



South Leigh Forest Restoration

*"Trees are poems that the earth writes upon the sky."*

Kahlil Gebran

**An Outline Plan for the South Leigh Parish Council**

January 2020



## Introduction and Quick Reading Summary

### THE VISION:

“To regrow the South Leigh Forest of the past as closely as possible”.

### OBJECTIVES

It is the idea of local resident, David Brooks, who is autistic, and it is based on his concern for the environment and the depletion of woodland over time, mainly by farming and urbanisation.

- To plant 200 trees in and around South Leigh in each of the next five years and so...
  - Achieve 1,000 plantings by 2025.
  - New targets will be set for ensuing years.
  - At no cost to the Parish Council. The indicative budget for 2020 is £1,000.
- The scheme will be self-funding. Money will be raised and materials sourced by volunteers who will run the scheme.
  - The plan was adopted in principle by the South Leigh Parish Council on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019. The Parish Clerk is investigating liability and insurance issues.
  - It will report to the PC as appropriate.
  - It will be an inclusive programme for all ages and abilities.

Volunteers will source and plant trees, and their sites, in and around South Leigh. In the early phases, locations visible to the public and in close proximity to the centres of habitation, will be given priority.

There will be single-tree and multiple-tree plantings. It is planned to expand from single trees to copses of 20 or more, later.

The trees will range from ‘self-set’ seedlings of a few inches to larger ‘potted’ and/or ‘established’ trees. This is a long-term programme, although every effort will be made to make a positive visual impact as early as is practicable.

- Land owners’ consents will be recorded in every case.

Today’s global environment is in crisis and trees naturally address the causes of global warming. The scheme also supports the ‘rural’ tenet of our Neighbourhood Plan and endorses the importance of our ‘countryside’ setting and bucolic views.

This outline plan addresses the next five years, although it is hoped that the scheme will continue indefinitely.

End

For further information, please contact [martinspurrier@hotmail.com](mailto:martinspurrier@hotmail.com), 01993 702808, 07799368464



## South Leigh Forest Restoration

### An Outline Plan for the South Leigh Parish Council

#### THE VISION

David's vision is:

**“To regrow the South Leigh Forest of the past as closely as possible”.**



*Looking south east across the de-forested parish*

#### OBJECTIVES

- To plant 200 trees in and around South Leigh in each of the next five years and so...
- To achieve 1,000 plantings by 2025.
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#### STRATEGY

How will the Objectives be achieved?

It is easy to try to do too much, in too many places, too soon and thus dilute effort and reduce visible results. The Objectives shall be achieved, therefore, through the scheme being:

**Simple, Focussed, Visible, Inclusive, and at no cost to the Parish Council.**

If any planned activity does not answer positively to these five criteria, it is not 'on strategy' and should not be pursued.

## NAME

### South Leigh Forest Restoration

#### OUTLINE ACTION PLAN

The Plan will require the following tasks to be performed under the following headings:

1. **Administration/preparation**
2. **Funding and Finance**
3. **Land**
4. **Trees and Protection**



*Lone trees remind us of the forest that once covered this part of England.*

#### 1. **Administration/Preparation**

- 1.1. Establishing the management team and relationship with the Parish Council.
- 1.2. Establishing the communication structure and communications plan. Recruiting additional volunteers.
- 1.3. Deciding what needs to be done and by whom. Scheduling the work.

#### 2. **Funding and Finance**

- 2.1. Income
- 2.2. Expenditure

#### 3. **Land**

- 3.1. Identifying sites.
- 3.2. Seeking and gaining land owners' agreements.

#### 4. **Trees**

- 4.1. Types of tree planting.
- 4.2. Sourcing stakes and tree shelters.
- 4.3. Seeking technical advice.
- 4.4. Planting.
- 4.5. Ongoing maintenance.

#### 1. **Administration**

1.1. *Establishing the management team and relationship with the Parish Council.*

The steering committee comprises David Brooks, John Ashwell and Martin Spurrier. John Ashwell has offered to represent the PC. Other members would be recruited.

1.2. *Establishing the communication structure and communications plan recruiting additional volunteers.*

Reporting to whom, when and how? The PC reporting obligations will be established and recorded.

