
Tree Health & Safety Report 2020

Hermitage Parish Council

Hermitage Village Hall
Pinewood Crescent
Hermitage
RG18 9TD

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Produced for: Hermitage Parish Council

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Document:

This resurvey and report was commissioned to do the following:

- To assess the health and safety of all trees within the areas of **Furze Hill Wildlife Heritage Site**
- To recommend remedial works and to advise on any other concerns regarding the health and safety of the trees.

1.2 Scope of the Report and Survey

The scope of this Tree Safety Report is to offer guidance on the management of trees that have the potential to impact students, members of the public, neighbouring properties and buildings. In doing so it provides the landowner with a defensible risk management system that shows:

- A clear audit trail.
- A tree risk assessment.
- A clear management system to detail what action should be taken to reduce the risk and/or remove the hazard.

The general principles of the tree risk survey have been defined by the National Tree Safety Guidelines document 'Common Sense Risk Management for Trees' this publication and others regarding landowners' responsibilities is available to download from the Forestry Commission website. [Please click the link](#)

1.3 Mapping

A sketch map will be included which details the location of all the trees and groups as identified in the survey

Concise Summary

1.4 The full appraisal of the tree safety inspection is found in the Tree and Group data in **Appendix 1**.

Birds, Bats and Habitats

1.5 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (amended by the Countryside and Right of Way Act 2000) provides statutory protection to birds and other protected species that may inhabit trees.

It is essential to check for nesting birds, bat roosts, badgers and hibernating animals such as hedgehogs under trees before pruning or removing trees as negligent disturbance is an offence under the EC Habitat Directive 1992 and CROW Act 2000.

In general, autumn tree work, in September, October and November is least disruptive to bats and birds.

Survey Details

- 1.6
- The survey took place during the month of November 2020
 - The survey was conducted by David Cook Level 3 diploma in arboriculture, AA technician and experienced Arboriculturalist Consultant.

- Inspection was made at ground level using Visual Tree Assessment methods. Visual Tree Assessment techniques (VTA¹) are generally non-invasive (unless open cavities are present which can be probed from ground level).
- All trees within the boundaries have been inspected for tree health and safety. A series of recommendations has been proposed, and formulated into a data table.
- Weather Conditions on the of 20th November 2020: Wet underfoot with light rain

1. DoE publication *“The Body Language of trees a handbook of failure analysis”* by Claus Mattheck and Helge Breloer

1.7 Marking Trees and Mapping

The positions of the trees have been mapped accurately using GPS and aerial mapping which will make identification easier. The trees have not been tagged as they were too small to do so.

1.8 Validity

Plants are biological organisms and change with time. This assessment remains valid for 24 months from the date of inspection, or until a major storm is experienced, after which time a re- inspection is recommended.

The contents are intended for the sole use of the clients only. No liability is accepted for their use by any other parties.

2.0 Site Description

2.1 Land Use

The land at the wildlife site is open to the public via a number of footpaths which run along the boundary and inside the site. There is a village hall situated in the centre of the site. This area offers a great space for public use and of which means there can be a high footfall in the area and on the footpaths

2.2 Treescape

The trees on the site are typical native woodland species with mainly Oak, Ash and Silver birch present. The vast area in the middle of the site is a natural woodland which is not farmed or worked to produce timber. There are however as is common now signs of Ash die back in a number of the ash trees within the woodland.

3.0 Status of the Trees

The trees on the site are all predominately in good health however as mentioned above there is the on set of Ash die back so in the future it may be advised to start a replanting programme and the possibility of thinning the woodland over time to see whether there are any resistant trees within the woodland

3.1 Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Area Orders **are** in force on this site. As a precaution it would be prudent to enquire before any work begins, except on dangerous or dead trees, to the Local Planning Authority which is Swindon Council. All trees in the school will fall into this category. No exceptions.

4.0 Tree Descriptions and General Recommendations

4.1 Full details of all individual trees surveyed are recorded in the tables in **Appendix 1**. A full explanation of the tables can be found at **Appendix 3**. Please refer also to the Tree Position Plan at **Appendix 2** for tree locations.

5.0 Discussions & Recommended Works on Hazardous Trees and other Works

5.1 **The Risks:** The trees have been surveyed with practicality and common sense in mind. This is a high target area only at certain times of the day and year. Within the survey the hazards have been identified, the associated risks have been evaluated and work recommendations provided to control the risk. For instance, a “Fell” recommendation has been put onto damaged, dead, dangerous or diseased trees that will impact onto the buildings, path or roads if they fall. If they are dead or in decline and leaning away from the target or are small and the associated risk is very minor, then a no or low recommendation has been given. Deadwood and standing deadwood is an integral part of the treescape ecology and can be incorporated into a safe environment.

