



Woods Round Nettleham

THE HISTORY OF NETTLEHAM WOODLAND TRUST
THE EARLY YEARS 2006 to 2011
a.k.a. WOODS ROUND NETTLEHAM

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<http://www.nettlehamwoodlandtrust.co.uk/historygallery.htm>

PREFACE

'From tiny acorns mighty oak trees grow'. Nettleham Woodland Trust is not yet a mighty oak, but it is a strong young creation which has taken root in its community. There is a tendency for voluntary organisations of this sort to be so totally absorbed by the present and the near future that the protagonists forget the recent past, and how everything started. We are therefore extremely indebted to Susie Mendel, the Secretary from the outset for having applied her historian's skills to creating this excellent account of the first five years, both as a document of record and also as a template of good practice and a few mistakes to which others can refer in the years to come. It is a good story. We hope readers find it as interesting as we have found the experience enjoyable.

Chris Williams, Chairman

FOUNDATION

On the 20th September 2006 the Inaugural meeting of Nettleham Woodland Trust was held at the home of Ian and Jenny Benford in Beech Avenue, Nettleham. The first meeting was attended by Ian Benford (founder and first Chair), Jenny Benford, Susie Mendel, Nigel Kingston and Bill Ball. Dennis Tate was also a founder member, attending from the second meeting. After publicity in *Nettleham News* others joined from January 2007.

Whilst known as *Nettleham Woodland Trust* (NWT), the organisation was officially called *Woods Round Nettleham* (WRN) for its first two and a half years.

Late 2006: Account opened with the Co-operative Bank in the name of "Woods Round Nettleham" (see 'Early Mistake' below)

January 2007, WRN became an Unincorporated Association.

28th June 2007, WRN Charitable status was approved – Registered Charity Number 1119854.

OBJECTS OF THE CONSTITUTION

"The objects of our Constitution are to provide and maintain community woodlands, wildflower meadows, orchards and wildlife areas for the benefit of the inhabitants of Nettleham, Lincolnshire and the surrounding area, in the interests of social welfare, for recreation and leisure time occupation and with the aim of improving the conditions of life of the said inhabitants."

These have remained the core objects of NWT.

EARLY VISION AND AIMS

The Charity was formed with the long term aim of buying, leasing, or managing land around the village to plant trees, shrubs and meadowland for the future enjoyment of the people of Nettleham and surrounding parishes. Specifically the Charity aimed to:

- Plant native species of trees, shrubs and wildflowers.
- Provide new and larger habitats for birds, bats, other mammals, butterflies, moths and insects.

- Develop recreational facilities for walking and picnicking, cycling and bird watching; in essence to add to the health, quality of life and enjoyment of the residents and future generations of Nettleham and surrounding area.
- Give educational opportunities for children. We would encourage local schoolchildren and cubs/beavers, as well as older villagers to become involved with tree planting and maintenance. Our hope is to give the young people of our village an interest in, and respect for, our natural environment.
- Help reverse the effects of climate change.
- Work with Nettleham residents in enriching our community as outlined in the 'Nettleham Parish Plan 2007'.

FIRST COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2006-7 – ROLES AND BACKGROUND

Ian Benford – First Chair.	District Nurse
Jenny Benford – First Treasurer.	Radiographer
Susie Mendel – Secretary.	Professional Genealogist
Nigel Kingston – Publicity.	Graphic Designer and Editor of <i>Nettleham News</i>
Dennis Tate – Business Advisor.	Retired Director of Agro. Chemical Company
Bill Ball – Research on local landowners.	Retired
Chris Williams – Education Advisor.	Senior Deputy Head, Lincoln Christ's Hospital School
Andrew Watson	Worked for LCC but Forestry trained.
Michael Denton – Website Designer	Design Electrical Engineer
Julia Ambrose – Treasurer from July 2007	At-home mum with various voluntary roles
Mark Lawrence – Cub/scout liaison and Child Protection Officer.	Marketing Manager at Siemens Industrial Turbomachinery Ltd in the Energy Sector, Oil & Gas Service Division.
Rod Newborough – Woodland Advisor.	Forestry Commission Officer for 40+ years.
Leticia Hamilton – Child Protection Officer	Lincs. County Council: Public Rights of Way. Mother

EARLY MISTAKE – TWO NAMES, TWO IDENTITIES, BUT ONE ORGANISATION

At the inaugural meeting the founding group had decided on the name *Nettleham Woodland Trust*. However, when the Treasurer tried to open a bank account in that name, the Co-operative Bank said that, as the organisation was not a Trust, the bank account could not be called *Nettleham Woodland Trust*. It was decided to use the name *Woods Round Nettleham* for the bank account and charity name, whilst keeping the working name of *Nettleham Woodland Trust*.

This was a mistake for two reasons. First, it caused confusion for the public and resulted in cheques being written to NWT instead of WRN. It was only when the organisation became a Company Limited by Guarantee in March 2009 that the name became officially *Nettleham Woodland Trust* (NWT) and the bank account was finally opened with that name.

The second result of the mistake was that the group had to re-apply for Charitable Status under the official name of Nettleham Woodland Trust. This resulted in two lots of paperwork and headaches which we could certainly have done without.

