

Tree Safety Inspection Report

St Mary's Church, Lasham, GU34 5SG

Report by Andrew Player

BSc (Hons), MICFor

Checked and approved by Dr Martin Dobson

BSc (Hons) Biol, DPhil, FArborA, MEWI

Registered Consultant of the Arboricultural Association

On the instructions of St Mary's PCC

18th September 2021

MDA reference P83



Contents

Part 1	Introduction	Page 3
Part 2	Tree inspection	Page 4
Part 3	Conclusions	Page 9
Appendices		
MD1	Extract from Forestry Commission <i>Hazards from Trees</i> leaflet	Page 10
MD2	Tree schedule	Page 11
MD3	Site plan	Page 13
MD4	Qualifications and experience	Page 14

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Martin Dobson Associates Ltd (MDA) was instructed by Allyson Hall of the St Mary's Church PCC on the 10th August 2021 to carry out a safety inspection of all trees within the grounds of St Mary's Church, Lasham, GU34 5SG and report on any trees which require work to be done to them to remove any unreasonable risks identified.
- 1.2 The grounds of the Church extend to approximately 0.3ha, bounded by Church Lane to the south and the car park of the adjacent Royal Oak Pub to the north, and include a number of mature and semi mature trees.
- 1.3 A search of the East Hampshire District Council's online interactive maps confirms that there are no trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) within the Churchyard, but that it is within the Lasham Conservation Area. This means that the local authority would need to be notified of any tree works, and consider whether or not to serve a Tree Preservation Order on the trees in question, unless an Exception (exemption) applies, e.g. removal of dead branches.
- 1.4 The purpose of a tree safety inspection is to determine whether a tree poses an unreasonable risk to people or property. Trees are not usually hazardous simply because of their size. But trees may be predisposed to failure as a result of obvious hazardous features including, for example, root damage, cracks or cavities in the trunk, the presence of fungal fruiting bodies which may indicate internal decay, weak forks, break-out cavities and abrupt bends in branches. The industry standard tree inspection procedure is known as Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) and involves examining a tree from ground level to detect possible weaknesses. If necessary, this may be supplemented by tapping the trunk or buttress roots with a sounding mallet to assess the possible presence of internal decay.
- 1.5 The principles of Visual Tree Assessment are discussed in *Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment and Management* by David Lonsdale (Research for Amenity Trees No. 7, Forestry Commission, 1999) and have been incorporated into a Practice Guide issued by the Forestry Commission in 2000 entitled *Hazards from Trees - A General Guide*¹. The National Tree Safety Group has issued guidance on tree management and inspections in their publication entitled *Common sense risk management of trees* (NTSG 2011)². All of these publications have contributed to the procedure adopted by Martin Dobson Associates for VTA tree safety inspections. An extract from a Forestry Commission leaflet now out of print is provided at Appendix **MD1** and illustrates the features assessed which are indicative of a potential hazard.

¹ <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/research/hazards-from-trees-a-general-guide/>

² <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/research/common-sense-risk-management-of-trees/>

2. Tree inspection

- 2.1 Andrew Player carried out a safety inspection on 11th September 2021 and the schedule of trees requiring work can be found at **MD2**. All trees within the area marked in red outline on the plan at Appendix **MD3** were subject to a visual inspection, with only those that presented a feature of note being recorded. Where access to view the trunk of a tree was impeded the condition of the visible crown, alone, was assessed.
- 2.2 Trunk diameters were measured using a diameter tape. Tree heights were measured using a Haglof Electronic Clinometer and laser range finder and radial crown spreads were estimated. Where appropriate, a nylon mallet was used to 'sound' tree stems for the presence of significant decay or patches of bark death. Similarly, a monocular was used where necessary to inspect features high in the tree crown. No samples were taken from the site.
- 2.3 The recommended tree works have been prioritised to provide guidance regarding the timescales over which it might be considered reasonable for works to be undertaken. The timescales given are for guidance only and should not be treated as strict requirements to comply with a duty of care. The priorities are as follows:
- Priority 1 – tree safety works requiring immediate attention, within 24 hours to 1 week.
 - Priority 2 – tree safety works requiring attention within 3 to 6 months.
 - Priority 3 – tree safety works requiring attention within 12 months.
 - Priority 4 – tree safety works requiring attention within 24 months.
- 2.4 Four trees were identified as posing a hazard and require work to be carried out to make them safe and/or warranting observation. Of the trees identified as requiring works:
- 0 trees had a priority 1 recommendation
 - 0 trees had a priority 2 recommendation
 - 2 trees had a priority 3 recommendation
 - 2 trees had a priority 4 recommendation

2.5 T1 (Ash) is on the boundary with the Royal Oak pub and is actually two separate trees, but they are effectively a single tree as they grow so close together. Both are infected with ash dieback and are within falling distance of the car park and adjacent property (Figure 1). It is recommended that they are both felled within 12 months.

Figure 1. T1 two Ash stems to be felled.



