

# WYLAM PARISH COUNCIL

## ANNUAL SURVEY OF TREES ON PARISH COUNCIL LAND July – August 2023

This is a visual, ground level assessment of the trees on land owned and managed by Wylam Parish Council, with a view to identifying any trees requiring work in the interests of public safety and in accordance with the Wylam Tree Policy. (The survey is essentially in line with the International Society of Arborists' Level 1 visual tree inspection. Levels 2 and 3 are for professionals where the tree is identified as needing a more detailed risk assessment)

***Where trees are potentially dangerous, a professional arboricultural opinion is recommended to confirm the condition of the tree and specify any necessary work.***

Survey findings are noted below. **(Actions in Red are priority)**

### **Abbreviations:**

TW = Tree Warden WPC = Wylam Parish Council / Parish Clerk. DBH = Diameter at Breast Height

NCC = Northumberland County Council. EA = Environment Agency. WAC = Wylam Angling Club.

### **Introduction**

Like 2021 and 2022 there was another prolonged cold dry spell in spring, followed by a very hot and quite windy period in May – June with no rain for 6 weeks, then a stormy and rather cool July. Ash dieback and horse chestnut blotch / leaf miner continue to be very evident and we can expect tree losses, hastened by the adverse weather.

Winter storms were less of a problem and a number of new trees (saplings and transplants) are doing well, helped by watering during the dry spell and by protective wire netting around the base to discourage mower and strimmer damage.

Generally speaking: little change since the 2020 - 2022 surveys and no serious and immediate hazards on parish council land requiring urgent action. It is always important to remain vigilant and check at-risk trees after storms and other adverse weather, particularly near roads, buildings, paths and the river bank.

The parish council agreed to carry out precautionary pollarding of 3 sycamore and re-pollarding of three crack willow: six large trees in total close to the river, below the houses at Tyne View. This is to reduce the risk of these large trees falling and pulling out a section of river bank. Work did not proceed as planned last autumn but should be done this coming autumn.

The three swings attached to trees on WPC land are still in place and have had new ropes added for safety, by persons unknown. (Engine Dene and Jackson Road) WPC have liability for such items on their land, in the event of an accident.

Damage (“scalping”) of surface roots during grass cutting has been much reduced as a result of protecting vulnerable tree bases and an agreement with Northumberland County Council Grounds Maintenance team to leave an area uncut: at least 60cm (2 ft) radius around mature trees. This protection area is particularly important for veteran trees. Roots of a veteran ash have been damaged by a contractor installing BT equipment at Dene Road.

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## 1 Engine Dene

Much as previous year. Northumberland Council are responsible for the eastern portion of this green space but have done no work to low hanging branches and dead wood on their large veteran ash trees, nor planted a replacement for a fallen alder. (Note: adjoining residents have reported concerns about the large ash trees to NCC)

On the WPC land, two very large veteran ash trees on the north garden boundary of no 20 The Dene are regularly inspected for dead wood, soil cracks and any other indications of problems, particularly after storms. The swing is still attached to a sycamore tree in a clump east of Woodvale Gardens. On visual inspection this seems reasonably sound and an extra length of rope has been added securing the swing to a second limb.

### Recommendations for potential hazards

Ash – large veteran trees.	2 no	Close to residential property boundary.	TW to monitor condition particularly after storms.
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## 2 Green space between Hedley Street, Jackson Road and The Dene

There has been more unauthorised work at this site. A shrubbery area adjacent to No 15 Jackson Road has been cleared of brambles and other undergrowth. Herbicide has been used. A tree was felled at the NW perimeter of this green space for no obvious reason. Two main stems of the veteran oak have been removed at approx. 10metres above ground, removing a substantial part of the upper crown. A large lateral limb of the oak has subsequently fallen exposed to strong gusts and has now been removed. A tree surgeon opinion is awaited on the condition of this tree.

A large elm has branches in contact with the roof /gutters of the property containing the take-away.

Replacement trees (two chestnut and an oak: transplants) have been planted on the site to replace those lost.

There are several younger trees , mainly birch, that are dead or dying. There is a dead young ash and a multi-stem sycamore (SE corner) with p foliage and bark damage. Many of these trees are tall and spindly - too close together and a thinning programme would be beneficial.

A swing attached to a branch of a large Norway maple at the south end of the central grassed space is still there and a second swing has been added in the adjoining maple.

There is no obvious damage to the trees but both carry some deadwood: the new swing in particular is attached to a tree that has visible splits in the bark of lower limbs and a second opinion on safety is advised. In the event of a fall, the area below the swings is hard packed bare earth with scalped tree roots.

