



Broadland Tree Warden Network

Low Farm Wood, Postwick Lane, Brundall, Management Report

By

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Broadland Tree Warden for Brundall**

Low Farm Wood



January 2023

Postwick Ln

Holmesdale Rd



Introduction

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 December

December was a difficult month as, for most of the time, we had to work in sub-zero temperatures which resulted in slippery surfaces. Luckily though we were spared our biggest enemy. Rain. It was important that we worked every day possible as we had the chipper on hire and needed to make maximum use of the time we had it.

We erected the Network's 3m x 3m heavy duty gazebo to give us shelter from the wind and cold during our breaks and that proved most beneficial. We were pleased that no attempt was made to vandalise or otherwise interfere with it during the three weeks it remained in place.

Right from the outset we made great progress. Indeed, better than we anticipated. That meant that in addition to chipping the enormous quantity of arisings we had created we were able to carry out additional thinning work in the northern section of the wood and chip those arisings as well. As always, all resultant chippings have been laid on pathways and, overall, we estimate that we achieved 20% more than we had planned.

We had hoped to receive volunteer assistance in the time-consuming task of spreading the chippings on the pathways but sadly that was not possible. However, that did not really affect our progress and we still managed to achieve more than planned.

We encountered just one unforeseen problem when the starter on the chipper failed. However, a call to Travis Perkins resulted in one of their technicians visiting us on site and repairing the fault. All within two hours. We cannot praise Travis Perkins enough for their continued excellent service and support.

Work Planned for 2023

We have taken delivery of the timber required to manufacture two wooden seats for the wood. It is estimated that will take three days with a further day needed to install them securely (ie steel secured to the legs and set in concrete).

We shall need to hire the chipper for a further three weeks when we plan that Richard will complete the thinning while John operates the chipper, clearing the arisings as we progress. That will complete the initial work necessary in the wood, after which we shall consider further removal of remaining large goat willow throughout the wood and further understorey planting. We hope to do that during February.

At the present time it is difficult to estimate a precise time-scale for this outstanding work as, in addition to work in Low Farm Wood, the Network has other Tree Warden tasks that Richard and John will be involved in. Such tasks include:

- Planting of Brundall Community Orchard - estimate 3 days in February.
- Possible hedge bordering Brundall Community Orchard - estimate 3 days in March.
- Creation of a wildlife garden at Rackheath Primary School - estimate 3 days in January.
- Work at Church Fen Local Nature Reserve - estimate 4 days.
- Open day at Low Farm Wood - 1 day during summer.
- John will be required to attend a national Tree Warden Advisory Group Conference in his capacity as the East of England Representative - 5 days during March/April.

On 9 January we shall have a Low Farm Wood site meeting with Catherine Dew, the newly appointed District Ecologist at Broadland District Council. Catherine is eager to view the most ambitious project our Network and undertaken to date and we, in turn, will be grateful to receive her comments/advice regarding the ecological benefits/impact our work has had to date. Needless to say, I shall report in detail on the meeting in my next report.

We are definitely approaching the conclusion of this most worthwhile project and we are very pleased with what we have achieved. However, a young community woodland such as Low Farm Wood requires regular care, inspection and maintenance and that is something that has not yet been considered in any depth. For our success to date to be maintained and, indeed, built upon, the Network strongly recommends that the Parish Council gives the matter due consideration now rather than wait until problems occur.

The Network's two Tree Wardens currently working on the project are approaching 73 years of age and cannot be expected to carry out such demanding physical work long into the future. Yes, as the Network's Tree Warden for Brundall I hope to be able to advise on necessary management etc for several years to come, but the demands of heavy tree work are becoming as challenge. All being well, I intend to renew my chainsaw user insurance in September 2023 for a further year giving me cover until September 2024 at which time I shall consider my options.

Perhaps the Parish Council would care to consider budgeting for a local, suitably qualified tree surgeon to carry out necessary maintenance work. Such a tree surgeon should be accredited by one of the three UK schemes that accredit the competence of tree care companies and arborists, namely The Arboricultural Association, The International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborists (ISA) and Trustmark Registered Tree Care Companies. Such contractors will, of course, possess public liability (third party) insurance, employers' liability and professional indemnity insurance.

All tree work should conform to British Standard 3998:2010 "Tree work - recommendations" and recognised good arboricultural practice.

It must also be remembered that under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, The Habitat Regulations 1994, The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (Natural Habitats) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 it is an offence to:

- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, disturb the dependent young of such a bird;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats;
- Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time).

In the light of this legal protection, it is recommended that any works to trees where birds and/or bats are known to, or are likely to, nest/roost, be avoided during the bird nesting season (usually March to August) and/or the advice of a bat specialist is obtained.

Man Hours Given to the Project

During December our two Tree Wardens gave 142 man-hours to the project, comprising 66 hours using the chipper, 56 hours chainsaw work and 20 hours using hand saws. That brings our total Network Tree Warden man-hours given to the project to 1,480. Using a value of £40 per man-hour, that results in the value of our work to date being £59,200.

Richard Farley
Broadland Tree Warden for Brundall.