



Tree Survey Report

Prepared for: Syresham Parish
Council

Site Address: 2 The Terrace
Biddlesden
Brackley
Northamptonshire
NN13 5TR

Date: March 2024

Our Reference: HS002488

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	3
2. Limitations	3
3. Investigations	4
4. Site Occupancy	5
5. Risk Assessment	5
Appendix 1: Survey Schedule	6
Appendix 2: Survey Key	7
Appendix 3: Site Plans	9
Appendix 4: Site Images	11
Appendix 5: Experience	12

1. Introduction

- 1.1** This report was commissioned by Ms Nicola Ali, the Parish Clerk for Syresham Parish Council.
- 1.2** The scope of the report is limited to a ground level visual inspection of the trees situated within Swingfield Children's Play Park and Syresham Pocket Park.
- 1.3** My brief was to:
 - 1.3.1** Visually inspect the physiological and structural condition of the trees located within Syresham Pocket Park and Swingfield children's play park.
 - 1.3.2** Record attributes for all trees that currently require remedial works.
 - 1.3.3** Make recommendations on the immediate and future management of the trees. This is based on my assessment and these guidelines, and on my personal experience as a professional arboriculturist.
- 1.4** The assessment was undertaken in the spirit of the guidance provided by the National Tree Safety Group, in that due consideration has been given to the landscape and ecological benefits trees provide when making recommendations for the management of risk to persons and property.

2. Limitations

- 2.1** Due to the changing nature of trees and other site circumstances, this report and any recommendations made are limited to a three (3) year period (unless otherwise stated). Any alteration to the subject site or any development could change the current circumstances and may invalidate this report and any recommendations made.
- 2.2** This report and recommendations relate to the condition of the tree(s) and their surroundings at the time of assessment only.
- 2.3** A lack of recommended work does not imply that a tree is safe, and likewise it should not be implied that a tree will be made safe following the completion of any recommended work.
- 2.4** This report is only for the use of the client. Reproduction and / or use by anyone other than the client is prohibited unless written consent is provided by the author.
- 2.5** This is a tree condition assessment, it should in no way be considered, or used as a subsidence / heave risk assessment.

3. Investigations

- 3.1** The survey was carried out on the 28th of February 2024, during which time the weather was clear, allowing adequate visibility.
- 3.2** During the survey I was accompanied by Mr Andrew Saunders, who is currently training towards a recognised qualification in tree surveying and consultancy. Detailed investigations were not carried out. Dimensions were estimated unless otherwise indicated. I had full access to the site, and I was able to gain a clear view of the trees (unless otherwise stated).
- 3.3** The process used to methodically assess these trees is widely recognised and known as a Visual Tree Assessment (VTA). The VTA was devised by Mattheck (1993) as an addition to Hazard Evaluation by Matheny & Clark (1993). Guidance is also taken from Lonsdale (1999) *Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment and Management*, and from *VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Management & Assessment*.
- 3.4** I evaluated the significance of weight considerations for the listed factors and their respective levels of importance using the above methodology:
- 3.4.1** history of failure of the tree and others nearby;
 - 3.4.2** prevailing ground conditions that could affect stability;
 - 3.4.3** recent changes or disturbance to nearby ground conditions and shelter;
 - 3.4.4** exposure to weather, such as high winds, drought periods, heavy rain/ snow;
 - 3.4.5** predisposition of the species to failure;
 - 3.4.6** health of the tree, such as vitality, structural features or defects that could increase the likelihood of failure; giving indication to their significance.
- 3.5** Prior to undertaking any recommended works to the tree(s), it is critical to engage with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) as the tree(s) might be protected under a Tree Preservation or be situated within a designated Conservation Area (CA). If this is the situation, obtaining the necessary consent from the LPA will be a prerequisite before commencing any tree works.
- 3.6** The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, protects with certain exceptions all birds and their nests. It is an offence to destroy such nests or take or injure such birds during tree works operations.
- 3.7** If a tree is a bat-roost, a licence to work on the tree must first be obtained from the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Organization (in England: Natural England 0845 601 4523.) Acting without a licence is likely to be justifiable only in acute emergencies threatening human life and where all other legally available option such as footpath diversion, fencing and warning signs cannot be applied.
- 3.8** Tree work should be undertaken to BS3998: 2010 'Tree Work – Recommendations' (where applicable) by a competent, experienced, and insured arboricultural contractor.

