



## FEATURE 3, SEPTEMBER 2005

### AA Utility Arboriculture Group Quarterly Update

Article by Nick Eden, Arboricultural Association

Like waiting for a bus, none come, then two at once! Lantra Awards' recent consultation on their suite of training courses for utility arboriculture has been followed swiftly with a consultation by the Sector Skills Council for Utilities (Energy and Utility Skills SSC) which is conducting a study on the current provision of qualifications for Utility Arboriculture.

But that's where the similarity stops – unlike busses, **training** and **qualifications** are different, although essentially linked by the working relationship between Lantra Awards (training) and NPTC (qualifications).

Suzanne Walker of Energy and Utility Skills SSC visited the AA Utility Arboriculture Group in June to explain her work: she is conducting a study to confirm that existing NPTC qualifications remains fit for purpose (the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority require all SSCs to periodically undertake such studies).

Suzanne has interviewed employees of Lantra Awards and NPTC as UA training provider and qualifications provider respectively, and has interviewed training managers within the major utility arboriculture contracting companies. She has also interviewed key players within Distribution Network Operators and will soon report to the Energy Networks Association, with a copy to the AA UAG.

Suzanne applauded the concept of a forum of the contracting side of Utility Arboriculture and is a useful contact with the ability to support the Group's aims of unifying safety and tree work standards within the industry.

AA Conference delegates can gain further insight to the work of the AA UAG from its chair, George Mc Robbie (Monday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2005, 13.50 hrs. 'The AA Utility Arboriculture Group').

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