WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT WESTON MUSEUM, BURLINGTON STREET, ON WEDNESDAY 4TH FEBRUARY 2026

Meeting Commenced: 7.05 pm
Meeting Concluded: 7.42 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Caroline Reynolds (C), Ray Armstrong, Justyna Pecak-Michalowicz, Marcia Pepperall and Tim Taylor.

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE: Samantha Bishop (Democratic Services Manager) and Alison Garner (Democratic Services Officer).

303	**Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitution** Apologies were received from Councillors John Carson, Peter Crew, Catherine Gibbons and Richard Tucker with no substitutions.
304	**Declarations of Interest** There were no declarations of interest received.
305	**Minutes of the previous Planning and Environment Committee Meeting held on 7th January 2026.** The minutes from the previous meeting held on 7th January 2026 had been previously circulated. **PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Ray Armstrong **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Justyna Pecak-Michalowicz A vote was taken and accordingly it was **carried**. **RESOLVED:** That minutes of the 7th January 2026 be approved and signed by the Chair.
	PLANNING

306 **Matters for Consideration:**

a) Advisory disabled parking bay applications – None received
b) Infrastructure Consultation Survey – previously circulated to committee members.

RESOLVED: That the Infrastructure Consultation Survey be noted.

307 **Matters for Noting:**

a) Penrice Close; Local Worlebury residents objected to the construction of an additional storey on a bungalow in their street. Did a planning breach occur and could the prior approval process be more transparent?
This was a letter of petition from Penrice Close residents regarding applications 25/P/1471/FUH and Prior Approval 25/P/2155/H2PA.

RESOLVED: That the residents objection to Penrice Close be noted

308 **Planning Applications and other Planning Matters submitted to the Town Council for consideration.**

The Committee considered all applications in respect of the weekly lists provided by North Somerset Council dated**:**

At the time of despatch, this includes weekly lists dated:

a) 29 December 2025 – 4 January 2026
b) 5-11 January 2026
c) 12-18 January 2026
d) 19-25 January 2026

The following applications were discussed with further comment and recommendations as follows:

Application Number	***Comments***
2669	**SUPPORT – WSM TC** - It was noted that the length of time (4-5 months) for the re-fit was concerning regarding the impacts on the local community.
2577	**RECOMMEND REFUSAL – WSM TC** – A vote was taken and accordingly it was **lost**, (2 in support and 3 for refusal). Objection citing the following grounds: • Impact on character and appearance of the area. • Compliance/conflict with the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan. • Design, scale and character of development. • Impact on residential amenity (privacy, noise, overshadowing). • Effect on heritage assets or conservation areas.
2664	**SUPPORT – WSM TC –** Change of use would provide more accommodation which was in line with local planning policies.
2572	**SUPPORT – WSM TC –** Change of use would provide more accommodation which was in line with local planning policies.

	2573	**SUPPORT – WSM TC –** Change of use would provide more accommodation which was in line with local planning policies.
	2580	**SUPPORT – WSM TC –** Support the demolition of the timber lean to, the space created would be used by the YMCA for parking.
	2643	**SUPPORT – WSM TC** – The Committee noted that the Council had received a presentation on the application and were pleased to see the inclusion of tree planting within the development and good use of replacement of the existing tower block.
	0044	**SUPPORT - WSM TC** – Noting the application had come back due to the entrance being changed.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council's comments on planning applications discussed be directly uploaded to the 'Uniform' website as part of the system of work requirement by North Somerset Council. This information would also be reflected on the Town Council's website with hyperlink back to North Somerset Council's website for referral purposes.

309

ENVIRONMENTAL

Roadmap to Zero

a) Community Fridge Statistics

The report of the Community and Wellbeing Officer had been previously circulated.

RESOLVED: That the Community Fridge Statistics report be noted.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 7.42 pm.

Signed……Dated ……
Chair of the Planning and Environment Committee

Applications Registered, Listed by Parish/Town Council

From: 26 January 2026 - 1 February 2026
Date Sent: 2 February 2026
21 day period ends: 23 February 2026

Introduction
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For all other application types, that are not listed in at appendix 1, there is no statutory requirement for you to submit any comments to us and your council is not formally being consulted. This means the consultation period set out above does not apply. We have included these applications in this list for information purposes, but your council can submit comments, if it chooses to do so.

Applications with a suffix of AOC are seeking to approve details required by a planning condition. They are not subject to formal consultation and so are not listed at appendix 1. You can submit comments about them but please bear in mind that we are required by Government to determine them as soon as possible and without delay, which means we often make our decisions well before the target date.

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Conditions

It is important to set out your council's views with regards to what conditions should be applied, even if your council is objecting to the proposal. When doing so please refer to the condition codes listed in our standard conditions. For example, your comment could state:

'Without prejudice to our comments above, and should planning permission be granted contrary to our objection, we recommend that that the following standard conditions (as found on North Somerset Council's website) should be applied to the decision notice:

- ACC02
- ECO06
- MAIN01.'

Legal Agreements

It is also important to set out your council's views with regards to what mitigation should be secured by a legal agreement, even if your council is objecting to the proposal. When doing so we recommend that you state in your comments what mitigation you think is required. For example:

'Without prejudice to our comments above, and should planning permission be granted contrary to our objection, we would like the following mitigation to be secured by a legal agreement:

- Play equipment located at x
- Improvements to cycle way between x and y
- Increased frequency of bus service x from 2 hourly to hourly'

If planning permission is granted your request for conditions and legal agreements will be considered and taken into account. The Government has prepared statutory tests relating to the use of planning conditions and planning obligations which local planning authorities have to comply with.

Parish	Application Number	Location	Proposal	Case Officer	Target Date
Weston-super-Mare	25/P/2555/NMA	Flat 3 42C Walliscote Road Weston-super-Mare BS23 1XF Grid Ref: E 332019 N 160962	Non-material Amendment to application 25/P/1562/FUL (Proposed conversion and extension of the existing loft with a flat roof rear dormer and erection of a new dual pitched dormer to the front elevation to match the existing. Enlargement of the rear bedroom window and installation of 2no. new side windows with obscured glazing. Erection of a new rear glazed porch with an additional window to the utility room and a new double front door. Relocation of 2no. skylights of the front in loft area.) to allow for alterations to the window and door styles and placement, installation of a ventilation extractor and creation of an enclosed Catio above rear porch.	Molly Willmot	26 February 2026
Weston-super-Mare	25/P/2632/FUL	Marketing Suite Adj To Haywood Village Academy Whitney Crescent Weston-super-Mare BS24 8ES Grid Ref: E 334095 N 160126	Temporary change of use of marketing suite to school classroom; the erection of a temporary two storey welfare cabin for staff and a temporary playground	Niloofar Abolfazlzadeh	27 March 2026

Parish	Application Number	Location	Proposal	Case Officer	Target Date
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0102/FUL	2 Brownlow Road Weston-super-Mare BS23 4LS Grid Ref: E 332455 N 159610	Change of use from a Use Class C3(a) dwellinghouse to a Use Class C2 children's home	Andrew Stevenson	13 March 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0113/TRCA	Flat 1 13 Trewartha Park Weston-super-Mare BS23 2RP Grid Ref: E 332637 N 162028	T1 - Holm Oak (Quercus Ilex), reduce overall crown by 2-2.5m, in order to keep the tree under control	James McCarthy	4 March 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0114/TRCA	Broadoak Academy Windwhistle Road Weston-super-Mare BS23 4NP Grid Ref: E 332090 N 159291	T012 - Alder - Dead tree - Fell to ground level. T033 - Elm - Dead tree - Fell to ground level.	James McCarthy	4 March 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0138/FUH	19 St Nicholas Road Uphill Weston-super-Mare BS23 4XE Grid Ref: E 331876 N 158738	Proposed removal of existing rear lean-to, erection of a single storey rear extension and detached outbuilding to the rear of the site.	Marcus Henley	19 March 2026

Parish	Application Number	Location	Proposal	Case Officer	Target Date
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0148/AOC	Birnbeck Pier Birnbeck Island Birnbeck Road Weston-super-Mare Grid Ref: E 330495 N 162571	Request to Discharge condition 5 (Details of board fencing) from application 24/P/1907/FUL.	Bryn Clare	20 March 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0154/TRCA	Ellenborough Park West And Ellenborough Park South Weston-super-Mare Grid Ref: E 331784 N 160776	G877 - 6No. Sycamore - Fell to ground level. Reason - trees are damaging boundary wall adjacent to public footpath/road.	James McCarthy	10 March 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0155/TRCA	Water Adventure Play Park Knightstone Road Weston-super-Mare BS23 2AW Grid Ref: E 331490 N 161900	T502 - Turkey oak - Formative prune to remove minor storm damage. Remove epicormic growth to 4m. Crown lift to 4m above ground level. T503 - Turkey oak - Formative prune to remove minor storm damage. Remove epicormic growth to 4m. Crown lift to 4m above ground level.	James McCarthy	10 March 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0162/AOC	Uphill Grange Nursing Home Uphill Road South Uphill Weston-super-Mare BS23 4TX Grid Ref: E 332226 N 158186	Request to Discharge conditions 10 (Contamination Report), 11 (Remediation Scheme), 12 (Archaeological Investigation), 13 (Construction Management Plan), 16 (Waste and Recycling) and 28 (Construction Environmental Management Plan) from application 23/P/2550/FUL.	Bryn Clare	25 March 2026

Appendix 1

Application types for which Town and Parish Councils are statutory consultees

Suffix	Application type	Suffix	Application type
/ADV	Advertisement Consent[1]	/MW1	Minerals and waste
/FUL	Full planning permission	/MW2	Minerals and waste with EIA
/FU2	Full planning permission and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	/MMA	Minor material amendment
/FUH	Full planning permission - householder	/NMA	Non-material amendment[2]
/OUT	Outline planning permission	/MOD	Modification or discharge s106 Agreement
/OU2	Outline planning permission and EIA	/HZ1	Hazardous Substance Consent (general)[3]
/RM	Reserved matters	/HZ2	Hazardous Substance Consent (vary/remove condition)[3]
/PIP	Permission in Principle[1]	/HZ3	Hazardous Substance Consent (change of control)[3]
/TDC	Technical Details Consent[1]	/HZ4	Hazardous Substance Consent (revocation)[3]
/LBC	Listed Building Consent	/QRU	Crown Development – special urgency
/LBD	Listed Building Consent to demolish	/RLA	Council application - alter listed building
/R3	Council planning application (NSC is the developer)	/R3EIA	Council planning application +EIA (NSC is the developer)
/R4	Council planning application (NSC not the developer)	/R4EIA	Council planning application +EIA (NSC not the developer)
/R32	Council application for advertisement consent (NSC is the developer)	/R42	Council application for advertisement consent (NSC not the developer)
/R43	Council application for demolition in a CA (NSC not developer)	/R33	Council app for demolition in a CA (NSC is the developer)
/R36	Council app for Minerals and Waste (NSC is developer)	/R46	Council app for Minerals and Waste (NSC not developer)
/RLD	Council app to demolish listed building		

Footnotes:

1. The statutory consultation period for Advertisement Consent, Permission in Principle and Technical Details Consent is 14 days. North Somerset Council has increased this to 21 days.
2. Town and Parish Councils are statutory consultees for non-material amendment applications only if they have formally adopted a Neighbourhood Plan.
3. The statutory consultation period for hazardous substance applications is 28 days, which is calculated from the date this list was sent as stated above.

Applications Registered, Listed by Parish/Town Council

From: 2 February 2026 - 8 February 2026
Date Sent: 9 February 2026
21 day period ends: 2 March 2026

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Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0177/TPO	Uphill Grange Nursing Home Uphill Road South Uphill Weston-super-Mare BS23 4TX Grid Ref: E 332226 N 158186	T18 Magnolia - fell to ground level and remove the stump	James McCarthy	25 March 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0195/LBC	Stones Cafe Knightstone Causeway Weston-super-Mare BS23 2AD Grid Ref: E 331234 N 161844	Listed building consent for proposed works to repair existing damaged Oolitic Limestone balusters on the southeast elevation of Stones Cafe	Marcus Henley	26 March 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0196/LBC	Former Baths Building Knightstone Causeway Weston-super-Mare BS23 2AD Grid Ref: E 331184 N 161826	Listed building consent for proposed works to repair existing damaged Oolitic Limestone stonework to window jambs, cills and ashlar course below cills on the internal facing south elevation	Marcus Henley	26 March 2026

Parish	Application Number	Location	Proposal	Case Officer	Target Date
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0205/NMA	22 Hughenden Road Weston-super-Mare BS23 2UR Grid Ref: E 333333 N 161621	Non-Material Amendment to application 23/P/2263/FUH (Proposed removal of 3no. existing sheds and erection of a single storey Garage at the North-elevation, alongside a front porch extension. Hip to gable loft conversion including the removal of 1no. chimney alongside the installation of 8no. rooflights. Minor changes to vehicular access including alteration to exiting boundary wall and extension of existing dropped kerb.) to allow for the omission of front porch extension, boundary works and dropped kerb. Amendment to approved roof lights, garage door, fenestration and finishing.		27 February 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0236/TRCA	1 Elmsleigh Road Weston-super-Mare BS23 4JW Grid Ref: E 331890 N 159679	Front Garden: - Bay Leaf tree; to be removed in full - Holly tree; to be removed in full Back Garden: - Holly tree; to be removed in full - Field Maple tree; to be removed in full (sign of decay with fungal growth)	James McCarthy	17 March 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0247/FUH	46 Wyvern Close Weston-super-Mare BS23 3LR Grid Ref: E 332889 N 161117	Proposed removal of existing conservatory and erection of a single storey rear extension.		31 March 2026

