

# TREE POLICY

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## Introduction

Trees help to add variety to our landscape and provide valuable habitats for many species while providing us with cleaner, filtered air. Council aims to preserve Rusper's trees for future generations to enjoy.

This policy sets out Rusper Parish Council's approach to the management of trees on land owned or managed by Rusper Parish Council only. Other Councils, organisations, companies and private individuals may need to be contacted if a tree is located on their land.

Rusper Parish Council is responsible for trees at the following locations:

- Children's Playground, High Street
- Recreation Ground, High Street

If a tree falls and causes injury or damage, the relevant landowner could be held negligent if they have failed to take sufficient care of the tree. Therefore, as a landowner, the Council has a duty of care to ensure that all trees on Parish Council-owned land are kept in an acceptable condition and do not put people or property at unreasonable risk.

Trees situated within the public highway, adjacent to the road or on roadside verges, are generally the responsibility of West Sussex County Council. You can report a problem with a tree by using their online reporting system: <https://love.westsussex.gov.uk>.

This policy covers trees and hedgerows but is specifically targeted at trees that are over 8cm in diameter and 1.5m above ground level.

## Inspection schedule

The following inspections will be undertaken:

1. A biennial inspection will be carried out by an Arboricultural Consultant or a qualified Tree Surgeon appointed by the Council.
2. A quarterly inspection will be carried out by the Councillor responsible for trees. This inspection will be a visual inspection from ground level only.

## Reporting requirements

The biennial inspection will be commissioned in April of that year and the subsequent survey will be considered by the Council at its meeting following receipt. All remedial work identified in the survey and subsequently authorised by the Council will be undertaken in accordance with the priority indicated in the survey.

Any problems identified by members of the Council in the quarterly inspection will be reported to the next meeting of the Council. If deemed appropriate, estimate(s) will be obtained for the remedial work to be undertaken, such estimate(s) to be considered by the Council at the following meeting.

If any problems identified are considered by the Chair or the Clerk to require urgent attention, the Clerk will obtain an estimate for remedial work to be undertaken as soon as possible. The work and estimate will be approved by the Chair and Councillor responsible for trees.

## **Maintenance**

Only essential/minimal works will be undertaken in order to manage a tree because the Council supports a policy of tree preservation.

Tree works will be undertaken in the following circumstances:

- Where an inspection has identified the tree as potentially hazardous or an immediate danger
- If the works are vital to the tree's long-term survival. Dead, dying or diseased trees will only be fully removed when there is no other option.
- To abate an actionable nuisance where branches are touching buildings e.g. physical contact with walls, windows, gutters.
- When previous maintenance regimes have determined future works are of the same specification for that specimen e.g. pollarding, crown reduction.
- Where a tree is blocking a designated footpath, bridleway or highway.

The impact on local wildlife of all tree works, specifically felling and pruning, will always be thoroughly considered, with the impact minimised where possible.

Where appropriate, dead and fallen wood will be left on site unless there are sound conservation and safety reasons for its removal.

All tree work will be carried out by a qualified tree surgeon appointed by the Council and in accordance with BS/3998/2010 Recommendations for Tree Work 2010 (and any subsequent revisions). All works must have Parish Council approval and must be carried out by the Parish Council's appointed Tree Surgeon based on their professional advice.

## **Work that Rusper Parish Council will not carry out to Council owned Trees**

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.