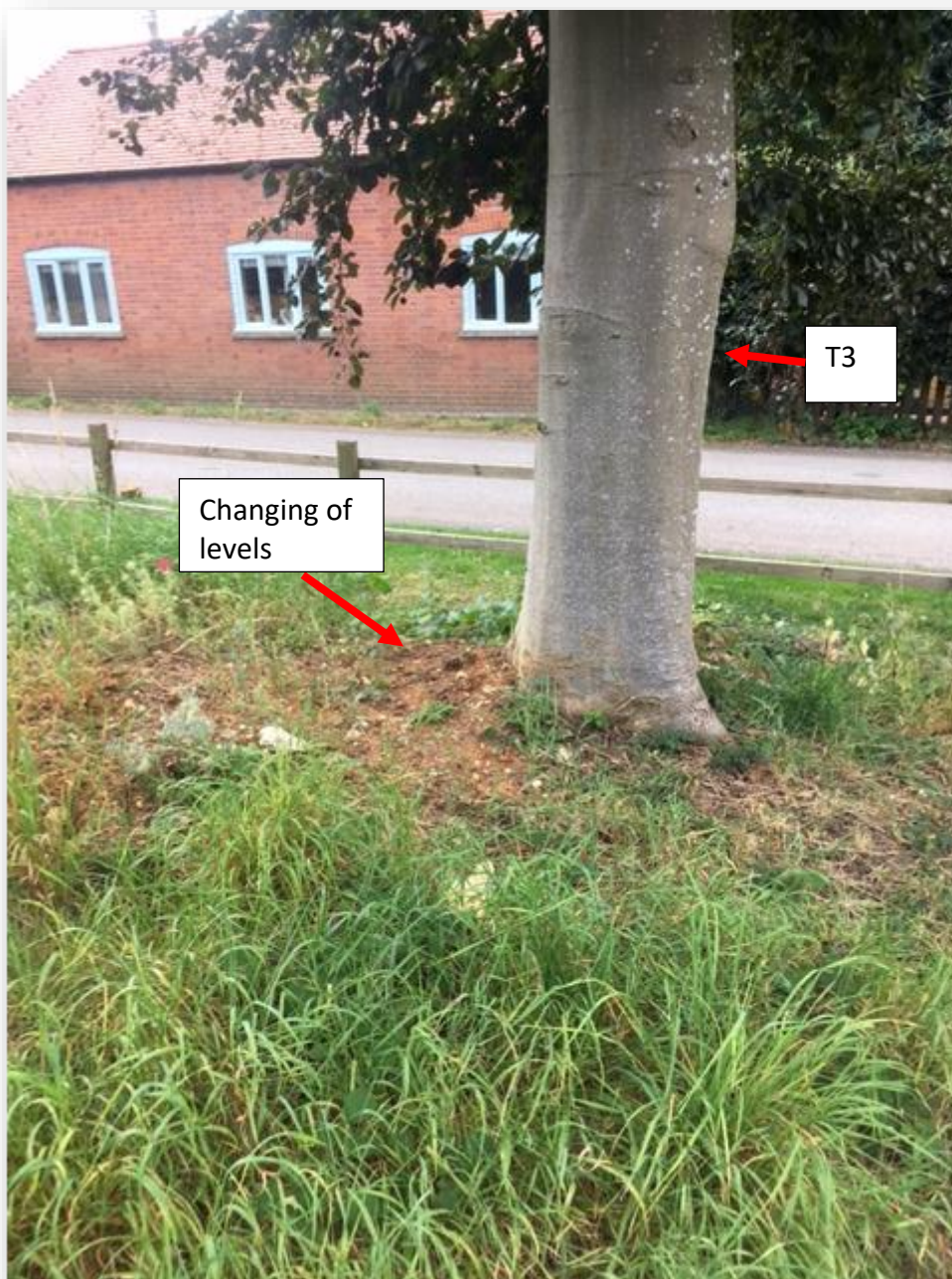
2.6 T2 (Lawson cypress) is in overall fair condition, though a dead limb on the northern side of the canopy should be pruned out (Figure 2): to remove potential hazard, aid further investigation and assist ongoing monitoring of condition. Follow up inspection should be undertaken within 24 months.

Figure 2. T2 Lawson Cypress – remove dead limb.



2.7 T3 (Beech) is in normal condition but I observed evidence of recent changes of soil around the base of the trunk, and that this was compacted (Figure 3). No further levels changes should take place (either adding or removing soil) as the roots of Beech are very sensitive to changes in their rooting environment. The condition of the tree should be monitored for signs of stress which may be a consequence of changing of levels or soil compaction. Remedial works may be required in future to address this, but no further action is required at this time.

Figure 3. T3 (Beech) - note disturbed soil around base. Monitor condition of tree.



- 2.8 T4 (Oak) a fine veteran tree which is highly significant in the location for amenity, sense of place and biodiversity. It has evidence of former pruning wounds and there is significant dead wood in the canopy. Major dead wood (branches > 50mm diameter) or damaged branches should be removed where they present a hazard to users of the road and path into the church (e.g. Figures 4 – 6).

Figure 4. T4 (Oak) – major dead wood to be removed.

