



Report on Tree Replacement in The Avenue, Minehead

Background

The Avenue in Minehead, a major feature of the town centre, is lined with mature *Tilia* sp. (Lime) and *Carpinus* sp. (Hornbeam) trees. These trees are increasingly susceptible to wind fall and disease due to their age, necessitating replacement over time. Somerset Council, who are responsible for these trees, has conducted a survey indicating that many will need felling in the coming years.

Somerset Council has clarified that they lack the finances and resources to replant removed trees. Currently, three trees have been felled with stumps remaining, and one is due for imminent felling in The Avenue. These are located outside Hold Fast Tattoo Studio, Foxes Lodge, Hairy Dog, and Bar 21. Detailed information on these trees and their exact locations can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

Town Councillors have allocated £6,000 as an earmarked reserve for the 2024/25 financial year to replace street trees in The Avenue.

Needs

The initial plan was to replace the three existing tree stumps. However, with the recent news of the tree outside Foxes Lodge requiring felling, replacing this tree promptly would prevent further loss in the avenue. Following a meeting with Somerset Councillor Chilcott and the SC tree officer, a clear specification for tree replacement has been established.

Somerset Council will fund the felling of the tree to a 1-meter high stump. The Clerk has arranged for SC's contractor to grind all four stumps simultaneously if MTC finances the work, saving on additional roadside work license costs. The agreed replacement tree is *Tilia cordata* 'Street Wise', a cultivated lime variety suitable for urban conditions.

To complete this work, MTC and SC must collaborate, following specific steps to ensure adherence to specifications, safety standards, and legal requirements. Once planted, MTC will assume responsibility for the trees' maintenance and potential replacement until they reach a point of maturity (5-10 years), after which Somerset Council will resume responsibility.

It's worth noting that most, if not all, existing trees in The Avenue are expected to require replacement over the next 5-20 years due to their maturity and health.

The clerk has obtained all the available information on services that run through The Avenue. The initial findings are that this work can be safely carried out around the existing infrastructure. However, the timeframes and estimated costs of this project rely on all services information obtained being correct.

Financial and Legal Considerations

The £6,000 earmarked reserve, along with a £500 cash gift accepted under Section 139 of the Local Government Act 1972, provides sufficient budget for replacing these four trees. The estimated cost is £6,401, as detailed in Appendix 2. Additional funds allocated for devolution costs, currently underspent, could cover any unforeseen expenses.

Several licenses and agreements are necessary for this work. The Clerk is coordinating with the highways authority to obtain required licenses for roadside work. All contractors considered have the necessary qualifications, as does the in-house Amenities Team.

Somerset Council must consent to MTC carrying out the required works through an agreement under The Highways Act 1980, Section 96 (4). An agreement in principle is already in place.

Before work commences, MTC must sign a maintenance agreement, accepting full responsibility for watering, maintaining, and potentially replacing the trees for 5-10 years. After this period, ownership and maintenance responsibilities will revert to Somerset Council.

Recommendations

To replace four trees in The Avenue, Minehead and delegate authority to the Clerk to spend up to £8,000 if required, using appropriate budgets to complete the work as specified.

Ben Parker

Town Clerk

October 2024

Appendix 1

Closest Shop	Current Status	What Three Words	Picture	SC ID Tag	Replace with
Exmoor Vape	Stump (Alive)	deserved.polka.grudge		NA	Tilia Cordata 'Streetwise'
Foxes Lodge	Tree (due to be felled)	fortunate.unless.washable		516	Tilia Cordata 'Streetwise'
Hairy Dog	Stump (Dead)	replenish.bashful.habit		NA	Tilia Cordata 'Streetwise'
Bar21	Stump (Dead)	stubborn.lawfully.sliders		NA	Tilia Cordata 'Streetwise'

Appendix 2

Task	Owner	Unit Cost (MTC) ex. VAT	Total Cost (MTC) ex. VAT	Contractor Name	Comments
Fell Tree to 1 meter of stump X 1	SC	£0.00	£0.00		
remove 1 meter stump and grind out root X 4	MTC	£250.00	£1,000.00		
Reinstate footpath around stump, create new tree pit x 4	MTC	£932.50	£3,730.00		Somerset Council to waive fee for a section 171 licence
Issuing of Section 96 Agreement.	MTC/SC	£0.00	£0.00		MTC will need to provide as much information on tree type including exact locations.
Purchase Trees (Tilia Cordata 'streetwise') x 4	MTC	£144.00	£576.00		
Delivery of trees	MTC	£295.00	£295.00		
Purchase robust metal tree guards x 4	MTC	£200.00	£800.00		Galvanised and painted black. Size 195 CM H, 63 CM Diameter. Does not include delivery.
Create and agree Tree maintenance plan	MTC/SC	£0.00	£0.00	MTC/SC	Will formalise MTC's maintenance and/or replacement obligations of tree for a set amount of years
Plant Trees and Install tree guards	MTC	£0.00	£0.00	MTC	In house amenities team to undertake work. (Labour already costed)
MTC to maintain Trees (Water etc.)	MTC	£0.00	£0.00	MTC	In house amenities team to undertake work. (Labour already costed)
Remove Tree guards at to be determined point of maturity	MTC	£0.00	£0.00	MTC	In house amenities team to undertake work. (Labour already costed)
Transfer of Tree responsibility from MTC to SC	MTC/SC	£0.00	£0.00	MTC/SC	Once a pre determined point of maturity is reached, the trees are transferred back to SC for maintenance
Ongoing mature Tree maintenance	SC	£0.00	£0.00	SC	
	Total		£6,401.00		