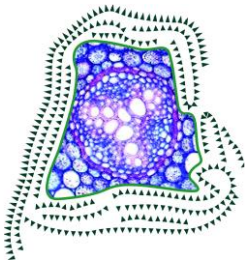
HILL-FORT TREE CARE



# Arboricultural Survey

# St Peter's Churchyard, Thornton

Produced for: Shirley Garlick
St Peter's Church
Thornton
Leicestershire

Produced by: Harry Ashman *L4 DipArb*
Arboricultural Consultant

Report date: 17 June 2026

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## 1.0 Introduction:

1.1 Following correspondence over email, instructions were received (Email) from Shirley Garlick, on behalf of St Peter's Church Perochial Council, Church Lane, Thornton, Leics, LE67 1AA to survey the trees at St Peter's Church, Thornton.

## 2.0 Brief

2.1 To survey all those trees on the site of the Church yard and report back upon their health and safety. The assessment is to be made on each individual tree recording its major attributes, species, age range, approximate height, range of physiological and structural conditions, notes and sufficient information to inform future assessment and management.

## 3.0 Qualifications and experience

3.1 This survey is based on site observations, conclusions have been made in the light of experience, training and qualification. A list of the surveyors qualifications and experience is detailed at appendix 3

## 4.0 Inspection details

4.1 Preliminary assessment of the trees was carried out from ground level on Monday 17th June 2026, using current visual tree hazard and risk assessment methods. Tree information is recorded on the enclosed survey sheets. No digging, excavation or drilling was undertaken.

4.2 No comment on the condition of any other trees than those as annotated (G1, T1 – T18) on the sketch plan attached at appendix 4, is attempted or inferred unless clearly stated.

4.3 The weather conditions were bright. At the time of the report, all live trees were in full leaf, as is typical for the time of year.

4.4 The survey is based on a sketch plan drawn up by the surveyor and the trees individually indicated on the plan are not plotted to scale. No attempt has been made to match tree plotting numbers with any previous reports or maps of the site.

## 5.0 Appraisal

5.1 The trees assessed are mostly mature or early mature, located within the grounds of the churchyard. For the most part they are in a good condition and afford the church and the locale substantial amenity value. They offer high wildlife values and are an important part of the green infrastructure of the locale.

5.2 There is one tree on site considered to be in ‘poor’ condition. This is a mature common ash (T11), that exhibits a torn out limb at approximately 5-6m above ground level, and significant decay and hollowing both around the tear out area and in other cavities about the crown.

5.3 Around the site, several trees, including T2, T6 and T17 exhibit bark-included unions. These unions limit the development of strong connective wood, which can reduce structural stability and increase the likelihood of failure under load. While the severity varies, some unions show early signs of weakness that warrant remediation and ongoing observation (see schedule attached for recommendations.

5.4 Along with the recommendations outlined in this report, trees with bark-included unions should be paid special attention to and checked regularly for signs of incipient failure particularly cracks or split developing directly below the unions on either side especially following storm conditions.

## 6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Recommendations for work to individual trees and further inspection of trees are given in the schedule attached at appendix 1.

6.3 The recommended re-inspection intervals assumes that all the works as per the recommendations made in this report are carried out within the time frames provided and are guidelines based on the target value (persons or property that might come to harm from trees), the condition of the trees and their environment. Should changes occur in the condition of the trees, their environment or the frequency of people/property beneath the trees the need for re-inspection should be adjusted, and in particular following storm events.

6.4 Tree work should conform to the current BS 3998:2010 Tree work - Recommendations.

## 7.0 Statutory Protection

7.1 No contact has been made with the local planning authority to confirm the prospective status of the trees contained in this report. Nevertheless your attention is drawn to Appendix 2.

7.2 All British Birds and their nesting sites are protected under the Wildlife and countryside Act 1981 (amended by the Countryside and rights of Way Act 2000) and the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994. The implications of which are that thorough inspection of trees prior to any works on trees must be undertaken to establish the presence or not of any nesting bird

7.3 All British bats are similarly protected. Although I saw no evidence of the presence of bats during my inspection, all bats use trees for shelter and protection. Therefore adequate surveying for the presence of bats or their roosts must be undertaken immediately prior to carrying out any tree works.

## 8.0 Terms, conditions and report limitations

8.1 While every effort has been made to identify defects within the trees surveyed, no absolute guarantee can be given or is intended to the safety or otherwise of any tree or trees discussed in this survey or report.

8.2 Trees are living organisms whose health and condition can change rapidly. The health, condition and safety of trees should be checked regularly, preferably at least once a year. The conclusions and recommendations in this report are valid for a period of one year. This period of validity may be reduced in the case of any change in conditions to the trees or their local environment.

8.3 Upon undertaking the recommended works, the arborist/tree surgeon must without delay report any defects that become apparent while climbing or working on the tree in question. Those defects must be reported immediately to the project manager, landowner and the author of this report to enable the appropriate remedial action.

8.4 No permission is intended or granted to work on any trees, shrubs, hedges or hedgerows without the prior permission of the landowner or their agent.

8.5 This report in no way comments on or discusses tree related subsidence or heave, nor does it infer or attempt a subsidence or heave risk assessment.

## Appendix 1 (tree schedule)

| Ref. | Species | Description | Measurements | Survey Notes | Overall Condition | Inspect Period | Recommendations |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| G001 | Common ash *(Fraxinus excelsior)* | TREE CARE<br>Owned by the estate. | Height (m): 25<br>Life Stage: Mature<br>Life Exp.: 40+ Years | Group of 6 mature ash. Deadwood (DW) throughout group, although none over high usage area of church yard. One tree in poor structural Condition, centre of the group, significantly truncated. | Fair | 1 Year | Remove major deadwood throughout crown<br><br>Remove central truncated tree to ground level<br><br>Remove ivy to 1m above ground level to allow for basal inspection of ivy clad trees.<br>Timescale: 15-Jun-2027 (1 Year) |
| T001 | Bird cherry *(Prunus padus)* | Owned by the estate. | Height (m): 8<br>Life Stage: Early Mature<br>Life Exp.: 40+ Years | Pleasant tree.<br><br>Lower crown inhibits access to gravestones | Good | 2 Years | Crown raise to 2m above ground level<br>Timescale: 15-Jun-2028 (2 Years) |
| T002 | Common ash *(Fraxinus excelsior)* | Tree on or adjacent to site boundary, unknown ownership | Height (m): 13<br>Life Stage: Early Mature<br>Life Exp.: 40+ Years | Self-set tree, bark included union at base. | Fair | 2 Years | Reduce tree by 2.5m in height to alleviate pressure on bark included union<br>Timescale: 15-Jun-2027 (1 Year) |
| T003 | Common ash *(Fraxinus excelsior)* | Owned by neighbour. | Height (m): 20<br>Life Stage: Mature<br>Life Exp.: 40+ Years | Major deadwood over churchyard, although in a corner with relatively low expected footfall. | Fair | 2 Years | Remove major deadwood (>25mmØ) where over or likely to impact church yard<br>Timescale: 15-Jun-2027 (1 Year) |
| T004 | Common holly *(Ilex aquifolium)* | Owned by the estate. | Height (m): 12<br>Life Stage: Mature<br>Life Exp.: 30+ Years | Foliage on eastern side of the tree in contact with superstructure of the church | Good | 2 Years | Prune to clear superstructure of the church by 1m<br>Timescale: 15-Jun-2027 (1 Year) |
| T005 | Common ash *(Fraxinus excelsior)* | Owned by the estate. | Height (m): 22<br>Life Stage: Mature<br>Life Exp.: 40+ Years | Over extended western primary limb showing signs of apical dominance. Leaning over footpath. | Fair | 1 Year | Reduce western primary limb by 3-4m<br>Timescale: 15-Jun-2027 (1 Year) |