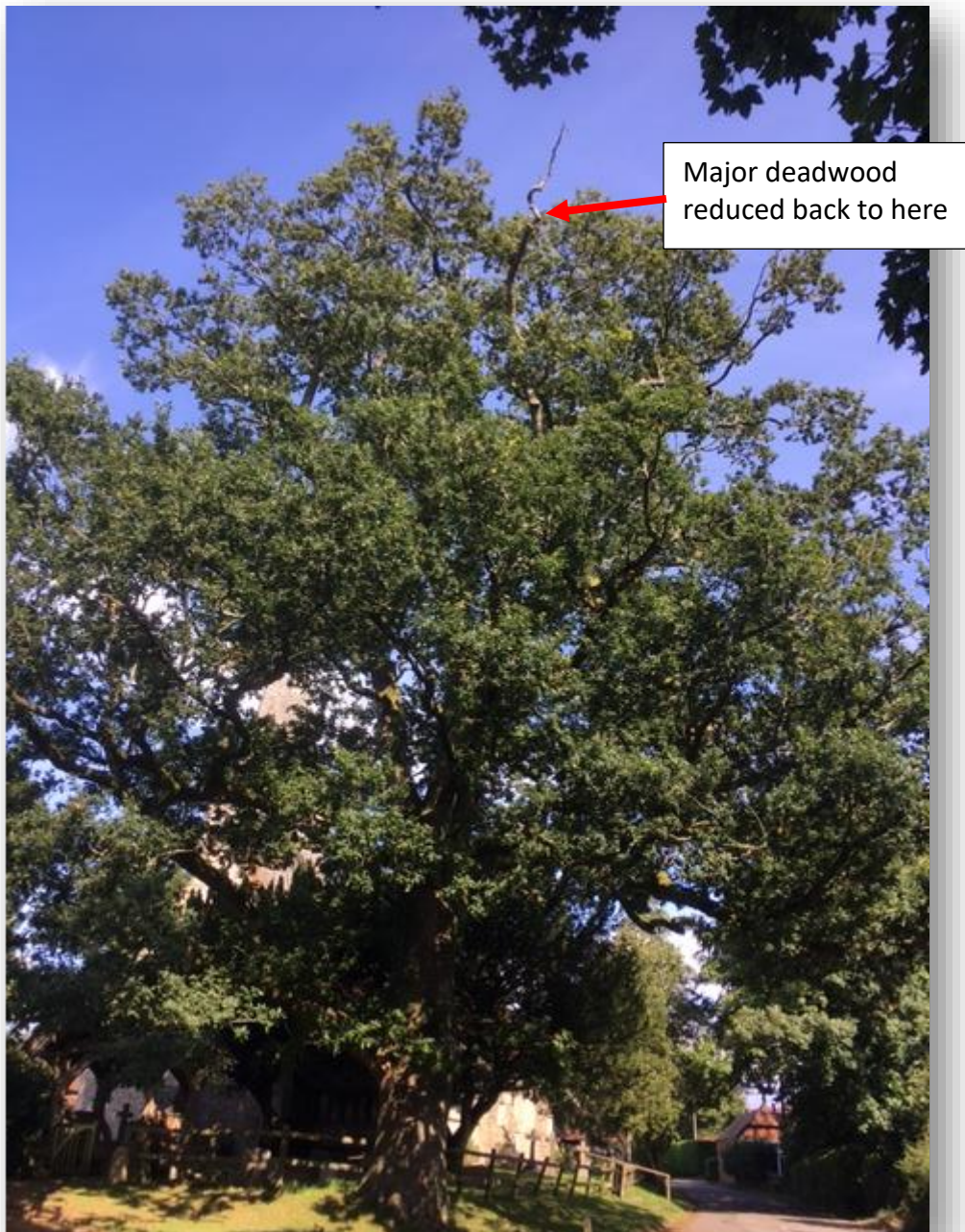
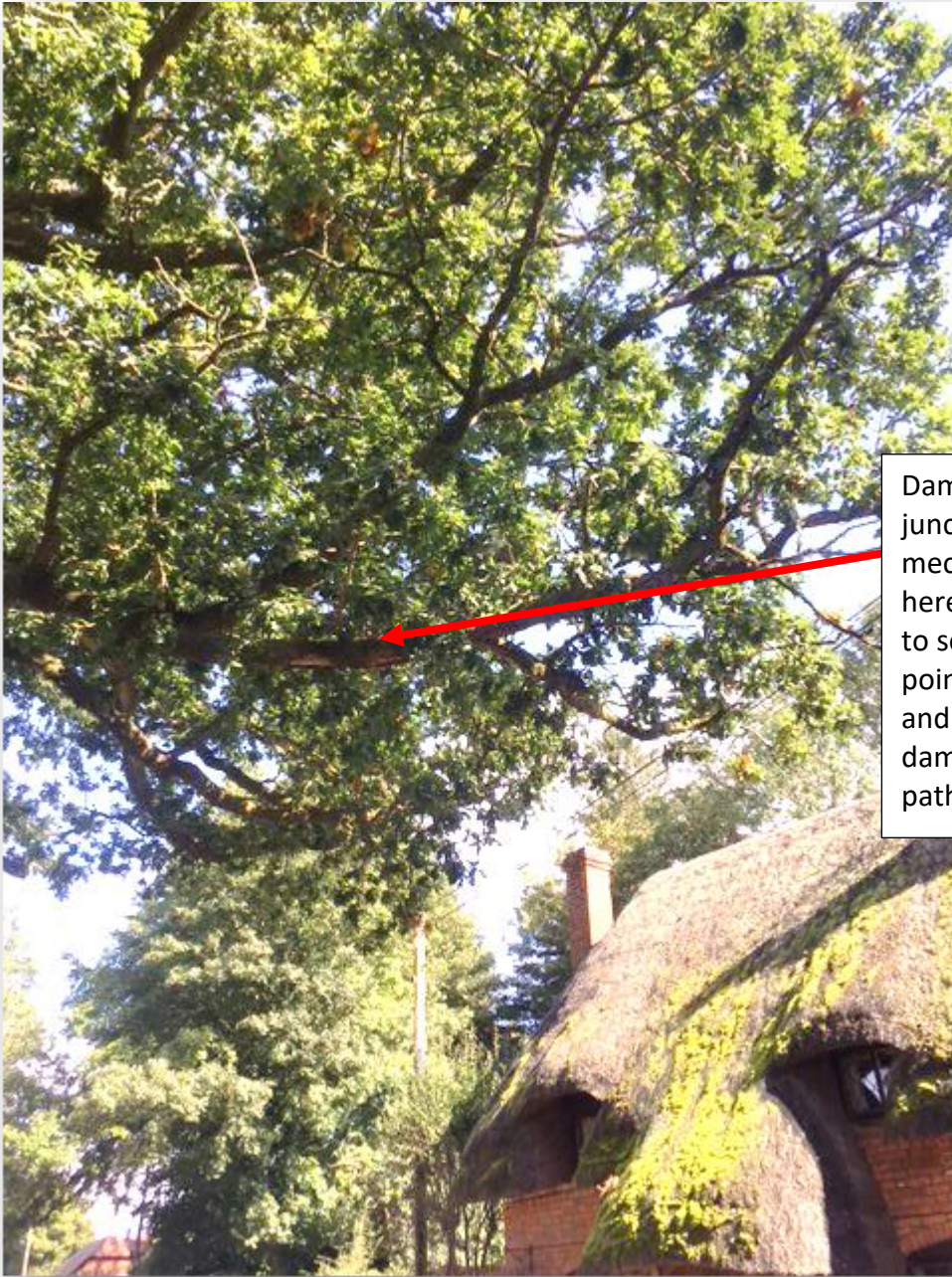
