



Broadland Tree Warden Network

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Report for Acle Annual Parish Meeting – 26 April 2021

The Broadland Tree Warden Network is now in its third year as an independent Network, following the closure of the Broadland District Council scheme. We still enjoy an excellent relationship with the District Council who have supported us with an annual £5,000 tree planting budget. Our only other source of income comes from town and parish councils in response to our annual requests for donations. Not all councils make a donation but we are extremely grateful to those who do as it allows us to pay our annual subscription to The Tree Council.

Perhaps the most important change in the way this Network operates today compared with the way we operated under Broadland District Council is that we are no longer “Parish Tree Wardens”. We are not appointed by parish councils but instead by the Network. Hence, your Tree Warden is now known as the “Broadland Tree Warden for Acle”.

That change has allowed us to recruit more Tree Wardens and today I am pleased to report that this Network has 41 Tree Wardens covering 27 of Broadland’s 64 parishes. Of those 64 parishes, 5 have unfortunately stated that they have no interest in having a Tree Warden. Never before has Broadland had as many Tree Wardens.

The title “Tree Warden” is actually a registered Trade Mark of the Tree Council and can only be used by volunteers who are registered with a Tree Warden Network that subscribes to the Tree Council.

In addition to our roles within the parishes to which we have been appointed, we now also work as teams, enabling us to tackle larger, more ambitious projects. Projects such as tree and hedge planting and woodland management.

Each project commences with a detailed Project Proposal, submitted to the relevant parish/town council for comment. That is then followed by an even more detailed Management Plan, agreed with the relevant council. The Network then submits annual reports to that council, detailing the work completed and that planned. Hopefully, that will then display the professional approach of the Broadland Tree Warden Network and avoid any “misunderstandings”. We have a detailed knowledge of conservation matters and a professional approach to our work.

During the 2020-2021 planting season which ended at the end of March we planted 1,079 trees and just over 200m of native hedging, all supplied from our £5,000 tree planting budget from Broadland District Council. We all know that land on which to plant trees is difficult to find and Broadland District Council will only fund planting on publicly owned or publicly accessible land. Therefore I think that we have been very successful with our tree planting.

Indeed, I am delighted to report that following our successful planting, Broadland District Council has agreed to increase our budget for 2021/2022 by £2,000 to £7,000.

Our work with schools has been greatly curtailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but while we have for some years had a most successful Junior Tree Warden scheme in Freethorpe and Wickhampton, when lockdown rules permit, we plan to start additional schemes in Thorpe St Andrew and Salhouse.

Nationally, tree nurseries are warning of severe shortages in the next couple of years because local authorities have committed to ambitious tree planting targets without actually considering where the plants will come from! Nobody warned the nurseries! This Network has taken steps to ensure a steady supply of native planting material by creating our own nursery, growing trees from locally collected seed thereby ensuring known provenance with strict adherence to plant biosecurity. Whilst most our stock will need a couple of years before it is ready to plant out, we have been asked if we can supply trees to Norfolk County Council.

All of our Tree Wardens continue to be on the look-out for trees that warrant a Tree Protection Order and make appropriate recommendations to Broadland District Council if and when necessary. Similarly, our Tree Wardens report any cases of unlawful works carried out on protected trees.

Town and parish councils are not formally notified of applications to carry out works on protected trees. However, our Tree Wardens are made aware of them in the Network's monthly newsletter, Broadsheet. He or she will then formally submit their views to Broadland District Council for consideration when making a decision.

In all of these matters relating to TPOs, and indeed all matters relating to trees, hedgerows and ecological matters, the Tree Warden will report the matter and actions taken to the his or her town or parish council.

I am enormously proud to be the Co-ordinator of The Broadland Tree Warden Network and all that we have achieved to date. I wish to assure you that we shall always endeavour to serve parishes to the best of our abilities and protect and enhance our local environments.

John Fleetwood

Network-Co-ordinator.
The Broadland Tree Warden Network.