

Harbledown & Rough Common Parish Council

Tree Management Policy

Introduction

Trees in Harbledown & Rough Common Parish enhance the landscape, help to reduce climate extremes, improve air quality, and provide wildlife habitats. They also create tranquillity and reduce stress. Trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders or located in Conservation Areas require planning permission for any work. Although trees offer many benefits, their growth can inconvenience nearby residents. This Tree Management Policy aims to address these issues fairly.

Objectives

The Tree Management Policy sets out Harbledown & Rough Common Parish Council's approach to the proactive management of trees on land owned/managed by the Parish Council and to its statutory responsibilities, under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 legislation, with regard to land owned by others.

This Policy is also intended to act as a source of information and reference regarding the management of tree issues in the Harbledown & Rough Common area.

Land Owned or Managed by Harbledown & Rough Common Parish Council

Tree Planting

- Harbledown & Rough Common Parish Council will support new tree planting when suitable, adhering to good horticultural and arboricultural practices and complying with the relevant British Standards. Depending on the proposed planting location, the Council will typically plant trees ranging in size from 45cm height (whip size) to 150cm – 180cm tall.
- The Council will endeavour to create a balanced selection of appropriate indigenous varieties according to the specific location and soil type of the new planting. In instances where planting is planned in proximity to areas of conservation significance, it is anticipated that indigenous species will be utilised.

The fundamental aims of tree planting will be to:

- Maintain tree cover perpetually within Harbledown & Rough Common Parish
- Mitigate climate change
- Provide year-round interest
- Encourage species diversity
- Create wildlife habitats
- Offer screen, shelter, and windbreaks
- Replace removed trees
- Commemorate the community

- Improve air quality
- Reduce erosion

Harbledown & Rough Common Parish Council will select trees that reflect the importance of their planted position and the anticipated maintenance needs throughout their respective lives.

Strategy for Tree Planting and Management

Harbledown & Rough Common Parish Council will develop a strategy with professional help when required, for tree planting and preventive and remedial work, including addressing tree disease. Objectives include:

- Managing and developing the tree population
- Maintaining a high-quality, sustainable tree stock
- Promoting the value of trees to the community
- Adhering to British Standard BS 3998: 2010 for tree care and relevant legislation
- Ensuring tree safety for the public and property
- Avoiding unnecessary tree removal unless justified by health, safety, or legal concerns, and assessing all arboricultural work requests on council owned or managed land

Tree Pruning

Harbledown & Rough Common Parish Council does not typically prune or remove trees due to natural or seasonal occurrences like:

- falling leaves
- sap exudation (honeydew)
- falling fruits, nuts, seeds, blossom, or pollen
- bird droppings
- changes in garden moisture
- germinating seeds from Council trees

The Council also does not usually prune trees for reasons such as:

- loss or interference with TV or satellite signals
- loss of sunlight or artificial lighting at any time of day
- obstruction of views from residences
- overhanging branches

Trees Adjacent to Structures

Installing or maintaining a structure does not justify excessive tree reduction or removal. The Parish Council may approve reasonable tree work that adheres to accepted arboricultural practices.

Harbledown & Rough Common Parish Council will not:

- Remove or significantly reduce tree size solely due to shading of solar panels.
- Undertake works with uncertain shading causes
- Work on trees supporting roosting bats without consulting Natural England first.
- Conduct tree work during nesting seasons for birds or bats. Compliance with protective legislation will be ensured if protected species are found.

Statutory Undertakings

Statutory undertakers (providers of gas, electricity, water, and telecommunication services) are entitled to perform work on trees to restore service or ensure public safety without prior notice. However, they are encouraged to coordinate with Harbledown & Rough Common Parish Council to agree on any necessary work affecting trees and to facilitate inter-agency cooperation.

Requests for Tree Work on Land Managed by Harbledown & Rough Common Parish Council

All complaints or formal requests for work on trees on land owned or managed by Harbledown & Rough Common Parish Council will be investigated. Where the Parish Council determines that action is necessary, a programme of works will be prepared, and the Parish Council will respond in writing with the reasons for the proposed action.

Overhanging Branches

Householders may trim branches from Parish Council trees overhanging their property to the limit of their boundary, at their own expense, with the necessary permissions for protected trees.

If there is a buffer such as a footpath or stream between the trees on land the Council is responsible for and an adjoining property, the Council may consider trimming overhanging branches.

Subsidence or Other Damage to Property

Claimants investigating subsidence, heave, or other below-ground damage from tree roots on Parish Council land must provide evidence supported by a detailed report from a qualified expert. The report should cover the following, as appropriate:

- Describe the property, including damage and crack pattern, date of occurrence, any previous underpinning or building work, and geological strata from the map.
- Provide details of nearby vegetation and its management since damage discovery, along with a plan showing vegetation and affected building.
- Measure vertical movement extent and distribution using level monitoring; if not possible, explain and provide crack monitoring data consistent with implicated tree(s) or vegetation.
- Include sub-soil characteristics such as soil type.
- Locate and identify roots found.
- Propose repair options with estimated costs, supported by an arboriculturist report on tree work proposals and arboricultural options for indirect tree-related damage. For other structural damages, provide technical evidence from a relevant engineer, surveyor, or expert.

Inspection and Maintenance

- Harbledown & Rough Common Parish Council will employ an arboriculturist to conduct surveys every 5 years to inspect the trees it manages in order to identify any risks to life or property. The inspection program may recommend remedial work, and records of inspections and actions will be kept. All trees will be evaluated for maturity,

vigour, life expectancy, height, trunk girth, crown spread, defects, and any required arboricultural work will be rated as High, Medium, or Low.

- The Parish Council through its Open Spaces Committee members and tree officer will also carry out interim recorded checks of all trees annually, using the previous tree inspection report as its reference.
- Wherever possible, trees that have died will be left in position as standing wood if they do not pose any danger to the public. Similarly trees that have fallen within a copse or wood that do not cause an obstruction may be left as they are generally beneficial for the ecosystem by supporting wildlife and contributing to nutrient cycling.

Statutory Obligations

To protect trees of particular amenity value using relevant Town and Country Planning Acts and Regulations.

To use Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Area legislation to retain valuable trees in Harbledown & Rough Common Parish.

Harbledown & Rough Common Parish Council will consult with Canterbury City Council on tree-related planning applications.

Dangerous Trees not on Harbledown & Rough Common Parish Council owned or managed Land

Harbledown & Rough Common Parish Council will work with Canterbury City Council, under the Local Government Act, 1976, to require private tree owners to perform remedial works for public safety. If no owner is found or in urgent cases, the council may do the work and seek reimbursement by placing a Land Registry charge on the property upon its sale.

Harbledown & Rough Common Parish Council Owned/Managed land

The land areas under the ownership or management of Harbledown & Rough Common Parish Council comprise; Neal's Place Meadow, Dukes Meadow, Jubilee Field, Pine Meadow, and Cheyney Field.

This policy was adopted on **Monday, 30th June 2025 - Minute reference 106/25.**