

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. In the center-left, a village named Flaxton Green is visible, characterized by a row of houses with red-tiled roofs and a narrow road running alongside them. To the right of the village, there are large, open fields in various stages of cultivation, some green and some golden-brown. The background shows a vast expanse of similar fields under a clear sky.

The Trees of Flaxton Green

Their history, status and management

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Trees at northern end of Flaxton Green



York Lane to Community Hall



Trees around The Kell



Churchyard trees



Southern end of The Green



Native trees

- Pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*)
- Grey poplar? (*Populus canescens*)
- Common hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*)
- Common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*)
- Common lime (*Tilia x vulgaris*)
- Small-leaved lime (*Tilia cordata*)
- Goat willow (*Salix caprea*)
- Wild cherry (*Prunus avium*)
- Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)
- Common holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)
- Crack willow (*Salix fragilis*)
- White willow (*Salix alba*)
- Common alder (*Alnus glutinosa*)
- English yew (*Taxus baccata*)

Non-native?

- English walnut (*Juglans regia*)
- Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)
- Copper beech (*Fagus sylvatica purpurea*)
- Swedish whitebeam (*Sorbus intermedia*)
- Red horse chestnut (*Aesculus x carnea*)
- Black hybrid poplar (*Populus x canadensis*)
- Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*)
- Horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*)
- Cappadocian maple (*Acer cappadocicum*)



Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*)



What Native UK Wildlife Does Common Oak Support and How Does It Support Them?

The common oak plays a vital role in supporting native UK wildlife. Its abundance of acorns serves as an essential food source for many creatures, including jays, squirrels and wood mice. These animals feast on the nutrient-rich nuts, providing them with sustenance and aiding in their survival. Additionally, the tree's robust structure and sprawling canopy offer nesting sites for numerous bird species, such as owls, woodpeckers and nuthatches. The tree's presence in woodlands and forests provides an intricate web of habitats, allowing a diverse range of organisms to find shelter, feed and breed. From insects to birds and mammals, the common oak nurtures and sustains an unmatched array of wildlife, contributing to the overall biodiversity of the UK.



Crab apple (*Malus sylvestris*)

- Mature trees grow to around 10m in height and can live up to 100 years. They have an irregular, rounded shape and a wide, spreading canopy. With greyish-brown, flecked bark, trees can become quite gnarled and twisted, especially when exposed, and the twigs often develop spines. This 'crabbed' appearance may have influenced its common name, 'crab apple'.
- The leaves are food for the caterpillars of many moths, including the eyed hawk-moth, green pug, Chinese character and pale tussock. The flowers provide an important source of early pollen and nectar for insects, particularly bees, and the fruit is eaten by birds, including blackbirds, thrushes and crows. Mammals, such as mice, voles, foxes and badgers, also eat crab apple fruit.
- Not so good where you park cars or walk!



Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*)

- Mature trees can grow to 15m in height and can live for up to 200 years. The bark is smooth and silvery grey, and leaf buds are purple and hairy. Also known as mountain ash. Two of these trees on Flaxton Green have died recently. Is it too warm and waterlogged for them?
- The leaves are eaten by the caterpillars of a number of moths, including the larger Welsh wave and autumn green carpet. Caterpillars of the apple fruit moth feed on the berries.

Flowers provide pollen and nectar for bees and other pollinating insects, while the berries are a rich source of autumn food for birds, especially the blackbird, mistle thrush, redstart, redwing, song thrush, fieldfare and waxwing.



What Native UK Wildlife Does Hawthorn Support and How Does It Support Them?

