

Broadsheet

The Magazine for Broadland Tree Wardens

Issue 245 - August 2025



Beware of trees!!

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Broadsheet is written and published by

John Fleetwood,

Broadland Tree Warden Network Co-ordinator

4 Oakhill, Brundall, Norwich NR13 5AQ.

Home: 01603 716 297 Mobile: 07555 535 741

E-mail john.fleetwood@hotmail.com

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Beware of trees!!

ALL of us will have read with horror about the young child that was killed and another left in a critical condition after a tree fell at Chalkwell park in Southend-on-Sea on Saturday 28 June. The girls, aged seven and six, suffered serious injuries and were taken to hospital where one sadly died.

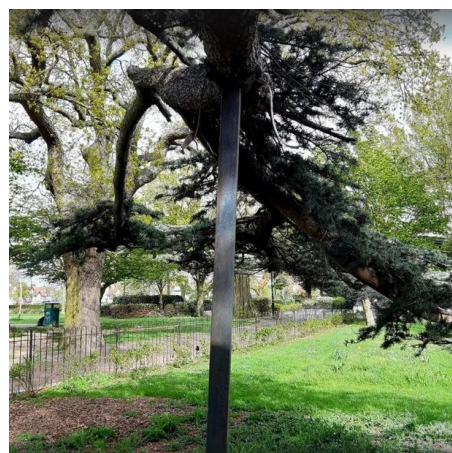
The giant tree which crushed the seven-year-old girl to death was being held up by metal poles, and benches underneath the low-hanging branches "encouraged" children to climb on it, locals have claimed.

Sam Elliott-Gibbs and Emily Carubia reported for The Mirror that the six-year-old child remained in a critical condition in hospital after the tree collapsed leaving the community devastated. Three more children playing beneath it also required hospital treatment after the tree suddenly fell shortly before 3pm.

Heroes alerted by the screams after a "large crash" rushed to help remove the huge branches but one youngster died, despite the efforts of medics. Now questions are being asked of Southend-on-Sea City Council by furious locals, who claim it even installed benches under the tree, which was propped up by poles.

Around 50 people attempted to lift the fallen trunk after it trapped the children enjoying an afternoon in the sunshine. Members of the public continued to lay flowers as police conducted enquiries with investigations seeking to establish the circumstances leading up to the heartbreaking incident.

Angry residents have sent Mirror Online images of the a heavy branch being kept in the air by black pole, with locals rushing to Facebook to express their fury as well as their devastation at the girl's death. Steven Nesh wrote: "Clearly it was too big to support its own weight and unfortunately someone's family has had to suffer the consequences of their negligence."



Rhea Mae Westfall added: "Council/park owners should be covering the cost of the funeral and compensating all families involved. It's clear this tree has been a danger for quite some time," while Anne Bell put: "The council need to start maintaining all trees around Southend. As this should never have happened. My thoughts are with you all. Fly high little angel."

Dean Bailey posted: "It should have been

cut down rather than propped up..." Meanwhile, Mimi Faria added: "That bough should have been cut off instead of using a pole to hold it. That is sheer negligence and someone must take responsibility."

Lesley Gold, another local resident, said: "The council should have done something about it we have now lost a little girl and other children have been hurt I can't imagine what the families are feeling." Diana Zachau slammed the council, saying: "How utterly not acceptable to pass this off as an avoidable accident. I am sure the council did not want to splash out on having the trees inspected by tree surgeons and now children had to pay for the budget mismanagement."

Steve Ives, 68, walks through the park every day and told the BBC: "The tree has been propped up by the metal props ever since I can remember. The boughs are just so huge. It always looked healthy and people stood under it and chatted. It's such an awful thing to happen."

The council said "This was a devastating incident and our thoughts remain with everyone affected. As this is an ongoing investigation, we won't be commenting further or pre-empting its findings."

Council leader Daniel Cowan said in a statement that evening "The death of a child is devastating and my deepest, most heartfelt condolences are with the child's family and friends. My thoughts are also with the injured children and those on the scene. I hope the other children make a full and speedy recovery."

"This was a traumatic event for those involved, those who witnessed the incident, and the emergency services. I encourage those affected to seek support."

Southend's mayor, Councillor Nigel Folkard, added: "I am heartbroken by the tragic loss of a young life following the incident in Chalkwell Park. As both Mayor and a Chalkwell councillor, my thoughts are with the child's family, friends, and all those affected. I ask our community to come together in support and compassion during this incredibly difficult time."

Among the witnesses was accountant Ishan Madan, 39, from Westcliff-on-Sea, who said he was playing in a cricket match nearby when he heard a "horrendous, screeching scream".

He said his team immediately ran towards the clubhouse where the tree was located, finding several children hit by a branch, two of whom were "stuck under this massive tree". He said: "Everyone ran towards the clubhouse, where the tree is. The tree had snapped and I think there were four children, the fifth one was slightly further away, I think she'd be hit by a branch."

"Two of them were under a smaller branch, they were rescued easily, and unfortunately, the other two girls, they were stuck under this massive tree. So we got bystanders to help, it must have been 40 to 50 people who then tried to lift the fallen tree up and to our horror, these two little girls, poor girls, were stuck underneath

it. Their mother was on the corner. It was horrendous."

TREES can fall in hot weather due to a combination of factors, primarily related to heat stress and drought conditions, and the recent heatwave saw many instances of that.

High temperatures and lack of water can weaken trees, making them more susceptible to sudden limb drop and ultimately, toppling over.

When temperatures rise, trees lose more water through transpiration (evaporation from leaves). If the soil is dry (due to drought), the tree may not be able to absorb water fast enough to keep up with the water loss from transpiration, leading to heat stress.

Heat stress can cause the tree's cells to shrink, making the wood more brittle and susceptible to cracking or breaking, according to some experts. Trees slow down photosynthesis (sugar production) under heat stress, weakening them further and making them less resistant to damage.

Sudden Limb Drop (SLD) is a phenomenon where healthy-looking branches suddenly fall from a tree, often during or after periods of hot, dry weather. It's thought to be caused by a combination of factors, including the tree's inability to maintain adequate moisture and structural support in hot, dry conditions. SLD can cause damage to property and pose a safety risk.

Drought can also weaken the root systems of trees, making them less stable and more prone to uprooting. Weakened trees are more vulnerable to pests and diseases, which can further compromise their structural integrity.

While hot weather can weaken trees, sudden storms can then exacerbate the problem, causing branches or entire trees to fall.

Poorly drained or compacted soil can also contribute to root problems and increase the risk of tree failure.

AT the start of July there were numerous reports of fallen trees following the heatwave the UK had experienced.

TransPennine Express called on customers not to travel on its services heading to and from Scotland on the West Coast Mainline after a tree fell onto the tracks.

The tree came down near to Beattock in the early hours of Monday 30 June, completely blocking the line between Carlisle and Glasgow/

Edinburgh. As a result, trains running to and from the north-west of England started and terminated at Carlisle.

Train passengers taking the West Coast Main Line were warned to avoid travelling on 30 June after a tree fell on lines in Dumfries and Galloway. Network Rail said the tree caused "significant damage" to overhead lines after it fell on the track near Beattock and the disruption was expected to last until the following day.

The A3058 outside Newquay Zoo was closed in both directions due to a fallen tree. Edgcombe Avenue, from Wildflower Lane to Trennick Hill was closed.

A 'fallen tree' forced a Newport road to close and cause traffic congestion on June 29. Usk Road in Newport was shut between Abernant Road and the junction leading to Newbridge on Usk, putting diversions in place.

Firefighters were called after a tree fell on to part of a road outside a pub in Bletchley in Buckinghamshire. The incident took place just after June 30 on Buckingham Road, when a tree came down outside the appropriately named Three Trees pub

The tree blocked the pathway and part of the road, with a cordon put in place to allow firefighters to remove the tree.

The A11 southbound carriageway between Attleborough and East Harling was closed on the morning of July 1 after a crash caused a tree to topple across a carriageway. Police attended alongside contractors from National Highways who were working to clear the scene. Drivers were warned to expect delays to their journeys, with diversions via the A47, A140 and A14.

James Felton reported for Stroud News that the A46 Painswick Road was closed between Coopers Hill and Green street due to a fallen tree. Police were called at around 02:00 on July 1 following a report that a tree was blocking the road on Cooper's Hill. The road remained closed for some time to allow contractors to clear the obstruction.

A stretch of the A5, Holyhead Road, Corwen, was closed in both directions on July 1 due to a fallen tree, reported Joe Robinson for the Leader.

James Felton reported for the Stroud News and Journal that the A46 Painswick Road was closed on July 1 between Coopers Hill and Green Street due to a fallen tree.

ALEX POPE reported for BBC News, Cambridgeshire, that a wood has been closed to the public after the

recent dry weather has caused its trees to become "unsafe", a trust said.

The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire said Ansetts Wood, at Fulbourn Fen, Cambridge, was shut after a safety inspection. It said that the warm temperatures had "added to the issue of ash dieback".

The area remains off limits while further assessments and work was completed to ensure it was safe for the public, it said on its website.

The charity thanked visitors for their patience and it added their safety was its "top priority". It said other areas of the Fulbourn Fen remained open.

VICTORIA COOK reported for BBC London that People have been warned not to sit underneath or near trees after a number of large branches fell suddenly in some north-west London parks.

Safety notices were issued by Harrow Council after branches fell in Stanmore, Hatch End and Pinner. No one was reported to have been injured.

The council said it was due to Sudden Branch Drop Syndrome, external, which has no known cause, but heatwaves and changes in tree moisture levels could be a factor.

Additional inspections have been made of trees in parks, near play areas and outdoor gyms, the council said, and none so far have been found to be hazardous.

The council asked the public to be aware of the issue, and to report any concerns with local trees via their website.

It added: "Trees are vital to our environment and wildlife, and we remain committed to maintaining and growing our tree stock. They provide better air quality, reduce flooding, and is good for mental health and wellbeing."

In 2012, a woman was killed at Kew Gardens after a branch fell unexpectedly from a tree in the Royal Botanical Gardens. Kew Gardens referred to the incident at the time as a "terrible freak accident".

SO on that most unhappy note I shall wish you all a very happy, satisfying and, above all safe August.

All the best,

John Fleetwood

Tree Council Grants

THE TREE COUNCIL actively supports community tree, hedgerow, and orchard projects that boost agricultural productivity and create publicly accessible green spaces that promote physical and mental well-being. You can find out more about current grant funding programmes below.

Trees Outside Woodland Fund.

Grants of between £10,000 and £40,000 for local authorities and registered charities with incomes over £100k. England only. Find out more

Network Rail Community Tree Planting Fund.

Grants of between £2,500 and £10,000 for projects in England, Scotland and Wales. Open to wide-range of applicants, including local authorities, community groups and landowners.

SP Energy Networks Community Tree Planting Fund.

Grants of between £2,500 and £10,000 for projects in Scotland only. Open to wide-range of applicants, including local authorities, community groups and landowners.

National Highways 3 Million Trees Project.

Free trees for planting in England. A selection of tree species, with orders of between 2,500 – 50,000 whips available to a wide range of applicants, including charities,

farms, education institutions and more.

Branching Out Fund. Grants of between £250 and £2,500 for community groups, schools, small registered charities, and Tree Warden Networks (among others) – with a quicker decision for those seeking funding below £500. UK wide.

For further details on these funding opportunities visit <https://treecouncil.org.uk/grants-and-guidance/our-grants/>

Planning and Infrastructure Bill, Government Amendments to Part 3 (Lords Committee Stage)

*Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
(Updated 17 July 2025)*

THE government is determined to deliver on its Plan for Change milestones of building 1.5 million safe and decent homes and making decisions on at least 150 major infrastructure projects by the end of this Parliament.

We remain firmly of the view that when it comes to development and the environment, we can do better than the status quo, which too often sees both sustainable house-building and nature recovery stall. Instead of environmental protections being seen as barriers to growth, we are determined to unlock a win-win for the economy and for nature.

The current approach to discharging environmental obligations is too often delaying and deterring development and placing unnecessary burdens on housebuilders and local authorities. It requires housebuilders to pay for localised and often costly mitigation measures, only to maintain the environmental status quo. By not taking a holistic view across larger geographies, mitigation measures often fail to secure the best outcomes for the environment.

The Nature Restoration Fund will end this sub-optimal arrangement. By facilitating a more strategic approach to the discharge of environmental obligations, it will streamline the delivery of new homes and infrastructure and result in improved environmental outcomes being delivered more efficiently.

Following the introduction of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, we have taken very seriously the concerns expressed by those who are not yet convinced that the provisions in Part 3 provide the necessary certainty that the Nature Restoration Fund will deliver in practice the potential environmental benefits it offers and who question whether the safeguards in the Bill are sufficiently robust.

With a view to ensuring that everyone has confidence that the Nature Restoration Fund delivers the improved outcomes for nature that are at the core of the model, we have continued to engage with expert stakeholders, including environmental organisations and housebuilders, as well as the Office for Environmental Protection.

Having done so, the government has developed a comprehensive set of amendments for consideration during the Lords Committee Stage of the Bill. As part of that exercise, we have also taken the opportunity to address wider issues raised during parliamentary debates as to how the Nature Restoration Fund will operate going forward.

Taken together, we are confident the following package will provide reassurance that the Nature Restoration Fund will restore, not

harm nature, while at the same time ensuring housebuilders benefit from the same streamlined process to discharge their environmental obligations and get Britain building.

The overall improvement test is the existing test that the Secretary of State must consider to be passed before they can approve an Environmental Delivery Plan (EDP). The government has always been clear that it is one of the key environmental safeguards in the new system and, as such, it is vital that there is confidence in its operation.

The amendment we are tabling clarifies this test. It removes any risk of ambiguity by making it clear that the Secretary of State can only approve an EDP where the effect of the conservation measures will materially outweigh the negative effect of development on the conservation status of each identified environmental feature. This provides further assurance for communities and developers that outcomes will be delivered, and that the actions taken under an EDP must lead to a material improvement for the relevant environmental feature.

At introduction, the Bill provided the ability for Natural England to include back-up conservation measures within an EDP which could be used if the initial conservation measures were not delivering the desired outcome. Reflecting the original intent that these back-up measures would be used where necessary, our amendments now make it clear and mandatory for an EDP to include back-up measures, as well as explicitly requiring Natural England to monitor the effectiveness of conservation measures.

Where monitoring shows that the primary conservation measures are failing to deliver, this would then trigger a requirement for Natural England to deploy the back-up measures. This combination of monitoring and direct action to address any underperformance provides further assurance that an EDP will deliver in line with the overall improvement test.

While back-up measures provide greater certainty of outcome, we also propose to reframe the duty on the Secretary of State to deliver remedial action in the unlikely event that the conservation measures and back-up conservation measures do not deliver as originally foreseen. We propose an explicit requirement for midpoint, endpoint and revocation reports to set out whether the EDP is still likely to, or has passed, the overall improvement test.

Should the endpoint report contain an assessment that the conservation measures are not likely to, or have not passed, the overall improvement test, the Secretary of State will be under a duty to take proportionate action to

address any shortfall in environmental outcomes. These measures will need to be set out in a report, containing a clear assessment of the effect the Secretary of State expects those actions to have. The Secretary of State will then also need to review the effect of these measures two years later.

We have always been clear that Natural England as the Delivery Body will use a robust evidence base when determining which conservation measures to take forward. In order to provide the greatest possible assurance that this will always be the case – and reflecting what would have happened in practice – we are including an explicit provision in the primary legislation requiring both Natural England and the Secretary of State to take account of the best available scientific evidence when preparing, amending or revoking an EDP.

In addition, and again making the existing intent more explicit, we will also now require EDPs to set out the anticipated sequencing of the implementation of conservation measures – with specific reference to the timing of development coming forward. This will provide additional assurance that EDPs will not lead to open-ended or irreversible impacts from development. This would include detail as to whether and which conservation measures must be in place in advance of development coming forward, ensuring that no irreversible harm could occur to an environmental feature. This would form part of the Secretary of State's assessment of whether an EDP would pass the overall improvement test. Upfront conservation measures may be necessary in instances where a habitat or species is rare or fragile, requiring immediate action to improve its conservation status before development impacting upon it could be approved.

As part of this package, we have included new provisions to clarify the consultation requirements when amending an EDP – where the intent had always been to ensure consultation was taken forward where it was proportionate to do so. This will ensure that where an EDP makes a significant amendment, measured by its meeting certain criteria, there will now always be a requirement to consult on that amendment, so that the public and expert stakeholders are able to contribute to and comment on the proposals.

We have always been clear that Natural England should be empowered to secure conservation measures that will provide the best outcomes for the environment. That is why it is crucial to embed flexibility in this new approach to avoid the sub-optimal outcomes that occur under the current system's rigid approach to the

selection of environmental interventions. We believe this should apply even if, in Natural England's expert judgement, those measures should be delivered at a different site to where the development impacts are being felt.

In providing this flexibility, we have always recognised it is crucial that conservation measures that do not directly address the environmental impact of development on a feature at a specific site should only be used where there is a clear environmental rationale for doing so. Reflecting that position, we have now made it explicit in the Bill that Natural England can only deliver these network measures where they consider that it would make a greater contribution to the improvement of the environmental feature in question than measures that address the impact of development locally.

Under our proposals, Natural England would be required to state how they have reached this conclusion, again with reference to the best available scientific evidence. Crucially, network measures could never be used where to do so would result in the loss of an irreplaceable habitat as this would inherently not pass the overall improvement test.

We are also adding two other provisions to reflect how Natural England would operate in practice: the first requires Natural England, in taking forward network measures of this type, to have regard to the need to protect the overall coherence of the relevant site network; the second means that Natural England will be required explicitly to have regard to a site's conservation objectives when they relate to an environmental feature included in an EDP.

In designing and delivering conservation measures, Natural England will continue to be guided by existing obligations to seek to achieve and maintain favourable conservation status for protected species. This is also now explicitly embedded in the NRF framework, by way of an additional duty to have regard to maintaining and / or improving favourable conservation status of species subject to an EDP.

These changes underline the continued role for the mitigation hierarchy in the design of EDPs, ensuring that local conservation measures are preferred unless there is a clearly articulated environmental basis to look further afield. When determining what conservation measures to include in an EDP, Natural England would have regard to the desirability to avoid or reduce impacts from development on site, by the use of planning conditions – for example, water efficiency measures in new build housing.

These conditions can be set out within an EDP alongside other conservation measures to outweigh harm that cannot be avoided. The ability to set planning conditions will ensure that EDPs set out how action will be taken to avoid the impact of development in advance of conservation measures being put in place, which will secure the overall improvement to the environmental feature required through this legislation. Natural England will include information on whether and how they considered such options under the existing duty

to describe why the conservation measures in a specific EDP are considered appropriate and what alternatives were considered.

Finally, all the environmental principles – including the prevention, rectification at source, and precautionary principles – must be considered by Natural England in preparing an EDP, because the Secretary of State is under an existing duty under the Environment Act 2021 to have due regard to the Environmental Principles Policy Statement. This will add additional assurance that the Secretary of State will have regard to these important principles when making an EDP.

These amendments demonstrate our commitment to getting this right. The Nature Restoration Fund is a huge opportunity to reframe the relationship between development and the environment. We hope that, with these amendments, stakeholders and parliamentarians can work with the government as we shift our focus to on the ground delivery – driving nature recovery while supporting the delivery of the homes and infrastructure we need.

As we look towards implementing this new model, we recognise there are a number of areas where we will want to work with the sector to develop guidance and regulations that support Natural England in the delivery of the NRF – which will be important in ensuring we deliver the intended benefits for nature and manage the risks that come with a new approach.

AFTER months of campaigning by The Wildlife Trusts and other environmental organisations, the UK Government has tabled amendments to add nature safeguards to Part 3 of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill.

Part 3 of the Bill introduces Environmental Delivery Plans (EDPs), to manage impacts in some places where development will affect protected sites and species. The UK Government's environmental watchdog, the Office for Environmental Protection, warned in May that the absence of legal certainty and key environmental principles from this proposed system would lead to environmental regression. The Wildlife Trusts ran a 'Broken Promises' campaign later that month, which saw over 30,000 people email their MPs asking for Part 3 to be withdrawn as environmentally unsafe and for the Government to stop issuing incorrect statements about nature protections being a blocker to housing delivery and growth.

The amendments published by the Government today (18 July) add new safeguards to Part 3, informed by Office for Environmental Protection recommendations. These include strengthening the legal tests that EDPs will have to pass, requiring each EDP to be based on scientific evidence showing it will lead to environmental improvement and imposing monitoring and reporting requirements. The amendments have been published alongside a

policy statement stating the Government respects the need to prioritise the avoidance of harm to wildlife and recognises that environmental protections are not a barrier to growth.

