



Introduction

This policy identifies the 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.

The Parish Council recognise that trees around Southbourne are valued by the public and need to be properly managed.

The Parish Council will operate tree management based on the following principles:

1. Trees provide a wide variety of benefits to society
2. Trees are living organisms that naturally lose branches or fall
3. The overall risk to the public is extremely low
4. The owners of trees have a legal duty of care
5. Tree owners should take a balanced and proportionate approach to tree safety management

If a tree falls and causes injury or damage its owner could be held negligent if they had omitted to take sufficient care of the tree. As landowner, the Council has a duty of care to ensure that all of the trees on its land are kept in an acceptable condition and do not put persons and property at unreasonable risk.

Inspections

Informal observations by the public, Parish Council Members and the Tree Warden(s) should be passed to the Clerk to the Council.

The Council will ensure that expert inspections of trees are carried out by a qualified tree surgeon/arboriculturalist on land owned by the Parish Council. These inspections will be carried out on a biennial basis¹ unless the need arises for more frequent inspections, as advised by an arboriculturalist or tree surgeon.

Tree Work

Only dead, dying, diseased or dangerous trees will be removed or made safe, whichever is deemed necessary.

A prioritised programme of tree work will be maintained based on the inspections and with an emphasis on planned rather than reactive tree maintenance.

¹ Cavanagh v Witley Parish Council & Kevin Shepherd Tree Surgeons QBD 14 February 2017

Planned maintenance will be carried out based upon inspection results.

Corrective maintenance will be carried out in response to ad hoc reports of suspected problems if the condition of the tree so requires.

The Council will allocate sufficient resources to ensure that it is able to manage the trees that it owns.

Consideration will always be given to the impact of any tree pruning or felling on local wildlife.

Tree pruning or felling will only take place outside the bird nesting season of March to August unless matters of public safety dictate otherwise. Tree work will always be undertaken in such a way as to ensure the impact on local wildlife is minimised.

Tree work will be scheduled to take place in periods where the impact on local wildlife is minimised and comply with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as may be amended from time to time) and any other relevant legislation.

The Council will ensure all tree works are carried out to BS3998/1989 British Standards for Tree Work 1989 (and any subsequent revisions). Tree pruning will only be undertaken where there is sound justification for the work. Where pruning is undertaken it will be in accordance with good arboriculture practice to ensure minimum harm to the tree and every effort will be made to ensure the general shape and character of each tree is retained.

The Council will carry out work in the following circumstances:

- Safety- where there is deemed to be significant risk to the public
- Where there is deemed to be significant risk to property
- To comply with the Highways Act 1980 Section 154
- Tree Health- where work is required to prolong life or promote development of good tree structure.

The Council will not fell or prune trees on Council owned land:

- Solely to alleviate problems caused by natural and/or seasonal phenomena.
- For reasons of light.
- For reasons of loss of view
- Solely because they are causing interference with television or satellite reception, unless complainants have taken other measures to improve reception without success and it can be proven that pruning will improve reception.

In considering any action the Council will take account of the amenity value of the trees concerned.

The Council will give consideration to any complaints and requests regarding trees on Council owned property, taking into account its tree management policy and/or advice from a qualified tree surgeon.

The Council does not undertake any work on privately owned trees.

Southbourne Parish Council

Adopted 11 September 2018

Reviewed 11 June 2019