

# **About Trees**

Issue No 32

January 2021

Circulation 322

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#### Reprieve for TPO Trees at Southleigh Park - Terry Smith

On 10th December, HBC's Development Management Committee met to consider an application (APP/20/00757) by Bargate Homes to fell trees subject to TPO 1068 at Southleigh Park House, Eastleigh Road, Havant. The applicant claimed permission to fell the trees was given under the original hybrid application (APP/17/00863) which was in two parts:

**Full Application** for change of use, alterations to and extension of existing buildings to 20 Residential units, (13 dwellings in the main house and 7 in other Listed Buildings) with associated landscaping parking and amenity space. Full planning permission was granted for that part of the application.

**Outline Application** for the demolition of 1983 office building and associated brick and glass corridor link and development of up to 70 residential units, associated landscaping, parking and infrastructure works. Outline planning permission was granted **with all matters reserved**, except means of access.



Councillor Patrick said, "This is probably one of the most prestigious sites that the Borough has and would have made a wonderful country hotel and conference centre while at the same time providing hundreds of jobs for our local economy".

Photo: Grade II Listed Southleigh Park House (http://www.redwoodworld.co.uk)

In the December 2020 meeting, the committee unanimously refused consent to fell TPO trees because, in the absence of a reserved matters application being submitted and approved, the removal of all of the trees applied for would be premature and would lead to undue loss and detriment to the visual amenities of the locality. In particular, in the absence of approved layout and landscaping proposals for the development, the removal of all of the trees applied for would prejudice the proper consideration of natural features as part of the development.

Deputations from Havant Borough Tree Wardens and the Hampshire County Bat Recorder emphasised the arboretum standard of trees in the grounds as exceptional heritage assets and their value for wildlife and bats, in particular.

Photo: Giant Redwood in the grounds of Southleigh Park House (http://www.redwoodworld.co.uk)



This site is an exceptional hotspot of bat diversity and is of national importance for bat conservation. The wider area merits designation as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) as required under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

14 of the 17 species of bats breeding in the UK have been recorded on the application site or the immediate surroundings. All the rarer species are totally dependent on the presence of mature trees of a range of species for their roost sites, feeding resources and commuting routes. If these trees are felled, the cumulative effect of other very damaging development proposals in the immediate area is likely to render some of the bat populations no longer viable. It is impossible to see how any net biodiversity gain can be achieved if TPO status is removed from these trees.

The Havant Civic Society website has a very informative report which includes a recording of the meeting, the background to ownership and the application. <a href="https://havantcivicsociety.uk/2020/12/11/bargate-homes-southleigh-park-tree-preservation-orders/">https://havantcivicsociety.uk/2020/12/11/bargate-homes-southleigh-park-tree-preservation-orders/</a>

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#### Oak on Hayling Park Boundary – Judy Valentine

Last month I wrote about an oak along the Hayling Park boundary which was felled on 20th November. The line of trees is protected by TPOs. Kevin Peters, Arboriculture Technical Officer for Havant and East Hants, asked the enforcement team to look into the felling of the tree. He acted quickly to find out what had happened and has written to let me know that Council consent to remove the tree was given to the owner on 20th July 2020 under the dead and dangerous exceptions.

The Havant Borough website explains what this is:

#### 'Dangerous, dead and nuisance trees

Trees (subject to a TPO or within a Conservation Area) that have become unstable or are posing a threat to health and safety should be made safe by the owner or occupier of the land where the tree is located.

During normal working hours contact the Council's Customer Service Team on 02392 446015 for further advice. If you are faced with a dangerous tree situation outside of office hours then instruct a tree surgeon to make the tree safe and take photographic evidence of the situation. Customer Services can then be contacted following the event.'

In most circumstances tree officers are not been making site visits to dangerous trees because of workload caused by Covid and the knock on effects.



The oak on the boundary of Hayling Park being felled.

It is essential for the tree owner to contact the tree officer (except in the absolute emergency situation as outlined on the website. The tree officers rely on the professional judgement of the tree surgeon. They will ask for this information and a written/verbal report on the health and safety issue. After this they will give verbal/written consent to fell or undertake tree work without planning consent.

