

Tree Management – Policy Notes



Controlled Document

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the health and safety of trees within Lenham Parish, reflecting Lenham Parish Council's (LPC's) commitment to environmental stewardship. It sets out the tree management procedures that provide a framework for all works undertaken by LPC.

This policy applies to all trees owned, managed, or maintained by LPC. It does not apply to privately owned trees unless they pose a direct risk to LPC land or the public.

Requests for tree works from residents will be assessed against this policy and prioritised based on safety, tree health, and wider community benefit.

2. Tree Management Operations

Tree felling: It is not LPC's policy to fell healthy trees. Trees will only be felled where:

- a. There are safety concerns,
- b. Trees are dead, dangerous or diseased,
- c. To follow good tree management practice and promote healthy trees,
- d. Where buildings, roads and paths are being damaged and root pruning would be ineffective or cause destabilisation of a tree,
- e. The tree would prevent development of an approved planning application,

Trees may be cut down by felling directly onto the ground or by being lowered down in sections. The decision to fell a tree on parish council land or maintained by LPC can only be made by the parish council.

All works will comply with relevant legislation, including Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), conservation area restrictions, and wildlife protection laws. No works will be undertaken that contravene statutory protections. All works carried out on LPC owned/ managed trees will be undertaken by qualified persons/contractors.

Where appropriate a replacement tree of a suitable species will be planted as near as possible to the original site. LPC is committed to enhancing biodiversity. Where possible, tree works will retain habitat features such as standing deadwood, and replacement planting will prioritise native species.

3. Responsibilities



The Clerk will coordinate inspections and works. All operational works will be carried out by suitably qualified and insured contractors. MBC are responsible for administering TPO's and for approval of any works to a tree with a TPO on. MBC are also the approving authority for tree works within any of the Parish Conservation Areas.

In emergencies (e.g. storm damage), LPC may instruct immediate works to make trees safe without prior formal approval, with actions reported retrospectively.

4. Crown Lifting

(Removal of branches below a specified height)

This is very often done to allow pedestrians or vehicle access on paths and roads. Normally a tree by a path will have its branches removed up to a height of three meters and a tree beside a road to six meters.

5. Crown Reduction

(Reduction of overall height and/or spread of the tree)

This is normally done where a tree is touching a building, streetlight, CCTV camera, or telephone/power cable. Where frequent reductions are required it may be preferable to remove the tree. Where trees cause overshadowing a crown reduction may be used but only where it significantly affects quality of life.

LPC owned/managed trees overhanging neighbouring properties will only be pruned if there is a significant health and safety issue. Overhanging trees may be pruned back to boundaries by property owners after checking with Maidstone Borough Council's (MBC's) planning department that the tree is not protected (TPO or in a conservation area).

There is no right to trespass on adjoining land while cutting back overhanging branches. Branches may be disposed of on the cemetery bonfire by arrangement and subject to the size of the heap at the time.

6. Crown Thinning

(Removing a percentage of the smaller branches from within the crown, leaving a canopy of foliage on a well-structured framework of branches)

This is usually undertaken on broad-leaved trees. It is often combined with a crown lift to allow more light to pass through the tree, or where the density of the crown causes increased wind resistance.

7. Pollarding

(Cutting a tree back to the same point, known as pollard heads, at regular intervals)

Pollarding has traditionally been used to produce small diameter wood products for areas with grazing animals.

This technique is mainly used for broad-leaved trees such as hornbeam, lime, willow, oak and London plane. Trees that have not been managed as pollards from a young age will not normally be considered for this type of work as it is detrimental to the health of the tree.

Pollarding is often used for maintaining street trees that would otherwise outgrow their location.

8. Crown Cleaning and Dead Wooding

(The removal of ivy, broken branches and dead, diseased and dying wood)

Used to allow visual tree inspections and to manage the risk of wood falling from the tree. When appropriate, some dead wood may be left to provide wildlife habitat. This also includes allowance for removal of tree ivy to prevent tree strangulation.

9. Coppicing

(The regular cutting of woody stems to near ground level to encourage the development of multiple stems)

This is normally done on a cycle of five to 15 years. Species that can be managed in this way include hazel, alder, sweet chestnut, hornbeam and willow. Traditionally used for small diameter wood products but is now widely used for wildlife conservation. Where hazel and willow are planted as shelter belts or amenity planting schemes they may be managed in this way.

10. Root Pruning

(Where a tree root is removed to prevent direct root damage)

It is used where a root may be damaging footpaths, highways, walls, buildings and underground services. If root removal may affect the tree's stability or health, tree felling may be the only option.

11. Tree Survey

LPC will instruct a professional arboriculturist to complete tree surveys of all LPC owned/ managed trees every two years. Each survey will include inspections in both in-leaf and out-of-leaf conditions.

12. Works not Undertaken

LPC will not usually undertake works where the benefit to an individual is outweighed by the detriment to the wider community.

The following items are not generally considered good reasons for undertaking works on trees:

- a. Pollen, fallen leaves, fruits and seeds
- b. Squirrels, bird roosts and droppings
- c. Insects such as aphids causing sticky residue on cars and driveways (honeydew)
- d. Any works that may contravene wildlife legislation
- e. Loss of view
- f. Television reception either by aerial or satellite dish. Installation engineers should consider trees and their likely growth before installing equipment.
- g. Lopping and topping – this is the severe cutting back of large limbs, which is now recognised as bad arboriculture practice. It results in a disfigured tree which is susceptible to disease and decay.

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 4 years or sooner if legislation or best practice changes.