

# Tree Condition Survey



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## 1. Instructions and Terms of Reference

- 1.1. I was instructed by Ms Trish Walker, Clerk to Harting Parish Council, via email on 5th January 2021, to undertake a tree condition survey of the trees within the curtilage of land, owned and managed by the council, known as South Gardens & The Warren.
- 1.2. Several plans were supplied outlining the subject area(s). The overall boundary of the survey can be seen in red on the appended plans.
- 1.3. A ground-based formal assessment of the trees was undertaken as a matter of routine maintenance enabling my client to fulfil their duty of care as defined by both civil law and the Occupiers' Liability Acts of 1957 & 1984.
- 1.4. The trees were surveyed, initially at a basic level, to assess their overall condition and to identify the level of risk they may pose to persons and property.
- 1.5. Only trees with a stem diameter greater than 150mm at 1.5m from ground level within falling distance of areas of significant use or property of value were assessed, as defined by the client and/or by the surveyor.
- 1.6. Where the level of risk is deemed unacceptable, remedial works are prescribed/assigned to reduce the risk to acceptable levels, additionally, general management advice has been provided where appropriate.
- 1.7. **Although all trees are assessed, as defined above, only trees requiring works, or are noteworthy in some way, are recorded on the plan and survey schedule.**
- 1.8. Any questions relating to the content of this report should be directed, in the first instance, to myself, at mark@mwelby.com or 01730 239492 quoting the site address and report reference number.

## 2. Tree Owner Responsibilities

- 2.1. We have a duty of care to manage the risk from our trees. That duty requires that we should be reasonable, proportionate, and reasonably practicable when managing this risk. What this means is, there's a balance we need to strike between the many benefits of trees provide, the risk from them, and the cost of managing the risk. By taking a balanced approach, we don't waste resources by reducing risk (and losing the benefits) where risk is already acceptable.
- 2.2. The following references may be of help.
- Health & Safety Executive<sup>1</sup>
  - National Tree Safety Group<sup>2</sup>
  - VALID Tree Risk<sup>3</sup>
- 2.3. As the overall risk from tree failure is extremely low, carrying out a formal assessment of every tree, every year or every other year isn't reasonable, proportionate, or reasonably practicable. Particularly, when trees that have defects that are so obvious they'll be picked up by an informal assessment.
- 2.4. The Tolerability of Risk Framework (ToR) is an internationally recognised approach to making risk management decisions where risks are imposed and have benefits. ToR identifies Broadly Acceptable and Unacceptable levels of risk. Between these two risks is a region where the risk is Tolerable if it's 'as low as reasonably practicable' (ALARP). Put simply, ALARP means the risk is Tolerable if the cost of the risk reduction is much greater the value of the risk reduction.
- 2.5. This tree assessment has been carried out using ToR principles and applying them to tree risk-benefit management. Risk reduction work will be given priority when a risk is highest, and where it's most cost-effective.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.hse.gov.uk/foi/internalops/sims/ag\\_food/010705.htm#Summary](http://www.hse.gov.uk/foi/internalops/sims/ag_food/010705.htm#Summary)

<sup>2</sup> [ntsgroup.org.uk](http://ntsgroup.org.uk)

<sup>3</sup> [www.validtreerisk.com/tree-risk-management-strategy-policy-&-plan](http://www.validtreerisk.com/tree-risk-management-strategy-policy-&-plan)



### 3. Survey: Scope and Methodology

#### Formal Assessment Levels

- 3.1. **Basic**- at this level, the aim is to find the few trees with obvious defects where the risk might not be acceptable. These trees will then have a Detailed assessment carried out on them.
- 3.2. This level of survey will be carried out from ground which is easily accessible. Climbers, undergrowth, basal growth will not be removed, and hedgerows will not be cut to get a closer look unless there are obvious defect 'triggers' to justify the costs of this work.
- 3.3. Trees are either picked out for a Detailed assessment or the risk is deemed acceptable.
- 3.4. **Detailed**- a detailed assessment is carried out on trees identified during the Basic assessment. Or, because particular trees have been highlighted for a closer look by an informal assessment. This is a higher-level assessment to find out whether the risk might not be acceptable.
- 3.5. If any risk reduction work is necessary, it will be specified and organised in order of priority. It will also be decided whether the tree remains as part of the standard formal assessment cycle, or if it's monitored and assessed more frequently.
- 3.6. **Advanced**- after a Detailed assessment, if we need more in-depth information about the likelihood of failure, and Advanced assessment can be carried out. This may be the case with large or important trees where it looks like there's been some significant strength loss.

