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20th April 2022

Tree Survey Cuttle Brook LNR, Thame

I was pleased to meet you and Mark again on 20th April 2022 to survey trees in higher risk areas around the Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve, owned by Thame Town Council, following some storm damage earlier this year.

Last year I applied to the Forestry Commission for a felling licence. This licence lasts five years and gives consent for a thinning to remove poorer, deteriorating and weaker trees and most of the ash trees on this site. We have agreed plans to sell the standing ash for firewood in Coxs Wood later this summer, the work was originally intended for last winter but the firewood contractor was busy elsewhere when ground conditions were suitable.

The priority of this visit was to do a check on the condition of mature trees in higher risk locations by the main paths and along the roadside and the parking area. Younger woodland trees were not inspected.

We put metal numbered tags on mature trees in higher risk locations that either need work done or should be monitored about every 18 months to ensure safety. This should allow the trees to be seen in different seasons to see both physical damage and the condition of the canopy when in leaf.

NB - There is one mature ash right by the Oxford Road, that I recommend should be felled in the next year as it has died on one of the two ivy covered trunks. It is marked with an orange paint spot.

NB – All ash trees across the site will be checked for dieback in mid to late summer and marked for felling if necessary. Other young trees in woodland areas also to be assessed for possible thinning if stronger trees will benefit from removal.

Ash Dieback is a wind dispersed fungal disease caused by *Chalara fraxinea*. It is now a reality in the Chilterns. Ash may need to be felled if they are suffering as ash trees can become very brittle due to this disease and are

close to paths. The disease is easier to see in late **July or August** when the ash should be in full leaf to assess their condition.

For more information on ash dieback please see this link
<https://www.treecouncil.org.uk/What-We-Do/Ash-Dieback>

Also <https://www.rfs.org.uk/news/2019/7/managing-ash-dieback-10-case-studies/>

See also **Common Sense risk management of trees by National Tree Safety Group** <http://ntsgroup.org.uk/>

Both standing and fallen **dead wood** is very important habitat for wildlife and should be retained where it is safe to do so. Ideally large logs should be left to rot down in as long lengths as possible so that they are not thrown into the brook. This will improve the range of wildlife habitats on this site.

It is suggested that there should be a programme of willow pollarding along the brook over the next few years.

The condition of the swing tree by the brook is a concern as many children and teenagers gather around this tree. It was seen to have an active bees nest indicating a hollow base to the trunk, it also has bracket fungi on the main trunk and previous damage suggesting weakening and possible decay of larger limbs. Ideally this willow tree should be retained as a pollard for its habitat value.

This report will be shared with the Cuttle Brook volunteers who help look after this nature reserve for the Town Council.

Yours sincerely,

John Morris BSc

The table below shows the mature trees tagged during the tree survey carried out on 20th April 2022 by John Morris with Andrea Oughton and Mark Pinnells for the Town Council.

This survey was carried out in good weather conditions and before most of the trees have leafed up. It was a ground level visual inspection of trees by the main paths.

Trees requiring work in the next year are highlighted in yellow.

Tag no	Tree species	Approx height metres	Comments on condition	Risk Zone High, medium	Location	Work recommendation
401	Silver maple	20m	7 trunks	High	Near entrance sign	Remove hung up snapped branch over path
402	Silver maple	20m	1 trunk - good	medium	Near car park	Monitor
403	Horse chestnut	10	Poor some damage & decay	medium	Below car park	Monitor
Orange spot	Silver maple		Poor damaged, leaning		Over grass by car park	Fell in autumn
404	Horse chestnut	15	Good	medium	Below car park	Monitor
405	Silver maple	18	Ivy covered	Med /high	Below car park	Monitor
406	Ash	20	Ivy, 3 trunks at 4m	Med/ high	Below car park	Monitor in summer for dieback
407	Grey willow	18	Leaning, ivy	Med/ high	Below car park	Monitor
408	Sycamore	18	Ivy	Med / high	Below car park	Monitor
409	Sycamore	15	Forked, ivy	Med /high	Behind scout hut	Monitor
410	Silver maple	20	Leaning towards building	Med/ high	Behind scout hut	Monitor
Orange spot	Hawthorn		Uprooted / dead	Medium	Near scout hut	Cut so on the ground
411	Silver maple	20	Dead side branch	medium	Near internal path	Remove dead limb, orange line
412	Silver maple	20	Split trunk	medium	Near path	Remove damaged trunk near owl box

