

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL



TREE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

NOVEMBER 2013

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1. INTRODUCTION

What is a tree?

The Oxford Dictionary defines a trees as:

“A woody perennial plant, typically having a single stem or trunk, growing to a considerable height and bearing lateral branches at some distance from the ground”. This includes (in general use) any bush, shrub, or herbaceous plant with a tall erect stem.

Wood is a fibrous material which conducts water from the roots to the leaves.

Trees, shrubs and vines have a long lived perennial woody stem. The outer part of a tree trunk, twig or woody root is called the bark. Inside this is the cambium, and the inner most part is called the wood or xylem.



The outer most part of a tree is called the bark. This is a layer of dead corky cells which protects the rest of stem. The inner bark (phloem) lies just inside the bark and is a live spongy layer which transports sugars and other substances from the leaves to other parts of the tree. This inner bark eventually becomes the outer bark as it grows outwards. As the tree ages the bark becomes rougher in texture and can peel or flake away.

New wood is derived from the cambium which contains cells that are constantly dividing. This layer is known as the growth ring and determines the age of a tree. A wide ring indicates a good growth year whilst a narrow ring signifies that the tree has been subjected to poor growing conditions.

As the tree grows and ages the inner wood is not needed for water movement and so it dies, one ring at a time, and becomes heartwood. The active living wood on the outside, known as sapwood, conveys all the water and minerals through the stem.

There is no scientific definition to separate a tree from a shrub. However, a shrub will be usually less than 13 feet tall with stems no more than about 3 inches in diameter. Of course, shrubs can develop into trees.

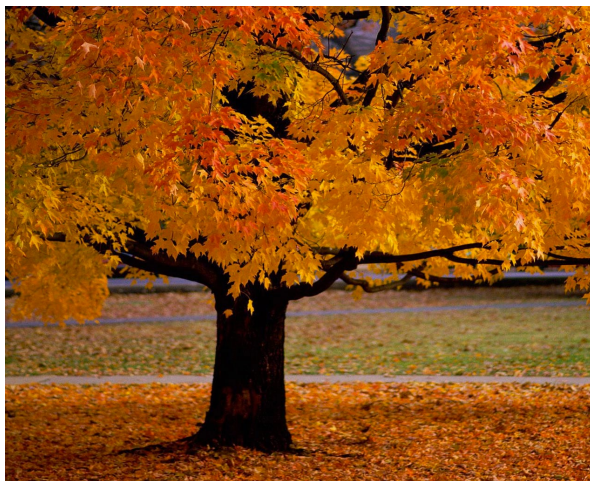
Much Wenlock Town Council owns trees at Much Wenlock cemetery and the Gaskell Recreation Ground. Many of the trees on the Gaskell Recreation Ground can be considered as ‘heritage trees’ because they have provenance. Indeed, many were planted by the late Dr William Penny Brookes (1809-1895). There is also a 30ft oak which was planted to mark the golden jubilee of the reign of Queen Victoria, a golden English Oak planted by Baron Pierre de Coubertin (friend of Penny Brookes) in 1890, and a Lucombe Oak planted by Juan Antonio Samaranch (president of the International Olympic Committee) in 1994. All trees on the Gaskell Recreation Ground are protected by TPOs.

Trees provide attractive landscapes and give aesthetic enjoyment. They break up the harsh outlines of buildings by softening the view, and create picturesque avenues in urban areas.

Evergreen trees provide green foliage all year round. These include pines, spruces and junipers.



Deciduous trees on the other hand shed their leaves to help them survive cold winter spells but before doing so they provide a rainbow of colour through the autumn and then come alive again in spring time. Deciduous trees include elms, maples and ashes.



2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Much Wenlock Town Council recognises the benefits that trees and hedges make to the environment. This strategy outlines how the Council will protect and care for trees and hedges that are on Council owned land, and how the Council will endeavour to maintain a safe environment that can be enjoyed by the local community and visitors alike, by ensuring that adequate risk management is in place.

