

Street Trees replacement, related to Bradway

Street tree replacement was raised at BAG's AGM on 4th October when Nick Hetherington from Amey's Streets Ahead team gave a very full explanation of what was planned, and the processes involved. A good debate ensued and he managed to answer all questions very well. Most wanted to keep as many trees as possible but, it being Bradway, one resident wanted them all to be cut down and removed without replacement!

It's an emotive subject, made even more so by this week's handling of the Rustlings Road situation.

Most Bradway residents will have had a letter today inviting them to take part in a survey of the trees on their road. Apparently so have residents right across Sheffield in what seems to be an almost military style offensive! It's online and opens on 25th November until 9th December.

When it goes live there will be links to schedules of what is proposed for each road. Roads in Lower Bradway have already been through the process with all trees now replaced. We're not aware of any complaints arising from that operation. Some roads may not have any trees so may not receive a survey invitation.

If more than 50% of those who respond to the survey are against the proposals for their road an Independent Tree Panel will be asked to report. Previously we understood their report would be heeded and some changes would be made to the plans. The Rustlings Road experience suggests that despite 6 of the eight condemned trees being capable of preservation, the report wasn't made public, and all 8 trees were to have been felled, and 7 have been. It doesn't bode as well as we'd been assured!

BAG's position is not to oppose felling and replacement as long as the agreed procedures are complied with. The action this week is too recent for the committee to have met to discuss, but we're watching developments very carefully.

The situation in Bradway is somewhat different to Rustlings Road. Bradway has very few street trees more than 50 years old. Almost all the trees here were planted by the developers when our roads were laid out in the 1960-80s period. Previously it had all been open green fields. The quality of those trees was mixed. In places they've survived very well, but some are not in good condition, or growing at weird angles because they weren't well maintained.

Those planted into small square holes cut in the tarred pavements were fine when new, but their roots got poor sustenance and most of those trees have died and not been replaced. Those that remain are getting to be very large, obstructing the pavements and potentially disrupting underground services, and garden walls. A few were replaced at neighbouring householders expense (it cost us about £150) and are, supposedly, better suited to their situation. Newer residents may not realise just how many of those original trees have gone.

Trees planted into the grassy verges at the side of the roads are generally in better condition, or so you might think. However, a large number of them have also died and been removed, or are in bad shape. Once again newer residents won't appreciate how many have disappeared.

The cherry blossom in spring is something we'd all miss, despite it coming from probably less than 2/3 of the originally planted trees. In theory we should get cherries of more suitable types for

street planting. That is what we got opposite our house about 10 years ago and it is doing well.

Amey's plans are to replace all diseased and inappropriate trees. They will be replacing all felled trees with ones that should grow better, yet their roots and branches should do less damage. In 20-30 years time we should have a much better stock of street trees that should be maintained, and replaced if any should become damaged, diseased, or die.

My personal sadness is that the large number of original trees that have already been removed will not be replaced. In Bradway that might be something we could push for. BAG is for more viable street trees of appropriate types in suitable positions, but as the resident at the AGM made clear, it's impossible to please everybody.

I hope this is helpful.

Chris Morgan
Chairman
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