Tree risk management report

Trowbridge Town Council – various sites

Chris Allder **MSc HNDArb FArborA MICFor RCArborA**

barrell
TREE CONSULTANCY

26th November 2025

25142-TRM-2025-CA

1 Site location, instruction, and contents

1.1 Site location

This aerial image is provided courtesy of Google. The yellow line shows the approximate boundary of the area where we were asked to check trees, and is illustrative only.

1.2 Instruction

We are instructed by Trowbridge Town Council to visit several sites across the town and visually check all the significant trees that could reasonably foreseeably cause harm within the provided site boundaries approximately shown on the above aerial image, and prepare a brief report summarising our findings. For clarification, this report is for the purposes of identifying any necessary safety-oriented tree works, and to assist in having those works carried out. It is not a detailed report on each tree and does not include any supporting explanations of the assessment process, other than those included in 2.2 below.

1.3 Report contents

This report includes:

- sketch **tree location drawings (25142-01)** superimposed on aerial photographs showing the estimated location and numbering of trees identified for work, a copy of the tree schedule, and the priority of each work recommendation;
- a summary of how we checked the trees, in **Sections 1 and 2**; and,
- **Appendix 1** listing background administrative information and describing how the trees were surveyed, and **Appendix 2** with a schedule of the trees and work recommendations.

Both the report and the location drawing must be used together; the drawing illustrates where the trees are, and the report explains the management recommendations.

1 Site location, instruction, and contents

Together, these documents inform the duty holder (the person or entity responsible for tree safety) of our advised work recommendations, and guidance on how those works should be carried out. Although this advice is purposely brief to focus on identifying necessary works, it is based on a detailed review of the current guidance and technical publications informing modern tree risk management (see Appendix 1).

Implementing the described intervention works within the timescales specified in this report will be important to demonstrate that reasonable and proportionate proactive measures have been taken to manage obvious significant risks of harm from tree failures.

Several of the surveyed sites do not have any trees that currently require work, and are therefore not included in the set of plans appended to this report. These sites are:

- Allotments at Shearman Street
- Playing fields at Hawthorn Grove
- St Thomas' play area
- Trowbridge Wanderers FC

The sites with trees that do require work are included and named as follows:

- 25142-01-Biss Meadow Country Park
- 25142-01-Langford Park
- 25142-01-Paxcroft Brook
- 25142-01-St James Church
- 25142-01-St John the Evangelist
- 25142-01-Trinity Church
- 25142-01-Trowbridge Cemetery
- 25142-01-Trowbridge Skate Park
- 25142-01-Trowbridge Town Park

2 Summary of management recommendations

2.1 Statutory protection

A check was carried out through the Wiltshire Council website on 26th November 2025 and confirmed that there are several trees scheduled for work that stand within a Conservation Area. None of the scheduled trees are subject to a Tree Preservation Order.

2.2 The tree checking process, the prioritisation of works, and important reminders

All the significant trees that could reasonably foreseeably cause harm within the approximate site boundary indicated on the location drawing were found and visually checked to prepare the schedule of management recommendations, as explained in more detail in Appendix 1. The approximate locations of trees requiring work are shown on the annotated aerial photograph. This drawing is not to scale, and the illustrated tree locations are only likely to have an accuracy of about ±10 m. It must not be used to scale distances, or for any purposes other than identifying the approximate location of the area checked and the approximate location of each numbered tree or group.

A full schedule of the trees identified for work with explanatory notes is included in Appendix 2. In summary, the recommended tree works were prioritised as follows:

- **URGENT (carry out as soon as practically possible, and within three months of the site visit):** No trees were given this priority.
- **Normal priority (carry out as soon as practically possible, and within 6–12 months of the site visit):** All the trees included in the schedule were given this priority.
    - 25142-01-Biss Meadow Country Park – trees T108, T109 and T110
    - 25142-01-Langford Park – trees G113
    - 25142-01-Paxcroft Brook – trees G124, G125, T126 and G127
    - 25142-01-St James Church – trees G111 and G112
    - 25142-01-St John the Evangelist – tree T123
    - 25142-01-Trinity Church – trees G122
    - 25142-01-Trowbridge Cemetery – trees T114, T115, T116, and T117
    - 25142-01-Trowbridge Skate Park – trees T118, T119, T120, and T121
    - 25142-01-Trowbridge Town Park – trees T101, T102, T103, T104, T105, T106 and G107

    NOTE: *Trees listed for Normal priority work that are subject to statutory protection (T101, T102, T103, T104, T105, T106, G107, G111, G112, and G122) will require formal consent to be issued before they can be carried out.*

Reminder 1: Normal habitat and tree protection restrictions must be fully accounted for when carrying out the advised work.