| Ref. | Species | Description | Measurements | Survey Notes | Overall Condition | Inspect Period | Recommendations |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T006 | Copper beech *(Fagus sylvatica purpurea)* | Owned by the estate. | Height (m): 20<br>Life Stage: Mature<br>Life Exp.: 40+ Years | High value tree. Displays a large bark included union from it's base | Fair | 1 Year | Reduce south western primary limb by approximately 3m from the distal end to reduce forces acting upon the weak bark included union.<br><br>Optional: consider raising crown to allow for easier mowing beneath if necessary<br>Timescale: 15-Jun-2027 (1 Year) |
| T007 | Common ash *(Fraxinus excelsior)* | Owned by the estate. | Height (m): 25<br>Life Stage: Mature<br>Life Exp.: 20+ Years | Major DW throughout crown. Dieback visible on the lower crown and certain parts of upper crown. Possible early onset of 'Ash die back' (*Hymenoscyphus fraxinea*) | Fair | 1 Year | Remove major Deadwood (>25mmØ) throughout the crown<br>Timescale: 15-Dec-2026 (6 Months) |
| T008 | Common ash *(Fraxinus excelsior)* | Owned by the estate. | Height (m): 18<br>Life Stage: Mature<br>Life Exp.: 40+ Years | Major deadwood over footpath | Fair | 1 Year | Remove major deadwood(>25mmØ) where over or likely to impact upon footpath<br>Timescale: 15-Dec-2026 (6 Months) |

| Ref. | Species | Description | Measurements | Survey Notes | Overall Condition | Inspect Period | Recommendations |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T009 | Elder *(Sambucus nigra)* | Owned by the estate. | Height (m): 4<br>Life Stage: Dead | Dead tree. Leaning away from footpath | Dead | Not Recorded | Remove to ground level<br>Timescale: 15-Jun-2028 (2 Years) |
| T010 | English elm *(Ulmus procera)* | Owned by the estate. | Height (m): 15<br>Life Stage: Dead | Dead tree | Dead | Not Recorded | Remove to 2m stump and leave for wildlife value<br>Timescale: 15-Jun-2027 (1 Year) |
| T011 | Common ash *(Fraxinus excelsior)* | Owned by the estate (assumed).<br><br>Tree in fence line. | Height (m): 25<br>Life Stage: Over Mature<br>Life Exp.: <10 years | Hollow at base when sounded using nylon hammer. Large breakout wound at 4-5m on west side, revealing significant cavitation within. Multiple apparently hollow woodpecker holes on the main stem. Tall tree with large crown | Poor | 1 Year | Monolith at 5-6m above ground level<br>Timescale: 15-Jun-2027 (As soon as is reasonably practicable) |
| T012 | European larch *(Larix decidua)* | Owned by the estate. | Height (m): 16<br>Life Stage: Mature<br>Life Exp.: 20+ Years | Major deadwood over churchyard | Good | 1 Year | Remove deadwood (>25mmØ) where over or likely to impact upon churchyard. Remove ivy on south side of tree.<br>Timescale: 15-Jun-2027 (1 Year) |

| Ref. | Species | Description | Measurements | Survey Notes | Overall Condition | Inspect Period | Recommendations |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T013 | Common ash *(Fraxinus excelsior)* | Owned by the estate. | Height (m): 25<br>Life Stage: Mature<br>Life Exp.: 20+ Years | Major deadwood visible in the crown potential Cavities at old pruning wounds | Fair | 1 Year | Remove major deadwood. Aerially inspect old pruning wounds for extent of decay<br>Timescale: 15-Jun-2027 (1 Year) |
| T014 | Common beech *(Fagus sylvatica)* | Owned by the estate. | Height (m): 25<br>Life Stage: Mature<br>Life Exp.: 20+ Years | Isolated areas of major Deadwood in crown | Good | 1 Year | Remove major Deadwood in crown<br>Timescale: 15-Jun-2027 (1 Year) |
| T015 | Common beech *(Fagus sylvatica)* | Owned by the estate. | Height (m): 25<br>Life Stage: Mature<br>Life Exp.: 10+ Years | Ganoderma spp at base of tree on east side, between 2 buttresses. No hollow sounds evident when striking with a sounding hammer. Occluding helical cavity from 5-8m on west side. Major DW in crown. Rooting area on southern side has tarmac walkway running through it. | Fair | 1 Year | Map basal decay by sonic tomography or Resistograph drilling to understand better the extent of decay associated with colonisation of decay fungus (Ganoderma sp.)<br>Timescale: 15-Jun-2027 (6 months) |

