

BACKS COMMITTEE

There will be a meeting of the Backs Committee on Friday 11 June 2010 at 11am
in the Latimer Room at Clare College

A G E N D A

1. **Chairman and Secretary of the Backs Committee**
Following the retirement of Mr John Easterling as Secretary, it is proposed that Professor Harrison should be Chairman and Mr Donald Hearn should be Secretary.
2. **Minutes**
To approve the minutes for the meeting on 22 May 2009. There are no matters arising.
3. **Wildlife Strategy for the Backs**
Presentation by a member of the Wildlife Trust.
5. **Update of Master plan for the Backs**
Presentation by Mr Robert Myers, with particular reference to the Clare College yews on Garret Hostel Lane and to the "King's Backs".
6. **Trees on the Backs**
Presentation by Mr Hugh Johnson and Sir Richard Storey.
7. **Any other business**
8. **Date of Next Meeting;** proposed Friday 10 June 2011 at 11am.

Distribution:

Mr Hugh Johnson	Mr James Trevithick – King's College
Sir Richard Storey	Professor David McKitterick – Trinity College
✕ Professor Alan Hayhurst – Queens' College	✕ Mr Dennis Footman – Trinity College
✕ Mr Jonathan Spence – Queens' College	✕ Professor Chris Dobson – St John's College
Mr Steve Elstub - Clare College	Mr Adam Magee - St John's College
Mr Donald Hearn – Clare College	✕ Andre John Harris – St John's College
✕ Professor Martin Daunton – Trinity Hall	Mr Malcolm Oviatt-Ham – City Council
Mr Andrew Myson – Trinity Hall	Ms Dinah Foley-Norman – City Council
Mr Glen Sharp – Trinity Hall	Mrs Diana Oviatt-Ham – City Council
Professor Ross Harrison – King's College	Mr Robert Myers – Robert Myers Associates
Mr Duncan Baxter – King's College	Mr Ian Webb – Wildlife Trust

BACKS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Backs Committee held on Friday 11 June 2010 at 11am in the Latimer Room, Clare College

Present: Professor R Harrison (Chairman), Mr D Hearn (Secretary), Mr D Baxter, Mr J Trevithick, Mr S Elstub, Mr A Magee, Professor D McKitterick, Mr G Sharp, Mr M Oviatt-Ham, Mrs D Oviatt-Ham, Ms D Foley-Norman, Sir Richard Storey, Mr H Johnson, Mr R Myers and Mr I Webb for part of the meeting.

Apologies: Commodore J W R Harris, Professor M Daunton, Professor C Dobson, Professor A Hayhurst, Mr J Spence, Mr D Footman, Mr A Myson.

There were no declarations of interest.

1. Chairman and Secretary of the Backs Committee

The Committee approved the arrangements for Professor Harrison to be Chairman and Mr Hearn to be the Secretary of the Backs Committee following the retirement of Mr Easterley as Secretary.

The Committee noted the terms of reference as follows:

- a) to exercise a general oversight of landscape issues on the Backs, on the understanding that each College retains sole responsibility for its own grounds;
- b) to obtain expert advice on best practice relating to the landscape of the Backs;
- c) to provide a forum for Colleges to share their experience and to indicate their future plans relating to the landscape.

2. Minutes

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2009. The Secretary will circulate a note on the main points Dr Webber had made in that meeting on the current problems arising from various diseases of trees.

3. Wildlife Strategy for the Backs

Mr Ian Webb (Wildlife Trust) presented the case for including features in the Master plan which would encourage wildlife. Leaving a strip of unmown grassland along the boundaries for the summer would provide valuable habitat and reducing the amount of shade along the ditches would encourage mammals to return to the Cam.

The Committee endorsed the Wildlife Trust's proposals and agreed that subsequent issues of the Master plan should include measures to encourage wildlife.

Action: Mr Myers

4. Master plan for the Backs

It was reported that there had been only minimal changes to the Backs landscape during the twelve months to June 2010, following extensive work carried out in the previous year. The Landscape Progress Plan, dated June 2010, was noted by the Committee.

5. Yews on Garret Hostel Lane

The Committee considered the proposal from Clare College to reduce the height of the yews on Garret Hostel Lane to four metres. The yews had grown to a size where they obscure the views across the Backs and had become over-dominant, resulting in a somewhat menacing effect on pedestrians using Garret Hostel Lane. It was noted that Trinity College's limes on the other side of Garrett Hostel Lane would grow to a substantial height, but as deciduous trees would not produce the same effect as the yews.