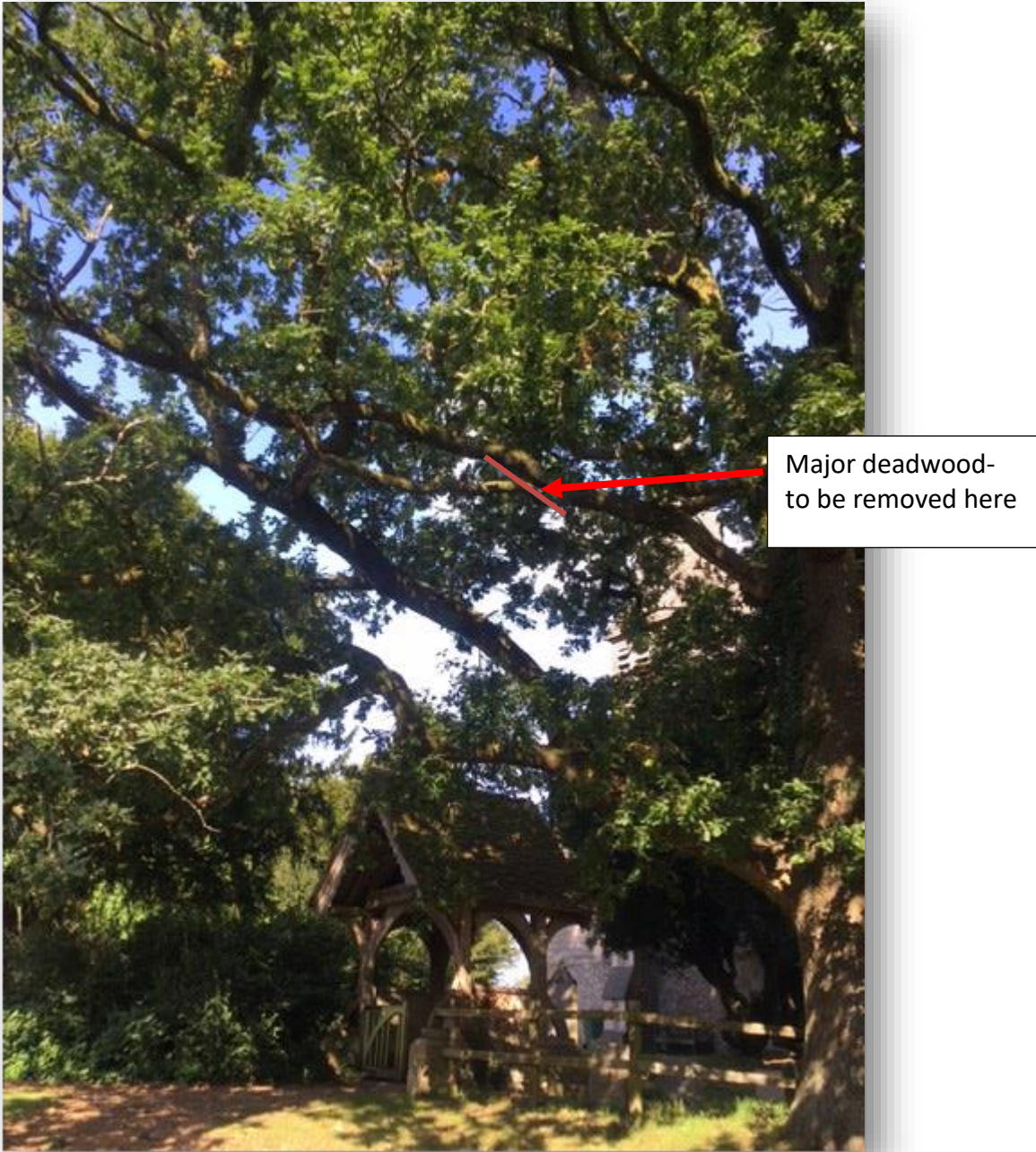


