

Introduction

We as parishioners are lucky to live in a region of Hampshire that has a wide variety of trees. Some are imported, the majority native, but they all add colour to the environment. Our countryside has been called 'stunning' by the Hampshire County Council.

This area has many footpaths, trails and lanes that take us through some very pleasant villages and towns. The main feature that stands out in these walks, rides and drives are the many trees that we live with. Live with because, let's face it, many of them were here before we arrived. They will probably be here long after we have gone.

The trees contribute so much to our pleasant village or town. They give us changing shapes throughout the year, and changing colours. They provide shelter for birds and food for many insects and animals. They absorb excess water from the ground, act as wind breaks and bind soil to stabilise the ground.

During the last few years there has been a growing pressure to squeeze more and more into the village areas. More houses, more road area, more parking areas and so on. These incursions are beginning to eat away at the structure of our villages by removing the one feature that has been stable over many years – our trees.

The continued development pressure means that we have to maintain a very close eye on the trees that remain. A catalogue of the major trees within the Shedfield Parish would be useful to keep a record of what we have and to enable all of us to be aware of any losses. There is a partial catalogue of trees held by the Winchester County Council but this is purely those trees that have been categorised as under threat. The Arboricultural Officer can, if he considers the tree worthy of protection, apply a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and lodge an order with the Land Registry.

What is a TPO?

To be eligible for a TPO a tree must match certain criteria. The criteria and more details can be found in the Government Guide¹. Basically a TPO is an order - "... to protect specific trees or a particular area, group or woodland from deliberate damage and destruction. TPOs can prevent the felling, lopping, topping, uprooting or otherwise wilful damaging of trees without the permission of the local planning authority"².

Why make a TPO?

The Local Planning Authority - "may make a TPO if it appears to them to be: 'Expedient in the interests of **amenity** to make provision for the preservation of trees or woodlands in their area'.

- "TPOs should be used to protect selected trees and woodlands if their removal would have a significant **impact** on the local environment and its enjoyment by the public."
- **Visibility**: the extent to which the trees or woodlands can be seen by the general public
- **Individual impact**: the mere fact that a tree is publicly visible will not itself be sufficient to warrant a TPO. The LPA should also assess the tree's particular importance by reference to its size and form, its future potential as an amenity, taking into account any special factors

such as its rarity, value as a screen or contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.

- **Wider impact:** the significance of the trees in their local surroundings should also be assessed, taking into account how suitable they are to their particular setting, as well as the presence of other trees in the vicinity.

The TPO list is a changing list, as trees are sometimes damaged and can become dangerous, by virtue of falling branches, so they must be made safe. This may involve removing the tree altogether and so the TPO is removed or altered. A TPO may cover an individual tree, a group of trees, or an area of land containing many trees. There are many TPO's that exist in the three villages of Shedfield Parish. We do not have a definitive list of them as the data is unavailable from the 'Tree Officer' of the council for various reasons. (You can check if an individual tree has an order applied with the officer.)

Why do we need a list?

A list of trees in our parish is needed to hold details not only of trees that have TPOs but also all trees that we, the parishioners, consider worthy of keeping track of. We cannot obtain a TPO for all of our trees as this would cost too much money – several thousands of pounds are involved to get a single tree protected. We must be aware of what we have and protect it ourselves by watching and being vigilant, knowing exactly what we have and taking responsibility for them.

This would be a long term task. We now have a web site (www.shedfieldparishcouncil.org.uk) where we can keep details of any of the parish assets such as our trees. We have people available who are willing to help with this cataloguing. So let's get going and record what we have for ourselves and future generations. Let's not make it a treeless environment for our children otherwise they won't want to stay here!

Can you help?

Help is needed to create this catalogue of trees. Please let the Parish Council know if there is a particular tree that you think should be included. Give us the location, the type and any other details that you may have. You may know when it was planted or who planted it and why it was planted. If you need any help with this, contact the tree warden.

What we have done.

We have already started a database of trees that have a TPO applied to it; we only have a very small number of these so far. Remember from 'small acorns....' this is a small beginning to gather details of all the major trees in the parish. We only have some of the details; you are needed to help us record more. Do you know of any trees with TPOs? Do you know the TPO number? Is there a tree that you would like to see protected or just watched and recorded for posterity?

What tree species do we have?

The list below shows the variety of trees that we have growing within the south of Hampshire; it isn't comprehensive by any means. Can you help add to this list? Have you seen any others? We are especially interested to find out if there are any other species growing in the area and where.

Oak	Spindle	Eucalyptus	Maple	Lime
Gingko Biloba	Beech	Holly	Hawthorn	Rowan
Monkey Puzzle	Yew	Alder	Poplar	Box
Whitebeam	Willow	Pine	Fir	Spruce
Juniper	Cypress	Plane	Catalpa	Birch
Elder	Blackthorn	Robinia	Cherry	Hazel
Larch	Hornbeam	Dogwood	Ash	Cedar
Walnut Elm	Mulberry	Laburnum	Laurel	Crab Apple
Bay	Chestnut	Tulip tree	Magnolia	

To see the Winchester Council's map of trees having a TPO go to this web site 'On the Map':

<http://map.winchester.gov.uk/localview/OnTheMap.aspx>

You then select the tab 'View map layers' and Zoom in to the parish - select the 'TPO Points' and then 'Display on Map'. To see some TPOs that have been assigned as 'groups' of trees you need to select 'TPO Areas' rather than 'TPO Points'.

What to do next?

If you want to help in any way with the survey of the trees in our parish, please contact a member of the Parish Council or the Tree Warden. Photographs of trees will be needed, locations, species identification, cataloguing and research into individual tree history.

¹ For further information about TPOs please refer to the relevant government papers on the web site:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/tposguide>

Tree Preservation Orders: A Guide to the Law and Good Practice ISBN 1 85112 361 X (free to download from the web site).

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tree_preservation_order

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