

Wiltshire Council has a duty to look after trees in the county.

That is a legal duty where a Tree Protection Order is in place.

But we also have a wider duty as custodians of the countryside to protect our natural environment for the enjoyment of all.

Both duties apply in the case of a walnut tree at Suffolk Road, Westbury.

A swing and climbing apparatus have been attached to the tree, removed by our contractors, and then replaced by another swing.

While this may seem a harmless activity, it is causing serious damage to the tree. Even apparently insignificant injury to the tree leaves it highly vulnerable to pests and disease.

Wiltshire Council urges all residents to respect this tree and to prevent any further harm.

They should not attach swings, ropes, climbing frames or any other items to it, at the risk of killing it.

As a reminder, it is an offence to wilfully damage a protected tree such as this. It could lead to prosecution and a fine of up to £20,000.

We are sure that this situation will not arise, and that the community will agree that this lovely tree would deserve to be respected, cherished and preserved even if it wasn't protected by the law.