up and are pleased to confirm that regular litter picking is resulting in a cleaner and pleasanter nature reserve for people and a safer one for wildlife – *#alwayscarryabag*.

Finally, we've been very busy, working behind the scenes, setting up the new Manor Woods Valley Group. We now have a website, www.manorwoodsvalley.org, a bank account, a constitution and a new management committee ready to carry on the good work of the Malago Valley Conservation Group (see Marie Jo and André's account, opposite, of the first meeting of the new group).

MARTIN GRANT
*on behalf of the Manor Woods
Valley Group*



LAUNCH OF THE MANOR WOODS VALLEY GROUP

THERE ARE A FEW OCCASIONS when one can enjoy the present, celebrate the past and look forward to the future with impatience and enthusiasm. The evening of Tuesday 11 June was such a special occasion, when Manor Woods Valley Group was officially launched at Zion on Bishopsworth Road. 38 people came along to share in the event – despite the wet and windy weather!



MANOR WOODS VALLEY
GROUP



Martin Grant and Peter Loy-Hancocks presented an evening which informed, engaged and inspired. Martin began by introducing the committee members of M.W.V.G. – himself as Chair, Peter as Vice-chair and ecological advisor, Cheryl Loy-Hancocks as Secretary, Davina Blake as Treasurer and André Coutanche as planning advisor. André gave a brief presentation summarising the milestones and achievements of Malago Valley Conservation Group in its 24 years of existence, especially so far as Manor Woods Valley was concerned. Peter then described the rich range of habitats in the Local Nature Reserve, focusing on this occasion on the main Wild Flower Meadow – future M.W.V.G. meetings will have presentations which focus on other areas and habitats.

The Wildflower Meadow



Martin summarised M.W.V.G.'s vision and constitution; Cheryl outlined the Group's finances; then Peter described what the Group had been doing and why – there was lots to describe, as readers of this *Newsletter* will know!

VISION

Manor Woods Valley, which includes the Local Nature Reserve, Orchard and Old Quarries, is a place:

- where wildlife thrives;
- where people enjoy the health, learning and fun opportunities it provides;
- where people are safe;
- and which is a source of great pride for the local communities.



Coppicing

*Scrub clearance
in the Orchard*





*Wild flower meadow
re-creation*



Working for Slow-worms



An outline of future plans rounded off the presentations, then it was discussions, questions and ideas from the audience. There were lots of contributions – and several people had ‘quiet words’ with committee members afterwards!

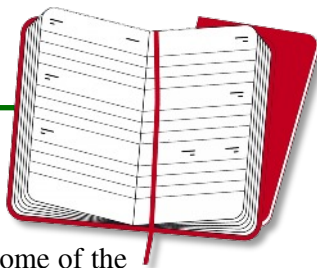
FUTURE PLANS

- Continue to maintain habitats
- Organise more events
- Organise more guided walks and talks
- Repair/rebuild the Woodland Path
- Tackle fly tipping
- Champion Manor Woods Valley
- Young Rangers Project

The next meeting of Manor Woods Valley Group is at Zion on Wednesday 11 September, starting at 7.00pm. All M.W.V.G. meetings are open to the public and everyone is very welcome. Anyone can show their support for the new Group by ‘signing on’ for e-mails – contact manorwoodsvalley@gmail.com. There is no membership fee.

MARIE JO & ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



SUMMER MAY BE TAKING ITS TIME, but do note M.V.C.G.'s Summer Outing in our favourite Local Nature Reserve. If you haven't visited for a while, this will be your chance to catch up on some of the fantastic work which has been done in recent months.



Sunday 28 July: M.V.C.G. SUMMER OUTING. A Guided Tour, led by Peter, around some of the habitats, special places and hidden history of Manor Woods Valley Local Nature Reserve. Meet at 2.30pm at the entrance off St Peter's Rise (behind Bishopsworth Library).

Wednesday 11 September: MANOR WOODS VALLEY GROUP MEETING at Zion, Bishopsworth Road, starting at 7.00pm. Presentations, discussion, decisions. Open to all. More information at www.manorwoodsvalley.org.



MANOR WOODS VALLEY
GROUP

MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

Chairman	André Coutanche	964 3106
Vice-Chairman	Mary Sykes	964 3712
Hon. Secretary	[Vacancy]	
Hon. Treasurer	Beryl Heaton	964 5780

Committee Members

Marie Jo Coutanche, Peter Crispin, Martin Grant, Peter Loy-Hancocks, Lis Pibworth

Co-opted Committee Members

Richard Bevan (Highridge Forum), Catherine Withers (Bedminster Down & Uplands Society), Cllrs Mark Brain, Richard Eddy, Paul Goggin, Helen Holland, Kevin Quartley

(All the City councillors for Bishopsworth ward and for Hartcliffe and Witherwood ward are invited to become co-opted Committee members)

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Letters, articles and suggestions from readers are welcome.

The opinions in this *Newsletter* do not necessarily represent those of M.V.C.G.