

**WYLAM PARISH COUNCIL
ANNUAL SURVEY OF TREES ON PARISH COUNCIL LAND
July – August 2024**

This is a visual, ground level assessment of the trees on land owned and managed by Wylam Parish Council, with a view to identifying any trees requiring work in the interests of public safety and in accordance with the Wylam Tree Policy. (The survey is essentially in line with the International Society of Arborists’ Level 1 visual tree inspection. Levels 2 and 3 are for professionals where the tree is identified as needing a more detailed risk assessment)

Where trees are potentially dangerous, a professional arboricultural opinion is recommended to confirm the condition of the tree and specify any necessary work.

Survey findings are noted below. **(Actions in Red are priority)**

Abbreviations:

TW = Tree Warden WPC = Wylam Parish Council / Parish Clerk.

DBH = Diameter at Breast Height

NCC = Northumberland County Council. EA = Environment Agency. WAC = Wylam Angling Club. OJBC = Ovingham Joint Burial Committee

Introduction

Spring and early summer 2024 were cold and stormy in contrast to the drought conditions in previous years. Ash dieback and horse chestnut blotch / leaf miner continue to be very evident and we can expect tree losses, hastened by adverse weather.

Coppiced or pollarded trees and shrubs and new trees (saplings and transplants) are doing well, helped by the cool wet conditions.

Generally speaking: little change since 2023 and no serious and immediate hazards on parish council land requiring urgent action. It is always important to remain vigilant and check at-risk trees after storms and other extreme weather, particularly near roads, buildings, paths and the river bank.

A note about ivy in trees. Ivy is not a parasite and does not feed on trees. Ivy is a UK native species and has co-existed with trees for millennia. Many people have very strong views on whether ivy is harmful or beneficial. The answer is probably both. Ivy does not kill or “strangle” trees but climbs a tree to reach the light and flower. Ivy can add a significant extra weight to the crown of a tree over the years, increasing the risk of storm damage particularly if the host tree itself is in poor condition. Thus trees with heavy ivy loads in public locations do need to be monitored but within woodlands and wildlife areas away from public access, there is little risk. English ivy is an invasive, non-native plant in the USA which impacts on native species there.

1 Engine Dene

Northumberland Council are responsible for the eastern portion of this green space. A very big prominent veteran ash fell during the winter in high winds and decay can be seen in the root plate. There are still low hanging branches and deadwood in the other large ash trees. (Note: adjoining residents have reported concerns to NCC) No replacements have been planted for the fallen alder (Storm Arwen) or the recent fallen ash.

On the WPC land, two very large veteran ash trees on the north garden boundary of no 20 The Dene are regularly inspected for dead wood, soil cracks and any other indications of problems, particularly after storms. The swing is still attached to a sycamore tree in the "spinney" east of Woodvale Gardens. On visual inspection this seems reasonably sound to date. A three-stem ash in the same area is showing die-back and two main stems have been marked, presumably for removal. An old elder overhangs close to the path and requires pruning back.

Recommendations for potential hazards

Ash – large veteran trees.	2 no	Close to residential property boundary.	TW to monitor condition particularly after storms.
Ash in "spinney"		In spinney	Remove marked stems.
Elder			Prune back from path (TW)

2 Green space between Hedley Street, Jackson Road and The Dene

The overgrown cherry laurel and other tall shrubs have been coppiced down close to ground level and will be allowed to re-grow to an acceptable height that allows more regular maintenance. With clearance of the dense shrubbery the site has the appearance of a more open glade but still contains over 200 trees: some good mature specimens but also a very large number that are likely to be self-seeded, growing very close together and drawn up seeking the light. These will need to be thinned, removing any that are dead, dying, weak, leaning or otherwise inappropriate, leaving the remainder to develop as healthy trees. The veteran oak may need more work in the crown for safety reasons following two recent large breakouts in storms and is being monitored by a local contractor. A large elm has branches in contact with the roof /gutters of the property to the north.

Replacement trees (chestnut, oak, hornbeam and hazel transplants) have been planted on the site as replacements for trees already removed.