Figure 5. T4 – Damaged branch over junction with Church Lane to be removed.



Damaged limb over junction (note mechanical damage here): reduce limb back to secondary branching point to remove hazard and prevent further damage allowing pathogen attack

Figure 6. T4 - Major deadwood over path to Lychgate to be removed.

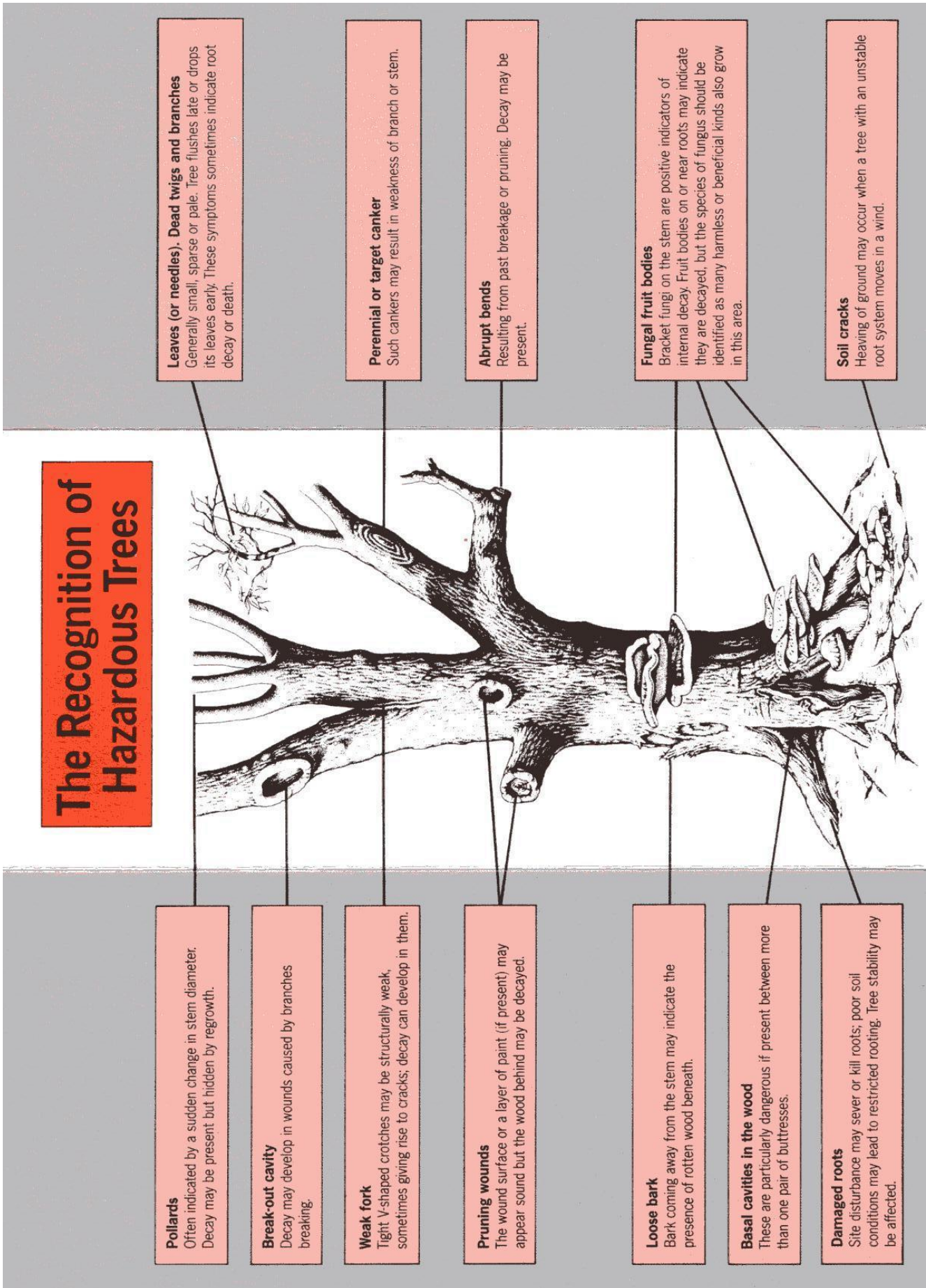


3. Conclusions and recommendations

- 3.1 A safety inspection of trees at St Mary's Church has been carried out.
- 3.2 All trees on site were inspected and those which pose a risk were recorded.
- 3.3 Three trees were noted as requiring works to make them safe (T1, T2 and T4) and the condition of a fourth (T3) should be monitored.
- 3.4 All tree works should be undertaken by suitably qualified, insured and competent professionals and comply with all pertinent industry best practice, such as British Standard 3998 (and subsequent revisions), and legislation, such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act, Town and Country Planning legislation and Health and Safety legislation
- 3.5 The content of this report remains valid for one year and it is recommended that professional inspection intervals do not exceed three years.

APPENDIX MD1

Recognition of Hazardous Trees. Published by Forestry Commission but now out of print.

