

DRAFT: 29/01/2018

TREE SURVEY FOR ASTON TIRROLD & UPTHORPE

Background

To our knowledge, the parishes of Aston Tirrold & Upthorpe have never conducted a tree survey that covers both parishes before. We have gone through village records (digital archives) and found no such data.

Historically, the Astons supported an excellent quality of fruit orchards (where the fruits were sold mainly to the London market). A few of these orchards still exist in private gardens but any commercial value in the orchards became dormant after (date to be confirmed: post war?)

Dutch elm disease impacted heavily here in the 1970's. All the infected elms were felled which introduced a government regeneration scheme of tree planting (**PLANT A TREE IN 73**).

Current data

- ARC, as a subcommittee of the Parish Council, commission a survey of the trees in the **recreational ground** every 5 years or so for public health and safety reasons. We can ask the Parish Council if they are willing to share this survey data with us.
- **Individual trees** in private gardens have been surveyed during planning applications. We might be able to extract some of the data from here?
- The **Juniper trees** on the Aston Upthorpe Downs are surveyed and monitored within the SSSI by Natural England. The site is important for the presence of the largest stand of juniper scrub in the Berkshire Downs and Chilterns. Juniper, the small native conifer, has become increasingly rare and is also a national priority for nature conservation.
- We can collect data from central and local councils. We have produced a map (below) that shows where priority woodland habits are, important trees within the conservation area and trees with Tree Preservation Orders. *This doesn't cover the SSSI area yet. Data is taken from Magic.gov (government website).*



Objectives & Aims

- To monitor **Ash Dieback**. We have many ash trees in our villages and surrounding countryside. This could impact seriously on our habitats in a similar way to the Dutch elm disease of the 1970's.
- To record the tree species within the parishes.
 - Recording will be identifying the species of tree
 - estimating the age of the tree
 - mapping the location of the tree
- To establish if we have any ancient and/or veteran trees where possible amongst our older trees.
- To protect the biodiversity of our local wildlife, its habitat and its relationship to our trees and woodland (for example, recording rookery's in our parishes).
- To conserve, record and collect valuable data on our parish trees for future community reference (ash dieback).
- **Finally, to produce a report. This could be adopted by the Parish Council and community.**
 - Which will provide valuable data on the trees and woodland within our parishes for our Parish and Local Councils so that they can make informed decisions based on the information that they receive from the survey.

Proposed timescales

- Step 1: Collect data from online and parish sources and collate (already started - see map above).
- Step 2: From Spring 2018, volunteers can start to survey trees in public access areas (church yards, paths, village hall, etc) with permission from relevant bodies.
- Step 3. See if we have ash dieback in the villages (monitor two or more trees over the next few months).
- Step 4: In Spring 2018, send out a notice to villagers, asking them to volunteer information on their garden trees (do this through the village news and door to door).
- Step 5: Set out transects (street roads) for trees to be surveyed (spring to early summer 2018).
- Use Autumn 2018 to compile data and photographs and liaise with SODC forestry officer.
- Write report over Winter 2018.
- Get report reviewed by independent expert (to be decided).
- Deliver report to Parish Council in May 2019.