413	Ash	20	Three trunks	medium	Near powerline	Monitor in summer for dieback
414	Silver maple	20	Trunks rubbing	Med / high		Monitor, tangle of trunks
Orange spots	Goat willow		3 x broken trunks	Med / high	Water leak !	Fell
415	Silver maple	20	Leaning forked ivy covered	Med/ High	Near play area	Monitor
416	Ash	20		High	By paths	Monitor in summer for dieback
Orange spot	Goat willow		Dead	High	Near path	Fell
417	Lombardy poplar	20	Ivy	High	By road / Spring Path	Monitor
418	Goat willow x2		Ivy covered large old trees	High	Spring path corner	Monitor
419	Crack willow	20		High	Over spring path	Monitor
Orange spot	Goat willow		Lot of dead	High	By Spring Path	Fell
No tags	3 x Crack Willow		Ok, tall younger willows	High	By Spring Path	Monitor
420	Ash	20	Ivy covered heavy branches	High	Over Spring Path by ditch	Monitor in summer for dieback – possible fell?
421	2 x Crack willow		Trunks dividing at base	High	By brook & paths	Pollard both trunks in autumn
Orange spot	Grey poplar	20	Poor leaning to path	High	Near Spring path	Fell in autumn
Orange X	2 x Grey poplar		Damaged, uprooted	medium	In wood	Fell in autumn
422	Sycamore	18	2 x dead trunks	high	Near house & track	Remove dead wood in autumn
423	Wild cherry	20	Ivy covered	High	Near house & track	Monitor
424	Crack willow	20	Half lost / damaged	High	Over Spring	Pollard remaining trunk in autumn

			in storm		Path	
425	Crack willow	20	Tall		By Spring path	Pollard, near wires
426	Crack willow	10	poor	High	By Spring path	Pollard in autumn
427	Wild cherry	18	Ivy covered	High	Near house & track	Monitor
428	Ash	15	Ivy covered	High	By Car park Oxford Rd entrance	Monitor for dieback in summer
Orange spot	Ash	20	Part dead, ivy covered	High	By Oxford Road bridge	Fell in autumn
429	Ash	20	Ivy covered, over road	High	By Oxford Road bridge	Monitor for dieback in summer
No tags	Group of Crack willow		Group of fallen, broken willows	Low	Near Oxford Road bridge	Decided ok to leave as habitat
No tags	2 x Hawthorn	10	Old bushes by gardens, ok !	Low	By garden fence	A little dead wood. Neighbour wants them cut back (for view?)
430	Corkscrew willow	12	ok	Medium	By entrance to family area	Monitor
431	Corkscrew willow	12	Decaying lower limb	Medium	By bin, family area	Monitor, remove low branch?
432	Crack willow	20	Some low dead /dying branches	Medium / low	By grass path and brook	Monitor
433	Crack willow	20	Some low dead /dying branches	Medium / low	By grass path & brook	Monitor
434	Weeping white willow	20	Ivy covered	Medium low	By grass path & brook	Monitor
435	Crack Willow	20	Fungal decay, hollow trunk, active bees	High	Swing Tree	Pollard in autumn? Remove limb with swing – need

			nest			notice to explain
436	Crack willow	20	Tall, ok, eroded ground	High	Next to swing tree	Possible pollard?
437	Crack willow	15	Possibly starting to crack?	High	Near Watkins Bridge	Pollard?
Orange spot	Goat willow		Dead/ dying		Near backwater	Fell
438	Goat willow	18	Very large multi stemmed	Medium high	By board walk	Monitor
439	Crack willow	18	Ok, hollowing trunk	Medium high	Near steps & board walk	Monitor
440	Crack willow	15	Leaning over path	Medium high	By steps	Monitor
Orange spot	Goat willow		Collapsing over path	Medium high	Near boardwalk	Fell
Orange spot	Goat willow		Splitting & decaying limbs over path	High	Near Watkins Bridge	Fell
No tag	Poplar		Snapped top	Low	Near path	Leaving standing stump & top to decay as they are
No tag	Crack willow		Uprooted clump	Low	Near Watkins Bridge	Allow to fall into reed bed & remain
No tag	Crack willow		Uprooted & part cleared	Low	By Brook	Monitor, clear debris from brook
No tags	6 x Italian alders		Black spots on trunk	Med High	By path & brook	Monitor / fell?
No tags	Wellingtonia Redwoods x 3		One used for climbing		Below Old Tip Wood	Remove low branches from other 2 trees to 2m
Orange spots	Golden Willows	small	2x Dead	medium	By bottom path	Volunteers to fell?