

**Climate Change Working Group**  
**7pm on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – The Cannon Inn**

Present: Chris Lea, Rosemary Walker, Ted Swan, Geraldine Swan and Gill Cameron Webb

Apologies: Maz Dufall, Joan Bisseker, Steve Filer and Howard Hughes.

**MINUTES**

**1. Webber's Meadow**

1.1. On 3/2/24 three of the CCG team and a volunteer met in Webber's Meadow:

- planted five cherries and five rowans in the south field;
- shifted more of the dumped concrete to build up the stone habitat;
- used a massive magnet which picked up 170lbs of pallet nails from the bonfire area which were taken to the tip. Ted reported this to the Parish Council on 27/2/24 as a safety issue;
- moved leftover logs from the bonfire to make a habitat in the trees to the east;
- planted a gorse bush and a Lonicera on the western boundary to create habitat;
- put up the bird box which had fallen down.

1.2. Last year we found grass snake eggs in the woodchip pile and in a bag of woodchip so we'd like to make some more robust woodchip habitats that can't be got at by dogs.

Chris has a large old box we can fill with woodchip and we'll ask around for pallets. Gill will ask around for some free woodchip.

1.3. Ted planted 100 willows where the fence fell on the north edge of north field and will be planting another 30.

**2. Parklife/DCC trees**

On 26/2/24 two volunteers and three CCG members joined Parklife in the new cemetery to weed the hedging and re-stake the trees.

DCC ordered small feathered whips so Parklife bought small stakes when we planted the trees last year. However when the tree nursery actually delivered 8' trees on the day they had to be planted with the small stakes so Parklife has now started re-staking all the trees with much bigger, double, stakes. The new cemetery trees and 1 tree in the sportsfield have been done so far and we're waiting for Parklife to provide dates for doing the rest.

The sportsfield trees still need to be weeded so Gill will send out a date and see who's free.

On the 26/2/24 we also added some whips to extend a sportsfield hedge.

### 3. School Trees

Steve arranged for us to get into the school on 31/1/24.

Gill and Chris, ably assisted by six Year 6 children and their tutor, planted 6 new cherry trees and replanted 5 other whips using much more robust stakes and tree guards which won't get flattened by footballs and lawn mowers.

We also weeded and mulched the 7 AONB trees and removed the canes.

### 4. Val's Memorial Trees

On 21/2/24 VOSRA planted 3 whitebeams donated by Bowhayes Farm so this means there's now a tree planted in each village of the parish in Val's memory.

Ted made three plaques; he's already put one in Harpford and will put the other two up soon.

Gill updated the people who donated money for the Harpford Churchyard tree via GoFundMe and will now put a spreadsheet on the Parish Council website showing how all three trees were donated.

Gill will also do a Parish Magazine article and include the three trees planted in Val's memory so that everyone knows where to find them.

### 5. Trees on EDDC land

Paul Fealey (Streetscene) responded to our survey of EDDC land:

- he queried the four trees we planted on Burrow Green last year as it turns out that the land belongs to EDDC. Because Parklife checked there were no underground services and because the trees will be re-staked EDDC say we can keep the trees where they are;
- he suggested putting hedging all around Burrow Green next year to create a community area;
- Paul is planning to check Turner Close playpark and the top of Meadow Drive for underground services this week;
- Paul says we can't plant trees in Millmoor Vale as all the locations we suggested are within 7m of underground services. Gill will double-check the proposed tree in the south east corner;
- we can't put any trees on Chestnut Way green to eventually replace the Ash trees when they die because the new trees would be shaded out by the Ash Trees;
- Paul says that Streetscene don't maintain the gardens on Turner Close but we could speak to Victoria Robinson (Housing) to see if they could help with planting apple trees in gardens.

### 6. Saving Devon's Treescapes

On 2/2/24 Ted, Chris, Rosemary and Gill talked with Graham Beck about getting trees from Saving Devon's Treescapes (SDT).

Graham has now sent an email to say:

- he's put in a request for Newton Popleford to do another a Free Tree Giveaway next winter;
- SDT will supply hedging whips for the allotment and could also provide more trees for the sportsfield if wished;
- SDT are keen for us to plant black poplars in Webber's Meadow as they were traditionally used to reinforce river banks at a deeper level than willow ;
- they can provide apple trees for the school and mini tree nurseries for the school and allotments;
- they can't provide apple trees for Turner Close gardens but suggest that EDDC might be able to help with this;
- if we get permission to plant any trees on EDDC land they can give us British native tree whips up to 1.5m tall;
- Webber's Meadow pond reappeared after the recent rains. SDT can provide water tolerant trees such as Alder, Downy Birch and Willow for the flooded area if we like;
- Graham's continuing to look for someone we can contact in Highways to plant street trees.

Gill will fill in a form to formally request anything we would like from Saving Devon's Treescapes.

## 7. Venn Ottery Green

VOSRA will plant the small leafed lime "Landmark" tree donated by the Devon Wildlife Trust to replace the tree uprooted during the mini-tornado.

## 8. Bio-Diversity in Churchyards

8.1. The newly planted snowdrops and daffodils appeared in St Luke's churchyard, they look a little sparse at the moment but will hopefully multiply and give a better show in future years. Unfortunately the crocus's haven't appeared (yet).

We'll plant some hellebores and cyclamens in the south west corner of St Lukes churchyard in March/April. Chris also has a honeysuckle, a rambling rose and a gorse bush to plant at the same time

Gill will send out a proposed date for the planting.

8.2. Ted put up a new bird box in Venn Ottery churchyard and repositioned one in Harpford churchyard.

8.3. Gill will contact David Curry (Diocese of Exeter) and ask if he can survey our four parish churchyards and draw up a list of things which could be done to improve bio-diversity.

Brian Bartlett said it's okay to survey Harpford Churchyard but we still need to check with Venn Ottery.

8.4. Later this year Gill will ask Devon Wildlife to lend us a microphone & sensor (FoC) to see if there are bats in the old hidden shed in St Luke's churchyard.

## 9. Left Over AONB Freebies

Gill still has 20 hedgehog fence markers which we'll hopefully give away at next year's Free Tree Give Away.

## 10. Grounds Maintenance

The Parish Clerk said all our proposals were included in the new grounds maintenance contract. She'll be meeting with the new people before their contract starts on 1 April and said we could join the meeting.

## 11. Grass Banks

### 11.1. Green Bank

Gill to agree a date with Chris to put stakes in the ground while the daffodils are in flower so we know where the shrubs will go.

The shrub suggestions put forward were:

- Heather bush (Exeter)
- Photina (dwarf)
- Pittsoporum (dwarf)
- Skimmia
- Sarcocca
- Viburnum (smaller)
- Osmanthus

Before we buy any shrubs we'll check with the nursery plantsman that they'll be okay for the location (height, width, aspect, etc).

11.2. Gill to ask the Parish Clerk who owns the higher School Lane grass bank so we can consider whether to plant wildflowers or trees there.

## 12. Other Projects

12.1. Ted believes the Terms of Reference for the East Devon National Landscape is the same as for the East Devon AONB it replaces.

12.2 Clinton Devon Estates Nature Restoration Project are having a committee meeting on 2/4/24. Rosemary will email an outline of their plans out to us.

12.3. Ted hasn't heard back from the Electricity people about planting trees or shrubs to hide the generator station.

## 13. Next Meeting

The next meeting is on Weds 1<sup>st</sup> May at 7pm in the Cannon Inn.