



Peak District Ash Dieback Update

December 2020

This update is designed to inform you about our ash dieback tree safety work, happening across National Trust places in the Peak District, in January and February 2021.



What's ash dieback and how is it impacting the Peak District?

Ash dieback is caused by a fungus called *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*; it is also commonly known as 'Chalara' after an old scientific name.

The fungal disease originated in Asia and more than likely arrived in mainland Europe and the UK due to the movement of plants as part of global trade. The fungus spreads quickly as its spores are wind borne. It can take from 1 - 30 years for a tree to die after being infected. The record breaking dry spell in spring 2020 made ash trees more susceptible to the disease.

Ash dieback has been recorded in the Peak District for over 4 years and in 2019 significant amounts of tree safety work took place in Dovedale. By spring 2020 it was evident that ash dieback was prevalent throughout the areas of the Peak District cared for by the National Trust.

We are responding to ash dieback in 2 ways. The first is by undertaking tree safety work near footpaths and roads. The disease weakens the tree's structure making them extremely prone to uprooting and therefore unsafe to be around. More information about this work, scheduled in January and February 2021 is detailed below. Some of the felled trees will be removed and some will be left. The deadwood and log stacks left behind are excellent for fungi, soil condition, invertebrates and birds.

The second way we are responding to ash dieback is by tree planting. Our ranger team are currently 3 years into their 5 year Woodland Conservation Project that aims to help our woodlands to be better equipped to face climate change and diseases like ash dieback. Our woodlands in the White Peak are dominated by ash and so this makes them vulnerable to species specific diseases such as ash dieback. Despite what will be a tragic loss of trees, our team will be seizing the opportunity to increase the diversity of tree species in the Peak District. Trees being planted include hazel, rock whitebeam, wych elm and lime, which would all have populated the woodlands before the ash became dominant.



What's happening in January and February?

Tree health inspections were carried out in the summer to check for signs of ash dieback. In a normal year tree felling work would begin in October. This has not been possible in 2020 due to the impacts on our work due to Covid19, so our response to ash dieback is very delayed this year.

This winter approximately 4000 ash trees need to be felled on public safety grounds across the land we care for in the Peak District, over half of which are in the White Peak. The cost of this essential work by specialist contractors is in the region £200,000. Our Rangers are also undertaking this work and the combined cost of their work and the contractors is in the region of £500,000. It is likely that we will need to undertake work to tackle ash dieback for the next 3 to 4 years.

Tree felling will be taking place in the following areas and local stakeholders will be advised of dates closer to the time.

- Miller's Dale
- Ilam Park
- Wetton Mill
- Edale
- Litton (Lode Lane)
- Milldale
- Manifold Valley
- Park Hall Wood (Hayfield Area)