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## **Tree Warden's Report to Hartest Annual Parish Meeting 26/4/2017**

This will be my last Tree Warden report as I am standing down this year, and I am very pleased that Mr John Kemp has agreed to take on the role.

John will be known to many residents as the person who established and ran Giffords Hall Vineyard, and so he is an ideal tree warden because of his extensive knowledge of horticulture, wildlife and local affairs. John has already started tree warden work, and has put up a fence to keep the deer off the new cemetery hedge, and he has taken on the 'Scattered Orchard' project, involving fruit and nut trees in various places around the parish. It was explained in the last 'Contact' magazine and I expect you will hear more about it in future reports.

I know many of you are very familiar with the role of Tree Warden, but it might be useful if I clarify the role for those who are not sure: A parish tree warden is a local resident who has an interest in and a knowledge of trees and so is able to help the parish council and the residents with advice and information, as well as encouraging the planting of and care for trees generally. The role is voluntary, amateur and unqualified and where there are issues of public safety or insurance or law, then a properly qualified professional must be brought in. Hartest Parish Council has always done this and it has worked very well. The title: 'Warden' is a little misleading, and can lead residents to think that the Tree Warden has power to make decisions, which is obviously not the case. So it might be a good moment to consider changing the role title to something like 'expert' or 'advisor' – I will leave you to think about that for the future.

So I was originally going report that it had been a very quiet year for trees, with just the usual few applications to remove overgrown trees in small gardens, and then Storm Doris came along and blew down a couple of trees on the green and got everybody talking about it. The situation is still on-going and being discussed, but basically the two lime trees which blew down were not well placed, being close to houses, so will not be re-planted. That leaves the question of whether anything else needs doing, and I can say that the local residents and the Parish Council are still discussing the long term planning for trees and the management of trees in public places. We hear reports of city councils, like Leeds, felling a large number of trees because of health and safety and insurance issues, so we have to tread carefully to maintain our very attractive village while at the same time looking after our residents. So there are plans under way for more formal monitoring and management of our trees, and you will doubtless hear more about it next year. As for the long term, I will say again that the trees already planted by the Parish Council in 1984 are still quite young and small and will grow very much bigger. The two London planes by the pub entrance, for example, will be magnificent large trees in another 50 years. Once the existing trees reach full size we will have a lot of trees on the green.

So it will be very interesting to see how the Hartest trees develop and grow, and I shall still be around to give John Kemp back-up if needed.

Finally I would like to thank James Long and Gavin Tattershall for continuing their work cutting the footpaths in Hartest Wood and to thank the volunteers for tidying the wood again this year.

Michael Feather