We don't know the circumstances of why the tree had to be felled, so my suggestions are pure conjecture. Could the tree shown in the photo be left as standing wood? Would a severe crown reduction have prevented the need for felling?

Some of you may have watched the 'Tree Risk and The Topping Debate' presentation by Jeremy Barrell and Andrew Koeser as part of the Arboricultural Association Wednesday evening talks series. Jeremy discussed topping and severe crown reduction as a good alternative to felling. On all occasions there is a professional judgement about risk to be made by the tree surgeon. A short interesting video that summarises the issues is available to watch on You Tube <a href="https://youtu.be/rliBxsuv9qq">https://youtu.be/rliBxsuv9qq</a>

If you haven't yet come across the free Wednesday talks from the Arboricultural Association, follow this link to find out more <a href="https://www.trees.org.uk/Training-Events/Online-Learning">https://www.trees.org.uk/Training-Events/Online-Learning</a>

#### Correction

Because consent was given under the dead and dangerous exceptions, no formal planning application was made to fell this tree. The article in the December 2020 issue of About Trees stated the felling was illegal; we were subsequently informed that was not the case and we apologise to all concerned.

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#### Hayling Update - Eric Walker

In December, for the first time, I saw MPs debating in Westminster Hall through my laptop. Because I had signed the petition "Legal rights for ancient trees", on 16th December I got to see the MPs debating the National Tree Strategy. The video for the event <a href="https://parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/5ab218b1-c48b-4227-bfab-9cc6902e3ca8">https://parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/5ab218b1-c48b-4227-bfab-9cc6902e3ca8</a> was still available when I submitted my copy and so was the Hansard transcript. <a href="https://www.theyworkforyou.com/whall/?id=2020-12-16b.125.0&p=25868#g132.0">https://www.theyworkforyou.com/whall/?id=2020-12-16b.125.0&p=25868#g132.0</a>

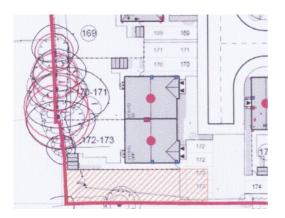
The session was only supposed to last for 90 minutes; it actually lasted 2 hours with six MPs from both sides of the house speaking. In that time I learnt so much.

I had not realised Chris Clarkson (Heywood and Middleton) had, in his first ten-minute rule bill, called for all future housing developments to have tree-lined streets adopted by the government and had 100% success. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Rebecca Pow) listed many sources of funds for new trees, which was encouraging.

The Northern Forest initiative seeks to put in a forest that will span 120 miles, connecting the cities of Liverpool, Manchester and Lancaster to the west, and Sheffield, Leeds and Hull to the east.

They did touch on my hobby-horse – that of trees being felled or pollarded and there is no measure of what is being removed. The MPs admitted this is also true everywhere else in the UK as well as Hayling Island. The government says planting more trees is absolutely central to efforts to address the two major environmental crises of climate change and biodiversity collapse. My observation is that in my small corner, more is being removed than planted. If a significant increase in tree cover is to be achieved then without a measure of what is being lost and its control, the planting of trees is one-sided.

My New Year's resolution is to get a second tree nursery to replace the one we lost in Hollybank Woods. When I read that Moor Trees in Totnes collect 30,000 acorns and get seeds or cuttings from 20 native species, I am inspired to do better. Having had my first COVID-19 vaccine, these aspects for 2021 are encouraging.



Barratt have submitted their Planning Application for 195 houses in Sinah Lane, again. With the architect in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the landscaping in Malmesbury and they are not taking notice of the effects of global warming on coastal communities, no wonder there will be problems.

A fragment of the Barratt proposal shows how properties 170 to 173 will be faced by existing trees on joint gardens, leading to the felling of the trees.

I predict that with Brexit settled and the pandemic under control "they" will then return to the flooding problems of London and the Thames Barrier being inadequate, so highlighting the problem for this island and this island nation. The Government is saying that under the new Environment Bill, every developer will have to put back 10% more nature than was there when it started and will have to look after it for 30 years.

