



# Campaign Toolkit for tree protection



Photo: Julian Glaser

This guide is designed to help you effectively campaign for the protection of trees that are at risk of being felled, especially by property insurers or building developers.

For further assistance, get in touch with us via social media:



[@SHIFT\\_Haringey](https://twitter.com/SHIFT_Haringey)



[@SHIFTharingey](https://facebook.com/SHIFTharingey)



# **SHIFT**

## **Our story**

SHIFT (Stop Home Insurers Felling Trees) is a community-led tree protection organisation based in Haringey, London. SHIFT was established in 2020 to fight against the proposed unnecessary felling of four ancient woodland oak trees by an insurance company.

At first, the insurers and local council were determined that the trees 'have to go'. However, we launched a fierce campaign that included a petition signed by over 9,000 local residents. We managed to convince the insurers to fund independent reports by structural engineers and arboriculturists, who determined that tree removal would be neither necessary nor useful and could even worsen the subsidence issue at hand. As a result, the insurers agreed that underpinning of the property is the only solution.

However, there are thousands of other trees across the country that are also at risk of being needlessly felled by home insurers and property developers. We've learned a thing or two on our journey, so we've put together this toolkit to help others campaign to protect our trees.



# Ask Questions

## 1. Question the decision

From the perspective of an insurer or property developer, felling a tree is cheaper than potentially shelling out for large insurance claims. As such, tree removal is often considered without fully or impartially assessing its necessity. Start your campaign by writing to the insurer/developer to request that they undertake further assessments and consider alternative options. Try appealing to their public image —e.g. unnecessary tree felling (especially of old, established trees) would be an embarrassment to a company's green credentials.

## 2. Seek council & political support

Get in touch with your local councillor(s) and MP. If your messages to the insurer/developer go unheeded then further communications from a local councillor will add further pressure. Once you have the support of your local council, this can help your campaign to carry more weight and influence a wider sphere of people.

## 3. Get independent evaluations

Try to organise independent evaluations by arboriculturists and/or structural engineers to give an unbiased assessment of the need for tree removal. You may be able to convince the insurer/developer to pay for this as it damages their green image & ultimately, their profits. Alternatively, you could start a fundraiser using sites like [gofundme.com](https://www.gofundme.com) to fund this yourselves.

## 4. Obtain a Tree Protection Order (TPO)

Contact your local planning authority (LPA) to request a Tree Protection Order (TPO). This prohibits the felling or destruction of a tree without LPA permission and will be granted if a tree is determined to have 'amenity value'.



# Protest & Petition

Petitions should have a clear aim (e.g. to cancel the felling of a specified tree)

## *Petition*

Try petition sites such as [38degrees.org.uk](http://38degrees.org.uk) and [change.org](http://change.org)

Name & shame the insurer/ planner

## *Support*

## *How to protest*

Other groups like [Extinction Rebellion](http://ExtinctionRebellion.org) may help with activism

## *Branding*

## *Events & actions*

Banners & signs

Your group name & slogans should be catchy & succinct. Try alliteration, a clever acronym, or a play on words

Art displays & family activities

Group protests, & overnight camp-outs if trees are under immediate threat



# Publicity & Media

Get in touch with your local newspaper to request coverage of protests and events.

Make sure to provide them with details of your petitions and social media.



## Social media for campaigning

Make Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram pages for your campaign. Post regularly and always include engaging content like photos and videos. E.g. interviews with locals or footage of protests and events. Come up with a snappy and catchy hashtag for your campaign—use it consistently for all of your posts and encourage others to use it too.



Spread your message, share petitions & social media, and recruit campaigners through local community pages like [nextdoor.co.uk](https://www.nextdoor.co.uk), and local groups/pages on Facebook.



# Further Tips

## 1. Seek legal support

Even if legal action does not ultimately prove necessary, having a lawyer on your side can help bolster your campaign by acting as a threat to the opposition. Try specific environmental legal groups like [Lawyers for Nature](#).

## 2. Create a WhatsApp group

WhatsApp is a quick and convenient way of sharing information, images, and files in real-time. Adding all of your campaign team to the group enables you to share the latest news, plan meetings, and to quickly seek help if urgent actions are required.

## 3. Make a file-sharing account

Creating a shared folder on a file-sharing service like Dropbox or Google drive can help your team to share and mutually edit documents. For example, you may find this helpful for sharing schedules, photos, and contact lists

## 4. Research Ancient Woodland

Read up on the value of ancient woodland to help support your case. For example, to replace the carbon capture lost by felling just one mature tree, it is necessary to plant at least 500 saplings. As such, the planting of new trees to replace ancient woodland is neither an effective nor cost efficient solution. The [Woodland Trust](#) and [Forest Research](#) are great sources of information. You may also find a range of resources on green infrastructure and urban trees from the [Trees & Design Action Group](#).