The Parish Clerk is investigating appropriate liability and insurance issues and is checking whether the scheme is covered by existing policies.

Keeping the PC and the community informed will ensure that this is a 'community' project. We shall use Facebook, Instagram and Twitter as well as e-mail and the Parish website.

We shall involve the media to generate interest in the scheme both for recruiting volunteers and funding. We shall be approaching local schools, especially Forest Schools

(<https://www.forestschoollassociation.org/what-is-forest-school/>) and those that South Leigh children attend, to encourage their involvement.

We will also seek to place stories and updates in the SouthLeigh Newsletter and communicate via the PC's e-mail list and website to generate two-way communications (as well as to recruit volunteers to help, especially youngsters!).

### 1.3. *Deciding what needs to be done and by whom.*

This is the role of any group management in order to ensure efficiency and to avoid duplication and wasted effort.

## 2. **Establishing a Budget and Funding.**

### 2.1. **Income:** There will be three principal sources of income:

- *Private contributions in cash and time:* Where individuals wish to contribute either, they will be encouraged to do so and this will be recorded appropriately.
- *Private funding for 'dedicated' trees:* Where donors wish to pay for a specific planting. This may be a single tree or many. Such trees may also have dedications attached to them in an appropriate manner. Later we may formalise fund raising, perhaps under categories e.g. Oak, Ask, Willow etc.
- *Government and NGO funds/grants:* There are many grants available and, over time, we shall research each and apply for them as appropriate e.g. OVO Energy, the Oxfordshire Woodland Group, Forest of Oxford, the Woodland Trust, The National Forest, DEFRA's Woodland Creation Planning Grant, The Tree Council's Tree Future's Grant Scheme, The Forestry Commission, International Tree Foundation, United Nations Environmental 'Plant for the Planet' programme etc all have schemes.

### 2.2. **Expenditure:** There are four principal cost items (until we use contractors, i.e. labour costs, for large-scale planting):

- *Trees*
- *Tree shelters*
- *Stakes*
- *Cable ties*

(See Appendix A for more detail).

## 3. **Land**

3.1. *Identifying sites:* This will start immediately and all will be plotted on a map for reference.

3.2. *Seeking and gaining permission:* We have sounded out the Eynsham Estate contractor with a positive response. The Estate and other land owners will be approached, accordingly. We have already received one dedication request.

Where it is common land or land owned or controlled by the OCC, we shall keep the PC informed.

Planting on verges can be done under Section 142 of the Highways Act through application to the OCC.

## 4. **Trees and Protection**

4.1. *Types of tree planting:* It is envisaged that there will be three:

*Hedgerow planting/protection:* Here, 'self set' saplings of a few inches tall (right) will be found along existing hedge lines, and 'rescued'. They will be cleared of grass (their worst enemy even before rabbits!), at no cost, and then staked and provided with a tree shelters for protection, at a cost. At this size, they can also easily be moved (we have 30 potted already, see end for pictures). Larger, well positioned saplings will be treated similarly but without re-location. 'Self-sets' of a few inches are rescued and protected (right).



*Specific plantings:* Here, individual members of the Parish may wish to pay for a tree, or several, to be planted in a specific place and, maybe, for a specific purpose. One such request/offer has already been received. Tree sizes will depend on the project.

*Specific plantings (left).*

*Copse creation:* Here, later in the programme, we envisage the planting of copses of say 20 trees upwards to several acres. *Copse creation (right).*



4.2: *Sourcing stakes and tree shelters.* See Appendix A.

4.3. *Seeking Technical Advice:* We shall seek professional advice before making novice mistakes. We shall always seek to have such expert advice provided on a complimentary basis (see end for references).

In order to achieve the objective and not to over promise nor to over expect, it is proposed to take 'baby steps' (multiple phases) both in the scope of work and in the geographic distance from the centre of population. We shall regard Lymbrook Close as the centre.

4.4. *Planting:* This can occur generally at any time although the best is early spring, say February/March, depending on the weather (for the planters, not the trees!). We see there being two phases in the first year, Phase 1 being 'self-set trees' and Phase 2 being purchased trees. The timing will depend largely upon permission from land owners.

