

Dalton with Newton Town Council Tree Management Policy 2024



Dalton Town Council has responsibility for trees growing on land that it owns including amenity greens, parks, open spaces and woodlands. This policy sets out the principles for the maintenance of the Council's tree population.

We recognise that trees and woodlands make a significant contribution to the diverse landscape of the district and employ professional staff experienced in arboriculture (the care and maintenance trees) to assist with the management of our tree stock and to meet the council's duty of care.

We have set out some core principles to help us prioritise our work. When managing our tree stock and planning future planting we aim to:

- ensure the health and safety of council-owned trees so that they do not pose a risk to people or property
- promote the natural habitat for wildlife
- recognise the tree stock as an amenity that enhances the local area and
- reduce waste by utilising timber, firewood and woodchip for wood fuel.

Tree inspection

Under UK law the occupier of land has a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent or minimise the risk of personal injury or damage to property arising from the presence of any tree on the land, or from its breakage or uprooting.

In our parish, council-owned trees are formally inspected for safety and for information and recorded on a computer based tree management system. This information includes details on species, age, condition, proximity to structures and any recommendations for work. We carry out an inspection of the council's trees systematically every two years and then programme works to maintain our tree stock.

The main aim of the inspection is to identify trees which pose a risk to people or property, but other management issues are also identified such as obstruction to paths, roads street signs, street lighting

and where branches physically touch fences and buildings. The tree survey records the works required and when they need to be carried out according to the priority.

Pruning

We will prune to ensure that a tree does not pose a safety risk as well as to improve the health of the tree. There may also be circumstances where pruning a tree improves the surroundings for neighbouring properties, however, we will not prune unless it benefits the tree or prevents damage or unless there is a statutory reason to do so.

Planting

The Council follows a planned, consistent and coordinated approach to the planting and replacement of trees throughout the district. All trees will be planted in accordance with the British Standard and we carry out quality checks on our tree stock prior to planting and inspect the quality of any planting that takes place.

The species choice for planting will be varied where possible, but appropriate to the site conditions and surroundings. The selection should benefit wildlife where appropriate (e.g. fruit bearing varieties) or have an intrinsic horticultural value. We recognise that indigenous and exotic tree species each have a practical and aesthetic role in the improvement of the district's amenities and drought-resistant species will be chosen where appropriate. We aim to replace any trees with a suitable species, in a suitable location. This is a legal requirement within Conservation Areas and where a tree with a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) has been removed.

The Council aims to protect and enhance the integrity of the natural landscape of the district. We will carefully consider the impact that any new trees planted may have on the environment and its surroundings including the landscape, any existing nearby structures, public safety and neighbouring properties where the sunlight may be blocked. We have identified sites with ancient monuments or of archaeological interest and take relevant precautions in these areas.

We will always try to improve the quality and suitability of the trees across the district when selecting and planting trees, but this is subject to the availability of resources and the Council's capacity to maintain all trees planted to acceptable standards.

Post planting maintenance

Newly planted trees will be surrounded by a bed of mulch to suppress competing vegetation and reduce water loss, and will be supported by stakes and straps where appropriate. Supports are to remain until the tree is in a structural condition as to allow their safe removal. After removal of the supports, short stakes will normally be left in the ground surrounding young trees in order to protect against damage from mowing and strimming machinery during general maintenance. We will maintain 1 metre wide tree circles for trees planted in grass until otherwise specified.

Works not undertaken

There are some works that the Council will not usually undertake, normally where the benefit to an individual is outweighed by the detriment to the wider community.

We will not normally undertake works on trees because of:

- **Pollen, leaves, fruits and seeds** falling from the tree
- **Loss of view or loss of light.** Pruning will only be undertaken when the tree is newly planted and affects the light in habitable rooms. A 'habitable room' means a dining room, lounge, kitchen or bedroom, but specifically excludes WCs, bathrooms, utility rooms, landings and hallways. The Council will only prune trees to improve the availability of light in exceptional circumstances where a sustainable solution is identified
- **Television or radio reception** either by aerial or satellite dish. Installation engineers should consider trees and their likely growth before installing equipment
- **Insects** such as aphids causing sticky residue on cars and driveways (honeydew)
- **Algae or moss** on surfaces
- **Any works that may contravene wildlife legislation.** The Council will not routinely remove trees which provide a roosting place for birds, but may prune areas where bird droppings are seriously affecting drying areas which cannot be relocated. Such pruning will only take place where this work does not affect the amenity value of the tree and is within current good arboricultural practice
- **Drain Blockage**
- **Height.** Council-owned trees are left to reach their natural size and shape unless they pose a significant health and safety risk
- **A reduction or increase of moisture to gardens.** Only in exceptional circumstances will the Council prune trees to improve the availability of water in a neighbours garden
- **Reduced security by virtue of concealment.** The Council will work in partnership with CCTV and the Police and prune trees where exposure will assist in the control of high-risk anti social behaviour
- **Branches overhanging adjacent property.** The Council may take action if the tree growth is physically damaging a neighbours property
- **Lopping and topping.** The severe cutting back of large limbs is now recognised as bad arboriculture practice resulting in a disfigured tree which is susceptible to disease and decay.

