



## Tree Condition Survey - July 2019

For trees on land owned by:

**Stalbridge Town Council**

Prepared by:

Jonathan Astill *Dip.Arb.(RFS) M.Arbor.A.*

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Tel: 01963 33455 Mobile: 07717 826806

e-mail: [info@astilltreecare.co.uk](mailto:info@astilltreecare.co.uk)

[www.astilltreecare.co.uk](http://www.astilltreecare.co.uk)

Astill Treecare Ltd, Brickfield Office, Maperton, Wincanton, Somerset BA9 8EG  
Registered in England Company No. 7608116

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES**

- 1.1 I have been instructed by Tracey Watson, the Town Clerk for Stalbridge Town Council, to undertake a preliminary condition survey of council owned trees on land at the following sites:
- (1) Land at junction of Gold Street, Park Grove and Grove Lane
  - (2) Station Road Car Park
  - (3) Verge north of Library, Station Road
  - (4) Land south-east of the Stalbridge Hub
  - (5) 'Pump' triangle at junction of Thornhill Road and Lower Road
  - (6) Village Hall, Lower Road
  - (7) Recreation Ground, Wessex Road
  - (8) Verge south of Nos: 21 to 35 Lower Road
- 1.2 The objectives of the survey are to assess the trees' condition within the context of their setting and make appropriate recommendations pertaining to public safety and good arboricultural management.
- 1.3 The survey has been undertaken in the spirit of the guidance provided by the National Tree Safety Group, in that due consideration has been given to the landscape and ecological benefits the trees provide when making recommendations for the management of risk to persons and property.
- 1.4 Where applicable, it is recommended that tree works are undertaken within the suggested timescales.

## **2.0 DATA COLLECTION**

- 2.1 The survey was carried out by Jonathan Astill on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> July 2019. On both occasions, the weather was dry and calm with clear visibility.
- 2.2 All individual trees over c. 100mm stem diameter have been individually tagged with numbered aluminum disks and were subject to a formal survey. Small and recently planted trees have not been tagged but have been assigned a reference number or letter which corresponds to the tree location plans. Some trees growing in small linear groups have not been identified individually but as 'Groups'.
- 2.3 The position of the trees have been plotted by eye. Whilst fit for the purpose of identifying the tree's locations, the plans are not scaled and should not be used for planning purposes.
- 2.4 The trees have been assessed for physiological health and structural condition from the ground using the Visual Tree Assessment method (VTA). Binoculars, a 900mm steel probe and a sounding mallet were used where it was deemed necessary.
- 2.5 Survey data for trees includes; tree number, species, approximate stem diameter, age class, physiological and structural condition, risk rating, management recommendations, and a priority rating to undertake works. A scoping rating for 'bat/wildlife habitat potential' has also been included for trees where major pruning works or felling is recommended. Details of the survey criteria can be found in the Tree Survey Schedule (Appx. A).
- 2.6 A photographic record has been made for select trees to use as comparative assessments in future surveys and monitoring, or to provide illustrative guidance for recommended pruning.

### 3.0 MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 You are advised to undertake the works specified in the management recommendation (within the suggested timeframes where applicable). A summary is as follows:

	Suggested Timeframe	Tree numbers
4.Urgent	Works required immediately to make tree safe	None
3. High	Within 1 month	None
2. Moderate	Within 3 months	0629, 0638, 0640, 0645, 0648
1.Low	Within 6 months	0634, 0637, 0638, 0639, 0653, 0654
D. Discretionary	Where resources permit	0625, 0628, Group B, 0638, 0646, Group E, 0647, 0649, Hedge G, 'Tree D', 0651, 0652, Group H, Group I
T. Tree Benefit	As soon as reasonably practical, (for the benefit of tree health and establishment) where resources permit	Group A, 0631, 0632, 0633, 0638, Group F, Tree B
M. Monitoring (in house)	During summer months as part of annual informal observations.	0623, 0626, 0628, 0629, 0632, 0639, 0640, 0641, 0642, Group D

