

Tree Risk Management and Maintenance Policy

This policy states Church Crookham Parish Council's (CCPC) approach to the risk management and maintenance of trees on land owned by CCPC, it does not provide guidance on the management of privately-owned trees.

CCPC owns several areas of land throughout the parish including sports fields, play areas, allotments, and open spaces all freely accessible to the public.

This policy is intended to act as a point of reference for the public, councillors, and council employees to ensure a clear, consistent, and structured approach to the management and maintenance of trees. A healthy tree population provides benefits to all by filtering polluted air and mitigating against climate change factors, providing wildlife habitats, land stabilisation, and an enhanced quality of landscape.

CCPC recognises that the risk from falling trees is low however as a public landowner, it has specific legal and moral responsibilities to visitors to its land and members of the public in general. This justifies the need to carry out routine, proactive safety surveys of trees on land owned or maintained by the Council, which in turn would provide CCPC with a detailed knowledge of location and condition of its tree population, enabling the Council to budget appropriately.

1. Scope and Objectives:

This policy covers the management of risk from falling trees only on land owned by CCPC.

- 1.1. The management of trees in relation to subsidence is **not** covered within this document.
- 1.2. Pruning trees to reduce shading, improve satellite reception or views is **not** related to risk and is beyond the scope of a tree risk strategy.
- 1.3. The objectives for tree risk management must balance between the level of risk, the benefits, and the resources available to the duty-holder. For a tree risk strategy to be effective, the following objectives must be applied:
 - To identify and control the risk.
 - To comply with relevant legal and regulatory requirements
 - To assure the public that trees on public land are appropriately managed.
- 1.4. The setting of performance indicators will confirm whether objectives are met and indicate where additional resources may be necessary. Performance indicators should include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Risk zone maps to be reviewed within 6 months of implementation.
 - b. 100% of trees within high and medium risk zones will be inspected within their designated timescales.
 - c. 100% of remedial works within high and medium risk zones will be carried out within their designated timescales.

2. Site Zoning

- 2.1. CCPC has divided its land into three risk zones based on how an area is used, how frequently it is occupied and the nature of the tree population.
- 2.2. It is not realistic to assess each tree in every risk zone annually, as the financial costs would outweigh the benefits. High risk zones should be prioritised according to available resources.
- 2.3. A practical approach to tree inspection would be to view trees with leaves on and leaves off in alternate surveys. This enables the inspector to note physiological issues with the tree e.g. sparse or chlorotic (yellowing) foliage in summer while allowing clear view of crown architecture and fungal fruiting bodies in autumn/winter.

3. Inspections

Level 1 – Informal inspection: Carried out by a member of staff or contractor with a basic understanding of trees.

Level 2 - Formal inspection: The inspector will visit for the specific purposes of performing an inspection. The inspector will be a competent arboriculturist with training and experience of managing trees for safety balanced with other site-specific requirements.

Level 3 - Detailed inspection: May be required to provide assessment of decay or tree stability by using specialist equipment. This level of inspection will usually be reserved for high value trees within high-risk areas.

Those carrying out formal, recorded inspection of trees will be required to demonstrate competence appropriate to the level of inspection.

All members of staff and contractors with responsibility for surveying trees must undertake refresher training and/or continuing professional development in the field of arboriculture.

Note: All external contractors and consultants must hold Professional Indemnity Insurance.

Summary of risk zones			
Risk Zone	Site Characteristics	Frequency of Inspection	CCPC Site
High	Frequently occupied. Within falling distance of property. Beside trunk roads, railways adjacent to play areas/sports facilities, property or car parks. Mature or over-mature population tree population. Species of tree with a higher risk of failure e.g. poplar or willow.	Level 1 - included in monthly site inspections and after F8 or above winds and/or heavy snow. Level 2 – every 2.5-3 years	Lynwood Azalea Play Area Chesilton Woods Allotment including surrounding land (Areas I & J) Allamand (Area E) Everest to Rana (Area B) Grant Drive (Area A) Thapa Formal (Area H) High Trees (Area K) Dragon Play Park Formal Open Space to front and Rear of Community Centre including Skate Park, MUGA, Tennis, Athletics area
Medium	Adjacent to footpaths in parks or within falling distance of gardens. Occupation may be influenced by weather. Early-mature to mature tree population.	Level 1 – included in monthly site inspections. Level 2 - every 2.5-3 years	Azalea Open Space Peter Driver Sports Ground Meadowlands (Area F – rear of 2H) Gurkha Path and surrounding land (Area D) Courtyard (Area G – end of Thapa) Memorial Orchard
Low	Infrequent public access and no property of value. Early-mature tree population	Level 1 – included in monthly site inspections. Level 2 - every 3 years	Sian Close Crossways LEAP & LAP (Area C) Jubilee Play Park Nepal Gardens LAP Sandy Lane Car Park (Adjacent landowners as SANG)

4. Recording

- 4.1. All inspection records will be retained to evidence that trees have been subject to systematic inspection. All trees will be identified and recorded using Parish Online.
- 4.2. Records will be stored in a central location. Records must be kept for at least 7 years.
- 4.3. It is acceptable to record groups of trees with no significant defects, referring to their general characteristics. Where it is decided to retain a tree with structural defects, an individual record must be made with reference to remedial action taken and any deviation from the standard inspection interval.
- 4.4. Remedial work must be recorded when it is recommended e.g., the work may be to fell the tree, crown reduce all or part of the tree, exclude the public or specify a higher level of inspection.

