

# Tree Warden report 15.3.22

During February and March we have had two major areas of activity: the Recreation Ground and Hall Farm Road Sports Ground.

## **Recreation Ground:**

The team completed the gap plugging project in the road hedge along the road edge. This involved using hazel canes coppiced from trees in coppice close to weave the attractive fencing. We have planted hedging saplings on both sides of this fencing. On one occasion we were joined by students from Suffolk Rural College, (ex Otley college) with their lecturers. These were students with learning difficulties who had planted and germinated crab apples and acorns and other seedlings and watched them grow over the last couple of years. We had a good turnout of the Tree Crew who joined lecturers in encouraging students to plant some of their trees within our planting areas - also, two crab apple trees were planted, either side of the commemorative cherry tree. On the same day I planted about a dozen hazel on the raised mound of topsoil. Subsequently two oaks have been planted in front of the picnic benches, and 6 oak and a willow cutting in the open spaces in woodland opposite the entrance.

I intend to plant 6 more hazel in the shaded spinney area next to the picnic benches before end of season.

My guesstimate for numbers planted in the ground is 240.

## **Woods:**

Hoping to complete this planting season with around a dozen oak to plant in the clearer space areas in the woods - using coir matting to compact the overwhelming presence of bracken

Around the pond - we were asked to consider some planting for shading to inhibit the invasive pond weed species. I had planned a layered approach: willow, closest to the pond edge, with a line of dogwood behind, and an outer planting of downy birch. The dogwood has been planted (the middle layer). Mother nature, in the recent storm anticipated the willow intention by gently laying down an elderly willow parallel to the line of dogwood - in due course, if we leave her be, this fallen tree will be a source of multiple withies reaching for the sky and providing the shade we need. In due course, I will take some cuttings from other fallen trees and plant them at the pond edge - just to give the shading project a quick start. A couple of downy birch have now been planted behind the row of dogwood.

Numbers: 40

## **Hall Farm Sports Ground**

We have had three bursts of work here: mostly to green-screen the surrounding wood panel fencing - the first being the fencing erected by Phil to close off the run through gap into the community farm area. In the next two visits I was joined by local resident, Cllr Harvey-Smith. Extending the fence screening we also planted 10 crab apples behind the fruit trees planted by the Transition Group.

At our last visit, progress was halted on account of running out of canes. It has occurred to me, whilst waiting for my efforts to source canes to bear fruit, that we can plant alongside the edge of the dead hedge without necessity for canes, as long as the maintenance people are made aware of the presence of the hedglings and limit their mowing to a foot away from the hedge. And, I think the plan is for encouragement of wildflower / wilding in that area - in which case the hedglings will take their chances alongside re-naturing and will this be protected. This work remains to be completed - we're low on hedging stock, but Woodbridge has just received a fresh consignment that I can make use of for our purposes here in Melton.

We have so far planted 179 saplings at Hall Farm Road Sports Ground - this figure has been doubly and independently verified by Cllr Harvey-Smith's twins!

## **Orchard Close**

On a bare square patch of grass, I've supplemented a line of specimen trees planted by the former Tree Warden with a partial L shaped hedge - double row: hawthorn on the outside and wild rose on the inside - ending off with a wild cherry at the end. At the bottom of the square, opposite the road edge there is a broken line (leaving wall space for potential goalmouth) comprising hazel and field maple - with a crab apple at the end. I met with neighbouring residents who indicated willingness to keep an eye on these during drought periods. Number guess: 70

## **Bury Hill**

Two wild cherry within the copse opposite the entrance to Fernhill close; a couple of wild cherry and a whitebeam (sneaked) onto the edges of pre-existing decorative beds at the bottom of Fernhill Close. And, in the rectangular patch adjacent to the footpath down into the woods from Fernhill Close around 35 - quite a number of hazel - some in spirals, some anonymously planted as a potential fence panel covering.

Sad, and necessary to see the cedar go, the long trunk / bench and circular cut seats have been arranged in a seating circle. The newly planted pine has a local resident as its Tree-Friender to water it in drier months.

Numbers: 40

We will be well over 600 trees planted Feb/March

It has been a pleasure - and sometimes a burdensome responsibility. And getting them in the ground is step1! Perhaps we might mention 'citizen action' in the newsletter - a request for people to be aware of newly planted saplings and to share water from their drinking bottles during long periods of rain-lessness?