Joan Edwards, director of policy and public affairs at The Wildlife Trusts, says: "Over the last few months, we have continued to shine a spotlight on the damaging aspects of this Bill, making clear that nature needs a voice in decisions around our growth as a nation, so it's good to see that our concerns have been heard and some changes will be made.

"However, this is not a done deal and we will now scrutinise these changes in detail to make sure they stand up to analysis, embody the Office for Environmental Protection recommendations in full and truly deliver the win-win for nature and development the Government has promised. We will continue to campaign and to work with peers and MPs to improve the Planning and Infrastructure Bill for nature.

"This must mark the start of Ministers listening more to the nature-loving British public and recognising that wilder places mean happier, more secure and more prosperous futures for all."

JOSHUA ASKEW reported for BBC News, South East, that a councillor has warned, that the Planning and Infrastructure Bill could cause "tragic, irretrievable and avoidable" damage to Surrey's countryside.

Jonathan Essex, Green Party councillor for Redhill East, said the Planning and Infrastructure Bill could "dismantle decades of progress in nature protection" if passed.

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government told the BBC: "The government has inherited a failing system that has delayed new homes and infrastructure while doing nothing for nature's recovery. We are determined to fix this.

"Our Planning and Infrastructure Bill will deliver a win-win for the economy and nature by unblocking building and economic growth and delivering meaningful environmental improvements."

There is a shortage of affordable homes in Surrey, with more than 10,000 households on a local authority housing waiting list, according to a Surrey County Council (SCC) document, external.

SCC unanimously agreed on a motion by Mr Essex to urge the government to change "deeply damaging" parts of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill.

The bill will "water down" habitat protections to sites of specific scientific interest and other protected areas, the East Surrey Green Party said in a statement.

Protection granted to individual species, such as bats, newts, wild birds and water voles, could also be weakened, it added.

A letter to The Guardian

AS an arborist for over 25 years, I would not disagree with your editorial (18 July) that trees are literally part of the air we breathe.

What I object to is the rise of the celebrity tree. All trees are equally important. In terms of the natural environment, the Sycamore Gap was just a tree, no more no less.

The men who cut it down arguably deserve to be punished, but if they had been given

community sentences working in woods, for example, they may have benefited from some *shinrin-yoku* and emerged as more enlightened souls.

Paul Goetzee
Liverpool

Council apologises to tree campaigners

By Steve Jones for BBC News, Yorkshire

SHEFFIELD City Council has accepted an independent review's recommendation for a full apology for its "heavy-handed" legal threats against four tree campaigners. In 2017, several protestors were threatened with injunctions which would have stopped them from disrupting the council's controversial tree-felling programme, or encouraging others to do so.

The council issued a full apology for its failings over the scandal after an independent review in 2023, but the complaints of the four campaigners were not considered in that report.

It said it accepted the recommendations of the latest investigation "in full" and had issued apologies.

The review said the council issued legal letters to some Sheffield residents setting out their intention to obtain injunctions preventing them from continuing to protest against its £2.2bn street improvement project.

Those who received the letters were given the opportunity to agree to stop campaigning in terms set out by the authority as an alternative to not proceeding to court.

"In broad terms, it meant the complainants would not have to risk the granting of an injunction and the costs consequences for them personally of proceeding to a contested hearing in the High Court," the report added.

After new information about the scandal came to light in 2020 and 2021, the individuals



made several complaints about the council's "intimidating" legal threats, which they said went "further than was reasonably necessary".

Several complaints were upheld following the independent investigation by legal firm VVW that concluded in February, with its findings published ahead of a meeting on Monday.

The report described the legal basis against the complainants as "sound", but concluded the authority's action "was a result of the bunker mentality at the council at the time and the desire to 'get the job done'."

It also labelled the authority's approach as "heavy-handed".

It said the impact on the complainants

"cannot be underestimated" and criticised the delay.

The report added "The handling of the complaints means there are four residents who have been let down. It will not be enough to simply apologise again."

The council admitted the process had "taken longer than necessary, and an external investigator should have been commissioned earlier".

As well as calling for "full and complete apologies", the report's other recommendations related to governance, how the council's legal team works, and the authority's culture.

Officers have advised councillors to accept its findings in full and endorse an action plan when they meet on Monday.

A previous independent review of the council's behaviour during the dispute, known as the the Lowcock Inquiry, said there had been a "failure of strategic leadership".

In response, the authority acknowledged its "poor" behaviour towards campaigners and residents and issued personal apologies to some individuals.

E-mails to Broadsheet

PETER CROOT (alias Crootie), one of our longest serving Tree Wardens, e-mailed me with some comments and a question. I have been fortunate to have known Crootie, one of our Tree Wardens for Coltishall, for more years than either of us would admit to, during which time we have shared many laughs, enjoyed our trees and hegerows and had a couple of really good arguments!

Some time ago Crootie e-mailed me to ask if I still wanted letters to Broadsheet and comments on relevant matters and, as I replied "yes", I have since waited somewhat nervously!

Anyway, here is Crootie's e-mail.

Many thanks for July's Broadsheet. As usual, thought provoking, especially page 19 where it is stated that water is a precious resource and should not be taken for granted. I really concur with that, but how do we get that over to the great unwashed, or should that be the overwashed, public?!!

I note in the tree works, that an oak, with a TPO on it, is due to be felled at Paterson Lodge, the centre for East Anglia Girl Guides, Hautbois Road, Coltishall. No reason was given and no requirement to replace. What do you think?

There is a grass triangle at the end of White Lion Road, Coltishall, which has a tree, planted in celebration of George V Silver Jubilee by a group of children, in 1935, including Alan Spinks,

a former Coltishall Tree Warden. We now have thirsty clowns, parking their 4x4s near the tree, while they rush to the nearest pub!

In spite of bollards around the island, they still manage to park next to the tree!

Apart from contacting Norfolk County Council or buying a shotgun to take direct action, any thoughts?

Cheers Pete

That really couldn't have been written by anyone other than Crootie! Direct and straight to the point! I like that.

Sorry Crootie, but Broadsheet simply publishes the basic details of applications. As it states at the end of the tables, "Note: This is not intended to be a definitive list of all the relevant details. Readers should always refer to the specific application on the South Norfolk and Broadland District Council Planning website at <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning-applications/find-planning-application>"

Section 10 of the Network Handbook gives details of how to use the "Broadland District Council Planning Portal"

If you had followed that you would have

seen that the applicant stated "The oak tree needs felling, it has severe stress crack at the spring of the branches. Should it fail it will demolish the greenhouse. This tree is standing in the wood at the rear of 10 Great Hautbois Road adjacent to the greenhouse of the above garden. This is best viewed from the rear garden of number ten. The owner of the address is aware. The Guide Association are happy to replant."

One final thing. The application, 2025/1246, was validated on 01/05/2025 and appeared in June's Broadsheet. It was approved on 02/06/2025.

Turning to 4x4 parking on the grass triangle at the end of White Lion Road in Coltishall, I can only suggest that you contact the Norfolk County Council Highways Department.

On the other hand, you could request that the tree is protected by a TPO.

Oh yes. One other thing. Have you tried land mines?

Thanks for your mail Pete and I very much look forward to the next one.

John.

The Guardian view on the cultural life of trees: we must protect our natural heritage

A Guardian Editorial

FROM Shakespeare to Radiohead, ancient woodlands have shaped the UK's creative landscape. They deserve to be celebrated. If the mindless felling of the Sycamore Gap tree has taught us anything, it is that there is no such thing as "just a tree", as one of the perpetrators, Adam Carruthers, told the jury. "It was almost as if someone had been murdered," he said of the ensuing public outcry. For many it was.

Animism runs deeply through our relationship with arboreal life. From Macbeth's prophetic Birnam Wood to the towering Ents in *The Lord of the Rings*, trees have long been personified in literature. Furthermore, from Constable's bucolic Suffolk to David Hockney's Yorkshire wold, they have helped shape Britain's artistic landscape.

This cultural heritage is being celebrated by the Woodland Trust UK Tree of the Year 2025. The Sycamore Gap tree won in 2016. The shortlist, announced this week, brings together William Wordsworth and the Beatles, Virginia Woolf and Radiohead, all united by the trees they have helped put on the UK's cultural map. The Tree of Peace and Unity in County Antrim, where the Good Friday agreement was signed in 1998, also makes the list of 10 culturally remarkable trees.

British history is written in its trees: the ancient Ankerwycke Yew at Runnymede, where Henry VIII is rumoured to have courted Anne Boleyn; the Royal Oak in Shropshire, which hid the future Charles II; and the Tolpuddle Martyrs Tree in Dorset (pictured).

Like the rings in their trunks, over centuries trees become the keeper of stories. They also,



of course, provide paper on which to read them. This is ingeniously encapsulated in *The Future Library* by the Scottish conceptual artist Katie Paterson. Starting with Margaret Atwood in 2014, each year a manuscript by a different novelist is buried in Oslo's Nordmarka forest. In 2114, 100 books will be published out of the 1,000 specially planted pine trees.

In fairytales and crime fiction, forests signal danger, but they are also places of sanctuary and renewal, hence the ancient Japanese practice of *shinrin-yoku* or forest bathing. Peter Rabbit finds safety in a burrow at the bottom of a tree. They also promise adventure and

character-building, as in Robin Hood and the ethos behind Scandinavian forest schools.

We learn to anthropomorphise arboreal beings from an early age: Enid Blyton's Magic Faraway Tree and JK Rowling's Whomping Willow are characters in their own right. Trees have very human qualities: they can learn from past traumas, such as droughts, and they make good "parents", allowing their seedlings just the right amount of sugar through their roots.

However, they cannot protect them from global heating and disease. New research has revealed that saplings in British woodlands have been dying at an alarming rate since 2000. As much as 70% of ancient woods in the UK have been lost or damaged in the last 100 years. After the destruction of the Sycamore Gap tree, and the 500-year old oak in Enfield near a Toby Carvery restaurant this year, the government has set out much-needed plans to give legal protection to older and culturally important trees in England.

Our ancient woodlands are irreplaceable. We must protect them as they protect us. As Woodland Trust patron Judi Dench put it, our oldest trees "are as much part of our heritage as any literature". They should be cherished and celebrated. In the words of WH Auden: "A culture is no better than its woods."

Fig trees convert atmospheric CO₂ to stone, research reveals

by European Association of Geochemistry

SOME species of fig trees store calcium carbonate in their trunks, essentially turning themselves (partially) into stone, new research has found. The team of Kenyan, U.S., Austrian and Swiss scientists found that the trees could draw carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere and store it as calcium carbonate 'rocks' in the surrounding soil.

The research was presented at the Goldschmidt conference in Prague.

The trees, native to Kenya, are one of the first fruit trees shown to have this ability, known as the oxalate carbonate pathway.

All trees use photosynthesis to turn CO₂ into organic carbon, which forms their trunk,

branches, roots and leaves; this is why planting trees is seen as a potential means to mitigate CO₂ emissions.

Certain trees also use CO₂ to create calcium oxalate crystals. When parts of the tree decay, these crystals are converted by specialized bacteria or fungi into calcium carbonate—the same mineral as limestone or chalk. This

increases the soil pH around the tree, while also increasing the availability of certain nutrients.

The inorganic carbon in calcium carbonate typically has a much longer lifetime in the soil than organic carbon, making it a more effective method of CO₂ sequestration.

Dr Mike Rowley, senior lecturer at the University of Zurich (UZH), said, "We've known



about the oxalate carbonate pathway for some time, but its potential for sequestering carbon hasn't been fully considered. If we're planting trees for agroforestry and their ability to store CO₂ as organic carbon while producing food, we could choose trees that provide an additional benefit by sequestering inorganic carbon also, in the form of calcium carbonate."

The team, from UZH, the Nairobi Technical University of Kenya, Sadhana Forest, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, University of California, Davis, and the University of Neuchatel studied three species of fig tree

grown in Samburu County, Kenya.

They identified how far from the tree the calcium carbonate was being formed and identified the microbial communities involved in the process. Using synchrotron analysis at the Stanford Synchrotron Radiation Lightsource, they found that calcium carbonate was being formed both on the exterior of tree trunks and deeper within the wood.

Dr Rowley explained, "As the calcium carbonate is formed, the soil around the tree becomes more alkaline. The calcium carbonate is formed both on the surface of the tree and within the wood structures, likely as microorganisms decompose crystals on the surface and also, penetrate deeper into the tree. It shows that inorganic carbon is being sequestered more deeply within the wood than we previously realized."

Of the three types of fig tree studied, the scientists found that *Ficus wakefieldii* was the most effective at sequestering CO₂ as calcium carbonate.

They are now planning to assess the tree's suitability for agroforestry by quantifying its water requirements and fruit yields and by doing

a more detailed analysis of how much CO₂ can be sequestered under different conditions.

Most of the research into the oxalate-carbonate pathway has been in tropical habitats and focused on trees that do not produce food. The first tree to be identified as having an active oxalate-carbonate pathway was the Iroko *Milicia excelsa*. It can sequester one ton of calcium carbonate in the soil over its lifetime.

Calcium oxalate is one of the most abundant biominerals and the crystals are produced by many plants. The microorganisms that convert calcium oxalate to calcium carbonate are also widespread.

"It's easier to identify calcium carbonate in drier environments," explained Dr. Rowley.

"However, even in wetter environments the carbon can still be sequestered. So far, numerous species of tree have been identified which can form calcium carbonate, but we believe there are many more. This means that the oxalate-carbonate pathway could be a significant, underexplored opportunity to help mitigate CO₂ emissions as we plant trees for forestry or fruit."

Over 120 different tree species found in Sheffield's gardens

By Rebecca Ferguson, Media and PR Officer, at University of Sheffield

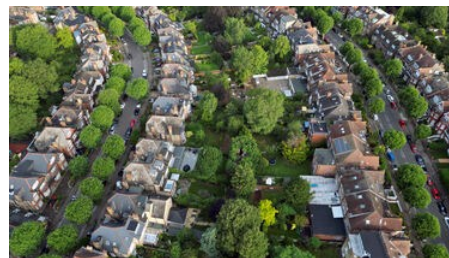
MORE than 120 different species of trees are growing in gardens across the city of Sheffield, a new survey has revealed. The survey into urban tree diversity, led by researchers at the University of Sheffield, aims to better understand Sheffield's urban forest and how the environmental and wellbeing benefits of trees can be more evenly distributed across the city.

The Sheffield Urban Tree Species Survey first launched in 2023 and residents are now being invited to share more information about the trees in their gardens, as well as their views on tree selection and the role of trees in urban spaces.

Researchers hope that the second round of the survey, now open, will reveal even more unique species and offer deeper insights into how and why residents choose particular types of trees.

Urban trees are known to offer numerous benefits to people living in cities, from mitigating heat and improving air quality to supporting wellbeing and biodiversity. Understanding which species grow where can help ensure these benefits are distributed more equitably across the city.

Abigail Catterall, University of Sheffield's School of Biosciences, said "Whilst we know a lot about the species of street trees, there has been relatively little research in the UK into the species growing in people's gardens. In



Sheffield, over a third of the city's trees are found in gardens, so to fully understand our urban forest, we need to explore what's growing in these spaces."

So far, participants have reported a wide range of species. Apple trees are the most common, followed by cherry and silver birch. More unusual findings include the handkerchief tree, native to China, and species of *Acacia*, typically found in Africa and Oceania.

The survey has also highlighted trends in residents' preferences, with many favouring smaller trees that offer colourful blossoms or edible fruit. However, researchers say the second round of data collection may shift this perspective.

The project also explores what people value in urban trees. Participants are asked what factors, such as size, aesthetics, or environmental benefit influence their choices for both private gardens and public spaces. Initial results suggest that size is a key consideration, but researchers are keen to hear a range of views.

"We're not just interested in where trees are planted - we also want to understand what people value about them," Abigail Catterall added. "We want all of Sheffield to be represented in this study so if you don't have any trees, or even if you don't have a garden, we would still really like to hear your views."

The research forms part of a PhD project funded by Adapting to the Challenges of a Changing Environment (ACCE DTP), Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), and supported by Sheffield City Council. The aim is to enhance understanding of the UK's urban forests and to help inform strategies that maximise the social and environmental value of trees in cities.

The Sycamore Gap Tree

I have to say that as much as I love trees and, in particular, our veteran, ancient and historic trees, I was most surprised at the public's reaction to the "murder" of the Sycamore Gap Tree. Yes, it was a landmark tree and it was an "old" tree, but probably most significant of all was a tree made famous by a film.

Like most lovers and guardians of our precious trees I was pleased to learn that the two men who chopped down the Sycamore Gap tree have been sentenced to a term in prison, but it wasn't long enough!

Anyway, the following two articles report matters far better than I can and one of them addresses the fact that trees more notable, trees much older and trees more precious have been felled without such public outrage.

DUNCAN LEATHERDALE reported for BBC News, North East and Cumbria, that the two men who chopped down the "irreplaceable" Sycamore Gap tree in an act of "sheer bravado" have each been jailed for four years and three months.

Daniel Michael Graham 39, and Adam Carruthers, 32, both from Cumbria, were convicted of criminal damage after filming themselves using a chainsaw to illegally fell the landmark tree by Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland.

Sentencing them at Newcastle Crown Court, Mrs Justice Lambert rejected a claim of "drunken stupidity" and said, while a full motive was not clear, felling the tree and the ensuing outrage gave the men "some sort of thrill".

The National Trust, which owned the more than 100-year-old tree, said the landmark could "never be replaced".

The pair, whose friendship imploded in the aftermath as the public revulsion became clear to them, drove to the site under the cover of darkness in the early hours of 28 September 2023. They used the winds of Storm Agnes to help them topple the tree on to the Unesco World Heritage Site wall, the court heard.

The value of the tree was disputed with prosecutors saying it was worth about £458,000 and Graham's team claiming it to be about £150,000, but Mrs Justice Lambert said the exact financial price did not really matter.

The judge said the tree was a landmark of Northumberland and "symbol of the untamed beauty" of the landscape around Hadrian's Wall. It was a place of "peace and tranquillity" which people returned to year after year, the judge said, adding it held great personal significance to many.

She said Carruthers used spray paint and a chainsaw to mark and then cut a wedge out of the tree, while Graham filmed it on his mobile phone.

Mrs Justice Lambert said a full motive was not clear, but she was "confident a major factor was sheer bravado," adding the action of felling the tree and the outrage it caused gave the men "some sort of thrill".

The men then "revelled in [their] notoriety" in the aftermath, the judge said.

She also rejected Carruthers' claim that he was drunk as the mission required skill and coordination as well as a "high degree" of planning by the two "experienced tree surgeons".

The tree had been planted in the late 1800s to be a "feature in the landscape", fulfilling that

ambition and more by becoming a much-loved visitor destination and landmark at the former frontier of the Roman Empire.

It found global fame after featuring in a scene of the 1991 film *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, starring Kevin Costner, and was popular with photographers and artists.

In a statement read to the court, National Trust manager Andrew Poad said: "This iconic tree can never be replaced."

He said the trust cared for the "totemic symbol" on behalf of the nation and it "belonged to the people".

The tree was a "place of sanctuary" for many and its destruction led to an "unprecedented" outpouring of love and emotion, Mr Poad said, with the "overwhelming sense of loss and confusion felt across the world".



He said the reason for the "malicious" and "mindless" vandalism was "beyond comprehension" and the way it was felled to land across the Roman wall was "reckless in the extreme".

However, he added that there were "signs of life" with shoots emerging from the stump, while seeds taken from the tree had been used to grow saplings which would be placed around the country.

Prosecutor Richard Wright KC said there had been "significant planning" with the tree felled in a "deliberate and professional" manner.

The court heard both men had since admitted involvement in the expedition to probation officers.

In mitigation, Carruthers' barrister Andrew Gurney said the mechanic from Wigton would carry the burden of regret for his "stupid act" as a "personal penance" for the rest of his life.

Mr Gurney also said many people had asked why he did it, to which the reply was: "Unfortunately it is no more than drunken stupidity."

Christopher Knox, for Graham, said the groundworker from near Carlisle had had multiple struggles and mental health problems and had made a "serious attempt" to take his own life in December which resulted in a long hospital stay and then him being remanded into prison.

He also said people had attacked Graham's caravan and sent him hate mail showing "unpleasant" and "malign intent" towards him.

HELEN BRIGGS, BBC Environment Correspondent, reported that the fate of the Sycamore Gap tree has shed light on a deeper concern.