5. Remedial Works

- 5.1. Where a tree poses an unacceptable level of risk, it will be necessary to carry out remedial works to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. The timescale for implementing such works will be identified by the inspecting officer.
- 5.2. Remedial works may not be confined to tree surgery; it may be acceptable to modify how the public uses a site perhaps by relocating benches or fencing off 'target' areas with shrub planting or dead hedges. There may be circumstances where the growing environment may be improved using soil aeration or mulching.
- 5.3. CCPC must be assured that the contractors they use are competent to carry out the work i.e. they are fully trained and experienced in the work that they are undertaking. The work must be carried out in accordance with current arboriculturally best practice and with the safety of staff and the public in mind. They must hold Public Liability Insurance to at least £10m and Employers Liability Insurance commensurate with the size of their business. Copies of this information must be obtained before appointing a contractor.
- 5.4. The inspecting officer and contractor must make consideration to the likely presence of protected species. Bats, birds and other species and their habitats are afforded statutory protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the EU Habitats Directive 1992.
- 5.5. Where tree works are identified they will be prioritised. Works that are immediate or high priority will be carried out before medium and low priority works. This will enable the tree works to remain within the available budget, although if necessary additional budget could be sought.

It is noted that whilst a risk may be categorised as low, the law requires that, where reasonably practicable measures are available, they should be taken.
- 5.6. During work in progress additional or emergency works may be identified that will incur additional costs but would be both prudent and economical to be carried out immediately. Delegated authority is given to the Clerk who will notify the Chair (or Vice Chair in absence of Chair), to authorise these works (to a limit of 10% of the annual total tree management budget) provided all work and expenditure is reported to the next Full Council meeting.
- 5.7. It is expected that, following completed cycles of prioritised survey and remedial works, the amount of works generated by the surveys should reduce in volume, priority and frequency.

6. Maintenance

- 6.1. The Council will not fell or prune trees on CCPC-owned land:
 - a) Solely to alleviate problems caused by natural and or seasonal phenomena.
 - b) For reasons of light.
 - c) Solely because the trees are causing problems with television or satellite reception, unless complainants have taken 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 trees concerned.

6.2. The Council will consider any complaints requests regarding trees on CCPC- owned property. The first consideration is public safety, legal obligations and then the impact upon the community (residents, businesses, visitors to the parish). Tree works will be carried out under the general guidance of dead, dying, diseased or dangerous and specifically where:

- there is a significant risk of harm; or
- damage (for instance subsidence or physical impact from branches); or
- free passage is required (for instance below statutory heights on footways and carriageways); or
- sightlines or views of road signs is required.

This includes removal of dead trees, significant dead wood within crowns of trees, removal of diseased trees, which have exceeded acceptable limits of risk and general lifting of excessively low and obscuring branches causing obstruction. CCPC will not carry out works, without exceptional reason, that would cause a significant loss to the community or would be contrary to maintaining a healthy tree population.

6.3. Consideration must also be given to the budget allowed.

6.4. The Council does not accept responsibility for the maintenance or care of trees that are not in its ownership.

6.5. The Council will expect other property owners to maintain their trees in good condition, so as not to pose risks to person or other property. Where this does not appear to be happening the Council will initiate the appropriate action.

6.6. To help maintain a continuity of tree cover CCPC will consider replanting to replace removed trees, taking advice from the tree survey to ensure that the right species are planted in the right locations.

Environmental Aims

CCPC will seek to undertake the planting of new trees where suitable opportunities arise to encourage and maintain a suitably diverse and viable tree population with a range of maturity which will contribute to the improvement of the environmental quality and that will ensure a tree population for future generations.

Aim – To identify and establish tree planting capacity within Parish Council owned sites.

Aim – To seek grants to support tree planting aims.

Aim – to preserve Church Crookham's trees for future generations to enjoy.



Common law rights to carry out tree works.

Adjacent property owners can exercise their common law right and remove overhanging branches (where they extend across their boundary) so long as the trees are not subject to a tree preservation order, within a conservation area, cause significant damage to the tree or leave the tree in an unsafe condition.

Private individuals should always make their intentions known to the tree owner so that any proposed work is mutually agreed. No work should be carried out which could prove detrimental to the long-term health of the tree. In such an instance, persons can be held liable for the failure of the tree or any damage or harm that occurs because of unauthorised work.

The council encourages people to dispose of the arisings / debris themselves if they decide to take such action, otherwise the Council will need to dispose of the debris which will have a financial cost which may affect the ability to pay for safety works elsewhere.