

Chapter 13 Funding and advice

13.1 Introduction

It will have become apparent from previous sections that active management is often needed on sites with old trees. This may not necessarily mean work on the old trees themselves but often on the land surrounding them or to encourage a new generation of trees. This work can be costly.

Various organisations give grants for habitat work that includes ancient trees but further details should be obtained to check up to date facts and figures. Present sources include:

- Countryside Stewardship (funding for pollarding and tree surgery as part of a site, including farms).
- Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) payments.
- Forestry Commission Woodland Grant Scheme can include work to benefit veteran trees in certain wood-pasture situations.
- Heritage Lottery funding is a possibility for survey and historic landscape work.
- NNR section 35 (1) (c) - Available for National Nature Reserves owned or managed by organisations other than English Nature.

Another option is to make the trees themselves pay. This can be as woodland products such as firewood, charcoal, venison, or domestic animals but these should be by-products of the work, not a reason for doing it. Neither the veterans themselves nor the associated flora and fauna should be compromised as a result of the work. For example, dead wood should not be removed from the veterans to generate income. However, twisted and knotted wood that has no timber value can yield a high income from wood turners, who like burrs and spalted wood.

It is extremely difficult to estimate costs for pollarding and work on ancient trees. In some situations it may be possible to cut 10 trees in a day or only one, depending on the difficulty.

13.2 Sources of advice and getting work done

While awareness of the values and management problems associated with ancient trees is growing it is not safe to assume that all woodland advisors and tree surgeons are competent and have experience in this area. Even the Arboricultural Association approved contractors, although they may be very experienced, may not have ever worked on old trees let alone be able to give detailed and accurate advice. Appendix 6 gives details of some organisations that may be able to help with funding or advice.

It is recommended to use Arboricultural Association approved contractors, and the Ancient Tree Forum may be able to help locate people in your area experienced in veteran trees. Be wary of using the same contractors for advice and for doing the practical work, they may be rather over zealous about the amount of work that needs doing.

If in doubt about the advice you have been given try to find someone else who has dealt with a similar situation before.

Suitable questions to ask a contractor

1. *What are the constraints to working on a tree?*
 - **Legal constraints such as Tree Preservation Orders, Conservation Areas, or felling licences.**
 - **Wildlife value.**
2. *What signs would indicate that a tree has a high wildlife value?*
Holes, cavities, water-filled cavities, loose bark, staining, bracket fungi, etc.
3. *What might be living in the tree?*
Bats, birds, insects, etc.
4. *What would you do if you found bats or nesting birds during the course of the work?*
Refer to chapter 7 for suitable replies.
5. *How can a tree be made safe, causing minimum damage to its wildlife value?*
Remove the target, crown reduction, propping, cable bracing, etc.

The impression that you should get is that the contractor would not cut the tree unless absolutely necessary and that he would do the minimum of tree surgery necessary to achieve the required aim. The contractor should also have adequate knowledge of the wildlife value of veteran trees and know what to do if a protected species were found during work in progress.