



Report on Upcoming Tree Management Work At Marsh Common

An independent tree consultant recently conducted a tree condition survey across all Minehead Town Council owned sites. This survey identified a group of willows and poplars on the south side of Marsh Common that require attention.

Location of Marsh Common

Marsh Common is owned and maintained by Minehead Town Council. It is situated between Marshfield Road and Seaward Way, and includes the Millennium Rose Garden. In recent years, the common has also served as the site for the annual September funfair. The tree management work will focus on the south side of this area (towards the rear of the Premier Inn hotel).

About the Trees

The southern area of Marsh Common features several large, mature willow and poplar trees. The assessment considered factors such as the trees' age, species, wood strength, potential for failure, and overall structure. Based on this evaluation, the tree surveyor determined that some trees require intervention to ensure their long-term health and safety.

Planned Work: Retrenchment Pruning

The primary intervention will be retrenchment pruning. But what exactly is retrenchment pruning?

Retrenchment pruning is a specialised technique used on mature trees which is carried out in stages so as not to stress the tree further. It involves carefully reducing the size of the tree's crown to lessen the risk of branch or trunk failure. This method allows us to:

- Extend the lifespan of older trees
- Maintain their structural integrity
- Preserve their ecological value

Our Approach

We're implementing a phased reduction strategy:

- Initial retrenchment pruning to mitigate potential limb or stem failure
- Ongoing cyclical pruning and reduction over the next 3-5 years
- Ultimate goal: Create a group of low pollarded trees at 3 meters height

Benefits of This Approach

- Cost-effective long-term management
- Reduced risk of tree failure

- Extended tree retention
- Easier future maintenance
- Enhanced wildlife habitat
- Increased light levels, promoting ground flora diversity
- This strategy aligns with Minehead Town Council's current rewilding project.

Work Schedule and Environmental Considerations

Work is scheduled to begin at the end of July (exact date to be confirmed but no earlier than Thursday 25th July). While these works need to be carried out during the growing season, we've taken steps to minimise environmental impact:

- We've selected a specialist arboricultural contractor experienced in similar projects.
- The contractor will perform an environmental impact assessment before starting work.
- The pruning will focus exclusively on the upper sections of the trees, well above the areas typically used by nesting birds. This targeted approach ensures that the local bird population will not be disturbed by our work.

Public Safety and Cooperation

During the works, an exclusion zone will be in place. We kindly ask members of the public to respect these zones and any signage to ensure the work can be carried out safely and efficiently.

Our Commitment

Public safety is our top priority. These crucial works, once completed, will not only ensure public safety but will also allow these beautiful trees to continue thriving at Marsh Common for many years to come.

Ben Parker

Town Clerk

July 2024