5.2 Where a full detailed inspection of trees was inhibited by restricted access or by the presence of ivy, epicormic shoots and understory vegetation,
5.3 as detailed in **Appendix 1**, a concise inspection was carried out and a judgement made on what could be seen.

5.4 On undertaking the recommended works, the arborist/tree surgeon must without delay report any defects that become apparent while climbing or working on the tree/s in question. Those defects must be reported immediately to the relevant manager or supervisor to enable the appropriate remedial action.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Tree & Tree Group Data and Recommendations for Hermitage Parish 2020

T No	Species	Height (M)	Details	Works	Priority	Client notes
	Hermitage Parish Council					<p>Key Priority</p> <p>1 = Works should be completed within 6 months</p> <p>2 = Works should be completed within 12 months</p> <p>3 = Works should be completed when budget allows</p> <p>M = Meters</p>
1	<i>Oak</i>	9	Good condition, suppressed over path with deadwood	Remove deadwood over 25mm from within crown	1	
2	<i>Oak</i>	17	Good Condition, deadwood within falling distance of the footpath	Remove deadwood over 25mm from within crown	2	
3	<i>Oak</i>	16	Good Condition, deadwood within falling distance of the footpath	Remove deadwood over 25mm from within crown	1	
4	<i>Oak</i>	14	Good condition, with some minor deadwood over the footpath	Remove deadwood over 25mm from within crown	1	
5	<i>Oak</i>	19	Good condition, multistemmed at base with large deadwood over the footpath	Remove deadwood over 25mm from within crown	1	
6	<i>Silver Birch</i>	18	Good Condition, multistemmed from base with minor deadwood present and one hanging branch	Remove hanging branch over path and deadwood	1	
7	<i>Ash</i>	12	Fair condition, multistemmed from base but heavily suppressed. Minor deadwood at the end of the limb	Remove deadwood over 25mm from within crown	2	
8	<i>Cherry</i>	17	Good condition, with minor deadwood over path	Remove deadwood over 25mm from within crown	1	
9	<i>Oak</i>	16	Good condition, minor deadwood over path	Remove deadwood over 25mm from within crown	2	
10	<i>Ash</i>	15	Dead, leaning into the field however one limb could land on the path	Fell to ground level	1	

11	<i>Silver Birch</i>	12	Dead, Inside the exclusion fence and slightly bias towards the fence	Fell to ground level	1
12	<i>Oak</i>	17	Good condition, deadwood over hanging the boundary fence with potential to break fence and land on path	Remove deadwood over 25mm from within crown	1
13	<i>Oak</i>	15	Fair condition, suppressed over path with dead overhanging fence and path	Remove deadwood over 25mm from within crown	1
14	<i>Willow</i>	9	Fair condition, multistemmed from base and heavily leaning on the fence.	Prune back from fence by 3m to prevent it from falling on the fence again	1
15	<i>Willow</i>	15	Fair condition, multistemmed at the base. One stem is covered in ivy and has previously been cut back.	Remove ivy clad stem back to source and prune back remaining canopy to the boundary line	2
16	<i>Willow</i>	7	Fair condition, tree has failed in recent winds and the tree is no leaning over the gardens	Fell to ground level	2
17	<i>Willow</i>	8	Fair condition, stem has failed previously but is growing from ground level. Heavily leaning over the gardens	Reduce back to source to prevent it growing back towards the gardens	2
18	<i>Willow</i>	10	Fair condition, growing towards the houses and gardens will cause a problem in the future	Reduce back to boundary line to prevent any damage to the property	2
19	<i>Silver Birch</i>	16	Fair condition, Tree is bias towards the properties. Decay pocket in the back of the stem suggests compromised roots and weak stem	Fell to ground level	1
G1	<i>Silver Birch</i>	10	Dead, group of standing dead trees	Fell to ground level	2

20	<i>Willow</i>	14	Good condition, multistemmed at base but has grown towards the properties.	Prune back to boundary line	2	
21	<i>Silver Birch</i>	7	Dead pole, could fall onto the path	Fell to ground level	1	
22	<i>Ash</i>	20	Good condition, deadwood in lower canopy over the path	Remove deadwood over 25mm from within crown	1	
G2	<i>Silver Birch</i>	15	Dead, group of dead trees some within falling distance of the road and footpath	Fell to ground level	1	

Appendix 2: Tree Positions: Hermitage Parish 2020



Appendix 3: Key to Tree Data

Number:

Trees are recorded as **T1, T2** etc. Groups as **G1** etc. **W1, W2** Woodland area.

Species:

The English name of the tree species.

Height:

In metres.

