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Tree Safety Assessment-**Review 5.**

At: Melton Recreation Ground and Burkes Wood

For: Melton Parish Council.

Date of Report: February 2024

Contact Details

Client: **Melton Parish Council**		
Address: 17 Riduna Park, Station Road, Melton, Woodbridge, IP12 1QT	**Client Contact:** Pip Alder Clerk to Melton Parish Council.	**Client contact details:** Tel: 01394 382224 Email: clerk@melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk Web: www.melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk

Local Authority (LA): **East Suffolk Council**		
Address: East Suffolk House, Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1RT	**LA Contact:** The Arboriculture & Landscape Manager.	**LA Contact details:** Website: www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk Telephone: 0333 016 2000 Email: customerservices@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

Arboricultural Consultant: **AlisonK - Arboriculture**		
Address: 6 Pond Piece, Brandeston, Woodbridge, IP13 7AW	**Owner**: Mrs Alice Martin-Butler	**Contact details:** Telephone: 01728 685898 Mobile: 07425 389 786 Email: ali@alisonk.co.uk

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1.0 Terms of reference

Melton Parish Council has commissioned AlisonK-Arboriculture to survey trees specified by them at Melton Recreation Ground and in 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 ranged from dry and bright to overcast. Deciduous trees surveyed were not in leaf.

This report contains a review of the tree safety assessment from September 2022 and should be read in conjunction with this and previous **tree safety assessments, reports, and appendices.** Mrs Alice Martin-Butler carried out the latest site survey on 9th, 10th, 15th and 18th February 2024. The relevant qualitative tree data was collected 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 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 defendable in a Court of Law being underpinned by a nationally recognised body.

Land areas, which contain trees, have been assessed and allocated 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 can inform the 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 a lower risk level associated and placed in Zone 2.
1.2.3 Zone 3 trees:

Areas of land that see few visitors and where there is no easy access presents a very low risk (barring exceptional circumstances) to people and therefore placed in Zone 3.

1.2.4 Trees in 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 2 at 7.0) 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 and vital in sustaining a healthy tree population.

2.0 Scope of the work:

117 remaining trees from **Review4** have been re-assessed together with **eight** additional trees added to the schedule either due to their condition requiring monitoring or for identified safety issues. The 140 trees listed in **Appendix AA5: Review5 -Tree Schedule and Recommendations** also contains **six** trees listed for felling, following the 2022 assessment and further **nine** trees which have been removed or lost from and around the Recreation Ground and Burkes Wood since 2017. One off site tree is also listed (82). All trees are **shown on Appendix BB5: Review5 - Tree Location Plan**.

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 2022 report:

All High and Medium priority works recommended in the report of March 2022 has been completed to a satisfactory standard. Six trees were felled due to their deteriorating condition

and identified safety issues. Low priority 'non urgent' work recommended for two trees (83 & 86) for ivy management is still to be completed. This has been added to **Table 1: Recommended work schedule and priority:**

4.0 Current position following assessment:

- **Appendix AA5: Review5 -Tree Schedule and Recommendations** contains full survey details of the **No125 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 AA5-Review5) and shown on **Appendix BB5: Review5 - Tree location plan**.

- Supporting information for terms 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.**

4.1 General site comments:

The increase in human activity first mentioned in February 2019, especially in woodland areas remains high. Several more dens (in various stages of build) were evident, and the many desire line paths remain criss-crossing the woodland.

The increase in use, raises the target areas in some parts of the Recreation Ground and woodland, previously considered low use. This has increased the need to add some trees to the schedule and take action in some areas to reduce an identified risk.

Since the last inspection in 2022 evidence of active management/planting works where noted on both the Recreation Ground and in Burkes Wood.

Recreation Ground:

- In several areas new tree planting was evident. Once established new trees in the grass areas will be recorded.
- The hedge boundary between the Recreation Ground and Hutchinson Meadow was being laid at the time of inspection.

The hedge maintenance and new tree planting are extremely positive steps and a good start in creating robust management that will help improve diverse habitats and maintain and increase the tree stock on site into the future.

Burkes Wood:

- Work had been carried out along the well-used footpath between Burkes and Leeks Hill wood, where a 'dead hedge' had been created and a new hedgerow planted along the front edge.

