

**February 2024**



# Bowdon Conservation Group

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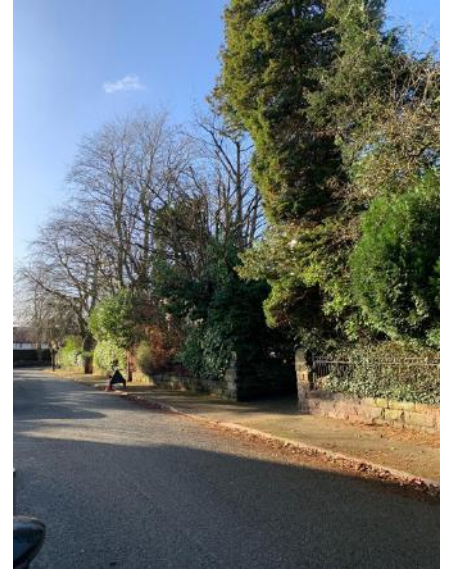
Happy New Year and welcome to our annual newsletter. We hope you and your families had an enjoyable and relaxing time over the festive period. In this newsletter we aim to update you on some current issues affecting Bowdon.

The Bowdon Conservation Group committee is a small and friendly group of residents who volunteer our time to manage or try to influence specific issues that we believe are important to the amenity of the Bowdon area. The group has around 350 members. The committee reviews planning and tree applications affecting the Bowdon and Devisdale Conservation Areas, responding to those that we believe could have a detrimental impact on the area. We also lobby on issues outside the boundaries of the conservation areas that we believe are important to the quality of life in Bowdon, such as traffic schemes, proposals from Manchester Airport or issues affecting the green belt. Our website is [www.bowdonconservationgroup.co.uk](http://www.bowdonconservationgroup.co.uk).

Committee meetings are organised once a month and conducted via Zoom. Tasks and discussions are well managed to minimise time commitments involved. We would benefit from the contribution of new members joining the committee, to enhance a spread of representatives from different areas of Bowdon and of varied backgrounds. Our treasurer and membership secretary is retiring shortly and we are looking for someone to replace him, but new committee members would be welcome without necessarily taking on these roles. Please do not hesitate to contact Kate Stross (chair) or Mike Ward (secretary) if you feel you can contribute.

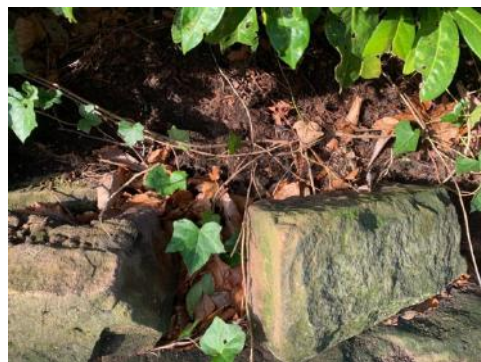
## The Battle of the Bulge!

All around Bowdon there are examples of walls being pushed out of line by hedges and trees or even areas of stone displacement. But what is it that you most notice as you walk down any Bowdon road? The most prominent feature in most cases, if not all, are the trees, yet unfortunately there have been cases where the tree has been sacrificed for a wall, even where the displacement is minor and when it is the tree that contributes most to the surrounding street scene.

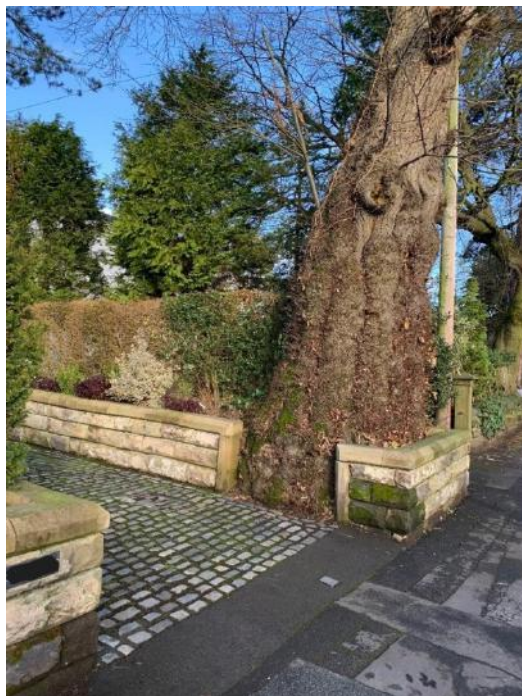


These photographs of roads in Bowdon, illustrate the significance of the trees to the Conservation Area.

