

Bushy Park Tree Care Programme (2023-2025)

Notice of Temporary Closure of Woodlands Areas

Ludovic Beaumont

Dublin City Tree Officer

June 2023

1. Introduction

Dublin City Council (DCC) Parks, Biodiversity and Landscape Services are in charge of the maintenance and care of Dublin City urban forests, street trees and park trees included. Every year, over 4000 trees are assessed and recorded on DCC Tree Management application. A qualified arborist carried out a tree survey of the bushy Park's woodland in October 2021.

2. Tree Survey and Programmed Works

Overall, there is 2,446 young to veteran trees growing in 10 hectares of woodland in Bushy Park (newly planted and small/very young trees have not been included in this figure). During the woodland assessment, the arborist identified and recorded 241 trees that will require works within a 3-year timeframe.

3. Tree Care Programme Phase I

The first phase of the Tree Care Programme started in March 2023 and was to involve work on 60 trees total.

Table III: Phase I - Description and Quantity.

Works Description	Quantity
Crown cleaning(Deadwood and hangers)	14
Crown cleaning (Deadwood and hangers). Remove Epicormic Growth and Ivy.	4
Monolith.	14
Pollard	1
Reduce Crown. Crown cleaning (Deadwood and hangers). Remove Ivy.	13
Remove Epicormic Growth	2
Remove Limb	1
Tree Removal and stump grinding	11

4. Temporary Closure of the Woodland for protection of bat and heron populations (see map below)

In 2019, a bat survey was carried out in Bushy Park as part of the Dodder Greenway project. This survey identified five Daubenton's bat roosts in trees in the woodland. Both bats and their roosts are protected under national and EU legislation and it is an offence to disturb or interfere with them without a licence. In Phase I, tree works were scheduled beside three of these bat roosts and DCC Parks, Landscape and Biodiversity services applied for a Derogation Licence from National Park and Wildlife Services (NPWS) to carry out work close to bat roosts. NPWS have recommended a series of further bat surveys between April to October 2023 (inclusive) before works can commence.

Bushy Park Woodland is also the home to a large number of herons which nest every year in the woodland. Parks have appointed a qualified ecologist to monitor the tree works close to the heronry as it is legally possible to carry out tree works during bird nesting season if no nests are disturbed and all works are monitored by an ecologist. This year heron eggs hatched earlier than usual with a second clutch laid. This has resulted in tree works beside the heronry being delayed for the protection of the heron chicks.

DCC Parks have worked with the NPWS to design a series of surveys and monitoring programme of both bats and heron nests in order to better understand the significance of this location in a wider context. These surveys are ongoing and will continue, in the instance of the bats until mid-Autumn. Unfortunately since the start of the year there have been a number of tree failures and large branches dropped in the woodland. With this in mind and in order to protect the public, a section of the main footpath in the woodland will be closed from June 2023 until the tree work is completed (see closed pathways on map below).

To promote the long term health of the woodland, the future management of the woodland will involve keeping some areas fenced off on a more permanent basis in order to allow natural re-generation and new planting establish successfully. There will also be a programme of Laurel and Japanese Knotweed removal which again may require sections of woodland to be closed for a period. These works will be flagged in advance. In future Parks will close the woodland in its entirety in response to weather warnings issued by the Met Office in future, yellow up. A woodland management plan is currently being prepared and will explain these initiatives in more detail.

The presence of both the bat and heron populations within the woodland in Bushy Park marks it out as a significant location for biodiversity in Dublin City. Parks apologise for the inconvenience caused by closing the woodland paths but must take necessary precautions to ensure the health and safety of the public. Along with its history and cultural significance it is worth doing all we can to protect the woodland for future generations to enjoy.

