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Tree Safety Assessment-Review 3.

At: Melton Recreation Ground and Burkes Wood

For: Melton Parish Council.

Date of Report: MARCH 2021

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1.0 Terms of reference

Melton Parish Council has commissioned AlisonK-Arboriculture to re-survey trees specified by them at Melton Recreation Ground and Burkes Wood and then prepare a record of findings, highlighting any tree works necessary on safety grounds. The weather conditions at the time of inspection were overcast and dry. Deciduous trees surveyed were not in leaf.

This report contains a review of the tree safety assessment from July 2019 and should be read in conjunction with this and previous **Tree Safety Assessment Reports and Appendices**.

Mrs Alice Martin carried out the latest site survey on 22nd and 23rd February 2021. The relevant qualitative tree data was collected in order to re-assess the condition of the trees and their potential risk in relation to their existing environment and the risk they pose to people and property.

1.1 Updated tree assessment and risk evaluation method

For this report, the five-step risk assessment has been adopted following Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance for a simple tree management system. It is reliable, tried and tested and considered a robust method of assessing risk. It is also defensible in a Court of Law, being underpinned by a nationally recognised body.

Adopted land areas which contain trees have been assessed and allocate a 'Zone' based on the designated land type and level of use - 'Target' (measured by how frequently an area is visited by people). (1: High use, 2: Moderate use 3: Low use). Area Zones dictate the level of information collected during inspection and suggests a reasonable frequency for re-inspections (the risk associated with the trees are less in a site which has less frequent visits).

1.2. Zoning of land areas and rationale:

1.2.1 Zone 1 trees:

All trees in areas designated as parks, play areas and areas adjacent to well used public rights of way and well used footpaths are placed in Zone 1. In these areas, where there are prominent individual specimen trees they are inspected and recorded individually. Less prominent/younger trees in Zone 1 are placed in groups. Basic information on tree species and approx. number of each, along with general group comments recorded.

In wooded areas such as along public rights of way and well used permissive footpaths, all trees within falling distance (approximately 20 metres of the Zone boundary) are briefly inspected.

1.2.2 Zone 2 trees:

Areas which see less frequent use such as minor footpaths and woodland where access is somewhat restricted and where trees could impact on gardens are considered a 'lower' target area with lower risk level associated and placed in Zone 2.

1.2.3 Zone 3 trees:

Areas which see few visits where with no easy access. present a very low risk (barring exceptional circumstances) to people and therefore placed in Zone 3.

1.2.4 Trees on Zones 2 and 3: In some restricted areas it is not practicable and often not necessary to inspect all trees in detail at the base, although it may be possible to assess some trees on sites more fully during the summer months. Where this is the case, assessments are completed from as close to trees as conditions allow and comments made on the visible parts.

1.3 Tree survey method and rationale

All trees inspected will require regular monitoring for the following reason:

- Tracking the progress of diseases such as ash dieback disease (See Table 3 at 6.0); needed as tree condition can deteriorate quickly and in a short period of time create safety issues.
- Full tree condition is unclear or thought to be such that further investigation is needed to confirm full tree health and/or potential safety issues.

Trees were assessed from the ground, using the level '1' or level '2' basic assessment developed by the International Society of Arboriculture - taking into account all tree features and site considerations.

1.4 Recommendations in the report are based on sound arboricultural management practice and to aid future decision-making and planning. Aesthetics and environmental issues are also considerations and trees in need of work, to reduce an identified higher than acceptable risk, where feasible, should be retained in some form as standing deadwood. The value of these retained trees in terms of environmental and ecological benefits is substantial in sustaining a healthy tree population.

2.0 Scope of the work:

For the purpose of this report, **one hundred and nineteen** of the trees, shown on **Appendix BB: Review3 - Tree Location Plan** have been re-assessed. An additional **five trees** have been added to the schedule for monitoring purposes. The schedule also contains a further **eight trees** which have been removed for safety issues since 2017.

The information contained in the schedule covers only those trees that were examined and reflects the condition of the specimens at the time of inspection. The trees were inspected from the ground only and were not climbed. No samples of wood, roots or soil were taken for analysis. No guarantee, either expressed or implied, of the safety stability or **internal** condition of any of the trees can therefore be given.

3.0 Review of tree safety issues from 2019 report:

All recommended works in the 2019 report with a 'MEDIUM' priority have been completed. A willow tree on the roadside (38) has been removed as has a sycamore (121) in poor condition.

