

## **Tree Warden's Report on Tree Planting to Parish Council Meeting 16 February 2021.**

Further to my report to the January 2021 Parish Council meeting, I have now submitted a draft article to your Parish Clerk for the Parish News. One of the purposes of this article is to see if there is any interest among local landowners in planting schemes on their land.

From my January report, Councillors expressed an interest in a number of the schemes I outlined, namely:

- A bereavement and memorial park
- The Tree Council 'Branching Out' Fund
- The 'Tree Angel' Orchards Fund

I feel that these initiatives are worthy of further investigation.

Other initiatives I mentioned in my January report are also still valid, I feel, namely:

- Tree and Hedgerow Strategy for Wealden

(Just before Christmas, MPs debated the England Tree Strategy in parliament, raising some excellent points - such as the importance of local authority funding and planting trees in towns and cities)

- Young Tree Champions to Become a #ForceForNature
- £1.8m Grant Secured for National Hedgerow Project
- Orchard for Schools - Free Tree Packs
- Ancient Tree Inventory
- Advice on Successful Tree Establishment
- Local Inventory.

It might be useful to nominate a contact for each initiative (if agreed), particularly those that involve schools and young people.

The Tree Council's January 'Branching Out' Newsletter has no new initiatives that would be appropriate in Chiddingfold, just updates on initiatives previously notified.

There is one project however, that I find particularly interesting: 'Great Oaks from Little Acorns Grow': Community Tree Nurseries.

The 'seed' of establishing Community Tree Nurseries across Suffolk has been germinating for a long time. Finally, inspired by the enormous demand for locally sourced and grown trees & shrubs, especially for hedgerow planting, now and in the future, Suffolk Tree Wardens are making this dream a reality, establishing Tree Nurseries in their communities across the county.

The project got started following discussions between members of Suffolk Tree Warden Network (STWN) committee and Suffolk County Council's Woodland Adviser to fund Suffolk-wide Tree Nurseries in summer 2020.

A progress report was presented at STWN's AGM. The response from Tree Wardens was amazing and the project was so enthusiastically taken up that by the end of October they had held two online Tree Nursery meetings and Tree Wardens were already collecting seeds! The group keeps in touch in Covid-safe ways using WhatsApp to share tips and photos and meeting regularly on Zoom to share information, ask advice and discuss the way forward.

To date, sixteen Tree Wardens across Suffolk have set up tree nurseries in their communities, ranging from small gardens to medium-sized nurseries at secondary schools to larger ones at a wellbeing hub and a community farm. This year, they plan to involve more Tree Wardens (they're calling them Tree Nurses!) across the county as well as junior schools and community centres.

Various materials and propagating methods are being tried out by seed nursery, such as deep modular trays (cell grown), large pots, raised beds and moveable raised beds designed by a young student using recycled materials. Recycled materials are also being used to protect seeds from animal attack, including a large pet cage! Funding for deep modular trays, large seed trays, deep pots, compost and tree growing books has been provided by Suffolk County Council.

Seeds are collected locally mainly from native shrubs and trees, especially ancient pollards to maintain local genetic diversity. So far, more than 14,000 seeds from 39 species have been collected and sown. Suffolk Tree Wardens are also taking cuttings from native black poplar and willow and collecting self-sown saplings. Spreadsheet records are being kept of all seeds collected, cuttings taken, location, species, number and method. Each year, more seeds from more species will be collected and sown to provide an ongoing supply. The first trees and shrubs will hopefully be ready by winter 2022/3 for planting in the community and others will be offered to Healing Woods around Suffolk.

Maybe this initiative would be a little too ambitious for Chiddingly alone. But could the Council persuade ESCC to become involved, in the same way that Suffolk County Council did?

That's all for this month!

Andy Barnes,  
Parish Council Tree Warden.

8th February 2021