

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

6 October 2023

Applications to be Determined by the Committee

Report of the Head of Development Management

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Dartmoor National Park Authority

Teigncombe Farm, Chagford



Scale 1:1,000



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Application No: **0291/23** District/Borough: **West Devon**
Application Type: **Full Planning Permission** Parish: **Chagford**
Grid ref: Officer: **Oliver Dorrell**
Proposal: **Teigncombe Farm, Chagford**
Location: **Change of use of land for the siting of two glamping pods**
Applicant: **Mr & Mrs Stansbury**
Recommendation: **That permission be REFUSED**

Reasons for Refusal:

1. The proposed development would constitute new build short stay tourist accommodation in the open countryside of the National Park, not delivered through the conversion of a suitable redundant historic building. It would therefore be contrary to policies SP1.2, SP1.3, P5.5 and P5.9 of the Dartmoor Local Plan, and to the advice contained in the English National Parks and the Broads UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.
2. The proposed glamping pods, by reason of their design, scale and positioning, would fail to conserve and/or enhance what is special or distinctive about the local landscape character and would have a negative impact the tranquillity of the area, contrary to policies SP1.1, SP1.5, SP2.1 and SP2.6 of the Dartmoor Local Plan, and to the advice contained in the English National Parks and the Broads UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, in particular paragraph 176.

1 Proposal

- 1.1 Teigncombe Farm is located approximately 2.5km to the east of Chagford. The farm holding extends to approximately 150 acres. The farmstead is located in the hamlet of Teigncombe.
- 1.2 This application is for the change of use of land at Teigncombe Farm from agriculture to the siting of two glamping pods.

2 Planning History

- 2.1 0585/21 - Change of use of land from agriculture to mixed use agriculture/tourism to include the erection of two modulong glamping pod – Application withdrawn – 9 December 2021

3 Consultations

- 3.1 West Devon Borough Council - Does not wish to comment.

- 3.2 County EEC Directorate - No highways objection.
- 3.3 Environment Agency - Standing advice – Flood Risk Zone 1.

4 Parish Council Comments

- 4.1 Chagford Parish Council – The Parish Council supports this application (Policy 5.9 Farm Diversification).

5 Relevant Local Plan Policies

- 5.1 Strategic Policy 1.1 Delivering National Park purposes and protecting Dartmoor's Special Qualities
Strategic Policy 1.2 Sustainable development in Dartmoor National Park
Strategic Policy 1.3 Spatial Strategy
Strategic Policy 1.5 Delivering good design
Strategic Policy 1.6 Sustainable construction
Policy 1.7 Protecting local amenity in Dartmoor National Park
Strategic Policy 2.1 Protecting the character of Dartmoor's landscape
Strategic Policy 2.2 Conserving and enhancing Dartmoor's biodiversity and geodiversity
Strategic Policy 2.3 Biodiversity Net Gain
Strategic Policy 2.4 Conserving and enhancing Dartmoor's moorland, heathland and woodland
Strategic policy 2.5 The Water Environment and Flood Risk
Strategic Policy 2.6 Protecting tranquillity and dark night skies
Strategic Policy 4.1 Supporting community services and facilities
Strategic Policy 4.2 Supporting public open space and sports facilities
Policy 4.4 Parking standards for new development
Policy 4.5 Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs)
Policy 5.5 Tourist Accommodation
Policy 5.7 Camping and touring caravan sites
Policy 5.8 Agriculture, forestry and rural land-based enterprise development
Policy 5.9 Farm diversification

6 Representations

- 6.1 Six letters of support. The comments are summarised as follows:
- Provides alternative form of tourist accommodation to that found in Chagford
 - Would not result in material change in traffic
 - Diversification needed to maintain farming traditions and character
 - Applicant has farmed at Teigncombe for generations
 - Existing barns are in use and not redundant
 - The tourists which would use site would be respectful to surroundings and residents
- 6.2 14 letters of objection. The comments are summarised as follows:
- Loss of privacy for nearby residents
 - Harmful impact on tranquillity
 - Run off from package treatment plant not fully considered