EARLY PUBLICITY FOR & PROMOTION OF NWT

- Leaflet designed by Nigel Kingston entitled "Woods Round Nettleham – A Vision for the future"

- Website designed by Michael Denton: www.woodsroundnettleham.co.uk, later changed to www.nettlehamwoodlandtrust.co.uk
- The quarterly village magazine, *Nettleham News*, first brought NWT to the notice of villagers and continues to provide important publicity. The editor of *Nettleham News*, Nigel Kingston, was a founder member and Trustee of NWT until January 2011.
- From July 2007, NWT had a stall at Nettleham Carnival, publicising and talking to local people about our work.
- First Chair, Ian Benford, appeared on BBC *Look North* in August 2007.
- In 2009 and 2010, NWT attended the Dunholme Fete.
- Since January 2010 Chris Williams has been writing a newsletter three or four times a year which is sent round to NWT Supporters by our Supporters' Secretary, Elizabeth Hipgrave. At the time of writing 64 supporters receive the newsletter.
- In June 2010, NWT had a stall at the Lincolnshire Show, taking our work to a wider audience.
- Powerpoint presentations to local, and not so local, groups have become a regular feature of the NWT diary. The sessions have been prepared by our Education Adviser, Chris Williams, often supported by other trustees. The first one was in the Nettleham Scout Hut on a Friday evening in November 2007 with the toughest audience of them all, a cub-scout group at the end of a week in school! Since then presentations have included:

October 2008:	Lincoln Fringe Villages Area Forum
January 2009:	Nettleham Women's Institute
November 2009:	St. Mary's Welton Junior School
March 2010:	Dunholme Ladies Club
October 2010:	Nettleham Becksides Women's Institute
January 2011:	Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust Lincoln Branch
April 2011:	Transversal Study Visit on Sustainable Development and public/private partnerships - La Réunion"

INSURANCE THE CHARITY & OTHER BUSINESS MATTERS

One of the early priorities in 2006-2007 was to establish some sort of credibility in the community and also to take steps to protect individual NWT enthusiasts from future financial and legal liability. This was quite challenging at a time when we hadn't actually planted any trees or done anything physical apart from a little weed clearance around the bases of some recent planting near the Brown Cow public house on the A46. In addition to organising insurance cover we formulated a Business Plan which provided a valuable focus and a useful attachment to funding applications. We became an Unincorporated Association in January 2007 and a Charity in June 2007.

Public Liability and equipment insurance was taken out with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV). NWT has continued its insurance with BTCV.

EARLY INSPIRATION, ADVICE & FINANCIAL HELP

- October 2006: visit to Adrian Isaacs of Boston Woods Trust. Adrian took Ian, Nigel, Susie and Bill around his woods which were between one year and 8-9 years old. He provided us with lots of useful information and much inspiration. Two Hazelnuts from his woods were planted in pots by Susie and, to her amazement, grew. One is now planted in "PC Wood" and the other in the front garden of her house in Beech Avenue. In July 2011 the first hazelnuts appeared.

- September 2007: visit to Kettlethorpe Woods by Chris Williams, Susie Mendel and Andrew Watson. These woods are owned by Roger and Alison Brownlow and are at various stages of growth. Roger and Alison were very informative and keen to share their knowledge.

- Forestry Commission – David White and his predecessor, John Hendrie, gave lots of advice and information.

- Woodland Trust: Nick Sherriff and Liz McCloughlan gave us much useful advice and encouragement.

- Prohelp: in May 2008 Prohelp found McKinnells Solicitors in Lincoln to act for NWT in the legal process of becoming a Company Limited by Guarantee. First Tim Walker, who sadly died in June 2011, and then John Roper conducted this work and their service to NWT was excellent. John Roper also worked on our lease with LWT for Monks Wood. All this legal work was done *pro-bono*, saving the Charity over £2,200, a tremendous amount of money for a Charity with very limited resources.

EARLY ATTEMPTS AND FAILURES IN FINDING LAND TO PLANT TREES IN 2007

Nettleham lies just three miles from Lincoln and was, and still is, a desirable place to live. In 2007, NWT wrote to all the local landowners asking if they would be willing to lease or sell small pieces of land for tree planting. Many did not reply, but all those who did said ‘No’. The main reason seemed to be that landowners hoped that in time they could sell their land for property or other development. It became apparent very quickly that it was going to be extremely difficult to find any land for tree planting in or around Nettleham.

1. Early in 2007, NWT heard that a strip of land at the back of Mulsanne Park, the village sports field, might be made available for tree planting by the owners, the University of Lincoln. Talks took place with David White from the Forestry Commission, who said a grant would be available. However, the University of Lincoln then made it clear that they would not allow any tree planting to take place. Three years later it transpired that the University was already in talks to sell this land to the Lincoln Rugby Club to create multiple rugby pitches and hence their refusal to allow any of it to be used for tree planting by NWT. [See “The Near Future”].

2. NWT members had noted a large field at the back of the Brown Cow Public House, on the A46, running down to the beck. On the other side of the beck there is a footpath connecting the old A46 road with Cherry Tree Lane in Nettleham. The public house was owned by Enterprise Inns. Contact was made and a site meeting was arranged between the Breweries Estates Manager Sally Peach, Chair Ian Benford and Susie Mendel. Our idea was to erect a bridge across the beck at the foot of the pub’s land so that walkers could access the pub from the footpath. This would increase the pub’s business and the tree planting would provide a pleasant wooded area for both walkers and pub visitors.

Although the Estates Manager seemed very keen on the idea when she visited the site, within a couple of weeks we were told that they were not interested after all. Later, the brewery put in for planning permission to turn the field into a caravan park, which was subsequently refused.

3. Further down the lane, NWT identified another small field between the beck and the old A46. It was a ‘set aside’ piece of land. We were unable to identify the owner, but the farmer who received a stewardship grant to manage it for wildlife was not interested in giving it up to plant trees on.

