



Tree Safety Management Policy

Little Horwood Parish Council is committed to protecting, maintaining and enhancing the landscape and trees of the Parish.

As a tree owner, the Council has a direct responsibility to ensure that trees on Parish Council land do not harm or injure anyone or damage property. This Tree Safety Management Policy addresses this risk.

The Policy will ensure that:

- an overall assessment of risk is completed to identify high risk tree zones on all Council-owned land;
- a system of tree inspections is in operation in relation to the level of risk;
- a record of trees and inspections is retained by the Clerk;
- risks identified by the inspections are controlled and mitigated;
- staff/contractors who carry out inspections are competent to do so and have received the appropriate level of training.
- all work identified through the inspection programme is undertaken by suitably qualified staff or contractors.
- The risk to life and property, as a result of tree deterioration, is kept to as low a level as is reasonably practicable through the operation of this policy.

The main areas of trees that are the responsibility of Little Horwood Parish Council are the Spinney, the Millenium Wood and Nature Reserve and the Garden of Peace. This policy will cover all areas that contain trees for which the Council is responsible.

There is public access to these areas at all times. There are designated paths which are regularly used by dog walkers and leisure walkers. The grass is cut by the Council's contractor and Parish Council volunteers regularly undertake working parties.

Little Horwood Parish Council will manage the risks from trees in a balanced way to maximise the benefits from trees whilst taking reasonable precautions to protect the safety of its members, employees, contractors and members of the public. It will achieve this by adopting procedures for the inspection, management and maintenance of trees proportionate to the risks identified. Resources will be identified to manage the risks in a prioritised way whilst seeking to maintain or enhance the overall asset value.

Inspection Regime

Zoning by level of Risk

The highest risk areas are adjacent to formal public paths; adjacent to the highway, adjacent to neighbouring properties and structures; near seating and information boards. These are coloured red on the attached plan.

The lowest risk areas are in the middle and on the fringes of woodland that are infrequently accessed by people and where falling trees or branches are very unlikely to fall on anyone.

Inspections

The Parish Clerk will arrange for an inspection of high risk areas every 3 years. There is no formal inspection regime for low risk areas. The person completing the full tree surveys will be trained to a minimum of Level 3 arboricultural qualification with at least two years practical experience in tree management and surveying.

The details of the inspections and the significant defects identified will be recorded along with recommendations for further action.

Ad hoc inspections of individual trees or groups of trees will be commissioned if felt to be necessary after strong winds, heavy rain and storms and/or in response to any concerns reported by members of the public, councillors, contractors or employees.

Remedial Works

The Clerk will arrange for remedial work identified to be undertaken as soon as practically possible where public safety is at immediate risk.

The Clerk has delegated powers to instruct a contractor to complete remedial works to trees that are dangerous or high risk.

For all other tree works required appointment of contractors will be carried out in accordance with our Financial Regulations.

The Council will not undertake to fell or cut back healthy trees without good reason.

Records

Records, including maps, provide the basis for safety management reviews and, in the extremely rare event of an accident, can support evidence of reasonable tree management. It is not necessary to record every tree inspected. However, records of trees presenting a serious risk and requiring treatment are useful, as is a record of how they have been treated.

Little Horwood Parish Council will keep records of when inspections are carried out, who has completed the inspection, the recommendations for work to trees and any actions taken and when tree work has been carried out. These will be retained according to the Data Retention Policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually.