

Disease resistant elms arrive in Yarmouth

Located on reclaimed land alongside the Yar Estuary, The Green in Yarmouth is a popular venue for a range of events including fun fairs, Old Gaffers and MayFest all of which contribute in no small way towards the vitality of the town.

Now, as part of an initiative spearheaded by Natural Enterprise and supported by the Yarmouth Harbour Commission the site is being deployed in the fight back against Dutch Elm Disease. Once a common feature of the local landscape nearly 80% of our elms have been killed by this fungal disease carried by bark beetles.



Volunteers at work (left). Disease resistant elms among the poplars (right)

However, a WWLP grant award has enabled more than 40 disease resistant elms to be planted on The Green to replace a line of poplars that are now in the final stages of their lifecycle. A magnificent turnout of volunteers on a remarkably bright day in early February helped make light work of preparing the site for planting. Once established it is hoped that the trees will, amongst other things, support populations of the endangered white-letter hairstreak butterfly for which elms are the sole source of food.

Improving access to Ashley Copse

Ashley Copse is a valuable wildlife corridor and recreational green space sandwiched between two residential areas in Brighstone.

Access to the site has historically been tricky, especially in the winter months. However, a WWLP grant has enabled Brighstone Parish Council to upgrade the footpath, making it easier for more people to enjoy the site.



Ashley Copse access before



Ashley Copse access after

A stitch in time for Yarmouth's historic town hall

Built in 1763 by Thomas Lord Holmes, Governor of the Isle of Wight, today Yarmouth Town Hall is listed at Grade II and sits at the heart of the historic harbour town's conservation area.

It is arguably Yarmouth's most significant civic building which continues to function as the hub for political life in the town. However, over the years the building has suffered from an ad hoc approach to its repair and maintenance, resulting in the deterioration of historic fabric such as brickwork and pointing.



Town Hall encased in scaffold (left). Applying the finishing touches (right).

A grant award from the WWLP has now enabled Yarmouth Town Trust, the building owners, to appoint local conservation specialists Henry Ingrams & Sons to undertake a programme of repair works, which when supported by an appropriate regime of maintenance will help ensure that the building serves the town for another 250 years.

Smoothing the way to Mill Copse

Another day another WWLP award for the IW Ramblers. On this occasion the grant is being invested in improving and extending the Western Yar Easy Access Trail to Mill Copse.

Owned and managed by Wight Nature Fund, Mill Copse is a magical ancient woodland covering an area of 5.7ha alongside the Estuary wetlands.



Temporary path closure as resurfacing works are completed by Yarmouth Mill

The site is much loved by visitors including many hundreds of schoolchildren each year, and is an important site for dormice and red squirrels. The works will enable a wider range of people to enjoy the site's qualities and include the provision of ramped access to the bird hide in the Copse from which visitors can observe wading birds on the adjacent marshland.