

Meeting	Full Council
Date	22 nd September 2026
Report Title	Thames Avenue Tree Matter: 93 Thames Avenue
Agenda Reference	12A
Author	Jason Watts, Parks & Open Spaces Manager Laura Cutter, Deputy Clerk/RFO, HR & Services Manager Georgina Morgan-Denn, Chief Officer/Clerk & RFO

Officer's Recommendation

1. To proceed with reducing the tree by 30% to reduce the amount of water consumption on a one-off basis, at a cost of £820.00 + VAT to be met from 4301/307.
2. To note all future tree works will continue to be monitored, reviewed and managed appropriately in line with the Council's Tree Survey [2025 – 2030].
3. To note that the resident has investigated purchasing the land with Swindon Borough Council.

Background

The residents have reported experiencing shrinkage and expansion within the walls of their property and have raised concerns that the adjacent oak tree may be contributing to the movement. Swindon Borough Council (SBC) has recommended a 30% reduction of the tree to reduce its water consumption and, consequently, its potential impact on the surrounding ground conditions. SBC has advised that the cause of shrinkage and expansion within the walls is not proven to be a direct result of the tree and a structural engineer, at the cost of the residents, should assess the property to determine the cause of the cracking and identify any necessary remedial measures.

The land is owned by Swindon Borough Council but leased on long-term lease to Haydon Wick Parish Council. As the Parish Council does not have a tree team, the support from the SBC Tree Officer has been greatly appreciated.

Professional Statement

The tree has previously been significantly reduced and maintaining it at an appropriately reduced size through a regular maintenance regime will help limit its water demand. Given that much of the Swindon area is situated on shrinkable clay soils, changes in soil moisture caused by prolonged hot and dry periods can result in soil movement and potentially contribute to cracking and subsidence. Removing the tree could create further problems as the root system decays, potentially resulting in changes to soil conditions and further ground movement.

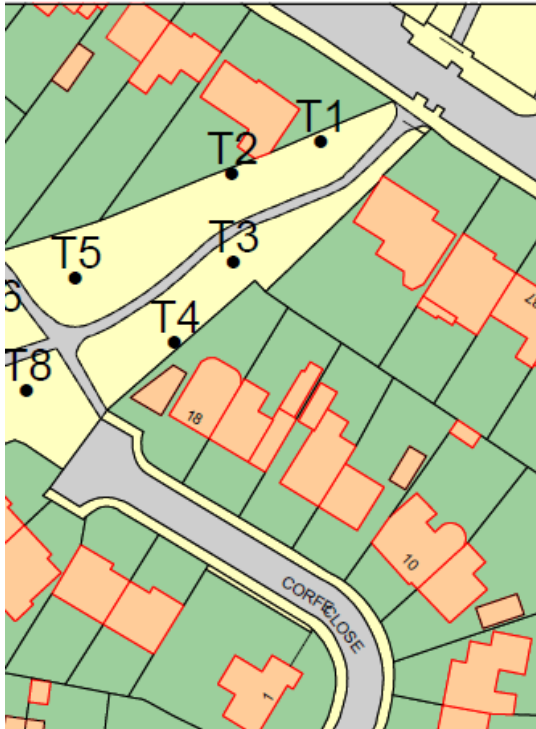
Previous Tree Maintenance

In December 2020, the SBC Tree Team pruned the tree up to 40% to see if this would alleviate the issue – it helped substantially.



Tree Survey Findings [2025 – 2030]

The Parish Council commissions a tree survey every five years. The last survey was done in early 2025 and there was a 12 – 18 month remedial recommendation for this tree.



T001 – Common Ash

- Asymmetric crown
- Suppressed by neighbour
- Minor deadwood throughout crown
- Co dominate branches
- Epicormics throughout crown, potential signs of stress

Recommendation: Remove failed hanging branch at 11m, on southern aspect within 12 – 18 months.

Resident Statement

The residents have confirmed that they wish to work constructively with the Parish and SBC to find a positive, cost-effective long-term solution to the ongoing issues. They have proposed purchasing the land for £1, subject to an agreed boundary/offset, and are willing to accept a covenant preventing any permanent or temporary structures being built on the parcel.

They have also offered to undertake tree reduction and eventual removal over the next five years in consultation with the Parish and SBC Tree Officers, and to accept responsibility for any further damage to surrounding buildings. They consider this to provide appropriate safeguards and reduce potential long-term financial liabilities for the Parish.

The residents have asked whether any response has been received from the Legal and Land Department and have indicated that they would be willing to commission a structural survey, estimated at £500–£1,000, although this would not be available before the meeting.

They have requested an opportunity to speak at the meeting and present a prepared statement, answer questions, and clarify that they should not be associated with views or comments made by the previous owners. They have emphasised their wish to establish a positive working relationship with the Parish.

The residents have also highlighted that further cracks have appeared since the site visit and consider the matter to remain urgent. They have invited Parish Councillors to inspect the damage and have requested that the ongoing deterioration and need for an initial tree reduction be noted, given the previous reductions undertaken by SBC over approximately 20 years.



Figure 1: Google Maps