



About Trees

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Approval for Havant Thicket Reservoir

Portsmouth Water's application for a reservoir at Havant Thicket has been approved by both Havant Borough Council and East Hampshire District Council. The reservoir will have a storage capacity of 8.7 billion litres (1.9 billion gallons) and cover 160 hectares (395 acres).



Deputations in person were made by Havant Borough Tree Wardens, Havant Climate Alliance/Havant Friends of the Earth and members of Stop the Chop!, a group of local residents. Several speakers emphasised the importance and irreplaceability of ancient woodland and made the case for avoiding further losses. The discussion between committee members asked whether the size of the reservoir should be reduced to avoid that loss, with the response that it would probably need to be enlarged at some point, so it might as well be constructed to full size now.

Left: Outline of the reservoir (light blue) and ancient woodland to be removed (light brown)

Stop The Chop! members emphasised safety aspects and expressed concerns about the size of the earth barrier, the volume of water near to houses, the risk of a disaster, the likelihood of drownings in the reservoir and the need for safety aids from the start.

Approval was also given for a related outline application for the development of a new pipeline to fill the reservoir from Bedhampton Springs and draw it off for use, including an emergency discharge structure at Hermitage Stream. Points raised included the opportunity to generate electricity using water drained from the reservoir and the need to minimise damage to trees and reinstate disturbed ground, particularly at Hermitage Open Space, was emphasised.

Of the five HBC Planning Committee members, four voted for the proposals and one abstained.

One environmental benefit from this project will be reduced abstraction from the Rivers Test and Itchen, both protected chalk streams. Despite the proximity of the reservoir (6.5km), there will be no reduction in abstraction at Walderton from the River Ems, another chalk stream.

110 hectares of compensatory measures are proposed, of which 80 ha would be woodland pasture, together with restoration works of up to 75 ha within Southleigh Forest. The application provides for a relatively small wetland area of 10 ha in a narrow strip, varying between 60-100m in width, along the north edge of the reservoir. The proximity of the visitor centre and picnic area, providing parking for around 250 cars and 3 coaches, is likely to result in significant human disturbance.

Final legal commitments for the reservoir scheme will now be agreed with both authorities before full planning permission is granted, potentially this summer. The reservoir is due to be completed and operational by 2029.

There will be a separate application for a 40 km (25 miles) pipeline to transfer water from the reservoir to Otterbourne water supply works.

Hayling Update – Eric Walker

The tree plants from the Woodland Trust arrived safely at Mengham Junior School early in May. These were scheduled for delivery in March, but the Trust had a double whammy, a cyber-attack that affected all their systems and of course the Covid-19 restrictions.

With help from the tree wardens, Mengham Junior School have filled in gaps and extended their boundary hedge with saplings from the Woodland Trust. Under the supervision of Tony Athill, the children have also been busy creating a tree nursery. They are planting young tender saplings in pots that can be planted out around the Island when larger and more robust. They are also growing various hedge and tree species from cuttings and oak trees from acorns. In years to come, children will be offered small trees to take home and plant.



Above: Planting the saplings.

Right: The tree nursery.

(Photos: Tony Athill)



In the second week of May the Tree Council had a Spring Health Check webinar. I was prompted on 20th May to look at the recording. As it happened that was the day a lady from St Catherine's Court, Hayling wanted to know if their holm oak hedge, which is suffering leaf damage, is going to recover. So, following the direction from the webinar I generated a Forest Research Tree Alert.



Leaf damage on holm oak. (Photo: Eric Walker)

Looking around the area, I found that the same disease was in all the holm oak trees and was interested to note that some of them have TPOs against them.

Subsequently Terry Smith tells me it looks like Holm Oak Blotch Leaf Miner (*Phyllonorycter messaniella*) caused by the larvae of a micro moth that was first recognised in Britain in 1996. Adult moths have a wingspan of ¼" and emerge in late June but are rarely seen.

Forest Research has confirmed the culprit as *Phyllonorycter messaniella*.

According to Forest Research, the damage will remain visible until the old leaves drop in early summer, after which new leaves will develop and improve the overall look of the plants. Even when heavily infested, holm oaks tolerate the damage and continue to grow, so there should not be any long lasting effect on the health of the trees.

Queen's Inclosure – Terry Smith

We returned to the Queen's Inclosure for our May work party. We started by removing large branches that had been thrown into the main pond and stacking them far enough away that they were unlikely to be thrown back in.

