

FACT SHEET IF YOU WANT TO CHALLENGE A THREAT TO A TREE (or trees) ON YOUR STREET, IN YOUR AREA, IN A NEIGHBOURING GARDEN etc

We are the **Haringey Tree Protectors**, a group of residents and tree campaigners who came together in 2021 to try to protect mature trees under increasing threat by insurers, developers, councils - but also from some of your neighbours and landlords.

Our most recent campaign was protecting a 120-year-old [plane tree](#) on Oakfield Road - still standing after a year. We've noticed a massive rise in threats against mature trees in London, from a mix of places - new housing, insurance claims, developers, council dept who want to cut maintenance costs. The rise in insurance claims in our borough - over 200 last year, maybe more this year – is only set to escalate further due to the extreme droughts we are seeing in the climate crisis. The tree dept is planning to spend more money allocated to their budget on chopping back trees in the borough even more. Disaster on many fronts, for habitat, for insects and birds, the cooling effects of canopy - leaves and branches etc

The law as it stands is rigged against trees. At the moment, the insurers have established enough case law (tort law) to set a precedent that trees **only have to be implicated in damage to be felled**. They are rarely the direct cause. It's more to do with bad foundations and clay soil. In a climate crisis this is wrong. We need a change in law asap.

USEFUL WEBSITE from the **SHIFT Group (Stop Home Insurers Felling Trees)**
<https://stophomeinsurersfellingtrees.org.uk>

What can you do? Be a tree hero!

We want to empower others and really hope that the following tips will help tree lovers in every street in Haringey protect their trees – and that people will feel confident to take action into their own hands. We can support of course and advise, but if residents are really concerned about the threat to a street tree, they need to join forces, galvanise and question the rationale behind every tree threatened as the nature, climate and pollution crises deepen.

Get together with your neighbours and speak to the neighbour affected. Insurers are bullies and habitually use bullying tactics but you are stronger together. Don't be timid.

Make a fuss.

Badger.

Hold the tree depts, the insurers and planning depts and parks depts to account.

Remember:

Haringey's new tree pages – covers the steps the council should be taking when a tree is threatened by an insurer (this is for public street trees)

<https://www.haringey.gov.uk/environment-and-waste/nature-and-conservation/trees/tree-protection>

Public Duty to Consult

Later this year (2023) the new 'Public duty to Consult' tree law, section [115 of the Environment Act](#) 2021, will be fully implemented. Ie 'A local highway authority in England must consult members of the public before felling a tree on an urban road (a "street tree").

Some proactive councils may start doing this already. Worth asking how your council will be publicly consulting with residents about this valuable green amenity they want to fell.

Advice/tips from our experience as campaigners:

Contact your tree dept, in Haringey the contact details are:

Alex Fraser, Tree and Nature Conservation Manager alex.fraser@haringey.gov.uk – always CC him on emails

Clare Pappalardo, Senior Arboricultural officer clare.pappalardo@haringey.gov.uk (Clare tends to **manage all the insurance claims** in the borough but worth emailing Alex Fraser too.)

Daniel Monk, Senior Arboricultural officer (planning) daniel.monk@haringey.gov.uk

Ian Williams, Arboricultural Officer ian.williams@haringey.gov.uk

Make a big fuss, don't be timid. You must ask to see **all the arboriculture and engineering reports** that deem this tree to be causing damage - from your tree department, if appropriate, your planning department and/or the officer who deals with all the insurance related cases. These reports should be over a few years. **Have they pollarded and managed the trees? Used a root blocker, improved the soil pits. Is the tree directly implicated?** (this is rare)

Get local support - Speak to your neighbours and others on your street/area to get their view and support. Post leaflets through doors and put signs up on the tree (recycled paper and string ties only). Hold a public meeting and ask councillors and officers to attend. *Haringey announced a climate emergency in 2019 and want to create 30% more canopy cover. Ask your council how is felling this important tree going to fit with these plans?*

ROTA If the council (or other organisation) still plans to fell tree or trees, **take direct action.** It's very productive - sitting under the tree can be effective and handing out flyers works well to passers-by. You might have to get help and draw up a **rota with neighbours or contact tree climbers.** (Since Covid, more people work flexibly, some people are retired, some work part time.) If you stand or sit under a tree, the tree surgeons won't fell it for health and safety reasons.

Contact your ward councillors and go to their surgeries.

Ours are Alexandra Worrell, (alexandra.worrell@haringey.gov.uk) George Dunstall (george.dunstall@haringey.gov.uk) and Eldridge Culverwell (eldridge.culverwell@haringey.gov.uk)

Get your local MP involved, ours are [Catherine West](#) and [David Lammy](#) (Tottenham).

