

*Tree safety works to commence at The Dark Hedges*

# Six trees to be cut down at Armoy beauty spot

**ESSENTIAL** public safety works, including removal and remedial works, to a number of trees at The Dark Hedges on Bregagh Road, Armoy will start next Monday, November 20.

Although always loved and admired by locals, the tunnel of trees became a popular tourist attraction after featuring in fantasy drama, 'Game of Thrones.'

The trees on the Bregagh Road are on privately owned land.

But, following concerns about the condition of some of the trees, the Department for Infrastructure commissioned an independent specialist survey which found that 11 trees, out of a total of 86, along the route are in a poor condition and could pose a potential risk to the public - several of them have been brought down by storms in recent years.

In September The Chronicle reported that DFI had engaged a 'specialist contractor' to investigate reports of trees in a very poor condition and a potential danger to tourists.

And two weeks ago we revealed that the DFI looked set to overrule a decision to remove only one tree by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

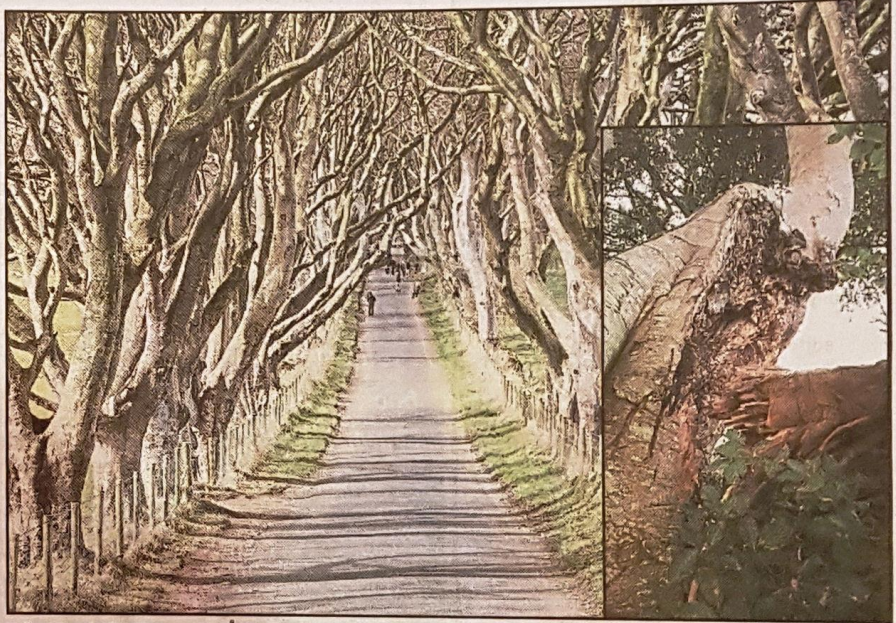
Since then an inspection survey by the independent arboriculturist had recommended that 11 out of the 86 trees be felled.

## 'THE DECISION HAS NOT BEEN MADE LIGHTLY'

However, after liaising with the relevant landowners and other stakeholders, given the urgency of the work required, arrangements have now been made to remove six of the trees (stump retained) and carry out remedial work to four trees, to reduce the risk to the wider public.

The condition of one further tree will be assessed on site.

This decision has not been made lightly and, whilst the amenity value afforded by the corridor



*The Dark Hedges. INSET: Beech tree at top end of Dark Hedges with a dropped limb and rotten trunk visible,*

of trees is acknowledged, the safety of road users is paramount.

The Department will continue to engage with landowners and other stakeholders regarding their implementation of a suitable management strategy to protect the future of the other 75 trees.

Completion of the works on or before 24 November 2023 is dependent on favourable weather conditions. However the Department will keep the public informed of any change.

All work will be carried out in line with current

public health and health and safety advice, with safe systems of working in place for staff and contractors.

The Bregagh Road, which is already closed to traffic at this location, will also be closed to pedestrians during these planned works.

The Department apologises for any inconvenience.

**In order to ensure the safety of the contractors and the public, everyone is asked to comply with the road closures and restrictions.**

*Courtesy of The Ballycastle Chronicle*

*7<sup>th</sup> November 2023*