

Visual Tree Condition & Risk Assessment

Land at
Turnpike Field
Green Lane
Audlem
Cheshire

Ref:
VTA/TFA/12/23

Date:
29th December 2023

Commissioned by:
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Prepared by
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Instruction

- 1.1 Shields Arboricultural Consultancy received instructions from Mr G. Seddon on behalf of Audlem Parish Council to provide an arboricultural assessment in respect of a number of trees at Turnpike Field.
- 1.2 The assessment covered all trees within the Turnpike as marked on the quotation plan and an additional tree at Longhill Lane.
- 1.3 The purpose of the survey was to provide an assessment of the condition of the trees and provide advice regarding any works required to the trees to ensure that they are maintained in as safe a condition as is reasonably practicable.

Introduction

- 2.1 It is recommended that all tree owners should have their trees inspected for safety purposes on a periodic basis. The frequency of these inspections will depend on the location of the tree in relation to roads, footpaths, public areas and buildings or structures. This is confirmed by HSE guidance relating to managing the risk of falling trees which states that *'there is the duty to do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure that people are not exposed to risk to their health and safety. Doing all that is reasonably practicable does **not** mean that all trees have to be individually examined on a regular basis. A decision has to be taken on what is reasonable in the circumstances and this will include consideration of the risks to which people may be exposed.'*

Scope and Limitations of the Survey

- 3.1 The survey was undertaken 9th October 2023 by Stephen Shields, principal consultant with Shields Arboricultural Consultancy.

Methodology

- 3.2 The survey was carried out in accordance with the principals of tree inspection and assessment described in Lonsdale 1999 and using Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) techniques as described in Mattheck & Breloer 1994. This term describes an approach to tree surveying using visual observation which allows the surveyor to evaluate the stability and structural condition of a tree. The basis behind VTA is the identification of symptoms, which the tree produces in reaction to, for example, a weakness in its structure, or as a result of external stress factors e.g., drought.
- 3.3 The trees were inspected from the ground level using field glasses and basic equipment such as a soft faced hammer and steel probe. Where required a F-400 Resi-drill was used to examine the internal quality of the wood. The inspection followed a set procedure; firstly, the site conditions are assessed to establish if any environmental factors are present that could affect the stability of the trees. This includes an evaluation of the soil conditions to establish if there are any aspects that could inhibit root growth, such as water logging or shallow soils. The exposure and elevation of the site are considered along with any changes to the tree's environment that could affect the tree. Next the root plate and area

around the tree are visually inspected for signs of instability or decay, followed by a visual examination of the trunk and branch structure to identify structural defects or decay. Finally, the vitality of the tree is assessed, and any significant pest and diseases identified. Where defects or health issues were identified, these are noted in the report and any required remedial measures recommended. Where no comment is made, it can be assumed that no defects were identified.

- 3.3 The findings of the survey are limited to the date of inspection. The seasonal nature of fungal and decay organisms and other symptoms of stress such as late or early leaf emergence or fall means that indicators of disease and decay may not have been present on the date of inspection.
- 3.4 The risk assessment evaluates the risk of failure in all weather conditions up to and including Beaufort Scale Gale Force 8. All trees are at risk of failure through exceptional weather conditions.
- 3.5 Where solutions to arboricultural problems are specified which require the usage of a third-party product e.g., no dig roadway construction, tree bracing products. No liability is assumed for the performance or suitability of the product and specialist advice as to the suitability or installation of the product should be sought from the manufacturer or other specialist. No responsibility is assumed by Shields Arboricultural Consultancy for legal matters that may arise from this report, and the consultant shall not be required to give testimony or to attend court unless additional contractual arrangements are made. Any alteration or deletion from this report shall invalidate it as a whole.

