

Great Langborough Residents' Association

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To all Wokingham Town & Borough Councillors for Wescott West Ward

Threat to Lime trees in Langborough Recreation Ground

Concerns for their continued health and longevity – a request for help

Summary

The lime trees surrounding Langborough Rec are in danger. They are deteriorating and may have to be felled within a few years for safety reasons. Treatment might extend their life for another 50 years. These mature trees make a substantial contribution to atmospheric carbon capture. The cost estimate is near £14,000. It cannot be met from the existing tree management budget.

The aim of this brief to local ward Town and Borough Councillors is to seek your help to obtain the necessary financial support and to save these important trees for another few generations.

Background

Langborough Recreation Ground is acknowledged as a Town Green – urban common land. It is managed by Wokingham Town Council on behalf of the community. As Wokingham grew in the late 19th century, more residential development occurred. To provide a park and recreational space, this area was landscaped and some two dozen lime trees were planted on three sides – probably in the 1890s. Lime trees were a particular favourite of the Victorians and were often used in the many public parks of the era. Existing mature trees absorb as much carbon as many new saplings.

The 120+ year old lime trees provide a distinctive period character to the park adjacent to the town Victorian & Edwardian Conservation Area. Like all British broad leaf trees, they are under stress from the recent higher temperatures and longer dry spells. Nevertheless, there are measures that could help them withstand the climate change pressures and continue their valuable carbon reduction.

The tree consultant to WTC has made an assessment and recommendation. With their present accelerating rate of die-off at their tops, the lime trees will probably have to be felled within the next 10 to 20 years for safety reasons – a tragic loss. To avoid this, they need a programme of root care very soon. With proper ecological care, they might last for another 50 years or more.

Recommended Actions

Following soil testing, the recommended treatment for the two dozen lime trees bordering three sides of Langborough Rec consists of: -

- compressed air decompaction of the soil around the roots
- the application of mulch, compost, organic nutrients and worm colonies

Financial Problem

From its total distribution of Council Tax from Wokingham Borough Council, the Town Council budgets £25,000 per year to care for all of its trees in all seven parks that it manages. The preliminary cost estimate for the treatment of the two dozen lime trees bordering three sides of Langborough Rec is about £1,700 for three trees; that is a total cost in the order of £14,000 for 24 trees – over 50% of the WTC total annual tree maintenance budget.

Please find a way to make the necessary funding available to save these trees.

David Nash, Secretary, Great Langborough RA Tel: 0118-979-3167 david.p.nash@ntlworld.com