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| The Occupier | Community Relations  Western House  1 Holbrook Way  Swindon  SN1 1BD  **24 hour National Helpline**  **03457 11 41 41** |

29 June 2018

Our reference: SWY 89m 50-94m 25c, SWY 88m 45-94m 45c

Dear Neighbour

**Safety-critical vegetation management**

In order to run the railway safely, we will shortly be carrying out a controlled programme of tree and vegetation management on the railway line from Patney to Westbury.

**Why do we need to undertake this work?**

The safety of the general public, travelling passengers and our staff is our number one priority. Uncontrolled vegetation can pose a serious risk to the safe running of the railway.

The vegetation clearance is to take place from Great Cheverall to Westbury.

On 31 December 2017, a train travelling along the railway line to Plymouth was struck by a tree during a storm with the tree trunk piercing the reinforced glass window of the front car drivers cab causing the train to come to a stop immediately. Thankfully, no passengers were injured and although shaken, the driver was unharmed. However, this was a close shave and the impact could have been much worse. As it was, the damage to the train drivers cab was severe enough that it has had to be written off, reducing the number of trains for passenger services.

**What is involved in vegetation management?**

We take our responsibility to manage the railway safely and look after the habitats on our land very seriously. Work will be carried out considering the safety risks to passenger trains and our staff, the natural environment, bird nesting season and the local community.

Before we undertake any work, we will inspect vegetation and undertake ecological surveys. Once we have undertaken these assessments, we will conduct vegetation clearance in line with best practice and guidance issued to us.

The vegetation clearance will involve stripping or removing trees and vegetation up to 8m from the tracks or to the boundary fence, whichever is the lesser from the outer running rail.

This programme will include investigating any vegetation growning on third party land that poses a risk to the railway; in this situation, we will contact the relevant landowner to discuss this with them directly.

**When will this work take place?**

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| Saturday 14 July 2018 to Sunday 15 July 2018  Monday 16 July 2018 to Friday 20 July 2018 | Between 23:59 to 09:00 (overnight)  Between 22:25 to 06:05  (overnight for four nights) |

**How will we manage the impact on our neighbours?**

We recognise that work on the railway can be disruptive to those living or working nearby. The nature of our work often means some disturbance is unavoidable, but please be assured that every effort is made to minimise any unnecessary noise and we have reminded all staff to be considerate of our neighbours.

**Contact us**

I hope this information is helpful and we apologise for any inconvenience this essential vegetation management may cause.

If you have any additional questions or concerns about the work taking place in your area please call our dedicated 24-hour National Helpline on **03457 11 41 41**, visit **networkrail.co.uk/contactus** or email **crwest@networkrail.co.uk**.

Yours sincerely



**Arron Judd**

Community Relations Executive