Dunnington Parish Council

TREE AND HEDGEROW MANAGEMENT POLICY

Updated March 2025
Reviewed Annually in May

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Parish Council has previously adopted the following principles in relation to trees on Parish Council land –

- It will take a responsible approach to tree management and to any risks which they may pose to people and surrounding property
- It will be prudent in identifying any such risks in advance
- It will take steps to reduce these risks, recognising that the costs of early remedial action may be significantly less than future costs.

The Woodland Trust states that "trees and hedgerows are important features in the landscape, providing food and shelter for wildlife'.

The Parish Council accepts that as well as being central to the visual character of the Parish, trees and hedgerows create a diverse habitat and wildlife corridors for a variety of wildflowers, bugs, birds and mammals. They are also useful in flood prevention and absorbing noise and particulate pollution.

The rest of this policy provides further details of the approaches the Parish Council will use to preserve, enhance and manage trees and hedgerows on their land.

GENERAL POLICY

This policy defines the Council's approach to tree and hedgerow management on its land. It is intended to be a point of reference for the Public, Councillors and Officers to ensure a consistent and structured approach to the management of the Parish Council's trees and hedgerows. This policy sets out a proactive and systematic method of management that will both conserve and enhance our tree population and hedgerows and the amenity value of our land. For sites of special character or that have trees and hedgerows of particular significance, this general policy will be supplemented with the site's particular management needs.

TREE PROTECTION

Due care will be taken by the Council to ensure that damage to trees by mowing and strimming is prevented. Longer grass margins around trees may be left. Protection will

be provided for newly planted or young trees where appropriate, for example, timber posts surrounded by wire mesh.

TREE INSPECTIONS

The council has a duty to care for its trees and will use a qualified tree surgeon to inspect all trees in high-risk areas every two years. High risk areas will include areas adjacent to the public highway, major footpaths and other areas of high use such as the cemetery and play park. Areas deemed as non-high risk, that is areas away from public areas and highways will be inspected every three years, for example Undergate Field.

The Council will also consider requests to conduct tree work on the Council's land from local residents. If the request concerns a potentially dangerous tree, the tree will be inspected on the same or next day. If the request is non-urgent, the Clerk will place the request on the next Parish Council Agenda. If agreed, an inspection will be undertaken within three months. In all cases the local resident will be informed of any actions taken.

The Council recognises the importance of mature and ancient trees and will balance safety with a duty to protect the environment, ensuring only essential/minimal works are undertaken in order to preserve a tree.

TREE FELLING

The Council will avoid felling trees unless it is necessary. This will usually be for health and safety purposes or to prevent the spread of serious tree diseases and pests. However, the Council reserve the right to fell trees to prevent overcrowding, to improve habitats or restore landscapes in line with site management or where a tree is inappropriate to its location and has a significantly detrimental impact on the amenity of the site.

WOODY DEBRIS

Where appropriate woody debris will be used to provide or extend wildlife habitats in the vicinity or offered to local residents for this purpose.

MAINTENANCE

Tree work will be prioritised and carried out according to the following criteria –

<u>Emergency</u>	Dangerous trees requiring immediate attention
Timescale for work	Same day or next day

Desirable Work	Actions to improve tree health
Timescale for work	Within 6 months
Non-Essential Work	Actions to thin or prune trees
Timescale for work	Within 12 months

Tree maintenance will be carried out by contractors who are qualified tree surgeons. All tree works will comply with BS3988:2110 Recommendations for Tree Work and any subsequent Revisions.

TREE PRUNING

This will be carried out for health and safety reasons, such as to remove lower branches growing over a road

Or where it benefits the health of a tree, for example pollarding to extend the lifespan of a tree and prevent splitting

Or where it is in line with site-specific plans, for example to improve the amount of available light

The Council will not undertake tree pruning or maintenance -

- In response to natural occurrences that do not pose a health and safety risk, such as falling leaves, fruit, berries, seeds, bird droppings, pollen etc.
- Solely for reasons of increasing sun light/views to properties and gardens
- During the nesting season, unless work is for health and safety reasons
- If a tree contains roosting bats, unless work is for health and safety reasons
- Where trees have a negative impact on television reception
- On trees overhanging an adjacent property, unless work is for health and safety reasons. Landowners have a common law right to prune back tree branches to their boundary, providing that would not lead to tree death and providing the tree is not protected by a TPO or within a Conservation Area.
- To remove dead branches from trees located in relatively quiet locations due to their ecological value, unless work is for health and safety reasons

CONSERVATION AREA AND TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

A Tree Preservation Order is a form of planning control. It prevents cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage or destruction of trees without permission from the City of York Council.

The same protections apply to trees in a Conservation Area and also require permission from the City of York Council Planning Department.

Consent is required to work on trees in a Conservation Area or that are protected by a TPO. Planning applications to York City Council are usually dealt with in 6 weeks.

NEW PLANTING AND REPLACEMENT OF TREES

Should it be necessary for the Parish Council to fell a tree, it is policy to replace that tree with a UK native species of a suitable size and type to fit the growing conditions.

The Parish Council will also aim to increase planting of native species on sites they own within the parish.

HEDGEROWS

Hedgerows are an important feature in the village. They may have marked important historical boundaries, and their loss is to be discouraged. Hedgerows provide habitat for a wide range of wildlife.

The Council will aim to increase, infill or plant new hedge of native species on sites they own within the parish.

The Council will adhere to the hedgerow legislation (The Management of Hedgerows (England) Regulations 2024) and avoid undertaking hedge pruning or maintenance in the main nesting and breeding season unless necessary.

Dunnington Parish Council

APPENDIX A – PARISH COUNCIL OWNED LAND

- The Green
- Intake Lane Green
- Greenside Open Space
- Millennium Garden
- The Cemetery on Eastfield Lane
- Hassacarr Local Nature Reserve
- Julia's Garden
- The Allotments off York Road
- The Allotments off Water Lane
- The broad verge on Intake Lane, just past Millennium Garden
- The Play Park
- The Matthew Hill Plot (beside the Play Park)
- Undergate Field

APPENDIX B – Common Law – Advice on Cutting of Tree Branches <u>Not Protected by a TPO or within a Conservation Area</u>

Provided the tree is not protected by a TPO or situated in a Conservation Area, then

Under Common Law a person may cut back any branch (or root) from a neighbour's tree that overhangs or encroaches on their property. In cutting back any overhanging branches (or encroaching roots) the following points need to be observed –

- You must not trespass on the land on which the trees are growing
- Branches or roots must not be cut back beyond the boundary
- Any branches, fruit or roots removed must be returned to the owner unless they otherwise agree
- All work must be carried out carefully to avoid damaging property or carrying out work that would leave the tree unsafe or dangerous or would lead to the death of the tree.