



Tree Frontiers News

A newsletter that helps keep you abreast of interesting facts and information from the world of arboriculture and related industries

October has been an active month for our team, marked by a significant increase in activity. One major challenge we encountered involved conducting a tree survey on a very large potential development site. The site features some truly remarkable trees, but it also presented us with an interesting dilemma. As many readers will know, Biodiversity Net Gain became a legal requirement for most development sites in 2024. This legislation also introduced the first legal definition of a veteran tree. In one sense, this is beneficial because everyone on the design team now has a standard to follow. However, (and there always seems to be a "but"), the definition sets a rather low threshold, which is at the heart of our dilemma.

While this isn't the place to delve deeply into what constitutes a veteran tree or why they are important, it became clear as the survey progressed that a surveyor's interpretation of the definition can significantly impact a development project. If the definition is applied strictly as written, we estimate that up to ten times more trees on a typical development site could be classified as veterans. Conversely, using professional judgment and experience would allow focus on those truly exceptional trees. The challenge is that, during the planning process, consultees must interpret these definitions, often relying exclusively on the surveyor's descriptions without ever seeing the trees themselves. And so, the core issue emerges - while having a definition for veteran trees is helpful, setting the bar so low leaves room for misinterpretation and may diminish the value of genuinely special, irreplaceable trees. Furthermore, there appears to be little consideration given to those outstanding trees listed as Notable in the Ancient Tree Inventory (which is worth investigating). Why aren't we adequately protecting these living pieces of history, while potentially permitting less significant trees to receive attention instead? The Woodland Trust is addressing this through its [Living Legends campaign](#). Take a look and consider adding your name to the petition —we need to get this right, and we need to act now!



Petitions

UK Government and Parliament

Petition

Review protections for important trees: amend Forestry Act & list heritage trees

Petition Launched for greater protection of important trees

As highlighted in the foreword above, the petition seeks an amendment to the Forestry Act 1967 to explicitly define and set a higher evidence bar for exempting any ancient tree felling from licences. Publish and maintain a list of heritage trees with protected status as proposed in the Heritage Trees Private Members Bill 2023-24.

Sign the petition

Guidance on methodology for Tree Canopy Cover Assessment:

1. Calculate the total area of the existing (baseline) tree canopy cover within the application site.
2. Calculate the baseline tree canopy cover as a percentage of the total site area.
3. Project the future tree canopy cover, making sure to factor in any key site-specific factors (such as tree growth rates, age, life expectancy, and potential future contributions). This future tree canopy cover should be forecast at the following intervals, from the completion of construction:
 - Baseline + 10 years, and
 - Baseline + 20 years, and
 - Baseline + 30 years.
4. Assess the impact of the proposed development on tree canopy cover by comparing the projected canopy area under a “no development” scenario (baseline + 30 years) with that of the “with development” scenario (baseline + 30 years). The difference represents the net impact.

Types of planning application that Tree Canopy Cover Assessment applies to and indicative targets for compensation according to existing canopy cover:

Application Type	Indicative targets for mitigation of development impacting upon trees (according to existing tree canopy cover)
MINOR/HOUSEHOLDER/OTHER	Existing Canopy Cover ≥ 10% NO NET LOSS at 30 Yrs post development (compared against baseline before development)
	Existing Canopy Cover < 10% NET INCREASE to ≥ 10% at 30 Yrs post development (compared against baseline before development)
MAJOR	Existing Canopy Cover ≥ 20% NO NET LOSS at 30 Yrs post development (compared against baseline before development)
	Existing Canopy Cover < 20% NET INCREASE to ≥ 20% at 30 Yrs post development (compared against baseline before development)
MAJOR (Sites of ≥ 1.5ha.)	Existing Canopy Cover ≥ 30% NO NET LOSS at 30 Yrs post development (compared against baseline before development)
	Existing Canopy Cover < 30% NET INCREASE to ≥ 30% at 30 Yrs post development (compared against baseline before development)

Oxford City Council have updated Technical Advice Note 9 (Green Spaces)

Oxford City Council has published an update to its existing Technical Advice Note (TAN) 9: Green Spaces, providing clearer guidance for applicants and planners. While the core local planning policy requirements remain unchanged, the updated TAN sets out more robust expectations for how developments should

protect and enhance Oxford's green infrastructure.

Key update: Tree Canopy Cover

- The revised TAN now requires all planning applications to demonstrate “no net loss” of tree canopy cover over a 30-year period, with clear targets based on site size and existing cover.
- Where canopy cover is below target, developments must deliver a net increase—up to 30% for major sites.
- Assessments must be transparent, robust, and project canopy cover at 10, 20, and 30 years post-development.

Download the Guidance



Almost 50% of UK garden space is paved over

A study by the RHS found that almost half of UK garden space is paved over. Paving over large sections of garden reduces space for nature as well as exacerbating flooding, as water has nowhere to go.

The RHS is asking homeowners to stop paving over their gardens and instead use robust planting and permeable paving to help mitigate flood risk and promote the cooling potential of gardens as well as support biodiversity. The charity is also calling on the government to guarantee “space to grow” in all housing and urban planning, so every household has access to a garden.

[Read more](#)



Tree felling

Getting permission – updated August 2025



Updated guidance on tree felling rules

The Forestry Commission have updated the guide to Tree Felling, providing information on when a felling licence is required and what happens if trees are felled without one.

