

The Playscape Copse Proposal – July 2016

The Copse was identified in the draft master plan as a place for greater interaction with nature for all sections of the community.



“The wild landscape takes its inspiration from the increased sense of adventure Tom gets as he continues to explore new areas and depths of the garden. He begins to climb enormous trees, push his way through overgrown hedges and scale towering walls. **This area will challenge its user to engage up close with nature, climb natural play structures and get users of the park to explore the beautiful copse area at the back of the park.**”

Erect Architecture



The Vision

Great Shelford Playscape with The Shelford & Stapleford Youth Initiative would like to transform the overgrown copse on the village rec into a natural play space with woodland trail, to encourage more outside play whilst increasing biodiversity, and interest for walkers too. A fantastic opportunity for the young people of the SSSI to make a real difference for their community and learn new skills, the project could run from late Summer 2016 to Spring 2017.

Proposed Design

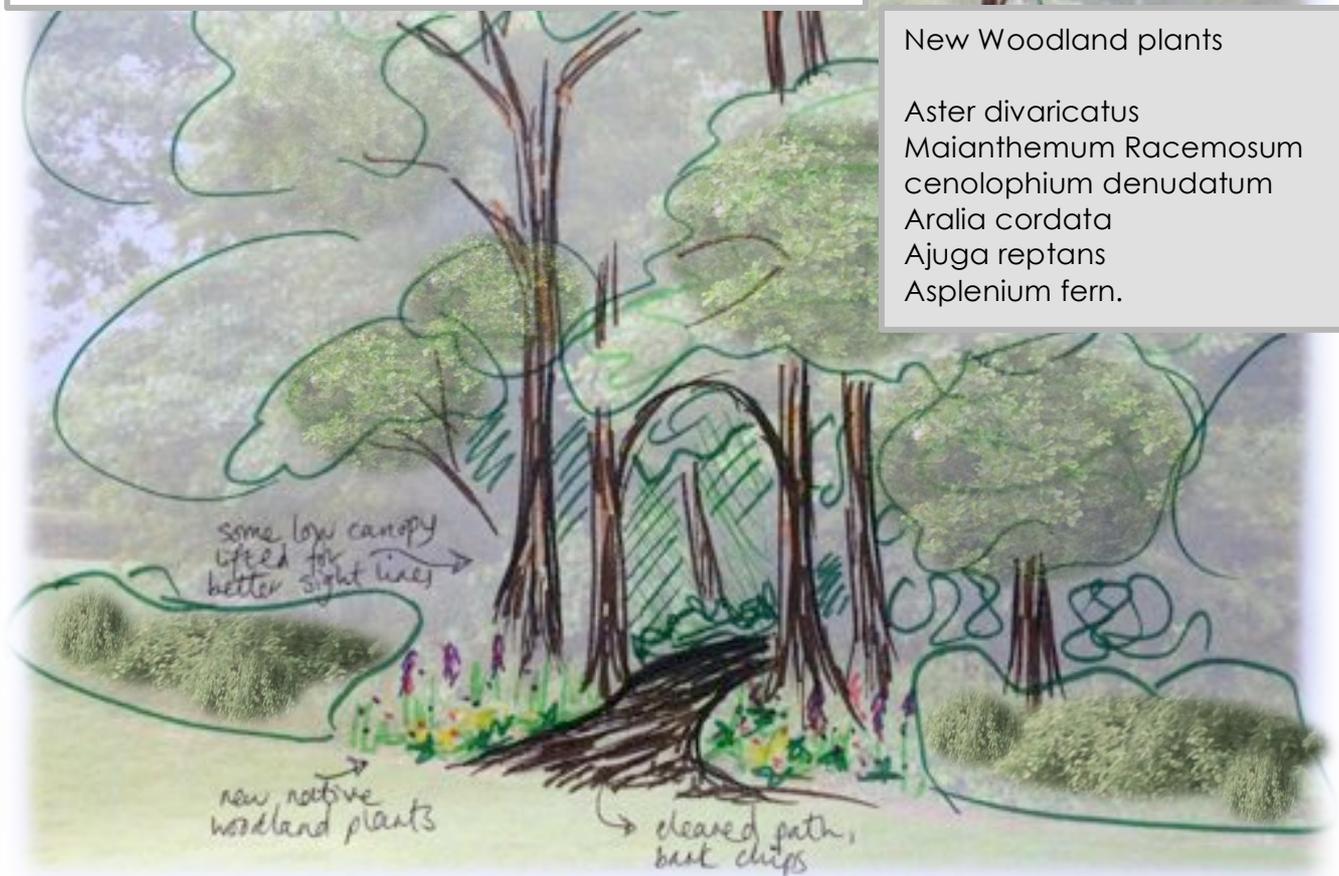
Currently impenetrable because of nettles, we would clear some paths into the copse opening up areas to site reclaimed logs for playing and sitting on, create a natural den-like structure with a willow artist, and plant a wider selection of woodland plants. All this will encourage play and relaxation in the heart of the copse, for both the community and wildlife!

The exact location of the paths would need to be established on site because we don't have a complete survey of the area, but we would look to create entrances into the copse on the river side and to the east and west (see white paths on plan). This would be a very sympathetic approach as it would entice people who have come down to the river to explore the copse, but would not change the view of the copse from the top of the rec.

