

DOWNTON  
PARISH COUNCIL



**Tree Management Policy**

***This Policy sets out the Parish Council's stance on the management and maintenance of trees situated on its land***

**Adopted October 2019**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This policy sets out the Parish Council's approach to the management of trees on land owned by Downton Parish Council only. Other Councils, organisations, companies and private individuals may need to be contacted if a tree(s) is located on their land.
- 1.2. This document has been created to provide guidance for the public, Councillors and Council employees to ensure a clear and consistent approach is adhered to regarding the management of trees by Downton Parish Council.
- 1.3. If a tree falls and causes injury or damage, the relevant landowner could be held negligent if they have failed to take sufficient care of the tree. Therefore, as a landowner, the Council has a duty of care to ensure that all trees on Parish Council-owned land are kept in an acceptable condition and do not put people or property at unreasonable risk.

## **2. Inspection**

- 2.1 All trees on Council-owned land will be inspected annually by a qualified tree inspector and any recommendations made will be considered by the Council in line with this policy.

## **3. Maintenance**

- 3.1. The Council has adopted a proactive approach to tree maintenance. However, only essential/minimal works will be undertaken in order to manage a tree because the Council supports a policy of tree preservation. The type of works undertaken will depend on the tree's location, the species of tree and its state of health at that time.
- 3.2. Regular inspections will be carried out to identify issues at the earliest opportunity, so that preventative action can be taken where possible. Areas close to roads, buildings and with high public usage will be prioritised
- 3.3. As a guide, tree works will be undertaken in the following circumstances
  - 3.3.1. Where an inspection has identified the tree as potentially hazardous or an immediate danger;
  - 3.3.2. If the works are vital to the tree's long-term survival. Dead, dying or diseased trees will only be fully removed when there is no other option.
  - 3.3.3. To reduce a nuisance where branches are touching buildings e.g. contact with walls, windows, gutters.
  - 3.3.4. When previous maintenance regimes have determined future works are of the same specification for that specimen e.g. pollarding, crown reduction.
- 3.4 The impact on local wildlife of all tree works, specifically felling and pruning, will always be thoroughly considered, with the impact minimised where possible.
- 3.5. Where appropriate, dead and fallen wood will be left on site unless there are sound conservation and safety reasons for its removal.
- 3.6. All tree work will be carried out by a qualified tree surgeon appointed by the Parish Council and in accordance with BS/3998/2010 Recommendations for Tree Work 2010 (and any subsequent revisions). All works must have Parish

Council approval and must be carried out by the Parish Council's appointed Tree Surgeon based on their professional advice.

#### **4. Protected Trees**

- 4.1. A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) prevents cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage or destruction of trees (including cutting roots) without permission.
- 4.2. It is an offence to cut down, lop, top, uproot or wilfully damage or destroy a tree in a Conservation Area without giving prior written notice to Wiltshire Council.
- 4.3. Additional approval will be obtained from the Tree Officer at Wiltshire Council for trees on which there is a TPO or from the Conservation Officer, if located in the Conservation Area.

#### **5. Requests for Tree Work**

- 5.1. Whilst the Council will consider the impact of trees in each case on individual merit, the Council will not fell or prune trees on Parish Council-owned land if it is for any of the following non-arboricultural reasons:
  - 5.1.1. To alleviate problems caused by natural and/or seasonal phenomena e.g. falling leaves, fruit, seeds/berries, bird droppings, pollen etc.
  - 5.1.2. For reasons of increasing sunlight/views to properties and gardens.
  - 5.1.3. For the reason that the tree(s) is causing interference with television or satellite reception. In most cases the problem can be resolved by relocating the aerial or satellite dish. Residents are advised to contact their satellite or TV provider for specialist advice. Removal or pruning to enable clear television reception would only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- 5.2. Adjacent landowners have a common law right to prune back tree branches to their boundary, providing that it would not lead to tree death and providing the tree in question is not protected by a TPO or situated within a Conservation Area.
- 5.3. Tree roots in gardens are a natural occurrence and root presence is unlikely to be affected by tree pruning or removal. Tree felling and branch pruning in response to root invasion in gardens would not normally be appropriate as such works are likely to worsen the problem. The encroachment of roots into adjoining land is not considered to amount to actionable nuisance. Adjacent landowners have a common law right to prune back tree roots to their boundary, providing that this would not lead to tree death and providing that the tree in question is not protected by a TPO or situated within a Conservation Area.
- 5.4. Landowners are reminded that if access to Council-owned land is required to carry out pruning they will require written permission from the Parish Council before carrying out such works.

- 5.5. The Parish Council will consider formal applications for tree works on its land, but these must be in writing, either by letter or email to:

Downton Parish Council, c/o The Clerk, West View, Slab Lane, Downton, Salisbury Wiltshire, SP5 3PS Email: [clerk@downtonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@downtonparishcouncil.gov.uk)  
For an informal conversation and advice regarding tree works, please call the Clerk on 01725 513874.

**6. Hedges**

Hedges are an attractive feature on Council-owned land and they provide an important habitat for a wide range of species, offering food, shelter, protection from predators, wintering and nesting sites, and acting as transit corridors. It is recognised that trimming hedges too severely can have a detrimental impact on their wildlife value.

Where there is no negative impact on health and safety, the Council aims to have taller, bushier hedges. However, it will ensure that hedge growth does not impair the safety of highway or footpath users nor impede their access. Hedge cutting will not be conducted between March and August unless for urgent health and safety reasons.

**7. Parish Council-Owned Land:**

Downton Memorial Gardens, The Borough, Downton  
Moot Lane Recreation Ground, Moot Lane, Downton  
Downton Cemetery, Barford Lane, Downton  
Play Area, Lower Road, Charlton All Saints  
Play Area, West Wick, Downton