

North Curry Parish Council

Lime trees in Church Road – Suggested way forward

The Parish Council have been keeping the issue of how to best manage the lime trees in Church Road under review for a considerable time. A survey of Parishioners views was carried out in 2012 and this revealed how much the majority value these trees which dominate the heart of the village. Since then certain crown reduction works have been carried out which reduced shading of the adjacent houses.

A sum has been set aside for future management of the trees. Reports on the condition of the trees and associated quotes have recently been received from three tree surgeons and these have varied significantly in their analysis and recommendations.

Following agreement by the Parish Council, the advice of the tree officers at both Taunton Deane and Somerset County Council has now been sought by Phil Stone. He has taken their advice in putting forward the following recommendations for consideration by the Parish Council:-

The advice from tree surgeons was very mixed, ranging from felling all 10 trees to doing nothing at the present time. The options are considered in turn :-

- 1) Felling all the trees is totally unacceptable and unnecessary
- 2) Pollarding all the trees is considered unacceptable due to the visual impact and the ongoing cost of future maintenance.
- 3) Reduction of the top of the tree crowns would be costly, achieve little and have a negative visual impact.
- 4) Cleaning out decayed wood from cavities and inserting drains on some of the trees would delay further decay but not solve the problem permanently.

Most of the wounds from previous pruning have healed over but four trees have larger cavities in which decay has set in and some action will be required, phased over a number of years. These trees are no's 2,3,5,8. (No1 being near the square)

It is proposed that the worst two of these four (no's 3 and 5) be felled and replaced immediately after felling with new lime trees of a suitable variety during the Autumn planting season. The impact and public reaction to this would then be considered and, subject to this review, further felling and replacement of the other two trees carried out in future years. Further review would then take place from then on. Research on the most suitable variety will be carried out.

Conclusion

It is suggested that felling of 2 trees as the first of a longer term phased replacement of the limes which are in the poorest condition is a restrained and practical solution to this important issue with which it is hoped that most of the many local residents who care deeply about these trees can agree.