Below are two examples of stone displacement.



There are however adaptations that can be made to accommodate trees. One such example is shown in the next photograph.



Here this handsome tree protruded onto the pavement and the wall was built round it further enhancing an already attractive feature. Where the tree came out towards the drive, a further allowance was made in the design, leaving a gap in the wall for the tree to maximise the room for vehicles and of course the tree itself. A lot of thought and consideration has gone into this process, producing a result that not only aesthetically benefits the hard landscaping of the house but of course the tree too. The tree

was seen as a positive attribute to be incorporated into the design, not as an obstacle to be removed.

The cost of removing large trees isn't insignificant, and putting the money into rebuilding and modifying a wall is certainly worth investigating.

Simpler solutions exist too, removing and saving displaced stones, especially at the top of a wall, which are often not particularly noticeable, or leaving a gap in the wall could also potentially be a solution where the gap isn't very wide. It is of course often easier to adapt lower walls of just a few courses of stones, than higher more prominent ones. Bowdon has many such low walls.

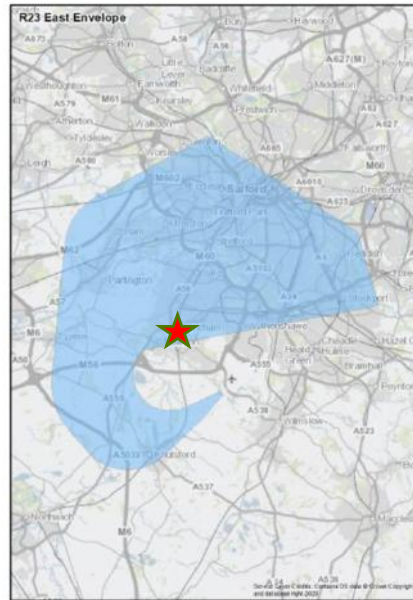
Our aim is to increase awareness of this growing problem and encourage Bowdon residents to try and adapt walls for trees wherever possible and not see felling as the only solution to bulging walls and displaced stones.

If you have adapted a wall in some way, especially for a tree, please get in touch. We would very much like to hear from you!

### **Flight departure paths consultation – latest news**

As we discussed in our last newsletter, Manchester Airport Group (MAG) has been considering a redesign of the pre-defined aircraft departure routes (the Preferred Noise Corridors) since 2019. This is part of a UK wide process overseen by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).





In future, the airspace immediately above/around the airport will be controlled by MAG up to an altitude of 7000ft. As aircraft pass above this altitude, they will be controlled from the Prestwick Air Traffic Control Centre in Scotland (NATS).

In the past the MAG controlled altitude over Bowdon was only 4000ft and the new MAG control intentions for 4000-7000ft are of specific relevance to our local area as they could increase the level of aircraft noise we experience in this area.

For full information please follow the link, <https://airspacechange.caa.co.uk> The Design Options Report Document Section 14 provides the most relevant details for our area and sets out the alternatives being considered .

A full public consultation is promised during 2024 with a proposed MAG document submission deadline to the CAA indicated for the end of November. The 'Update and Submission of Proposals' stage is to follow in in 2025 with 'Implementation' following on in 2026. From 2027 there would be a 'Post Implementation Review'.

Bowdon Conservation Group continues to pay close attention to progress, which has been limited of late. We will update you when the consultation gets underway and suggest how you might respond to it.

We saw an increase in noise nuisance in July 2023, when it transpired that MAG had maintenance issues with one of their Ground Navigational Aids, resulting in aircraft following a non-standard departure route. Several members contacted BCG at the time, wondering if the increased noise was part of a Future Airspace trial, which it was not.

Legitimate complaints about aircraft noise nuisance should be sent to MAG via their simple online complaints form at <https://complaints-eu.emsbk.com/man3> . The Flightradar24 app and website provide useful real time data on aircraft movements.

