

**Shelfanger Parish Council Meeting 8.1.24**  
**Boyland Common Report**

Since our report dated 4.12.23, due to the weather conditions, there has been little opportunity for getting jobs done on the Common.

We do try to minimise the effect of invasion by willow saplings in the ditches, and we also try to coppice the willow trees where their growth threatens to dominate in one particular area.

In all conservation issues, it is necessary to consider carefully the reasons for, and the extent of, intervention in the natural development of the site. However, if the celebrated diversity of the site is threatened by nature's 'thugs'; the strong dominant species like willow and blackthorn that will overpower the less robust species of plant that can colonise the area, then perhaps a little intervention is acceptable.

Following advice from Chris Batey, our 'Owl man' we will be looking to cut back the branches that are beginning to obscure the South Easterly approach to the owl box. This must be done on a dry day, as it is possible that an owl is sheltering in the box, and will fly out at the sound of intervention. It will return, but, driven out on a wet day it will suffer, as Owls do not have the same weatherproof plumage as many other birds.

We are now working towards creating a replacement information board for the Common, and we are hoping that this will be funded by the District Council. We are hugely indebted to Rita and Sandy at Lime Tree Farm for their meticulous and in depth research into the historical aspects of the Common as well as details of the flora and fauna.

Having now made contact with Jamie Henry, Community Assets Officer for the District Council, we have now been approached by the Marketing and Communications Officer, Debbie Storey, and are currently looking to organise a meeting with her up at the Common.

All of these activities and connections will help to raise the profile of Boyland Common, and increase the awareness of how important this site is, both historically and environmentally.

Pam Ross, Chairperson for the 'Friends of Boyland Common'