Some of the speakers in the debate had clearly been listening to Jon Stokes and the Chinese proverb was quoted: "The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago, the next best time is now". Ed

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#### Tree felling in Windsor Road, Waterlooville

Hampshire Highways have instructed works to fell the following trees in Windsor Road, Waterlooville:

Outside no. 1 – dead cherry

Outside no.16 – apple in terminal decline and with basal decay

Outside no.17 – dead rowan

Outside no.22 - rowan in decline and with basal decay

Outside no.28 - dead cherry



The cherry outside 28 Windsor Road in October 2014 (Image: Goggle Streetview)

It is unclear what lead to the decline of these trees although Goggle Streetview images from October 2014 (the most recent available) indicate strimmer damage to some of the trees, which may have contributed.

The trees have been felled by HCC contractors and replacements are expected to be planted in next winter's planting season.

#### Hedge Planting at Warblington School – Grainne Rason

On 6th November, the first of 420 whips of mixed hedge plants arrived at Warblington School from the Woodland Trust. Over the next five weeks, teams of students from different year groups planted the whips along the back of the school playing fields. Each team adopted a tree name: Dogwood, Crab Apple, Hazel and Hawthorn. Luckily the weather was kind on most occasions and the students learnt that digging holes for the whips was not as easy as it looked but we avoided getting blisters. We coated the roots in mycorrhizal fungi to hopefully get the trees off to a good start. We will put mulch around the trees in February when both ground and mulch are wet and we are looking forward to caring for the trees throughout the time we are at Warblington School.

Right: The new hedge at Warblington School



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#### Update on Mill Rythe Holiday Village Building Works - Malinda Griffin

In the December edition of "About Trees" we reported concerns over the number of trees being felled during the £10million refurbishment of the Mill Rythe Holiday Village, Hayling Island. Additional concerns raised by residents living near the site included frequent bonfires on site producing choking smoke and floodlights to enable construction work to continue after dusk.

After persistent enquiries from residents and tree wardens to various HBC officers and Hayling Island councillors, one of the Borough's tree officers carried out a site visit. She confirmed that significant trees that should have been retained had been destroyed. This is a breach of Condition 2 of the Decision Notice and approval of the planning application for the site. HBC is now waiting for an explanatory report from the owner and a proposal of new planting to mitigate for the damage. Whilst this seems a reasonable result, it will not compensate for the loss of mature 'Legacy' trees such as oak, nor for the gap each felled tree will leave in the fragile fabric of local biodiversity.



The remains of trees removed from the boundary. (Photo: Stephen Southgate)



Bonfire on the Mill Rythe site. (Photo: Stephen Southgate)

HBC's Environmental Health Officers confirmed two further breaches of Planning Conditions on the site:

1. The bonfires on the Mill Rythe site were found to be breach of Condition 10, 4.7 of the approved Construction Ecological Mitigation Plan:

"During construction, fires will not be permitted on the development site and the work force will be made aware of the risks of accidental fires on surrounding retained habitats"

The owner/agent is now expected to confirm that there will be no more bonfires of any sort on site, in accordance with agreed planning conditions.

2. Night time lighting on site is permissible only in exceptional circumstances, and must meet guidelines to protect local wildlife:

"During construction, generally work will be scheduled during daylight hours. However during exceptional circumstances outside of the bat activity season (i.e. between November and February), when night work is required, construction phase lighting will be confined to the minimum level of nocturnal illumination necessary to allow construction works to proceed, with no up-light illumination permitted. No additional construction phase lighting will be permitted during the bat activity season, i.e. between March and October.

Lighting required in proximity to the boundary features, dense scrub or scattered trees, which are considered to provide suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bats, should be kept to a minimum and directed away from these features."

The Tree Council describes volunteer Tree Wardens as the "eyes, ears and voice" of trees in their local patch, but this can only happen with good links to the local community, so please continue to contact us with any concerns regarding trees near you. We may not be able to prevent harm, but we can sometimes get answers and solutions.