- No provision for refuse/recycling
- Dilapidated buildings nearby pose risk to children staying
- Proposed pods are permanent structures with sewage connection
- Insufficient parking proposed
- Glamping pods not high architectural standard
- Priority should be given to converting existing buildings
- No reference to associated works (access track, parking area, sewage treatment plant) in application
- Lacks information on impact on wildlife/biodiversity

7 Observations

PROPOSAL

- 7.1 Teigncombe Farm is located in the hamlet of Teigncombe approximately 2.5km to the east of Chagford. The farm holding extends to approximately 150 acres.
- 7.2 Teigncombe Farmhouse and a stone barn to the north-east are grade II listed buildings, as is Teigncombe Manor on the opposite side of the road. Teigncombe Farm is identified on the historic environment record as a non-designated heritage asset as an historic farmstead.
- 7.3 The application site is located to the south-west of the historic farmstead across a road adjacent to the west of an existing range of agricultural storage buildings which are separate from the main building group. The site is currently part of an agricultural field. There is a public bridleway adjacent to the southern boundary of the site (Chagford Bridleway 2).
- 7.4 The proposal is for the siting of two glamping pods each comprising one bedroom, and living/dining/kitchen area and a bathroom. The pods would be arc shaped and constructed and clad in timber. They would have external measurements of approximately 5.7m wide by 5.5/6.6m long, with a height of 2.8m
- 7.5 Vehicular access to the site would be provided via an existing field access which is shared with the agricultural buildings. There would be an associated access track and parking provided for each pod unit.
- 7.6 The application has been submitted as a farm diversification project to support the existing farming enterprise at Teigncombe Farm.

8 Key Policy Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

- 8.1 Paragraph 84 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should support a prosperous rural economy by enabling:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*

- c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*
- d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.*

8.2 While at Paragraph 176 it states:

Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks 58 Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality. 51 and the Broads59. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

Dartmoor Local Plan

- 8.3 The strategy for the Local Plan is founded upon delivering the development required to meet the needs of the National Park and its communities, sustaining them as vibrant and viable places to live and work, whilst also ensuring Dartmoor's Special Qualities are conserved and enhanced.
- 8.4 The application site is in open countryside. Policy SP1.3 advises that development in open countryside will be acceptable in principle where it relates to: *farming, forestry or other land-based rural businesses with a proven need to locate in the open countryside, including farm diversification.*
- 8.5 Policy 5.9 sets the criteria for assessing proposals for farm diversification in the National Park. It states that planning permission will be granted for development to support farm diversification enterprises where they:
 - a) are located on an established and active farm;*
 - b) support and add value to a farm business which contributes to the conservation and/or enhancement of the National Park's Special Qualities;*
 - c) are ancillary and subordinate in scale to the farm business;*
 - d) make use of redundant buildings before proposing new buildings; and*
 - e) in the case of new buildings and structures, they are clustered with existing building groups and enclosed with an appropriate boundary feature, taking into account the special characteristics of the farmstead.*

It goes on to state that:

Proposals for a holiday let or Local Needs dwelling of up to 93m² will be supported where they are provided only through the conversion of a suitable redundant historic building in accordance with Strategic Policy 2.8. Only one Local Needs dwelling will be permitted per farm holding and only where no residential accommodation has already been permitted under this Policy or Policy 3.10.

For new diversification enterprises, permission will be subject to a condition tying the enterprise to the main farm business.

For Local Needs dwellings, permission will be subject to a legal agreement restricting it to occupation by a Local Person and tying the dwelling and any other relevant dwellings to the land holding.

- 8.6 It is also helpful to set out the policy position in respect of proposals for tourism development (Policy 5.5) and camping and caravan sites (Policy 5.7) in the open countryside but outside of a farm diversification scheme.

Policy 5.5 states:

Within Villages and Hamlets and the open countryside planning permission will only be granted for new short-stay tourist accommodation where it is: a) well related to tourist services; and b) provided through conversion of suitable redundant historic buildings in accordance with Strategic Policy 2.7 and/or Strategic Policy 2.8.

