

## REMOVAL OF TREES AT MANLEY ROAD COPSE

Several mature trees have recently been removed from Manley Road Copse, a small area of land in the ownership of FTC, on Manley Road, Frodsham.

The trees have mainly been Beech trees, but others, including a Larch have also been removed.

Our attention was drawn to this area last autumn, when a bough from a Beech tree broke free and damaged the roof and internal ceiling of a house on land adjoining the copse.

We engaged the local CWaC Tree Officer to carry out an inspection (from the ground) of the tree. He suggested crown thinning and crown reduction of the tree.

We then engaged a CWaC registered Arborist (tree surgeon) who is also registered with the Arboriculture Association. Unfortunately on closer inspection of the tree (by climbing) it was discovered that the tree was in a very poor state. It was also found that the tree was in fact made up of 3 trees which had combined.

The Arborist found that the tree was infected with a fungi - *Ganoderma applanatum*, this is a bracket fungi that both feeds on heartwood and also living sapwood. It is a common disease found in mature Beech trees. It is also known as artists bracket and bear bread.

The trees were also 'suffering' from water pockets, caused by the trees branching habit, causing rot within the tree.

The advice given to FTC was that the only solution was, sadly, removal of the trees.

FTC invited tenders and an approved contractor was engaged. Although there were no Tree Preservation Orders on the trees (TPOs), whenever a tree of this age is felled a licence has to be obtained from the Forestry Commission.

This licence took time to be issued, and FTC needed to complete the works by the end of March to avoid encroaching into the nesting season. Also mammal habitat could also have been compromised.

It was also decided to remove several other trees on site which were fast becoming a problem, stability-wise. One of these - a Japanese Larch, was very shallow rooted due to the area being sandstone, with very little topsoil, resulting in a serious stability problem. There was also a danger that the said tree would become infected by other fungi- *Phytophthora ramorum*. This is spreading throughout the UK, attacking numerous species. The generic Ramorum disease is also known as Larch disease and sudden Oak death. It has also attacked Beech trees.

Storm 'Doris' realised our 'fears' by bringing down trees at the copse, blocking Manley Road. Work is now completed and the trees have been removed. FTC has financed the removal, but costs were kept somewhat lower by the contractor removing the timber for sale as logs.

We now plan to 'leave the area alone' during the nesting and breeding season to allow nesting in the hedgerow, etc. This will also allow the seed bank to maybe 'wake up' due to ground disturbance, allowing species of wildflowers to germinate.

Replanting will then take place, the species being selected for visual and habitat value. Such species as wild cherry (gean), red hawthorn and rowan/mountain ash. The hedgerow will also be replanted where there are gaps.

Whilst it is very sad to lose any tree, especially a mature one, this was unfortunately the only solution.

With the new planting and monitoring in the future, hopefully the copse will continue to provide a quiet area for people to enjoy.

Alan Oulton  
FTC Councillor for Castle Ward  
Chair of the FTC Environment Committee  
Deputy Mayor 2016/17