



Ridgeways **T** 01242 522051
Oakley Road **M** 07860 790024
Cheltenham **E** info@treeking.co.uk
GL52 6PA **W** treeking.co.uk

Report on trees for Old Marston Parish Council

May 2010

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Company Registration No: 05934386
VAT No: 720 8066 54

Inspection of trees for Long Marston Parish Council

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Instructions were received from Old Marston Parish Council to inspect and report upon the condition and management of trees at the following sites:
- Boulton's Lane Recreation Ground
 - Mill Lane Recreation Ground
 - Mill Lane Allotment Gardens
 - Elmsfield Road Cemetery and adjacent land
 - Oxford Road/Marston Ferry Road Recreation Grounds.
- 1.2 I reported on the condition of trees on the same sites in April 2006, at which time some of the trees in Boulton's Lane Recreation Ground had been found to be causing subsidence damage to a nearby house. These issues have been resolved, and no consideration of the risks which tree roots might cause to buildings or underground structures are to be included in the assessment.
- 1.3 I visited the site and met with Mr C. Haynes and Mrs K. Stratford of Old Marston Parish Council. I am an independent Arboricultural Consultant with 29 years experience in the industry, I hold the Professional Diploma of Arboriculture and I am a Fellow of the Arboricultural Association.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 In accordance with normal practice, the trees were inspected from the ground, which the most serious defects of trees are likely to occur. Where there is evidence of defects higher in the tree which require further investigation, a climbing inspection may be recommended. No climbing inspections are recommended in this report.
- 2.2 All the trees were inspected, but only those trees requiring tree surgery are scheduled below. A number of trees were removed in 2006, and the trees have been re-numbered in this report to avoid confusion.

3. Discussion

- 3.1 In Boulton's Lane Recreation Ground, a number of trees were removed on my recommendations of 2006. Some were removed unavoidably because they were causing subsidence damage, and others were removed because they were defective or over-crowded. In this report, I have made further recommendations for the removal of trees for reasons of over-crowding.
- 3.2 In a forest, trees may be planted as close as 1.5m (5ft) apart. The skill of the forester is to keep the crop of trees growing vigorously by manipulating the numbers of trees, through regular removal of the weaker or less desirable trees, to favour the better ones. At the outset, there could be as many as 1000 trees on a acre of ground, and when the crop of trees is mature, there may be only 50. Despite the fact that 95% of the trees have been felled, the forest remains fully stocked as each tree grows larger.
- 3.3 If the forester does not thin the crop, the branches of adjacent trees meet, and then the only way they can grow is upwards. Under-thinned plantations are all too common, especially at times when the economics of forestry are being squeezed. When this happens, the life-span of the trees is reduced because they become stressed, the slower-growing but often longer-lived trees (eg. Oak) are usually lost under the faster growth of the pioneer species (eg. Birch), and the entire wood may be at risk of being blown down.

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- 3.4 Regular removal of individuals from groups of trees is therefore an essential part of good husbandry. It does not mean that overall woodland cover is being lost, because the space they leave will be occupied by the trees which remain.
- 3.5 In the Mill Lane Recreation Ground, the woodland strip has become very over-crowded. I have recommended that a small number of trees be removed where it is possible thereby to benefit the growth of significantly more valuable English Oak trees. If this is done soon, a small number of high quality trees can be saved from the large number of under-thinned trees, many of which have in-grown forks and short useful safe lives.
- 3.6 Growing along the left side of Cumberledge Close is a line of good quality Lime trees. These will soon be suffering competition from the trees within the Recreation Ground, and consideration should soon be given to removing some of the latter to allow the better trees to thrive.
- 3.7 Horse Chestnut trees nationally are severely affected by Bleeding Canker Disease. Horse Chestnut trees should be monitored annually because, although the progress of the disease varies, the condition of some affected trees can decline rapidly. (Appendix B)

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APPENDIX A

The management of tree risks

The management of tree risks

The following is taken from the **English Nature** publication *Veteran Trees: a guide to risk and responsibility*:¹

“A site may be important for a range of historic, landscape or wildlife features. As zero risk is not a societal expectation, it is reasonable to expect that these valued features will be retained, albeit with specific management requirements for the maintenance of adequate safety.”

