

REPORT TITLE: CONFIRMATION OF TPO2294 – HOCKLEY GOLF CLUB,
WINCHESTER ROAD, TWYFORD.

26 MAY 2021

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Wellbeing

Contact Officer: Ivan Gurdler Tel No 01962 848403 Email igurdler@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): COLDEN COMMON AND TWYFORD

PURPOSE

To consider confirmation of Tree Preservation Order 2294 to which one letter of objection and two letters of support have been received.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That having taken into consideration the representations received, Tree Preservation Order 2294 be confirmed.

IMPLICATIONS:**1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME**

- 1.1 Tackling the Climate Emergency and Creating a Greener District
 - 1.2 Trees represent an important environmental, economic and amenity resource within the built and natural environment. They are recognised within the England Forestry Strategy (1998), SW Regional Forestry Framework (2005) and national and regional Biodiversity Action Plans.
 - 1.3 Mature trees such as this group at Hockley Golf Course, play a key role in helping to tackle the climate emergency and create a greener district. They directly remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and convert this to stored carbon. Additionally they are important for biodiversity both in their own right and as a habitat for other species. Therefore, the protection of this group of trees and woodland will contribute towards the council's objectives to reduce the effects of global warming and carbon emissions as well as supporting the Biodiversity Action Plan.
 - 1.4 The climate crisis remains a significant, long term challenge in the coming years and decades, and there is a growing ecological crisis too. Winchester City Council has committed to tackle these emergencies by producing a carbon neutrality action plan, biodiversity action plan and a tree management plan to ensure the district is handed across to future generations in a better condition than it is currently. One way to achieve the council's objectives as set out in these policies is to safeguard trees that are identified as worthy of protection.
 - 1.5 Homes for all
 - 1.6 None
 - 1.7 Vibrant Local Economy
 - 1.8 None
 - 1.9 Living Well
 - 1.10 The protection of these trees supports the priority of "Living Well" by helping to enhance the street view and open spaces through their high amenity and aesthetic value, thereby supporting good mental and physical health for residents of all ages.
 - 1.11 Your Services, Your Voice
 - 1.12 None
- 2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 2.1 There are no financial implications for the City Council at this stage. Compensation is potentially payable only where sufficient evidence has been provided by an applicant to support an application to carry out works to the protected tree and where that application is refused.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 This report is in line with the council's legal procedures in relation to making and confirming TPOs.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are sufficient resources to respond to any works arising from the confirmation of this TPO.

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 On serving of the Tree Preservation Order (TPO), the landowner and immediate neighbours were notified and allowed 28 days to object.

- 6.2 One letter of objection and two letters of support were received to this TPO.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 Trees contribute a key role in helping to tackle the climate emergency and creating a greener district. They not only directly remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and provide us with oxygen but also deliver many other benefits including:-

- Providing visual public amenity, softening or complementing the effect of the built environment
- Displaying seasonal changes and providing opportunities for biodiversity
- Making places more comfortable in noticeable ways by contributing to screening and shade, reducing wind speed and turbulence, reduce flooding by intercepting snow and rainfall, and reducing sun glare.

- 7.2 Trees are also a key element of the green infrastructure network, contributing to urban cooling and providing micro climate effects which help reduce energy demands on buildings. They therefore represent a key resource that can significantly contribute to climate change adaptation.

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 None

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 None

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

10.1 None

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
<i>Property</i>	N/A	N/A
<i>Community Support</i>	N/A	N/A
<i>Timescales</i>	N/A	N/A
<i>Project capacity</i>	N/A	N/A
<i>Financial / VfM</i>	N/A	N/A
<i>Legal</i>	N/A	N/A
<i>Innovation</i>	N/A	N/A
<i>Reputation</i>	The loss of reputation if the council fails to safeguard trees worthy of protection in light of the climate emergency and Biodiversity Action Plan	Officers to ensure they appropriately assess whether a tree is worthy of protection and provide clear evidence to members to justify the decision using the TEMPO methodology.
<i>Other</i>		

11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 11.1 This matter comes to Planning Committee because one objection to the making of TPO 2294 has been received and has not been withdrawn.
- 11.2 On 8th February 2021 the Principal Tree Officer received two emails, one from Twyford Parish Council and one from a Colden Common and Twyford ward member informing him that a group of mature beech trees around the water reservoir at Hockley Golf Course were under immediate threat of felling.
- 11.3 Following his visit on the 8th February 2021, TPO 2294 was made on 15th February 2021. If TPO 2294 is not confirmed, the TPO will expire on 14th August 2021.
- 11.4 The group of trees within TPO 2294 (G1) consist of 29 mature beech trees and 1 maturing yew. G1 surrounds a water reservoir that feeds water to the golf course greens. G1 is in full public view from the adjacent public right of way and track which is regularly used by walkers. The trees are growing on elevated ground and therefore are a prominent feature in the local landscape

and are highly visible from the golf course car park, which has a right of way passing through.

