



East Hunsbury
Parish Council

TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Contents

Introduction	3
Trees in East Hunsbury.....	3
Scope and Aims of the Policy	4
Biodiversity	4
Trees Maintenance Policy.....	4
1. Common Law Right	4
2. Emergency Procedures for Dangerous Trees.....	5
Tree Resource Management.....	5
1. Tree Surveys.....	5
2. Standard of work.....	5
3. Timeline of service	5
4. Tree work priorities.....	5
5. Arboricultural Work Levels	8
a. Tree planting – establishing new trees to an existing site:.....	8
b. Light Pruning Operations – minor works that include:.....	8
c. Selective Pruning Operations – works on individual trees:	8
d. Major Pruning Operations – major works that include:	8
e. Minor Tree Removal	8
f. Major Tree Removal.....	8
Trees in the Urban Environment.....	8
1. Damage to Property.....	9
2. Light.....	9
3. Television and Satellite Reception	9
4. Bird Droppings	9
5. Blossom and Fruit	9
6. Insects	10
7. Leaves.....	10
8. Ivy.....	10
Tree Planting, Establishment and Design	10
1. Tree replacement.....	11
2. Species and Site Selection.....	11

Introduction

In March 2021 the Parish Council were transferred three parks and open spaces from Northampton Borough Council: Blacky More Open Space, Penvale (Penn Valley) Park and Grangewood Park.

Maintenance works in the park are carried out by idVerde under contract with Northampton Borough Council (now West Northamptonshire Council “WNC”), and this contract will continue until 2028.

Tree works are carried out by idVerde in accordance with the policy adopted by WNC. Therefore the parish council agreed that it was sensible to use the WNC policy as a template, but are free to make adjustments and amendments to suit the council.

There is a cost to the parish council for any works outside of the idVerde contract but we do have the flexibility to use other professionally qualified contractors as we see fit.

This document is intended to set out the parish council policy for management of trees in the parks and open spaces, the need for a regular inspection schedule and associated works, and careful planning of pruning, felling, and planting.

Trees in East Hunsbury

Trees play an important role in enhancing the urban environment and bring many benefits as they:

- screen unsightly structures and activities.
- give privacy.
- soften the hard lines of buildings.
- bring colour and contrasts into the urban environment.
- improve air quality by acting as natural air filters removing dust, smoke and fumes from the atmosphere.
- reduce the ‘greenhouse’ effect by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen.
- act as an effective sound barrier and can limit noise pollution.
- help to reduce the stress of modern life.
- provide habitats for native ground flora such as bluebells, fauna, birds, bats and invertebrates.

Despite all of the benefits that trees bring to our urban areas, this environment is often a hostile one for a variety of reasons:

- many urban trees show signs of stress, grow slowly and become more prone to disease.
- they are subjected to a variety of pollutants such as car fumes, herbicides, salt and other de-icing agents from roads.
- vandals rip off branches, strip bark and even set fire to trees.
- urban trees are more susceptible to drought. Many of the surfaces that they grow in are impervious to water and air; because the soil is compacted, and any excess rainwater is drained away.
- tree roots are frequently severed during installation of underground services or to allow for construction work. This can lead to the premature death of trees.

Even under the guise of tree care there can be subconscious acts of vandalism. For example, tree ties that are left in place can strangle the tree that they were once intended to support. Also, incorrect pruning can leave unsightly trees struggling to survive.

Scope and Aims of the Policy

This policy is specific to trees in parks and open spaces owned by East Hunsbury Parish Council.

The aims of the policy are addressed in the following sections:

- To ensure the management of trees contributes to making the environment attractive and healthy for people who visit, live and work in East Hunsbury.
- To ensure trees enhance the environment.
- To ensure the efficient management and sustainability of the trees.
- To ensure an increasing and varied tree population within East Hunsbury which is in harmony with other land uses.
- To promote awareness of the importance and value of trees to the residents of East Hunsbury.