“Nothing is without risk

We are at risk every day in our own home, travelling to work and in the workplace. We expect to take risks, and the law requires only that we should be guarded from risks that are unreasonable. Absolute safety or the eradication of all risk is not expected and arguably is neither possible nor desirable. In the context of tree management, such an approach could result in the loss of all tree associated amenities. By controlling risks from the hazards, owners are meeting natural and ethical duties for the safety of others. They are also meeting the requirements of insurers and of the law.”

It is an accepted that no tree may be regarded as entirely safe. Trees are living systems, the condition of which it is often impossible to assess with accuracy. Pragmatic decisions must balance the apparent condition of the tree, all facets of its value, the location and the “target”.

In assessing the *overall risk* which any tree or group of trees poses, the management requirements are decided upon after consideration of the *target rating*, or what could be hit if part of the tree failed, and the *hazard rating*, or the likelihood that failure might occur.

¹ One of the co-authors is Charles Mynors QC, an expert in the law as it relates to trees.

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The *target rating* seeks to balance the vulnerability of the target and the length of time it is exposed to the risk, and to quantify it (low, medium and high). The *target rating* for cows which may sometimes stand beneath a tree in a field would be less than that for vehicles travelling at speed on a busy highway, or a tree in an urban park where people habitually congregate.

The tree surveyor observes the condition of the tree, and uses experience to assess the *hazard rating*, that is, the probability that any part of the tree might fail and the size/mass of the defective part of the tree. This is combined with the *target rating* to assess the *overall risk* and make management recommendations. Additional considerations, such as a tree's exceptionally high visual amenity or its historical or conservation value, may also be taken into account.

Tree surgery is recommended to make trees safe, to maintain trees in good condition and to obviate future problems. Where the target rating is low or the tree is of higher value, the acceptable hazard may be greater.

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APPENDIX B

Bleeding Canker Disease of Horse Chestnuts

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Bleeding Canker Disease of Horse Chestnuts

Bleeding Canker Disease is a disease of Horse Chestnut trees which has become widespread in recent years. Its cause is not fully understood, but it is thought to be caused by a bacterium of the *Pseudomonas* genus. Formerly thought to be caused by a fungal infection of the roots, the disease is sometimes referred to as *Phytophthora*.

The effect upon an individual tree is uncertain. Symptoms vary from tarry spots upon the bark which indicate a canker of the inner bark beneath, to strips of dead bark reaching far into the crown.

The prognosis is also uncertain and ranges from the recovery of slightly affected trees, to the rapid spread of the cankers which causes the death of the tree. Trees which are affected by Bleeding Canker Disease may not become liable to fail for some time and their immediate removal may not be required. When the strips of dead tissue on the main branches become extensive, the need to fell the tree within the foreseeable future is inescapable.

An experimental treatment is available from JCA Ltd (telephone 01422 376335 or www.jcaac.com). The cost is likely to be no less than £250 + vat per tree, and although the results are so-far promising, they are not proven.

Schedule of works to trees – May 2010

Crown reduction: a crown reduction of 25% is a reduction of a branch or stem by one quarter.

Monitor condition: draws attention for the particular need to keep the condition of an individual tree under review. It does not imply that other trees do not require regular inspection.

20% crown reduction: shortening of each branch by around one fifth of its length.

Climbing inspection: climber to inspect for other potential defects, and report any which appear to be significant to the consultant.

Priority of works:

- 1: Works are urgent and should be undertaken within 7 days. None in this report.
- 2: Works are necessary for safety and should be undertaken within 6 weeks. None in this report.
- 3: Works needed to make trees safe. Recommended timescale within 3 months.
- 4: Works needed to make trees safe once higher priority works have been completed. Recommended 12 months.
- 5: Works not needed to make trees safe, usually recommended for silvicultural reasons to benefit other trees.

General recommendation: Cut the ivy on all trees where it is present

Ivy is not a parasite, it takes nothing from the tree on which it grows and it has many benefits for wildlife. However, it may add to the wind resistance and conceal defects.

