

# *Renovation of Yews on Path to Church*

## **Statement of Need**

The Irish Yews - (Taxus baccata "Fastigiata") either side of the path to the church have become overgrown and now heavily shade the path, and even obstruct the entrance as seen during a recent funeral. This makes the entrance to the church dark and forbidding.

Irish Yews are a variant of the English Yew which grow more vertically to produce columnar trees.

Photo 1 - Yews from Lych Gate



Photo 2 - Pall bearers struggling at funeral



As a result of the problems and the forbidding character the yews give to the church entrance, the Parochial Church Council has been investigating options for the trees. The aim being to retain as much character as we can whilst resolving the access issues, and opening up the church.

In the past the trees have been "banded" - putting a wire round the branches to hold them in and stop them impeding the path. This has resulted in a significant amount of dead wood in the centre of the tree which is a potential risk for disease to eventually kill the whole tree.

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The Churchyard is maintained by the Parish Council and is within the Ardleigh Conservation area so all Trees are protected and will require approval from Tendring District Council for any work on them..

In the most recent Tree Inspection report (produced by [REDACTED] for Ardleigh Parish Council in August 2022), he identified the trees as being medium priority requiring the height to be reduced by 1.5-2m, and to be formatively pruned. To our knowledge this was not done.

## **History of the Trees**

These yew trees are not ancient. It is believed they were planted shortly after the Church was refurbished. [REDACTED] (Village Archivist) has commented

The church was partially rebuilt in 1882, with the existing entrance and path made to the south door and porch. The yews may have been planted very soon afterwards. They were certainly there as small trees/bushes by 1916, when the church magazines had a line drawing of the path up to the porch.

We also have a photograph from about that time showing them as small trees.



We also have a plan of all the trees in the churchyard (produced for the 2022 survey described above) identifying the yews as G93 (it has a slight error in that it shows 9 trees rather than 11).

## **Investigation into options**

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Irish Yew can be pruned back into old wood, and will recover but they will take a long time (many years) to grow back and in the meantime will look ravaged and unsightly. This has been confirmed by a query to the Royal Horticultural Society.

We also contacted [REDACTED] (Arboricultural advisor for diocese and Practice Manager for [REDACTED] Arboricultural Consultants) and he visited with [REDACTED] (Arboriculturalist who has previously done work on the trees). Jointly they discussed the state of the trees and provided us with a plan.

## **Proposal**

In summary the arboricultural advice is to remove the 6 overgrown yews either side of the path, retaining the 2 at the Lych Gate, and the 3 to either side of the Church Porch. It is our intention to replant the area with a yew hedge, which can be simply maintained.

Other options including renovation, banding etc were considered but none were considered suitable approaches for these trees.

[REDACTED] report (from an e-mail dated 3 Apr 2025)

### **Remove 6 Irish Yews**

Remove and stump grind 6 intermittent Irish yews along the path.

Retain 2 yews by the lych gate and 3 closest to the church.

These trees were identified as being in poor structural and physiological condition causing obstruction to the path and making the area very dark and dank.

### **Pruning remaining yews by path**

5 Irish yews to be trimmed to contain growth, reducing the height by approx. 50cm. and trimming the sides

[REDACTED] has quoted for this work as per attached Quote #752

The PCC has discussed this matter and agreed with the plan (dated 23 April 2025) which is attached.

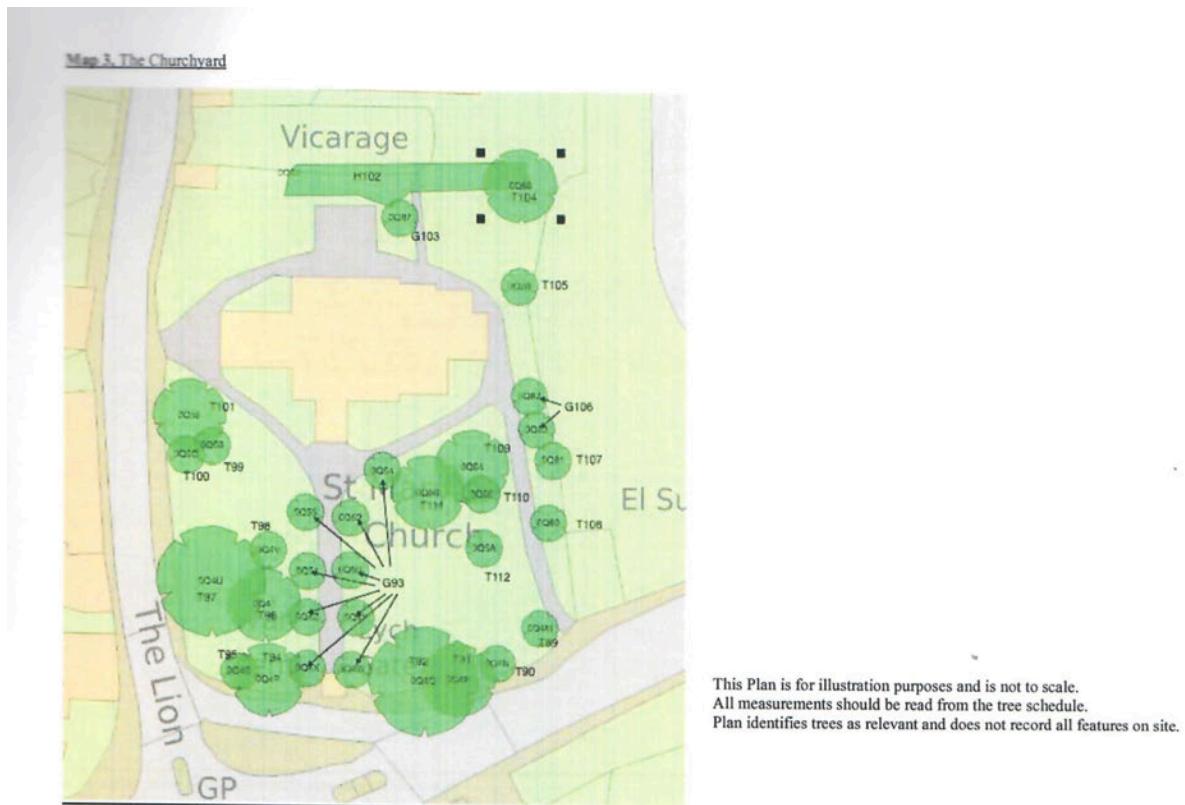
An application to Chelmsford Diocese to request a faculty (approval from them) has been started. Our next step is to discuss with Ardleigh Parish Council as they have overall responsibility. Finally an application to Tendring District Council would need to be made as the

trees are within the Conservation area. Neither J████████ nor ██████████ thought this final step would be an issue given the current state of the trees.

Date 9 Jul 2025

## Layout of Trees from 2022 Tree Survey

Note Error as there are 11 trees rather than 9 marked G93



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**Minute copied from PCC Meeting on 25th April**

PCC Meeting April 25 th 2025

Following reports from meetings with DAC advisor, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED],

Lead on Yew Tree Project the PCC agree to support an application to Faculty for the work to be carried out