

**LAINGLY CHASE
TREE RISK REPORT
APRIL 2026**



FORD TREESCAPES

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SUMMARY

The condition of a number of trees at Laingley Chase was assessed and risk assessments made when relevant features found. The trees were found to be in good condition overall with some decline in oak trees with a number of factors in which could be contributing to their decline. Risks were found to be in the broadly acceptable regions when assessed using the QTRA method.

Trees are covered by Kington Langley conservation area.

INTRODUCTION

I am Laurence Ford an arboriculturist with 12 years contracting experience and 6 years surveying and consultancy experience within the arboricultural sector. I have a degree in Environmental Science, I have completed the LANTRA Professional Tree Inspection course and I am a VALID and QTRA registered user. I am passionate about tree preservation and giving objective and realistic advice on their management.

Ford Treescapes were asked by Bill Kallaway to assess the condition of 15 trees at Laingley Chase, Kington Langley (hereby referred to as the "site") and to produce a report detailing the findings. Only 15 trees we're assessed that Bill thought were relevant to assess and therefore not all of the trees on the site were risk assessed. The extent of the work was to assess the trees for failure associated characteristics and when found make a calculated judgement on the risk that they pose as well as giving good management recommendations. Recommendations on pruning works were also asked for in which to prune away from overheads lines and crown lifting to trees in fields for tractor access.

Ford Treescapes have had no prior experience working on this site.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON TREES AND RISK

It is important to note that trees pose an incredibly small amount of risk in our daily lives compared to other things that we may deem "safer". Although fatalities and injury to person and property are infrequent, they do occur annually, and it is the responsibility of the landowner to ensure that those on or near to their land have an acceptable level of safety. Zero risk from trees cannot be achieved whilst trees are retained within a landscape, statute law does not require the tree owner to maintain completely safe trees. The duty of care requires the tree owner only to take reasonable care. Where there has been failure to do this and injury to person or property has occurred there is possibility of a claim either in negligence or under the Occupiers Liability Acts 1957 and 1984. The landowner needs to ensure that reasonably foreseeable events that could cause harm from falling trees or parts of trees are reduced or removed.

"The duty of care is to take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions that cause a reasonably foreseeable risk of injury to persons or property" from the National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) – Common Sense Risk Management of Trees. The NTSG outline three types of inspection. These are:

Informal Observations - carried out by landowners or staff in their day-to-day activities.

Formal assessments - someone invited to visit the trees with the specific purpose of performing an inspection.

Detailed assessments - carried out by a competent specialist following an informal observation or a formal inspection.

The survey carried out at Laingley Chase constitutes a formal assessment.

METHODOLOGY

The tree survey sought to find any failure associated traits on the three trees on site. Information regarding the space around the tree, the size of the defective part that could fail and a timescale in which the part could fail was gathered on site. The trees were assessed from ground level using the visual tree assessment (VTA) method. And one of the trees with rope and harness to access the crown and view limbs from above and in more detail. A sounding mallet was used to identify and assess hollows, decay and cracks inside the tree. The sound as well as the feel of the mallet hitting the wood was used to differentiate between different qualities within the wood. Information regarding the occupancy area, size of defective part and the likelihood of failure was collected on site using observations of the surrounding area, measurements and arboricultural knowledge, this information was then inputted into the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA) calculator. QTRA is a well used, universal and robust methodology for quantifying risks from falling trees or branches and uses a specialised calculator.

QTRA INPUTS

Occupancy area (target range)

Occupancy area or target range is the area directly underneath the tree or part of tree which could fail. Information on this was gathered on site from clues and observation. This is given as a range between 1 and 6 with considerations made in regards to property value and vehicle/pedestrian traffic.

Size of defective part (size)

This is the size of the tree or the part of the tree being assessed which could fail. This is given as a range between 1 and 4 or a separate property value if property is a potential target.

Probability of failure (POF)

How likely the tree or part of tree is to fail within the coming year. For QTRA these values are between 1 and 7 with decreasing likelihood. Each value corresponds to a given range of probability of failure in the coming year where 1 is the highest probability - between certain and greater than 1 in 10 of the tree failing ($1/1 - >1/10$), and 7 is the lowest probability between 1/1,000,000 and 1/10,000,000 chance of the tree failing in the coming year. 7 represents the structurally acclimatised tree.