- 11.5 To the west of G1 is a woodland. For completeness this woodland (W1) has also been included in TPO 2294 by means of the woodland category. In addition a number of mature yew trees have been protected by the individual tree category to the north of W1 as the public right of way passes through this woodland.
- 11.6 The protection of the group of trees and woodland by a Tree Preservation Order is in accordance with Government guidance which states that "orders should be used to protect selected trees if their removal would have a significant negative impact on the local environment and its enjoyment by the public." The proposed removal of the 29 beech, 1 yew, and any future felling within W1 would have a significant negative impact on the local environment and its enjoyment by the public.
- 11.7 There are no arboricultural reasons or justification provided for the felling of G1, there is no history of tree failure and no reports of structural damage being caused to the water reservoir. There are no dwellings or neighbouring properties near to the trees.

12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

At the time that TPO 2294 was served, the City Council received 1 letter of objection, and 2 letters of support.

13 SUMMARY OF OBJECTION

- 13.1 The owners of the golf course object to TPO 2294 as it prevents them from felling the 29 beech and 1 yew (G1) which are located around the water reservoir that feeds the water to the greens. They propose to fell the trees within G1 as the leaf litter from the trees creates silt within the water reservoir that causes blockages in the watering system. They propose replanting the area around the reservoir with wildlife friendly plants.
- 13.2 In addition, they state that the South Downs National Park countryside ranger's opinion is that the removal of G1 would not have a significant impact on the local landscape. A felling licence has been issued by the Forestry Commission for the removal and thinning of the trees across the whole golf course.

14. SUMMARY OF SUPPORT LETTERS

- 14.1 Two letters of support of the TPO have been received. One from Twyford Parish Council and the other from one of the Colden Common and Twyford ward councillors.
- 14.2 The parish council has stated the following in their letter of support:

"The trees in this area form a significant visual feature in the landscape and the treescape is of high public amenity value with a public right of way passing through the area. The council also understands that the trees support bat commuting routes and that the habitat of the pond environs provides foraging for barn owls".

"Moreover the felling of two mature yew trees immediately following the Arboricultural Officer's visit give the council further concern about the management of this landscape and therefore reinforces the requirement for this TPO"

- 14.3 The WCC local member has stated in her letter of support the following:

"I like the Twyford Parish Council am in strong support for the above Tree Preservation Order to be enforced and not to be removed"

"These trees in the area form a Significant Visual Feature of the landscape. They are also High Public Amenity Value with a Public Right Of Way passing through the area also mentioned on the map".

"Both the Parish Council and myself as one of the Ward Councillors is most DEFINITELY of the view that the proposed works for the site (as there is currently no wide Woodland Management Plan) is not selectively thinning but removing significant and a distinct group of trees around the reservoir and it is not justified!"

"So in conclusion with reference to the TPOs that have been temporarily placed on certain trees and they are shown in the map that was supplied by the Arboricultural Team, I should like to enforce that they are fully supported and are placed on these trees for evermore!"

15. ARBORICULTURAL OFFICER'S RESPONSE

- 15.1 The 29 beech trees and 1 yew that are located within G1 are mature trees. The beech trees are estimated to be between 60- 80 years old and the yew, 20 years plus. The beech trees have in excess of 250 years remaining safe useful life expectancy, with the yew in excess of a further 800 years. From a ground visual inspection it was noted that the trees are of reasonable health with good bud and twig density that are evenly distributed throughout the groups tree canopy to indicate that the trees are of good health.
- 15.2 The location of the trees is correct for the species. Beech trees are a characteristic species of the southern chalk down land and contribute an important feature in the character and setting of the South Downs National Park. The proposed removal of G1 will have a detrimental impact on the local landscape. The trees within G1 and W1 cannot only be seen from the public right of way that runs through the golf course but can also be seen as a prominent feature in the landscape when viewed at a distance from the

opposite side of the valley from the public right of way, giving them high visual public amenity value.

