



Tree & Hedgerow Management Policy

General Principles

The Parish Council has the following principles in relation to trees on Parish Council land:

- It will take a responsible approach to tree management and to any risks which they may pose to people and surrounding property
- It will be prudent in identifying any such risks in advance
- It will take steps to reduce these risks, recognising that the costs of early remedial action may be significantly less than future costs.

The Woodland Trust states that “trees and hedgerows are important features in the landscape; providing food and shelter for wildlife’.

The Parish Council accepts that as well as being central to the visual character of the Parish, trees and hedgerows create a diverse habitat and wildlife corridors for a variety of wildflowers, bugs, birds and mammals. They are also useful in flood prevention and absorbing noise and particulate pollution.

The rest of this policy provides further details of the approaches the Parish Council will use to preserve, enhance and manage trees and hedgerows on their land.

Parish Council Owned Land

- **Ash Recreation Ground**, Queen’s Road, Ash
- **Pound Corner**, The Street, Ash

General Policy

This policy defines the Council’s approach to tree and hedgerow management on its land. It is intended to be a point of reference for the Public, Councillors and Officers to ensure a consistent and structured approach to the management of the Parish Council’s trees and hedgerows. This policy sets out a proactive and systematic method of management that will both conserve and enhance our tree population and hedgerows and the amenity value of our land. For sites of special character or that have trees and hedgerows of particular significance, this general policy will be supplemented with the site’s particular management needs.

Tree Protection

Due care will be taken by the Council to ensure that damage to trees by mowing and strimming is prevented. Longer grass margins around trees may be left. Protection will be provided for newly planted or young trees where appropriate, for example, timber posts surrounded by wire mesh.

Tree Inspections

The council has a duty to care for its trees and will use a qualified tree surgeon to inspect all trees in high risk areas every two years. High risk areas will include areas adjacent to the public highway, major footpaths and other areas of high use such as play areas and parks.

The Council will also consider requests to conduct tree work on the Council's land from local residents. If the request concerns a potentially dangerous tree, the tree will be inspected on the same or next day. If the request is non-urgent, the Clerk will place the request on the next Parish Council Agenda. If agreed, an inspection will be undertaken within three months. In all cases the local resident will be informed of any actions taken.

The Council recognises the importance of mature and ancient trees and will balance safety with a duty to protect the environment, ensuring only essential/minimal works are undertaken in order to preserve a tree.

Tree Felling

The Council will avoid felling trees unless it is necessary. This will usually be for health and safety purposes or to prevent the spread of serious tree diseases and pests. However, the Council reserve the right to fell trees to prevent overcrowding, to improve habitats or restore landscapes in line with site management or where a tree is inappropriate to its location and has a significantly detrimental impact on the amenity of the site.

Maintenance

Tree work will be prioritised and carried out according to the following criteria:

Emergency

Dangerous trees requiring immediate attention

Timescale for work: Same day or next day

Desirable Work

Actions to improve tree health

Timescale for work: Within 6 months

Non-essential Work

Actions to thin or prune trees

Timescale for work: Within 12 months

Tree maintenance will be carried out by contractors who are qualified tree surgeons. All tree works will comply with BS3988:2110 Recommendations for Tree Work and any subsequent Revisions.

Tree Pruning

This will be carried out for health and safety reasons, such as to remove lower branches growing over a road or sports pitch or where growth is interfering with electrical or telephone wires.

Or where it benefits the health of a tree, for example pollarding to extend the lifespan of a tree and prevent splitting.

Or where it is in line with site-specific plans, for example to improve the amount of available light.

The Council will not undertake tree pruning or maintenance –

- In response to natural occurrences that do not pose a health and safety risk, such as falling leaves, fruit, berries, seeds, bird droppings, pollen etc.
- Solely for reasons of increasing sun light/views to properties and gardens
- During the nesting season, unless work is for health and safety reasons
- If a tree contains roosting bats, unless work is for health and safety reasons
- Where trees have a negative impact on television reception
- On trees overhanging an adjacent property, unless work is for health and safety reasons. Landowners have a common law right to prune back tree branches to their boundary, providing that would not lead to tree death and providing the tree is not protected by a TPO or within a Conservation Area. (See Appendix A)
- To remove dead branches from trees located in relatively quiet locations due to their ecological value, unless work is for health and safety reasons

Conservation Area and Tree Preservation Orders

A Tree Preservation Order is a form of planning control. It prevents cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage or destruction of trees without permission from Dover District Council.

None of the trees owned by the Parish Council are subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

The same protections apply to trees in a Conservation Area and also require permission from Dover District Councils' Planning Department. The Parish Council's trees at Pound Corner fall within the Conservation Area. The Recreation Ground is not located in the Conservation Area.

Consent is required to work on trees at Pound Corner only. Planning applications should be made to Dover District Council.

New Planting and Replacement of Trees

Should it be necessary for the Parish Council to fell a tree, it is policy to replace that tree with a UK native species of a suitable size and type to fit the growing conditions.

The Parish Council will also aim to increase planting of native species on sites they own within the parish as opportunity allows.

Hedgerows

Hedgerows are an important feature in the parish. They may have marked important historical boundaries and their loss is to be discouraged. Hedgerows provide habitat for a wide range of wildlife.

The Council will:

- aim to increase infill or new planting of native hedge species on sites they own within the parish.

The Council will not undertake hedge pruning or maintenance:

- During the nesting season, unless work is for health and safety reasons
- The main nesting and breeding season is recognised as being between 1 March to 31 August.

APPENDIX A

Common Law – Advice on Cutting of Tree Branches Not Protected by a TPO or within a Conservation Area

Provided the tree is not protected by a TPO or situated in a Conservation Area, then

Under Common Law a person may cut back any branch (or root) from a neighbour's tree that overhangs or encroaches on their property. In cutting back any overhanging branches (or encroaching roots) the following points need to be observed –

- You must not trespass on the land on which the trees are growing
- Branches or roots must not be cut back beyond the boundary
- Any branches, fruit or roots removed must be returned to the owner unless they otherwise agree
- All work must be carried out carefully to avoid damaging property or carrying out work that would leave the tree unsafe or dangerous, or would lead to the death of the tree.

Ash Parish Council request that any overhanging branches, fallen fruit or encroaching roots removed are responsibly disposed of by the neighbours carrying out the work. Depositing waste branches, fruit or roots onto Council Land without permission will be treated as fly tipping. If you have any concerns regarding this please contact the Clerk.