4. Then there was Mr Truelove, a farmer and property developer who, in 2006-7, bought all the land of a local farmer, Mr Pickwell, who had sold up. The land was dispersed around Nettleham, including

Danby Hill, on the outskirts of the village. Mr Truelove wanted to build houses on land adjacent to Greetwell Lane. Discussions were held between Mr Truelove and NWT about the possibility of planting woodland along the Danby Hill track. After their initial attempts to persuade the villagers and parish council to approve the property development failed, their discussions with NWT ceased.

5. In November 2007, two adjacent three acre paddocks (Northfield Paddocks) came up for auction on the outskirts of Nettleham, on the Scothern Road. The price guide for each field was £25,000. NWT decided to launch an appeal to the villagers to raise money to purchase one of these fields. Over a four day period, NWT members delivered a leaflet with details of the appeal to every house in Nettleham. The response from villagers was excellent – pledges and donations would have brought in over £11,000. But, realistically, NWT would never have raised enough money to purchase one of the paddocks.

However, one morning, Ian Benford, Julia Ambrose and Susie Mendel stood outside the Nettleham Co-op, handing out leaflets about the paddocks and talking to people. Ian had contacted the *Lincolnshire Echo* and a reporter and photographer arrived to take photographs and hear the story, which was printed on 22nd November 2007.

By chance, the Chief Executive of Lincolnshire Co-operative Ltd., Ursula Lidbetter, read the story and contacted Ian Benford. The Co-op had been looking for some land to create a small community woodland and they offered to purchase one of the fields for NWT to plant with trees.

On the day of the auction, Susie Mendel attended, as did Elizabeth Welbourn, the Estates & Property Manager for Lincolnshire Co-operative Ltd, who took part in the bidding. However, the first field eventually sold for £40,000 and the second for £33,000. The Co-op understandably dropped out of the bidding at £30,000.

Although unsuccessful on this occasion, an important contact had been made. The Co-op said that they would still be willing to purchase land in the Nettleham area to create community woodland and lease it to NWT. This partnership almost happened a year and a half later (see the story of Monks Wood below) and did happen in 2011 (see “The Near Future”).

BEGINNINGS – FIRST COMMUNITY TREE PLANTING EVENT FEBRUARY 2008

In October 2007, agreement was reached between NWT and Chris Hitchens, the Estates Manager at Lincolnshire Police HQ, to plant over 400 trees and flowering shrubs on two sides of the Nettleham Police HQ fields. Half of the cost of the trees and shrubs, with stakes and guards, was paid for by Lincolnshire County Council. A further £200 was donated by Lincolnshire Co-operative Ltd. and the remaining cost by a private donation. Hot soup and drinks, donated by Waitrose, were provided by Nettleham Scout Group.

The tree planting took place on Saturday 23rd February 2008 and NWT invited villagers, particularly children with their parents, to bring a spade and come and plant a tree. The event was a huge community success – nearly 300 children and adults came and all the trees were planted in 3½ hours (see Appendix photographs 1). <http://www.nettlehamwoodlandtrust.co.uk/historygallery.htm>
The trees planted were oak, ash, silver birch, wild cherry, crab apple, alder, Scots pine and holly. All the shrubs were native species such as hazel, dog rose, hawthorn, viburnum, etc.

To ensure the trees were planted where we wanted them, Rod, Ian and Susie spent a couple of hours the day before painting tree codes on the grass where each tree was to be planted. “OK” was oak, “AL” alder, “AH” ash, “HT” hawthorn and so on. The plan worked extremely well. The trees, shrubs,

guards and stakes were in a tent and people came to collect them and then went to find the appropriate code and plant the tree. Rod and Andrew gave tree planting demonstrations to those who had never planted a tree before.

NWT Trustee and cub leader Mark Lawrence asked his cubs to suggest a name for the new wood and Matthew Randles, later a scout, came up with the name “**PC WOOD**”. Chris Hitchens was delighted with the name and on 8th June 2008, at the Lincolnshire Police Open Day, “PC Wood” was dedicated by the then Deputy Chief Constable Richard Crompton and a plaque, provided by Lincolnshire Police, was unveiled (see Appendix photographs 1).
<http://www.nettlehamwoodlandtrust.co.uk/historygallery.htm>

NWT was also given permission to plant wildflowers and more shrubs in other parts of the Police HQ and a number of planting events took place with Nettleham Infants and Junior Schools and Nettleham cubs/scouts during the autumn of 2008. An application for a grant from The Lottery’s “Breathing Spaces” was successful, and WRN was awarded over £3000 to purchase the wildflowers, trees, shrubs and equipment for this and future events.

Chris Hitchens had agreed that the area on the west side of the lake could be used by villagers as an amenity area. In 2010, after an appeal in *Nettleham News*, Threshold Church in Nettleham raised money from coffee mornings to purchase a round picnic table which was sited close to the shrubs and wildflowers planted by villagers on the Police HQ land.

Over time, “PC Wood” and The Scotches footpath through the Police HQ have become lovely places to walk and picnic, especially in the spring, when the wildflowers come out.

In 2009, NWT planted a small leaved lime tree in “PC Wood” for Chris Hitchens on his retirement to thank him for allowing and supporting these exciting community projects.

