

GUIDELINES FOR TREE CHAMPIONS

There are a number of characteristics that make a suitable Tree Champion. They have more to do with their attitude rather than their knowledge, which can be improved through training.

- A Tree Champion should be RESPONSIBLE and willing to CO-OPERATE. Champions have no special powers, and they should not trespass or get bogged down in tree disputes. They should not interfere with the work of District Tree Officers (who may provide advice and training) but try and work with them. Tree champions are not experts, and are not expected to be, but they can be a focus for actions, assist the Tree Officers as well as initiate their own projects.
- Tree Champions need to be PROFESSIONAL. This quality will enable him/her to see matters in a balanced way, so if a tree does have to come down, e.g. for safety reasons, they won't overreact or let their emotions rule their reasoning.
- Champions must genuinely CARE for their environment and the trees in it.
- Champions need to have enough TIME to give to their duties. There is no minimum amount set, but clearly champions need to be living in the area. Many champions who work find time in the evenings and weekends, or combine some duties with their normal routine, e.g. tree surveying while walking the dog.
- Champions should be WILLING TO LEARN. Those who 'know it all' or who are extremely narrow-minded are difficult to work with!
- Ideally, Champions should have some prior KNOWLEDGE of trees, e.g. a basic recognition of our native trees and where they grow. However, this knowledge can be learnt.
- People who could COMMERCIALY GAIN from being a Tree Champion, e.g. working tree surgeons, should preferably NOT be appointed since they could unfairly exploit their position.
- Age is not a limiting factor; although some Tree Champions may not be able to undertake physically demanding tasks, e.g. tree planting, they can help gather information or give talks.
- If Parish Councils prefer, they can appoint people on a TRIAL BASIS e.g. for an initial six months before they confirm the appointment. If demand is high, several Champions can be appointed (either to cover different geographical areas or to undertake different aspects of the Scheme).