



Tree, Woodland and Hedgerow strategy.

Comments from Crowthorne Village Action Group (CVAG)

When, in the not too distant past, a Government Planning Inspector refused a planning application he wrote that in part his reasoning was a need to save Crowthorne village's "sylvan character".

On the subject of Biodiversity, CVAG's aim is to maintain and enhance this feeling of verdant serenity through our recommendations that follow below under the headings 'Main Priorities', 'Actions' and our 'CVAG Actions'.

Because our village crosses parishes, boroughs, and parliamentary postal areas, we believe that often each responsible authority sees the problem differently or sees it as a challenge for the other party to solve. We assert that in arriving at a Bracknell BAP **working with one's "neighbouring authorities" is a priority**. Birds bees, plants and trees don't see our man made boundaries. Our aims therefore are a little more wide sweeping than just parochial village concerns.

In summary our concerns are:

1. Crowthorne Village sits adjacent to Swinley Forest and the Thames Basin Heathland Special Protection Area (SPA), a large proportion of which was decimated by a recent forest fire, so it is important that these bare areas are returned to **broadleaf** forest with patches of heathland for the flora and fauna that are already protected under the EU legislation.

2. That a large proportion of any new development be set aside for trees and hedgerows and flora and fauna.

*In this instance, our **current** concerns are the old TRL site, destined for 1000 new homes, and Broadmoor Hospital where there is the possibility of up to 400 houses planned. Both these sites abut Swinley Forest and the SPA.*

3. Other areas, if built upon either currently or in the next 5 years, should be replanted with any tree, hedgerows or wildlife habitat removed or damaged to protect the biodiversity of these areas within Crowthorne and its environs.

An example is the land around the Coral Reef roundabout restructuring.

4. An erosion of 'green gaps', 'green strips' or 'wild life corridors' between residential developments limits the free movement of species.

A recent example, in an approved outline PA by Legal and General, is the addition of residential properties into the space between the footprint of the old offices on the TRL site and Central Bracknell. We see these 'gaps' as similar to Green Belts that were the reaction to strip development in the 1920-30's. Recently even Green Belts are being criticised by building firms as being a hindrance when they apply for larger housing estates in quiet and desirable village locations around major city and town centres.

5. The need for more wildlife corridors to complement others **within** the parish and those intersecting with those in neighbouring parishes **plus** the maintenance of current ones.

Hedgerows along paths, byways, lanes and highways are by default 'green corridors'. Two examples of neglect at both ends of the spectrum are Peacock Lane that contains rubbish along its length, some of which has been there for more than a year, and Sawmill Lane, where a property owner whose land backs onto this verdant byway decided he would turn it into a paved road with hard standing.

6. We are concerned about the lack of a register of all woodland, ancient and veteran trees, hedgerow, and copses,

Maybe something similar to TPO's that is also published on maps and on the BFBC's public portals.

Main priorities

1. Get trees protected with TPO orders. We know the public often say that they assumed trees were protected e.g. oaks.

2. Safeguard trees against future development.

3. Maintenance of wildlife habitats. This includes preservation of trees/ hedgerows **and** litter picking throughout the Borough as discarded plastic and human refuse is dreadful and a hazard to wildlife.

4. Planting more hedges and replacing lost trees.

5. Joint planning and ongoing maintenance with Wokingham.

6. Look at sites like Edgcumbe Park that are split between the Boroughs and ensure that the same rules apply for all trees, hedgerows, etc..

7. Maps available on web site showing TPO trees/ woodland/ hedgerows and wildlife habitats.

8. Working with farmers and land owners to protect hedgerows and trees.

9. Maintain green gaps and wildlife corridors.

10. Reduce pollution levels in Crowthorne High Street.

Actions

1. TPO trees throughout the Borough and also blanket TPO woodland. Be pro active and not re active.
2. Put information on the BFBC web site. Maps should show:
 - a) TPO trees
 - b) Woodland and whether it is protected by blanket TPO'
 - c) Wildlife habitats are, including wildlife corridors and green gaps.
3. Use social media to alert people to the need to get trees protected.
4. Inform and educate people by:-
 - i) Writing in the Crowthorne Eye
 - ii) Have a stall at the Crowthorne Carnival and Pinewood festivals each year.
 - iii) Produce posters for CVAG to display at our public meetings.
 - iv) Training days in schools and colleges.
 - v) Attend the CVAG AGM each year.
 - vi) On social media and web sites keep people informed of progress on your targets set out in the Biodiversity Action Plan.
5. More planting when trees are felled for development or road works e.g. Coral Reef roundabout changes to road system. **(What is happening about replanting healthy trees felled for this development?)** Ensure that any trees removed are replaced elsewhere in the Borough and mapped so the public can see where they are.
6. People to adopt trees in the Borough or to plant a tree for a loved one. These have been popular ideas in other areas and were once promoted by Greenpeace who were amazed at the response. Areas where they are planted should be shown on maps and posters. People would be more involved in the future of bio diversity this way whereas now they have little say in what happens.
7. Litter collection urgent. Educate people about keeping their environment clean and tidy.
8. Planning and ongoing maintenance with Wokingham. Have a representative at forum meetings e.g. Broadmoor redevelopment meetings/ triangle major development meetings.
9. Ensure that future development protects trees and that plans will include maintenance of existing trees and hedgerows/ green gaps and wildlife corridors.
10. Publicise minutes of any biodiversity meetings.
- 11. Ensure that contractors who come in to do essential road works/ pipe replacement etc. replace plants they destroy with similar plants, and they don't just throw down some grass seed. Here in Crowthorne we have had lots of works done recently but they never plant things that they destroy. Valuable wildlife habitats are destroyed. The maintenance work they do may be important but no thought goes into returning the verges to their original states. Gas companies, water companies etc need to be educated in this matter.**

CVAG actions

1. Put biodiversity issues/ links on our web site.
2. Fliers/posters at our stall at the Pinewood festival this year.
3. Advertise biodiversity meetings to the public.
4. Send a representative to our AGM and put up information posters.
5. Note action points in the objectives and review what has been achieved.

Other comments

1. Plant trees in Crowthorne High Street. This will easily help with the pollution issue and improve our environment. There is a lot of information available about the benefits of planting trees where pollution is an issue. So far little has been done to solve this problem and it is only set to get worse when all the new homes are built in and around Crowthorne.
2. We don't want developers to lead future development. They should not be able to fell trees just because they want to e.g. Bowman's field in Crowthorne. Those apple trees are historic and a part of our history. They formed part of an ancient orchard and should be protected as a matter of urgency.
3. Huge loss of trees/ hedgerows with the Broadmoor and TRL developments. What planning is there to replace them?
4. Get training into schools. Have education days for children and the public to attend.
5. Better co-operation between Bracknell and other local community organisations. E.g. When CVAG had a large number of trees and the volunteers to plant them, Bracknell tree officers said there was nowhere for them! Fortunately, Pinewood wanted them and they were successfully planted.

When CVAG had a lot of trees to plant a few years ago, Bracknell tree officers said there was nowhere for them! Pinewood took them. Is this really the way forward?