**Stoke Environment Group - Project Plan**

Project Title: Village Hall Hedge Community Hedge Planting Day (H&T-1)

Project Date: 29 January 2022

Project Manager: Ian Upshall

**Project Objective**

The principal objective is to plant 120m of native species hedge along the two field boundaries of The Williams Hall. A secondary objective is to organise an event around the hedge planting that encourages community involvement and ownership, together with an opportunity to understand more about the importance of biodiversity in our Parish.

**Project Outline**

The community has been given 120m of native species hedge plants (approx. 500-600 whips) through the Reimaging The Levels and Woodland Trust. The plants will be ready for collection from the nursery in January 2022. It is planned to organise a community planting day on Saturday 29 January 2022. This event will run in parallel to the monthly ‘Coffee & Books’ which takes place in the Village Hall between 0900 and 1200hrs. The organisers have been contacted and are content that SEG runs its event during the day.

A working party of at least 15 people will be required to prepare the ground, place each whip and install protection around some of the whips. It is hoped the working party can include young people, but all ages will be welcome to make a contribution during the day. We will require two or three ‘supervisors’ whose role will be to ensure whips are planted according to an agreed plan and that protection is correctly installed.

This will be the first event organised by SEG that directly involves the community. The intent is to encourage community ownership of the hedge and the project overall.

In addition to the hedge planting, arrangements will be made to provide refreshments throughout the day and activities for younger people. This could include a learning experience to understand more about the birds and animals that will use the hedge for food, protection and concealed movement. An expert will be invited to provide assistance with this.

In summary, the three parts of the project comprise; hedge planting; refreshments, and; young people’s activities.

**Project Plan**

1. Hedge Planting

The physical process of hedge planting will require planning prior to the event and coordination on the day.

There is 120m of hedge line to be planted. The bio-degradable membrane is in place. It is intended to plant through the membrane. David Smith and Ian Upshall are going to attend a hedge planting day near Street on 15 January 2022. Trevor Williams is also taking part in the event. Attendance will give valuable insight to the process and techniques – particularly on how to plant through the membrane.

All hedge whips, trees and stakes etc. must be collected from the nursery at Compton Dundon (near Street). Ian Upshall is liaising with Jason Morgan regarding the collection of the plants and stakes, etc. It is hoped collection can be arranged for the Friday 28 January 2022 but this has yet to be confirmed with RTL and the nursery.

It is anticipated that on Friday 28 January, the whips will be laid out in position roughly where they are to be planted. The precise process will be confirmed after our visit to the Street planting day. The aim is to have all plants in position ready to be put into the soil at the start of the planting day, 29 January.

We have received a list of species and quantities from Reimaging The Levels (RTL) and guidance on how species should be planted in groups, as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Planting Ref** | **Species** | **Quantity Supplied** | **Plants per Group** | **Number of Groups** | **Distribution**  **37:9:63** |
| 1 | Blackthorne | 24 | 3 | 8 | 2:1:5 |
| 2 | Common Buckthorne | 12 | 1 | 12 | 3:1:8 |
| 3 | Common Dogwood | 24 | 3 | 8 | 2:1:5 |
| 4 | Common Elder | 12 | 1 | 12 | 3:1:8 |
| 5 | Common Holly | 12 | 1 | 12 | 3:1:8 |
| 6 | Common Privet | 12 | 1 | 12 | 3:1:8 |
| 7 | Dog Rose | 24 | 2 | 12 | 3:1:8 |
| 8 | Field Maple | 60 | 4 | 15 | 6:0:9 |
| 9 | Guelder Rose | 24 | 2 | 12 | 3:1:8 |
| 10 | Hawthorn | 120 | 5 | 24 | 7:2:15 |
| 11 | Hazel | 60 | 4 | 15 | 6:0:9 |
| 12 | Hornbeam | 36 | 4 | 9 | 3:1:5 |
| 13 | Spindle | 36 | 3 | 12 | 3:1:8 |
| 14 | Wayfaring Tree | 24 | 2 | 12 | 3:1:8 |
| 15 | (Currently unspecified) Tree | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0:0:2 |

In addition, two trees will be planted. The Parish Council and Village Hall Trustees have been asked to make their preference of species known to SEG. We will need to inform RTL about one week before collection of the plants.

It is intended to retain the membrane in situ – this will help protect the newly planted whips against cold weather and retain moisture when the weather warms up. Ian Upshall is currently sourcing wood chip which will be placed on the membrane to improve protection and water retention and to improve the look of the completed hedge. Approximately 12 cubic metres will be required (at 10cm deep).

Based on a discussion with the volunteers at Longrun Meadow in Taunton, 40 metres of hedge takes about two hours to plant with five helpers: two people preparing holes, two placing pre-positioned whips into the holes and one person ‘filling in’. If we have wood chip available on planting day, two more volunteers will be required to spread the wood chip.

It is proposed to divide the task into two ‘groups’ – one for the east boundary and one for the north. Although unequal lengths, this will enable us to better utilise labour. There will be at least two ‘supervisors’ present at any time to assist and to brief incoming volunteers. The only tools required will be a measuring stick and up to two spades per planting group. Volunteers will be asked to provide their own tools and protective equipment.

We will ‘advertise’ the event in advance. All means will be used including social media, direct communication with village groups, flyers and notice board. Ideally, we will require ten volunteers working at a time. Clearly the length of time will be determined by each volunteer. However, with good planning and preparation it is envisaged that the planting will be completed within the day.

Timings for the day: volunteers will be invited to come along to the village hall from 0900hrs. It is envisaged that work will finish at 1600hrs at the latest.

1. Refreshments

Hedge Planting Day coincides with the monthly ‘Coffee & Books’ which runs from 0900 to 1200hrs. During this time, refreshments are provided for visitors. It is planned to ‘take over’ the kitchen from 1200hrs to provide volunteers with refreshments in the afternoon. An arrangement will be made with the Village Hall Trustees regarding sharing costs.

Refreshments will be tailored to the weather. At the very least, tea, coffee and squash plus biscuits will be provided free of charge. Hot Dogs and Pizza slices will be provided over the lunch period for a nominal charge (to cover costs).

Ian Upshall has approached the WI to determine if they can help. Alternatively, we will ask for volunteers on the day.

(c) Activities

One of SEG’s objectives is to increase the involvement of young people in all our environmental projects. The Hedge Planting Day will be the first event we have organised that provides an opportunity to involve our young environmentalists.

We will liaise with appropriate groups, for example, Brownies, Beavers, Cubs, School and Willow-Set and invite participation at this family focussed event.

It is proposed to organise some activities on the topic of ‘Our Hedge’. One activity will be based on Eye-spy and involve children searching the area for names of wild animals and plants using pictures and clues. We also have access to short films and videos. Ian Upshall is liaising with Somerset Wildlife Trust and expert groups to source material.

Consideration of safety will be important in an area where cars are moving. A risk assessment will be undertaken and made available prior to the event.

Leaders and families will be encouraged to participate in both planting and activities.

**Publicity**

Ian Upshall will produce copy to be used for publicity, which will include:

* Social media – Envirostoke Facebook page, shared with SSG and SSG Villagers Facebook pages starting w/b 3 January 2022 (and repeated weekly);
* Envirostoke website (from w/b 3 January 2022);
* Flyers to be made available in shop, pub and distributed to churches, School and Willow-set (from about 15 January 2022);
* Direct email to village groups (from about 15 January 2022);
* Notice board on shop gate (from about 15 January 2022).

**Costs**

* All trees, shrubs and associated equipment is free of charge. The costs of the biodegradable membrane has been paid (£247) from SEG funds.
* There will be a charge for a half-day use of the village hall kitchen (about £15), which will be met from SEG funds;
* There will be a contribution of £15 towards the morning’s refreshments;
* Cost of refreshments and lunch estimated at £50.

Total cost approximately £80 (not including cost of membrane).

This estimate does not include any costs associated with the procurement of woodchip.

**Next Steps**

* Prepare planting guidance in cooperation with local experts and RTL/WT/SWT by 15 January 2022
* Manage Hedge Planting Day on 29 January 2022