Policy 5.7 states:

Within Villages and Hamlets and the Open Countryside new small scale campsites will be permitted where: a) the proposal involves siting of tents only, is located close to tourist services and is of a scale appropriate for the local highway network; b) the development, use of the site and provision of site utilities and services conserve and/or enhance the National Park's Special Qualities, particularly landscape character, biodiversity, dark night skies and heritage significance; c) any need for a new building is met through the conversion of a redundant building, and suitable historic buildings are used first in accordance with Strategic Policy 2.7 and/or Strategic Policy 2.8; and d) the site is capable of being managed without the need for a new dwelling.

9 **Assessment**

Background to application

- 9.1 Planning officers have been engaged in discussions with the applicants regarding a potential farm diversification project at Teigncombe over a period of several years. This commenced following the submission of a pre-application enquiry to the planning team which established support in principle for a tourist-based proposal to support the existing farming enterprise. At this time no detailed drawings were provided of the proposed pods.
- 9.2 In September 2021 a planning application was submitted for two glamping pods – identical to those submitted under this current application – on a site to the south of Teigncombe Manor. Following discussions with the applicant this application was withdrawn on the advice of officers due to concern over scale and location of the proposed development.
- 9.3 Officers then undertook to carry out follow up site visit with the applicant in December 2021 with a view to establishing a more suitable location for the pods. Having regard for the site, its surroundings and the overarching policy requirement to ensure that

the special qualities of the area would not be compromised officers confirmed this to be land between the farmhouse and the modern barns to the east – known as ‘the Plat’.

- 9.4 It was also confirmed, at that time, that the proposed pods, due to their size and connection to services, would have an attachment to the ground and a degree of permanence which would mean they would be classed ‘buildings’ in planning terms. Also, that given the proposed pods would contain all the facilities to enable self-contained occupation, that they would be akin to a new-build holiday let, which would not be supported by Policy 5.9.
- 9.5 Officers suggested that the pods be simplified to seasonal camping pods/huts - a smaller version of pod comprising just a sleeping platform - and that a small ablutions block be provided at a suitable location near the entrance to the farmstead.
- 9.6 The applicant stated that the site suggested by officers was not appropriate as it would interfere with the workings of the farm and raised concerns over safety of the occupiers due to the proximity to livestock buildings and machinery.

10 Principle of development

- 10.1 Farming is the principal land use in Dartmoor National Park and is also one of its largest employers. Over the lifetime of this Local Plan, the industry is likely to be affected by an ageing workforce, changing consumer habits, Brexit and wage pressures. Adding new business activities through diversification can help build resilience into existing farming businesses and in the process safeguard the National Park’s Special Qualities
- 10.2 The farm at Teigncombe comprises 150 acres of permanent pasture and woodland owned and tenanted and a newtake of approximately 300 acres, with additional grass on various grazing agreements. As a Dartmoor hill farm, the farm includes moorland grazing rights on both Chagford Common and the Forest of Dartmoor; all of which are within the HLS scheme. The applicant’s run a suckler cow herd and 400 sheep.
- 10.3 Farm diversification schemes within Dartmoor are supported by Policy 5.9 of the Local Plan subject to certain criteria being met. These are set out at paragraph 8.5 above and the officer response to this proposal is as follows:
- (a) The proposed development would be located on an established and active farm.
 - (b) The farm enterprise contributes to the conservation and/or enhancement of the National Park’s Special Qualities; the proposed development in the form of tourism accommodation would add value and support the farm.
 - (c) No financial information has been provided to demonstrate how the proposed pods would contribute to the long-term business plan for the enterprise while being both ancillary and subordinate to the main farming business.

The proposal is for two self-contained glamping pods. As referred to in the background information above these types of structures are considered to be

buildings in planning terms and as they would be capable of being occupied independently from the farm enterprise at Teigncombe (including bathroom, kitchen and separate drainage) they are judged to be new build holiday lets in their own right.