A few years ago, I suggested clearance of poor, close grown and often self-seeded trees plus reduction of overgrown evergreen shrubs. Much of this work could be suitable for volunteers. An approach via a local resident to meet and discuss options was suggested but not taken forward in 2018. As suggested last year, perhaps now is the time to re-open the communication channels.

**Recommendations for potential hazards**

<b>Norway maple containing rope swings</b>	<b>2no</b>	<b>Tree limbs show bark splits.</b>	<b>Obtain 2<sup>nd</sup> opinion on safety of swing attachment points and seek advice from insurer.</b>	<b>WPC</b>
<b>Thin out spindly and dying trees and prune shrubbery.</b>				<b>WPC /Volunteers /TW</b>

**3 The Orchard - Church Road corner**

There is one new tree (rowan) that has died back but is continuing to put on healthy regrowth from the base. The others are healthy and have benefitted from wire netting protective collars to prevent mower damage

**Recommendations for potential hazards**

<b>Mature ash, yew, elm, chestnut.</b>	<b>Adjacent to wall</b>		<b>Monitor and control new ivy growth.</b>	<b>TW</b>
<b>Young trees.</b>			<b>Control height of elm regrowth to max 2m</b>	<b>WPC</b>

**4 Charlie's Corner**

The rowan trees continue to be slow to put on growth in the poor soil conditions but the existing birch is developing well. Three new trees have been planted this spring: a donated walnut to replace the storm damaged rowan and two birch saplings. All the trees here now have protective mesh collars to prevent the regular mower damage.

**Recommendations for potential hazards**

<b>None</b>				
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**5 Wylam Institute** (Note Advisory: the green space is **not** WPC responsibility)  
 No significant change or concerns. There are some large sycamore hard against the boundary railings; one is lifting the tarmac pavement. (The paving is the responsibility of Northumberland Council.) Several small laburnum show decay and should be pruned to remove dead stems. Low hanging branches should be pruned as necessary to maintain minimum 2.5m clearance over the footway. There is a low retaining wall around the corner of Church Road / Main Road and there is a section approx. 9 metres long that is crumbling. Road signs are very faded and need repainting. (Probably NCC)

**Recommendations for potential hazards**

None				<b>TW meet with Institute representative</b>
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**6 Wylam Haughs Nature Reserve**, including riverside trees and public footpath.  
 An ecological survey (October 2020) has shaped a management plan (agreed 2021) of tasks for the reserve, based on the ecological guidance and there have been a number of work sessions attended by a small informal group of volunteers carrying out hay raking, rotational bramble and shrub clearance and creation of a dead hedge. Several multi-stemmed sycamores were coppiced down south of the allotments. Planned tree work was carried out in the winter including thinning some diseased and overcrowded trees, removing some dead and fallen limbs and coppicing hazels. The coppicing will continue as a phased programme. Three oaks will be removed this winter from a line of 8 just west of the allotments. There is already regrowth of the coppiced trees and much natural regeneration generally across the reserve. Cherry and sycamore seedlings are over-abundant and will need some control and monitoring. Oak, crab apple, yew and holly saplings have been planted as replacements. For the main woodland there is little change from last year and no intervention is required.

There are two dead trees on the river bank near Points Bridge that could be reduced by 2/3 leaving the lower third as standing deadwood. The local anglers have requested work to a large pollarded willow with dieback. This could also be reduced and left as deadwood. (Woodpeckers forage and may have nested in these trees.) Firm proposal needed from the Angling Club.

Dead / dying shrubs leaning over the public footpath will be removed, together with trimming back blackthorn

Horse riders and cyclists enter the reserve from time to time via the wider gate on the Public Footpath and this is harmful to sensitive ground fauna and flora. More efforts are needed to dissuade them. Walkers would still be able to use can use any of the other 4 entrances to the reserve from the riverside public footpath.

A walk-through estimate has been made of tree numbers in the reserve and adjacent riverside – well over 800, 24 species of which 20 are native. Sycamore (Non-native) is dominant at 15 % with birch 10 % and cherry 10 % close behind. Both sycamore and cherry are producing a huge number of seedling trees within the reserve. Oak is 8% of the tree cover with understorey species hazel at 9%

### Recommendations for potential hazards – no significant concerns

None				<b>TW</b> <b>Monitor generally especially after storms and prune shrubs and deadwood adjacent to main paths.</b>
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## 7 The Haughs – Wylam Allotments Association

South of the allotments and beside the public footpath, there is some natural regeneration of a few trees(sycamore, goat willow) and berrying shrubs.(Elder, bramble, blackthorn, blackcurrant, raspberry, privet.) The area is reserved for potential future allotments, but is increasingly shaded by vegetation and riverside trees.

