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## Tree Condition Survey and Risk Assessment



Site: North Tawton Council, Various Sites

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025

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| Site Inspection History |                                 |                                 |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| No.                     | Next Inspection Date            | Last inspection Date            |
| 1                       | 29 <sup>th</sup> September 2026 | 29 <sup>th</sup> September 2025 |
| 2                       |                                 | 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2023  |
| 3                       |                                 |                                 |



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## Summary

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- The assessment was carried out on **29<sup>th</sup> September 2025**, during fine weather conditions.
- **36 arboricultural features were assessed** across 3 sites: Memorial Park, North Tawton Cemetery and St Peter's Churchyard.
- The site was previously surveyed on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

## 1 Instruction, scope and limitations

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I have been instructed by **North Tawton Town Council** (Client) of **Memorial Park, North Tawton Cemetery and St Peter's Churchyard** (the Site) to provide the following:

- I. To carry out a QTRA of trees within the various sites recorded, where structural defects or reduced physiological condition may impact a target.
- II. Individual inspection (including minor invasive techniques including a handsaw, sharp knife and probe where required) of the trees which comprised of a visual inspection for preceding symptoms of defective trees;
- III. Recorded details of the trees on the site in a tabulated format and carried out a risk assessment of any trees with significant defects in relation to the most significant target;
- IV. Indicated the position of the trees within the site boundaries, on a plan; and
- V. To carry out a QTRA of trees in the areas where structural defects or reduced physiological condition may impact a target and provide recommendations where risks are calculated as crossing the 1/10,000 threshold, or lie between 1/10,000 and 1/1,000,000 and are not ALARP.

### 1.1 Documents associated with this report

- DTS25.17018.1. PLAN for Memorial Park, North Tawton Cemetery and St Peter's Churchyard.
- DTS24.17018.1.SCH for Memorial Park, North Tawton Cemetery and St Peter's Churchyard.

### 1.2 This assessment is limited in that it relies on the client to do the following:

- I. Check the allocation of target values and inform DTS if they disagree with our target allocations (see page 3)
- II. Determine the tolerability of risk (ToR) threshold (see page 4). DTS assumes this to be 1/10,000 unless the client informs us differently in writing.

1.3 Soil type has not been assessed; the influence of trees upon structures is not within the scope of this report and the locations of trees are approximate.

- 1.4 This report is relevant to the date of the next recommended site assessment, however as the condition of trees can change following severe weather conditions the client may need to reassess mature trees in close proximity to targets before the next assessment date.
- 1.5 A sounding hammer, pocket knife, pruning saw and binoculars may have been used where deemed necessary to facilitate the inspections.
- 1.6 Minor invasive techniques only were employed as part of the investigations and the estimated risk of harm posed by the trees remains relevant for twelve (12) months in the absence of environmental change (including but not limited to trenching works, major storms and unapproved pruning).
- 1.7 Please note that the visual inspections and risk assessments are made with the over-arching goal of assessing a trees' ability to withstand the range of normal weather events that might reasonably be expected to occur.
- 1.8 No estimated pedestrian or vehicular usage for any of the site requiring tree inspection has been provided. This information is used to determine the appropriate target range when assessing the risk of failure from trees. Therefore, an estimated pedestrian and vehicular usage has been calculated whilst carrying out the survey. Should the Client feel that the Site usage for pedestrians, vehicles or property values described in this report is or are inaccurate, then the Client must notify the same to us as soon as possible in order for this report to be amended.
- 1.9 This report has been prepared for, and may only be relied on by, the Customer.
- 1.10 Trees shown in this report have not been verified for ownership. Inclusion does not imply they are within the client's control. It is the client's responsibility to confirm ownership and obtain any necessary permissions before works. Devon Tree Services Ltd. accepts no liability for actions taken on trees not owned by the client.

## 2 Method

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- 2.1 The system of risk assessment used is the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA) V5/13. Details of this system can be found in the **QTRA Practice Note** attached.
- 2.2 A walkover of the trees is carried out. During the walkover, tree inspection entails viewing the tree bases, stems, main branch attachments, and overall health. Observations are from ground level only, by Visual Tree Assessment (VTA)<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.3 Where trees contain structural defects (weaknesses) and can impact a target a QTRA will be carried out. Where the calculated risk crosses the 1/1,000,000 (broadly acceptable) threshold this will be recorded and identified on the plan.

### 2.4 Allocation of targets

- 2.4.1 The allocation of target value is an essential component of QTRA. The assessment of targets is carried out during the site visit.

