1. DEFINITION - There are instances of a high hedge consisting of just one unmanaged tree, a mature conifer, the branches and trunk of which may extend to a total of say 10 ft or more across at the base or side of a property's garden and which - depending on compass point and density - keeps a small garden in dark shade throughout the year.

2. Deciduous trees should be included. Unmanaged, they not only create a light barrier during seasons when the light is strongest and most beneficial to health, they may grow to considerable heights; their weighty branches may be torn off during storms and demolish nearby property and may even threaten the life of anyone in the vicinity of a falling tree/branch. As has happened in my area several times in the past two years.

3. The 'high hedge' may consist of trees which are dying or dead and may thus prove a danger to nearby property(ies) even without the prompting of a storm, so it is not necessarily just a question of being a 'barrier to light' and/or height.

4. ROOTS - If no account is to be taken of the roots of a high hedge, how may this be addressed? Tree roots may be intrusive and dangerous to surrounding properties and would certainly affect the enjoyment of a property so threatened. In stormy conditions tree roots may be seriously weakened, particularly after a long period of wet weather; such roots going under property might tear up the foundations as the tree falls. Would a separate Bill need to be involved?

5. I note in your Section 34 there is power to modify the meaning of 'high hedge'.

6. FEE - It is hoped that an application fee would not be such a stinger that it would bar those with justifiable cause from making application. The Law may be open to all, but justice may be prevented by its cost.

7. With reference to your 6 (6) (a) - what would a 'reasonable period of time' be? Within 6 months? A year? Presumably if constituent(s) of a hedge proved dangerous (e.g. about to fall at the next puff of wind) then urgency would demand swift resolution.

8. Your 8 (2)(g) - the high hedge owner may fail to comply with the notice knowing that the authority may be unwilling to become involved in the legal cost of recovering expenses. Are there any specific penalties for failure to comply on the part of the high hedge owner other than interest accruing on authority expenses?

9. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on this Bill.