

Woodland & Waterways Steering Committee

The woodland is now starting to take shape with good growth all round. Fishing is proving to be popular and seems to be enjoyed by a number of local children.

We haven't had much of a problem with litter and I know that there are a number of people who help keep the area tidy during their frequent walks.

Year 6 pupils from the Sir Robert Hitcham Primary School Debenham were amongst the volunteers helping Debenham Woodland and Waterways to celebrate The Tree Council's National Tree Week (26 November to 7 December).

Backed by a grant from environmental charity The Tree Council, the lead UK tree campaigning partnership, we planted a number of local Suffolk apple varieties including Honey Pippin, Catherine and Lady Henniker. All of these trees were supplied by the East of England Apples & Orchards project whose aim is to ensure the long-term survival of the region's rich heritage of orchard fruits and their orchard habitat. This is the fifth year that the school has been involved in tree planting at the Hoppit Wood and we are pleased that so many of them are willing and eager to help.

Hopefully in a couple of years there will be a supply of apples that people can help themselves to whilst out on a walk. All of the trees are labelled with the variety.

We planted three Black Poplars (today there are thought to be less than 8,000 mature native black poplars in Britain. 430 of these survive in Suffolk). these seem to have taken well and will grow very quickly.

Completed the hedge along the bottom edge of the woodland. Can already see that the habitat is good for wild life as a number of nests could be seen in the more established part of the hedge.

We hosted a "Tree Warden's Training Event" in November run by the Suffolk Coastal tree Wardens. This was attended by 20 or people and was a really useful training session. I hope to see if we can arrange more of these types of events.

Wildlife

The Kingfisher has been seen on a number of occasions as well as a Barn owl that hunts around the area.

I also believe that a Little Egret has been spotted.

There has been no sign of any otter activity but this is a good thing as they would affect the fish stocks in the lake.

Future Plans

More work on the wild flower meadow and try to improve the conditions for wild flowers.

Repairing rabbit damage to the paths.

More hedge planting.

General pruning/management

Final Note

We are supported by a relatively small core of volunteers and I would like to extend my thanks to them for all their hard work. However we are always on the lookout for any additional help which would be appreciated.

There are also vacancies on the Steering Group and we would welcome anybody willing to join.