2.4.2 It is the client's responsibility to inform DTS of any change in land use and / or any substantial increase in vehicle / pedestrian occupancy. Failure to notify DTS of any change in land use may render the risk assessment invalid. Targets are identified as:

- 2.4.3 The targets for these trees are identified within the attached tree inspection schedules. These schedules provide detailed information on each tree's location, condition, and the specific targets associated with them. This information supports effective risk assessment and management by ensuring that all relevant factors are considered when evaluating tree safety and maintenance priorities

### 2.5 Tolerability of risk (ToR)

- 2.5.1 The Tolerability of Risk<sup>2</sup> (ToR) is a widely accepted approach for reaching decisions on whether risks are broadly acceptable, unacceptable or tolerable. ToR can be summarised as:


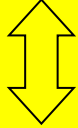
- I. A broadly acceptable region where the upper limit is an annual risk of death of 1/1,000,000.
- II. An unacceptable region of which the lower limit is 1/1,000.
- III. Between the above is a tolerable region within which the tolerability of a risk will be dependent upon the costs and benefits of further risk reduction.

- 2.6 QTRA uses colour coding to illustrate advisory risk thresholds in relation to trees:

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<sup>1</sup> VTA: Mattheck & Breloer (1995) & Lonsdale (1999); diagnosis of potential defects through visual signs and the application of mechanical criteria.

<sup>2</sup> Health and Safety Executive. 2001. Reducing Risks: Protecting People. HSE Books, Sudbury, Suffolk. 80pp. Available for download at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/theory/r2p2.pdf>

| Threshold   | Description  | Action  |
|---|--|---|
|   | <b>Unacceptable</b><br>Risk will not be ordinarily tolerated   | - <b>Control the risk</b>   |
| <b>1/1,000</b>  |  |   |
|  | <b>Unacceptable</b><br>Where imposed on others, risk will not be ordinarily tolerated                                  | - <b>Control the risk</b><br>- Review the risk  |
|   | <b>Tolerable by agreement:</b><br>i) If accepted by those exposed to the risk<br>ii) if the tree has exceptional value | - <b>Control the risk unless there is broad stakeholder agreement to tolerate it or the tree has exceptional value</b><br>- Review the risk                                     |
| <b>1/10,000</b>   |  |   |
|  | <b>Tolerable</b><br>Where imposed on others if as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP)                                | - <b>Assess costs and benefits of risk control</b><br>- <b>Control of the risk only where a significant benefit might be achieved at a reasonable cost</b><br>- Review the risk |
| <b>1/1,000,000</b>  |  |   |
|   | <b>Broadly acceptable</b><br>Already ALARP   | - <b>No action required</b><br>- Review the risk  |

- 2.7 According to the HSE, where a risk is less than 1/1,000,000 it is considered as broadly acceptable and there is no need to demonstrate it is ALARP. As a tree owner or manager, the client may choose to operate at a higher or lower level<sup>3</sup>.
- 2.8 The client is responsible for deciding the level of annualised risk that is acceptable for them to be imposed on the public. However, based on HSE guidance, DTS assumes this as 1/10,000 if the risk is 'As Low as Reasonably Practicable' (ALARP) unless the client communicates otherwise in writing.

<sup>3</sup> "For members of the public who have a risk imposed on them 'in the wider interest' HSE (Health and Safety Executive) would set this limit at 1/10,000 per annum" (Health and Safety Executive 1996).

### 3 Site visit and description

3.1 I carried out a site visit on the **29<sup>th</sup> September 2025** during **fine** weather conditions. The Site comprises of 3 separate sites within Tawton – Memorial Park, North Tawton Cemetery and St Peter’s Churchyard.

3.2 The Site Location



Figure 1 is an aerial image taken from Google, which illustrates the Site (red boxes) in relation to the wider local environment.

### 4 Observations

#### 4.1 General Observation

The tree stock across all three sites is generally in good condition. Most specimens exhibit good structural form, with canopies free from significant dieback or major defects. Any issues identified during the inspection are detailed in the following observations, together with associated work recommendations.

#### Memorial Park

4.2 G0618 is a mixed species group predominant stock includes Leyland cypress (*Cuprocyparis leylandii*) which has an approximate height of 13 metres and a stem diameter at 1.5 metres above ground level of 700mm. The trees have a crown radius of approximately 4 metres and exhibit canopy

and stem congestion typical of the species. Within the group, one primary branch (approximately 375 mm in diameter) shows extensive bark necrosis affecting the main stem. Although a good level of reactive wound wood development ('ram's horns') was previously noted following the earlier inspection, this response has since declined and the foliage on this section has now died.

