

Nov 26th 2023

Paula Cottrell
Clerk to Hankelow Parish Council

FELLING OF MATURE FIR TREE ON HANKELOW GREEN

As long-term residents adjacent to our lovely Green in Hankelow, we are writing in protest about the recent felling of a beautiful mature fir tree from our end of the Green, without any warning or consultation with the residents here. Nor was this listed on the agenda for the previous Parish Council Meeting. The reasons given subsequently for this irreversible action seem totally inadequate. Those of us who live near were absolutely shocked and dismayed to hear the chainsaw at work, removing a perfectly-shaped large coniferous tree which gave much pleasure to those of us lucky enough to see it from our windows and to the many who regularly walk around here. As well as providing screening from the traffic on the main road, this tree was helping to absorb CO2 emissions and noise from the large amount of heavy lorries and agricultural vehicles which use the road. Surely we are all being encouraged to plant trees to help fight climate change and pollution.

We understand that the tree was too tall for easy hanging of Christmas lights and are grateful to the team for all the years this was done. It will now look delightful in Audlem for one month. However, this is not a good reason to remove a living, beautiful specimen tree which should still be standing now for the full 12 months of next year and years to come. Similarly its inconvenience for the one day per year of the Fete is also a dreadful reason.

The removal of the Horse Chestnut trees here a few years ago resulted in their replacement by young beech trees, but sadly the one nearest this end has been dead for a while and now that the fir tree is gone we have a real gap in the tree screening here. We cannot bring back our mature fir tree but at least a new tree of some size should be planted as near as possible, to help in time to fill the gap. As a beech has died it would seem this is not suitable – perhaps a *Betula Utilis Jacquemontii* (Himalayan Silver Birch), which has attractive bark in winter as well as being reasonable quick growing? I am happy to make a donation towards the cost.

Those of us who live by the Green also ask that any future tree removal or major surgery be a subject for proper consultation with the residents. The trees here are much loved and a precious asset to the environment. Unless there is any immediate danger, homes near a tree under threat should be consulted personally and a general notice published on the website and around the Green, in a similar way to planning applications. Comments and objections to be considered by the Parish Council, with a chance for open discussion.

We ask that this matter should be given serious consideration at the next Parish Council Meeting, and that no more tree felling or major surgery be done without proper consultation. We know that we speak for many around us.

Yours sincerely

Christina and Peter Lawson: Green Looms, Hall Lane, Hankelow, CW3 0JB

John and Gill Howells: Dunelm House, Hall Lane, Hankelow CW3 0JB