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From: 9 February 2026 - 15 February 2026
Date Sent: 16 February 2026
21 day period ends: 9 March 2026

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Parish	Application Number	Location	Proposal	Case Officer	Target Date
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0124/FUL	Land Off Winterstoke Road Weston-super-Mare Grid Ref: E 332843 N 160873	Construction to provide 45no. build to rent residential units with associated parking, landscaping and access via Bridge Road	Jason Mak	7 May 2026

Parish	Application Number	Location	Proposal	Case Officer	Target Date
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0153/TRCA	Cemetary Bristol Road Lower Weston-super-Mare Grid Ref: E 332766 N 161880	T4 - Elm - Fell (Dead); T8 - Sycamore - Crown reduce by 1.5m, Crown lift 7m over neighbouring property and 3m over cemetery; T9 - Sycamore - Crown reduce by 1.5m, Crown lift 7m over neighbouring property and 3m over cemetery; T20 - Weeping Ash - Reduce height by approx. 2-3m with 60-80mm pruning wounds. Reduce lateral growth up to 2m with 60-80mm pruning wounds; T21 - Holm oak - Reduce crown to secondary canopy; T75 - Pendant Silver Lime - Crown lift 3m, formative prune and stabilise dead wood; T82 - Holm Oak - Re-pollard to previous pollard points; T186 - Whitebeam - Fell; T192 - Ash - Reduce lateral growth to give 1.5m clearance from adjacent house with 30mm pruning wounds. Reduce low lateral east limbs by approx. 2-3m with pruning wounds of approx. 50-60mm to crown lift to 4m over road; T197 - Monterey Cypress - Remove dead east stem and dieback in north stem. Prune from neighbouring house to give 3m clearance. Crown lift to approx. 5m over adjacent property; T203 - Monterey Cypress - Remove storm damaged limbs; T207 - Red Chestnut - Reduce height to approx. 3m. Reduce lateral live growth by up to 3m to give compact form; T274 - Weeping Ash - Remove dead and dying limbs. Reduce weeping form and lateral limbs by approx. 2-3m. Retain reverting stems; T381 - Silver Lime - Crown lift to 3m above ground level; T399 - Sycamore - Reduce height and lateral growth by approx. 4-5m with 70-90mm pruning wounds at previous pruning points.	James McCarthy	10 March 2026

Parish	Application Number	Location	Proposal	Case Officer	Target Date
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0180/FUL	11 Quantock Road Weston-super-Mare BS23 4DN Grid Ref: E 332217 N 160033	Demolition of a detached garage and rear store for ground floor flat and entrance lobby for first floor flat. Erection of a new entrance lobby for first floor flat and alteration to layout of ground floor flat and windows. Erection of 1no. new single storey dwelling in garden	Niloofar Abolfazlzadeh	30 March 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0228/FUL	10 Severn Avenue Weston-super-Mare BS23 4DH Grid Ref: E 332269 N 160274	Retrospective application for the change of use of the first floor from 4no. holiday units back to residential use (amalgamated with the existing ground floor flat).	Neil Underhay	6 April 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0238/FUL	Church Hall Christ Church Montpelier Weston-super-Mare Grid Ref: E 332595 N 161729	Proposed installation of PV panels atop the Spire Centre.	Catherine Shuker	31 March 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0256/CM2A	2 North Lane Weston-super-Mare BS23 1QR Grid Ref: E 332099 N 161406	Determination as to whether Prior Approval is required for the change of use of part of property from Use Class E (g)(i) offices to 1no. dwelling (Use Class C3)	Annika Lepoittevin	9 April 2026

Parish	Application Number	Location	Proposal	Case Officer	Target Date
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0261/FUL	11 Whitecross Road Weston-super-Mare BS23 1EP Grid Ref: E 332124 N 160658	Proposed change of use from a small (6 bed) HMO (C4) to a large (7-bed) HMO (sui generis) and erection of a timber refuse and recycling store to the forecourt area.	Charlotte Hughes	2 April 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0274/ADV	1 - 3 New Bristol Road Weston-super-Mare BS22 6AD Grid Ref: E 335059 N 162354	Retrospective advertisement consent for 2no. internally illuminated Fascia signs and 2no. non-illuminated Poster signs.	Catherine Shuker	3 April 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0275/TRCA	67 Beach Road Weston-super-Mare BS23 4BG Grid Ref: E 331706 N 160147	T1827 Magnolia / Cherry - limb growing towards the building should be reduced back to 1m from the glass fence and the tree crown lifted to a height of 3m; T1406 Prunus - crown lift to 2.5m from ground level; T1405 Holly - cut back to provide a 2m clearance; T2980 Turkey Oak - branches are removed over the shed to gain a 2m clearance; T2981 Holm Oak - crown is lifted to 4m and the canopy reduced back to the shrub bed kerb line; T2982 Poplar - major deadwood is removed, the crown is lifted to 4m and the canopy reduced back to the shrub bed kerb line; T2983 Holm Oak - crown is lifted to 4m and the canopy reduced back to the shrub bed kerb line; T2984 Norway Maple - crown is lifted to 4m and the canopy reduced back to the shrub bed kerb line; T1401 Beech - remove major deadwood and crown lift to 4m from ground level;	James McCarthy	23 March 2026

Parish	Application Number	Location	Proposal	Case Officer	Target Date
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0299/NMA	48 Corondale Road Weston-super-Mare BS22 8PY Grid Ref: E 334833 N 161663	Non-material amendment to application 25/P/2579/FUH (Proposed erection of a single storey rear extension to facilitate a utility room.) to allow for an alteration to the external facing materials from render to buff coloured facing brick with blue engineering brick detailing.	Marcus Henley	10 March 2026

Appendix 1

Application types for which Town and Parish Councils are statutory consultees

Suffix	Application type	Suffix	Application type
/ADV	Advertisement Consent[1]	/MW1	Minerals and waste
/FUL	Full planning permission	/MW2	Minerals and waste with EIA
/FU2	Full planning permission and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	/MMA	Minor material amendment
/FUH	Full planning permission - householder	/NMA	Non-material amendment[2]
/OUT	Outline planning permission	/MOD	Modification or discharge s106 Agreement
/OU2	Outline planning permission and EIA	/HZ1	Hazardous Substance Consent (general)[3]
/RM	Reserved matters	/HZ2	Hazardous Substance Consent (vary/remove condition)[3]
/PIP	Permission in Principle[1]	/HZ3	Hazardous Substance Consent (change of control)[3]
/TDC	Technical Details Consent[1]	/HZ4	Hazardous Substance Consent (revocation)[3]
/LBC	Listed Building Consent	/QRU	Crown Development – special urgency
/LBD	Listed Building Consent to demolish	/RLA	Council application - alter listed building
/R3	Council planning application (NSC is the developer)	/R3EIA	Council planning application +EIA (NSC is the developer)
/R4	Council planning application (NSC not the developer)	/R4EIA	Council planning application +EIA (NSC not the developer)
/R32	Council application for advertisement consent (NSC is the developer)	/R42	Council application for advertisement consent (NSC not the developer)
/R43	Council application for demolition in a CA (NSC not developer)	/R33	Council app for demolition in a CA (NSC is the developer)
/R36	Council app for Minerals and Waste (NSC is developer)	/R46	Council app for Minerals and Waste (NSC not developer)
/RLD	Council app to demolish listed building		

Footnotes:

1. The statutory consultation period for Advertisement Consent, Permission in Principle and Technical Details Consent is 14 days. North Somerset Council has increased this to 21 days.
2. Town and Parish Councils are statutory consultees for non-material amendment applications only if they have formally adopted a Neighbourhood Plan.
3. The statutory consultation period for hazardous substance applications is 28 days, which is calculated from the date this list was sent as stated above.

Applications Registered, Listed by Parish/Town Council

From: 16 February 2026 - 22 February 2026
Date Sent: 23 February 2026
21 day period ends: 16 March 2026

Introduction
This weekly list sets out what applications have been registered by North Somerset Council within the past week. Local Parish and Town Councils are statutory consultees for the application types listed at appendix 1.

For applications shown in this weekly list, that have a suffix that is listed at appendix 1, we are hereby formally consulting the Town or Parish Council within whose boundaries the application is located (please note the variations to this in the notes beneath the table).

The consultation period for these applications is set by Government and starts from the date we sent this weekly list. The date by which the consultation period ends and by when your comments need to be submitted to us, is confirmed at the top of this page and in the notes to the table at appendix 1. If you will not be able to provide your comments by the date the consultation ends, please contact the case officer to request additional time. If the name of the case officer is not shown, it means the application was not allocated to a case officer when the list was generated. However, you can ask who the case officer is by sending an email to developmenttechnicalsupportteam@n-somerset.gov.uk

For all other application types, that are not listed in at appendix 1, there is no statutory requirement for you to submit any comments to us and your council is not formally being consulted. This means the consultation period set out above does not apply. We have included these applications in this list for information purposes, but your council can submit comments, if it chooses to do so.

Applications with a suffix of AOC are seeking to approve details required by a planning condition. They are not subject to formal consultation and so are not listed at appendix 1. You can submit comments about them but please bear in mind that we are required by Government to determine them as soon as possible and without delay, which means we often make our decisions well before the target date.

Sending your comments

Town and Parish councils can send their comments to North Somerset Council using either of the following options.

Option 1 – Upload via website
Submit your comments using the Make a Comment function on the case file online. Your comments will be shown online immediately, and the case officer will be able to see them. Place the name of your council at the very top of your comments so people know they are from you council.

Options 2 – By email

Send your comments to dmscanningrequests@n-somerset.gov.uk and CC them to the case officer. Your comments will take up to five working days to appear on the website.

Conditions

It is important to set out your council's views with regards to what conditions should be applied, even if your council is objecting to the proposal. When doing so please refer to the condition codes listed in our standard conditions. For example, your comment could state:

'Without prejudice to our comments above, and should planning permission be granted contrary to our objection, we recommend that that the following standard conditions (as found on North Somerset Council's website) should be applied to the decision notice:

- ACC02
- ECO06
- MAIN01.'

Legal Agreements

It is also important to set out your council's views with regards to what mitigation should be secured by a legal agreement, even if your council is objecting to the proposal. When doing so we recommend that you state in your comments what mitigation you think is required. For example:

'Without prejudice to our comments above, and should planning permission be granted contrary to our objection, we would like the following mitigation to be secured by a legal agreement:

- Play equipment located at x
- Improvements to cycle way between x and y
- Increased frequency of bus service x from 2 hourly to hourly'

If planning permission is granted your request for conditions and legal agreements will be considered and taken into account. The Government has prepared statutory tests relating to the use of planning conditions and planning obligations which local planning authorities have to comply with.

Parish	Application Number	Location	Proposal	Case Officer	Target Date
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0191/FUH	12 Marindin Drive Weston-super-Mare BS22 7UT Grid Ref: E 336695 N 163635	Proposed demolition of existing conservatory. Erection of a single storey wraparound side/rear extension and first floor extensions to the East and West elevations.	Harshali Pande	10 April 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0279/TRCA	32 Charlton Road Weston-super-Mare Grid Ref: E 332023 N 159757	T1 - Birch, crown reduce by up to 1.5 meters, reducing to suitable growth points.	James McCarthy	24 March 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0280/TRCA	10 Queens Road Weston-super-Mare Grid Ref: E 332013 N 162139	G1 - Mixed group of Yew, Holly, Bay and euonymus - remove to ground level.	James McCarthy	24 March 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0282/TRCA	Alice House Care Home 8 Queens Road Weston-super-Mare BS23 2LQ Grid Ref: E 332010 N 162110	T1 - Leylandii cypress, dismantle to ground level. Previously topped, poor specimen tree, removal would favour the holm oak tree. T2 - Holm oak, reduce lateral growth by up to 1.5 meters to rebalance crown.	James McCarthy	24 March 2026

Parish	Application Number	Location	Proposal	Case Officer	Target Date
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0304/FUH	55 Boulevard Weston-super-Mare BS23 1PG Grid Ref: E 332473 N 161720	Proposed widening of the front boundary wall and restoration of existing access gates, together with the creation of an additional off-road parking area to the front of the property.	Niloofar Abolfazlzadeh	8 April 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0306/FUH	55 Boulevard Weston-super-Mare BS23 1PG Grid Ref: E 332473 N 161720	Proposed conversion and part-extension of an existing outbuilding to create a single-storey link attached annex to be used in conjunction with the main dwelling.	Niloofar Abolfazlzadeh	8 April 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0352/TEN	Weston Super Mare Cricket Club Devonshire Road Weston-super-Mare Grid Ref: E 332196 N 159251	Notification under Regulation 5 of the Electronic Communications Code of the intention to install electronic communications apparatus comprising of; existing 3No. Antennas to be removed and proposed installation of 6No. Antennas, proposed installation of 1No. GPS Module, removal of 1No. Cabinet and proposed installation of 2N.. Monza cabinet, proposed installation of 1No. CSC Cabinet, proposed installation of 1No. Meter Cabinet, proposed Monza conversion of 1No. cabinet, proposed installation of 18No. ERS, existing 3No. ERS Rails to be removed, existing 3No. pairs of off-set brackets to be removed and proposed installation of 6No. pairs offset brackets, existing 3No. pairs CHS pole to be removed and proposed installation of 6No. CHS pole, development ancillary reworks/additions thereto as per drawings. THIS IS NOT A PLANNING APPLICATION	Molly Willmot	11 March 2026