#### Informal Assessment

- 3.7. When a tree has a risk that might not be acceptable it will often have defects that are so obvious you can't help but notice them. Informal assessment means keeping a look out for obvious defects whilst going about your day-to-day routine. Details on obvious tree defects to look out for can be found here at [validtreerisk.com](http://validtreerisk.com).
- 3.8. When such an obvious defect is noticed, an arborist should be called in to carry out a Formal assessment and make recommendations.

## Notes

- 3.9. The above approach has been formulated In-line with current best practice, and the guidance and policies on [validtreerisk.com](http://validtreerisk.com). and thus attribution is duly afforded.
- 3.10. Where measurements have been included in the schedule, they are estimated and thus for notional reference only.
- 3.11. In addition to the relevant and appropriate formal qualifications, professional memberships and associated CPD, I am a LANTRA Professional Tree Inspector, and authorised user of the VALID Tree Risk-Benefit Assessment & Management system.
- 3.12. Where necessary, I used binoculars. No climbing inspection was carried out. No analysis of soil samples was undertaken, and the condition root systems was only investigated by way of a surface visual inspection, light excavation around the buttress (if expedient) and assessment of the tree(s) overall vitality.
- 3.13. Any urgent work is clearly marked on the schedule. The tree owner will also have been immediately notified by the surveyor.
- 3.14. An online search of Chichester District Council's records do not show any trees with tree preservation orders within the survey area.
- 3.15. Harting Conservation Area does cover the Northern section of the survey area; the ponds and more formal recreation area. The image to the right is taken from the council's site and shows the conservation area boundary in magenta. None of the recommended work is within that area.

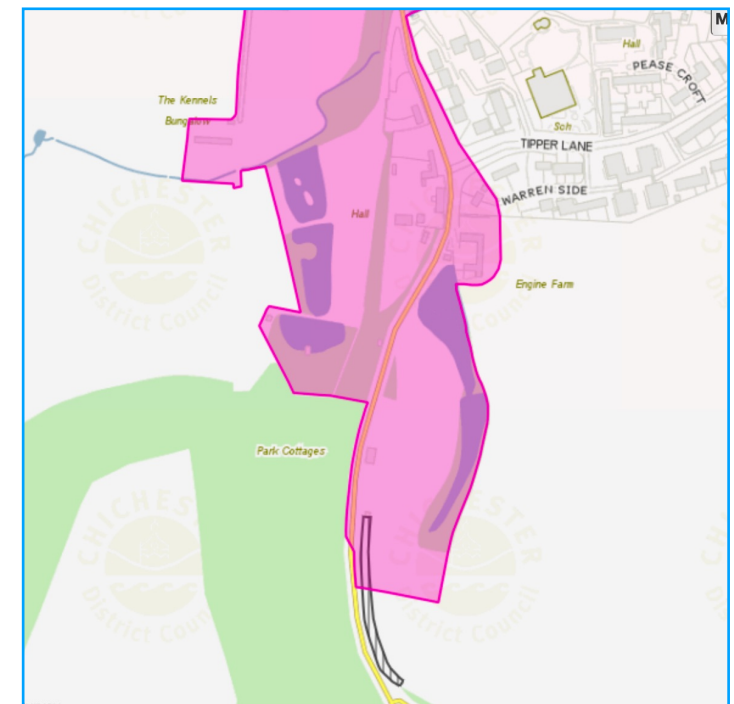


Fig 1: Harting Conservation Area boundary

## 4. Recommendations

### Your Trees

- 4.1. The recent significant work to clear the site of ash trees (other trees had also been removed following arboricultural advice from the last survey in 2019) has addressed most of the risk issues.
- 4.2. During my visit I found two instances where the risk posed by a tree appeared unacceptable: one large beech tree at the top of The Warren, leaning acutely west; and a smaller ash, hung up in an adjacent tree, that could fall onto the highway.
- 4.3. The work prescribed has been done so to reduce these risks to an acceptable level.

### Ongoing Management

- 4.4. Ongoing informal assessments are outlined above. This is your default, day-to-day responsibility as a tree owner.
- 4.5. Further guidance on trees and the law can be found on the Arboricultural Association's website [here](#)<sup>4</sup>.
- 4.6. In terms of fulfilling this duty you might find it useful to review the policies and documents that VALID provide [here](#)<sup>5</sup>.
- 4.7. I recommended that you review the above and adopt a policy/strategy if deemed appropriate. You might find the VALID Landowner Management Strategy appropriate.
- 4.8. This assessment essentially covers the basic assessment level and includes work to reduce any NOT ACCEPTABLE risk to ACCEPTABLE levels.
- 4.9. Should you have any questions about the above, please get in touch. I am happy to discuss options for all proposed management.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.trees.org.uk/Help-Advice/Help-for-Tree-Owners/Guide-to-Trees-and-the-Law>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.validtreerisk.com/tree-risk-management-strategy-policy-&-plan>

I.

