

Elvetham Heath Parish Council Tree Management Policy

Reviewed and adopted 16th October 2023
Minute ref 94/23

Scope - This policy applies to all trees on land owned and/or managed by Elvetham Heath Parish Council (EHPC) and is intended to act as a point of reference for the public, Councillors and Council officers to ensure a clear, consistent, and structured approach to the management of the trees.

Trees are important features in the landscape. They help to create an attractive environment, making the Parish a better place to live, work, study, and visit. They bring colour and contrast, screen unsightly structures, give privacy and soften the hard lines of streets and landscapes. Not only do trees have a visual quality, but they also enhance the environment in less obvious ways;

- They improve air quality by filtering airborne dust, smoke, and fumes.
- They absorb traffic noise in built-up areas and can help limit noise pollution.
- Reduction of temperature extremes by providing shelter in hot weather and insulation in cold weather; trees adjacent to buildings can reduce air conditioning and heating costs.
- They act as a screen, increasing privacy in residential roads and gardens.
- They convert carbon dioxide to oxygen, increasing the quality of the air locally.
- They provide food and habitat for birds and other wildlife, thus supporting nature conservation value and biodiversity.
- Research has shown that trees provide many psychological and health benefits and have been shown to reduce stress.

Policy - As a landowner, EHPC has a duty of care to ensure that all trees on its land are kept in good condition. It will endeavour to maintain them in a healthy state and take such action as it deems necessary to protect the safety of the public and nearby property.

- All trees will be inspected by a qualified tree surgeon. These inspections will be carried out on a three-yearly basis although trees are monitored regularly. Only dead, diseased, or dangerous trees will be removed or made safe.
- A prioritised programme of tree work will be maintained based on the inspections. Consideration will be given to the impact of any tree pruning or felling on local wildlife and non-emergency tree work will be scheduled so that the impact on wildlife will be minimised.
- The council will allocate sufficient resources to ensure that it is able to manage the trees under its responsibility.
- Non-urgent major tree work involving tree removal/reduction and hedge cutting operations should not normally be undertaken during bird nesting/breeding season, which is considered to be from 1st March to 31st July. Trees displaying signs of roosting bats will be referred to an Ecologist before any work commences. Any trees supporting roosting bats will not be worked on until Natural England is consulted.
- The council will ensure that the tree surgeons are fully qualified and have sufficient public liability insurance. Attempts will be made by the tree surgeons to notify affected residents prior to the commencement of the works.

- Tree work will only be carried out where there is sound justification for the work.
- Every tree removed from Parish Council land is replaced by two others as appropriate.
- A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is a legal document made, administered, and enforced by the local planning authority, to protect specified trees and woodlands with public amenity value. A TPO prevents cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage or destruction of trees (including cutting roots) without permission.
- EHPC will adopt a robust approach to damage to its property. Where EHPC trees are felled or damaged without prior consent the matter will be referred to the police. Civil action will be considered to recover compensation for the loss of the tree and/or any remedial works including replanting with a suitable replacement, and aftercare.
- EHPC will consider the use of Tree Preservation Orders in conjunction with the Local Planning Authority to increase the legal protection afforded to specific trees or woodlands which are under threat. Where damage is caused to a tree which is protected by a Tree Preservation Order, the EHPC will consider prosecution.
- The Council will consider any complaint requests regarding trees on council owned land, considering its tree policy and advice from a qualified tree surgeon.
- The council will not fell or prune trees on council owned land for the following reasons:
 - Solely to alleviate problems caused by natural and/or seasonal phenomena;
 - Shading, loss of light, loss of view
 - Problems associated with television or satellite reception, unless complainants have taken all other measures to improve reception without success and it can be proven that pruning will improve reception. In considering any action, the council will take account of the amenity value of the tree(s) concerned.