



Tree Management Policy

1. AIMS

- 1.1 To value trees and hedgerows¹ for the significant contribution they make to wellbeing and quality of life within the Parish of Plaistow and Ifold.
- 1.2 Trees and hedgerows are managed to promote:
 - biodiversity,
 - valuable habitats for many species of wildlife,
 - climate mitigation,
 - visual amenity,
 - public health and safety.
- 1.3 To encourages residents to retain existing trees and hedgerows within the curtilage of their property.
- 1.4 To preserve the Parish's trees and hedgerows for future generations to enjoy.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Plaistow and Ifold Parish Council ('the Council') has adopted this policy to maintain a consistent approach to tree management within the Parish.
- 2.2 This policy is intended to act as a point of reference for the public, Councillors, Council employees and Contractors to ensure a clear, consistent, and structured approach to the management of Council owned or maintained trees.
- 2.3 Trees are a highly valued feature within this rural Parish, as they make an enormous contribution to the character and beauty of the landscape and create/maintain environments rich in biodiversity.
- 2.4 The Council values its trees and recognises both the human and environmental benefits of having a healthy and sustainable tree population.

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

- 2.5 The Council recognises that although trees are a positive feature, they can be the cause of a range of problems, from being a nuisance or inconvenience to potentially causing serious injury or even death.
- 2.6 A principle of English Common and Statute Law is that land/tree owners have a duty of care to visitors, residents, passers-by and indeed trespassers when on their land. This means that the Council has a duty to do all that is reasonably practical to reduce the risk of death, or injury to those on Council land.
- 2.7 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 best 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 including community orchard(s).
- 2.8 The Council aims to inspect its tree stock at an appropriate frequency, depending upon number of pedestrians, vehicles and other targets either passing beneath or within falling distance of the tree, to ensure continued public safety.
- 2.9 Following inspection, the trees will be assigned a risk classification which will inform their prioritisation for maintenance works.

3. POLICY SCOPE

- 3.1 This policy applies to all trees under the Council's ownership/management, regardless of their location.
- 3.2 Although the Council believes this policy to be as comprehensive as possible, it acknowledges that it does not cover every situation. 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.

- 3.3 Any queries on trees belonging to the Council should be made to the Parish Office, telephone 01403 871652, or email: clerk@plaistowandifold.org.uk.
- 3.4 The following tree related issues are not specifically managed by the Council:
- 3.4.1 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
- 3.4.2 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.
- 3.4.3 Trees on other open spaces may be the responsibility the National Trust: lse.customerenquiries@nationaltrust.org.uk. Please contact the Council's office (see 3.3 above for more information).

4. TREE INSPECTIONS

- 4.1 The Council carries out a rolling programme of Detailed Inspection by a qualified Arboriculturist at least every three (3) years to ensure that its tree stock is kept safe and in a healthy condition.
- 4.2 The Detailed Inspection records information on all Council owned trees 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 assessments/observations will be carried out during the period between the Detailed Inspections for dead branches and other issues of concern.
- 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.
- 4.7 The most recent Detailed Inspection and associated programme of tree works will be appended to this policy as Appendix A, from time to time.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT / PROGRAMME OF WORKS

- 5.1 A prioritised programme of tree works will be maintained based on the Detailed Inspection and resulting professional advice received by the Council (4.1 above).
- 5.2 Trees which are assessed as in decline will be monitored to ensure that they do not pose a risk to people, or property.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 The Council will respond promptly to any matter involving safety and will remove dead trees (except where biodiversity issues prevail, and the tree is assessed as safe) and dangerous and unsafe trees and branches.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 Veteran trees will be managed in a way that preserves their unique characteristics and promotes health and longevity.
- 5.8 The Council will allocate sufficient resources within its annual budget to ensure that it is able to manage the trees that it owns/is responsible for.
- 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 Whilst maintaining Council owned/managed trees, consideration will be given to the impact of tree pruning or felling on local wildlife and tree works will be scheduled, wherever possible, to take place in periods where the impact on wildlife will be minimal.