4. Site Occupancy

- 4.1 The occupancy of the sites has been considered in the context of tree risk/ benefit.
- 4.2 Whilst trees can fail in calm weather; the likelihood of failure is significantly increased during adverse weather, such as high winds and heavy rainfall.

Site Occupancy				
The site(s)	Pedestrians (Estimated based on people passing by) recorded as seconds, minutes, or hours Very high – 3-6s High – 30s – 1m Moderate – 5-10m Low – 1hr	Weather affected Yes or no (Areas such as public parks, or domestic gardens are generally used much less during adverse weather)	Vehicles (Estimated based on passing traffic) recorded as seconds, minutes, or hours Very high - 2-3s High - 20-25s Moderate – 3-4m Low – 1hr	Buildings, play equipment, car parks or utilities
Swingfield Children's Play Park	Moderate	Yes	n/a	Play equipment. Third-party land and property
Syresham Pocket Park	Moderate	Yes	Low to moderate on the public highway to the south of the site	Public highway. Seating areas. Overhead utilities

5. Risk Assessment

- 5.1 When determining the need for remedial action to minimize the risk of failure, a priority level is assigned. This level serves to assess the risk posed by the individual tree, considering its condition and position. Each urgency category is accompanied by a designated target timeframe, which should be regarded as the maximum period within which the risk needs to be mitigated.

The urgency categories are:

- High priority** - requires immediate action to fulfil liability under duty of care. Risk to be reduced within a maximum of three months.
- Moderate priority** - requires action as soon as reasonably practicable to fulfil duty of care obligations. Risk to be reduced within a maximum twelve months.
- Low priority** - requires action for good tree management. Works to be completed within a maximum of three years.

- 5.2 The target timeframes for completing tree works are considered S.M.A.R.T (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) goals. They serve as maximum timeframes for carrying out the necessary works rather than predicting the precise moment a tree may become unsafe.

- 5.3 It is impossible to accurately pinpoint the exact day when a tree might fail due to various factors, including environmental conditions, decay progression and structural changes. Therefore, the timeframes set for tree works allow for proactive management while acknowledging that tree safety assessment remains an ongoing and dynamic process.

Appendix 1: Tree Survey Schedule

Site	Easting	Northing	Tree No	Species		No Stems	Size	Age	Vitality	Condition	Comments	Recommendations	Priority
Swingfield Children's Play Park	462907	241779	T1-T6	5x cherry <i>Prunus serrulate Kanzan</i>	1x sycamore <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Single (per tree)	Medium	Young Mature	Normal	Fair	Bark included forks throughout structures of each tree. Forks appear to be currently stable, with no obvious signs of active or adverse movement	No works currently required. Reassess the trees within 3yrs from the date of the last survey	n/a
Syresham Pocket Park	463849	241521	T7	Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Double	Large	Mature	Low	Poor	Severe ash dieback. Low occupancy area surrounded by bramble and nettles that creates a natural barrier during summer months	Retain as standing dead wood habitat	n/a
Syresham Pocket Park	463855	241509	T8	Goat willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>	Single	Large	Mature	Normal	Poor	Fungal fruiting brackets of <i>Ganoderma spp.</i> at base southeast and northeast. Tree is within striking distance of a footpath and seating area.	Top at 3m to form a pollard framework	2
Syresham Pocket Park	463822	241477	T9	Crack willow	<i>Salix fragilis</i>	Multi	Large	Mature	Normal	Fair	All surrounding willow were previously topped, leaving this tree exposed to new wind loading. Two large limb failures (northeast), which are partially hung up in the tree.	Remove the failed limbs and top the remaining tree at 10-12m to form a pollard structure	2