Some works recommended (non-safety reasons) under the DESIRABLE category have yet to be completed. The cavity between the buttress roots fire damaged oak tree (10) has been

Melton Recreation Ground and Burkes Wood: Review3: Tree safety assessment March 2021. fitted with a shaped wooden block to reduce the chance further vandalism. However, the recommended felling of 2 sycamores (119 & 120) identified for felling to benefit the veteran oak tree (2) has yet to be carried out.

4.0 Current position following assessment:

- **Appendix AA-Review3: Tree Schedule and Recommendations** contains full survey details of the **No124 trees** inspected in this report.
- A detailed schedule of works is listed at 6.2 in **Table 1: Recommended work schedule and priority** (extracted from **Appendix AA-Review3**) and shown on **Appendix BB-Review3: Tree location plan**.
- Supporting information for term and explanations used within the tree schedule can be found at 7.0 in **Table 2: Evaluation of threats to tree population** and in **Appendix C: Explanatory Notes**.

General site comments:

Since the last inspection in February 2019, there has been a notable increase in human activity, especially in woodland areas. Numerous new dens (in various stages of build) are evident. Several new desire line paths which crisscross the woodland have been established and one which has seen recent and regular use by cyclists contains soil excavations and humps along its route.

The increase in use, raises the target areas in some parts of the woodland previously considered low use. This increases the need to take action in some areas to reduce an identified risk.

Tree related comments:

Only 17 of the 124 trees inspected have been recommended for action on safety grounds. (See **Table 1**) with no works recommended under the 'URGENT' and 'HIGH' priority categories.

Work to 4 trees have been given a 'MEDIUM' priority with deadwood removal specified for two trees and to felling/reduction required for two others. The remaining works identified in the 'LOW' Priority for maintenance type work with 13 trees where work is recommended to allow for a more detailed assessment at the next inspection.

Felling has been suggested under the 'DESIRABLE' category for 3 trees, one which has a short life expectancy and two to help reduce the present pressure on the environment for the veteran oak (2).

Five additional trees have been added to this schedule.

- Two sycamores (128 & 129) have been added their condition requires monitoring.
- One oak tree (130) (at the start of the woodland) on the side of the public footpath to turnpike Lane has been recorded following an enquiry by a member of the public.
- A further two sycamores (131 & 132) on the boundary of a property on Jenners Close are now densely clad with ivy the management of which is recommended as a precaution due to their size and location.

5.0 Findings and significance:

The majority of the one 124 trees assessed remain in reasonably good condition with no urgent action needed to mitigate tree safety issues.

The condition of the 24 lime trees on the road side (trees 39 to 47 and 49 to 63) is starting to be of concern as many showing very little growth, since they were last pruned and appear to be in slow decline. In this schedule, one lime (50) has now died and 2 of these roadside lime trees have been identified for removal of epicormic growth from the base as there are minor concerns over their current health which will need closer monitoring. This decline is likely to continue over a relatively short timescale, increasing the need for action over the years to maintain those remaining ones in a safe condition.

Although not a safety issues, the felling of the 2 sycamore trees (119 &120) is still suggested to allow more room to the important veteran oak tree (2).

6.0 Recommendations:

Proposed tree surgery is recommended to mitigate any identified tree safety issues. It is recommended that work given a 'MEDIUM' and 'LOW' priorities, specified at 6.2 - **Table 1: Tree work schedule and priority** and **Figure 1** on page 8 are adhered to and the tree surgery recommended, carried out within the timescale stated, by a competent arborist to the BS Standard for tree surgery BS 3998, (2010).

It is suggested that plans be made for phased removal for the majority of the roadside lime trees (protected under the TPO) over the next five to ten years.

6.1 Statutory tree Protection:

The majority of the tree surgery recommended are to mitigate identified safety issues and therefore considered exempt from an application to East Suffolk Council under the TPO 25.

Works under the '**DESIRABLE**' category recommended in **Table 1** may need an TPO application as they do not currently have any significant safety issues. **The advice of the arboricultural officer at East Suffolk Council should be sort before this felling work is carried out.** Where trees protected by the TPO are felled, there may be a replacement condition added to an approval by East Suffolk Council to plant a replacement tree.