- (d) There a number of existing buildings on the holding at Teigncombe including traditional stone barns and modern agricultural sheds at the main farmstead and modern storage buildings on the parcel of land adjacent to the application site. In respect of these buildings the planning statement submitted with the application advises the following: *'while there are some farm buildings in the main farmstead these are not considered to be available for two reasons firstly the building are being used by the farming enterprise and secondly even if they were not the buildings are immediately adjacent, centrally located, in the main working hub of the farm where there is livestock, vehicular movements and as such not a location that is favourable to holiday accommodation by reason of noise, smell and potential danger'*.

Officers are satisfied that there are no suitable redundant buildings on site which could reasonably be utilised for the purposes of providing tourist accommodation.

- (e) The proposed pods would be located adjacent to the group of buildings to the west of the main farmstead. The pods would be clustered with these buildings.

There is no reference to boundary treatment in the application drawings or statement.

- 10.4 Part two of the Policy 3.9 refers to proposals for holiday lets or local needs housing and states that such accommodation will only be supported where it would be provided through the conversion of a suitable redundant historic building in accordance with Strategic Policy 2.8. As identified above there are no current redundant historic buildings on site.
- 10.5 Officers are of the opinion that the proposed glamping pods are 'buildings' and that the proposed development is tantamount to formation of new holiday lets. Policy 3.9 cannot therefore be relied upon to support this form of development.
- 10.6 In terms of other relevant policies, Policy 5.5 is more restrictive than Policy 3.9 as in addition to requiring short stay tourist accommodation to be provided through the conversion of a suitable redundant historic building, it also requires the site to be well related to tourist services (making clear at paragraph 5.4.4 that new-build holiday homes, flats, chalets, lodges and other permanent holiday accommodation amounts to new housing and will therefore be expected to comply with this Local Plan's housing policies). Policy 5.7 meanwhile is supportive of tented campsites only in the open countryside where it would be outside of farm diversification.
- 10.7 In conclusion, farm diversification is supported in the Local Plan and Policy 3.9 provides a greater level of flexibility and opportunity to the farming community than that available to other portions of the local population however, it does not extend to the provision of self-contained new build holiday accommodation in the open countryside of the National Park. For this reason the proposed development is not considered to accord with this policy.

11 Impact on character and appearance

- 11.1 Strategic Policy 1.1 supports development which promotes National Park purposes and will have regard for the duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of the local communities within the National Park, provided such development is compatible with National Park purposes.
- 11.2 Strategic Policy 1.2 seeks to promote sustainable development which protects the special environmental qualities of the National Park.
- 11.3 Strategic Local Plan Policy 1.5 requires all new development to create a strong sense of place with a clear and distinctive character by reinforcing local character, respecting Dartmoor's vernacular, and maintaining and enhancing townscapes, street patterns and frontages and their relationship with the landscape. Planning applications exhibiting anything less than good design will be refused.
- 11.4 Strategic Policy 2.6 concerns the protection of tranquillity and dark night skies and states that outside classified settlements development proposals will only be permitted where they conserve and/or enhance tranquillity and that all development proposals should avoid external lighting.
- 11.5 The proposed development would be located within an agricultural field. The immediate area is characterised by pastoral fields and largely by buildings of traditional form which are grouped in small clusters. Slate and stone are the predominant materials although there is timber cladding on some of the buildings and the agricultural buildings which can be glimpsed through the trees to the south and east of the application site have evidence of timber and corrugated metal sheeting.
- 11.6 The proposed pods would be largely screened in views from the existing access gateway by trees however the access track and parking area would be clearly visible. The pods would also be visible in glimpsed views through the hedgerows which border the Mariners Way, a well used public path, to the south of the application site and the unclassified road to the north. There may be greater visibility of the site during the winter months when the trees are not in leaf.
- 11.7 The proposed pods would not have a design reflective of the local vernacular. They do not take any particular reference from surrounding buildings and lack any form of local distinctiveness. Officers therefore question their suitability for this location.
- 11.8 There are also concerns regarding the size of the proposed units. The pods contain all of the facilities required for self-contained occupation which inevitably means they are much larger than a camping pod, which only generally has a sleeping platform and is much more compact.
- 11.9 There has been no information submitted in respect of how the boundary of the site will be delineated, which is an important consideration for any new development on greenfield sites, neither have there been any section drawings provided to show any excavation which might be required for the pods.