Biodiversity

A high level of biodiversity is usually considered to be important and desirable by not removing the wood from site after taking a tree down. This assists with biodiversity by:

- reducing our carbon footprint as we do not have to move the material about.
- woodchip is beneficial to the surrounding area; nutrients are able to go back into the soil.
- woodpiles and standing timber are ideal habitats for insects, birds and bats.

Where trees are taken down by the parish council or contractors working on our behalf, we will leave wood where it is possible to do so, and in accordance with our assessment of safety and risk at the location.

Trees Maintenance Policy

1. Common Law Right

East Hunsbury Parish Council take tree ownership responsibilities very seriously and may take action against unauthorised planting or vandalism against its trees. Any unauthorised works to trees will be treated by the parish council as an act of vandalism with the exception of Common Law Right.

You have a common law right to remove nuisance where trees infringe onto your property. If this is the case, our policy is:

- You can only remove any parts of a tree that overhang your property, but only from inside your boundary. You have no legal right to remove anything that does not overhang the boundary of your property.
- A tree surgeon should be consulted when pruning back any part of a tree that overhangs your property, unless the pruning can be reasonably carried out with hand secateurs.
- If the trees are owned by East Hunsbury Parish Council you can make reasonable requests to carry out work to the trees. Any work should be carried out by a reputable tree surgeon.
- Before carrying out any work you should also find out if the trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. In order to do this please contact West Northamptonshire Council on Tel: 0300 126 7000 Email: Planning.NBC@westnorthants.gov.uk

- If the trees are protected then you will need to gain consent by making an application and giving notice to West Northamptonshire Council.
- You should speak with your neighbour before pruning any overhanging branches and offer to return any that are pruned back to your neighbour, as legally you do not own them. It is most likely that your neighbour will ask that you dispose of them yourself, but it is good practice to ask them first.
- If the overhanging branches belong to trees on parish council owned land then we require that you dispose of the prunings yourself, and not return them to the park/open space. This enables us to keep track of any incidents of environmental fly tipping.
- If work is carried out to trees that has not been approved in accordance with this policy, the parish council may decide to take action to prevent further works and seek restitution through legal or other means.
- By carrying out any work to a tree as above, the person takes responsibility for their actions. Should injury/ damage or failure of the tree occur, as a result of such action, the person who carried out the work becomes liable.

To find out if the trees are owned by East Hunsbury Parish Council please contact clerk@easthunsburyparishcouncil.gov.uk or telephone 01604 708429.

2. Emergency Procedures for Dangerous Trees

West Northamptonshire Council, working with East Hunsbury Parish Council, will remove trees that are posing a hazard and make safe trees that are imminently dangerous. To notify West Northamptonshire Council of an emergency situation please telephone 0300 126 7000.

Tree Resource Management

1. Tree Surveys

East Hunsbury Parish Council will establish regular surveys to assess trees in the parks and open spaces that they own. The plan will establish high quality trees and with the expertise of approved contractors and works carried out will focus on improving the existing treestock, using various types of arboricultural practices to achieve this. Until 2028 this work will be carried out by idVerde under the existing West Northamptonshire contract, however the Parish Council may agree to have additional surveys carried out at any time.

2. Standard of work

East Hunsbury Parish Council will liaise with idVerde to ensure that expectations are being met by both parties.

3. Timeline of service

East Hunsbury Parish Council will;

- Support a policy that allows residents to request work on a Parish Council owned tree.
- Request idVerde inspect the aforementioned tree and specify work required.
- Ensure that if work is required, idVerde carry out the work in good time.

4. Tree work priorities

Priority work levels are split into 5 separate areas. These areas are established and structured around the defect with the selected tree/s. With each area an action and reason can be given for such works, and this will correspond with the arboricultural work levels described below.

It should be noted that the final decision on works to be carried out is with East Hunsbury

Parish Council.

