

Dear Councillors and Clerks,

You may have heard through various media outlets that our much revered native ash trees are currently at a high risk of infection from Ash Dieback disease which may affect their health and eventually the stability of the whole tree in some instances.

Devon County Council are currently leading the way in the county with positive actions to encourage tree owners to take responsibility for their ash trees and to have them inspected by a qualified arborist where they present a risk to the Highway network.

DCC have produced a general information leaflet (attached) which they are distributing to householders around the County and have also created a highly informative website about the disease and who is responsible for infected trees. This can be viewed at <https://www.devonashdieback.org.uk/>.

If you have concerns that Ash trees within your parish that grow alongside highways, byways, bridleways or footpath may be infected by Ash Dieback, these trees need to be reported to Devon County Council highways via their website at https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/map/map_src/hzt/.

If tree owners require assistance in finding a suitably qualified and insured arborist, information is available via the following link: <https://trees.org.uk/Help-Advice/Public/Choose-your-Tree-Surgeon>

Furthermore if trees suspected of being infected are located within a Conservation Area or are subject to a Tree Preservation Order, an arborist should be able to advise whether the tree owner should apply for recommended works by the normal 6 or 8 week process or under a 5-day notice for emergency works to dead trees or trees which pose an immediate threat to persons or property. In either scenario, the tree owners or their appointed agent are responsible for following the required procedures for works to protected trees.

Further information on the tree works application procedure is available here: <https://www.southhams.gov.uk/article/3490/Protected-Trees> or <https://www.westdevon.gov.uk/article/3487/Tree-Preservation-Orders>

Kind regards,

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