



Report on Tree Maintenance Works at King George Playing Fields

Background

A specialist tree survey commissioned by Minehead Town Council in March 2023 evaluated established trees on council property. The survey identified necessary maintenance works to ensure public safety and reduce failure risks in council-managed spaces.

Through effective use of specialist contractors and the council's amenities team, all immediate intervention works have been completed. This efficient approach has generated budget savings, creating an opportunity to address medium-term works ahead of schedule.

A row of Willow trees along the northern boundary of King George Playing Fields, last pollarded approximately 15 years ago, now requires attention. Recent boundary reviews indicate that most of these trees fall within neighbouring property boundaries, potentially shifting maintenance responsibility to the adjacent landowner. (See Appendix 1) The Town Clerk has contacted the landowner regarding this matter and awaits their response.

However, approximately 6 trees near the footbridge at the eastern end of King George Playing Fields are still within MTC ownership and responsibility.

Needs

These 6 trees require pollarding back to the main stem at previous work sites to prevent potential damage to the trees, nearby property, and park users, as well as to mitigate risks from weak regrowth at attachment points ensuring the trees longevity.

Quotes

The procurement process is currently underway, with anticipated costs not expected to exceed £2,500.

Financial and Legal Considerations

Current tree maintenance budget underspend, achieved through in-house completion of other intervention works, can fund this additional work. All works would need to be authorised, completed, and invoiced before April 1st to utilise this underspend. Completing these works now will advance the overall tree maintenance programme, allowing remaining work to be scheduled alongside other maintenance activities in the next financial year.

Legal compliance requires adherence to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, particularly regarding protection of nesting birds. Works must be completed before March to avoid the UK bird nesting season (March to September), ensuring compliance and minimising environmental impact.

Recommendation

To authorise the Clerk to obtain quotes and appoint a contractor for pollarding works on approximately 6 trees along King George Playing Fields' eastern boundary, with a maximum budget of £2,500 and completion within the timeframes specified in this report.

Ben Parker

Town Clerk

January 2025