

Review of current status of land owned by Stratfield Mortimer.

1. Brewery Common

Varied non-woody vegetation, including interesting but not rare herbaceous spp. (eg Broad-leaf Helleborine, wild mignonette), but also moderate size patches of near monoculture of eg Yarrow, nettle etc. Advice from Hampshire adviser was to cut and cart away regularly (twice a year) to gradually reduce fertility with some sowing to increase range of species

Adjacent to two patches of scrubby woodland to N and S; ownership of these is unclear. The area to the S is recorded as “felled” in the Defra MAGIC database and contains predominantly birch/holly of fairly even-age, with some quite old standard trees – oak, cherry etc – and patches of rhododendron and cherry-laurel. These tend to cast extreme shade and therefore support limited diversity of other species and the food chains extending from these.

If possible it would make a better habitat if all three of these could be managed as a single entity, and if the woodland to the S could be improved by selective felling and possibly seed distribution or planting.

2. Five-Oaken

The council's bit of this is small, less than 0.5 ha, but merges into birch/oak woodland to NW, with Englefield commercial forest to E, S and W. Light penetration is quite good and with varied depth of soil surface presumably provides varied niches. Trees along the road are numbered so presumably we or the county have a record of who did the survey and what information they gathered

3. Cemetery

Separate from the rest of the list and managed mainly for burials and a respectful aesthetic. Coordination of management with the churchyard should be simple. The site is relatively close (about 1km) to the woodland with possibly long-established (judging from the flora- Solomon's Seal, Town Hall clocks) coppicing in Admirals Copse.

4. and 5 War Memorial and “Pound and Heath Elm Pond”

The ponds apparently harbour evidence of great crested newts. The condition – especially summer drying out and Canadian pondweed– needs thought and perhaps management changes. Five other ponds are within a few hundred m of this area, and harbour other amphibians (Frogs, toads, smooth newts).

5. (War memorial: see above)

6. Windmill Common

Conifers and Holly with a conifer litter base or bracken. A management programme already under way attempting to produce a varied age stand of dominant species. Perhaps not as diverse as it could be, but provides a link to Wokefield Common woodland. Invasive plants (Skunk cabbage, small balsam) are present but not in the Council land.

7. Summerlug.

Ownership not explicitly with the parish council. A large area of nettle to the NE, which might be managed by moderately frequent cutting and carting to reduce fertility, but otherwise quite varied woodland. The Ash will presumably succumb to Ash dieback within the next few years.