Several trees had fallen in the months since our last work party and a large oak was blocking the path to the smaller winter pond. It was just possible to step over the trunk and we cut the thick ivy stems back to make it easier to climb over.



During a walk around the woodland in March, Peter noticed our work to build up the bank of the winter pond had been destroyed and a channel had been made across the path to the nearby Hermitage Stream. Our main job of the morning was to effect a more permanent repair.

In March 2020 we filled in a deeper channel and carried out a repair to another section of the bank. That section was still in place and we used the same method this time. Three large hazel spars were cut and dragged to the pond and cut into lengths to fill the gap, then wired together and stapled so the bundle was too heavy to move and covered in mud.

Left: The channel from the pond to the stream.



Left: Repairing the bank.

Above: The view from the back of the pond.

Photos: Peter Wallbank

A class of children from Queen's Inclosure Primary School, which borders the woodland, passed on the other side of the stream and I took the opportunity to explain what we were doing and why in the hope they would appreciate our work and not be tempted to sabotage it and may dissuade others from doing so. We were concerned that as some water had been drained and April was dry, tadpoles may not have survived, so we were pleased to see some fat and active tadpoles remained.

We spent the afternoon digging out more laurel from around the edge of the wood. Various people carry out regular litter patrols; Peter had previously filled two bags and there was little sign of litter along the paths. We still managed to fill two bags with litter we uncovered from around the laurel.

The Disappearing Hedge at Saxon Corner, Emsworth - Brendan Gibb-Gray

We are seeing a large number of new developments on green field sites in the borough and as tree wardens we should be quietly monitoring whether or not the environmental conditions attached to the planning consent are being carried out. It's our view that developers pay lip service to planting hedges and trees and then offer little or no maintenance or watering support. The development at Saxon Corner in Emsworth is a case in point.

There was a great deal of local opposition when Havant Borough Council granted planning permission for 250+ houses to be built on farmland close to Chichester Harbour and the ANOB. To the Emsworth Tree Wardens (ETWs) matters got progressively worse when sub-contractors working on behalf of Barratts Homes in creating an opening to allow access to the potential site ripped out and demolished most of the ancient hedge that bordered the main A259 road between Havant and Emsworth.



The original hedge – May 2019.



Construction site with the hedge removed.

Barratts claimed the work was a “mistake” and the ETWs immediately lobbied HBC to have more than 100 metres of hedge replaced. Whilst Barratts agreed to replace the hedge, their original intention was to plant whips, but we insisted on semi mature hedging (double the height and girth) that would have an immediate impact and begin to restore the visual impact along this busy road and form a “green” boundary to the estate.



Gaps in the replacement hedge – May 2021

A variety of native species were selected including viburnum, rose, acer, cornus, hazel and hawthorn. We also asked that young trees were planted in the new hedge and again this was finally agreed by the Council and Barratts. The ETWs have had to constantly lobby the Council and Barratts to ensure watering and maintenance.

One or two gaps are appearing in the emerging hedge so our lobbying continues. As the houses on this estate become homes we hope to encourage the creation of an environmental group to take responsibility for environmental matters there - they will have plenty of work to do!

Photos: Yvonne Copeland

HedgeTalks

The Tree Council organised a series of free 'Hedge Talks' webinars for the first National Hedgerow Week (Saturday 29th May to Sunday 6th June). If you missed any, they were recorded and are available on You Tube. <https://hedgelink.org.uk/campaign/national-hedgerow-week/hedgetalks/>

Talks available:

- ◆ 'An introduction to the dynamic world of hedgerows' with Megan Gimber from People's Trust for Endangered Species.
- ◆ 'Connecting children to nature through lovely stories' with author and publisher Alison Mannion, illustrator Erin Brown and bookshop owner Alison Cameron.
Touching on story, illustration and imagination, this webinar will explore the process of creating 'The Happy Hedgerow', the poignant tale of a hedgerow under threat Will the field ever become a happy home for wildlife again?
- ◆ 'Buzzy beasts, crawly creepers and nectar sippers of the hedgerows' with Michael Garratt, Principal Research Fellow and Sean Stephenson, Chairman of Buckinghamshire Beekeepers' Association.
Everything you need to know about insects and hedgerows, including why hedgerows are so important for pollinators, how they help agriculture, and how you can care for your hedgerows in a way that protects insects and other pollinators.
- ◆ 'Hedgerows, homes and us – what hedgerows do for you and what you can do for them!' with Dr Tijana Blanusa, RHS Principal Horticultural Scientist and Jon Stokes, Director of Trees, Science and Research at The Tree Council.
This webinar explores what research is telling us about hedgerows' roles in daily life, as well as how to best care for them.
- ◆ 'From billhooks to bumble bees - the management lifecycle of a hedge' with professional hedgelayer Nigel Adams.
- ◆ 'Hedgerow harmonies - discussing the birds that find their home in hedgerows' with Lucy Lapwing and Nick Acheson, Norfolk Wildlife Trust.
Lucy has her own unique way of recognising bird songs which you may find helpful, or at least entertaining.
- ◆ 'Higgledy-piggledy happiness – hedgerow plants and what they can teach humanity' with Jonathon Drori CBE

