



Broadland Tree Warden Network

Low Farm Wood, Postwick Lane, Brundall, Management Report

By

Richard Farley, Broadland Tree Warden

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Introduction

This report is the second in my series of reports to Brundall Parish Council on the progress of the management by the Broadland Tree Warden Network of Low Farm Wood, located to the north of Postwick Lane in Brundall, almost opposite the Brundall Country Park.

This report should be read in conjunction with the aims and objectives set out and agreed in the “Low Farm Wood Management Plan” dated 2 May 2020.

Norfolk County Farms has recently sold by auction the plot of land to the east of the barn conversion to the south of the site and has, accordingly, moved the access path to the east and a more dangerous location on the bend of Postwick Lane. The view of oncoming traffic is now greatly reduced. The Broadland Tree Warden Network has cleared an access to the woodland to accommodate the relocation of the footpath.



Progress to Date

The Broadland Tree Warden Network commenced management of the wood on Tuesday 1 June 2021 and I am delighted to report that we have now completed phase one of our initial clearance work. That area is highlighted in yellow on the aerial view pictured opposite.

The greater majority of the dominant pussy willow *Salix caprea*, also known as sallow, has been removed. That in itself has allowed more light to penetrate the woodland and will now assist the growth of ground flora. It is notable that the amount of bird activity has dramatically increased as has the presence of small mammals, squirrels, etc.

Nothing has left the site. Arisings have been passed through a chipper and the resultant chippings laid along the pathways to improve the surface. Pathways have been bordered with larger logs, both to help define them and retain the chippings. Smaller logs have been piled in habitat piles to accommodate invertebrates and insects that will, in turn, provide food for birds.



Unfortunately, despite the erection of advisory signs adjacent to every log pile informing the public why the piles had been left and that the selecting and subsequent taking of logs from the piles is actually theft, some members of the public remain more interested in free fuel for their wood burners than caring for our wildlife, taking (stealing) logs from the piles. They select those of a convenient size and leave the piles in a "mess".



Obviously, we have "uncovered" several seedlings and whip-sized trees that are worth saving and they have been supported and protected with spiral guards, as shown opposite.



The Broadland Tree Warden Network is pleased to announce that it will be supplying and planting, free of charge, trees and shrubs to increase diversity and help form an appropriate understory within phase one of the project. Species selected will include field maple *Acer campestre*, pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, dog rose *Rosa canina*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, silver birch *Betula pendula* and wayfaring tree *Viburnum lantana*. All plants will be supplied and planted with appropriate tree shelters, spiral guards, stakes, tree ties and canes, as appropriate. Planting will take place within the first two months of 2022 and the total cost of plants and accessories being supplied by the Network will be approximately £200.

To date, two Broadland Tree Wardens have given a total of 642 man hours to the project and there have also been 14 volunteer hours, making a total of 656 man hours.

52 of those Tree Warden hours were devoted solely to chainsaw work, although additional hours have been spent periodically using chainsaws.

236 Tree Warden hours have been spent solely using a chipper, a very tiring operation. Not least of all has been the effort expended by two “aging” gentlemen hauling the machine in and out of the woodland. There can be no doubt that volunteer “muscle” will be necessary to haul it deeper (and up hill) into the woodland.

Hire of the chipper has amounted to £236.40 and fuel for the chipper has cost £67.74. The Parish Council is asked to note that this cost will be repeated for stages two, three and four of the project. Perhaps the Parish Council may wish to consider purchasing a machine and, if desired, selling it at the end of this project. Alternatively, it could be retained and used to process arisings in order to comply with the Council's environmental policies (eg the Country Park, the allotments and Cremer's Meadow).

Broadland Tree Wardens have supplied their own fuel and oil for their chainsaws and will continue to do so.



Phase Two



The Network shall commence phase two of the thinning operations on 11 January 2022. That area is highlighted in yellow on the aerial view pictured opposite. It is estimated that phase two will be completed in less time than phase one. Whilst it is difficult to accurately estimate the time required we plan to have phase two completed before the nesting season and some initial hand tool work has already been completed.

Suggestions for Future Events and/or Use

As stated in the Management Plan, few residents of Brundall were aware of the existence of Low Farm Wood. However we are pleased to report that public use of the site has increased during the time we have been working there. In addition, comments received from members of the public have been most positive. The most popular “improvement” appears to be that Low Farm Wood “is no longer a dark and foreboding place, but somewhere I can now walk and feel safe”.

We plan to hold an open day during spring or summer when The Broadland Tree Warden Network will be pleased to conduct informative tours and answer questions. Apart from the printing of some leaflets (a tri-folded A4 sheet printed on both sides and printed on, say, an ink jet printer) there would be zero cost.



Low Farm Wood will be an excellent teaching resource for Brundall School as well as for Guides, Scouts, Brownies and Cubs. However, such use should not be at the expense of the ecology, so no camp fires or den building should be permitted. We need to emphasise that such activities are not only bad for the environment but can be catastrophic for the wildlife.

Perhaps the WI and/or the local gardening club would like an informative tour, conducted by Broadland Tree Wardens.

The Broadland Tree Warden Network will be pleased to assist when and where required.

Richard Farley,
Broadland Tree Warden for Brundall.