

Tree Warden progress report CM Town Council Feb 2021

The Council owns and manages two sites within the Parish, The Skatepark/QE Jubilee Park, and the open cemetery on the Ludlow Road. It manages the closed graveyard of St. Marys' Church, as well as some play areas. The Council cuts the grass and maintains the trees and hedges on all these sites.

In 2018 the Town Council appointed a volunteer Tree Warden -Mr. Kit Smith, a local resident and in June 2019 signed up to the Tree Charter. At the start of 2020 they appointed two volunteer deputy Tree Wardens Mrs. Diane Payne and Mrs Charlotte Wallis, with particular reference to the 22-home development on Tenbury Road to be called Stanbury Place. The team agreed to monitor this difficult and challenging development, being on a steep slope and containing TPO oaks. They sought to be able to use the site as a model/exemplar, learning from the experience for when other existing sites were developed as well as those proposed by land allocation by the Neighbourhood Plan.

Planning conditions were imposed by the LPA to ensure protection of the Trees Root Zones of the TPO trees, in the form of 6' high fence to ensure no soil of the trees' root zone would be disturbed. The team worked with the site manager and with Dougal Purce of the LGA and visited the site once a month.

The LGA is based in distant Shrewsbury and being short staffed valued the offer by the Wardens to be extra local eyes and ears monitoring this challenging site. The site was developed a year of the Covid pandemic with two sessions of national Covid lockdown. It is predicted that the site will be completed by Easter 2021.

As of February 2021: -

1. Root zone protection fencing has remained intact and effective for the TPOs on the western edge of the site. Original scrub and shrubs remain intact to the end of development.
2. Root zone fencing to the TPO oak on the eastern boundary has been damaged from late autumn with tracking of heavy excavators damaging surface soil of the root zone. This was reported to the LPA.
3. This tree suffered damage when Whitcombe Orchard housing estate to the east was developed and a children's play area established removing half of the trees' root zone. Together with the damage to its remaining root zones from the present development it is doubtful that the tree (est. 120yr old) will survive. It is noted that the tree has been crown reduced, though permission sought, and permissive action taken, has not been seen.
4. It will be necessary to establish how the LPA intends to assure the TPO trees continue to be protected within a developed multi ownership estate.
5. Regular site visits by the team became difficult as national anti-COVID-19 social distancing and masking was imposed. The site in common with many other building sites became an unsafe environment for vulnerable people including Tree Wardens – no masks and as many as 30 tradespeople on site.
6. The Warden team have gained knowledge and experience from the development of the site and seek to add the expert knowledge and experience of soils of Jane Davis to the team.
7. The team continue to respond to the Town Council's requests for planning application comments and advice where trees, hedges and the environment are involved.