



GREAT DUNMOW TOWN COUNCIL

TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Version	Date Adopted	Minute Reference	Date For Review
1	07/12/2023	FC 2392ii	December 2024

AIMS

To value trees for the significant contribution, they make to wellbeing and quality of life within the area. Trees are managed to promote biodiversity, climate mitigation, and visual amenity whilst being managed and maintained in a way which promotes their safety and health.

INTRODUCTION

The Town Council has a responsibility to ensure the Council's tree stock is regularly inspected and managed to ensure public safety and to minimise risk to property in particular in areas where the public may walk or sit beneath trees.

The Town 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 Town Council trees is done to a high standard, is appropriate and in line with best arboriculture practice.

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 orchards.

TREE INSPECTIONS

The Town Council's tree stock will be visually inspected by a qualified arboriculturist annually depending on the location and risk assessment. The Town Council also conducts its own routine annual visual assessment for dead branches, plus additional checks are carried out after periods of bad weather to identify damaged trees. The Town Clerk retains records of the safety checks.

POLICIES

The Town Council will respond promptly to tree matters involving safety and will remove dead trees (except where biodiversity issues prevail) and dangerous and unsafe trees and branches. Trees which are in decline will be monitored in order to ensure they pose no risk to people or property.

Where it can be demonstrated that a tree from the Town Council's stock is the direct cause of damage to property, the Town Council will act to rectify the problem. In cases of damage to property it must clearly be demonstrated that the tree is the principal cause of the damage. (The effects of tree litter such as leaves, twigs, fruit, sap etc. will not be considered as direct damage and no action will be taken by the Town Council.)

Except in exceptional circumstances, the Town Council will not prune its tree stock to alleviate the obstruction of light or telecommunication signals where branches overhang neighbouring properties.

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.

When carrying out tree works the Town Council will comply with all relevant legislation in respect of the protection of nesting birds and other wildlife.

Only essential tree works will be carried out during the bird nesting season. Work will not be carried out on trees to address the issues of bird droppings. Prior to works being carried out on a mature tree the potential for bat roosts will be assessed. 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. If bat roosts are found to be present appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented before any work takes place.

The Town Council will consider accepting third party sponsorship for tree work only where this has been identified as good arboriculture practice.

The Town Council will work with partners and community groups to identify opportunities to increase its tree stock through appropriate tree planting.

There will be a presumption against removal of existing trees and where this is necessary replacement in the same location, or if this is not possible in another more suitable location, will be considered.

The Town Council will consider planting new, species rich, native woodlands 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.

Veteran trees will be managed in a way that preserves their unique characteristics. When managing trees and woodlands, 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.

In planting or adopting trees or tree belts, the Town Council will be sensitive to the potential for damage or inconvenience, or the impeding of access, as the trees mature. In addition, the Town Council will recognise and take positive action to prevent the potential conflict of interest where developments are proposed in close proximity to existing trees, tree belts and wooded areas.

Adequate resources will be made available in order to ensure that the Town Council complies with its duty of care in respect of tree safety.

All tree works carried out on behalf of the Town Council will comply with appropriate Standards and Legislation in respect of tree protection and will be undertaken by competent and qualified contractors.

This policy will be reviewed every 3-5 years or when there are major changes to legislation or best practice in respect of tree management.