

# Melton's Tree Crew Report – Martin Wilks

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

## **Recreation Ground**

Carol and David Steptoe and 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 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 we planted about a dozen hazel on the raised mound of topsoil.

Subsequently two oak 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.

Six more hazels were planted in the shaded spinney area next to the picnic benches, the Jubilee commemorative Oak - on the edge of the playing field, in front of the ancient oak trunk. Further around that edge of the field, adjacent to the zip wire, a 10 year old Walnut tree, nurtured by Martin Minta, has been placed. Martin also nurtured the Indian Chestnut tree that has been carefully sited near to the bench midway along the course of the stream.

My guesstimate for numbers planted in this area is 260

## **Woods**

We have completed this planting season with around a dozen oak planted 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 have taken cuttings from other fallen willow trees and planted them at the pond edge - just to give the shading project a quick start. Six downy birch have now been planted behind the row of dogwood and advance willow cuttings have been taken from previously fallen willow to take their chances of rooting during the spring.

The hedging along the footpath running up from Turnpike Lane into the woods and up to Leeks Hill has had some additional planting to fill in the gaps.

Numbers planted: 70

### **Hall Farm Road Sports Ground**

We have had three bursts of work at Hall Farm, mostly to green-screen the surrounding wood panel fencing. In the next two visits I was joined by local resident, Frankie. Extending the fence screening we also planted 10 crab apples behind the fruit trees planted by the Transition Woodbridge group. We've also now planted alongside the edge of the dead hedge.

Transition Woodbridge has prepped the ground around the new bench site for wildflower / wilding in that area. Hence, the hedglings will take their chances alongside the re-naturing and will thus be protected.

We had so far planted 179 saplings in this area, and now, with the green hedging planted alongside the dead hedge that will take us up to around 350. We also took the opportunity to plant two small communities of silver birch (these trees thrive in each other's close company) - out into some of the open spaces.

### **Orchard Close**

On a bare square patch of grass, I've supplemented a line of specimen trees planted by Lindsay (our previous 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. Very reassuring, thanks!

Number guess: 80

### **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 Cl. And, in the rectangular patch adjacent to the footpath down into the woods from Fernhill Cl. around 35 - quite a number of hazel - some in spirals.

Sad but necessary to see the cedar go, the long trunk / bench and cut seats have been arranged in a circle.

Numbers: 40

We will be close to 800 trees planted Feb/March/April

### **Become a Tree-Friender**

We are looking for residents to 'tree-friend' some of these newly planted specimens. You may notice some of them have ribbons tied to them – this indicates someone has agreed to look after the tree, giving it some water in drier spells. The Tai Chi group that meets at the Recreation Ground on Tuesdays has kindly taken on responsibility for several the trees at the Recreation Ground.

If you would like to become a Tree Friender or find out more about the Tree Crew and their work please contact the Clerk ([clerk@melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk)).

If you can't give that level of commitment, please consider taking a bottle of water when out walking in the local area and giving some of the newly planted trees a drink in warm weather.

Martin Wilks, Tree Warden, Melton Parish Council