- 6.2 When carrying out tree works the Council will comply with all relevant legislation in respect of the protection of nesting birds and other wildlife.
- 6.3 Only essential tree works will be carried out during the bird nesting season.
- 6.4 Prior to works being carried out on a mature tree, the potential for bat roosts will be assessed.
- 6.5 If it is found that there are features within the tree that are likely to be suitable for bat roosts, a survey will be carried.
- 6.6 If bat roosts are found to be present appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented before any work takes place.
- 6.7 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.
- 6.8 The Council will recognise and take positive action to prevent the potential conflict of interest where developments are proposed near existing trees, tree-belts, and wooded areas within the Parish.

7. REPLANTING

- 7.1 There will be a presumption against removal of existing trees. The Council will not support the removal of trees or hedgerows that offer positive amenity unless there is a health and safety risk to the public, or property.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 The Council has discretionary power to provide and maintain trees on open spaces and amenity land under the Open Space Act 1906.
- 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 The Council will consider planting new, species rich, native trees in appropriate locations to meet a variety of objectives, including habitat creation, the screening of unsightly development, the provision of shelter and the enhancement of the landscape.
- 7.6 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 The Council has no obligation to carry out works on privately owned trees such as:
- Cut back branches overhanging private property.
 - 'Top' trees, or remove branches, to increase daylight or decrease height in relation to property.
 - Remove branches or trees affecting views or interfering with telecommunication signals/reception.
 - Remove branches or trees to prevent falling leaves, honeydew from aphids or other minor debris.
 - Remove roots from drains, or repair root damage to structures, where the tree has not been clearly demonstrated to be the principal cause.
 - Remove branches or trees to prevent potential root damage to structures.
 - Remove branches nearly touching buildings, walls, roofs, fences etc.
 - Remove branches or trees to prevent access from squirrels or birds.
- 8.3 Where it can be demonstrated that a tree from the Council's stock is the direct/primary cause of direct or indirect damage to property, the Council will act to rectify the problem.
- 8.4 Direct damage may include:
- tree roots lifting paving stones
 - trunks or branches damaging garden walls or fences.
- 8.5 Indirect damage may include:
- subsidence due to soil shrinkage resulting from water extraction by tree roots.
- 8.6 In cases of damage to property 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.
- 8.7 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.
- 8.8 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.

- 8.9 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.
- 8.10 Work will not be carried out on trees to address the issues of bird droppings.
- 8.11 The Council will consider accepting third party sponsorship for tree work only where this has been identified as good Arboricultural practice.

9. CARRYING OUT TREE WORKS YOURSELF

- 9.1 In common law, a property owner can cut back overhanging branches to the boundary of their property.
- 9.2 If members of the public wish to carry out any works to Council owned/managed trees, they should notify the Council in advance (see 3.3 above).
- 9.3 The Council would usually have no objection to property owners carrying out tree work, or engaging a contractor at their own expense, and would not unreasonably challenge the requirement for the works, provided that:
- The property owner notifies the Council (before the work begins) of the proposed work and commencement date.
 - Access is not gained onto the neighbouring land, or to a tree within that land.
 - If access to Council owned/managed land, or to a tree on that land, is required permission must be sought.
 - The tree is not protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). If the tree is awarded protection, then the appropriate planning procedure must be followed, by submitting an appropriate application to the Local Planning Authority for approval (see 3.4.1 above).
 - Any work carried out is not detrimental to the tree's health or stability.
 - For their own protection, members of the public are advised to obtain advice from a qualified Arboriculturist or tree surgeon, as appropriate and the Council reserves the right to require this prior to giving its consent.
 - Works are carried out to an acceptable standard, in accordance with appropriate Standards, Best Practice and Legislation.

10. STANDARDS

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 Any contractor carrying out work on behalf of the Council should be Arboricultural Association approved, or able to demonstrate that they have achieved a similar standard of competency.

Adopted:
Review:

- 10.3 All personnel undertaking tree works must wear the appropriate Personal Protective Clothing and be adequately trained.
- 10.4 The Council will request sight of a contractor's public liability insurance certificate.
- 10.5 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or when there are major changes to legislation or best practice in respect of tree management.