



Broadland Tree Warden Network

Low Farm Wood, Postwick Lane, Brundall, Management Report

By

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

Low Farm Wood



December 2022

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, and 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.

Progress during November

Following a frustratingly inactive (for various reasons October), I am delighted to report that the Network has now completed the clearance for the creation of a network of footpaths through the woodland. Logs have been laid to mark their boundaries and retain the chippings from the arisings, laid to give a safe non-slip surface. Most pathways had already been cleared, but November's work has completed the network.

The network of pathways is shown on the plan on page 4 of this report.

We have deliberately kept the footpath some distance clear of the properties on Beverley Road on the north-east corner of the site in order to discourage woodland users from disturbing the privacy of those properties.

We have now started the thinning of the northern section of the wood (ie the top of the "F" shape) where the majority of the trees are very small and extremely weak and can therefore be removed with loppers and hand saws. That will greatly increase the speed of our work.

A few of the larger goat willow will be removed to allow increased light to the woodland floor and remove suppression of the more suitable species such as oak, field maple, silver birch and hazel.

We have recently discovered many seedlings that will not survive in their current positions. They are healthy and if transplanted could be used in other locations. Therefore, we have decided that we shall "lift" them as we work through the current planting season as place them in pots. The pots can then be stored in a nursery area in a quiet and inaccessible area of the wood while the seedlings grow on for one or two years inside a wire netting enclosure, protected from squirrels, mice and other hungry, interfering wildlife.

Such a small nursery will not require any plant health certification as we shall not sell the trees, we know that they have originated from healthy, disease-free trees and they will not be planted outside the immediate area. Plant biosecurity will remain paramount in our management of Low Farm Wood.

Obviously, there has always been a proliferation of ash seedlings as the species vainly attempts to survive the effect of ash dieback. Needless to say, we simply allow them to die as naturally as ash dieback will allow and under no circumstances will we attempt to "grow on" ash seedlings.

We continue to manage the willow that we have coppiced by harvesting shoots whilst they are still manageable by hand.

Work Planned for December

Most of December will be spent chipping the enormous quantity of arisings we have created. The Council will remember that a mechanical failure of the chipper prevented us from completing all chipping the last time we hired it and, when that outstanding quantity is added to the arisings we have created since then, we estimate that it will take three weeks to complete the task, working on a pattern on two days work then a rest day. That will give us 14 days to complete the work. We actually commenced that phase of the project on 28 November, giving us two days with the third as a rest day and we plan to complete the task on 12 December when the Chipper is collected from hire by Travis Perkins.

It must be appreciated that, while John operates the Chipper and Richard carries the arisings to him, there is a further time-consuming job and that is removing the chippings from the base of the chipper and spreading them on the pathways. While John keeps the chipper outlet clear as part of his role, it creates a large pile that has to be moved and laid and that is time-consuming. In the past we have been grateful for the assistance of volunteers for that role and will be grateful for any further assistance we can be given on that front.

If all goes to plan, that will then give us three days in December to continue with the thinning of the northern section.

Whilst carrying out the chipping we cannot afford to lose any time and will have to work through all weathers. However, we will need a shelter for our tools and lunch etc plus somewhere to shelter whilst we have a break and lunch. To that end we plan to erect the Network's 3 x 3m gazebo. It is pop-up, heavy duty, waterproof and commercial grade. Obviously, we don't want to erect it and take it down every day, also involving us in an trips to and from our cars (ie from the northern section of the wood to where we park behind Low Farm Barns). We therefore plan to leave it erected on site for the duration of the three week exercise. We understand that the Council's insurance will cover the gazebo for theft and/or damage and are most grateful for that.

Christmas Break

We plan to suspend work from 21 December until 4 January for the Christmas and New year break.

Wooden Benches

During January the Network plans to manufacture two, wooden, two-seater benches for Low Farm Wood. One to be site in close to the eastern boundary of the southern section and the other to be sited close to the south of the northern section. Made from preserved softwood to a robust design, they should be a valued asset to the site for many years to come.

Suggestions for Events in Low Farm Wood

It is already planned to hold an 'open day' in April where our Tree Wardens will give conducted tours around the wood and answer any questions from the public. An information leaflet will be prepared for visitors to take home.

Low Farm Wood will be an ideal site for educational use. The Network is considering holding a "Name the Tree" event where we will tie numbers to specific trees and younger people (hopefully assisted and accompanied by parents) can write the species on a prepared form. All fully correct forms will earn a set of Tree Council tree identification cards as a fitting prize.

Perhaps Brundall School would like to bring classes or groups to the Wood for conducted tours with our Tree Wardens.

Man Hours Given to the Project

During November our two Tree Wardens gave 104 man-hours to the project, comprising 44 hours using the chipper, 30 hours chainsaw work and 30 hours using hand saws. That brings our total Network Tree Warden man-hours given to the project to 1,338. Using a value of £40 per man-hour, that results in the value of our work to date being £53,520.

Richard Farley
Broadland Tree Warden for Brundall.

Footpaths in Low Farm Wood



It must be noted that this is not an accurate depiction of the footpaths as they have deliberately been made to "wind". It is purely a graphical representation.