Parish	Application Number	Location	Proposal	Case Officer	Target Date
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0327/FUL	Crown House 1 Stafford Place Weston-super-Mare BS23 2QZ Grid Ref: E 332330 N 161737	Proposed replacement of 24no. single glazed timber sliding sash windows with new double glazed like for like conservation style sliding sash windows.	Marcus Henley	9 April 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0336/FUH	2 Priests Way Weston-super-Mare BS22 9BJ Grid Ref: E 334842 N 162551	Proposed creation of a rear ground floor annex to provide accommodation for independent living. Extension and modernisation of the first floor to provide family living accommodation. Demolition of existing conservatory and sheds and conversion of existing garage into a utility room.	Nick Manley	10 April 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0341/AOC	57 Severn Avenue Weston-super-Mare BS23 4DG Grid Ref: E 332283 N 160037	Request to discharge conditions 5 (Secure Cycle Store), 8 (10% Renewable Energy) and 9 (Noise Scheme) from application 25/P/0250/FUL.	Bryn Clare	10 April 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0344/AOC	Weston Super Mare Rugby Football Club Drove Road Weston-super-Mare BS23 3PA Grid Ref: E 332420 N 160865	Request to Discharge Condition 15 (2 week notice of remediation works) from application 21/P/3368/OUT.	Bryn Clare	10 April 2026

Parish	Application Number	Location	Proposal	Case Officer	Target Date
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0350/HHPA	51 Mendip Road Weston-super-Mare BS23 3HB Grid Ref: E 333017 N 161363	Prior approval request for the erection of a single storey rear extension with a pitched roof that would 1) extend beyond the rear wall of the original house by 4.30m; 2) have a maximum height of 3.50 metres and 3) have eaves that are 2.25 metres high.	Niloofar Abolfazlzadeh	30 March 2026
Weston-super-Mare	26/P/0356/AOC	Police Maintenance Depot Stuart Road Weston-super-Mare BS23 3XN Grid Ref: E 333480 N 160186	Request to discharge conditions 3, (Construction Method Statement) and 6, (Arboricultural Method statement & Tree Protection Plan) on application 25/P/1746/FUL.	Bryn Clare	14 April 2026

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Planning and Environment Committee – March 4th, 2026.

Tree Consultant's Report

This report provides the Planning and Environment Committee with an update of the tree management and environmental work carried out by the Council's arboricultural consultant.

Tree Management:

The focus of my work over the last two months has been on delivering the annual tree maintenance programme. I have assessed the trees, specified the tree works and submitted a Section 211 Notification to North Somerset Council. I am waiting to receive quotation from the tree surgeons and approval from North Somerset before finalising the works.

My work on the Tree Management Plan has been paused while Grounds Manager and Senior Development Officer carry out a comparison between the management plan and other tree related documents.

Environment Projects:

Weston Community Arboretum:

A significant time investment has been made in completing the Weston Community Arboretum Management Plan, which will be circulated with this report for your consideration. It is based on the Stonehouse Community Arboretum Management Plan which was written by John Parker CEO of the Arboricultural Association, and who gave us permission to use it as a template. I have worked with the North Somerset Council Tree Officer to edit the document in a way that reflects how both councils manage their trees but doesn't commit either council to something that they are not delivering already.

The key points are the 15 actions that the management plan is based on, and which build on the principles of the Tree Charter that the council signed up to in 2021. We have also worked with other members of the Tree & Plant Group to insert the unique aspects of a community arboretum that we have created here, such as the digital map supported by NSC (not live at time of writing), the tree walks that have been created and are available on our You Tube Channel and the tree information signs that we are making from wood recycled from Weston Woods.

The management plan will also be presented to the North Somerset Natural Environment management team and if they and the town council agree to adopt it, the document will be used to support our application to be accredited as part of the global network of community arboreta.

Green Infrastructure Strategy:

The site visits for the Green Canopy Project are due to take place in March with the Forest of Avon's Woodland Officer.

Work on creating the SMARTER objectives for the action plan will also take place in March.

Tree and Plant Group:

The Tree & Plant Group meeting will take place on March 18th, 2026, where we also review the community arboretum management plan.

THE WESTON-SUPER-MARE COMMUNITY ARBORETUM MANAGEMENT PLAN

A tree and woodland strategy for Weston

The Weston Community Arboretum Management Plan is based on the Stonehouse Community Arboretum Management Plan which was written by John Parker, who gave us kind permission to use it as a template.

It was amended by Emily Burnell, Steve Clark, James McCarthy and Simon McCoy to highlight the trees of Weston-super-Mare and that the public open space trees are managed by both North Somerset Council and Weston-super-Mare Town Council. This management plan reflects and combines the management style of both councils.

Design & Layout by Simon McCoy

Photographs by Steve Poulsom (cover photo), Steve Clark, Simon McCoy

Contact:

Weston-super-Mare Town Council, 32 Waterloo Street, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1LN.

wsm-tc.gov.uk

admin@wsm-tc.gov.uk

The Weston Community Arboretum Management Plan –2026

Contents

" A STRUCTURED, RESPONSIBLE AND REALISTIC FRAMEWORK FOR TREE MANAGEMENT"

1.1 Background and purpose

Trees deliver a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits to communities, but they require proper care and attention if they are to flourish and fulfil their potential. Within the boundaries of Weston-super-Mare there are many different tree owners and managers but there has never been an overarching strategy which regards the urban forest collectively and coordinates its management in line with best practice and the wants and needs of the community. The aim of this management plan is to do just that – to provide relevant information about trees to the people of Weston and to create a structured, responsible and realistic framework for the management and care of the urban forest of Weston-super-Mare to ensure that everyone in our community, of present and future generations, benefits equally from the Weston Community Arboretum.

1.2 Weston-super-Mare

Weston-super-Mare is a charming coastal town in North Somerset, that offers a delightful blend of seaside attractions and scenic beauty. Known for its long sandy beaches, vibrant pier, and iconic seafront, Weston-super-Mare is a place where both locals and visitors can unwind and enjoy the relaxed atmosphere. The town boasts a rich history and a welcoming community, making it an ideal destination for those seeking both relaxation and adventure.

Beyond the coastline, Weston-super-Mare is also home to a variety of stunning trees, woodlands and green spaces, perfect for nature lovers. Areas like the Weston Woods and the nearby Bleadon Hill offer peaceful walks among tall, ancient trees and lush landscapes. These woodlands are a haven for wildlife and offer tranquil settings for those looking to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life. The woodlands, park

trees, and street trees around Weston provide a beautiful natural backdrop that complements the town's coastal charm.

1.3 The Weston Community Arboretum

An arboretum can be defined as a collection of trees intended for people to enjoy, and to be studied for scientific purposes. Most arboreta are clearly defined areas, often surrounded by fences and accessible only with a ticket. The Weston Community Arboretum is rather different. Its boundaries are the boundaries of Weston-super-Mare, and it is free to visit. It includes all of the trees on public and private land (although Weston-super-Mare Town Council (WSMTC) and North Somerset Council (NSC) only have management responsibilities for relatively few trees, and private trees will of course remain the responsibility of the landowner), in the urban and rural parts of Weston-super-Mare. Ultimately its intention is to create and highlight a diverse collection of trees, responsibly and sustainably planted and cared for, which will deliver a wide range of benefits to Weston's community and encourage people to visit the town. It is there for everyone - for the current and future generations, regardless of gender, race, or socioeconomic factors. It is a long-term project, not a quick fix, and those involved in implementing the policies presented in this management plan will do so knowing that they will never see it completed in full.

1.4 Climate emergency

North Somerset Council and Weston-super-Mare Town declared a climate emergency in 2019 joining many towns and cities across the world in declaring a climate emergency. The Town Council stated that "Weston-super-Mare Town Council acknowledges the urgent need for global society to reduce carbon emissions and recognises the part which we have to play and commit to taking an active role in achieving this." Trees sequester carbon, can improve air quality and help mitigate extreme weather events by intercepting rainfall and creating shade. Trees are the lungs and the air conditioners of the urban environment and help mitigate the biodiversity crisis by offering essential shelter and food for animals, birds, fungi and insects. Trees are long-lived organisms and those we plant today may need to cope with the conditions we will face in decades and centuries to come; tree selection and maintenance will therefore be influenced, among other factors, by the likely future climate of the area. This strategy will contribute to the town's climate ambitions, although it is important to note that trees are just one part of the solution to the climate and ecological crises.

1.5 Legal and policy context

The Arboricultural Association has produced a simplified list of legislation relating to trees in their publication Guide to Trees and the Law (Arboricultural Association, 2015). The definitive publication relating to trees and the law is *The law of trees, forests and hedgerows* (Mynors, 2002). In summary, all tree owners have a duty of care to

ensure that their trees are maintained in such a way that does not lead to an unreasonable level of risk for those who might be affected by them. This obligation applies to public and private landowners. In terms of policy, there is a wide range of international, national, regional and local policy considerations which have been taken into account in the production of this strategy. On a local level it has been written in accordance with the principles of North Somerset Council's Local Plan for 2026-2041. This also takes account of the NSC Tree Risk Management Plan (North Somerset Council tree risk management plan 2024) and North Somerset's Green Infrastructure Strategy (Green Infrastructure Strategy | North Somerset Council), WSMTC's Town Council Strategy (Town Council Strategy) and the Town Council's Green infrastructure Strategy (Link).

1.6 This document

Tree care and management – arboriculture – is complex, and it is not possible within this strategy to include a detailed account of all of the important aspects. This strategy is a living document which is expected to change over time. The document will be under constant review, as well as being formally reviewed every five years. The Weston Community Arboretum Management Plan is based on the management plan that was written for Stonehouse Town Council (STC) by John Parker, Chief Executive Officer at the Arboricultural Association. It was reviewed and revised to reflect the creation of a community arboretum in Weston-super-Mare and will continue to be amended as the arboretum develops. Prior to publication it was reviewed by WSMTC and NSC, and was subject to public consultation in February - March 2026. It was formally adopted by the Full Town Council on March 31st, 2026.

2.0 The urban forest of Weston-super-Mare

2.1 The urban forest

The urban forest of Weston-super-Mare can be defined as all trees, under public and private ownership, within the town boundary, covering urban and rural areas. This includes trees on the streets, in parks and school grounds, in private gardens, in the churchyards, alongside the railway, in farmland and those that make up Weston Woods. The trees of Weston are an important part of the town's character, delivering a wealth of benefits to the community and contributing to the green corridors which connect the urban environment to the rural fringe and wider countryside. Trees are also an important part of our town's history, and its future. One of the key aims of this document is to redefine the urban forest of Weston and establish it as the Weston Community Arboretum.

2.2 Weston's Wonderful Trees

Weston is home to many important trees, from newly planted trees to veteran specimens, and everything in between. Some key examples include the London Planes in Clarence Park West (CPW2 & CPW3), Monterey Cypress in Ellenborough Park West (EPW1), three stemmed Lime in Weston Woods (WW1). These trees are plotted on a map which is found on the North Somerset Council website (search 'Weston-super-Mare Community Arboretum) – and are the three which instantly spring to mind;

We have included trees of particular interest on a digital map **(link)** and included some of them in tree walks **(link)** for people to visit and explore.

The Weston Tree and Plant Group are also supporting a series of books and booklets under the collective title of 'Weston's Wonderful Trees'.

2.3 Weston Woods

Weston Woods, also known historically as Worlebury Woods, occupies around 130 hectares along the limestone ridge forming the northern skyline of Weston-super-Mare. The area was originally grassland until the 1820s, when landowner John Hugh Smyth-Pigott planted the hillside to create a private game reserve, with much of the early woodland later felled for timber during the First World War. Since then, the woods have largely re-vegetated naturally, creating a varied woodland mosaic. Today, the site is recognised as responsibly managed and is designated as a Local Nature Reserve, supporting diverse flora, fauna, invertebrates, and birdlife throughout the year.

Although Weston Woods contains planted and naturally regenerated stands, the south-eastern section known as Ashcombe Wood is classed as *ancient semi-natural woodland*. This area has maintained long-term woodland cover, allowing ancient woodland indicator species—particularly spring wildflowers—to persist in its undisturbed soils. The site supports a wide range of native trees and ground flora typical of long-established woods, consistent with the characteristics of ancient semi-natural woodland defined by Natural England and the Woodland Trust (native tree cover, long ecological continuity, and specialist woodland species). The woodland also encompasses significant archaeological heritage, including the Iron Age *Worlebury Hillfort*, further emphasising its historic and ecological value in the North Somerset landscape.

2.4 Measuring the urban forest

There are different metrics available to measure the size and extent of the urban forest. Two of the most common are tree numbers and canopy coverage. These are useful but are quantitative rather than qualitative and their limitations should be understood – for example, neither tree numbers nor canopy cover tell us anything about size, species, age, or condition. However, they are a useful starting point and give a snapshot in time

which can be used to assess progress. This strategy will include the adoption of a canopy cover target against which to measure performance.

Across North Somerset the Council manages approximately 300,000 trees. While in Weston, the Town Council manages approximately 1,000 trees on their open spaces.

