

Biodiversity Report, June 2020.

1. Parish Tree Planting.

The young trees donated by The Woodland Trust in March, and planted by resident volunteers, are thriving despite the prolonged drought of April and May. This is largely due to the kind “donation” of water by nearby residents, and the hard work of resident and BFPC volunteers to water and trim weeds and brambles.

When social distancing guidelines permit, we have the opportunity to access free wood chips from Cornwall Council. These would have to be collected by BFPC members. The chips would not necessarily be able to suppress bramble growth, but would certainly be useful to control annual weeds and to reduce moisture loss in periods of drought.

BFPC is eligible to apply for further free tree packs from The Woodland Trust this year. Councillors may want to consider this, bearing in mind the following:

- The parish is still sadly lacking in public spaces suitable for planting.
- There are still substantial areas of bramble along the north east verge of the A388 that could be cleared for planting. However, the clearing would be an additional cost to BFPC. Any after care, especially in times of drought, would also be much more difficult.
- Another option might be to consider asking local landowners to donate, or provide for a peppercorn rent, a piece of land for an allotment or community orchard. Given the recent upsurge of home vegetable growing prompted by the Covid emergency, this would likely be well supported by residents. A draft letter previously circulated is available should councillors be interested in this proposal.

2. Grass management.

- The proposals previously approved by Councillors for the management of grass verges in Hatt village and on the A388 roundabout have now been approved by Cormac. Cormac did not, however, support the use of black chippings on the transverse cuts of the roundabout, saying they could cause some confusion for drivers. The transverse cuts will therefore be just mown. Cornwall Council will contribute £392.42 to the cost of the mowing. The contract will be reviewed in March 2021.

- Cornwall Council have just made public their new verge cutting policy which perfectly mirrors what we here in BFPC have been advocating for some time. The main points are:
 - “a new verge-cutting policy in our towns and villages, which aims to encourage wildflowers and pollinators to thrive and allow more natural growth without compromising road safety.
 - Annual cuts will be more than halved from eight times to only two or three.
 - Cutting will be done *after* the flowers have finished and seeds are set.
 - Environmental Growth means creating the space and conditions for more abundant, productive and healthier habitats, species and natural systems. These, in turn, improve the lives of people.
 - The Pollinator Action plan manages the Councils assets and operations to make sure they are more pollinator friendly.”

Cornwall Council finally catching up with Botus Fleming!

Cllr Malcolm Fletcher, June 2020.