James Canton spent two years sitting beneath an 800-year-old oak tree near his home in Essex, watching acorns fatten and butterflies

land on the massive knurled grey trunk. Sometimes he sat in the branches too.

Canton, a lecturer at the University of Essex, recalls how it helped him feel a "sense of connection". "We're happier sat in an oak tree ten feet from the ground, watching blue tits feeding on caterpillars – involved and immersed in that natural world." He went on to write a book called *The Oak Papers* about that time spent studying the Honywood Oak (pictured).

For years, it was easy to forget that we used to be a woodland nation: around 6,000 years ago untouched swathes of oak, hazel, birch and pine blanketed an estimated 75% of the UK.

However, in recent months the felling of the Sycamore Gap tree next to Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland has put our relationship with trees, and the natural world more widely, back under the spotlight. Canton calls it a "symbolic" moment.

The felling of the Sycamore Gap has prompted calls for stricter legal protections for trees, not only to help prevent similar crimes in future but also to help the public appreciate the value of trees at a time when many of our woodlands are in poor health and targets for tree-planting are not being met.

However, even if the government were to back calls for greater legal protections, other questions remain. Namely, which trees should be protected?

Arguably even more pressingly: should Britain be thinking more broadly about how to save our depleting woodlands and is legal protection enough or is a fundamental rethink required?

The Sycamore Gap wasn't a particularly ancient tree, nor a native species, but its position gave it a totemic status. Tucked into a fold of the hills in an area of outstanding beauty, it was famous around the world. People went there to have picnics, propose marriage, scatter ashes and to seek solace during lockdown.

Local people spoke of their devastation at its loss, while Northumberland National Park Authority received thousands of emails, letters and messages.

Yet despite, apparently, being a nation of tree lovers, the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries on Earth. It still isn't planting enough trees, despite calls by successive governments.

The UK has 13% woodland cover, compared to an average of 38% in Europe, according to Prof Mary Gagen of Swansea University.

Despite woodland creation rates being much higher now than they were in the 2010s, they remain off track, according to statistics from Forest Research.

The target set by the previous Conservative government was to plant 30,000 hectares a year by 2025 across the UK, in line with the heyday of tree planting in the 1970s.

Statistics show that 20,700 hectares of new woodland, the woodlands that already exist aren't in great shape. Only 7% of it is in good ecological health, says Prof Gagen. She is among those who think that this all nods to an "odd relationship" with trees. One of "simultan-



ously adoring and denuding woodlands".

Andrew Allen of the Woodland Trust warns there could be a knock-on effect: "While money goes into getting new trees in the ground, we continue to spend very little on looking after the trees we already have and this risks serious consequences. Why would a tree older than Stonehenge go unprotected?"

Ancient trees provide a home to hundreds of different bird, insect and mammal species, yet they have no automatic right of protection. This is unlike some other countries, including Italy and Poland, where so-called "heritage" trees have specific legal protections.

Some UK trees are protected through being in a nature reserve or a site of special scientific interest, while Tree Preservation Orders can be made by a local planning authority to protect specific trees or woodland from deliberate damage or destruction.

Yet many fall through the gaps. Only a fifth of our "oldest and most important veteran trees" are in protected areas, says Prof Gagen. Veteran trees are trees that through their own decay act as a habitat for other species, promoting biodiversity.

The Tree Council has written a report calling for greater protections for the country's "most important trees", such as the one that stood at the Sycamore Gap.

The outpouring of emotion and anger after the felling shows how valued these "socially, culturally and environmentally important trees are", says Jess Allan, science and research projects manager at the charity.

On the back of a Heritage Trees Bill,

introduced in December 2023 as a private members bill in the House of Lords, the charity is calling for legislation to create a statutory list of the most valuable trees and to impose stricter penalties for damaging them, mirroring the system for listed buildings.

Crucially, this could protect trees that are much-loved and culturally important because of their place in the landscape, as well as protecting ancient trees that are vital in preserving nature.

Jon Stokes, the the Tree Council's Director of Trees, Science and Research, points out that in Portugal, the fine for destroying a notable tree can be as much as €500,000 (£433,000).

He says protecting our "most celebrated trees" is a no-brainer. "There are yew trees in this country that are older than Stonehenge. Nobody would ever contemplate not protecting Stonehenge so why would a living thing that's older than Stonehenge not receive some protection?"

He hopes something positive could come out of the felling of the Sycamore Gap: it has made people realise that some of the UK's trees are "truly vital to our culture and heritage and history - and our biodiversity - we should be looking after them better than we are at the moment".

The Tree Council's report is currently being assessed by the government, but there is no date on when any decision will be made.

There are some who believe legal reforms are not enough. After all, the proposed new measures might not have saved the famous sycamore: its felling involved trespass onto land owned by the Northumberland National Park.

A Tree Preservation Order wouldn't have made a difference either, adds Sarah Dodd of Tree Law in Barry, Wales, a law firm that specialises in legal issues involving trees.

"Ultimately, you can put all the protection you want on trees, but some people are just going to break the law. You can't stop some people doing some reckless acts."

The bigger question, she says, is how we get people to appreciate the value of trees and therefore not want to fell them. She hopes that giving trees special legal status will raise their profile, and make people recognise their importance.

Jon Stokes says that to maximise the bio-

diversity value of trees, it's crucial to celebrate and protect the old ones and to build up new trees next to older ones, so that wildlife can flow "from these ancient bastions into the new woods and hedges and individual trees that we're planting".

A recent report by the Woodland Trust confirmed that the current health of woods and trees is "concerning".

Proposed solutions include more woodland creation, better management, agroforestry (combining agriculture and trees), ancient woodland restoration, and natural flood management, whereby trees are planted to slow down water flow.

However, this will not be easy and Prof Gagen of Swansea University says saving the UK's woodlands is a complex problem that demands difficult choices.

Unfortunately, for most people if asked if they'd like more new, cheaper housing or faster transport, or to protect nature, they are going to sacrifice a woodland," says Prof Gagen.

She argues there is a need to ensure people are aware of the "true value of nature".

"A single big tree in the right place is providing thousands of pounds worth of carbon store, flood protection, free air conditioning, habitat, wellbeing provision, pollution control and a hundred other benefits, and no one is asked to pay those costs if the tree is felled for development. That needs to change to save UK woodlands."

As for Canton, he stills visits the Honywood Oak near his home, and is involved in projects to turn around the fortunes of the "forgotten forests", areas of ancient woodland that were historically turned into timber plantations and now need to be restored.

He hopes that years from now we will have learned from the loss of the Sycamore Gap tree and others like it, and changed our attitude.

"I'd really like to think that in a generation's time, there will be rights for trees. Trees that are over, say, 100 years old that you cannot do this to and you get much worse punishments than currently exist," he says.

"Hopefully in time we will gradually get there – our society is naturally catching up with our natural emotional connection with the natural world."

Tree surgeon fined after being spotted tipping a magpie nest

WAS most disappointed to read on the Forestry Journal website that a tree surgeon has been fined after what has been described as a 'deeply distressing incident' by police in Warwickshire. Officers were informed by a member of the public that an arborist was spotted discarding a live nest from tree branches he was cutting in Wellesbourne, with chicks seen falling to the ground.

Investigating the incident, police identified the person responsible who admitted to destroying a wild bird nest which is a breach of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

A spokesman for Warwickshire Rural Crime Team said: "We were recently contacted by a concerned member of the public who witnessed a deeply distressing incident during tree works

in a residential area in Wellesbourne.

"A tree surgeon, hired to remove branches, was seen tipping a live magpie nest, causing chicks to fall to the ground, before removing and destroying the section of the tree that contained the nest.

"Thanks to the swift action of the member of the public and our rapid response, we were able to locate a fallen magpie and the remains of the destroyed nest on the ground.

"Following our investigation, the individual

responsible admitted to destroying a wild bird nest, which is a criminal offence under UK law.

"This action is a breach of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which clearly states: 'If any person intentionally takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built, they shall be guilty of an offence'."

The tree surgeon has not been named by officers.

In some UK woodlands, every young tree has died. What's going wrong?

Patrick Greenfield for The Guardian

TO the untrained eye, Monks Wood looks healthy and lush in the summer sun. Hundreds of butterflies dance on the edge of footpaths in the ancient Cambridgeshire woodland, which is rich with ash, maple and oak trees. Birds flit through the hedgerows as they feed. A fox ambles through a forest clearing, before disappearing into long grass.

However, for a number of years, it has been clear to Bruno Ladvoat and Rachel Mailes that something is missing. In 2022, Ladvoat, Mailes and their research team from Birmingham University were out sampling when they noticed that the small trees that typically cover the woodland floor were increasingly hard to find.

Today, in the dappled sunshine surrounding the largest trees, spaces that would normally be home to a mass of saplings scrambling for light are bare.

This pattern is not limited to the 157 hectare (388 acre) site. From Buckholt Wood in Monmouthshire to Glen Tanar in the Cairngorms, new research across eight sites around the UK shows evidence of a deeply concerning trend: ancient woodlands are failing to regenerate.

Despite having vastly different species, soil types, rainfall and temperatures throughout the year, all the sites were following the same trend: the saplings were dying.

Mailes, a postgraduate researcher and co-author of the research, says: "We could see as we were going through the forest that there wasn't a lot of regeneration coming back up. I had the sad job of crossing off all the saplings that we couldn't find or that we were finding dead. Across a lot of different species, they were just not coming back. It really made us think: there's a problem here. Then we ran all the data and we could see that we were right."

The study, which has not yet completed the peer-review process, found that sapling mortality rate increased by 90%, from 16.2% of saplings a year on average dying before 2000, increasing to 30.8% in 2022, meaning that an average sapling's chance of survival after five years has fallen from 41.3% to just 15.8%. There was also a 46% drop in the number of small trees becoming established over the same period. At Denny Wood in the New Forest and Dendles Wood on Dartmoor no saplings at all have survived since 1995 in the sites studied.

The research is based on rare long-term monitoring of the same areas of ancient woodland since 1959, which allowed researchers to monitor changes over six decades. Its findings have sparked concern about the future resilience of Britain's forests.

Global heating, disease and overgrazing by deer could all be causing the loss. Drought and extreme heat have become commonplace in many forests. In addition, the rate of biomass loss has started to increase across the study sites, with a rise in mortality rates of the largest trees observed in some areas, rising from 0.5% to 0.8% a year.

This means that one in every 125 of the



Bare oaks on a winter's morning in Blenheim Park, Oxfordshire. Researchers have studied some areas of ancient woodland around Britain since 1959, offering rare chance to monitor long-term change among different species, soil and climate. Photograph: Tim Gainey/Alamy

largest trees die every year instead of one in every 200. As a result, the rate at which the woodlands are removing carbon from the atmosphere has started to fall.

"I look at this as a big worry," says Ladvoat. "Even in areas which are relatively open, where you would expect to see new trees coming up and more trees surviving, we see less coming up and more dying."

"These forests are in a moment that makes them more vulnerable to the challenges they are facing, such as climate change and new pathogens. If there's an external force that starts killing a lot of big trees around them, then there might not be enough saplings and small trees to replace them," he says.

Deeper into Monks Wood, we stumble across a clearing that highlights one of the many pressures in ancient woodlands: a group of ash trees, a skeletal grey, all killed off by ash dieback. There is no green in the canopy, just a straight view of the blue sky above.

The disease is projected to kill up to 80% of the UK's ash trees in the coming years, and the problem is so bad in Monks Wood that researchers have to wear helmets when leaving the path to protect them from falling branches. On closer inspection, many other ash trees in the woodland are suffering from the disease.

Concerns about forests' ability to

regenerate in a warming world are not new, but data is sparse and the subject is understudied, the researchers say.

"The conditions of these forests are not unlike those of other forest remnants across Great Britain and much of Europe. That's why it's concerning," says Ladvoat. "These changes may be more widespread than what we were able to detect with our current dataset."

Ladvoat and Mailes are part of Membra, a project based at Birmingham University aiming to better understand how trees retain and pass on memories of stress and how this knowledge can improve resilience and management. The researchers are looking for ways to help UK woodlands reverse this worrying trend as temperatures continue to rise, bringing yet more stress.

Researchers hope they can develop methods to trigger genetic markers in seeds that make them more likely to survive. In theory, they could lead to the development of a "bootcamp" for seedlings that could help improve forest resilience.

"There is still hope for these forests," Ladvoat insists. "They are still absorbing carbon; they still have lots of species that are connected to people's history. There is a possibility that this can be reversed, possibly with the help of people."

Hidden forest slowly being revealed by the tide is linked to a Welsh Atlantis

By Portia Jones for msn.com

WALES has many surprising features and unusual quirks hidden among its ethereal landscapes. There are romantic castle ruins, Roman remains, Holy Wells, neolithic burial chambers and a grave for a fictional house elf. One of the more curious is 'Borth Forest', an ancient, Bronze Age forest slowly rising from a Welsh beach, said to be linked to the 'Welsh Atlantis.'

This prehistoric forest was buried under water and sand more than 4,500 years ago. In early 2010, a large area of fantasy-film-looking tree stumps was finally exposed. Then, over the winter of 2011/12, another significant area became exposed at Upper Borth, south of the RNLI Lifeboat station.

The forest was then further uncovered by storms in 2014 and Storm Hannah in 2019. The submerged woodland between Ynyslas and Borth in Ceredigion, just south of Eryri, was lost beneath the waves thousands of years ago and is now slowly being revealed.

It's thought the woodland died around 1500BC and was preserved by the acid conditions in the land's peat, becoming the stuff of legends, folklore, and songs.

These gnarly stumps of oak, pine, birch, willow, and hazel trees, preserved in the local peat, have been further stripped back by high tides and crashing waves that battered the region six years ago. Geologists believe a layer of clay and silt, some 60 to 100 feet deep, lies beneath the jagged stumps.

This sediment possibly holds vital information about what came before the forests and grasslands, including salt marshes, mud flats, brackish waters, and whatever life thrived there.

It's an awe-inspiring sight and a tangible reminder of the thousands of years of ancient history right below us.

For years, there has been much speculation that these haunting remains are a mythical submerged kingdom and are a Celtic 'otherworld'.

According to Discover Ceredigion, the petrified forest has become associated with a 17th-century myth of a sunken civilisation known as 'Cantre'r Gwaelod', or the 'Sunken Hundred'.

Legend tells us that Cantre'r Gwaelod was the rich and fertile 'lowland hundred' and sixteen cities governed by Gwyddno Garanhir, whose palace, Caer Wyddno, was reputedly near Aberystwyth.

The land stretched across what is today the marine-life-rich Cardigan Bay and lay below sea level, protected by sea walls. Seithennyn, a



friend of the king, was the guardian of the sea defences, charged with the all-important role of shutting the sea gates every night.

One night, Seithennyn, who liked his drink, was at a feast in the king's palace and forgot to shut the sea gates.

It was a stormy night, and the high spring tides broke through, flooding Cantre'r Gwaelod, forcing its people to flee to the hills, and creating Wales' very own Atlantis.

The fantastical tale is first recorded in the 'Black Book of Carmarthen' along with stories of Arthur and Merlin. This precious manuscript is being kept by the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth.

As Wales Online reported, excavation work on the site has found a Mesolithic tool, flints and a skeleton of an auroch, an ancestor to domestic cattle, found by a local butcher in the 1960s.

Human and animal footprints and scatterings of burnt stones from ancient hearths have also been unearthed.

In January 2014, after weeks of storms pummeling the Welsh coastline, a wattle walkway became visible for the first time used

by local people to cope with an increasingly waterlogged landscape.

The surreal-looking sunken forest soon became a social media sensation, with locals and tourists posting photographs of the ancient remains, which were studied closely by academics.

Alun Hubbard, from the Department of Geography and Glaciology at Aberystwyth University, told Wales Online that installing sea defences in Borth in 2012 could be a factor in more of the trees becoming exposed, along with Global warming.

Professor Hubbard said, "Of course, climate change is leading to extreme events in places. Borth is very vulnerable to high seas and extreme events, so we might see more in the future.

Borth is an ephemeral geographic formation. Its coastal erosion and position allowed it to be there. The sea will take it away again."

For now, at least, you can still see this mythical woodland at low tide and wonder what mysteries are lost beneath the waves.

Beaver activists claim they are 'doing God's work'

By Charlotte Cox for BBC South West Investigations

UNDER cover of darkness, a nocturnal creature emerges from a crate and takes its first tentative steps into a new life in the wild. "It is just essentially God's work. We're undoing the damage of hundreds of years ago and bringing back these extraordinary animals," claimed Ben, who spoke to the BBC on the condition of anonymity.

He is part of an underground network where members risk arrest, jail and hefty fines by carrying out covert and unlicensed releases of beavers.

It is an offence, external to release beavers into the wild without a licence and a spokeswoman for the National Farmers Union (NFU) said it was "irresponsible" and "really worrying".

There is now a legal route in the UK for the species to be reintroduced. Despite this and the risks of acting without licences, activists whose names have been changed were unrepentant and said they were taking action themselves because the legal option was "too bureaucratic".

"It feels like they're back in their proper place," Ben said.

Like the nocturnal creatures at the heart of their cause, the group he belongs to operates under the cover of darkness. He said secrecy was key in everything from where other parts of the network got the animals - "we really don't need to know" - to the clandestine releases.

Ben said "You don't want to be caught with a box of beavers in the boot so you have to be quite quick. You open the door, do it and drive away. They are instantly much happier in the water."

However, the NFU said concerns over unlicensed releases included flooding, tree-gnawing and damage to land and crops. NFU countryside advisor Poppy Sherborne said illegal releases were "irresponsible".

She said "They are really worrying because there has been no process put in place to check that release should be happening. There's no support for farmers who could be impacted by that release if it's not happened in the right way."

When challenged over his actions, Ben said: "I'm unfamiliar with species of animals or species of wildlife, plants or animal that would be badly affected by the presence of beavers... they can reduce risk of flooding, mitigate the damage that a drought can bring. They can help to clean up water. What's not to like about this?"

Det Insp Mark Harrison, of the National Wildlife Crime Unit, which supports wildlife crime enforcement across the UK, said he loved nature and visiting rewilding locations but "it has to be done properly". He said although there had been prosecutions for illegal species release in England, none had applied to beavers.

"The reason for that is because we've got no evidence," he said, describing the covert nature of releases and the fact beavers could be on site for long periods before they were spotted. You commit an offence so there could be consequences for you but you've also got to think about the impact on the animal so there could be welfare issues. You could be reintroducing other diseases and parasites."



Marie, who is also part of the network, said being part of beaver releases was "one of the most amazing things I've ever witnessed".

Asked about the difficulties beavers could cause for farmers and landowners, she added: "I can understand why it is scary to some people... but there are so many ways that you can maintain control. If the landowner wants to protect particular trees, you can make sure that beavers don't fell an individual tree. You can control the water level even and I think beavers can actually bring benefits to farmland too."

Beavers were hunted to extinction in Britain 400 years ago for their meat, furry water-resistant pelts and a substance they secrete called castoreum, used in food, medicine and perfume. For a long time, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 regulated the release of "non-native" species, including beavers. It allowed for licensed releases of beavers, imported from countries including Germany and Norway, into enclosures, of which there are 52 in England, according to the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra).

However, in 2013, video evidence emerged of a wild beaver with young on the River Otter, near Ottery St Mary, Devon. After public pressure, the population became central to the River Otter Beaver Trial, which resulted in the 15 families being given licensed status.

Their descendants are among upwards of 600 beavers currently roaming free in England, according to Natural England; the majority through unlicensed releases or escapes.

The Beaver Trust's figure is higher; its "educated estimate" is that there are 1,000 wild beavers in England, mostly in the South West, with a total of 3,500 in England, Wales and Scotland.

In 2022, Eurasian beavers were recognised as a protected species in England, making it illegal to capture, kill, injure or disturb them.

In February 2025, a licensing scheme overseen by Natural England was introduced, without which it is still illegal to introduce or move beavers. Natural England is now considering about 50 expressions of interest. Applicants will have to demonstrate clear benefits and where risks can be "avoided, mitigated or managed".

Cornwall Wildlife Trust applied to release beavers on a site near Helman Tor as part of a

planned £800,000 10-year project. During the two-year preparation of its application, a pair turned up at the site in what the trust believes was an unlicensed release.

Bbeaver officer Lauren Jasper said "We have seen this site be absolutely transformed. They've created a couple of dams. In doing so, this is holding back water and it's slowing the flow and it's created this amazing wetland area that's now brimming with wildlife."

The trust said its project work would include providing advice on learning to co-exist with the species again and added it did not support unlicensed release.

