

Stop the Chop to present petition to Holyrood

✘ A petition with over 1,000 signatures urging the council to stop felling trees next to Canonmills Bridge will be presented to The Scottish Government tomorrow afternoon.

It was a pure stroke of karma that the trees on the west side of the Canonmills Bridge are still standing, according to Ani Rinchen Khandro, the official spokesperson behind the campaign, Stop The Chop.

Ani explained that she was attaching a notice about the ✘ petition to the bridge only last Saturday when she met a city architect who offered his professional help to the campaign. He then established that there was sufficient doubt over the status of the trees to mean that the council instructed their contractors not to proceed on Monday.

A blow by blow account of Monday's developments is reported on The [Broughton Spurtle website](#), where they also reproduce in full the letter written by the protesters to council Chief Executive, Sue Bruce.

✘ The council had planned to remove the trees on the west side of the bridge in the same way as others on the east side have already been taken away. This is part of the Flood Prevention works which the council is carrying out all the way along the Water of Leith.

This is what the Stop the Chop petition says:-

“Healthy, mature trees are being hacked down along Edinburgh’s Water of Leith in a heavy handed and fundamentally flawed plan to prevent flooding. Much of our

precious urban landscape has already been decimated. But by acting together we can stop the magnificent trees at Canonmills Bridge from going under the chop.

These beautiful willow and birch trees take up a large volume of water through their roots, which also stabilise the riverbank. They are essential in protecting homes from flooding, noise and pollution. Chopping them down would make flooding more likely, not less.

Edinburgh City Council must be encouraged to work with nature, not against it. By implementing a more environmentally sensitive plan we can save this iconic landmark for the benefit of people and wildlife."

Malcolm Chisholm, MSP for Edinburgh Northern & Leith, said :-
"The trees in question are a small stretch of the river but they are particularly beautiful and historic, and I therefore think that they need to find an alternative solution on the Water of Leith.

They are not putting barriers all the way along the Water of Leith and I am not sure that this area is a particular flooding flashpoint. It was flagged up in a previous report that the council should try to retain the trees, as it was recognised as a special area. I would really like to see them preserved."

Local Councillor Roy McIvor said:-"I am pleased that there is a halt on this – I asked the Department to look into the matter – whilst documentation is being checked. I would have concerns that any hold up could result in flooding and huge cost to the taxpayer at a time of financial restraint. There has been a very substantial consultation and presentations over quite a period of time. I would also point out that more trees are to be planted than removed."

Another Inverleith Ward Councillor, Tim McKay, commented:-

"The flood prevention work has been in planning for years and it is important to any residents who might be affected by

flooding.

I feel however it is inevitable that the trees will be taken down. There are only 9 on the northern bank. Thankfully two of them are quite small. There is one sycamore and several willows.

Also there is to be nothing removed on the Brandon Terrace side at all and as part of the work schedule there is to be replanting on a two for one basis.

I am pleased also that the contractor will do their best to save the large willow at the start of the path.

There is no official tree preservation order at Canonmills Bridge. I would also highlight that our tree officer has visited the site this week and he has confirmed that the contractor's plan's are in line with the agreed tree management plan."

We interviewed Ani today on Canonmills Bridge to find out what the protesters' are really trying to do:-

[Interview with Ani Rinchen Khandro \(mp3\)](#)

This graphic on the council website shows what they believe will be the possible flood zone if water levels on the city centre were increased to such an extent that the banks are breached.

[Phase1 – V8 – Flattened 1 A](#)

The Scottish Government [has issued guidelines](#) on what needs to be done in areas subject to flood risk on its website, and the council has [a statutory obligation to](#) carry out such works in terms of The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 .

Greener Leith has also written about the matter [here](#) where Juliet Wilson gives a very detailed account of what happened at the public meeting last week in Stockbridge Library.