

Wingham Parish Tree Warden Annual Report

April 2026

Trees in the village are located on public and private land. Inside the village Conservation Zone all trees of a certain size are protected and require local authority permission for work on them. Trees in public areas are owned and maintained either by Kent County Council (KCC), Dover District Council (DDC) or Wingham Parish Council (WPC).

WPC employs a qualified expert to carry out yearly reviews of the trees that it is responsible for; at the recreation ground, Wingham Green, Elgar's Field, Preston Hill, the High Street and the burial ground. In July 2025 this was conducted by Invicta Arboriculture. The assessment criteria include: form, vitality, structural and physiological defects. Problems and potential hazards such as die-back are noted, and a risk analysis is undertaken with time-dependent work recommendations. This review and maintenance process keeps most trees within broadly acceptable risks. The next yearly review is planned for 24th July 2026. Intermittent walk-arounds and maintenance operations are conducted by the Tree Warden and Clerk. WPC agreed to update the existing tree inventory for Parish Council-owned trees.

Trees at the recreation ground present a variety of challenges. A row of Lawson cypress trees is a feature at the far end, with several leaning due to wind damage. One was removed in March this year by Leaf Tree Services because it presented a risk of falling onto the Goodnestone Road. Horse chestnuts and Norway Maples are being monitored due to the presence of canker. Protectors were replaced around the bases of young cherry and hornbeams to limit lawn mower damage, and leaning trees were provided with sturdy chestnut stakes. Some replanting may be required to fill gaps appearing in the tree lines on the south and west sides of the recreation ground. Many village trees suffered stress from the severe drought during Summer 2025, the sunniest and warmest year on record for England, with the driest spring since 1893.

WPC entered the Ulmus x "Wingham" (Wingham Elm) planted in 2022 at Elgar's Field into the Kent Friends of the Tree's competition 2025, on a theme "Tree with a Story". Being a disease-resistant variety co-developed by a former resident of Wingham it was presented as "a source of hope for the future". Although it did not win, it was noted as an important contender by the organisers in their competition report.

The Parish Council is always looking out for opportunities and sites for small tree-planting schemes if local landowners are interested. 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)

