

Sturmer Parish Council Tree Policy

1. Introduction

This is a policy for the management of trees owned and/or managed by Sturmer Parish Council (the Council). It is intended to act as a point of reference for the public, Councillors, Officers and Contractors to ensure a clear, consistent and structured approach to the management of trees for which the Council is responsible.

2. Management

The Council will manage trees to ensure that it meets its legal responsibilities, and to ensure public safety according to the priority of works and its financial resources. e.g. duty of care, health and safety.

The Parish Council will ensure that a detailed inspection of trees on Council owned land is carried out by a qualified Arboriculturalist on an 18 monthly basis, unless the need arises for more frequent inspections. Tree surveys will be required within 3 months of the date of instruction.

3. Planting

Parishioners and other members of the public including the Council contractors should not plant trees on Council owned land unless express written permission is obtained from the Council on a tree by tree basis.

4. Maintenance

The Council may carry out works to trees for safety reasons to reduce risk and liability, and to allow the reasonable enjoyment of public and private property. The Council may also prune trees to improve the structure and help the future health of the tree. Felling and removal of trees will only be considered where pruning does not offer a reasonable solution. Where risk is an issue a risk assessment of the tree will be undertaken and advice sought from a suitably qualified contractor if time permits, dependent upon the urgency of removing the risk.

Tree work may be required for the benefit of a group of trees. For example, it may be necessary to remove diseased or damaged trees or to thin out a group of closely planted tree to meet long-term management objectives to benefit those remaining trees that will grow to maturity.

The Council will maintain all its trees ensuring works are carried out in accordance with current best practice and whenever possible within the scope of the most recent "British Standards for Tree Work", (BS 3998:2010)

The Council will continue to carry out regular tree inspections on a cyclical basis, at a frequency appropriate to the individual location, and carry out work to trees based on risk to ensure its duty of care is maintained. The Council will keep a record of all tree inspections including those done on just a visual basis by a member of the Council or their appointed representative. The safety of Parishioners and other members of the public is the priority of the Council.

Tree work will be prioritised and carried out according to identified hazard and risk. After investigation and inspection, the Council will produce a programme of works within the available budgets. The emphasis will be on planned, rather than reactive, tree maintenance. The following categories will be used to categorise our tree works:

Emergency: Dangerous trees requiring immediate attention. Timescale for works: Same day or next day wherever possible. This will require excluding public access to dangerous tree(s).

Category One: Essential works to mitigate hazard. Target timescale for works: Within 12 weeks of identification

Category Two: Desirable works e.g. to improve tree health, loosening/removing tree ties as the trees grow. Target timescale for works: Within 3 months of identification

Category Three: Non-essential works e.g. thinning out, formative pruning. Target timescale for works: Within 12 months of identification

Tree maintenance will be conducted by qualified Contractors subject to the nature of the work. All tree works will be conducted to comply with any tree survey recommendations.

5. Protection

The Council will seek compensation from any organisation or individual responsible for significant damage to or removal of any council-owned tree(s) to the value as calculated by Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees (CAVAT).

6. Felling and Pruning

The Council will only fell/remove trees for sound arboricultural reasons. These may include:

- Dead, dying or dangerous
- Proven to be causing significant structural damage or hazard to neighbouring properties
- In accordance with any statutory duties and/or plant health orders
- Considers to be an inappropriate species for the location, or to have structural or physiological defects making removal the only sensible management option.

In locations where it is safe to do so and desirable for site management, standing dead trees may be left for the benefit of ecosystem services.

Tree Removal will also be considered where required as part of an agreed management programme or as a strategic improvement project.

The following reasons will not constitute grounds for the pruning or removal of trees on Council owned/managed land by the Council:

- Interference with a satellite dish or TV aerial reception telephone cables.
- Leaf, seed and fruit fall.
- Obstruction of view or causing shade.
- Mess caused by insects or birds, or trees home to mammals including squirrels.
- Problems associated with fruit.
- Problems associated with pollen.
- Healthy mature trees will not be removed to create space to plant new trees.
- Someone is willing to pay for the removal and replacement of a tree.
- The perceived risk that it may cause subsidence in the future.

Selective minor pruning may be undertaken to tree on Council owned/managed land if deemed justified by the Council on the following grounds:

- Overhanging neighbour's land.
- Excessive blockage of light.
- To facilitate community safety CCTV cameras.

All felled material will be used for wildlife features such as log piles and dry heaping. Any surplus material may be collected by Sturmer residents upon application to the Parish Council.

In the case of an emergency please contact the Parish Council via the Parish Clerk. Contact details and other emergency contacts can be found on the Parish Council website: <https://sturmer.pc.gov.uk>

Review Annually