

# Neighbours fight to save 47 trees at historic site

## Landowners say root growth is destroying the unique geology of the land

By Nick Mayo  
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PLANS to chop down 47 protected trees on land adjoining an exclusive Maidenhead estate have been met with anger by residents.

Neighbours in Kinghorn Park launched a Save Our Trees campaign this week.

They fear the wildlife, the environment and the visual

outlook will be severely hit if the trees – a mix of sycamore, hawthorn and oak – are cut down.

They have called upon Maidenhead MP Theresa May to take up the battle and she has asked the Royal Borough to look carefully into the matter and identify those trees which could be saved.

The land is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest

(SSSI), monitored by statutory body Natural England. Mrs May said: "I am concerned at the proposal to cut down so many trees.

"Some may need to be cut down where Natural England thinks they damage the site but it is clear what is proposed goes far beyond that and will probably damage the environment."

The proposal comes

from two Kinghorn Park residents whose homes back onto the Cannoncourt Farm Pit site.

Jim Bennis and his next door neighbour Martin Oppenheim say they own the land which has been designated an SSSI for more than 50 years.

In the past, archaeologists have found some of the biggest prehistoric axe heads in the

country there, and geologists have discovered the gravel soil beds are unique in the Thames basin and date back to the Ice Age.

But now Mr Bennis has asked for the blanket tree preservation orders (TPOs) on the site to be lifted and permission granted to cut down the 47 trees over the next five years, in a bid to protect the soil strata.

He said: "The SSSI is designated for its geology special interest. The application is solely in context of conservation and fully supported by Natural England."

He feels there is conclusive evidence of irreversible damage caused by tree roots to the soil strata and pit face and has legal obligations to conserve the site and cannot 'discharge these obligations with the current TPOs in place'.

However, it appears a considerable number of

his neighbours and residents in nearby Kinghorn Lane, Switchback Road South and The Chase disagree.

Almost 40 people gathered for a meeting on Tuesday last week to hear the views of Natural England's local conservation officer, Sarah Wright, who has supported the plan.

Following the meeting – which Mr Bennis and Mr Oppenheim also attended – Miss Wright has written again to borough planners to moderate her views.

The meeting was hosted by the Kinghorn Park's Residents Association. Chairman Jim Taylor said: "It is fair to say this application has sparked a lot of upset among neighbours.

"The trees are an emotive issue and most people cannot understand why they all have to come down. They feel there must be a better solution for all parties."



TREE CONTROVERSY: Some of the trees under threat. Ref:102207-3

## Grave identified

THE final resting place of Hollywood legend Joan Rice has been revealed.

Calls flooded in to the Advertiser after an appeal for information was run in last week's paper. The former Maidenhead and Cookham resident died in 1997 and the location of her grave was a mystery to many fans and friends.

The Royal Borough's cemetery team has confirmed the star of Disney's 1952 movie Robin Hood is buried at Braywick Cemetery.

Fan Tony Wait, who had been trying to track down the location of her grave for years, said it was 'wonderful news'.

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## Teaching is for the kids today

CHANGING places was the theme at Wessex Primary School on Monday when children stepped in to take the adults' jobs.

All the children had applied for the jobs and the successful candidates were chosen after an interview process.

Corey Ford, named as headteacher for the day, staged the morning assembly at the school in St Adrian's Close, Cox Green.

The school also chose two assistant headteachers in Jack Dwyer and Robert Piling, along with secretaries Yusuf Mohammed and Prachi Raizada.

They were shadowed by their adult counterparts throughout their day.

Teacher Helen Lugton said: "The children were very brave to have taken on the roles as teachers and we hope to do this again in the future."

■ TIME FOR TEA: Job swap deputy headteacher Robert Piling and headteacher Corey Ford are served refreshments by regular headteacher Nick Stevens. Ref:102200-7



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