The Council will keep a close eye on other trees and hedges within the parish to ensure that no undue harm comes to them. This will be done by carefully examining all planning applications for tree works and by being observant when travelling through the area under the Council's jurisdiction. The Town Council will also work closely with the Much Wenlock Tree Forum.

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF TREES

Trees help to stabilise the atmosphere by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and turning it into oxygen. They also absorb heavy metals from contaminated land, and absorb moisture and rainfall. Their roots break up the soil which allows water to penetrate and rainwater is more easily absorbed which can help to reduce flooding.

In accordance with *Objective 3: Reducing flood risk*, in the Neighbourhood Plan for Much Wenlock, the Council will support the protection of existing trees and the planting of new trees.





Trees absorb pollution from the air and are often planted alongside busy motorways to assist in noise reduction. Tree roots help to prevent soil erosion and give more stability to river banks and other areas of loose ground.



A tree can be dated by the number of rings

Trees are of many types and have many uses. They produce nuts and fruits, are used as a building material, some are used to produce medicines, and trees are more frequently being used for biofuels as a source of renewable energy. Trees also provide shelter and habitat for a variety of wildlife.

Much Wenlock Town Council:

-  supports the protection of all trees and hedges within the Much Wenlock area in accordance with *Objective 7: green and open spaces*, and *Objective 8: the local landscape and wildlife*, in the Neighbourhood Plan for Much Wenlock
-  supports the retention of high nature conservation or landscape value, including mature trees, species-rich hedgerows (*Policy LL2*, of the Neighbourhood Plan for Much Wenlock)
-  understands the value of mature trees, hedgerows and woodland
-  actively encourages the enhancement of the green infrastructure within the parish

4. PROTECTING OUR TREES

Many trees of a high amenity value, or which have a significant impact on the environment, are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). These are made under Section 198 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and awarded by principal authorities. All landowners on whose land protected trees are growing are served with a copy of the associated TPO.

Once a tree is protected by a TPO permission from the local authority must be approved before any pruning or felling can commence. This is also true if the tree is within a Conservation Area. In compliance with Section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 anyone wishing to fell trees or carry out tree work on trees which are not protected by TPOs in conservation areas must give the principal authority six weeks prior notice.

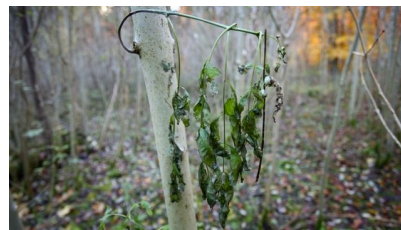
However, a dead, dying, or dangerous protected tree may be felled without permission, although the council's tree officer must be contacted first unless the tree is deemed to need emergency action. The local authority may insist that a felled or dead tree is replaced with one of a suitable species and size, especially if a protected tree has been removed. Before a tree more than three metre cubed of timber can be felled a felling licence must be obtained from the Forestry Authority. However, gardens and certain other sites are exempt from felling licenses. It is advisable for tree owners to seek advice before undertaking any tree works.

Anyone found to have felled, uprooted or willfully destroyed, or deliberately damaged, or pruned a tree in a manner likely to destroy it, may be prosecuted and liable to pay a substantial fine by contravening a TPO.

If anyone is concerned about a tree or trees being felled in a Conservation Area, or if the trees are protected, they should contact the Tree and Woodland Amenity Protection Officer at Shropshire Council on 01743 252584 who will take appropriate action if necessary.

Infection

Trees are prone to infection and infestation by many different pests and diseases which, if not treated, can lead to the death of the tree and the spread of the infection. One of the more serious diseases is *Chalara fraxinea*, a fungus which affects ash trees. It causes leaf loss and crown dieback. It can kill affected trees.



