

Email correspondence from Mr Graham Farley (Mersea Island Environmental Alliance & Environmental Law Foundation) to Essex County Council (Assistant Arboricultural Consultant) on 07/10/25.

Dear Sabrina

Thank you for your email regarding the planned tree works on Fairhaven Avenue.

We wish to inform you that we have written to our contacts in Natural England regarding the potential impact of the proposed works on red squirrels, a protected species known to be present in the area. They have confirmed receipt of our email. We are therefore currently awaiting their formal response and advise that no tree works be carried out until their guidance is received.

Essex County Council and West Mersea Town Council have been notified.

Additionally, we would highlight that October is not an appropriate time to carry out significant tree works in areas of potential red squirrel habitat. Currently, trees are still in full leaf, making it significantly more difficult to identify active dreys, and the risk of disturbance remains unacceptably high.

Trees still in leaf makes dreys harder to detect, increasing the risk of unintentional disturbance or destruction of a sheltering site — which would be a criminal offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

To reduce the risk of harm or legal non-compliance under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, we strongly recommend that any necessary works be postponed until at least November, which falls outside the main breeding period and when dreys are more easily identified due to leaf fall.

We would be grateful for confirmation that the proposed works will be deferred until further ecological assessment and guidance from Natural England has been received.

Kind regards

Graham Farley

Mersea Island Environmental Alliance & Environmental Law Foundation

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Good morning Graham,

Thankyou for getting in touch with us and I apologise for the delay in replying.

I have consulted with our ecology team about this and do not believe that a licence would be required for these tree works. When inspected none of the trees to be works upon had hollows visible that might be used as sheltering spaces by squirrels and the works are being done outside of breeding season. The contractor undertaking the work has been specifically told to inspect the trees prior to undertaking any works in case squirrels are present. If squirrels are found tree works will be postponed on the tree identified pending further inspection. As this is for tree maintenance works only it would not be considered a development that would cause major disruption for an extended period of time so any impact to local wildlife is expected to be low.

In response to your letter below the works are only for Fairhaven Avenue. The surrounding streets will not be affected. So far as we are aware no trees along Fairhaven are protected by Tree Preservation Order and so this would not be a constraint however, it is down to the contractor to check this before undertaking any works. The contractor has stated the works will commence week starting either the 6th or 13th October.

If you have any further question please get in touch.

Kind regards,
Sabrina