



Assets, Community & Environment Meeting

Date: 17th February 2022

ACE028b Horsefield Green – Habitat Management

1. Meadow Grassland

In light of our current biodiversity crisis, I think we should make an attempt at reviving and maintaining the wildflower areas, particularly if the funding is available.

I would suggest three cuts a year (first two weeks of April / last two weeks of August and first two weeks of October) for two years and then review. It may be that we can then reduce the cuts from three to two or even one.

Sowing each year with yellow rattle will also help reduce the vigour of some of the coarser grasses.

It is vital that all arisings are removed but if after two years, there is no sign of improvement then we may have to go down another route.

I have received two quotes one, from Sussex Agrifactors and one from Keep It Green.

Sussex Agrifactors were suggested by High Weald AONB and charge £500 per cut and have also quoted for yellow rattle and Wealden seed. They are essentially farmers and seemed to have a good understanding of meadow management.

Keep It Green supplied a one line quote for £800 per cut. Keep It Green is a young guy who I had feeling said yes to everything, was liable to get overwhelmed and didn't seem to be overly reliable time wise.

2. Trees

Many of the trees on site are Ash and showing signs of die back although one does appear to be showing some resistance.

For the Ash trees along the southern / eastern boundary, there is plenty of regeneration of other species so may be better to let nature take its course rather than new plantings while any extra light will benefit the orchard.

The Ash trees by the pond however all look like they are failing. It may be worth seeing how they fare this summer, but ultimately may need removing altogether. However, this would provide the opportunity of planting some Alder (English not Italian) which provide great wildlife habitat and character.

3. Community Orchard

The orchard trees will need mulching with woodchip in order to keep moisture in and prevent weeds growing around them. They will need regular watering if we have a dry spring. Hoping to arrange for next planting day for 19th/20th February but will confirm but should include fruit trees, edible hedge and hops. Be good if we could get some mulch delivered beforehand.

4. Pond

A thick mat of what looks like to be Water Fern (*Azolla filiculoides*), a non-native invasive species at the north end is creeping down the pond while there is also a substantial covering of Sweet Grass (*Glyceria notata*) that is native but clearly rampant too.

It would be good to clear out at least two thirds of the pond, preferably from the northern roadside end which looks the most clogged. Ideally to leave material at side of pond for a couple of weeks but some material might be used for reinforcing bund at southern end.

5. Hedging - Southern and Eastern Boundaries

Much of the current hedging along the boundaries is Blackthorn and just needs trimming each winter to prevent it encroaching on the meadow.

Name: Cllr A Podmore
Date: 1st February 2022