The Tree Council and partner organisations will plant 53km of hedgerows, 2,650 hedgerow trees, train ten new apprentices and create a new knowledge hub with guidance on hedgerow management for farmers, local authorities and home owners.

A free 'Talk to the Hedge' guide can be requested from the Hedgelink website. <https://hedgelink.org.uk/campaign/national-hedgerow-week/>

A Bad Year for Blue Tits

There is evidence that the cold weather in April has taken a heavy toll on blue tits which lay their eggs to synchronise with oak foliage. The chicks are fed on green caterpillars that hatch on young leaves, but this year the very late oak bud burst has resulted in about 40% of blue tit chicks starving to death. Blue tits lay 7 to 14 eggs and won't begin incubating until all of the eggs have been laid. Unlike many birds, blue tits usually only raise a single brood each spring.

Surprise Discovery on Hayling Island – Malinda Griffin



This oak (left) is a thing of sculptural beauty, and a memorial to the rich history of this area of Hayling Island. It has large, low branches reaching towards the south and sunlight. Most surprisingly, several of these lower branches have layered and rooted, creating a virtual thicket of young growth.

These 'saplings' are still attached to the parent oak and so well covered by healthy leaves, that from the path, the parent tree is well hidden (below).

I have heard coastal oaks can air layer well but is a slow process, so that indicates age and moisture. If any reader has insights into this I'd be glad to learn more.

The parent tree is a lapsed coppice, with signs of branch removal and branch losses, and is recorded on the Ancient Tree Inventory as "Veteran" ID no 217115. It carries a lot of dead wood with loose or rotting bark, and holes – very good potential bat habitat. There are also signs of wood-boring invertebrates, which together with moss and lichens show the huge biodiversity value of this tree.



This oak is one of several idiosyncratic oaks thriving in a thin strip of woodland by Sinah Lake. Alongside there are several Ancient Woodland Indicator species such as wild privet and Butcher's Broom. These features all suggest this woodland margin may have been planted for timber harvesting (coppice and pollards) and as shelter for livestock from coastal gales.

The path past this tree leads to Sinah Common, which has a great array of pollen and nectar rich plants, including this attractive clump of thrift (left). Sinah Common, although it has incorporated the golf course since the 1700s, and the coastal area of the Common was heavily militarised in WW2, still holds significant environmental value and is a designated SSSI nature reserve.

Photos: Malinda Griffin

Wood Chips Used on Havant Borough Council Land

Havant Borough Council Estates Department now requires all wood chips brought onto council land to be provided by approved suppliers who are required to confirm they are free from diseases and safe to use. Records of deliveries must be retained for future reference.

A form for recording deliveries of wood chips can be downloaded from the HBTW website.

Insects Recorded in Hundred Acres

Richard and Keith have visited the sandy paths we helped to clear and are very happy to report a fantastic population of the rare Buff-tailed Mining Bee and its specific thief-parasite the Cat's Ear Nomad Bee at the lower end of the sandy track, along with a new bee for the site, the Big-headed Mining Bee. There was also good bee activity at the other points that had been tended.

Right: The aptly named Big-headed Mining Bee (*Andrena bucephala*)

(Photo: Jenny Seawright Kingston Lacy allotments, Dorset. May 2019 - www.dorsetnature.co.uk)



The records (available to download from our website) are in two parts:

- ◆ Insects recorded by Richard and Keith, mostly along the sandy paths.
- ◆ Insects recorded by Fareham Moth Group using lamps. As expected, the majority of insects recorded are moths. There is a surprisingly long list of species with two moths and one fly new to the site. According to Richard, "The list includes some that moth fans in other parts of the country would sell their souls for though we're hardened to their charms!"

The report refers to West Walk (High Lines). That is the name used by locals and the area is known by Forestry England as Hundred Acres, North Boarhunt.



