

Chepping Wycombe Parish Council Tree Maintenance Policy

Approved – Full Council 26 January 2016

1. Introduction

This policy identifies Chepping Wycombe Parish Council's approach to the management of trees on land owned by the Parish Council. It is intended to act as a point of reference for the public, Councillors and Council employees to ensure a clear, consistent and structured approach to the management of trees.

Chepping Wycombe Parish Council is responsible for managing its trees in a safe condition and ensuring that they do not create a legal nuisance such as causing damage to property.

The Council seeks to maintain and improve the amenity values of its woodlands whilst also undertaking to improve its' bio-diversity and their environmental impact. Tree felling or pruning and the method of disposal of any arising material will always consider the impact these activities will have upon local wildlife.

The Council may undertake works under its' emergency powers if appropriate and is always mindful of the financial regulations amongst other policies.

The Council will undertake a prioritised inspection programme of its' woodlands to ensure that the risks are well mitigated.

Trees that have a TPO, Tree Preservation Order, require the approval of the Wycombe District Council for any works to be done as do trees within a Conservation Area. Tree works are very restricted within the bird nesting season.

2. Works to Trees

Any work carried out will be subject to available budget which will be applied on a priority scale.

Any work will only be undertaken by the Parish Council in accordance with the following priority list:

2.1 Priority 1 – Public Safety (high risk areas)

The Parish Council will undertake all work which removes actual hazards to safeguard the public and property. These areas being footpaths and boundaries where the general public are often present.

2.2 Priority 2 – Public Safety (low risk areas)

The Parish Council will undertake all work which removes actual hazards to safeguard the public and property. These areas being within woodlands where the general public go less often.

2.3 Priority 3 – Remedial/Preventative Works

The Parish Council will undertake all work which:

- a) Remove potential hazards that may subsequently threaten public safety or property;
- b) Prevent or minimise the effects of a tree on the structure of a property (eg. Preventative subsidence related work).

2.4 Priority 4 – Management of Veteran Trees

The Parish Council will, where public safety is not compromised, undertake all work which;

- a) Conserves trees with high ecological value and,
- b) Preserves trees with significant local historical and / or aesthetic value.

2.5 Priority 5 – Young Tree Maintenance

The Parish Council will undertake all work which:

- a) Assists the establishment of young trees with significant life expectancy; and
- b) Enables new tree planting to reach its full potential
- c) Self setting trees will be removed as necessary
- d) Removes non-native species

2.6 Priority 6 – Nuisance Management

The Parish Council will undertake remedial work where it is considered that its trees are causing an actionable nuisance to a neighbouring property.

For example:

- a) Root / branch encroachment over property boundaries where damage has occurred or is likely to do so imminently.
- b) When a tree is thought to be causing a nuisance which does not threaten public safety or property, the Council will consider appropriate remedial works during the next programmed cycle inspection of that tree.

The Parish Council is unable to undertake one-off, reactive inspections to consider general nuisance issues such as:

- Shade onto a garden or property;
- Deposits of seed / leaf litter;
- Tree is considered too large;
- Summer honeydew deposits;
- Droppings from roosting birds;
- TV reception interference.

3. Neighbouring Properties

Neighbouring properties may always trim back branches to the property boundary that overhang the boundary lines.

The Council should be advised of the proposed works in sufficient time to allow an inspection to be made. The council may insist on an appropriate contractor being employed and other works (eg balancing works) being undertaken at the same time.