

## **Annual report on Friends of Tud Valley (FOTV) Conservation Volunteers**

As with all organisations, 2020 -21 has been a difficult one for Friends of Tud Valley Conservation Volunteer group with the pandemic lockdowns and further Covid restrictions curtailing the work sessions in East Hills Woods. However, because of our ongoing programme of bramble clearance over previous years, the displays of bluebells in the woods during April and May 2020 were stunning and brought a lot of pleasure to those walking the woods during the first Lockdown, helping to relieve the stresses and feelings of isolation that many were feeling. Many Costessey residents discovered East Hills Wood for the first time and have continued to visit the woods since. It is a positive result of the pandemic that members of the Costessey community have realised how fortunate they are to have beautiful woodland green spaces, such as East Hills, Greenhills, Bunkers Hill and Snakes Hills Woods available for their exercise and enjoyment, right on their doorstep, a valuable asset for their mental and physical wellbeing.

With our growing membership of FOTV Conservation Volunteers, we had an available workforce ready and willing to assist with the replanting of the woodland in Greenhills Wood once the land had been cleared of the felled Corsican Pine plantation and prepared for planting by CTC's hiring of a Forest Mulcher. During National Tree Week at the beginning of December 2020, work parties from the FOTV Conservation Volunteers worked socially distantly alongside other local residents in all weathers to plant over 1100 hardwood saplings, including oaks, sweet chestnut, beech, rowan, silver birch, hornbeam, hazel and small leafed lime. Then, after Christmas, during the lockdown, our volunteers laid biodegradable mulch mats during their permitted individual exercise. These mats will assist to suppress weed growth that would compete with the young trees in their early years as well as helping to retain moisture around the roots during the summer months.

Hopefully, the coming year will enable a full return to our conservation efforts, and the team will also be able to work with new volunteers from Queens Hills in Queens Hills Community Park, yet another wonderful green space within the Costessey Town boundaries.

We are a very sociable group and always welcome new volunteers who would like to add their efforts to our work to look after Costessey's green spaces. Please contact Pauline Williamson by email at [p m williamson@hotmail.com](mailto:p_m_williamson@hotmail.com), or by phone on 01603 742491.