



## Tree Management Policy

### 1. AIMS

- 1.1 To value trees and hedgerows<sup>1</sup> for the significant contribution they make to biodiversity, wellbeing, and quality of life within the Parish of Plaistow and Ifold.
- 1.2 To preserve the Parish's trees for future generations, including to encourage residents to retain existing trees within the curtilage of their property.
- 1.3 To ensure that Parish owned and/or managed trees are safe and healthy.

### 2. POLICY SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all trees under the Council's ownership/management.
- 2.2 The Council reserves the right to exercise discretion in application of this policy when to do so would be in the best interests of the Council and its residents.
- 2.3 Any queries on trees belonging to the Council should be made to the Council: telephone 01403 83 93 00, or email: [clerk@plaistowandifold-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@plaistowandifold-pc.gov.uk)
- 2.4 The following tree related issues are not managed by the Council:
  - 2.4.1 Planning related tree services are administered by [Chichester District Council](#) (CDC). This includes any matter relating to [Tree Preservation Orders](#) (TPO), Conservation Areas, Hedgerow Regulations, and planning applications relating to trees. Please contact CDC on 01243 785166, or [dcplanning@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:dcplanning@chichester.gov.uk)
  - 2.4.2 Trees growing on land which forms part of the adopted highway or are situated adjacent to the road or on roadside verges, are generally the responsibility of the [Highways Authority, West Sussex County Council](#). Please contact Highways on 01243 642105.
  - 2.4.3 Trees on other open spaces may be the responsibility the National Trust: [lse.customerenquiries@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:lse.customerenquiries@nationaltrust.org.uk). Please contact the Council's office (see 3.3 above for more information).

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the document, any reference to 'trees' is also a reference to 'hedgerows' as well.

### **3. RESPONSIBILITY**

- 3.1 Trees are a highly valued feature within this rural Parish; however, the Council recognises that they can cause serious injury or even death if not properly managed.
- 3.2 As a land/tree owner, the Council has a legal duty of care to all those on its land and to do all that is reasonably practicable to reduce the risk of death, or injury.
- 3.3 The Council has a responsibility to ensure its tree stock is regularly inspected and managed to ensure public safety, particularly in areas where the public may walk, or sit beneath trees and to minimise risk to property and/or the public highway. The Council does this with the following objectives in mind:
- Ensure tree stock is maintained in a cost-effective manner, maximising visual amenity, and associated environmental benefits whilst minimising risks to public safety and property.
  - Ensure that the work undertaken on Council trees is done to a high standard, is appropriate and in line with good Arboricultural practice and conducted lawfully within the planning system.
  - Ensure appropriate management of trees which are important for biodiversity, as wildlife corridors, or as landscape features.
  - Promote the positive contribution made by trees to open spaces, including the value which they have for wildlife.
  - Identify opportunities for appropriate tree planting schemes.
- 3.4 The Council will inspect its tree stock at an appropriate frequency, as advised by an appropriately qualified Arboriculturist, depending upon the number of pedestrians, vehicles and other targets either passing beneath or within falling distance of the tree, to ensure continued public safety.
- 3.5 Following inspection, the trees will be assigned a risk classification which will inform their prioritisation for maintenance works.

### **4. TREE INSPECTIONS**

- 4.1 Detailed Inspections are carried out by a qualified Arboriculturist in accordance with paragraph 3.4 above to ensure that its tree stock is kept safe and in a healthy condition.
- 4.2 The Detailed Inspection records information and identifies any tree(s) which may pose a risk to health and safety.
- 4.3 More frequent Detailed Inspections (as referred to at 4.1 above) may be required depending on the outcome of the Detailed Inspection and resulting professional advice, the location, e.g., high risk areas such as Council owned/managed playgrounds, the risk assessment, or an event.

- 4.4 Informal visual observations of trees growing within or near to playgrounds are carried out as part of the monthly playground inspections.
- 4.5 Additional checks will be carried out after periods of bad weather to identify damaged trees.
- 4.6 The Parish Clerk retains records of the Detailed Inspections and other safety checks.

