

European Tree of the Year contest – Vote for England!

The Cubbington Wild Pear tree won the 2015 English Tree of the Year competition, organised by the Woodland Trust. It now needs the support of the great British public as it goes forward to the European contest. The result is decided by a public on-line ballot lasting until 29 February at www.treeoftheyear.org where the tree features at England UK with a picture entitled The Cubbington Pear Tree. This European competition, run by the Czech Environmental Partnership, highlights the importance of the preservation of trees and the environment and their importance to people and communities. ¹

The Cubbington Pear tree has stood for over 200 years on top of a hill, overlooking ancient woodland and the peaceful Leam Valley, on a much-used public footpath to neighbouring villages. The tree is now competing against 14 others but it is the only one at risk of destruction from a government's major project. Many old trees in the UK have little legal protection; although the Cubbington Pear has Tree Preservation Order status it will be felled if HS2 goes ahead in 2017. It is the second largest wild pear tree reported in the UK and the largest in Warwickshire. Since it was put on the National Tree Register it has become an icon for all trees and ancient woodlands threatened by the railway project. Warwickshire has only 6% of woodland cover [less than the National average of 10%].²

Peter Delow, Chairman of Cubbington Action Group Against HS2 which nominated the tree in England's Tree of the Year contest, comments:

'Whilst Cubbington representing England in an international competition is exciting and a reason to be proud of our tree, it does bring with it the pressure to do well in the contest – after all, national pride is at stake here. I am very conscious that we need to do more than ten times better this time. If we are to keep the pressure on the Government to make HS2 more environmentally-friendly, then it is important for the Cubbington tree to do well in this European contest. So, if you voted for the Cubbington tree before, please be sure to vote for it again and do your very best to encourage others to support our entry this time.'

Notes for editors:

¹ The Czech Environmental Partnership is a leading foundation supporting sustainable development projects in all regions of the Czech Republic, assisting in protection and improvement of their environment. This European competition seeks trees that have become a part of the wider community and consists of the winners of the national rounds.

² The Woodland Trust and Forestry Commission's National Inventory of Woodland and Trees by S.Smith.