

OAK TREE BESIDE PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY

What3words /// corrosive.farms.spoiled

TPO Number: 1886/2022

In September 2026, a member of the public reported to Haines Hill Estate that one of its trees was being used as an amenity by children, despite the tree's poor condition and despite its proximity to a Public Right of Way (PRoW). A rope swing had been attached to one of the tree's lower limbs and the Estate was duly asked to remove this to avoid potential risk of harm to those using it.

The Estate has now cut this swing down and removed it (see photos below).

In view of the poor condition of this tree, it is proposed to seek TPO approval from Wokingham Borough Council to undertake works in order to make it safe, specifically for users of the PRoW. As described in detail below, it is proposed to monolith the tree by removing the outer boughs while retaining the main trunk as a standing deadwood habitat, thereby enhancing local biodiversity and supporting saproxylic insects and nesting birds.

Action taken on 24th September 2026



BEFORE: Children's swing hanging from the tree



AFTER: Once the swing had been cut down

LOCATION OF THIS OAK TREE

Twyford station

Stanlake Park



Morbund Oak Tree



Photos of the oak tree taken on 24th September 2026



Viewed facing East



Viewed facing West

ASSESSMENT

The TPO tree in question (Number 1886/2022) is a native English oak (*Quercus Robur* / *Quercus Petraea*). This variety of tree typically maintains its green canopy well into October or November. However, when inspected on 24th September, in contrast to the surrounding oaks – which display robust foliage – this specific tree shows a total absence of leaf development. Because this is unlikely to be caused by standard seasonal change, and given its condition is completely at odds with its immediate neighbours, this is assessed as a moribund tree in terminal decline, with clear loss of structural integrity.

Tests:

1. Using a pocketknife to scrape away a small sliver of bark on a few lower, boughs demonstrated dry, brittle, and brown/yellow underneath, indicating these sections are dead.
2. Observation of the tips of the bare branches indicates zero winter buds for next spring.

Clearly, the total lack of buds and its complete brittleness, with snapping twigs, is indicative of an ongoing problem. Crucially the vicinity of this tree – immediately beside a Public Right of Way (PRoW) – poses a safety hazard to the public.

RECOMMENDATION

The second of the two photos on page 2 is taken from Google Earth and shows how this tree stands out markedly from its neighbours. It is moribund, in terminal decline. And when viewed from the ground, it has lost its boughs to its southeast side, such that it is leaning dangerously towards the PRoW. This is clearly visible in the photo on page 3 when viewed facing East.

It is a clear and apparent danger to the public in its current condition (which is only expected to deteriorate further). Therefore, it should have its upper boughs removed to avoid further dropping onto, or near to, the PRoW. This will also deter children from playing on, or in the vicinity of, the tree.

PROPOSED WORK TO BE UNDERTAKEN TO THIS TPO TREE



Given the poor condition of this tree and its proximity to the Public Right of Way (PRoW), it is vital that it is made safe for the public who use this PRoW. However, it would be difficult to specify a selective pruning programme that guarantees their security. Its state of deterioration – and the way in which it is leaning towards the PRoW – makes it risky to focus on just pruning part of the crown, or identifying specific branches or limbs to remove. There is a danger that any of its boughs could fall and injure someone.

It is therefore proposed to monolith the tree by removing the outer boughs while retaining the main trunk as a standing deadwood habitat, thereby enhancing local biodiversity and supporting saproxylic insects and nesting birds.

— — — Proposed limb removal, leaving the trunk.