The Committee noted the support of the City Council's Officers in favour of the proposal which it was recognised would be likely to require sensitive handling with the local community since the impact on the landscape would be substantial. It was agreed that the "do nothing" option was not a sensible alternative.

The possibility of phasing the work would be given further consideration by Clare College in consultation with the City Council. There was a case for drastic rejuvenation since yews respond better to brutal treatment than to intermediate pruning. This would need to be balanced against the risk of the north side not rejuvenating as strongly as the south side; the impact on community relations of a brutal approach would also have to be considered. Mr Hearn thanked the Committee for the helpful advice and indicated that the College would consult further with a view to applying for permission to reduce the yews in winter 2011/12.

6. King's College land on the Backs

The Committee considered the proposal to fell a substantial number of the Italian alders to provide growing space for the oaks and to increase the diversity of tree species on the Backs with new plantings. The need to remove the alders was strongly supported by the Committee on the grounds that they were congesting the space available for the oaks and had outgrown their usefulness as nursery trees. The Committee supported the idea of planting a variety of tree species. Alternative species were discussed from the list compiled by Sir Richard Storey and Mr Johnson, concentrating on English oak (*Quercus robur*), Common beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*).

Some doubts were expressed about the Tulip tree's propensity to drop branches and about its overall shape and leaf size. The Tulip tree in Emmanuel College was cited as a magnificent specimen and, subject to checking on its branch dropping propensity, the Committee agreed that the Tulip tree would be one of the best trees for the Backs and elsewhere. (Subsequent to the meeting, Kew Gardens confirmed that the Tulip tree was not any more structurally unsound (e.g. dropping its branches more than other trees).

The Committee discussed the proposal to under-plant with *Cornus kousa* 'Chinensis' and members thought that it would provide an appropriate and attractive solution.

The Committee discussed an alternative proposal to plant an extensive under-storey of

It was noted that such a hedge would change the character of the space to resemble a designed imposition, compared with its present free-flowing nature. A design for a sinuous hedge could be prepared to assist King's College in considering the alternatives.

Proposal to plant willow (*Salix alba*) and pollard the existing willows along the ditch was supported by the Committee, noting that appropriate root barriers would need to be in place alongside the Gate. Consideration was given to the importance of preserving the historic view from the Gate towards King's Chapel. The Committee recognised the benefit of planting specimen trees to screen the side of the Gate, and it was pointed out that visitors would walk to the optimum viewing position, slightly further up the path.

The Committee suggested that the planting of beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) on the south side of Scholar's Piece alongside the ditch should be restricted to the area towards the Gate, leaving the space near the Bridge open.

The City Tree Officer and the City Landscape Consultant indicated their support for the proposals in the Master plan. It was recognised that the Planning Authorities, including English Heritage, would need to be consulted. Professor Harrison thanked the Committee for their advice which would be taken to the King's College Gardens Committee for further consideration.

7. Trees on the Backs

The Committee considered the list of the most suitable large scale trees for use on the Backs:

Tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), Common beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Oriental plane (*Platanus orientalis*), English oak (*Quercus robur*), Chestnut-leaved oak (*Quercus castaneifolia*), Small-leaved lime (*Tilia cordata*), Weeping silver lime (*Tilia petiolaris*), Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*), a disease-resistant Elm (*Ulmus*).

The Committee endorsed the list of recommended trees and agreed the set of criteria proposed by the City Tree Officer for the appropriateness of specific trees in particular locations.

8. Date of next meeting

It was agreed to meet on Friday 2 June 2011 at 11am.

Distribution:

Mr Hugh Johnson
Sir Richard Storey
Professor Alan Hayhurst – Queens' College
Mr Jonathan Spence – Queens' College
Mr Steve Elstub - Clare College
Mr Donald Hearn – Clare College
Professor Martin Daunton – Trinity Hall
Mr Andrew Myson - Trinity Hall
Mr Glen Sharp – Trinity Hall
Professor Ross Harrison – King's College

Mr James Trevithick – King's College
Professor David McKitterick – Trinity College
Mr Dennis Footman – Trinity College
Professor Chris Dobson – St John's College
Mr Adam Magee - St John's College
Cmdre John Harris – St John's College
Mr Malcolm Oviatt-Ham – City Council
Ms Dinah Foley-Norman – City Council
Mrs Diana Oviatt-Ham – City Council
Mr Robert Myers – Robert Myers Associates
Mr Ian Webb – Wildlife Trust

Tree Diseases

Notes on the presentation made by Dr Joan Webber to the Backs Committee in Cambridge on 22 May 2009.