Statutory Controls & Obligations

- 4.1 Forestry Act; the felling of trees is controlled under Forestry Act, which requires that a felling licence is obtained prior to cutting down any trees. The Forestry Act does not apply to the felling of trees growing within an orchard, private garden, churchyard or public open space. Natural Resources Wales has the responsibility for enforcing the Forestry Act.
- 4.2 Tree Preservation Orders & Conservation Areas; Local Authorities have specific powers to protect trees through the use of Tree Preservation Orders. Where trees are protected under such orders it is a criminal offence to (subject to any exemptions for which provision may be made by the order) undertake, cause or permit the cutting down, topping, lopping, uprooting, wilful damage or wilful destruction of trees except with the consent of the local planning authority. Similar controls apply to all trees growing within a designated Conservation Area.
- 4.3 Bats, wild birds and other protected species; The Wildlife & Countryside Act & the Conservation (Natural Habitats & C.) Regulations make it an offence to disturb or destroy bats and bat roosts and wild birds and their nests. Other species of plant and animal are also protected. These creatures often inhabit trees and sufficient care must be taken to ensure they are not affected during forestry and arboricultural works.

- 4.4 Other restrictions and controls may be in force in sensitive areas such as SSSI's and Ancient Woodlands.

Description of Site

- 5.1 Turnpike Field is an informal recreation area situated to the south of the town of Audlem. The site has boundaries with Whitchurch Road to the north, the Shropshire Union Canal to the east, agricultural land to the south and Green Lane to the west. There are two watercourses on the site and a small pond. The site extends to approximately 5.4 ha and is reasonably even with a slight slope down north to south, in the centre section.

Soils

- 5.2 Soils appeared to be free draining and loamy, with some wet areas around the watercourses.

*NB. This soil assessment is undertaken in situ using visual and manual techniques and is **only** for the purpose of establishing the influence of site soils on tree growth. The assessment **must not** be relied upon to inform any engineering decisions.*

Tree Survey Findings and Recommendations

Summary of Tree Work

Tree Tag#	Operation	Priority
T32,	Fell and replace	High
T4, T30	Further investigation	High
T1, T3	Branch Reduction	High
T5, T10, T22, T24, T26, T27, T29, T30, T31, T36	Remove unstable deadwood	Moderate
T17, T37	Pollard	Moderate
T6, T9, T10, T25, T30	Monitor	Moderate

- 6.1 All trees are assessed and those requiring work or monitoring or with minor defects are recorded. Full details of the tree inspections are provided in the Arboricultural Inspection Record, along with work recommendations.
- 6.2 Ensuring that the trees within the site remain in a reasonably safe condition, can normally be achieved through periodic inspections and monitoring of trees that may have progressive defects. In addition to inspections by the owner it is recommended that a professional inspection is undertaken every 24 months or after any storm where wind speeds exceeded gale force 8 or where damage is noted.
- 6.3 The management of aerial deadwood should be given careful consideration. This provides an important habitat and is an integral part of a woodland or arboreal habitat. Deadwood should only be removed

where there is a high value target, such as over buildings, roads and well-used footpaths, seating areas or high use areas and it is large and unstable, in excess of 50mm diameter and / or 1m in length unless it is reasonable robust.

Tree Health & Condition General Assessment

- 6.4 The trees vary in age and species, other than the trees individually recorded the overall structural condition of the trees is good, and only work is required to identified trees.
- 6.5 In the main, the physiological condition of the trees is also good and no significant pest or diseases were noted.

S.J.A. Shields

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M.Arbor.A, MICFor.

Chartered Forester

29th December 2023

Arboricultural Inspection Notes & Recommendations**Location:** Turnpike Field, Audlem.**Weather:** Clear, Calm.**Date:** 9th October 2023**Surveyor:** Stephen Shields

