

Veteran tree management

Ecology and biodiversity – an environmental case study



The project

As part of the Green Transport Corridors Project, a section of the Hull to Selby line was selected for an environmental assessment, carried out with support from Infrastructure Projects Signalling, during which an important veteran tree was identified by a colleague from the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. A veteran tree is one that, by nature of its size and age, provides many habitat niches that do not exist on younger trees; this structural complexity is important for rare fungi, invertebrates, lichens, birds and bats. This tree had previously been pruned to remove limbs growing towards the line but the work actually was negatively impacting its long term health and safety. Experts from Network Rail accompanied an independent arboriculturalist and The Tree Council to site in order to assess whether the tree could be safely retained.

The key benefits delivered

The expert group assembled was able to identify and assess conditions and risk factors to enable an appropriate management plan to be agreed. Work subsequently carried out means that the tree does not pose a threat to the operation and safety of the network and it has maintained the health of the tree, its long term stability and the wider ecological and cultural benefits that it provides. The tree is also now registered on Network Rail's Hazard Directory, and is identified by on-site signage, so that any future work in the area recognises its importance and value.

Lessons learned

- This case study demonstrates the value to Network Rail of working with stakeholders so that natural assets and a safe operational network can be delivered in tandem.
- Despite the relatively young age of our estate, veteran trees are found on our property and with the right input they can be retained safely.

Who to contact for more information

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Yorkshire
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