Two swings are attached to Norway maples at the south end of the central grassed space. There is no obvious damage to the trees but both carry some deadwood: one swing is attached to a tree that has visible splits in the bark of lower limbs and a second opinion on safety is advised and could be included in one of the contractor's monitoring visits. (See para above) In the event of a fall, the area below the swings is hard packed bare earth with scalped tree roots.

Recommendations for potential hazards

Norway maple containing rope swings.	2no	Tree limbs show bark splits.	Obtain 2nd opinion on safety and seek advice from insurer.	WPC
Overcrowded trees	TBC	Thin out weak, dead or dying trees .	Survey	WPC / TW

3 The Orchard - Church Road corner

A request has been received to pollard two ash trees and prune a yew on the north boundary wall, to enable an adjoining owner to install solar panels. An elm on the same boundary appears to have died and will need removal.

The young trees planted as part of the new housing development have put on good growth this year, including a rowan, with a dead leader, that is continuing to put on healthy regrowth from the base. The others are healthy and have benefitted from wire netting protective collars to prevent mower damage

Recommendations for potential hazards

Remove dead elm and replace.	Adjacent to wall		Monitor and control ivy and elm regrowth	WPC / TW
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4 Charlie's Corner

The rowan trees continue to be slow to put on growth in the poor soil conditions but the existing birch is developing well. Four new trees are establishing well.

Recommendations for potential hazards

None				
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5 Wylam Institute (Note Advisory: the green space is **not** WPC responsibility)

No significant change or concerns with trees. Low retaining wall and signage at the corner are still in need of repairs. (Try "FixMyStreet")

Recommendations for potential hazards

None				
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6 Wylam Haughs Nature Reserve, including riverside trees and public footpath. 2021 – 2025 Management plan will need review of actions over the coming year. There have been a number of work sessions attended by a small informal group of volunteers carrying out hay raking, rotational bramble and shrub clearance and creation of a dead hedge. Several multi-stemmed hazel were re-coppiced by volunteers as part of a 7-year rotation but remaining hazels will need professional coppicing with mechanical tools as they are too large for volunteers with hand tools. There is good regrowth of previously coppiced trees and much natural regeneration generally across the reserve. Cherry and sycamore seedlings

are over-abundant and will need some control and monitoring. More young trees (Oak, Hornbeam, Hawthorn, Holly, and Blackthorn transplants) have been planted.

There are several dead and dying ash in the reserve, most in the central woodland areas. This die-back will continue. Some trees may need reduction or felling as they die and decay.

Storms have damaged an oak and a goat willow. These trees are within the dense woodland and the branches are hung up on other trees. If the hazels are coppiced (see above) then professional remedial pruning could be included for these two trees.

As noted in 2023, there are two dead trees on the river bank near Points Bridge, one has fallen and the other could be reduced by 2/3 to leave some standing deadwood. A large pollarded willow with dieback has fallen at the river edge. A group of young elms (12) that have re-grown from older stumps appear to be dying, probably from a Dutch Elm Disease re-infection. These trees are between the public footpath and the river and felling is recommended.

Recommendations for potential hazards

Hazel coppicing (8) remedial work to storm – damaged trees and felling of dying elms.			Survey and prepare schedule of work	WPC/ TW
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7 The Haughs – Wylam Allotments Association

South of the allotments and beside the public footpath, there is some natural regeneration of a few trees (sycamore, birch, goat willow) and berrying shrubs.(Elder, bramble, blackthorn, blackcurrant, raspberry, privet.) The area is reserved for potential future allotments, but is increasingly shaded by vegetation and riverside trees plus incursion of Himalayan Balsam in an area difficult to access.

Within the allotments there are some scattered hawthorns 5 – 6 metres in height, fruit trees and a perimeter hedge. The trackside hedge needs to be controlled in height down to 1.metres (4 ft) to prevent tall growth out of reach from the ground and shading of plots. The hedge should not be allowed to develop into trees. A taller hedge long established with gaps at the base would benefit from being laid to promote new basal growth. The allotment association has requested tree management and thinning along the trackside, on the west face of the pit heap (see below) and to the south east of the allotments to reduce impacts on plots adjacent.