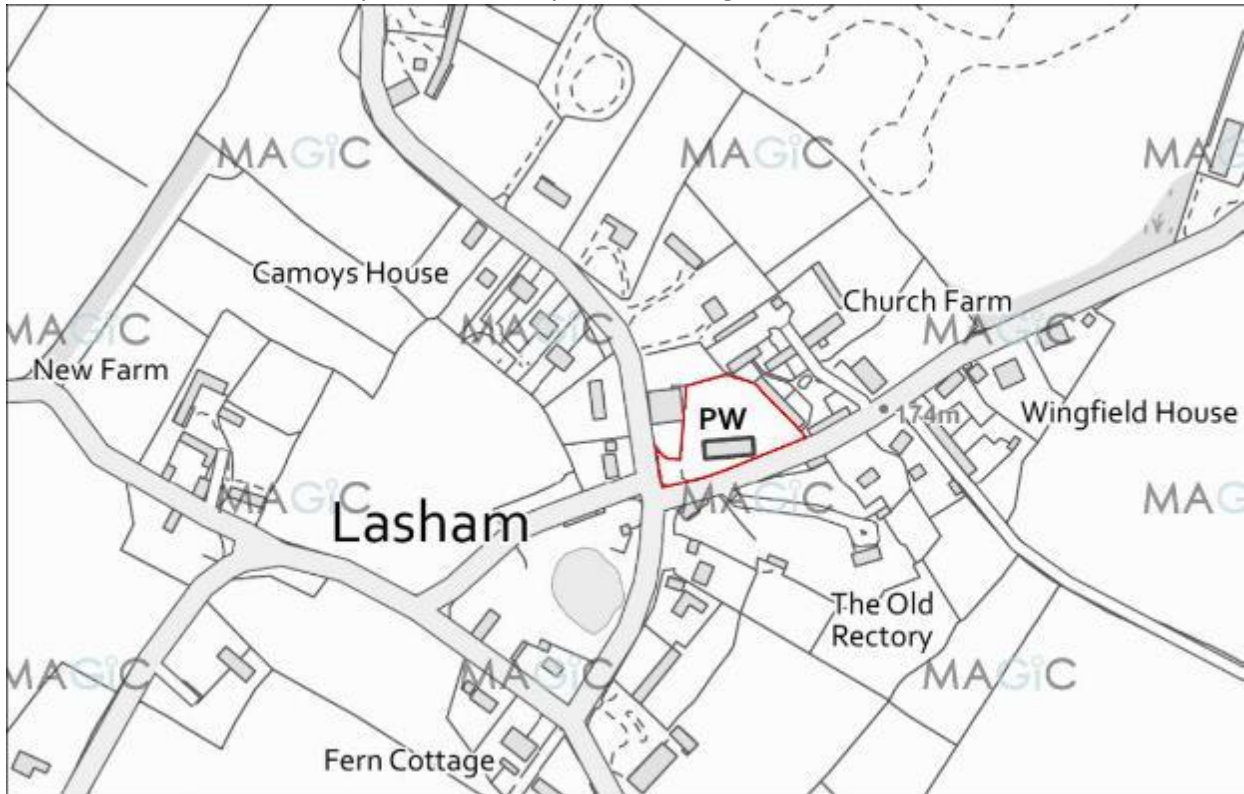


APPENDIX MD2
Schedule of trees inspected

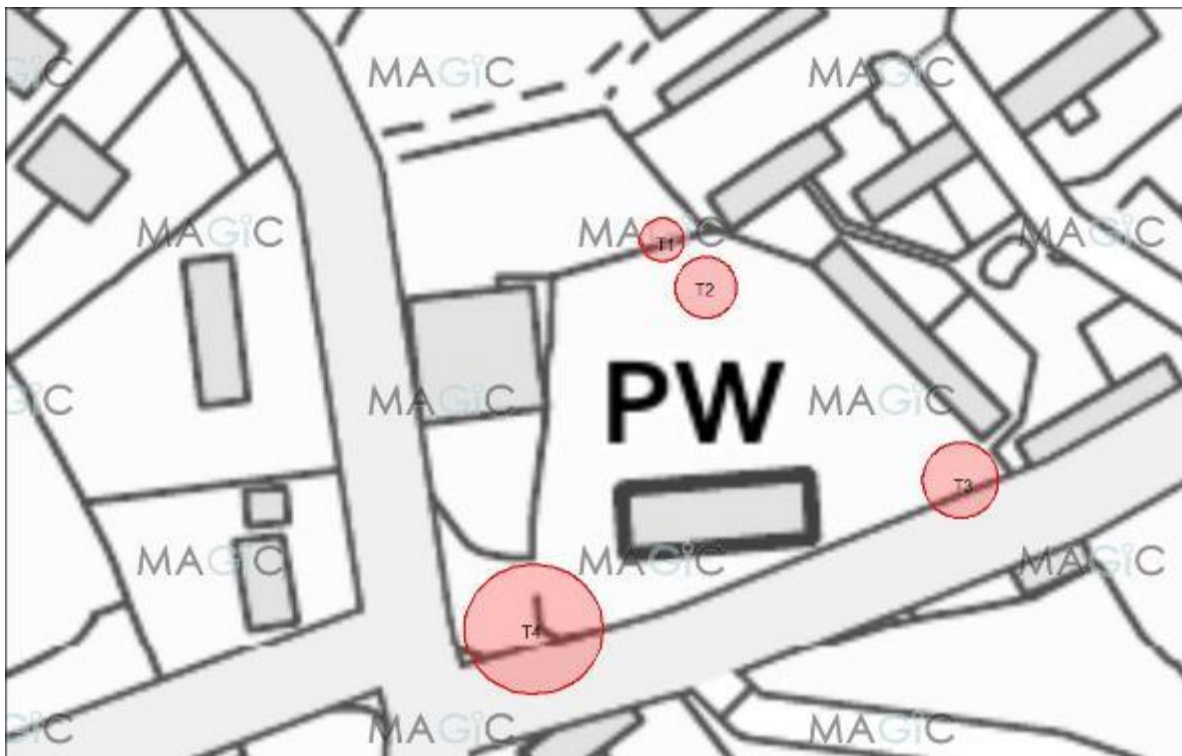
Tree No.	Common Name	Height (m)	Stem Dia. (mm)	Crown Radius (m)	Maturity	Condition	Comments	Tree Works	Priority
T1	Ash	18.6	320 & 250	14	Semi Mature	Poor	Co-dominant stemmed ash. Eastern stem showing medium infection of Ash Dieback Disease (<i>Hymenoscyphus fraxineus</i>). Western showing low/early signs of infection. Target includes pub car park and adjacent private dwelling. Weak union between stems. Large tear out wound on western stem at 4m.	Fell both stems	3
T2	Lawson Cypress	19.5	880	10	Mature	Fair	Deadwood at 7m on northern side; Minor deadwood approx. 5% of crown; Knock test sounding solid at base.	Remove deadwood and Reinspect within 24 months	4
T3	Beech	17.8	480	10	Semi Mature	Normal	Recent changing of levels observed around the base of the tree, and indications of soil compaction noted. Continue to monitor condition for signs of stress and prevent further changing of levels	Reinspect within 24 months	4
T4	Oak	26.3	1270	23	Veteran	Fair	Knock Test solid around base; Major deadwood at approx. 20m over junction; multiple former pruning wounds on southern side of canopy- not occluding well but do not present hazard at present. Mechanical damage to limb at 5m over junction from repeated vehicle strikes, and minor deadwood on same limb; Major deadwood on northern side at approx. 5m over path to lychgate	Remove/reduce major deadwood and remove limb over junction	3

APPENDIX MD3

Location plan and Site plan showing locations of T's 1-3.



Map produced by MAGiC on 15 September, 2021.
 © Crown Copyright and database right 2021. Ordnance Survey 100022661.
 Copyright resides with the data suppliers and the map must not be reproduced without their permission. Some information in MAGiC is a snapshot of the information that is being maintained or
 continually updated by the originating organization. Please refer to the metadata for details as information may be illustrative or representative rather than definitive at this stage.



Map produced by MAGiC on 15 September, 2021.
 © Crown Copyright and database right 2021. Ordnance Survey 100022661.
 Copyright resides with the data suppliers and the map must not be reproduced without their permission. Some information in MAGiC is a snapshot of the information that is being maintained or
 continually updated by the originating organization. Please refer to the metadata for details as information may be illustrative or representative rather than definitive at this stage.

APPENDIX MD4

Qualifications and Experience

Dr Martin Dobson - Principal Consultant

Dr Martin Dobson has been engaged in research and advisory work on trees since graduating in 1986 with a BSc (Hons) Degree in Biology. Subsequent postgraduate research led to the award of a Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) Degree in Tree Physiology in 1990.

