

Piper's Hill and Dodderhill Commons



Introduction & Location

Piper's Hill and Dodderhill Commons, 15.5 hectares, combine as one of the few remaining areas of remnant ancient wood pasture in the West Midlands, probably the most important example in Worcestershire. Over 200 veteran trees, many estimated to be 400 years old. A flagship nature reserve, nationally important Site of Special Scientific Interest and significant regionally for its population of veteran trees, associated invertebrates and fungi. The two commons are divided from each other by the B4091 with Dodderhill comprising the larger area to the west of the road. Another popular name given to it is Hanbury Woods. NGrid SO958650. Map sheet OS 1:50000- 150; 1:10000 -SO96SE

Objectives:

- Restoration of wood pasture in parts or all of the reserve by re-introducing grazing
- Restoration and prolonging the life of veteran trees
- Restoration of a varied shrub layer for the benefit of saproxylic invertebrates

Actions:

- Carry out feasibility study for the re-introduction of grazing
- Maintain the life of the existing veteran trees by removing surrounding trees
- Select and carry out arboricultural work on "future" veteran trees
- Increase the deadwood component available for saproxylic invertebrates
- Clear a strip along the western boundary to allow existing hawthorn to flower
- Plant hawthorn elsewhere on the site

Achievements:

- All trees mapped, tagged, condition recorded and individual management plans produced
- Arboricultural work on existing and future veteran trees and halo thinning around veteran trees to reduce overshading
- Scrub management and planting of hawthorn as a nectar source

GROWING OUR FUTURE

WEST MIDLANDS
FORESTRY FRAMEWORK



Worcestershire

Background:

The Common was traditionally wood pasture and opening up the site as part of the restoration of the 240 veteran trees sees real potential for re-instating this. The heavy beech canopy means there is little understorey. By removing beech and ash to provide enough light to promote grassy growth it is hoped that grazing can be reintroduced to all or part of the site. A popular woodland for public enjoyment. Reintroduction of grazing and fencing requires case evidence to be produced to prove the conservation and public benefit.

Quotes:

“I love it for all seasons and my children love running through the leaves in autumn” Sian.B Local resident

“This project will make a significant contribution to the delivery of the national plan” K.K. Natural England, lead partner Wood-pasture and Parkland Habitat Action Plan

“...and we congratulate the Trust on the work they have done” Ancient Tree Forum

Partners:

Ancient Tree Forum, Worcestershire Bat Group, Worcestershire Recorders, local residents of Pipers Hill and Dodderhill Common, Natural England, Forestry Commission.

WMRFF Objectives:

Main Theme & Others

Enhancing Biodiversity

- Meeting National and Local targets
- Preventing further loss
- Effective Woodland management planning
- Increasing public awareness
- Raising levels of skills and knowledge

Contact Details:

Central Reserves Officer
Worcestershire Wildlife Trust
Lower Smite Farm, Smite Hill, Hindlip, Worcs WR3 8SZ
Tel: 01905 754919 Email: enquiries@worcestershirowildlifetrust.org
www.worcestershirowildlifetrust.co.uk