

# High Street trees in the 20<sup>th</sup> century

## Parish Council tree planting

In **December 1894** Stonehouse elected its first Parish Council. Encroachment on the village greens was one of the important matters considered by the new Council. The County Council regarded the greens as “highways waste” and was not prepared to acknowledge that Parish Councils could exercise any authority over such areas. If the Parish Council had not argued its case effectively, our delightful greens might not have survived.



*Upper High Street c1900 showing young trees.*



*Funeral cortege of William Hill grocer, October 1902.*

**Early in 1898** several leading parishioners offered trees to the Council. These were gratefully accepted. Within a month, the Council received a letter from the Lord of the Manor’s solicitor objecting to the trees being planted on common land at the side of the streets. A hastily convened Parish Meeting authorised the Council to assert its rights to the control of the village greens and “roadside wastes”.



*Crown & Anchor Hotel, coaching inn, c1900.*

These early photos show a mix of young trees and fairly mature ones by the side of High Street. There were some trees on the street prior to the 1890s, but there were no trees on the west side of the street, other than at its upper end.



*Young trees, mid High Street, 1894.*



*Young trees, mid High Street, c1910.*

## Trees that were lost in the 1950s

In **1951**, the street was widened and resurfaced and electric street lights were installed. As part of that reconstruction, some of the roadside trees were felled, although many of the mature trees remain.



*High Street, Stonehouse.*



*HIGH STREET. STONEHOUSE.*

*3615.*



# High Street trees in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

## Regeneration 2011

The High Street was modified with the aims of improving the centre of Stonehouse. The scheme adopted 'shared space' ideas which had been developed in the Netherlands and Denmark, and included planting new trees. The modified section now looks splendid and, as the trees grow to maturity, they are enhancing the appearance of the main shopping area.



The following tree types were chosen:

**American ash** (*Fraxinus Americana*) - a fast growing conical tree with a robust branch structure and good autumn colour.

**Hornbeam** (*Carpinus Betulus*) - a native tree with good autumn colour and which is most valuable as a seed and insect food source for birds.

Ten semi-mature trees were planted in mid High Street in the late autumn of 2011, 60 years after the previous ones were felled. As the trees are maturing, High Street is looking splendid and revitalised.

The trees were purchased with funds raised by local schools, businesses and local people. Plaques were installed to acknowledge the donors.