Scarce Merveille du Jour (*Moma alpium*)

(Photo: David G Green 2006 Godshell Wood, New Forest - www.hantsmoths.org.uk)

Moths recorded include the Scarce Merveille du Jour "Scarce Marvel of the Day", an attractive moth, well camouflaged to blend in with lichen.

This rare Red Data Book species is almost entirely restricted to large areas of well-established oak forest. It is still quite common in the New Forest and present in Havant Thicket, but has disappeared from other localities where it was fairly common up until the 1950s.

Wingspan 34-40 mm. The larva feeds on Pedunculate Oak and Sessile Oak, overwintering as a pupa.



This magnificent crabapple on Lumley Road, Emsworth by Peter Pond is on the Ancient tree Inventory as a Veteran coppice. Tree ID 211466 (1.50m girth at 0.50m). It seems surprisingly pink.

Photo: Malinda Griffin

Trees for Streets Update – Anne Sayer

More than 50 street locations were put forward by Havant residents as places where trees could be planted as part of a publicity campaign by Havant Borough Tree Wardens and Havant Climate Alliance. The Trees for Streets initiative was launched following a request from Hampshire County Council asking the local tree wardens for potential street tree planting locations in the borough. Local people were encouraged to nominate locations via a form drafted by the two groups. Tree planting forms part of the council's climate change strategy but trees on streets also have many direct benefits for residents, providing shade, a habitat for wildlife and generally enhancing the value and appeal of their homes.

The Hampshire Highways Arboriculture Team is investigating the locations put forward by residents and will feed back on any locations that may not be suitable and the reasons why. Currently Hampshire County Council has 122 trees programmed for planting in Havant Borough (on the highway) for the upcoming season and a total approaching 3,000 trees programmed for planting across the county - more than has ever been planted before and far exceeding the 1,300 planted last year. Many of the trees for these nominated sites will be planted in the 2022/23 season although it is possible some of these plantings may be brought forward to the 2021/22 season.

This has been a great opportunity to engage local people directly and both Havant Climate Alliance and Havant Borough Tree Wardens were pleased to help local people share their suggestions for increasing the number of trees in the Borough.

Upcoming Oak Fell on West Lane, Hayling Island

Hampshire Highways has given instructions to fell the large oak growing in the highway verge outside No. 21, Pear Tree Cottage, West Lane, Hayling Island



The large oak has been suffering from some basal dysfunction for a number of years and that is causing its upper crown vitality to decline. During a visit on 1st June, it was noted that the lower limb that originates at approximately 3m on the west side had a longitudinal split near its base, meaning it is no longer safe to retain near the highway. Removing this split limb is likely to introduce significant stress and vascular dysfunction that is likely to boost the rate of the existing basal degradation. Similarly any crown reduction will also increase stress and vascular dysfunction in this tree, hastening its decline.

The adjacent oak to the south is having a light crown reduction and a long limb over the carriageway will be shortened to reduce the wind loading that will result from the removal of the adjacent tree.

These works should be completed by contractors by the end of July. A replacement tree will be planted, but this may not be until next winter's planting season as this winter's schedule is already nearly full.

Photo: The tree on the right is to be felled. The long branch on the tree on the left will be shortened. (Image: Google Streetview. Image capture June 2018.)

The Queen's Green Canopy



The Queen's Green Canopy invites people from across the United Kingdom to "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee" to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 and create a legacy in honour of The Queen's leadership of the Nation that will benefit future generations. Everyone from individuals to Scout and Girlguiding groups, villages, cities, counties, schools and corporates will be encouraged to play their part to enhance our environment by planting trees from October through to the end of the Jubilee year in 2022.

Her Majesty and The Prince of Wales planted the first Jubilee tree in the grounds of Windsor Castle in March, to mark the launch of the QGC.

As well as inviting the planting of trees, The Queen's Green Canopy will dedicate a network of 70 Ancient Woodlands across the UK and identify 70 Ancient Trees to celebrate Her Majesty's 70 years of service. <https://queensgreencanopy.org/>

Portsmouth & Southsea Tree Wardens



Captain Sir Tom Moore's Golden beech (left) at Stagg Woods on 10th May after watering. It is leafing up nicely as is the elm planted to celebrate 30 years of Tree Wardening (right). Other new trees there are doing well.

Below left: Judas tree in the Porter's Garden in the Dockyard where Pauline volunteers on Wednesday mornings. The yew hedge on the left provides shelter for the resident blackbirds and other birds and berries in the winter.

