

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
CLIMATE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE – 15 JULY 2021**

Officer: Helen Ball – Town Clerk

TREES

Purpose of Report

To update the Committees on programmes in relation to Trees

TREE CHARTER

The Council has been contacted by the the Tree Charter programme lead at the Woodland Trust.

The Tree Charter works in partnership with the National Association of Local Councils to help support local councils improve their canopy cover and create greater accessibility to woods and trees.

Details of the Tree Charter can be found at <https://treecharter.uk/>

The Tree Charter is a document of ten principles that launched in 2017, details of which can be found at:

Sustain landscapes rich in wildlife

Each tree is a world within itself, teeming with life. A fallen branch is a feast for beetles, fungal-rich woodland soil is a wildflower bed. A hedgerow is a living network, where a host of creatures share their home. Forests are full of opportunities for people, but their natural wealth is the wildlife. Our future good means thinking in the round, adapting plans to what is on the ground. New urban and transport projects should make routes for our native wildlife to move forward too. Take heed of nature's needs.

Plant for the future

When we enjoy the company of a treasured tree or the beauty of a favourite wood we often owe thanks to those with the foresight and confidence to invest in the future. We must show that same generosity of spirit, that same sense of hope for the future, and plant more now. Line streets with living greenery, let trees allow shifting colour into every life. More orchards for communities, more hedges for wildlife, more forests for timber and jobs. Nurture people's pride in their local trees and empower them to care for their future. Right tree, right place, bright future.

Celebrate the power of trees to inspire

Stories have always grown on trees. Artists are drawn to their intricacies. Woods are rooted in memories, but it's the leaf mould of tales told that nourishes future growth. The poetry of trees is always living, for every older work sends out new shoots. We grow attached to trees in books and learn to look for them in life. We feel connected to trees we know and love to see them painted well. Celebrate Tree Charter Day each year to strengthen this cultural legacy and help our living traditions thrive.

Grow forests of opportunity and innovation

Forests, woods and trees all flourish under the stewardship of skilled professionals. Trees reward us with fuel for enterprise, craft and invention, green energy and fires. Consider the source of wooden products and choose the home-grown from well-managed forests. Teach the rising generation that with responsible management a wooded land is a thriving nation.

Protect irreplaceable trees and woods

Ancient woods have been continuously wooded since before records started: they are living descendants from Britain's prehistory. A tree may be a village's oldest inhabitant, a founding figure in a region's identity, a natural monument in the nation's story. Thorn-bushes and hedgerows harbour our history. Old orchards are habitats for some of our rarest species and living museums of disappearing ways of life. A country that cares for its future cares for its past: we need laws and commitment to protect these irreplaceable natural treasures

Plan greener local landscapes

The trees that touch us most are those that live among us, along our street, in the local park, beside our school or place of work. Like us, they grow and change, need space to breathe and support to thrive. Trees give places their distinctive character. Local community networks have a vital role to play in caring for woods and trees. Trees provide long-lasting good, so well-informed planning reaps long-term rewards. Take guidance on planting, felling and replanting from skilled professionals. Good landscapes of the future depend on care for trees today.

Recover health, hope and wellbeing with the help of trees

Peace grows quietly in tree-lined places, where bees, fresh scents and birdsong revive our jaded senses. Sprays of greenery ensure cleaner air and clearer minds, and fitter bodies, more inclined to take a walk or meet a friend. Spirits lift and stress recedes when we stroll through healing glades. Parks and woodlands keep us well and help to quell fears of illness, ageing, loss – we breathe more freely under trees. Healthcare and tree-care go hand in hand: harness the therapeutic power of trees.

Make trees accessible to all

Trees offer shared experience to every age, religion and race. In woods people can work together, sharing experiences and learning from each other and their natural surroundings. Those who no longer move with ease can still find pleasure among the trees. Cheerful voices ring through leaves, from makeshift pitches and games of make-believe. There should be room for us all beneath spreading canopies.

Combat the threats to our habitats

Pests, diseases and climate change pose serious threats to our precious trees. Enlightened management of woods will help ensure their future health: planting strong seeds and saplings, selecting species suited to the site, keeping forests mixed in age and kind, regular thinning, combatting invasive plants, and controlling infections and pests at the earliest sign.

Strengthen our landscapes with trees

From roots that bind and enrich the soil to leaves that shade and shelter, from locking carbon into timber and purifying air and water, trees make our landscapes better. Rising water swells and floods, so strengthen riverbanks with roots. Bare hills need trees to keep the soil stable, to slow the flow of nature's deluge, to shelter sheep or shade the cattle. The right tree in the right place earns its keep again and again. As farmers and landowners benefit from woods, the country will be strengthened in the years ahead.

There are currently 281 town and parish councils that have registered as Charter Branches. Charter Branches sign up to support the Tree Charter and embed the principles in their local community.

There are benefits of the Town Council being part of this initiative. It allows for networking with others, access to specialist advice as well as validation of the methodology by which the Town Council operates its arboricultural work.

QUEENS GREEN CANOPY

The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) is a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 which invites people from across the United Kingdom to **"Plant a Tree for the Jubilee."**

Details can be found at <https://queensgreencanopy.org/>

Everyone from individuals to Scout and Girlguiding groups, villages, cities, counties, schools and corporates will be encouraged to play their part to enhance our environment by planting trees from October, when the tree planting season begins, through to the end of the Jubilee year in 2022.

With a focus on planting sustainably, the QGC will encourage planting of trees to create a legacy in honour of The Queen's leadership of the Nation, which will benefit future generations.

As well as inviting the planting of new trees, *The Queen's Green Canopy* will dedicate a network of 70 Ancient Woodlands across the United Kingdom and identify 70 Ancient Trees to celebrate Her Majesty's 70 years of service.

The Town Council is in a good position to be able to initiative a tree planting scheme in Shrewsbury. It did something similar in 2018 when it planted 17 Oak Tees to commemorate the centenary of the end of the First World War.

Discussions have taken place with Shropshire Association of Local Councils, Sustainability Officers at Shropshire Council and the Shropshire Horticultural Society about the Town Council facilitating the procurement of enough trees for the county. This would tie in with the Tree Nursery Project that we are facilitating at the Weeping Cross Depot in partnership with Shropshire Council and with DEFRA funding.

ASH DIE BACK

The Town Council identified the need to begin to address Ash Die Back Disease back in 2019. It set aside a financial provision of £100,000 to undertake a staged process:

1. Undertake a survey of all Town Council Ash Trees to determine the severity of the disease;
2. Initiate works to progress tree felling;
3. Develop a replacement strategy

We are now in Year 2 of what we think will be anything upto a 5-year programme. All trees have been plotted and assessed with all priority trees having been felled. Year 2 assessment has started; the window for assessment is very short given the fact Ash Trees are generally very slow in leafing and often shed their leaves the first. Year 2 tree felling will commence from October. Officer are looking at a list of traditional hard wearing trees to develop a tree replacement programme.

This disease has a negative impact on the Climate Emergency agenda but is a necessity given the prevalence of the disease, the speed by which it infects others and the timeframe from infection to tree death.

The programme also requires strong communications messages with the community at large and an awareness for residents to review any Ash Trees they may have in their gardens. If it is affecting trees in municipal settings across the town it will be affecting private trees.

It is the intention to keep this Committee involved in progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the report be noted
2. That the Town Council sign up to the Tree Charter
3. That officers progress with initiatives to appropriate mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee by taking part in the Queens Green Canopy
4. That progress of Ash Die Back be noted