Appendix 2: Survey Key

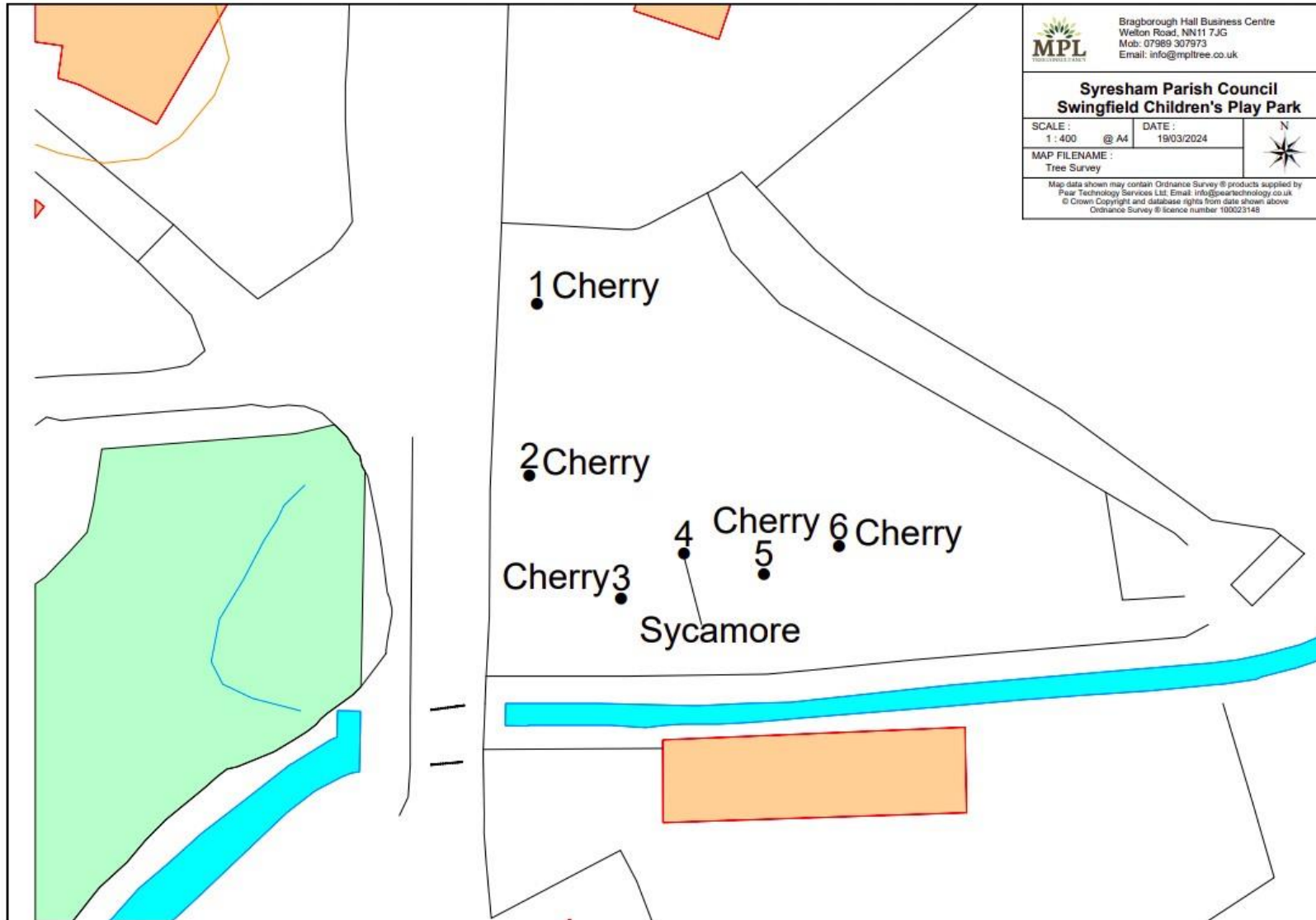
Survey Key

Tag/ Tree No.	The unique reference number assigned to the tree, or asset tag number added to tree during the survey for ease of identification
Species	Common and botanical names have been given
No. Stems	The number of stems (trunks) the tree has
Size	A description of the tree's overall size: specific to the species
Age	<p>Young – a tree yet to have reached 1/3 of its expected mature height. Generally growing vigorously and have high apical dominance</p> <p>Young-mature - a tree that has reached between 1/3 and 2/3 of its expected mature height</p> <p>Mature - a tree close to its full height and crown size, these dimensions being determined by species and site factors.</p> <p>Over-mature – senescence; a tree that has entered a period of overall decline</p> <p>Veteran - a tree that has characteristics, which have been achieved by age or condition; of which are significantly important in regard to, habitat, biodiversity, cultural importance to a local area</p> <p>Ancient – a tree that has past beyond maturity that is old, aged, in comparison to other same species</p>
Vitality	A visual assessment of the tree's health, foliage density, foliage colour, ability to lay down repair wood in damaged or localised areas of high loading. This is drawing comparison to similar trees of the same age class and species. This provides an insight into a tree's physiological and overall health
Conditions	<p>Good – a tree in optimal condition</p> <p>Fair – management works may be necessary, or comments made on a condition that needs to be reviewed: either during the next inspection or via a detailed assessment</p> <p>Poor – a suboptimal tree which has poor form, or is in a declining condition</p> <p>Dangerous – a tree with a significant defect, which could affect people or property</p> <p>Dead – an insufficient amount of functional foliage to support the tree's system</p>
Comments	Details of defects or features that could increase the likelihood of failure, and/ or general observations of the tree
Recommendations	Recommended remedial action to reduce the likelihood of failure, or advice for good tree management.