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#### The Queen's Inclosure - Terry Smith

In December, Havant Borough Tree Wardens and volunteers from other groups joined the Forestry England Ranger in The Queen's Inclosure, Cowplain to supplement regeneration with sixteen locally grown oaks. The majority of oaks were grown in pots with a few transplanted from gardens. Four walnut saplings were included to give the squirrels some variety in their diet.

The rest of the day was spent digging out invasive laurel.

We have been offered a few more oaks in pots and hope to add them later this season.

Right: Digging out invasive laurel.



#### New Trees from Hampshire County Council – Malinda Griffin

HCC's Street Trees Team has been taking a very active part in planting trees on our borough's highways. A total of 239 trees have been planted this season, the majority in Waterlooville and around Havant Town with 18 in Emsworth and 58 on Hayling Island.

Several have been disease-resistant Elm, e.g. 6 Ulmus New Horizon have been planted in the verge opposite the Saxon Corner development on Havant Road to replace trees felled for the new traffic lights. "New Horizon" is a non-suckering elm grown exclusively by Hillier as part of the resister elm breeding programme.



We hope the Havant elm plantings will provide habitat for threatened White-Letter Hairstreak butterflies, dependent on elm for breeding grounds since their caterpillars' sole food is elm leaves – when Dutch Elm Disease killed millions of UK elms in the 1970s it also devastated the White-letter Hairstreak butterfly population which dropped by 96%.

This once common butterfly is now at critically low levels, but in time we might be able to watch a colony of White-letter Hairstreaks in these elms – the males competing in spiralling aerial fights over territory over the canopy, while the females search for egg-laying places lower down.

Left: New Elm trees opposite Saxon Corner.

Even better news is that HCC Highways Street Tree Team are able to increase the number of trees they can plant, starting in winter 2021/22. They have asked for our help in finding suitable verges and roadsides – in time, there will be a special link on the HCC website where requests for Highway trees can be made, but if you send your suggestions to <a href="https://hbctreewardens@gmail.com">hbctreewardens@gmail.com</a> we will collate them and pass them on.

Each suggested site will be surveyed, although some of course may not be suitable (perhaps there are underground services or not enough room for roots to grow strongly), so look at your area, and let's help more trees thrive in Havant.

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#### Topiary on North Common - Terry Smith

In September I walked around North Common, Hayling, a SINC in HBC ownership, with Eric, Judy and Judy's husband, Paul, to look for a suitable site to plant additional trees. A site was agreed and trees were planted in November, as reported last month.



The view looking west showing trees cut to low bushes. The sea is to the right of the image. (Photo: Judy Valentine)

In front of Spinnaker Grange we saw dozens of well-established trees that had been repeatedly cut to the height of bushes. It was obvious the trees had been kept low to prevent them from obstructing the sea view from houses in Anchorage Place. I have been told the grass in front of some of the houses is mown at inappropriate times to the detriment of orchids and weed killer is used around fence panels.



Satellite view of topiary. (Image: Google)



Close-up of some of the damage. (Photo: Malinda Griffin)

Craig Stainton of HBC's Estates department is aware of the issues and will write to the residents of all properties bordering the common, informing them they do not have permission to carry out any work on the common.

## Malicious Damage to Protected Cedar – Malinda Griffin

Horndean Road is the main route connecting Rowlands Castle and Westbourne to Emsworth. To the north it is particularly verdant with woodland and fields to each side. Prestigious late-Victorian mansions, complete with frontages displaying fine specimen trees, once lined Horndean Road itself, sadly many of them felled now.

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Very few of those Heritage trees remain, but there is still one particularly fine Atlas Cedar, invaluable for its visual presence and stature within this rather suburban view. Because of its undoubted significance it, (together with a neighbouring lime tree), was given a TPO when concerns were raised by neighbours about its future well-being when the house was sold several weeks ago. This led to a survey visit from the local authority Arboriculture Team, and TPO number 2116 was put in place to protect them from potential harm.





Close-up of the trunk showing the bark removed.

The cedar in Horndean Road, Emsworth.