Dr Joan Webber is the Principal Pathologist in Forest Research at Alice Holt Research Station.

Sudden oak death

Sudden oak death is caused by *Phytophthora ramorum* producing bleeding lesions. There is a low chance of sudden oak death in East Anglia as climatic conditions are not suitable for the infection. Native oaks have only a low susceptibility.

Horse chestnut leaf miner

The leaf miner, *Cameraria ohridella*, was first recorded in Britain in 2000. The impact on trees is not health threatening; eight years after the disease was first seen in Wimbledon those trees remain in good health. The leaf miner causes browning of the foliage after the tree has made its growth in the spring. The effect is unsightly, but it is not causing damage to the tree. Removing infected leaves in the autumn is a useful precaution but may not be particularly effective in preventing its spread.

Horse chestnut bleeding canker

About seven years ago there was an increase in a number of cases of bleeding canker and it is no longer limited to southern England. There can be a very rapid spread of the disease. It is caused by a bacterium, *Pseudomonas syringae* pv *aesculi*. The effected trees can have multiple cankers, and branches and stems may be girdled. The typical symptoms are gummy black exudate on the trunk and into branches; in advance cases there is crown dieback. The disease can be very obvious on young trees (as thin bark and quickly girdled). It is unlikely that bleeding canker will spread to other tree genera. Unfortunately there is no proven treatment available and the bacterium and disease distribution is persistent.

Further information can be obtained from www.forestresearch.gov.uk

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AGENDA

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Distribution

Trinity College

Mr John Easterling
Mr George Thorpe

Trinity Hall

Professor Martin Daunton
Mr Andrew Myson

St Johns College

Mr John Harris
Mr Adam Magee

Clare College

Mr Donald Hearn
Mr Steve Elstub

Queens College

Professor Allan Hayhurst

Kings College

Mr David Munday
Mr James Trevethick

Mr Hugh Johnson

Sir Richard Storey

Mrs Diana Oviatt-Ham, City Council

Mr Robert Myers, Robert Myers Associates

Dinah Foley Norman, City Council

Dr Webber, Forest Research

Professor Max Wade, RPS Planning & Development

Dr Nick Betson, RPS Planning & Development

BACKS COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Backs Committee was held at 11 a.m. on Friday 22 May 2009 in the Latimer Room, Clare College. There were present: Mr D P Hearn (Clare College) in the chair, Mr S Elstub (Clare College), Mr J A Trevithick and Dr D J Munday (King's College), Professor A N Hayhurst (Queens' College), Mr A Magee (St John's College), Mr H J Easterling (Trinity College) (Secretary), Mr W G Thorpe (Trinity College), Professor M J Dauntton (Trinity Hall), Ms D Foley-Norman (Cambridge City Council), and Mr Hugh Johnson. Apologies were received from Sir Richard Storey and Mrs Diana Oviatt-Ham.

The following attended by invitation: Mr Robert Myers (Robert Myers Associates), Dr Joan Webber (Forest Research), Professor M Wade and Dr N Betson (RPS Planning and Development Ltd).

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2008 were confirmed, noting the Committee's terms of reference:
 - a) to exercise a general oversight of landscape issues on the Backs, on the understanding that each College retains sole responsibility for its own grounds;
 - b) to obtain expert advice on best practice relating to the landscape of the Backs;
 - c) to provide a forum for Colleges to share their experience and to indicate their future plans relating to the landscape.
2. The Chairman welcomed Mr Myers, Dr Webber, Professor Wade, and Dr Betson.
3. Master plan for the Backs

Mr Myers presented (a) a revised version of the master plan, updated in the light of submissions received from Colleges in the autumn of 2008, and (b) a landscape progress plan, dated May 2009, showing work undertaken by Colleges and by the City Council in the past year. College representatives reported on the tree work that their Colleges have carried out, and on work that they plan to undertake during the coming year.