This work has helped considerable in controlling the growing number of improvised BMX/cycle tracks through the site and discourage/restrict access to that part of the wood. Restricting access should help reduce the 'people' pressure and create new wildlife habitats at the ground and shrub level.

4.2 Tree safety related comments:

Only 11 of the trees in the schedule have been recommended for action. (**See Table 1 at 6.2**). No works have been recommended under the 'URGENT' or 'LOW' priority categories.

- Work to **two** trees (139 & 140) have been given a 'HIGH' priority for action due to poor tree condition and higher target location.
- Work to **nine** trees (63, 69, 70, 83, 86, 89, 128, 129 & 137) have been given a 'MEDIUM' priority with felling specified for six trees and a crown reduction required for one other (63). Two trees (83 & 86) have been added to this category for ivy management to allow time for ivy stems to die off before the next inspection.

Six additional trees have been added to the schedule.

- One maturing sycamore tree (137) has been added, as it is in poor condition and felling is recommended.
- One young birch tree (139) and one young oak stem (140) have been added as they are potentially unstable, and felling is recommended.
- One mature oak tree (138) has been recorded. The tree has died and required additional monitoring although not yet a safety issue.
- Two mature large willow trees (135 & 136) have been added due to an increase in use by people using the playing area, within falling distance of the trees.

5.0 Findings and significance:

The majority of trees in **Appendix AA5: Review5 -Tree Schedule and Recommendations** remain in reasonably good condition with no significant safety issues. Only 11 trees of the approx. 122 trees assess were identified as in need of work on safety grounds. **See Table 1 at 6.2.**

Six trees were identified in the schedule as in need of removal, due to their poor condition. Two of these trees (69 and 70) are in a prominent position near the Pavilion and their removal will leave a noticeable gap in the mown grass area. The are near the pavilion appears suitable for replacement trees to be planted and is suggested as a good location for semi ornamental varieties cush as birch, cherry (Prunus avium cultivar) liquidambar, or larger trees such as tulip tree, pin oak and London plane, although there are many others.

Roadside lime trees:

The roadside lime trees is still an important landscape feature although the condition of the twenty-two remaining lime trees on the roadside remains either fairly static in growth or in slow decline. In this schedule, one lime (63) next to the Recreation Ground entrance and car parking has been recommended for reduction work due to its declining condition. Work to cut back epicormic growth on seven lime trees (52, 55, 58, 59, 60, 61 & 63) has been partially successful however it is not feasible to clear growth back to the main stems completely. Although inspecting the base of these trees was difficult, no further removal of trees have been considered necessary following this inspection.

The three lime trees (46, 47 & 62) removed as part of the 2022 inspection have not yet been replaced and replacement tree planting should be considered if this important tree feature is to continue along the roadside. Although there appears to be limited opportunity to replant in some parts of the hedge line there appears to be room to replant at the entrance of the car park where tree 62 was felled and to start a new line of trees in the grass on the inside of the ditch, especially from the tennis courts along to Jenners Close. Larger tree species such as lime, ginkgo, London plane and tulip tree could be considered as suitable species for the site.

6.0 Recommendations:

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

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

6.1 Statutory tree Protection:

Tree surgery recommended in this report have been made to mitigate identified safety issues and are therefore considered exempt from an application to East Suffolk Council under the TPO 25. It is suggested however that the arboricultural officer is contacted to confirm whether an application for work is required.

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 trees and the contractor should be made aware of their 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 Table 1: Recommended work schedule and priority timescales:

Table 1	Recommended work schedule and priority: February 2024		
Tree No	Species	Works recommended.	Timescale
HIGH PRIORITY - Works identified on safety grounds for trees in higher use area be carried out within **3 months** of notification.			
139	Betula pubescens (Downy Birch)	Fell to ground level and stack arisings on site	Within 3 months
140	Quercus robur (English Oak)	Fell to ground level and stack arisings on site	Within 3 months
MEDIUM PRIORITY Works identified on safety grounds for trees in higher use area with less urgent or minor tree surgery to be carried out within 6 months of notification.			
63	Tilia spp (Lime spp)	Reduce tree crown by up to 3.5 metres back to branch union or sound wood, whichever is greater.	Within 6 months
69	Quercus rubra (red oak)	Fell to ground level, grind stump and stack arisings in adjacent undergrowth	Within 6 months
70	Acer platanoides (Norway maple)	Fell to ground level, grind stump and stack arisings in adjacent undergrowth	Within 6 months
83	Quercus robur (English Oak)	Carry out Ivy management (see Table 2 for technique)	Within 6 months
86	Acer pseudoplatanus (Sycamore)	Carry out Ivy management (see Table 2 for technique)	Within 6 months
89	Prunus avium (wild cherry)	Fell to ground level and stack arisings on site.	Within 6 months
128	Acer pseudoplatanus (sycamore)	Fell to ground level and stack arisings on site	Within 6 months
129	Acer pseudoplatanus (sycamore)	Fell to ground level and stack arisings on site	Within 6 months
137	Acer pseudoplatanus (sycamore)	Fell to ground level and stack arisings on site	Within 6 months

6.3 Timescale for re-inspection

Trees in this report have been given a re-inspection date **within 18 months** from the report date with the next inspection ideally to take place in the **mid to late-summer of 2025**.

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
Ash dieback disease (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)
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.
Bleeding cankers
The threat from both the fungal pathogen (Phytophthora spp) and other bacterial causal agents of bleeding canker (Pseudomonas spp) are a growing threat to the health of many tree species including oak, horse chestnut and maple. The distinctive symptoms of brown and black staining 'bleeding cankers' is now a common site across the country.
Brittle Cinder (Kretzschmaria deusta)
Kretzschmaria deusta is considered one of the most important root and butt decay pathogens in urban trees. It causes a soft rot type of decay and has a broad host range, commonly affected are beech, sycamore, and lime, although it may occur on any species. Such a decay type can cause failure of the tree with little or no warning.
Dutch elm disease (DED)
Dutch elm disease 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 (Scolytus spp) carrying the fungus (Stout and Winter, 1994). Most standing trees 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.
Epicormic (sucker) growth
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 (Tilia x vulgaris) it is usually a normal function of the tree. 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.
Ivy (*Hedera helix*)
The presence of Ivy on healthy trees is not normally a problem and provides excellent wildlife habitat and is 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. **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.

8.0 Conditions and limitations:

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

General Exclusions

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-Arboriculture 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 the report. Should 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.

29th February 2024 .....

Mrs A. Martin-Butler BSc (Hons) Arboriculture
Arboricultural Consultant

9.0 References:

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National Tree Safety Group (2011). Common Sense Risk Management of Trees: Guidance on Trees and Public Safety in the UK for Owners, Managers and Advisers. London: Forestry Commission. 23.

Occupiers' Liability Act 1957. C.31 Available at https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/5-6/31/contents Last accessed 10th November 2021

Royal Forestry Society. (2019). Managing ash dieback. Available: https://rfs.org.uk/media/598372/rfs-managing-ash-dieback-case-studies-2019.pdf. Last accessed 21st February 2020.

Strouts R.G. & Winter T.G. (1994) Research for Amenity Trees No2. Diagnosis of Ill-Health in Trees.

