



Tree Management Policy

1. Introduction

Trees play an essential role in providing a range of environmental, social and economic benefits. Some are measurable, such as improvements in air quality. Many are not, but they have a positive impact on the lives of people living and working in the village.

This policy is Quorn Parish Council's approach to the management of trees on its land and property.

The policy is intended to:

- Protect the natural environment – preserve and prudently manage and maintain the trees on Council land
- Fulfil the Council's 'duty of care' to the public - by law, the standard of care required from a tree owner is 'that of a reasonable and prudent landowner', although the owner is not expected to guarantee that a tree is 'safe'.
- Improve and develop our parks and open spaces.

2. The benefits that trees provide

Trees are the oldest and largest living organisms on the planet. They play a significant role in improving environmental conditions and people's quality of life. Trees can make it a healthier, attractive and more comfortable place to live and work.

Environmental benefits

- Absorbing carbon dioxide (the main greenhouse gas).
- Filtering, absorbing and reducing pollutants (ozone, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, dust, particulates and noise).
- Producing oxygen.
- Reducing localised extremes in temperatures, cooling in the summer and warming in the winter (countering urban heat island effects).
- Reducing the effects of flash floods (tree canopies intercept rainfall slowing down its path to the ground beneath).
- Reducing noise levels by acting as a sound barrier.

Social benefits

- Providing amenity, aesthetic value and historical continuity.

- Providing habitats for a broad range of wildlife.
- Marking the changing seasons with leaf changes and floral displays
- Symbolizing community focal points.

Economic benefits

- Increasing property values (the presence of trees can increase the value of residential and commercial property by 5% -18%.
- The value of undeveloped land with mature trees can be increased by 27%.
- Providing a sustainable source of compost (leaf litter).
- Providing employment through all aspects of the industry.

Health and Well Being

- Providing shade, making outdoor leisure activities more pleasurable during hot weather and also reducing risk of skin cancers from harmful ultra-violet radiation.
- Reducing stress and illness by providing psychological refreshment and a sense of well being through softening the built environment, creating character and a sense of place and permanence.
- Releasing scents and aromas that elicit a positive emotional response contributing to health and well being.

3. Tree problems

The close proximity of trees, people and built structures can occasionally result in inconvenience to residents. Nuisance issues may also arise by maintaining a tree population which is diverse in age and species. Problems may include the obstruction of light into homes, leaf and fruit fall and direct or indirect damage to structures. The majority of problems can be mitigated by appropriate tree maintenance.

4. Trees under Council Ownership

The Council is responsible for approximately 300 mature trees, located mainly in parks, open spaces and conservation sites, plus many saplings and self-sown willows in woodland/wetland sites and mature hedgerows.

Street trees

The Parish Council has responsibility for only a few street trees; these are inevitably in locations where public safety is a consideration, and public and vehicle safety is therefore important.

Street trees are often subject to a poor rooting environment and stress from airborne pollution. Disturbance and physical damage can also be caused by the works of utility companies.

Trees in Parks and Open Spaces

Quorn Parish Council owns approximately 10 hectares of parks, recreation grounds and open spaces. They make an important contribution to people's overall quality of life. Trees are an essential feature of parks and open spaces, providing screening, shade and structure, making them a more attractive environment to visit and in which to enjoy a broad range of recreational activities.

Parks and open spaces are of significant arboricultural importance as they contain some of the largest and oldest trees in the Parish. Proactive management is necessary to ensure a healthy tree population and one that is diverse in age and species.

Trees in Woodlands and Conservation sites

Quorn contains a variety of habitats and dependent wildlife and their protection is important in order to retain and enhance biodiversity. The range of different flora and fauna found within the semi-urban urban environment can affect the quality of life by providing contact with the natural world. Biodiversity increases the value of a site for educational and recreational activities.

Woodlands and large native trees support a greater number and variety of species than most other habitats. Of particular importance are old trees, including stumps, which contain cavities, rot holes and dead, decaying wood. This habitat supports large numbers of insects not found anywhere else.

Tree works in woodlands and conservation sites are only undertaken to mitigate actionable nuisances, potential risks to site users and to further good management of the relevant site. Maintenance works such as coppicing and the clearance of invasive species are coordinated through Community Groups and volunteers.

5. Trees and the Environment

A sustainable tree resource

The Council has a cyclical inspection and maintenance programme for the majority of its tree stock (see Appendix 1). This proactive approach ensures appropriate works are undertaken where necessary and that any problems regarding tree health are identified and dealt with systematically. Those trees which are dead, dying or appear dangerous are removed after assessing the risk to public safety or damage to property. In some cases, however, they may be retained in appropriate locations (eg Tom Long's Meadow) for their value as a wildlife habitat.

The Council is committed to maintain the overall tree population by ensuring that replacement trees are planted on its land.

Climate Change and its Effect on Trees

Lower summer rainfall and an increased evaporation have led to longer periods of drought-induced stress on trees. An increase in the occurrence of storms has also made trees more vulnerable to wind damage and falling branches. Warmer summers and a rise in temperatures in general are likely to extend the life cycle and geographical range of certain pests and diseases. Trees under stress are more susceptible to colonisation by insect pests and decay-causing fungi.