The new owners were notified of their responsibilities to look after both 'public amenity' trees in order to ensure they continue to thrive and give pleasure for another 150 years. However, look again at the photo and notice the deeply cut rings of removed bark. Both these protected trees have been ring-barked in the last month. This shocking behaviour is clearly intended to threaten tree health. The deep wound has severed the vascular system, preventing the trees' uptake of water and nutrients, and will likely result in the slow death of the trunk above the 'girdle'.

Clearly a depressing prospect that raises the question "What can be done?"

HBC Enforcement officers investigated the case but, "following an interview under caution and enquiries received, did not conclude with any substantial evidence and therefore the Council is not in a position to move this case forward with any prosecution at this time". (e-mail 22.12.2020)

HBC's proposal is that the owner now applies for the felling of these protected trees, and the replacement planting of two new trees.

Is this game set and match for local tree vandals? Maybe not! Watch this space.



This photo of a tree covered with mistletoe on the corner of Applewood Grove, Widley was taken on Christmas Day. (Photo: Terry Smith)

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#### **Tree Council Funding for Portsmouth – Pauline Powell**

Simon Pearce, Tree Officer at Portsmouth City Council, has been successful in his application for funding from The Tree Council to plant trees as follows:

200 mixed native whips in Staggs Wood, Baffins 200 mixed native whips on Great Salterns field area

- 10 standard trees in London Road
- 20 standard trees in Hilsea Sea Defence area
- 10 standard trees in John Wesley Gardens

The award amounting to £15,543 will include maintenance and the first year's watering costs. Simon will be busy organising these plantings after Christmas with the relevant persons. With the above trees, PCC as a whole including Colas, Housing, the Tree Wardens and Parks will have planted 1.286 trees so far for 2020/21 within Portsmouth.



These photos of the Stagg Woods/Baffins area show where infill planting will take place.



I have just heard more good news! The Tree Council has agreed to fund the extension of the Charles Dickens Community Orchards project and fund orchards for initially seven schools in the City. Much thanks to Trish Bell and Hellen Betteley of PCC for their sterling work in researching and costing the Orchards for Schools project, and liaising with the Tree Council. And many thanks to the Tree Council for their support.

#### "A World without trees would be a world without chocolate"



Jon Stokes, Director of Trees, Science and Research at the Tree Council speaks to Gardens Illustrated about a life spent among trees and nature, the importance of the tree warden scheme and why we all need trees in our lives.

https://www.gardensillustrated.com/gardens/gardeners/jon-stokes-tree-council-interview/?utm\_source=twitter&utm\_medium=article&utm\_camp\_aign23Dec

Left: Jon Stokes with wild service tree. (Photo: Judy Valentine)

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#### **Tree Council Jobs**



In December 2020, The Tree Council and Partners received confirmation that their joint £1.8m bid to the Green Recovery Challenge Fund had been successful. The Fund is financed by Defra and is being delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency.

The 18-month programme, called Close the Gap, focuses on hedgerows and is jointly presented by The Tree Council, with People's Trust for Endangered Species, Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group, Moor Trees, University of Reading and Hedgelink (the partnership organisation for those with an interest in hedgerows). The Tree Council is the lead partner guiding the delivery of the programme, supported by a Steering Group with representatives from each organisation.

The Tree Council has four new positions to help deliver the Close the Gap programme.

#### Close the Gap – Project Manager

We're looking for a Close the Gap Project Lead who can demonstrate strategic thinking, as well as practical planning, delivery and communication skills. You will need to bring partners together to deliver this ambitious programme on time and on budget and be inspired by the idea of working independently, across a wide range of disciplines (environment, technology, comms, education, volunteering), on a nationally significant project.

Deadline for applications: 12th January 2021 - midday

### **Close the Gap – Development Manager**

We're looking for a Development Manager to help ensure the continued financial stability, growth and success of our charity, as well as the many programmes and projects that we deliver.

Deadline for applications: 20th January 2021 - midday

#### Close the Gap – Community Engagement Officer

We're looking for a skilled Community Engagement Officer who can demonstrate a passion for connecting people and the environment and inspiring communities to take local action. You will have minimum three years' experience of working with a wide range of voluntary groups, ideally including 16-24 year olds, and you will also be an advocate for the ecological, economic and social importance of hedges and trees.

