

John Leigh-Pemberton is based outside Doddington and makes chestnut fencing that is sold throughout the world. He employs 50 people and gets through about 50-80 acres of chestnut coppice a year. He bought the western portion of Kings Wood about 6 months to a year ago for commercial reasons. He will be able to harvest 5-10 acres every year on 13-year rotation basis.

He has a 20-year management plan with the Forestry Commission and will continue to manage the woods as they have been managed in the past. Some replanting may be needed, and he is currently negotiating with the Forestry Commission re this.

In the woods there are very few young oak trees which is a long-term problem. His plan is to look at the Oaks as blocks of Chestnuts are being coppiced and if they are very damaged, cut them down and plant new ones at the same spot in the woods.

Between Christmas and New Year, he spent time in the woods, met many people and realised how many people use and enjoy the woods. The woods are public place and 99% of those using the woods for recreation are careful and respectful. He is happy to continue with the arrangement that people can walk in the woods as they wish. He will try and keep the tracks open and clear of overhanging branches.

People can help with managing the woods and looking after them:

There is a permanent risk of fly tipping. If people see any fly tipping please could they report it to Pam Bower, the Parish Clerk who will let Mr Leigh-Pemberton know

Motorbikes in the woods – this is a difficult problem to address which can't be resolved by being aggressive. It is also an offence. The first step is to get the PCSO engaged

The Crater holes have been there a long time and might be where sand or earth has been dug out.

Q & A

1. When coppicing takes place, what route do the tractors take in and out of the woods?
Would it be better to go via Chegworth Road rather than Broomfield Road?

Answer: Mr Leigh-Pemberton agreed this was a very good idea that he would take it on board.

2. How do you feel about horses being ridden in the woods?

Answer: Mr Leigh-Pemberton is happy for this to happen.

3. Could a sign be put up re motorbikes using the woods?

Answer: A conversation needs to be had with the PCSO first.

4. Lots of mature trees have already been cut down. Is it possible to leave them standing as long as possible so there are no bare patches?

Answer: The Forestry Commission wants them cut down and new ones planted straight away at the same spot as Oak trees are difficult to grow in Chestnut woods

5. Did you manage to ascertain what the blue powder is in the woods?

Answer: Mr Leigh-Pemberton advised he thought it probably was paint laid out to mark a walking path and that it would not be harmful to dogs.

6. What about the deep grooves left by tractors in the woods?

Answer: The Autumn was very wet which does not help the tractors. When it dries up Mr Leigh-Pemberton advised that he intends to get some stone and make the grooves up.

7. What are the orange circles on certain trees?

Answer: These trees marked in orange are to be considered in a tree safety survey.