RESIGNATION OF FIRST CHAIR AND APPOINTMENT OF THE SECOND CHAIR

In June 2008, **Ian Benford** was obliged to stand down as Chair of NWT due to promotion and pressure of work. His vision led to the foundation of NWT and his dedication, enthusiasm and sheer hard work in establishing the Charity and Unincorporated Association were enormous. His wife Jenny also stood down at that time and they were both thanked for their services with sincerity.

Committee member Andrew Watson also left towards the end of 2007 when he took a job as a wildlife officer on Dartmoor, but he returned to help with the planting of “PC Wood” in February 2008.

For a few months, NWT did not have a Chair and committee meetings were alternately chaired by other members. Around the time Ian resigned, Dennis Tate introduced his friend **David Cotten** to NWT and he began attending meetings. Towards the end of the year David was asked to take on the role of Chair, which he accepted. David had a business background, being a director and partner in a plastics business and he had an accountancy qualification. He had many contacts in business, the parish council and the village, which often proved very useful.

One of David’s first jobs was to introduce a budget/schedule spreadsheet. Each month the Treasurer, Julia Ambrose, updated all expenses and income and the Secretary, Susie Mendel, the activities of the members, events, dates of committee meetings, etc. It allowed everyone to see the state of finances of the Charity at any one time and in the future and helped members budget effectively. David also re-vamped the committee meeting agendas, introducing separate items for the Treasurers’ Report by Julia Ambrose and Website Update by Michael Denton.

David's role as Chair began at the time when NWT's first big project was just beginning and he was able to use his skills and contacts in a very practical way. His small digger skills were hugely useful on a cold and extremely wet and muddy January day in 2009, when members dug a large French drain near the main entrance to what would become Monks Wood. This was obviously successful because wellies are no longer sucked over the wearer's feet, and the land is now level and sown with meadow flowers.

David also organised the hiring of a welfare unit from Lindum for the month of tree planting in February/ March 2009, negotiating a 50% reduction in the cost (see "Funding for NWT Projects" on page 12).

NWT's FIRST LARGE-SCALE WOODLAND – MONKS WOOD DUNHOLME 2008-9

Early in 2008 and following on from the failed attempt to purchase one of the three acre paddocks at auction, Ursula Lidbetter, the Chief Executive of Lincolnshire Co-operative (Lincs. Co-op) by chance met Hugh Wykes, farmer, of Dunholme Lodge. Mr Wykes told Ms. Lidbetter that he and his brother, Brian, wanted to sell three fields, totalling 19.27 hectares, in Ashing Lane Dunholme for the creation of new woodland. From this meeting, members of NWT and Liz Welbourn, the Estates Manager of Lincolnshire Co-op, began a number of meetings with Messrs. Wykes and then with Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust (LWT).

Lincolnshire Co-op wanted to purchase one of the fields and hoped that LWT would purchase the other two, but this was not to be. After a number of meetings, Lincolnshire Co-op decided to pull out of negotiations. In the meantime, Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd. (WREN) was looking for a suitable memorial for the late Director of the Lincoln branch of WREN, Dennis Monk. Eventually WREN agreed to purchase the whole 19.27 hectares for LWT on the understanding that 14.8 hectares would be created into a woodland which would be named **MONKS WOOD**. After further negotiations, it was agreed that NWT would have a 125 year lease to plant and maintain the new woodland.

The land is adjacent to the existing Pickerings Meadow and Watts Wood in Ashing Lane, which had been gifted to LWT by sisters Elsie Pickering and Sylvia Watts of Dunholme. The idea was to extend the meadow by 4.5 hectares and incorporate the new Monks Wood with the existing wood and meadow into the **ASHING LANE NATURE RESERVE**. The whole reserve would cover 28 hectares (67 acres) and would be linked by woodland walks, footpaths and bridleway.

In January 2009, members of NWT, led by Rod Newborough, the group's Woodland Advisor, marked out the woodland areas, glades and walks. The middle wood (2 hectares) was to be planted by a local contractor. The south wood, comprising 7.94 hectares, was to be planted by local schools, community groups and members of the public. A month of tree planting was organised from February to March 2009.

HOW MONKS WOOD WAS DESIGNED AND THE TREES PLANTED

Woodland Advisor Rod Newborough had over 40 years experience working for the Forestry Commission and he knew how to create a woodland. The main body of Monks Wood comprises oak, ash and silver birch, with 1200 small leaved lime in the north wood. These four species were planted in large blocks. NWT members walked rows 2½ metres apart, pushing canes into the ground every 2½ metres. Although the rows were evenly spaced (which would make mowing and brush-cutting easier) they were curved, not straight – to use Rod's term, 'organic'. Once all the canes were sited, the tops

were then sprayed different colours to identify each species. So, red canes were for oak, green for ash, purple for silver birch and black for lime.

On the edges of these four species, more canes were pushed in for the other trees – alder, field maple, holly, crab apple, wild cherry, etc. These were in smaller groups and each species had its own colour cane. This method was very time-consuming and tiring, but effective, as it allowed us to decide where each species of tree would be planted and it made the community planting a much easier affair. We could give the planter a bag of oak, ash, or birch and tell them to plant the trees wherever the red, green or purple canes were situated.

Once all the trees were planted, we then planted smaller groups of shrubs along the edges, adjacent to the walks and glades – hazel, guelder rose, wayfaring tree, dogwood, wild privet, dog rose, hawthorn, blackthorn, spindle and common buckthorn.