- 15.3 The trees within G1 & W1 which are protected by TPO 2294 make a large tight symmetrical cohesive group. The threatened removal of G1 will create a large void in the tree cover and create asymmetrical group of trees of which will be highly noticeable locally and also from the opposite of the valley on the public right of way.
- 15.4 There has been no arboricultural justification to justify the felling of G1, or any landscape plan submitted to mitigate the loss of G1. The Secretary of State's guidance is in general terms, the higher the amenity value of the tree or woodland and the greater any negative impact of proposed works on amenity, the stronger the reasons needed before consent is granted.
- 15.5 Large numbers of ash trees have recently been felled on the golf course because of Ash Die Back, which has created large gaps in the trees cover on the golf course. In addition two large mature yew trees (T1 & T2) with an estimated age of 140 years old have recently been felled because they cast shade on the adjacent greens. The confirmation of TPO 2294 to protect the remaining trees will ensure there is no further loss of trees in this area. .
- 15.6 A Tree Evaluation Method for Preservation Orders (Tempo) has been carried out. The trees scored a total of 21 points which means the trees merit a TPO.

16. [South Downs National Park Local Plan](#)

- 16.1 Purpose1 of the South Downs National Park (SDNP) local plan adopted 2nd July 2019 states: To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.
- 16.2 Point 1 of the SDNP local plan objectives is to Conserve and enhance the landscapes of the National Park
- 16.3 Point 6 of the SDNP local plan objectives is to adapt well and to mitigate against the impacts of climate change and other pressures.
- 16.4 South Downs National Park policy SD11 gives the following guidance:

The purpose of policy SD11 is to ensure the management, including conservation and enhancement of existing trees, woodland and hedgerows, and to ensure that opportunities for restoration and new planting is realised.

- 16.5 The appropriate objectives to this TPO of the SDNP Policy SD11 are set out below.
 - 1. Development proposals will be permitted where they conserve and enhance trees, hedgerows and woodlands.

2. Development proposals that affect trees, hedgerows and woodland must demonstrate that they have been informed by a full site survey, including an Ecological Survey, Arboricultural Method Statement and associated Tree Protection Plan, and include a management plan.
 3. The removal of protected trees, groups of trees woodland or hedgerows will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and in accordance with the relevant legislation, policy and good practice recommendations. Where protected trees are subject to felling, a replacement of an appropriate number, species and size in an appropriate location will be required.
- 16.6 With regard to the felling licence, the Forestry Commission in England and Wales does not take account of the public amenity value of the trees when granting a felling license. Rather they expect Local Planning Authorities to identify if the felling will impact on the visual amenity value of the area and to issue a TPO if relevant. The TPO will override the felling licence.
- 16.7 The proposed removal of G1 contravenes the policies laid out in the SDNP local plan, and the SDNP local plan purpose. The TPO has been placed on the trees to preserve and enhance the landscape in accordance with the policies laid down within the SDNP local plan. The area ranger office for the South Downs National Park has been contacted in regard to the felling of the 29 beech trees, and their response is as follows:
- "There appears to have been a miscommunication concerning the extent of the proposed works. The understanding of the area team was around the selective removal of a small number of trees in line with the license agreement for 'selective thinning' rather than the full removal of the 29 trees surrounding the pond as since disclosed by the WCC tree officer. In the context of a landscape losing a significant number of trees to ash dieback, felling of non-ash species in high volume requires careful consideration".*
- "From the available correspondence the SDNPA area ranger team does not perceive the advice given to be against or in support of the proposed works prior to the formalisation of the TPO. Rather, advice was given on the basis that proposed works would be completed in accordance with the HGCs felling license agreement and following consultation with the relevant officer. The default position for the area ranger team is to remain neutral with respect to planning decisions as we seek to work with the landowner in the best interests of the SDNP regardless of the outcome".*