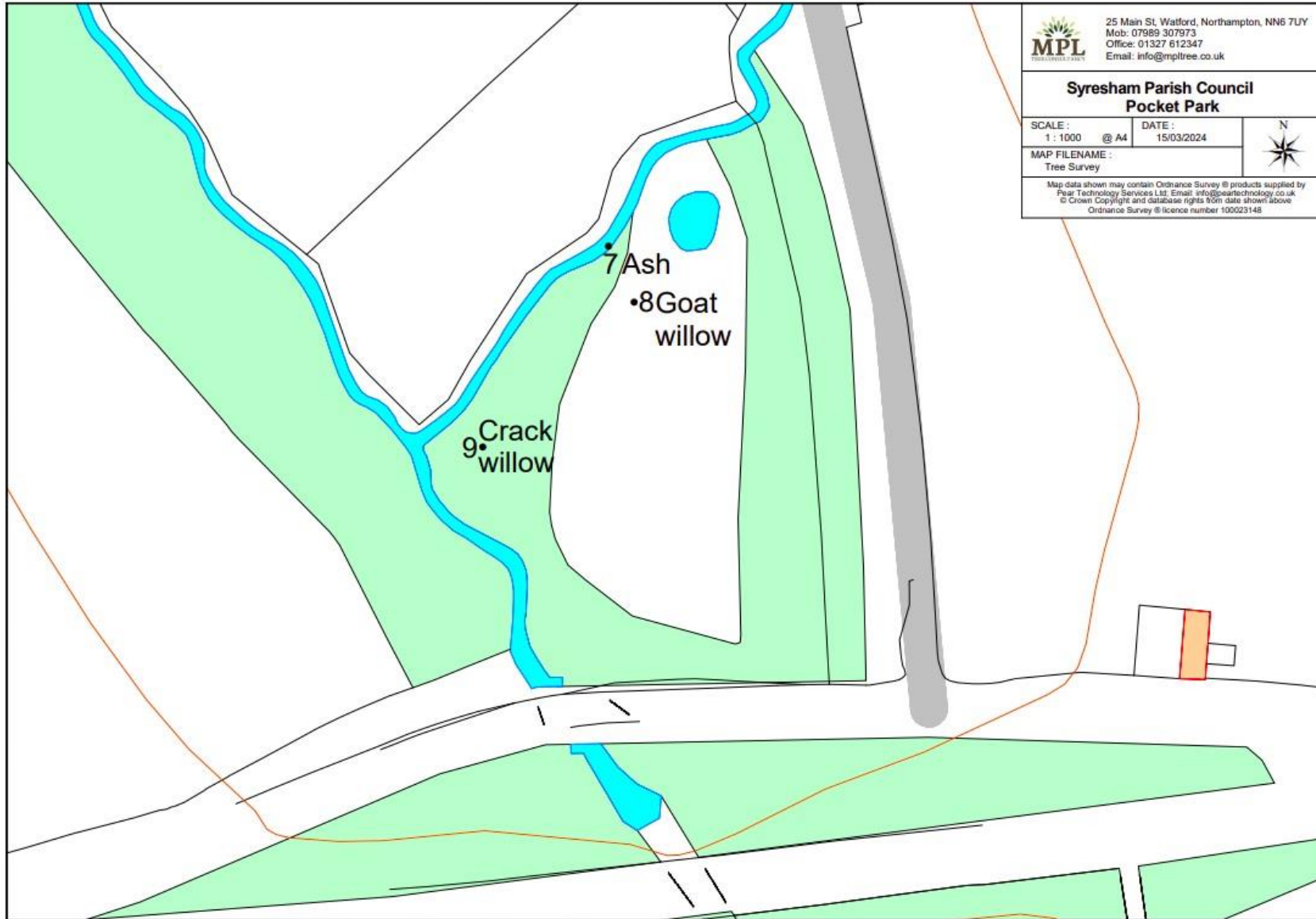
General Recommendations

Ivy growth	<p>Ivy colonisation in trees can become a significant issue. While it rarely kills a tree, it does change branch loading and tree dynamics as well as concealing problems. Conversely, it provides a source of habitat for bats and birds and is a great source of nectar for bees.</p> <p>Where trees grow in prominent locations, within striking distance of a 'target'; I recommend carefully severing ivy growth.</p>
Deadwood	<p>Deadwood can provide important niche habitat and should be retained where possible. However, sometimes in frequently used areas removing large deadwood may be necessary.</p>
Test using microdrill	<p>Where internal decay is suspected, it may be necessary to measure the extent in order to make an informed management recommendation. This equipment measures the strength of the wood by its resistance to drilling, up to a maximum 380mm and produces a graph that can be interpreted to give an accurate indication of decayed wood.</p>
Test using tomography	<p>Where internal decay is suspected, it may be necessary to measure the extent in order to make an informed management recommendation. This equipment maps the internal condition of a tree's stem by measuring the speed that sound travels in a number of different positions and directions. Sound travels fastest through sound wood and more slowly through decayed or degraded wood. The data is then interpreted to produce a visual image of the tree's internal condition.</p>
Ash dieback	<p>Ash dieback is caused by a fungus called <i>Hymenoscyphus fraxineus</i>. It is naturally spread by airborne spores landing on a tree's foliage, and/ or at the base of a tree: the spread may have also been exacerbated by the movement of ash wood in the arboricultural and timber industries.</p> <p>The decline and dieback are a result of the fungus progressively damaging the tree's vascular system. This can result in individual branches dying first, progressing onto multiple branches, due to a lack of water and nutrients, and in some cases, the eventual death of the tree.</p> <p>The fungus was first officially recorded in the United Kingdom in 2012, however later analysis identified that some trees were infected as far back as 2004.</p> <p>It is not possible to predict the rate of decline in individual trees. The rate of decline in young trees tends to be rapid. Whereas some maturing trees appear to be able to coexist with the fungus for a number of years. Where a rapid decline of mature trees is observed, it is often associated with secondary factors, such as a poor growing environment, or secondary fungal colonisations because of the tree's weakened system.</p> <p>Please see the link below for the latest guidance for tree owners provided by the Tree Council: Tree-Council-Ash-dieback-tree-owners-guide-FINAL.pdf</p>