| Ref. | Species | Description | Measurements | Survey Notes | Overall Condition | Inspect Period | Recommendations |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T016 | Common beech *(Fagus sylvatica)* | Owned by the estate. | Height (m): 25<br>Life Stage: Mature<br>Life Exp.: 20+ Years | Major Deadwood throughout the crown . | Good | 1 Year | Remove major deadwood<br>Timescale: 15-Jun-2027 (1 Year) |
| T017 | Common beech *(Fagus sylvatica)* | Owned by the estate. | Height (m): 25<br>Life Stage: Mature<br>Life Exp.: 20+ Years | Multiple bark included unions where tri trifurcation occurs around 4m above ground level. | Fair | 1 Year | Reduce tree by approximately 5m in height and proportionately in spread to reduces forces acting upon bark included unions.<br>Timescale: 15-Jun-2027 (1 Year) |
| T018 | Common beech *(Fagus sylvatica)* | Owned by the estate. | Height (m): 20<br>Life Stage: Mature<br>Life Exp.: 40+ Years | Exhibits south westerly lean due to competition by a now removed neighbouring beech tree. Southwest crown near to neighbouring property | Good | 1 Year | Optional<br>Consider pruning south west side by 0.5m, where in close proximity to superstructure of neighbouring property |

**Appendix 2** *(Tree Preservation orders & Conservation areas)*

## 10.0 Tree preservation Orders

10.1 A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is and order made by the local planning authority (LPA) to protect individual, groups, areas of trees and woodlands. The legislation on TPO'sis in *Part VIII of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.* **Written consent from the Local Planning Authority must be obtained before any work can take place on protected trees**. Failure to acquire consent from the LPA may result in prosecution. In some cases the dead, dying and dangerous exemption will apply, you should contact your LPA for more details

## 10.2 Conservation Areas

10.2.1 The Law relating to conservation areas is in *Part II of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.* Conservation area are areas of specialarcitectural or historical interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to enhance or preserve. **Anyone proposing to undertake work to trees within a Conservation Area is required to give the Local Planning Authority 6 weeks prior notice** to enable the tree to be considered for protection by a Tree Preservation Order. Failure to give the LPA 6 weeks notice may result in prosecution. In some case the dead and dangerous exemption will apply, you should contact your LPA for more details.

**Appendix 3** *(Qualifications, experience, professional development & membership of trade organisations)*

## Qualifications and experience

Harry Ashman currently holds the Level 4 Diploma in Arboriculture *(ABC)* achieved at Distinction level. He also holds the LANTRA Awards Certificate in Professional Tree Inspection and has been assessed. He has over 10 years experience in arboriculture, beginning work as a tree climbing arborist. He is the son of Mark Ashman and Co-Director of the family firm, Hill-Fort Tree Care and Consultancy.