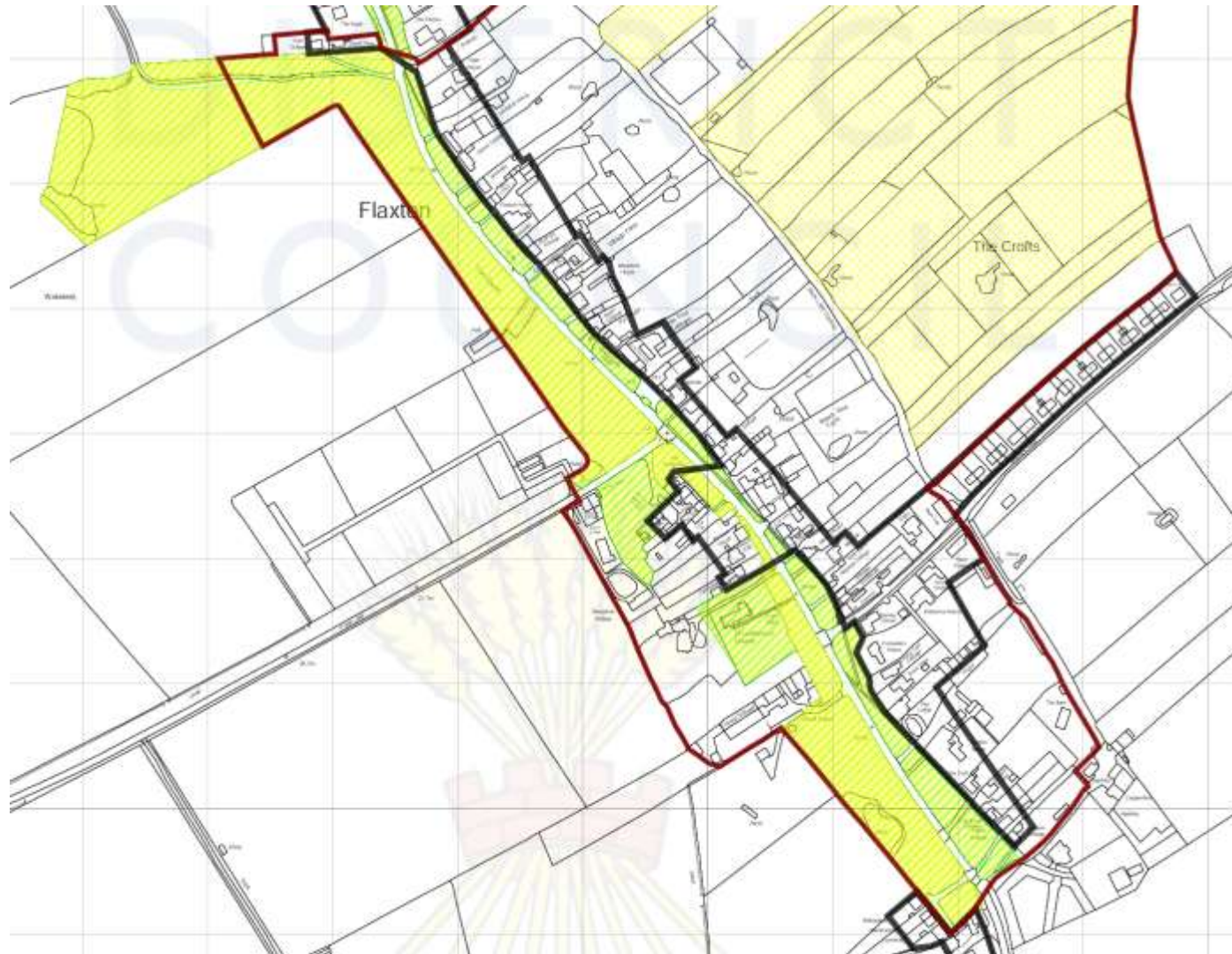
- The hawthorn stands as a haven for a diverse range of wildlife in the UK. Its abundant flowers attract bees and other hoverflies, bolstering local populations and enhancing biodiversity. The blossoms of hawthorn, with their sweet (some say sickly sweet) scent and abundant nectar, attract butterflies like the orange-tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*), brimstone (*Gonepteryx rhamni*) and small copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*). The hawthorn moth (*Scythropia crataegella*) is even named after its close association with this tree.
- The tree's haws are a vital food source for birds such as thrushes, blackbirds and fieldfares, as well as small mammals like dormice. Additionally, the dense foliage and thorny branches of the hawthorn provides excellent nesting sites and shelter for numerous bird species, making it a vital habitat for their survival.



Others to consider as open space trees?

- Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) – Found in wet areas at the side of ponds. Can produce specimen trees. Perhaps a replacement for copper beech affected by Yorkshire Water leaks?
Alder is the food plant for the caterpillars of several moths including the alder kitten, pebble hook-tip, the autumnal and the blue-bordered carpet moth. Catkins provide an early source of nectar and pollen for bees, and the seeds are eaten by the siskin, redpoll and goldfinch.
- Wild cherry (*Prunus avium*) - Mature trees can grow to 30m and live for up to 60 years. The shiny bark is a deep reddish-brown; beautiful blossom and a bounty of bright red fruits. Autumn leaf colour. The spring flowers provide an early source of nectar and pollen for bees; while the cherries are eaten by birds, including the blackbird and song thrush; as well as mammals, such as the badger, wood mouse, yellow-necked mouse and dormouse. The foliage is the main food plant for caterpillars of many species of moth, including the cherry fruit and cherry bark moths, the orchard ermine, brimstone and short-cloaked moth.