## Survey Schedule

Please note that it is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and Countryside and Rights of Way Act to disturb a nesting bird or roosting/breeding bat. The nesting season runs from approximately March to August, but it is always best to check the trees before working.

Ref	Assessment type	Species	Measurements	Survey Notes	Condition	Recommendations to manage risk
01	Detailed Assessment	Common Ash (Fraxinus excelsior)	Height (m): 11 Crown Radius (m): 3 DBH (cm): 30 Life Stage: Early Mature	Tag 900. Declining. Supported by and entwined with adjacent tree.	Poor	Remove tree
02	Detailed Assessment	Common Beech (Fagus sylvatica)	Height (m): 20 Crown Radius (m): 15 DBH (cm): 70 Life Stage: Mature	Tag 59. Acute lean towards and over path. Wounds and decay on lower stem.	Poor	Remove tree
03	Basic Assessment	Mixed species (Mixed species)		Fenced off area. Significant recent tree removals. Remaining standards mostly mature beech. Some windthrown following release.	Good	
04	Basic Assessment	Mixed species (Mixed species)		Central path with other informal paths. Roadside smaller trees on steep bank. Less clearance than upper area.	Good	
05	Basic Assessment	Mixed species (Mixed species)		More formal recreation area with play equipment, ponds, pitches and benches.	Good	



## II.

## Photographs



Fig 2: Declining small ash (#01 Tag900) leaning towards road



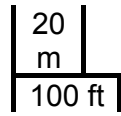
Fig 3: Leaning beech (#02 Tag059)