At Mr Johnson's suggestion, it was agreed to keep under review the list of preferred tree species which had been discussed at the last meeting (Minute 5; see p. 20 of the master plan), and to draw up a revised version of the list for discussion at the next meeting. The revised list might usefully identify the characteristics of each suggested species making it worthy of inclusion on the Backs.

4. Tree diseases

Dr Webber briefed the Committee on current problems arising from various diseases of trees, including different species of phytophthora, horse chestnut leaf miner, horse chestnut bleeding canker, and sudden oak death. The main points that she made are summarised in the accompanying handout.

5. Ecology strategy for the Backs

Dr Betson and Professor Wade presented proposals for the implementation of an ecology strategy for the Backs, which would undertake an historical review of the area and would identify measures to enhance the biodiversity of birds, animals, and plants on the Backs. Having presented their proposals Dr Betson and Professor Wade answered questions and then withdrew. After discussion the Committee agreed not to implement the proposed strategy, but to seek ecological advice from some other source which might help Colleges to widen the range of wildlife found on the Backs.

6. Next meeting

The next meeting was fixed for 11 a.m. on Friday 11 June 2010.

7. The meeting ended at 12.30 p.m.

Mr. h

THE BACKS LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

Minutes of the Meeting to consider the Masterplan on the Backs on Friday 26 October 2007 at Clare College

Present: Professor Chris Dobson, Cdre John Harris, Mr Adam Magee, Dr Rod Pullen, Dr John Easterling, Mr George Thorpe, Professor Martin Dauntton, Mr Glen Sharp, Mr Andrew Myson, Professor Howard Griffiths, Mr Donald Hearn, (Chairman), Mr Steve Elstob, Professor Allan Hayhurst, Mr Robert Myers, Dr David Brown and Mr John Drake

+ H. Thorpe
R. Myson
+ Dr. H. Griffiths
Dr. H. Griffiths

1. Landscape Strategy

The Chairman explained that the loss of all the horse chestnuts in Trinity Hall had triggered a general concern that the Colleges on the Backs should consider the long term future of the trees on the Backs, to safeguard the landscape for the next 100 years. The aim was to agree on the structural issues in the Report on the Backs Landscape Strategy, and to leave each of the Colleges to decide how and when to carry out specific work on their land.

Mr Meyers and Dr Brown presented the key points in the draft Report, drawing attention to the proposals:

- i) to strengthen the Avenues as "rungs of a ladder" on the east/west axis
- ii) to replace the formal lines of trees on the north/south axis with a continuation of the St John's Wilderness, with informal planting of mixed species.

These proposals were endorsed at the meeting as offering a coherent long term plan. The planting along Queens Road would need to be given further careful consideration, to provide sufficient bulk so as to screen the traffic from the Backs whilst ensuring that pedestrians would feel safe walking at night along the pathways. Pedestrians on the paths should be able to enjoy the views across the Backs, whereas car drivers on the road should be screened off by the planting.

It was agreed that the City Council should be brought into the discussions, both as a land owner on the Backs and in their capacity as the Planning Authority. It was noted that the Planning Authority would be more likely to take a positive view of specific tree replacement proposals from a College if the overall context was clear from a Masterplan for the Backs.

2. Press and PR issues

It was agreed to use the University's External Affairs and Communications Office to publicise the landscape strategy for the Backs, promoting the positive aspects of the Colleges working together for the long term benefit of the landscape. Ms Ursula Buchan, a leading horticultural journalist, would be prepared to write a piece for the national and horticultural press.

3. Backs Committee

It was agreed to reconvene the Backs Committee which had fallen into abeyance in 1994. The membership of the Committee should be contained to just the six Colleges adjacent to the Backs, with two representatives each (probably the Chairman or

Secretary of the Gardens Committee and the Head Gardener). Two external members (Sir Richard Storey and Mr Hugh Johnson) would be invited on to the Backs Committee and the City Council would also be asked to send representatives. Expert advisers might be invited to particular meetings to share their experience on tree issues. The Committee would plan to meet annually, probably in the middle of May. Initially, Mr Hearn agreed to convene the Committee.