A small moth, (*Cameraria ohridella*) can cause the leaves of Horse Chestnut trees to brown, although the trees can recover.

Acute Oak Decline (AOD) is thought to be the result of infestation by a beetle (*Agrilus biguttatus*) that causes bleeding of the bark, although it may be attributable to a number of combined factors. Oaks can also be attacked by other pests, such as the pinhole Borer (*Platypus cylindrus*).

The Asian longhorn beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*) is a new threat to Ash, Birch, Poplar, Sycamore, Willow and some fruit trees. It bores into the trunks of these trees and severe infestations can be fatal.

Climate change has also begun to contribute to conditions which are detrimental to the health of trees. For example, milder wetter winters, hard frosts and hotter dryer summers.

Professional help should be sought where a tree is thought to be in danger.

5. TREE PROTECTION ORDERS

The following is a list of trees in Much Wenlock which are protected by TPOs.

Smithfield Road, Much Wenlock (TPO/28)

Nine (9) lime trees opposite Wenlock Motors.

Reason for TPO: "The trees are very prominent in the immediate street scene and are visible from many parts of the town. It is considered that they are of high amenity value and should be preserved."

Bradley Quarry, Much Wenlock (TPO/45)

Mixed broadleaf and conifer trees within the disused quarry.

Reason for TPO: "The trees are important and an attractive feature in this area and their retention will ensure the screening of the starter factories for which planning permission has been granted at Bradley Quarry" and Farley oil terminal.

Southfield Road, Much Wenlock (TPO/53)

Group of three larches at Larch house, Southfield Road of which only one remains. Permission was given to remove two in 1999 and 2008 respectively.

Reason for TPO: For the remaining tree: "This tree stands in an elevated and prominent position and is, therefore, a significant feature in the neighbourhood especially when viewed from the east along Southfield Road. It can also be clearly seen from Victoria Road where it enhances the visual amenity of the Conservation Area."

Permission to remove the remaining tree has been sought by the owner in both 2003 and 2010. Permission was refused on the grounds "that the felling of the larch tree would seriously diminish the visual amenity of the locality."

Farley Road, Much Wenlock (TPO/95)

Broadleaf and conifer trees in the grounds of the Lady Forester Hospital. All the trees on the hospital site, which now includes the remaining trees at Foresters Gardens, are protected by a Group Tree Preservation Order.

Reason for TPO: "the amenity value of the trees and of this site to the town of Much Wenlock."

Land at the entrance to Bache Farmhouse, Homer, Much Wenlock (TPO/118)

Large-leaved lime tree on the village green in Homer.

Reason: "The Council considers that the lime tree, which is located in a prominent position in Homer, contributes significantly to the visual amenity of the village." "The lime tree is located prominently on a grass 'splitter' island in the middle of the road and, being a perfect specimen, it contributes significantly to the character of the village." This tree was planted in 1977 to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

Old Engineering Works, Barrow Street, Much Wenlock (TPO/116)

One (1) Walnut tree, opposite Carbers Cottage at corner of development of new houses.

Reason: "The walnut tree, which is located in a prominent position close to the boundary of the Much Wenlock Conservation Area, contributes significantly to the visual amenity of the street scene."

"It was considered desirable to protect the tree in order to ensure its continued existence when the property changes hands from the developer to the first and subsequent residents."

Brockenhurst, Farley Road, Much Wenlock (TPO/131)

23 Douglas Firs and 1 Lime tree alongside "Woodlands" and along two sides of "Brockenhurst".

Reason: "The Council considers the line of trees to be of high quality value as they are a prominent feature on a main route into and out of Much Wenlock."

Permission was given in September 2008 to crown raise the lime to a height of 3 metres to clear the path. Permission was given in November 2012 to remove two of the Douglas Firs which were in poor health.

2, High Causeway, Much Wenlock (TPO/142)

One Sycamore on corner of High Causeway and Southfield Road.

