

## The Healing Wood Project

This is the creation of a small woodland by the community on the village rubbish dump next to Greyhound Lane.

In the past the dump had been covered over and trees planted but dry conditions and continuous dumping had seen these, sadly, fail.

In Winter 2020, the ditches on two sides of the site were dredged and the spoil spread over the surface. This exposed a lot of plastic, asbestos, bricks, glass and metal.

Starting in late spring 2021 and meeting regularly since, volunteers have picked up many tonnes of waste which has been taken to the West Suffolk waste site. They have created a new entrance with slope, created and mown a path and then worked with families and children from Hopton school to plant trees.

In September 2021 Suffolk County Council agreed to support the project as a Healing Wood.

Richard Rout, Deputy Leader of the Council said in a press release “The site in Hopton is particularly exciting as it will look to establish a community woodland on an area which was formerly used as a village tip and whilst rural, has fantastic accessibility. It is also a brilliant example of the expertise we have in our communities and the opportunities of partnership working.”

In 2022 volunteers fenced and gated the main entrance, watered the site through a long hot summer and kept the path and seating area cut back. An audit of trees in the autumn made the work worthwhile when it was found a large number (possibly 95%) had survived. This winter saw more trees planted and the hedging work completed. A new noticeboard should be in place soon and there may even be a grand opening!

There is still work to do. All the trees need mulching and volunteers to water in the summer will be very welcome.

We hope these photographs show the way the site has changed

# A photo diary of the Healing Wood

March 2021

Ditches have been cleared and re-profiled and the spoil spread across the surface.





**April and May 2021  
Volunteer clearing days**





Creating a new access slope



# Family Tree Planting day. December 2021

**Hopton Healing Wood**  
Would love to see you this Saturday  
11<sup>th</sup> December from 10am to 12noon  
for a:  
**Family Tree Planting Day**

Put on your wellies and gloves, bring your  
parents and family and plant a tree in our  
community woodland.

You can find the Healing Wood on the junction  
of Greyhound Lane and the footpath from  
Nethergate Street.

Want to know more?  
Text 07464267891 and  
we will get back to you as  
soon as we can.





Hopton School planting Oak trees December 2021





## Mulch mats January 2022





**Dr John's bench being put in place March 2022-  
carved and installed by the woodcarver at 'Heaven'**



**...and a recycled plastic bench to remind us of all the plastic waste we removed!!**



**Volunteers working on gates and an entrance fence.**





## Spring and early summer 2022



# An information sign has been made to go at the entrance January 2023

## The Trees

Our vision is that in 30 years this will be an area of dominant English Oak trees under which is an assortment of smaller trees. These have been chosen to provide cover and winter food for birds and small mammals.

The smaller trees:

- Hazel
- Apple
- Rowan
- Hawthorn
- Blackthorn
- Dog Rose
- Elder

The oak trees on this site are to be managed by pollarding. This will see them develop a shorter, broad trunk with multiple branches instead of a tall, straight stem. This is a traditional way of managing trees so they can be harvested without killing the tree. It is also a way of helping the tree cope with increasingly difficult climate conditions.

**John Taylor's Bench**

Dr John represented Knettishall Parish for many years. In memory of his wife he donated the carved oak bench that looks south-west across the fields.

## Hopton Healing Wood

### - a community woodland project

This site was once a pond in the corner of a field that for nearly 80 years served as the village rubbish dump. Hopton Parish Council, owners of this small piece of common land, had the rubbish covered with soil in the early part of this century. Over time, this rubbish had once again become visible and the ditches had almost disappeared until, in 2020, this site was recognised as a potential green space. It is now part of the Suffolk County Council Healing Woods Project. Developed during the 2020 COVID pandemic this project supports the development of green spaces where people can walk, sit and meditate.

Volunteers from Hopton and surrounding villages have worked steadily to establish the fledgling community wood that is here today. Ditches were cleared by digger; tonnes of rubbish, (picked up by hand), went to the WSDC waste site; dead wood was heaped up; weeds mown; access paths established and the main entrance fenced.

Planting with small trees from the Woodland Trust and larger oaks, funded by Suffolk County Council and from donations in memory of a Hopton resident, took place in December 2021. Local families and children from Hopton Primary School helped plant the trees and hedging. In times of extreme heat and drought these are watered by a small volunteer team, who also carry out site management tasks.

This project is supported by Hopton Parish Council, Suffolk County Council and West Suffolk District Council.













If you have some time to spare and would like to help maintain this woodland please email [Hoptonhealingwood@gmail.com](mailto:Hoptonhealingwood@gmail.com)




## The Ground Flora

This will change as the woodland develops. In the early years it will be dominated by nettles, cleavers, burdock and thistles. Although these make the woodland appear untidy the shade from these plants is helping the small trees survive long, hot, dry periods. As the young trees establish and provide shade themselves, the dominance of these plants will decrease and other flowers will become more obvious.

Look out for:

- Garlic Mustard
- Celandine
- Lords and Ladies
- Primrose
- Green Alkanet
- Forget-me-Not

**WARNING!**  
Please beware that this site was once a rubbish dump. Occasionally waste works its way to the surface and may constitute a hazard. Please inform Hopton Parish Council of these so they may take appropriate action.

## Further planting January 2023

