

Sutton Poyntz Biodiversity Group Hedge restoration 2011 / 12

This project was a considerable step up from the 2010/11 hedge restoration as it involved the renewal of a much longer section of hedge with a large number of dead elms to remove as well as the whole hedge line being overgrown by brambles.

We were successful in the application for a grant from the **Dorset Sustainable Development Fund** to cover the costs of employing a tree surgeon to help with the removal of the elms as well as a fencing contractor to replace the stock proof fencing. We also needed to purchase about 500 hedging plants such as Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Hazel and Guelder Rose. We also purchased a small number of oak trees to provide a traditional balance to the competed hedgerow.



The hedge forms the boundary between the water meadow which is part of the Wessex Water land to the North of the pumping station. When fully established it will combined with the hedge restored last year to form a wildlife corridor linking the woodland just North of the Pumping station to the larger area of wet wood below the spring basin.



Here we can see the first of several loads of dead timber ready to be removed from the site.



We had considerably more waste material from this restoration project compared with last year so we constructed two log-piles as wild life refuges, one at each end of the small water meadow. Here Pete and Dave are starting to build a wildlife refuge at the north end of the site.



One refuge had a visitor within minutes of completing construction.

We purchased 500 hedging species including Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Hazel, Guilder and Dog Rose. They were bought as 1-2 year old whips which are planted by digging a slot with a spade and then healing in the tree. We had a good turn out of 12 volunteers and managed during a long and somewhat wet morning to get all the planting done which was quite an achievement when compared with similar projects reported elsewhere.



We not only kept to budget but actually had a slight under spend which we were allowed to spend on a number of bat boxes to hopefully increase the number and diversity of bat species we have in the village and surroundings. They are made of a material called “ wood-crete “ which makes them quite heavy to put up. They have all been put up on private land owned by Wessex Water and should not be disturbed under any circumstances.



Overall the project took about 5 months to complete using 45 man / days of volunteer time. This time amounted to over half the total project costs which is how could justify the grant.