

Tree Warden Report 2014

To quote from the Tree Council:

'The Tree Warden Scheme is a national initiative to enable people to play an active role in conserving and enhancing their local trees and woods. The scheme was founded and is co-ordinated by The Tree Council.'

Tree Wardens are volunteers, appointed by parish councils or other community organisations, who gather information about their local trees, get involved in local tree matters and encourage local practical projects related to the trees and woods.'

In the past year I have been involved in

- Advising on planning applications affecting trees
- Advising on and taking part in tree and hedge care and maintenance on publicly owned sites – the school, the playing field and Church Field.
- Advising residents on problems relating to trees on their land.
- 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, the Scattered Orchard Project (WALGA) and also the hedgerow survey now completed.

Chalara disease of ash.

This is a continuing problem and there are many sites in East Anglia where it has been found. I am not aware of any in Waldringfield parish but please let me know if anyone has found it. The forestry commission continue to monitor the situation and are conducting a breeding programme to try to find resistant strains of ash. Advice is not to plant ash at present and if the disease is found to report to the forestry commission but not cut down the tree as it may lead to further distribution of the spores.

Dutch Elm disease: The advice continues to be to keep all hedges down to about 2m as they become infected at 3m or above, depending also on stem thickness. Dead elm should be cut low down near the ground.

Other diseases: There are now more strict controls in place for the importation of plane trees, pines and sweet chestnut to prevent further spread of diseases from other countries.

Trees and hedges in the village

Each year brings more challenges and the loss of more trees and hedges from the village. The St Jude storm resulted in the loss of some large trees around the parish. There is always the opportunity to plant more trees and I would be happy to advise on the placement, planting and sourcing of trees. For example it is often preferable to

start with younger trees which get off to a better start than more expensive large rootballed versions. Please contact me with any questions whatsoever.

Importance of trees and hedges

To re-iterate what I said last year, TPO trees are not the only trees of importance in the village. The trees which contribute to the village scene also improve the air quality, provide homes for all kinds of wildlife and contribute to a sense of well being which has been shown in various studies worldwide to be beneficial to health and recovery from illness.

Where possible and where there is room we need fit in the larger trees, especially our native oak and small leaved lime, which used to form forests in East Anglia.

As reported last year, SCDC removed the funding for their hedge and tree planting schemes in 2011 under the cuts. Other sources of funding are often available however and anyone with ideas of replacing countryside hedges which have been lost and hedgerow trees should contact me to see what can be done.

A word on hedges.

While hedges require maintenance they can also be a joy to behold, providing flower, fruit and shelter for birds through the seasons. They are also important to hedgehogs. If putting in close board fencing please think about where hedgehogs might find a gap as they apparently need to rove far and wide between gardens and fields, more than was previously thought. The wildlife group have a hedgehog project in the pipeline. Fencing which supports climbers can however still be of value to wildlife for example spotted flycatchers prefer to nest on a wall or fence among climbing plants. However, preferably plant new hedges where possible either of native species or the many ornamentals which make fine hedges and may be more easily managed. One I would avoid is laurel as it requires an enormous amount of cutting and the leaves contain cyanide so are no good for your compost heap.

Watering of trees (advice from the Tree Council)

Especially if newly planted, trees 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.

Planting season: I am sometimes asked about planting times. Plant trees and hedges in autumn before Christmas to get the best start. However planting can continue through the dormant season to February. More watering may be needed if it is delayed. Evergreens are supposed to be moved in May.