In 2014, North Somerset Council carried out a survey to understand the effects and values of the urban forest in the region. The survey demonstrated the trees in Weston provide us with numerous structural and functional values such as:

• Carbon sequestration (Carbon absorption)

• The structural value of the tree stock

• Oxygen production

• Rainwater interception - leading to a reduction of flooding risk

• Pollutant interception

• Reducing energy costs

• Reducing urban heating (the Urban Heat Island Effect)

The survey also importantly highlighted that the canopy cover across the town is just 8.2% and of that 16.3% of that overall percentage is from the Ash species.

Tree canopy cover is expressed as a percentage of a given boundary which is covered by tree canopy when looking down from above. Comparisons to other towns and cities can be seen in **Table 1. [incl. WSM results to the table]**

"Table 1: Tree canopy cover in selected UK towns and cities.

Town% Tree cover(± Standard Error)SourceYear of survey

Bath 20% (± 1.79) i-Tree Canopy 2016

Bristol 19% (± 1.52) i-Tree Canopy 2016

Cardiff 21% (± 1.44) i-Tree Canopy 2016

Cheltenham 12.80% (± 1.49) i-Tree Canopy 2016

Exeter 18.80% (± 1.75) i-Tree Canopy 2016

Gloucester 13.60% (± 1.53) i-Tree Canopy 2016

Stroud 28.60% (± 2.02) i-Tree Canopy 2016

Torquay 15.80% (± 1.63) i-Tree Canopy 2016

Data from Doick et al, 2017.

*Weston-super-Mare 8.2% (Av.) North Somerset Council iTree Eco survey 2014

**Forest Research - Weston-super-Mare average canopy cover - 14.02%

***Canopy Equity - https://uk.treeequityscore.org/

“NEITHER TREE NUMBERS NOR CANOPY COVER TELL US ANYTHING ABOUT SIZE, SPECIES, AGE, OR CONDITION”

2.5 Ownership

Responsibility for, and ownership of, trees in Weston is divided amongst a wide range of stakeholders. The main public bodies with responsibility for public open spaces include WSMTC and North Somerset Council (NSC) There are also many trees in the churchyards, schools or under the management of housing associations and health care trusts. Much of the urban forest is located on private land – in individual gardens and on land occupied by larger organisations. Mixed ownership and responsibility means there has never been a holistic overview to managing the urban forest of Weston to maximise benefits for the community. A key aim of this document is to provide a framework within which public and private landowners, renters and community groups can operate to make Weston an exemplary example of collaborative tree management. It is estimated that NSC has planted approximately 35,000 trees since 2020, and WSMTC have established approximately 580 trees on their open spaces (including whips planted in hedges).

3.0 The Weston Tree Charter

3.1 Principles and policy commitments

At the heart of this strategy is a set of principles and commitments which describe WSMTC/NSC’s approach to managing the Weston Community Arboretum and which can collectively be described as the Weston Tree Charter. All other organisations managing trees in Weston and all private landowners, large and small, and those renting property, are invited to subscribe to these principles and commitments, which are outlined here. In 2021, WSMTC adopted the Woodland Trust Tree Charter which sets out how trees and people benefit each other and provided ten guiding principles:

1. Sustain landscapes rich in wildlife.
2. Plant for the future.
3. Celebrate the power of trees to inspire.
4. Grow forests of opportunity and innovation.

5. Protect irreplaceable trees and woods.
6. Plan greener local landscapes.
7. Recover health, hope and wellbeing with the help of trees.
8. Make trees accessible to all.
9. Combat the threat to our habitats.
10. Strengthen our landscape with trees.

These principles provided the structure on which the Weston Tree and Plant Group was formed and led to the inspiration for the creation of a community arboretum, and in turn provide the fifteen-point Action Plan that provides the basis of the Weston Community Arboretum Management Plan. These state that WSMTC, NSC and other stakeholders will:

ACTION 1. Actively promote trees as an asset, not a liability.

ACTION 2. Protect and retain trees wherever possible to do so.

ACTION 3. Increase tree canopy cover and improve canopy equity on public land in Weston to from 8% to 16% by 2040.

ACTION 4. Inspect all publicly owned trees on a cyclical basis and keep records of inspections.

ACTION 5. Only engage competent, qualified arboricultural professionals to undertake tree work.

ACTION 6. Revise the woodland management plan to protect and enhance Weston Woods by 2028.

ACTION 7. Plant and establish a diverse range of trees, responsibly and sustainably.

ACTION 8. Only plant trees which are UK-grown or, if imported, have gone through an appropriate period of quarantine.

ACTION 9. Work to ensure that at least 80% of all newly planted trees are established and still alive three years after planting.

ACTION 10. Seek to invest resources in tree planting, establishment, and care equally across Weston.

ACTION 11. Work actively with local schools to promote the importance of trees and nature.

ACTION 12. Actively engage landowners and renters to sign up to the principles of the Weston Community Arboretum Management Plan.

ACTION 13. Create an online map of all Community Arboretum trees and links to our Tree Walks to encourage others to participate.

ACTION 14. Continue to help the Weston Tree and Plant Group support and deliver this strategy.

ACTION 15 Respond to any questions, complaints, or concerns about trees openly and honestly.

The urban forest of Weston is a Community Arboretum, for everybody.

4.0 Trees will be regarded as an asset, not a liability

4.1 Summary

Trees are good. It is now widely acknowledged that trees bring considerable benefits to those who live, work and play in urban environments. These benefits are commonly divided into environmental, social and economic benefits and are sometimes collectively referred to as ecosystem services. It is important to remember that trees are multi-functional infrastructure, doing many things at the same time. It is unhelpful to focus exclusively on one benefit at the expense of others. A more detailed explanation of the benefits of trees can be found in Appendix A.

4.2 The benefits of trees

(summary) A non-exhaustive list of the benefits of trees includes: (Diagram)

Text for diagram:

Mitigate the urban heat island effect through direct shade and transpiration.

Provide habitat for a wide range of insects, birds, mammals and fungi.

Reduce flooding by intercepting rainfall.

Sequester carbon. Improve air quality.

Aesthetically pleasing.

Slow traffic speeds.

Screen views of undesirable buildings or infrastructure.

Reduce certain types of crime.

Add cultural and heritage value to an area.

Improve physical health for people.

Increase commercial activity of nearby retailers and food/drink establishments

Improve mental wellbeing for people.

Also see: https://www.jackpinetrees.co.uk/what-do-trees-do-for-you/

4.3 Positive correlation to canopy size

There is a positive correlation between the number of benefits delivered and the size of trees, with the effects of the benefits increasing with canopy size. Large-canopy trees and increased canopy cover has been shown to increase the benefits associated with air quality, carbon sequestration, shade, urban cooling and water management (Armour et al, 2012). Large trees have been demonstrated as more effective than small or medium-sized trees in delivering benefits related to commercial spending, health and perception of health. Some sources suggest that most, if not all, benefits associated with trees are positively correlated to canopy size, and research shows that ecosystem services delivered by large trees are 44% greater than medium-sized trees and 92% greater than small trees (Armour et al, 2012).

Canopy equity refers to the fair, balanced distribution of tree canopy cover across a landscape, ensuring that no particular area, community, or habitat disproportionately lacks the benefits that tree canopies provide. In practical terms, it's about making sure canopy cover is *equitably shared*—whether across neighbourhoods, public spaces, biodiversity corridors, or woodland compartments—so that environmental benefits such as shade, cooling, air-quality improvement, habitat provision, and aesthetic value are accessible to all. In urban forestry, canopy equity often highlights the need to address historic under-planting in deprived areas, while in woodland settings it can relate to maintaining balanced canopy structure so that light, resources, and ecological functions are shared more fairly across the ecosystem. Ultimately, canopy equity supports both social fairness and ecological resilience.

As a group, we intend to plant trees in areas which have historically low canopy cover and are considered deprived such as Bournville and the Coronation.

Text for diagram:

Mitigate the urban heat island effect through direct shade and transpiration.

Provide habitat for a wide range of insects, birds, mammals and fungi.

Reduce flooding by intercepting rainfall.

Sequester carbon. Improve air quality.

Aesthetically pleasing.

Slow traffic speeds.

Screen views of undesirable buildings or infrastructure.

Reduce certain types of crime.

Add cultural and heritage value to an area.

Improve physical health for people.

Increase commercial activity of nearby retailers and food/drink establishments

Improve mental wellbeing for people.

Create employment and career opportunities for those working in arboriculture.

Some of the many benefits of trees

4.4 Canopy cover as a metric

Recognising the fact that the benefits of trees are positively correlated to increased canopy coverage, WSMTC/NSC is committing in this strategy to increasing canopy cover in the town from the existing 8% to 16% by 2030. This is an ambitious target which will not be met purely through tree planting – existing trees must be protected and cared for. Crucially, it is not a target that can be achieved by WTC/NSC alone. It will require the support of other public and private landowners in the town. Canopy cover studies will be undertaken at least every ten years and reported online to monitor progress depending on available funding.

4.5 Quantifying the benefits

It is increasingly common practice for towns and cities to use tools such as iTree Eco in order to quantify and value the benefits delivered by trees. Whilst these attempts to place a monetary value on trees can undoubtedly have useful practical applications, there is also a risk that the true value of trees is significantly underestimated. Aside from the fact that these valuation tools do not take into account many of the benefits of urban trees, there are also benefits which simply cannot be quantified and given a 'value' in pounds and pence. This includes many of the social, cultural and heritage benefits, which should be considered no less important simply because a price cannot be put on them. The benefits of trees can also be measured using the Tree Equity Score UK https://uk.treeequityscore.org/ which combines information from a variety of sources to create a single measure that takes into account the impact of tree canopy on income, health, employment, age, heat and air pollution.

4.6 Disbenefits of trees

It must be acknowledged that urban trees can also bring perceived disbenefits. Like any other living thing they can go into decline and die, and in the case of trees this can sometimes bring increased risk to persons and property. However, through a responsible and appropriate inspection regime and proactive maintenance work, this risk can be reduced to acceptable levels. The mere presence of a tree, no matter how

large it is, should not be regarded as a danger which needs to be dealt with. Blocked light can be a real frustration for those who suffer from it, although it is important to understand that there is no 'right to light' in English law (although there can be exceptions to this under the rules around 'easement'). There are also other potential irritations, usually minor, which can be considered non-actionable nuisances. This includes phenomena such as falling leaves or fruit, blocked television reception or attracting insects and birds. However, the benefits trees deliver far outweigh any of these perceived disbenefits, although understandably these can create a difficult situation for those directly affected.

There are some common misconceptions around tree roots and the risk they pose. Tree roots can indeed cause damage to other infrastructure, whether directly (for example, lifting paving slabs or cracking asphalt) or indirectly (such as subsidence – although this can only happen on shrinkable substrates or soils). When planting new trees this risk can be mitigated through careful pit design and species selection. For existing trees, footway maintenance or even root pruning might be required. Roots tend to follow the path of least resistance, and will not 'undermine' foundations, as is sometimes feared. The impact of roots on drains is also frequently exaggerated – tree roots lack the ability to actively break drains open and instead merely exploit existing weaknesses, usually cracks caused by natural ground movement over time, or a lack of drain maintenance. This is less of a problem with modern infrastructure.

5.0 Existing trees will be cared for and managed appropriately

5.1 Summary

If we are to ensure that newly-planted trees grow into maturity and that the urban forest of Weston continues to thrive and deliver benefits for future generations of Weston residents, then they must be properly looked after and maintained. Whilst the Community Arboretum is something for everyone to be involved in, it must be remembered that arboriculture is a specialist discipline and professional arboriculturists play a critical role in urban tree management. Money spent on tree care must be regarded as an investment, not a cost.

5.2 Pruning

Tree maintenance shall only be undertaken by suitably competent, qualified and insured arboriculturists. Arboriculture is an unregulated industry, and anyone can purchase a chainsaw and call themselves an arborist. Engaging appropriate professionals is likely to be more expensive than having the work done by someone without the relevant qualifications and competencies, but this is a worthwhile investment. Tree pruning operations should only be undertaken after instruction by a suitably competent arboriculturist who is independent from the company engaged to carry out the recommended works. All tree pruning must be undertaken in accordance

with British Standard 3998: Tree work – Recommendations and with due regard for legislation including the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 and the Town & Country Planning Act 1990. Pruning should not be regarded purely as a way to mitigate risk or problems, but as a tool to maximise the benefits of trees in the urban environment.

Tree pruning is an essential part of responsible tree maintenance, and all requests made to WSMTC/NSC from members of the public to prune or remove WSMTC/NSC owned trees will be considered. However, there are some reasons for which trees will typically not be pruned or removed. These include:

■Non-actionable nuisances such as blocked light, views or television/radio reception.

■Falling fruit, leaves or twigs.

■■Perceived problems with birds; insects or animals (such as squirrels).

■Obstruction of views.

■Obstruction of private surveillance cameras.

Reasons trees might be pruned or removed include:

■Health and safety considerations.

■Clearance over roads or footpaths.

■Actionable nuisances (as defined in law).

■To facilitate developments with full planning permission.

■Cyclical pruning programmes, such as pollarding or coppicing.

■Trees making contact with structures or above-ground infrastructure.

■Legal requirements such as those associated with pest and disease notifications.

It should be noted that these lists are non-exhaustive and requests to prune or remove trees will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

5.3 Tree removal

On occasion it is necessary to remove a tree, particularly in the interests of public safety. However, as a general rule the presumption will be to retain healthy trees wherever possible. Requests from third parties to remove WTC-owned trees will be considered on a case-by-case basis, with a presumption towards retention. The community will be notified of planned tree removals. This should be regarded as a notification rather than a consultation, although feedback will be welcomed. Under some circumstances, such as emergency removals, this communication will not be possible. However, regardless of the circumstances WSMTC/NSC will always be prepared to fully justify tree removals to residents and no tree will be removed

without good reason. It should be noted in the context of Worlebury Woods that reasonable and proportionate tree removal is part of good woodland management.