### **Tatton Motorway Services – latest news**

In 2022 Tatton Estates and Westmorland Services submitted a planning application to Cheshire East Council to build a motorway services area (MSA)

adjacent to the Bowdon roundabout on what is now agricultural green belt land.

Whilst the site is located within Cheshire East's boundary, it is far closer to the economic centres of Altrincham, Bowdon, and Hale in Trafford. There were many objections to this controversial proposal which was considered by Cheshire East's Strategic Planning board at a meeting in Crewe in late October 2023.



The Cheshire East planning officer and the Strategic Planning board acknowledged that the application represents '*inappropriate development in the Green Belt*'.

However, they considered that the damage to the Green Belt was justified by the Highways Agency policy that '*there should be a motorway services area at least every 28 miles for reasons of highway safety and the well-being of users of the strategic road network*', and by the economic benefits of the proposal.

The board therefore accepted the recommendation of the planning officer to grant the application subject to conditions. Because this is acknowledged to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, the Cheshire East decision *must* be referred to the Secretary of State (currently Michael Gove), who can decide to accept the recommendation, or to call the decision in and review it.

Trafford Council, the Green Party in Trafford and Bowdon Conservation Group have all made submissions asking the Secretary of State to call in and review/re-take the decision. There are several reasons that call in and review are needed.

- There is acknowledged damage to the Green Belt.
- The decision was taken by Cheshire East councillors who are not familiar with this area and its town centres and road network.
- While Cheshire East will benefit from the business rates paid by the new MSA, its economic and traffic impact will be felt largely within Trafford.
- The Cheshire East recommendation is also based on a misunderstanding of the nature of the proposed MSA, having analysed its impact based on viewing it as a 'typical' MSA, rather than as an out-of-town retail destination, which is what the Westmorland-run MSAs at Gloucester and Tebay are in practice. Hence the damage the MSA will cause to local town centres has not been adequately assessed and considered.

In November 2023 Trafford Council made a detailed submission to the Secretary of State which can be found on their planning website under the designation 107928/ART16/22, together with our critique of Tatton Estate/Westmorland's analysis of the economic impact of their proposals.

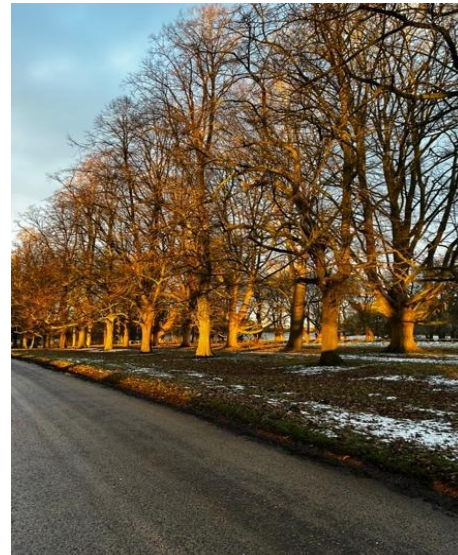
The matter is now with the Secretary of State who must decide whether to rubber stamp East Cheshire's recommendation to grant the application or to call in the decision and to re-take it based on all the evidence and submissions which have been made.

We do not know what the timescale is for the Secretary of State's decision. However, we would encourage residents who oppose this damaging proposal to add your arguments to the lobby for the Secretary of State to call in the decision. Please address your emails to [PCU@communities.gov.uk](mailto:PCU@communities.gov.uk) and to [Maria.Bowen@levellingup.gov.uk](mailto:Maria.Bowen@levellingup.gov.uk) and include the reference 22/0872M Bowdon Roundabout MSA - Cheshire East - Objection.

### **When can a tree be protected with a Tree Preservation Order? – the TEMPO system explained**

The TEMPO or Tree Evaluation Method for Preservation Orders is a points-based system that exists to assess trees for legal protection.

Points are awarded for firstly amenity value. Aspects looked at in this category include the condition of the tree, scoring '0' for dead or dangerous to '5' for good and healthy. Retention span or longevity is also considered suggesting a score of '0' for less than 10 years to a score of '5' for 100+ years. Public visibility and crown size and height are also looked at with '1' given for trees not visible to the public regardless of size to '5' given to large trees with some visibility or for a very prominent tree. If any of the above score '0', then no Tree Protection Order (TPO) would be considered.