QTRA RISK OF HARM (ROF)

Using the inputs above, the QTRA calculator generates the risk of harm as a probability over the coming year.

On the right are the QTRA advisory risk thresholds. Broadly speaking thresholds under 1/10,000- risk of harm are generally considered acceptable and over this are unacceptable. This framework has been adapted from HSEs Tolerability of Risk Framework (ToR) but does not dictate how these principles should be applied with each situation being different.

QTRA ADVISORY RISK THRESHOLDS

Risk Thresholds	Description	Action
Under 1/1,000	Unacceptable Risks will not ordinarily be tolerated	Control the risk
1/1,000	Unacceptable (where imposed on others) Risks will not ordinarily be tolerated	- Control the risk - Review the risk
	Tolerable (by agreement) Risks may be tolerated if those exposed to the risk accept it, or the tree has exceptional value	- Control the risk unless there is broad stakeholder agreement to tolerate it, or the tree has exceptional value - Review the risk
1/10,000	Tolerable (where imposed on others) Risks are tolerable if as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP)	- Assess costs and benefits of risk control - Control the risks only where a significant benefit might be achieved at reasonable cost - Review the risk
1/1,000,000	Broadly Acceptable Risk is already ALARP	- No action currently required - Review risk

LIMITATIONS

This survey sought to assess the condition of 15 trees on the site which are highlighted in the tree location map. They comprise of 12 individuals and a group containing 3 trees. A whole site survey was not deemed necessary for the client. Trees are dynamic living organisms existing within an unpredictable and changing environment and their condition can change very quickly due to biotic and abiotic factors. The purpose of this survey was to identify any failure associated characteristics and the risks relating to these as well as giving good management recommendations to enhance the local environment. Although all effort was made to make a balanced and reasonable judgement, no responsibility can be accepted for any damages caused by a tree failing due to an unseen issue on the day of inspection. It must certainly be expected that no tree can be deemed completely safe and even seemingly fault-free healthy trees can fail in calm weather conditions and the risk they pose must be balanced with the benefits that they provide, which are numerous (see benefits of urban trees on page 10).

This report does not constitute a mortgage report or cover issues of subsidence and no subterranean investigations were carried out.

TREE SURVEY FINDINGS

The trees on site were surveyed on the 8th of April 2026 by Laurence Ford on a dry clear day with good visibility. The site is a small farm just outside of Kington Langley, Chippenham. It comprises of a number of houses, gardens and fields. Bill walked me to the trees in which he wanted an assessment carried out which are all on the tree location map at the end of the document. T1, T2 and T3 are along the site boundary bordering residential properties. T4 - T9 are along a road and T10, T11, T12 and G1 are around a rented cottage. There was also some concern as to why some of the oaks in the interior of the property have been dying these have not been mapped as they do not pose a risk, these trees are down hill of a recent pond that has been put in.

TREE SUVEY DATA KEY

Ref-Tag no - This is the unique reference number either T Tree, G group or H hedge, a tag number may follow if one has been used.

Species - Common name followed by latin.

Height - Total height given in meters

SD - Stem diameter given in cm.

Age - The age class of the tree ranging from Y Young, SM semi mature, EM early mature, M mature, V veteran, A ancient.

Physio Cond - The overall physiological condition of the tree.

Struc Cond - The overall structural condition of the tree

Observations - Written useful observations given here.

QTRA Target - Quantified tree risk assessment Target area rating .Between 1 and 6.

QTRA size - Quantified tree risk assessment size rating. Between 1 and 4 or property value.

QTRA POF - Quantified tree risk assessment probability of failure rating. Between 1 and 7.

QTRA risk of harm - Quantified tree risk assessment risk of harm probability. K= 1000 M = 1000,000.

Management recommendations risk reduction/maintenance - written recommendations for remedial works given here and whether they are for risk reduction or maintenance reasons.

