

BLAKES WALK LEWES FUTURE TREE MANAGEMENT

Dear Stakeholder,

East Sussex County Council and River Oak Homes have a legal agreement in place to manage the vegetation on Blakes Walk as part of the Section 106 Agreement from the development on Brooks Road Lewes. This includes the removal of the poplar trees to allow the progress of the lime tree avenue.

The intention to carry out these works in 2024 generated significant interest in the future management of the avenue and given the views expressed by stakeholders and the community, East Sussex County Council and River Oak Homes undertook consultation with The Blakes Walk Tree Specialist Group, which includes members of the Trees Committee of Friends of Lewes, to create a long term management strategy for Blakes Walk, that will maintain the longevity of both the Lombardy poplars and the lime trees for as long as the trees remain healthy.

The result of this will be that the poplars will be sensitively reduced in height and have their canopies reduced externally to create a natural form which can then be maintained on a regular basis, to limit wind-sail movement and reduce the risk of damage to themselves and adjacent property. This will also provide more space for management of the limes planted between them.

The Blakes Walk Tree Specialist Group has agreed that in the interest of maintaining the trees in the most desirable form and bringing the avenue in to regular management as soon as possible, the trees on the east side of Blakes Walk will be pruned this winter, in February, subject to a road closure being accepted for the dates required. Next winter the same will happen to those trees on the western side. At this point other works to remove diseased ash, coppice parts of the lower hedge/scrub layer and hedging work will also take place.

A more detailed explanation of the long-term management strategy is attached, which explains the aims and processes involved.

The planning agreement still states that the Lombardy poplar will be felled between 2035 and 2040, but this cannot be changed. Both ESCC and River Oak Homes have agreed that at this point, neither party will look to invoke this clause. It will therefore be left up to the planning authority to decide whether it requires fulfilment as part of the planning agreement.

The Blakes Walk Tree Specialist Group is happy that a plan has been found to maintain all the trees on Blakes Walk and that the change in long term management will be of great benefit to the environment and community of Lewes.

NB. The Blakes Walk Tree Specialist Group is made up of Audrey and Nick Jarvis from the Trees Committee of Friends of Lewes, Richard Green a local arboriculturalist, Peter Thurman a local tree and environmental consultant, Keith Sacre local arboriculturalist and urban forestry designer and Anthony Becvar ESCC Arboriculture Officer.