

More Trees for Guilden Morden: Progress Report September 2021

1. Introduction

One of the ideas generated by the Climate Conversations (now Zero Carbon Mordens) group in 2019 was to plant more trees in Guilden and Steeple Morden. Although not a panacea for the reversal of climate change, trees do sequester carbon from the atmosphere so can be seen as part of the solution. The advantages of such a plan would be that tree planting is an achievable project which could involve many villagers. It would provide a platform to disseminate ideas and from which further initiatives could arise. Nettie Traverse-Healy agreed to steer the Steeple project and Phil Porter the Guilden one. As there was already a Community Orchard project proposed for Guilden in 2020, it was decided to defer the Guilden project until 2021.

2. Parish Council involvement

Approaches were made to Guilden Morden Parish Council and a tree working group was set up. PC Chair Cllr Barry Holme, Cllr Michael Chapman and Phil Porter met on the Recreation Ground in order to identify possible sites and discuss which tree species might be included in the scheme. The group also visited Thompson's Meadow where GMPC have a small area of land which has already planted with three trees supplied free of charge by South Cambs District Council. Phil Porter agreed to produce a draft planting plan and suggestions for a more environmentally friendly management of the Recreation Ground. Cllr Barry Holme also agreed that the trees on the approach roads to the village could be added to, with the gaps being plugged with new trees.

At a subsequent meeting with Cllr Michael Chapman with Andy and Rachel Tanser, these ideas were firmed up and Andy agree to formalise them on a map of the site.

3. District Council involvement

Phil Porter undertook an informal survey of the village in order to identify further possible tree planting sites. The largest potential site is the open ground of Thompsons Meadow but there are other small sites around the village, including some wide road verges which may come under the jurisdiction of Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Department.

It was suggested that in order to gain permission to plant on the land owned by SCDC Councillor Heather Williams should be contacted. Heather was very supportive and has agreed to set up a meeting with council officers in order to identify sites for possible planting. Unfortunately this may not happen for some months due to the pressures SCDC are under.

4. Trees for Gardens and Fields

Following the success of the More Trees for Steeple Morden project, fliers were given out at Guilden Market in order to gauge the level of interest in a similar project for Guilden. Some interest was generated but until there is some funding in place, it will not be possible to pursue this at present. Should funding be forthcoming, further publicity for this part of the project will be put in place eg in Gamut, village Facebook pages.

5. Future Developments

- Plan for the recreation Ground to be presented to September 2021 meeting of GMPC to request funding
- Request to be made to GMPC for commitment to fund future planting
- Native trees to be sourced from local suppliers where possible
- Volunteers for tree planting to be recruited via Gamut, Facebook and by contacting those who planted the orchard
- Further sites for planting to be identified with Heather Williams and SCDC officers
- Adopt-a-tree scheme to help care for new trees
- Free trees to be sourced from The Woodland Trust for possible sites in Thompsons Meadow
- Call out in Gamut and Facebook for self-seeded trees to be rehomed by those who have sites available
- Survey of roadside trees to be completed and Highways Department contacted with a view to plugging the gaps and planting hedges where tree planting not possible
- Farmers and other landowners to be approached with a view to finding more sites for planting

6. Conclusion

Despite some obstacles, there has been some progress made and with the support of the GMPC, there will be more trees planted in Guilden Morden very soon.

Phil Porter September 2021