



January 2015

[www.wiltshiretreewardens.co.uk](http://www.wiltshiretreewardens.co.uk)

Issue No.13

### *Message from Vicky*

[vicky.roscoe@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:vicky.roscoe@wiltshire.gov.uk) or 01225 718647

I am currently planning the events/training programme for this year. If you have any training requirements or have a tree related project in your parish that you would like to share with other Tree Wardens please [contact me](#) with your comments/recommendations/requirements.

In the meantime on Sunday 8 February from 10am – 1pm there is a free hands-on opportunity to learn about pruning fruit trees with Richard Cripps, an RHS speaker and member of the Horticulture Committee at the Royal Bath and West Show. For more information contact [enquiries@bigcommunitygrow.org](mailto:enquiries@bigcommunitygrow.org)

On 31 March from 10am - 12.30pm Steve Russell of Woodland & Countryside Management Ltd. is leading a walk primarily for Tree Wardens in Savernake Forest on Woodland Archaeology. There are thousands of known archaeological sites in Britain; however, the total archaeological resource of Great Britain is unquantifiable. With over 2.7 million ha of land currently under woodland management, it is inevitable that this includes many thousands of sites of archaeological interest. Trees and their management can have a significant impact on the underlying archaeology. As many sites are not properly recorded and others remain unknown, the risk of damage and its control can be greatly influenced by site management. The morning will be spent looking at an area of woodland to learn about what features to look for and how to manage trees and woodland to protect such archaeological features in the woodland context. To book please [contact me](#).

Is anyone running an event this year for Walk in the Woods Friday 1 May - Sunday 31 May? Do let me know.

### *News from Tree Wardens*

#### **Cricket Bat Willows**

Debbie Carter, Tisbury



Photo by Andrew Carter

Travelling by train from Tisbury station towards Salisbury, a large number of slim willow trees can be seen which have been planted in the marshy area between the railway line and the river Nadder. A variety of white willow (*Salix alba* var. *caerulea*) is being grown as a cash crop specifically for the production of cricket bats. The four - five year old saplings (whips) are planted in January or February in low-lying fields with a good natural source of water such as a river, brook or stream. These are left to grow for about fifteen years with the side branches stripped off to provide a straight trunk without knots. When they reach 55 inches in circumference they are felled and then cut into 2 x 30 inch lengths (known as clefts) each of which is then split into five sections providing wood for ten cricket bats per tree. These are then seasoned by air drying before being made into bats in a lengthy process, much of which is still done by hand. The whips cost £30 each with guards against deer or rabbits and are planted and felled by the supplier and are sold when fully grown to the cricket bat manufacturers who sell the bats for around £300 each.

If there is an area of wetland prone to flooding in your parish, the planting of these trees could be a good idea. Ground, which is otherwise unusable could, by planting trees, benefit the environment and when harvested prove to be a good investment. If you know of a suitable planting site you might like some advice and a free, no obligation site visit.

For more information <http://www.cricketbatwillow.com/trees> or <http://www.kippaxcricket.co.uk>

### **A Small Planting**

Norman Hodnett, Sutton Benger



Sutton Benger is blessed with a nine acre recreation ground given to the people of the village by the heir to the Draycott Estate in 1920. Before the week long auction sale, apart from the Church and the Rectory, every piece of land and building had belonged to the Estate. A timber and corrugated iron village hall was built in the 1920s which served the community well before replacement by a modern building in 2001. At some time a small swing park was created alongside the original village hall. It too has been refurbished from time to time as equipment no longer met current standards. Some fifteen months ago a group of parents formed themselves into a working group to drive forward a programme of modernisation and updating and to economise if possible by doing the work themselves. They decided that they wanted to include some trees within the 40 by 30 metre enclosure - and flatteringly asked the Tree Warden for advice.

Inspection of the plan revealed that it would be necessary to choose the trees and their locations carefully. In my 1940s London childhood roundabouts and swings stood on concreted areas and lesson one was that if you fell off it hurt. Today there is a plethora of regulations covering 'soft areas' and clearances from nearby fences, trees etc. There can be no chance that a child could grasp twig or a branch while on a swing or slide.

Funding is tight and it was decided to offer the chance to plant a tree in memory of a relative for £50. This cost would include a tree, an engraved and mounted plaque, a tie and a stake and the opportunity to dig the hole and then plant a bare-root tree. The choice of tree was driven by the planting spots available and even then some would have to be columnar in growth. A very helpful bare-root nursery in Gloucestershire helped narrow the field and a field maple was chosen to eventually provide a shady spot, two Pyrus for their verticality, a Persian ironwood to go against the northern boundary for its foliage colour, and a *Tilia oliveri* to provide a striking tree near the entrance (and I've always wanted to plant one).

Planting day was 6 December (end of National Tree Week). I left at 9 am to collect the trees while the group leader set his tree donors digging guided by printed instructions. Returning with the trees at 11 am, I then helped with final shaping of the holes, positioning of the stakes and the actual planting. All was complete shortly after midday, finishing with at least two buckets of water per tree. Everyone seemed pleased with their efforts!

### *Matters of Interest to Tree Wardens*

#### **The Tree Council's Jubilee 'Diamond' Trees**

The book should be going to print by the end of January. The plaques will follow and should be ready by Easter.

