

HECKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL TREE POLICY

This policy sets out Heckington Parish Council's position regarding trees on its land. It does not apply to trees located on land owned by Lincolnshire County Council, North Kesteven District Council or any other organisation or individual.

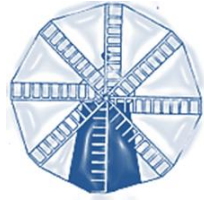
It sets out broad principles of how existing trees will be managed and where new tree planting may take place.

The Parish Council recognises the importance of trees to the natural environment; not only do they help to clean our air but they maintain soil structure, provide habitats for a diverse range of creatures; manage water runoff, help to mitigate the effects of global warming and play an important function in the well-being of Heckington's inhabitants.

The Parish Council is committed to the preservation of existing trees and the appropriate planting of new trees. The Parish Council acknowledges Lincolnshire County Council's Tree and Woodland Planting Strategy 2024-2034.

Existing trees

- The parish council will conduct an annual tree survey to report on the health and wellbeing of all tree specimens which will feed into a three-year maintenance and risk management plan.
- All tree specimens will be tagged and indexed with details of the specimen type and condition.
- The pruning or felling of trees will only be carried out when the following apply:
- To maintain the health of the tree which may include the regular removal of basal growth with no detriment to the health of the tree.
- When the tree is diseased and will not recover.
- Where a tree is touching or near to a structure with the likelihood of damage to that property.
- Where a tree is obstructing a path, it will be crown lifted to a height of 2.4m.
- The tree has become dangerous presenting clear and immediate danger to life and property.
- Where it is necessary for the development of the Council's assets, and full consideration has been given to alternatives.
- When trees are obstructing a road or path, in this case trees will be cut back to a height of 2.5 meters (if appropriate) and additional balancing work may be required by a suitably qualified arborist.
- When it has been advised by a suitably qualified arborist.



Trees will not be felled for:

- Cosmetic reasons
- Dropping of leaves (unless the leaves present danger to life and limb).
- Blocking of light.

Where Tree Preservation Orders are in place or trees are within a conservation area, trees may only be maintained or felled where appropriate permissions have been granted.

Planting of Trees

Wherever possible, where existing mature trees have had to be removed due to disease or damage, a new tree will be planted. This will be of a suitable type for the environment and species native to the UK and Europe.

This will be dependent on the budget in any given year or the availability of appropriate grants of the offer of free tree specimens.

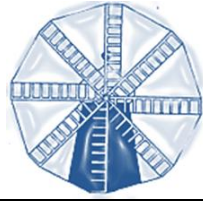
Tree planting in new locations will have regard to the surroundings. Consideration will be given to the proximity of buildings or structures that might be overshadowed or could suffer from root damage. Where planting is in proximity to other trees or habitats, such planting will have regard to the existing ecology so as to enhance rather than place stress upon the existing.

Where a group or individual wish to plant a tree on council owned land application must be made in writing to the clerk. Such application shall include the species of tree, its desired location and who will be responsible for watering until the tree/s are established. On receipt of an application advice will be sought from an external arborist as to the suitability of the species and location before any planting takes place. Subsequent planting of the tree/s will only take place under the supervision of the council caretaker at a time suitable to the council caretaker's schedule.

Risk Management

The maintenance plan and risk register will identify as and when tree management will be required and a traffic light system will be used to identify risk.

BLACK	Immediate Risk to Life and Property This means that orders will be placed to undertake tree work as soon as reasonably practicable as the tree is deemed to present risk to life or property.
RED	Not acceptable This means that orders will be placed within one year or sooner if recommended by an arborist and may be subject to emergency action by the Clerk/RFO.
AMBER	Medium This means that longer term plans may be considered to manage the problem but may require budgets to be made available in the following financial year and beyond.



GREEN	Re-examination will take place in 2-years.
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The Parish Council does not employ its own arborist and relies on contractors to undertake examination and tree surgery. Advice on tree condition and associated management will require specialist input. A budget for tree management is in place and this will need to be reviewed, each year, as part of the budget process to ensure that it is adequate.

Complaints and Requests

There are regular requests from neighbours of Parish Council land for trees to be pruned or felled. This is often in response to Autumn litter or of trees reducing light in gardens. In cases where the tree predates the building and the occupation of the property by the complainant, the policy statement in relation to existing trees will be followed.

Common Law Right

Property owners have a Common Law right to remove a nuisance associated with trees.

The following advice is given for anyone wishing to exercise their Common Law right.:

- a) You can only remove parts of the trees from the point where they cross the boundary of your property. You have no legal right to cut or remove any part of a trees that does not overhang your property.
- b) You are advised to consult with an arborist for guidance.
- c) Before considering any work to a tree/s you must find out if it is protected by a Tree Preservation Order or whether it is within a Conservation Area. If the trees are protected, you must obtain consent by making an application to North Kesteven District Council. If you fell or prune a tree that is protected, you may be subject to prosecution and unlimited fines.
- d) While the law requires you to offer any wood back to the tree owner, where the wood is not wanted, you are responsible for making adequate provision to dispose of any wood or cuttings are your own cost. If you fail to do this, you will receive an invoice for the cost of disposal and associated administration costs.

Version control and amendment history

Date approved	Version Number	Revision / amendments made	Review date
26 February 2025	V1.1	New policy	May 2025
19 May 2025	V1.1	Readopted, no changes	May 2026
20 April 2026	V1.2	Revised new planting rules	May 2026