

Saplings Planting Project – November 2015

November saw a great deal of tree planting activity on the Green. Following a tree stock survey and subsequent analysis in September, we put together an application to the Woodland Trust “Community Trees Scheme”.

On offer was a menu of half a dozen different packs of free tree saplings, each having different combinations of species suitable for the development of different types of woodland. We applied for, and were awarded, packs described as “Working Wood”, “Wild Wood”, and “Wild Harvest”. This gave us altogether over 400 free saplings of 14 different species. (See table overleaf.)

The survey had revealed a number of areas requiring tree stock refurbishment and development for various reasons. For example:

- to increase species diversity,
- to ensure maintenance of the canopy for the future, as existing trees mature and succumb to disease or wind damage,
- to re-instate the sense of density of woodland as viewed from outside the Green and within, and to re-establish a feeling of seclusion and peaceful tranquillity where practical and safe,
- to replace diseased and damaged stock (most notably elm) that had already been removed.

The latter had fallen, or been felled for safety reasons, and had left certain areas very sparsely wooded and overtaken by undergrowth.

Among other aspects we took into account were:

- to extend the life of the new paths by more carefully managing new and existing tree stock close to the pathways (mainly to reduce leaf litter accumulation),
- to balance the desire for seclusion with personal safety considerations,
- to avoid increasing maintenance issues around the pond area.

The planting strategy that emerged from this study resulted in identifying and prioritising two sorts of possible planting areas: firstly areas where thicket could be encouraged in the form of **hedgerow strips** around the perimeter and within the Green to provide some screening; and secondly, areas where planting of varying density could usefully establish (or re-establish) growth of **individual standard trees**.



Photo courtesy of DKS

Over 60 volunteers turned out to help us over four weekends in November. There was a lot of work to do to prepare the ground for planting. Strimming and clearing undergrowth and digging out the planting spots took the best part of three weekends. The actual planting was accomplished in just two days!

We are very grateful to those hard-working volunteers, who were essential to the success of the project. Many young people became involved – it will be fun for them to watch the new trees grow over the years and decades. Some have already been out with tape measures, hoping to see some early progress!

SPECIES PLANTED – November 2015	
Hedgerows – (about 60 linear metres – close planting)	Standard Trees – (about 1,300 sq m – varied density)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blackthorn (60) • crab apple (2) • dog rose (30) • elder (30) • hawthorn (15) • hazel (41) • holly (15) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • common oak (14) • crab apple (54) • downy birch (30) • field maple (15) • grey willow (15) • hawthorn (4) • rowan (46) • silver birch (15) • wild cherry (15)
– a total of 193 saplings	– a total of 208 saplings

Linked files have additional information: There is a site plan showing areas covered in this planting, and a table showing which species were planted where. {INSERT LINKS of WMGT-hosted files}

Key Project Personnel:

Operations Manager: **Jason Cowling**

Volunteer Teams Coordinators:

Mark Swan, Richard Lea, Luke Jennings

Volunteer Recruitment: **Daisy Hawken**

Budget Management: **Jeremy Hawken**

Coffee and Cakes: **Dietlind Bland and Debby Saxby**

Horticultural Consultant: **Sue White**

Project Director and Architect: **Brian Saxby**