

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council
Fairground and Cemetery 30/11/2021
Fairground Tree Work

Agenda item 21/042 7. To review and agree the work that needs undertaking on Tree 567 and any associated expenditure.

BACKGROUND

From the Tree Survey undertaken in November/December 2019, T567 is a mature Oak in fair physiological condition but poor structural condition. It was described as having slightly sparse canopy; series of branch failures and large branch removals and a potential for coalesced decay. It was recommended that this should be removed, and such work was of a moderate priority i.e. work is “important to carry out as soon as reasonably possible”

At the request of SMPC, the tree was reviewed by WBC Tree Inspector in March 2020 who reported as follows:

I had the opportunity to inspect the large oak tree tagged 0567 (and recorded on our system as oak tree OBFC). Although you have requested that I take a look at this tree I have previously carried out an inspection on the tree, and will do in the future in so far as the tree abuts the highway and WBC has a duty of care to ensure that roadside trees do not present serious risk to highway users.

My findings, based on a visual tree assessment and quantified tree risk assessment basis, are as follows:

Trunk type: single

Age: mature

Condition: reasonable

Tag: 0567

Stem diameter: 600-900mm

Spread: 15 to 20m

Height: >15m

Risk: low

Ownership: private (i.e. not owned by WBC)

Species: Quercus robur, English oak

Maintenance: we have previously pruned out deadwood in the crown that overhung the highway

General comments:

The structural condition is fair, whilst the physiological condition is reasonable. Multiple previous branch rip outs throughout the crown have left large amounts of space in the crown. Small volumes of small diameter deadwood remain in the crown, although these

present a low risk. The tree's lower stem, buttress roots and surface lateral roots do not show signs of decay, nor was there any evidence of fruiting bodies.

Although the tree has lost parts of its crown in the past the crown that remains is alive, has live budding throughout, and there are no current indications to suggest that this tree present a risk to the public.

Overall, my findings are that there is a strong lean towards retaining this tree due to its amenity value and the fact that given its age and location it could be providing opportunities for bats to roost, nest or hibernate in.

My recommendations are as follows:

- Retain this tree due to its age and habitat value, and as it forms part of a coherent line of mature trees running along the eastern boundary of the park.*
- Carry out an annual re-inspection of this tree (and recommended for all other similar aged trees in this locality), noting any significant changes.*
- If necessary carry out limited crown work, such as the removal of deadwood over the highway, or a reshaping of the crown on the western side of the tree.*
- If there is an insistence that the tree poses a significant risk to the public then employ an AA approved tree consultant to carry out a detailed arboricultural report that assesses the risk that the tree poses, and base decisions on the evidence presented.*

As part of the Fairground Tree Remedial Works survey, Sapling Arboricultural further reviewed T567 and reported:

As part of our site discussion I also understand that tree 567 is preferred to be retained due to its position in the landscape and wildlife benefits. Works to the tree are primarily necessary due to the history of branch failure, woodpecker holes in the principle branches, thickening of the primary branch in the central upper canopy all indicating further branch failures over the carriageway and footway is foreseeable and likely. An alternative specification for the works can be:

Crown reduction to a final height of 13 m with a 6 m horizontal radial canopy spread. Works to be carried out as a Moderate priority.

T567 does not have a TPO .

