

1. INTRODUCTION

This report is an update on Tree Warden activities in the last year. A more comprehensive initial report was issued to the Parish Council in July 2017.

2. TREE REGISTER DEVELOPMENT

An initial Tree register is now complete, which identifies over 60 areas of interest within the Parish. These vary from large copses to green spaces with just a few trees. The majority of these areas are publicly owned, the main exceptions being those North of the A264, and include some surviving Ancient Woodland.

The current Tree Register is quite high level and does not include any historical context or detailed listing of individual trees.

3. TREES ON NHPC PARISH LAND

Some work has been done to further develop a log of all trees on Parish land to supplement the high-level Tree Register. Notes from initial visits to NHPC areas have been made for:

- Earles Meadow
- Birches Road Play Area
- Amberley Close Play Area and Allotments
- North Heath Hall and surrounds
- Tythe Barn Play Area.
- Roffey Corner

Considerable further work is needed, but the longer term aim is to support the development of a schedule of independent inspections of trees on a frequency commensurate with areas of risk, as well as deciding whether further planting is appropriate.

4. THREATS TO TREES

4.1 PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR TREES PROTECTED BY TPO'S

We have continued to review and comment on Planning applications relating to trees. This process generally works well although sometimes we only get a short notice period prior to the upcoming NHPC Planning meeting.

There has been a notable increase in applications to fell trees, with 8 received since August 2017. While some of these are reasonable as the trees are diseased, the applications are often the result of construction taking place too close to the tree. Applications are often poorly completed, even by Tree Surgeons, with supporting evidence for felling insufficient and alternative actions not explained. In those cases where we have objected HDC usually appears to agree, but a lot of cases are still pending.

4.2 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Holbrook club (Planning application DC/14/1091) – Work is under way on this development. It passes through a well-established hedgerow at the top of the field and should also see considerable new tree planting (including the western ‘landscape buffer’) as illustrated in the plans. We will seek to monitor this as building progresses.

‘North of Horsham’ development (Planning application DC/16/1677)

We attended the Parish Liaison meeting on May 23rd 2018. At this meeting we noted the detailed tree survey that Liberty had commissioned, and pointed out the risks of building too close to established trees and overplanting of new copses.

A reminder of the Liberty statement:

North of Horsham contains a number of wildlife habitats and protected species such as ancient woodland, wood-pasture, trees, hedgerows, watercourses, ponds, bats, great crested newts, birds, reptiles and beetles, which we will aim to retain and manage. We will maintain the ancient woodland, keeping an appropriate buffer between this and new buildings. By building homes and amenities around the woodland, we aim to protect it while managing it for more people to enjoy.

We will also be creating new wildlife habitats, such as ponds, meadows, grasslands and areas of tree, shrub and hedgerow planting. This will enhance the landscape that is already there, as well as enhancing biodiversity and providing links to the ecology of the wider area.

4.3 ASH DIEBACK DISEASE

Ash dieback (Chalara) is a fungal disease which spread to the UK in around 2012. Symptoms include blackened leaves and dieback of shoots, twigs and branches.

We have noted some possible cases along the Riverside Walk in Holbrook and will monitor two trees, using a template supplied by the Tree Council. It isn’t clear at this stage whether Ash dieback is present.

5. TREE COUNCIL AND CHARTER

The Woodland Trust launched a Charter for Trees, Woods and People in November 2017. This includes 10 Principles which underpin the Charter. It is also promoting signature of the Charter.

<https://treecharter.uk/>

NHPC has become a local Council Charter Branch and this may provide some support and limited funding.

A Wild Cherry tree provided by the Tree Council was planted near North Heath Hall, but unfortunately did not survive the dry weather. We will seek to replace this in the Autumn.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The continuing actions to help maintain and improve the trees in the Parish include:

1. Develop the Tree Register further to show more detail and historical context
2. Complete a detailed survey of NHPC Trees and agree a future inspection schedule. This may require Professional input.
3. Continue to monitor Planning applications for work on trees with TPO's.
4. Work with the Liaison Committee to monitor the Tree related implications of the North of Horsham Development.
5. Be vigilant for other threats to trees such as disease, vandalism and pollution.
6. Monitor opportunities arising from becoming a Tree Charter Branch.
7. Consider Tree Planting.
8. Increase knowledge from additional training. This has so far been limited to the Handbook, and there has been no practical training courses offered by WSCC, or contact with other experienced Tree Wardens.

This is quite a wide range of actions and progress will take a while. Lin and I have limited time available and there would certainly be room for another Tree Warden should anyone come forward.

NHPC Tree Wardens – Mike Smith, Lin Whiting