TREE SURVEY DATA TABLE

TREE SURVEY DATA												
Ref Tag	Species	Height (m)	SD (cm)	Age	Physio Cond	Struc cond	Observations	QTRA Target	QTRA Size	QTRA POF	QTRA Risk of harm rating	Management recommendations
T1	English oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	12	126	M	Good	Good	Large stem diameter to height ratio. Mature tree with veteran potential. Historically pollarded at 4m. No significant visibly or audibly detected decay. Attachment points of re-growth from pollard head appear in good condition from within tree (see <i>figure 1</i>). Tree growing over garden shed. Neighbour has complained about overhang of tree. So QTRA assessment carried out.	3	Proper ty	6	<1/1M Broadly acceptable	No management needed at present but if pressure from neighbours to prune persists then a crown reduction by drop crotch pruning of one stem to south recommended. Reducing lateral benches by 1.5 m in length and in height by 1m only to the single stem to south. (See <i>figure 2</i>) Monitor tree health.
T2	Holly <i>Ilex Aquifolium</i>	8	24*	SM	Poor	Poor	Dead holly stem likely to fall onto neighbours driveway. Not risk related but maintenance issue.	3	Proper ty	5	<1/1M Broadly acceptable	Remove holly stem. (See <i>figure 3</i>)
T3	English oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	13	122	M	Good	Fair	Historic pollard, some large torn out branches to east and south Significant decay providing niche habitat value. Low occupancy area underneath branches which could fail.	4	2	6	<1/1M Broadly acceptable	No action required. At present. Monitor tree health.
T4	London plane <i>Platanus x hispanica</i>	13	70	EM	Good	Good	Establishing tree with high future potential.	-	-	-	<1/1M Broadly acceptable	Remove tree protection fencing from base of tree to stop stem enveloping it.
T5	London plane <i>Platanus x hispanica</i>	13	75*	EM	Good	Good	Establishing tree with high future potential.	-	-	-	<1/1M Broadly acceptable	Prune to give 2m clearance of twiggy growth from power lines to south.
T6	London plane <i>Platanus x hispanica</i>	13	75*	EM	Good	Good	Establishing tree with high future potential.	-	-	-	<1/1M Broadly acceptable	Prune to give 2m clearance of twiggy growth from power lines to south. Without removing larger diameter branches (above 10cm diameter) remove stub that is putting outgrowth into wire back to main stem. Avoid any stub cuts that will re-shoot towards lines, pruning to suitable growth points where possible and target pruning if branches are being removed.

TREE SURVEY DATA												
Ref Tag	Species	Height (m)	SD (cm)	Age	Physio Cond	Struc cond	Observations	QTRA Target	QTRA Size	QTRA POF	QTRA Risk of harm rating	Management recommendations
T7	English oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	12	129	M	Fair	Good	Mature tree with veteran characteristics. Large diameter to height ratio, likely historically pollarded at 4m similar to T1 and T3 likely indicating original field boundary. Large wound at base beginning to occlude. Tree beginning to dieback in places. Better bud density lower down the tree. Possibly getting less water now London planes are establishing.	3	4	4	1/1M Broadly acceptable	No action required at present. Monitor tree health.
T8	London plane <i>Platanus x hispanica</i>	12	65*	EM	Good	Good	Establishing tree with high future potential.	-	-	-	1/1M Broadly acceptable	Prune to give 2m clearance of twiggy growth. Remove stub cuts that are producing re-growth towards lines. Do not remove branches larger than 10cm diameter unless they are an old stub cut with regrowth growing towards lines, if so target prune to parent branch.
T9	Corsican Pine <i>Pinus Nigra</i>	13	60*	EM	Good	Good	Becomes multi stemmed with dense crown. No visible significant issues.	-	-	-	1/1M	No action required at present.
T10	Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	19	103	M	Good	Good	Impressive tree. Large diameter to height ratio. No visible or audible signs of decay on stem. Branch unions appear in good condition.	-	-	-	Broadly acceptable	No action required. Monitor for ash dieback disease on next inspection.
G1	Poplar (Hybrid black) <i>Populus x canadensis</i>	20	90	EM	Good	Good	3 Large trees with some long lateral branches. Client expressed concerns due to brittle nature of timber, no significant issues observed QTRA assessment carried out for branch failure. Risk is broadly acceptable.	3	2	5	1/1M Broadly acceptable	No action required for risk reduction. If risk is desired to be even lower it would not be detrimental to reduce two lower lateral branches by 3m.(see figures 4&5) If so the chances of them failing would be reduced but they would still act as a barrier from branches that may fall from above.
T11	Cypress <i>spp</i>	17	65*	EM	Good	Good	Growing in close proximity to shed.	-	-	-	1/1M Broadly acceptable	Crown lift to give 4.5m clearance from ground. Maintenance.
T12	Beech <i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	15	60*				No significant issues seen.	-	-	-	1/1M Broadly acceptable	No action required.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All the trees on site that I was asked to look at had an acceptable risk rating when calculated using the QTRA method. This being said although currently not necessary for risk reduction, partial crown reduction works to T1 could be carried out which would plicate neighbours and would ultimately help in the long term longevity of the tree as It is an old pollard with substantial re-growth. One holly stem has still been recommended for removal on a maintenance basis. Pruning works are recommended to T4-T8 also on a maintenance basis so they are not obstructing overhead wires. Crown lifting works are recommended to T11 also on a maintenance basis. Although G1 presents broadly acceptable risk, if lower risk is desired from snapped branches, reducing lower lateral branches has been recommended. Please look at the management recommendations section in the tree data table above for detailed recommendations.