### ***Application for works to trees in conservation areas***

In a conservation area, the law requires that anyone proposing to cut down or carry out any work on any tree, with a stem diameter of more than 75mm (approx 2 ½”) when measured at 1.5 metres height above ground level is required to give Wiltshire Council **six weeks’ notice**. There have been a few queries lately regarding the apparent lack of information that is submitted. These applications are officially only a notice of works. As long as the information is provided, they will be accepted in any written format, although people are encouraged to use the standard form.

Just to clarify, the application should include:

- A clear specification of the work, including a measurement (for example, crown raise to six metres).
- Sufficient particulars to identify the tree(s) must be provided. A sketch plan is optional, but encouraged (this does not have to be to scale)

The Council then have three options:

1. to issue a letter of no objections
2. to not respond at all
3. to create a Tree Preservation Order

Unless a Tree Preservation Order is served, people are free to carry out the work as soon as the six week notice period is up. Notification of an application is sent by email to the Parish clerk who should then advise the Tree Warden. All the relevant information should be available to view on the Council website the following day. However, it could be difficult to meet the deadline for objections if the Parish Council only meets ten times a year. If you think there is a reason to object to the work planned and time is short, contact Wiltshire Council direct rather than waiting for a Parish Council meeting.

Comments from Tree Wardens are of a particular importance on these applications, as Tree Officers only become involved if any objections are received. Very few trees will qualify for a Tree Preservation Order but more information on the regulations and time limits for these applications can be found on [our website](#).

### ***Management of Trees on Council-owned land***

The Wiltshire Council Tree Policy has been in preparation for a very long time. Part of the reason it has taken so long is that it is part of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan which covers many other countryside issues and it is still awaiting Cabinet approval. However, this policy is being used as a basis for any tree work and no work will be done to trees unless they are deemed to be dead, dying, dangerous or causing damage. A copy of this section of the draft policy can be seen on [our website](#). Be patient; it takes a little time to download because there are 20 pages but it makes interesting reading.

### ***Tree Planting Grants are currently available from:***

- The Woodland Trust  
Applications are now open for Community Tree packs which will be delivered in early November 2015. This is on-going for the foreseeable future.
- The Tree Council Futures Grant Scheme for Schools and the Community  
Any school or community group within the United Kingdom that is planning a project which actively involves children under the age of 16 is encouraged to draw on the fund to plant trees and make a greener future. The project is focussed on National Tree Week (28 November – 6 December 2015). Funds are also available for the planting of orchards by schools and community groups through the Orchard Windfalls Fund. Projects between £100 and £700 can be funded and successful applicants will receive up to 75% towards their planting costs. For example, if your project totals £700, The Tree Council would offer up to £525. The remaining 25% will need to be secured by your school or organisation.

## Bat Habitats Regulation Act 2015



A bill has been proposed by Christopher Chope, Conservative MP for Christchurch, to make provision to enhance the protection available for bat habitats in the countryside but to limit the protection for bat habitats in the 'built environment'. This means that the part of the aim of the bill is to limit the protection of bats in churches as, in some cases, bats have caused delays and problems when work on a building has been necessary. The Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) believes that the bill is impractical and could be disastrous for bat populations. BCT are of the opinion that when churches are given the right help and support and, where churches and conservationists work together in partnership, issues can be resolved and even large bat roosts can be accommodated. To learn more about the current debate go to [http://www.bats.org.uk/news.php/262/update\\_bat\\_habitats\\_regulation\\_bill](http://www.bats.org.uk/news.php/262/update_bat_habitats_regulation_bill)

### **Overhaul of the Woodland Grants System**

Steve Russell, Member of the Royal Forestry Society

[Woodland and Countryside Management Ltd.](#)

2015 will witness changes to the grant system as it applies to woodland management in England as well as who administers it. The overhaul of the woodland grants systems is part of the reform of the European Union Common Agricultural Policy. It will bring grant aid for woodlands into the central agricultural grant pot, rather than it being separate and managed through the Forestry Commission. It will be part of what will be called Countryside Stewardship which brings all support under the Common Agricultural Policy under the administration of Natural England.

The number of grants, the areas of work covered and the funding available will be far less and far more targeted. The impact will be that woodland will only get support if it is within the scheme and has an approved plan. The current position is that from February 2015 there will be grant support for the production of woodland plans, a three month window for a grant for new woodland and a grant for improving and restoring woodland aimed at woodland health. The reality is that there is little likelihood of any significant grant funding for woodland in the foreseeable future.

Does it matter that woodland grants will be administered by Natural England? If they use the existing Forestry Commission officers with expertise in woodland management, probably not but if generalists are used to cover all aspects of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme then there will be concerns. Would you use a general builder to do a specialist plumbing job? So with just a week or so to go, the government bodies have still not got their act together, the Forestry Commission seem to have given up and English Nature seem to be completely bogged down with what is happening for current scheme participants. On the ground it means that most woodland owners will carry on much as they do at the moment but in future they will be more reliant on the industry to make the woodlands balance the books.

As advisers our role will be to promote good practice and maximise value to ensure that managing woodland is seen as being worthwhile but the message has to be if you are managing woodland don't expect to get paid for doing it. The latest full update about Common Agricultural Policy schemes in England is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cap-reform-december-2014-update>. Further news is expected soon with some forestry grants being active from February.

### *Remember*

**Tree Care Campaign** 21 March - 21 September 2015

**Walk in the Woods** 1 May - 31 May 2015

**Seed Gathering Season** 23 September – 23 October

**National Tree Week** 28 November - 6 December 2015