

Tree Management Policy

ADOPTION DATE: 5th September 2023

POLICY AIM

The aim of this Tree Management Policy is to ensure the safety of Armthorpe Parish Council's trees, maintain and encourage biodiversity and improve the quality of the landscape. We will achieve this by:

- Encouraging the conservation, positive management and the appropriate planting of trees.
- Ensuring that the management of trees in the parish contributes toward making our environment safe, attractive, sustainable and healthy.

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out the Parish Council's approach to the management of trees on land owned by Armthorpe Parish Council only. Other Councils, organisations, companies and private individuals may need to be contacted if a tree(s) is located on their land.

1.2. This document has been created to provide guidance for the public, Councillors and Council employees to ensure a clear and consistent approach is adhered to regarding management of trees by Armthorpe Parish Council.

1.3. If a tree falls and causes injury or damage, the relevant landowner could be held negligent if they have failed to take sufficient care of the tree. Therefore, as a landowner, the Council has a duty of care to ensure that all trees on Parish Council-owned land are kept in an acceptable condition and do not put people or property at unreasonable risk.

1.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with Doncaster Council's Tree Policy and Tree Risk Management Plan.

2. Inspection

2.1. All trees on Council-owned land will be inspected annually by a qualified tree inspector and any recommendations made will be considered by the Council in line with this policy.

2.2 In addition the Parish Council will undertake monthly visual inspections to identify any issues at their earliest opportunity. Issues raised will be communicated to tree officers at Doncaster Council to obtain advice on any remedial action which is required.

3. Maintenance

3.1. The Council will adopt a proactive approach to tree maintenance. However, only essential/minimal works will be undertaken in order to manage a tree because the Council supports a policy of tree preservation. The type of works undertaken will depend on the tree's location, the species of tree and its state of health at that time.

3.2. Preventative action will be taken where possible and areas close to roads, buildings and with high public usage will be prioritised.

3.3. As a guide, tree works will be undertaken in the following circumstances;

3.3.1. Where an inspection has identified the tree as potentially hazardous or an immediate danger;

3.3.2. If the works are vital to the tree's long-term survival. Dead, dying or diseased trees will only be fully removed when there is no other option;

3.3.3. To abate an actionable nuisance where branches are touching buildings. e.g. physical contact with walls, windows, gutters;

3.3.4. When previous maintenance regimes have determined future works are of the same specification for that specimen e.g. pollarding, crown reduction.

3.4. The impact on local wildlife of all tree works, specifically felling and pruning, will always be thoroughly considered, with the impact minimised where possible.

3.5. Where appropriate, dead and fallen wood will be left on site unless there are sound conservation and safety reasons for its removal.

3.6. All tree work will be carried out by Doncaster Council as a competent appointed by the Parish Council or by the Parish Council's appointed Tree Surgeon based on their professional advice. No work will be carried out without the consent of the Parish Council (save in an emergency).

4. Protected Trees

4.1. A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) prevents cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage

or destruction of trees (including cutting roots) without permission.

4.2. It is an offence to cut down, lop, top, uproot or wilfully damage or destroy a tree in a Conservation Area without giving prior written notice to Doncaster Council.

5. Requests for tree work

5.1 The Parish Council will consider formal applications for tree works on its land, but these must be in writing, either by letter or email to: clerk@armthorpeparishcouncil.co.uk Armthorpe Parish Council, Armthorpe Community Centre, Welfare Park, Church Street, Armthorpe, Doncaster, DN3 3AG.

5.2 The Parish Council will consider each request on an individual basis. The positive benefits of any tree should always be weighed against any problems that have arisen. In most instances the Parish Council will not undertake work to trees to deal with the following:

Impact of shade and light loss

A common complaint about trees is that they block light from properties, shade residential gardens, cause mosses etc to grow on roofs and drives or kill lawns. The seriousness of this effect can vary as much as a person's perception of it. Usually, acceptable levels of pruning will have little or no effect on the amount of sunlight reaching a house or garden. In addition, there is no natural right to light in law as a right to light must be granted or acquired by long use and therefore in many cases there will be no legal right to light.

