



# BARWOODS

## Botesdale and Rickinghall Community Woodlands Project

### Report for Rickinghall Parish Council Annual Meeting, 2017

Members of the Steering Group of Barwoods are pleased to report continuing progress on the two sites that we manage on behalf of Rickinghall Parish Council.

Low Meadow, the first site that we worked on, continues to develop and there have been no major issues. There are two benches in the meadow and a public footpath runs along one side of it. Mowing is done only once a year now and we rake off the mown grass with the object of impoverishing the soil to encourage wildflowers to grow. This is done late in the year after flower seeds have dropped. There is a new hedge alongside the neighbour's fence as the old one had been grubbed up and we are awaiting a new sign that will be more permanent than the current one.

The summer rains encouraged vigorous growth of the annuals in Northfield Wood that threatened to dominate, especially the rosebay willow herb. Our small group struggled to control this vigorous plant, but fortunately the prevailing wind does not blow seeds towards the allotments and we have a plan to limit weed growth this year. During the winter Patrick Robinson brush-cut the whole area and we start the year with a promising wood, to which we have added newly planted snowdrops and aconites. Some new trees have been planted too, including ash and hornbeam.

The parish council donated a second bench which has been placed further down the path. Recently, the permissive path that ran alongside the wood and across the bottom of the field towards Botesdale has been closed. Now walkers have to retrace their steps when they get to the exit at the bottom of our path. We hope to have the path cut wider in future and are considering extending it to form a loop.

The fruit trees produced apples, quinces and medlars last summer. The hedge is intended to provide some protection from cold north winds; work parties have been tidying, weeding and keeping down the hedge to encourage lower growth.

This year is the first when we have not been able to visit St Botolph's School as part of our remit to encourage children to take an interest in trees. They will be the custodians of our environment in the future and it is important for them to be aware of and even to become involved in environmental concerns.

Last June we celebrated our first ten years by inviting the public on guided walks to our two sites in Rickinghall and Miller's Orchard in Botesdale.

Our work parties are usually on the first Sunday of the month only and we have an evening meeting most months on the third Monday. New volunteers are welcome to join us.

*Rosemary Jones, Chairman*