- 4.3 G0621 is a Group of Elm (*Ulmus procera*) comprising six individual stems, each approximately 6 metres in height with stem diameters of around 200 mm and crown radius of about 4 metres. All trees have been affected by Dutch elm disease (*Ophiostoma novo-ulmi*) and have subsequently died.

### North Tawton Cemetery

- 4.4 G0885 – Group of three European lime (*Tilia × europaea*) growing as a cohesive feature. The trees have an average height of approximately 18 metres and stem diameters of approximately 800 mm at 1.5 metres above ground level. The trees have a crown spread of approximately 7 metres, with the group's overall vitality is assessed as fair. The southernmost tree is markedly suppressed by adjacent canopy competition and extends over the adjacent highway, which represents the principal target for the group. The north-westernmost tree exhibits a bark-included union at approximately 2 metres above ground level, with a substantial development of axial reactive growth (adaptive tissue) evident at the time of inspection. Scattered small-diameter deadwood (<50 mm) is present throughout the canopies.
- 4.5 Row of Beech Trees – A linear group of 17 mature Common beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) located adjacent to the school and graveyard, forming a continuous overhanging canopy. Individual trees with identifiable risk features have been tagged for monitoring and management. The group averages approximately 17 metres in height, with stem diameters of around 800 mm measured at 1.5 metres above ground level and crown spreads of about 9 metres. The trees exhibit characteristics typical of mature beech, including large scaffold limbs extending over the adjacent land uses. Target areas beneath the canopy include pedestrian routes, school grounds and burial plots.

### St Peter's Churchyard

- 4.6 G003 – is a group of 4 trees. One Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) with a height of approximately 9 metres and a stem diameter measures at 1.5 metres from ground level of approximately 300mm. The trees exhibit an overall fair vitality, with a single dead lateral branch present within the south-eastern quadrant of the crown.

## 5 Conclusion

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### Memorial Park

- 5.1 G0618 includes a Leyland cypress (*Cuprocyparis leylandii*) physiological and structural condition is assessed as poor. The tree exhibits extensive cambial and bark necrosis affecting one primary branch, approximately 375 mm in diameter, with dysfunction extending into the main stem. Although a substantial adaptive wound wood response (“ram’s horns”), this compensatory growth has since declined, and the foliage associated with the affected section has now senesced and died. A QTRA assessment yields a rating of 1/40K representing a tolerable acceptable level of risk.
- 5.2 G0621 is a group of six Elm (*Ulmus procera*) that have subsequently died as a result of Dutch elm disease. The group’s physiological and structural condition is assessed as poor. With an adjacent footpath and road forming the principal target, the QTRA assessment yields a risk of 1/5K, which is considered a tolerable level of risk.

### North Tawton Cemetery

- 5.3 G0885 comprises a group of three European lime (*Tilia × europaea*) forming a cohesive landscape feature. The group’s overall physiological and structural condition is assessed as fair. The southernmost tree is markedly suppressed by adjacent canopy competition and extends over the adjacent highway, which represents the principal target for the group. The north-westernmost tree exhibits a bark-included union with substantial axial reactive growth (adaptive tissue) evident at the time of inspection. Scattered small-diameter deadwood (<50 mm) is present throughout the canopies. A QTRA assessment yields a risk of 1/3M, which is considered to represent a broadly acceptable level of risk.
- 5.4 The row of 17 mature Common beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) forms a continuous linear canopy adjacent to the school and graveyard. The group’s overall assessment as good physiological and fair structural condition. Individual trees with identifiable risk features have been tagged for monitoring and management. The trees display characteristics typical of mature beech, including large scaffold limbs extending over adjacent land uses. Target areas beneath the canopy include pedestrian routes, school grounds and burial plots. A QTRA assessment yields a risk of 1/400K, which is considered to represent a tolerable level of risk.

## St Peter's Churchyard

- 5.5 G003 comprises a group of four trees, including one Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*). The group's overall physiological and structural condition is assessed as fair, with a single dead lateral branch present within the south-eastern quadrant of the crown. A QTRA assessment yields a risk of 1/500K, which is considered a tolerable level of risk.

