

BFPC Climate and Ecological Report 25th May 2022.

1. Trees.

- **Landmark Tree.** The Landmark Tree that was planted in the Recreation Field in November 2021 was destroyed in an arson attack. Forest For Cornwall is now offering a further batch of Landmark Trees to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee for planting in the winter on 2022-23. Having enquired as to our eligibility for a replacement, I have now applied for a replacement tree.
- **A388 Tree Plantation.** A recent count of the trees identified 170 young healthy trees of 13 different species. Namely:
 - Oak
 - Hazel
 - Silver Birch
 - Hawthorn
 - Dogwood
 - Alder
 - Goat Willow
 - Beech
 - Horse Chestnut
 - Elderberry
 - Hornbeam
 - Wild Cherry
 - Rowan

Several of these are nearing 2m in height, and some Rowan and Dogwood are showing blossoms. Good signs off health and vigour.

Volunteer Gary Ford has carried out the first of our planned monthly strimmings to control brambles and other plants that would threaten the continued growth and vigour of the trees. It is not the intention to create a "green desert" around the trees. Many wildflowers have taken the opportunity of establishing themselves in the absence of the previous dense bramble thicket. This is greatly adding to the biodiversity of the area.

- **"Taking Action for Healthy Trees" Seminar.** I recently attended this on-line seminar hosted by The Tree Council for Tree Wardens. Useful information about how to ensure newly planted trees get off to a healthy start, as well as signs to look out for that may indicate disease.

It is evident that more ash trees in the Parish are now showing signs of Ash Dieback. Any that are on verges that are part of the publically maintained

highway are the responsibility of Cornwall Council. However, any on private land that border the highway, and are showing signs of disease, are the responsibility of the landowner, and should be felled to avoid injury to motorists or other members of the public. Cornwall Council's advice to those who may have concerns of this nature is to first of all talk to the landowner concerned to see if the issue can be resolved in that way. However, if you still have concerns, you can also report the problem direct to Cornwall Council by using the "Report a Problem" form here:

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/transport-parking-and-streets/roads-highways-and-pavements/report-a-problem-with-a-road-or-pavement/report-issues-with-hedges-or-verges/>

2. Hatt Roundabout.

- BFPC contractor has recently completed the second safety cut on the roundabout, namely a 1m cut around the edge and a 5m cut through the north-south diameter to provide visibility for pedestrians crossing the A388. A number of Ox-eye Daisies and Hawksbeard have been intentionally left uncut around the perimeter as they are valuable for pollinators and do not impede visibility.

At first glance the roundabout is covered with short, fine, native grasses of different species. These will often wave and shimmer in the wind like a field of miniature corn. While not "in your face" eye-catching and visually arresting, grasses such as these are a valuable habitat for invertebrates, many of which act as pollinators. They provide shelter, food and reproduce opportunities. The caterpillars of several butterfly species feed on these grasses and often pupate and overwinter there.

On closer inspection, the roundabout actually has a rich carpet of wildflowers in amongst the grasses, including red and white clover, knapweed, buttercups, daisies, cuckoo flower and cranesbill. Again, not showy or flamboyant, but vital for the survival of our native pollinators.

Most of us are now familiar with and accept that we are living in a Climate Emergency. Not so well publicised is that this is going hand in hand with an Ecological Emergency. There has been a catastrophic fall in the number of insects world-wide, thanks to a combination of damaging farming practices and climate change. Why does this matter? Virtually all our fruit and vegetable food crops depend on insect pollination. Without these invertebrates we would likely be reduced to a diet of meat, fish, potatoes and bread.

Cornwall Council declared an Ecological Emergency in December 2021, recognising the parlous state of our county's ecology. The policies they have set out to address this are very much inline with what BFPC is trying to achieve. One example is their current statement of how they intend to manage the grass verges in the county. This very much mirrors the approach that BFPC has been employing for the past four years, often in the face of opposition from certain sectors of the community. As a nation, county and village we owe it to future generations to manage our precious landscape in such a way as to ensure they have a healthy, productive place in which to live. This will sometimes mean rethinking our views of what constitutes "attractive". A healthy natural environment can at times appear untidy and unkempt, but that is the natural order of things with the changing of the seasons. The dead hand of winter is necessary for the birth, renewal and colour of spring and summer. We should embrace that cycle of nature. It's deep within our DNA.

Cllr Malcolm Fletcher