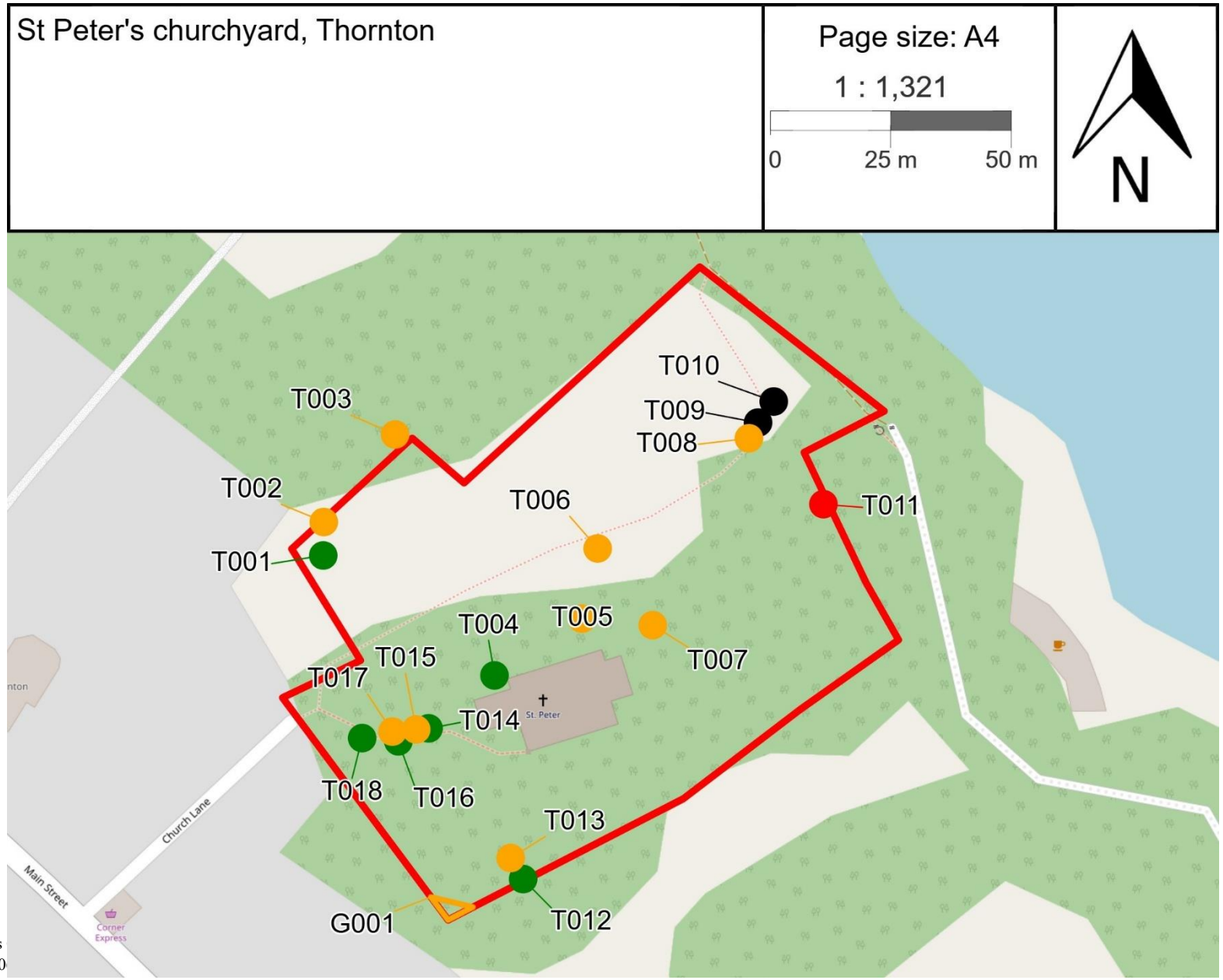
## Continuous professional development

Hill-fort Tree care is committed to continuous professional development at all levels of the organisation. We are regular attendees of industry conferences and seminars. Harry Ashman is currently working on his Masters in Forestry *MFORDL* (Distanced Learning) at Bangor University.

## Membership of professional organisations

Harry Ashman is a professional member of the Arboricultural Association and the Royal Forestry Society.

