



Friends of Naphill Common

Tree felling on Naphill Common.

Following a meeting with those involved, things are now much clearer about the impending felling on the Common. Because the Common is an SSSI Grade 1, the landowner, Sir Edward Dashwood (West Wycombe Estate) has had to gain permission from English Nature to fell up to 30% of the trees. The work will be financed in two ways: from the sale of the timber and by a grant from the Forestry Commission for clearing scrub and holly along some of the major rides and for

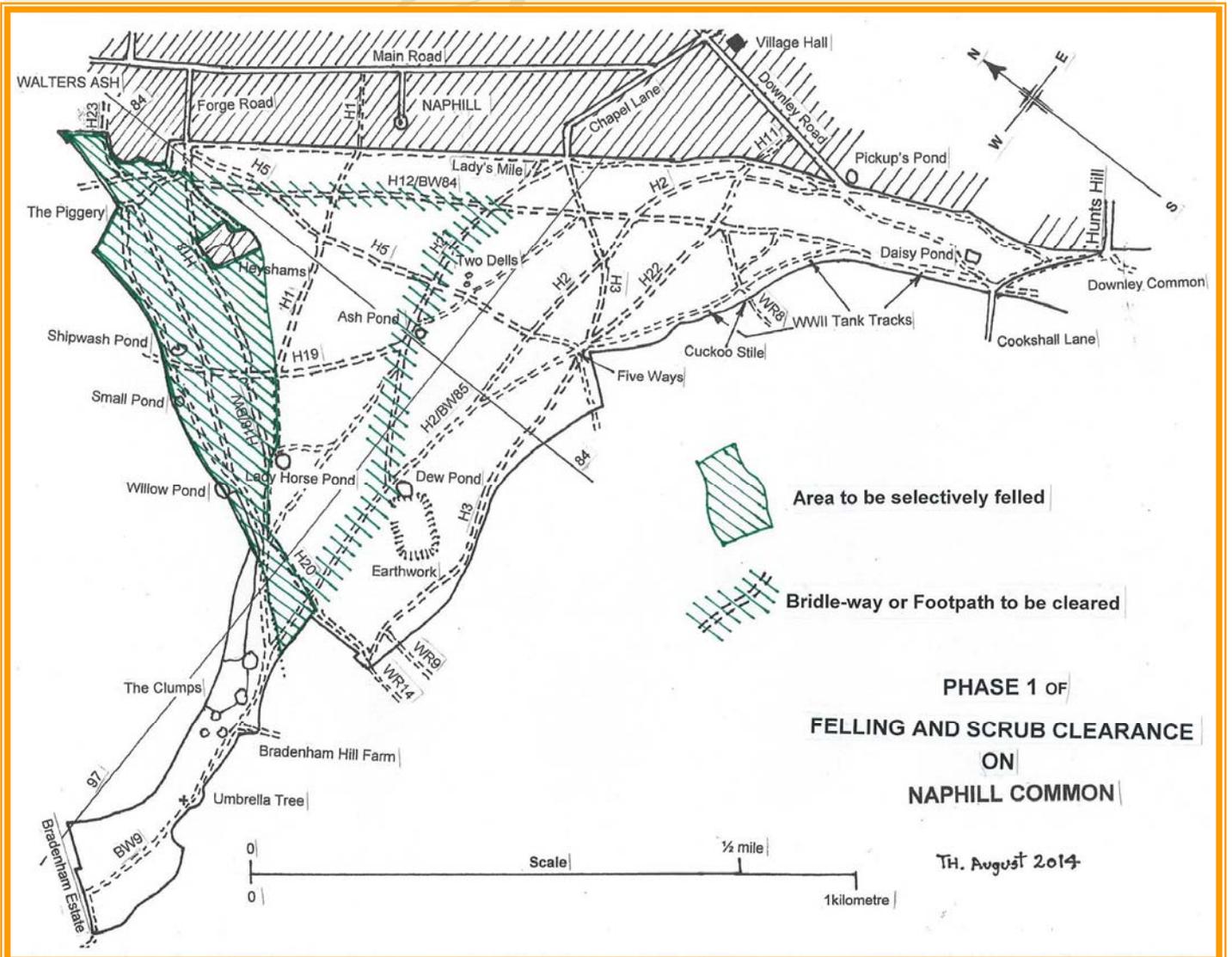
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work around the few remaining junipers. The work will be carried out by Wessex Woodland Management (WWM) in a series of phases and the first phase began in mid-September of this year and will be completed by Christmas.

As the map shows, phase 1 will include an area along the boundary with Bradenham Woods (The Coppice), extending out as far as Heyshams, together with

work on some of the main paths and bridleways: a triangle formed by H12/BW84, H21, part of H2/BW85 and H18/BW. On these paths or rides they will widen and clear them by cutting back the small trees, scrub and especially the holly that has invaded them.

They intended to do the work on the rides first but this has not happened, before starting on the main area of felling. The timber will be piled up beside the track near the end of Forge Road and will remain there for up to a year before being removed. Most of the work will be done by a two-man team with ex-



perience of the kind of sensitive approach required on Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

We were asked to mark with (temporary) green paint those trees that we wanted to preserve and WWM have accepted our choices. We also marked a few trees around some of the ponds with red paint and WWM will remove those. Of course, they will not cut down all of the unmarked trees but will select up to 30%; choosing those that are saleable and which give the remaining trees the best chance to grow. They have agreed to consult us and keep us informed during the

falling, and the Forestry Commission representative will also keep an eye on what is going on.

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There will be a meeting at the end of phase 1, at which we have been invited, to discuss how the project has gone and resolve any problems. It is intended to start phase 2 after a year-long gap, in September 2016. It is likely to cover a similar area of the Common and we will be asked to mark the trees to be preserved as before. This will be followed by other

phases at similar intervals, until the whole Common has been covered. As you can see, the felling is going to take many years to complete.

Obviously, there are mixed opinions about all this and some will not want the Common touched but, given that permission has been granted by Natural England, it is important that we get the best possible outcome for the Common and for those who enjoy it. There are several positive aspects: we will have wider, more open rides; the fine trees will be saved and relieved of competition from the smaller specimens; the ponds will be opened up and should prosper with more light, and the few remaining junipers will be given a chance to survive. We should achieve a healthier, more bio-diverse common with an open area for the return of the juniper cuttings taken from the surviving old bushes. There are worries: we want to ensure that there is an enduring management plan that stops the rides reverting to scrub once more and which keeps the holly in check, and we want permission from Natural England to allow us to return the ponds to health.

Over all, it is a positive picture. If all goes well Naphill Common will emerge from years of neglect and will be cared for in a way that preserves its ecology and ensures that we can enjoy it into the future.

If there are any questions or problems please contact a FONC committee member, especially Trevor Hussey 563767 and Philip Hussey 562023. For serious problems or emergencies contact the

Wessex Woodland Management office on 01488 685007 or info@wessexwoodland.com

- **There will be a Fungus Foray on Sunday 26th October starting from the Village Hall at 10am, led by experts.**
- **Our next long walk (about 5 miles) is from the Village Hall on 20th October at 9.30am.**
- **Short walks (2-3 miles) start from the Village Hall at 10.30am on the first Wednesday of the month.**

