

TREE GROUP REPORT 2024

The trees on the greens, along verges and in gardens make an important contribution to the character and appearance of our estate. Sadly there has been further deterioration since last year of some of the trees, mainly due to extreme weather conditions and old age. We are grateful to John Scoates and John Dixon for all their work in pruning, removing dead trees and stumps in Ethelburt Avenue.

Three new cherry trees were planted this year in the verges in Ethelburt Avenue. One was paid for from the Road Fund, one was kindly donated and planted by residents and another was donated in memory of long time resident Dave Adams. Dave planted many of the replacement trees in the verges and was always keen to maintain the original planting species. Therefore a standard Prunus Kanzan was an appropriate choice for his tree. Thanks to all those residents who water the young trees and keep the watering bags topped up in the summer months.

In November last year works were carried out to the large Monterey cypress tree in Field Close. There was significant storm damage to the upper canopy, resulting in branches being torn from the main stem and suspended by other live wood. There were also a significant number of major deadwood branches which had to be removed. A number of branches were deflecting and pressing down on overhead service cables: these were tip pruned clear of the cables. Following storms in March, there was further damage to this tree and a broken limb had to be removed by a tree surgeon.

The dead Himalayan birch on the green in Bassett Green Road was felled and the stump ground out. Nicola Birch, the appropriately named Assistant Tree Officer at Southampton City Council, pointed out that there is an obligation under Section 213 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that if a tree dies it is the duty of the owner of the land to plant another tree, of an appropriate size and species, at the same place as soon as they reasonably can. It was replaced with a Betula Pendula 'Fastigiata'. We have also recently been given a birch tree for planting on this green.

Residents are reminded that all the trees within our Conservation Area with a trunk diameter greater than 75mm at 1.5m above ground level are protected. This applies to both those in the communal areas and in private gardens. If anyone wishes to carry out works to a tree, they must give six weeks' written notice to Southampton City Council - for further information and an application form, please see <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/people-places/parks-open-spaces/trees/protected/>. There is no charge to residents applying to SCC for tree work. Pruning of fruit trees is excluded: as it states in our Appraisal and Management Plan 'Notice is not required for the pruning, in accordance with good horticultural practice, of any tree cultivated for the production of fruit'.

The Arboricultural Association [www.trees.org.uk] produces some helpful leaflets on planting, pruning and selecting tree surgeons and, along with the International Society of Arboriculture, maintains a register of quality assured and certified tree surgeons, including several in our area.

It is planned to plant new trees this winter to replace those which have been lost. Standard trees now cost around £100 each and the funding available for replacement trees is limited, so the Tree Group would welcome any donations from residents, perhaps to commemorate a celebration or remember a loved one. The Directors of Herbert Collins Estates Ltd ask that any tree donated and planted in the communal areas of the estate should first be agreed by Tree Group, following the guidance given last year.