

Date: 7th March 2019

Title: Report Item 6 – Trees in Micheldene Road

By: P Williamson (Tree Warden)

Purpose: To report as requested at the February council meeting

Recommendations: (a) To note the report
(b) To obtain quotes for removal of dead wood from all seven false acacia trees

On 9 May last year, in response to notification from the Parish Clerk, I met Allister Climpson for his opinion of this same tree that forms part of a line of several false acacia trees, five of similar age with two younger in their midst (probably shoots from roots) growing on the eastern verge of Michel Dene Road behind Gore Farm Close businesses and cottages....

You can see from the attached map of TPO areas in East Dean & Friston (that I recently acquired from GIS Services – SCGIS Ltd. at the SDNPA) that this line of trees forms a TPO group.

Then, on 1 December, again in response to notification, I visited [a resident] who had previously paid for work to be done to another of these trees to remove a bough overhanging her property.... Her concern last December was that a 'dead' main/subsidiary branch of an acacia actually overhanging 7 Gore Farm Close may be blown off by strong wind and fall into her property. She believes the branch is dead as it did not come into leaf that year.

According to Allister Climpson on 9 May 2018, no obvious disease is present in any of the trees in question, although one may be showing some canker. Much dead wood can be seen in the canopies, some of which overhang the road and the buildings mentioned. His opinion was that the dead wood should be removed for health & safety reasons. False acacia are not a native species and have limited conservation value. Allister Climpson was himself unsure whether they form part of a TPO group or not. He remembered being asked by the council for a quote for similar works 4 to 5 years ago, but thought he only gave it to the council verbally and not in writing....

My recommendation would be to wait until enough leaf is visible on these trees and then obtain two quotes for removal of dead wood from all seven trees in order to promote canopy growth as well as to manage any health & safety risk to the residences and businesses below them. If this is acceptable to Parish Councillors, I'd approach two tree surgeons with different qualifications.

It would be useful to know if the Council has any budget for such works as the line of trees grows on unregistered/Crown land. [Note by the Clerk: in the current financial year the council has a budget of £500 for tree maintenance, which is as yet unspent. In 2019/20 the budget will be £250.]

Please accept my apologies for the 7 March meeting as I'm away and inform the Council that I cannot obviously comment on the safety of these trees with regard to the buildings below them so Councillors may want to consider getting them inspected by an appropriately qualified and insured inspector.