Recommendations for potential hazards

Selective tree removal, pruning, hedge laying.	Shading and tree root competition affecting plots.		Reducing trees Hedge laying on western boundary.	WPC / TW /Allotments Association
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8 Former Colliery Spoil Heap

No change from previous years. Erosion continues gradually on steep sections particularly the south face next to the river. A tall dead elm now without bark is close to a well-used path east of the tip and should now be felled or reduced to a safe height as standing deadwood. Another dead ivy-covered elm has collapsed and needs to be made safe. A very large sycamore on the south west edge of the pit heap has reduced foliage and peeling bark and requires a second opinion. Otherwise there has been no obvious change that would indicate a significant increase in the current level of tree risk to people using the various informal paths on or beside the pit heap. (Refer to MWA consultants' assessment dated 13-02-2015 – reviewed by PC 2020.) Many trees at the top of the pit heap and on the level ground to the east, have a mass of basal growth and ivy at the base which prevents full inspection for basal decay.

Sapling elms overhanging the public footpath on the western side have been removed but some larger trees (8 - 12 approx.) require professional removal, and pruning of a few high dead branches.

Recommendations for potential hazards

Elms and sycamore Pine, elm, beech	Overhanging trees	Prune off heavy limbs extending over footpath. Fell 8 -12 medium elms and larger /dead elms.	WPC / TW
Beech, sycamore, ash, elm.	On or close to river. Large trees with exposed roots / rootplates.	Monitor trees and erosion particularly after severe weather, high river levels.	TW

9 Riverside south of Tyne View House and West View

Large riverside willows (2) and sycamore (3) have been pollarded to protect the river edge and are showing healthy re-growth. A third willow fell during storms and is lying along the river bank. Two others shed limbs into the river.

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Recommendations for potential hazards

None				
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10 Riverside south of Stephenson Court and Wylam Nurseries.

Despite barrier fencing and increasing scrub growth, the riverside footpath is still being used when river levels allow and a medium sized fallen tree has recently been sawn to clear the path. There are no other significant changes to the trees since 2020 - 2021. The elder, goat willow and hawthorn, weighed down with ivy, lean heavily over sections of the path and will continue to collapse from time to time.

Recommendations for potential hazards

Mainly mature elm and sycamore	Leaning and dead/dying trees on the lower bankside, particularly where root plates are exposed	Monitor after storms and floods -	TW
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11 Hagg Bank Playground

No concerns.

Recommendations for potential hazards - none

None				WPC continue annual management programme.
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12 Wylam Wood Road

One lime blown over by storms – removed but no replacement as yet. Large willow pollarded but showing weak regrowth. No other significant change from previous reports noting poor condition of most of the trees in this group: fissures in main trunk, possible canker and Horse Chestnut blotch / fungal disease, probably exacerbated by scalping of exposed surface roots. Lime tree overhanging the stone sign / planter needs crown lifting. (Too high to reach from ground)

Recommendations for potential hazards

Lime, willow and chestnut group.		Bark damage and fissures, possible canker .		TW to monitor condition
Prune lime				WPC

13 Land adjacent To Stanley Burn

No concerns. Birch still obscuring Northumberland sign. (Too high above pavement)

Recommendations for potential hazards

Birch adjacent to Stanley Burn			Pruning.	NCC
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14 Ovingham Burial Ground

No significant change from previous year. Lime trees have had some modest pruning. (These may be protected by TPO – Check status.) Trees generally in good health apart from young ash on north boundary.

Recommendations for potential hazards

None			Consider a tree / landscape management plan. OJBC
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15 Forster Gardens

Hawthorn hedge 2 metres high. Receives annual cut though not on PC land.

Recommendations for potential hazards - none

		Review maintenance	WPC
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Liz Bray
Wylam Volunteer Tree Warden
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