**Tree Preservation Order – Westbrook Woodland**

Bath Preservation Trust would like to offer comments on this provisional order which we understand will be heard by Development Management Committee in April.

We support the blanket Tree Preservation Order for the woodlands known as Westbrook adjacent to the West Brook, which is an historical brook that used to run through Weston village but is now culverted underground at Symes Park.

The reasons for our support are:

* The West Brook and its natural environment has been a key landscape feature of Weston for centuries and appears in maps dating from the 1700’s. Indeed a nearby cottage on the corner of Deanhill Lane appears on maps as Westbrook Cottage, and remains of an old bridge can still be seen next to the house.
* The fact the brook is now culverted above the Weston village means that much of this historic communal feature is now lost and its contribution to the local spirit of place is also in danger of fading from memory. The preservation of the natural woodland that surrounds the brook logically offers protection of the site from built development and this is an important factor in our support of the order.
* This woodland is extremely well established and forms a valued part of the landscape setting of the World Heritage Site, which is recognised for its Outstanding Universal Value, and contributes to the setting of the nearby Green Belt and to the character and local distinctiveness of the Cotswolds AONB.
* The woodland has specific protection under Policy NE2A as it forms part of the landscape setting of the settlement (Weston village). Given its unspoilt, bucolic and verdant nature, the woodland makes an important contribution to the rural character of the settlement edge.
* The woodland makes a significant contribution to the visual amenity of the local area and softens/screens the appearance of suburban development, making it an important transitional feature connecting the village edge with the beauty of the surrounding landscape which sweeps up to Kelston Round Hill and the Cotswold Way.
* In panoramic views over the World Heritage Site from local vantage points both north and south the woodland is a positive natural feature which enhances the views.

Failure to protect this woodland would put this green space at risk of harm and loss, and this will threaten the landscape setting of the World Heritage Site in this location.