



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Date: 11 March 2008**

### **NEWBURY TOWN COUNCIL – VICTORIA PARK BEECH TREES**

Newbury Town Council is responsible for the maintenance of Victoria Park. Part of that responsibility is to ensure the safety of all park users. In particular there is close monitoring of the trees in the park and tree works are frequently undertaken.

During a recent tree inspection, four of the remaining seven mature beech trees at the north end of Victoria Park were found to be infected with a fungi disease called *Meripilus giganteus* (Giant polypore). This is the same fungus that has already required the removal of other trees in the group in the past. This particular fungi disease is one of the most dangerous decay fungi to be found on Beech trees (*Fagus sylvatica*) and causes the tree to become very unstable over time. The trees are in an area of high public use. Newbury Town Council has sought expert advice and has been advised that the trees should be taken down as soon as practicably possible, subject to all legal requirements such as bat surveys and tree officer permission. The trees are scheduled to be felled on 21 March 2008. The remaining three beech trees in the group will be closely monitored.

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Separate tree works are also required to reduce the middle horse chestnut of the three large trees adjacent to the canal in Victoria Park by between 20% and 30%. Consideration was also given to felling this tree, but experts have confirmed that reduction is sufficient. This is the tree from which a large bough fell on the tow path in August 2006, fortunately with only minimal damage.

Work is also required on the large willow tree at the north end of the park, adjacent to the A339. This tree will be reduced to 7 metres in height to improve its overall stability.

Newbury Town Council is very disappointed that any action to reduce such mature trees is required, but safety is paramount. Replacement trees for those felled will be planted in due course, to fit in with the overall future plans for the park.

END

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