

The Tree Warden Scheme Biddenham 1991 to 2011

As a result of efforts made by The tree Council a tree warden scheme was started across the UK in 1990

This scheme was also backed by The Countryside Commission (as it then was) with a certain amount of finance backed up by local authorities

The aim was to harness local tree minded volunteers give them support and training and hope they would take an interest in their parish trees and find sites for hedge and tree planting with free trees to help to mager government targets

Beds County Council as it then was had the late John Niles as their forestry officer—John was a recognized national expert on all aspects of trees and tree management. He was supported by Mathew O'Brien the local FWAG officer (Farming and Wildlife group) as well as a number of other staff both from the farming and forestry departments of Beds CC as well as david Alderman who is still active on the tree front locally

Biddenham parish Council enthusiastically took up the scheme and appointed councilor John Congdon as Biddenham's first warden.

John famously and very successfully organized the supply and planting of the western hedge at the Biddenham Pond a hedge known for evermore as The Congdon hedge

Planting on the green was less successful and some trees had to be later removed but the three nowl arge Limes survive

Some time in 1991 I took over the role and continued until the scheme withered in the early C20 under a reorganized council structure and less “Big Government” about 2011

Over many years despite its small parish size many individual trees have been planted by volunteers and some new hedges as well as gapping up others

In 1992--200 new trees for a new hedge at Windmill field near the pond. (7/3/92) New trees and shrubs planted at the pond. Gapping up hedges and a tree course at The tree Council in London and the annual tree warden's forum where I met the late David Payntor who played Phill Archer I Planted a crab apple in the hedge at Duck End this was a prize for the Best kept Village competition

1993--114 trees for planting at The village lower school—at the back of the field where I was assisted this time by a young Andrew Moxon. and for planting at Biddenham Turn both on the St Gregory's corner (28/02/93) and in the rather gappy hedge line 4 volunteers and I was assisted in the hedge work by a young Ian Gardener. In addition with the help of Jim Loyd a new hedge was planted along Windmill Field where the foot[path goes through a gate

1994—more gapping up at Biddenham Turn in the long hedge by the field this time assisted by a frequent volunteer Steve Claridge. Trees also planted near the new pavilion (25/03/94) including a Giant Redwood! Tree wardens Forum!

1995—25 trees planted at Duck End lane and Manor Road. Extra trees at the pond including a hedge where I was helped by John Greengrass and the school some 63 plus 10 trees now at the new pavilion site in Deep Spinney where Isabel and I planted the Wellingtonia now flourishing behind the cricket nets

1996 -Collected 90 trees to go variously at Biddenham Turn and a hedge near St James Church

1997—trees planted in the copse near Manor Rd as well as at Redgates where the hedge was repaired and gapped up. Tree planting near the river as part of a riverside walk scheme assisted by a number of volunteers from the footpath group

1998—Tree warden's forum at Huntington

1999—Planting a new hedge at Church End with the village Guides 35 trees as well as a millenium oak tree also for the guides to plant

2001—a 20m hedge planted

2003—Tree wardens forum in Northamptonshire.

2004—A new hedge planted at the pond site along the coffin path

2005—Some planting by BTCV beside the Biddenham Turn footpath

2006—more planting at various sites in the village. Assisted by David and Jane George as well as Isabel Jones. Tree wardens Forum at Colne a fruit growing area near Huntington exploring some of the many ancient orchard in the locality

2007—scheme came to an end sort of fizzled out and no more officia support

I am pleased to say that despite the demise of the scheme plus all the old local authority links that supported us, many tree and hedges survive from these plantings around the village. The halcyon days of local authority backed schemes have all been lost but we continue to look ahead and try to look after our village trees and hedges as you will see from other pages devoted to hedges in the village

CHJ Aug 2020

Past

Honorary tree warden for Biddenham