Secretary Susie Mendel had early on suggested that Monks Wood could have a Memorial Garden where people could plant a tree to a loved one, or for a special occasion. It was agreed that the main entrance into Monks Wood would lead into this half hectare Garden. It was here, on 26 February 2009, that Mrs Joy Monk, the widow of Dennis Monk, came with representatives from LWT and WREN and local school children from St. Chad's, Dunholme, to plant the Monk Oak and dedicate the new wood. An oak paling fence surrounds the memorial oak and a woodchip path was later laid from the main entrance to the Monk Oak and onward to the beginning of the main woodland walk. (See Appendix photos 2) <http://www.nettlehamwoodlandtrust.co.uk/historygallery.htm>

Unfortunately, the first Monk Oak failed to grow. We made the mistake of digging a planting pit in the heavy clay and filling it with compost. This acted as a sump and filled with water over the winter, rotting the tree roots. In hindsight it would have been better to plant directly into the clay soil. Eventually, the oak was replaced with one of the smaller oak trees which had been planted at the same time as the Monk Oak in another part of South Wood. The Monk Oak is now growing well and, remarkably, two oak saplings have appeared within the fencing close to the larger tree.

Between 21 February and 14 March 2009, around 12,000 native trees and shrubs were planted in the south wood. During the week, school and college parties came – pupils and students from Queen's Park Special School, Monks Abbey Primary School, Lincoln Christ's Hospital School and the Riseholme Agricultural campus of the University of Lincoln. On the four Saturdays local people came, many with families, as well as scouts, cubs and guides (See Appendix photos 2). <http://www.nettlehamwoodlandtrust.co.uk/historygallery.htm>

The weather during this period was excellent for tree planting; dry and not too cold. The welfare unit provided shelter, warmth, a toilet and facilities for making hot drinks.

To pay for the trees, NWT applied to the Forestry Commission and obtained a grant through the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS; see "Funding for NWT Projects" on page 12). All the trees and shrubs were supplied by British Hardwood Tree Nursery Ltd. (BHT) of Snitterby near Gainsborough.

Once the south wood was planted, NWT set about creating the cambered woodland walks to link the whole woodland. These were sown with grass and wildflower seeds over one day in early October 2009. The seeds were supplied by Boston Seeds and paid for with a grant from LCC.

The ditch dividing the north and middle woods was culverted at the edge of the new meadow. In the north wood, a naturally wet area was scraped out to create a seasonally wetland area and in the south-

west corner of the newly planted south wood a pond was dug out. These projects were paid for with a donation from Secretary Susie Mendel, who auctioned her Beatles' autographs (see "Raising Money for NWT" on page 13). The pond was appropriately named "Beatles Pond" and the wetland was later named "The Wykes" after Hugh and Brian Wykes, the previous owners of the land.

The last north section of the new woodland, comprising 4.8 hectares, was planted in the first week of December 2009. During the week, pupils and students came again from Queen's Park Special School, Lincoln Christ's Hospital School and Riseholme Agricultural College.

On Saturday, 5th December, NWT took part in **TREE O'CLOCK**, a Guinness Book of World Records attempt to plant the most number of trees in one hour in multiple locations, organised by BBC Breathing Places. BBC Radio Lincolnshire provided live coverage of the event and *Lincolnshire Echo* and *Market Rasen Mail* sent reporters. Although the world record attempt was not successful, NWT greeted around 120 adults and children and, between them, they planted an incredible 2566 trees in one hour between 11.00 and 12.00. It was a lovely sunny day, which certainly helped everyone enjoy the occasion. Afterwards, Nettleham Scout Troop provided bacon butties and hot soup to the hungry tree planters. (see Appendix photographs 3). <http://www.nettlehamwoodlandtrust.co.uk/historygallery.htm>

During 2009, around 20,000 trees and shrubs were planted to create Monks Wood, mostly by local children, university students, cubs, guides, scouts and local families. Monks Wood is truly a community woodland.

EARLY RECOGNITION OF THE WORK OF NWT

LINCOLNSHIRE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY AWARD 2009

During this busy year, Trustee Chris Williams had decided to enter NWT for the Community Section of the Lincolnshire Environmental Awards (LEA).

We were delighted to be shortlisted and Roger Pavey and one of the judges, Charlie Partridge, visited Monks Wood on 25th May 2009 to see for themselves the work we were doing. A few days later we were informed that we had reached the finals, which would take place at the Bentley Hotel, Lincoln, on 11th June.

There were two finalists in each category. Chris gave a Power Point Presentation on the work of NWT and the creation of Monks Wood. The judges included President of LEA David Bellamy. The results and presentations were to be announced after dinner that evening, which was attended by six NWT members. After dinner, during which a large quantity of wine was consumed, David Bellamy gave a speech in which he commented on the work of each of the finalists. On the work of NWT and the creation of Monks Wood, he made particular reference to the position of the new woodland in relation to the surrounding villages and the network of footpaths which links them all. Shortly after the group were thrilled to hear that NWT had won their Community category and were presented with the trophy. (see Appendix photograph 3) <http://www.nettlehamwoodlandtrust.co.uk/historygallery.htm>

The concept of Monks Wood being at the hub of a network of footpaths is an important one which is proving to be a useful reference point in determining future developments.

THE YOUNG PERSONS DESIGN CHALLENGE SPONSORED BY STAR ENERGY COMMUNITY FUND

In keeping with the “community” objective of NWT, in 2009 the Charity applied for a grant from Star Energy Community Fund (SECF). Monks Wood needed both a main entrance and a bridge to link the north and middle woods at the culvert. Woodland Advisor Rod Newborough suggested the “Young Persons Design Challenge” (YPDC) – for students and young people to design a main “threshold” and a bridge “threshold”.