11.10 Overall it is considered that the introduction of two new units of self-contained holiday accommodation in this location, which would be divorced from the main farmstead and have their own parking and access, would not conserve what is special about this part of the National Park and would be unlikely to contribute positively to the tranquillity of the area.

12 Impact on residential amenity

12.1 There have been a number of representations received concerned over the impact of the proposed development on the residential amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of nearby residential properties.

12.2 Policy 1.7 states that development proposals should not significantly reduce levels of privacy, introduce levels of noise which would adversely affect human health or quality of life or have an overbearing or dominant impact.

12.3 There are a number of dwellings which form the hamlet of Teigncombe. The nearest of those to the application site are Mariners Way to the south-west and Teigncombe Barn east. The distance separating these properties from the nearest of the pods is approximately 25m and 30m respectively. This distance is not dissimilar to those separating other properties in the hamlet. There is a hedgebank separating the southern boundary of the site from the Mariners Way path and property.

12.4 While it is accepted that the noise arising from occupiers of a timber pod may at times be greater than from a permanent residence it is not considered that the proposed development would give rise to significant levels of noise or disturbance to warrant refusal.

13 Biodiversity net gain/enhancement

13.1 All development is required to contribute towards biodiversity enhancement to support the National Park's network of wildlife sites and priority habitats and maximise potential for other environmental gains.

13.2 The proposed development does not include details to demonstrate how the requisite biodiversity enhancement would be achieved on the application site, in accordance with Strategic Policy 2.3.

14 Conclusion

14.1 It is recognised that farm diversification can add significant value to existing farm businesses on Dartmoor. The Local Plan policies are generous in allowing a variety of diversification opportunities, nevertheless it must be proven that associated development would not harm the defined special qualities of Dartmoor and be in accordance with policies which seek to re-use existing buildings rather than introducing new, discordant structures in the open countryside of the National Park. In this case there is identified harm to the special qualities and amenity of this part of the National Park that is not outweighed by the perceived benefits. Where such conflict exists, greater weight should be given to protecting the special qualities of the National Park.

15 Member site visit - Friday 15 September

- 15.1 Members of the site inspection panel convened on the site where the Planning Officer outlined the application and provided a summary of the site history.
- 15.2 A Chagford Parish Council representative and the applicant's neighbour, Mr S Connelly, attended as a representative of the applicant in their absence.
- 15.3 Members inspected the area of the proposal – the site had been marked out, but the planning officer clarified that the markers did not give an accurate location to the proposed pods.
- 15.4 The Parish Council representative stated that the parish council believes the proposal is in accordance with the Farm Diversity policy of the Dartmoor Local Plan.
- 15.5 The agent described the site, access, and parking. The agent explained the water would be supplied by natural spring and that if planning was granted the electricity supply could be buried.
- 15.6 The agent confirmed to the Members that the site would not be cut and filled, with the pods sat upon the land, essentially on platforms.
- 15.7 Members assessed the location, observing that the proposed site location was in view of Gidleigh Tor.
- 15.8 The planning officer raised the alternative site suggestion for camping pods, located nearer the main farm; however this was not visited.
- 15.9 The applicant's representative raised questions in regard to local policy and it was decided this would be debated at committee.
- 15.10 Members viewed the site from the public right of way. Members noted the vegetation and established trees on the boundary.

CHRISTOPHER HART



NPA/DM/23/010

Dartmoor National Park Authority
Development Management Committee

6 October 2023

Tree Preservation Orders, Section 211 Notifications (Works to Trees in Conservation Areas) Determined Under Delegated Powers

Report of the Trees Officer

Recommendation: **That the decisions be noted.**

TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

Teignbridge

Ref: 23/0056 5 Hawkmoor Parke, Bovey Tracey

Application to fell 3 Sycamore T1, T2 and T4, and crown reduce 1 Oak T3 by approx. 2m. The application is supported by a written arboricultural assessment of the trees, which accurately reports on the condition of the trees and makes broadly appropriate recommendations for their management; specifically, the report picks up the significantly decayed condition of the Sycamore T1 (410) and the decayed Sycamore T2 (409).

