



Friends of Tooting Common

29 March 2016

Simon Ingyon
Enable Leisure and Culture
Wandsworth Council

Dear Simon

Tooting Common: consultation on proposals for Chestnut Avenue

Further to the recent meeting with you and Valerie Selby, and to Paul McCue's earlier email last month on WBC/Enable's plans for the consultation, these are comments from Friends of Tooting Common about the consultation and the way we consider that it should be organised.

We welcome the arrangements that WBC/Enable have made to obtain a further professional "second opinion" on the tree that fell last month, and that this will inform the public consultation exercise. (Incidentally, on a small but important point on Paul McCue's reference to a further public consultation exercise: we need to point out that this will not be a "further" exercise. As yet there has been no consultation on the proposals.)

We are glad that the public consultation exercise will include the latest information. This should of course include all, and all of, the expert advice and studies that the Council has received on this topic.

The material available on-line for the consultation should set out the available options for Chestnut Avenue. There should be a clear and balanced description of the options, including, for each option, its advantages and disadvantages, and feasibility. It is also important that the response arrangements on the consultation allow respondents to "vote" yes/no for each of the options, and not just the option which WBC/Enable recommend.

We would be glad of more information as to which specific options will be included, as these are developed further. As indicated we consider that they should include the available options (with the advantages and disadvantages of each). Among other things we assume this will, and consider it should, include the option of replacing trees individually over a period of years as they become diseased.

We welcome the intention of discussions with FOTC. However this needs to be on the basis of all the expert advice, once this is available. The results of public consultation needs to be the main factor in deciding the way forward.

As we have indicated, we do not think that the consultation should just comprise an online facility, although we recognise that most of the expert advice and background material will need to be held there. We consider that the consultation should also include some drop-in session(s) on the Common, to help explain the position to Commons users, and should also include some active "face-to-face" surveys of Commons users.

We welcome the proposal for a 'walk through' of the affected trees for the FOTC committee and one or two other colleagues. We will be in contact about specific dates.

We would of course be happy to discuss our comments with you.

Yours sincerely

Peter Ramell
Chair, Friends of Tooting Common

Copied to:

Cllr Jonathan Cook

Brian Reilly

Paul McCue

Jerry Birtles

Valerie Selby

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