



Ovington Parish Council

OVINGTON TREES

2025-2026 REPORT

Tree maintenance revealed approximately 10% of trees planted were suffering from the summer drought or had succumbed to predation by insects or mammals. Replacement plantings were made during the autumn and winter months. Seeking advice from experts revealed that this amount of loss from new plantings is common.

As in previous years, during the winter months the Project Manager trims hedges around free standing trees in hedgerows and places red/white streamers on branches. This helps the flail cutter teams see the trees while cutting hedgerows.

The winter months is also the time when weeding is done around free standing trees. This essential work helps prevent choking of trees by invasive weeds and also reduces predation by insects and mammals.

Around the same time as footpaths are cut along the River Tyne, contractors are engaged to cut back overgrowth along project planted hedgerows. This timing ensures as little wildlife disturbance as possible when bracken, balsam and brambles are actively growing. Over several years this suppresses the regrowth significantly.

The website www.ovingtontrees.co.uk has been set up and well used for ongoing information about the project and events. An Ovington resident kindly maintains the website for us. The project has to pay for annual domain charges and licences.

The main focus of administration during the year involved way markers.

Way markers

Planning permission for way markers was finally granted June 2025 after nearly two years of protracted correspondence with planners.

A local artist, Steve Pardue was appointed to design and create illustration panels on way markers to bring to life the arboretum route. Steve has walked the arboretum route in different seasons to understand each location's ecology. Copies of wildlife surveys have been provided to the artist to enable him to select known species that visit the area. 14 different art panels have been created.

A request was sent to five different joiners and timber merchants for quotes to supply and rout posts.

One said they could not provide oak posts. Others gave quotes for pine posts instead. A local firm did say they could source appropriate posts and rout them. This quote was put to parish council and accepted. Sadly the quality of work was below the standard needed. So alternatives were sought. Meanwhile the global issues of war and economic situation of the UK had a dramatic impact on the availability of suitable timber and costs to source and work on timber. A second attempt to gain quotes resulted in fewer organisations saying they could meet the specification.

The artist recommended we use his regular supplier. The organisation had fulfilled many of his previous timber art projects to a high standard. The design work is complete and illustration panels were sent to the supplier to fit them onto posts.

A funding shortfall between original quotes and current situation caused great concern. Grants were applied for, but had a very long lead in time before a response could be made. Councillor Anne Dale and NCC MLIS Fund came to the rescue. This was a tremendous effort by all concerned to resolve a difficult financial situation.

Outstanding action

- Installing the way markers. A resident villager has offered to receive and store posts. Volunteers are needed to put posts in the ground. A regular volunteer has agreed to transport the heavy posts to each location and to supply the cement to mortar the posts in place. The posts will need installation at precise locations agreed with landowners and NCC Planning
- A launch event needs to be planned and delivered when the posts are installed. This event is to invite all volunteers, sponsors, donors and key partners to celebrate the official opening of the arboretum routes. Media need to be invited as well as our own photographs and write up of the event for posting on social media and our website.
- A count of people involved and visitors attending events needs to be obtained. (Grant funder requirement).
- Feedback from volunteers and users of the paths needs to be obtained (Funding requirement).
- Full financial statement of entire project needed at end of project.
- When the above are completed, fulfilment reports need to be provided to each grant funder. These reports will need to be loaded onto our website for transparency.
- Presentation to Parish Council of above with a view to Arboretum being adopted as part of parish council ongoing responsibility i.e. akin to Millenium Gardens, Joiners Nature Park and The Green.

A big thank you

Throughout the past year, local residents have kindly helped with a variety of essential tasks to keep the project momentum going. A huge thank you to all volunteers and to Ovington Social Club for hosting events and Ovington Community Group for help with communications and events.

Volunteers

We would love to hear from anyone who is keen to help with trees maintenance or fund raising. We have some lovely ideas for a 'social media' campaign but lack the skills to deliver this. Anyone who can help would be greatly appreciated.

Contact: Anne Hudson, Project Manager anne.hudson@live.co.uk