5.4 Mitigation for removal

Where WSMTC-owned trees are proposed to be removed for development there will be an option for them to be valued through the CAVAT (Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees) system, and appropriate mitigation will be agreed prior to removal. This might take the form of replacement tree planting, a financial contribution to be invested in trees and green spaces in the town, or a combination of both. All applications to remove trees will be assessed with input from a suitably qualified arboriculturist. Where trees owned by WSMTC/NSC are removed without permission (including vandalism and accident), appropriate compensation for the town will be calculated using CAVAT. In some circumstances it might be appropriate for WSMTC/NSC to pursue the perpetrators of the damage through legal means.

Blanket rules, such a one-for- one or two-for-one tree replacement strategy, are rarely nuanced enough to be useful. Consideration should be given to the canopy coverage which has been lost, as well as tree numbers. Sometimes it might be entirely appropriate to replace a removed tree on a one-for- one basis; in other cases, it might take as many as 100 saplings to replace the lost canopy. Often, particularly when considering ancient trees, it is not possible to mitigate their loss at all.

It is estimated that NSC have planted 35,000 trees across the authority since 2020, while WSMTC have established approximately 570 trees and saplings across the town since 2016.

5.5 Reuse of material

Where possible, attempts will be made to reuse the material produced by tree removal. This may include donations to local recycling projects, local schools for use in outdoor areas, construction of habitat piles or the provision of firewood for the community. Where appropriate, some material will be composted and used for organic bark mulch. Deadwood – particularly standing deadwood – is a valuable habitat and will be retained where it is safe and practicable to do so, including monoliths in woodland areas. Where trees have been removed due to specific pests and diseases it may not be appropriate to reuse the material and there may be restrictions on transportation.

5.6 Tree inspections

All trees under the management of WSMTC will be inspected on a cyclical basis by appropriately-qualified individuals. Tree work will be largely driven by the inspection programme. In the absence of a bespoke tree database, records relating to tree inspections will be held by WSMTC/NSC in an appropriate format, such as an Excel spreadsheet. Information to be recorded about each tree includes a unique tree

number, common name, botanical name, age class, height, stem diameter, defects, work recommendations, timescale for work and last date of inspection.

5.7 Planning and development

New housing and developments are critical infrastructure for people and society, but so are trees, and we must strive to find space for both in our community.

“IT MIGHT TAKE AS MANY AS 100 SAPLINGS TO REPLACE THE CANOPY LOST FROM REMOVING A SINGLE MATURE TREE.“

The presumption against the removal of healthy trees extends to developments, which should be planned in such a way that minimises the need to prune or remove trees or hedgerows before, during and after construction. Planning applications which might have an impact on existing trees must go through the relevant processes, including a *British Standard 5837:2012 – Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations* arboricultural survey and report. This includes when there will be an impact on trees which are not within the development boundary, but adjacent to it, and the potential impact of construction traffic on the root protection areas of nearby trees must also be taken into account.

Proposed tree planting in new developments should be considered in the context of the principles of the Weston Community Arboretum Management Plan and should be properly planned. This includes considerations such as species selection, provenance, biosecurity, planting, staking/securing, aftercare, the timing of the planting and replacement in the event of failure. It is no longer enough to simply tick an environmental box by selecting a poor-quality tree, planting it in the front garden of a new development and leaving it to die.

5.8 Legally protected trees

Some trees are protected under law. The most common methods of legal protection are contained within the Town & Country Planning Act 1990; these are Conservation Areas and Tree Protection Orders (TPOs). In Conservation Areas, all trees larger than 75mm stem diameter are automatically protected and the Local Planning Authority must be contacted prior to any tree work being undertaken.

TPOs are a mechanism by which the Local Planning Authority can ensure that important amenity trees, groups of trees and woodlands are protected from unauthorised pruning or felling. Permission must be sought from the Local Planning Authority prior to any tree work being undertaken, unless an exemption applies as specified by the Town & Country Planning (Tree Preservation (England)) Regulations 2012, for example the removal of dead, fractured or hanging branches from a protected tree. More information about Conservation Areas and TPOs can be found on the North

Somerset Council website. It is good practice to always check if there is a TPO on your tree before undertaking work. If there is a tree which you believe should be protected, then contact North Somerset Council. Weston Community Arboretum lies on the outskirts of the Mendip National Landscape and Western Forest, and while we aim to complement their goals, this does not bring any additional tree protection beyond Conservation Areas and TPOs. One additional piece of legislation which might be relevant to tree protection and removal is the Forestry Act 1967, which specifies that a felling license is required if you are felling more than $5m^3$ in one calendar quarter, or more than $2m^3$ if the timber is to be sold.

5.9 Practical tree protection

Trees can be damaged in a variety of ways, for example during developments or improvement works, such as highway maintenance projects. Above the ground this damage can be caused in the crown of the tree through inappropriate pruning or by direct damage from vehicles. Materials laid up against the stem of a tree can cause direct damage to the bark which might also lead to future pest and disease problems. Changes to ground levels around the base of the tree can lead to long-term damage.

“ALWAYS CHECK IF THERE IS A TPO ON YOUR TREE BEFORE UNDERTAKING WORK“ ”

Below the ground, tree roots can easily be severed through excavation or be invisibly damaged by soil compaction. Materials – including fuel, salt or equipment – stored beneath a tree can cause compaction or direct damage. The root system of a tree extends further than is often thought. In *British Standard 5837:2012 – Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations* requires the Root Protection Area (RPA) can be shown as a circle around the tree which has a radius 12 times the diameter of the stem. For a tree with a one metre diameter stem the RPA therefore extends 12 metres away from the tree in each direction. The RPA must be considered whenever working around a tree. The risk of root damage can be mitigated through careful planning and protection measures such as fencing, bespoke boxes, signage, careful pruning or temporary cellular systems to avoid compaction. It should be noted that increased protection areas should be applied to ancient and veteran trees, including ancient woodland. Another useful document to consult with regard to tree protection is from the National Joint Utilities Group and has been updated to the ‘Street Works UK Guidelines for Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Utility Apparatus in Proximity to Trees’ 2026.

6.0 New trees will be established responsibly and sustainably

6.1 Summary

Tree planting is an investment in the future of our town. Trees are the only public realm assets we have that increase in value from the day of planting for the rest of their

lifetime. Whilst the act of planting a tree in the ground is obviously an important part of the process, it is just one element of a complex story. To ensure a healthy urban forest for Weston our new trees must thrive – this means focusing as much on establishment as planting. The approach to tree planting in Weston will not be based on targets or ever-escalating numbers, rather it will be informed by quality over quantity, sourcing high-quality trees in a biosecure fashion, and only in numbers that can be properly maintained.

6.2 Tree planting targets

In recent years tree planting targets have become increasingly popular, typically expressing planting ambition in terms of numbers. The Weston Community Arboretum Management Plan seeks establishment of trees rather than numbers of trees planted. When commitments are made to plant millions of trees, the far smaller numbers involved in urban projects are completely overlooked, despite being disproportionately important. We will plant only what there is room for, what can be afforded, and what can be responsibly sourced and properly looked after and will also be utilising the newly created community tree nursery, We SEE Trees CTN which will provide trees that are locally grown from local seed sourcing. Trees will be planted with quality rather than quantity in mind, with diversity as a key influencing factor. Tree planting numbers will be reported, but whips will not be included (unless specified) in order to avoid distorting the figures.

Rather than seeking to hit arbitrary tree planting targets, we will aspire to tree establishment targets, with the intention of ensuring that 80% of newly planted trees are still alive three years after planting. Progress will be carefully monitored, reasons for failure recorded and figures reported on the website.

6.3 Species selection and diversity

New trees will be selected on the basis of identifying the correct tree for the given situation, with particular attention paid to the importance of aftercare. We need a diverse urban forest with many different species represented, not only for the increased level of interest and broad range of ecosystem service delivery, but in order to future-proof our trees against climate change and the risk of pests and diseases. Where possible, trees will be selected which will have a large canopy at maturity. However, tree species selection will be made on a case-by-case basis.

“TREE ESTABLISHMENT IS AS IMPORTANT AS TREE PLANTING.“

Where possible and appropriate, input from local residents will be sought as part of the decision-making process. One key factor in selecting a species is what one is hoping to achieve through the planting. One factor of selection often given disproportionate attention is whether or not a species is ‘native’ to the UK.

In urban areas, the distinction between 'native' and 'non-native' trees is less important.

The UK has around 30 'native' trees, usually defined as species which colonised the British Isles between the end of the last ice age, around 10,000 years ago, and the formation of the English Channel. Of these, only a handful are large-canopy species, many of which suffer from pest and disease problems. Whilst in some circumstances – such as hedgerow planting or woodland creation – it may be entirely appropriate to prioritise native species, in general terms this is not the case when planting urban and amenity trees. Furthermore, just because a tree is native to the UK does not mean it is native to all regions of the UK. One common argument in favour of prioritising native species is that importation of species increases the chances of importing pests and diseases. This overlooks the fact that most native trees planted in the UK are probably not grown in the UK; they are still imported. The Weston Community Arboretum will be appropriately diverse, featuring native and non-native trees.

6.4 Tree size

In addition to species, there are other considerations to take into account when selecting a new tree. Trees come in many sizes at the time of planting. 'Standards' (including regular standards, heavy standards and extra-heavy standards) are specified in terms of stem circumference, for example 10-12cm or 18-20cm. Whips are much smaller trees, typically only a year or two of age. There are advantages and disadvantages to planting different sizes of tree. Standards have a more immediate impact on the landscape, are less prone to vandalism and often allow for a wider variety of species. However, they can be heavier to move around, more expensive and can require substantial pits. Whips are very cheap and easy to handle but often come in a limited range of species and have limited impact value at the time of planting. The overall approach of the WSMTC/NSC is to use standards wherever possible, opting for whips only in limited circumstances such as the gapping up of existing, or creation of new hedgerows.

6.5 Root specification

Different root types are often available when purchasing new trees, each with their own advantages and disadvantages. Bare root trees come, as it sounds, with no soil around them. These can be cheaper and easy to handle but must be planted very soon after delivery and can be available in a limited range of species. Rootballed trees come with a bag of soil around them which preserves much of the fine rooting material. These can be more expensive than bare root trees and more difficult to handle, but there is a slightly longer window in which to plant them, and they tend to have good success rates. A third option is container-grown trees, where the tree is delivered in a bag or container, along with a developed root system. These trees are usually the most expensive and often require substantial holes to be excavated but have high success

rates and in theory can be planted throughout the year, although best practice is still to plant only within the planting season. More information about specifying young trees can be found in *British Standard 8545:2014 Trees: From nursery to independence in the landscape – Recommendations*.

6.6 Biosecurity

Trees to be planted in Weston will be sourced from nurseries which supply UK-grown stock, such as the local community tree nursery WeSEE Trees CTN, or, if imported, have appropriate biosecurity and quarantine measures in place. Biosecurity is a critical issue which must be considered in all tree planting and maintenance operations – importing trees from other countries without using reputable nurseries or ensuring appropriate quarantine regimes will risk bringing new pests and diseases into the country or moving pests and diseases from one part of the UK to another. Alternatives to planting, such as natural regeneration, will be considered as and when appropriate.

6.7 Tree pits

New trees will be planted in tree pits to a specification appropriate to the site. In soft landscapes this might consist of a simple hole in the ground; in hard landscapes more highly engineered solutions may be required. Methods such as planting trees into buried concrete rings to inhibit root growth are not appropriate and should not be considered. Planting specifications may vary from one location to another but as standard it can be expected that new trees will be container-grown, between 12-20cm stem circumference and secured using two timber stakes and rubber ties. The preferred surface treatment for newly planted trees is organic mulch, preferably sourced from material generated through previous tree removal and pruning, although an alternative material may be required in certain circumstances, such as where pedestrian footfall is particularly heavy. Efforts should be made to create the best possible rooting environment for trees, with large tree pits containing uncompacted soil (where necessary using engineered tree pit systems) and, if at all possible, establishing underground soil connections between tree pits in hard landscapes.

6.8 Young tree maintenance

Young tree maintenance is essential if newly planted trees are to survive and become established in the landscape. For the first three years after planting, a new tree will be visited annually so that any necessary maintenance can be undertaken; this might include re-mulching, straightening of stake and ties or clearance of watering pipes. Formative pruning may also be necessary, but this is only to be undertaken by a suitably competent person acting under instruction by the tree owner, following current best practice guidance. After three years a decision will be made as to whether or not the tree is ready for young tree maintenance to come to a conclusion; if so, then the stake and ties will be removed, the surface treatment may be changed, and the tree will be

removed from the watering programme. If not, then it may be appropriate for young tree maintenance to continue for an additional period of time. Young tree maintenance will be undertaken by a combination of professionals and competent volunteers through local community groups, and records will be kept.

6.9 Watering

Adequate watering is essential for newly-planted trees. As a general rule of thumb each tree should receive 25 litres of water, once a week, between March and September. Additional watering might be required during periods of drought to ensure establishment. Water should be added to the surface of the tree pit unless there is a watering pipe, in which case half should go down the pipe and half on the tree pit. If watering bags are in place, then they should be used as specified. Sustainable sources of water should be used where possible, with stored rainwater the preferred option. Usage of drinking (potable) water to irrigate trees will often be necessary but should be minimised through sustainable alternatives where possible.

