

## Ashover Tree Group

### Summary of meeting: 14 January 2016

Minutes of last meeting 12 November 2015 agreed and actions carried forward discussed as follows:

#### 1. Objectives

Revised version approved with no further comments.

#### 2. Tree types appropriate for the area

The group has identified two experts it can call on for guidance on the indigenous trees most suitable for planting in the Ashover area.

#### 3. Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

Development of the Group's data continues, supplemented by contributions from NEDCC, via the Parish Clerk (PC).

Occasionally the Group will be asked through the Tree Warden, to comment on proposed work on trees the subject of a TPO. In this context, a response has been requested for work (topping out/removal of dead branches) for some Limes/Sycamores in Malthouse Lane. The proposed work seems fine but two of the Group will review and feedback to the PC.

It had been agreed that a detailed map of Ashover would be useful in helping us plot TPO locations. A single, full-sized map is not available but a member (RF) has a licence to down-load the areas we need as and when required.

We now have a guidance note with rules on how trees in a Conservation area are to be managed and is available to those interested in seeing it.

#### 4. Specialist speaker on TPOs

The Group feels that a presentation by a specialist in TPOs would be very interesting and worthwhile. Inquiries are being made to line up a speaker for a future meeting.

#### 5. Specialist speaker on riverbank preservation techniques

We have found a speaker who would be happy to present to an open meeting for us. Agreed this would probably be best in two parts – the first, an illustrated talk indoors and the 2<sup>nd</sup> a visit to a riverbank to put it in context.

Agreed we carry this forward as an agenda item for the next meeting when we would firm up on arrangements for communication etc.

#### 6. Member reports for the areas they represent around Ashover.

Highbredish. Gorse-bashing, to improve access, continues

Ashover centre. The pruning/removal of ash, sycamore and silver birch saplings pressing against the wall opposite the showground has yet to be actioned and will be followed up with the PC.

Kelstedge. Amber House, Vernon Lane has been sold, destined to be a wedding venue. There are some lovely Victorian trees in the grounds and members of the Group are arranging to carry out an assessment and will determine whether any are under threat.

Fabrick. Silver birches along the side of the wall have been removed and work on the heathland continues, supported by volunteers. Responsibility for management will shortly transfer from Middleton Top to Clay Cross.

Great Eastern Plantation. Quite a few problems and the challenge is to sort out old, decaying trees, some of them very big, and devise a plan on how best to re-generate the plantation. A grant to pay for professional help would be ideal and inquiries are to be made to find out if this will be possible.

### 7. Tree planting

An application has been made for an allocation of the free trees on offer. Nothing heard yet, meanwhile the PC have confirmed their agreement to some of them being planted on common land.

### 8. Working party

Most of the work by the (3 person) team has been concentrated in Fallgate, along the riverbank. Looking much better!

### 9. Landowner responsibilities for rights of way

Review of the NFU web-site wasn't particularly useful for our purposes. Landowners do have a liability as occupiers to remove trees which fall from their land across public rights of way. Their response does vary – some diligent while others leave it to others to clear obstacles. Some councils say they'll clear an obstruction and bill the landowner, often achieving a prompt response. Our approach should be to try and engage the landowner and escalate if need be.

### 10. Public Liability insurance

We have provided information to the Parish Council and we're presently awaiting a decision on whether they're prepared to cover members of our Group as working party volunteers. \*

### 11. Budget

In our submission to the Parish Council we have included a request for a small budget for safety equipment for the working party. The footpath group has a list of tools and may have cross-over use for the tree group.

### 12. Training

Where appropriate, the Tree Warden will carry out induction training of new recruits to the Group working party. This will be supplemented with additional training on other related skills eg. Pruning.

### 13. Future meetings

Agreed that the secretary would produce a schedule of dates for our bi-monthly meetings for the rest of the year and share it with the rest of the Group.

**Date of next meeting:** to be advised.

\*Regarding item 9, the Parish Council have since confirmed that our working party will be included in their Public Liability cover and they have allocated a budget to us for safety equipment.