Interference with mobile telephone, television and satellite reception

Trees that interfere with mobile telephone, television or satellite reception can be a cause for complaint. There has been an increase in these complaints in recent years but, in essence, nobody has a legal right to reception. In many cases television or satellite reception can be significantly improved by relocating an aerial or dish, or by considering an alternative provider. Boosters are also available which can improve reception.

Branches interfering with telephone wires

Telephone wires frequently pass through trees, but rarely cause a problem that requires action. Where there is a real problem, such as wires breaking repeatedly or interrupted signal, this can usually be resolved through acceptable levels of pruning, or by moving the wires.

Views obstructed by trees

Clearly trees will obstruct views and no amount of acceptable pruning work will resolve this.

Mess or nuisance associated with insects, birds or squirrels

Issues relating to honeydew, bird droppings on cars or squirrels getting onto a roof are common. Whilst

the mess or nuisance caused by insects, birds or squirrels may be annoying and inconvenient to some people, they are all natural consequences of having trees and wildlife in the urban environment.

Problems associated with leaf fall, blossom, fruit and seeds

Issues relating to leaves and fruit/seeds such as fruit being thrown, blocked gutters, slippery footpaths, mess falling onto gardens that need to be cleared, seeds or pollen blowing into the house are commonplace. Whilst these issues may be annoying and inconvenient, they are all natural and seasonal consequences of having trees in an urban environment.

A perception that a tree is too large to be safe

Large trees can be a cause of concern for occupiers of nearby buildings. The absence of significant pruning can also lead some people to believe that a tree is not being managed properly.

In nearly all instances, sound arboricultural practice dictates that trees are pruned to deal with specific defects or to suit site-specific circumstances. In most instances this means that trees will not be heavily pruned.

Requests to remove and replace a tree where they are willing to pay for the work

In some instances, for example when someone wants a vehicle crossing and there is a tree in the way, an offer to pay for the removal and replacement of the existing tree may be made. As the original tree may have taken decades to reach its current size these requests are treated with care and will normally be refused unless there are sound arboricultural reasons to approve them. For example, if the original tree has a limited life expectancy.

Allergies to tree pollen or insects associated with trees

Tree pollen, like grass pollens, can cause allergic reactions. As pollens are dispersed over a wide area the removal or pruning of individual trees would have little effect on an individual's symptoms and does not provide a remedy.

Branches or roots that grow over a property's boundary

Trees that overhang a neighbouring property boundary or have roots that grow into someone's garden can, in some instances, cause people to complain about them. If the branches of a tree encroach on to neighbouring land the person whose property is overhung has the common law right to cut them back to the boundary unless the trees are protected by a tree preservation order (TPO), planning condition or are growing in a conservation area as designated by the Council.

5.3 Landowners are reminded that if access to Council owned land is required to carry out pruning you will require written permission from the Parish Council before carrying out such works.

6. Parish Council owned land

- Land surrounding Armthorpe Community Centre, Welfare Park
- Rands Lane Burial Ground
- Mercel Avenue Allotments
- Cow House Lane Recreation Field
- Briar Road Recreation Field
- Mansfield Crescent Playing Field

IMPLEMENTATION

All Councillors and Staff have responsibility to ensure this policy is implemented and followed. Failure to do so may result in Disciplinary Action being taken against staff or Councillors being reported to Doncaster Council Monitoring Officer under the Code of Conduct.

MONITORING

The policy will be monitored in the following ways:

- Any breach of the policy to be reported to the Clerk/ Deputy Clerk.
- Anyone Requests for Tree Work to be addressed logged Clerk/ Deputy Clerk
- Reports will be investigated and remedial action taken if required Clerk/ Deputy Clerk/Doncaster Council The Clerk will review the insurance policy annually.

POLICY CONSULTATION

A copy of the policy is available to view on the Parish Council's website and Parish Council office.

POLICY REVISION DATE

Policy Reviewed August 2023

Next review date August 2024 This document shall be reviewed annually; or upon any changes to legislation; or subject to the requirements of Armthorpe Parish Council.