Reminder 2: These management recommendations are made on the basis that the locations will be re-surveyed within about two years of the date of the last inspection.

Reminder 3: The UK Health & Safety Executive advises that a system should be in place to: "*enable people to report damage to trees, such as vehicle collisions, and to trigger checks following potentially damaging activities such as work by the utilities in the vicinity of trees or severe gales.*" In principle, this means that consideration must be given to identifying and addressing tree hazards arising from severe gales, and activities that could adversely affect tree stability, such as excavation around their bases, but how that is interpreted in practice will vary according to each situation, and is a decision for the duty holder.

Appendix 1: Background administrative information and data collection

A1.1 Background administrative information

	Background administrative information
Report date & reference	26th November 2025; 25142-TRM-2025-CA
Drawing reference	• 25142-01-Biss Meadow Country Park • 25142-01-Langford Park • 25142-01-Paxcroft Brook • 25142-01-St James Church • 25142-01-St John the Evangelist • 25142-01-Trinity Church • 25142-01-Trowbridge Cemetery • 25142-01-Trowbridge Skate Park • 25142-01-Trowbridge Town Park
Instructing client	Trowbridge Town Council
Instructions	Visit and visually check all the significant trees that could reasonably foreseeably cause harm within the advised site area shown within the site boundary indicated on the location drawing at the beginning of this report. Only trees located within this area were visually checked.
Report author and credentials	Chris Allder has taken and passed the LANTRA Professional Tree Inspection course (https://www.lantra.co.uk/awards/product/professional-tree-inspection), is a Chartered Forester (www.charteredforesters.org), and a Fellow and Registered Consultant of the Arboricultural Association (www.trees.org.uk), and is fully qualified to undertake the assessments in this report (https://www.barrelltreecare.co.uk/who-we-are/).
Report limitations	• **Ecology:** We advise that trees can be valuable ecological habitat, but we have no specialist expertise in this discipline and this report does not consider that aspect. Some of the trees identified for intervention works may be habitat protected through the European Protected Species legislation and this should be checked before any works start. • **Checking frequency:** Our survey of the trees for the purposes of assessing their condition and work requirements is made on the basis that they will be re-surveyed within about two years (plus or minus six months) of the date of the last inspection. The UK Health & Safety Executive advises that a system should be in place to: *"enable people to report damage to trees, such as vehicle collisions, and to trigger checks following potentially damaging activities such as work by the utilities in the vicinity of trees or severe gales."* In practice, this means that consideration must be given to identifying and addressing tree hazards arising from storms and activities that could adversely affect tree stability, but the detail will vary with according to each situation and is a decision for the duty holder.
Technical references	• International Standard *ISO 31000: Risk management – Guidelines* (2018) (https://www.iso.org/iso-31000-risk-management.html) • BTC Technical Information Note 1 *Tree risk management for duty holders* (2018) (https://www.barrelltreecare.co.uk/assets/Uploads/BTC134-TIN1-151118.pdf) • HSE Sector Information Minute (SIM) *Management of the risk from falling trees or branches* (2013) (http://www.hse.gov.uk/foi/internalops/sims/ag_food/010705.htm) • The International Journal of Urban Forestry (Volume 34, Issue 1, 2012) *Balancing tree benefits against tree security; the duty holder's dilemma*, published in the *Arboricultural Journal* (https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03071375.2012.691674)

Appendix 1: Background administrative information and data collection

	Background administrative information
	• The International Journal of Urban Forestry (Volume 43, Issue 1, 2021) *The implications of recent English legal judgments, inquest verdicts, and ash dieback disease for the defensibility of tree risk management regimes*, published in the *Arboricultural Journal* (https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03071375.2020.1854996?src=) • Forestry Commission Practice Guide *Hazards from Trees: A General Guide* (2000) (https://www.forestry.gov.uk/PDF/fcpg13.pdf/$FILE/fcpg13.pdf) • National Tree Safety Group *Common sense risk management of trees* (2011) (https://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCMS024.pdf/$FILE/FCMS024.pdf) • *Tree inspections: a simpler alternative to the present complication and confusion* (2013) (https://www.barrelltreecare.co.uk/assets/Uploads/BTC86-AANews-Complete-191013.pdf) • Forestry Commission Operational Guidance Booklet 1 *Tree Safety Management* (2007) (https://vscg.org/documents/uploads/FCTreeSafety2007_1.pdf). • The UK Road Liaison Group's *Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice* (2016) (http://www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org/en/codes/) • International Society of Arboriculture *Best Management Practices – Tree risk assessment, Second Edition* (2017) (https://wwv.isa-arbor.com/store/product/324) • Prevention of Future Deaths Report arising from the Inquest of Michael Arthur Warren (2014) (https://www.barrelltreecare.co.uk/assets/Uploads/D05-Inquest-verdict-and-PFD-Report-Warren-2014.pdf) • Various civil judgments from the English High Court (https://www.barrelltreecare.co.uk/resources/useful-documents/) • BS 3998 (2010) *Tree Work – Recommendations* (https://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000030089960)

A1.2 Data collection

	Data collection
Date of site visit	18th November 2025
People present during site visit	Chris Allder
Weather & visibility	Dull, still and damp with average visibility.
Tree survey method	In the areas identified for checking shown on the location drawing, within the constraints of access, we identified each significant tree that we assessed could reasonably foreseeably cause harm and carried out a quick visual check. This included looking at the trunk and crown from a distance for any obvious signs of poor health and structural weakness. Where access allowed, we also looked at the base of the trunk for obvious signs of structural defects and/or instability. We did not closely check every small tree where we assessed that they did not present a significant risk. For the larger trees, if necessary, we scanned the upper crowns with binoculars or a zoom camera to assist in the identification of potential hazards. Where access allowed, if trunks had thick ivy cover, we probed and tapped the wood from ground level to establish if there were any obscured features that were relevant to the assessment. This check did not extend to removing all the ivy or probing beyond what we could reach from ground level.

Appendix 1: Background administrative information and data collection

	Data collection
Assessment of intervention work	Intervention work is specified based on a checking frequency of about two years, and an assessment of the following failure factors: tree health, structural defects, history of failure, predisposition of the species to failure, recent changes or disturbance, prevailing ground conditions affecting stability, and exposure to weather, as described in detail in the article *Tree inspections: a simpler alternative to the present complication and confusion* (https://www.barrelltreecare.co.uk/assets/Uploads/BTC86-AANews-Complete-191013.pdf). The priority and the detail of work interventions were based on the level of occupancy observed at the time of the visit. **NOTE:** If the level of occupancy changes following our visit, e.g., a new footpath is created near trees that were previously more distant from occupied areas, then we must be advised because this could affect the management advice.
Tree tagging, recording of locations, and intervention works	Where a tree was assessed as needing intervention works, it was identified with a numbered tag, attached to the tree or nearby in a visible position, and highlighted with spray paint, if appropriate. This number and the approximate location were then indicated on the location drawing and referenced in the schedule. Brief observations, including work recommendations, were recorded in the schedule in Appendix 2.
Limitations to observations	• The survey of the trees to assess their condition and work requirements was made on the basis that they will be re-inspected about every two years to identify any changes in condition and review the original recommendations. • All observations were of a preliminary nature and did not involve any climbing or detailed investigation beyond what was visible from accessible points at ground level. • Where there was restricted access to the base of a tree, its attributes were assessed from the nearest point of access. • All dimensions were estimated unless otherwise indicated.