## **Appendix 4** *(Sketch plans)*

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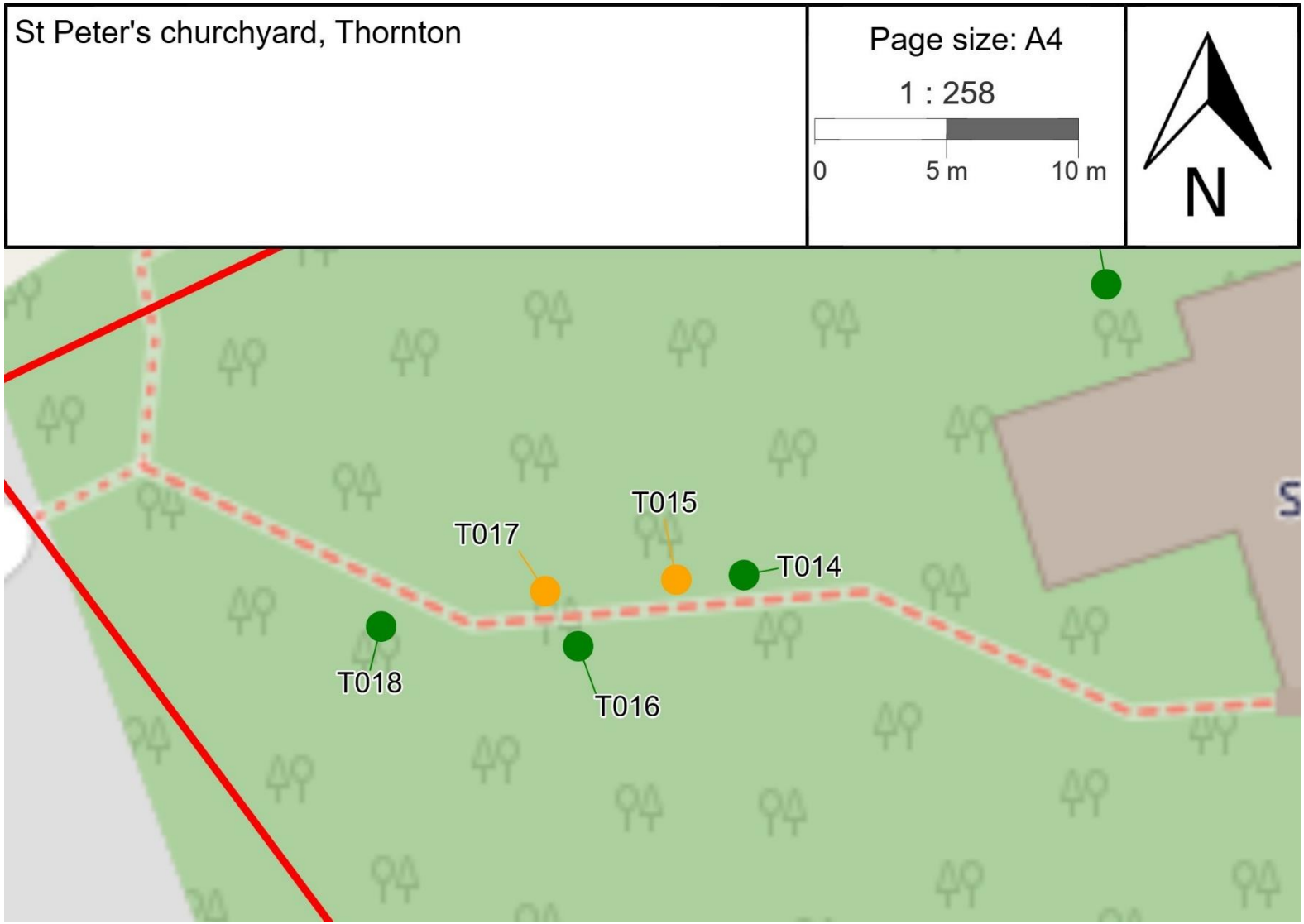
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