

## **SHALFLEET PARISH COUNCIL. Tree Management Policy**

**Dated: January 29, 2026. Adopted February 11, 2026.**

**Signed.**

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### **1. Introduction**

Shalfleet Parish Council owns and manages several trees, hedgerows, and planted areas across the parish. These natural assets contribute to the character, biodiversity, and wellbeing of the community. The Council also has a legal duty of care to ensure that its trees do not pose an unacceptable risk to the public. This policy sets out a clear, proportionate, and cost effective approach to the management of parish owned trees and hedgerows.

### **2. Policy Objectives**

The aims of this policy are to:

- Protect public safety through appropriate, risk based management
- Reduce unnecessary expenditure on tree maintenance
- Maintain and enhance the parish landscape and biodiversity
- Ensure consistent, transparent decision making
- Comply with relevant legislation and recognised best practice

### **3. Scope**

This policy applies to all trees and hedgerows on land owned or managed by Shalfleet Parish Council, including but not limited to:

- Withyfields
- Bouldnor Field
- Newbridge
- Shalfleet boundary hedge
- Queen's Canopy planting (100 whips)
- Coronation Avenue
- Spring Hill verge cherry trees
- Blacksmith Green and Malthouse Green cherry trees
- Malthouse Green oak
- Winchester Corner cherry trees

This policy does not apply to privately owned trees.

## **4. Management Principles**

### **4.1 Safety First, Proportionate Approach**

The Council will meet its duty of care by managing trees based on risk, not routine or cosmetic concerns. Work will only be undertaken where necessary.

### **4.2 Cost Effective Stewardship**

The Council will minimise expenditure by:

- Using a risk based inspection regime
- Avoiding unnecessary pruning or cyclical work
- Grouping works to reduce contractor mobilisation costs
- Tendering competitively
- Selecting low maintenance, climate resilient species for future planting

### **4.3 Environmental Responsibility**

Healthy trees will be protected wherever possible. Felling will only be considered when no reasonable alternative exists.

### **4.4 Transparency**

Significant decisions will be recorded in Council minutes. Residents will be informed of major works where practical.

## **5. Inspection and Survey Regime**

### **5.1 Routine Inspections**

The previous annual inspection requirement is replaced with a risk based schedule:

- High risk areas (play areas, car parks, public footpaths): every 18–24 months
- Low risk areas (open fields, rural verges): every 3–5 years
- After severe storms: targeted inspections only where damage is reported

Inspections will be visual and carried out by a suitably qualified arborist or trained Council representative.

### **5.2 Five Year Professional Survey**

A full professional survey will be commissioned every five years, undertaken by a contractor recognised by the Isle of Wight Council Tree Team.

## **6. Tree Work and Maintenance**

### **6.1 When Work Will Be Carried Out**

Work will be approved only when:

- A tree poses an unacceptable risk to people or property
- A tree is dead, dying, or dangerous
- A tree is causing structural damage supported by evidence
- A tree obstructs a public highway or right of way
- Required by law or statutory notice

### **6.2 When Work Will Not Be Carried Out**

The Council will not normally undertake work for:

- Loss of light
- Leaf, fruit, or sap fall
- Bird droppings
- TV/satellite reception issues
- Aesthetic preference
- Unsubstantiated nuisance

### **6.3 Felling and Replacement**

Felling is a last resort. Where felling is necessary, replacement planting will be considered using low maintenance, climate resilient native species.

## **7. Delivery of the Policy**

Shalfleet Parish Council benefits from the support of a locally based, professionally qualified tree officer and tree expert, who knows the parish landscape intimately.

He has undertaken to oversee and deliver this policy on behalf of the Council, including:

- Routine inspections
- Advising on risk and required works
- Liaising with contractors
- Ensuring decisions align with this policy
- Providing expert guidance to councillors and the Clerk

His local knowledge and professional expertise will help ensure that tree management is both safe and cost effective.

## **8. Financial Management**

The Council will:

- Maintain a rolling 3–5 year tree maintenance plan
- Group works to reduce contractor mobilisation fees
- Avoid emergency call outs through proactive risk management
- Seek grant funding for planting and biodiversity projects
- Review contractor performance annually

A dedicated budget line for tree management will be included in the annual revenue budget.

## **9. Resident Requests and Complaints**

- Requests must be submitted in writing to the Clerk.
- The Council will assess requests against this policy and the most recent inspection data.
- Residents will be informed of the decision and rationale.
- The Council will not intervene in private tree disputes.

## **10. Record Keeping**

The Council will maintain:

- A tree and hedge asset register
- Inspection and survey records
- Contractor reports
- Decisions relating to significant works

## **11. Policy Review**

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