**Arborists Biking for Biosecurity**

Starting from the home of UK Arboriculture, on the edge of the Severn estuary in Gloucestershire, at around 2.30am on a cold, and likely wet and windy December morning, four fearless Arboricultural Association (AA) members will be riding to the Houses of Parliament to deliver the biosecurity message in person at the official release of the AA’s [Guidance Note: Application of Biosecurity in Arboriculture](http://www.trees.org.uk/gn2).

AA members Simon Cox, the co-author of the new guidance, Russell Ball, the legendary tree research fundraiser at Fund4Trees, Karl Stuckey, director of one of the longest serving AA Approved Contractors, and Peter Wharton, kindly representing both the AA and Institute of Chartered Foresters are riding over 100 miles in one morning, to deliver a unified industry message in support of the document and to encourage further consideration by industry stakeholders and government of the health and well-being of our unique, amazing and valuable tree stock.

Leaving in the middle of the night they will ride over 112 miles, crossing two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, before braving the streets of London, all against the elements and the clock.

On arrival the intrepid arborists will be greeted by parliamentarians and lords from both houses, as well as representatives from DEFRA, The Woodland Trust and other cross-sector partners gathering to learn more about significance of the Application of Biosecurity in Arboriculture and how they can support the industry going forward.

Biosecurity is a pivotal issue and has rightfully gained national awareness ever since the outbreak of Chalara (Ash Dieback) in 2012. The free guidance represents a landmark for the industry; enabling its professionals at all levels to be prepared to deal with current and potential threats to the tree stock of the UK & Ireland. Just one example of the many threats on the horizon is Asian Longhorn Beetle, which could impact on some 3.8 million trees, 31% of the whole tree population. Replacing these trees and their benefits would cost £23 billion.

If this inspires you and you’d like to contribute to the industry, get in contact with the Arboricultural Association or Institute of Chartered Foresters. Alternatively, you can make a donation to the important work of the Fund4Trees charity and post your messages of support on social media using the hashtag #treesbiosecurity.

**ENDS** 463 Words

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***Notes to Editors:***

*Since 1964 the Arboricultural Association has been the professional body in the UK and Ireland for the amenity tree care professional. There are currently over 3,000 members of the Arboricultural Association in a variety of membership classes.*

*The Arboricultural Association’s Website is* [www.trees.org.uk](http://www.trees.org.uk)

***The Application of Biosecurity in Arboriculture***

*The document can be downloaded free at* [*www.trees.org.uk/gn2*](http://www.trees.org.uk/gn2)

*The guidance supports the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs’ ‘Tree Health Resilience Strategy’ released in May 2018. The strategy’s National Action Plan called for organisations in the environmental sector to “Take a leading role in international efforts to strengthen biosecurity and build resilience. Facilitate information sharing and work collaboratively to ensure those involved in tree health are aware of risks and know what to do to reduce them.”*

*The document provides detailed best practice guidance for Arborists working in any role in arboriculture and environmental sectors, with a helpful document key indicating which sections are directly relevant to each job role. The publication was developed by principal authors Simon Cox and James Roberts, with valuable assistance from a host of members and supporting organisations including Forestry Commission England and the Trees and Design Action Group.*

*By releasing the free to download Guidance Note, the Association aims to better equip professionals with the knowledge and tools to tackle biosecurity by providing information that will assist in efforts to prevent a pest or pathogen outbreak which results in the accelerated mortality and loss of large numbers of trees.*