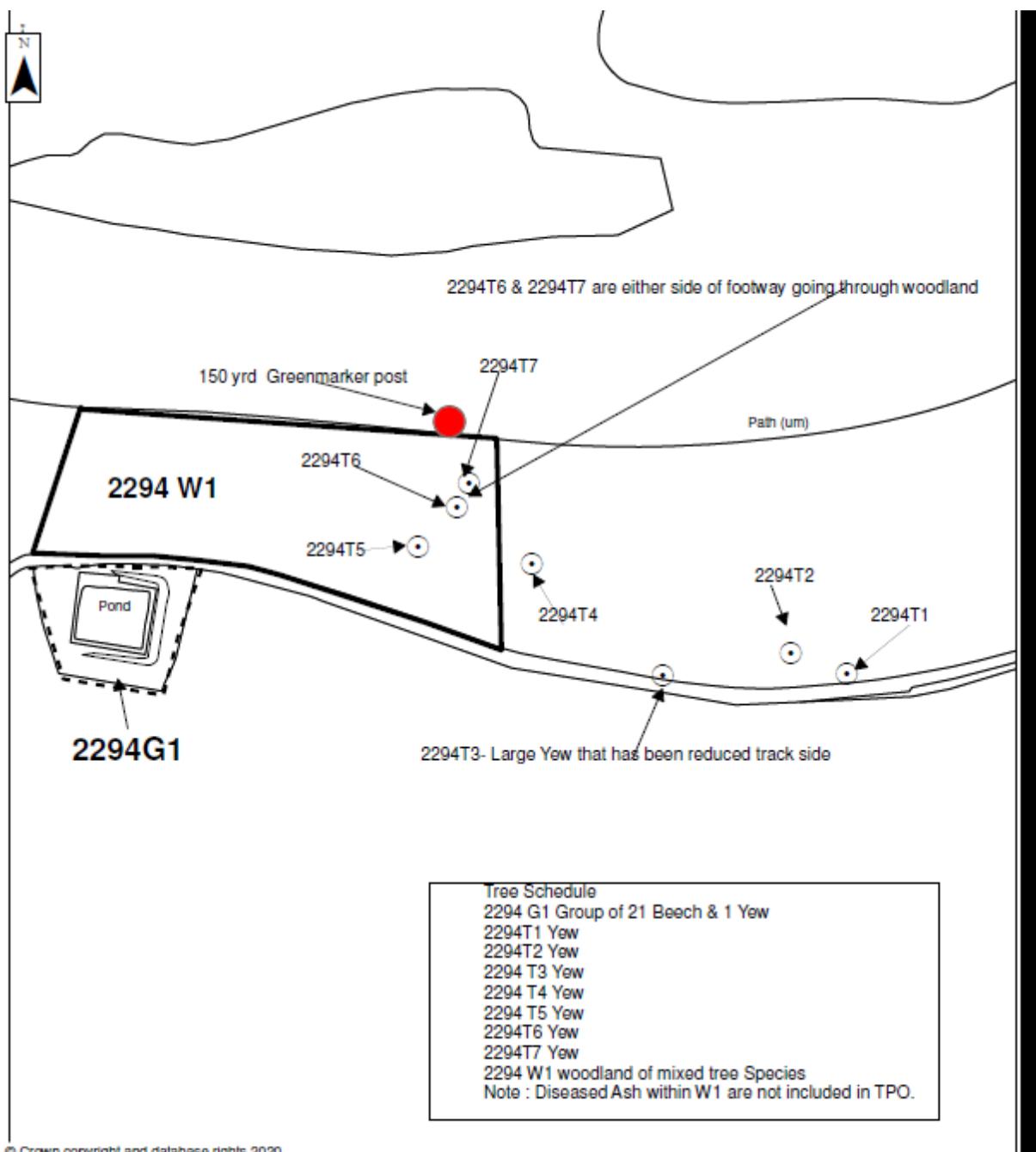
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Planning Practice Guidance – Tree Preservation Orders and trees in conservation areas.

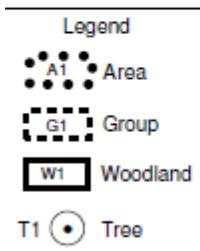
Tree Evaluation Method for Preservation Orders- (TEMPO)

APPENDICES: Appendix 1 TPO map.

Appendix 1



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OS Grid:

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
Section 198 - 201
Tree Preservation Order No. 2294
Location: Land at Hockley Golf Course
Winchester Road
Twyford
Hants

Scale @A4: 1:1,555 Date: 11/02/2021



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