

## Wingham Parish Tree Warden Annual Report

April 2025

Trees in the village are located on public and private land; many lie within the conservation area around the village centre and are subject to protections. Work on trees of a certain size specification within this zone requires consultation with Dover District Council. The many species present contribute significantly to maintaining local biodiversity, so work carried out must respect provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Trees in public areas are owned and maintained either by Kent County Council, Dover District Council or Wingham Parish. Most of the trees along the high street and on verges are owned and maintained by Kent County Council, who periodically remove branches and pollard trees considered a potential public safety hazard. Each year, the Parish Council employs a specialist to undertake an annual health and safety check to 'recommended standards' on trees that it owns. This is mainly a visual inspection, looking for signs of damage, distress, disease or developing hollows that might require action. The inspection covers trees at the recreation ground, Wingham Green, the burial ground, Elgars Field, and the High Street

The latest inspection on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2024 was carried out by Invicta Arboriculture. Five trees at the recreation ground exhibited observable problems, two of which required action. Firstly, in early autumn, the canopy of a large walnut tree in the play area at the recreation ground was pruned back. Secondly, the large horse chestnut at the entrance to the recreation ground was reduced in height by two meters during this winter. The three remaining trees exhibit some cankering and will be monitored in future surveys. The trees at the burial ground, the High Street and Wingham Green displayed good form and vitality with no significant observable structural defects. One small-diameter rowan tree was observed to be in poor health at Elgars Field. The next inspection is scheduled for 25<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

Walk-arounds and minor works are conducted by the Parish Council periodically. For example, some of the leaning hornbeam saplings at the recreation ground were secured with stakes. Hedges were pruned at Elgars Field. Plastic protectors were placed around the bases of some saplings to protect against damage from grass strimming. It is recommended not to trim directly up to the tree base to avoid damage to the bark and resultant infection. The "bleeding canker" (*Pseudomonas syringae* pv. *Aesculin*) observed on some horse chestnut trees in the village is a concern. Diseases are becoming more common with the accelerating effects of climate change and the introduction of invasive species through imported plants and trees. Please contact me or the Clerk if you observe new problems with village trees.

The parish council would like to take advantage of small tree planting schemes should opportunities for sites arise from local landowners. This will help improve aspects of the local environment and contribute towards reducing atmospheric carbon dioxide levels, responsible for global warming and climate change.

Martin Smith (Tree Warden)