Existing view of copse, looking East (river to the right)



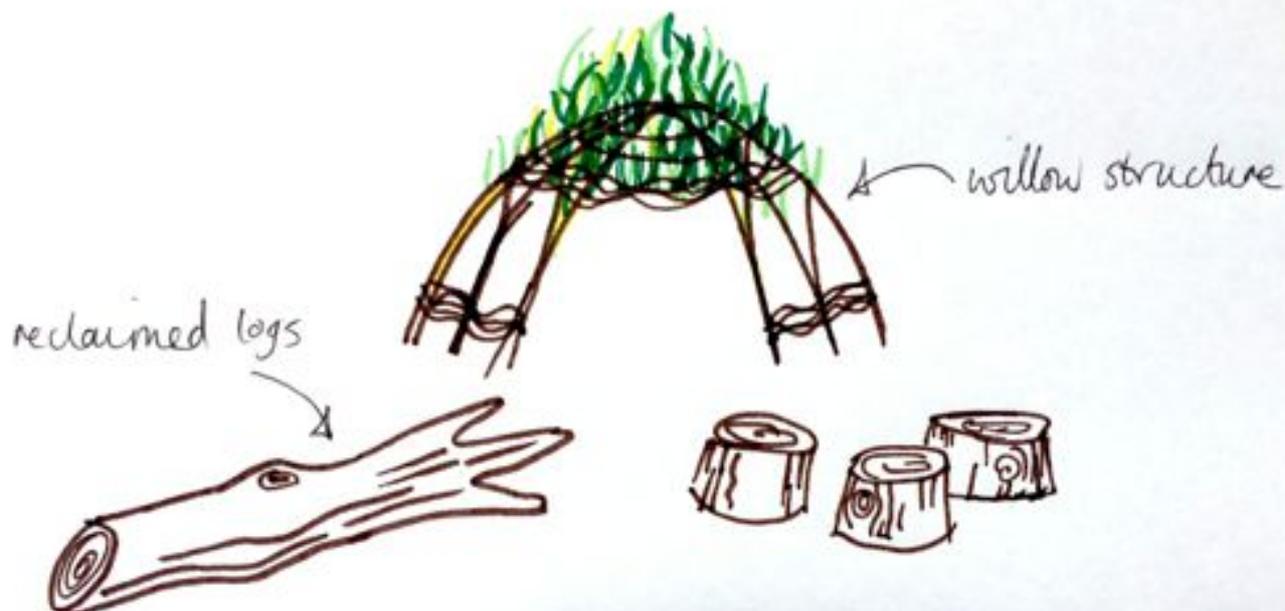
Impression of a proposed entrance into copse



New Woodland plants

Aster divaricatus
Maianthemum Racemosum
cenolophium denudatum
Aralia cordata
Ajuga reptans
Asplenium fern.

Examples of plants & natural elements to introduce to the copse



Aster divaricatus



Ajuga reptans



Maianthemum Racemosum



cenolophium denudatum

Ball Park costs

Having a team of volunteers to clear, plant and build is a tremendous cost saving. The SSYI are also willing to fund some of this project as they value highly the opportunities this project offers their young people. The SSYI and GSP will also apply for grants, run fundraising events and consider releasing some of funds raised for Playscape so far.

Daniel Lee Garden Design, Consultation and Labour: 10 Days @ £200/day = £2000

Planting & materials (such as logs & bark chipping): £3,000

Equipment: £1090 (n.b. this could be greatly reduced if we can borrow forks, barrows etc!)

Willow Workshop: £1000

Proposed Action Plan for The Copse By Daniel Lee

Summer – Winter 2016	Task 1	Remove any Himalayan Balsam seedlings/plants from the copse area. Waste to be removed from site.
	Task 2	Clear entrance and pathways into the copse: strim and clear away nettles from new paths, dig out nettle & weed root, rake the soil level
	Task 3	Prune off the lower branches of the Alder trees to open up the sightlines through into the copse.
	Task 4	Select 2 trees that will form an entrance into the copse. Using the tree trunks as “pillars” create an archway using branches already pruned from the copse and plant honeysuckle (one on each tree) to create a floral arch into the copse.
	Task 5	Remove Ivy from the stems of the Alder trees
	Task 6	Redefine the perimeter of the copse. Replacing the existing “nettles meet cut grass” scenario, we can create something much more beneficial for wildlife and pleasing to the eye by planting native shrubs around the boundary such as: hazel, viburnum, crab apple, coppiced Sorbus torminalis, and taxus baccata. In addition or as an alternative we could erect chestnut pale fencing and plant the native clematis to scramble over it.
	Task 7	Clearly define and mark out “zones” within copse itself that we will keep “wild” with nettles, areas where we can “tame” the nettles and introduce tough ornamental species, and areas to be cleared for pathways, seating and play.
Spring 2017	Task 8	Day Trip to visit local wood(s) to find further inspiration for the project.
	Task 9	Visit local nursery to select species relevant for the project.
	Task 10	Visit local sites to obtain recycled materials to be used within the copse. E.g. logs to define pathways, create seating and informal play elements
	Task 11	Specifics teams to work on the follow: team 1- pathways team 2- planting team team 3- construction of willow structure
Aim of completion - May 2017		

- The new shrubs will be a good size (5-10l pots) to give some instant structure to the cleared areas. They will be planted in blocks of 3/5 for even greater impact.
- All the plants will be sourced from local nurseries.
- The lower growing plants will be planted at a high density, 5 plants per m2.
- In total we plan to introduce 400-700 new plants to the area.