

NOTES OF THE TREE AND HEDGE APPEAL GROUP – 3 JUNE 2010**South Hams District Council (Parish of Slapton) (No.10) Tree Preservation Order 2010 – Cleeve, Prospect Hill, Slapton**

Present: Cllr Fielden (Chairman)
Cllr Baldry
Cllr Blackler
Cllr Howarth
Cllr Ward

In attendance:

Simon Putt (Tree Officer)
Mr and Mrs Troake (Owners and objectors)
Mrs H Davey (Neighbour and objector)
Mrs V Mercer (Slapton Parish Council tree warden)

The Appeal Group undertook an inspection of the trees at Cleeve, Slapton, specifically viewing those which were subject to the Tree Preservation Order (TPO). The Tree Officer gave a brief background history and stated that the TPO had arisen as a result of an anonymous call to the office, to say that the trees were in danger of being felled. This was despite a previous visit to the Council from the objectors, who had advised of their intention to fell the trees, and they were told at that time that no TPO existed. A subsequent visit by the Tree Officer following the anonymous call, assessed the trees and found their score was high enough to warrant a TPO being served.

The Group asked for clarification as to which tree was which, as there were four in total. The Group also questioned what had happened to two other trees, whose stumps were visible. In response, the objector advised that he had been told that one of the trees had been removed as it affected two of the trees that were left, and the other tree, which was also a Monterey Pine, had been lost as a result of a storm. Both events had taken place prior to the owners buying the property.

The remaining trees were thought to be around eighty years old.

Once all Members were satisfied that they had viewed all aspects of the trees, the Inspection was concluded and the Group then reconvened at a local village hall, and the hearing was held. Mr and Mrs Troake also attended and took part.

During discussion, particular reference was made to:-

- (a) the subjective nature of the scoring. The score was based on the Tree Officers assessment. Elements of the score were challenged by the objectors who had come up with a different score, and it was admitted that other people may score differently as the scoring system used (the Helliwell system) was based on professional opinion. In addition, the trees were treated as a group, despite some differences between T1 and T2, and T3 and T4;
- (b) the objectors stated that if the TPO was not confirmed they would not remove the trees immediately, and they would be replaced with more appropriate trees;

- (c) a great deal of discussion centred around the element of risk. The risk assessment clearly indicated that the assessment of risk of the trees falling down, or branches falling from the trees, was acceptable. To ascertain the risk, the condition of the trees was inspected and there were no indications of damage, such as heave or deformations in the bark. However, in light of previous incidents resulting in loss of life, the owners were extremely concerned that, in bad weather, the trees could still fall.

It was then:-

RESOLVED

That South Hams District Council (Parish of Slapton) (No.10) Tree Preservation Order (2010) be Confirmed with Modifications to include the trees designated as T3 and T4.