The following works were approved:

- Sycamore T1: Fell
- Sycamore T2: Fell
- Oak T3 Crown reduce by approx. 2m.
- Sycamore T4 Crown reduction by approx. 2m.

The following works were refused.

- Sycamore T4 Fell (Reason: The felling of the tree is currently considered unnecessary and lesser works have been allowed to manage the crown of the tree).

Consent was granted subject to conditions:

1. The works hereby consented to shall be carried out within a period of two years from the date of the decision notice.

2. All works are carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998:2010 Tree Work – Recommendations.
3. Two replacement trees shall be planted as close as practicable to the same location in the first planting season following the felling of the trees hereby permitted to be removed. The replacement trees shall be a minimum of 8-10cm in girth and shall be maintained for a period of five years; such maintenance to include the replacement of the trees should they die. The species of the trees may be selected by the applicant and agreed in writing by the National Park Authority prior to planting.

West Devon

Ref: 23/0050

Woodland south of A30 - along the drive of the golf club, below the golf club car park and behind the club house

Application to:

- Reduce spread by 2m by making 6 x 100mm target pruning cut to oak T1
- Monitor Ash Dieback annually with view to reducing 2 branches by 4m in height by making 3 x 200mm cuts to ash T2
- Reduce by 3-4m in height if working on nearby Ash by making 6 x 150mm target pruning cuts to beech T3
- Remove hanger and clean around line for 0.5-1m clearance to oak T4
- Reduce to 4m deadwood sculpture to oak T5
- Reduce limb to N by 3-4m in height by making 4 x 150-200mm target pruning cuts to beech T6
- Reduce limb over drive by 3-4m in height by making 5 x 150-200mm target pruning cuts to beech T7
- Fell across 17th or no parking beside president's space, till branches fall off to ash T8
- Fell if declines to 50% to ash T9
- Cut and stump treat whole line of Willow regeneration to willow G1

Consent was granted subject to conditions:

1. The works hereby consented to shall be carried out within a period of two years from the date of this decision notice.
2. All works are carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998:2010 Tree Work – Recommendations.
3. The National Park Authority Tree Officer shall be given 10 working days' notice of commencement of works in relation to the Ash trees T2 and T9. The notification shall include images of the trees T2 and T9 to demonstrate the Ash Health Class of the trees.

Ref: 23/0058

The Old Smithy, 54 Station Road, Horrabridge

Application to fell a small, dead Ash in a high risk area, next to a road and pavement. The removal of the dead tree is considered exempt from normal requirements of tree protection legislation. There is an obligation to plant a replacement tree, the species is for the Parish Council to choose. Consent was granted subject to conditions:

1. The works hereby consented to shall be carried out within a period of two years from the date of this decision notice.
2. All works are carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998:2010 Tree Work – Recommendations.

Ref: 23/0065

Brook Farm, Sheepstor

Application to make the trees safe by removing the storm damaged branches. Exempt works notice, for the above site for the removal of damaged branches from three trees. Consent was granted subject to conditions:

1. The works hereby consented to shall be carried out within a period of two years from the date of this decision notice.
2. All works are carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998:2010 Tree Work – Recommendations.

SECTION 211 NOTICES

West Devon

Ref: 23/0053

Clearview, Lydford

Notification to fell a beech tree growing in the garden. The tree contributes to the amenity and special characters of the Lydford conservation area. The tree is considered at risk of felling following the receipt of a s211 notice (Reference number 23/0053) for its removal. Insufficient information has been provided demonstrating on the balance of reasonable probability that the tree is causing damage to the adjacent dwelling. An emergency Tree Preservation Order has been made to prevent the removal of the tree.

The Tree Preservation Order will be brought to Committee following the consultation period for decision.

STUART BAKER
Consultant Trees Officer