

Tree Warden's Report on Tree Planting to Parish Council Meeting 4th May 2021.

At the March meeting, it was agreed that Julian Richards, Cliff Marchant and I would meet on the Jubilee Field to examine the plan from 2014 to plant 62 trees there. Cliff Marchant, Brendon Welsh and I met there on Sunday 18th April: we discussed 2014 plan and whether it was feasible to use CIL funds to buy saplings that would've been part of that project; the possibility of including a memorial copse; the rewilding project and the imminent arrival of 200 hedging saplings; the possibility of using some of the hedgerow saplings to fill gaps in the established hedges around the Jubilee Field.

Subsequent to this, more saplings arrived from Wildlife Trust, many of which are for future-mature trees, rather than for hedging. I met with Cliff again on Saturday 24th April, when he had a small team planting the saplings around the rewilding area, and we discussed where the tree saplings might be planted.

I mentioned at the April meeting that I still feel that it's worthwhile the Council following up on schemes I've already raised at meetings: Memorial Gardens/Roots to Remembrance, Orchard Fund, Branching Out Scheme, and to establish what Local authority or other funding may be available, and which if any the Council may wish to apply for.

The Tree Council has indicated that grant-funding for their 'Close the Gap' scheme is to be launched 'later this spring'. They also say that there will shortly be an app available to survey our hedgerows, and that 'National Hedgerow Week' is to be 29th May to 6th June, the idea behind which is to encourage everyone to plant more hedgerow and care for the existing - I think this Council is already doing its bit!

I also mentioned at the March meeting and again at the April meeting that I was studying the Government's proposed 'Environmental Land Management Scheme. What still isn't clear is if the 'large-scale tree planting' section of the plan will include landowners in general and not just farmers. I have no information yet via the Tree Council, particularly about how it will be launched in 2024 and how the 10 projects will be selected (their May report to Tree Wardens is not yet available).

Since the last meeting I have still had no response from the other sponsors of tree-planting schemes that may be available from other organisations: (Woodland Trust; Wildlife Trust; RHS/Wakehurst Place; DEFRA;etc. Any such schemes would be with a view to planting in Autumn this year (2021), so in a sense there's no great rush.

I've also had no response yet from WDC about any 'Tree and Hedgerow Strategy' that they may have. Para 14.16 of the WDC 'Local Development Framework' says this:

'Opportunities may exist to restore and expand Wealden's woodland. Furthermore, opportunities may exist to increase the number of trees located within Wealden's more built up areas. Both new trees and woodland should be located to maximise the contribution that they can make to climate change adaptation and to the strengthening of the green infrastructure network.'

I will chase-up the outstanding responses towards the end of June, when I return from holiday. I won't be able to join the June PC meeting (be it virtual or actual), and may not be able to provide a report for that meeting. There may be little to report by then anyway, but if there is I'll endeavour to keep the Council in the picture.

Andy Barnes,
PCTW.

27th April 2021.