

Report for Brightling and Dallington Parish Councils

Planting of Black Poplars in the Parishes, Spring 2020

Background

In late spring 2019 the two parishes of Brightling and Dallington were gifted 10 saplings of the now rare native tree species *Populus nigra ssp betulifolia* (Black Poplar) by a generous Brightling parishioner.

The species is dioecious, male and female flowers are on different plants, and is one of the rarest trees in Great Britain and Ireland with only about 7,000 trees known of which only some 600 have been confirmed as female.

From consultation with the two parish councils it was felt that planting these long-lived and special trees would enhance the natural environment of the parishes and be of benefit to future generations.

It was too late in the year to find permanent planting locations for these 10 saplings and so they were heeled-in (6 in Brightling and 4 in Dallington) to preserve them for the next planting season. By autumn 2019 one of the Dallington saplings had succumbed to the very dry conditions of that summer.

During the autumn of 2019 I became aware of a project at Wakehurst Place, a Kew Gardens outstation, to raise clones of the 38 remaining mature black poplar trees in Sussex (made up of just 5 genetic clones; 3 males and 2 females) and make them freely available for organisations and landowners to plant in suitable locations.

Planting-out, Spring 2020

In January Wakehurst Place kindly provided 18 saplings (representing all 5 genetic clones) labelled with information about the clone number and the location of the specific mature donor tree. Unfortunately, three of the plants had already lost their labels and so their genetic provenance is unknown.

Following appeals posted on the parish websites a total of 9 landowners across the two parishes came forward to offer planting locations. After visiting each site to assess its suitability I worked with the individual landowners and volunteers from both parishes (thanks to Andrew Wedmore and Daniel Lambert-Gorwyn from Brightling and Peter Robotham from Dallington for their assistance) to prepare the sites, plant and stake the 27 saplings, protect each one from rabbits and deer, and mulch to suppress weed and grass growth.

All the materials for planting and protection were sourced by me and I was reimbursed at cost for materials used.

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Black Poplar saplings are particularly sensitive to drought (the loss of one of the original saplings during the 2019 summer is testament to this) and after one of the wettest winters on record the weather changed in mid-Spring 2020 to dry and sunny. The landowners have been contacted to ask them to keep an eye on their trees and ensure they remain well-watered.

On a following page is a table with the full details of the plants and their locations for the parish records. An explanation of the fields in the table is given below.

Parish Tree Ref#	An identifier for each tree; first letter of the parish name followed by a sequential number
Plant Code	<p>A code used by Wakehurst Place and which I've adapted for all the Black Poplar saplings: -</p> <p>The first two digits are the place of origin and the following letter is the gender; 10 = Hastings (Male), 13 = Rushlake Green (Female), 18 = Ripe (Male), 31 = Robertsbridge (Female), 35 = Lower Horsebridge, Hailsham (Male), 36 = also Lower Horsebridge, Hailsham (Male), and the last two digits are the clone number (set by Wakehurst place)</p> <p>The 3 unidentified plants from Wakehurst Place with unknown provenance are coded WUa through WUb</p> <p>The 9 surviving plants donated in 2019 with unknown provenance are coded 2019Ua through 2019Ui</p>
Source Tree	Mature source tree number as shown in the Plant Code
Source Tree Location	Location of the source tree as determined from the Plant Code
M/F	Sapling gender
Clone #	Clone number as given in the Plant Code
Grid Ref.	The Grid Reference of the planted sapling's location
Planted Address	The name of the property where the sapling is planted
Planted in Parish of	Parish where planted
Planting Date	The date of planting the sapling
Notes	Additional useful information

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Parish Tree Ref#	Plant Code	Source Tree #	Source Tree Location	M/F	Clone #	Grid Ref.	Planted Address	Planted in Parish of	Planting Date	Notes
B1	31F27	31	Robertsbridge	F	27	TQ7047121477	Hunters Farm	Brightling	12/02/2020	
B2	31F27	31	Robertsbridge	F	27	TQ7094522941	Fern Hill	Brightling	21/02/2020	
B3	31F27	31	Robertsbridge	F	27	TQ7131523560	New House Farm	Brightling	16/02/2020	
B4	35M29	35	Lower Horsebridge, Hailsham	M	29	TQ7042621421	Hunters Farm	Brightling	12/02/2020	
B5	18M46	18	Ripe	M	46	TQ7131423578	New House Farm	Brightling	16/02/2020	
B6	WUa	-	Wakehurst unlabelled	-	-	TQ7043121459	Hunters Farm	Brightling	12/02/2020	This could be one of 1x13F28, 2x18M46, or 2x36M29
B7	WUb	-	Wakehurst unlabelled	-	-	TQ7092422918	Fern Hill	Brightling	21/02/2020	This could be one of 1x13F28, 2x18M46, or 2x36M29
B8	2019Ud	-	Donated 2019	-	-	TQ7040321443	Hunters Farm	Brightling	12/02/2020	
B9	2019Ue	-	Donated 2019	-	-	TQ6326521178	Greenwood	Brightling	22/02/2020	
B10	2019Uf	-	Donated 2019	-	-	TQ6328321197	Greenwood	Brightling	22/02/2020	
B11	2019Ug	-	Donated 2019	-	-	TQ7135323895	New House Farm	Brightling	20/02/2020	
D1	13F28	13	Rushlake Green	F	28	TQ6530718616	Stream Farm	Dallington	16/02/2020	
D2	13F28	13	Rushlake Green	F	28	TQ6586220184	Highlands Rose Farm	Dallington	14/03/2020	
D3	13F28	13	Rushlake Green	F	28	TQ6647518251	Herrings Farm	Dallington	26/02/2020	
D4	35M29	35	Lower Horsebridge, Hailsham	M	29	TQ6541719515	Barn Cottage	Dallington	18/02/2020	

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D5	31F27	31	Robertsbridge	F	27	TQ6534118592	Stream Farm	Dallington	19/02/2020	
D6	18M46	18	Ripe	M	46	TQ6541319517	Barn Cottage	Dallington	18/02/2020	
D7	10M24	10	Hastings	M	24	TQ6542119516	Barn Cottage	Dallington	18/02/2020	
D8	10M24	10	Hastings	M	24	TQ6539219517	Barn Cottage	Dallington	18/02/2020	
D9	10M24	10	Hastings	M	24	TQ6537219517	Barn Cottage	Dallington	18/02/2020	
D10	10M24	10	Hastings	M	24	TQ6539418510	Stream Farm	Dallington	16/02/2020	
D11	WUc	-	Wakehurst unlabelled	-	-	TQ6587620192	Highlands Rose Farm	Dallington	14/03/2020	This could be one of 1x13F28, 2x18M46, or 2x36M29
D12	2019Ua	-	Donated 2019	-	-	TQ6532318694	Stream Farm	Dallington	16/02/2020	
D13	2019Ub	-	Donated 2019	-	-	TQ6532218630	Stream Farm	Dallington	19/02/2020	
D14	2019Uc	-	Donated 2019	-	-	TQ6539618524	Stream Farm	Dallington	19/02/2020	
D15	2019Uh	-	Donated 2019	-	-	TQ6638919481	Wish House	Dallington	22/02/2020	
D16	2019Ui	-	Donated 2019	-	-	TQ6664418287	Herrings Farm	Dallington	26/02/2020	

End of report.

Doug Edworthy, 21.06.20