

Wylam Parish Council

10 September 2018

Report on discussions on trees at The Orchard with Gentoo

Recent history up to 6 September 2018

Previous meetings of the Parish Council have discussed the request by Gentoo some time ago for the Council to fell or allow felling of some or all trees along the wall at the southern boundary of their housing development site next to The Orchard, as it comes off Church Road. This would be at their expense and they would also fund tree replacements there or elsewhere under the Council's normal procedures.

The felling was requested originally to allow more light in to new properties on the site, though later was said to be to facilitate rebuilding of the wall (though this has now been done with the trees in place). The Council has already agreed this request in principle, but subject to a review of the trees over summer 2018 and then production of a phasing plan. A final version of the proposed phasing plan will be brought to the Parish Council meeting on 10 September for agreement. However, the recommendation on felling and phasing at the meeting will depend on the outcome of issues arising out of a meeting on site on 6 September (see next below).

A further issue arose when a tree surgeon employed by Gentoo was observed over the summer doing works to trees on Parish Council land very close to Church Road. This, a company rep on the day said, was to allow a path to be put through the wall to join up with the internal paths with the existing highway footpath heading southwards. The Parish Council rep at the time told Gentoo's rep that this did not seem to be on the approved plans and that the Council had not given permission to be on its land. The company told the tree surgeon to stop work and a site meeting was promised.

Site meeting 6 September 2018

A site meeting about the path happened on 6 September. The Contracts Manager for Gentoo attended and said they had now moved the line of the proposed footpath to be next to Church Road, so avoiding the trees and linking up better with the existing footpath. The bus stop sign and an old 20 mph sign advisory sign for the blind corner would have to be moved. He agreed to put all this in writing or by email with a plan and a request that the Parish Council agree to the new path crossing a very small portion of its land in this location. He said he would do this before the next Parish Council meeting on 10 September.

He also unexpectedly said that the whole wall along Church Road was to come down with no new replacement, just a kerb and presumably grass back in to the site. He thought the County Council had agreed this.

When the issue of felling the other trees further west by the wall was raised, he said he was not fully appraised of the history, but wondered if the fact that the wall had now been rebuilt with the trees in place affected the previous request and the offer to pay for the works, as above. Both he for Gentoo and Colin Percy for the Parish Council agreed that they would try to seek clarification on this before the Parish Council meeting.

Colin Percy
5 September 2018