AS A GENERAL RULE OF THUMB EACH TREE SHOULD RECEIVE 25 LITRES OF WATER, ONCE A WEEK, BETWEEN MARCH AND SEPTEMBER. “

Residents will be engaged to water trees using captured rainwater, bath water or washing up water where appropriate, particularly during prolonged periods of dry weather. Engaging community groups and using watering tags to encourage participation from residents is encouraged.

6.10 Funding and sponsorship

Processes will be developed to allow residents and businesses to request and/or fund the planting of new trees. Requests to plant trees in specific locations will be assessed by WSMTC/NSC and decided on a case-by-case basis. This includes memorial trees; guidelines relating to memorial signs and plaques etc. are covered by the WSMTC Memorials Policy. Residents and businesses wishing to sponsor the planting of trees more generally rather than in specific locations are invited to do so and can contact (The Town Council or Weston Tree & Plant Group’s **Room For Trees** scheme) for further information. Grant funding may also be available for some projects.

6.11 Private landowners

The Weston Community Arboretum is intended to include not only trees on public land, but those on private land which are visible from public areas. To this end, residents and businesses are encouraged to consider planting trees on their own property and are able to contact NSC/WSMTC for any additional information or support they might require in responsibility and sustainably purchasing, planting and establishing trees. In time it is hoped that grants will be made available from WSMTC/NSC to offer financial

support to those hoping to plant trees on private land which will benefit the wider community.

6.12 Annual programme

Tree planting is a seasonal activity and one which is led by natural processes. The ideal time to plant new trees is before they come into leaf, and the standard planting season is between October and March. Each year the intention of WSMTC/NSC will be to have submitted a tree order by the end of September and to have planted all of the trees by the end of March in the following year. Residents wishing to make a request for a new tree should be aware that, depending on the timing of the request, it might not be possible to plant the tree in the forthcoming season. All newly planted trees on public land will be recorded by WSMTC/NSC for inclusion in the inspection and maintenance regime.

6.13 New trees – Site considerations

When assessing a site for potential tree planting, considerations will include:

■Above and below-ground utilities.

■Sightlines.

■Proximity to infrastructure.

■Proximity to existing vegetation.

■Local heritage.

■Access for maintenance.

■The short, medium and long-term implications of planting.

6.14 New trees – Species considerations

When selecting a species for planting in a given situation, considerations will include: ■Overall diversity of the urban forest.

■Ultimate dimensions.

■Species characteristics.

■Soil type.

■Water demands.

■Local vegetation.

■Local heritage.

■Existing and future pest and disease considerations.

■Existing and likely future climate.

■Community preferences.

7.0 The Weston Community Arboretum is for everyone

7.1 Summary

It is well acknowledged and understood that urban trees bring benefits, but those benefits are not always equally distributed throughout communities. In some towns and cities there is more investment in tree planting and maintenance in wealthier areas, which are typically already more heavily treed than less well-off areas. The main indicator of health is wealth, but there is also a correlation between increased tree canopy and improved human physical health and mental wellbeing. Urban trees have the potential to bring a wide range of benefits to people at all stages of their life, and it is the responsibility of all public bodies to ensure that these benefits are enjoyed equally across society.

7.2 Green equity

This concept can be defined as "fair access to, and governance of, urban forests regardless of differentiating factors such as socioeconomic status, racialization, cultural background or age" *(Nesbitt et al, 2018)*. This does not mean that the problem of green inequity can be solved simply by planting trees in less well-off areas, although this might be part of the solution and a balanced public investment across all areas of Weston is to be encouraged. However, it also means that the governance decisions relating to the management of the urban forest should involve all parts of the community.

7.3 The 3-30-300 rule

In 2021 a policy approach to urban forestry was proposed by Professor Cecil Konijnendijk at the University of British Colombia, Canada. The 3-30-300 concept calls for every resident of an urban area to be able to see a minimum of three trees from their house, to live in a ward with a minimum of 30% canopy cover, and to live a minimum of 300m away from the nearest public green space. The 3-30-300 approach has influenced this strategy, and it is agreed that these are good aspirational aims to have, but a lack of existing data relating specifically to Weston (other than with respect of canopy cover) means that they have not been adopted as formal policies. However, this should not be ruled out as an option for the future and the importance of visibility of trees from private dwellings, canopy coverage and proximity to public green space is fully acknowledged.

7.4 Rights for future Generations

A well-known ancient Greek proverb tells us that the mark of a great society is one in which the older generations plant trees, in the shade of which they know they will not sit. Tree care is not simply a pastime of the present; it is a promise to the future. We must all think in tree time. Aside from being good general life advice *(credit to Ted Green MBE "Britain's foremost ancient tree expert")*, this means that we must understand and acknowledge that trees exist on timescales which it can be hard for us to conceptualise.

“THE MARK OF A GREAT SOCIETY IS ONE IN WHICH THE OLDER GENERATIONS PLANT TREES, IN THE SHADE OF WHICH THEY KNOW THEY WILL NOT SIT.“

When we consider tree management, we must therefore consider the rights not only of the Weston residents of today, but of those who will live in Weston 10, 100 or 500 years from now. The trees we plant today are the ancient trees of the future.

7.5 Land ownership

Proximity to green space is incredibly important, but it is access to that green space which really matters. Open spaces behind fences might look attractive, but to fully benefit from them, people need to be able to get there. As has been established, trees are good for our community – but this extends to those trees on private land as well as public. Tree owners are encouraged to see themselves as tree custodians; temporary owners of the land on which the tree might have been growing for centuries. One of the key aspects of the Weston Community Arboretum is that it includes all trees in our town, including those on public and private land. Examples of this are trees in front gardens, which – whilst legally possessed by the landowner – will be delivering benefits to the people who live and work nearby. Another example is farmers, because it is on farmland that we find many of our oldest and most important trees. Tree time transcends land ownership, as well as human lifespans.

7.6 Promoting Weston

The Weston Community Arboretum is also intended to promote Weston as a town, with the hope that this unique selling point will attract visitors and investment into the area. It is important that these indirect benefits, as well as the direct benefits delivered by trees, are equally distributed through the community. Promoting the Weston Community Arboretum will involve sharing best practice, actively seeking to learn from others, adopting those ideas and practices which might be beneficial to the town.

8.0 Community engagement is critical to the success of the urban forest

8.1 Summary

The trees maintained by WSMTC/NSC and other public bodies are not owned by them – they are owned by the people of Weston and are being held in trust and managed on their behalf. For the Weston Community Arboretum to be a true community project, the

people of Weston must be encouraged to engage with the trees and woodland in our town throughout every stage of the process. This is not to deny the fact that arboriculture is a specialist discipline and that decisions do need to be taken based on professional advice, particularly relating to risk management and pests and diseases. However, community engagement is still possible. This section outlines some keyways in which the community can be engaged with their trees. Some of these ideas are already happening, some are ambitions for the future. Additional ideas are always welcome.

8.2 WestonTree & Plant Group

If the objectives of the Weston Community Arboretum Management Plan are to be achieved, then participation from all parts of the community is essential. An ambitious programme of tree planting, establishment and care cannot be undertaken by individuals or the town council alone. Responsibility must be shared. To this end, the Weston Tree & Plant Group has been formed which works with WSMTC/NSC, local residents, community groups and arboricultural professionals to ensure that the objectives of this management plan are successfully implemented and monitored. This group aims to be representative of the community it is there to work with.

8.3 Telling stories through trees

An important part of the Weston Community Arboretum is to tell the stories of some of the trees we have in the town, and how they relate to the community.

For example, in Weston we are in an area that once encapsulated the **medieval Forest of Mendip.**

"Black Rock is a tiny island that is exposed at low tide in the mouth of the River Axe, and remains clear of the water at high tide. It was very popular with fishermen although it is not used so much today. A muddy causeway allows access at low tide. The rock serves as an important navigational marker and once delineated the western limit of the Forest of Mendip, an area stretching as far east as Frome, a hunting ground of the Saxon and Norman Kings."

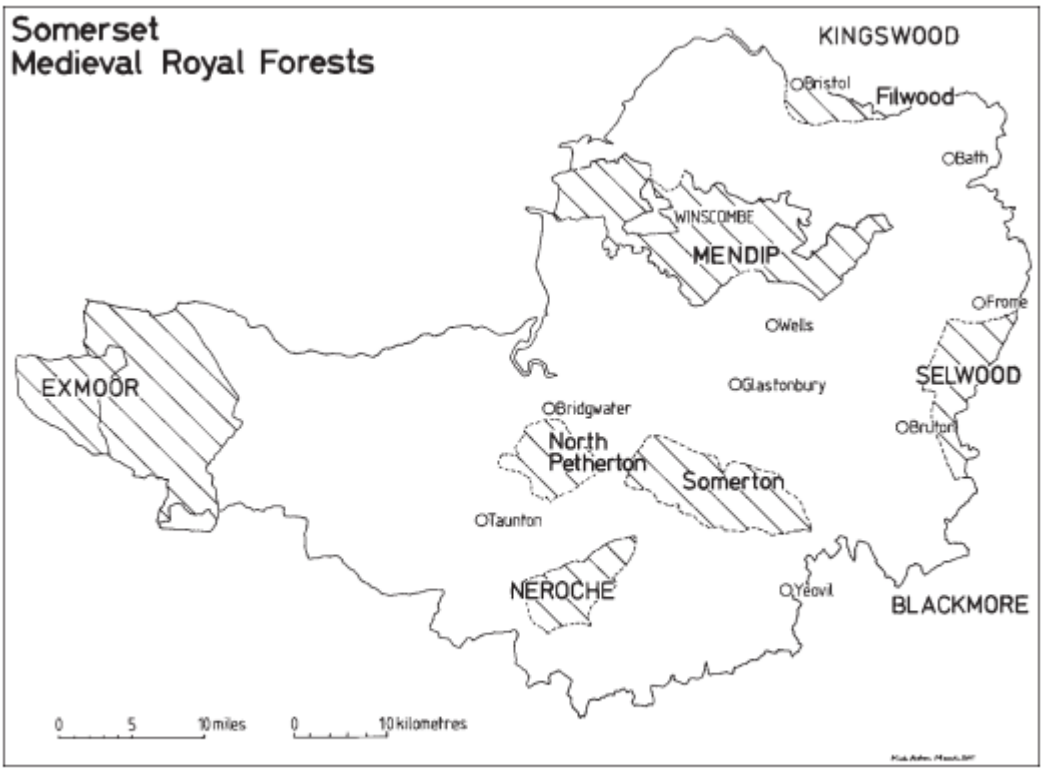

Fig. 1 Somerset medieval Royal Forests with the position of Winscombe parish (partly based on Bond 1994)

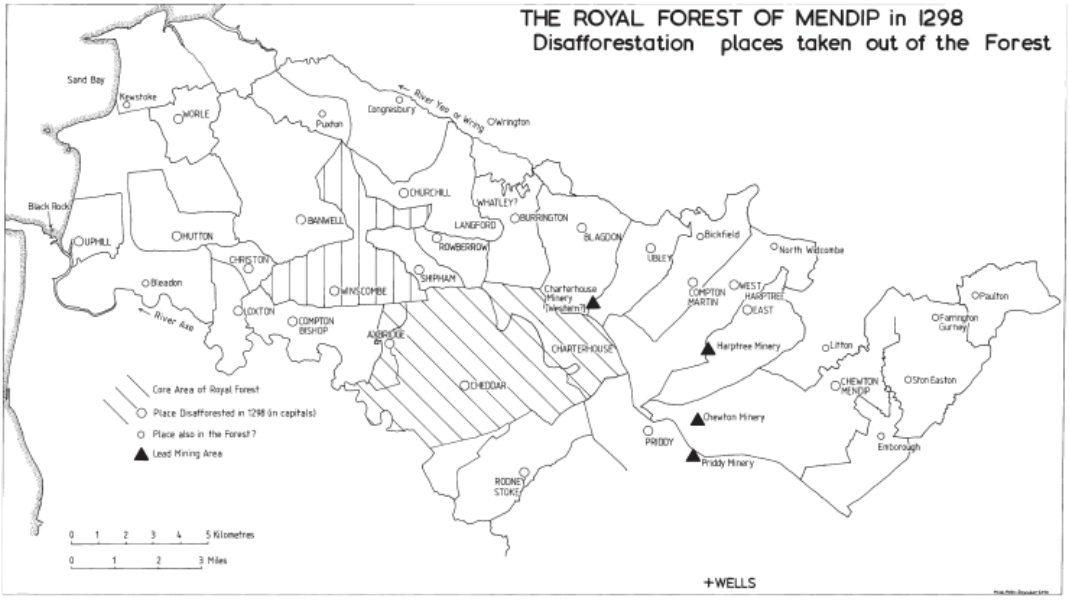

Fig. 4 The Royal Forest of Mendip in 1298; disafforestation – places taken out of the Forest

Through forest clearance, the rise of agriculture and the march of industry, most of our ancient woods have disappeared

Weston Woods, also known as Worlebury Woods, dominate the northern skyline of Weston-super-Mare. At 130 hectares, it is the largest area of green space in the North Somerset district, comprising of 3.5 hectares of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland, 10.07

hectares of lowland calcareous grassland with a scheduled monument (the Iron Age hill fort) with the rest being lowland mixed deciduous woodland,

"It seems Lord of the Manor, John Hugh Smyth-Piggot (1792-1853), got the idea of a wooded estate following a visit to Sir Walter Scott in Scotland - returning enthused by the writer's love of trees. The story is that Smyth-Piggot then enlisted local children to plant acorns and seedlings on the Weston hillside. It took several attempts to get the woodlands established. By the early 1900's the trees were mainly conifers with abundant red squirrels in their preferred habitat. During WWI, the woodland was practically clear-felled. Since then a rather random assortment of native and non-native trees has become established along with grey squirrels replacing the red.

