**Report of Plant Survey 2023**

The weather in the UK has continued to be rather irregular. 2023 was much warmer and wetter than normal. March, July and especially October were very wet with several named storms. This enabled taller grasses – which then restricted and hid the orchids on the lower end of Broadwater Meadow. The south side of Newstead Meadow was noticeably very boggy this year – and may be why I found a new rush (Toad rush) there. Autumn was very mild and wet and leaf fall very late, not much before Christmas. If or how this will affect plant growth in the Spring remains to be seen.

Observations:

* Contractors were brought in last year to reduce the tree cover along Central Ride in order to let in more light. This has resulted in the emergence of both red and white dead nettles, black horehound and bugle, woundwort and common figwort and giant fescue where they have not been seen before.
* Another area on the southside of Broadwater Wood (opposite the sports field) which was recently cleared of bramble, has also allowed several grasses and ferns to grow, including a new species, Hard Shield Fern.
* Another slightly ‘odd’ patch is in Newstead Wood, alongside the tarmac path. Suddenly this year, several species new to Newstead Wood have emerged: Hawkweed oxtongue, Hedge mustard, Shepherds purse, Guernsey fleabane, Spear thistle, Rough hawksbeard, Ribwort plantain, Perennial Rye grass. I don’t know why. I can’t see any obvious ground disturbance or dumping.

Using the same Area plan as last year, there are 14 “Areas” in DNW, grouped broadly into Meadows (4), Wet Areas (3) and Woods (7). Please see attached map. Inevitably of course, the meadows have woods or shaws on the boundaries and the woods have wet areas or open glades/ woodland edges etc. but the Areas are fairly well defined geographically.

Eight new species were identified this year:

190 White bryony R1 Meadow fescue

310 Caper spurge R44 Glaucous sedge

478 Hawkweed oxtongue R48 Toad rush

532 Twayblade R62 Hard shield fern

Page references are to: The Wild Flower Key ------------------------ by Francis Rose

 or: Grasses, Sedges, Rushes and Ferns ----- also by Francis Rose

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