

All Saints, Shillington – Application for the removal of trees in the churchyard

Ref: 222350-1124G

Further Information

The last tree survey was completed in January 2023 and is not due to be carried for another year. The trees that are being requested to be removed are the remnant of those damaged by the storm and those that have self-seeded within the churchyard.

It is anticipated that removal of the trees will enable this area (called the Upper Avenue) to be cleared so the state of these steps can be addressed. The work will seek to enhance and develop a space that has become overgrown. Safety is a primary objective in addition to ensuring the positive quality of the whole appearance of the churchyard. The churchyard is managed as part of the Living Churchyard Scheme.

Further information has been provided by Liz Allan, who manages the churchyard and the volunteers who form a significant team of committed individuals;

‘The trees are cypress conifers and in a bad state. Their history dates back to early 1928 and is well documented in the transcribed minutes of the Churchyard Fund Committee for which we have records from April 1925 to December 1947. The original planting took place between December 1927 and March 1928 "20 in the new churchyard and 8 in the old", The "old" refers to the Upper Avenue The reason for their planting isn't recorded, but given how recently WW1 had ended, it may well have been intended as some sort of memorial for villagers who had died in the war. The record shows that the trees planted at the very top, by the tower, failed twice and that the committee were strongly advised by their supplier not to replant them. The avenue was therefore never more than 6 trees.

There are also references at this time to the making of the steps through the Upper Avenue. It is the remnants of these that we also need to restore and make safe, but cannot easily do this until the trees are removed.

Of the six remaining trees in the Upper Avenue, the two middle trees were blown down in the storm of February 2022. This now leaves 4 cypress trees, plus a large bush at the top by the tower in the middle of which is a spindly dead tree, probably a self-set wild damson or similar (attachment 1 and 3).

The photos attached show in greater detail the state of the remaining trees. The two nearest the path (photos 2, 4 and 5)) appear to be the remains of the original trees where branches have rooted themselves into the ground following the failure of the main trunk. At the top of the steps, looking towards the tower from the path, the left-hand side tree is almost dead (photo 1). The only tree in any reasonable state is the one top right looking from the path.

The laurel tree in the lower part of the churchyard (the north west area) is either self set or was planted on a grave many years ago. (Photo 6). This area of the churchyard was previously very neglected and is still the most difficult to care for. The tree has grown largely unchecked and is now smothering a number of graves. It is in the wrong place and is too big. Laurels are not native to this country and are largely used as hedging.’

Avenue bush at the top (1)



Avenue Trees, top left and right from below (2)



Bottom left tree (3)



Bottom left tree from steps at the side (4)



Bottom right tree looking up (5)



Laurel tree (6)



**Revd Jenna Dearden
6 December 2024**