Deadline for applications: 20th January 2021 - midday

#### **National Schools Programmes Officer**

We're looking for a talented project manager to help support our National Schools Programme with the aim of encouraging young people across the UK to be a #ForceForNature by learning, planting and caring for trees.

Deadline for applications: 14th January 2021 - midday

https://treecouncil.org.uk/jobs/

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#### **Diary Dates**

The Tree Council urges Tree Warden Networks and other volunteer groups NOT to organise planting events which would include more than one family group/support bubble during the current time, until restrictions are lifted or changed. In line with that request, work parties organised by Havant Borough Tree Wardens have been postponed until further notice.

# Wednesday 13th January at 7:30pm - The Secrets to Good Natural Observation Free talk on Zoom.

Simon Watts of WILD! Presentations UK explores natural observation and the key elements that can gain access to better experiences and thus filming opportunities when out and about. Hosted by the Charnwood Local Wildlife Trust Group.

https://www.lrwt.org.uk/events/2021-01-13-local-group-online-talk-secrets-good-natural-observation-simon-watts

#### Tuesday 19th January 3.00 - 3:45pm - Talk on Ancient Trees



Meet the Ginko, the Metasequoia and Wollemia, three trees known as fossils and thought to be extinct before scientists discovered that they are still around in our days living and growing.

Join scientist Fred Rumsey and science communicator Cristina Torrente and find out how these widespread trees slowly retreated to hidden and remote areas of our planet and learn about their rediscoveries.

https://www.nhm.ac.uk/events/nature-live-online-ancient-trees.html

#### Wednesday 27th January 6:30 - 7:30pm - Talk: An Introduction to Plant Galls

This free talk hosted by the London Natural History Museum explains the fascinating abnormal growths caused by viruses, fungi bacteria, other plants, insects and mites.

James Heal will focus on commonly found galls and will pay special attention to those he finds locally. He will organise his talk by causer species type and it will be suitable for those with little (or even no) knowledge of galls.

https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/an-introduction-to-plant-galls-by-james-heal-tickets-123949196383?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch

#### Friday 29th - Sunday 31st January - RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch

Spend an hour counting the birds you see in your garden, from your balcony or in your local park, then report what you saw.

If you feed birds to attract them to your garden, make sure you keep feeding them. Birds rely on regular food sources and flying to empty feeders wastes energy and can affect their survival.

https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch/

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#### **Newsletter Contributions**

Please submit newsletter contributions to hbctreewardens@gmail.com

**Deadline for next issue:** 24th January 2021

Photographs illustrating articles or photographs on their own (with captions) would be appreciated. If you are not the photographer, please check you have permission and say who is so that credit can be given. To keep file sizes manageable, please avoid sending high resolution images. The ideal image size is 250KB or less.

If you embed images in documents, please also send the images as attachments.

Please let us know if you have ideas for future articles or subjects you would like to see included.

#### Would you like your own copy of this newsletter?

If this newsletter was forwarded to you and you would like to request your own copy, please send an e-mail to hbctreewardens@gmail.com

#### **Membership of Havant Borough Tree Wardens**

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in trees. We do not currently charge a membership fee and, although we need members who want to be involved in practical tasks or the running of the network, we also welcome supporters. If you would like to become a member, please request a membership application form by e-mail to <a href="mailto:hbctreewardens@gmail.com">hbctreewardens@gmail.com</a> or download it from our website. <a href="https://groups.tcv.org.uk/havantboroughtreewardens/">https://groups.tcv.org.uk/havantboroughtreewardens/</a>

#### **Donations**

If you would like to make a donation to Havant Borough Tree Wardens, payments can be made into our bank account.

Account No: 84937017 Sort Code: 55-70-34

Please include your name as a reference.

#### **Havant Borough Community Lottery**

You can also support us through the Havant Borough Community Lottery. You have the chance to win up to £25,000, plus additional prizes in special draws, and we receive 50p from every £1 ticket. A further 10p is paid into a community fund and grants for specific projects are distributed from the fund to eligible good causes every six months.

https://www.havantlottery.co.uk/support/havant-borough-tree-wardens

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