Postgraduate studies began in 1986 at the University of Ulster and continued in 1987 at the Forestry Commission's Research Station in Hampshire and focussed on the influence of air pollution on trees. Upon completion of this research in 1989 Dr Dobson was employed by the Forestry Commission and worked in both the Tree Pathology and Environmental Research Branches. During the next six years he was responsible for Department of Environment research contracts focussing on air pollution, climate change, de-icing salt damage to trees, woodland establishment on landfills and tree root research. He has authored two books: *De-icing Salt Damage to Trees and Shrubs* and *The Potential for Woodland Establishment on Landfill Sites*. He concluded his time at the Forestry Commission as Project Manager for research into the interaction between trees, roots and clay soils which included laboratory investigations, testing of root barriers and a three-year field-scale monitoring programme investigating the influence of woodland and grassland on the moisture status of clay soils.

In 1995 Martin joined the Arboricultural Advisory and Information Service as a senior Arboricultural Advisor. The AAIS advised the (then) Department of the Environment on matters concerning amenity trees and was the principal source of technical advice and information to the arboricultural profession as well as landscape architects, engineers, the horticultural industry and private individuals. A large proportion of advisory work focussed on issues relating to tree diseases and interactions between trees and buildings.

In 1997 Martin started an arboricultural consultancy practice specialising in subsidence and tree root claims, planning and development, tree safety and disease diagnosis. He was a local authority retained consultant providing expertise on tree protection practice and legislation from 1999 - 2006 and has dealt with several thousand Tree Preservation Order and Conservation Area applications.

He has extensive experience as an Expert Witness in the High Court, County Court and Magistrates Court. Notable cases he has been involved in include Khan v London Borough of Harrow and Kane.

From 1995 to 2011 he was an examiner for the Professional Diploma in Arboriculture for the Royal Forestry Society/ABC Awards and he is currently Lead Assessor for the Arboricultural Association's Registered Consultant scheme. He has been a guest lecturer for the Middlesex University Countryside Management MSc course and for Portsmouth University. He has devised and teaches introductory and advanced courses on trees and subsidence and co-presents seminars on trees and climate change with Professor Andy Moffat for the Arboricultural Association.

In addition to over 30 publications in scientific and technical journals he is the author of Arboriculture Research and Information Note 130/95/ARB *Tree Root Systems*, and leading author of:

Driveways Close to Trees. Arboricultural Practice Note 1. AAIS, Farnham.

Trees in Dispute. Arboricultural Practice Note 3. AAIS, Farnham.

Root Barriers and Building Subsidence. Arboricultural Practice Note 4. AAIS, Farnham.

He is a Fellow and Registered Consultant of the Arboricultural Association and is a Member by examination of the Expert Witness Institute.

Andrew Player - Associate Consultant

Andrew has been working in Forestry and Arboriculture since 2002 after graduating from the University of Wales Aberystwyth with an Honours degree in Physical Geography.

Andrew began his career with the Forestry Commission, Wales and then Forest Enterprise in Hampshire, during which time he also completed an HNC in Woodland Management and Arboriculture from Bangor University. Here he gained valuable experience of delivering Woodland Grants and Licences, and latterly practical woodland management skills.

After his time at the Forestry Commission, Andrew then moved to Exmoor National Park, where he took up the role of Assistant Trees and Woodlands Officer of the National Park Authority. Here he combined day to day management of the Park Authority's 600ha woodland estate, and the work of Planning Authority Tree Officer, processing Tree Work Applications from across the Park, developing and delivering Tree Safety Management Systems for the NPA estate, serving Tree Preservation Orders and providing trees and planning advice.

From the National Park Authority, Andrew then took up the position of Countryside and Forestry Manager for The Crown Estate's Western England Portfolio, based at Dunster in West Somerset. Here he managed a diverse range of forestry and recreation assets across 16 estates, oversaw the development of forestry management plans and delivering forestry harvesting and restocking programmes, as well as developing recreational facilities and delivering forest educational services. He is particularly proud to be able to say he 'looked after' the tallest tree in England too (a 60m tall Douglas fir), and was instrumental in the Dunster estate winning the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors SW Regional Award for Economic Regeneration, and was a finalist in the National Award of the same.

From Dunster, Andrew then moved back to Hampshire, and the South Downs National Park Authority, where he was the Strategy Lead for Trees and Woodlands. Here he developed and led partnerships to enhance the forestry and woodland management sector across the Park, and provided expert advice to the SD Planning Authority, both on individual planning applications involving Trees and Woodlands and serving TPOs, and for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. He also led the SD Tree Officers Group and produced Supplementary Planning Guidance for Trees and Development.

Latterly, Andrew has been the South East Regional Rural Estate Delivery Advisor for Landmarc Support Services, an MOD principal contractor, managing 4,500ha of forestry estate and a diverse portfolio of priority habitats, as well as undertaking detailed tree inspections across the MOD's south eastern training estates.

Andrew has been a Chartered Forester since 2009, and is a qualified Lantra Professional Tree Inspector.