Other rewilding efforts, both legal and illegal, causing debate include sea eagles, lynx, wolves, elk, and even some species of butterfly, while sightings of wild boar on Dartmoor sparked division.

Devon farmer and conservationist Derek Gow said he believed they had been released by illegal rewilders.

"I wouldn't imagine very many people are involved in doing this but the effect they've had, especially when it comes to beavers, has been profound," he said.

Mr Gow, who is working to rewild 150 acres of his own land near Launceston, said he had also legally reintroduced species including beavers, dormice, 25,000 water voles and glow-worms. He said biodiversity in England was at "rock bottom" and the licensing system was fraught with "complex and medieval rules" and an obligation to "pay for the next 10 years".

"What they are trying to do is shut the stable door long after the horse, the horse's grandmother and the horses' relatives have crossed the mountain range to emerge free on the other side," he said.

Defra said unlicensed releases could "reduce the likelihood of success of beaver reintroductions". It said detailed and comprehensive licensing applications were important to "achieve a measured pace of reintroduction and prioritise areas where beavers can thrive without causing significant conflicts with people, agriculture and infrastructure".

However, rewilder Ben, who said the licensing process was a step in the right direction, said he thought there "may well be a requirement" to continue releasing the animals illegally.

"We are in a national emergency of climate and biodiversity loss," he said, adding rewilding beavers was being treated as "yet another bureaucratic exercise. It's not good enough for beavers, and it's not good enough for the people of this country".

Det Insp Harrison said "coexistence" was needed and a lot of wildlife crime issues were "because we don't know how to live with these animals anymore. It brings about a lot of conflict and usually it's human-human conflict because of an animal."

Greater Norwich Local Plan wins top regional planning award

Published on www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/

THE Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) has been named Best Plan of the Year at the prestigious Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) East of England Awards, held on 18 June. This accolade recognises the plan's outstanding contribution to shaping a sustainable and prosperous future for the sub-region.

In a further celebration of local planning excellence, the Planning Team at South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils received a Highly Commended award in the Planning Team of the Year category, highlighting their innovation, dedication, and collaborative approach.

This regional success follows national recognition just the previous week, when the GNLP was Highly Commended at the Planning Awards 2025, cementing its reputation as a leading example of strategic, community-focused planning.

Both awards celebrate excellence in planning and placemaking, honouring projects

that demonstrate innovation, impact, and strong cross-sector collaboration.

Councillor Daniel Elmer, Chair of the Greater Norwich Development Partnership and Leader of South Norfolk Council, said "An enormous amount of hard work went into creating this plan, and the teams across all of the councils involved should feel incredibly proud. Being recognised in these awards is a remarkable achievement and a clear testament to the strength of our partnership. Congratulations to all of our planners who are helping shape the future of Greater Norwich."

Adopted in March 2024, the GNLP was developed by the Greater Norwich Development Partnership, comprising Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council, and South Norfolk Council, with support from Norfolk County Council and the Broads Authority.

The plan sets out a bold and strategic vision for growth across Broadland, Norwich, and South Norfolk, aligning housing delivery with low-carbon economic development, environmental stewardship, infrastructure investment, and climate resilience.

For nearly two decades, this voluntary partnership has provided a stable and trusted platform for delivering joined-up, strategic planning, making the GNLP a model for sub-regional plan-making in line with the government's emphasis on collaborative planning.

The GNLP will now go forward to the RTPI National Awards, to be held later this year.

For more information about the Greater Norwich Local Plan and the partnership, please visit <https://www.gnlp.org.uk/>

Green Tree Badge completed by 30,000 children

Published on the Forestry Journal website

AN initiative that aims to develop an understanding and love for trees has reached a significant milestone. The Green Tree Badge, a partnership between the Royal Forestry Society (RFS) and Bags of Ethics, has now been completed by 30,000 children in the UK.

The scheme centres around 24 fun and engaging activities, all contained within an activity book, *For the Love of Trees*. When children have completed enough activities, they earn their own Green Tree Badge.

"Trees and woods provide so much for us," said Christopher Williams, chief executive of the RFS. "The Green Tree Badge helps children to understand their value and care for trees in return."

As well as families, schools and groups purchasing their own Green Tree books and packs, nearly 3,000 Activity books have also been donated to schools in socially disadvantaged areas. This is thanks to generous donations and support from Severn Trent, Mulberry, Talking Tables, Hamptons, Nimble,



Green the UK, Trainhugger and hundreds of individual donors.

Launched in 2023, supporters of the initiative include Ellie Goulding and Sir David Jason, as well as a number of high-profile industry figures.

"We are delighted to have reached so many children since we launched the Green Tree Badge campaign," said Smruti Sriram OBE, chief executive of Bags Of Ethics. "Green Tree Badge started as a kernel of an idea following the tree-planting campaign during Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

"Trees support us in so many ways – from wellbeing, to food, shelter, to cooling our planet, and it is important that our future leaders – children of today – embrace the magical world of trees in a manner of ways."

Find out more about Green Tree Badge: rfs.org.uk/green-tree-badge/

133-acre Somerset woodland purchased to help fund rewilding

By Jack Roberts, AI-Assisted Reporter for South West Farmer

A 133-acre site in Somerset has been purchased to help fund a major rewilding initiative. The land near Bruton was bought with the help of a £1.5m loan from Triodos Bank UK. The site will form part of the Hicks Park Wood project in the historic landscape of Selwood Forest, an ancient woodland which dates back to the 13th century.

The project aims to restore ecosystems and support sustainable land use and local employment.

Plans include woodland restoration, enhancing public access, and restoring nature trails.

Laura Rumph, senior relationship manager at Triodos Bank UK, said: "As a sustainable bank, we are supporting the restoration of biodiversity and protection nature in the UK. Both are essential in addressing the interconnected climate and ecological emergencies that we face.



Nature will only recover if it has far more space to thrive.

"We are excited to see how Hicks Park Wood progresses and hope to be able to

support similar landscape-scale initiatives nationwide that are advancing more connected and co-ordinated rewilding efforts."

The first phase of the project involves active timber management, selectively removing non-native conifers to increase sunlight penetration, restoring oak woodland, and encouraging native regeneration.

Once this groundwork is complete, a low-intervention approach will take over, enabling forests, grasslands, and wetlands to recover naturally.

Another year of tree planting success by local Community Forest

By Robina Ballard Davis for Bedford Today

OVER 122,000 trees were planted in and around Bedfordshire between November 2024 and March 2025 by the Forest of Marston Vale Trust. Through the Trees for Climate programme, supported by Defra, the Trust delivered 31 new planting schemes, covering 109.24 hectares with trees, planting 8768.6 metres of hedgerow and engaging 1270 people in the process.

As a catalyst for woodland creation, the Forest of Marston Vale Trust has been a trusted partner for local landowners for nearly 30 years.

Forest Director, James Russell said, "Thanks to the Trees for Climate programme, the Trust has been able to extend its support to offer expertise and experience, combined with an attractive funding package, to schools, parish councils, farmers and other landowners across the 61 square mile Forest area, and a 10-mile radius beyond."

Through tree planting, the Forest of Marston Vale Trust is not only tackling climate change by capturing carbon, cooling and cleaning our air and reducing flood risks but also enhancing the well-being of local communities. Creating greener, healthier spaces, strengthens people's connection with nature, supports mental and physical health, and fosters a sense of

community pride. Increasing tree cover and hedgerows is helping to restore natural habitats making a lasting impact on local biodiversity and ecosystems.

The Forest of Marston Vale Trust is one of England's Community Forests, a diverse and growing network of 15 forests each working in partnership with their local communities, landowners, and businesses to help nature recover and regenerate the landscapes in and around our largest towns and cities. The network has planted over 8 million trees across the country since the Trees for Climate programme began five years ago. That's 35% of all government-funded tree planting since 2020.

Nature Minister Mary Creagh said, "With this Government, tree planting rates are now at the highest level in over 20 years. There is much more to do – that is why we are investing over £800 million to plant trees across the country as part of our Plan for Change."

For more information about tree planting with the Forest of Marston Vale Trust visit their

website: [Trees for Climate | The Forest of Marston Vale Trust](https://www.treesforclimate.org.uk/the-forest-of-marston-vale-trust)



Roadmap to rebuild trust in water sector

By Tim McManan-Smith for <https://theenergyst.com>

A new integrated regulator for water, stronger consumer advocacy and 9 new regional water authorities to deliver on local priorities are among the final recommendations set out on 21 July by the Independent Water Commission. Chaired by Sir Jon Cunliffe. The Commission set out 88 recommendations in its report to the UK and Welsh governments to transform the sector.

The report covers how the system is regulated, how to manage the competing demands on water, how water companies are governed and how critical water infrastructure is kept resilient both now and in the future.

It follows just under nine months of extensive engagement, analysis and research, including the 50,000+ responses submitted to the Commission's Call for Evidence.

The key recommendations include the following:

1. Single integrated water regulators. The report recommends a single water regulator in England and a single water regulator in Wales. In England this would replace Ofwat, the Drinking Water Inspectorate and water-environment related functions from the Environment Agency and Natural England. In Wales, Ofwat's economic responsibilities would be integrated into Natural Resources Wales. Water is a complex sector responsible for the second-largest infrastructure programme in the UK. Water companies will spend £104 billion on investment and operation over the next 5 years. Climate change, population growth and economic development will put huge pressure on water systems over the coming decades. The current regulatory landscape is fragmented and overlapping and fully joined-up regulation is essential for the system to meet the demands of the future and ensure that private water companies act in the public as well as the private interest. A powerful, single regulator for water would simplify the system, reduce duplication, close regulatory gaps and ensure a much stronger 'whole-firm' view of each company. It would also improve investor confidence through a more stable regulatory regime. In making this recommendation, the Commission has looked closely at other regulatory models such as Ofcom.
2. Eight new regional water system planning authorities in England and one national authority in Wales. As part of a radical overhaul of water system planning, the report recommends devolving current planning responsibilities and transferring resources from the regulators to 9 new regional water authorities. These would be responsible for developing water investment plans that reflect local priorities and voices. They would streamline existing planning processes and be empowered to direct funding and ensure accountability from all sectors that impact water. They would be independent and include representation from local councils, public health, environment, agriculture and consumers, among others.
3. Greater consumer protection. The

Commission sets out proposals to improve affordability and customer service. That includes upgrading the consumer body CCW into an Ombudsman for Water to give stronger protection to customers and a clearer route to resolving complaints. It then proposes transfer responsibility for consumer advocacy to Citizens Advice. The Commission also recommends the introduction of a national social tariff to provide consistent support for low-income customers who need support to pay their bills. This will help address the widely different levels of support currently in place, with caps on bills varying by £100s in different parts of the country.

4. Stronger environmental regulation. The report recommends significant improvements to areas such as Operator Self-Monitoring through greater digitalisation, automation, third-party assurance and inspections. It proposes stronger regulation on abstraction, sludge, drinking water standards and water supply. After one of the driest springs on record, it recommends compulsory water metering, changes to wholesale tariffs for industrial users and greater water reuse and rainwater harvesting schemes. It also sets out where environmental legislation needs updating and why, including proposals for a new long-term and legally binding target for the water environment.
5. Tighter oversight of water company ownership and governance. The Commission recommends new powers for the regulator to block changes in water company ownership – for example, where investors are not seen to be prioritising the long-term interests of the company and its customers – as well as potential new 'public benefit' clauses in water company licences. It recommends that the regulator set "minimum capital" requirements so that companies are less reliant on debt and more financially resilient. On investment, the report sets out proposals to improve investor confidence, including government direction to the regulator to support stability and predictability for long-term investors.
6. Public health reforms: The report covers legislative reforms to better manage public health risks in water, recognising the many people who swim, surf and enjoy other water-based activities. These include a) new public health objectives in water quality legislation, b) senior public health representation on regional water planning authorities and c) legislative changes to address emerging pollutants such as PFAS, micropollutants and microplastics.
7. Fundamental reset of economic regulation. More detail is set out on the Commission's recommendation for a new 'supervisory'

approach to economic regulation, supporting tailored decisions and earlier interventions in water company oversight. The report also makes recommendations on the Price Review process, including changes to ensure companies are investing in and maintaining assets and to help attract long-term, low-risk investment.

8. Clear strategic direction. A new long-term National Water Strategy should be published by both the UK and Welsh governments. This should have a minimum horizon of 25 years, with interim milestones on a 5 and 10 year basis. It should be cross-sectoral, with a clear framework for managing the many demands on water. A set of ministerial priorities specifically for the water industry should also be issued to regulators every five years, replacing the current Strategic Policy Statement (SPS). A clear long-term strategy will help drive the right outcomes for consumers, growth and the environment and support long-term investment planning.
9. Infrastructure & asset health reforms. The report sets out a marked step change in how water infrastructure is managed, monitored and delivered – essential for safeguarding the provision of water and wastewater management for future generations. That includes new requirements for companies to map and assess their assets and new resilience standards that are forward-looking and applied consistently across the industry.

Sir Jon Cunliffe said, "Restoring trust has been central to our work. Trust that bills are fair, that regulation is effective, that water companies will act in the public interest and that investors can get a fair return.

"Our recommendations to achieve this are significant. They include the management of the whole water system, regulation of the water industry, the governance and financial resilience of water companies and a stronger voice for local communities and water customers.

"In this report I have considered what is best for the long-term future of water. This is a complex sector with a highly integrated system, responsible for the second-largest infrastructure programme in the UK.

"Resetting this sector and restoring pride in the future of our waterways matters to us all. In countless conversations in the last nine months I have been struck by the urgent need and passion for change. Doing this will require hard work, strong leadership and sustained commitment, but it can and must be done.

"I am grateful to all to all those who have contributed generously and constructively to our work with their time, expertise and challenge."

The final report also shares recommendations on implementation, including which reforms can be delivered in the short-term and which require new primary legislation.

Water boss pay 'outrageous', says environment secretary

SPEAKING on Sunday With Laura Kuenssberg, environment secretary Steve Reed urged Southern Water's chief executive to turn down a pay rise worth hundreds of thousands of pounds, saying it was not "merited". Lawrence Gosden was awarded £691,000 as part of a long-term incentive plan this year, on top of his fixed pay of £687,000, according to the company's annual report.

It is understood that he has only received half of this payment this year, taking his total pay to more than £1m.

Environment Secretary Steve Reed told Sunday With Laura Kuenssberg it was "outrageous" and suggested the water company to "think about how this looks to their customers".

He said: "Trust between the customers and the water companies is at the lowest point probably ever and, by paying their senior executives rises of that kind, what message are they sending to their customers?"

Asked whether Mr Gosden should turn down the pay rise, Mr Reed said: "I think it would be right if he did. I don't think Southern Water has performed well enough for that kind of pay increase to be merited."

Shadow housing and communities secretary Kevin Hollinrake, also talking to Laura

Kuenssberg, agreed with Mr Reed, calling the pay rise "ludicrous".

He added that it was a matter for Southern Water's shareholders, before suggesting the payment "should be stopped" by water regulator Ofwat.

Southern Water was banned from paying bonuses in June over a so-called category 1 sewage spill in the New Forest, Hampshire, in August 2024.



Under new rules, companies are banned from paying bonuses if they do not meet environmental, consumer or financial standards, or are convicted of a criminal offence.

Southern Water has insisted the payment to Mr Gosden is not a bonus but part of a long-term incentive plan set up in 2023, and would be paid directly by shareholders.

A company spokesperson said its chief executive's pay and benefits were decided by a remuneration committee "following protocols and rules set out by Ofwat and in accordance with the law".

They added: "Lawrence Gosden's 2025 package includes a relocation allowance and long-term incentive plan paid by shareholders, which marks improvements made during the delivery of our turnaround plan.

"Both of these payments represent common industry practice."

Lib Dems accuse Ealing Council of tree care mismanagement

By Ben Simons for EALING.NEWS

EALING Liberal Democrats have accused Labour-run Ealing Council of mismanaging tree care services in the borough, claiming contractors are being paid for work that is not being properly carried out. According to the Lib Dems, locals have voiced concerns to them about the way in which contractors employed by Ealing Council are caring for trees, including how young trees are being grown.

Reports include trees being planted in sand and a failure to water newly planted trees regularly – a vital task during their first year, particularly in dry summer months.

The council's system for recording watering requires contractors to write the date of each watering on a post next to the tree. But residents have told Lib Dems they have observed numerous discrepancies, with many trees showing no markings. In some cases, backdated entries were reportedly added without any watering taking place. One resident claimed to have seen dates written on posts without any water being applied.

These concerns echo issues from 2022, when a previous tree care contractor was sacked by the council following widespread complaints of underperformance across the borough.

Liberal Democrat Councillor Gary Busuttill, opposition spokesperson on finance and council honesty, said: "Sadly for residents, Ealing Labour seems to be repeating its failings time and again with no appropriate oversight or management of contractors resulting in a misuse of public funds which are going to line contractors' pockets for services they do not provide."

Councillor Busuttill added: "This is a scandal of epic proportions especially as our council taxes go up every year. Ealing Labour been in for 15 years and things have simply got worse for residents. This is a sign they have failed their residents as they are not getting the basic services like this right."

Speaking to EALING.NEWS, an Ealing Council spokesperson countered the Lib Dems. They said: "Due to the sharp increase in the number of trees planted since 2023, our contractors have faced challenges keeping up

with the watering schedule – with over 5,000 trees requiring watering every fortnight. In response to the recent hot and dry weather, we have increased the watering frequency and all street trees are now being watered weekly.

"Contractors are required to write the date of each visit on the tree stake, which are checked during routine inspections and where they are missing the issue is raised with the contractor and payment may be withheld. Trees that die due to a lack of watering, are replaced at the contractor's cost, which happened in 16 cases last year and 2 this year.

"We are also grateful to residents who have joined our 'Ealing Watering Champions' scheme where more than 200 trees are receiving extra care from local volunteers. Find out more or sign up at www.treesforstreets.org.

"We are committed to improving how we manage our contractors and ensuring our trees are well cared for."

Environment

A JIT NIRANJAN reported for The Guardian that the European Union's rollback of environment policy is gaining momentum, campaigners have warned, in a deregulation drive that has shocked observers with its scale and speed. EU policymakers have dealt several critical blows to their much-vaunted European Green Deal since the end of 2023, when opinion polls suggested a significant rightward shift before the 2024 parliamentary elections. Environment groups say the pace has picked up under the competition-focused agenda of the new European Commission.

The most striking examples are the "omnibus" packages that water down sustainable finance rules, some of which have been put on hold even before they came into force, and which member states proposed diluting further last month. The European Commission has promised more simplification measures to "radically lighten the regulatory load" on people and businesses.

In the first six months of the new European Commission mandate, the EU also delayed a law to stop deforestation in supply chains by one year, gave carmakers two extra years to meet pollution targets and downgraded the protection status of the wolf. Environmental NGOs have found themselves in the crosshairs of a funding freeze they argue undermines democracy.

The political tensions reached a high last month after an anti-greenwashing law was seemingly killed in the final stages of negotiations.

The warnings of green backsliding come amid a global slump in efforts to cut pollution. In the UK, the government has faced growing political resistance to its target to hit net zero by 2050. In the US, Donald Trump has begun his second term with a series of attacks on environment agencies and policies as he seeks to promote fossil fuels. "DRILL, BABY, DRILL!!!" he told the US Department of Energy in a social media post on Monday. "And I mean NOW!!!"

Green groups say similar, albeit less sensational, shifts are under way in Brussels, which boasts some of the most ambitious rules to clean up a polluting economy.

"There has been a radical change in political priorities and this came before Trump was even close to election in the US," said Marco Contiero, Greenpeace EU's agricultural policy director.

Bold green policies from the EU's executive body have typically been watered down as they pass through protracted negotiations with other institutions. Critics say ambition is now being lost at the top while resistance is growing stronger throughout the legislative process. After farmers' protests swept across Europe last year, lawmakers and member states nearly killed off a nature restoration law that EU institutions had already negotiated.

It was the first sign of open revolt against the Green Deal that the centre-right president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, had put forward in 2019 after student climate protests.

"The fact that the Green Deal became the poster child of the first von der Leyen Commission was received with surprise by civil society, industry, and lobbies," said Contiero. "In a very similar manner, so has her decision to



radically change her approach."

In mission letters to commissioners in September, von der Leyen set targets to reduce administrative burdens by 25% for all companies and by 35% for small- and medium-sized enterprises, with a "one in, one out" principle to ensure that new rules displaced existing ones. The Commission also promised to fight "gold-plating" measures, in which member states add their own rules that go beyond what the EU requires.

