



WHAT'S IN THIS NEWSLETTER?

- What's Happening on the Nickey Line
- Redbourn car park access problem
- Events and Work Parties Updates
- AGM notice Thursday 11th May with talk from our local Sustrans Manager
- Book Holidays with Ramblers Worldwide Holidays and Earn the Friends £s
- We need a committee member for Dacorum

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE NICKEY LINE

Dacorum News

East Hemel Hempstead Development

We are involved with the councils and other local organisations in consultation on the Crown Estate East Hemel Development. This will involve a new road cutting through the Nickey Line and possible development along the south side of the Line (which is actually in St Albans DC rather than Dacorum BC and lying between Dacorum and Redbourn). We hope to help ensure minimum impact on the rural feel of the Line in this section, have good quality road crossings and improve the Line surface.

Dacorum Work Party Insurance

We have been discussing the possibility of insurance for our work party volunteers in Dacorum to be provided by Dacorum Council, so far without a successful conclusion.

Redbourn News

Main Road Crossings

As flagged up in our last newsletter, sight line vegetation management was re-started in the summer at long last but we continue to seek improvements to crossing safety and ease of use.

Redbourn Lane Car Park – Restricted Access

Without any prior notice to users, Herts Highways 'restored' bollards at the entrance to the small car park near the Redbourn roundabout. With a gap of only 207 cms wide, these unfortunately make it almost impossible to access the car park unless you come at right angles to it and get it exactly right. This is very difficult to do, particularly turning left out of fast moving traffic going towards the roundabout and making an error leaves your vehicle in the way of the traffic - not recommended!

As a result we have had to cancel volunteer work parties between Knott Wood and

the roundabout and many walkers have been similarly frustrated. Both Redbourn Parish Council and CMS (Countryside Management Service) have raised the issue with Herts Highways, but we still await action to alleviate the problem.



Redbourn Car Park- Before Bollards



Redbourn Car Park – With Bollards

Harpenden News

The surface from Roundwood Crossing to the 'Fiveways' junction and beyond is currently muddy and 'puddled' - much as expected with the wetter Winter weather and heavy usage. Surfacing improvements to this section were identified in last year's Green Action Plan and we hope that CMS / SADC will be able to source funding to achieve this.

FRIENDS NEWS

£40 Donation from Virgin Atlantic Voucher

We offered an unwanted £100 Virgin Atlantic Voucher to our members via email and received a £40 donation from a lucky Friend. A win-win we think.

AGM – 7.30 pm Thursday 11th May at Park Hall, Harpenden

Do come along and support us and give us your feedback. Free refreshments will be available. Sustrans manager Peter Bate will talk about their work and plans and how it may affect the Nickey Line.

Ramblers Worldwide Holidays Walking Partnership

We continue to receive donations from our arrangement with this company –
Reminder: Book a holiday with Ramblers Worldwide Holidays (www.ramblersholidays.co.uk) and you can nominate Friends of the Nickey Line to receive £10 per head for UK holidays, £20 for short haul holidays, and £30 per head for long haul holidays.

*****You must nominate Friends when you book! *****

Nickey Line Work Parties

Six work parties have been held in the Harpenden stretch of the pathway involving coppicing, hedge maintenance, bench repairs, tree planting, and the removal of self-sets, and a further one is planned. The Friends also supported three CMS hazel coppicing work parties in the Redbourn area.

Cherry Tree Lane Bridge - Numerous small work parties have been held on a combined basis with our Dacorum volunteers at Cherry Tree Lane bridge (which is on the edge of Dacorum but officially within Redbourn Parish Council) so that Nickey Line users will have better views of the railway bridge from both sides and also to allow ground flora to develop.



Cherry Tree Lane Bridge from East



Cherry Tree Lane Bridge from West

Summer Walk Programme

Harpenden Spring Watch Walk, Sunday 30th April 2017 - Witnessing the changes in the countryside in Spring is an exciting experience, and on this approx. 5 mile walk we will look at the flowers, butterflies and birds on and nearby the Nickey Line, which the Friends have been managing to increase the biodiversity. Meet in the Amenbury Lane car park at 10am, and bring binoculars if you own them. Wear stout footwear.

Contact Roger on 01582 763560 or rogerjan76@gmail.com, but pre-booking not needed. All are welcome.

Railway Ramblers Walk Monday 22 May - This year Railway Ramblers are holding their AGM in St Albans and as well as the formal meeting there will be local walks including on the Nickey Line. Roger Green will be leading the walk from Harpenden on Monday 22 May starting from Harpenden around 10.00 am. The outline plan is coffee in Redbourn and lunch at the Midland pub in Hemel Hempstead.

Railway Ramblers members will have priority but email friends@nickeyline.org if you are interested. We may repeat the walk (on a Saturday) if enough people apply.

Come and See the Orchids, Sunday 25 June at 10am - Friends of the Nickey Line and the Ver Valley Society are holding a joint walk for the third year to view orchids at two sites. Starting at the car park on Redbourn Common, this 5 mile circular walk will visit a bee orchid site on the Nickey Line and also visit the chalk slopes on the side of Harpenden Hill where we hope to see pyramidal orchids and fragrant orchids. We expect to finish about 12.45. Wear stout footwear.

All are welcome. For more information contact Roger on 01582 763560 or John Fisher on 01582 792843.

Other Planned Events - We are planning a Butterfly Walk in July and a Berry & Fruits walk in the Autumn. We will also be leading two 'Nature Discovery' sessions for a local Cubs group to help them achieve their Naturalist Activity Badges.

See our website www.nickeyline.org for events as they are announced.

Nickey Line Talks?

We typically give 2 – 4 illustrated talks a year on the History of the Nickey Line to local organisations who want a guest speaker, in return for a small donation to the Friends. If you know of any organisation who may want one, please suggest they email us on friends@nickeyline.org.

*****YOUR COMMITTEE – CAN YOU HELP?*****

We need **another committee member from Hemel Hempstead** - Even a small amount of your time would be very welcome to help us monitor the Hemel Hempstead section of the Nickey Line and give feedback to Dacorum Borough Council. Can you help? Email friends@nickeyline.org or ring 01582 622771 to chat about what you could do.

Comments and feedback on this newsletter and any aspect of the Nickey Line are welcomed – email friends@nickeyline.org.