

High level feeder project.

1. We have had to put this project on hold due to the subsidence in the car park.
2. We do have a contractor who is ready to price for the supply of the feeder.
3. Hopefully when a contractor is in place to remedy the car park situation we can avail of them to create an area for a viewing platform.(with the necessary permissions from FS).
4. A package is being prepared for FS – LVRP – RSPB to request support for the project and for permissions where needed. They will all have input to info kiosk at viewing site.

THREAT TO BELVOIR'S JAP. LARCH.FROM PYHTOPHTHORA RAMORUM.

The threat to Belvoir's Larch trees would have a serious impact on the local red squirrel population which is already struggling from the pressure posed by the large numbers of greys in the forest. Belvoir's red squirrels rely on the almost constant supply of seed from the mature larch found in the forest to sustain them through the lean periods of summer and late winter when other seeds are in short supply.

This threat also hangs over the future of our high level feeder project; we shall have to wait until spring to see what happens.

SURVEY and VOLUNTEERS ETC.

We have had a student in over the summer doing a study of the feeding preferences of red and grey squirrels. We are waiting to see the finished report.

We have had a lot of input from LVRP volunteers who have been collecting squirrel sighting from transects in various parts of the forest and we would like to thank them for this very valuable work.

Recording cards which have been supplied by NIEA are being handed out to interested members of the public. They are being returned sporadically at present. We hope that this will increase in future.

Supplementary feeding continues and small numbers of reds are observed at or close to feeding stations.

Sadly we have not been as active as we would have hoped in recent months due to illness and work commitments with two of our group members having to reluctantly step down for the foreseeable future. We are hoping to expand the group with the addition of 7

volunteers. We will be holding a meeting with them next week. This will help to spread the load and give a long overdue boost to our group

WEB SITE

LEAFLET

We have produced a leaflet which gives a brief overview of our group and the plight of the red squirrel—SAMPLES TO HAND OUT!

GREY SQUIRREL CONTROL

We continue to call for an urgent grey squirrel control program Forest Service continue to carry out an annual cull in Belvoir Forest but this is extremely limited due to time and budget constraints. We are however very grateful for this input.

As I mentioned earlier with the very real threat posed by the sudden oak death disease it is crucial that more immediate control of grey squirrels is carried out within the lagan valley area

Belvoir golf course already carry out control on their property which lies just outside Belvoir's boundaries and I believe the national trust at minnow burn have also done some trapping.

WE would be very interested to know if the local council's attitudes have changed.