Photos: Pauline Powell



Pauline Powell (Co-ordinator of Portsmouth & Southsea Tree Wardens) and Dennis receiving Community Recognition Awards for tree planting in the City, both fruit and other, from James Gunston (Community Champion) at Morrisons, Portsmouth, Victory Park store.

Barbastelle Bats under threat at Wensum Link

Norfolk County Council is planning to build a 3.8 mile dual carriageway road that, together with another section due to start construction in early 2023, would complete a fully dual carriageway orbital route around Norwich. The Norwich Western Link (The Wensum Link) has attracted a significant amount of opposition because after crossing the River Wensum on a viaduct, the road will cut directly through the woodland home of the UK's only known super colony of the Barbastelle Bat (a IUCN Red List species).

The Wensum is a chalk stream and the only river designated as an SAC (Special Area of Conservation) in the East of England. It is also a Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) because of the presence of rare species such as the bullhead fish, the brook lamprey, and white clawed crayfish, and many plant species including water crowfoot and water starwort. The river is also home to otters, kingfishers and many other fish, birds, mammals and insects.



The route passes through the area where two Barbastelle colonies converge.

This map shows where the road would cut through the 'core of the cores' (coloured yellow), the critical area where Core Sustenance Zones of each Barbastelle maternity colony within the super-colony overlap.

All bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The Norwich Western Link would destroy Barbastelle bat roosts and feeding areas, and lead to deaths of bats attempting to cross the road. Mitigation measures such as bat gantries or underpasses have been shown to work poorly, if at all, to preserve bat populations. Recently, the Northern Distributor Road was built near barbastelle colonies. Those colonies can no longer be found. So, in this real world test, just a couple of miles away, mitigation measures failed to protect bats.

Norfolk County Council claims it is aiming to achieve 'biodiversity net gain' for all applicable habitats, as set out by Defra, which will see new areas of habitat created, including woodland and wetland, as well as improvements to existing ones. It is difficult to see how that could be achieved if the road goes ahead as planned.

Diary Dates

Wednesday 23rd June 7:00pm The birds of Havant area and how you can help (Zoom)



Join us to hear Martin Hampton tell us about the birds you might see around Havant Borough and how we can all help them.

Martin is a wildlife gardener who has already inspired us to create better habitats for our insect population.

<https://actionnetwork.org/events/the-birds-of-havant-area-and-how-you-can-help/>

Monday 28th June 10:00am – 4:00pm HBTW Work Party in The Queen's Inclosure

Tasks will include removal of invasive species (including laurel) and some coppicing.
Please bring a packed lunch, refreshments, gloves and a high visibility vest if you have one.

Meet at the main entrance in Park Lane, Cowplain, PO8 8AB at 10.00am.
Parking in Park Lane (please do not park on the verge) or in Winscombe Avenue.

Please contact Terry Smith to book a place. tjs.oaktreecottage@gmail.com

Monday 28th June 10:00am – Noon - Friends of Hampshire Farm Meadows Work Party

Details to be confirmed.

For more information and to book a place: hfmfriends@gmail.com

Newsletter Contributions

Please submit newsletter contributions to hbctreewardens@gmail.com

Deadline for next issue: 23rd June 2021

Photographs illustrating articles or photographs on their own (with captions) would be appreciated.
If you are not the photographer, please check you have permission and say who is so that credit can be given. To keep file sizes manageable, please avoid sending high resolution images. The ideal image size is 250KB or less.

If you embed images in documents, please also send the images as attachments.

Please let us know if you have ideas for future articles or subjects you would like to see included.

Would you like your own copy of this newsletter?

If this newsletter was forwarded to you and you would like to request your own copy, please send an e-mail to hbctreewardens@gmail.com

Membership of Havant Borough Tree Wardens

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in trees. We do not currently charge a membership fee and, although we need members who want to be involved in practical tasks or the running of the network, we also welcome supporters. If you would like to become a member, please request a membership application form by e-mail to hbctreewardens@gmail.com or download it from our website. <https://groups.tcv.org.uk/havantboroughtreewardens/>

Donations

If you would like to make a donation to Havant Borough Tree Wardens, payments can be made into our bank account.

Account No: 84937017
Sort Code: 55-70-34

Please include your name as a reference.

Havant Borough Community Lottery

You can also support us through the Havant Borough Community Lottery. You have the chance to win up to £25,000, plus additional prizes in special draws, and we receive 50p from every £1 ticket. A further 10p is paid into a community fund and grants for specific projects are distributed from the fund to eligible good causes every six months.

<https://www.havantlottery.co.uk/support/havant-borough-tree-wardens>