The push to cut red tape has been led by the European People's party (EPP), the largest group in parliament and the political home of 10 of the 27 commissioners, including von der Leyen. Its shift in tone has increasingly led to it siding with far-right forces. The cancellation of the anti-greenwashing law last month came after EPP and far-right lawmakers separately wrote to the European Commission to withdraw the bill. The EPP later celebrated the bill's withdrawal as "a win for European companies".

Tiemo Wölken, a German MEP from the centre-left S&D grouping who led negotiations of the proposal, said: "The Commission obviously wanted to fulfil the wishes of the right, and this is what is so scandalous. The EPP is again working with the far right to get rid of Green Deal files, but are pretending they are still in the middle and working with pro-European democratic forces."

The Commission has said it is pursuing an agenda of simplification rather than deregulation, and that its focus on competitiveness does not contradict the environmental aims of the Green Deal. It has also put forward plans to green industry, such as the Clean Industrial Deal, which have been celebrated as driving the energy transition in the EU forward.

Paul de Clerck, a campaigner at Friends of the Earth Europe, said the scale of the cuts in the first omnibus proposal in February showed that the simplification argument was "basically bollocks".

The Commission's plans postpone corporate sustainability reporting requirements by two years and reduce the number of companies in its scope by 80%; delay corporate due diligence rules by one year; remove a requirement to conduct in-depth impact assessments; scrap a

civil liability clause that would make it easier to sue companies; and exclude about 90% of businesses from the carbon border adjustment mechanism. Member states on Monday proposed reducing the scope even further.

De Clerck said: "This is highly relevant because it's the first proposal under the simplification agenda that's been put forward and ... it's not just weakening it a little bit, it's slashing it. The heart of the proposal has basically been taken out."

Political support for environment rules has dried up in several wealthy economies in the past year, even as the energy transition gains pace and an overwhelming majority of people say they want governments to cut pollution faster.

European businesses have long complained of complex rules that hamper innovation and make it harder for them to compete with foreign companies.

"The Green Deal often overlooked challenges like high energy costs or lengthy and complex permitting procedures," said Markus Breyer, the director general of the industry association BusinessEurope. "The current focus on competitiveness reflects a more balanced and pragmatic approach that better aligns climate goals with economic realities."

Critics counter that failing to quickly transition to a clean economy will jeopardise economic prosperity in the medium term, as well as saddling individuals and governments with the cost of climate damages. Contiero said the EU would be "crushed by larger blocs such as the US and China" if it continued to play by 20th-century rules.

"Investing in the Green Deal means decoupling economic growth from the use of natural resources. That was the essential element that made an awful lot of sense for the 21st century," he said. "Abandoning such a critical approach will take away the competitive advantage that Europe could have had."

A councillor said it may never be safe to swim at a "poor" beach in Norfolk as water quality issues continue to cause concern reported Owen Sennitt for the BBC Local Democracy Reporting Service.

The beach at Heacham near Hunstanton has been classified as poor by the Environment Agency since 2021, with the cause of the problem being disputed among experts and locals.

After another "poor" result, Sandra Squire, cabinet member for environment at West Norfolk Council admitted the coastal waters off Heacham may always have high levels of pollution.

Studies suggest 60% of the intestinal enterococci (IE) bacteria recorded in human and animal waste may be coming from seabirds, which visit The Wash in huge numbers throughout the year.

IE is the main bacteria causing the problems



at Heacham, which is found in human and animal waste and, if ingested, can cause severe stomach upsets.

Scientists are yet to gather a full picture of the sources of poor water quality at Heacham, but sewage leaks/outfalls, agricultural run-off and dog waste are all cited as contributing factors.

Squire told a full council meeting that seabirds may always cause issues at Heacham.

"Sooner or later we may have to admit, if 60% of pollution is coming from the bird population, it may be that this area should not be for bathing," she said.

While DNA evidence suggests seabirds are a major cause, bacteria levels are highest in July and August, said the Local Democracy Reporting Service.

Squire suggested that increase could be due to numerous factors, ranging from increased tourism, less or more rainfall or due to birds breeding. To better understand the problems, she called for year-round testing at Heacham, as currently it is only conducted in the summer months.

The meeting heard that Anglian Water has said its sewage works was nearing capacity and would not be able to cope with any more housing development.

Squire said: "If Anglian Water said they cannot cope, then nothing else should be connected to that sewage works. We all know what happens when they can't cope. We end up with sewage in our streets, our rivers and seas."

The Environment Agency told the BBC: "Pollution comes in many forms and from multiple sources, and the Environment Agency will continue to investigate poor water quality."

ONE WELLS, BBC Foreign Correspondent, reported that Raquel Celina Rodriguez watches her step as she walks across the Vega de Tilopozo in Chile's Atacama salt flats.

It's a wetland, known for its groundwater springs, but the plain is now dry and cracked with holes she explains were once pools.

"Before, the Vega was all green," she says. "You couldn't see the animals through the grass. Now everything is dry." She gestures to some grazing llamas.

For generations, her family raised sheep here. As the climate changed, and rain stopped falling, less grass made that much harder. However, it worsened when "they" started taking the water, she explains.

"They" are lithium companies. Beneath the salt flats of the Atacama Desert lie the world's largest reserves of lithium, a soft, silvery-white metal that is an essential component of the batteries that power electric cars, laptops and solar energy storage.

As the world transitions to more renewable energy sources, the demand for it has soared. In 2021, about 95,000 tonnes of lithium was consumed globally. By 2024 it had more than doubled to 205,000 tonnes, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA).

By 2040 it's predicted to rise to more than

900,000 tonnes. Most of the increase will be driven by demand for electric car batteries, the IEA says.

Locals say environmental costs to them have risen too.

So, this soaring demand has raised the question: is the world's race to decarbonise unintentionally stoking another environmental problem?

Chile is the second-largest producer of lithium globally after Australia. In 2023, the government launched a National Lithium Strategy to ramp up production through partly nationalising the industry and encouraging private investment.

Its finance minister previously said the increase in production could be by up to 70% by 2030, although the mining ministry says no target has been set.

This year, a major milestone to that is set to be reached. A planned joint enterprise between SQM and Chile's state mining company Codelco has just secured regulatory approval for a quota to extract at least 2.5 million metric tonnes of lithium metal equivalent per year and boost production until 2060.

Chile's government has framed the plans as part of the global fight against climate change and a source of state income.

Mining companies predominantly extract lithium by pumping brine from beneath Chile's salt flats to evaporation pools on the surface. The process extracts vast amounts of water in this already drought-prone region.

Faviola Gonzalez is a biologist from the local indigenous community working in the Los Flamencos National Reserve, in the middle of the Atacama Desert, home to vast salt flats, marshes and lagoons and some 185 species of birds. She has monitored how the local environment is changing.

"The lagoons here are smaller now," she says. "We've seen a decrease in the reproduction of flamingos."

She said lithium mining impacts micro-organisms that birds feed on in these waters, so the whole food chain is affected.

She points to a spot where, for the first time in 14 years, flamingo chicks hatched this year. She attributes the "small reproductive success" to a slight reduction in water extraction in 2021, but says, "It's small. Before there were many. Now, only a few."

The underground water from the Andes, rich in minerals, is "very old" and replenishes slowly.

"If we are extracting a lot of water and little is entering, there is little to recharge the Salar de Atacama," she explains.

Damage to flora has also been found in some areas. On property in the salt flats, mined by the Chilean company SQM, almost one-third of the native "algarrobo" (or carob) trees had started dying as early as 2013 due to the impacts of mining, according to a report published in 2022 by the US-based National Resources Defense Council.

However, the issue extends beyond Chile too. In a report for the US-based National Resources Defense Council in 2022, James J. A. Blair, an assistant professor at California State Polytechnic University, wrote that lithium mining is "contributing to conditions of ecological exhaustion", and "may decrease freshwater availability for flora and fauna as well as humans".

He did, however, say that it is difficult to find "definitive" evidence on this topic

Environmental damage is of course inevitable when it comes to mining. "It's hard to imagine any kind of mining that does not have a

negative impact," says Karen Smith Stegen, a political science professor in Germany, who studies the impacts of lithium mining across the world.

The issue is that mining companies can take steps to mitigate that damage. "What [mining companies] should have done from the very beginning was to involve these communities," she says.

For example, before pumping lithium from underground, companies could carry out "social impact assessments". Reviews which take into account the broad impact their work will have on water, wildlife, and communities.

For their part, mining companies now say they are listening. The Chilean firm SQM is one of the main players.

At one of their plants in Antofagasta, Valentín Barrera, Deputy Manager of Sustainability at SQM Lithium, says the firm is working closely with communities to "understand their concerns" and carrying out environmental impact assessments.

He feels strongly that in Chile and globally "we need more lithium for the energy transition" and adds that the firm is piloting new technologies. If successful, the idea is to roll these out in their Salar de Atacama plants. These include both extracting lithium directly from brine, without evaporation pools, and technologies to capture evaporated water and re-inject it into the land.

"We are doing several pilots to understand which one works better in order to increase production but reduce at least 50% of the current brine extraction," he said.

He says the pilot in Antofagasta has recovered "more than one million cubic metres" of water. "Starting in 2031, we are going to start this transition." However, the locals he spoke to are sceptical. "We believe the Salar de Atacama is like an experiment," Faviola argues.

She says it's unknown how the salt flats could "resist" this new technology and the reinjection of water and fears they are being used as a "natural laboratory."

Sara Plaza, whose family also raised animals in the same community as Raquel, is anxious about the changes she has seen in her lifetime. She remembers water levels dropping from as early as 2005 but says "the mining companies never stopped extracting."

Sara becomes tearful when she speaks about the future. "The salt flats produce lithium, but one day it will end. Mining will end and what are the people here going to do?"

"Without water, without agriculture. What are they going to live on? Maybe I won't see it because of my age, but our children, our grandchildren will."

She believes mining companies have extracted too much water from an ecosystem already struggling from climate change.

"It's very painful," she adds. "The companies give the community a little money, but I'd prefer no money. I'd prefer to live off nature and have water to live."

Sergio Cubillos is head of the association for the Peine community, where Sara and Raquel live. He says Peine has been forced to change "our entire drinking water system, electrical system, water treatment system" because of water shortages.

"There is the issue of climate change, that it doesn't rain anymore, but the main impact has been caused by extractive mining," he says.

Climate

DAMIAN CARRINGTON, Environment Editor for The Guardian, reported that scientists have said record-breaking extreme weather is the new norm in the UK, showing that the country is firmly in the grip of the climate crisis. The hottest days people endure have dramatically increased in frequency and severity, and periods of intense rain have also ramped up, data from hundreds of weather stations shows. Heatwaves and floods leading to deaths and costly damage are of “profound concern” for health, infrastructure and the functioning of society, the scientists said.

The weather records clearly show the UK’s climate is different now compared with just a few decades ago, the scientists said, as a result of the carbon pollution emitted by burning fossil fuels.

The analysis found that the number of days with temperatures 5°C above the average for 1961-1990 had doubled in the last 10 years. For days 8°C above average, the number has trebled and for 10°C above average it has quadrupled. The UK has also become 8% sunnier in the last decade.

The assessment also reported that rain had become more intense. The number of months where counties receive at least double the average rainfall has risen by 50% in the last 20 years. Much of the additional rain is falling in the months from October to March. That period in 2023-24 was the wettest ever, in records that span back to 1767, and resulted in flooding in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, the West Midlands and elsewhere.

The sea level around the UK is rising faster than the global average, the report said, which worsens the impact of coastal flooding.

Six hundred people are believed to have died due to the heatwave that hit England and Wales at the end of June. The soaring temperatures were made 100 times more likely by global heating, the scientists calculated. Two more heatwaves have followed in quick succession.

The government’s preparations to protect people from the escalating impacts of the climate crisis were condemned as “inadequate, piecemeal and disjointed” by official advisers in April.

Mike Kendon at the Met Office, who led the analysis, said: “Breaking records frequently and

seeing these extremes, this is now the norm. We might not notice the change from one year to the next, but if we look back 10 years, or 30 years, we can see some really big changes. We’re moving outside the envelope of what we’ve known in the past.”

“The extremes have the greatest impact for our society, if we think about our infrastructure, our public health, and how we function,” he said. “So this is really of profound concern.”

The assessment, called the State of the UK Climate 2024 and published in the International Journal of Climatology, found the last three years were in the UK’s top five hottest years on record. The warmest spring on record was seen in 2024 although this has already been surpassed in 2025.

The UK has particularly long meteorological records and the Central England Temperature series is the longest instrumental record in the world. It shows that recent temperatures have far exceeded any in at least 300 years. However, today’s high temperatures are likely to be average by 2050, and cool by 2100, the scientists said.

Sea level around the UK has already risen by 19cm over the last century, as glaciers and ice sheets melt and the oceans absorb heat and expand. The rise is accelerating and is higher around the UK than globally, although scientists are yet to work out why. It could rise by up to 200cm (8 inches) by the end of the century, said Dr Svetlana Jevrejeva, at the National Oceanography Centre.

Storm winds can push seawater surges on to coasts and are most dangerous when they coincide with the highest tides. “The extra sea level rise [due to global heating] is leading to an increase in the frequency of extreme sea levels and an intensification of coastal hazards,” said Jevrejeva. “It is only a matter of time until the UK

is next in the path of a major storm surge event.”

While heat records are increasingly being broken, cold weather events are becoming less common. For example, days with air frosts have fallen by 14 per year in the last decade, compared with the 1931-1990 average.

The UK’s changed climate has also affected nature, the report said. The earliest ever frogspawn and blackbird nesting was seen in 2024, in records that began in 1999. All but one of the 13 natural events monitored were earlier than average in 2024, from the first lesser celandine flower to the first elder leaves. The changes mean species that depend on others, such as for food or pollination, risk getting out of sync, said Dr Judith Garforth at the Woodland Trust.

Prof Liz Bentley, at the Royal Meteorological Society, said the report showed the urgent need to make the UK resilient to climate-fuelled extreme weather: “This report is not just a record of change, but a call to action.”

FROM London to Lisbon, European cities melt in climate change heatwaves reported Martin Guttridge-Hewitt on July 2 for Environmental Journal. Hundreds of excess deaths are expected in Britain, while major cities in Italy take unprecedented steps to protect the elderly and infirm.

According to new polling by Centre for London, almost half of people living in the UK capital believe they are now personally affected by climate change. One-in-three have specific concerns about polluted water, extreme wind and heat, with many also adding air pollution to the list.

The results have been published shortly after the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and Imperial College London released modelling which suggested up to 600 premature deaths could occur as a result of recent heatwaves across Britain.

At the start of July thermometers already hit 33°C in some areas, and were expected to continue climbing in many regions, with potential highs of 36°C. Research has previously highlighted a lack of preparedness for such extremes, with poor quality building stock, much without adequate insulation and climate control, causing increasing issues.

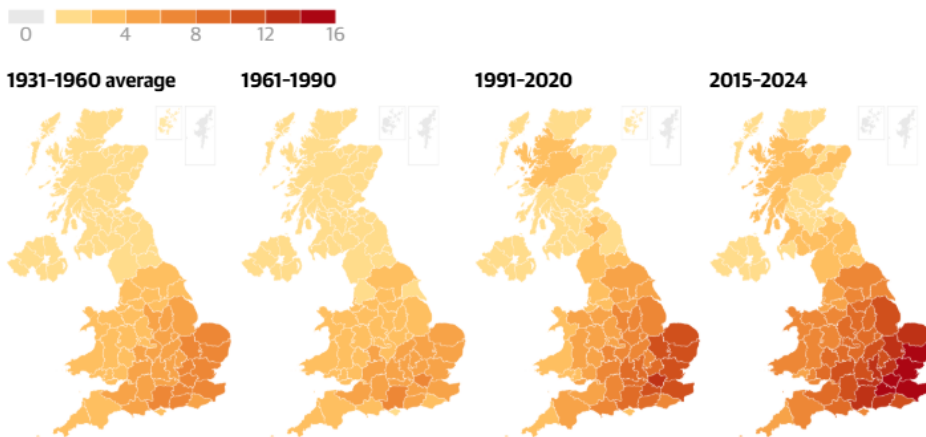
“Extreme heat is a growing killer, already claiming thousands of lives each year, with older people, disabled people, and those with health conditions particularly at risk.

“As the climate crisis accelerates, deadly heatwaves are hitting harder and more often, but the UK is nowhere near ready. Even the government’s own advisers warn that the current climate adaptation plan falls dangerously short” said Mike Childs, Friends of the Earth’s Head of Policy.

“Ministers must stop dithering and urgently strengthen the national adaptation programme to protect lives, homes, and nature, as well as

High temperature days

Days a year in which the highest maximum temperature in each county exceeded 28C



Guardian graphic. Source: International Journal of Climatology, Met Office

cutting emissions faster to help tackle the crisis at its source" he continued.

In June, meteorological experts warned the UK could be facing a plume summer, in which successive heatwaves with little respite contribute to extended periods of high temperature. Experts have also suggested there is a 50:50 chance of the country facing temperatures of 40°C or over within the next 12 years. The first time this happened was the summer of 2022.

"As over 80% of people in this country live in urban areas, it is vital that we introduce measures to tackle higher temperatures over the coming decades" said Richard Broadbent, Environmental Lawyer at leading law firm Freeths.

He added "This includes ensuring that existing housing stock, and especially all new housing, benefits from greening measures such as on-site biodiversity net gain. Shading caused by trees and other vegetation has proven benefits in terms of reducing the Urban Heat Island effect. This includes the natural evapotranspiration of plants, which cools the air."

Continental Europe has also been suffering from searing heat. On the Greek mainland, authorities have been struggling to cope with wildfires, with blazes also causing major issues in countries such as Turkey and France. On July 1, Paris announced the Eiffel Tower would close alongside a nearby nuclear power station and more than 1,000 schools across the city region amid predictions of 39°C.

Meanwhile, the Portuguese Institute for Sea and Atmosphere issued a red public health warning for 'persistently extremely high maximum temperature values and healthcare professionals in the capital, Lisbon, urged people not to go outside in the hottest hours of the day.

Several regions of Italy, including Lazio, Tuscany, Calabria, Puglia and Umbria, have announced plans to ban some outdoor work activities, with trade unionists urging Rome to extent this nationally. 21 of 27 monitored cities across the country were under the highest level of heat alert on Sunday, with seven 'climate shelters' opened in Bologna offering air conditioning and free drinking water.

Primarily aimed at helping the elderly, patients with cancer and other chronic and long term health conditions, and the homeless are also considered to be high risk. In Venice, free guided tours of climate controlled museums and galleries are being offered for people over 75, dehumidifiers are being given out for free in Ancona and Rome has announced free access to all swimming pools for anyone aged 70 and above.

A UN expert is calling for an urgent shift away from fossil fuels by the global economy, including a ban on advertisements or promotions, and the criminalisation of misinformation from the industry reported Kristine Sabillo for Mongabay.

Elisa Morgera, the UN special rapporteur on human rights and climate change, who presented her 23-page report at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, reminded states of their human rights obligations, and businesses of their responsibility to phase out fossil fuel within the current decade.

"The interlinked, intergenerational, severe and widespread human rights impacts of the fossil fuel life cycle, coupled with six decades of climate obstruction, compel urgent defossilisation of our whole economies, for a just transition that is effective, human rights-based and transformative," Morgera wrote in the report. She added there's "no scientific doubt" that fossil fuels are the main cause of climate

change, and the main driver of planetary crises including biodiversity loss and mass human rights violations.

Morgera said at the Human Rights Council's 59th session that current efforts to mitigate climate change "fall significantly short" of greenhouse gas reductions needed to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C (2.7°F) by the end of the century.

However, she added that "securing a liveable and sustainable future for humanity is still possible" through effective climate action within the decade.

This includes countering the fossil fuel industry's efforts to "keep the public uninformed about the severity of climate change and about the role of fossil fuels in causing it," Morgera wrote in the report.

She added the formation of public opinion and democratic debate should be protected from "undue commercial influence," and urged states to ensure the availability of science-based information, ban fossil fuel advertisements and promotions, prohibit lobbying by the fossil fuel industry, criminalize misinformation and misrepresentation such as greenwashing, and criminalize attacks against environmental human rights defenders, including judicial harassment.

Morgera said phasing out fossil fuel production and use should be interpreted as part of states' duty to fulfill the right to life. To prioritize the phaseout, she recommended that states prohibit new licenses and revoke existing ones for fossil fuel operations.

Morgera wrote of the need to "tackle historical responsibilities and current injustices" to prevent mass human rights violations due to climate change. Remedies to address the harms of fossil fuel activities should be given to, and developed with, affected communities, she said.

