



Broadland Tree Warden Network

Low Farm Wood, Postwick Lane, Brundall, Management Report

By

**Richard Farley,
Broadland Tree Warden for Brundall**

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Low Farm Wood



Postwick Ln

Holmesdale Rd

This report is supplemental to my previous 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.

During the last month progress has been hampered by the exceedingly hot weather (chainsaw and chipper safety workwear is very heavy and increases fatigue in the extreme temperatures we have experienced recently). In addition, toward the end of the month the question regarding our insurance whilst using chainsaws and the chipper was raised. The result of that has been that we have been restricted to using hand saws and we have not been able to chip the arisings as planned.



We are concerned at the amount of arisings that are piled, awaiting chipping. We estimate that there is four weeks of chipping now outstanding, based on working no more than four days per week due to the demands of the operation and the fact that the risk of accidents is increased significantly with fatigue.

With the excessive hot, dry weather we have recently experienced the risk of fire within the tinder-dry piles of arisings is greatly increased. Added to that is the fact that schools have now closed for the summer holidays and there may be a temptation to "experiment with fire setting"! It is therefore most important that the arisings are chipped as soon as possible.

As the Council is aware, the Network cannot now use power tools until the matter of insurance is settled. Page 6 of the agreed project Management Plan clearly states "Any Broadland Tree Warden working on the site will be expected to be given full personal insurance by Brundall Parish Council." Therefore, the Network must be forgiven for being most concerned that the Parish Council is only now considering the matter, over one year into the project.

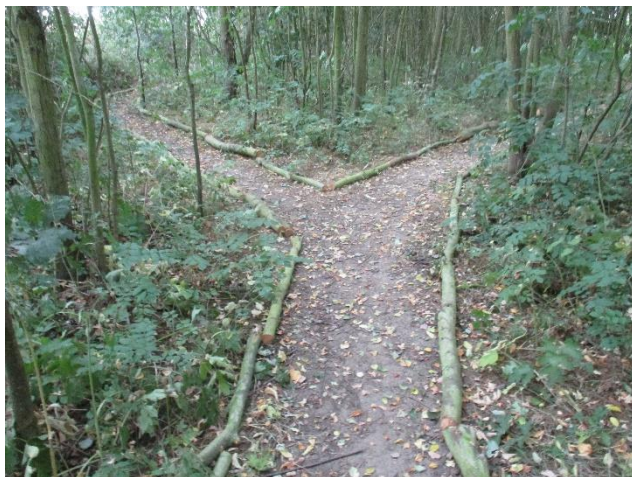
To date, the Network has used chainsaws for 226 hours and the chipper for 401 hours ... without mis-hap. We only allow appropriately certificated personnel to use power tools. Therefore, I would suggest that, whilst the two Broadland Tree Wardens who carry out the work cannot produce their certificates of competence (they have mislaid them over the years), they have more than demonstrated their abilities and safe work practices.

July saw our two Tree Wardens give 49 man-hours to the project, comprising 24 hours on chainsaw work and the remainder using hand saws. That brings our total Network Tree Warden man-hours given to the project to exactly 1,100.

It has been suggested that when reporting on the volunteer hours donated to the project the Network should use a value of £40 per man-hour which is far more realistic than the £15 per hour previously used, although it would still be difficult to find certificated personnel to work at this amended rate. That results in the value of our work to date being exactly £44,000.

The remaining thinning work will be far less challenging than the work tackled to date as the greater majority of the trees are no more than pole size and, indeed, many are actually dead and therefore simply have to be pulled over. Having said that, several large goat willow remain and require thinning, necessitating chainsaw work.

Therefore, time wise, the project is far more advanced than things may appear at present.



In the remaining area yet to be thinned we are creating additional pathways at the south of the section in order to provide a circular route which so many members of the public have requested. However, that work should not be that demanding nor should it take any significant time.



We are very concerned about the safety of one tree we found. As can be seen from the pictures here, the roots have “heaved” making the tree dangerous. It could easily fall at any time, particularly with the soil being so dry the upper centimetres and more like powder and therefore needs to be felled as a matter of urgency. However, the Network is unable to carry out that task as felling will necessitate the use of a chainsaw as the stem diameter is too large to be tackled with hand saws, as illustrated in the picture above.

During July, whilst planning where the additional pathway will be located, we were concerned to discover that two of the residents of the properties to the extreme east of the top of the "F" shape had cut back woodland trees up to 3m inside the woodland and piled the arisings in such a way as to render that pathway unpassable. Indeed, one of the residents had even made a barrier from scrap wood and placed hooks in the ground. They had obviously attempted to create a barricade.

We informed one of the residents that we had cleared the arisings and returned the scrap wood and hooks to the garden of her neighbour. In addition, we made it clear that they had no right to remove overhanging foliage beyond the boundary and the work had been carried out in such a manner that we would have to cut it back further, to growth points, to ensure the future of the trees. The picture below



illustrates just how poorly the cutting had been carried out

The resident claimed that people walked along there peering into the gardens and they simply wished to prevent that. We, in turn, informed her that we would be creating a new pathway to the west of that so there would not be a problem, but if she had a complaint she should contact the Parish Council, rather than illegally cut trees that she does not own.

We should point out that beyond those two properties the vegetation makes the "path" impassable anyway.

Richard Farley
Broadland Tree Warden for Brundall.