

Biodiversity Report 24th April 2019.

Tree Planting Proposal.

- **Why plant trees?**

Cornwall Council, along with numerous other local authorities, has declared a Climate Emergency. It is now almost universally accepted that the planet is warming at an unprecedented and dangerous rate as a result of greenhouse gases being released as a side effect of human activity. One of the most prevalent of these gases is carbon dioxide. This, and other greenhouse gases, traps heat in the earth's atmosphere, resulting in global warming and climate change which will have potentially catastrophic results.

Obviously there is a major role for international bodies and national governments here. However, the old saying "Think global, act local!" very much applies too. There are a number of low-cost, low-tech measures we as a parish can take to do our bit. One of these is to plant trees. Young, growing trees capture carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and convert it into woody tissue in their trunks and branches. A hectare of forest in Europe can capture about 300 tonnes of CO₂ a year.

The CO₂ is only released when the tree is felled and burned or dies and decays. Unfortunately, this is what is about to happen to most of our ash trees. Ash dieback disease has spread across Europe and into the UK. It is estimated that most ash trees will eventually succumb to this. As a very minimum we have to try to offset this loss by replacing the ash trees with other native species if we are to even tread water.

- **What we can do here.**

Highways have given BFPC outline permission to plant native trees and/or wildflowers along the A388 verges north and south of Hatt roundabout. The most suitable areas would seem to be:

- The north east verge. There is an area approximately the size of half a tennis court that extends from the junction with the Botus lane to a much larger area of dense brambles punctuated by medium-sized saplings of mixed species. It is currently an area of tussocky grass.
- The south east verge. This extends from the Botus lane junction, past the Cardinals to the parish boundary with Saltash. Highways have confirmed that this is in fact part of the Maintained Highway, and hence public land. However, it is not clear where exactly the boundary between the Maintained Highway and land belonging to the Cardinals lies. South of entrance to Tree Alley most of this verge is covered in dense brambles, apart from the narrow grassed footpath. Approximately 200 m. south of Tree Alley, the verge

widens considerably and is free of brambles. It appears to be regularly mown by the owners of the Cardinals. There is certainly potential here for tree planting. This need not necessarily be in conflict with the commercial interests of the Cardinal's Hatt. In fact the presentation for their recent Planning Application placed much emphasis on their green credentials. They might even wish to sponsor this venture!

- Once the situation of the Recreation Field has been finalised, there is also the potential for some tree planting there.

- **Cost**

Failing commercial sponsorship, the Woodland Trust, the Tree Council and Cornwall Council offer various packages of trees, many free of charge. We also have Mervyn Ellis's generous offer to provide some funding from the proceeds of his monthly quiz night. All in all, the initial outlay for BFPC should be minimal. There would of course be on-going maintenance costs to keep the young trees free of excessive weed growth and bramble incursion. This could be undertaken by the Community Action Team or by Cormac as part of their general roadside maintenance programme.

- **Next steps.**

- Apply to Woodland Trust and Tree Council for support.
- Produce a planting and maintenance schedule for approval by Cormac
- Clarify situation re property boundary of Cardinal's and Maintained Highway.
- Engage with local community to create a working group, especially young people.
- Begin planting in winter of 2019-20

Malcolm Fletcher, April 2019.