4.5. *Ongoing maintenance.*

Fortunately, there is little maintenance to the hedgerow tree plantings. Simply removing grass now and then and replacing any trees that do not survive. In MS's experience this is significantly less than 10 percent. We shall keep a map showing every tree site and will ensure that they are checked and maintained periodically.

## CONCLUSION

This is a simple and endearing environmental scheme initiated by a 25-year-old local resident. Many will benefit from it - those in the South Leigh community who chose to become involved as well as those who chose otherwise. It will also add to the area's natural beauty that is enjoyed by a much wider population.

The scheme endorses the Neighbourhood Plan and will further beautify the village and its surroundings, it will help address global warming, it will provide habitat for fauna, and it will replace forest lost to progress. Everyone will benefit while it will cost the Parish Council nothing.

Thank you,

The South Leigh Forest Restoration Steering Committee.

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## APPENDIX A

### Estimated Costs and Indicative Budget

*Tree shelters and Stakes (best purchased together):*

There are numerous suppliers on the internet and three quotes are below for information. However, through our own local trade contacts, it may be possible to buy at more competitive prices and to 'involve' local firms. These quotes are for 100 of each, but the unit cost is less for 300 upwards.

Internet prices	Tubex Tree Shelter 1.2 m If we buy 100	Softwood treated stakes 1.2m If we buy 100
Britishhardwood*	£ 227	.69
Greentech	£ 257	.63
Gardensupplies (E Bay)	£ 238	1.69

\*MS uses Britishhardwood and finds them very responsive plus there are further discounts available.

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Based on the above guidelines, here is the proposed indicative budget for 2020:

### Indicative initial budget for 2020

#### Phase 1: Protection for 'self-set' hedgerow protected/ 'rescued' trees:

Trees: nil

Labour: nil

200 x tree shelters, stakes and cable ties:

SUB TOTAL: £650

#### Phase 2: Purchased trees:

Indicative tree purchase – say the Woodland Trust 'starter packs' x 3 = £150

Tree 'whips' and up to 500 mm at approx. £1-3 per tree, say = £200

TOTAL £1,000

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*Every effort will be made to achieve the best prices through supplier and trade contacts, in which case, surplus funds will be held for tree purchases.*

#### Notes for background information and reference:

*Expert advice:* We shall approach the Woodland Trust, which provides such services free. Others include The Forest of Oxford, which is linked to the Oxfordshire Woodland Group (a registered charity that we should probably join) and part of the Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum (ONCF), Natural England and CPRE. All offer assistance, some also provide grants, as noted above.

OCC Tree Team is: 0345 3101111.

*Trees:* The Woodland Trust provides free packs to schools and communities (see below). However, we need to have the permission of the landowner and the grid references before applying for them. Distribution is in March so we may not have time for this by March 2020 (but we shall try). We shall definitely do this for 2021.

*Tree costs:* Woodland Trust sells Copse Starter Packs of 30 saplings for £49.95. See below: For general information, the blog, 'arbtalk' cites £5,500 for 10 acres planting 60cm 'whips'. This includes shelters and stakes but no fencing. Thus, the unit cost is dramatically lower for large plantings.

Whips and small trees (500mm) cost £1-3 each and mature trees of 7-12 m tall cost about £200 each.

### **Woodland Trust Copse starter pack**

"Create a piece of paradise with this copse pack. Plant a mini forest school classroom or a peaceful spot that's an oasis for birds. With 30 trees per pack, you will receive Silver birch, Rowan and Wild cherry, perfect for your own small, tranquil copse.

**Estimate full grown height:** Rowan: 8-15m, Silver birch: 15-20m and Wild cherry: 18-25m.

**Purchase size and growth:** These trees are cell-grown saplings, ranging from approximately 15cm-60cm in height. Cell grown trees can be planted all year round in most situations as long as they are given the correct care. Please be aware that depending upon the time of year you receive your sapling (particularly early spring) it may not look very perky upon arrival, please do not worry once it has been planted it should pick up quickly".

*A 'self-set' oak 'rescued' from the roadside.*



*Our first 30 'rescued' trees ready for planting out.*



Logo royalty-free reference: <http://clipart-library.com/tree-roots-cliparts.html>

End