Trees in a Conservation Area



-  Ryedale Local Plan Boundary
-  Area Outside of Ryedale Local Plan
-  Development Limits (SP1)
-  Local Sites (Biological and Geological) (SP14)
-  Conservation Area (SP12)
-  Visually Important Undeveloped Area (SP16) (SD16)

Work on trees in a conservation area

- Anyone who cuts down, uproots, tops, lops, wilfully destroys or wilfully damages a tree in a conservation area (if that tree is not already protected by an Order), or causes or permits such work, without giving a section 211 notice (or otherwise contravenes section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) is guilty of an offence, unless an exception applies. The penalty is the same as for contravening a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).
- The penalties for contravening a TPO can be severe. A person guilty of an offence under the TPO may be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale. If the offence is more serious, the court may impose an unlimited fine. The amount of the fine is determined by the court, taking into account any financial benefit that may have accrued to the offender from the offence.

Who decides to apply a TPO and why?

- This is the Local Planning Authority on the advice of its Trees Officer.
- The main criterion for making a TPO is the value to public visual amenity.
- An overriding criterion is public safety.
- There is no legal definition of public visual amenity
- For many years it was the personal opinion of the Trees Officer that held sway.
- Now there is a widely agreed method for evaluation known as TEMPO

Risks to public safety



Risk to public safety

Black hybrid poplar T003 – Decay fungi fruiting body.

Risk Rating: Red/Not Acceptable

Work planned 2026 – reduce crown height by 4m



Risk to public safety

Black hybrid poplar T007 - Decay fungi fruiting body.

Risk Rating: Red/Not Acceptable

Work 2026 – reduce crown by 6m



Risk to public safety

Copper beech T030 - Decline and/or death.

Risk Rating: Red/Not Acceptable
Work 2026 –reduce crown to stem





TEMPO Scores of trees on Flaxton Green

TEMPO

- TEMPO stands for Tree Evaluation Method for Preservation Orders. It was written by a consultant in 2006 for a client who wanted a clearer field system to follow towards decision making. It takes expediency as well as amenity value into account, as required by law.
- 'Amenity' is not defined in law, so the local authority has to judge if removal of a tree or trees would have a significant negative impact on the local environment and its enjoyment by the public: Factors to consider: 1. Condition 2. Expected retention span 3. Relative public visibility 4. Other factors/importance
- Expediency is essentially the need for a TPO because the authority believes there is a risk (now or in the foreseeable future) of trees being felled, pruned or damaged in ways which would have a significant impact on the amenity of the area.

TEMPO points system

OVERALL DECISION GUIDE – THE TREES MUST HAVE AMENITY VALUE

(PART ONE, with four subsections, the first three of “condition, retention span, visibility” (7 points needed) and only then the fourth, other factors/importance (now 9 points needed)) AND IT MUST ALSO BE EXPEDIENT TO APPLY THE TPO (PART TWO) and now at least 11 points are needed.

- Any ‘0’ scores – (dead/dangerous or less than 10 years to go), NO TPO.
- Score 1 - 6 – TPO indefensible,
- Score 7 - 10 – Does not merit a TPO,
- Score 11 - 14 – TPO defensible (resources, public pressure, gut feeling),
- Score 15 + - Definitely merits a TPO.

Bear in mind that in EXPEDIENCY:

- Score 5 – Immediate threat to tree (eg. Conservation Area notice to fell)

The tree does not need to score many points elsewhere if you plan to fell it and it is within the Conservation Area.

Trees that definitely merit TPOs (TEMPO)

- Pedunculate oak – T001
 - Black hybrid poplar – T003*, T007
 - Sycamore, English yew, common lime (churchyard) – T026
 - Crab apple (memorial?) – T020
 - Copper beech – T027*
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- Other memorial trees to add?

