

Report on retrenchment pruning works required at Marsh Common.

Background

In February 2024, during a Full Council meeting, Minehead Town Councillors considered quotations for a tree survey to be conducted on all trees located on MTC-owned land. The decision was made to engage Simon Scotting Tree Consultancy to carry out the work, which was subsequently undertaken in March 2024. Following the field assessment, all findings have been compiled, and MTC officers have met with the consultancy to discuss the findings and identify high priority works. Additionally, a tree risk management strategy has been developed to guide MTC in identifying and prioritising tree risks, while also allowing members of the public to understand the process.

Needs

The survey identified the need for priority work on a group of willow trees at Marsh Common due to their age, species, weak wood, and potential for failure. The recommendation is to perform initial retrenchment pruning, with the aim of gradually reducing the trees over a period of years to achieve a group of low-pollarded trees. This work will ensure the long-term future of these trees by maintaining their health and mitigating risks to users of the open space. The work needs to be carried out during the growing season to encourage proper healing and new growth for the group of trees. While considering the environmental impact at this stage is necessary, the manner in which the retrenchment pruning will be conducted, in line with the work schedule, makes it unlikely to have a detrimental impact on wildlife.

During the Finance and General Purposes meeting held on 11th June 2024, Councillors considered three quotations:

Quote A - £2,400 + VAT

Quote B - £3,580 + VAT

Quote C - £6,965 + VAT

After discussing and considering the quotations, Councillors agreed to recommend Quote B based on the contractor's portfolio and experience working on similar projects. Contractor B has advised that they have availability to undertake the works during the week commencing July 29, 2024.

Finance

In the 2024-25 budget, Minehead Town Councillors allocated £8,000 for Tree Works under the 215 - Open Spaces budget line. This budget was set aside as a proportionate response to the potential findings of the survey. To date, no funds have been spent from this budget line, leaving sufficient finance to undertake the required work.

Recommendation

To appoint Contractor B at a cost of £3,580 + VAT to undertake the required work as per the specification at their earliest opportunity.

Ben Parker

Minehead Town Clerk

June 2024