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All Parish Councils
South Cambridgeshire

Our ref: IL/PTS/Dec16
Your ref:
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Planning & New Communities
Contact: Ian Lorman
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Direct dial: 01954 713405

Dear Parish Councils

Proposed new service to Parish Councils Tree health & safety surveys

As part of ongoing improvements and extension to the Trees service at SCDC I am proposing to offer a competitive service to Parish Councils to assist with your health & safety audit processes.

Please would you register your interest by responding to this letter (preferably by email) to the address above so I may determine the level of interest in this service, which will enable me to present a business case. If you can respond either way within around six weeks from today, that would be very helpful. Registering interest is not binding and is not a commitment or contract.

Many Parish Councils, if not all who have trees to maintain, have regular professional tree inspections undertaken by external contractors. This is to ensure, among other things, to comply with their responsibilities and obligations to insurance and duty of care under The Occupier's Liability Acts of 1957 & 1984 and The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974. All tree owners are required by law to maintain trees so as to reduce to an acceptable minimum, the risk of damage to person and property that might be so caused by the failure of trees such as falling branches or whole tree failure. A regular visual inspection by an expert can alert the tree owner to many defects that require attention before a failure occurs. The proper recording of trees, their locations, their condition and defects coupled with a prioritised schedule of works is an essential audit process that can be invaluable when defending any third party claims regarding loss or damage connected to the health & safety of trees. It also enables effective, prioritised budgeting for a programme of tree surgery works and help to maintain a healthy and robust tree population.

DRAFT parameters / specification for a SCDC tree health & safety survey would be expected to comprise the following items and would be based upon maps provided by the customer showing all the land parcels for which the customer is responsible:

Service

- Tree inspection by qualified and experienced arboriculturists (one-off surveys or regular surveys as specified by the customer - for example, every three years)
- Use of proprietary, specialist software and hardware to enable fit for purpose, accurate tree plotting
- Maintenance of customer tree survey records back-up
- Supply of electronic copies of surveys and maps provided on completion of tree survey in popular formats

Survey fields

- Tree numbering on maps and survey forms (no physical tree number tags fixed to trees)
- 'Zoning' of trees dependent of their location in respect of the presence and frequency of targets
- Species identity, limited to necessary criterion for identification - e.g. Lime, Beech, Pine etc
- Estimated dimensions - height, spread, trunk diameter at 1.5 metres above ground level
- Comments on form, structural and physiological condition
- Defects requiring remedial tree surgery and specification of works
- Helpful notes where other works are recommended - e.g. removal of stakes, adjustment of ties etc.
- Priority / urgency for works

Items that would not be covered

- Advice and opinion on the probability of trees causing direct or indirect root damage to structures - e.g. buildings and walls
- Trip hazards from surface roots

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ian Lorman', with a horizontal line underneath.

Ian Lorman
Trees Officer