

REPORT TO PICKMERE PARISH COUNCIL

5th September 2017

AGENDA ITEM 9.11 – Trees in the Parish

1 Background

1.1 Members will recall the recent incident concerning the chopping of a tree adjoining The Elms PH site, which gave rise to some urgent activity at the time, and concern generally about how such matters can be dealt with. As a result, your Clerk wonders if it is an appropriate moment to consider whether the potential for other incidents of this nature is such that a more formal approach or arrangement might be warranted.

2. Report

2.1 In the incident referred to, the matter was brought to the Council's attention by chance when Cllr Flannery happened to pass the site in question, spoke to the persons involved in cutting down the tree and then spoke to your Clerk, who tried (unsuccessfully) to make urgent contact with CE's Tree officers to discuss what action might be possible.

2.2 The Parish Council's involvement was therefore reactive, and relied on luck for the various elements of it to be carried out.

2.3 Since there are so few trees within the Parish which are covered by a Tree Preservation Order, but there are so many trees which make substantial contributions to the local environment, it is relevant to consider whether the Council should seek to take a more pro-active approach on this issue.

2.4 Such possibilities might include:

- Appointing/selecting a councillor to be responsible for dealing with any such tree issues which may come up in the future; such a person would need to have previously made contact with CE's tree officers, and have had discussions with them about what powers and actions it might be possible to take in circumstances such as the above. There should also be an approved Parish Council policy on the approach to be taken in such circumstances.
- A further, more demanding, possibility is to for members to carry out a 'survey' of the Parish, noting those trees or groups of trees which make a substantial contribution to the Parish's environment. A schedule of such trees should be supplied to CE with a request that they be considered for TPOs.

2.5 Other possible approaches may come to mind. Clearly there has to be an appropriate balance between the scale of the (potential) problem, and the resources available to the Parish Council. However, consideration of the need for such an initiative is considered worthwhile in view of the significant visual harm that can result from incidents like that referred to above.

3. Recommendation

3.1 That members consider the questions raised and decide on any future action to be taken.