**Tree Warden Report. September 2020**

**We are lucky enough to have a great number of beautiful ok oak trees (both young and old) in or near the village. The best and most prominent for Rendham arguably being the one on the Green, in the centre of the village, used by the Mummers.  In previous posts, I have highlighted the threats to them such as acute oak decline and oak die back. However, given all the bad news floating around at the moment a post of renewal and rebirth is called for. As Autumn breaks into our landscape and the leaves begin to tint and fade in colour and fall to the ground in a flurry of golds and browns, you will notice that this year appears to be a Mast Year for Oak and Beech.  A Mast Years is one when trees produce a bumper crop of fruit and seed.  For example: Acorns on Oak Trees and Seeds on Beech Trees. Trees, particularly oak and beech produce seeds in amounts that massively fluctuate year on year, - some years no fruit, some years masses.  There is a theory that trees hold back their seed production volumes to keep in check the population of the mammals and birds that guzzle on them year to year(frugivores). In a Mast Year the bumper fruit /seed crop allows the guzzlers to eat their fill and leave some uneaten to germinate to grow into saplings (baby trees).  Producing fruit costs the tree a great deal of energy, as you would think, so it’s important the end result produces saplings. Over the following years before the next Mast Year a dearth of fruit keeps the guzzlers population in check as there is not enough food. Surprisingly, trees seem to synchronise Mast Years across large areas: maybe due to the weather- a combination of rainfall, temperature - it’s still a mystery.  Other theories are that a Mast Year, portents a harsh winter.**

**The tinting and falling of leaves this year did start early perhaps due to little rainfall and high winds so I worry about the quality of the fruit and it’s ability to germinate. Time will tell. If you are thinking of helping by planting an acorn whilst on your walk please bear in mind Acorns need pushing into the ground about 3 cm in quick order when they are ripe. Also remember Right Tree Right Place.**

**We should also bear in mind when walking in woodland that increased fruit guzzlers, such as mice, may lead to increased incidence of Lyme Disease and Tick infestations next spring because in Mast Years abundance allows these populations to thrive.**