



HARPENDEN TOWN COUNCIL

CLOSER TO THE COMMUNITY

HARPENDEN TOWN COUNCIL TREE POLICY 2017

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Harpenden Town Council Tree Policy sets out a proactive method of management that will both conserve and enhance Harpenden's tree population and the amenity value of its land.
- 1.2 For sites with specific management needs, this general policy will be supplemented with site specific management plans. These include Harpenden Common, Batford Springs Local Nature Reserve (including Marquis Meadow), Fovant Close and Lydekker Park.
- 1.3 This policy is intended to provide a guideline for the management of trees in Harpenden Town Council owned locations. It is not exhaustive and is subject to change. The policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Commons and Greens Officer and proposed amendments will be submitted to the **Community Services** Committee for approval.

2. The value of trees

- 2.1 Trees are essential to life and have many positive impacts on many aspects of our lives and on the environment, including:
 - Contributing to and improving the amenity value and appearance of our town, contributing to residents' quality of life and sense of well-being
 - Reducing air pollution and releasing oxygen for us to breathe
 - Reducing wind speed
 - Providing shelter and a haven for all sorts of wildlife, including birds, bats and insects
 - Reducing noise levels
 - Providing shade
 - Reducing flooding
- 2.1 Harpenden Town Council acknowledges the importance of maintaining a healthy tree population that is appropriate to the character of all Council-owned land and will allocate sufficient resources to ensure that it is able to manage the trees that it owns, in line with its **Business Plan** and key objectives for the Town Council:
 - To promote sustainable policies that strive to improve the environment to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs

- To continue to defend the character of the Town, oppose inappropriate development and preserve the green belt
- To work for a cleaner greener Harpenden

2.2 Harpenden Town Council will take advice from professional arboricultural consultants in relation to recognising and putting in place any specific management regimes for locally important trees.

3. POLICY SECTIONS:

- (i) Risk zones
- (ii) Frequency and method of inspection
- (iii) Tree Preservation Orders, Conservation Areas and the management of veteran/ancient trees
- (iv) Common complaints
- (v) Further information/resources.

(i) Risk zones

ZONE	RISK LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	AREAS INCLUDED
Zone 1	High	High use areas including intensively used footpaths, bridle paths, car parks, sports clubs and areas adjacent to public highway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lydekker Park and car park • Town greens, from Sun Lane to Bull Road roundabout • Harpenden Common: Baa Lamb trees, permissive horse ride, nature trail, sports clubs (Bamville and Harpenden Cricket Clubs, Harpenden Rovers Football Club and Harpenden Common Golf Club), road verges • Broom Common • Batford Springs Local Nature Reserve (including Marquis Meadow): along main footpaths, rear of buildings
Zone 2	Medium	Lesser used footpaths/bridle paths, general recreation/common land areas, allotments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kinsbourne Green, including car park • Play areas/recreation grounds with low numbers of large trees: Marquis Lane Open Space, Westfield and Porters Hill • Hatching Green • Allotments • Batford Springs Local Nature reserve: informal footpaths • Harpenden Common: frequently used informal footpaths/desire lines
Zone 3	Low	Areas in which there are no formal public footpaths, densely wooded areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harpenden Common: densely wooded areas • Fovant Close

(ii) **Frequency and method of inspection**

RISK ZONE	FREQUENCY OF INSPECTION	METHOD	BY WHOM
Zone 1	1. Annually and after winds in excess of 40 mph/heavy snow fall 2. Every 5 years	1. Visual inspection 2. Formal health and safety survey	1. Town Council Officers* 2. Arboricultural consultant
Zone 2	1. As required and after wind speeds in excess of 40 mph/heavy snow fall	1. Visual inspection and/or formal health and safety survey	1. Town Council Officers in the first instance, and/or Arboricultural Consultant
Zone 3	No routine inspection procedure/as required		

* Town Council Officers: Commons & Green Officer, Amenities Officer, **People & Wildlife Officer** or Grounds Maintenance Officer and Assistant. Each has attended Lantra Awards Basic Tree Survey and Inspection training, which are refreshed every 5 years.

(iii) **Tree Preservation Orders, trees in Conservation Areas and ancient trees**

a) **Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas**

St Albans District Council has duties and responsibilities under the Town and Country Planning Act, Government Regulations and Circulars to protect trees within its administrative area in the interest of amenity. These duties and responsibilities extend to making Tree Preservation Orders (**TPO**) and to special provisions for trees within Conservation Areas.

The maximum fine for the willful destruction of a TPO or Conservation Area tree is £20,000 per tree. Willful damage carries the maximum fine of £2,000 per tree.

Many trees throughout Harpenden and the district as a whole are protected through individual Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) or are sited within a conservation area.

Both the Town Council and individual property owners are obliged to seek permission from St Albans District Council before undertaking tree works to any tree covered by a TPO or sited in a conservation area.

The District Council has up to eight weeks to determine applications for works to TPO trees. It has six weeks to determine a Conservation Area notification.

This includes the pruning of trees under a preservation order or in a conservation area that are over-hanging a property boundary.

b) **Ancient Trees**

There are currently no ancient trees or woodland sites registered in Harpenden or on Harpenden Town Council owned land. Should an ancient tree or ancient woodland be identified on Town Council-owned land, the Town Council will manage the tree accordingly, under professional guidance. It is anticipated that some trees on Town

Council owned land could be identified and managed to become ancient trees of the future.

(iv) Common Complaints

Circumstances where Harpenden Town Council will not prune or fell trees:

- Tree pruning or removal will not be undertaken in response to natural occurrences that do not pose a health and safety risk, such as falling leaves, fruit, flowers, bird droppings or honeydew. Highway pavements badly affected by leaves or other tree debris can be reported to Hertfordshire Highways for clearance.
- Tree pruning or removal will not be undertaken where trees have a negative impact on television reception, where canopy is blocking light, or where the tree is blocking views from a residence. Property owners have a common law right to cut back overhanging branches as far as their boundary unless the tree is protected by a Tree Preservation Order or is in a Conservation Area.
- Tree works are generally planned to limit their impact on wildlife such as nesting birds (season runs from March to August although some birds may nest earlier or later than this), unless the work is for health and safety reasons. Contractors will always refer to BS3998.
 - Tree work will not be conducted if a tree contains roosting bats (it is a criminal offence to recklessly or intentionally disturb bats, or to damage or destroy a roost). If work is required for health and safety reasons, the advice of the Bat Conservation Trust or Natural England will be sought.
 - Trees will generally not be pruned where they are overhanging an adjacent property unless it poses a health and safety risk.

(v) Further information/resources

a) Tree Preservation orders and Conservation Areas

You can find out more information about the status of trees in the district on the St Albans District Council mapping system on the [Local Information Service](#) using the Map Layers and selecting Tree Preservation Orders and or Conservation Areas under Planning Constraints. Please note the accuracy of the mapped tree positions cannot be guaranteed, so if in doubt contact the St Albans District Council Arboricultural officer on 01727 **866100** or email treesandwoodlands@stalbans.gov.uk.

b) Reporting trees causing problems on Highways land

Contact Herts Highways on 0300 123 4047 or via their website: www.hertsdirect.org/highwayfaults

c) Managing trees on your property

Assessing whether a tree on your property is safe should be done by a qualified expert. This is not a service offered by the Town Council but details of tree contractors and consultants operating throughout the UK are available from the [Arboricultural Association](#). Reliable and trustworthy tradespersons can also be found via the [Trustmark](#) website, a Government approved scheme.

Harpenden Town Council contacts

For further information please contact harpenden.town.council@harpenden.gov.uk or telephone 01582 768278.