

Tree Warden Report 2012

The tree warden is a voluntary post appointed by the parish council. The scheme was developed by the tree council in 24 years ago and there are currently about 8000 tree wardens. Tree wardens usually

- Advise on planning applications affecting trees as in removal or opportunities to re-plant trees and or hedges
- Advise on problems with trees acting as extra 'eyes and ears' for the SCDC tree officer and landscape officer with whom I work closely.
- Advise on tree and hedge care and maintenance especially on publicly owned sites –here these include the school, the playing field and Church Field
- In addition many tree wardens are involved with countryside planting schemes for hedges and trees and other projects involving habitat creation such as pond creation and road verge management. In Waldringfield I have been involved in the village verge project (Wildlife Group), school grounds management, playing field management and the Scattered Orchard Project (WALGA).

In the past year I have advised on a number of planning applications where **TPO trees** were involved. It should be emphasised that TPO trees are not the only trees of importance in the village. They may have a TPO because they were thought to be threatened in the past. SCDC are very reluctant to put on new TPOs as it is an expensive process for their overstretched officers. However ALL the trees affected by new developments are important and need to be looked at in connection with their contribution to the environment and the village scene. We have lost several large trees from the centre of this village for one reason or another, none of which was a TPO, but taken together this means a degradation of the environment.

Another aspect of concern is the loss of **large trees such as oaks and limes** and replacement with smaller growing trees. Where possible we need to replace the larger trees, especially our native oak and small leaved lime, which used to form forests in East Anglia. Anyone wishing to plant oaks or small leaved limes on their land is welcome to contact me for advice, help and possibly supply of trees depending on their situation.

On a pecuniary note, **SCDC removed the funding** for their hedge and tree planting schemes last year under the cuts although they will still advise. Other sources of funding are available, though involving more complicated sourcing through application to different bodies but it seems there is funding for trees and hedges available and anyone with ideas of replacing countryside hedges which have been lost and hedgerow trees should contact me to see what can be done.

Planting for wildlife: At the recent 'Tree Warden and Volunteer Seminar: Your Parish' (22nd March 2012) the following advice was given for encouraging butterflies and moths which you may be interested in: elm hedges –very good for the white letter hairstreak – but do keep elm hedges below 2m high or they will be attacked by the elm bark beetle and die;

Best trees for encouraging moths: oak, willow, birch, aspen and poplar

For butterflies: holly and elm

Also many moths and butterflies have grass as food plants and areas of long grass are very valuable for their caterpillars. So please restrict **use of strimmers**.

While on the subject of machinery, those **garden hoovers** which suck up all leaf litter must be greatly damaging to wildlife as they will kill or damage any insects they take up as well as destroying the

microscopic leaf and bark litter on which they depend, and remove the foraging sources for many songbirds, also making a dreadful noise while doing it.

Hedges: hedges are very valuable as wildlife links and tree wardens are generally encouraged to find places where hedges can usefully be planted to link existing hedges and woodland areas. As most people know hedges have been lost in great numbers throughout the British countryside over the last 60 years or so. Garden hedges are important too and an old field hedge along the end of a garden is also an important **wildlife corridor**. Some animals – dormouse for example – will be restricted to islands of scrubby vegetation if there is no aerial route for them as they will not descend to the ground. When I was doing the hedgerow survey around the agricultural fields I noticed that some of the hedges along garden boundaries are enriched with garden species such as apple trees, damsons and berrying shrubs such as *Pyracantha*. However unfortunately others had been removed. Generally when development is permitted in the countryside a hedge is stipulated along the rear of the property to preserve the views as well as wildlife, that is the view of the wider countryside as seen from public footpaths and roads.

The hedgerow survey was completed last summer and is here displayed. Green hedges are species rich – over 8 species in the hedge. Blue have 5, 6 or 7 and red have three or less species described as ‘species poor’. The survey was coordinated by Guy Ackers at Greenprint Forum sponsored by SCDC and the SWT among others. Guy amassed the results of x thousand hedges throughout Suffolk. He has analysed the results which indicate more species rich hedges on the clay lands (60%) than the sandlands (30%). The results for each parish are lodged with the landscape Officer so that they have a detailed record of what is growing in each parish to consult when considering planning applications.

The hedgerow survey did not cover garden hedges except where these border on agricultural land. However garden hedges throughout the village and garden trees supply important habitat as well as improving the atmosphere by giving out water and oxygen into the air and alleviating flood risk.

Watering of trees

I am appending advice from the tree council (the body which co-ordinates tree wardens) about watering trees in dry weather. Especially if newly planted, trees will need to be watered where there is drought as this can lead to their death or to severe stress where diseases can then take over. Grey water from washing is quite good enough for trees, distributed around where the roots are growing, not directly over the trunk. At least a whole can of water should be given each time – about a gallon- or more. If trees show signs of stress such as drooping leaves, start watering at least once a week – the Tree Council recommends three per week. The Wayfaring Tree in the village hall grounds will need this as it looks severely stressed already. Also the new apple trees planted in spring this year will need it unless we get lots of rain.

This has been an exciting year with the WALGA orchard project beginning in the three villages and it will be very interesting to see how this develops.

Christine Fisher Kay, 16th April 2012

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