TPO status defensible

- Black hybrid poplar – T002, T006, T008
- Pedunculate oak – T004, T031, T034
- Sycamore – T005, T009, T023
- Common hawthorn – T010, T046
- Horse chestnut – T011
- Common lime – T012, T035
- Small-leaved lime – T013
- Hornbeam – T015*
- Norway maple – T017, T016
- Cappadocian maple – T021
- Common walnut – T022*
- Swedish whitebeam – T029
- Red horse chestnut – T032
- Common ash – (T038)
- Goat willow – (T041)
- Mixed species around York Lane pond and southern pond – T037, T024

TPO not defensible

- Copper beech – T030*
- Pedunculate oak – (T043)
- Common ash – (T039), (T040), (T044), (T045)
- Mixed species alongside The Kell
- Mixed species in hedge by Draft Farm – T25

Trees with special status

- Veteran trees – Black hybrid poplars T003 and T007, copper beech T030, common ash T038?
- Memorial trees – Many of the trees on the Green are in this category, but we have no comprehensive list of these. Perhaps you could help?

Identifying memorial trees

- Thomas Smith wrote in 1993 “The many trees on the Green have been planted at various times over the past 105 years mainly to commemorate some national event such as Coronation days and various silver, golden and diamond jubilees of the monarchs of the period. Others have been planted to celebrate the end of the three major wars which have occurred over that period. The two copper beeches that stand each side of the Strensall Lane junction with the village street have always been known as the peace trees, the name arising from the fact that one was planted to celebrate the ending of the South African War , and the other at the ending of the Great War of 1914/18.” [But which is which?]



Susan's and Michael's are European Black Poplars, from Rogers' Nurseries near Pickering, planted around 1987.

Andrew's and Christopher's are English Black Poplars, planted around 1995, and taken as "root cuttings" from the two large trees seen in the photograph. The Water Company had disturbed their roots while laying a new pipeline.

Identifying memorial trees

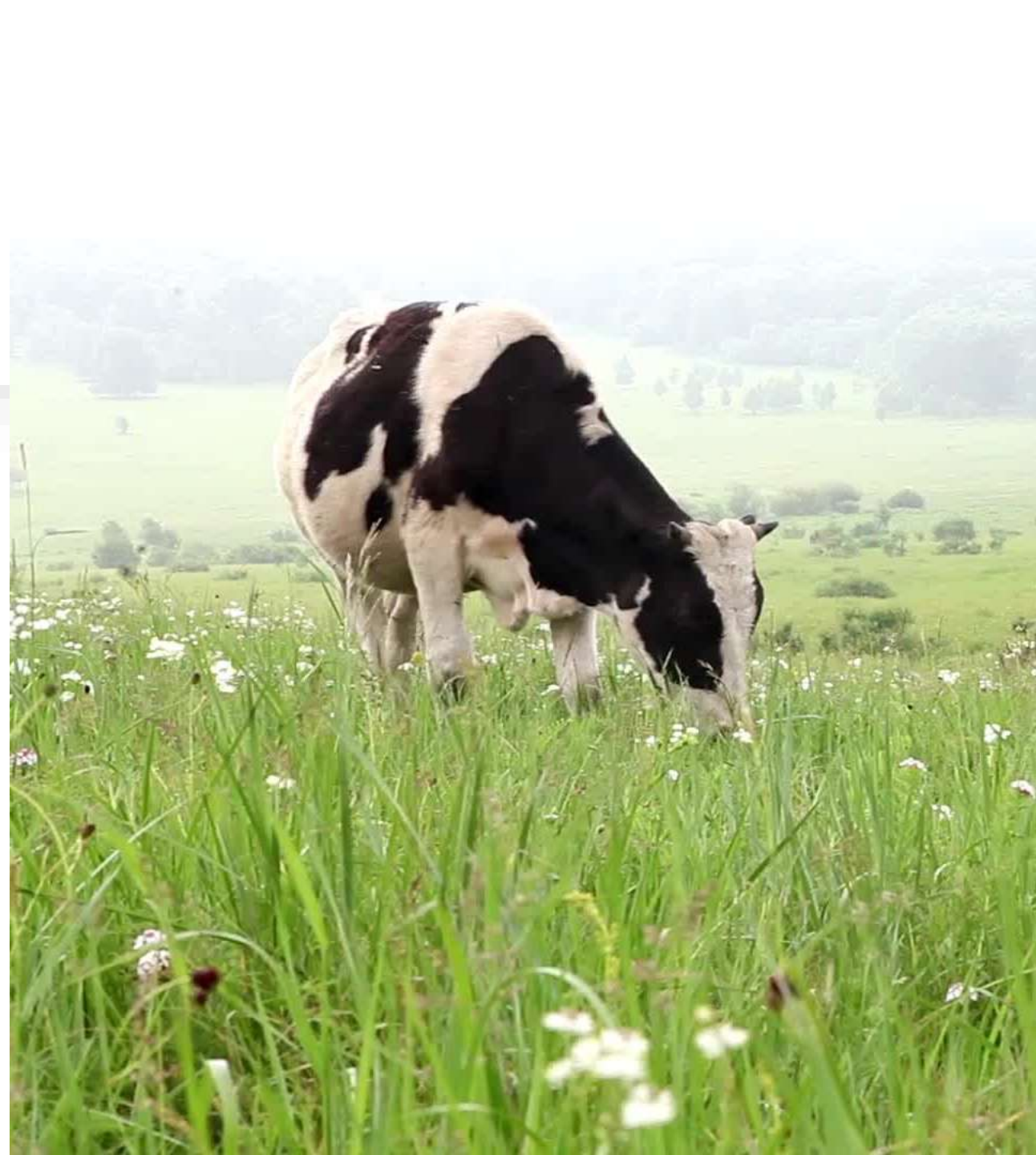
- Common walnut T022 was planted by Flaxton Gardening Club in 2000 to mark the Millennium.
- Pedunculate oak T001 was planted in 2011 in memory of Harry and Deborah Plews.
- Hornbeam T015 was planted in 2022 as a memorial of Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee.
- Please let me know of evidence about other memorial trees, especially the two largest black poplars, T003 and T007 and the crab apple T020.
- The Parish Council seem to have planted a number of trees on the Green but their status as memorials is unknown.

