

Babraham Forest Garden - Progress Report – March 2021

Progress on activities since the last report (Feb)

1. Forest Garden Working Group

The 'Working Group' has grown again with the welcome addition of Sandra Bandy, Carole Anastasi and Lorisa Dubuc as members. The first meeting was held the week before tree planting began, and helped to arrange refreshment facilities at the Church, signage preparation and engagement with Babraham School parents through FOBS.

2. Tree planting

Tree planting for Year One was an outstanding success! There was an extraordinary and wonderfully positive response from all parts of the community. There were 12 separate tree planting sessions, and about 175 volunteers came to help plant: a great many villagers, 24 groups of parents and their children from the School, companies on Campus; local companies from the 'Green Labs' environmental network of biotech firms, and the Babraham Research Campus Gardening team. The Church very kindly allowed the use of their new kitchen and toilet facilities for refreshments at the end of the sessions, kindly coordinated by Damon and Anouk Stanwell-Smith, with delicious cakes made by Ben Clawson and Janie Thomas.

Babraham Primary School children took part in their own tree planting session in the forest garden, arranged through their EcoSquad of year group representatives. Each of the four school classes planted and labelled a fruit tree, enabling them to learn good planting technique and to follow the growth of the tree during their time at school.

As a result, there is now a windbreak hedge of 502 hornbeam trees planted, along with 65 edible and ecologically beneficial forest garden trees and large shrubs.

3. Communications and outreach

- **Educational materials for schoolchildren** – To support the EcoSquad planting session, a little educational pack was created introducing the Babraham Forest Garden and providing information on the four fruit trees planted by EcoSquad. Packs were provided to each year class so representatives could feed back to their classmates.

BABRAHAM FOREST GARDEN
Growing greens together

What's a Forest Garden?
A forest garden is a garden that is planted to resemble woodland, with trees, shrubs and long-lived groundcover or have benefits for wildlife, such as attracting pollinating insects and making the soil rich and healthy.

A mature forest garden will be a beautiful place eventually producing fruits, nuts, berries, herbs and can pick and eat, or make into jams, jellies, puddings. It is designed to grow just like a forest, it won't need weeding or constant management.

Planting the forest garden will attract new animals as it will also help tackle climate change by locking up in the plants (leaves, trunks, branches and leaves) and

What sorts of plants will the Forest Garden have?
The Babraham Forest Garden was designed by a professional horticulturalist and forest gardener with his own 12-year-old forest garden in Falmouth (The Forest Garden).

For our design, he selected the right plants for our soil and weather conditions, making sure they would be planted next to natural companion plants that help control pests and making sure they are given enough light and space in the site to flourish once they are fully grown.

Trees and large shrubs
We have 27 different types of trees and large shrubs, which have been planted in the first year because they take up the most space in the forest garden. We have many native edible species like Medlar, Apple, Rose, Sweet Chestnut, Plum, Gage, Hawthorn and Hawthorn. We also have interesting non-native edible species, such as Autumn Olive (little sweet red berries are delicious), Italian Alder (very good for soil health), Stone Pine (edible pine nuts), American Elder (flowers can make cordial and syrup), Asian Pear (apples like pear drops), Chinese Quince (for quince lemonade), Choklaterry, Hibiscus (you can eat the little pink flowers), Strawberry Tree (delicious fruits that look nothing like strawberries) and Sachuan Pepper (fruit).

The garden will also contain several varieties of eating apple, crab apple and gage trees, like the 'Cambridge Gage', provided by the East of England Apples and October Frogs, a Norfolk-based charity promoting and preserving local heritage varieties. The picture below shows all the trees and large shrubs we've planted this year.

How Babraham Primary School supports the forest garden
EcoSquad have planted two apple tree varieties, called Monkey Seedling and Chivers Delight, a Cambridge Gage and an Asian Pear in the forest garden.

'Monkey Seedling' Apple tree (Malus domestica)
A late keeping cooking apple used by Charles Monroy of Fortham about 1925. Can be large in size, with a green coloured skin and occasionally a dull brown flush. Keeps shape well when cooked.

'Chivers Delight' Apple tree (Malus domestica)
Desert apple. Raised by Stephen Chivers of Histon in 1925. A medium to large sized dull green skinned apple that is occasionally flushed golden orange-brown. Aromatic with crisp flesh. Pick mid-Oct and eat from Nov-Jan.

'Cambridge Gage' tree (Prunus domestica)
Desert gage. A greenish yellow skinned gage that is probably a seedling of the Green Gage. First recorded as growing at Histon in 1927. Soft and juicy flesh. Extremely sweet to taste.

'Asian Pear' tree (Pyrus Pyrifolia 'Kumto')
Asian pears have fruits that are nothing like European pears, as they are usually round, apple shaped and have a crumby texture and sweet smell. The tree will grow tall (8-20m) and will produce fruit in 10 years.