Other aspects considered if the tree doesn't score a '0' before this point could be veteran trees, individual trees, or groups important for cohesion, historical value, perhaps a tree planted in commemoration of an event or person, or points could be given for particularly good form or rarity or habitat importance. This is scored with a maximum 5 points.

Points are then also given on grounds of expediency. An immediate threat to fall through perhaps Conservation Area Notification would merit

maximum points (5) and a threat from a planning application could also attract points.

The total scoring is then looked at out of a maximum 25 points:

- 0 - no TPO can be granted
- 1-6 - a TPO would be indefensible
- 7-11 - does not merit a TPO
- 12-15 - a TPO would be defensible
- 16+ - definitely merits a TPO

Throughout this process there is a degree of subjectivity, even for longevity - who can be sure a tree will survive longer than 100 years attracting the maximum score of 5 points? The assessor might cautiously choose 60 years, reducing the points given.

Similarly, a very large tree in a back garden might not be visible from the street or pavement but is very visible from surrounding houses and this might not be awarded as many points as those affected by the loss of the tree would wish.

Furthermore, there are no considerations, or points, given to trees as a tool for carbon capture or climate change mitigation, or as absorbers of air pollution, factors that are now more relevant than ever.

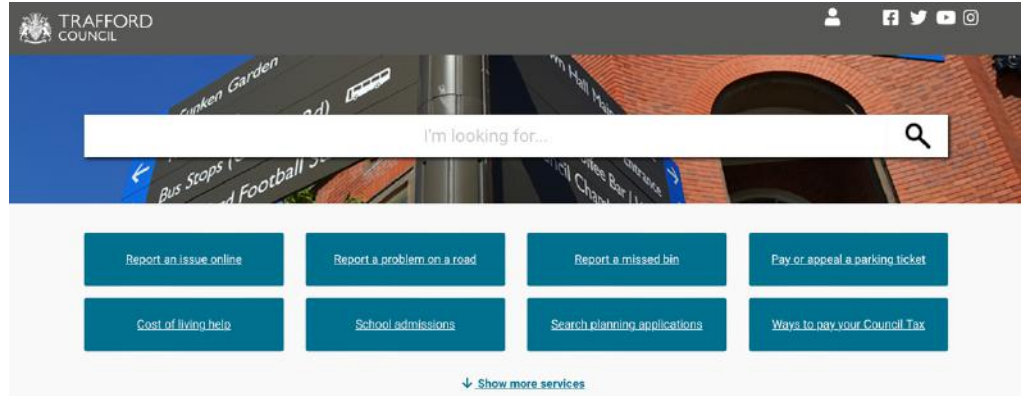
The greatest issue determining the number of Tree Preservation Orders awarded however, is likely to be cost. It is to be expected that the council has constraints on its budget and needs to prioritise.

### **Trafford Council – how to raise concerns**

We often receive emails from members and other residents raising concerns about highway maintenance, public areas and works to properties.

It is always helpful to be aware of our member's concerns and we often refer to them in our correspondence with Trafford and other bodies. It is however important that residents formally raise issues directly with Trafford (or other relevant bodies) so that they are captured in official statistics and performance monitoring of delivery bodies such as Amey, who undertake many services for the council.

The first port of call is the Trafford council website [www.trafford.gov.uk](http://www.trafford.gov.uk), there are several options prominent on the homepage including 'report an issue online' and 'report a problem on a road'. These links take you to various forms – if you register for an account, you will be able to track responses, but this is not compulsory.



You can report fly-tipping, damaged streetlights, potholes, graffiti, and other common issues in this way.

If your concern relates to works to a private property – for example if you believe that planning consent has not been properly obtained, or that a protected tree is at risk of damage or removal, you can search the Trafford Planning Register by postcode or address to check if there is a live or approved application.

If you still have concerns, they can be raised via the Planning Enforcement Referral form – the easiest way to reach the form is to type 'planning enforcement' in the search bar on the Trafford Council website.

Trafford usually responds quickly and efficiently if you use these steps.

***Keep in touch:***

***Visit our website [www.bowdonconservationgroup.co.uk](http://www.bowdonconservationgroup.co.uk)***

***Contact us by email: [bowdoncg@gmail.com](mailto:bowdoncg@gmail.com)***