The Guardian reported that while the report lays the human rights case for decisive political action for a world in which the basic rights of people are prioritized above profits by a few, it "will probably be dismissed by some as radical and untenable."

However, Morgera told The Guardian that the seemingly radical transition to renewable energy "is now cheaper and safer for our economics and a healthier option for our societies."

A landmark decision by a top UN court has cleared the way for countries to sue each other over climate change, including over historic emissions of planet-warming gases reported. Esme Stallard and Georgina Rannard for BBC News Climate and Science.

However, the judge at the International Court of Justice in the Hague, Netherlands on 23 July said that untangling who caused which part of climate change could be difficult.

The ruling is non-binding but legal experts say it could have wide-ranging consequences. It will be seen as a victory for countries that are very vulnerable to climate change, who came to court after feeling frustrated about lack of global progress in tackling the problem.

The unprecedented case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) was the brainchild of a group of young law students from low-lying Pacific islands on the frontlines of climate change, who came up with the idea in 2019.

One of those students, Siosua Veikune from Tonga, was in the Hague to hear the decision and told BBC News "I'm lost for words. This is so exciting. There's a ton of emotions rushing through us. This is a win we take proudly

back home to our communities.2

Flora Vano, from the Pacific Island Vanuatu, which is considered the country most vulnerable to extreme weather globally, said "Tonight I'll sleep easier. The ICJ has recognised what we have lived through - our suffering, our resilience and our right to our future. This is a victory not just for us but for every frontline community fighting to be heard."

The ICJ is considered the world's highest court and it has global jurisdiction. Lawyers have told BBC News that the opinion could be used as early as next week, including in national courts outside of the ICJ.

Campaigners and climate lawyers hope the landmark decision will now pave the way for compensation from countries that have historically burned the most fossil fuels and are therefore the most responsible for global warming.

Many poorer countries had backed the case out of frustration, claiming that developed nations are failing to keep existing promises to tackle the growing problem.

However, developed countries, including the UK, argued that existing climate agreements, including the landmark UN Paris deal of 2015, are sufficient and no further legal obligations should be imposed, but the court rejected that argument.

Judge Iwasawa Yuji also said that if countries do not develop the most ambitious possible plans to tackle climate change this would constitute a breach of their promises in the Paris Agreement.

He added that broader international law applies, which means that countries which are not signed up to the Paris Agreement - or want to leave, like the US - are still required to protect the environment, including the climate system.

The court's opinion is advisory, but previous ICJ decisions have been implemented by governments, including when the UK agreed to hand back the Chagos Islands to Mauritius last year.

Joie Chowdhury, Senior Attorney at the Centre for International Environmental Law (CIEL), said "The ruling is a watershed legal moment. With today's authoritative historic ruling, the International Court of Justice has broken with business-as-usual and delivered a historic affirmation: those suffering the impacts of climate devastation have a right to remedy for climate harm, including through compensation," she added.

A spokesperson for the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office said it was "taking time" to look at the opinion before commenting in detail, but added:

"Tackling climate change is and will remain an urgent UK and global priority. Our position remains that this is best achieved through international commitment to the UN's existing climate treaties and mechanisms."

The court ruled that developing nations have a right to seek damages for the impacts of climate change such as destroyed buildings and infrastructure, adding that where it is not possible to restore part of a country then its government may want to seek compensation.

This could be for a specific extreme weather event if it can be proved that climate change caused it, but the Judge said this would need to be determined on a case by case basis.

"This is a huge win for climate vulnerable states. It's a huge win for Vanuatu, which led this case and is going to change the face of climate advocacy," said barrister Jennifer Robinson at Doughty Street Chambers, who represented Vanuatu and the Marshall Islands.

It is not clear how much an individual

country could have to pay in damages if any claim was successful, but previous analysis published in Nature, estimated that between 2000 and 2019 there were \$2.8 trillion losses from climate change - or \$16 million per hour.

During the evidence sessions in December, the court heard from dozens of Pacific Islanders who have been displaced as a result of rising sea level, caused by climate change.

The Marshall Islands highlighted that the costs for their island to adapt to climate change are \$9 billion.

"That is \$9 billion the Marshall Islands does not have. Climate change is a problem they have not caused, but they are forced to consider relocating their capital," said Ms Robinson.

As well as compensation, the court also ruled that governments were responsible for the climate impact of companies operating in their countries. It said specifically that subsidising the fossil fuel industry or approving new oil and gas licenses could be in breach of a country's obligations.

Developing countries are already exploring bringing new cases seeking compensation for historic contributions to climate change against richer, high emitting nations citing the ICJ opinion, according to lawyers the BBC spoke to.

If a country wants to bring a case back to the ICJ to make a ruling on compensation then it can only do so against countries which have agreed to its jurisdiction, which includes the likes of the UK, but not US or China.

However, a case can be brought in any court globally, whether that be domestic or international, citing the ICJ opinion, explained Joie Chowdhury from CIEL. So instead a country may choose to take their case not to the ICJ but a court where those countries are bound e.g. federal courts in the US.

However, the question remains whether the ICJ opinion will be respected.

"[The ICJ] is an institution that is subject to geopolitics and it relies on states adhering to its judgements, it doesn't have a police force," said Harj Narulla, a climate barrister at Doughty Street Chambers, which also represented the Solomon Islands.

When asked about the decision, a White House spokesperson told BBC News: "As always, President Trump and the entire Administration is committed to putting America first and prioritising the interests of everyday Americans."

THETFORD Town Council agreed to spend £30,000 on tackling climate change but has now been warned it is "bordering on insolvency" reported Eleanor Storey, Local Democracy Reporter for the Thetford and Brandon Times.

An internal audit found Thetford Town Council, which counts Terry Jermy, local Labour MP, among its members, has "excessively low balances" and urged it to reassess its investments.

The council has been under fierce criticism from locals for several months over the handling of its finances after it unanimously voted to declare a "climate emergency" and commit £30,000 of its funds to combat the issue.

The revelations about its finances are likely to be deeply embarrassing not only to the authority, which covers one of Norfolk's largest towns, but also to Mr Jermy personally.

The MP, who rebelled against his party's welfare reforms last month, defeated Liz Truss at last year's general election after campaigning against what he described as her "appalling" handling of the UK finances during her brief period as prime minister.

The audit report will be seized upon by critics angered at the climate change spending, agreed unanimously by members in February 2024. They claim it is a poor use of resources for a town council.

The authority, which represents the 25,000 people living in Thetford, is largely funded through a precept, which is collected as part of the council tax paid locally, as well as fees and charges on services. It collected £1.1m through the precept in the previous financial year.

Such councils usually focus time and funds on amenities they are responsible for such as allotments, playing fields, cemeteries and public toilets.

The decision to declare a climate emergency included a commitment for all council meetings and committees to consider carbon and ecological impacts of decisions made wherever relevant, and for funds to be set aside to support sustainability projects in the area.

Of the £30,000 set aside, £10,500 of this has been allocated to install rainwater harvesting systems at the Shambles and the chapel in London Road Cemetery, both owned by the council.

The fund has been criticised in speeches by a campaign group known as Thetford Council Watch, which attends council meetings to raise topics such as climate change, sex education in schools and the use of vaccines.

The presence of the group at meetings has resulted in the police being called on several occasions as well as the council hiring security staff to help restore order as discussions become heated. At a recent meeting, one member of the group banned from the chamber watched proceedings from outside by standing on a windowsill.

Councillors have been repeatedly pressed by the campaigners to explain the scientific evidence for their decision to set the money aside for climate change and urged to spend the funds on other local services.

The new audit report states: "Balances reported by the council are excessively low and bordering upon insolvency. The council must ensure it maintains adequate capital and has not unduly committed excessive capital into long-term investments."

Following the audit, which all councils must routinely carry out, the authority said it still had sufficient funds but that much of them were in stocks and shares and that it would now "revisit" those investments.

Councils routinely keep some of their funds in long-term investments to generate additional income and provide financial security. However, the auditor advised that no more than £100,000 should be held in stocks and shares. At the time of the review, the council had invested more than £600,000.

A Thetford Town Council spokesman said: "Although we received this from the auditor the council does have reserves but they are in stocks and shares. Therefore, the council must revisit the decision to keep its reserves in long-term investments."

The auditor said the council was exposed to "excessive risk" and advised that the long-term investments in held in shares be liquidated "immediately".

THE Local Government Association has backed calls for councils to be given a statutory duty to lead on climate action reported Martin George for the Local Government Chronicle.

The move follows an LGA consultation, which received 308 individual responses, including from 150 local authorities. In a statement on its website, the LGA said the results "revealed a clear consensus support, which the LGA has adopted as its headline position".

This position is that "local authorities need statutory duties and powers, sufficient funding and robust support to lead on climate action".

It said the LGA will undertake "further analysis on the findings and set out our next steps for developing detailed, evidenced, and costed proposals for moving forward".

The move comes amid increasing politicisation of net zero, with Reform UK winning a majority on 10 councils in this year's local election after campaigning on its opposition to net zero.

West Northamptonshire Council was set to scrap its net zero targets at a meeting on 16 July, while Darren Grimes (Reform), deputy leader of Durham CC, tabled a motion for a full council meeting that same day that would "rescind the climate emergency declaration made on 20 February 2019".

Furthermore, Linden Kemkaran (Reform), leader of Kent CC, last month said the council's department of local government efficiency team had "indicated we can avoid a future increase in capital spending by scrapping the net zero renewable energy programme saving £32m over four years," and could save £7.5m by 2030 by scrapping the transitioning of the council's vehicles to electric vehicles.

Isaac Beevor, partnerships director at Climate Emergency UK, called on the government to "listen to this strong call from councils and introduce a fully-funded climate statutory duty," citing the English Devolution & Community Empowerment Bill as a vehicle to do this.

He added: "This is the first time that English councils have collectively called for more responsibility to tackle the climate crisis. Councils have redeclared that tackling the climate crisis continues to be a top priority and that residents want more renewable energy, more homes retrofitted and more frequent and electric public transport.

"This message will resonate across the UK and is a rallying cry for councils to do their utmost to tackle the climate crisis and for the government to fully support local climate action through a funded climate statutory duty."

Saving our trees and woodlands

SONIA KATARIA reported for BBC News, East Midlands, that a large woodland fire described by fire crews as "senseless" and "heartbreaking" is thought to have been started deliberately. Fire crews and wildlife specialists were called out to Brierley Forest Park, in Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, during the early hours.

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service said an area of forest, undergrowth and woodland had been damaged and the fire was thought to have been started deliberately.

"A beautiful forest has been damaged," it added. Wildlife habitat has been destroyed."

It said on a social media post: "This is not just senseless - it's heartbreaking. A beautiful forest has been damaged. Wildlife habitat has been destroyed and the cost, both environmental and financial, is huge."

The fire service urged anyone who may have seen anything suspicious or have any idea who might be responsible to contact police.

The park, on the site of Sutton Colliery which closed in 1989, was created in 1992.



A PERMANENT TPO has been slapped on a lime tree on the edge of a Tavistock cemetery after a resident called for its removal because he said it was blocking out the sky reported Alison Stephenson for the Tavistock Times Gazette.

Graham Coker said the tree at New Cemetery in Plymouth Road was too close to his property and took away his right to light and made his house harder to insure.

He complained about aphids, bird excrement and falling leaves.

He said at a meeting of West Devon Borough Council's development management and licensing committee that things had become a little contentious between him and the town council, who own the cemetery, after he had a line of fir trees removed along the boundary.

LEWIS SMITH reported for WalesOnLine that Proposals to remove a group of 25m-tall trees near residential properties in Neath Port Talbot have been rejected by the local authority despite concerns from some councillors.

The plans which were brought before the council's planning committee at a meeting held on July 1 asked for permission to fell 62 coniferous trees located behind two houses in March Hywel, Cilfrew.

The application, which was recommended for refusal by council officers, was brought before the committee by the local ward member due to what she said were "ongoing concerns regarding the structural integrity and potential safety risks posed by these trees".

Councillor Caroline Lewis of Aberdulais said while nobody wanted to cut down this number of trees residents at the properties felt they could

not use the outdoor space on a regular basis because of them.

Speaking at the meeting she said: "I called up recently and they are quite impactful. They're over 25m high and I called up on a reasonably calm day but I wouldn't want to be out there with anyone elderly or young children."

Councillor Matthew Crowley said the authority had a duty of care for trees across the borough adding that he feared the potential for one to come down and crash through the houses.

Comments from a public consultation which supported the removal said they also feared a fall risk during storms with the height and density of the trees blocking out sunlight.

Those who responded against the removal felt that drainage and privacy could be compromised if the trees were felled adding that they should not be cut down just because they are viewed as an inconvenience.

In response to the proposals officers said an arborist inspection had shown the trees were not dead, dying, or dangerous and as such offered no justification to cut them down. They added that the trees had been covered by a TPO since 2010 having been there years before the houses were built.

A comment from the tree officer read: "I am reluctant to allow the felling of the entire 62 trees at this time as there is no evidence of root plate movement or immediate danger of collapse within this population to warrant such actions."

"A re-inspection period of these trees every 18/24 months considering the target area, size, and species of the trees will identify any future works that may need to be undertaken."

Additionally the report said because of their size and the site topography it meant the trees were a prominent feature in the local landscape which provided a "visually pleasant aspect to the street scene and the locality as a whole".

The proposals to remove the 62 trees were later rejected after a vote of eight members to three. It was highlighted by officers that an alternative scheme could still be submitted, potentially looking at cutting down a smaller number of trees, or even specific trees along with the potential to remove them outside of planning if they do become unsafe.

TWO horse chestnut trees in Lode have been saved from being felled after a councillor said it would be "sacrilege" to fell them reported Hannah Brown for CambridgeshireLive.

An application was submitted to cut down the two protected trees in Lode Road, due to subsidence damage being caused to a neighbouring home.

Planning officers at East Cambridgeshire District Council had recommended that this application should be refused, but highlighted the authority could face a compensation claim by doing so.

They explained that if the district council stopped the trees from being cut down and further damage was caused to the home, the authority could face a potential compensation claim of around £90,000 to £130,000 for repair work. The proposal to cut down the trees was

considered by councillors at a planning committee meeting on July 2.

A letter was read out to the meeting from an independent expert who had reviewed the evidence and concluded in their professional view that there was tree related subsidence at the neighbouring property. They said due to the close proximity of the trees to the home, a root barrier could not be safely installed in the ground. They added that if the authority refused the application then the "public purse will be liable for a claim of full costs".

Councillor Lucy Wells, from Lode Parish Council, said they "strongly objected" to the trees being cut down. She said the parish council was "sympathetic" to the homeowner,



however, she said the village had already lost other trees and hedgerows and raised concerns about further loss if these trees were cut down.

She said the trees had been there for over 100 years, and were there before the home in question was built. Cllr Wells said: "We are concerned that the felling of these trees will create a precedent for easy agreement for felling applications in the future."

Councillor Julia Huffer asked why "on god's green earth" the district council could be liable to pay for the repair work to the home rather than the insurance company. Officers explained that the council would only be liable if it refused the application. They said cutting the trees down was the solution to the subsidence issues being proposed by the insurance company.

They added that if the district council refused to allow them to do this, then the authority would become liable for a compensation claim. Cllr Huffer said it should not be the district council's responsibility to pay for the underpinning work for the property, and that this should be paid for by the insurance company.

She said: "I would like to propose that we accept the officers recommendation to refuse the felling of these beautiful trees, and I would ask that our legal department fight the insurance company, if necessary with handbags out on the green, to make sure that the weasel insurance company do the right thing and put their hands in their pockets and pay up, as they should to look after this house."

Councillor Alan Sharp said he believed it would be "sacrilege" to cut the trees down that had been there for so long. Councillor Bill Hunt said it could be argued that it was "irresponsible" to build the home next to the trees. He said: "It was quite clear from my visit to Lode they have got a beautiful village, a small old fashioned beautiful village, the parish council are quite rightly trying to protect it."

Councillor Keith Horgan said he understood

the opposition to cutting the trees down, but said he was struggling to ignore the advice of the independent professional who had said the subsidence problems were being caused by the two trees. When a decision was put to a vote the majority of the committee agreed to refuse the application.

A DISPOSABLE barbecue was blamed after a fire broke out in woodland that saw fire crews spend six hours tackling the incident reported Richard Williams for the Shropshire Star

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service said they received a call at around 10.15pm reporting the open fire in Hopton Hill, Nescliffe, north of Shrewsbury.

The fire service said they sent four fire crews including the Incident Support Unit from Baschurch, Minsterley, Oswestry, Shrewsbury and Telford. Operations and Safety officers were in attendance.

A spokesperson said the fire had affected 20m² of woodland and undergrowth.

"Two main jets and one fogging lance plus thermal imaging camera have been in use," the spokesperson said, add in that the incident was "believed to be caused by disposable BBQ".

Fire crews remained on the scene until 4.40am on Sunday, the spokesperson added.

Meanwhile, another open fire was reported to fire crews on Saturday when a small fire broke out in Danesford near Bridgnorth.

That incident, reported at 9.30pm saw fire crews use knapsacks and beaters to douse the undergrowth and extinguish the fire. The fire was out within 30 minutes, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service said.

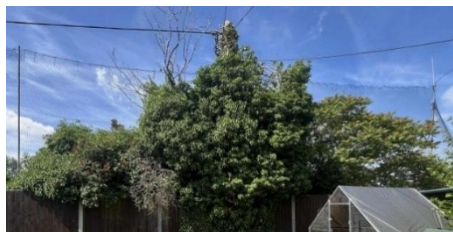
HEREFORDSHIRE mother has said there is a risk of electrocution at a passageway near her home, as well as other safety concerns, due to overgrown trees damaging electricity poles reported Bridie Adams, senior reporter for the Hereford Times.

Teri Major Mackay lives near Bromyard Cricket Club, and said that she discovered the "horrendously overgrown" passageway, also near the club, when emergency work was needed on her property. However, the owner of the land is unknown, with National Grid and Mrs Major Mackay both searching for who is responsible for the trees.

A notice has been issued by National Grid calling for the owner of the strip of land near the club to come forward, as it needs clearing before works can be done to replace poles damaged by ivy.

The notice was put up on the land in June, giving the owner 28 days to get in touch before the work is done. This will include cutting trees and replacing poles.

Mrs Major Mackay said she has also taken matters into her own hands, attempting to find the landowner after becoming concerned about a risk of electrocution and damage to her back fence affecting the safety of her garden for her children.



"It has been really time-consuming trying to track down the current owner, and has become

somewhat of an ADHD hyperfocus.

"My main concern is the overgrowth and damage to my back fence. With two special needs children, it's important I maintain a secure boundary, but I cannot do maintenance to the overgrowth as I'm not the legal owner. I have a physical disability too, that would make it too strenuous for me.

"Trees are conductors of electricity and there is a risk of electrocution from this as they have consumed the pylon."

Although the work was set to be done during July after the 28-day notice period ended, Mrs Major Mackay is worried about the same happening again in the future.

"Once National Grid have completed the work, without finding the owner, we will be back to square one in a few years," she said. "I would like the landowner to take appropriate action moving forward. That would be the best possible outcome."

DAM LYON, Digital Audience and Content Editor for Ayrshire Today reported that plans have been lodged to remove more than 30 trees from the grounds of the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum.

The National Trust for Scotland has put forward a tree works application to South Ayrshire Council for the changes at the Murdoch's Lone visitor attraction. The trust says that the planting around the site has become "overgrown" and "out of proportion".

Planning documents state: "Although the exterior of the monument has recently been restored to a high standard, the planting in and around the site is vastly overgrown and out of proportion.

"The trees and shrubs were never meant to cast a shadow on the enjoyment or importance of the monument itself. Key sightlines to and from the monument are now lost.

"Through selective pruning and removal where necessary, the height of some trees can be reduced to re-establish views to Burns Cottage and the Auld Kirk, reflecting the monument's historic prominence and the pride of the Alloway community in its national poet, Robert Burns."

The trees will be felled and pruned in a number of phases to restore sightlines from the monument to the historic Burns Cottage.

All brash will be chipped and wood removed from the site, and stumps removed to allow for suitable soil preparation ahead of future replanting.

The trust says there will be a "targeted removal" of trees in visible decline or with poor structural/formative condition. The body added that the historic yew *Taxus baccata* specimens surrounding the monument will be carefully retained.

Planning documents add: "Sensitive renovation pruning will be undertaken to reduce their height and rejuvenate their form while retaining their historic presence.

"The felling works have been phased to minimise sudden habitat loss, allow local wildlife to adjust gradually, and reduce potential negative public reaction to large-scale change."

