



Update to Community Assets and Open Spaces, March 2026

Tree Guardian Volunteer – Steve Lichfield

Over the last year, our volunteer Tree Guardian Steve Lichfield has been assisting us with maintenance at Belmont Green and has recently been pruning the apple trees in WillowBrook Gardens and also at Belmont Green to help them to fruit productively. He will be undertaking some further pruning work for us at the Secret Garden, Boness Road to keep our 2021 planting there healthy. We are very grateful to Steve for undertaking this work for us which is in addition to the ongoing tree maintenance works which have recently been taken on by our Grounds Team. A risk assessment is in place regarding the safe activities which can be undertaken by Steve and we have a joint memorandum of understanding place with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust to support this activity which was agreed by CA&OS last year. Steve also volunteers for the Wiltshire Wildlife Fund and ARK (Action for the River Kennet).



Belmont Green Memorial Trees

There are some large Councillor Memorial trees planted at Belmont Green (nearest to Ridgeway Fence, by a bench) some years ago that are in a very poor state. As part of Steve's role, this has been brought to the attention of the Community Projects and Events Officer. On request, tree experts Southern Forestry have visited site to inspect these and recommend that two of the trees, which are dedicated to Mike Hinder and John Newman, are removed as they are slowly dying. Southern Forestry have advised:

“Both the species and are in poor condition. The lack of maintenance of correct pruning and damage to the base of the trees probably caused by strimming. Both trees have some basal growth. This basal growth will eventually convert both trees into multi-stemmed specimens. There is evidence of bacterial bleeding that will further deteriorate both trees. Regular pruning will exasperate this bleeding.

I suggest that two new memorial trees are planted that require little maintenance and should be long lived trees e.g.

Red Oak

Liquidambar Styraciflua- Sweet Gum

Ginko Biloba – Maidenhair Tree

Estimated cost of replacing with one of the above. Standard tree in a container 2.5m minimum height around £250.00 each plus VAT.*

Another suggestion would be to label two of the existing trees in the same area which have been planted more recently.”

*Please note there is no existing dedicated budget for this work.

Please turn over for photographs

Photographs of trees for Cllrs Hinder and Newman at Belmont Green





Secret Garden – Boness Road – orchard tree replacement

One of the dwarf, non fruiting apple trees at Boness Road has died. This should be replaced to maintain our stock levels in line with the original grant funding. We are awaiting a cost for the tree but have provisioned in the recommendation for upto £100 so that as soon as we have a price we can proceed with the work ahead, hopefully during this winter dormancy period. If we miss this, we will plant the replacement tree in the period of winter dormancy from late 2026 to early 2027.

Recommendations

1. Steve Lichfield continues as Tree Guardian volunteer and works more closely with WWPC Grounds Team to enable a coordinated approach to tree care and maintenance. (James Allison and Zee Carvalho of WWPC GT recently completed a day of 'on the job' tree maintenance training with our contractor Southern Forestry).
2. WWPC Councillors decide whether to fund two replacement Memorial Councillor trees (approx. £250 each) for the late Mike Hinder and John Newman or whether instead to label some of the existing trees planted in 2022 which are immediately nearby at Belmont Green in their honour. Budget of upto £600 with WWPC GT planting the tree could be considered if replacement trees are required (General Reserves 4650 450)
3. A replacement dwarf, non fruiting apple tree for the Secret Garden is sourced and planted in the appropriate season this year with a cost approved of upto £100 to be taken from General Reserves 4650 450.