

Report of the Head of Planning & City Regeneration

Planning Committee - 6 September 2016

PROVISIONAL TREE PRESERVATION ORDER P17.7.4.618

LAND AT NEWTON VILLAGE HALL, CASWELL ROAD, SWANSEA. 2016.

To consider the confirmation, as a full Order, of the provisional Tree Preservation Order 618: Land at Newton Village Hall, Caswell Road, Swansea. 2016.

Recommendation:

That the Tree Preservation Order: Land at Newton Village Hall, Caswell Road, Swansea, be confirmed.

For Decision

1. Introduction

1.1 The provisional tree preservation order was served on 11th April 2016.

2. Objections and Representations

2.1 One letter expressing an objection was received within the minimum required consultation period. No letters of support were received.

2.2 The objection has been received from the management committee responsible for Newton Village Hall which is included in its entirety in 2.3.

2.3 *"The St Peter's Parochial Church Council wishes to make an Objection to the Authority's Order to place a Tree Preservation Order on the "Shallow Root" Scots Conifer Pine Tree situated in close proximity to The Newton Village Hall.*

The Church Council respectfully requests The Planning Committee to consider the following reasons for making this objection.

On the 5th January 2016 the nearby "twin" tree approximately 18 feet away and 6 feet from the building fell down. There was no wind or rain during that day and the falling tree was witnessed by three persons in Caswell Road at 11.25 a.m. The fallen tree and the tree on which has been placed the provisional TPO were planted on this site in 1908 and so are more than 100 years old. The tree that fell narrowly missed the Village Hall Building (built in 2010) and fortunately no one was hurt and there was no damage to the Village Hall and Church Buildings. The Village Hall is used regularly during the week by over 400 people from the Community and The Church. The

Village Hall was built by voluntary public subscriptions received from the Local Community and also fund-raising Events to a total of £500,000 received over a period of 7 years and is a much used Community facility. The Hall is run by a Voluntary Team of 40 people from The Community. The adjoining Church roadway situated between St Peter's Church and The Village Hall is in regularly daily use by many people, so Church Members and Community Hall Users are all concerned about the potential danger of the standing tree. This tree, similar to the fallen tree, is more than 60 feet high and has very thick branches and because of its close proximity to the Village Hall it would obviously cause major damage if it falls. Should it fall in the other direction it will damage the end wall of the beautiful 113 year old St Peter's Church which has a large stained glass window.

Although The Council's Experts say the standing tree is not diseased neither was the fallen tree. The area on which they are planted due to the heavy rain over the past 6 months appears to have a high water table and we are advised because this species has shallow roots, approx 3- 4 feet, this could well have been the reason for the tree falling without warning.

We would emphasise our request is for safety reasons. If our request to cut down this tree is accepted we will be very willing to purchase two replacement Trees to be planted in the grounds and we will take your Officers advice on the type of tree.

Thank you for your consideration of this major problem which is causing very many local people great concern”.

3 Appraisal

- 3.1 The pine tree at Newton Village Hall is protected by virtue of being within a conservation area. On the 1st March 2016 St Peter's Parochial Church Council notified the authority that they intended to fell the pine tree. A neighbouring tree of similar size had fallen and the Church Council are concerned that this tree will fail also.
- 3.2 The tree contributes significantly to local amenity in the immediate area and appears to be in good condition. There are no signs that this tree is susceptible to failure and as such the proposed felling is not based on arboricultural reasons.
- 3.3 It was deemed necessary to create a tree preservation order to ensure that any future felling or work is based on sound arboricultural principals.
- 3.4 Felling protected trees because they could cause damage if they were to fall is a risk adverse method of management and would lead to many fine trees being removed which pose little risk.
- 3.5 The St Peter's Parochial Church Council did not consider this tree a risk until the 'twin' tree failed in January 2016.

- 3.6 Pine trees are shallow rooted and the 'twin' tree most likely fell due to saturation of the soil. Rainfall recorded at the Swansea Bay station at Blackpill in the period 1st January to 8th January 2016 was 64.2mm. This figure compared to the average for the month of January of 98-110mm (depending on source of information) indicates that the rainfall in the days leading up to the tree failure was unusually high.
- 3.7 The St Peter's Parochial Church Council has not provided any documentation from an arboriculturist or other professional detailing that this tree is at any more risk of failure than in its previous 100+ years.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 That the Tree Preservation Order: Land at Newton Village Hall, Caswell Road, Swansea. 2016; TPO P17.7.4.618 be confirmed without amendment.