

SALTASH TOWN COUNCIL VOLUNTARY TREE WARDENS' REPORT
PA22/09277
China Fleet Country Club Ltd Pill Lane North Pill Saltash PL12 6LJ

Works to trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) to fell two Oaks.

Three tree wardens visited the site and identified the two trees with the help of the applicant. The trees lie within a Tree Preservation Order Area, being the historic 'green lane' which formerly was access to the farm and has long-standing rows of native trees mainly oaks on both sides.

The application states that the trees are close to car parking areas implying they present a risk to people and/or property: we are not qualified to assess the risk and defer to the Tree Officer on that. We restrict our comments to the general condition of the trees.

Both trees are in excellent health with good leaf canopies forming their part in the green lane's canopy. As expected of mature oak trees, there are dead branches in both. Bark is healthy down to the ground and we could see no evidence of significant fungal damage at ground level. Both trees are hollow again as would normally be expected of mature oak trees, and in principle would not of itself increase the risk of falling.

The larger of the two trees is an impressive tree; it consists of three trunks, and the stump of a fourth remains up to a height of about 6 feet, showing considerable decay. This former trunk was clearly cut some years ago and the removed section lies close by, rotting. All this rot is of course perfect habitat for a large number of plant and animal species, brilliant for biodiversity. We measured the trunk girth below the level of multiple stems to be over 6m which suggests the tree could be more than 300 years old. Since the tree has a hollow trunk, dead wood, ivy and epiphytes it might meet the definition of a 'veteran' tree and qualify for inclusion in the Woodland Trust Ancient and Veteran list. We will investigate this further - though listing it doesn't bring any additional protection.

We concluded that the hollowing of both trees is not on its own a reason to fell them, subject to the Tree Officer's opinion on safety. There is one prominent branch from the larger, older tree which extends over the car park and might unbalance the tree, so could be removed if required for purely safety reasons.

Finally, we expressed our support for the China Fleet Club's stance in both maintaining and adding to their important stock of trees.

Adrian White
Saltash Voluntary Tree Warden