

REGENERATING WOOSEHILL MEADOWS AND THE EMM BROOK



Access: Existing tracks in woods and along brook to be cleared/re-opened. Build new boardwalk across reservoir. Create outdoor classroom for schools & community.

Woodlands: Opening up, managing of deadwood and young overgrowth, building dry hedges & deadwood piles, coppicing, diversify tree selection.

Woodland Edges: Replace hard wood/grassland edge by structured edge with bushes and perennial herbs & grasses for more diversity & habitats. Creating "edible", laid hedge along busy main walk.

Balancing Pond: Establish wetland with reed beds for filtering of surface water runoff from estates & roads.

Riparian Zone: Opening up of canopy for more natural light to reach brook and banks. Pollarding of grey/crack willows.

Following the 2025 Annual General Meeting on 17 December 2025 a talk was given by Jürgen Adam of the Friends of the Emm Brook.

Jürgen is both a Professor of Structural Geology and the Foundation Professor of Earth Sciences at Royal Holloway, London – he is also a local resident. He explained to those present that during the course of the Covid19 lockdown in 2020 it was noted that biodiversity was not vibrant in the Emm Brook and its environs. Slowly interest has grown with people / volunteers and partners coming together.

As a result, the Woosehill Meadows & Emm Brook community was born. This is also the name of the associated Facebook group – which audience members were invited to join if they had an interest in getting involved and / or supporting the aims and objectives of the group.

Their statement of intent is that: ***'We want to inspire community members to become proactive in enabling and creating viable ecosystems in the Woosehill Meadows & Emm Brook Park that serve the nature of the place, residents and the wi(l)der community'.***

- The **nature** / ecological goals of the group are to improve the functioning, productivity and resilience of the ecosystem. This will be achieved through actions related to drought & flood resilience (supporting climate adaptation), increased biodiversity and habitat quality as well as improved soil quality & water retention and an improved return of ecological succession.
- The **community** goals are focussed on shared ownership and management which it is hoped will lead to a stronger sense of community, increased opportunities for networking and neighbourhood exchange and increased health and wellness for individuals and the communities to which they belong. As a consequence, trust in and engagement with the local council/authorities will become stronger.

- For individuals (**people**), the goals are to increase the sense of belonging and connection, to share knowledge and skills and encourage social networking – through which individuals will gain a stake in the future of ‘place’ and community and be encouraged to take responsibility for their health and well-being.

A historic map of the locality from 1870 shows that the future park area belonged to two farms in the Woosehill area. In the Middle Ages this area was part of the extensive Royal Windsor Forest

Records show that the Woosehill residential area was built on re-zoned farmland in the 1980s. The area known as Emm Brook Park was mostly meadow with limited tree cover along the main walk and Emm Brook stream.

There is potentially a small area of fragmentary ancient woodland that remains in the North near Reading Road based on historic map and ecological survey.

No photos have been found of Emmbrook House despite extensive searches and a direct request to former resident and author Felix Francis, who lived there with his father Dick Francis in the 1950s. The house was replaced by the ‘Brookside’ development (circa early 1960s) – so any help in finding a photo would be appreciated.

Through the efforts of the community and ideas that are being generated, Jürgen noted that there is great hope that a new balance will be brought to the area – bringing beauty and connection to a neglected woodland which could one day become a recognised zone in a suburban park in Berkshire.

All those present and all interested people were warmly invited to visit the community on Facebook and to join in the effort!

In addition – interesting observations can also be reported through this site.