Stumps should be painted with an appropriate herbicide to prevent them re-growing. Good contractors will be familiar with the safe use of these chemicals. Alternatively, they can be ground-out to facilitate mowing and avoid mower damage.

Boult's Lane Recreation Ground (trees shown on accompanying sketch plan)

Tree No.	Species	Condition	Management recommendations
T1	Lime	In satisfactory condition.	None.
T2	Cherry	Wound on lower stem occluding satisfactorily.	None.
T3	Norway Maple	In satisfactory condition. Suppressed.	Fell to benefit surrounding trees. Works priority: 5
T4	Ash	In satisfactory condition.	None.
T5	Field Maple	In satisfactory condition.	None.
T6	Field Maple	The bark of the fork of a branch on the SE side is in-grown and potentially weak.	Reduce branch by 30%. Works priority: 4
T7	Norway Maple	Basal bark damage.	None.
T8	Norway Maple	Suppressed.	Fell to improve growth of other trees. Works priority: 5
T9	Ash	Dominant tree.	None.
T10	Lime	Fork at 2m high will become in-grown in due course.	None.
T11	Norway Maple	Poor tree, suppressed.	Fell to improve growth of other trees and to clear light. Works priority: 5
T12	Ash	In-grown fork at 1.4m high. Will need tree surgery in due course.	None.
T13	Field Maple	Basal wound.	Monitor condition.
T14	Cherry	Good tree.	None.
T15	Norway Maple	Two in-grown forks are weak.	Fell to benefit T16. Works priority: 5

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Tree No.	Species	Condition	Management recommendations
T16	Cherry	In satisfactory condition.	None.
T17	Lime	Narrow crown.	None.
T18	Field Maple	Untidy tree. In satisfactory condition.	None.
T19	English Oak	Narrow crown. In satisfactory condition.	None.
T20	Ash	Several forks in-grown.	Monitor condition.
T21	Field Maple	Untidy tree. In satisfactory condition.	None.
T22	Field Maple	In satisfactory condition. Dominant.	None.
T23	Oak	In satisfactory condition. Good tree.	None.
T24	Field Maple	In satisfactory condition.	Reduce height by 3m to allow T 23 to develop. Works priority: 5
T25	Ash	Stem has failed at 1m high as result of in-grown bark.	Monitor condition.
T26	Field Maple	Bush of no consequence.	None.
T27	Field Maple	4-stem bush. In satisfactory condition.	None.
T28	Field Maple	Untidy bush. In satisfactory condition.	None
T29	English Oak	Good tree.	None
T30	Field Maple	Untidy multi-stemmed tree. In satisfactory condition.	Remove one upright-growing dead branch at 1.4m high. Works priority: 4
T31	Lime.	In satisfactory condition, but potentially too close to the building in the long-term.	Fell. Works priority: 5
T32	Field Maple	Fork at 75cm high will become in-grown in due course.	None.

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Row of trees at the east end of Recreation Ground – right to left (south to north)

Tree No.	Species	Comments	Management recommendations	Works priority
T33	Ash	Too close to nearest house in the long-term and bark of forks will become in-grown.	Fell.	5
T34	Field Maple	In satisfactory condition.	Remove the 2 lowest branches at 45cm high.	5
T35	Lime	In-grown forks in the upper crown render this tree useless in the long-term without recurrent tree surgery.	Fell.	4
T36	Field Maple	Untidy tree. In satisfactory condition.	None.	na
T37	Ash	The fork at 1.7m appears to be in satisfactory condition.	Reduce the large branch or co-dominant stem branch over the recreation field by 30%.	5
T38	Field Maple	Untidy tree. In satisfactory condition.	None	na
T39	Lime	Main forks in-grown.	Fell	4
T40	Ash	Dominant tree. Forks at 4m high in satisfactory condition.	None	na
T41	Field Maple	Good form. Suppressed by T40.	None	na
T42	Lime	Bark of main forks in-grown.	Fell	5
T43	Lime	Bark of some forks in-growing and not suitable for long-term retention.	None.	na
T44	English Oak	Excellent tree.	None.	na