A small green seedling with two leaves growing out of dark soil, with a bright sun flare in the background.

Planting more trees?

How many trees and what species?

- We are obliged to keep Flaxton Green as a Public Open Space and to maintain it as grazing land sufficient for 32.5 cows.
- Native tree species are preferable, as they support the greatest diversity of other animals, plants and fungi.
- Should they also be:
 - resilient to climate change
 - deciduous
 - single stem
 - not liable to sucker or seed profusely
 - without other undesirable traits
 - not prone to known problem diseases



Safety risk from trees to Green users

- The Green is classed as open access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Unless the landowner or occupier sets out to create a risk, or is reckless about whether a risk is created, they are not liable for any injury caused by:
 - any natural feature of the landscape including any tree, shrub, plant, river or stream
 - any ditch or pond, whether natural or not
 - people passing over, under or through a wall, fence or gate, except if they're making proper use of a gate or stile

Actions to be taken in relation to trees

- Safety survey carried out by arboricultural consultant. Three trees shown to provide a risk to the public, especially to road users.
- Qualified arboricultural surgeons have been employed to carry out the work required to a British Standard (April 1 & 2).
- These trees are not protected by a TPO for the next 2 years.
- The chosen contractors are licensed waste carriers and recycle all their waste but have agreed to clear smaller branches and leave larger logs on site if we so wish.
- Flaxton Green Gait Owners are committed to actions for public benefit, especially in relation to nature conservation. Flaxton Environment Group support this and as a Chartered Environmentalist, I am also committed to sustainable development and actions for environmental protection.

What should we do with timber and small branches?

- If removed from site, then it may be regarded as waste and we have producer responsibility for where it ends up.
- As part of our responsibilities for reducing carbon dioxide emissions to reduce climate change and to protect biodiversity, we should keep the carbon content locked in and on site by finding suitable uses, e.g. adventure playground (Skelf Island), insect houses, log piles (but these would need protecting from theft for log burners) or walkways over boggy areas (if not in Flaxton, then on Strensall Common?).
- If surplus to the above requirements, how can we require their use in suitable ways to benefit the residents of Flaxton?

What to do in future?

- We have more trimming to do in following years. Do we handle this in the same way?
- How can we restore the ecology of ponds on the Green affected by tree shading to the detriment of aquatic life?
- How should we manage the standing stem of the copper beech?
- What species of tree should we use to replace specimen free-standing trees that have died?
- How to find out more details of memorial trees?

