

Tel: (0118) 974 6000
Email: development.control@wokingham.gov.uk
Date: 02 December 2025
My ref: CY/TPO/1611/2017/252434



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr Glen Harding
GHA Trees
5 South Drive
High Wycombe
High Wycombe
HP13 6JU

Place and Growth
Development Management Team
P.O. Box 157
Shute End, Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR

Tel: (0118) 974 6000

Dear Mr Harding,

TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NUMBER: 1611/2017

APPLICATION NUMBER: 252434

SITE ADDRESS: LANDS END HOUSE, BEGGARS HILL ROAD, CHARVIL, WOKINGHAM, RG10 0UD

I am writing to you regarding your application to carry out works to protected tree(s), which was received on 05 August 2025 and validated on the 9 October 2025.

I can confirm Wokingham Borough Council **refuses consent**, to the following work being carried out to tree(s) included in the above-mentioned Tree Preservation Orders (TPO):

Proposed tree works to W1 of TPO 1611/2017:

T1, Ash – Fell.
T2, Hazel - Fell.
T4, Hazel – Fell.
T6, Ash - Fell.
T7, Ash - Fell.
T9, Sycamore - Fell.
T10, Oak – Fell.
T11, Sycamore - Fell.
G12, Sycamore – Fell.
T13, Elm – Fell.
T14, Willow – Fell.

Reasons stated for works:

T1, Ash – Advanced signs of ash dieback. Major stem wound at ground level on road side.
T2, Hazel - nil.
T4, Hazel – dead tree.
T6, Ash – early signs of ash dieback noted.
T7, Ash – poor fork at ground level. Early signs of Ash Dieback noted.
T9, Sycamore – 50% dead from squirrel damage.
T10, Oak – top dead due to past nearby falling tree damaging the stem of this tree.

T11, Sycamore – 50% dead from squirrel damage.
G12, Sycamore – 50% dead from squirrel damage.
T13, Elm – dead tree.
T14, Willow – dead tree.

Officer comments:

When looking to undertake works to a protected tree it is the responsibility of the applicant to supply adequate proof with the TPO application, in the form of 'written arboricultural advice or other diagnostic information from an appropriate expert.' To date, no detailed arboricultural information has been submitted to demonstrate that the work is in the interests of health and safety or based on any arboricultural need and no overriding reason for the proposed work was apparent.

As observed at the Council's Tree Officer's site visit on the 4 November 2025, some of the trees under application are of moderate health condition with dieback present in the tree crowns. Contrary to the provided reasons for removal, only G8, silver birch are dead trees. In addition, the trees are located in a woodland away from dwellings, roads and footpaths, though deadwoods are present in most of the trees, their conditions do not warrant complete removal.

Dead and decaying trees are a vital component of a properly functioning woodland ecosystem and play a key role in sustaining biodiversity and soil fertility. A healthy woodland ecosystem features deadwood in various locations. It is therefore undesirable to remove all dead wood from the woodland as this would harm the natural ecosystem. It is recommended that any standing deadwood, dead branches, and other defects with ecological value are retained, where it is considered reasonable and safe to do so.

Regarding T1, Ash, T6, Ash and T7, Ash. Ash Dieback Disease (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) poses a significant threat to the health of ash trees in the UK and in many areas of the UK a significant percentage of ash trees have already been affected by Ash Dieback to varying degrees.

Experience in continental Europe, which is now being seen replicated in the UK, indicates that Ash Dieback can kill young and coppiced ash trees quite quickly. However, older trees can resist it for some time until prolonged exposure, or another pest or pathogen, such as Armillaria (Honey Fungus), attacking them in their weakened state eventually causes them to succumb. There is no known cure.

The Arboricultural Association note that if affected trees are situated in high footfall areas this can create health and safety risks, but it doesn't necessarily follow that all ash trees growing in these areas will need to be removed or that they will all die.

With the exceptions of felling for public safety or timber production, Forest Research recommend a general presumption against felling living ash trees, whether infected or not. This is because there is good evidence that a small proportion will be able to tolerate an Ash Dieback infection. There is also the possibility that a proportion of ash trees can become diseased, but then recover to good health. These trees would be valuable for research.

The Council considers that it would be drastic action to permit the removal of T1, Ash, T6, Ash and T7, Ash in its current state and on the evidence provided. It is noted there are diebacks in the crowns, however I am not satisfied that the present state confirms advanced or terminal decline such as would be required to justify their removal at this time. Wokingham Borough Council's recommendation is that deadwood be removed and that the tree is monitored.

The Council is committed to ensuring that protected Ash trees are retained unless their condition is so undermined that recovery is not considered viable or without the structure of the tree being severely impaired as a result. Public safety is the priority, and tree owners are advised monitor the trees' safety. Consent will be granted for any necessary pruning works provided supporting evidence is received to demonstrate that the tree or its branches threaten to cause injury or damage or that the decline is so great that there is no potential for a reasonable recovery.

