South Leigh Forest Restoration

To: Parish Councillors From: Martin Spurrier cc David Brooks 22nd April 2022

A brief report:

**Grant of £1,243.26 awarded** by Trust for Oxfordshire’s Environment. We claim in arears but have already bought and planted five trees to catch the end of the planting season.

**The five trees were planted** on the north side of Church End where the hedge has just been laid.

**Many thanks to Rachel Murphy** for granting us permission to plant there. She has kindly signed the agreement that is now with the Parish Clerk.

**Estate approval received** from Nick Pain (Savills) after three attempts to get a response since January, to plant on the south side of Church End to restore the historic avenue of trees there, work to start in October.

**Planting at the old crossing** – we are holding four more lovely trees and David Bury has indicated that we can plant them at the newly cleared land (owned by Jo Wilson). To be confirmed.

**Change of objectives** – it is a current objective of SLFR ‘to plant 200 trees per annum for the next five years’ from 2020. Another objective states: ‘To achieve 1,000 plantings by 2025’. Regrettably, these objectives cannot now be achieved.

Apart from delays caused by Covid restrictions, this is principally because of the UK Government’s new national agriculture policy where land owners can claim grants for, inter alia, tree planting (rather than receive subsidies for certain crops) and thus land owners do not want to allocate land to us that, otherwise, they might be able to plant and claim grants themselves. This has been re-affirmed by Nick Pain from Savills in his e mail of yesterday. David Bury has indicated the same.

Thus, no sizable piece of land is likely to become available for the foreseeable future.

We propose, therefore, that our objectives are modified to reflect this and say: ‘To plant as many trees as is possible on land made available to us’. And to add an additional objective: ‘To do our utmost to secure land for planting and so increase the total number of trees planted each year’. We do not like unquantified objectives, but we have little choice. May we have your agreement to this?

**Current planting status since 2020, both paid for by SLFR and/residents:**

SLFR: Chapel Road 12, Football Field 18, Just Cartridges drive 8, The Bury Triangle (SH Road) 15, Church End 5, consent to plant 22 more at Chapel Road and Church End, and the old crossing junction (soon) 4: **Total 84**. Plus, residents’ planting (known to us): Chapel Road 1, Acre Cottage 3, Station Farm 9, Station Road 3, Manor House 24, Field House 20, Glebe House 15, **TOTAL 75**, **COMBINED TOTAL 159**. In addition to these small plantings are Rachel Murphy’s large-scale planting on Station Road of about 600 trees (from memory).

Thankfully, it seems that we may only have had one casualty from all our planting to date. That is an oak at the Football Field, which we shall observe. All the others have flourished and some of the cherry trees are in blossom.

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