One speculation as to why the oak trees could be dying in the field north of the pond is that the pond is capturing water that would have flowed down hill, therefore reducing the available water for these trees, this coupled with changing climate and other factors such as disease like oak decline could be contributing to the mortality of these trees. It is recommended that these dead trees are retained as they hold high biodiversity and habitat value in standing deadwood. If it is becoming tiresome to keep moving befalling branches out of the way of tractors, the trees could have the limbs shortened so they are more stable standing trunks. Bill had asked whether crown lifting some of the live trees would be possible this time of year, The main issue here would be then allowing tractors in closer proximity to these trees which would be of fr higher detriment to the crown lifting of smaller branches. Crown lifting to allow tractors underneath the canopy would increase compaction below ground and increase risk of physical damage to the tree from tractors. Compaction damages the rooting environment limiting the trees ability to uptake water and nutrients and will likely accelerate tree mortality and decline in these fields.

If pruning works need to be carried out for crown lifting to the oak trees although spring is not an ideal time of year for pruning this would be

acceptable to do if only minor pruning carried out for access. As minimal as possible for the access needed is recommended as any lower hanging branches that could be left will act as a good barrier to keep machinery away from trees and their rooting environment where possible. It is recommended that any pruning equipment is cleaned in-between trees within the site this is to stop the spread of pathogens and diseases such as oak decline.

It is recommended that the trees be re-assessed in 3 years time between this time it is recommended that the landowner carry out observations of the tree, an obvious tree risk feature guide is at the end of the document, if any of these features present themselves a suitably qualified arboriculturalist should be contacted.



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Benefits of Urban trees

The list of the benefits that trees provide is enormous and too long to mention entirely. But some of the main benefits are mentioned below:

Environmental services include:

- Biodiversity enhancement and habitats for a huge number of organisms
- Helping to improve air, water and soil quality
- Reducing the effects of flooding and high wind speeds
- Reducing air temperatures in summer

Economic services include:

- Increasing property value
- Reduced energy costs
- Large trees add a sense of maturity to a site

Social and well being:

- Fundamentally, urban trees make our towns and cities better places to be in
- Trees can soften the built up landscape and provide privacy
- Studies have shown that psychological benefits of trees can affect the physiology of our bodies by reducing pulse rate and levels of cortisol, a major stress hormone.
- There are also positive physiological effects from the chemicals released by some trees.

TREE LOCATION MAP





Figure 1 T1: stem unions at crown break.



Figure 2 T1: yellow highlighted stem with red pruning line if pruning is to be carried out.

