



Coventry Tree Warden Network Annual Report for 2020 - 2021

WELCOME

No minutes from previous AGM – progress reviewed, elections etc by email due to pandemic

Thanks – Committee, plus consultants - (Derek and David Moseley) and to Mac for his help and ongoing support. Welcome to new members and please let us know if you would like to join the Committee

Website /facebook - A breakthrough for Tree Wardens and we've stayed connected throughout Lockdowns thanks to Tom Smith. We've been able to pay Tom a small amount each month to manage these and have also been able to buy the necessary equipment through a grant of £2000 from Heart of England Community Fund. Kathy Fletcher has prepared a PowerPoint outlining our work which we hope to use during visits to various associations and schools.

Training -Huge thanks to Birmingham Tree people for welcoming us to their monthly training sessions via Zoom. Also thanks to the Arb Association which has provided us with Zoom access to talks by experts from across the world (America, Canada, Poland, and the Caribbean). Also, we've joined some very informative webinars by experts across the UK. We are hopeful that our monthly training sessions with Mac at the War Memorial Park classroom will be able to start again after Christmas.

Sponsorship – Coventry Tree Warden Network is sponsoring Tom Woodward to complete an Arboriculture Level 2 course and he will become one of our consultants.

Conservation Work – Work continues on restoring Kingsfield Gardens and has been led and well supported by members of the Committee Terry, Frank and Ann Hossack and (where possible)the local community. Ann Wilson has also been involved with restoring a rockery on Gosford Green.

Consultations We have been consultees both for the Coventry Urban Forestry Plan and with Birmingham on their Urban Master Plan. As Coventry is now part of the Combined Authority we are very hopeful that the excellence of the Birmingham Master Plan will impact on cities across the area.

Charity work -We were able to harvest some mistletoe before Christmas and sold it to local garden centres and florists making £315 which we donated in full to the Lord Mayor's Fund (Domestic violence support).

Projects and Tree Planting – Solicitors Wright Hassall asked us to help planting 175 trees in recognition of the firm being 175 years old. These have been planted in the Humber Road /Binley Road area. Two disease resistant elms were also planted in the same corner of Humber Road, one to replace an old elm sadly lost to a storm and the other a gift from the Tree Council.

We are planning to apply for a grant from FCC Communities Foundation to buy 20 flowering cherry trees for **Caludon Park**. The National Trust are currently running a project to plant flowering cherries in parks across the country for people to enjoy and we will also try to get involved with the planting and care of these lovely trees.

The project to have boxes of pollution absorbing shrubs on **Ball Hill** has been restarted and the Bray's Lane Community is interested in supporting this. Smith's Garden Centre has been very helpful in suggesting appropriate plants and ways of planting and the siting the planters. It's hoped that local shop keepers and the community along with Tree Wardens will become involved with ongoing care.

Challenges - 1. **HS2** has caused huge damage to the environment in the local area and we are trying to support all tree planting schemes by emphasising the need for after care (watering etc).

2. Many green belt areas are also threatened by development and TW's try to support objectors wherever possible and speak at CCC Planning Committee meetings in an effort to preserve our green environment.

3. Mature Trees - It is vital that we preserve Coventry's mature tree stock wherever possible since replants take 20 years to do the same job which is absorbing carbon, preventing flooding, providing shade and a green environment which supports community mental and physical health. We hope to encourage the use of CAVAT (a method of establishing the monetary value of a tree) and agreed for use by our Tree Officers which can help to retain trees when developers plan to remove them. Replants are easily damaged by vandalism and many die in the first year through lack of care whereas our mature tree stock is tough and resilient.

4. Urban Woodland Management - We have serious concerns demonstrated by our campaign to halt radical management of Piles Coppice. We've been monitoring this woodland for years and it is a treasure trove of habitats which support a huge number of wildlife species - some very rare. We've discovered that owners of woodlands (whether they be charities, councils or private owners) have the right to extract timber annually and can decide which trees to fell and sell. With the push for biomass to burn in our so called 'green power stations' another threat has been added because it's our biggest and oldest trees that provide the most biomass and produce the most income. The Forestry Commission has to provide felling licenses for trees being felled. BUT - After all the hard work identifying and protecting our city trees it seems very worrying that trees growing in urban woodlands have almost no protection.

We are challenging woodland management guidelines laid down by Forestry Commission 50 years ago and are asking for a complete review of urban woodland management to reflect the protections now being agreed for street trees. We believe urban woodlands should be for wildlife and community health and that timber extraction (which may be acceptable in the rural environment and economy) should not be a part of urban management.

5. Tree Planting after care - We are concerned that many newly planted whips and young trees die through lack of after care. We would

ask membership to report trees that have died and also try to generate an interest in local communities to care for young tree stock.

Walks, Talks and Outings - There have been few opportunities over the past 12 months but two very successful moth nights led by Warwickshire moth expert David Brown were enjoyed by a small group of Tree Wardens at Piles Coppice.

FINALLY! Coventry Tree Wardens are the eyes and ears of Coventry's trees and hedgerows. Please let us know of any concerns and also highlight good practice and tree care which add to health and well being of our city's communities.

Pip Pountney (Chair 2020 - 2021)