

Report of Tree Warden 11 December 2023 (Emailed)

Trees on the east side of the allotments and the east and north faces of the Pit heap.

I had a look at some of the trees on the eastern side of the allotments with two allotments committee members, during the allotments maintenance day on Sunday 26 November. I wanted to give them some feedback about what I recommended in the annual tree survey. (See my report to PC on 9 October 2023).

We discussed additional work that the committee would like to see carried out, described below. The Allotments Committee will discuss the work at their next meeting and I have asked them to write formally to the Parish Clerk to request the work they consider essential, with reasons. They have suggested that the work could be phased over several seasons to spread the costs. The trees are all on Parish Council land.

1 Trees on the western edge of the pit heap.

These trees overhang the public footpath with low hanging branches, some of which are extending all the way across to the allotments and plot holders have asked for pruning. I have recommended removal of approximately 8 medium sized elms. Most of these are suppressed by the trees further up on the pit heap and are leaning out over the path for more light. They have lop-sided crowns weighted down with ivy so pose a potential danger to path users as they grow larger. The tree branches also impede access for the tractor and flail to cut back the allotment hedge. There are two trees on the pit heap with large heavy dead limbs to remove. This work will need the services of a tree surgeon and was flagged in my annual report.

There are many small elm saplings/suckers that I can thin out over the winter: I last did this early 2019.

2 Trees at the south east corner of the allotments

This partially fenced, triangular area has dense growth of young saplings/suckers, mostly native cherry. The Allotment Association is concerned about future impacts on the adjacent allotment plots. Thinning to leave perhaps 2 - 3 sturdy trees would probably be acceptable, with subsequent control of suckers. (Note: there are helleborines in this area which seem to prefer dappled rather than dense shade.) Some of the work could be done by volunteers and myself but we may need some help with the larger saplings.

3 Trees at the north east corner of the allotments

This is a small triangle of hawthorn scrub at the junction of the allotment track and the public footpath. The hawthorns have had some pruning but are encroaching over the track and should be cut back to the hedge line.

4 Trees on the north side of the allotments track

There is a medium sized sycamore and other hedge / scrub adjoining the track. The area is fenced and it looks as though the trees have self-seeded there. They will compromise the allotment plots as they continue to grow. The sycamore is now too large and would need a tree surgeon.

5 Trees on the north edge of the pit heap

These are mostly elm, heavy with ivy and leaning in a similar way to those on the west side. The allotments association are concerned about trees and branches falling on to the track. I have cleared some fallen limbs here a few years ago. I would not be keen on extensive felling here as the tree roots stabilise the loose colliery waste. Pollarding could be an option but the cost and extent of the work would need to be balanced against the risk posed.