Consideration is needed when carrying out surgery and investigations of the trees and the contractor made aware that they have responsibility for the implications of harming protected species that may be present in the trees and protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

6.2 Recommended Work Schedule and Priority timescales:

Table 1		Recommended work schedule and priority: March 2021	
Tree No	Species	Works recommended.	Timescale
MEDIUM PRIORITY - Works identified on safety grounds for trees in higher use area with less urgent or minor tree surgery.			
1	Sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>)	Remove dead branch 10m long x 300mm diameter at 1.5m back to main central stem & carry out ivy management.	Within 6 months
50	Lime (<i>Tilia</i> spp)	Fell 3.5m high dead stem to ground level and remove arisings from site.	Within 6 months
70	Norway maple (<i>Acer platanoides</i>)	Suggest (rather than felling), reduce tree with a 3 to 4 metre branch structure.	Within 6 months
103	Lime (<i>Tilia</i> spp)	Remove deadwood down to 60mm diameter throughout crown.	Within 6 months
LOW PRIORITY - Works identified for trees to allow for more detailed inspection.			
3, 37, 87, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 131 & 132.	No11 trees of various tree species	Carry out Ivy management (see Table 2 for technique) to allow for more detailed assessment at next inspection.	Within 12 months
61 & 63	2 x <i>Tilia platyphyllos</i> (Large-leaved Lime)	Remove epicormic growth around base as close to main stem as is feasible.	Within 12 months
DESIRABLE - Non-urgent works to aid positive tree management/future planning timescales (N.B. May require an application to East Suffolk Council)			
119 & 120	2 x Sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>)	Fell to ground level. No significant safety issues however tree removal will likely benefit veteran oak (2) by reducing competition from them.	Non urgent work
102	Sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>)	Fell to ground level. No significant safety issues currently however, tree with declining health and short life. expectancy.	Non urgent work



Figure 1: Tree works location plan, to accompany Table 1 on previous page.

6.3 Timescale for re-inspection

Trees in this report have been given a re-inspection date of within **18 months** from the report date with the next inspection to take place in the mid to late summer of 2022.

Trees are dynamic, ever-changing organisms, which react to changes in their environment. In the event of high winds and storms a survey of the trees is recommended as soon as possible after the event.

7.0 Table 2: Evaluation of threats to the tree population:

Table 2 gives a brief explanation of the most significant biotic threats to the trees identified in the trees on site.

Table 2: Evaluation of threats to tree population
<p>Ash dieback disease (<i>Hymenoscyphus fraxineus</i>)</p> <p>This disease can cause death of branches leaving significant sized deadwood, capable of causing harm to people and damage to structures. Rate of decline can vary significantly within trees of different ages in some cases deteriorating within a year to the point where action is required. Regular annual assessment (preferably during the summer months) is needed to monitor and manage the disease spread.</p>
<p>Bleeding cankers</p> <p>The threat from both the fungal pathogen (<i>Phytophthora</i> spp) and other bacterial causal agents of bleeding canker (<i>Pseudomonas</i> spp) are a growing threat to the health of many tree species including oak, horse chestnut and maples. The distinctive symptoms of brown and black staining 'bleeding cankers' is now a common site across the country.</p>
<p>Dutch elm disease (DED)</p> <p>Dutch elm disease (DED) is still common across the UK, especially in unmanaged hedgerows. New elm growth generally reaches a certain height and is then infected by the beetle (<i>Scolytus</i> spp) carrying the fungus (Stout and Winter, 1994). Most standing are not more than 'pole' stage, small diameter stems and often die within three to four years of infection. Trees of this diameter can stand dead for several years before becoming unstable and a potential safety issue.</p>
<p>Epicormic (sucker) growth</p> <p>Epicormic growth relates to the numerous small 'suckers' stem, that grow around the base of some tree species. It can be present in various tree species as a reaction to the bark being damaged, but in species such as European lime (<i>Tilia x vulgaris</i>) it is usually a normal function of the tree.</p> <p>Where epicormic growth is extensive at the base, management has been specified to cut suckers back as close to the main stem as possible to allow for a clearer inspection.</p>
<p>Ivy (<i>Hedera helix</i>)</p> <p>The presence of ivy on healthy trees is not normally a problem and provides excellent wildlife habitat and vital as a winter food source. However, where a tree is already in decline and ivy has become extensive, it can be a problem by increasing wind sail effect increasing the risk of failure and suppressing growth. Ivy may also be masking major defects. Where this is felt to be the case, ivy management has been specified.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Ivy management technique: Sever and remove a section (minimum of a 50mm) of all ivy stems around the tree base. NB. Care needs to be taken when carrying out this work not to cut right through ivy stems into the bark of the tree as this can cause long-term damage.</p> </div>

8.0 Conditions and limitations:

This tree safety report is subject to the following limitations and qualifications.

