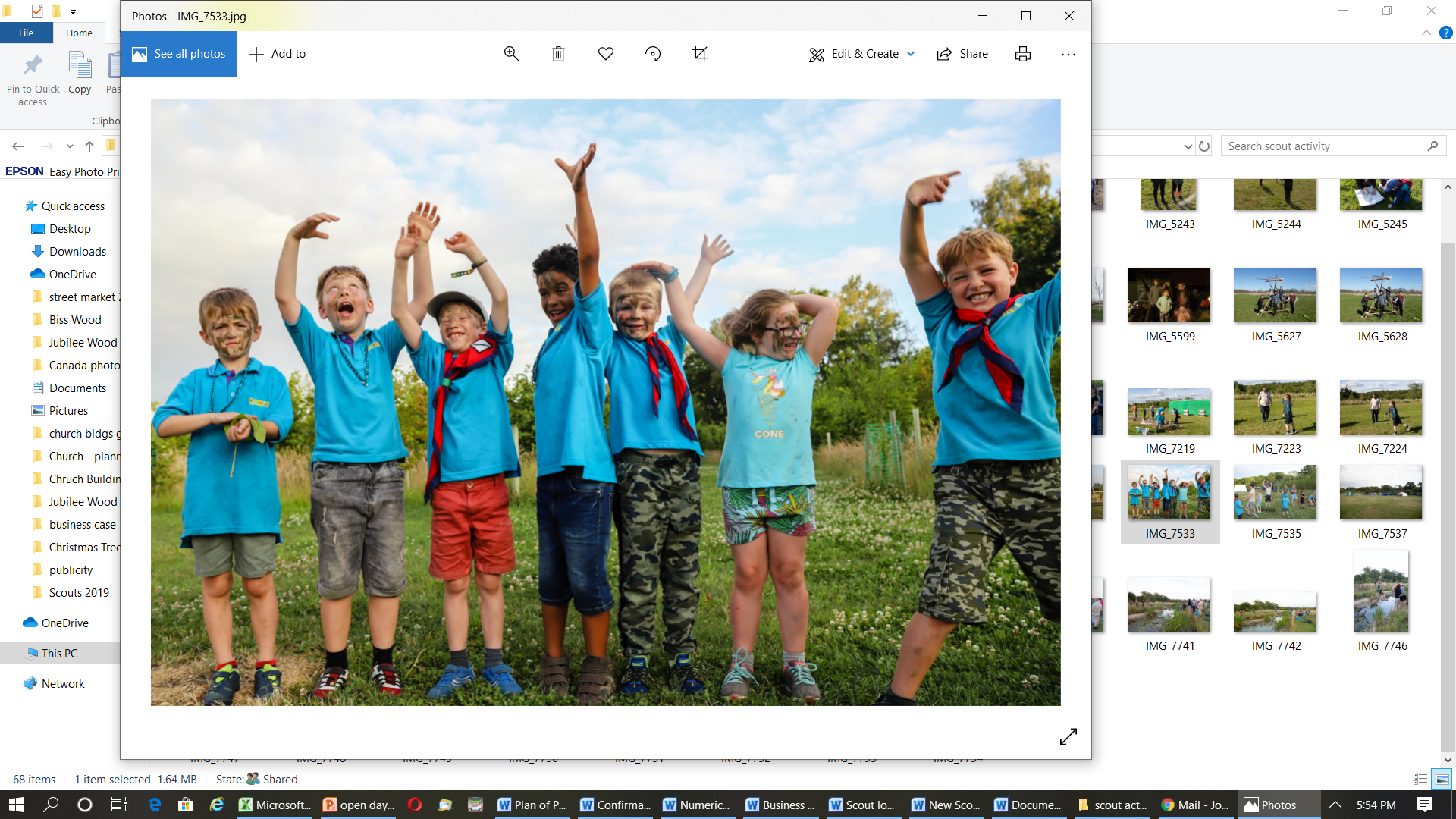
**Jubilee Wood Extension**



Our young members want to take action to protect our natural environment while there is still time by creating new thriving habitats and tackling the root causes behind nature’s decline such as climate change.

