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Reg Charity No: 1122151

HAMBLETON HOUGH ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

05/06/2019

The past year has been centred on the re-planting programme and will continue in October 2019. We expect the planting project to be completed this year as we are getting contractors to help with the planting of the steep banks as well as any infill that is required.

Unfortunately due to the very dry conditions this year quite a lot of the trees have died and will need to be re-planted but this is factored into the works and will be ongoing each year until we are satisfied that we have enough healthy trees to provide a sufficient covering per acre.

When the planting programme is completed we will have planted around 3000 trees consisting of Oak, Beech, Hazel, Birch, Wild Cherry, Douglas Fir, Blackthorn and Field Maple.

Because of the heavy growth of bracken around the newly planted trees we have had contractors in to spray around the base of each tree which also have tree protectors in place. This allows the trees to grow without the added restriction of weeds which can often overtake the slow growth of the trees.

Many new paths have been created now within the woodland as it has obviously been opened up and the view from the very top of the hill has been warmly welcomed by many visitors to the wood who previously had very little view at all due to the density of the trees.

The local primary school continue to make use of the woodland on a regular basis with their Forest Schools programme as well as dog walkers and members of the public on a daily basis.

We intend to leave the hard standing area open as this provides additional parking during busy periods and also stops complaints from local residents with regards people parking on private roads.

The incident regarding dogs that had become sick after walking through the Hough during the summer of 2017 has not resurfaced since and all investigations into this have shown no evidence that any sickness was related to the Hough.

We have had some trees and protectors stolen but again this is factored into the project as we are well aware that this tends to happen, especially when the woodland has so many daily visitors.

The initial shock that followed when contractors first started work on felling part of the Hough has now been more openly accepted by the public as they can see that the woodland is being planted up with native English trees. Bird boxes have been fitted at various points in the wood and there are now seating areas that have been constructed including at the very top of the hill offering great 360 degree views of the surrounding countryside.

In summary, everything is going to plan and all going well the project will be completed by the end of this year. The woodland will be monitored regularly with regards maintenance and trees that need replacing but overall once finished it will require very little upkeep apart from general tidying up and the pathways maintained.

Martin Blakey