



Annual Report to the Parish Council 2020-21

This project has been supported by:

The Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment with funding from Grundon Waste Management Ltd

Background and Strategic Overview

Initiated in the pub over a beer in November 2019 at the suggestion of co-founder, David Brooks, the South Leigh Forest Restoration group (SLFR) has made good, but slower-than-hoped-for, progress in its first 18 months. We had aimed at planting 200 trees per year for five years and we have planted 100. Future planting towards the objective of 1,000 trees is uncertain. Private planting, however, has resulted in more than 1,700 trees being planted.

We believe that this initiative and its frequent communication and 'community involvement' has raised a very positive awareness of trees and sustainability in the Parish and contributes towards the general long-term Neighbourhood Plan objectives for South Leigh as a precious rural community.

The difficulty in sourcing sites is disappointing. That is partly because of the new government agriculture policy that was released early this year over which there is confusion among land owners / managers. This has resulted in landowners' understandable reluctance to allocate land to us from which they might, potentially, be able to benefit from grants, themselves.

That is not all bad because the thrust of the new government policy, as we understand it, is to remove certain crop subsidies and to replace them with grants to land owners for contributing to the environment and sustainability, including tree planting. We don't mind who plants them, or who pays, so long as they are planted. We still believe, however, that there is an important role for a small scale, inclusive community endeavour, such as SLFR.

We have learned a lot about trees, planting and local land ownership and the time it takes to raise funds since the first beer. We are now working hard to find one or two large sites so that we can 'catch up' with our SLFR objective of planting 200 trees a year towards the 1,000 by 2024/25. That remains elusive.

Our approved Parish Council plan is [on this page](#).

Money and Acknowledgements

Our 10th March 2021 report to the PC provided quite some narrative so here we set out a more succinct presentation of the achievements and try not to duplicate information. However, our annual report must record our thanks to those who have helped.

What we have done could not have been achieved without support and money and we are most grateful to all who have contributed in any way.

In particular, we thank retiring **County Councillor Charles Mathew**, who provided the first grant of £475 from the County Council's Priority Fund 2019/20 that got us up and running. Then, we applied to the **Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE)** and received £238 funding from **Grundon Waste Management Ltd**. And we received a most generous **anonymous donation** of £400 and a £100 commemorative donation from long-term South Leigh resident, **Mrs Phyllis Broome**. **Thank you to each and every one.**

Landowners, the **Eynsham Park Estate** and **Sophie Tidy** of their agent, Savills; and **David and Trish Bury** of Warner's Farm, who have made the programme possible by allocating land to us, and the Burys' Farm Manager, **Phil Barbour**. **Thank you so much**. From the outset, South Leigh resident, **Mike Kirk**, has helped with his gift of our three tall elms and two 2.8m hornbeams, advice, his time and supplying all our other trees at an amazing price. **Thank you, most sincerely, again**.

Hands, boots, spades, time and tea

An objective of SLFR is to 'engage' with the community and many in the village have responded. They have helped us dig holes, bang posts, water and plant the trees. They include: **Graham Soame, Oliver Soame, Caroline and David Auger, Alan Crowder, John Ashwell, Ed Brooks** and **Richard Catling** who donated and planted a 'Judas' tree at the Football Field.

We want to thank others for their advice and support and offers of saplings: **Marie-Thérèse Elliott, Eileen Mawle, Heather Horner, Ken and Nicky Brooks, Mark Walker, John and Liz Ashwell, Jackie Johnson, Ros and Tim Lewis and Richard Law**.

Thank you, again. Please forgive us if we have omitted anyone.



Football Field North



Chapel Road



Football Field East



Burys' Triangle, SH Road



Just Cartridges drive East

Where and what

As at 30th April 2021, all the trees we have planted have taken well and are, by early May, in leaf with the oaks lagging behind, as we'd expect. Some are in early blossom.

The sites are:

	Number of trees planted
Chapel Road, North side and Wayside Cottages (1).	12
A second 'dedicated' tree, sponsored by Mrs. Phyllis Broome, at Wayside Cottages.	1
The Football Field including the Judas Tree.	14
Just Cartridges' drive east.	6
The Burys' Triangle in Stanton Harcourt Road. (Planted and self-sets sheltered).	20
Sheltered trees in hedgerows.	4
Total SLFR	57

In addition:

Privately funded plantings of which we are aware and / or have helped	45
<u>Private large-scale planting north of Station Road (Rachel Murphy's for which we take no credit!)</u>	<u>1,600</u>
KNOWN VILLAGE TOTAL	1,702

Species

The species that SLFR group has planted are all native, as per our plan i.e.: English Oak, Beech, Hornbeam, Silver Birch, Rowan, Field Maple and Wild Cherry, as recommended by Mike Kirk of Hadingham Kirk Gardens Ltd, and TOE (Trust for Oxfordshire Environment).

Looking ahead

As reported in March, we have now exhausted all the sites for which we have permission to plant, although Eynsham Park Estate have said that they would consider plantings on the west side of Church End between Margery Cross and the Village Hall to replace the avenue of elms shown in old photographs.

We have already written to the estate managers asking if we may plant there and in the field behind the Village Hall and we continue to establish the ownership of a large site in Moor's Lane. This would answer all our problems as there is room for several hundred trees that we could plant over several years. Again, any help with advising us who owns the huge field at the junction of Moor's Lane with the old Railway line, would be much appreciated.

If we are unable to secure new sites, it may be necessary to change strategy somewhat. We have a plan for this that would result in creating a micro nature park of about an acre on land that we believe could become available. In the meantime, we shall continue to focus on our original objective under our existing strategy, which is:

Simple, Focussed, Visible, Inclusive, and at no or minimal cost to the Parish Council.

Conclusion

We are reasonably satisfied with progress to date and will strive to find additional sites. We thank the outgoing Parish Council for its support and we trust that the new Council will wish us to continue.

Martin Spurrier David Brooks
South Leigh Forest Restoration
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Rachel Murphy has kindly provided the breakdown below of her planting north of Station Road.

OAK VAR Robur	240
OAK VAR patraea	240
alder glutinosa	80
lime small leaf	160
crab apple	80
birch silver	80
hornbeam	160
wild cherry	64
elder	16
hawthorn	80
blackthorn	80
bird cherry	64
hazel	32
spindle	32
field maple	32
Total	1600

South Leigh Forest Restoration Accounts y/e 31st March 2021

2021 / 21 Income & Expenditure at end of Phase 1		£
Income (Grant / Cash / Donations received)		
22.01.2020	Contribution from C. Mathew's Councillor Priority Fund (held by P.C.)	475.00
	Donations from Phyllis Broome (£50 x 2 Held by M.S.)	100.00
21.12.2020	TOE Grant (Held by M.S.)	238.00
	Anonymous donation (Held by M.S.)	400.00
Total Income and pledges to date		<u><u>1213.00</u></u>
Expenditure		
18.06.2020	British Hardwood - stakes, shelters, ties etc. (Paid by P.C.)	399.32
09.02.2021	Hadingham Kirk (Paid by M.S.)	827.00
Total expenditure		<u><u>1226.32</u></u>
 South Leigh Forest Restoration - Cash account		
	P.C. grant received from C. Mathew's fund	475.00
	P.C. paid out	399.32
	Cash balance held	75.68
 M.S. paid out		
	Hadingham Kirk	-827.00
	TOE grant received	238.00
	Cash donations received	513.32
	Cash balance from P.C. to M.S.	75.68

Martin Spurrier