

ITEM 7.3

Report and update from the Hedgerow Working Party. 16th Jan 2018

The WP has met twice since your November meeting including a site walk-around to assess recent work. We are making good progress working through the agreed Priority 1 items, but a few issues have arisen - see Next steps.

Progress includes:-

- 1.2 Eastern hedge. The face of the hedge was cut in October.
- 1.6 Eastern hedge. The Community Orchard working party cleared the hedge back to the fence. The large ash tree is scheduled for felling in late Feb (Andrew Gale).
- 1.8 Eastern hedge. The rough area by the tarmac strip has been cleared, flattened and re-seeded.
- 2.1 Western hedge. The two large sycamore trees are scheduled for felling in late Jan (Andrew Gale)
- 4.1 Southern boundary. The Community Orchard WP has cut back the vegetation and removed a small ash tree, clearing the area ready for hedge planting.
- 4.2 Southern boundary. A hedge planting date has been set for Saturday 10th March. A working party will be convened to do this. Plants have been obtained via a Woodland Trust grant.
- 4.3 Southern boundary. Hedge adjacent to allot plot 7 has been cut.

Next steps

A prime objective of this group is to thicken and reinforce the long hedge boundaries of Rublees. We are concentrating on the MPF side at present. The recent hedge cutting and clearing has given us a much clearer view of the problem. As a result, we have had to reevaluate our plans as follows:-

- 1. The wooden post and wire fence is in better condition and more complete than we thought, but is being pushed down by ivy and damaged by fallen branches. We propose getting estimates to clear this vegetation back to the fence line.
 - 2. We then need to clear the ground where we want to plant the new hedging plants. At present these areas are covered in rubbish/decaying plant material, making planting impossible. We have asked the clerk to obtain estimates for this work.
 - 3. The fence then needs to be repaired with some new posts and some extra wire. (A partial repair was done in Spring 2017- more of the same is needed)
 - 4. The 'den' area. This has multiple old cherry plum and other trees that are quite large and intertwined with each other, together with other apple and cherry plum trees that we want to keep. This area needs thinning to give light to the hedge line behind, before we can start work on improving this. Simon has advised that this is more than he can do as an 'Orchard volunteer'. We are investigating with the Council whether Simon may tender for this work.
- Ideally these 4 items need to be completed by March.

General comments

- 1. Communication with allotment holders is important to keep them informed of this work. We need their cooperation not throw any rubbish into the areas we are trying to clear. Notices on gates will help, but also to have an item in the next mail-out from the council to plot holders.
- 2. The WP will walk around Canada Gardens on Sat 27th at 10am, to see if any work is required there.
- 3. The newly cleared area by the tarmac strip needs to be added to the grass cutting contract for the MPF, otherwise the nettles will quickly regrow.
- 4. Budget. We have saved some expenditure but may incur some extra costs. We will assess where we are with budget once the work planned for Feb/March has been completed.

Roger Brown for the Working Party:

Phil Howell, Tim Lloyd, Sarah Sullivan, Rodney Goldsmith, Fran Wedderburn, Simon Zec, Jayne Michalska.