Tree ID #	Species	Age Class*	Size Class*	Struct Con	Health & Vitality	Notes from Inspection	Haz Rat
Trees within Turnpike Field							
T1	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	OM	L	Fair	Fair	Veteran / High Value. Decay present on stem. Fungal brackets visible on stem. Tear-out wounds. Broken branches in crown. Major deadwood in crown. Old tree surgery. Decay in branches. Damaged branch extending over field. Canopy density reduced 70% live crown. Recommendation: Selective reduction of overextended and damaged branch, remove unstable deadwood.	50K Low / Mod
T2	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	M	M	Good	Good	Recommendation: No work required	<1M V. Low
T3	Quercus cerris (Turkey Oak)	M	VL	Fair	Fair	Declining. Dieback in crown. Low bud/leaf density. Major deadwood in crown. Decay in branches. Over-extended branches over road. Recommendation: Selective reduction of overextended and damaged branch, remove unstable deadwood.	50K Low / Mod
T4	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	OM	M	Fair / Poor	Fair	Veteran / High Value. Decay present on stem. Cavity on stem. Tear-out Wounds. Decay in branches. Damaged branches. Fungus present, <i>Inonotus dryadeus</i> causing decay in buttress roots. Recommendation: Given the accessible location of the tree and proximity to the highway and the clear evidence of significant decay within the stem and buttress roots, it is recommended that further investigation work, using decay detection and measuring equipment is undertaken to establish the extent and pattern of decay within the main stem and root system.	100K Low

T5	Quercus cerris (Turkey Oak)	M	VL	Fair	Good	Major deadwood in crown. Recommendation: Remove unstable deadwood.	50K Low / Mod
T6	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	M	L	Good	Fair	Minor dieback in crown. Recommendation: Monitor condition of tree.	<1M V. Low
T7	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	M	L	Good	Good	Ivy on tree. Recommendation: No work required	<1M V. Low
T8	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	M	M	Good	Good	Recommendation: No work required	<1M V. Low
T9	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	OM	M	Fair	Fair	Exposed / damaged roots. Cavity on stem. Tear-out wounds. Dieback in crown. Minor decay in branches. Recommendation: Monitor condition of tree.	1M V. Low
T10	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	OM	L	Fair	Fair	Veteran / High Value. Root decay. Major deadwood in crown. Decay in branches. Fungus present. Decay in Buttress Roots. Recommendation: Remove unstable deadwood and monitor condition of tree.	400K Low
G11	Crataegus monogyna (Hawthorn)	M	S	Good	Good	Recommendation: No work required	<1M V. Low
G12	Alnus glutinosa (Common Alder)	M	M	Good	Good	Recommendation: No work required	<1M V. Low
T13	Alnus glutinosa (Common Alder)	OM	S	Fair	Fair	Tree has been reduced to habitat pollard. Recommendation: No work required	<1M V. Low
T14	Alnus glutinosa (Common Alder)	OM	L	Good	Good	Recommendation: No work required	<1M V. Low
T15	Fraxinus excelsior (Ash)	OM	S	Fair	Fair	Tree has been reduced to habitat pollard. Recommendation: No work required	<1M V. Low
T16	Alnus glutinosa (Common Alder)	OM	L	Good	Good	Recommendation: No work required	<1M V. Low
T17	Salix fragilis (Crack Willow)	OM	VL	Fair	Fair	Declining, Ivy on tree. Possibly on third party land. Recommendation: Consider pollarding tree	40K Low / Mod

