



**Minutes of the Grounds Committee meeting** held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022 commencing at 2.00pm, in the Town Council Office, Lady Street, Dulverton.

**Present:** Chairman: Cllr. Mrs Christine Dubery. Cllrs: Mr Alan Ottey; Mrs Louise Parrish and one member of the public.

**Deferment of Business for comment by the public.** None

**Apologies:** Mr John Preston.

**Declarations of Interests:** None

**Chairman's Comments & Meeting Management:** None

**Matters Arising:**

Tree Survey Report:

Barns Close (ref 13.1, three oaks in the bank next to footpath):

1. The two trees nearest the neighbouring property have been crown lifted and pruned back; this has significantly reduced the encroachment on the property and no further works are required other than routine trimming of lower branches to keep the footpath clear.
2. As mentioned in the previous report, the ground level around the south eastern tree has been raised and it would be desirable, for the health of the tree, if excess soil was removed carefully using hand tools.

Members agreed that Mr Bryant is requested to carry out crown lifting as necessary and remove the excess soil referred to.

Churchyard (ref: A10, T11, T18, T19, T20)

No significant changes but the following points were noted:

1. Holm oak near the southern boundary will require trimming of its canopy where it is encroaching on the low voltage powerlines, the power company carry out these works routinely.
2. Western boundary – minor crown lifting of a yew tree to statutory height (5m) above the highway is required.
3. T11, the incense cedar has been felled since the previous survey; the dead hawthorn near the lichgate has also been removed.

No 2 – Quote to be sought.

Kemps Way car park (ref: A7, A8)

1. The recommended works to the collapsing hazel stems next to a footpath appear to have been completed. The suggested pruning works to the beech stems and willows growing in the bank next to the Mill Leat do not seem to have been carried out, however these works were advisory rather than essential.

2. The remaining ash growing in the northern perimeter of the car park has been retained but is increasingly succumbing to ash dieback disease or ADD (estimated 50-60% crown dieback). It would be prudent to fell the tree during coming winter season, as with T9 the adjacent ash that was felled, the main stem may be left as a habitat feature.

3. There is one other piece of general management works in this area: the two large silver maples located on the western boundary of the car park will soon require crown lifting over the adjacent single-storey building to prevent branches lashing against the building in high winds.

4. With reference to the large ash next to the Fire Station, the resident from the adjacent property came out and complained to me about the tree. While part of the canopy does overhang the garden slightly there is no reason to carry out any works to the tree, only to assess its condition annually for ADD.  
Exmoor Lawns

All issues are the responsibility of SWT.

Exmoor Lawns (ref: A3, G4, A5, A3.1)

1. The cedar has been felled, also several ash trees growing in the river bank, in line with previous recommendations.

2. The coast redwood (G4) has shed two approx. 10cm diameter branches (since the last survey, one of the branches is caught up in the mid canopy on the north side. It would be prudent in the interests of safety to remove the caught-up branch.

3. The three Norway maples (G5) growing atop the bank next to the access road still require crown lifting to the statutory height over the highway to prevent collisions with high sided vehicles.

4. Due to the river levels in the Barle being considerably lower than in previous years, I was able to inspect the mature beech (T3.1 on attached plan) growing in the river bank. The tree has one main stem leaning slightly towards the grass area and several subsidiary stems/limbs leaning at varying angles to the west over the river. It is some 26m in height. While the crown of the tree and the foliage appear in normal health and condition, the root plate has become undercut by the erosive action of the river over many years and a large basal branch has recently broken away from the tree and is lying in the river. Closer inspection of the base of the tree from the river side revealed colonization with the decay fungus *Kretzmaria deusta*, and was the likely cause of the branch failure.

*Kretzmaria* is a significant decay fungus because it can cause a brittle fracture of the main stem or roots on host trees such as beech. From my observations and soundings taken the *Kretzmaria* fruiting bodies and the associated decay appear to be mostly concentrated within the underside of the exposed root plate above the current river level. The base of the main stem and the main anchoring roots within the bank appeared to be in relatively sound condition however inspection of the base of the tree was impeded by its location over the river and by the amount of basal epicormic branches, this would also make any further detailed inspection of the tree problematic.

In view of the presence of *Kretzmaria* I would recommend the tree is reduced in height by approx. 5-6m, this remedial pruning will significantly reduce the strain at the base where failure could occur. Some minor reduction of the stems on the west side over the river may also be advisable to prevent future failure of branches into the river. Please see attached annotated photograph showing extent of suggested pruning, the works should accord with BS3998 2010.

Price for 3 & 4 to be sought

*Tree Work - Recommendations*

*The trees at Exmoor Lawns/Kemps Way car park and the churchyard fall within the Dulverton conservation area. Please note it is a legal requirement to give six weeks' notice (called a section 211 notice) to the Local Planning Authority (ENPA) before carrying out tree works in a conservation area (other than those works that are exempt from the usual planning requirements (e.g., dead trees)).*

The Clerk was requested to forward onto Ms Clapp the contents of the report concerning Barns Close (ref 13.1, three oaks in the bank next to footpath).

**Reports from Members as follows:**

Cemetery: Cllr. Mrs Louise Parish

Looks neat and tidy.

Dead flowers etc. require removal. Mr Nicholas to be reminded.

In response to Mr & Mrs Ansell's enquiry regarding the cutting of the hedge, members agreed that on account of the fact that they are unhappy with the quality of work carried on their behalf for the last 20 plus years, at no charge, DTC will examine its continuing responsibility to maintain that side of the hedge and seek legal advice accordingly.

Sign regarding regulations/rules concerning monuments and flowers. Bullet points and in colour is to be placed on the cemetery shed.

Church Yard: Cllr. Mrs Louise Parrish / Parish Lengthsman: Mr John Preston

Church yard looks lovely.

The maintenance of the flower bed and the removal of rubbish has not yet been undertaken by the P.C.C.

Sports Field: Cllr. Mrs Chris Dubery

Some issues regarding the posts at the entrance.

Works completed to both trees and grass

Barns Close: Cllr. Mr Alan Ottey

Looking tidy and well maintained.

Kings Corner: Cllr. Mr John Preston

The inside hedges have been cut. The road side hedges are to be done.

Exmoor Lawns: Cllr. Mrs Louise Parrish

Looks well maintained.

The rail by the steps are still to be fixed. Mr Takel to be pursued.

Post to be removed. Mr Takel to be requested to undertake the task.

The issue concerning noise by those using Exmoor Lawns in the evening was discussed by members who considered that the noise was not excessive.

Abbots Way: Cllr. Mr Allan Ottey

Three lights are out. Nos. 4, 5 & 10. Nos. 10 was reported over a year ago.

The issue is to be pursued with Councillor Nicholson at the meeting on Monday.

Jubilee Pond: Cllr. Mrs Chris Dubery

Some oxygenating weed has been out into the pond, some of which requires removing as it is no longer needed as there is now a flow of water.

Pound Walk:

No issues raised.

Lorna Doone Roundabout & Grass Cutting: Cllr. Mrs Louise Parrish

No issues raised.

Replacement of mowers etc.

The Chairman has made enquiries concerning the cost involved regarding the 'trading in' of the current large pieces of grounds equipment for members to consider at a later date

**Urgent maintenance issues with regards all other grounds with permission of the Chairman:**

SPFA Awards 2022: Kings Corner – Bronze Award

Barns Close – Commendation

Sports Field - Commendation

Members expressed their thanks and gratitude to Mr Takel for his hard work.

Exmoor Lawns – Canoe Season to commence on 15/10/22. The fencing will be erected in two sections around the picnic bench.

**Chairman.....**