SECF liked the idea and granted £15,000 for the project.

In April/May 2009, the Challenge was launched and local schools and youth groups were invited to take part. The timing of the launch was unfortunate because of examinations and holidays and there was a very limited take-up. After consultation with SECF, it was decided to re-launch the Challenge in September, with a closing date in early December. Once again, the response from schools was very disappointing, but by December, designs had been received from Welton St. Mary’s Primary School, 2nd Nettleham Guides and 1st Nettleham 4th Lincoln Scout Troop. In all, 57 children and young people submitted 61 designs.

Four judges were chosen to judge the designs – Julie Barlow from Star Energy, Janet Wright, Chair of Dunholme Parish Council, Charles Pickering of Ashing Lane and Rod Newborough representing NWT. The judging took place in mid-December and the results were unexpected.

RESULTS OF THE YPDC

After a four hour meeting, the judges arrived at the conclusion that in fact “everyone is a winner”. This unexpected conclusion emerged because there were so many good ideas across the entries as a whole that it was agreed that it would make sense to blend all the design elements to construct the thresholds.

Involving the community as a whole is one of the objectives of NWT and was seen by the judges as fundamental to the development of Monks Wood, and so combining the ideas from many entries seemed an excellent way forward.

THE THRESHOLD DESIGNS

Common elements in the childrens’ designs included arches, cathedral, towers, totem poles, Humber Bridge, living sculpture (willow) carvings, colour, wildlife habitats and sound.

Lincolnshire architect, Philip Heath, was asked to design the main entrance and the bridge thresholds from the ideas submitted by the young people. B. Knight & Son of Langworth, timber merchants and builders supplied the wood and constructed both thresholds.

The main Threshold into the Memorial Garden and Monks Wood is loosely based on Lincoln Cathedral with its “nave” and “towers”. It is constructed of Scottish larch with a red cedar shingle roof. In the four spaces behind the seating, silver birch trees were planted in January 2011. Ivy and honeysuckle were planted to grow up the “towers” which will be beneficial to wildlife, and living willow was planted to form a trellis on each side. (See Appendix photographs 4)

<http://www.nettlehamwoodlandtrust.co.uk/historygallery.htm>

Over time, this beautiful Threshold will become part of the landscape of Monks Wood, but it will also be a practical entrance, providing shelter for people and wildlife, seating and spaces for interpretation and information boards (see below). The adjoining fencing is Lincolnshire rail and post and the gate provides access for maintenance vehicles. Within months of construction two birds’ nests had been made in the eaves.

The water crossing Threshold reflects the image of the Humber Bridge. It is also made of larch and has paling fencing as a safety feature. Its situation, on the main walk and at the junction of wood, meadow and water, is a stunning focal point within the Reserve. (See Appendix photographs 4) <http://www.nettlehamwoodlandtrust.co.uk/historygallery.htm>

AWARDS TO THE YOUNG DESIGNERS

An awards ceremony took place on Saturday 24th April 2010 at Welton Village Hall. This was attended by Peter Marsh and his wife on behalf of SECF.

Peter presented each of the three groups with a beautiful plaque made of ash by Nettleham woodturner Len Grantham. Each young designer received a certificate acknowledging their participation in the Challenge. (See Appendix photographs 5 <http://www.nettlehamwoodlandtrust.co.uk/historygallery.htm> showing some of the young designers with a model of the main Threshold made by Rod Newborough and the framed designs presented to NWT by Peter Marsh on behalf of Star Energy.)

TIME CAPSULES

The three groups of participants were each invited to make a Time Capsule and they were buried underneath the main Threshold during construction.

VISIT BY STAR ENERGY TO SEE THE THRESHOLDS

On Tuesday 19th October 2010, NWT invited Barrie Hedges, Julie Barlow and Peter Marsh to visit Monks Wood to see the Thresholds. Also invited were Philip Heath, the architect, judges Charles Pickering and Janet Wright and members of NWT.

It was a very enjoyable visit and was followed by a picnic lunch (Photographs enclosed).

The last part of the YPDC was to design four information and interpretation boards to fit inside the main entrance Threshold. Early in 2011, the four beautiful boards were designed by former Trustee Nigel Kingston, who is a graphic designer and constructed by sign-makers Venture Signs of Lincoln. The text, developed mainly by Chris Williams, who also drafted the map, tells the story of Monks Wood and the Ashing Lane Nature Reserve and provides a plan of the Reserve, together with information on what to look out for at different times of the year. The majority of the photographs on the boards were provided by Rod Newborough, Susie Mendel and Chris Williams.

FUNDING FOR NWT PROJECTS - GRANT APPLICATIONS

LINCOLNSHIRE CO-OPERATIVE: Paid £200 towards the cost of the trees at PC Wood in 2008.

ENGLISH WOODLANDS GRANT SCHEME (EWGS) for Monks Wood from 2009: Two grants were obtained from the Forestry Commission through the EWGS. The first was a Woodland Creation Grant – a contribution to the planting and maintenance of a New Native Woodland. Second a Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG) to help with the cost of public access facilities. Much of this was spent in the creation of the raised woodland walks of approx 1.5km.

ANNUAL FARM WOODLAND PAYMENTS were also awarded for taking land out of agriculture, payable for 15 years.

LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL: Community Wildlife Grants 2008/2009/2010. Up to £500 and 50% of the cost. Used for trees and shrubs at PC Wood, shrubs at Police HQ, grass and wildflower seed at Monks Wood, wetland plants and seeds for Monks Wood.

