



Broadland Tree Warden Network

Low Farm Wood, Postwick Lane, Brundall, Management Report

By

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

February 2024

Low Farm Wood



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 February



Following almost a year's break from management works within the wood, we resumed on 29 January 2024. Our aim was to complete the thinning of the northern section (ie the top of the “F” shape) and thereby the whole thinning project by the end of February depending, of course, on weather conditions. I am pleased to report that we were successful in that and the thinning of Low Farm Wood was completed on 16 February 2024.



Our work, once again, involved hand saw work, chainsaw work and the operation of a wood chipper, all carried out by suitably qualified Broadland Tree Wardens.

In addition, local volunteers assisted with some hand saw work, laying cut logs for path edgings and laying the wood chippings as a footpath surface. That work was invaluable as it allowed us to proceed at a faster pace.

Out of respect for the privacy of the owners of the properties on Beverley Close whose gardens have a boundary with the north of the wood, we decided not to thin that small section, thereby helping to preserve their privacy. Hopefully that will help deter woodland visitors from using the “unofficial” footpath worn by those taking a shortcut across adjoining farmland.



Whilst the weather during January and February was far from ideal for our thinning work we were very lucky in as much as we experienced very little rain. However, the Network erected its gazebo for the duration of the work to provide a comfortable place for lunch and refreshments.

We were very pleased that the gazebo survived the extremely strong winds that we experienced.

The Network is grateful to Chris Muskett and Eddie Wozniakowski for the valuable time they gave as volunteers and to Claudia Dickson, the Clerk to the Council, for kindly taking the time to visit us to see progress.

Additional Planting Planned

As with the lower section of the wood, our work has shown that Low Farm Wood does not have a proper woodland structure. All the trees are of the same height, lacking the proper structure of 'upper canopy', 'mid canopy' and 'shrub layer'. Some additional planting is necessary to help rectify that, as we did with the lower section of the wood. To that end we plan to plant the following 85 trees and shrubs before the end of the current planting season.

<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Qty</i>	<i>Unit price (£)</i>	<i>Total price (£)</i>
Hornbeam <i>Carpinus betulus</i>	0.9 - 1.2m	5	2.00	10.00
Crab apple <i>Malus sylvestris</i>	0.6 - 1.9m	5	0.70	3.50
Myrobalan plum <i>Prunus cerasifera</i>	0.4 - 0.6m	5	0.60	3.00
Spindle <i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	0.4 - 0.6m	5	0.70	3.50
Hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	0.4 - 0.6m	10	0.60	6.00
Blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i>	0.4 - 0.9m	10	0.60	6.00
Dog rose <i>Rosa canina</i>	0.4 - 0.6m	10	0.55	5.50
Whitebeam <i>Sorbus aria</i>	0.4 - 0.6m	5	2.00	10.00
Guelder rose <i>Viburnum opulus</i>	0.4 - 0.6m	10	0.80	8.00
Wayfaring tree <i>Viburnum lantana</i>	0.4 - 0.6m	10	0.80	8.00
Wild service <i>Sorbus torminalis</i>	0.4 - 0.6m	10	4.00	40.00
Tree stake	1.35m x 32mm x 32mm	85	0.45	38.25
Shrub shelter	0.6m	85	2.00	170.00
Sub-total				311.75
VAT @ 20%				62.35
Total order				374.10

The Broadland Tree Warden Network will supply and plant the above trees and shrubs free of charge from its annual tree planting budget. I estimate a day's work for two Tree Wardens.

The larger species such as the hornbeam will require pollarding at some point in the future after which they will be managed as mid-canopy trees and that will remain the responsibility of the Network

Man Hours Given to the Project to Date

During January our two Tree Wardens gave 98 man-hours to the project, comprising 49 hours chainsaw work and 49 hours using the woodchipper. That brings our total Network Tree Warden man-hours given to the project to 1,606 comprising 587 hours of handsaw work 397 hours chainsaw use and 622 hours operating the wood chipper. Using a value of £40 per man-hour, that results in the value of Broadland Tree Warden work to date being £64,240.

In addition during January our progress benefitted from 21 hours from volunteers who carried out some thinning using hand saws plus the spreading of the wood chippings along the footpaths. That took the total of volunteer hours given to the project to date to 59 and at £15 per hour that would total £885.

Therefore, the Low Farm Wood project has benefitted from a total of 1,665 hours being given freely by Broadland Tree Wardens and local volunteers at a total value of £65,125. That is what the Broadland Tree Warden Network is about. People working freely for their community.

Future Management of Low Farm Wood

If the work carried out to date is to have full effect and maximum benefit then continued management is essential. Whilst woodlands would survive very well without the intervention of *Homo sapiens*, Low Farm Wood was planted by man who then walked away and ignored it. The dense planting of the trees, the lack of a proper structure (ie upper and mid-canopies and a shrub layer) and not the ideal choice of species resulted in the poor vegetative condition the Network has been fighting.

There was a dense population of ash *Fraxinus excelsior* planted and that is now suffering badly from the terribly destructive ash dieback disease *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*. Whilst we have cleared a great number of infected trees we expect that within a year or two there will not be a healthy ash (or living ash) remaining in Low Farm Wood.



Similarly, during our work this year we have cleared many diseased oak *Quercus robur*. We have yet to identify the cause of death but we expect it to affect the greater majority of Low Farm Wood's oaks.

Needless to say, it has been fascinating to see the various fruiting bodies of the various fungi.

Many of the stumps remaining from our felling, pollarding and coppicing work are now "sprouting" new life and will need to be properly managed in the future,

I could list many more future management tasks but I hope the message has been conveyed. Decisions must be made now. We cannot wait until the current workforce for the wood is no longer capable of the work undertaken to date.

In Conclusion



This has been by far the biggest and most ambitious project tackled by the Broadland Tree Warden Network in our five years existence and we are extremely proud of what has been achieved. We are most grateful to Brundall Parish Council for its continued support.

So, the Broadland Tree Warden Network's task is complete ... or is it?

Yes, with the exception of the remaining planting, we have completed the task we agreed to undertake, but Low Farm Wood is demanding more.

As we walked down through the wood, following the completion of the project, we commented that we really should start again at the southern end, working our way back to the top, tackling trees that did not develop as we had wished, clearing unwanted ground cover plants, giving some TLC to the new trees we planted, attending to some of the vandalism, carry out annual coppicing (eg on the hazel *Corylus avellana*), cut back the Buddleja (butterfly bush) as it needs to be done every year) and maybe pollarding a few trees for the benefit of biodiversity.

To mention but a few!!!

That is for the parish council to decide, but for us it is time for a well-earned rest!!

Richard Farley
Broadland Tree Warden for Brundall.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND CO-ORDINATOR OF THE BROADLAND TREE WARDEN NETWORK

I have been privileged to have been a Tree Warden for over thirty years and have been very proud to have been our Network's Co-ordinator for its five years existence since Broadland District Council closed its Network. That experience prompts me to say that Richard Farley is an outstanding Tree Warden and undertakes far more work than any other of our Tree Wardens. Indeed there cannot be many Tree Wardens across the country that can say that they've achieved as much as Richard.

Richard Farley is a delight to work with and, I would suggest, is irreplaceable. Unfortunately, he is also easily taken advantage of. I do hope that Brundall recognises that.

John Fleetwood,
Network Co-ordinator,
Broadland Tree Warden Network