Appendix 2: Schedule of tree work recommendations and explanatory notes

Item	Species	Comments	Recommendations	Priority
T-101	Maple	Dead	Fell	Normal
T-102	Sycamore	Decay in trunk at 1 m, dieback to central stem	Fell	Normal
T-103	Birch	Dead	Fell	Normal
T-104	Sycamore	Significant deadwood over path and light	Stabilise dead wood	Normal
T-105	Horse chestnut	Decay through stem, spiral crack up to crown break at 5 m	Fell	Normal
T-106	Plane	Dead	Fell	Normal
G-107	Lime	Line of 12 trees, lapsed pollards, poor upper branch structure, overhanging courts	Re-pollard	Normal
T-108	Ash	Ash dieback disease (>75% defoliation)	Habitat to 4 m	Normal
T-109	Willow	Hazard beam crack through stem over footpath	Reduce defective stem to leave 4 m	Normal
T-110	Willow	Stem over river cracked at 0.5 m	Reduce stem over river to leave 4 m	Normal
G-111	Lime	5 no. pollarded trees up against boundary wall. Significant decay through stem of tagged tree.	Pollard 4 trees, fell tagged tree	Normal
G-112	Lime, Variegated maple	6 no pollarded trees, significant decay through all trees. Replacements have been initiated, and consideration should be given to replacing all of them.	Re-pollard	Normal
G-113	Purple plum, hawthorn	Broken limbs over playground boundary	Remove broken limbs	Normal
T-114	Turkey oak	Dead wood (throughout crown)	Stabilise dead wood	Normal
T-115	Poplar	Storm damage (in upper crown), broken branches	Stabilise deadwood, and remove broken branches	Normal
T-116	Lawson cypress	Storm damage (severe in need of remedial works)	Stabilise vulnerable branches	Normal
T-117	Turkey oak	Significant, large and mature fungal brackets present at base. Wide, squat crown, but exposed. Important landscape tree, benches and graves beneath. Retention only possible if tree is fenced off to prevent access beneath. Replacement essential if felled.	Fell	Normal
T-118	Sycamore	Previously pollarded, significant decay through stem, ivy clad	Re-pollard	Normal

Appendix 2: Schedule of tree work recommendations and explanatory notes

Item	Species	Comments	Recommendations	Priority
T-119	Lime	Interference with light column	Prune branches interfering with light column to give a clearance of 2 m	Normal
T-120	Horse chestnut	Decay in trunk at 1 m	Fell	Normal
T-121	Horse chestnut	Failed limbs, significant decay in stem	Fell	Normal
G-122	Lime	Line of pollarded trees around churchyard.	Re-pollard	Normal
T-123	Oak	Declining condition, deadwood over road, dieback	Reduce/shape whole tree by 5 m	Normal
G-124	Elm	3 dead stems	Fell	Normal
G-125	Elm	Multiple dead stems	Fell	Normal
T-126	Crack willow	Old pollard, several failed limbs, hollow stem	Re-pollard	Normal
G-127	Elm	3 dead stems	Habitat to 3 m	Normal

Explanatory notes

1. This schedule is intentionally brief and must be interpreted by an experienced and qualified arborist working to the commonly understood conventions explained in more detail in BS 3998 (2010) *Tree Work – Recommendations*.

2. **Inspection frequency:** The work recommendations are based on an expectation that the trees will be rechecked about every two years. Within this average timescale, there is flexibility to move that time up to six months either way, i.e., the inspection frequency can range from between 18 months and 30 months, to allow the option of varying the season for checking. In practical terms, this means that trees can be checked alternately with leaves on and leaves off. Trees can be checked at any time of the year, but varying the season can sometimes facilitate the discovery of subtler defects.

3. **Tree No:** The individual tree or group identified for work is identified by a tag stapled on or near the tree corresponding to the number on the location drawing and in the schedule. Where appropriate, the tag maybe highlighted with spray paint to make it stand out.

4. **Species:** The common name is listed to assist with identification on site.

5. **Comments:** These are discretionary notes intended to assist in understanding the reasons for the work recommendations. They are not intended to be a detailed description of the tree or a detailed rationale for the work recommendation.

6. **Recommendations:** The work described in the schedule is intentionally brief, to be read in the context of BS 3998 (2010) *Tree Work – Recommendations* (see link in Appendix 1), and interpreted by a qualified and experienced professional, with the following clarifications:

    - **Fell:** Remove the tree leaving the stump cut as close to ground level as possible.

