

The sentiment behind the avenue of horse chestnuts is difficult for anybody else to appreciate

As Dennis Washington's only child I was privileged to call him Dad.

The idea behind the trees was months in planning. Dennis paid the council for permission and agreed spacing, distance from the highway and maintenance before we even got to the decision on which type to plant. Many such as elm beech and oak were discounted for various reasons.

The purchase and supply of the trees was problematic in itself due to the number required.

The actual planting was quite straight forward and Dennis employed the services of well regarded Barford resident Mick Cook who was a legend on a digger.

Dennis was fortunate to have very good employees and with their help the trees were reposted and strapped as they grew. I remember helping with this on various occasions the most recent being around 1976 when I was 17.

Dennis wanted to ensure the trees had the best opportunity to thrive and form the avenue he envisaged.

The time and effort came to fruition and we had that avenue that he wanted enhanced in the spring with the daffodils he planted at the base.

Washy's Conks as he referred to them have been enjoyed by many over the decades. Whether it be children collecting conkers, walkers or motorists passing through they have all taken as much pleasure out of the horse chestnuts as Dennis did gifting them to the village.

This was my Dad's legacy and it should be preserved as he intended so that many future generations can enjoy them.

I ask that the felled trees are replaced with a red horse chestnut which is more disease resistant than the original species. Dennis never had the intention of planting mixed species else he would have done so.

It is not just a commemoration of Dennis but also those who helped in achieving the dream of a beautiful avenue of horse chestnuts that would enhance the road either side of the village.