

Community Actions - summary

STOP THE CHOP!

Community actions to help support the efforts to prevent the old oak (and additional trees) from being felled 13-15th January

So you've signed the petition to try to Save Wivenhoe's Old Oak tree, what next?

This document is a live list of actions you can take to support efforts to save the old oak tree:

Action type	Action description	Additional information
Information about the tree - measurements	<p>We need the following information about the oak tree (and ideally also threatened ash and chestnut) so that we can assess their value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circumference measured at 1.5mtr • Approx Height. • Crown spread from trunk . North South East and West. • Vigour • Form 	<p>If an arborist can do this for us we will be very grateful. But if not, we will accept enthusiastic individuals submitting this information to our email oldoaktreewivenhoe@gmail.com and we can run an estimate with the info we receive</p>
Memories & visual support (heart and mind, pour your love out for the tree using your creative skills)	Children can produce drawings and either submit them to us for lamination or decorate the tree directly with these. Give the kids a voice.	
	Photo/video - please take and share high quality photos of the tree and share any you may already have with us at oldoaktreewivenhoe@gmail.com	
	Create signs, placards, artworks, poems that celebrate the old oak tree and the group of trees being felled and share these on our facebook group and via email at oldoaktreewivenhoe@gmail.com	
Email/write letters (for all emails, it would be helpful if you could CC us at oldoaktreewivenhoe@gmail.com)	Write to the Wivenhoe Town Council to share your concerns and reasons for signing the petition. Please bear in mind these councillors are volunteers. Colchester Council and above are paid and will have more time and capacity to respond.	<p>https://wivenhoe.gov.uk/contact-us/</p> <p>https://wivenhoe.gov.uk/town-councillors/</p>

<i>We have created a template email you can use with key info to speed up the process - see in tab 2 of this document</i>	Write to Colchester council to share concerns and reasons these trees should be protected	customerservices@colchester.gov.uk
	Write to Essex County Council to share concerns and reasons these trees should be protected	
	Write to our local MP Bernard Jenkins	
	Write to local councillors who are elected to represent us in the local authorities	
	Write to any other influential individuals/organisations you think may help to stop the tree(s) from being felled	
Bats / endangered species	If you have any evidence of bats roosting in the trees or that a wildlife crime could be being committed in the felling of these trees please share your evidence with oldoakwivenhoe@gmail.com and consider reporting if you believe a wildlife crime and a bat crime in particular - see (https://www.bats.org.uk/advice/bats-and-the-law/reporting-bat-crimes) i	
Events	Attend the event Saturday 11th January - more info to follow	
	Photographers/videographers - we would love your help in ensuring we have high quality photos of the event	
	Support with event prep and set-up/take down - more to follow	
	Share details of the event with press/media/influential individuals and to try to ensure a good turnout	

More ideas are welcomed and this is by no means exhaustive as a list of actions one could take to protect the tree. Any more ideas, send to oldoaktreewivenhoe@gmail.com

Email template

CC oldoaktreewivenhoe@gmail.com

Good morning/Dear XXX/Hello XXXX,

I'm writing with the hope you might be able to support and raise awareness for our #stopthechop campaign to save an ancient Essex oak tree from being unfairly felled.

As covered by the [BBC](#) and the [Colchester Gazette](#), an old oak tree estimated to be more than 120 years old is due to be felled in Wivenhoe, Essex, next week due to claims made by an insurance company (Aviva) of subsidence – purportedly caused by the tree – affecting nearby houses. These houses are notably located on the periphery of a railway line cutting and on very gravelly soil.

Even if the tree is found to be contributing to the subsidence, other solutions – such as root zone management, crown management, transplanting the tree (sounds extreme but is achievable) and underpinning the structures affected – exist besides felling, but these have to our knowledge not been considered fully by the insurance company in question, Aviva. Instead, the local council is being intimidated with huge financial implications if they don't fell the tree.

The local community has been petitioning to save this historic oak for the past 18 months, gaining more than [2,500 signatures](#) to our petition in the last few days and with an active community group all in support of saving the tree. Architects, parents, lawyers and biodiversity specialists are amongst prominent members of the community all sharing their concerns – and reasons for – the tree not being felled. The tree is in a prominent town centre location and is a much loved landmark. It supports wildlife (over 2300 species rely on oak trees), carbon sequestration and climate resilience and as an old oak, it is irreplaceable. We are informed there may be endangered species, bats, resident in the tree which may mean felling it could be a wildlife crime. We have sought additional advice on this.

The tree contributes to the quality of place of our town, with long views in multiple directions that will be changed forever by its loss. It faces directly onto a children's playground which adds additional interest for us to save it. We want our children, and their children, to enjoy the shade of this mighty oak for generations to come. We want our children to play in a playground in sight of nature, not cars.

We appreciate any support and exposure you may be able to give this campaign. We may only be a small community of fewer than 8,000 people, but the will to preserve this beautiful tree – and its history, legacy and significance to the local community and environment – is mighty. We will be holding an event this Saturday 11th January to celebrate the tree and give the children an opportunity to enjoy its beauty, possibly for the last time.

We know this situation to be just one of many up and down the country where old oak trees and other important and well loved trees are at risk in similar circumstances. We believe protection for trees must change and hope our story at the very least will help to ensure other old oaks, other urban trees, are saved from the same fate.

Many thanks,

XXX

#STOPTHECHOP



Links

Petition <https://www.change.org/p/save-wivenhoe-s-old-king-george-oak-tree>

Website

<https://stopthechop.co.uk>

Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/savewivenhoeoldoaktree>

Contact information

oldoaktreewivenhoe@gmail.com

Please note we are a campaign team made up of Wivenhoe residents who did not intend on needing to defend this tree at such short notice. We are juggling this campaign alongside our work and caring responsibilities so will respond as soon as we are able. This situation is fast-moving and the facts included were accurate at the time of sending, unfortunately we have not been privy to all the details between the town council and the insurer.

Who we are

We are a community of more than 600 Wivenhoe residents who happen to include architects, parents, artists, legal whizzes, biodiversity experts and more. We live care for this tree which is part of our daily lives. We love it. We want to save it. We also want to help others save their well loved older trees and use our story to help ensure the same stressful experience of facing a felling does not fall upon others.