On balance the information submitted for the proposed works is not sufficient justification for the removal of T1, T2, T4, T6, T7, T9, T10, T11, G12, T13 and T14, however the Council would welcome a further Tree Work Application supported by appropriate levels of arboricultural evidence i.e. full VTA, climbing inspection (with photographs of all bio mechanical defects that require remedial pruning) and results of any secondary investigations (i.e. resistograph etc.) to justify the proposed works

Due to the reasons stated above the above proposed tree removals have been refused.

I can confirm that Wokingham Borough Council **consents, with conditions**, to the following work being carried out to the tree(s) included in the aforementioned Tree Preservation Order (TPO):

Approved Tree Work to W1 of TPO 1611/2017:

T1, Ash

- Crown clean to remove any dead, diseased, or dysfunctional branches back to suitable growth points

T3, Oak

- Remove deadwood.

T5, Oak

- Fell.

T6, Ash

- Crown clean to remove any dead, diseased, or dysfunctional branches back to suitable growth points

T7, Ash

- Crown clean to remove any dead, diseased, or dysfunctional branches back to suitable growth points

G8, Silver Birch

- Remove dead trees

T9, Sycamore

- Crown clean to remove any dead, diseased, or dysfunctional branches back to suitable growth points

T10, Oak

- Remove deadwood.

T11, Sycamore

- Crown clean to remove any dead, diseased, or dysfunctional branches back to suitable growth points

G12, Sycamore

- Crown clean to remove any dead, diseased, or dysfunctional branches back to suitable growth points

T13, Elm

- Crown clean to remove any dead, diseased, or dysfunctional branches back to suitable growth points

T14, Willow

- Crown clean to remove any dead, diseased, or dysfunctional branches back to suitable growth points

The consent is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The above works must be completed before **2 December 2027** and in the event of the works not being completed by that date, further consent will be required.
2. Work must be carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998 – 2010 ‘Tree work - Recommendations’. At least 50% of the removed deadwood shall be kept on site.
3. Climbing spikes shall not be used whilst undertaking any form of works on living trees, except on trees to be felled.

Reasons for conditions 1-3.....

1. To ensure that our records remain accurate.
2. To ensure the health, safety and visual amenity of the tree(s) and ensure works are undertaken in accordance with recognised arboricultural good practice. To ensure a sustainable woodland ecosystem.
3. Spikes can cause extensive long-term damage to trees.

Informative:

If you are aggrieved by any of the conditions attached to your consent, you may appeal to The Planning Inspectorate (PINS). Because of coronavirus (COVID-19), you can currently only make a planning appeal online. You cannot currently apply by post.

For more information go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tree-preservation-order-appeal-form>

Telephone: 0303 444 5570 or e-mail it to: treeandhedgeappeals@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Your appeal should be received within one month of receipt of this decision or any such longer period as the Planning Inspectorate may allow.

You are advised that this letter is in respect of the **Tree Preservation Order only** and it does not imply that consent would be forthcoming from the owner of the tree(s) or any such other persons from whom consent may be required.

If we can be of any further assistance, please contact the Tree Officer via email to:
development.control@wokingham.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Hannington". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Chris Hannington
Trees and Landscape Team Manager

Please note that your attention is drawn to the following information:

Bird Nesting Season and Presence of Bat Roosts

In accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and Countryside Rights of Way Act (2000), consideration must be given to the timing and type of tree work operations, to avoid causing disturbance to any nesting birds or bat roosts that may be present within the tree(s).

The Act makes it an offence (subject to exceptions) to intentionally kill, injure, or take, possess, or trade in any wild animal listed, and prohibits interference with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturbing animals occupying such places.

It is advised that all non-urgent major tree work and hedge cutting operations are undertaken at a time to avoid disturbing nesting birds during the breeding season (to which the bird nesting season is considered to be from March to July). Where bats are suspected to be present, it is recommended that advice first be sought from a licenced bat specialist and if appropriate, the relevant licence(s) be obtained before any major tree work or hedge cutting commences.

Further information can be found at the following:

DEFRA (Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs)
Tel: 08459 33 55 77 or by email at helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.defra.gov.uk/

Natural England
Tel: 0845 600 3078 or by email at enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk
Website: www.naturalengland.org.uk

Bat Conservation Trust
Tel: 0845 1300 228 or by email at enquiries@bats.org.uk
Website: www.bats.org.uk

Forestry Act 1967 and Felling Licences

If it proposed to fell a tree or trees greater than 5 cubic metres or sell more than 2 cubic metres of timber in any calendar quarter, a Felling Licence from the Forestry Authority may be required.

Please note that Felling Licences are not required to remove trees from domestic (residential) gardens. Where you are the landowner of large pieces of land with numerous trees, clarification from the Forestry Commission may be required as to whether a Felling licence is needed.

For more information on Felling Licences, please speak to the Woodland Officer at the Forestry Commission on 01296 696543

Further Information can be found on the Forestry Commission Website:
www.forestry.gov.uk