

**May, 2020**

## **Tree work at Marlhill Copse Q&A**

### **What work are you doing?**

Following Southampton City Council's approval of our recent TPO application (20-00067-TPO), we are currently felling 5 trees within Marlhill Copse. The five trees are considered to be at high risk of failure, with such a failure having the potential to cause harm to the public or damage to adjacent property. As part of the works, we will replant 15 trees within the copse later in the year.

### **How long will it take?**

Works started on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020. We plan to finish by Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2020. Replanting will be completed later in the year.

### **Are you allowed to work given the ongoing Coronavirus situation?**

Whilst vital social distancing measures continue, the work can go ahead as it is primarily of a nature to ensure public safety. This is permitted under Defra guidance allowing arboriculturalists to carry out such works on these grounds. All specialist arboricultural workers on site will follow strict Public Health England guidelines.

### **Why these specific trees?**

The five trees in question have a number of defects, evidence of disease or decay and history of significant failure. All of the trees have been assessed by qualified arboriculturalists and we follow their recommendations and advice. We experienced a significant number of tree failures during the winter storms earlier in the year.

The extent of failures was widespread and severe throughout the copse. Each of the 5 trees overhang property adjacent to the copse and as a responsible land owner, we have to act on the advice of arboriculturalists and in reaction to the storm events earlier in the year.

### **Can you give me a bit more detail?**

Detailed reports and supporting information can be found on the council's planning website [here](#). However, we plan to fell:

- One Beech tree, which has multiple defects, including fungal growth (Ganoderma), weak split stems, evidence of internal decay. The tree has a heavy lean over adjacent properties;
- One Ash tree, which has a large cavity in its main stem, is topped and of very poor form. Once again it has a heavy lean over adjacent property.
- Three Monterey Pine trees which are beyond their safe useful life expectancy and from which we saw the most damage during the winter storms. These trees cause us the greatest concern due to their size and position towering over the adjacent bungalow properties.

**Why now, aren't we in bird nesting season?**

Given the urgency of the works and our ongoing safety concerns, we cannot delay the works. This unfortunately means we will complete the works during the bird nesting season. We are acutely aware of the ecological and environmental implications of our work and the importance of Marlhill and the surrounding area as an important and sensitive woodland habitat. All works will be completed under the watchful eye of a qualified Ecological Clerk of Works who will be on site throughout the works. Our site team will follow their instruction, advice and guidance.

Natural England are aware of the works and we follow their guidance, legislation and licencing requirements throughout the project. During the works we will look to recreate habitat through monolith and deadwood retention.

**Isn't this all about airport expansion?**

Our priority is to make the woodland safe for the public and neighbouring properties. The work to fell five trees is because they are considered to be at high risk of failure, with such a failure having the potential to cause harm to the public or damage to adjacent property. Despite rumours to the contrary, none of the works at Marlhill, are related to airport expansion. Other rumours which have circulated including that the copse is going to be developed into houses or used to physically expand the airport are completely untrue and without substance.

**Have you got any future plans for Marlhill?**

In addition to the tree work, we have been improving pathways and seating, planting more trees and working with local groups to ensure the copse is a beautiful, safe and healthy community space for all to enjoy.

New specially-designed signage and information boards detailing flora and fauna that lives within the copse will be introduced later in the year, as well as an extension of the Townhill Park Mosaic Way through the woodland. We are working with the council to provide a better link through the copse and on to Cutbush Lane.

Following a period of consultation with statutory bodies including Natural England, Historic England, the Forestry Commission and Southampton City Council as well as community groups including Townhill Residents Association, SO18 Big Local and the Hampshire Gardens Trust, we will submit our Woodland Management Plan for the copse to SCC towards the end of May. The woodland management plan will outline how we plan to manage and enhance the woodland over the next 5-10 years and will be open for consultation via the council's planning website ([planningpublicaccess.southampton.gov.uk](http://planningpublicaccess.southampton.gov.uk))

**How can I contact the airport if I have a question or an issue?**

The airport has a dedicated mailbox for all Marlhill related issues.

Please e-mail:

[Marlhill@southamptonairport.com](mailto:Marlhill@southamptonairport.com)