A final phase of the works will involve replanting the area with a native hedgerow, with small to medium-sized trees behind. The trust says the layout will "preserve the restored sightlines while enhancing biodiversity, cultural value, and seasonal interest".

JOSH RECAMARA reported for www.insurancebusinessmag.com that Direct Line has withdrawn plans to

remove six mature trees in Fareham, Hampshire, which it had previously linked to subsidence at a nearby bungalow, according to a report from the BBC.

In December, Fareham Borough Council agreed to lift TPOs on oaks and a lime located between Heath Lawns and Southmead Road. The decision followed a claim by Direct Line that the trees were contributing to structural damage at an insured property. One tree was felled in March but the remaining six remain in place.

Following further assessment, Direct Line has said it will now install a root barrier around the affected home, an option it had earlier considered unfeasible due to the perceived need to extend it across neighbouring gardens. The revised plan confines the barrier to the perimeter of the policyholders' property, the report said.

Local resident Dean Scopes, who raised the issue with MP Suella Braverman, welcomed the development. "The protection of our trees goes on, but we must celebrate these small wins when we get them," the report quoted Scopes as saying.

The council had previously reported cracking in two homes, likely due to soil shrinkage caused by nearby tree roots. It stated it could face more than £225,000 in future liability if it declined to lift the TPOs and further damage occurred, according to the report.

Braverman, MP for Fareham and Waterlooville, has criticised what she described as pressure from insurers on local authorities. "Insurance companies have pressured local authorities into felling perfectly healthy trees with Tree Preservation Orders at the first point of contact," she said.

Tree-related subsidence can occur when roots draw moisture from clay soils, causing shrinkage and movement in foundations. However, such cases depend on several factors, including soil type, weather patterns, tree species, and the condition of a building's foundations. In some instances, alternative causes such as drainage issues may be responsible. Mitigation options can include pruning, root barriers, or soil management.

In a letter to Scopes, Direct Line said it considers non-removal options where possible, though felling can be more cost-effective and help manage insurance costs.

The Association of British Insurers stated that tree removal is not its default approach and that less invasive solutions should be explored where feasible, BBC reported.

A COUNCIL has put a TPO across a whole woodland in response to a planning application for a wedding venue reported Niki Hinman for the BBC Local Democracy Reporting Service.

There are plans to put up permanent tipis, tents and a toilet block for six months of the year in Berkshire's Welford Park, where the Great British Bake Off is filmed.

West Berkshire Council's own economic development team are behind the plans, but the tree team team has put the TPO in place meaning no trees can be touched without consulting them.

The matter will go before the council's Western Area Planning Committee on 23 July.

Welford Park is ancient woodland, which takes hundreds of years to establish and is defined as an irreplaceable habitat.

The application is to allow what is happening already - weddings in a glade in the wood for 28 days a year - to have five-year temporary planning consent from May to September.

The proposal is for permanent tipis, a ceremony tent, a catering tent and toilet block.

In a letter to the planning authority, the tree officer said trees had been felled without a licence. He also said the ground was cleared for the ceremony tent just as bluebells had emerged, "causing significant damage of this protected species".

However, around 25 letters of support from local people and businesses have been sent to the council. One, from a local butcher, said weddings at the venue helped their business.

The scheme also has the support of the council chairman and ward councillor for Hungerford and Kintbury, Tony Vickers. He said granting the consent would enable the council to "demand rigorous monitoring of the impact" on the environment.

"Arguably this could provide valuable research with far-reaching value to science and conservation practice," he said.

He also said the plans did not require any trees to be felled, although he said two large elms in the glade were dying and "will need to go for safety reasons".

PATRICK GOULDSBROUGH reported for The Northern Echo that the emergency service says that incidents of deliberate fires near Captain Cook's Monument, near Great Ayton and Stokesley, have increased in recent months.

The most recent incident was on Saturday July 5, at around 4pm, which saw firefighters battling flames and smoke.

They say that the fire "spread rapidly" due to the dry undergrowth in a wooded area.

A spokesperson for Stokesley Fire Station, through North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, said: "Stokesley crew were mobilised back to a location where we had previously visited near Captain Cook's Monument.

The fire is believed to be deliberate, which had begun to spread rapidly towards the previous fire through dry undergrowth in the surrounding forestry area.

Upon arrival, the Stokesley crew requested Danby's appliance to assist as Stokesley's pump was unable to access the area. A hose reel jet and Stokesley's wildfire tools were used to bring the fire under control.

Following the incident, the fire service has now warned of future deliberate fires in the area and has called on parents to monitor their children's whereabouts.

The statement reads: "Over recent weeks, we've responded to several small fires in woodland areas, many of which appear to have been started deliberately.

"While we understand that young people enjoy the outdoors, we kindly ask parents and carers to have a conversation with their children about the serious dangers of starting fires, even small ones."

BBC News reported that firefighters have repeated advice against lighting campfires and barbecues after putting out a fire in a forest following an unlicensed rave.

Between 150 and 200 people attended the unauthorised party in Charmouth Forest, Dorset, on 28 the night of June, according to police, who were called by local residents.

The music was subsequently turned off but, shortly after noon on Sunday, emergency services received multiple calls about a fire in the area. A small off-road appliance was deployed to locate the incident and the crew discovered partygoers sleeping and sitting around a camp fire

Dorset Police said officers were alerted to the party near Wootton Fitzpaine just after midnight. Residents reported about 50 vehicles and said their sleep was being disturbed by the music.

A force spokesperson said: "Officers attended and liaised with those present, ensuring the music was turned off and those in attendance have now dispersed. We responded swiftly to this incident to ensure it was promptly brought to a safe conclusion and no further disruption was caused."

Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue said Sunday's camp fire was extinguished "due to concerns about the dry conditions.

"As it was not a good idea to have a bonfire in the woods, we extinguished it and offered advice," a spokesperson said.

Since the start of 2025, the service has attended more than 400 wildfires across the two counties, many of them a result of "human intervention", and large areas of Dorset's protected heathland have been destroyed.

A district councillor has expressed frustration at the failure of an investigation to identify the culprits who felled a series of trees along the A47 reported Henry Durand for the EDP.

Alison Webb, who sits on Breckland Council, said she was "disappointed" with the result and had wanted to see someone held to account.

National Highways concluded its investigation into the disappearance of the trees near the Tesco exit on the A47 at Dereham in June without identifying who was responsible. Instead, it said it had reached an agreement with the caravan business near where the trees were cut.

It has not given any details of the agreement but insists it will "look to some restoration",



although it again gave no details.

Mrs Webb, a Conservative, said: "I would like to have seen somebody prosecuted for what they did because I think it's appalling, but obviously the authorities have investigated, done a thorough job and they cannot find anything to link anybody to it. You've got to have trust in the officials that they've done their job."

The disappearance of the trees on land between the A47 and Greentrees Caravans was reported to officials in 2023.

The caravan company, which was set up by former BBC Radio Norfolk DJ Keith Greentree, closed last year. The company has always denied any involvement in the disappearance of the trees.

SECURITY measures are still under consideration after beech trees were illegally felled at a beloved nature reserve reported Danielle Champ for the EDP.

Drayton Parish Council has turned to its environment committee to decide the best way to ramp up security at Green Lane nature reserve after beech trees were vandalised.



The incident happened in early May and the criminal damage to the approximately 150-year-old trees led to an investigation by the police, but after exhausting all lines of enquiry the case was closed without any arrests.

The parish council has been considering "a range of measures to help prevent such acts of vandalism in the future", including installing CCTV at key locations around the reserve. The council's Environment and Highways Committee, which oversees the nature reserve, is expected to make the necessary recommendations this month.

A spokeswoman for Drayton Parish Council said: "The council agreed to delegate authority to the Environment and Highways Committee to consider the purchase and installation of CCTV equipment for the area. The committee will consider quotes at a meeting on August 7 and make its recommendation to the council for approval shortly after."

TENDRING District Council reported that a mature poplar tree in Dovercourt is to be removed after it was deliberately poisoned in what has been described as a "disgraceful" act of vandalism.

The tree, in Norway Crescent, was found to have been systematically damaged in a way that has compromised its structural integrity and health. Tendring District Council (TDC) officers discovered the sabotage during a site visit following concerns about the tree's condition.

Mick Barry, TDC's Cabinet Member for Leisure and Public Realm, said the act was not only dangerous but is deeply disappointing.

He said "This poplar is around 80 years old and, in terms of leaf area and environmental value, is worth more than thousands of newly planted trees.

"Sadly, this is not an isolated incident. We've seen other trees in the same area cut down with household saws, and over the years we've dealt with numerous cases of residents attempting to kill trees near their homes using other methods.

"While we understand that trees in urban areas can sometimes cause inconvenience, they are vital for our environment, wellbeing, and the character of our neighbourhoods."

Due to the extent of the damage and the risk of the tree falling towards nearby properties, the council has no choice but to remove it.

Councillor Adrian Smith, TDC's Cabinet Member for Environment, said he was appalled and saddened by the senseless destruction of

trees in our community.

He said "This is a cherished tree that has stood for generations, and its loss is a blow to the community. I would urge anyone who may have seen something suspicious to come forward. We must send a clear message that this act of environmental vandalism will not be tolerated."

TDC is also liaising with the Harwich Neighbourhood Policing Team and encourages residents to report any information that may assist with investigations.

STEVEN MORRIS reported for The Guardian that a Labour-led city council has been criticised for backing an airport's scheme to cut down "majestic" trees in a historic, wildlife-rich cemetery close to a runway.

Environmental campaigners, people whose loved ones were laid to rest in the cemetery and opposition politicians have expressed dismay that the trees in South Stoneham Cemetery in Southampton are to be lost.



Southampton airport argues that 29 trees - including oak, cherry, cedar and cypress - in the council-owned cemetery should be felled or reduced in size so that the number of passengers can be increased.

Southampton city council's cabinet gave its approval for a plan to be prepared to fell 19 trees, five of which are classed as "category A - highest value", and carry out work on a further 10.

Katherine Barbour, the leader of the Green party group on the council, said it was deeply concerned by the move. She said: "It threatens our heritage and local biodiversity. These trees provide invaluable habitat, help combat air pollution, contribute to urban cooling and are a vital part of our community's character.

"We urge the council and airport authorities to rethink and explore alternative solutions. Once lost, our mature trees cannot be replaced overnight."

More than 800 people have signed a petition opposing the removal of the trees. The petition says: "For countless individuals, the cemetery is a sacred space for reflection and solace, with its majestic trees playing a vital role in shaping this tranquil environment.

"The cemetery is home to a diverse range of wildlife, including kestrels, swifts, swallows, owls, and both green and great spotted woodpeckers. It also shelters bats. Deer, foxes, and rabbits also call this area home."

Liz Batten, a member of Transition Southampton and Southampton Climate Action Network, said: "Now that we're so much more aware of the importance of trees to our survival and the outrage and heartache that comes from seeing mature trees being cut down, you'd think a city council like Southampton's would have taken things gently."

Rosemary Milne, who runs a local animal rescue centre, said: "It is all about big business."

The airport says the trees present an obstacle to planes departing and arriving. Aircraft are forced to fly with a reduced number of passengers and payload (fuel or luggage) so they can maintain safe clearance to the trees in the event of an engine failure.

A spokesperson for Southampton airport said: "We are legally obliged to maintain a clear and safe airspace for the aircraft that fly to and from our airport. Our application related to 29 trees that were identified by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) as presenting a hazard and we are therefore required to have a management plan in place.

"We presented a range of measures for officials to consider that would allow us to remove the risk presented by the trees while also enhancing the biodiversity of the local area. This included a comprehensive replanting scheme both within South Stoneham cemetery and across Southampton, as well as the creation of new hedgerows and a meadow."

The cemetery includes the graves of 66 military personnel and RJ Mitchell, who led the team that designed the Supermarine Spitfire.

AN Exmouth family are fighting to save a beloved oak tree which insurers say must be felled because it's causing subsidence at the property it's on reported Marina Jenkins for ITV News.

Linda and Scott Taylor Cantrill who own the 200 year-old tree say it's valued by the community and an important part of their family, especially their 11 year old son Redd who has complex disabilities. He has epilepsy and visual and hearing impairments which they say are helped by the tree in their garden.

Linda says "The shade from the tree canopy allows Redd to access his garden to explore his residual hearing and vision but also allows him to exercise his sensory need for movement while under the safety of the tree. The extreme heat of the sun can cause an increase in seizure activity in epilepsy."

The tree is the subject of a planning application to fell it, submitted by Property Risk Inspection Ltd. on behalf of LV Insurance and Sedgwick loss adjusters who say that the tree is the reason for subsidence to the owners' house

The family say LV have failed to produce the evidence to support their claim.

Friends and neighbours have held a demonstration to voice their opposition to the move and nearly 100 objections have been registered on East Devon District Council's planning site.

Scott added, "The only way of resolving the subsidence of our home is by underpinning, for which we are fully covered by our insurance, but to date LV are avoiding this more expensive route and prefer to unnecessarily destroy our tree."

A spokesperson at Allianz UK, which owns LV, said: "Trees, while essential for the environment, can exacerbate subsidence due to their roots drawing moisture from the soil. In



Awoman has applied to fell protected trees which could poison her horses Areported Chris Bishop, Chief Reporter South & West, for Cambstimes.

Debbie Macklin fears sycamores on her property at Walton Highway, near Wisbech, could kill the animals, but the nine specimens in a paddock behind her house on St Paul's Road North are covered by a TPO.

"I have recently purchased this property as an equestrian starter home with a small paddock area at the rear which has many large trees within it that are mostly fine for my horses wellbeing," she says in her application to West Norfolk Council.

"Since moving here in April when the trees were bare and I had no idea what type of tree they were, I have found that some of the trees are sycamore which are highly toxic and fatal for my horses."

Vet Richard Meers says in a statement he saw the trees when he visited the property to vaccinate a horse in May. He adds both the leaves and seeds from sycamores can cause a condition called atypical myopathy, which can be severe and is fatal in most cases.

"It is my veterinary advice that the sycamore trees are removed from the property," he continues.

Miss Macklin says a neighbour applied for a TPO covering the entire paddock in 2021 to prevent the land being developed.

"I don't understand how a TPO has been processed for sycamore trees on what has been a horse grazing paddock for many years when they are a danger to the life of a horse," she adds.

She says saplings are spreading despite her efforts to remove them.

"I would like permission to fell the sycamores to protect my horses' lives," she says.

A decision from West Norfolk Council is expected soon.

FAREHAM Borough Council's planning committee voted to keep a TPO on a pedunculate oak at 24 Southways, Stubbington.

Tree officer Paul Johnston said the 150-year-old oak is on the front fence boundary and the pavement, 8m away from the house at Southways but had been there before the house was built in 1930. The homeowner raised six reasons for objections to keeping the TPO on the tree, including that the tree damages their house and cars, with leaves, branches and acorns dropping on the drive during wet and windy weather.



They also said branches coming down during storms could cause harm to people, with passing cars and schoolchildren walking past underneath and the leaves possibly blocking drains. Bird droppings falling onto cars sitting on the driveway was another concern raised.

The owners had already "carried out a

crown lift" permitted by the council, said Mr Johnston.

The committee voted unanimously to keep the tree protected as recommended by the tree officer as it was a very large visible tree and an amenity for the local area.

DANIELLE CHAMP reported for the Norwich Evening News that a large willow collapsed into the River Wensum in Norwich has been removed.

The tree was believed to have collapsed because of the recent heat wave, which was then followed by heavy showers. That led to weakened roots. When it fell, it blocked the river in front of a building owned by Jarrold Group, near the Whitefriars Bridge.

However the firm's boss has confirmed the tree has since been removed. Nick Steven-Jones, CEO of the Jarrold Group: "The willow tree became uprooted and fell into the river on Saturday (19 July) morning. As soon as we were made aware, our grounds maintenance team attended the site, to ensure the tree was secure.

"The Broads Authority also attended to place markers ensuring passing boats were alerted. On Monday (21 July) afternoon our tree surgeon managed to remove the fallen tree safely."

It was an example of summer branch drop.

AN illegal all-night rave in a Milton Keynes woodland caused sleep disruption for thousands of people over the weekend of 19 and 20 July reported Sally Murrer for the MKCITIZEN.

The party started on Saturday night and went right through to late Sunday morning in Lavendon's Threshire Wood.

According to social media reports, up to 2,000 people attended and danced the night away to loud and booming dance tunes that could be heard as far away as Northamptonshire.

One irate resident wrote on social media: "The booming noise has been going on all night and can be heard in Bozeat, Grendon and Earls Barton".

There were numerous calls made to police, who sent officers out to the scene to "manage the situation". They spoke to the organisers and sat in police vans outside the village hall to keep the peace.

One rave-goer said: "It a good night. We respected the emergency services including the police... No trouble kicked off."

They added: "The police were fair and instead of coming in force and shutting it down they gave a time to pack up by. We cleaned up our rubbish and left peacefully. that's how it should be -respect on all sides. When police turn up in riot gear it can potentially incite a riot. When police turn up as peacekeepers then the peace is kept. We don't want trouble or violence, just a good party."

However, residents in Lavendon and surrounding areas were not so happy. One said: "Large numbers of people in the surrounding villages had no sleep despite numerous calls to the police."

Another added: "From midnight until lunch-time today...they really have no care for other people."

A few people thanked the police for attending, but others were quick to criticise. "Not sure why you're thanking them as I can't see that they did anything except watch from the sidelines given that the noise went on for 12

hours!" said one.

Meanwhile, a minority of residents defended the rave, saying on social media: "Lot of killjoys on this post. It's people having fun in nature without getting ripped off by big corporations."

The spokesperson for Thames Valley Police issued on Sunday lunchtime, when the noise finally abated. It said: "We've been dealing with an unlicensed music event in Lavendon. Officers attended the scene and have been managing the situation to keep everyone safe and minimise disruption.

"The event has now been shut down, and those who attended are leaving the area. Thank you to everyone for your patience and support. If you have any concerns or information, please speak to officers who will still be in the area."

A decision on Oxford United's new football stadium plans has been delayed after a nearby woodland was designated as ancient reported Galya Dimitrova for BBC News

Cherwell District Council was due to review an application for a 16,000-seat venue on land known as the Triangle, near Kidlington, on 31 July, but the local authority said it required further time after Natural England identified an area of ancient woodland near the site, and said its planning committee would now consider the application on 14 August.

The club said it was "disappointed" with the delay. Development director at Oxford United Jonathon Clarke said it the last-minute submission was "frustrating".

He said "However, we have provided comprehensive evidence addressing the points raised. It was "an incredibly detailed, robust application. We will continue our work towards a positive recommendation as we await a new committee date."

The planning application has faced several delays since its submission.

The council said the designation required "a further period of time to ensure the robust consideration of those matters" and incorporate them into its recommendation report.

Natural England previously said its woodland specialists had "found that there has been sufficient evidence submitted to support this site as ancient woodland".

However, it added that it would be willing to "consider further substantively different evidence" in this particular case.

Anneliese Dodds, MP for Oxford East, said she was "disappointed" by the delayed decision, and that the club, its fans and the county "need this stadium for the benefits it will bring".

"A positive decision is crucial, as more delays could have a catastrophic impact on the club," she added.

WEST BRIDGFORD WIRE reported that precious ravine woodlands across the Peak District are being brought back to life through the largest restoration project of its kind, with 84,000 native trees now planted to replace those lost to ash dieback disease.

The five-year LIFE in the Ravines project has successfully restored up to 25% of the region's most severely damaged woodlands, creating resilient habitats that will protect this rare ecosystem for future generations.

Natural England's partnership project has focused on the Peak District Dales Special Area of Conservation, where ash dieback has devastated ancient woodlands. Teams have

replanted a diverse mix of species, including the foundation species large-leaved lime, small-leaved lime, and wych elm...trees that historically thrived in these unique limestone ravines.

Martin Evans, Woodland Restoration Manager for Natural England said "The success of the LIFE in the Ravines project shows what can be achieved when we work with nature rather than against it. By planting 84,000 trees, we're not just replacing what was lost to ash dieback, we're creating more diverse and resilient woodlands that will thrive for generations to come.

"These restored ravine woodlands are truly unique habitats, and this project demonstrates Natural England's commitment to protecting and enhancing our most precious natural environments whilst supporting the government's environmental priorities."

The restoration work tackles a critical environmental challenge. Without intervention, entire woodlands would have been lost to the fungal disease that kills ash trees. The project has prevented this ecological disaster whilst creating more diverse, resilient habitats.

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust has seen remarkable success across their managed sites, with 16,000 trees planted in the Wye Valley including Cramside, Cheedale, and Millers Dale. The new plantings form the foundation for naturally expanding woodlands that will colonise surrounding areas over time.

