

APPENDIX B

WILDLIFE HABITAT PROTECTION TRUST

Willow Farm, Church Fenton, Tadcaster,
North Yorkshire
LS24 9QR

Hambleton Hough Annual Report 2021 - Prepared by Martin Blakey

The main focus of our attention over the last 12 months has been the replanting of the Hough as we lost over 80% of stock due to a number of issues including very dry conditions and bracken which seemed to flourish in the conditions now exposed to full sunlight.

With this in mind we asked the contractors (Tilhill) advice on the best way to tackle the problem in terms of controlling the bracken and replanting the lost stock. It was decided to try and mulch the site in between the trees with a remote-controlled track machine which would cost over £1000 per day to operate. It was agreed to do a trial day to see how efficient this process would be, unfortunately, due to the high stumps on the site, they ended up mulching more tubes and trees than they were trying to save so this process was abandoned.

The only option then left in order to clear the bracken was to get a team in with trimmers to manually clear the site of bracken, this was more time consuming but the only way we could make the site suitable for replanting. Contractors have since completed this task in early December and proceeded to plant new stock.

There is a lot of natural regeneration on the site made up of trees including Oak, Rowan, Alder, sycamore and Laurel all around 10ft plus. All these will be left in as removing them is not good forest/silvicultural practice.

This left us with a deficit of around 2000 trees, they managed to reuse quite a lot of the tree protectors but needed an additional 200 support stakes as quite a lot had rotted or snapped with the weight of bracken.

I can confirm that work has now been completed and the Hough is now fully replanted with the following species of trees: Alder, Beech, Douglas Fir, Oak, Silver Birch, Sycamore, Cherry, Holly, Hazel, Blackthorn and Hawthorn.

We have also put plans in place to control the bracken during 2022 and this process will be carried out by Tilhill contractors. The area around each individual tree will be sprayed twice during the year in early spring and mid-summer to give the trees the best possible chance of survival. There will of course be trees that do not make it but the site will be closely monitored and any dead trees replaced each year.

The Hough continues to have a good foot fall of people, mainly made up of dog walkers and sightseers who take advantage of the excellent views now possible from the top of the hill where there is also wooden seating so you can get panoramic views of the whole area.