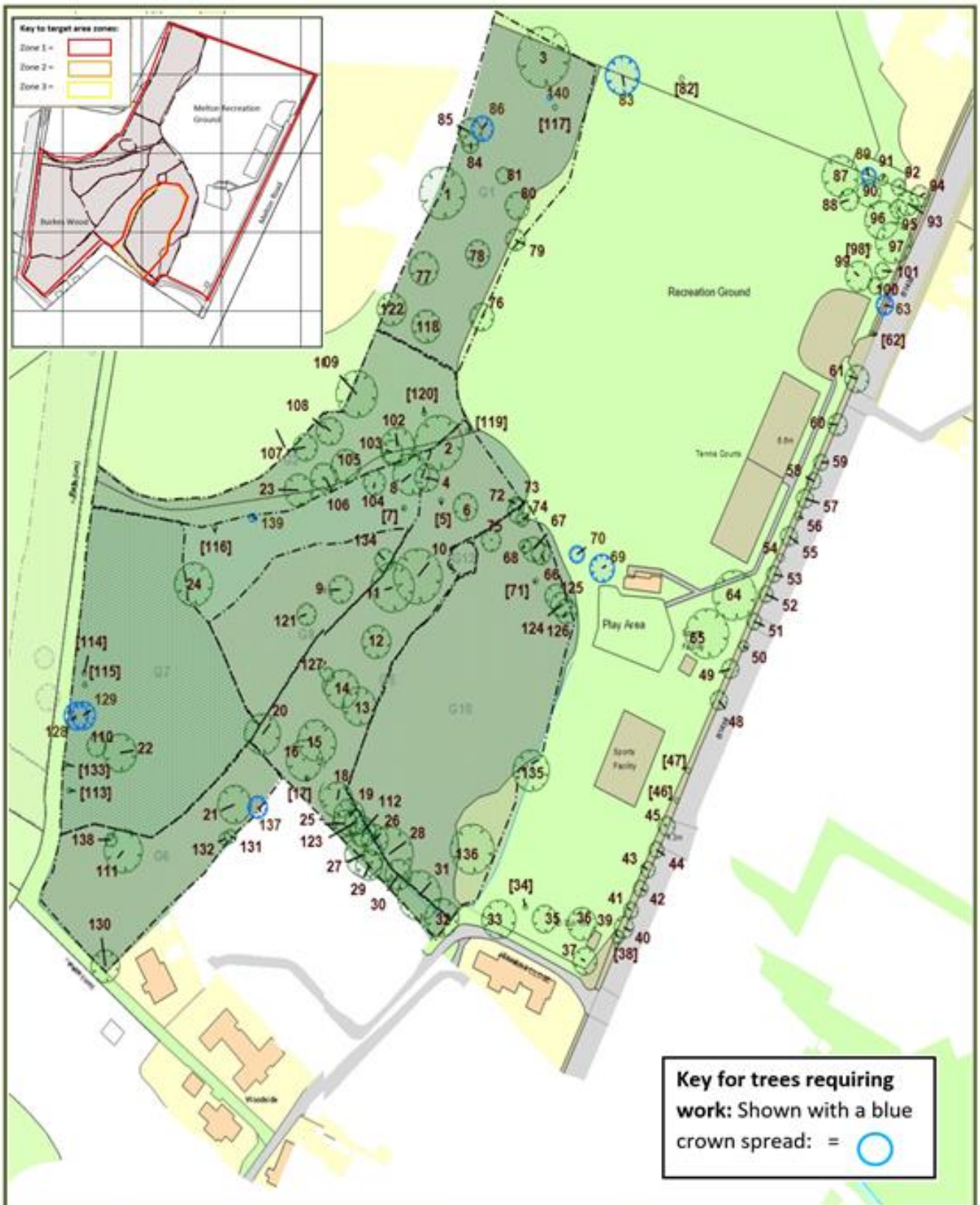
The British Standards Institute (2010) Recommendations for Tree Work BS 3998: BSI Standards Ltd.

10.0 Appendices:

Appendix AA5: Review5 -Schedule of trees and recommendations (attached separately)

Appendix BB5: Review5 -Tree Location Plan

Appendix C: Explanatory notes to accompany tree schedule.


Key to target area zones:
Zone 1 =
Zone 2 =
Zone 3 =
Melton Recreation Ground
Burkes Wood
Melton Road
Recreation Ground
Tennis Courts
Play Area
Sports Facility
Woodside
Key for trees requiring work: Shown with a blue crown spread: =
Melton Recreation Ground & Burkes Wood
Project: Tree Safety Assessment – Review 5
Client: Melton Parish Council.
Ref: Appendix BB5: Review 5 - Tree Location Plan
Plan produced by: Mrs A K Martin-Butler
Scale: Not to scale
Date: February 2024
AlisonK-Arboriculture. Tel: 01728 695898. Mob: 07425 389786. Email: ali@alisonk.co.uk
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Appendix C: Explanatory notes

Below is an explanation of the categories used in the tree survey **Appendix AA5-Review5**: Tree schedule and **Appendix BB5**-**Review5**: 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:
Both botanical and common names are given to aid understanding for a wider audience.

Spread:
An 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 of 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 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