In 2012 we bought the land and planted 8000 trees to transform a muddy field into a thriving community asset, set in rapidly maturing woodland wildlife habitat that is already home to many birds and mammals, which includes car parking, an interpretation centre and toilets. We are however becoming victims of our own success as the numbers of bookings increase and will soon need more physical space to expand and need to plant trees now so that the woodland is mature enough when we come to use it. We hope to buy 3 neighbouring fields and plant them with native deciduous trees.

Without more space we will either have to turn young people away or risk damaging the local environment. Environmental studies show that important bat habitats in nearby Biss Wood and Green Lane Wood are being damaged by increased visitor pressure; our new woodland will dilute that pressure and provide facilities for Wiltshire Wildlife to mount educational programmes.

Of the total estimated cost of £605,000 we are contributing volunteer labour to the value of £55,000 and £5000 from our reserves. We expect to receive a Forestry Commission Woodland Creation Grant of £140,000 (of which £1000 has been granted towards the design process). We have just begun to apply for various grants, including Heritage Lottery and Landfill and have had firm offers of £34,000 so far. This leaves us £370,000 to raise.

We will use the money towards:

* the purchase of 16ha of land,
* building access tracks, rides, cycleways, footpaths and footbridges,
* installing drainage, fencing, gates, ponds, a wildflower meadow and hedges
* planting 25,000 trees
* creating new wildlife habitats, including a bat house and a bat observatory
* creating educational facilities and instal information boards and route markers
* buying maintenance equipment and training volunteers.

Launching our project now also gives us the opportunity to mark the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee in 2022 in a very appropriate and enduring way.

The woodland we will create lies within the internationally important Bath and Bradford on Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the locality is known to be of high importance, supporting at least 14 of the 18 UK bat species and, in particular, all four of the rarer UK species. Recently approved housing developments and others shortly to come will increase the pressures on wildlife and our new woodland will provide key connectivity between the existing bat roosting and feeding sites south and east of Trowbridge, which are so important to the continued success of the Bath and Bradford SAC.

Planting trees will sequester carbon from the air, enhance biodiversity, protect the valuable soil beneath, provide natural flood management, as well as water and air quality improvement, and more amenity space. Almost all of the woodland in the River Avon’s catchment has disappeared over the last few centuries. This is disastrous for many reasons and by growing thousands of new trees we can take a significant step in the battle against a climate disaster. From a wider landscape perspective, reforesting the Avon Catchment area has multiple other benefits. It will provide natural flood management which is much more cost-effective than engineered flood defences. All of the towns and cities in the area, including Chippenham, Bath, Bradford-on-Avon Trowbridge and Bristol are greatly at risk of flooding, particularly as climate change advances. Careful planting will also help enhance biodiversity and protect our water quality by reducing nitrogen runoff. We believe buying the land is a much better way to get things done. Asking landowners to voluntarily make these changes does not provide long term, guaranteed results.

It seems clear that more needs to be done to protect and enhance the natural environment, fight climate change and somehow balance this with the need for people to have somewhere to live and our young members want to do something positive to help. The 25000 trees that we will plant will each lock up significant amounts of carbon in their lifetime as well as help wildlife to flourish despite local challenges. In the process we will educate and engage our young people in something very worthwhile, fostering understanding of how communities and individuals need to integrate with the countryside and how the actions and behaviours of young and old alike impact on the environment. Our aim for this project is to create a safe, self-sustaining environment in which young people, the trees, the flora and the wildlife can flourish.

Seizing this once-for-all opportunity will enable us to build on our existing foundation and continue to develop a particular focus on conservation, woodland and wildlife management, as well as teaching young people how to enjoy the countryside in a responsible manner. Our present Jubilee Wood facility is well used by Scouts, Guides and other organised community groups to conduct outdoor activities in a way that stimulates interest and excitement in the natural environment and the facility provides an ideal base for the development of the new woodland project.

We want to respond positively to the very real concerns that young people have about the future for our planet. This project will focus attention on what they themselves can do and counteract the hopelessness that many feel about getting anything done to counter this very real and growing problem. We hope that this project will help us to look beyond the current Covid 19 crisis to the future by helping to make the world a better place in our own relatively small way.

Do please get in touch if you would like to help our project; we are particularly looking for someone to chair a small fundraising committee which would set up a crowdfunding page and run such things as a plant a tree scheme.

John Cox BEM December 2020

District Chairman and Project Manager

[jandbcox@hotmail.com](mailto:jandbcox@hotmail.com)

01225 864270