



# Heart of England Hedge Laying Group

August 2020

As a committee we thought it was about time that we let you know how things are progressing for the group.

The last few months have, of course, been a very frustrating and worrying time.

Events have had to be cancelled and it is still not clear when we will be able to resume activities. Doubtless, there will be a period of time during which events will have to observe social distancing etc and we will need to address how this can be done. Clearly, the safety of participants is paramount and we need to tread carefully.

In March, we had been hoping to hold an open meeting but this proved impossible. Committee meetings were suspended and we made the decision to have a break and planned to pick things up again in the summer. Last week we had our first socially distanced meeting in an open sided barn and started to think about the future.

We feel that it would be pointless to plan any training or indoor events for this side of Christmas: the virus is still with us and there is the possibility of a 'second spike'.

Last year's AGM was held in October and the constitution expects us to have another within 15 months which gives us the scope to hold the next AGM in early January 2021. We need to give at least 3 weeks' notice so we would hope to make a decision on a date and notify members prior to Christmas. We are planning another committee meeting in October, by which time we hope that the situation is a little clearer.



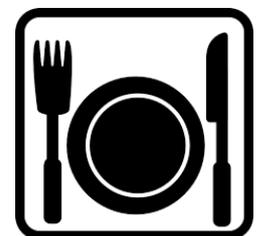
We had planned to run an Improvers' Day in March but that had to be postponed at the last minute when restrictions started to be imposed. We are currently in negotiation with the landowner and have every intention of running this in 2021 if it becomes possible. We have not decided on a date but would hope for February or March.

We would also very much like to run at least one other hedge laying training session and we are currently in discussions about possibly running a competition late in the season.



Having qualified first-aiders available at events is important to us and we are hoping to arrange a course that would cover catastrophic bleeds and other outdoor-working elements. Accidents can happen at any time and axes and chainsaws have the potential to inflict serious injury, so this training would certainly be useful to hedge layers. This was something that we had hoped to run this month, prior to the new cutting season, but has had to be put on hold.

Early last year, we spent some time discussing the possibility of running an 'end of season dinner' as a social occasion, perhaps with some presentations and a guest speaker. We had already decided that there probably was not time to organise this for 2020, even before the virus struck. If circumstances allow it, we would love to run this in 2021 – probably April. We feel that this would be a good way to round off what is likely to have been a pretty disastrous season for hedge laying. Of course this relies on things improving. It may be that we have to severely limit numbers.



## Membership

As you are probably aware, membership of HOEHLG runs from September to September and so subscriptions are soon due for existing members who wish to renew. It is also a good time for new folk to join. The annual subscription has not increased and is a mere £15. Becoming a member is a way of showing your support for group and its aims. We offer free publicity on our website for members who are professional hedge layers or who run related businesses. If you would like to become more involved then there are likely to be opportunities as we start to build momentum post-Covid. We will certainly be asking for nominations to the committee prior to the AGM.