## 6 Recommendations

- 6.1 A full specification of works can be found within the **Tree Survey Schedules DTS25.17018.1.SCH** along with the corresponding **Plan DTS25.17018.1. PLAN**. This document can be used as the basis for any application to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for works to protected trees.
- 6.2 I would recommend the following:
- 6.3 G0618 - Remove stem from Leyland cypress (*Cuprocyparis leylandii*) within northern aspect of tree group to 10/20cm above ground level. Tree tag number 5056.
- 6.4 G0621 - Remove all 6 elms to ground level.
- 6.5 G0885 - is to be reinspected - within the next 12 months.
- 6.6 Row of 17 mature Common beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) - row of 17 mature Common beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)
- 6.7 G003 - Remove the dead branch on the eastern aspect of the canopy back to the main stem, undertaking the work in accordance with **BS3998:2010 – Tree Work Recommendations**.

## 7 Other considerations

- 7.1 Implementation of works: All tree works should be carried out to BS 3998 Tree Work-Recommendations as modified by more recent research. For more information, please contact a contractor who is approved by the Arboricultural Association. Their website [www.trees.org.uk](http://www.trees.org.uk)
- 7.2 Statutory wildlife obligations: The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 provides statutory protection to birds, bats and other species that inhabit trees. All tree work operations are covered by these provisions and advice from

an ecologist must be obtained by the tree owner or person responsible, before undertaking any works that might constitute an offence.

- 7.3 Trees subject to statutory controls: These trees may be protected by a tree preservation order or growing within a Conservation Area, so it will be necessary to obtain consent from the Local Planning Authority (LPA) before any pruning works other than certain exceptions can be carried out.

## Appendix I: Tree Survey Schedule - Key

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| REF:             | Reference number- refers to plan or numbered tree tags as applicable.   |
| SPECIES:         | Common name with botanical name in brackets where applicable.   |
| TARGETS:         | Target for tree and brief description of its location.  |
| HEIGHT:          | Measured in metres from ground-level. Where many trees are inspected, 1 in 10 trees are measured with the remainder estimated against the measured trees.   |
| DIAMETER:        | Stem diameter in mm, measured at 1.3m above ground-level.   |
| CROWN RADIUS:    | Radial crown spread in metres.  |
| LIFE STAGE:      | <b>Y</b> = young tree; under one third life expectancy <b>SM</b> =semi mature tree; between one third and two thirds life expectancy, <b>M</b> =mature tree; two thirds life expectancy, <b>OM</b> =Over mature; over two thirds life expectancy.   |
| LIFE EXPECTANCY: | Estimated life remaining for the tree in years considering its age and condition.   |
| PHYS. CONDITION: | <b>Physiological condition: G-Good</b> = fully functioning biological system showing average vitality i.e. normal bud growth, leaf size, crown density and wound closure <b>F-Fair</b> = fully functioning biological system showing below average vitality i.e. reduced bud growth, smaller leaf size, lower crown density and reduced wound closure <b>P-Poor</b> = a biological system with limited functionality showing significantly below average vitality i.e. limited bud growth, small and chlorotic leaves, low crown density and limited wound closure <b>D-Dead</b> = dead |
| STR. CONDITION:  | <b>Structural Condition: G- Good-</b> Tree without any significant structural defects. <b>F- Fair</b> Tree with minor defects that may be remedied with appropriate management. <b>P- Poor</b> Tree with significant defects that cannot be remedied  |
| TARGET RANGE:    | Ranges 1-6. 1 = High, 6 = Low value/occupancy. Highest value target potentially affected by failure of the part most likely to fail.  |
| SIZE:            | <b>Size category</b> of most significant part considered likely to fail. Range 1-4 and PROPERTY (PROP). 1 = Large, 4 = Small. Part identified in 'MOST SIGNIFICANT PART' column.  |
| PoF:             | <b>Probability of failure</b> within 12 months. Range 1-7. 1 = High, 7 = Low.   |
| RISK INDEX:      | E.G. Risk Index 20 = risk of significant harm 1 in 20,000. An additional figure in brackets may be suffixed 'T' representing the rate of multiple occupation over the year (e.g. 1(10T)/10,000 = risk of harm 1/10,000 to 10 occupants or equivalent monetary value   |
| RoH:             | <b>Risk of harm</b> associated failure.   |
| INSPECT PERIOD:  | Years until a new inspection is needed for the tree (recommended).  |
| RECOMMENDATIONS: | Works recommended to reduce the level of risk posed by the tree. Essential management works can be recommended here however, they should be prioritised by the Client in line with funds available.   |
| PRIORITY:        | <b>1. Emergency-</b> Undertake within 48hrs of being notified of works. <b>2. Urgent-</b> Undertake within 30 days of being notified of works. <b>3. Normal-</b> Undertake within 6 months of being notified of works. <b>4.</b> Undertake within 3 years of being notified of works. <b>M. Management-</b> undertake if funds become available.  |