[Get Guidance](#)



Planning & Infrastructure Bill gets another review

Members of the House of Lords began their further examination of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill in report stage on Monday 20 October.

The Planning and Infrastructure Bill would change the law and streamline the legislation surrounding the construction of new homes and critical infrastructure. Read the votes and agreed changes below.

Agreed Changes

BS 8640:2025



BSI Standards Publication

Structural and supported soils for trees in hard landscapes – Guide

BS 8640:2025 A Guide to Structural & Supported Soils for Trees in Hard Landscapes

The newly published British Standard BS 8640:2025 provides guidance on designing and managing soils to support healthy tree growth in urban and engineered environments.

[Download](#)



Children, young people & the built environment

Research from the House of Commons has highlighted the challenges facing children and young people in accessing formal and informal play spaces. This highlights the opportunities offered through the built environment, by focusing on a child-centred place-based approach to design and development. The briefing highlights the wider benefits this brings for health, well-being and the realisation of vibrant, sustainable communities.

[Read more](#)

Every Interaction Matters: Mental Health in Forestry



Most people working in forestry know someone who has been severely affected by issues surrounding mental health. The Royal Forestry Society have released this striking video, with a message that 'Every interaction matters'.

Have your say with London's Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Over the past couple of years, The Greater London Authority have been putting together a new nature strategy for London. They are now consulting the public on the Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Take part in the consultation, they particularly want to hear what Londoners and organisations in London think of the draft priorities for nature in London and the opportunity areas they have mapped.

[Find out more](#)



Evaluating urban tree population fitness for a changing climate: using climatic moisture index

This study explores how trees handle changing moisture levels. By comparing climate moisture and leaf water potential across species, researchers found that some trees are better at coping with drought than others. These insights can guide smarter conservation, restoration, and tree planting as climate conditions shift.

[Read more](#)



Forestry Facts & Figures 2025

Forestry Research have released a summary of statistics about woodland and forestry in the UK. This report offers a snapshot of the UK's woodland landscape, timber production, and environmental impact, highlighting trends across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

This year's edition underscores forestry's growing role in climate resilience, biodiversity, and the rural economy - providing essential insights for policymakers, landowners, and conservationists navigating a changing climate and evolving land-use priorities.

Take a look

Tree Frontiers News



Case Study: Eddington Cambridge

We were delighted to be part of the design team for the future phases of Eddington in Cambridge. This is a scheme that Nick has personally been involved with for the last 15 years, and following the delivery of the outline application in 2013, the future phases outline application was submitted in September.

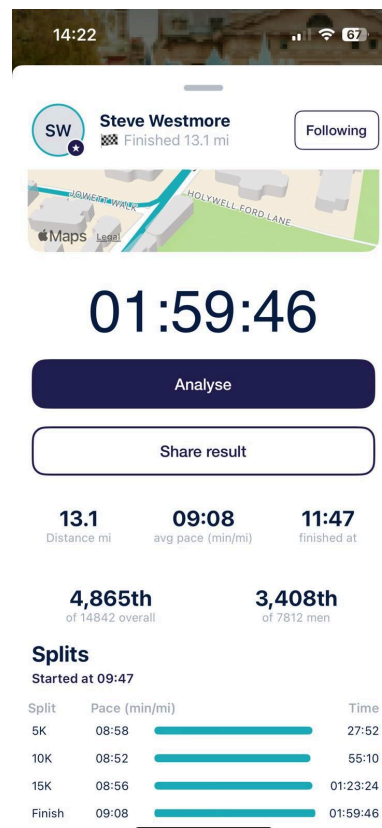
The Future Phases will continue the success of Eddington, which boasts a thriving, connected community and is home to both University staff and students and non-University residents. When complete, it will deliver:

- The delivery of up to 3,800 high-quality new homes, bringing the total across the whole of Eddington to an estimated 5,650
- Up to 50% will be affordable housing for University key workers
- Dedicated accommodation for up to 1,675 students, bringing the total student homes at Eddington to 2,000
- Up to 100,000m² of employment space, 60% of which will be used for research and innovation, and 40% focused on mid-tech uses
- Over one third of the development is retained as green and open spaces
- New pedestrian and cycleways through and out of Eddington
- Sports facilities and diverse play spaces throughout the development
- The creation of an ambitious, sustainable development that builds on the renewable practices established in Phase 1

We will be tracking the application with interest and liaise with Tree Officers on any queries they have during the determination stage.

If you need assistance on any schemes where trees may need to be considered, get in touch
(info@treefrontiers.com)

Case Study: Eddington



Final Push for Fundraising for Chipping Norton Theatre

Some people need a little evidence before donating - so here it is!

Steve managed to beat his previous time (albeit cutting it extremely fine for a sub 2 hour race!)

But the real win? Supporting [The Theatre Chipping Norton Ltd.](#)

This local gem brings creativity, connection, and joy to our community - from bold performances to inclusive outreach. We're proud to back their work, and every donation helps them continue to inspire and uplift.

This is our final fundraising call, with the current fundraising total at **£2,695**. If you've been meaning to donate, now's the time. Let's finish strong for The Chippy Theatre.

[Donate Here](#)



Tree of the month

This month's tree is about to show its true colours, with a spectacular display of claret purple and red hues. Named for the gardens in Australia where it was first discovered, can you identify this ornamental beauty?

What Tree?



Share



Forward



Share

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