



ODIHAM PARISH COUNCIL TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY Adopted 15th July 2025

1. Introduction

Trees are a vital component of the Odiham and North Warnborough landscapes and provide a wide range of environmental, social, and economic benefits. They enhance visual amenity, support biodiversity, improve air quality, reduce noise pollution, moderate temperatures, and offer psychological and health benefits. Odiham Parish Council (the Council) recognises both the value and the responsibility of maintaining a healthy and sustainable tree population.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and consistent approach to:

- i) The management of trees owned or maintained by the Council.
- ii) Management of requests for tree work on Council owned land, bordering private properties.
- iii) The Council's approach to considering tree planning applications.

It aims to:

- iv) Ensure the safety of the public.
- v) Mitigate risks.
- vi) Promote the long-term health of the tree stock.
- vii) Encourage biodiversity and enhance environmental sustainability across the Parish.
- viii) Comply with local planning policy.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- i) All trees located on land owned or maintained by the Council.
- ii) All trees located within the Parish when subject of a tree planning application.

4. Legal Framework

The Council is guided by the following legislation and national best practice:

- i) Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- ii) Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 and 1984.
- iii) Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which includes the Bird Nesting Regulations.
- iv) Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act).
- v) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas).
- vi) Environment Act 2021 (Biodiversity Duty).
- vii) Guidance from the National Tree Safety Group (www.ntsgroup.org.uk).



5. Responsibilities

- i) The Council is responsible to agreeing terms of this policy.
- ii) The Amenities Committee is responsible for the management of tree stock on Parish Council owned land.
- iii) The Planning & Development Committee is responsible for reviewing and commenting on tree planning applications.
- iv) The Parish Clerk and Council officers are responsible for managing land in compliance with this Policy.
- v) The Parish Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and/or Vice Chair of the Amenity Areas Committee, has delegated financial authority to instruct emergency works.

6. Tree Management and Maintenance on Council owned sites

- i) The Council adopts a proactive, risk-based approach to tree management.
- ii) Maintenance is informed by scheduled surveys, unplanned events such as storms or reports from the public.
- iii) All Council owned trees are inspected:
 - a) Visual inspections are conducted weekly by the Amenity Officer or other Council representative.
 - b) The Council's grounds contractors are asked to report any findings observed when on site during routine grounds maintenance.
 - c) Following storms of adverse weather, the Amenity Officer or other Council representative will strive to inspect site inspections within 48 hours.
 - d) All Council owned trees are inspected by a qualified Arborist every 5 years.
- iv) Inspections consider species, stem diameter, physiological health, age, condition, risk rating, habitat value, and proximity to protected species.
- v) Works are prioritised based on tree health, location risk and potential for harm.
- vi) Risk zones:
 - a) High priority areas – high use areas such as play areas and open spaces, near buildings, Odiham Cemetery and routes which border public highways.
 - b) Medium priority areas – woodlands.
 - c) Low priorities – small/ornamental trees.
- vii) The Council responds swiftly to reports of storm damage or hazardous conditions:
 - a) Urgent tree work will be conducted as soon as possible where there is an imminent risk to public safety.
 - b) When there is a delay, for example due to a contractor's availability, the area around the tree posing a risk will be cordoned off to prevent public access.
- viii) The Council will only authorise the removal of trees which present a demonstrable safety, legal or arboriculture risk.



- ix) The Council will not remove dead tress as a matter of course. These trees are significant habitats for biodiversity. Arisings such as woodchip and deadwood will be repurposed for mulch or habitat where safe to do so.
- x) Replanting and sustainability replacement planting will take place if possible, where trees are removed, to maintain canopy cover and biodiversity. Species selection will be based on site suitability, future climate resilience, and minimal maintenance needs.
- xi) Publicity:
 - a) Publicity will not take place for minor works unless the tree is in a conservation area and publicity is necessary through the planning application process.
 - b) Where trees are to be removed or heavily pruned, site notices and maps will be provided where appropriate.
 - c) No notice is required for emergency work undertaken on safety grounds.

7. Management of requests for tree work on Council owned land, bordering private properties

- i) The Council considers requests for tree work on a risk basis.
- ii) The Council aims to respond within one week when a report is received and considered urgent. All other enquiries will be referred to the next available Council or Amenity Areas Committee.
- iii) Works will be considered where:
 - a) Where a significantly hazardous branch is identified it will be removed or reduced to a safe point.
 - b) When it can be demonstrated that a tree is the primary cause of direct or indirect damage to property the Council will act to rectify the problem.
 - c) Trees are blocking streetlights and jeopardise public safety.
- iv) Works will not be considered solely where:
 - a) There is an obstruction of light to houses or gardens. There is no “right to light” within law for adjoining properties.
 - b) The request is to improve television reception.
- v) Under common law a property owner has the legal right to cut back overhanging branches to their boundary. Ideally this work should be done to a good standard and by a competent person and with discussion with the landowner. Arisings from such works should be disposed of by the resident. Common law does not supersede a tree’s protection by Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or Conservation Area status.
- vi) The Council is not legally responsible for fallen leaves or other tree debris such as cones, seeds, blossom etc. Pruning of trees is not a solution to this occurrence and we would be extremely unlikely to fell a tree because of leaf litter etc. The same criterion applies to trees which host birds and aphids.
- vii) Where property damage or subsidence is alleged, the claimant must provide a structural engineer’s report, crack monitoring data, and root analysis. Mitigation may include pruning, root barriers, or in some cases tree removal if justified and proportionate.



8. The Council's approach to considering tree planning applications

- i) The Planning & Development Committee shall consider all tree applications wherever possible within Hart's planning timeframes.
- ii) Where an application for works or removal is significant or unclear from the documents provided, the application will be referred to the Council's Tree Officer and their advice referred to the Planning & Development Committee prior to submitting the Council's comment to Hart.
- iii) An application for the following works will be considered favourably:
 - a) Where a significantly hazardous tree or branch is identified.
 - b) When it can be demonstrated that a tree is the primary cause of direct or indirect damage to property.
 - c) Where a tree blocks a public right of way, streetlight, or public land and may jeopardise public safety.
 - d) Where evidence of disease or damage is evidenced.
 - e) Where evidence is demonstrated through a professional arborist's report and supporting photographs.
 - f) Where proposals for a replacement tree, of the same or similar specimen, are included with the application.

Contacts

The Clerk of Odiham Parish Council
clerk@odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk

The Bridewell
The Bury
Odiham
Hampshire
RG29 1NB

Tel: 01256 702716