



Little Ouse Headwaters Project

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Working with Willow at Broomscot Common and in Garboldisham Primary School 2013-4

Photos by Di MacDonald, Reg Langston , Laura Cox
and Garboldisham Primary School

The willow arbour in Garboldisham Primary School needed help

A lot of the willow had died, probably because it had not been kept wet enough. Willows like very wet conditions.

We asked Mr Langston if the LOHP could help us.

He said they had got to pollard* a willow on Broomscot Common to make the pond bigger.



**Pollarding means cutting off all the branches at head height. This is done so that sheep and cattle can't eat all the new shoots.*

One tree – lots of branches

Mr Langston and his helpers showed us which pieces of willow to cut and we cut a lot of it down.

We kept the cuttings at school in big buckets of water, hoping they would grow roots.



Apparently after we cut the branches off they'll grow right back in a jiffy.
One tree = lots of willow.

LOHP volunteers finished the cutting

It looks a bit alarming,
but the tree will sprout
again in spring.

It grows masses of
nooks and holes where
the branches are cut –
for insects and
nesting birds.

Cutting the tree in this
way keeps it alive for
much much longer, than
if we just left it alone.



Important records - writing

Our visit to Broomscott common

9th October

On the 9th we went to Broomscott common, and we pollarded some willow for our willow arbour at school because it is kind of falling apart. When we started we used loppers and bow saws. The kind of willow we were pollarding was crack willow. We had to put it in a trailer full of manure to keep it moist and green otherwise it won't root very well. When I had a go it was really goey mud and at one point we had to go back to school. About an hour later they had done, so they brought it back to school and then a few of us went outside to put the crack willow in water to root. There was so much willow, hopefully it will be done for winter when Mr Langston comes back to help us put it together to restore our willow arbour we have now. ✓

Grace Stretton

Important records – pictures



Cutting methods:

The difference between coppicing and pollarding is that coppicing is cutting low and pollarding is cutting high.

Albie Spriddell

We cut the branch where it was green because it would root much better.

Planting out in winter when the plants are asleep



One windy January morning, Mr Langston and two other LOHP volunteers came to help plant the cuttings.

The willow cuttings had stood in barrels of water for two months. They had sprouted good strong roots.

We dug holes, and carefully planted them. Some were over two metres high.

Firmly planted and well watered



Making it strong

After they were securely planted, the tops of the cuttings were tied on to the willow arbour using cable ties.

We had to make sure they were not tied too tightly, otherwise they would cut into the bark.

Some of this job was a bit of a stretch!



A healthy tree – full of life

Back on the
Common, the
pollarded willow is
waiting for spring.

Go and have a look
at it in summer
when it has grown
its new crop of
twigs and leaves.

