

24th September 2023

Water Lane, Arlington, Bibury

At meeting requested by Brian Scada with Kent Jackson of Arlington Lodge and Phil Challinor as Flood Warden the general condition of the Water Lane mill leat. Brian had already received undertakings from Martin Jones of the National Trust that they would undertake the following work: clear the vegetation from their side of the mill leat; rebuild the partially collapsed wall near the foot bridge across the leat, allow greenery to be placed on NT land.

Mr Jackson stated that he had arranged for the felling of 10 dying Ash trees during the last year that were on his side of the bank and he had also cut back some other smaller shrubs etc. Mr Jackson explained that he needed to leave as much dense vegetation in place as possible to screen his house and to act as a barrier to intruders. His house had been burgled a number of times before he substantially upgraded his security, but additionally people had been coming across the mill leat onto his land where he had found used needles, underwear, alcohol containers and other evidenced of unwanted intrusion. Mr Jackson stated that he had no problem with cutting branches and vegetation by volunteers (he would be happy to join in) hanging within say a meter of water level and to having this material dumped on his land to act as a natural barrier, but would wish to be present during such work which would need to be at weekends.

We found 3 ash trees on Mr Jackson's bank showing varying degrees of ash die back and Mr Jackson would ask his nominated tree surgeon later this winter to review what additional tree felling or pruning might be needed.

The mill leat is heavily weeded and contains quite a few tree branches that need to be removed. The weed could probably be placed on NT land and the branches on Arlington Lodge land. Phil Challinor offered to come up with additional ideas on natural barriers to deter intruders accessing Arlington Lodge land, the suggestions included willow and box cuttings and old fashioned briar roses or similar plants containing large thorns.

A volunteer team would need to be supported with chainsaw, strimmer, weed rakes, simple rigging gear to pull larger branches out of the leat and up onto Arlington Lodge's bank. A team of at least 6 people could probably achieve most of this work target over 4 or 5 hours if well organised and focused.

Phil Challinor