The eastward road from the water tower runs along the crest of the hill. The trees here are a mix of ash, beech, sycamore, wych elm, holm and turkey oak, sweet chestnut, field maple, stands of yew with hazel and holly in the understorey. It's a higgledy-piggledy assortment which underlines the woods rather random planting". Weston-super-Mare in Watercolours Revisted. 2015 ed. Rosie & Howard Smith

In exciting news North Somerset will form part of a new national forest stretching from the Cotswolds to the Mendips, announced in March 2025. Led by the Forest of Avon, **the new 'Western Forest**' will span Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, the West of England area and North Somerset – the first national forest in more than 30 years. Weston-super-Mare has been identified as one of the priority urban areas that will receive support to increase tree planting. The project also seeks to connect woodlands, which is important for the region's biodiversity, woodland health and carbon storage. This supports North Somerset Council's green infrastructure objectives of connecting woodlands from north of the district to the south and along the Mendip Hills – and will lead to more tree planting across the area. https://n-somerset.gov.uk/news/north-somerset-form-part-new-western-forest-announced-today

A tree which was speared by railings during a World War II bomb explosion has been preserved for display. Bombs fell on Weston-super-Mare in January 1941, leaving buildings destroyed and an oak tree from Grove Park was embedded with park railings. The tree became a feature of the park until May 2013 when storm damage meant it had to be felled. Weston-super-Mare Museum said it had taken almost a year to preserve and transform the fallen oak and railings. "We hope that it will also become a lasting memory about the Second World War for future generations."

https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-somerset-22307787

3 Veteran Trees have been noted on the Ancient Tree Inventory in The Plantation & Bluebell Woods, Uphill;

- Common Beech, (Fagus sylvatica) [Tree ID 248329]
- Common Horse Chestnut (Aesculus hippocastanum) [Tree ID 248330] Recorded by: Terry Davis, Woodland Trust Volunteer
- London Plane, Recorded by: Jon Burgess, Ancient Tree Hunt Project (HLF) [Tree ID 3796]

The Plantation and Bluebell Field is a plantation wood and parkland field and is an important landscape and historic feature for Uphill village and Weston-Super-Mare, as well as being a popular recreational green space in the area.

The mature veteran trees and parkland of wood pasture are an important part of the former historic landscape of Uphill Manor. The site comprises a mid-19th Century plantation of predominantly mature beech, with sycamore, oak, yew and horse chestnut with a holly dominated understorey, and The Bluebell field - a parkland field of wood pasture rich in spring flowers, particularly bluebells and snowdrops which carpet the field in springtime and contains scattered mature veteran trees. The field is managed by late summer and autumn grazing with cattle. It was also known locally as the Donkey Field as it was used to over-winter the donkeys from Weston Super Mare beach.

Owned and managed by the Woodland Trust the plantation is open to the public for quiet informal recreation, but the field is closed to protect the displays of spring flowers from damage.

Closer to the Grand Pier you can find the Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) in Ellenborough Park West which is **a notable tree on the Ancient Tree Inventory**, and inspires many photographs [see front cover]

There are more stories such as these, right on your doorstep, and The Weston Tree & Plant Group will actively seek to plant more of these special trees in the town and share their stories.

8.4 Tree walks and maps

In 2023 a series of videos were started by local tree enthusiast @TreemanWeston who has created a YouTube channel for the project which showcases some of the most interesting trees in Weston. The Weston-super-Mare Community Arboretum project celebrates our wonderful trees through education and positive tree management.

Tree Trail videos in Clarence Park, Milton Road Cemetery and Grove Park are available online; https://m.youtube.com/@WestonCommunityArboretum/playlists

The best examples of trees in the Weston Arboretum will be added to an online map so that residents and visitors can enjoy their own walks around the town to visit some of the best trees in the area. It is hoped that technology such as QR codes will be used to allow people to learn more about the trees through their smartphones. (Link to follow)

8.5 Trees and education

If the Weston Community Arboretum is to succeed, then it is essential for the youngest generation to get involved and feel ownership. The Weston Tree & Plant Group will work with local schools and youth groups to educate and entertain children and young people with trees, whether in the classroom or out in the field, planting and maintaining them. One common concern around tree planting is that the new trees will be the victim of vandalism, often blamed on young people. This risk can be mitigated against through involving and engaging young people in the process of growing, planting and caring for trees – by making this something they are a part of, rather than something that is being done to them.

8.6 Open-source data and mapping

Some Local Authorities hold their tree data and survey information online, accompanied by maps of tree locations and notable trees, so that it can be accessed and reviewed by the public. This is an aspiration for Weston but can involve costly databases and will require the buy-in of all public bodies who maintain trees in the town. However, it is acknowledged that open-source data can assist with management and help communities feel that they are engaged with, and have ownership of, the urban forest. Until such a time that data is available in this format, WSMTC/NSC commit to being entirely transparent with regard to all matters relating to trees and will answer all enquiries as fully as possible.

Community engagement is critical to the success of the urban forest

8.7 Communication

WSMTC/NSC will seek to communicate with local people when taking significant decisions relating to tree management. Wherever possible, felling notices will be affixed to those trees which are intended for removal in order to notify residents. However, under some circumstances – such as emergency works – it will not be practical to notify residents in this way. Where appropriate to do so, WSMTC/NSC will consult with local residents when planting trees immediately adjacent to properties and will be open to discussion about suitable species. Communication with local residents will be carried out in a variety of ways including social media, the WSMTC/NSC website and using printed material where required. Progress on the targets set out in this management plan will be reported on using the WSMTC/NSC website.

8.8 Tree planting requests

Residents and businesses are encouraged to make requests for new trees. Where the requests relate to land maintained by WSMTC/NSC the request will be considered, and an answer given as soon as is reasonably practicable. Where the land concerned is not under the jurisdiction of WSMTC/NSC, it will be raised with the appropriate public body or landowner. It should be remembered that there are many restrictions to tree planting, as described elsewhere in this strategy. In many cases it will not be suitable to plant a tree in a given location, sometimes due to above-ground considerations but often due to below-ground restrictions such as utilities. These problems are not always obvious when assessing a potential tree planting site for suitability.

8.9 Community engagement in management

Whilst many tree-related activities such tree work operations or detailed inspections and reports should only be undertaken by appropriate professionals, there are many opportunities for the local community to get involved in caring for the Weston Community Arboretum. This might include tree watering, young tree maintenance activities such as mulching, basic tree inspections, logging and recording instances of pests and diseases and many more. These activities can be coordinated by a combination of WSMTC/NSC and the Weston Tree & Plant Group. It is important to remember that over-reliance on specific individuals should be avoided, and responsibility for undertaking these key tasks should be split amongst different members of the community, each feeling a sense of ownership for their trees. Local and regionally based businesses and organisations are encouraged to take an active role in the Weston Community Arboretum. This might include financial contributions, sponsorship or encouraging staff members to volunteer their time for tree care.

8.10 Professional input

As has been explained previously, arboriculture is a specialist profession, and it is essential that qualified arboricultural professionals are fully engaged in the management of the Weston Community Arboretum. This might be in relation to tree

inspections or reports, pest and disease concerns, or in tree species selection for new tree planting. The role of the Local Authority Tree Officer is a very important one. Tree Officers are the custodians of urban trees and are vital sources of information, advice and contacts. If the Weston Community Arboretum is to succeed, then it must be through close collaboration between the community and the arboricultural profession.

9.0 Miscellaneous

9.1 Surface materials around trees

A healthy tree requires a root system which has access to air and water. Where trees are located in soft landscape areas the surrounding surface material might be grass or other vegetation. In grass areas it might be necessary to introduce a layer of organic bark mulch around the base of the tree in order to protect the tree from strimmer damage and to suppress the growth of vegetation and weeds. Soil compaction can be an issue around trees in grass areas, where pedestrian or vehicular impact damage can compact the soil and prevent the roots from accessing air and water. In such circumstances it might be necessary and appropriate to ensure the long-term health of the tree through soil decompaction, the addition of organic material or by fencing off particular trees to discourage footfall beneath the canopy. Soil management should often be regarded as being just as important as tree management in order to ensure tree health. Conditions can be particularly difficult for trees in hard landscaped areas, such as in pavements or car parks, where access to water and air might be limited. Surface materials around these trees should be permeable to air and water as far as is reasonably practicable; appropriate materials for this purpose might be bound rubber crumb, self-binding gravel, organic or inorganic mulch, or resin-bound gravel. Asphalt should rarely be considered and appropriate surface material around a tree and should not be laid up to the base of a tree. Where asphalt is currently in place, an alternative should be sought. More information about materials can be found in the London Tree Officers Association guidance document Surface materials around trees in hard landscapes (London Tree Officers Association, 2015).

9.2 Ancient and veteran trees

An ancient tree can be defined as one “that has passed beyond maturity and is old, or aged, in comparison with other trees of the same species” (Ancient Tree Forum, 2015). A veteran tree is not necessarily defined by its ages but can be understood as “a tree that has survived various rigours of life and thereby shows signs of ancientness, irrespective of its age” (Lonsdale, 2013). Weston has only a few such ancient and veteran trees, delivering all of the usual benefits of trees but particularly adding to the biodiversity, habitat and cultural value of our town. It is hoped that WSMTC/NSC can work with landowners and other organisations such as the Ancient Tree Forum and

Arboricultural Association to ensure that these trees are properly protected and given the space and care they need to survive into the future.

9.3 Hedgerows

Hedgerows, and trees in hedgerows, deliver a particular range of benefits which must not be overlooked. Aside from being key landscape features, hedgerows are integral to green infrastructure and create green corridors offering connectivity to a range of species, and can perform functions such as improving air quality, mitigating against noise and offering habitat and biodiversity. Hedgerows must be managed in a responsible and sustainable fashion and require protection. Gaps in hedgerows should be planted using appropriate species and they should be retained and actively managed wherever possible.

9.4 Soil and fungi

A tree should not be regarded as existing in isolation – all trees, even those in urban areas – are part of a wider ecosystem in which many organisms depend on one another. One of the key components of this are fungi (Boddy, 2021), particularly the mycorrhiza in the soil with which trees develop mutually beneficial relationships, creating a greatly increased rooting area and enabling access to minerals and essential resources which they would not otherwise be able to access. The rooting zone, fungal associations and – crucially – the soil must not be forgotten about when considering tree care. Trees hosting fungi may feature visible fungal fruiting bodies; these should not necessarily be regarded as a problem or a defect and in many cases should be appreciated as part of the wider biodiversity of Weston. Greater consideration should be given to how we treat soil, whether with regard to the application of pesticides and fertilizers, compaction or ploughing, and in Weston we aim to improve soil health and quality through the North Somerset Master Composter's Weston's Wonder worms composting scheme.

9.5 Pests and diseases

There are a number of tree pests and diseases of particular concern to urban forests in the UK. Some of these are present in North Somerset, others are in the UK but not necessarily in this region, and some are not known to be in the UK at all but are of considerable concern. Significant tree diseases known to be in North Somerset include ash dieback (Hymenoscyphus fraxineus), Dutch elm disease (Ophiostoma novo-ulmi) sudden oak death (Phytophthora ramorum) and massaria disease of plane (Splanchnonema platani). Pathogens present in the UK but not known to be in North Somerset include oak processionary moth (Thaumetopoea processionea). Pests and diseases which are not thought to be in the UK at the current time, but are of concern for the future, include Xylella (Xylella fastidiosa), emerald ash borer (Agrilus planipennis), Asian longhorn beetle (Anoplophora glabripennis) and canker stain of plane (Ceratocystis platani). A comprehensive list of pests and diseases of concern and

useful resources can be found on the Observatree website at observatree.org.uk. In the fight to prevent new pests and diseases reaching the region or the wider UK, robust biosecurity practices are critical in all elements of arboriculture, particularly when sourcing and planting new trees.

9.6 Lights and signs on trees

Requests to install lights in trees, whether permanent or temporary/festive, will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any installations must be non-invasive, with suitable strapping used to secure the lights and cables in place rather than screws or nails. Care must be taken not to affect rooting systems during any excavations which might be necessary. Lighting systems should be removed from trees in their entirety every three years as a minimum, in order to allow any necessary tree pruning operations to be undertaken and to reattach the lighting in a safe and appropriate way. No tree work should be undertaken whilst lighting is still installed in the tree. Signage must only be attached to trees in a non-invasive manner, without using screws or nails which can damage the tree and create the conditions under which pests and diseases can flourish.

9.7 Trees in planters

Planting trees in restricted rooting environments should only be considered where it is impractical to plant directly into the ground. Careful consideration should be taken when specifying and installing planters, including pedestrian and vehicular traffic, sightline obstruction, drainage, and the potential for the planter to be used to drop litter in. Species selection is particularly important, and it must be remembered that trees with restricted rooting environments will not develop to their maximum dimensions and are unlikely to have long lifespans. Trees in planters will require watering for the lifetime of the tree rather than just for the usual young tree establishment period.