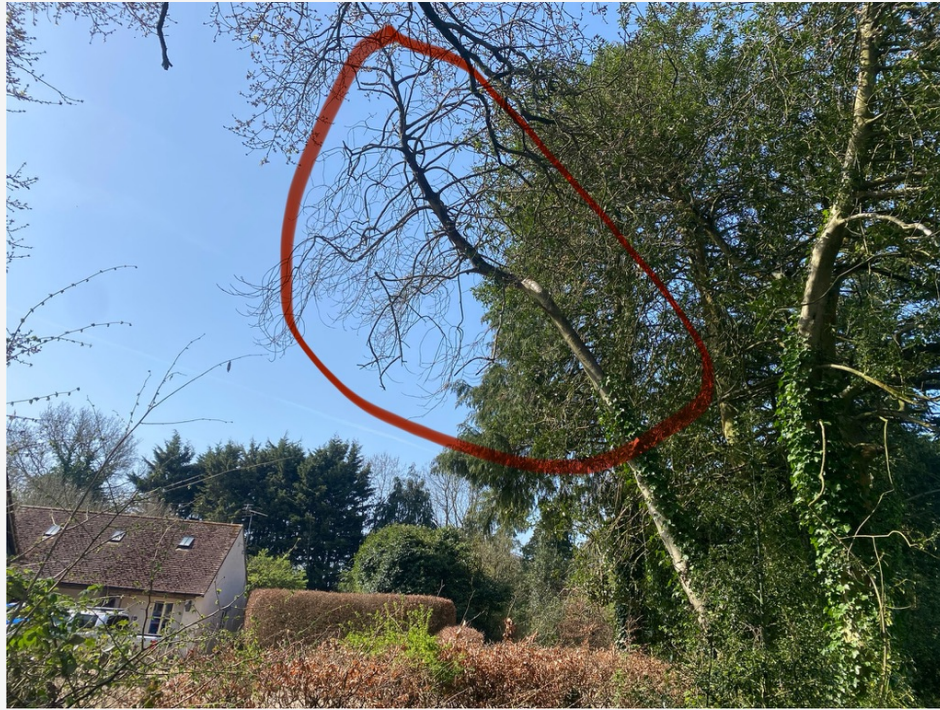


Figure 3 T2: Dead holly stem to remove for maintenance reasons.



Figure 4 G1: lower lateral branch that may be desired to be reduced by 3-4 m in length to a suitable growth point.



Figure 5 G1: another lower lateral branch that may be desired to be reduced by 3-4 m in length to a suitable growth point.



Figure 6: view downhill over pond toward dead oak trees.

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Quantified Tree Risk Assessment User Manual Version 5

1

When might a tree be dangerous?

**Trees with the highest risk
are the easiest to spot**

Be watchful after storms

When a tree has a risk that might not be Acceptable or Tolerable, it'll usually have an obvious tree risk feature you can't help but notice. If you come across a tree with anything like these obvious features, it should be looked at by an Arborist (tree expert) who's been trained in tree risk assessment.

1.1 Root failure

**Storms can break tree roots
without blowing them over**

Signs to look out for are

**Change in angle of the trunk
Large cracks in the soil
Hump in the ground on one side**

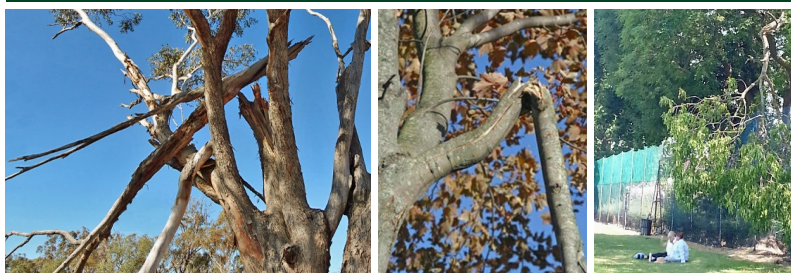


1.2 Hanging branches

Don't forget to look up

**Branches can break during storms
and still hang on**

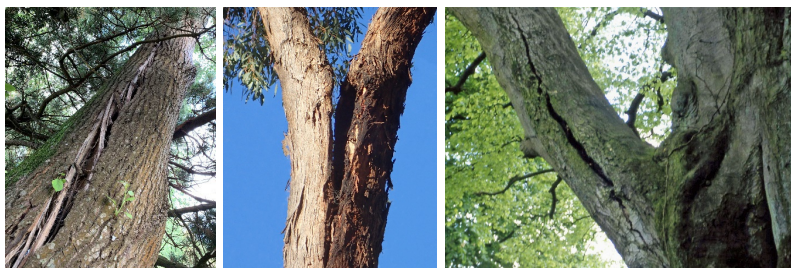
**Sometimes they can get stuck
up there for quite a while**



1.3 A crack or split into the wood, beyond the bark

**When trees bend and twist in storms
the wood can split and crack**

**Vertical cracks in the bark
are just the tree growing well
there's no need to worry**



1.4 Decline & death

**To stay healthy and strong trees
need 'solar panel' leaves to make food**

**When trees suffer they often have much
less leaf cover and many dead branches**

**Standing dead trees have great
habitat benefits but need checking**



1.5 Decay fungi fruiting bodies

**To decay fungi these 'fruits' are
like apples to an apple tree**

**Decay fungi and trees mostly
live happily together creating
essential habitat for wildlife**

**Fungi can sometimes 'eat' too
much wood and weaken the tree**

