

Appendix 1 - Stop the Unnecessary Felling of Mature Trees on Herringthorpe Valley Road

We the undersigned petition the Council to:

- Maintain the current suspension of all proposed felling;
- Publish a tree-by-tree assessment setting out the condition, identified risks and urgency of any proposed work;
- Obtain or permit an independent arboricultural review before any mature tree is removed, except where there is an immediate and evidenced danger to public safety;
- Fully consider less destructive options, including pruning, pollarding, crown reduction, removal of individual limbs and monitored retention;
- Provide residents and Ward Members with advance notice of any proposed non-emergency felling;
- Explain why the mature tree already removed was considered beyond retention and why residents and local councillors were not informed beforehand;
- Agree a long-term management plan for the remaining mature trees; and
- Ensure that any tree which must ultimately be removed is replaced locally with suitable trees, together with a clear planting and maintenance plan.

We call upon Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council to protect the mature trees on Herringthorpe Valley Road and prevent any further felling unless clear, independently reviewable evidence demonstrates that removal is unavoidable.

Residents of Herringthorpe Valley Road were shocked and extremely upset when a large, mature tree—believed to be around 100 years old—was felled without any prior notification or consultation with nearby residents.

We subsequently learned that several other mature trees along the road had also been identified for possible removal. This caused significant concern that felling was being treated as the preferred response to trees showing signs of age, disease or deterioration, rather than as the final option after all reasonable measures to retain them had been properly explored.

Approximately ten years ago, some of these trees were heavily pruned or pollarded in response to similar concerns. They recovered and produced substantial new growth, continuing to make an important contribution to the character, environment and appearance of the area.

Residents accept that external appearance alone cannot prove that a tree is safe, and we fully recognise the Council's responsibility to manage genuine risks to the public. However, we have not yet been shown the individual assessments, photographs, risk ratings or professional evidence demonstrating that each tree presents an unacceptable risk or that removal is the only reasonable option.

There was also no advance warning to residents before the recent felling. Local Ward Members were apparently not informed either. This denied residents and

elected representatives the opportunity to understand the evidence, ask questions or discuss whether less destructive alternatives were available.

Following complaints from residents, RMBC has temporarily suspended the remaining works while further engagement takes place. The Council has offered to meet residents and Ward Members to explain the proposed works and discuss future replanting. We welcome this pause and the opportunity for discussion, but residents believe stronger and more transparent safeguards are required before any further mature trees are removed.

Mature trees provide shade, absorb carbon, support wildlife, reduce pollution, help manage surface water and give Herringthorpe Valley Road much of its established character. Once removed, their environmental and visual value cannot be replaced for many decades by a young sapling.

This petition is therefore not asking the Council to ignore genuine and immediate safety risks. It is asking RMBC to demonstrate that each proposed removal is necessary, proportionate and supported by clear professional evidence; to consider every reasonable retention option; to involve residents and Ward Members before non-emergency felling; and to ensure that removal is genuinely used only as a last resort.

Residents recognise the Council's responsibility to manage genuine safety risks. However, mature trees should not be felled simply because they are old, show signs of disease or require ongoing management. Felling should be the last resort, supported by transparent evidence and used only where no safe and proportionate alternative exists.