

(CCC) (6 Friars Close) Tree Preservation Order No. 34/2019

In relation to your response to Request for Information (RFI: 10021(CCC) In relation to City of Cambridge (6 Friars Close) Tree Preservation Order No. 34/2019

1. In relation to your answer number 2 (" The trees on the boundary were listed as being managed by the Council. This was informally checked at the time. A formal check to establish the ownership of the boundary trees is currently underway.):

a/ please explain why the ownership was checked only informally (not formally) at the time of the TPO, and why it was not formally checked at the time.

b/ please explain when the formal check to establish the ownership of the boundary trees will be completed, and (if it has already been completed) please describe the results of the formal check (i.e. who owns the trees on the boundary?)

2. In relation to answer 3 ("See above, if they belonged to 6 Friars Close they may have been TPOd. They were not fully assessed for TPO due to their apparent ownership. All the trees on the boundary were to a degree compromised by the metal railings.")

a/ please describe the trees (type, age, etc.) on the boundary

b/ please explain what is meant by 'may have been TPOd if they had belonged to 6 Friars Close'

c/ please explain what is meant by 'compromised' - does this refer to the state/quality of the trees, or to the ownership?

3. The situation appears to be that trees belonging to the Council (and that would have been subject to TPOs if they had belonged to 6 Friars Close) have been felled.

a/ What does the Council intend to do to rectify this situation?

b/ Who in the Council is responsible for this action?

c/ What support can the Council give to neighbours affected by the felling of these trees?

Response

1a. You asked why the ownership was checked only informally at the time of the TPO and not formally checked. The trees are listed as being in Highway ownership on our tree maintenance database; as such, it was a reasonable assumption that the trees were under the Council's management when the TPO was assessed. An informal ownership check would have been completed when the trees were added to the maintenance database. For context, over 10,000 trees on this database have been categorised as Highway trees based on a visual assessment of their location, a cost-benefit based methodology to data collection. It was reasonable to assume these boundary trees were in Council ownership

based on their location and the formal nature of the fence that borders multiple properties and runs through them. Given the current situation, greater certainty on boundary ownership is required before establishing any damage to Council property has occurred.

1b. You asked when the formal check to establish the ownership of the boundary trees will be completed. In response, Cambridge City Council has asked Cambridgeshire County Council to clarify its responsibility for the boundary. We are still waiting on a response.

2a. You asked to describe the trees on the boundary. In response, have 4 individual trees recorded on the Council's database; these individual trees are recorded as within a group recorded that would consist of several small trees that are not individually recorded. Details of the four individual trees follow:

One early mature sycamore, multi-stemmed with asymmetrical crown circa 16m in diameter at its maximum extent.

One early mature sycamore, multi-stemmed with asymmetrical crown circa 10m in diameter at its maximum extent.

Two early mature ash, circa 8m in diameter at its maximum extent.

2b. You asked what is meant by 'may have been TPO'd if they had belonged to 6 Friars Close'. In response, a full amenity assessment of the trees would have been undertaken. Depending on the outcome of that assessment the trees may or may not have been protected by a TPO.

2c. You asked what is meant by 'compromised'. In response, there is an iron railing fence running along the boundary. The boundary trees had grown up through the railings such that they were embedded in the trunks of the trees. This may have compromised the trees' structure and longevity, and hence safety.

3a. You asked what the Council intends to do to rectify this situation. In response, the Council is looking: to establish if there has been a breach of TPO legislation; if criminal damage has occurred; to serve a replacement tree notice; replanting planting in the vicinity on Highway land.

3b. You asked who in the Council is responsible for this action. In response, Cambridge City Council's Tree Team is responsible for asset management and serving replacement tree notices. The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service's Planning Enforcement Team is responsible for investigating TPO legislation breaches. Cambridgeshire County Council's Highways Team are responsible for establishing asset ownerships.

3c. You asked what support the Council can give to neighbors affected by the felling of these trees. The Council does not offer specific support to neighbors but will respond to enquiries from members of the public about actions it is taking concerning this case.

Further queries on this matter should be directed to foi@cambridge.gov.uk