

WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Planning & Environment Committee

Public Open Space – Common Platt

- 1.1 Previously an area of land at Common Platt has been brought to the attention of this Committee and highlighted as an anomaly. Swindon Borough Council owns this land even though it is outside of both the Parish boundary and Borough boundary. The Parish Council currently undertakes grounds maintenance/grass cutting here however it is highlighted as an area to be reviewed as part of the Deed agreement.
- 1.2 The Parish Office has recently received a communication from a local resident regarding maintenance concerns with a request that this Committee considers the situation. Details of the correspondence are set out below:

The SBC tree gang was here 4 weeks ago and cut 2 willow trees down to the ground, applied stump killer and crown lifted the other trees. They have not returned since so we presume that they have completed their work.

This is good progress and has made the ground area more accessible so now, once WSPC has removed all the debris and the dumped green waste, it will be possible for them to cut the grass and keep it maintained. We have noticed recently that more garden rubbish has been added to the existing pile.

However it is disappointing that the other 8 willow trees have only had a few lower branches removed. This leaves the very tall top heavy branches that are relying on decaying and diseased trunks to support them.

This is our main concern, as the cutting season is drawing to a close, are these trees going to be left in their current state for another growing season?

They are likely to grow another 2 to 3 metres taller and the trunks might not be able to support them in any adverse weather conditions, which will cause damage to our fence and property.

. . . work men said the reason for removing the 2 trees was because they had been neglected for several years and the roots were trespassing on land causing damage to garage and patio area.

We do not understand why the reasoning for cutting down these 2 trees does not apply to the other 8 trees. They have been just as neglected and their roots are spreading just as far probably doing as yet unseen damage to our property.

Why can't they all be totally removed and the area cleared once and for all, to allow easy access to both the grass area and drainage channel, and to open up the area which would give it a much nicer outlook for the neighbourhood?

- 1.3 The resident has asked for this Committee to consider what else could be done, however they are aware of the division of responsibilities in relation to trees and tree maintenance. The Parish Council is not the land owner and cannot make any significant changes to the open space environment.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 The Parish Council has maintenance obligations within the legal Deed agreement. There are regular cuts to the grass as part of the grass cutting programme and we responds to issues relating to flytipping. The Parish Council does not receive any precept from residents in this area as they are living outside of the Parish boundary. This will be considered further as part of the review of the deed. Generally any unfunded work undertaken outside of the Parish boundary diverts resources away from the Parish.
- 2.2 The Parish Council is not responsible for major tree works and has no permissions in place for felling or significant reduction work.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 For the Committee to review the feedback and consider whether there is a need to undertake any further action.

Paula Harrison
Parish Manager