

Teffont Tree Warden Annual Report for 2023/2024

This is the first Annual report for a Tree Warden and is more a short informative notes on the role of the Tree Warden rather than what has been one in the past year.

Tree Wardens are volunteers appointed by their Parish Council and of particular value as Teffont is in a Conservation Area. No previous tree knowledge is required as training will be provided. There are no limits to the amount of time a Tree Warden works; it will be as much or little time as you are able to give.

The previous Tree Warden was Richard Hawkins until he left the village and I was asked to take over the role a few years ago now. The role was not really explained what it involved apart from providing the PC some help towards identifying information with Tree Planning Permission applications. I have recently found out there is more to this role after a meeting with the Wiltshire Council (South) Tree Officer Naomi Styles.

Whilst all Tree Wardens are valued volunteers, Tree Wardens are not qualified tree experts, and you do not have any special powers or authority.

There are some things a Tree Warden should NOT DO:

- Advise whether a tree is safe: if it falls you would be liable, and you are not insured for this. This is the role of a professional arborist/tree officer.
- Attempt to handle tree disputes yourself or antagonise situations, trees can be an emotive subject and there are many reasons why people may not like trees just as there are many reasons why Tree Wardens love trees

There is a long list of what a Tree Warden CAN DO, which include helping to find funding from various means to help plant new trees and hedgerows for local landowners or public village spaces.

The Tree Wardens are supported by the Parish Council in the following way following way:

- Include them in discussions about tree matters
- Invite them to attend Parish council meetings and report any tree related matters
- Support them with any necessary resources needed to carry out their volunteering (within reason)
- Ensure that they are covered for health and safety and insurance as a Parish Council volunteer

Mick Audus
Teffont Tree Warden