

ITEM 9.1/6.1

Steyning
West Sussex
BN44 3NG

E mail: .

Allotment plot .

03-Dec-19

Steyning Parish Council

Dear Sir/Madam

Trees Bordering the Allotments to the East Side

May I request that the trees growing between the allotments and the Steyning Memorial Playing Fields are reduced in height significantly.

It has been three years since they were last pruned and have since grown very high.

These trees (especially the ones close to the Newham Lane end) cause a number of problems for growers along that boundary as follows:-

- Significant loss of sunlight resulting in decreased yield of crops, increased fungal diseases and later ripening (my strawberries ripen 2 weeks later than on the allotments on the other side of the site).
- On the east side of the allotments in Apr and May, a frost pocket develops against the tall trees providing a high risk to fruit tree growers (this year I lost most of my apples due to frost).
- Large rooted trees demand a large amount of moisture. Extra watering is required and this contributes to the council's water bill. As soon as we have a period of dry weather, the allotments dry out very rapidly.
- Very large roots extend into some allotment plots, robbing us of nutrients and moisture and making digging very difficult.
- High trees provide a haven for pigeons (a major pest for us).
- Allotment holders are required to limit the height of their fruit trees to 2.5 m. Some of the perimeter trees are up to 8 m high.

The additional benefit is that pruning the height will stimulate lower growth – this will in turn create a denser and more impervious hedge – this would prevent unwanted trespassers from the playing fields and would also provide a visual barrier so that property owners around the playing fields do not have to view the

allotments (I heard that this was a previous reason for making the hedge very high).

For many of us, the yield from our allotment represents part of our livelihood and by deliberately depriving us of sunlight, you are reducing that yield.

I had heard that some individuals wanted to preserve these trees as they are rare species of pear tree. Can I make one thing absolutely clear – no one would eat the fruit that comes from them – it is small, bitter and sour. There is absolutely no benefit in keeping these trees and their sheer size makes them totally unsuitable for growing adjacent to allotments. I have fruit trees growing on my allotment on modern dwarf root stocks that provide sweet and juicy fruits if they were to receive enough sunlight. I would suggest that if you would like fruit trees to grow in the hedge, then you cut down the antiquated and useless trees and replace them with modern varieties (as you have done in the community orchard). Better still, species such as hawthorn, blackthorn and elder would be far more appropriate as they provide a dense impervious barrier which will also provide a haven for songbirds and not pigeons.

I Hope you can help, and consider the benefit of good yields from our allotments and how this benefits the environment overall by reducing air miles on fruit and vegetables.

Yours Sincerely