Within the allotments there are some scattered hawthorns 5 – 6 metres in height, fruit trees and a perimeter hedge. The hedge needs to be controlled in height down to 1.metres (4 ft) to prevent tall growth out of reach from the ground and shading of plots. The hedge should not be allowed to develop into trees. A taller hedge long established with gaps at the base would benefit from being laid to promote new basal growth.

### Recommendations for potential hazards

None	<b>Shading and tree root competition affecting plots.</b>		<b>Selective tree removal, pruning of overhanging branches.</b>  <b>Hedge laying on western boundary.</b>	<b>WPC / TW</b>  <b>Allotments Assoc.</b>
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## 8 Former Colliery Spoil Heap

No change from previous year. Erosion continues on steep sections particularly the south face next to the river. A tall dead elm now without bark is close to a well-used path east of the tip and should now be felled. A large veteran beech has bark disease. Otherwise there has been no obvious change that would indicate a significant increase in the current level of risk to people using the various informal paths on or beside the pit heap. (Refer to MWA consultants' assessment dated 13-02-2015 – reviewed by PC 2020.) Many trees at the top of the pit heap and on the level ground to the east, have a mass of basal growth and ivy at the base which prevents full inspection for basal decay. Trees and saplings on the western side will need modest thinning (last done in 2019 to keep the footpath clear. Some crown reduction / lifting of high limbs on larger trees also needed. Allotment holders have complained about the encroaching and leaning trees. Some thinning was done in 2019 and more is needed now including removing about 8 medium sized young elms.

### Recommendations for potential hazards

Elms and sycamore Pine, elm, beech	Overhanging trees, tall hedges	Thin saplings and prune branches extending over the public footpath. Prune off heavy limbs extending over footpath. Fell approx. 10 medium elms and larger dead elm.	WPC / TW
Beech, sycamore, ash, elm.	On or close to river. Large trees with exposed roots / rootplates.	Monitor trees and erosion particularly after severe weather, high river levels.	TW

### 9 Riverside south of Tyne View House and West View

Large riverside willows and sycamore due to be pollarded. Two of the willows have shed limbs into the river this year and these are still attached.

#### Recommendations for potential hazards

			Carry out planned pollarding	WPC
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### 10 Riverside south of Stephenson Court and Wylam Nurseries.

Despite new fencing at each end, the riverside footpath remains in use by walkers and fishermen, when river levels are not prohibitively high. Erosion and subsidence continues to be a concern and is being monitored by WPC. There are no significant changes to the trees since 2020 - 2021. The elder, goat willow and hawthorn, weighed down with ivy, lean heavily over sections of the path and will continue to collapse from time to time.

#### Recommendations for potential hazards

Mainly mature elm and sycamore	Leaning and dead/dying trees on the lower bankside, particularly where root plates are exposed	Monitor after storms and floods -	TW
Some mature sycamore, oak, ash but mainly smaller hedge trees.	Trees, ivy and scrub leaning over the footpath	Ditto -	TW

## Hagg Bank Playground

No concerns.

### Recommendations for potential hazards - none

None				WPC continue annual management programme.
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## 12 Wylam Wood Road

One lime blown over by storms – removed but no replacement as yet. Large willow pollarded but showing weak regrowth. No other significant change from previous reports noting poor condition of most of the trees in this group: fissures in main trunk, possible canker and Horse chestnut blotch / fungal disease, probably exacerbated by scalping of exposed surface roots. Lime tree overhanging the stone sign / planter needs crown lifting. (Too high to reach from ground)

### Recommendations for potential hazards

Lime, willow and chestnut group.		Bark damage and fissures, possible canker .		TW to monitor condition
Prune lime				WPC

## 13 Land adjacent To Stanley Burn

No concerns. Birch obscuring Northumberland sign.

### Recommendations for potential hazards

Birch adjacent to Stanley Burn			Pruning.	TW
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## 14 Ovingham Burial Ground

No significant change from previous year. Trees generally in good health apart from young ash on north boundary and the whitebeam noted in poor condition last year is now dead. Clearance and reduction of shrubs at top of entrance track successful.

Adjoining resident has concerns about large lime at entrance. Tree is protected by TPO. Await formal approach and application to NCC.

### Recommendations for potential hazards - none

				Consider a tree / landscape management plan. (Joint Management Committee)
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## 15 Forster Gardens

Hawthorn hedge 2 metres high. Receives annual cut though not on PC land.

### Recommendations for potential hazards - none

			<b>Review maintenance arrangement</b>	<b>WPC</b>
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Liz Bray

Wylam Volunteer Tree Warden

AUGUST 2023