Appendix 3: Site Plans



MPL Tree Consultancy Ltd
Bragborough Hall Business Centre, Welton Road, Braunston, Daventry, Northamptonshire, NN11 7JG
Info@mpltree.co.uk
www.mpltree.co.uk



MPL Tree Consultancy Ltd
Bragborough Hall Business Centre, Welton Road, Braunston, Daventry, Northamptonshire, NN11 7JG
Info@mpltree.co.uk
www.mpltree.co.uk

Appendix 4: Site Images

Figure 1: a view of T7 (ash)



Figure 2: a view of the fungal bracket on T8



Figure 3: a view of the failed limb on T9



Appendix 5: Experience

Experience:

I have twenty-eight (28) years' experience working in arboriculture. Since 1996 I have developed a pragmatic approach to tree management through hands on experience and in an advisory capacity, allowing insight to the various stages of working with trees. I am a professional member of the Consulting Arborists Society (CAS) and technician member of the Arboricultural Association. I am accredited by LANTRA as a Professional Tree Inspector.

Formal qualifications relevant to this report:

ABC Level 4 Diploma in Arboriculture, Tree Life Training Ltd, September 2011- July 2012.

In 2013 I successfully completed training and assessment in the 'Professional Tree Inspection' course, awarded by 'LANTRA', which is the leading accreditation scheme in the UK for tree inspection (refreshed 27.11.18)

Continuing professional development relevant to this report:

On the 12th & 13th June 2018 I attended The Science and Art of Visual Tree Assessment lecture with Prof. Dr Claus Mattheck

On the 19th & 20th September 2018 I attended an advanced tree inspection training course with Dr Frank Rinn, RinnTech.

On the 14th and 15th June 2021, I received training in the VALID tree evaluation methodology with David Evans.

Bibliography:

National Tree Safety Group 'Guidance on trees and public safety in the UK for owners, managers and advisers', Common sense risk management of trees. 2011

Updated Field Guide for Visual Tree Assessment. C. Mattheck. 2007

Jeremy Barrell, Tree inspections: a simpler alternative to the present complication and confusion. The AA Arb magazine, Autumn 2013

Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment and Management. David Lonsdale. 1999

Fungi on Trees: A photographic reference. David Humphries and Christopher Wright. 2021



Matt Large

Dip Arb L4 (ABC), TechArborA.

