

## EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting for Members of Amenities & Leisure Committee 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021**Agenda Item 9 Lakeside**

The following communication was received by the Town Clerk from a resident of Lakeside regarding the planting of trees in the grass verges along this road:

*I am assuming that you will be the person who reads this, and I am writing to ask your advice about whom to contact to discuss an idea I have put to the residents of Lakeside. I sent a note to all my neighbours, including the following.*

*"When the Maiden Erlegh estate was built the houses were sold with a clause in the agreement which stipulated leaving front gardens hedgeless and treeless; this was to preserve an open vista, and maybe to encourage neighbourliness. These agreements have now expired, and there are other current thoughts about the environment. One of these is a government supported campaign to plant more trees. When I look up and down Lakeside I feel that the view is rather bleak, in great contrast to the view at the back of my house, which could easily be out in the country and is dominated by trees (mostly ash, which may before long be under threat from disease). There are some streets in Earley with trees planted on their verges (eg The Drive), and they look particularly attractive where the trees are not too dominant. Another example familiar to us is Betchworth Avenue, where the trees are dominant, rather overpowering, and have caused some recent problems. I think that with trees planted at perhaps 25m intervals within the grass verges along Lakeside, our environment would be significantly improved, and could be a contribution to the wider environmental campaign of tree planting. Of course, we would have to find appropriate trees that were both intrinsically attractive and not too large - certainly capable of being maintained at a height lower than the lampposts. Possible candidates are Pillar Apple or Cherry - maybe even Whitebeam."*

*I also asked whether people would be prepared to contribute to the cost. I have had 21 replies. Two were not in favour, but 19 were strongly in favour, with 17 saying they would contribute to the cost. This gives me a clear mandate to continue, and so I must now discuss this with ETC and WBC, to find whether it agrees or conflicts with any existing policies, to identify any problems with location of services or interference with any proposed domestic extensions (for example dropped curbs), and to agree who would do the planting and maintenance. If we can come to an agreement in principle and identify suitable trees, we will have to identify exact locations, and I would like then to talk to each householder to make sure that there are no further reasonable objections.*

The Deputy Town Clerk has spoken with the resident and explained some of the complexities of planting trees in WBC verges (permissions, underground service checks, impact on highway, cost, establishment of trees), including the issue of on-going maintenance responsibilities. He has been informed that the suggestion will be presented to town councillors for an initial discussion to explore how the town council could be of assistance.

**Town Clerk's note**

Matters for consideration and discussion:

- Highways land is the property of WBC, are there ways in which ETC could assist this resident with progressing his idea?

Further points:

- Does the proposal fit with ETC's (and WBC's) climate emergency stance?
- Does the proposal fit in with current national or local initiatives around tree planting? ie WBC's plans for 250,000 trees across the borough; Plant a Tree for the Jubilee and so on
- Could the idea of community led 'street trees' be suitable for other areas within Earley?
- If so, would it be possible for a street-tree version of the EASI model to be developed?

Elsewhere in the country there are community initiatives around the planting of street trees.

Councillors may be interested in checking out the following links:

[www.streettreestforliving.org](http://www.streettreestforliving.org)

[www.nationalparkcity.london](http://www.nationalparkcity.london)

<https://lewisham.gov.uk>myservices>environment>