

# Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

## Roads, Footpaths and Commons Committee Meeting 20/10/2022

### Brewery Common

**Agenda item 22/018 6: To receive an update on the management of Brewery Common and Summerlug and resolve to meet with the West Berkshire Council's Tree Officer to discuss the continued management of Brewery Common.**

### BACKGROUND

Brewery Common is owned by Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council but maintained by WBC. Summerlug Common is overseen by WBC.

IN 2019, SMPC undertook tree surveys of both Brewery Common and Summerlug Common and forwarded this information onto the tree officer at WBC.

In 1) considering whether as landowner under the Occupiers Act 1984 and common law, SMPC needed to undertake a further tree survey of Brewery Common and 2) to gain a further understanding of the management of Summerlug Common, advice was recently sought from WBC's tree officer. The following response was received:

*From my recollections, and from referring to our tree management database (Arbortrack), I can make the following points:*

#### *Brewery Common*

- I carried out a tree survey on 12/09/2017, and as far as I can see we did not raise works at this time*
- I carried out a tree survey on 22/03/2021, and no works were raised at this time*
- On 30/11/2021 I carried out a tree inspection (coded OFA4) on a tree growing to the side of a private lane (but sited on Brewery Common) leading to a property called 'Robin Hill'. I determined that the tree was unsafe and had the tree felled by our tree contractors in the following 7 working days*
- On 20/01/2021 I carried out an inspection of a tree (OE9Q) on Nightingale Lane, and subsequently got the tree felled in the following 7 working days; I think the farmer was having difficulty moving his tractor-mounted trailers past this tree*
- I recall that there was a small fallen tree by the side of the road, at the southern terminus of Brewery Common, and close to the property 'Hunters Lodge', and I carried out a tree inspection and determined that the tree posed no risk and could be left on site to rot down; no date available*

*This seems to be the only recorded data for Brewery Common that I have. I am happy to revisit in the next two weeks and carry out an update of the Brewery Common tree survey; I'll pass my findings on to you.*

#### *Summerlug*

- I have revisited the Summerlug woodland fairly regularly over the last few years, both in response to specific resident enquiries and through the pro-active inspections that we agreed to following the confirmation that WBC had responsibility for this woodland*
- I carried out a tree survey on 08/08/2018, no works raised*
- I carried out a tree survey on 16/08/2018, no works raised*
- I carried out a tree survey on 22/03/2021, no works raised*
- I carried out a tree survey on 13/04/2022, no works raised*
- In addition I carried out an inspection of a large oak tree (ODCY) on Drury Lane, immediately south of Summerlug, on 29/04/2020, and following this I instructed our tree contractors to fell the tree, based on the volume of decay in the tree and the risk it posed to users of the highway*
- In addition I carried out an inspection of the over mature and declining oak tree (OADD) sited outside no. 1 Hendys Cottages, on 08/08/2018, then on 29/04/2020, then on 22/03/2021, then on 22/08/2022, where on this date I decided that I would get the major deadwood removed from the tree, and leave it as a standing 5 metre stack on the grounds of safety*

*To the best of my knowledge the above lists reflects my tree-related involvement at these two sites since 2017. I will continue to re-inspect Brewery Common every couple of years (starting with re-inspecting it next week), and will re-inspect Summerlug annually, as appears to be what residents here would prefer. You may need to speak to Paul Hendry about any 'big picture' issues for these sites, for example, if there are any plans to change how the sites are managed; my involvement seems to be restricted to just carrying out tree safety inspections.*

*Finally, I'm always happy to meet up with a representative of the parish to walk these sites, and indeed I've met several residents at Summerlug to discuss any concerns they have had about trees.*

## **RECOMMENDATION**

To meet with the WBC tree officer to review the Brewery Common site and SMPC's role with regards to its management. The Committee may feel similar action should be taken with Summerlug Common.