BREATHING PLACES LOTTERY GRANT 2008

£3000 paid for wildflower plugs and bulbs for Police HQ, plus some equipment (trailer, spades, display boards) that have been very useful for subsequent events.

LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL: Capital Grant Aid Scheme. £660 paid for the welfare unit at Monks Wood during the month of tree planting in Feb/March 09, including insurance. LINDUM CONSTRUCTION who supplied the unit reduced the cost by 50% after discussions with Chair David Cotten.

STAR ENERGY COMMUNITY FUND 2009: £15,000 to launch the Young Persons Design Challenge and create a unique main entrance threshold and bridge threshold.

Not all grant applications were successful. In July 2009, NWT applied for a grant from Yorkshire Bank's 150th Birthday Community Awards to create an All Abilities Area (AAA) for persons with disabilities at Monks Wood. After putting in what we thought was a good application for a very worthy cause, we were disappointed to learn that we had been unsuccessful.

LATEST GRANT APPLICATION

However, early in 2011, new Grants Officer Stephen Hartford, with Chairman Chris Williams, Rod Newborough and Julia Ambrose began work and research for an application to the Lottery's Awards for All (A4A) for a grant for the AAA. (see below)

RAISING MONEY FOR NWT OTHER THAN BY GRANT APPLICATIONS – 2006 TO THE PRESENT

From its foundation, NWT committee members had to think about how to raise money. Early on, a number of donations were made by members. In March 2007, Secretary Susie took part in the Lincoln 10k Run and raised almost £500 for NWT. £200 of this sponsorship came from founder member and Trustee Nigel Kingston, who gives an annual donation to a good cause out of the profits from *Nettleham Now/News*.

Trustee and Nettleham cub/scout leader Mark Lawrence began making bird and bug boxes to sell at the Nettleham Carnival. Mark also took part in a sponsored 44 mile walk of the River Ayr Way from Glenbuck Loch to the sea at Ayr. He raised £400 which he divided between Nettleham Scout Group and NWT.

In 2008, a raffle was organised for the Carnival with prizes being donated by supporters and members.

Nettleham woodturner Len Grantham had made the beautiful wooden plaques for the Young Persons Design Challenge in 2010. He then gave a box of his woodware to be sold by NWT; 75% of takings were donated to the Charity. His lovely plates and bowls were sold at the Nettleham Carnival and at the Lincolnshire Show in 2010.

One trustee makes an annual donation based on his international business travel.

Secretary Susie Mendel auctioned her Beatles' autographs in 2009, raising £1350 which she donated to NWT to pay for the digging out of "Beatles Pond" and "The Wykes" wetland at Monks Wood.

We cannot put a price on donations of time. Our volunteers, past and present, have been magnificent and generous in their willingness to pitch in and get things done, although we could do with a slightly larger committee to share some of the routine matters that both bedevil and facilitate the activities of charities such as NWT.

We have been supported in other ways with donations of trees, picnic tables and benches for the Memorial Garden and other areas of Monks Wood and with wood chippings for some of our paths. People can purchase a tree for a loved one or special occasion to be planted in the Memorial Garden or along the woodland walks. The charge of £75 brings in a small income for the Charity.

There were ongoing discussions about whether to initiate a subscription membership of NWT. Opinions were always divided. The question was raised as to what members would receive for their subscription? Secretary Susie talked one day to Adrian Isaac of Boston Woods Trust; his Charity has a subscription membership and he said that once a year, he organises a special day for members at one of his woods with picnic or BBQ.

At the time of writing, NWT has still not agreed to a paid membership.

NWT DEVELOPMENTS IN 2009, 2010 and 2011

13 March 2009, NWT became incorporated as a Private Limited Company – Company No. 6846907..
First Directors: Julia Ambrose (Company Secretary), Dennis Tate, Susie Mendel, Rod Newborough.

18 May 2009, NWT Charitable status was approved – Registered Charity Number 1129705.

24 February 2010: 125 year lease of Monks Wood with LWT signed by Julia Ambrose and Susie Mendel.

Mid 2010: Two new committee members were welcomed. An early supporter of NWT, Elizabeth Hipgrave, took on the role of Supporters' Secretary. Stephen Hartford (who had worked for the Woodland Trust before his retirement) became Grants Officer; Stephen left a year later.

November 2010: Chair David Cotten resigned.

The four Directors of NWT met late in 2010 to discuss the role of the Chair of the Charity. They formulated a "job description" which was posted on our website and which any future Chair would need to adhere to.

January 2011: At the AGM, a new Chairman was elected – long serving committee member Chris Williams.

NWT PROJECTS IN 2010 AND 2011

1. THE "CONNECTING CLASSROOMS" ENCLOSURE AT MONKS WOOD

This is a 12 metre square fenced area to keep out tree nibbling deer, rabbits and hare. It is not being cut or sprayed, and so natural regeneration should be more evident as the years go by. This particular project has been co-funded by NWT and the British Council as part of a three year project linking

schools in Mazar-el-Sharif, Afghanistan, with Lincoln Christ's Hospital School, Yarborough High School (now Lincoln Castle Academy) and Monks Abbey Primary School. A similar enclosure is being created at one of the Mazar schools and should allow a comparative study of natural regeneration. The idea is likely to be copied by some of the teachers from overseas who have been to Monks Wood in recent months. Visitors include colleagues from Afghanistan, Nigeria, Lithuania and Portugal.

