

## **REPORT ON ASH TREES ON NPC LAND**

### **BACKGROUND**

There are 6 large Ash trees on the land which NPC believe they own in Nettleton Shrub. These trees were inspected by Kate Tate, Technical Support Officer Wiltshire Council (WC) and various tree surgeons in May 2019. At the time it was not felt by either Kate Tate or the tree surgeons that there was a need to fell but to keep under review. However, recent inspection shows that the trees now have Ash Die Back (ADB).

ADB has progressed rapidly over last 12 to 18 months across the UK. Wiltshire Council believe that 95% of all ash trees will need to be felled within 3 years. It is understood from tree surgeons that a tree can look healthy but drop branches and in some cases collapse without warning. There is no known cure for ADB.

Extract from [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) site:

“Trees affected by ash dieback weaken and die, and in some cases, the whole tree may suddenly disintegrate. This can pose a risk to safety and therefore felling is the only option to protect the public.”

### **QUOTATIONS**

9 tree surgeons were approached for quotes. 4 quotations were received, as follows:

Simon Penfold	£648 incl. VAT
Joe Thomas	£1030 (no VAT chargeable)
Greenway Tree Surgery	£1610 (no VAT chargeable)
Dryad Land and Tree Care (Matt Dry)	£1717 incl. VAT

As trees deteriorate tree surgeons are going to be increasingly reluctant to climb them, resulting in cherry pickers having to be used with significant cost increase. Note the comments attached to quote from Simon Penfold who is also is the Arboriculture Officer for S Gloucestershire Council and also those of Matt Dry (Dryad) that Taunton Dean BC have banned tree climbing. In addition, prices seem likely to rise as tree surgeons become busier as ADB spreads.

The owner of the adjacent field is happy for one tree and overhanging branches of two more to be dropped on his land for him to deal with. This may not be the case in the future as the property is for sale

Electricity cables run through the tree nearest the road. Cllr Meier is approaching SSE to see if they would fell this tree and any others that impact on the cables. It is hoped he will be able to advise the meeting of the outcome.

The trees are not subject to TPO and not located in a Conservation Area. It is understood a felling license will not be required.

### **INSURANCE ISSUES**

NPC owe a duty of care to footpath users and to the adjacent property owners in respect of these trees which are known to be diseased or dying, as advised by the tree surgeons that attended recently. In addition, the adjacent property is at risk which could impact on NPC's Third Party Property Insurance. Cllrs should note that no Arboricultural Report and Survey has been undertaken in last 12/24 months

### **SUMMARY and RECOMMENDATIONS**

These trees will almost certainly have to be felled in the next three years. If delayed, the cost to NPC is likely to rise significantly and there is the ongoing risk to users of the footpath and of damage to adjacent property. Recommendations:

1. All six trees are felled in the next 3 months.
2. Quote in sum of £648 (incl. VAT) from Simon Penfold is accepted on the basis that the trees will be felled this year. In default quote from Joe Thomas to be accepted

*Stephen Beare 6.8.20*