

Liz Everest

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 27 January 2026 16:11
To: Emma Rivett
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: DM/25/3277 - 15 Lewes Road, Haywards Heath

[REDACTED]
Dear Emma,

With reference to the objection letter from [REDACTED] in relation to our application for works to the Giant Sequoia at 15 Lewes Road. We are grateful for the opportunity to respond and address the points raised. Our comments below follow the same numbered structure and headings as set out in the objection letter and should be read alongside the attached arboriculturist report, tree survey and application documents.

At the outset, we would like to be clear that our application is driven solely by safety considerations. We value mature trees and would prefer to retain this tree in a safe and sustainable condition rather than see it removed. Our intention throughout has been to understand, evidence and appropriately manage any foreseeable risk.

1. Long-standing stability and History of the Tree

We agree that the tree is large and established. However, it was not established at the time our house was built. We are fortunate to have been gifted photographs taken during the construction of the house, in which the tree is not visible.

While the tree is mature, we do not agree that it has remained stable. There is a significant and measurable lean towards our property. Given the tree's size, age and elevated position, it is reasonable to conclude that its stability may have been adversely affected by historic storm events, including the Great Storm of 1987 and subsequent severe weather.

2. Regular Professional Inspections

We have seen no evidence of regular inspections by a qualified arboriculturist, nor any formal inspection reports that Sheila had assured us were completed on the tree. We have asked Sheila whether we can view any such report, as our intention was to reassure ourselves that the tree was safe.

Our concern has increased due to the higher frequency of significant meteorological events (heavy rainfall & strong winds) alongside the tree's close proximity to our home and the fact that it leans directly towards our bedroom and our children's bedrooms. If a suitably qualified professional were able to confirm that the tree poses no risk of failure, we would not be seeking any reduction or removal.

3. Incorrect Claims Regarding Mammal Activity

[REDACTED]

4.Natural Lean and Wind Direction

During the five years we have lived at the property, the lean of the tree has visibly increased. Due to the tree's orientation and elevated position relative to our house, were it to fail, the only realistic direction of fall would be directly onto our home.

5. No evidence of Damage

We agree that there is currently no evidence of damage to either property and we do not dispute this. Our concern is not about historic damage, but about the foreseeable consequences should the tree fail in high winds, which are now a more frequent weather occurrence.

6. Contribution to the Conservation Area

We agree that the tree is beautiful and, if it were possible to relocate it further down the garden, we would absolutely do so. This application is not about not wanting the tree, but about our concern for the safety of our family should it fall.

We strongly disagree with the suggestion that Sheila has been intimidated by anyone living at our property. This is not an accurate reflection of our interactions and we do not accept this characterisation.

Natural needle drop occurs to the eastern side of our property and, while it requires routine clearing from the ground and gutters, it has not caused us any material inconvenience and does not affect areas of the garden we use. We are fortunate to have several seating areas and are not concerned about natural shade.

7.Willingness to Follow Council Guidance

We are pleased to hear that Sheila is willing to undertake any works that the Council considers necessary and appropriate in the interests of health and safety. In this context, we respectfully ask that full weight be given to the independent arboriculturist's report, which identifies a high-consequence risk to life should the recommended works not be undertaken.

The previous tree work we undertook to the beech tree was carried out by an independent tree surgeon. We provided him with the relevant planning permission and left him to complete the works. While we would not use this contractor again, as he did not follow the permission precisely, we remain confident that the work was carried out with the best interests of the tree in mind.

We have no objection whatsoever to Sheila appointing her own contractor to carry out any approved works, provided those works are completed strictly in accordance with the permission granted and makes the tree safe.

We have always followed Council guidance and have not carried out works to any trees without prior consent. Some lower branches of this tree were removed on Sheila's side by her gardener without planning permission, and we have not seen a planning application for the removal of a large oak tree from her garden.

8. Application error

We agree that an error occurred within the application and appreciate that the Council has extended the deadline to allow this to be corrected.

In summary, any works proposed are purely intended to reduce the risk of failure. We sought reassurance that the tree was safe and were told that previous inspections were visual only, with no formal reports. On that basis, we requested access to commission an independent arboricultural inspection at our own cost. On the day of the inspection, I asked whether Sheila wished to be present, and she replied by text message: *"I am out this morning, but that's OK."*

We sincerely hope that the tree never fails. However, the attached arboriculturist report identifies a credible and foreseeable risk should the recommended works not be undertaken. Given the proximity of the tree to our home and the potential consequences, this is not a risk we are prepared to accept with our children's safety. There has previously been an incident involving a large redwood tree on Oathall Road which failed and resulted in a fatality. This demonstrates that, while such events are rare, failure of large mature trees can and does occur, with serious consequences. Our concern is to avoid any comparable risk in circumstances where a professional assessment has already identified a potential hazard.

We respectfully note that the professional risk assessment now forms part of the application record. Should the tree fail in the future, it would be clear that the risk had been formally identified and brought to the attention of all relevant parties.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our response.

K
H

From: Emma Rivett <Emma.Rivett@midsussex.gov.uk>

Date: 21 January 2026 at 07:48:17 GMT

cc: lee@rcttgrove.co.uk

Subject: DM/25/3277 - 15 Lewes Road, Haywards Heath

Dear Mr Bryant,

I am writing to you regarding the recent application DM/25/3277, concerning your neighbour's tree at number 15 Lewes Road.

I have recently visited the above tree, as has my colleague, Irene Fletcher.

Firstly, I am unwilling to permit the reduction that you have applied for. I note that some branches on the tree have previously been reduced, without prior consent. This is a criminal offence, as no application/notification was previously submitted.

It is likely that a 1.5m reduction to some **lower branches only**, is likely to be permissible. I can arrange a time that is mutually convenient to revisit to discuss this. It would not, in any event, be possible to implement the works that you propose, as they could not be carried out from your land and also relate to parts of the tree which could not be accessed from your land.

Further, I would also like to remind you, that you have no right to access number 15 Lewes Road, without first gaining consent from your neighbour. However, this is a civil matter and is enforced by the police, it does constitute trespass.

On a separate note, I observed that significant work has occurred to the beech tree, beyond the scope of permission DM/21/1825. Once again, it is a criminal offence to carry out works which are in excess of those that were agreed.

I look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

Kind regards

Emma

Emma Rivett

Assistant Tree Officer-Development Management

www.midsussex.gov.uk

Working together for a better Mid Sussex

The information contained in this email may be subject to public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Unless the information contained in this email is legally exempt from disclosure, we cannot guarantee that we will not provide the whole or part of this email to a third party making a request for information about the subject matter of this email. This email and any attachments may contain confidential information and is intended only to be seen and used by the named addressees. If you are not the named addressee, any use, disclosure, copying, alteration or forwarding of this email and its attachments is unauthorised. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender immediately by email or by calling +44 (0) 1444 458 166 and remove this email and its attachments from your system. The views expressed within this email and any attachments are not necessarily the views or policies of Mid Sussex District Council. We have taken precautions to minimise the risk of transmitting software viruses, but we advise you to carry out your own virus checks before

accessing this email and any attachments. Except where required by law, we shall not be responsible for any damage, loss or liability of any kind suffered in connection with this email and any attachments, or which may result from reliance on the contents of this email and any attachments.