

TREE RISK AND CONDITION ASSESSMENT OF TREES **AT CLITHEROE ST PAUL'S CHURCH, LOW MOOR, CLITHEROE** **Review April 2026**

Client: The Vicar and PCC of St Pauls Church, Edisford Rd, Clitheroe

Date of Tree Inspection: 7.4.2026

Weather conditions: Cold and Dry.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE.

- The specific trees are a group of 3 Pines and a Larch located at the south end of the church and close to Edisford Rd, a busy road handling local commuter traffic and buses with pedestrian traffic to schools and a sports centre.
- We understand that the trees are Covered by TPO No.7 1975 (St Pauls Clitheroe) The trees are referenced on the TPO as T12-14 Pine and T11 a Larch.
- The purpose of the study is also to identify the condition of the trees and the risk of harm and help provide completion of the clients Duty of Care liabilities. The inspection and application for permission for Tree Works has been initiated because of further recent wind damage to the larger of the pines resulting in a 3m branch being wind ripped out of the canopy and landing on the path into the church.
- Implications of ground desiccation by trees and the implications for buildings and structures have not been addressed.



The trees and wind damage (looking west)

Visible targets are the pavement and entrance area to church, the parking locations on the road and the Bus stop

INVESTIGATION METHODS AND QTRA

- The Trees which have been identified as presenting a risk of harm have been tag numbered for identification on site, with the attached schedule and plan helping to identify the location and required works.
- The methodology used, is to assess the tree conditions using VTA methods and a sonic hammer and then to proceed to use Digital Microprobe Techniques to identify basal or butt decay if required. All trees have been surveyed from ground level only.
- The urgency of the required work has been informed using the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment System of which we are licensees. The system involves assessing the condition of the tree and the type of possible failure, the use of the site and the proximity of people and buildings and the assessed likelihood of tree failure. In consideration of the risks associated with the trees I have applied the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment methodology (Ellison 2005), details of which can be supplied to you if required.
- Having considered generally perceived levels of acceptable and unacceptable risk reported in various literature, we propose that a risk of significant harm of 1 in 10,000 is a reasonable and broadly acceptable risk of harm that might be imposed upon people who have no control over the source of a risk. Risks identified which are greater than this will be referred to in the report and will require action on the part of your contractors. Certain of the recommendations may relate to issues of maintenance rather than safety and have been annotated with an (M) on the schedule. It is our view that if maintenance issues are not attended to over time they will develop into issues of safety.

FINDINGS

Taken as a group and assessed by the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment Method of which we are licensees we can advise that:

- The targets close to the trees are Buses, cars, visitors, and commuter Traffic on Edisford Road within the fail range of three of the four trees. A bus stop is also within close proximity. Road side parking is also permitted
- The Trees vary in condition and age.
- The likelihood of failure varies and is shown on the attached schedule.

Environmental/Climate Issues

1. The greatest concern is with the late mature Pine (Tag 632/629) where the trees have suffered further limb damage on two occasions since November 2024 and alerted the PCC to the apparent connection between climate change and higher wind speeds leading to tree failure.
2. The effects of gale force winds from the west can be exacerbated if wind gusts are channelled towards trees with evergreen canopies and a tendency to cause branch snap outs
3. In our view the trees condition has not markedly changed in the last twelve months but the continued frequency of gale warnings and branch loss must require us to consider the removal of the larger pines.
4. The remaining pine and larch have on one hand a high Height/Diameter ratio and an overhang towards the neighbouring private property. When the larger trees are removed the wind stress will be taken by the lesser trees. The solution is to fell all four trees and in autumn 2026 replacing with lower and more colourful broadleaves such as Maple which will lose their leaves in the winter when wind stress will be greater.
5. The level of complaints from the PCC is understandable as they have a fear that future failures may affect people walking by and older people waiting for a bus under the trees.
6. The attached schedule lists the trees which require attention and provide more information on trees health and recommendation for Risk of harm mitigation.

The replacement trees should be re-inspected in February 2028.

Contractors are asked to read the condition notes on the tree schedule and be aware of the risk of any basal failure of trees during pruning. Because of the site conditions, traffic and pedestrians control and protection will be necessary around the church. Contractors selected for this work will have high climbing skills and able to work to BS 3998. They will also be able to work to the requirements of the HSEs Working at Height regulations (especially the requirement for Dual rope lines for climbing, LOLER inspections of Climbing equipment.)

The work will not require Forestry Commission Permission but an application to carry out works will have to be issued to the Local authority and their permission to proceed is essential. We will make an application to the council for this work as set out in the schedule below

CONCLUSIONS

In our view the trees condition has not markedly changed in the last twelve months but the continued frequency of gale warnings and branch loss must require us to consider the removal of the larger pines growing in a high target value area.

The remaining pine and larch have on one hand a high Height/Diameter ratio and an overhang towards the neighbouring private property. When the larger trees are removed the wind stress will be taken by the lesser trees. The solution is to fell all four trees and in autumn 2026 replacing with two lower and more colourful broadleaves such as Maple which will lose their leaves in the winter when wind stress will be greater.

The level of complaints from the PCC is understandable as they have a fear that future failures may affect people walking by and older people waiting for a bus under the trees.

The attached schedule lists the trees which require attention and provide more information on trees health and recommendation for Risk of harm mitigation.

The issue of tree safety and climate change need to focus not just on the condition of the trees and their ability to withstand climatic stresses of wind speed, temperature and ground moisture, the presence of Pathogens and structural weaknesses **but on the increasing pressures of Climate change on trees.** This will require us to determine if trees are able to handle the pressures of on-going climate stresses and should inform our forward planting plans and tree replacement plans

Ken Linford
Consulting Arborist

TREE CHECK LTD
252 LEYLAND LANE
LEYLAND
LANCS
PR25 1XL
01772 621435

Proposed schedule of works to Trees

Tag.No	Species	Height (m)	Dbh (approx mm)	Canopy Spread (Radius in metres)	Age Class Y/EM/ M/LM /OM	Condition (Good/Fair/Poor)	Target Value rating	Size Of failure	Likelihood Of failure	Work required to mitigate risk	Priority (H/M/L)
632	Pine	17	720	7	M	Good in terms of vitality, butt and root plate condition, Recent and past wind damage over time is evident. Cause being the westerly winds with the tree standing exposed	M	M	H	Removal and replacement	H
629	Pine	17	680	7	M	Good, Canopy extends over pavement and Bus stop Recent and past wind damage over time is evident. Cause being the westerly winds with the tree standing exposed	M	M	H	Removal and replacement	M
630	Pine	17	360	4	M	Good, High Height :Diameter ratio. Tall and slender butt. Excessive sway	M	M	M	Removal	
631	Larch	16	480	3	M	Good, Root plate stable, canopy fair. Lean to adjacent property	L	L	L	Removal	

Tree Location Plan Trees number tagged 632,629,630,631

Prevailing wind shown by Arrow 

