

Minutes of the South Norfolk Tree Wardens' Forum Executive Committee meeting held at SNDC offices on Thursday 7th June 5.30-6.00.

Present: Henry Gowman, Steve Dowall, Rona Beardsley, Chris Brooks, Sarah Barney, Jon Stokes (Tree Council)

Apologies: Mike Hall

Matters arising from minutes of meeting 11th April not covered in Agenda - none

Preliminary Arrangements for East Anglian Tree Forum: Tasburgh Village Hall Saturday 24th September. 'The Past, Present and Future Treescape of East Anglia'

(working title)

We need SNTW's to volunteer to be guides and wardens on the day.

9.30: arrive tea/coffee

10.00: Welcome. Tree planting to mark 25th anniversary of Tree Warden Scheme. John Fuller Chief Executive of SNDC to plant an oak tree in the grounds of the Village Hall.

10.30: Group A leave for field trip to Fritton Common to be conducted by Gerry Barnes
UEA Group B to go on local trip led by Jon Stokes

11.15: Groups to switch

12.45 Return and lunch

2.00 Speakers: Jon Stokes -National context

Robin Taylor - local context, Ann Edwards Tree Disease and likely impact on future treescape.

4.30: Close

It was acknowledged that this programme is very tight and that changes may be necessary.

Arrangements for South Norfolk Show Sunday 18th July. 10.00 - 16.00

Volunteers will be needed to run our information stall. The purchase of publicity banners was discussed.

Progress of ideas for 25th anniversary of Tree Warden Scheme in South Norfolk.

Only a few Tree Wardens had responded to the idea of parish tree walks. It was agreed that any walks would be available on line and hoped that this archive could be developed. No other ideas have been forthcoming from members.

Training for Tree Wardens: This would be very helpful as we range from inexperienced to expert in our knowledge of trees and planting. Henry and Jon to devise training at all levels of expertise.

AOB: Money from Bussey's should be forthcoming (approx. £7000). ID badge design/use to be put to General meeting. NB Money now received in excess of £8,000
Meeting closed at 1830 ahead of General Meeting Next meeting 10th August 2016

Minutes of the General meeting of the South Norfolk Tree Wardens' Forum held at SNCC offices on Thursday 7th June 6.30-8.00

Present: Henry Gowman, Steve Dowall, Rona Beardsley, Chris Brooks, Sarah Barney (committee members) Jon Stokes (Tree Council)

An outline of the preceding committee meeting was given.

Re ID badges: Henry had designed and had made a prototype South Norfolk Tree Warden badge for ID purposes. These could be engraved with the names of individual tree wardens at a cost of approx. £4 each. Cheaper badges were available but not personalized. After discussion it was decided to investigate the cost of lanyard style ID details

Re: South Norfolk Show: Robert offered the use of a publicity board made for previous shows.

Re: 25th Anniversary celebrations Jon Stokes suggested the compilation by nomination and voting of the 25 most remarkable trees in South Norfolk.

Jon Stokes gave a most interesting and wide ranging presentation on the formation of the Tree Warden Scheme, Tree Planting and Tree ID, Training and Tree Disease, and the future for trees in East Anglia.

From the outset Tree Wardens were envisaged as:

1. Being a champion for trees
2. Being the eyes and ears in the community on tree matters.
3. Finding out what is in their local community
4. Doing something practical - planting and caring for trees and hedgerows.

Training needs.

Tree ID - growing trees from seed,

How what, when and where to plant and to then how to take care of the trees.

He gave illustrated and anecdotal examples of how well and how badly this could be done including being cautious and circumspect when deciding whether a tree is a risk to public safety.

The following link was recommended:

[Common sense risk management of trees](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCMS024.pdf/$FILE/FCMS024.pdf)

[www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCMS024.pdf/\\$FILE/FCMS024.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCMS024.pdf/$FILE/FCMS024.pdf)

Planting trees: Jon reported on a recent study in Denmark on tree planting - comparing those planting alone in grass, as we often do, with those planted in roundels and mulched. The second group grew three times as fast, produced three times the growth and cost a third of the price. The lesson was, 'plant by thinking like a tree'

The future for trees in East Anglia. Jon has noted, in his extensive travels around the UK that something very problematic is happening to trees in East Anglia, which is wider

than the failure of individual trees through disease. Given other variables, it can only be a basic water problem and he gives this absence of water as the main cause of tree failure across the region. East Anglia is possibly the driest region in the UK with probably the highest water abstraction rate via bore holes for crop irrigation. It may be necessary to look at more drought resistant trees for new planting and the use of watering bags. He also reported a strong finding that adding a teaspoon of fertilizer in the first watering to a tree had a very beneficial effect on growth. It made no difference what 'brand' or type of fertilizer was used.

Tree Disease: Ash dieback - Jon talked about the two types of rings which the ash produces, one in Spring identified as having dots on it and one in Summer which is white and each easily distinguishable. This pattern is now being disrupted and the rings are becoming less distinct. It appears that the trees are not laying down reserves of energy. It is the leaves that supply this energy and their loss through ash dieback disease, which is interrupting this natural process ultimately weakening the tree.

Jon disclosed one aspect of Ash Dieback that is worrying national government. There are billions of Ash trees, millions of which are growing in highway hedgerows or verges. The trees which have the disease are likely to fail suddenly and without warning, thereby posing a serious safety risk to the travelling public. Consultations are under way at the highest level as to how to tackle this risk.

Ann Edwards and Jon had a very interesting conversation around Ash Dieback. All tree disease matters will be more fully explored at the conference.

Tree ID

We ended the meeting with a session on tree ID from common leaf samples bought in by Henry and Jon. Most of us identified most of them and Jon gave us some good tips on distinguishing between 'look-a-likes' In the case of some of the leaves we were inspecting:

Hazel: feels soft and furry

Elm: Sandpaper feel

Sycamore: 5 lobes

Field maple: three lobes

He recommended the 'Reader's Digest Book of Trees' as being the best Field Identification book, which Henry endorsed – having a copy on the table. This book is available for a remarkably modest price from Amazon (or possibly from proper book shops).

A lot of was learned from this stimulating, entertaining and informative meeting and promises an excellent conference in September.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 10th August at 1830 South Norfolk Council Offices
East Anglian Tree Warden Forum Saturday 24th September

Sarah Barney - Secretary 17/6/16