

APPENDIX A

From: Bridget Samuelson <bridget.sam@thurstonhelis.co.uk>
Subject: TPO 27 of 2009 Land adjacent to Ulcombe Primary School, The Street
Date: 18 December 2009 11:21:50 GMT
To: Guy Stephens <GuyStephens@maidstone.gov.uk>

Dear Guy

Please could you note the following comments from Ulcombe Parish Council:

Ulcombe Parish Council is very concerned about the proposal to impose a TPO on the Dawn Redwood tree at Ulcombe Primary School in relation to the school's development plans for teaching and community use.

- 1) On a technicality the draft PTO is misleading in stating that the tree is "on land adjacent" to the school. The tree and the pocket of land in which it stands are part of the school's playing field.
- 2) The location of the tree as shown on the TPO 1:1250 scale plan is inaccurate. The trunk is actually 5.5 metres from the top of the southern bank of the adjacent stream and not 10 metres, and not in the middle of the plot as illustrated. Similarly the diameter of the branch spread is 8 metres and not 4 metres.
- 4) The Dawn Redwood can grow to become a very large tree with mature specimens in its native China being reported as 28 - 35 metres tall. The earliest planted specimen in the UK, at Cambridge University Botanic Garden, has grown at an average rate of 0.6 metres per year. It is conjectured that the species will attain the same size as in China and consequently now recommended that the tree is only suitable to be planted in an arboretum, park or large garden.
- 5) The Ulcombe tree is now 15 metres tall and was planted at a time when nobody knew how the species would fare in the UK and consequently what size it would attain. It was undoubtedly planted as an interesting species that had been believed to be extinct for 5 million years. Although the Ulcombe tree is a fine specimen the Parish Council believes that it will grow to present a problem in the future through its location and would necessitate removal.
- 6) The Parish Council has been in consultation with the school in relation to a proposed teaching/computer/community room. As you may be aware, KCC has declared the redundant adventure play area of the playing field which contains the Dawn Redwood, to be surplus to requirement. The land is to be sold and the capital receipt to be made available to the school for a limited period to assist in the financing of the development proposals.
- 7) Although the school is not currently under any threat of closure, as with many small villages, the pupil roll and facilities are not ideal. The opportunity to enhance the education provided by the school and the potential for a new community facility in the village through the sale of a piece of unused playing field is rare and very much welcomed. Ulcombe has lost its post office and village shop in the last decade and The Harrow public house in the centre of the village has been closed for over 3 years. The Parish Council believes that the village school is vital to the community and that the imposition of a TPO on the Dawn Redwood would severely reduce the potential and value of the plot of land to be sold.
- 8) The Parish Council would be willing to plant a replacement Dawn Redwood in a suitable location adjacent to the stream in the south east corner of the Recreation Ground, if this would be acceptable. There is a small arboretum in this location planted by the Kent Men of the Trees some years ago. Although this contains a mixture of native trees the introduction of a Dawn Redwood would not be any more incongruous than the row of hybrid poplars further along the boundary that Maidstone Borough Council protected by TPO for an unknown reason 35 years ago.

Kind regards

Bridget Samuelson
Clerk, Ulcombe Parish Council
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FAO Guy Stephens -
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