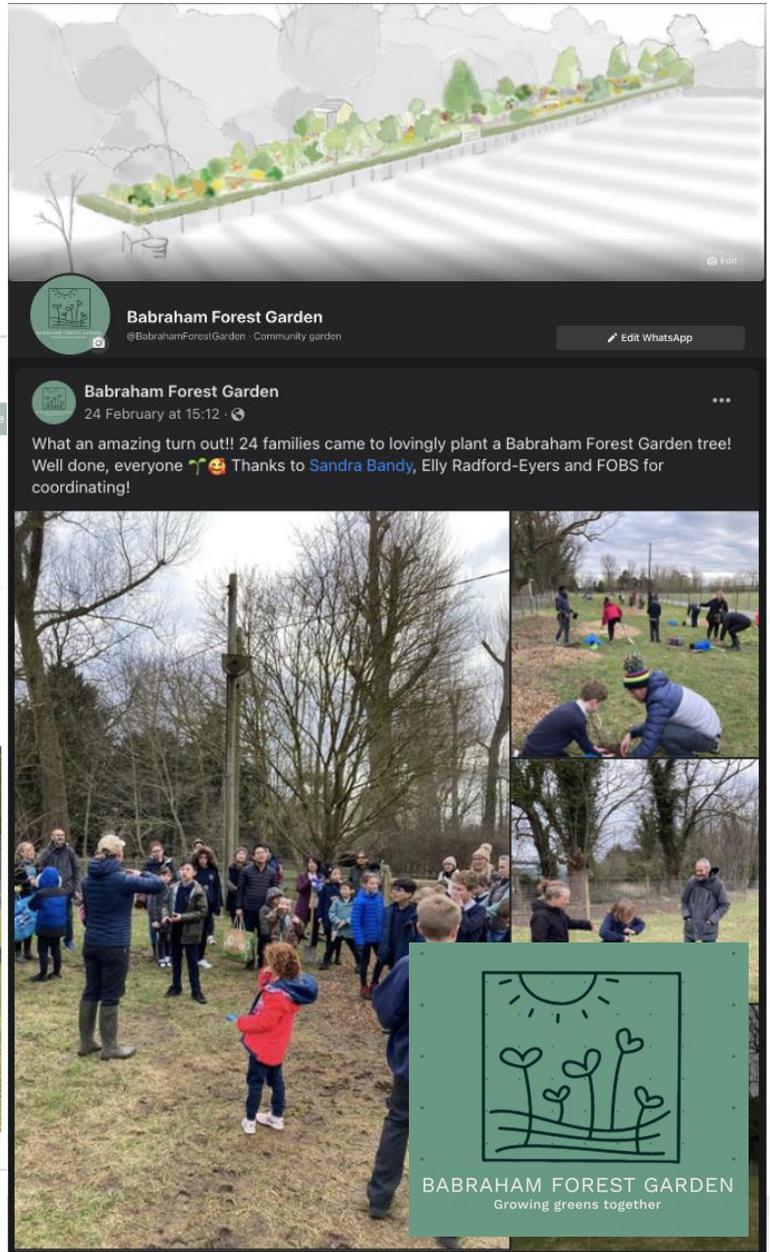
Babraham Forest Garden has been possible with support from:
zero carbon communities, Babraham Research Campus, Babraham Primary School, EcoSquad, and other local partners.

- **Dedicated social media**

A new Facebook page for the Babraham Forest Garden, complete with a newly designed logo, was set up to showcase all the volunteer planting activities and already has 57 followers! The community was also kept informed through posters on the Parish noticeboard and linked social media posts on the Parish Council and Babraham Village Community Facebook pages.

- **Press coverage**

Through the Babraham Research Campus marketing team, the Babraham Forest Garden was covered by the Cambridge Independent on Wednesday 2nd March.



Activities planned for the month ahead

1. **Rebuilding the School raised beds** - Work will start this week with help from a small group of parents.
2. **Communications** - Creation of a short (1-3 minutes) film to document the project's success.
3. **Reporting** - A final report to Zero Carbon Communities Fund (grant ends 31.03.2022).
4. **Contract renewal** - Renewing Parish Council Forest Garden contract for Year 2 work.

Budget

Necessary overspend (fencing) has been absorbed by contingency funds and underspend on most other budget lines. This month (March) will see strategic allocation of remaining budget to key activities (raised beds, education, project documentation and outreach) to reach end of Year 1 on or under budget for both Parish Council and Zero Carbon Fund.

---End---

Description	Funding source	Yr 1	Actuals	Projected spend to	Remaining
				end of Yr1	
			to end Feb	to end March	
Plants - Trees	Parish Council	2500	1745.52	0	754.48
Plants - Shrubs	Parish Council or other				
Plants - Ground cover	Parish Council or other				
Plants - Other forest layers (annuals, biennials and climbers)	Other				
Equipment for tree planting - Tree protection tubes; mulch matting; stakes	Zero Carbon	1200	818.96	23.5	357.54
Equipment for growing plants - Propagation (shelter; containers; compost; seeds) for school	Parish Council	1000	0	0	1000
Project Management - outreach & volunteer coord/school liason	Zero Carbon	2000	2000	0	0
Education, community engagement and scaling	Zero Carbon	2000	1000	1100	-100
Groundworks - landscaping (fencing); ground preparation; digger hire; planting support; plus extra Parish Council funding support brought forward for fencing (as agreed by PC Nov 2021)	Zero Carbon/Parish Council	4000	7266.09	0	-3266.09
Forest Garden Expertise (Forest Garden design consultant + online course)	Zero Carbon	1000	1107.88	0	-107.88
Volunteer working days expenses	Zero Carbon	500	16	235.61	248.39
Irrigation	Zero Carbon	500	0	0	500
contingency		735	0	0	735
	Totals	15,435.00	13,954.45	1,359.11	121.44
	Parish Council	5,500.00	5,378.57	-	121.43
	Zero Carbon	9,935.00	8,575.89	1,359.11	0.00
	Other funds to be sought	-			
					N.B. Remaining spend for groundworks assumes VAT costs reclaimed