



## **FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL**

### **TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

- This is a policy for the management of trees owned and managed by Four Marks Parish Council. It is intended to act as a point of reference for the public, Councillors, Council employees and Contractors to ensure a clear, consistent and structured approach to the management of trees.
- A principle of English Common and Statute Law is that land/tree owners have a duty of care to visitors, residents, passers-by and indeed trespassers when on their land. This means that the Parish Council has a duty to do all that is reasonably practical to reduce the risk of death or injury to those on Parish Council land.
- Any queries on trees belonging to the Parish Council should be made to the Parish Office, telephone 01420 768284 or email: [clerk@fourmarks-pc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@fourmarks-pc.org.uk)
- Trees on other open spaces may be the responsibility of East Hampshire District Council.
- Trees situated within the public highway, adjacent to the road or on roadside verges, are generally the responsibility of Hampshire County Council.

#### **WORK THAT FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL WILL CARRY OUT ON COUNCIL OWNED TREES**

- The Parish Council will ensure that a detailed inspection of trees on Council owned land is carried out by a qualified Arboriculturalist on a **3 yearly** basis unless the need arises for more frequent inspections.
- Informal observations and formal inspections will be carried out during the period between the detailed inspections, as appropriate and in high-risk areas, e.g. The Recreation Ground.
- The last detailed inspection was carried out in **August 2022** by Martin Dobson Associates Ltd. A prioritised programme of tree works will be maintained based on this inspection. An interim inspection took place in July 2024 by Martin Dobson Associates Ltd.
- Any trees identified as showing signs of crown dieback, fungal activity or decay, will be monitored as per the Parish Council's action plan.
- The Parish Council will allocate sufficient resources to ensure that it is able to manage the trees that it owns.
- The Parish Council will request that any arborist or tree surgeon carrying out work on trees on Parish Council owned land should provide the Parish Council with a copy of their public liability insurance certificate and ensure that they adhere to the appropriate standards.
- Whilst maintaining Parish Council owned trees, consideration will be given to the impact of tree pruning or felling on local wildlife and tree work will be scheduled to take place in periods where the impact on wildlife will be minimal.
- Whilst maintaining Parish Council owned trees, dangerous and damaged limbs, dead, dying, diseased and dangerous trees, will be removed. (See Action Plan following diagnosis of

disease or fungal activity.) Trees removed will be replaced with a suitable specimen on a two for one basis in the nearest most suitable location.

#### **WORK THAT FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL WILL NOT CARRY OUT TO COUNCIL OWNED TREES**

- The Parish Council has no obligation to carry out the following tree works:
  - Cut back branches overhanging private property
  - 'Top' trees or remove branches to increase daylight or decrease height in relation to property.
  - Remove branches or trees affecting views or interfering with TV reception.
  - Remove branches or trees to prevent falling leaves, honeydew from aphids or other minor debris.
  - Remove roots from drains or repair root damage to structures, where the tree has not been clearly demonstrated to be the principal cause.
  - Remove branches or trees to prevent potential root damage to structures.
  - Remove branches nearly touching buildings, walls, roofs, fences etc.
  - Remove branches or trees to prevent access to squirrels or birds.
- The Parish Council will consider any complaints regarding trees on Council owned property, taking into consideration its tree management policy and/or advice from a qualified arborist or tree surgeon, as appropriate.
- If members of the public wish to carry out any works to Parish Council owned trees, as detailed above, they should seek permission from the Parish Council and make their own arrangements using the guidance below.

#### **CARRYING OUT TREE WORKS YOURSELF AND PRUNING GUIDANCE**

- In common law, a property owner can cut back overhanging branches to the boundary of their property. The Parish Council would usually have no objection to property owners carrying out tree work or engaging a contractor at their own expense, provided that:
  - Access is not gained onto the neighbouring land or to a tree within that land; if access to Parish Council owned land or to a tree on that land is required, permission must be sought.
  - The tree is not protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). If the tree is awarded protection, then the appropriate planning procedure must be followed, by submitting an appropriate application to the Local Planning Authority for approval.
  - Any work carried out is not detrimental to its health or stability; for their own protection members of the public are advised to obtain advice from a qualified arborist or tree surgeon
  - Tree pruning work, is carried out to an acceptable standard, in accordance with the British Standard Recommendations for Tree Work 3998:1989.
  - The property owner notifies the Parish Council (before the work begins) of the proposed work and commencement date.
- The Parish Council do not carry out works to privately owned trees.

#### **ACTION PLAN FOLLOWING DIAGNOSIS OF DISEASE OR FUNGAL ACTIVITY**

- Trees identified as having a requirement to be re-inspected will have an inspection late Spring or once in full leaf, if there has been no further deterioration, the tree will be re-inspected the following year, and no further action taken.
- If a tree has deteriorated since the original inspection, a further inspection will take place late Summer, and full assessment made, and action plan agreed as appropriate.

- If a tree is showing clear signs of decay and/or fungal activity, and there is a risk to the general public or property, remedial works or removal, will be carried out dependent upon the situation as assessed.

#### **POLICY DECLARATION:**

##### **Four Marks Parish Council:**

- Recognise the importance and amenity value of trees and hedgerows within the environment as they add variety to the landscape, provide valuable habitats for many species of wildlife and remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and subsequently return oxygen back into the atmosphere, and would not support the removal of trees or hedgerows that offer positive amenity unless there is a health and safety risk to the general public or property.
- Encourages residents to retain existing trees and hedgerows within the curtilage of their property and plant new trees in accordance with the Council's own Climate and Nature Emergency Plan.
- Aims to preserve and increase the number of trees within Four Marks for future generations to enjoy.