Pupils from Welton St. Mary's Primary School are now keeping a log-book of Monks Wood supervised by teacher Hannah Jones.

2. WETLAND PLANTING AT MONKS WOOD:

A grant application to LCC for wetland plants and seeds for The Wykes wetland area in north wood was successful and we received £500. Sills & Betteridge Solicitors, who had already donated £500 to NWT in 2009 agreed to donate a further £500 to pay for the rest of the plants. On 18th March 2011, students and children from LCHS and Welton St. Mary's Primary School came to help with the planting (see Appendix photographs 5). <http://www.nettlehamwoodlandtrust.co.uk/historygallery.htm>

3. PLANTING AT ERMINE PRIMARY SCHOOL LINCOLN

On 25 January 2011 Chris Williams, Susie Mendel and Rod Newborough helped 400+ schoolchildren at Ermine Primary School plant 100 trees which had been donated by BTCV.

4. GRAND OPENING OF MONKS WOOD FRIDAY 27th MAY 2011

To celebrate the hard work and achievements of NWT in creating a 14.8 hectare new woodland, it was decided to organise a Grand Opening and it took place on Friday 27th May. The official part of the day began at 1pm when Joy Monk and family attended with representatives from LWT, WREN, and the very many people who had helped in its creation. School children from Welton St. Mary's Primary School came to sing two songs and the youngest pupil helped Joy Monk cut the ribbon across the main entrance threshold. This was followed by guided walks around the wood and refreshments.

During the afternoon, young children came with their parents to a teddy bears' picnic and later local people, cub, scout, brownie and guide groups came to take part in a treasure hunt and enjoy a BBQ, songs from a ladies' choir and some unplugged tunes from several guitarists and singers with musical roots in the 1960s.

It was a truly joyous day. (See Appendix photographs 6)

<http://www.nettlehamwoodlandtrust.co.uk/historygallery.htm>

5. ALL ABILITIES AREA AT MONKS WOOD

The application in early 2011 for a £9000 grant from the Lottery's Awards for All for the All Abilities Area was successful. The plan was to create a hard wheelchair friendly path from the car park at Watts Wood, through the main entrance Threshold into Monks Wood and up to the Monk Oak. It would then turn east towards a second entrance which would allow mini-buses to turn around and drop off wheelchairs. In June 2011 the pathway and wetland were constructed by a local firm with tremendous help from Charles Pickering.

The AAA will have lots of different features and advice has been sought from teachers and pupils from St. Francis Special School in Lincoln and other disability groups. There will be a tree nursery, an education area with a willow tunnel, lots of sensory planting and a pond.

This exciting project will evolve over the next year or two and further funding is being sought from WREN and other sources.

The All Abilities Area will fulfill one of the main objectives of NWT – to make our woodlands accessible to all.

THE NEAR FUTURE & A NEW WOODLAND

At the time of writing (September 2011), Lincolnshire Co-operative have just completed the purchase of an undrained and uncultivated 4 hectare field to the east of Monks Wood as part of their 150th birthday celebrations. The land is very damp and it will be made into a wet woodland, with up to a quarter as open water and/or seasonal wetland. NWT will have a management lease on the land. We will be seeking further grants from the Forestry commission for the creation of a New Native Wet Woodland and associated water habitats.

We are also awaiting with interest the outcome of the Lincoln Rugby Club's bid to establish itself on Lodge Lane, Nettleham and the Parish Council's application for Lottery funding for the Bishop's Palace site. Both projects will enable the planting of more trees and shrubs in the village of Nettleham.

THE NWT COMMITTEE AT THE START OF THE SECOND FIVE YEARS

Chris Williams – Chairman	Education consultant, British Council Ambassador for the East Midlands
Susie Mendel – Secretary	Professional Genealogist
Julia Ambrose – Treasurer	Various paid and (mostly) unpaid roles
Dennis Tate – Business Advisor	Retired Director of Agro. Chemical Company
Rod Newborough – Woodland Advisor	Retired Forestry Commission Officer for 40+ years.
Michael Denton – Website Designer	Design Electrical Engineer
Mark Lawrence – Cub/scout liaison and	Child Protection Officer. Marketing Manager at Siemens Industrial Turbomachinery Ltd. in the Energy Sector, Oil & Gas Service Division.
Leticia Hamilton – Trustee	Full-time mother
Elizabeth Hipgrave – Membership Secretary.	Retired Office Manager

CONCLUSION

The first five years of NWT have been truly amazing. From the modest first meetings of a group of six Nettleham residents, a Charity was born and new woodlands, meadows, wetlands and wildflower areas were planted in and around the Nettleham area, creating new habitats for wildlife and huge benefits to people.

The early group never envisaged that the opportunity would arise for the Charity to create a 14.8 hectare woodland from scratch – but so it was. We were in the right place at the right time; we were enthusiastic and determined; the backgrounds and varying experiences and skills of the committee members all contributed to the success of the Charity and the successful creation of Monks Wood.

It has been incredibly hard work for everyone involved. The committee members, past and present, have given up large portions of their lives and much energy to the work of the Charity. The rewards for them and everyone else who has been part of the NWT story will remain long after they are gone and will always be a testament to their vision and dedication.

We look forward to welcoming new people to carry on the work of NWT.

Susie Mendel, first Secretary of NWT
September 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to those of my colleagues who contributed to this early history of NWT and to all of them, past and present, for being part of it. In particular I thank our current Chairman Chris Williams for his invaluable advice and input and for writing the Preface and Elizabeth Hipgrave for the proof-reading.

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