9.8 Innovations and trials

Arboriculture is a relatively young industry, and technological advances offer many opportunities for improving best practice in tree care. These might include the use of smart technology to monitor soil moisture levels or tree health, drones or aerial surveys to assist with inspections, or equipment such as watering bags and engineered tree pits to facilitate establishment and maintenance. It is to be hoped that we can move away from using plastic products for tree planting and establishment (such as watering pipes and tree ties) where appropriate alternatives exist. If Weston is to become a leader in arboriculture and tree care, then we must embrace these developments and be prepared to trial new systems and methods of working. WSMTC/NSC will actively seek out such opportunities in order to become fully involved with, and benefit from, research and development in arboriculture.

9.9 Training, development and careers

It is hoped that the Weston Community Arboretum and associated reputation of the town as being a leader in arboriculture will create opportunities for the people of Weston to develop themselves though training and volunteering. As well as working with local schools to establish trees as part of the essential curriculum and forest school delivery, the approach towards tree care in Weston should benefit people throughout life. The intention is to deliver direct benefits for the people of Weston and for the young people of the town to consider arboriculture and green jobs a viable career for them, and to be helped in this aspiration by living within the Weston Community Arboretum.

9.10 National and international collaboration

The success of the Weston Community Arboretum is dependent to some extent on sharing ideas and experiences with others, whether in the UK or around the world. Many of the principles of arboriculture, urban forestry and tree care apply around the world, regardless of which country they are taking place in. Tree pests and diseases, for example, do not recognize arbitrary national borders. We will actively seek out opportunities for collaboration and engagement to ensure that the best ideas and practices from around the globe are considered and, where appropriate, adopted in Weston-super-Mare. In turn, the work being done in Weston will be promoted and shared with others.

APPENDIX A

The benefits of Trees

In recent times, the importance and value of trees has become increasingly clear to us, particularly with the acceleration of the human made climate and ecological crisis and the increased pressure for land and space in our towns and cities.

Not only do trees play a vital and integral role in our environment, but we are also beginning to understand how important they are to us on a psychological and physiological level, too. The more you think about it, the more you realise how important they are to us. Here are a few things that trees do for you ...

- Intrinsic beauty
- Mitigating the climate and ecological crisis
- Provide canopy cover
- Provide Ecosystem services
- Provide continuity in our landscape

- Create habitat for wildlife
- Social, cultural and historical value
- Improve neighbourhoods
- Create a healthy environment and improve our wellbeing
- Contribute to our economy
- Non-timber products such as fruits, nuts and medicines contribute $88bn to global trade (BGCI)

For a comprehensive delve into what trees can do please take a look at;
https://www.jackpinetrees.co.uk/what-do-trees-do-for-you/

Environmental benefits

Air quality

Each year in the UK around 40,000 deaths are attributed to the effects of poor air quality, with a cost burden exceeding £20 billion per annum (Royal College of Physicians, 2016). In London in 2010 air pollution was responsible for 141,000 life years lost, equivalent to around 9400 deaths at a cost of £3.7 billion (Laybourn-Langton, 2016). Trees improve air quality by removing gaseous air pollution through their leaves and stomata and via the interception of airborne particles (Nowak et al, 2006; Hiemstra et al, 2008). Due to a large leaf area and branch/crown structures which encourage air turbulence, trees are considered to be the most effective type of green infrastructure to improve air quality (Freer-Smith et al, 2005).

Water management

Trees play an important role in the urban water cycle (London Tree Officers Association, 2013), intercepting rainwater through their canopy and slowing or preventing much of that water from reaching the ground. Estimates of interception levels vary, but one study in Mexico involving figs (Ficus benjamina) in urban environments found that up to 60% of rainfall could be intercepted by the canopy of the tree (Guevara-Escobar et al, 2007). Canopies can direct water, channelling it down the stem and into the pit as opposed to the surrounding area (Xiao et al, 2000). Trees and tree pits can reduce surface water runoff from asphalt by as much as 62% (Armson et al, 2013) and can significantly reduce costs associated with stormwater management (Mullaney et al, 2015). In recognition of these attributes trees are increasingly being incorporated into sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) (CIRIA, 2015).

Biodiversity and habitat

Street trees can be significant contributors to biodiversity in the urban landscape and are an important element of the green grid, helping to create wildlife corridors (Kelly,

2011). Bees and other pollinators use trees as a food source as well as to shelter and nest (Defra, 2014). Trees provide habitat for insects, with 423 phytophagous insect and mite species associated with oak trees in the UK (Barsoum et al, 2014). Bats use trees for food and roosting and often use avenues of trees and other linear features as commuting routes (Forestry Commission, 2008). As well as using trees for nesting, perching and feeding, some bird species use urban trees as important stopover points on their migrations (Matthews and Rodewold, 2010). Studies have demonstrated that a greater diversity of bird species can be found where existing street trees have been retained rather than where they have to exclusively rely on newly planted trees (Barth et al, 2015).

Urban cooling

Evapotranspiration from leaves can moderate urban temperatures and mitigate the heat island effect (Qui et al, 2013), and temperatures are typically lower beneath the canopy of trees due to the interception of solar radiation and associated shading (Gillner et al, 2015). Different sizes and species of trees can have a different effect on this process, but in general terms a greater crown density results in greater interception and lower sub-canopy temperatures (Shashua-Bar et al, 2010). Lower temperatures in urban areas assist with improving human thermal comfort (Nasir et al, 2015) although this is also affected by factors such as air humidity, wind speed and solar radiation, all of which can be modified by urban trees (Takacs et al, 2016).

Carbon sequestration

Carbon sequestration is the process in which carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere and held in another form, in this case by, and within, trees (Nowak et al, 2013). During photosynthesis trees fix carbon dioxide from the air and store it as biomass, such as in stems and branches (McPherson, 1998). Different tree species sequester varying amounts of carbon depending on their life stage, but in simple terms it can be understood that larger, healthy trees typically sequester and store more carbon, and that long-lived trees will have a greater positive impact on carbon dioxide levels over their lifetimes than short-lived species.

Social benefits

Health and wellbeing

High levels of air pollution, particularly PM10, are a significant problem for human health (Zanobetti et al, 2003). The benefits of green infrastructure to health can be seen to extend throughout life. Proximity of pregnant women to green space has been found to have a positive effect on birth weight (Dadvand et al, 2012). Increased canopy cover can be positively associated with asthma and allergic sensitisation in children (Lovasi et al, 2013) and research has indicated that green infrastructure can combat

inflammation-associated illnesses in some urban environments (Rook, 2013). The probability of senior citizens living an additional five years was increased with the proximity of their residence to street trees and other green spaces (Takano et al, 2002). Street trees improve the liveability of cities and streets and generally help to improve quality of life for residents and visitors (Wolf, 2010).

Tree canopy is also associated with an increased perception of health; ten additional trees on a city block (approximately 200,000m^2) on average improves health perception to the same extent as would an annual salary increase of around £7000 or being seven years younger (Kardan et al, 2015). Mental health can also be improved by the presence of trees. Green spaces assist with recovery from stress (Hansmann et al, 2007; Natural England, 2009) and hospital patients recover quicker when they have a view of trees (Ulrich, 1984). London boroughs with a higher density of street trees tend to have lower prescription rates for antidepressants (Taylor et al, 2015). The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021 highlighted the importance of trees and green space to the mental health of those whose movements were restricted and brought into focus the importance of accessibility to green space (Berdejo-Espinola et al; Ribeiro et al, 2021).

Children and education

Trees and tree canopy cover have a positive effect on people of all ages, but the impact on children and their development is particularly interesting. Research has shown that increased tree canopy cover (as distinct from other kinds of green infrastructure) is a significant predictor of student performance in primary schools. In this study, the improvement was most pronounced in those schools which had the highest level of external challenges (Sivarajah et al, 2018). Including trees in education through initiatives such as Forest Schools can improve the behaviour of the children involved, as well as encouraging those children to share what they have learned with others in a positive ripple effect (O'Brien and Murray, 2006). A study in London showed that higher daily exposure to woodland was associated with higher scores for cognitive development and a lower risk of emotional behavioural problems for adolescents (Maes et al, 2021).

Amenity

General amenity is arguably the benefit traditionally most associated with urban trees, although research in recent decades have helped to prove that they provide many more tangible benefits (Kirkpatrick et al, 2013; Mullaney et al, 2015). The amenity value of trees is recognised in law and through the planning process and is one of the key elements of the Tree Preservation Order (TPO) system in the UK (Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations, 2012). Amenity is also taken into account in the quality categorisation process featured in British Standard 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations (British

Standards Institution, 2012), and the contribution of trees to wider heritage sites is acknowledged by the principal organisations responsible for managing those sites (English Heritage, 2014). Urban trees are often perceived as cultural assets, giving a wider sense of place and providing communities with a link between past and present (Chen, 2015). Quantifying amenity value can be difficult but methods such as the Helliwell System or CAVAT (Capital Asset Value of Amenity Trees) exist which can assist with this process (Helliwell, 2014).

Crime and traffic speeds

Well-maintained green spaces, particularly those containing large-canopy trees, are associated with increased usage of the space and a decrease in crime (Wilson and Kelling, 1982; Kuo and Sullivan, 2001). A 10% increase in canopy cover can lead to a 12% reduction in certain crimes such as robbery, burglary and theft; public street trees are more effective in achieving this than private trees or other types of vegetation (Troy et al, 2012; Wolfe and Mennis, 2012). Street trees have been shown to have a positive effect on driver behaviour; soft landscaping adjacent to roads has been proven to increase driver safety (Dumbaugh, 2005; Mok et al, 2003). Avenues of street trees in suburban areas can significantly reduce cruising speeds and accidents associated with speed (Naderi et al, 2008).

Economic benefits

Buildings and energy use

By creating shade and providing an alternative to the reflective hard surfaces characteristic of the urban landscape, trees reduce the heat island effect and break the cycle in which higher air temperatures lead to the increased usage of air conditioning and higher electricity requirements (Akbari et al, 2001). When properly positioned in relation to a building, trees reduce summertime electricity use and the carbon footprint associated with the structure (Donovan and Butry, 2009; Balogun et al, 2014). Much of the research into trees and energy use has been undertaken in the USA, where air conditioning usage is more common than in the UK. However, with UK temperatures predicted to rise (Defra, 2009) it is anticipated that air conditioning usage will increase accordingly, along with the associated increase in energy consumption (Caeiro et al, 2005).

Property prices and commercial activities

Trees in commercial and retail environments can improve perception of visual quality for visitors and influence consumer behaviour, encouraging them to spend more time and money than they would in a less satisfactory environment (Wolf, 2007; 2004). Commercial activities and increased urban greening should be regarded as compatible, mutually reinforcing practices rather than being in opposition to each other (Joye et al,

2010). Research demonstrates that the highest consumer ratings of retail environments were associated with large-canopy trees (Wolf, 2007). Property value can be affected by the presence of street trees, which have been shown to add significant value to nearby properties and reduce the amount of time that they are on the market (Donovan and Butry, 2010; Pandit et al, 2013). This might be considered a benefit or a disbenefit of trees, depending on your perspective, but it can be an effective way of making developers understand the value of trees.

Appendix B

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https://www.facebook.com/UphillVillageSociety/posts/the-plantation-bluebell-fieldthe-plantation-and-bluebell-field-is-a-plantation-w/3886843108034124/

https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-somerset-22307787

Appendix B

References

Further reading

Below is a list of publications which readers might find of interest with regard to trees and arboriculture. These were not referenced directly in the Weston Community Arboretum Management Plan, but many of them influenced its production.

ARBORICULTURAL ASSOCIATION (2013). An arborists' field guide: Tree pests and diseases. Arboricultural Association, Stonehouse.

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TREES AND DESIGN ACTION GROUP (2012). Trees in the townscape: A guide for decision makers.

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Useful online resources

There are many websites which contain useful information about trees, tree care and Weston-super-Mare.

Below is an alphabetical list of some which the author feels are particularly valuable (please note that this is not an exhaustive list).

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Ancient Tree Forum: https://www.ancienttreeforum.org.uk/

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Ancient Tree Inventory: https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/

- 

Arboricultural Association: https://www.trees.org.uk/

- 

Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees (CAVAT): https://www.ltoa.org.uk/resources/cavat

- 

European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation: https://www.eppo.int/

- ☐

Forest Research (pests and disease resources):

- ☐

https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/fthr/pest-and-disease-resources/

- ☐

Green cities, good health: http://depts.washington.edu/hhwb/

- ☐

Hedgelink: https://hedgelink.org.uk/

- ☐

Know Your Place: https://n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/planning-building-control/heritage/research-explore/know-your-place

- ☐

London Tree Officers Association: https://www.ltoa.org.uk/

- ☐

North Somerset Council https://n-somerset.gov.uk/council-democracy/priorities-strategies/climate-emergency

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NSC - Green Infrastructure Strategy https://n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/libraries-leisure-open-spaces/parks-countryside/green-infrastructure-strategy

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Observatree: https://www.observatree.org.uk/resources/

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Sustainable Soils Alliance: https://sustainablesoils.org/

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Tree Care Supporters: https://treecare.org.uk/

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Trees and Design Action Group Tree Species Selection: https://www.tdag.org.uk/tree-species-selection-for-green-infrastructure.html

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Weston Town Council: https://wsm-tc.gov.uk/our-pledges/our-climate-commitment/

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Weston Town Council - The Town Council Strategy 2020 - 2030 https://wsm-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Town-Council-Strategy-2020-2030.pdf

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