Contact Catherine West MP who has a tree role in parliament. westc2@parliament.uk She made a statement to parliament last week about more protections for mature trees. She comes in at about 4.33pm. <https://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/fdbd81f2-0d9c-49d4-a7c1-d80a2da7297f>

OTHER COUNCIL people to write to:

Write to Mike Hakata, deputy leader of council for climate, green travel and trees (mike.hakata@haringey.gov.uk) about how he plans to protect mature trees.

Simon.farrow@haringey.gov.uk – Head of Parks Services (Tree dept report to him) Head of environment
Barry Francis barry.francis@haringey.gov.uk
CEO of council – andy.donald@haringey.gov.uk

Speak to homeowners who have the claim in and try to ascertain what they are being told by insurers and council and whether they will come on board - this really helped the Queens Wood Oak campaign and the Oakfield Road Plane tree campaign.

Get PRESS on board - our mature street and garden trees are threatened like never before. Since Sheffield and Plymouth - trees are becoming bigger news. If you are local (Haringey), Nathalie Raffray at the Ham& High is quite supportive on trees. nathalie.raffray@archant.co.uk Contact both local and national press.

This is a lawyer from tree law might advise on neighbours' trees? sarahdodd@treelaw.co.uk

Contact a local tree group for support -

Is there an active nature group for the area? A friends Group? Can you galvanise them? Can you start one yourself?

Social media – Set up a twitter (lots of tree groups on here), Instagram and Facebook page for your tree. Get a petition going on change.org – also councils run their own petition pages.

Insurance Claims

Find out the name of the insurers implicated and challenge their CEOs directly with letters and emails and on LinkedIn and other business websites. **Name and shame the insurer** - they don't like this. Write to their CEOs and ecology reps, citing their environment pledges, (green washing abounds here.) Big insurers include AXA, Aviva and Allianz can be shamed on twitter. You may not have their money or lawyers, but you have your voice on social media and in media stories.

The system for insurers blaming trees for damage to houses is generally based on very little. Since the mid-1970s, insurers have established enough case or 'tort' law to set an unchallenged precedent - that a tree only has to be implicated in damage for it to be felled - it doesn't have to be wholly or directly the problem. Many cases are based on very weak evidence, insurers pass costs onto councils who can't afford to pay the costs or deem it too risky to be challenged in court. More info specifically on insurers and trees can be found here from the [Shift campaign group](#) who saved some the Queen's Wood Oaks being felled a few years ago by AXA insurers. (There are resources for protecting trees available on the website. Councils and homeowners can try different ways to prevent trees from causing

damage by pollarding, using root blockers, providing a good soil pit/asking residents to water the trees.)

THE PROBLEM WITH CLAY

Clay soil shifts cracks and moves more than other soils in the extremes of droughts and floods. Insurance claims are up 200% It's a disaster unfolding for our street trees in the climate crisis. Camden and Islington, the other clay boroughs are similarly implicated, with the most cases in London, if not the UK.

TPOs

Does your tree have a tree protection order (TPO)? Very few street trees do but worth checking – or asking for one to be put on it.

A tree preservation order (TPO) gives legal protection to a: Tree, Group of trees, Woodland. Without written consent, you cannot do any of the following to trees that have a TPO: Cut down, Uproot, Prune or cut back any branches, Damage or destroy, including cutting roots

Types of trees covered by a TPO

Anything normally classified as a 'tree' can be covered by a TPO. There is no minimum size, but bushes and shrubs cannot be covered.

In certain circumstances, fruit trees can be protected, provided they offer a benefit to the public.

Contact the **Woodland Trust and Forestry Commission** especially if it's large number of trees like St Ann's hospital site or the Parkland Walk fellings that began in 2021.

Oak trees are some of the most biodiverse trees in the UK as you probably

know: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/oak-tree-wildlife/>

If you are a local, contact us, your local Green Party, Friends of the Earth, XR group and other environmental groups for support: We have to fight these cases one by one or we will see our streets denuded of mature trees and replaced with piddly fruit varieties that won't cool our streets or absorb as much carbon.

Good website here: <https://stophomeinsurersfellingtrees.org.uk> Our website: <https://haringeytreeprotectors.co.uk/>

 Haringey Tree Protectors 

haringeytreeprotectors@gmail.com

Press, Petition, Crowd-funder:

[Linktr.ee/treeprotectors](https://linktr.ee/treeprotectors)

Twitter: @justplanenews

Insta @saveharingeytrees

Facebook: Haringey Tree Protectors