North Mymms Parish Council

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Ash Dieback in Gobions Wood

What is Ash dieback disease?

Most parts of the country are now experiencing the impacts of ash dieback disease. The disease is causing widespread decline of ash trees in some areas, and this is expected to continue. It is likely that the majority of our native ash trees will exhibit symptoms of ash dieback, but not all that do will die. A small percentage of ash trees will have a degree of tolerance to the disease and others will exist in locations where they escape the worst impacts.

It is important that the effects of ash dieback are planned for and managed, especially in safety-critical locations.

Going Forward

We are assessing the health of ash trees at Gobions wood and our response to the disease will require a significant investment in time and resources.

Affected trees near footpaths or along the site boundaries may pose a risk to public safety because of the risk of falling branches or collapsing trees. To keep our visitors and property safe, we will be undertaking a targeted programme of works within the wood.

Some trees may need to be felled immediately because they are already dead or dying and public paths may have to be temporarily closed to enable the works to be carried out safely. The loss of any trees will result in unavoidable changes to the wood, but the work is being carefully timed to minimise the impact on wildlife such as nesting birds.

Replanting

Where replanting is necessary, a component of natural regeneration from species other than ash may contribute to the species diversity of the wood, and to the maintenance of genetic diversity within the wood. The success of natural regeneration will depend on the presence of suitable parent trees and their pattern of mast years (heavy seeding), light levels, deer browsing, ground conditions/preparation, and the presence of seed predators. Where the felling of dead or dying ash results in canopy gaps that will not close within ten years through growth of retained trees, these will be restocked with other species using natural regeneration or planting.

Further information

Managing ash dieback in England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

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