

***Background***

In May 2019, Councillor Hawker and I received two requests from longstanding Freshford residents to plant memorial trees. The first request, received on 10/05/19, was in memory of the resident's partner, the second request received on 19/05/19 was for a tree to be planted in memory of the resident's mother who had lived in Freshford for 60 years.

In the July 2019 FPC meeting, Councillor Hawker presented a report regarding these requests (Trees: 02/07/19) . In addition, the second resident supplied supplementary information about their request (Resident 2 supporting letter 03/07/19. Appended). It should be noted that this resident initially made her request in 2017. Due to the July meeting running over time, FPC deferred discussion until the September 2019 meeting.

I produced a report for the September 2019 FPC meeting which included recommendations for planting memorial trees (Natural Environment: 05/09/19). FPC deferred the decision until Tynning Wood had been surveyed. This survey was undertaken by Jon Clarke on 10/12/19, and the results discussed in the January 2020 FPC meeting. At this point, the decision on memorial trees was deferred until the Climate Emergency meeting due to be held on 23/03/20, the day lockdown began. However, on 13/03/20 Councillors Walker, Hawker, Batchelor-Wylam and myself met with members of Friends of Freshford on the Tynning where the issue of memorial trees formed part of the discussion.

The two residents concerned have been asking for a decision for over a year and are understandably very upset that their requests have not been addressed. This catalogue of deferral and delay should be brought to an end as it suggests a lack of compassion on the part of FPC towards bereaved residents. If FPC is unable to come to a decision to support the recommendations below, a statement should be made to the residents concerned explaining why this is the case.

***Recommendations***

In the meeting on 13/03/20 referred to above, an area of the Tynning identified on the attached map was discussed and deemed suitable for planting memorial trees. This is in line with the recommendations I made in the report dated 05/09/19, and I put these before the Council again, namely:

- The area of the between the road across the Tynning and the small path running along the edge of Tynning Wood be used to plant memorial trees (see map attached). This area tends to be overrun with weeds and is difficult to maintain, and planting trees will enhance the 'holloway effect' along the path which will be an added benefit.
- FPC require memorial trees to be indigenous to the locality such as oak, field maple, beech, hazel, hornbeam, wild cherry and holly. FPC does not recommend ash or horse chestnut due to current problems, or fruit trees because of the maintenance required.

In conclusion, planting memorial trees is congruent with FPCs Climate Emergency resolution which states: *"the PC will work with the Freshford community ... to establish specific local initiatives that will contribute to and enhance all aspects of our locality including...the natural environment [and] ecology"*. Furthermore, the two memorial trees will replace the two trees nearby that were removed by Curo in March 2020, something which FPC has resolved to do.

***Councillor Jonelle Daniels.*** 26 June 2020