The remit of the Backs Committee would be considered further at its first meeting; the initial terms might be:

- i) for Colleges to share their experiences and indicate their future plans for the Backs
- ii) to take overall responsibility for the landscape issues on the Backs
- iii) to consider expert advice on best practice in respect of the landscape on the Backs

There being no further business, the meeting was closed.

Distribution List

St Johns:

Professor Chris Dobson,
Cdre John Harris
Mr Adam Magee

Trinity

Dr Rod Pullen,
Dr John Easterling,
Mr George Thorpe,

Kings

Dr David Munday,
Mr James Trevithick,
Mr Duncan Baxter,

Trinity Hall

Professor Martin Daunton,
Mr Glen Sharp,
Mr Andrew Myson,

Clare

Professor Howard Griffiths,
Mr Donald Hearn,
Mr Steve Elstub,

Queens

Professor Allan Hayhurst,

Consultants

Mr Robert Meyers,
Dr David Brown,
Mr John Drake

Clare College
MEMORANDUM

To: Professor C Dobson, Cdr J Harris, Mr A Magee, Dr R Pullen, Dr J Easterling, Mr G Thorpe, Dr D Munday, Mr Trevethick, Mr D Baxter, Professor M Daunton, Mr G Sharp, Mr A Myson, Professor H Griffiths, Mr S Elstub, Professor A Hayhurst, Mr R Myers, Dr D Brown and Mr J Drake

From: D P Hearn

Date: 7 March 2008

Re: The Backs Landscape Strategy

I enclose the minutes of the *ad hoc* meeting of College representatives which was held on 26 October 2007. As you will remember, we agreed at that meeting (minute 3) to revive the Backs Committee, each of the six Colleges to nominate two representatives to serve as members of the Committee. Sir Richard Storey and Mr Hugh Johnson have agreed to serve as external members and the City Council's two representatives will also be attending.

The first meeting of the Backs Committee has now been arranged for Friday 23 May 2008 at 10 am (NB not 11.30 as previously suggested). It is envisaged that at that meeting Colleges will make a preliminary report on their reaction to the proposals contained in the Myers' master plan. An Agenda for the meeting will be circulated later.

I should be grateful if each College would let me have the names of the two people who are to be its representatives.

Agenda

Trees on the Backs

Meeting to discuss the Masterplan on the Backs at 2.30 pm on Friday 26 October in ²⁰⁰⁷
the Latimer Room at Clare College

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Welcome | Donald Hearn |
| 2. | Report on Masterplan
Presentation – 10 mins
Discussion – 40 mins | Robert Myers |
| 3. | Press/PR interest | Donald Hearn |

RESERVED BUSINESS

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 4. | Backs Committee: consider resurrection | John Easterling |
| 5. | Any Other Business | |

The Masterplan is being circulated by CD to relevant Bursars for them to print and distribute within their College.

Distribution:

Trinity College: Chairman of Gardens Committee
St Johns College: Chairman of Gardens Committee
Kings College: Chairman of Gardens Committee
Queens College: Chairman of Gardens Committee
Trinity Hall: Chairman of Gardens Committee
Clare College: Chairman of Gardens Committee
Robert Myers: Consultant
David Brown: Consultant
John Drake: Secretary of Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust

Trees on the Backs :Meeting on 26 October 2007

List of individuals expected to attend

St Johns

Professor Chris Dobson, Master, Chairman of Gardens Committee,
Cdre John Harris, Domestic Bursar/Secretary of Gardens Committee,
Mr Adam Magee, Head Gardener

Trinity

Mr Rod Pullen, Domestic Bursar,
Dr John Easterling, Secretary of the Gardens Committee,
Mr George Thorpe, Head Gardener

Kings

Dr David Munday, Second Bursar,
Mr James Trevithick, Secretary of Gardens Committee,
Mr Duncan Baxter, Head Gardener

Trinity Hall

Professor Martin Daunton, the Master, Chairman of Gardens Committee,
Mr Glen Sharp, Junior Bursar,
Mr Andrew Myson, Head Gardener.

Clare

Professor Howard Griffiths, Chairman of Gardens Committee,
Mr Donald Hearn, Bursar,
Mr Steve Elstub, Head Gardener

Queens

Professor Allan Hayhurst, Garden Steward,
~~Mr Peter Balaam~~, Head Gardener

Consultants

Mr Robert Meyers,
Dr David Brown,
Mr John Drake, Secretary of Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust

Clare