



## QUARTERLY UPDATE



This winter there was of course the decorating of the community tree in the large south field. I think we found out how many people it takes to hang a bauble: One volunteer (Dave) and his ladder plus a dozen bauble wranglers and two dogs! Our thanks to everyone who helped, especially those that brought along and donated baubles for the tree. Next time we'll order better weather to make it jolly and bright.



### Grange Area Trust Car Park Appeal

For a number of years, Grange Area Trust has been in contact with the company that formerly owned **The Royal Standard Pub** in Grange Road, Widmer End. The pub has since closed, been sold, and converted into a private residence. However, the car park—situated separately from the building—was not included in the sale.

This car park is located opposite Widmer End Village Hall and is a valuable community asset. It enables visitors to park and access

Widmer Fields directly via the public right of way. The Village Hall also relies on it as overflow parking during weekend events and when cricket matches are taking place.

We are pleased to report that Grange Area Trust has now reached an agreement with the pub company to purchase the car park for community use. To achieve this, **we need to raise £20,000** to cover the purchase price and associated legal and administrative costs.



We are extremely grateful to **Hughenden Parish Council**, which has recognised the importance of retaining this asset and has generously awarded us a grant of **£3,400** to help launch our fundraising campaign.

**Grange Area Trust is now seeking donations to raise the remaining balance.** Any contribution, large or small, would be greatly appreciated.

Once the purchase is complete, we plan to overhaul the car park to fill in the potholes and address muddy areas. These improvements should increase capacity and make the space safer and more usable, particularly during busy dog-walking and event periods.

### Can you donate?

You can either make a one off donation or set up a standing order. We can also claim gift aid if you are a UK tax payer, which would mean the charity receives an extra 25% of your donation.

If you are able to help, please contact the Grange Area Trust Secretary, Joanna Davinson. **Email: [honorarysecretary@grangeareatrust.org.uk](mailto:honorarysecretary@grangeareatrust.org.uk)**

**Or call: 07970 056 903**

Winter has also been a good time to plant the remaining tree saplings we had so they can flourish in the spring. The volunteers finished off planting oaks, beeches and hollies around the field boundaries where we are trying to infill gaps created by aging and fallen trees. But no sooner than we plant new trees the winds are breaking off branches and bringing down old trees which meant extra work for the volunteers to make the fields safe for visitors by cutting down any hanging debris with chainsaws and loppers. I've even considered investing in a checked shirt so I can go 100% lumberjack. The branches have come in useful for thickening the dead hedges we built around the pond (to keep the dogs out) and the logs get stacked into piles which can slowly rot down and are ideal natural habitats for all manner of insects, amphibians and small mammals.



The volunteers have also been doing a good deed for Ed over on Grange Farm. Some 500 or so of the remaining saplings we agreed to plant as a new hedge alongside the public footpath that crosses his field from the end of Grange Road to the existing hedge that leads down to the pond. This will eventually thicken to provide a wind break for walkers and a wildlife corridor to join the existing mature hedge. We drove the mini tractor over the fields laden with the saplings and the sheep followed us thinking we were delivering them more food. Unfortunately, the wet weather meant the furrow dug for the saplings has become muddier than the battlefields of the Somme and was quite literally sucking the boots off our feet as worked!

Hopefully it will stop raining soon as Spring is on the way! There's already plenty of snowdrops showing and the daffodil and crocus bulbs are pushing through and will be flowering soon. We should then get a good showing from the bluebells which are in the boundaries if they have survived the onslaught from the continual rains.



## Volunteer Viewpoint: Dave & Sally Taylor!

In October 2024, my wife and I, who are both recent retirees, agreed we needed to find an interest to keep us active. Whilst reading the Widmer End News we noticed that the Grange Area Trust were looking for volunteers to help maintain Widmer Fields (they still need more volunteers by the way). As we love the outdoors and countryside we thought we'd give it a go as with 40 acres of fields there are always plenty of jobs to do.

In the last year we've been planting saplings, raising the crowns of the trees, topping up the paths with scalplings and cutting back the brambles and blackthorn to stop them taking over the fields.

One of the tasks we have been asked to complete this winter is the bird box survey.



There is an eclectic mix of over 80 bird/bat/bug boxes scattered around the fields. This time of year is the best time to maintain the boxes ready for the start of nesting season in March. All the boxes are located using the 'what3words' app references and each box is pinned onto a Google map of the area. So, if you have seen us over the fields, phone in hands, looking bewildered, we are surveying the boxes. Each box is assessed and cleaned, taken down and repaired or replaced if beyond repair. What is encouraging, is that nearly every box had a nest

### Are you able to help us maintain the Fields?

To volunteer with us, please contact Joanna Davinson:  
[HonorarySecretary@GrangeAreaTrust.org.uk](mailto: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 help meet our maintenance costs!

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