



Our Ref: BBPR2021.06.25 Ash dieback

PRESS RELEASE: Trust responds to national ash dieback crisis

Tree safety surveys are underway across the Hills and Commons as the Malvern Hills Trust continues to respond to Ash Dieback disease.

Ash trees near to highways, car parks or properties across the Malvern Hills and Commons are being surveyed to monitor the spread and effect of the disease. Those trees identified as being severely affected will need tree surgery and possibly felling in the autumn for safety.

Jonathan Bills, Conservation Manager said “For the second autumn in a row, we will be dealing with the most badly infected ash trees for public safety and there will be some trees next to highways and properties that will be felled. We are devastated to be losing any ash trees from the MHT estate”

Infected trees can become brittle and likely to fail, so the removal of trees near to highways and properties is essential.

Ash dieback, which was first identified in the UK in 2012, has spread across the country and causes the wilting of leaves, shoots to die back and often the death of the tree. It is believed that a small percentage of ash trees may be tolerant to the disease and ash trees showing little or no signs of disease will be left and monitored.

Authorities state that eradicating the disease is not possible as it is caused by a fungus that is airborne and therefore cannot be controlled.

Jonathan added “The impacts of ash dieback over the next 5 to 10 years are going to be significant in the Malvern Hills and Commons landscape. Evidence suggests that between 60-80 % of the UK’s ash will be lost to the disease. It is estimated that 20 % of trees under the Trust’s care are ash.

The loss of this species will have a significant effect on both the local landscape character and the ecology of the area. MHT will be planting replacement trees where possible and allowing nature to replace trees through natural regeneration.

“As a charity with 1,200 hectares of land under our care, we are facing huge financial pressures as the disease takes hold and more practical management is needed in response. Many of the ash trees are on steep slopes near to roadsides requiring specialist and experienced contractors to safely remove them. This is expensive work at approximately £400 per tree”.

The Trust is asking local people to report ash trees on the Trust’s land which are badly affected and are near to highways or properties. The Trust is also asking for donations to help support the response to tree disease. More information can be found on the Trust’s website: <https://www.malvern hills.org.uk/get-involved/supporting-our-work/>



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Notes for editors

1) Contact Beck Baker (Community and Conservation Officer) on 07961 251388 for more information.

2) Image included – Ash dieback survey

3) The **Malvern Hills Trust** manage over 1,200 hectares (3,000 acres) of land on the Hills and Commons of Malvern. The Trust were established under the Malvern Hills Act 1884. There have been four subsequent Acts in 1909, 1924, 1930 and 1995. The Malvern Hills Acts were set up to protect the rights of Commoners and the public and to prevent encroachment on the Malvern Hills, lands and commons.

Under these and other relevant Acts the Malvern Hills Trust shall manage the Hills to:

- Preserve the natural aspect
- Protect and manage trees, shrubs, turf and other vegetation
- Prevent unlawful digging and quarrying
- Keep the Hills open, unenclosed and unbuilt on as open spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public
- Conserve and enhance biodiversity, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Scheduled Ancient Monuments on its land.

The Trust are also a registered charity (charity number 515804)