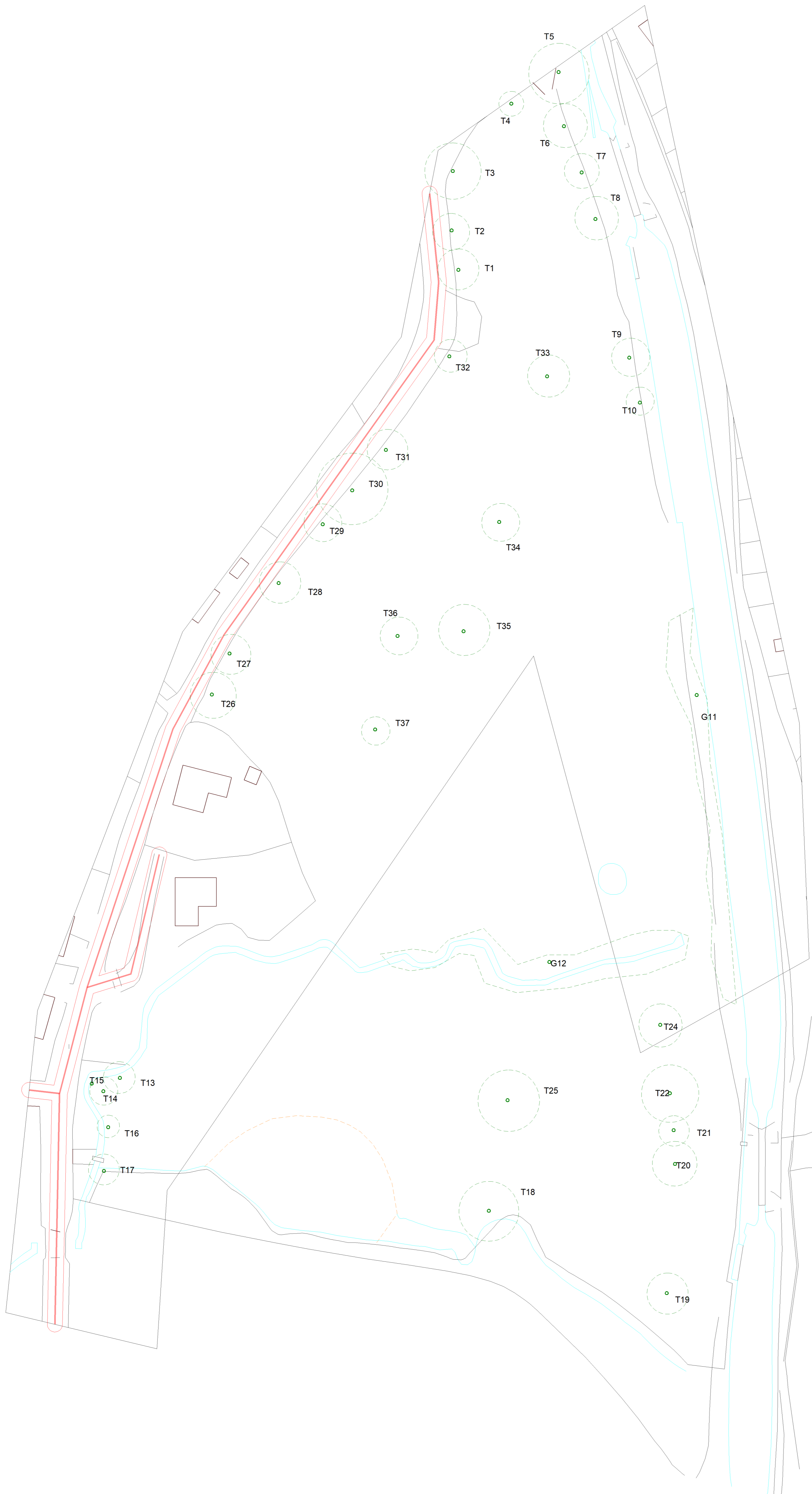
T18	Acer pseudoplatanus (Sycamore)	M	L	Fair	Good	Major deadwood in crown. Decay in branches. Very low target. Recommendation: No work required.	<1M V. Low
T19	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	OM	L	Fair	Fair	Cavity on stem. Decay in branches. Damaged branches. Bees's nest in stem. Very low target. Recommendation: No work required.	<1M V. Low
T20	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	M	L	Good	Good	Recommendation: No work required	<1M V. Low
T21	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	M	L	Good	Good	Exposed / damaged roots. Major deadwood in crown. Recommendation: Remove unstable deadwood or restrict access.	<1M V. Low
T22	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	M	L	Fair	Good	Tear-out wounds. Major deadwood in crown. Decay fungus present, <i>Grifola frondosa</i> , slow acting. Recommendation: Remove unstable deadwood or restrict access and monitor condition of tree.	500K Low
T24	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	M	M	Fair	Good	Tear-out Wounds. Major deadwood in crown. Recommendation: Remove unstable deadwood or restrict access.	500K Low
T25	Acer pseudoplatanus (Sycamore)	M	L	Good	Fair	Low vitality and declining. Early leaf drop. Canopy density reduced 60% live crown. Recommendation: Monitor condition of tree.	<1M V. Low
T26	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	M	M	Good	Good	Major deadwood in crown. Recommendation: Remove unstable deadwood.	<1M V. Low
T27	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	M	M	Good	Good	Major deadwood in crown. Recommendation: Remove unstable deadwood.	<1M V. Low
T28	Acer pseudoplatanus (Sycamore)	M	L	Good	Good	Recommendation: No work required	<1M V. Low
T29	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	M	M	Good	Good	Major deadwood in crown. Recommendation: Remove unstable deadwood.	<1M V. Low
T30	Quercus cerris (Turkey Oak)	M	VL	Fair	Fair	Declining. Decay present on stem. Included bark present in fork. Dieback in crown. Low bud/leaf density. Major deadwood in crown. Decay in branches. Damaged branches. Recommendation: Remove unstable deadwood. Given the accessible location of the tree and proximity to the highway and the clear evidence of significant decay within the stem and buttress roots, it is recommended that further investigation work, using decay detection and measuring equipment is	40K Low / Mod