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Tree No.	Species	Comments	Management recommendations	Works priority
T45	Lime	Thick ivy – form may be compromised.	Cut the ivy and re-assess in 1 year.	4
T46	Ash	In satisfactory condition.	Fell to allow T47 to develop.	5
T47	English Oak	Potential for long-term retention if T46 is felled to allow it to develop.	None.	na
T48	Field Maple	Good form.	None	na
T49	Field Maple	Untidy tree	None	na
T50	Ash	Fork at 2m high will become in-grown in due course. Not suitable for long-term retention.	Fell to allow T49 and T51 to develop.	5
T51	Red Oak	Good tree, through not as well suited to the heavy soil as English Oak. Can only be retained if T50 is felled soon, otherwise it will become suppressed. (T50 is larger, but is not a long-term tree). ²	None	na
T52 & 53	Ash	Vigorous ivy growth.	Cut the ivy, remove from the lowest 1m and inspect condition of stem base and report suspected defects to the consultant.	3

² In deciding which trees to remove, more especially amongst mixed species which grow at different rates, sometimes difficult decisions have to be made.

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Land behind the cemetery

Tree No.	Species	Location Condition	Management recommendations Works priority
T1	Norway Maple	Top boundary of field beyond cemetery. One broken ranch, one crossing branch.	Crown clean. Works priority: 5
T2	Elm	Top boundary of field beyond cemetery. Dead trees.	Fell. Works priority: 4
T3	Field Maple	Lower boundary against ditch in field.	Remove 2-3 low branches which have developed from epicormic shoots. Works priority: 5
T4	Ash	Adjacent to gate from road into field. two in-grown forks aligned across the line of stress naturally applied to them. In satisfactory condition.	Monitor condition.
T5	Ash	Growing through railings of lower cemetery.	Cut to ground level and apply herbicide to prevent re-growth. Works priority: 5

Mill Lane Recreation Ground

Tree No.	Species	Location Condition	Management recommendations
T1	Horse Chestnut	On left of gate on entering. Basal bark wounds.	Monitor condition.
T2	Various	A small number of trees (approx. 10) within the woodland strip marked with spots of blue paint. These are either dead, or should be removed to benefit the growth of significantly higher value English Oak trees.	Fell Works priority: 5
All roadside trees		Cut the ivy, more especially on the roadside trees. Works priority: 4	

Mill Lane Allotments

Tree No.	Species	Location Condition	Management recommendations
T1	Red Oak	T3 of previous survey, in lay-by adjacent to the A40 at the end of Mill Lane.	Cut the ivy, remove from the lowest 1m and inspect condition of stem base. Report suspected defects to consultant. Works priority: 4

Oxford Road Recreation Ground (adjacent to Mortimer Hall)

Tree No.	Species	Location Condition	Management recommendations
T1	Beech	Opposite No.73 Oxford Road. Small tree close to the railings, near to the pedestrian entrance by Mortimer Hall.	Fell to favour the growth of surrounding trees. Works priority: 5
T2	Lime	4 th tree along from the pedestrian entrance by Mortimer Hall.	Cut the ivy. Works priority: 5
T3	Lime	Opposite No.79 Oxford Road. 3-stemmed tree from 2m high. 5 th tree along from the gate and one from the corner. Former T5. Crossing branch at 5m high on the E side over the path.	Reduce the crossing branch by 30%. Works priority: 4
T4	Lime	Beside ramp, 2 nd tree. Formerly T8. In-grown fork at 2.2m high. In satisfactory condition.	Monitor condition.
T5	Beech	Formerly part of G2. One tree marked with blue paint, in-grown fork.	Fell. Works priority: 4
T6	Cherry	Dead, near gate. near to former T1 & T2.	Fell. Works priority: 3

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Marston Ferry Road Recreation Ground (through the tunnel)

Tree No.	Species	Location Condition	Management recommendations
T1	Poplar	Inside from the gate, on the left side on entering the open area. Marked with blue paint. Single un-branched stem, moribund.	Fell. Works priority: 3
T2	Poplar	Near to former T16 marked with blue paint. Large tree, multi-stemmed, extensive decay.	Reduce to approx. 2m high. Works priority: 3