- **Habitat:** Ecological diversity is an important tree management objective that is often enhanced by leaving standing and fallen dead and decaying wood. The '*Habitat*' option is an alternative to complete removal, with the intention that trunks are reduced in size to the specified height to remove any significant risk. Any long side branches should be reduced in length to remove any significant risk of them failing and causing harm, but as much live foliage should be left on the tree as possible to keep it alive, if it is not already dead. The approximate height of the standing trunk is indicated in the schedule and the disposal of cut material is a contractual matter to be agreed with the contractor. The final height that the trunk is left at is indicative, and it is for the climbing arborist to make the final decision based on the prevailing circumstances.

- **Stabilise dead wood:** Dead and dying branches can be important habitat to retain on trees where possible. As explained in 7.3.2 of BS 3998, '*Stabilise dead wood*' means pruning enough to prevent dead wood falling and causing harm, but not necessarily removing every bit. Where appropriate, as much as possible should be left on the tree if there is no significant risk of it falling and causing harm. The extent of pruning will be a judgement for the climbing arborist based on knowledge of the tree species and observations of the tree surroundings.

- **Re-pollard/prune to previous pruning points:** This can sometimes leave long side branches that were not previously pruned. In addition to the obvious pruning, any side branches that have become over-extended and out of proportion to the new pruned crown should be reduced in length with the aim of establishing a stable and natural flowing crown outline.

- **Maintenance:** This is intended to remove branches causing a nuisance and inconvenience to the normal use of the property, and generally includes lifting to 6–7 m above roads and 3–4 m above footpaths, and cutting back from road and path boundaries by 1–2 m. It also includes pruning back to clear structures, e.g., buildings, service cables, and lights, by 1–2 m.

- **Cut ivy:** Ivy plays an important role within the wider ecosystem because it flowers in autumn and develops fruits over winter, providing essential food and shelter for a wide range of animals. Where ivy is obscuring parts of the tree that require closer checking, or where it may be causing harm, it can be cut at the base to allow a more thorough check at the next visit.

- **Managing vulnerable branches caused by tree works:** Sometimes, work recommendations can expose branches on the subject tree or those adjacent to it, making them vulnerable to storm damage. In principle, this should be anticipated and addressed in the work recommendations, but sometimes it is not possible to specify every detail until the primary work is completed. Where a contractor carrying out the work assesses that it has resulted in branches becoming more vulnerable to storm damage, minor pruning should be carried out to remove any significant risks. Alternatively, the concerns must be reported in writing to the supervising officer.

- **Ecology:** The management of ecological issues is a routine requirement for tree work contractors. There is a presumption that contractors must work within the statutory ecological framework, and seek the advice of specialists where obvious ecological issues arise.

- **Contractor competence, insurance, and the standard of tree work:** Due to the inherent risks in undertaking tree work operations, they must be carried out by skilled workers who have training, experience, and adequate insurance cover. Contractor competence and insurance must be checked before instruction. The tree works listed in this document are made on the assumption that the work will be carried out by competent arborists who are fully trained and able to work to a high standard. All tree work must be carried out as described in BS 3998 (2010) *Tree Work – Recommendations* (see link in Appendix), as modified by more recent research and/or the specific site circumstances. As stated in the Foreword of BS 3998: "*Any user claiming compliance with this British Standard is expected to be able to justify any course of action that deviates from its*

recommendations." For the avoidance of doubt and misunderstanding, it must be a contractual requirement that the contractor carrying out the work has a copy of BS 3998 on site while working.

- **Reporting during work operations:** If a contractor carrying out recommended work discovers any features or conditions that may affect tree safety, these must be reported in writing to the supervising officer. Modification to the original specification may be required because of these reports. The contractor must be specifically instructed on this point.
- **Queries:** Any questions relating to the work recommendations in this report must be checked by phoning Barrell Tree Consultancy during office hours on 01425 651470 or emailing enquiries@barrelltreecare.co.uk.

barrell
TREE CONSULTANCY

Field House Fordingbridge Business Park Fordingbridge Hampshire SP6 1BD
☎ 01425 651470 ✉ info@barrelltreecare.co.uk www.barrelltreecare.co.uk