

Southborough Town Council

Tree Management Policy

(Adopted 27 June 2013)

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

This document has been created to provide guidance for the public, Councillors and Council employees to ensure a clear and consistent approach is adhered to regarding management of trees by Southborough Town Council. 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 Town Council-owned land are kept in an acceptable condition and do not put people or property at unreasonable risk.

The Council has adopted a proactive approach to tree maintenance. However, only essential/minimal works will be undertaken in order to manage a tree because the Council supports a policy of tree preservation. The type of works undertaken will depend on the tree's location, the species of tree and its state of health at that time. Regular inspections will be carried out to identify issues at the earliest juncture, so that preventative action can be taken where possible. Areas close to roads, buildings and with high public usage will be prioritised.

As a guide, 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.

Whilst the Council will consider the impact of trees in each case on individual merit, the Council will not fell or prune trees on Town Council-owned land if it is for any of the following non-arboricultural reasons:

- Solely to alleviate problems caused by natural and/or seasonal phenomena e.g. falling leaves, fruit, seeds/berries, bird droppings, pollen etc.
- Solely for reasons of increasing sunlight/views to properties and gardens.
- Solely for the reason that the tree(s) is causing interference with television or satellite reception, except in extenuating circumstances and with documentary evidence that all other options have been explored. In considering any action, the Town Council will take into account the amenity value of the tree(s) concerned.
- To allow for vehicle crossovers, except in extenuating circumstances.

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. Please note that removal of any wood from Southborough Common is against the Common Byelaws, unless you live on Southborough Common and have registered your Commoner's Rights at Kent County Council. Illegal removal will be reported to the police as theft.

All tree work will be carried out by a qualified tree surgeon appointed by the Town Council and in accordance with BS/3998/1989 British Standards for Tree Work 1989 (and any subsequent revisions). All works must have Town Council approval and must be carried out by the Town Council's appointed Tree Surgeon based on their professional advice. Additional approval will be obtained from the Tree Officer at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for trees on which there is a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or from the Conservation Officer, if located in the Conservation Area.

The Town Council will consider formal applications for tree works on its land but these must be in writing, either by letter or email:

**Southborough Town Council
c/o Tunbridge Wells Town Hall
Mount Pleasant Road
Tunbridge Wells
Kent TN1 1RS**

Email: clerk@southboroughcouncil.co.uk

For an informal conversation and advice regarding tree works, please call the Council Offices on 01892 529176 and speak to the Town Clerk.

Town Council-Owned Land:

Bounds Oak Way Land
Coppice of Trees Petanque Ground, Yew Tree Road
Crundwell Road Community Centre
Crundwell Road Recreation Ground
Frank Weare Recreation Ground
Gordon Road Rest Garden
Hilly Fields, Pennington Road
Hockey Field, off Yew Tree Road
Holden Pond and adjacent land at Holden Corner
Pennington Grounds
Ridgeway Allotments
Ridgeway Playing Fields
Southborough Cemetery, Victoria Road
Southborough Common
St Andrews: land at Scout Hut and Sports Pavilion
St. Peters Closed Churchyard (Town-Council Managed Only)
Yew Tree Allotments
Yew Tree Playing Fields
Wheeler's Field and The Piggery