The issues and actions below are a guide and may be subject to change depending on the severity of the issue. If a tree is subject to adverse weather conditions this may affect the condition of the tree, so the priorities act as a guideline only.

Priority 1	Urgent public safety – refer to section 2
Priority 2	<p>Potential future risk. The following issues may constitute, but are not exclusive to, a Priority 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree is dead or dying • Bark is loose or falling off • Fungi growing on or near tree • Large splits/cracks in trunk or large branches • Small branches falling from the tree • Causing an obstruction, e.g. footpath blocked, poor visibility or road junction.
<p>Any issues that fall within Priority 1 or 2 may constitute a reason to commission a detailed assessment before action.</p>	
Priority 3	<p>Maintenance required. The following issues may constitute, but are not exclusive to, a Priority 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dense areas of trees which may be suitable to be thinned to achieve an improved long term tree stock.
Priority 4	<p>Routine maintenance to existing tree stock.</p> <p>If budgets allow, desirable but non-essential works may also be carried out.</p>
Priority 5	No action necessary – re-inspect on next rotation.

5. Arboricultural Work Levels

When works are carried out, it is the contractors' responsibility to carry out these works in accordance with current legal practices statute and common where applicable. Ensuring that the highest possible levels of work standards and safety are adhered to, this should include but is not limited to:

- British Standards BS3998: 2010 'Tree Work- Recommendations.
- Wildlife and Country Act 1981 as Amended.
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- The Environment Act 2021
- Tree Preservation Orders (Town and Country Planning Act)
- designated Conservation Areas.
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000.

a. Tree planting – establishing new trees to an existing site:

- Appropriate species needs to be carefully considered, taking into account, growth rate, size water demand, soil conditions, exposure of the site, long term maintenance of the chosen species, etc.
- Formative pruning of new trees.

b. Light Pruning Operations – minor works that include:

- Lifting tree crowns to 2.4m over footpaths.
- Lifting tree crowns to 3m in parks and open spaces (where appropriate).
- Lifting tree crowns to 4m over car bays (where possible).
- Lifting tree crowns to 5.2m over highways.
- Clearing lamp column heads by 1m to give adequate light splay.
- Removal of secondary limbs to achieve lighting requirements.

c. Selective Pruning Operations – works on individual trees:

- Removal or reduction of selected branches.

d. Major Pruning Operations – major works that include:

- Full crown reduction.
- Crown thinning.
- Removal of primary limbs to achieve lighting requirements.

e. Minor Tree Removal

- Removal of young trees.
- Removal of understory growth.
- Coppicing of young trees.
- Selecting best specimen trees for retention.

f. Major Tree Removal

- Removal of semi mature to mature trees.
- Pollarding (where appropriate).
- Selecting best specimen trees for retention.

Trees in the Urban Environment

This section looks at some of the most common conflicts that the Council's urban trees cause and how these can be mitigated or overcome without felling or excessive pruning. It is important to

strike a balance between removing problem trees and retaining trees in good health.

1. Damage to Property

East Hunsbury Parish Council takes into account the long-term effects of planting trees near buildings when designing planting schemes referring to current relevant guidance such as NHBC Standards Chapter 4.2 'Building Near Trees' and British Standard 5837: 2012 'Trees in relation to construction.'

Should you have concerns about tree-related property damage you should first contact your insurance provider to seek advice.

Should you, or anyone acting on your behalf, wish to make a claim for damage or formally notify the council of concerns about future damage then you should contact us at clerk@easthunsburyparishcouncil.gov.uk or telephone 01604 708429.

2. Light

East Hunsbury Parish Council aims to manage its trees so that they contribute to making the environment attractive and healthy. Equally we aim to keep locality reasonably safe and ensure that trees do not cause an excessive nuisance.

A common complaint about urban trees within housing estates, open spaces and parks is that the available daytime light to properties and footpaths is being blocked.

This also relates to night-time with urban trees blocking lamp columns creating excessive shade in public areas. No one has a direct right to natural light in common law. However, works can be carried out to clear lamp columns and other light sources, by 1m as per our policy.

You can also exercise your Common Law Right to cut back any nuisance branches/ foliage to the boundary of your property. See 3.1 for more details.

3. Television and Satellite Reception

You should contact your satellite or TV provider who should be able to provide a solution to any problems with reception issues. This will most likely be relocating the satellite dish/ TV aerial or boosting the signal.

You can also exercise your Common Law Right to cut back any nuisance branches/ foliage to the boundary of your property.

4. Bird and Bat Droppings

East Hunsbury Parish Council will not authorise the felling or pruning of any trees that cause minor nuisances but strive to find alternative solutions. Bird and bat droppings can be a nuisance but are not considered sufficient reason to carry out pruning works on/ felling a tree. Bird droppings can be removed with warm water and soap.

Nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended, which means that it is illegal to carry out tree works where there are known to be nesting birds or if the presence of bats or their roost sites is suspected.

5. Blossom and Fruit

East Hunsbury Parish Council will not fell or prune any trees that cause minor nuisance but

strive to find alternative solutions. Tree blossom and fruits are a natural occurrence and cannot be prevented with pruning.

If you see an area in need of cleaning you can request a street cleanse from West Northamptonshire Council using their online form <https://eforms.northampton.digital/reportit/reportit.html>.

You can also exercise your Common Law Right to cut back any nuisance branches/ foliage to the boundary of your property.

6. Insects

Bees are a protected species so advice should be sought before considering removal.

Honeydew can occur as a result of aphids feeding on a tree. The aphids then excrete honeydew, which is a sugary sap. Honeydew is a natural and seasonal problem. Pruning will only offer temporary relief and the regrowth has potential to be colonized by an increased number of aphids, exacerbating the problem. Any cars affected should be washed with warm and soapy water to remove the honeydew.

7. Leaves

East Hunsbury Parish Council will not fell or prune any trees that cause minor nuisances but strive to find alternative solutions. The falling of leaves is part of the natural cycle that occurs each autumn and cannot be avoided by pruning.

Property owners are encouraged to regularly maintain their gutters to avoid blockages. Guards can be fitted where regular blockages of gutters occur.

Roads and pavements are swept regularly to prevent build-up of blossom or fruit as part of normal cleaning cycles. However if you see an area in need of cleaning you can request a street cleanse using our online form <https://eforms.northampton.digital/reportit/reportit.html>.

You can also exercise your Common Law Right to cut back any nuisance branches/ foliage to the boundary of your property.

8. Ivy

While it used to be considered that ivy was detrimental to trees, this is not always the case. Where ivy is established on a tree it is often because the tree is already diseased or dying.

Ivy provides extra habitat for birds, insects and other wildlife, and flowers later in the season which is another source of food for bees, butterflies and moths.

In these situations the Parish Council would not remove the ivy but leave it as part of the ecology.

Tree Planting, Establishment and Design

East Hunsbury Parish Council aims to improve the quality of life and the environment in the parish through proactive and appropriate tree planting. Our aim is to get the right tree in the right location so that urban trees are in harmony with the environment and community.

1. Tree replacement

Where a tree has to be removed we will endeavour to plant at least one tree of a suitable species and size at the most appropriate site in the locality. Should this not be possible then an alternative site will be sought.

2. Species and Site Selection

East Hunsbury Parish Council aims to reduce conflicts between trees and the urban environment by agreeing to:

- plant trees that will grow to a size appropriate for their location.
- plant a variety of species to help avoid the environmental damage of disease.
- plant tree species which are native to Britain where conservation and biodiversity are a priority as they hold the greatest wildlife value. However, we will plant a variety of native and non-native species throughout the borough to ensure they select the most appropriate tree for the location.
- all works are to be carried out to the standards set out in BS8545:2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape.
- work with developers to liaise on trees and sites on new housing developments within the parish.