Reason: "Thesycamore is a healthy and structurally-sound mature tree providing very significant public amenity value to the Southfield Road and High Causeway part of Much Wenlock."

St. Mary Magdalene (R.C.) Church, Barrow Street, Much Wenlock (TPO/152)

One Weeping Willow on land where the former St. Mary Magdalene Church was situated.

Reason: ".....The tree is a prominent feature on Barrow Street and it makes an important contribution to the visual amenity of the local environment, given that it can clearly be seen from a public footpath and road.....The potential change of use of the site means that the tree could be deemed at risk."

Gaskell Recreation Grounds (TPO/154)

All the trees on the Gaskell Recreation Ground (and on William Brookes School site). 174 trees, both broadleaf and conifers.

15, High Street, Much Wenlock (TPO/157)

Weeping Willow at the back of Number 15 High Street.

Reason: "The willow has an individual prominence which makes a significant contribution to the visual amenity of the locality. It is a prominent feature in the core of Much Wenlock." "The tree is viewed (as being) under threat from development pressure."

Land at rear of 27-30, St. Mary's Road, Much Wenlock (TPO/158)

One Yew tree and one Ash tree.

Reason: The trees appear healthy and are in good condition and should have considerable longevity if given protection. The trees are in prominent positions in the centre of this historic town and are highly visible from many aspects of the local environment. The trees are perceived to be at risk due to development pressures."

Wenlock Priory 17th March 2010

All trees in the grounds of Wenlock Priory.

Much Wenlock does, also, have one hedgerow that is protected statutorily:

Hedge retained under Hedgerow Regulations 1997

The hedge in the field adjoining Much Wenlock Primary School on land owned by Wenlock Estates (Grid Ref: SO 6299SE)

Reason: This is an historical hedgerow, almost 184 metres in length, pre-dating 1814. The historical evidence from the Victoria History shows that between 1807 and 1814, the Much Wenlock racecourse moved to land that includes the hedgerow. The two large gaps, one at each end, are on the line of the course over which the horses have run.

An application to remove the hedgerow was made by Wenlock Estates in 2008. This request was turned down at a Public Inquiry on 26th March 2008 (Appeal Reference: APP/HGW/07/304).

6. CONSERVATION AREA PROTECTION

The centre of Much Wenlock is a Conservation Area and no trees within this area may be worked on without permission from Shropshire Council.

A map of Much Wenlock Conservation Area can be found at the end of this Strategy.

7. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

When the Council's Planning & Environment Committee receives a planning application for tree works it will not support the removal of a tree unless there is good reason for its removal and that there is assurance of its replacement. The Committee will take the view that a tree should remain unless there are strong reasons for its removal. Neither will the Committee consider it beneficial to remove or alter the character of any woodland or hedge unless it finds adequate justification for so doing.

Prior to any new development the Town Council will recommend that all developers follow procedures as set out in British Standard 5837: 2012, and British Standard 2998: 2010 - "Trees in relation to construction, recommendations". This requires developers to carry out an arboricultural assessment of the proposed building site prior to any development.

Any trees on site will be assessed under the following categories:

A - Those trees of high quality and value

B - Those trees of moderate quality and value

C - Those trees of low quality and value

R - Those trees in such a condition that any existing value would be lost within ten years and which should, in the current context, be removed for reasons of sound arboricultural management.

The Council will study carefully the survey document and will, as much as possible, seek to retain all 'Category A' trees and the majority of 'Category B' trees. Consideration of 'Category C' trees will be on the basis of the tree's health.

Should the Town Council need to carry out any tree works it will obtain any necessary consent, such as may be required under Tree Preservation Order, Conservation Area or Forestry Commission felling licence regulations, prior to any work being carried out.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES

As a land owner the Town Council has certain responsibilities and must ensure that it complies with the law. Below are some examples of legislation which the Council must observe:

Occupiers Liability Acts 1957 & 1984 states that "The occupier must take 'reasonable care' or 'common duty of care' to ensure visitors to his property are safe". The 1984 Act extended some protection to trespassers.