Unless specifically mentioned, the report will only be concerned with the above ground inspections. No below ground inspections will be conducted out without prior agreement from the client that such works should be undertaken.

The validity, accuracy and findings of this report will be directly related to the accuracy of the information made available during the inspection process. No checking of independent data will be undertaken. AlisonK-Arbiculture will not be responsible for recommendations within this report where essential data is not made available or is inaccurate.

This report will remain valid for **18 months** from the date of report. Alterations to the site or soil levels are carried out other than those specified within the report, or additional tree work undertaken, then commissioning of a new tree inspection is strongly recommended.

Opinions expressed concerning built structures and soil data are provisional. Confirmation should be sort from an appropriately qualified professional sought for an in-depth opinion.

It will be appreciated and deemed to be accepted by the client and their insurers, that the formulation of the recommendations will be guided by the following:

- The need to avoid reasonably foreseeable damage.
- The arboricultural considerations - Tree safety, good arboricultural practice, aesthetics, and environmental considerations.

The client and their insurers are deemed to have accepted the limitation placed on the recommendations by the sources quoted in the attached report. Where time constraints or the client limits resources, this may lead to an incomplete calculation of risk.



23nd March 2021

Mrs A. Martin BSc (Hons) Arboriculture
Arboricultural Consultant

9.0 References:

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10.0 Appendices:

Appendix AA-Review3: Schedule of trees and recommendations (attached separately)

Appendix BB-Review3: Tree Location Plan

Appendix C: Explanatory notes to accompany tree schedule.



Appendix C: Explanatory notes

Below is an explanation of the categories used in the tree survey **Appendix AA-Review3:** Tree schedule and **Appendix BB-Review3:** Tree location plan.

Tree No:

Individual trees numbers are given in sequential order, commencing at "1" In some cases trees will be specified as groups (E.g. Gp1).

Tree Species:

Common names are given to aid understanding for a wider audience.

Spread:

A average crown spread has been provided to aid location.

Age class:

Young = An established tree (less than 1/3 life expectancy).

Maturing = A tree still to reach its full potential height and spread (around 1/3 to 2/3 life expectancy)

Mature = A mature tree (over 1/3 but less than 2/3 life expectancy) with slowing growth rate and limited potential for significant increase in height or spread.

Fully mature = A mature past 2/3 life expectancy for species.

Veteran = A fully mature specimen with high-value due to factors such as its age (having lived past that which is normal for the species) and/or ecological significance.

Tree Problem/Comments:

The following categories and descriptions are based on evaluation of tree health, structural integrity, and safety. Where appropriate comments have been made relating to:

- Tree Health and condition, tree structure and form and specific problems such as deadwood, pests and diseases broken limbs etc
- The effect of other trees present, of ground works and previous surgery.

Overall Tree Condition:

Good: = No significant physiological or structural defects, and an upright and reasonably symmetrical structure.

Fair: = No significant pathological defects but slightly impaired physiological structure however, not to an extent that the tree is immediate or early risk of collapse

Indifferent: = Significant physiological or pathological defects; but these are either remedial or do not put the tree at imminent or early risk of collapse

Poor: = Significant and irreparable physiological or pathological defects such that there may be a risk of early or premature failure.

Hazardous: = Significant and irreparable physiological or pathological defects, such that there is an elevated risk of failure.

Vitality: Comments on vitality are given in relation to such as growth rates, leave size and density, twig and branch extension growth and density.

Deadwood:

This relates to dead branches within the crown of the tree. In most cases this is due to natural aging of the tree or its location close to other trees. However, it could relate to fungal, bacterial or viral infection. For this reason, regular monitoring needs to be carried out on trees showing signs of excessive deadwood. Standing deadwood timber is a very important wildlife habitat and in short supply, especially in the urban environment. Standing stems should be retained where feasible when trees need to be made safe.

Minor Deadwood = 60mm diameter or less and not extensive enough to warrant removal

Moderate Deadwood = 60mm diameter up to 150mm

Major Deadwood = 150mm and above

Work Priority Rating:

This relates to the urgency of the work in relation to existing safety problems identified within the tree survey.

Very Urgent: Need for recommended works to be carried out within 48 hours of notification.

Urgent: Recommended works to be carried out within **4 weeks** of notification.

High: Recommended works to be carried out within **3 months** of notification

Medium: Works required within **6 months**.

Low: Works required within **12 months**.

Desirable: Non-urgent works given to aid positive tree management/future planning timescales