Age:

The tree was ascribed to one of six age classes as follows:

Young	= the first third of the estimated life expectancy
Semi-Mature	= the second third of the estimated life expectancy
Early Mature	= the stage between second and last third of life expectancy
Mature	= the last third of the estimated life expectancy
Over-Mature	= Over Mature. In slow decline
Veteran	= Veteran (or near veteran status) - "Veteran" trees have no precise definition, but are trees considered to be of biological, aesthetic or wildlife interest, because of their age or trees in the ancient stage of their lives or trees that are old relative to others of the same species. Special measures, such as increasing the tree protective zone distances and selective surgery could significantly increase their useful life expectancies.

There may be some overlapping with the above categories.

Physiological and Structural Condition:

- EXCELLENT: tree is without any visible symptoms
- GOOD: no apparent problem with
- FAIR: minor problems with
- POOR: major problems with
- DEAD Dead

Recommendations:

Prescriptions for remedial actions to alleviate problems or defects within the tree.

Recommendations to fell are normally to ground level unless specified.

Priority:

It is strongly emphasised that these categories and figures are only guidelines which are applicable under normal circumstances only. The occurrence of extreme weather and other events beyond ones control do occur and so would have to take priority over recommended work.

Urgent

Target completion - within 24hrs

- Making safe of storm damaged trees in adverse weather conditions
- Large limbs snapped and hung up over high vehicular and pedestrian flow
- Trees that pose imminent danger to people or property

Priority 1

Target completion – within 6 months

- Dead, dying, diseased and dangerous in high pedestrian and traffic flow areas
- Tree branches below 2.5mtrs over high pedestrian flow footpaths
- Tree branches below 5.2mtrs over high traffic flow roads
- Tree branches causing damage to property
- Trees with root plate movement

Priority 2

Target completion – within 1 years

- As High Priority but without causing damage to person or property and in low risk areas
- Snapped limbs/branches on public open space with low pedestrian access

Priority 3

Target Completion – 1 years+

- All other general tree maintenance work that is causing no risk of harm to persons or property.

Notes:

This refers to information on the evident health of the tree and if any apparent diseases, pests or damaged areas are present within the tree. Any Abiotic and biotic factors are both recorded. Any other relevant information is recorded in this section.

Appendix 4: Glossary of Terms & Abbreviations

- **Compression fork/Co-dominant stem.** Can be a failure point at a fork between two branches or limbs, which, as they grow, press against each other, causing a build-up of stresses similar to the effect you would get if a wedge were hammered into the fork. Increased end-loading as the limbs grow can lead to the fork failing.
- **Cracked bark.** Another indicator of structural weakness in the wood. It can be on the surface of reaction growth that has grown rapidly or it can show a shearing failure point, where the load on a branch/limb becomes too great and causes the grain of the wood to separate and fail.
- **Deadwood.** Twigs or branches in the crown of the tree which have died off. This can indicate the tree's inability to transport fluid and/or nutrients to its extremities signifying that the tree is under stress or has failing systems. It can also take place naturally when a branch affects a process known as "self-pruning". This occurs when the energy needed to sustain the live branch outweighs the energy it produces
- **Decay.** This can be minor, such as on the surface of a shallow wound, or severe, with large sections of the trees structure being decayed. It is a problem that can progress to the point where the tree collapses.
- **Epicormic growth.** This can sometimes indicate a problem within the tree's systems. Epicormic growth is produced by the tree to gain a greater ability to photosynthesize when it is in need of extra resources. Some trees, such as Lime, produce epicormic growth, particularly from the base, as part of their natural growth habit.
- **Lean.** A lean does not necessarily mean inherent instability but when a tree's stem loses structural integrity, it can become a hazard, especially if the weakness is on the side to which the tree is leaning.
- **Loosened bark.** This indicates a problem under the surface in either the wood or the inner layers of bark (cambium). Bark can fall away from decaying wood behind it, or can start to die off due to a range of reasons (bacterial infections etc). The bark can then no longer transport fluid or nutrients around the tree.
- **Mechanical Damage.** Damage caused by non-biological means i.e. vehicle impact or damage caused by animals trying to eat bark. Damage of this kind can penetrate into the structure and is more often found on the surface of the tree.
- **Reaction wood/growth.** Where weakness or decay within a tree occurs, the tree will grow material to compensate for it. It is often seen as 'cable' like structures with patches of uneven bark which indicate irregular growth patterns. Another form of reaction growth can be seen as 'bulges' on a trees structure. Large amounts of reaction growth indicate advanced decay or weakness within the tree structure.
- **Weak unions.** The unions between the stem (trunk) and structural limbs or branches sometimes develop weakly, and as the tree ages can become unstable. This can be exacerbated when the tree is affected by other problems. Also, certain tree species are prone to developing weak unions.