

TREE GROUP REPORT 2023

A new tree group was formed last year and currently comprises five members.

Eight new trees were planted in the communal areas in Ethelburt Avenue earlier this year, five funded via the Road Improvement Group and three funded by generous local residents. Thanks to all those who helped with the planting. Tree water bags were also purchased for the new trees and these seem to have worked through the long dry spells, thanks to regular topping up by nearby residents.

Since the Arboricultural Consultant, Marco Bartolini's 'Tree Assessment Report' of June 2022, there has been further deterioration of several of the trees, mainly due to the recent weather conditions. Some have suffered from bracket fungi, die-back of individual limbs and some have died completely. A further visual survey was carried out in July 2023 and an application made to Southampton City Council for consent for works to twenty one of the trees in the conservation area ranging from removal of suckers, removal of crossing and dead branches, through crown thinning to removal of dead trees. Approval was granted at the beginning of September and a start has been made on the removal of some of the dead wood. However there is still much to do. Obviously it is much easier to identify, fell dead trees and cut out dead limbs before the leaves fall in the late autumn, if the availability of volunteers and time permits.

The large ash tree in Stoneham Lane which was suffering from ash die-back disease has been felled. This took some time to arrange as Southampton City Council's tree officer required a full six weeks notice as the tree was not fully dead, and SSE wanted one of their surveyors to be present during the felling to ensure no debris fell into their adjacent electricity sub-station.

Abri, the successor of Swaythling Housing Society, is responsible for the maintenance of the trees on the large greens in Ethelburt Avenue and carried out some works on the lower green. They have been notified about the dying Corsican pine to the green on the corner of Stoneham Lane and Bassett Green Road. The Ermans Birch in the green in Bassett Green Road also appears to have died.

Some works were carried out to the large Monterey Cypress in Field Close but more is required, including removal of dead wood at high level. An estimate from a tree surgeon has been obtained and, as none of the Tree Group are qualified arboriculturists, it is proposed that this work is overseen and inspected by Marco Bartolini before any payment is made.

As funding for new trees and works is limited, the Tree Group would welcome any donations by residents, perhaps to commemorate a celebration or remember a loved one. The Directors of Herbert Collins Estates Ltd asked that any tree donated and planted in the communal areas of the estate should be agreed by Tree Group. Therefore the Group have drawn up some guidance:

1 Any tree to be donated to and planted on the estate requires the approval of the Tree Group

2 In general, the tree and its location should be in keeping with the overall tree planting scheme on the estate broadly in line with Herbert Collin's vision.

3 More specifically, the following should be observed:

- a] the tree, other than on the greens, should be a type of cherry
- b] it should have a clear stem and defined crown, rather than being bushy
- c] its location should be aligned with other trees along the verge, i.e. consider the spacing between the trees and its distance from the front gardens.

4 Any new tree should be watered during dry periods by the donor.

