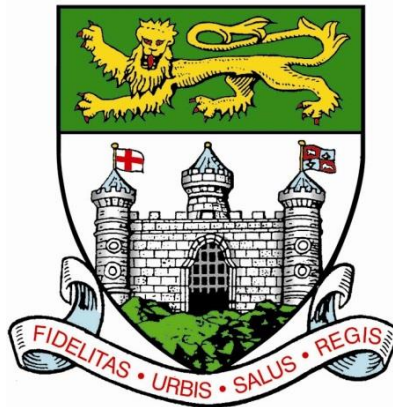


Tree Maintenance Policy

(in respect of trees on Town Council owned land)



BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL

Adopted 19th January 2021 (Town Council minute 0203/2021 refers)

Tree Maintenance Policy

1. Aim

- 1.1. The Policy is intended as a guidance for identifying tree works that the Council will or is more likely to undertake. It is intended that this policy should:
- 1.2. Apply to land that the Council owns or manages, and to any land that in the future the Council acquires or chooses to manage and maintain
- 1.3. Provide the public with a general guide as to what to expect from the Council regarding tree works.
- 1.4. Provide staff and maintenance teams with direction in undertaking routine work on and around trees.
- 1.5. Be used as part of a suite of documents that contribute to Bridgnorth Town Council's general aims in asset, land, and public realm management.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. All aspects of this Policy, except where the Council concludes there is a danger of harm to persons or property, will be subject to the limitations of finite resources, seasonal considerations, and other competing demands.
- 2.2. It is acknowledged that some areas have management plans already in place which include tree management. Furthermore, these plans might be modified or updated, and plans may be created for other areas.
- 2.3. Trees are individual living biological structures, and each tree's needs will evolve and develop over its lifetime that will be affected by and will affect neighbouring flora and fauna.

3. Health & Safety

- 3.1. The priorities are public, staff and property safety. In response to this the Town Council:
 - 3.1.1. Will engage suitable professionals to provide regular condition surveys as part of its risk management strategy.
 - 3.1.2. Will ensure that Council staff and contractors working on tree maintenance will be competent to carry out the tasks they undertake.
 - 3.1.3. Should look to budget sufficiently each year to at least tend to high-risk trees.
 - 3.1.4. Will deal promptly with all trees or branches on trees that pose a significant risk, regardless of designation or location.

4. Routine Maintenance

- 4.1. Routine maintenance will be carried out at appropriate times throughout the year, e.g., not when birds are nesting.
- 4.2. Routine maintenance is considered to include:
 - 4.2.1. Light pruning to remove damaged or diseased limbs.
 - 4.2.2. Removal of self-set saplings.

4.2.3. Shaping of canopies to improve appearance or longevity of a tree.

4.2.4. Thinning out of trees where they are in direct and detrimental competition with each other.

4.2.5. Light pruning to remove obstructions to the public realm. This will include tending to epicormic growth.

5. Conservation Areas & Tree Preservation Orders

5.1. Part of Bridgnorth lies within a designated Conservation Area, and Planning Permission must be obtained prior to undertaking any work on trees that lie within a Conservation Area.

5.2. Some trees have been afforded additional protection in the form of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). Trees with a TPO may be within a Conservation Area, but many are not. Planning approval must be obtained, prior to undertaking any work on such trees.

5.3. Bridgnorth Town Council is not the Planning Authority for the Bridgnorth. Like everyone else, the Town Council must apply to the local Planning Authority, Shropshire Council, for permission to undertake work on trees within a Conservation Area and/or trees with a TPO.

6. Council Trees Affecting Private Property

6.1. Overhanging branches

6.1.1. If branches from a Council tree are overhanging private property, then the resident or property owner can cut them back to the boundary of their property. This work should be done from their own property, and they have the responsibility to dispose of any cuttings.

6.1.2. Where it is not possible, sensible, or appropriate to undertake this work from the resident's or property owner's land, permission could be sought from the Council to undertake this work from Council managed land. If permission is granted, it must be in writing before work begins. The resident or property owner is still responsible for the removal of any cuttings.

6.1.3. The Council may consider assistance with the removal of cuttings but may want to charge for this service.

6.2. Trees Damaging Property or Potential Safety Hazard

6.2.1. Any tree that is an imminent or significant safety hazard will be dealt with promptly.

6.2.2. If it is proved that a Council tree has damaged property, or could cause damage in the future, we may or will carry out work on the tree, depending on the circumstances.

6.3. Trees Blocking Light, Affecting Television Reception, or Causing Other Issues of Concern, such as where trees block light or obstruct a reasonable view that was otherwise there before existing tree growth.

6.3.1. Where Council owned or managed trees are blocking light, affecting television reception, or causing some other perceived nuisance, the Council will, without prejudice, consider pruning or some other action as a matter of goodwill.

6.4. Trees Damaging Underground Pipes

6.4.1. It is considered exceedingly rare for underground water pipes to be broken by tree roots. Tree roots do not break into undamaged pipes but will take advantage of a pipe that is already damaged.

6.4.2. The Town Council will not carry out work on trees to prevent roots entering damaged pipes, as repairing the pipe is the only effective and certain solution.

6.4.3. Water pipes are the responsibility of the utility company.