### III.

## Tree Location Plans

Plans on following pages

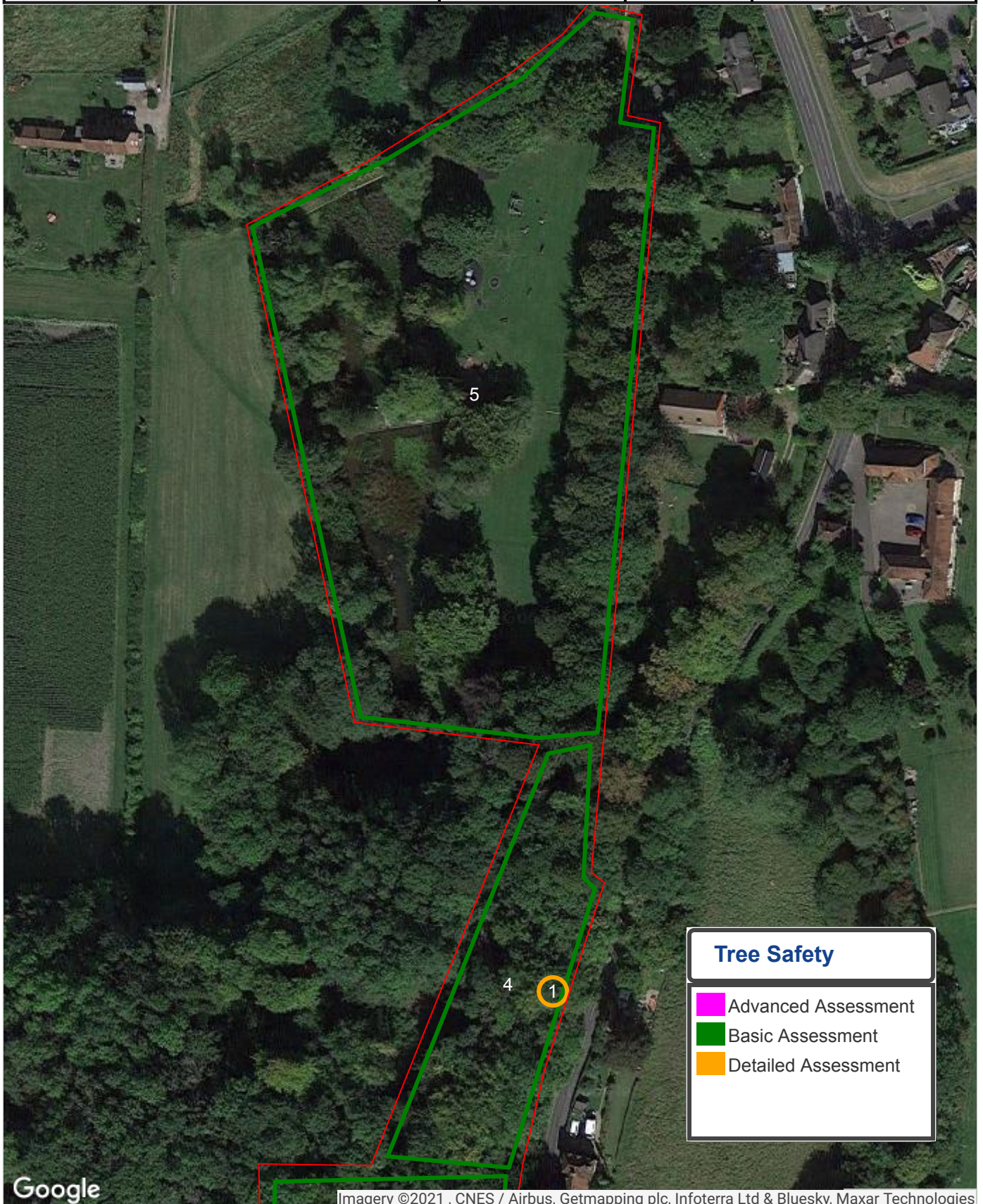




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Page size: A4



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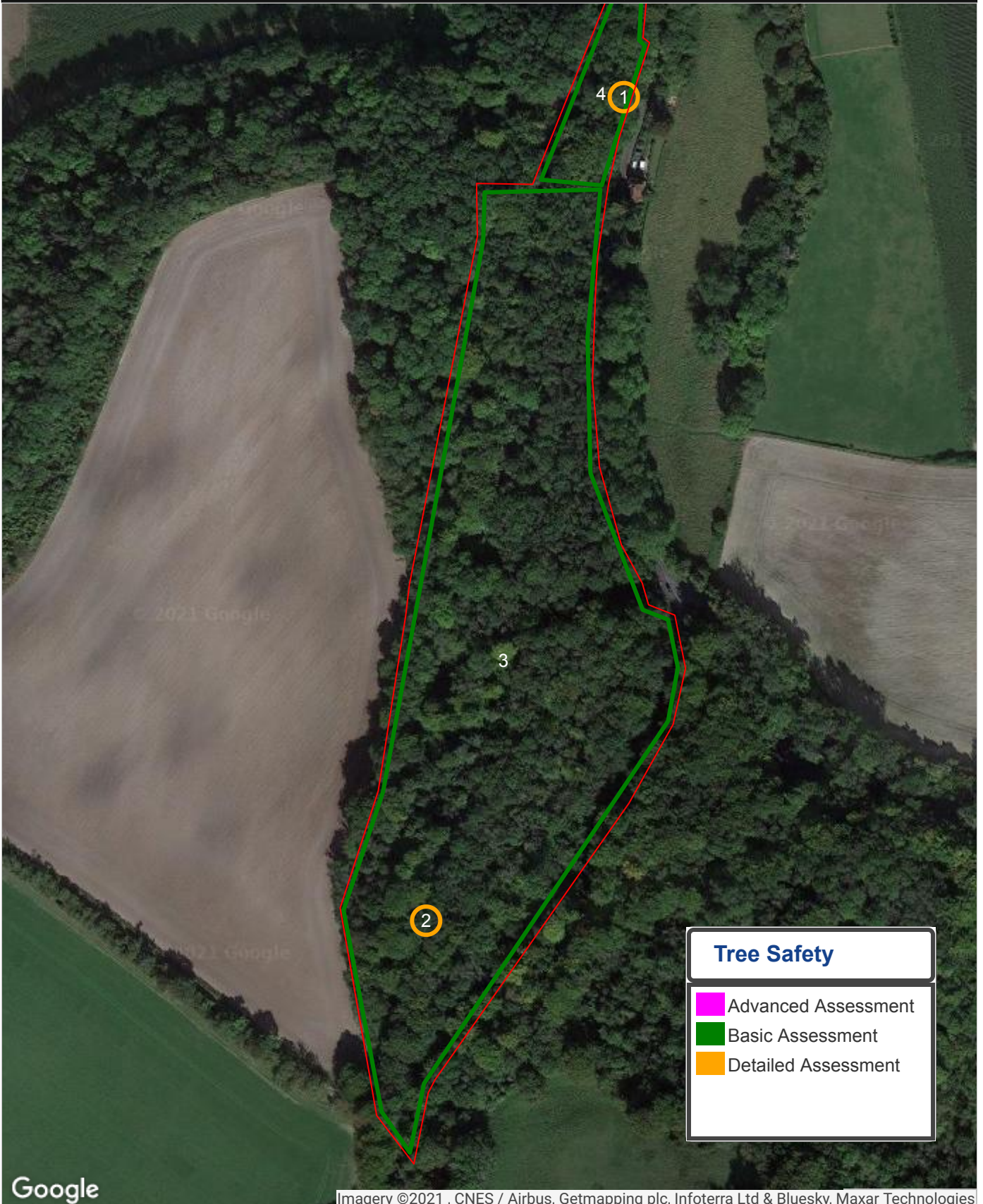
Tree Location Plan 2  
Ref: 21.0104  
The Warren, South Harting

100 m  
200 ft

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Google

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