



Bothenhampton & Walditch

Parish Council since 1886

Forestry Commission
620 Bristol Business Park
Coldharbour Lane
BS16 1EJ

Via Email

14th April 2023

Dear Forestry Commission

Trees in conservation areas/woodland and parkland/replacement
Location: around OS Easting 347584 Northing 92479

Our Parish has a Conservation Area of woodland and parkland within the Dorset AONB, which has been neglected by its landowner for over 20 years. The local authority has allocated TPOs to many trees, but since 2005 none of those felled or blown over have been replaced. Dorset Council has been dilatory in action.

Does the Forestry Commission have an interest in this area? Our Council has been unable to satisfy residents that think more should be done to protect these trees and replace them, and would be grateful for your advice.

Below I give more details of the precise problems, which may interest you.

The Parish Council has been corresponding for approximately 20 years regarding various trees within a conservation area, within private boundaries and along a road within Walditch colloquially named 'Sycamore Avenue'. These areas have some beautiful, healthy veteran trees within them and help form a lovely approach to the upper part of the village. Sadly, the landowner has neglected most of the trees over the years and very few replacements have been planted when they fall. There are other trees within parkland in our conservation area to the east, in the grounds of The Hyde care home.

We have had lengthy and protracted correspondence with the main councils in the area, formerly West Dorset District Council and more recently (following re-organisation) Dorset Council. Unfortunately, the net result of these exchanges has been that the trees remain largely neglected, with aTPOs not enforced and little or no tree surgery after storm damage. We appreciate that the Council has limited resources, and that its officers are hard pressed.

Our residents regularly ask us to intervene, but we have exhausted most options and would welcome any help or advice you may be able to give.

I set out below a potted history of the attempts we have made to get the situation remedied:

100+ year old veteran tree felled in Walditch, within a Conservation Area

February 2021, some residents witnessed the illegal felling of this veteran parkland

tree by the landowner. No permission was sought or granted. The tree was sited within the Conservation Area.

Issue with trees protected by TPOs

TPO/2021/0064 - Tree cut down by Dorset Council in spring 2022 – not replaced.

Non-replacement of Avenue Trees with TPOs

Non-replacement of trees 16, 17, 19 (blown down December 2013 and February 2014), 9 (blown down 2016) and 8 (blown down in 2020) on the north side of Sycamore Avenue, numbered from opposite the seat, eastward.

Neglect of replacement limes 3, 4, 10, 12, 14, and 15 on the north side of the Avenue since planting in 2005.

Damage to a notable beech tree, 19th tree from the bottom of the Avenue on the south side requires attention after major debranching in a storm, November 2021.

We would be grateful for any help or advice you could give us on these issues. We would be more than happy to meet with one of your team to show you the extent of tree neglect within this part of the village.

It would be most helpful if you could respond before our Annual Meeting on 15th May 2023.

Your sincerely

A J Basker
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