*Note: Some trees have more than one priority*

- 3.2 **Annual in-house surveys:** Trees are dynamic, living organisms whose physiological and structural condition will change over the course of time in response to variables such as disease, weather events, climate, excavations and alterations to their local environment. In addition to the formal re-surveys by an arboriculturalist, all trees should be subject to an annual in-house survey particularly following severe weather events such as gales and heavy snow fall. The survey should be undertaken by a designated employee, maintenance contractor or member of the Town Council. The designated person does not need to be a specialist in trees, but simply be familiar with the land and are able to spot clear and obvious tree defects. (e.g. windthrown trees, dead and dying trees, large broken and dead branches, decay fungi, cracks in stems and large branches). A copy of the tree survey schedule should be referred to in which to make comparative assessments. If there are any defects or abnormalities noted that give rise to concern, it should be brought to the attention of the Town Clerk for action. If the Town Council are unsure of what action to take, you are recommended to seek the advice of an arboriculturalist.

- 3.3 **Ash Dieback (*Chalara*):** In the past decade, a fungal disease (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*), formerly named, yet still referred to as 'Chalara' Dieback, is infecting Ash trees throughout the British Isles with a devastating impact on our Ash population. Based on current research it is anticipated that c. 98% of all Ash in the UK will succumb to the disease within the next decade with c. 15% showing some resistance and 1% to 2% expected to show a high level of resistance. When the disease becomes advanced branches and stems dieback, become brittle and shed which may pose an unacceptable risk to people and property.

Stalbridge Town Council only have a few ash trees, with the largest growing at the village hall. A few small young ash trees are growing elsewhere on council land. Currently, none of the Ash are showing any clear symptoms of Chalara Ash Dieback. For guidance on how to spot the symptoms of Chalara, please visit the following site:

<https://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/pest-and-disease-resources/chalara-ash-dieback-hymenoscyphus-fraxineus/>

As part of the annual in-house survey you are advised to monitor the condition of your ash trees every summer for signs of Chalara. Trees with an advanced infection of Chalara may have to be felled before they pose a risk of significance. In the interim, if you suspect the disease on your Ash trees but are unsure what action to take, please do not hesitate to send me photographs by email for further advice.

- 3.4 **Resurvey frequency:** It is recommended than the trees included within this survey are subject to a formal resurvey within **3 years of the date of this report** (before August 2022) by a competent and suitably qualified arboriculturalist. The contents of this report should be used to make comparative assessments.

## **4.0 STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS AND STANDARD OF WORK**

**4.1 Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas:** As of the date of this report, I have checked with the North Dorset explorer for the presence of Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas within Stalbridge.

4.1.1 The principle effect of a Tree Preservation Order is to prohibit the: cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage and wilful destruction of trees without the Local Planning Authority's consent. A formal application must be made before undertaking non-exempt works to protected trees. Before carrying out exempt works, such as the removal of dead trees or the removal of dead branches, the Local Planning Authority must still be given 5 days written notice for trees subject to a TPO. For trees that present an urgent and serious safety risk, you must give the LPA written notice as soon as practicable after the work becomes necessary. **Trees growing in Conservation Areas are afforded a similar level of protection.**

4.1.2 According to the interactive mapping system, none of the trees within this survey are currently subject to a Tree Preservation Order.

**4.1.3 With exception to the Recreation Ground and the highway verge south of 21 to 35 Lower Road, all the other trees within this survey are growing inside the Stalbridge Conservation Area. Before undertaking any non-exempt tree works, you must give Dorset Council (North Dorset) 6 weeks written notification before carrying out the work.** For simplicity, this is best achieved by submitting the whole Tree Survey Schedule with the Tree Location Plans with your notification.

Contact details: [treeteamb@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:treeteamb@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) 01258 484248

**4.2 Protection of Wildlife:** Many trees contain wildlife such as bats and nesting birds among other flora and fauna which are protected by law. (*Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010*). Whilst the tree population managed by Stalbridge Town Council is relatively young and almost all the work currently proposed is relatively minor and deemed to pose a negligible risk of encountering bat roosts, tree contractors working on your behalf must take steps to ensure that any tree work carried out will not harm or disturb any protected species and accord with the requirements of the legislation. Wherever possible, tree works should be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season (between September to February).

**4.3 Standard of Work:** All specialist arboricultural works should be undertaken in accordance with '*BS.3998:2010 British Standard for Tree Work - Recommendations*' by competent, trained and fully insured arboricultural contractors.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Astill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the main name.

**Jonathan Astill Dip.Arb.(RFS) M.Arbor.A.**

**23<sup>rd</sup> July 2019**