

## Framsden woodland Group – Report for the Annual Parish Meeting April 10<sup>th</sup> 2025

Framsden Woodland Group manage the small piece of woodland behind the churchyard. We currently have about 10 volunteers who meet once a month, usually on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month, to do maintenance but it's also a bit of a social occasion and we try to bring refreshments.

The aim is to keep it accessible for people to visit and enjoy, so we maintain the paths and glade areas, but most of the woodland is kept as natural as possible for the wildlife. There are routine maintenance tasks which we do each year, mowing etc, sometimes I feel bad when cutting back the brambles appears on the job list once again! We are pleased that young people of the village have the freedom to explore and a magnificent den has been built.

The main issue has been the appearance of sooty bark disease. It's a relatively new disease of sycamore trees and once affected they die quickly. There is a problem with the very fine mould spores causing breathing difficulties if inhaled, they get airborne very easily if touched. In the space of a few months most of the sycamores in the woodland showed the tell-tale black bark and some subsequently died. We have had a tree surgeon in, wearing the relevant breathing protection, to remove the ones posing immediate safety problems, if they were to fall and EDF were persuaded to fell the rest because they might fall on the power lines. You may have seen that the Helmingham Estate have put notices on the cut logs advising not to touch.

Last October we added another place to sit and enjoy the woodland with a bench right at the top overlooking the field.

The annual Halloween pumpkin trail was enjoyed by those who attended. The children of Helmingham school were invited to carve pumpkins and actually did one each so we had a good number this year.

In December we replaced the bridge on the top path, with Glenn supplying materials and expertise. In January it was the turn of 2 of the bench tops in the glade, these things have been in place for 10 years or more and had been starting to deteriorate. The snowdrops were fantastic this spring and we have divided and added to them again so they should get even better.

The only other thing to add is that after several years without a chairperson, we are very grateful to Alex Sharpe for taking on the role and especially putting in the time when the sooty bark issue needed resolving. Charlotte continues to lead the monthly work parties.

The annual plant sale raised £700