						undertaken to establish the extent and pattern of decay within the main stem and root system.	
T31	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	M	L	Good	Good	Major deadwood in crown. Recommendation: Remove unstable deadwood.	<1M V. Low
T32	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	M	L	Fair	Poor	Low vitality and declining. Major deadwood in crown. Undersize foliage and early leaf drop. Canopy density reduced to 40% live crown. Recommendation: Fell and replace.	4K Mod / High
T33	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	M	M	Good	Good	Recommendation: No work required	<1M V. Low
T34	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	M	M	Good	Good	Recommendation: No work required	<1M V. Low
T35	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	M	M	Good	Good	Recommendation: No work required	<1M V. Low
T36	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	M	M	Fair	Fair	Declining. Major deadwood in crown. Recommendation: Remove unstable deadwood or restrict access.	1M V. Low
T37	Quercus robur (Common Oak)	M	M	Fair	Poor	Low vitality and declining. Major deadwood in crown. Decay. Abnormal leaf colour and early leaf drop. Canopy density reduced to 40% live crown. Recommendation: Remove unstable deadwood or restrict access, consider reducing to habitat pollard if access cannot be controlled.	100K Low
Tree at Longhill Lane							
T38	Acer campestre (Field Maple)	M	S	Fair	Good	Recommendation: No work required	<1M V. Low

KEY






Size Class	Stem	S	Less than 5m height and / or 150mm trunk diameter
		M	5m– 15m height and /or 150mm – 500mm trunk diameter
		L	16m – 25m height and / or 501mm -1000mm trunk diameter
		VL	Over 26m height and or over 1001mm trunk diameter
Age Class:		NP -	New Planting less than 5 yrs
		Y -	Young Trees less than 1/3 life expectancy
		EM -	Early Mature 1/3 – 2/3 life expectancy
		M -	Mature over 2/3 life expectancy
		OM -	Late Mature exceeds normal life expectancy for species
		VET -	Veteran Tree has characteristics of veteran tree, see Read (2000)
Health & Vitality:		Good -	No significant health problems
		Fair -	Some health problems that will reduce vitality
		Poor -	Significant health problems that are affecting the tree's ability to survive
		Dead -	Dead
Structural Conditions:		Good -	No significant faults
		Fair -	Some faults that can be rectified through surgery
		Poor -	Major faults that cannot be rectified through surgery
		Env -	Environment in which the tree stands.
Hazard Rating:		Green -	Very Low
		Yellow -	Low
		Orange -	Moderate
		Red -	High
		Red*-	V. High

Numeric rating refers to QTRA score (1K = 1000 – 1M = 1000000). E.g. 60K = 1 in 60000.



Shields Arboricultural Consultancy
Tree & Woodland Management Solutions

Tree Location Plan
Land at
Turnpike Field
Green Lane
Audlem

-  Tree Location
-  Canopy
-  Water
-  Road
-  Buildings & Structures

Dwg No: TFA/TLP/12/23
Drawn By: S. Shields
Scale: 1:750@A1
Date: 29th December 2023
Revision:

Do not scale from this drawing all dimensions to be checked on site
Drawing is colour coded and a monochrome copy should not be relied upon

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