Management of the Risk from Falling Trees (SIM 01/2007/05) The Town Council must have adequate risk management in place to control the risk of harm to employees, contractors and members of the public. To this end the Council will ensure that thorough risk assessments and routine checks of trees in its care are carried out by a competent person.

The Council will arrange for a comprehensive tree inspection to be carried out every 5 years by a qualified Arboricultural Officer who will have the minimum qualification required, which is the Technicians Certificate in Arboriculture granted by the Arboricultural Association, or an equivalent qualification, together with at least two years practical experience of tree management, preferably in a local authority situation.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and amendments) This Act covers the protection of birds, some animals and plants, the countryside, National Parks, designation of protected areas and public rights of way.

9. SIGNIFICANT TREE WORKS

Should the need arise for significant tree works to be carried out the Town Council will advise anyone who will be affected, such as neighbours and other interested parties, prior to the works taking place. Should any potentially controversial works be considered the Council will consult with the local community.

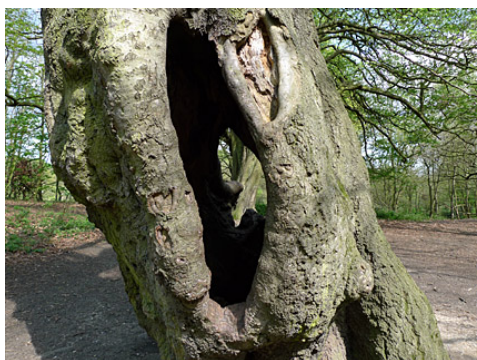
The Council will monitor all tree works carefully to ensure that high standards are maintained throughout and that health and safety regulations are complied with.

10. ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Below is some advice and guidance for anyone who is concerned about what might be deemed as a dangerous tree.

Dangerous trees

If anyone thinks a tree is dangerous they should have it inspected by a competent arboriculturist who will advise what action to take. If anyone is concerned with the safety of a tree in someone else's ownership they should speak to the landowner about it. In the event that the landowner denies any responsibility, and shows no intention of making the tree safe, then contact Shropshire Council who, provided the tree is imminently dangerous, may be able to enforce Section 23 of the Miscellaneous Provisions Act (1976). This Act entitles the local authority to make safe the tree and to retrieve associated costs from the landowner.



It is not often that hollow trees pose any danger since decay is part of the natural life cycle of certain species of tree, including Oak and Ash. Interestingly, all truly ancient trees which have stood for hundreds of years, are hollow, although this may not necessarily compromise the strength of their structure since, a hollow tree has less weight to support. Surprisingly, younger trees showing signs of hollowing due to disease and decay pose more of a threat since they may not be able to tolerate potential weakening.

Swaying trees are not always dangerous because trees have sufficient flexibility to dissipate the wind's energy. However, if the ground beneath the tree shows signs of heave (ground movement) and there is evidence of cracks along the root line, or cracks where the roots have snapped, there may be a problem. An arboriculturalist will be able to advise further.

Can trees cause underground damage?

Tree roots may occasionally affect foundations built on heavy clay soils or peats because the roots absorb ground water which will cause the soil to shrink leading to a slump in the foundations, and subsidence will occur. Large trees growing in close proximity to buildings may cause problems, such as the displacement of paving slabs, as the tree's roots expand. Drains will only be affected by tree roots if they are already damaged since they will allow the roots to grow through any cracks or loose joints leading to a blocked drain. Drains can also be affected by subsidence.



Above: Wellingtonia on the Gaskell Recreation Ground

11. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This Strategy has been developed with information from the following sources:

Much Wenlock Tree Forum

Oxford Dictionaries

Utah State University

Shropshire Council (<http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/environment/trees-and-woodlands/>)

Shropshire Star

