



QUARTERLY UPDATE

We've been Crown Lifting

No, we are not running away with the crown jewels... but the GAT volunteers have been busy from the end of the summer with our "crown lifting" campaign.

The crown of the tree is the main element above ground on the trunk. If anyone saw the recent "The Secret Life of Trees" (still available on BBC iplayer) you will understand that the branches don't move up the trunk as the tree grows taller. The branches stay at the same height and just get thicker as the tree grows. To get a nice tall trunk and a good crown with at least 6 feet of clearance used to be easy as the cows



would eat anything low hanging.

Widmer Fields hasn't been farmed since the early 80's so to encourage the trees to grow upwards – rather than outwards we must keep cutting away the lower branches.

Raising the crown also serves another purpose as it stops a damp air patch forming under the tree where the branches meet the grass top and that would encourage mildew to grow on the tree.

The crown lifting across all the fields has taken us months of hard work with



the pole-saw, chainsaw, and loppers to give the trees the haircut they need.

Fortunately, the weather was good for most of the time, so the volunteers enjoyed being able to "cut-loose".

Good fortune smiled on us again when we were looking for a chipper machine to shred the branches as one of the dog walkers in the fields got chatting and offered us the free use of the chipper he has for his business, so a big thank you to Nick Beresford of KPS Landscaping.



Mowing the Grass

Another activity we do after the end of the summer is cutting down the dry brown grass to mulch it back into the ground which reinvigorates new green growth for the next year.

We do have a couple of petrol mowers for trimming the paths, but can you imagine how long it would take to try and mow the 20-acre South Field with your average 15inch lawn mower? Luckily, we have our Kubota mini tractor and the topper attachment, which has a 48inch cutting span.

Even with our bigger machinery it still takes time so we needed to deploy... **our secret weapon, Bob!**

We set Bob the task of grass cutting while the other volunteers were tackling the crown lifting and he drove that tractor up and down, up and down, side to side, side to side, for hours. And then did it again day after day until the job was done.

For someone who's in their eighties and restricted to "light duties", Bob has done an absolutely fabulous job and another very big thank you. Look at how straight those lines are! Cont.





CAUGHT ON CAMERA



Widmer Fields Wildlife Pond



We started the pond back in April 2024 by lining an area that was already acting as a natural attenuation pond in the winter, but it dried out quickly in the spring. The pond is where the natural surface water run-off drains from the south field and the farmers field before it exits under the school road into the spinney.

We thought that if we could keep the water around all year long it would be a useful habitat for amphibians (we saw frog spawn and tadpoles this year) and insects (lots of dragonflies this year).

We've tried to keep dogs out to enable the pond plants to get established, so we built dead hedges using some of the cut branches to restrict easy access to the water. But now we weren't sure if we were stopping bigger wildlife from using the pond as well.

Step up local Hazlemere residents Phil and Jo Oliver who've got 25 years' experience of game reserves in South Africa. They wanted to see if they could track our big game wildlife visiting the pond using a motion activated trail cam.

So, we need not have worried about the wildlife being kept out by our hedges as they are getting into the new year-round watering hole through the thick blackthorn scrub below the pond.

The trail cam captured lots of muntjac, foxes and a badger. A big thanks to Jo and Phil for capturing the photos of some of Widmer Fields Big 5!

Cont.

Are you able to help us maintain the Fields?

To volunteer with us, please contact Joanna Davinson:
HonorarySecretary@GrangeAreaTrust.org.uk

As most of our work tends to be done on weekdays, newly retired people looking for exercise would be especially welcome.

Training and PPE provided.

SCAN TO DONATE



Can you donate?

Any donation large or small would be welcomed to help meet our maintenance costs!

Donate by scanning the QR code, visiting our website (below) or emailing us!

www.grangeareatrust.org.uk



Eight competitive teams battled against the fiendish questions of Quiz Master Adrian for the winter quiz crown. A fun night was had by all. The quiz was played out over seven rounds with the bonus kazoo music round creating quite a stir, which tested the artistic skills of some, and ears of others! The final scores were very close. The winning team, "Knackered Alpacas", over coming arch-rivals, "No Hoppers", by just half a point with a 96.5 to 96 point victory to carry off the chocolate bars and Widmer Fields key ring prizes. More importantly the income from the ticket sales and the ever popular raffle raised £530 for the Grange Area Trust charity coffers to help us maintain the fields. Thanks to Widmer End Village Hall for hosting the event.

Volunteer Viewpoint: Meet Nick Rogers!



I am a volunteer in Widmer Fields for the Grange Area Trust (GAT). You've probably seen me on the fields, I'm the tall one and I generally wear my green work overalls and yellow hi-vis. As a volunteer I meet a few times a week (depending on weather and my grandchildren minding duties) with the other volunteers and trustees to maintain the fields. I help keep the fields a beautiful, safe and accessible place for children to play, dog walkers to roam, and generally a place for people to walk, or sit and take in the peace and tranquillity of our green space and enjoy the nature all around. A place you can walk, run, have a chat with friends, chill out or just reflect on life. I volunteer as I get great enjoyment from it and it also gives me great satisfaction to see others enjoying the space that I've worked on. One day we might be trimming trees, cutting grass, planting new foliage, building a pond, or laying paths for people to walk round.

The trust is very proud of the area they own and it is looking so good at the moment. If you have never visited, please come along and see for yourself, and should you feel like becoming a volunteer, and joining the team, for a great workout, lovely company, job satisfaction and take in the great outdoors, then contact honorarysecretary@grangeareatrust.org.uk

ORDER YOUR 2026 CALENDAR TO SUPPORT WIDMER FIELDS

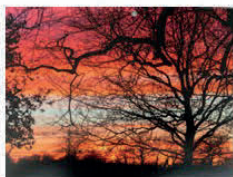
Back by popular demand, the Widmer Fields Calendar 2026 will feature more stunning images taken in and around the fields by local photographer, Chris Rowan of Class Picks (www.classpicks.co.uk)



Grange Area Trust (GAT) relies on fundraising to help cover the costs of managing and maintaining the fields for all of us to enjoy, so the more we sell the more we all benefit! Despite rising costs we've kept the price of the calendar at just £5 – why not treat yourself or gift to friends and family for Christmas?

The calendars measure approximately 42cm x 30cm (similar to A3 size) when opened, with a stunning picture on the top and space on the lower half to record your important appointments each days.

We are taking pre-orders so we don't produce more calendars than we can sell. Please support Widmer Fields by completing the order form. If you are able to make a small donation to accompany your purchase, we would be grateful for the additional support.



Here are just a few of the images you could enjoy over the year ahead.



WIDMER FIELDS 2026 CALENDAR

ORDER FORM

NAME (BLOCK CAPITALS)

ADDRESS

EMAIL

CONTACT NUMBER

NUMBER OF CALENDARS @ £5 EACH

VOLUNTARY ADDITIONAL DONATION TO GAT

Please make payment to Grange Area Trust, Sort Code 30-94-28, Account 35631560, quoting surname and year of birth as reference. Enter reference below so we can trace your payment.

REFERENCE

Email a scan of the complete form back to: honorarysecretary@grangeareatrust.org.uk. Calendars will be available at the beginning of December.

Alternately complete the form with payment and post/drop in to Piranor Barn, North Road, Widmer End, HP15 6NE.

Grange Area Trust (C.I.O.) Charity Number 1167347