

Tree Warden Annual Report

April 2021

Village trees have been monitored on a rolling basis across the year, with all visited at least once over the period of November-December 2020 in preparation for my recent report submitted January 2021 (please see report for details). The tree inventory is now fully up-to-date, including ID codes and locations for all new trees planted on the Recreation Ground in March 2020.

Late February, I met outdoors with the Church Warden to discuss issues relating to trees at the Burial Ground, during which meeting we also discussed trees in St Mary's churchyard. The Church Warden raised an issue of ongoing concern with the state of Yew trees lining the main path up to the church, which are very much in need of rewiring and trimming. The issue has been flagged up several times before in Tree Warden Reports by myself and my predecessor, but as the trees are the responsibility of DDC, not the Parish, it is unclear how to proceed given lack of funds. The matter may be worth raising with DDC.

As noted in my recent communication of 3/3/21 to WPC, in late February I also accompanied arboriculturist David Sephton on his professional tree inspection of those trees in the village for which WPC is responsible (primarily those at the Recreation Ground and Elgar's Field, but also a few isolated trees at other locations). As I noted in that communication, he was generous with his time and knowledge of trees, and talked me through his assessment of all trees we looked at. He has since submitted his report, which the parish council considered at their last meeting, and as such outcomes and actions are already known. Whilst generally very happy with the state and vitality of the majority of village trees – including all Ashes, which is very good news – there were a couple of trees along the western boundary of the Recreation Ground he advised felling, given significant splitting of major branches and an inability of the trees concerned to heal the fissures naturally (as other trees have done). One of these is a fairly large Acer with clear structural damage. I understand the council has decided to have the tree felled, as advised, in the interests of safety and as already suggested it may be useful to place a temporary sign at the location explaining why this action has been necessary. The tree will of course be replaced.

Other issues raised in the annual inspection and/or my recent report include removal of stakes from trees at Elgar's Field - also pruning of dead wood on a small Oak, which has already been addressed – and maintenance of newly-planted saplings on the Recreation Ground. The latter includes some grass removal around the base of the trees and mulching to improve water retention/availability of the soil, also replacement of 5 or 6 whips which failed to survive the hot weather last summer. The Parish Clerk, myself, and another volunteer will be attending to this over the coming weeks. That said, it's wonderful to see the majority of whips and the three new Silver Birches now bursting into leaf!

Chris Pike
Tree Warden
14.04.20