## **5. RISK ASSESSMENT / PROGRAMME OF WORKS**

- 5.1 A prioritised programme of tree works will be based on the Detailed Inspection and resulting professional advice received by the Council (4.1 above).
- 5.2 The Council will maintain an adequate annual budget to ensure that it can undertake a prioritised programme of tree works and meet all other tree related responsibilities.
- 5.3 Trees which are assessed as in decline will be monitored in accordance with professional advice to ensure that they do not pose a risk to people, or property.
- 5.4 Any trees identified as showing signs of crown dieback, fungal activity, or decay, will be monitored and works undertaken, as advised by the Council's qualified Arboriculturist, as per the Detailed Inspection and the prioritised programme of tree works (5.1 and 5.2 above).
- 5.5 The Council will respond promptly to any matter involving safety and will remove dead trees and dangerous and unsafe trees and branches (except where biodiversity issues prevail, and the tree is professionally assessed as safe).
- 5.6 If a resident, local organisation, and/or landowner has concerns regarding the condition of a particular tree, the Council will consider instructing a responsive inspection as appropriate.
- 5.7 The following categories will be used when prioritising tree works, in line with the priorities and advice identified by the qualified Arboriculturist and/or tree surgeon:
  - Priority 1: Urgent public safety - 24 hours to 1 week depending upon the professionally assessed risk.
  - Priority 2: Non-urgent, but essential work - 1-6 months depending upon risk/time of year.
  - Priority 3: Desirable - 12 months where possible.
  - Non-priority: No action proposed.
- 5.8 Veteran trees will be managed in a way that preserves their unique characteristics and promotes health and longevity.
- 5.9 The Council will be guided, at all times, by the advice of a suitably qualified Arboriculturist and/or tree surgeon, as appropriate.

## **6. CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 When managing trees, consideration will be given to biodiversity issues in line with the Biodiversity Duty for Public Authorities enshrined in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and Environment Act 2021.
- 6.2 Wherever possible, works will be scheduled to take place in periods where the impact on wildlife will be minimal.
- 6.3 The Council will comply with all relevant legislation in respect of the protection of nesting birds and other wildlife.
- 6.4 Only essential tree works will be carried out during the bird nesting season as advised by a suitably qualified professional.
- 6.5 Prior to works being carried out on mature trees, the potential for bat roosts will be assessed if so advised by a suitably qualified professional and appropriate mitigation measures implemented.

## **7. REPLANTING**

- 7.1 The Council has discretionary power to provide and maintain trees on open spaces and amenity land under the Open Space Act 1906.
- 7.2 There will be a presumption against removal of existing trees. The Council will not support the removal of trees that offer positive amenity unless there is a health and safety risk to the public, or property.
- 7.3 Where removal is necessary replacement with a suitable specimen in the same location, or, if this is not possible, in another more suitable location, on a one for one basis will be considered.
- 7.4 The Council will work with partners and community groups to identify opportunities to increase its tree stock through appropriate tree planting.
- 7.5 When planting trees, the Council will be sensitive to the potential for damage or inconvenience, or the impeding of access, as the trees mature.

## **8. NUISANCE TREES**

- 8.1 The Council will consider any complaints regarding trees on Council owned property, taking into consideration its Tree Management Policy and/or advice from a qualified Arboriculturist or tree surgeon, as appropriate.

- 8.2 Where it can be demonstrated that a tree from the Council's stock is the direct/primary cause of damage to property, the Council will act to rectify the problem. It must clearly be demonstrated by the property owner that the tree is owned/the responsibility of the Council and is the principal cause of the damage.
- 8.3 The effects of tree litter such as leaves, twigs, fruit etc will not be considered as direct damage and no action will be taken by the Council.
- 8.4 Except in exceptional circumstances, the Council will not prune its tree stock to alleviate the obstruction of light, or telecommunication signals where branches overhang neighbouring properties.
- 8.5 Works will only be carried out on trees which are restricting the efficiency of solar panels where the solar panels pre-date the presence of the tree.
- 8.6 Work will not be carried out on trees to address the issues of bird droppings.
- 8.7 The Council will consider accepting third party sponsorship for tree work only where this has been identified as good Arboricultural practice.

## **9. STANDARDS**

- 9.1 All tree works carried out on behalf of the Council will comply with appropriate Standards and Legislation in respect of tree protection and will be undertaken by competent and qualified contractors.
- 9.2 All personnel undertaking tree works must wear the appropriate Personal Protective Clothing and be adequately trained.
- 9.3 The Council will request sight of a contractor's public liability insurance certificate.