Kyle Winney, Living Landscape Officer for Derbyshire Wildlife Trust said "Although it's devastating to see the effects of ash dieback, it has provided us an opportunity to restore the ravine woodlands that would have been much more diverse before human impacts. The native trees we've planted form the foundation of a more diverse woodland that will be more resilient to future challenges such as weather extremes and disease."

Seeds collected directly from existing trees within the ravines are being grown by specialist nurseries and community groups. This local approach ensures planted trees can thrive in the challenging conditions of steep, rocky limestone terrain.

The project represents 16% of the UK's ravine woodland – a European Priority Habitat. As tree planting targets are met, teams are preparing for their final restoration season in autumn 2025, including work in the Via Gellia woodlands.

This restoration directly supports the government's environmental mission to make Britain a clean energy superpower by strengthening natural ecosystems that store carbon and support biodiversity. The project demonstrates how targeted intervention can reverse environmental damage whilst building climate resilience.



Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Area news

Broadland Tree Preservation Orders Served, Confirmed and Revoked

TPO No	Address where tree(s) are located	Date served	Trees to be protected	Status
2024 No BD0704	Front garden of Glencoe, 7 The Street, Ringland	20/11/2024	T1, T2, T3 & T4 cedar	Confirmed
2025 No BD0730	Land east of Flambirds, Buxton Road, Cawston	29/01/2025	T1 and T2 oak	Confirmed
2025 No BD0732	Front garden of Thirfield, 8 Station Road, Salhouse	13/02/2025	T1 oak	Provisional
2025 No BD0734	Front garden of 3 Bircham Road, Reepham	19/02/2025	T1 silver birch	Provisional
2025 No BD0736	Front garden of 219B St Faiths Road, Old Catton	25/02/2025	T1 oak	Provisional
2025 No BD0742	Rear of The Reading Room, Church Lane, Burgh	03/04/2025	G1 2 x oak	Provisional
2025 No BD0746	Highway verge adjacent to 3 Park Lane, Reepham	06/05/2025	T1 oak	Provisional
2025 No BD0748	Front and side garden and boundary between 40 & 42 Norwich Road, Cawston	16/05/2025	T1 oak	Provisional
2025 No BD0750	Land to the south of 10 The Street and east of 8 The Street, South Walsham	11/06/2025	T1 oak	Provisional
2025 No BD0755	Rear of Village Hall, 19 Crowes Loke, Little Plumstead	20/06/2025	G1 2 x oak	Provisional
2025 No BD0759	Rear garden of 3 Broad Lane, on boundary with Edgefield, Great Plumstead	17/07/2025	T1 walnut	Provisional
2025 No BD0760	Front garden adj to boundary wall and highway, School House, 70 Norwich Road, Horstead with Stanninghall	22/07/2025	T1 horse-chestnut	Provisional

Current Works to Trees Subject to a Tree Preservation Order and Section 211 Notifications for Works to Trees Within Conservation Areas

App No	Address where tree(s) are located	Cat	Species and requested works	Decision
2025/1246	Patterson Lodge, 14 Great Hautbois Road, Coltishall	TPO	T1 oak – fell.	Approved
2025/1316	Maingay House, Abbots Close, Aylsham	211	G001 mixed species - crown lift to 2.4m over footpath and strip ivy. T001 Himalayan birch & T003 Himalayan birch - crown lift to 2.4m over road. T004 common beech - epicormic removal and sever and strip ivy. T007 rowan & T009 common holly - epicormic removal. T010 silver birch - fell dead tree. T016 wild cherry - height 14m, spread 6m. Crown reduce from structure by up to 2m. T019 fig - height 3m, spread 2m. Crown reduce from structure by up to 2m. T020 Prunus - crown lift to 2.4m over footpath and strip ivy. T021 Norway maple - sever and strip ivy. T025 wild cherry - height 9m, spread 8m. Crown reduce from structure by up to 2m. T027 & T030 common holly - sever and strip ivy. T033 field maple - height 11m, spread 3m. Crown lift to 2.4m over footpath and crown reduce from structure by up to 2m. T035 cabbage tree - fell 1 stem leaning over footpath.	No objection
2025/1318	1 Booton Road, Cawston	211	BHHT001 rowan - height 6m, crown radius 2m. Crown lift to 2.4m over footpath. BHHT002 whitebeam - height 11m, crown radius 6m. Crown lift to 2.4m over footpath and reduce back from structure to give 2m clearance.	03/06/2025
2025/1424	Leeder House, 1 Leeder Hil, Postwick	TPO	G1 4 x Leyland cypress - fell and replant. G2 3 x sycamore - fell. G3 4 x sycamore - spread approx 7-8m. Reduce lowest lateral branches on northern side of crown by approx 3/4m.	Approved
2025/1426	Porthcothan House, 40 The Avenue, Wroxham	211	T1 holm oak - height 15m width 13m. Reduce height by approx 2.5m. T2 lime - height 20m width 6m. Reduce height by approx 3m.	Approved
2025/1434	Braydescroft, 3 Strumpshaw Road, Brundall	TPO	Golden cypress - 3-stem. Fell and replant	Approved
2025/1520	Oaklee, 68 Saint Williams Way, Thorpe St Andrew	TPO	T1 English oak - height 20m and width 18m. Reduce crown by 20% removing 4m in height to 16m and 3.6m in width to 15.4m.	20/05/2025
2025/1521	36B Waterloo Road, Hainford	TPO	T1 & T2 English oaks - reduce to 3m monoliths	Approved
2025/1522	The Oaks, 134 Shakespeare Way, Taverham	TPO	T1 English oak - height 20m, current width 8m. 20% reduction removing 4m in height to 16m and 2m in width to 6m.	Approved

2025/1573	41 School Road, Drayton	TPO	T1 beech - reduce NW radial spread from 7.5m to 5m and shape into crown. T2 sycamore - remove lateral branch on the north side at approximately 7m (approx 15cm diameter) and smaller over-extended branch just above, at approx 8 m (approx 6cm diameter).	Approved
2025/1574	14 Church Close, South Walsham	TPO	T1 oak - crown thin by 10%, reduce canopy by 3-4m from 10m. T2 oak - reduce canopy by 2m from 7m mainly over property. T3 oak - reduce canopy by 2m from 6.5m mainly over property. T4 oak - reduce canopy by 3-4m from 10m only over property. T5 oak - crown lift over garden. Remove 4 low branches to match.	Approved
2025/1592	30 Stuart Road, Aylsham	211	G1 hawthorn in rear hedge. Reduce height from 6m to 2m.	No objection
2025/1617	23 Firethorn Close, Taverham	TPO	T1 oak - height approx 12m. Crown lift by approx 5m to allow daylight into garden and to remove overhanging branches.	Approved
2025/1635	Meadow Hill, 90 Lower Street, Salhouse	211	T1 Lombardy poplar - fell and replant.	No objection
2025/1667	55A Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew	TPO	T1 oak - remove branches overhanging by 4 - 4.5m.	Approved
2025/1675	Street Record, Castle Street, Wroxham	211	AGUT001 crab apple - crown lift to 2.4m over footpath. AGUT002 wild cherry - reduce and reshape by up to 2m from 8m to 6m tall and crown radius from 8m to 6m. AGUT009 English yew - epicormic removal.	No objection
2025/1678	1 Booton Road, Cawston	211	T1 rowan - crown lift to 2.4m over grass. T2 whitebeam - crown lift to 2.4m over grass and reduce back from structure from 6m to 4m.	No objection
2025/1679	8 Redcliffe Way, Brundall	TPO	T1 oak - height 20m, width 15m. Reduce by approx 2m and crown raise lower canopy to approx 2.5m. Height to be 18m and width 13m. T2 maple - fell and replant with a <i>Liquidambar</i> tree.	Approved
2025/1682	2 Harrold Close South, Walsham	TPO	T1 & T2 beech - crown lift to 5.5m. Reduce extremities of crown by shortening only longest laterals protruding from the crown by around 1.5m leaving a radial spread of around 6.5m. Work to be carried out in order to retain attractive amenity value and to lessen the impact on the house and garden.	Approved
2025/1693	74A Thunder Lane, Thorpe St Andrew	TPO	T1 oak - crown lift over driveway and front garden to 3-4 m. Reduce lowest branch on southern aspect over driveway back to a pollard point 3m from parent branch union . Crown lift on northern aspect to 6m to give minimum of 0.5m clearance to overhead wires. Reduce overextended lateral over road/path on SW aspect by 2m (current length 10m). Crown lift over highway to 6m and over footpath to 4m.	Approved
2025/1697	The Gables, 6 Plumstead Road, Thorpe End	211	T1 rowan & T2 goat willow - fell.	No objection
2025/1704	2 Walpole Way, Freethorpe	TPO	T1 oak - crown reduction 2-3m all round to a finished height of 15m.	01/06/2025
2025/1734	Rookery Row, 14 The Street, Burgh	211	T1 unidentified - reduce from 8m to 7m to previous reduction.	No objection
2025/1737	Manestee, 42 Lower Street, Salhouse	211	Holly bush - overall height approx 7.7m. Trim to approx 4.2m reducing by 3.5m. Norway spruce - fell.	No objection
2025/1753	Gilden Croft, 56 Norwich Road, Horsham St Faiths	211	G1 ash x 2 - crown reduce lowest four lateral branches from 12m to 6m radius.	No objection
2025/1763	3 Potters Meadow, Salhouse	TPO	T1 & T2 beech - reduce height from 20m to 16m and southern laterals from 7m to 5m. Crown clean. Work required to regulate size and shape of tree due to its close proximity to the house.	26/06/2025
2025/1778	Rolston House, Norwich Road, Horstead With Stanninghall	211	T1 variegated sycamore - height 6m. Crown raise to 2m smaller lower 4 or 5 branches 50mm in diameter. T2 pear - current height 1.8m. Reduce upper canopy by 1.5m. T5 silver birch - current height 14m. Reduce lateral spread of canopy over patio by 1.5m from 5m to suitable growth points on branches no larger than 5m. T3 wild apple & T4 wild cherry - fell.	No objection
2025/1788	Honeywood, 39 Charles Close, Wroxham	211	T1 Atlas cedar - height 11m, width 10m. Crown raise to 4m, reduce crown away from building to allow 2.5m clearance and reduce selected branches over garden by 2.5m to reform shape.	No objection
2025/1792	Annexe 260, Taverham Road, Taverham	TPO	T77 ash - fell to a 3m monolith.	Approved
2025/1803	The Ferns, Beech Road, Wroxham	211	T1 holly - height 4m, Remove to approx ground level.	No objection
2025/1810	Moor Lodge Cottage, The Moor, Reepham	211	T3 goat willow (T3) - remove stem closest to garage, reduce and shape crown by 3m in height & width from approx 7m to 4m. G4 4x Leyland cypress - dismantle to 1m tall stumps.	No objection

2025/1815	The Grange, 21 Lower Street, Salhouse	211	T1 copper beech - height 12m, spread 11m. Raise crown to 5.2m for highway specifications. Raise crown over garden to 3m. Reduce lower section of crown growing over road. Remove 2-2.5m. T2 & T3 cherry - height 6m. Balance crowns and shape by removing no more than 1-1.5m from selective branches. T4 whitebeam - 10m height. Reduce height by 2m and shape.	No objection
2025/1817	Oakapples 12 Lower Street, Salhouse	211	T1 plum - height 11m. Reduce crown by 2-2.5m.	No objection
2025/1822	School House, 70 Norwich Road, Horstead With Stanninghall	211	T1 horse chestnut - fell and replant with same species.	Refused
2025/1827	26 Mayton Avenue, Frettenham	TPO	T1 oak - fell and replant.	Approved
2025/1836	Meadow View, 102 Lower Street, Salhouse	211	T1 Leyland cypress - in front garden. 1m crown reduction from 5m to 4m high and from 4m to 3m wide	No objection
2025/1839	7 Charles Close, Wroxham	211	T1 lime - fell.	No objection
2025/1840	Fourwinds, 37 Waterloo Road, Hainford	TPO	T1 beech & T2 oak - both dead. Completely remove.	Approved
2025/1842	9 The Street, Heydon	211	T1 oak & T2 ash - fell.	No objection
2025/1850	Walnut Meadow, 1 The Street, Coltishall	211	T1 Portuguese laurel – fell	No objection
2025/1854	Edgewood, 16 South Avenue, Thorpe St Andrew	211	T1 oak - height 15m. Reduce overhanging limbs back to boundary fence, reducing limbs on garden side only by 3m max, where necessary to bring canopy in line with boundary fence.	No objection
2025/1856	26 Margaret Crescent, Thorpe St Andrew	TPO	AZDT006 whitebeam - overall height 9m. Reduce branches back from phone lines by up to 2m.	Approved
2025/1860	The Gables, 6 Church Road, Upton	TPO	T4 ash – crown raise to approx 5m removing some lower branches.	Approved
2025/1873	Land adj Dowding Road, rear of 34 Evans Way, Old Catton	TPO	T1 oak - approx 20m. Reduce overextended extremities over No 34 Evans Way by 3 to 4m from 7 to 11m.	01/07/2025
2025/1877	37 Charles Close, Wroxham	211	T1 & T2 oak - approx height 15m. Tops of trees are dead. Reduce dead tops from 15m to 10m just above live growth.	No objection
2025/1893	1 Stuart Road, Aylsham	211	T1 Norway maple - remove and replace.	No objection
2025/1903	Keepers Cottage, Wroxham Road, Rackheath	TPO	T1 oak - crown reduce height over highway from 11m to 8/8.5m and width 6.8m to 3.8/3.5m. T2 ash & T4 sycamore - remove low limb for clearance over highway (max 7m). T6 sycamore - remove 2 low limbs for clearance over highway (max 7m). T7 oak - reduce crown height from 14m to 11m and width 9m to 6m over gates. G12 - crown lift to 5m over boundary. T3, T5, T8, T9, T10 & T11 sycamore - fell.	28/06/2025
2025/1905	64 Wilks Farm Drive, Sprowston	TPO	T1 oak - fell under exception of TPO restrictions for dangerous trees.	Exempt tree works
2025/1914	The Lodge, Taverham Park Avenue, Taverham	TPO	T1 & T2 English oak & T3 common lime – fell. Replanting has been suggested.	26/06/2025
2025/1932	Scotch Hill Wood, Taverham	TPO	T321 oak - remove branches on north side at 5m over garden. T351 oak - reduce crown to 4m from ground level.	Approved
2025/1937	Eastlands Residential Home, Beech Avenue, Taverham	TPO	T1 cedar - crown lift to 4m. T2 beech & T3 copper beech - crown lift to 5m.	29/06/2025
2025/1939	Summerfield, 132 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew	TPO	T1 oak - crown lift to 6m.	Approved
2025/1940	Fir Tree House, 86 Mill Road, Blofield	TPO	T1 ash - reduce branch ends of southern aspect of crown by 1.5 to 2m. T2 Acer - crown lift to 5m to adjacent outbuilding.	Approved
2025/1960	9 Beverley Road, Brundall	TPO	T1 ash - reduce height from 19m to 14m. Overall crown reduction and a crown clean. Crown spread will be from 6m to 4m north, 7m to 5m south, 6m to 4m west. East side of crown requires no work.	01/07/2025
2025/1963	Church Hill House, 53 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew	211	T1 ash - fell under an exception of Conservation Area restrictions for dangerous trees.	Exempt tree works
2025/1964	Glenlyn, 7 Copeman Road, Little Plumstead	TPO	T1 silver birch - fell under an exception of the TPO restrictions for dead trees.	Exempt tree works
2025/1976	Rosewalls, 22 Plumstead Road, Thorpe End	211	T1 holly - fell.	02/07/2025
2025/1977	The Manor, 28 The Street, Burgh	211	T1 willow - fell under an exception of Conservation Area restrictions for dangerous trees.	Exempt tree works
2025/1985	Meadow View, 102 Lower Street, Salhouse	211	T1 cedar - reduce height from 18m to 16.5m and reduce width from 3.5m to 2m.	No objection

2025/1989	17 South Avenue, Thorpe St Andrew	211	T1 Lawson cypress - fell.	03/07/2025
2025/1991	2 Stanmore Road, Thorpe St Andrew	211	T1 hazel - crown reduce and shape from approx 7.5m to 5m in both height and width.	No objection
2025/2002	10 Macmillan Way, Little Plumstead	TPO	Japanese pagoda tree - approx 9m tall. Pollard back to stump.	10/07/2025
2025/2017	The Beeches, Gashouse Hill, Aylsham	211	T1 common beech - to reduce canopy. Tree diameter 0.9m. Tree height from 13m to 9m, canopy width from 12m to 8m to save future encroachment and gain light at the property.	05/07/2025
2025/2040	The Grange 62 Spixworth Road, Old Catton	211	T1 Eucalyptus - reduce crown to left of entrance gateway. Reduce height from 20m to 14.5 -15m and spread from 15m to 10 -11m.	08/07/2025
2025/2042	Land rear of 18, 20m & 22 Impala Close, Mountbatten Drive, Sprowston	TPO	Hornbeam - fell and replace.	08/07/2025
2025/2057	The Granary, 45 School Road, Reepham	211	T1 Eucalyptus - approx 6.5 m high. Fell. T2 holly - reduce height by approx 2 m from 6m to 4m and spread by 1m from 3.5m to 2.5m. Crown lift lower branches to 2.3m over the footpath.	09/07/2025
2025/2058	Brewmere House, 10 Granary Loke, Ollands Road, Reepham	211	T1 ash - remove 3 branches back to their points of origin growing to the NW toward 4 the Dial to remove branches closest to the house.	09/07/2025
2025/2059	12 Cameron Green, Taverham	TPO	T1 whitebeam & T2 hornbeam - crown lift lower southern side of canopy to 4m and reduce the southern spread from 5.6m to 4.3m.	09/07/2025
2025/2100	7 Mill Pightle, Aylsham		T3 oak – fell.	14/07/2025
2025/2101	8 Lodge Place, Thorpe St Andrew	TPO	T1 sweet chestnut - reduce northern spread from 10m to 8m and western spread from 7.5m to 5.5m to increase clearance between the tree and the dwelling.	14/07/2025
2025/2120	Brackens, 38 Nightingale Drive, Taverham	TPO	T1 beech - current crown width 12.7m. Reduce east side of crown by approx 1.5m. After reduction, no smaller than 11.2m.	15/07/2025
2025/2121	Brackens, 38 Nightingale Drive, Taverham	TPO	T1 oak - Current spread 18m. Reduce south side of canopy by approx 1.5m leaving spread of no less than 16.5m. T2 elm - fell.	15/07/2025
2025/2122	Under Ridge, Beech Road, Wroxham	211	S1 to S9 stumps - to be either ground or dug out. T1, T4, T7 & T8 laurel - fell. T2 laurel - crown reduce height from approx 5m to 3m and 3m to 4m wide and prune to consistent shape 3m diameter overall. T3 Large Laurel - reduce crown from height 4m to 3m and 3-4m wide and prune to consistent shape overall 3m in diameter. T5 cherry- dead . Fell. T6 yew - raise lower boughs to 3m.	15/07/2025
2025/2136	Little Plumstead Hospital, Hospital Road, Little Plumstead	TPO	G1 lime - crown raise over road to 6m. G2 Leyland cypress hedge - reduce height from approx 3.5m to 2.5m.	17/07/2025
2025/2162	182 Thunder Lane, Thorpe St Andrew	TPO	T1 beech - fell under an exception of the TPO restrictions for dead trees.	Withdrawn
2025/2175	23 Oxcroft, Acle	TPO	T 1 oak - reduce eastern aspect by 1.5m from 12m and southern aspect by 1.5m from 11m. Crown lift to 4m over garden on southern aspect. T 2 oak - crown lift to 5m on eastern aspect and reduce branch ends on lateral branches on eastern aspect by 1-1.5m. Current radial spread 8m.	18/07/2025
2025/2194	The Dell, 42 Wood Lane, Burgh	211	T1 ash - reduce height as far as slope will allow (to approx 2m).	21/07/2025
2025/2243	First Taverham Scout Head Quarters, Sandy Lane, Taverham	TPO	5 trees (unspecified species) - fell under an exception of the TPO restrictions for dead trees.	Exempt tree works
2025/2252	South Lodge, Oak Lane, Old Catton	211	T1 oak - fell under an exception of Conservation Area restrictions for dangerous trees.	23/07/2025

Note: This is not intended to be a definitive list of all the relevant details. Readers should always refer to the specific application on the South Norfolk and Broadland District Council Planning website at <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning-applications/find-planning-application>.