

Friends of Batchwood received a grant of £1803 from the Woodland Trust in mid September 2003.

The grant was spent on the purchase of a chainsaw, a strimmer, and a full set of protective clothing for use with the chainsaw.

We also booked and completed a 5-day NTPC approved chainsaw training course with an assessment module for Miles Soppet. This consisted of the CS30 chainsaw maintenance and CS31 basic felling of small trees units.

We took delivery of the equipment on the 17th October and found it very frustrating that the chainsaw had to be left unused until Miles had completed the course.

Our other chainsaw qualified member had an operation on his elbow and had been forbidden any use of the chainsaw



The Strimmer was used to very good effect, we firstly cleared a large area of long grass where we had planted native daffodil bulbs in the previous season, and for this we used the nylon line cutter. The next task was to clear a planting area, which was covered with very rampant brambles with the steel cutting disk. The technique to do this took a little time to learn but with one person cutting the brambles and two more volunteers clearing them it worked really well. In the past we just have not been able to clear brambles effectively, we have planted in the middle of them by forcing a way through and then digging planting holes.

Miles completed the chainsaw course at the end of November and was successfully assessed on the 13th December. He found the course physically much harder than he had expected but felt it was very worthwhile.

We have just started to use the chainsaw in the wood and have found that it has enabled us to complete work in a couple of hours that would have taken very much longer using hand tools.

The attached pictures show Miles dealing with some very old elder and weed sycamore in order to plant self sown ash and holly from another part of the wood.



It also has enabled us to contemplate making a decent complete job where the council contractors have felled trees and just left the trunks where they fell. We have made a very minor start on this but when the planting season is finished we hope to do more.

Friends of Batchwood are delighted with the equipment and training that the grant has enabled us to buy.

With our relatively small membership and the ever increasing cost of public liability insurance we could not have contemplated funding the training or the equipment without the help of the grant.