

EAST GOSCOTE PARISH COUNCIL

TREE POLICY



Approved by: Full Council **Date:** 9th October 2019

Last reviewed: Full Council **Date:** 15th June 2026

Next review due: 2029

TREE POLICY

1. Introduction

East Goscote Parish Council recognises the significant environmental, social and health benefits provided by trees. Trees contribute to biodiversity, carbon capture, shade, amenity, landscape character and community wellbeing. They also enrich our parks and green spaces by providing shelter, colour and habitat for wildlife.

Trees are living organisms that grow, change and respond to their environment. While the Council undertakes essential maintenance for safety and legal compliance, it does not seek to unnaturally restrict tree size or shape, as this can be harmful and may stimulate excessive regrowth.

This policy is supported by the **Tree Protocol**, which sets out operational procedures for delivering the policy.

2. Legislative and Standards Framework

All tree management undertaken by or on behalf of the Council will comply with:

- BS 3998:2010 – Tree Work: Recommendations
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 & 1984
- Highways Act 1980
- Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003 (High Hedges)
- Electricity Act 1989
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TPOs & Conservation Areas)
- GDPR (inspection records)

3. Council Responsibilities

The Council is responsible for:

- Trees on land owned or managed by East Goscote Parish Council
- Ensuring trees do not pose an unacceptable risk
- Maintaining trees in accordance with BS 3998:2010
- Protecting biodiversity and complying with wildlife legislation
- Keeping accurate inspection and maintenance records

The Council is **not** responsible for trees on private land or land owned by other authorities or utility providers.

4. Tree Safety and Inspection Programme

- A qualified independent arboricultural consultant undertakes full inspections – **Last inspection:** *[Insert date]*
- The Council's Tree Warden carries out **monthly visual checks**.
- Records are retained securely in accordance with GDPR.
- Where a tree poses an imminent risk, the Council will take prompt action.

5. Dead, Dying or Dangerous Trees

The Council will remove or make safe any tree that is:

- Dead
- Structurally unsound
- Posing an immediate danger

Where feasible, replacement planting will be undertaken.

6. Damage to Property

Where evidence demonstrates that a Council-owned tree is the primary cause of damage, the Council will take appropriate action.

Examples include:

- **Direct damage:** root heave lifting paving, branches damaging fences or walls
- **Indirect damage:** subsidence caused by soil shrinkage

Residents may be required to provide independent structural or arboricultural evidence.

7. Obstruction of Light

The Council will not normally prune or remove trees solely to improve natural light. This is because:

- Pruning often provides only temporary benefit
- Excessive pruning can harm the tree
- Regrowth may worsen shading

Exceptions may be considered where:

- A tree excessively dominates a small garden
- A tree has grown abnormally due to past poor management
- A statutory High Hedge complaint is upheld

8. Overhanging Branches

Residents may prune branches back to their boundary under common law, provided:

- No trespass occurs
- The work does not damage the tree
- Arisings are offered back to the Council
- Work complies with BS 3998:2010

The Council will prune overhanging branches only where:

- They cause damage
- They present a safety risk
- They obstruct public rights of way or highways

Unauthorised works to Council trees may be treated as criminal damage.

9. Falling Leaves, Fruit, Sap and Debris

The Council is not legally responsible for:

- Fallen leaves
- Blossom
- Seeds, cones or fruit
- Honeydew from aphids

These are natural seasonal occurrences and will not normally justify tree works.

10. Obstruction of Signs, Street Lighting and Highways

Where branches obstruct:

- Street lighting
- Road signs
- Visibility splays
- Footpaths or cycleways

The Council will undertake proportionate pruning in line with the Highways Act 1980.

11. Trees Affecting Telephone or Power Lines

- Telephone lines: responsibility of the service provider
- Power lines: managed jointly with the Distribution Network Operator

The Council will liaise with utility providers where necessary.

12. Television and Satellite Reception

The Council will not normally prune or remove trees to improve TV or satellite reception. Residents should position equipment with future tree growth in mind.

13. Biodiversity and Protected Species

The Council will comply with all wildlife legislation, including:

- No disturbance of active bird nests (1 March – 31 July)
- Protection of bats and bat roosts year-round

Only emergency works will be undertaken during nesting season unless an ecological survey confirms no nesting activity.

14. Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas

Where Council trees are subject to a TPO or located within a Conservation Area, statutory consents will be obtained before works proceed.

15. Ash Dieback

The Council will:

- Monitor ash trees for signs of infection

- Prioritise removal where structural integrity is compromised
- Replace removed ash trees with diverse, climate-resilient species

16. Tree Planting and Replacement Strategy

The Council is committed to:

- Increasing canopy cover
- Planting climate-resilient, non-invasive species
- Ensuring “right tree, right place” principles
- Maintaining species diversity

Replacement planting will occur where trees are removed for safety or health reasons.

17. Memorial Trees

Residents may apply to plant a memorial tree on Council land.

Conditions:

- Species and location must be approved
- Residents are responsible for watering and informal care
- The Council retains responsibility for safety inspections
- The Council may remove the tree if it becomes unsafe or unsuitable

18. Sponsorship of Tree Works

The Council will not accept sponsorship for works that:

- Are not in the tree’s best interests
- Conflict with BS 3998:2010
- Would not normally be undertaken

Any sponsored works will be carried out by Council-appointed contractors only.

19. Development and Land Management

Tree works may be required to support:

- Site improvements
- Redevelopment of parks or open spaces
- Woodland management and thinning

Where trees are removed, replacement planting will be prioritised.

20. Reporting Concerns

Residents may report concerns about Council-owned trees by contacting:

Email: clerk@eastgoscote-pc.gov.uk

Reports should include:

- Location

- Description of concern
- Photographs (if possible)

21. Review

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

Signed.....

(Chair)

Date.....