



Title	PROPOSED TREE WORK TO ONE PROTECTED COUNCIL TREE IN ST MARY'S CHURCHYARD, ST MARY'S BUTTS, READING
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Sarah Hanson, Natural Environment Officer
Lead councillor	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
Corporate priority	Healthy Environment
Ward	Abbey
Recommendations	The Committee is asked: 1. To approve the proposed tree works subject to no substantive objections being received within the consultation period.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. To report to Committee on proposed work to one Horse chestnut tree; that being T11 of TPO 10/06 (copy of TPO plan attached – Appendix 1).

2. Policy context

- 2.1. The Council's Corporate Plan has established three themes for the years 2022/25. These themes are:
 - Healthy Environment
 - Thriving Communities
 - Inclusive Economy
- 2.2. These themes are underpinned by "Our Foundations" explaining the ways we work at the Council:
 - People first
 - Digital transformation
 - Building self-reliance
 - Getting the best value
 - Collaborating with others
- 2.3. Full details of the Council's Corporate Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the [Council's website](#). These priorities and the Corporate Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

2. Background

- 2.1 The tree is one of many protected in the Churchyard and maintained by the Council under a long-standing agreement with the Diocese. It has previously

been pollarded; the appropriate management for such trees being to re-pollard on a regular basis, normally every 3-5 years. An inspection by Reading Borough Council's Tree Surveyor in Streetscene identified some decay and cavities ((also noted on previous surveys) and concluded that re-pollarding was due and prudent. On 14 March 2024 an application was received from the Tree Surveyor seeking consent for the re-pollarding of the Horse chestnut (application reference 240336).

- 2.2 The work is in line with good arboricultural practice, the tree being historically managed as a pollard.
- 2.3 As the Council-maintained tree in question is subject to a Tree Preservation Order, a formal tree works application is required for the works to be approved.
- 2.3 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires applications for works to protected Council owned or maintained trees to be decided by a Committee of the Council which is not responsible for managing the land to which the application relates.
- 2.4 The law also requires a public notice to be displayed for at least 21 days giving details of the proposed works and contact details for any comments to be sent.
- 2.5 For information only, a crown reduction is proposed to the non-TPO Holm Oak on the north-east corner of the Church, back to previous pruning points. This is in line with good tree management, particularly given the fungal fruiting bodies present and increasing decay.

3. Result of consultation

- 3.1 A site Notice was attached to the Horse chestnut tree on 12 April 2024 and will be left for the required 21-day period. An update on any public comments received so far will be provided at Planning Applications Committee.

4. Conclusion and recommendation

- 4.1 The works proposed are necessary in order to appropriately manage this tree. Subject to no substantive objections or comments being received as a result of the public notice, it is recommended that the works be approved.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Preparing, serving confirmation and contravention of TPO's are services dealt with by the Council's Legal Section.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 None of this report. It is understood that works to the tree would be funded by the Council from existing budgets.

7. Equality impact assessment

- 7.1 None required.

8. Contribution to strategic aims

8.1 The aim of the TPO's is to secure trees of high amenity value for present and future generations to enjoy. Trees have multiple environmental benefits creating cleaner, greener and more attractive places to live. This contributes to creating a healthy environment as identified as one of the themes of the Council's Corporate Plan. See Section 2 of this report for more information.

9. Environmental & Climate implications

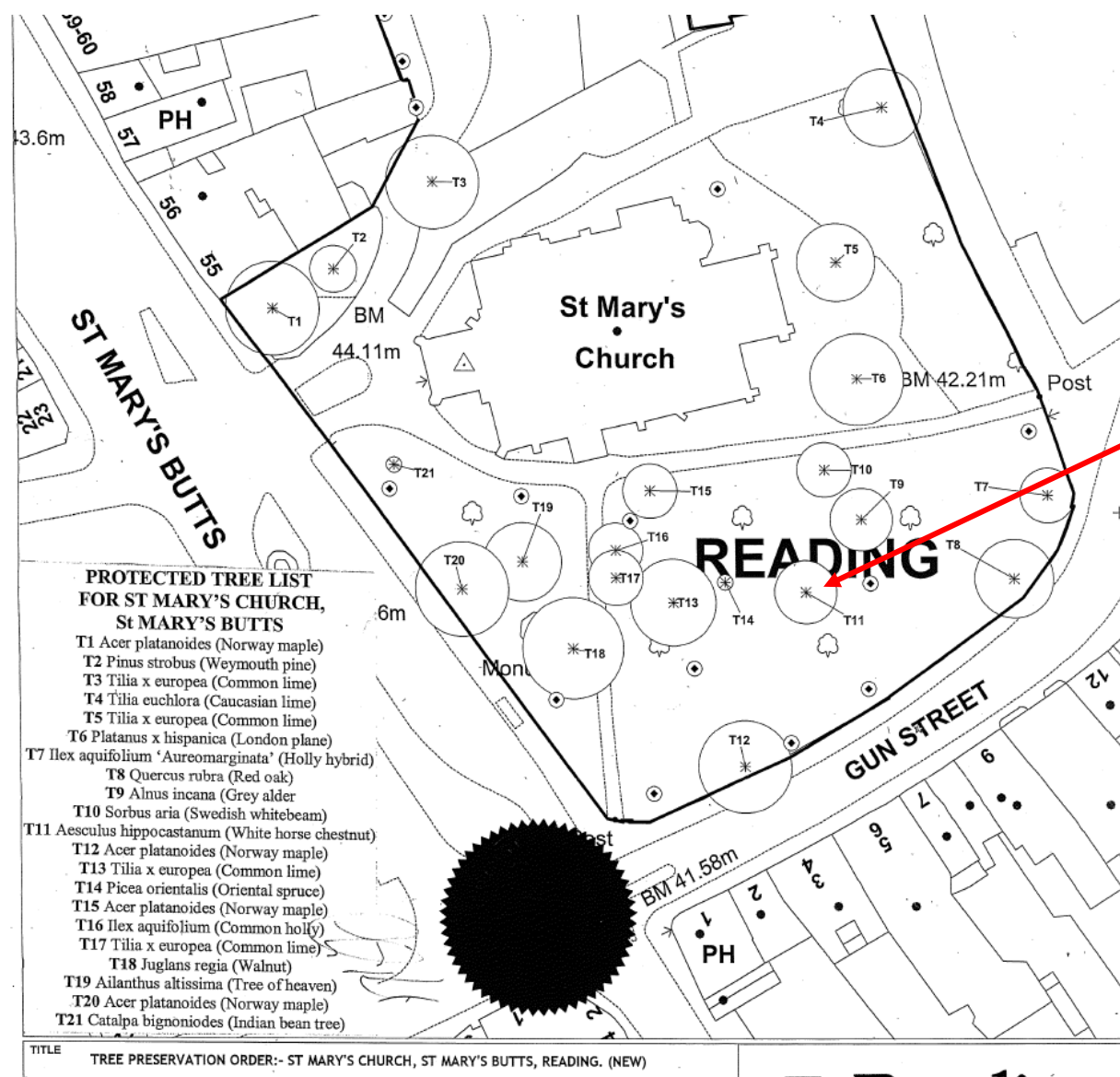
9.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).

9.2 Trees have multiple environmental benefits that include flood alleviation, wildlife benefits, air pollution mitigation and air cooling. The proposed works are not expected to substantially impact the tree's contribution to these multiple environmental benefits, as the intention of the works is to enable the tree to be retained in preference to felling.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

10.1 Register of Tree Preservation Orders

Appendix 1 - TPO 10/06 (plan)





T11 Horse Chestnut



non-TPO Holm Oak (for information only)