Recycling of green waste

Green waste generated from tree works in woodlands and conservation sites is usually left in situ to create wildlife habitats.

Green waste from parks, gardens and public open spaces is composted on site or recycled at a registered recycling site, where it is turned into composting material.

6. Tree maintenance

Tree maintenance programme

The Council has a proactive approach to tree maintenance and management. Tree works are undertaken to fulfil the Council's 'duty of care'. Where possible the work is scheduled to minimise disturbance to nesting birds and wildlife habitats.

The type of pruning works undertaken depends on the location and the species of the tree. The minimum work possible will be undertaken to adequately manage the tree for condition and safety. This may often only involve removing the lower branches to increase clearance for pedestrians and vehicle traffic and/or cutting back the branches adjacent to buildings.

The Council will undertake works to fulfil its legal obligations to ensure the safety of the public and properties.

Felling or pruning will not be undertaken to;

- Improve reception for satellite TV reception.
- Increase amount of sunlight reaching properties or gardens.
- Alleviate seasonal or naturally occurring problems, e.g. falling leaves, fruit, seeds or berries, bird droppings, pollen.

Felling or remedial work will be undertaken:

- Where an inspection has identified visible decay, fungal brackets indicating possible root and trunk decay or any other defect that would lead to the tree failing.

- To abate an actionable nuisance, where branches are touching or overhanging buildings, e.g. physical contact with walls, windows and gutters.
- Where Highways infrastructure (road signs, street lights, etc) and sightlines for vehicles and pedestrians are obscured.
- When previous maintenance regimes have determined that future works are of the same specification for that specimen, e.g. pollarding, crown reduction.
- Where works are in accordance with planned management of a site.

The siting of CCTV cameras must take into consideration existing trees to prevent requests for unnecessary pruning works or the removal of trees to improve desired sightlines.

Formal cyclical tree inspections are carried out by qualified arboricultural consultants, who also determine the tree work specification (see Appendix 1). Tree works are carried out by approved contractors.

7. Community involvement

It is essential that local people play a part and feel engaged in the process of protecting and improving their local environment. They are encouraged to monitor and report tree problems or issues. The Council also has a volunteer tree warden who is available for tree inspections and advice, and a footpath warden to informally monitor tree encroachment and/or safety issues related to Rights of Way.

APPENDIX 1 - Tree inspection and maintenance schedule

Location	Type of inspection	Frequency	Inspection by	Action
Stafford Orchard Park	Informal observation	Daily	Groundsman	Report problems, light pruning, leaf litter clearance, fence off/sign dangers.
	Formal (Health & Condition Assessment)	Annual	Arboricultural consultant	Remedial work as specified by Consultant (felling, crown reduction, dead-wood removal, pruning).
	Detailed	If required	Specialist	As specified by specialist.
Memorial Garden, High St land and The Cross Oak	Informal observation	occasionally	Groundsman Tree Warden Public	Report problems, light pruning, leaf litter clearance, fence off/sign dangers.
	Formal (Health & Condition Assessment)	3 yearly	Arboricultural consultant	Remedial work as specified by Consultant (felling, crown reduction, dead-wood removal, pruning).
	Detailed	If required	Specialist	As specified by specialist

Location	Type of inspection	Frequency	Inspection by	Action
Tom Long's Meadow (Zone 1 – Rights of Way and neighbouring properties)	Informal observation	occasionally	Tree Warden, Footpath Warden, Groundsman, Public	Report problems. Deal with individual tree issues.
	Formal (Health & Condition Assessment)	3 yearly	Arboricultural consultant	Remedial work as specified by Consultant (felling, dead-wood removal, pruning).
Tom Long's Meadow (Zone 2 – wetland Conservation Area)	Informal observation	occasionally	Community Group	Responsibility of The Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust under its lease with the Parish Council.
The Banks	Informal observation	occasionally	Groundsman Tree Warden Public	Report problems, light pruning, leaf litter clearance, fence off/sign dangers.
	Formal (Health & Condition Assessment)	3 yearly	Arboricultural consultant	Remedial work as specified by Consultant (felling, crown reduction, dead-wood removal, pruning).
	Detailed	If required	Specialist	As specified by specialist.

Location	Type of inspection	Frequency	Inspection by	Action
Caves Field	Informal observation	occasionally	Groundsman Tree Warden Public	Report problems, light pruning, fencing off/signing dangers.
	Formal (Health & Condition Assessment)	5 yearly	Arboricultural consultant	Remedial work as specified by Consultant (felling, crown reduction, dead-wood removal, pruning).
Fenny Copse Parkland	Informal observation	occasionally	Groundsman Tree Warden Public	Report problems, light pruning, fencing off/signing dangers.
	Formal (Health & Condition Assessment)	5 yearly	Arboricultural consultant	Remedial work as specified by Consultant (felling, crown reduction, dead-wood removal, pruning).