

Durrington Town Council Tree Management Policy 2025

1. Introduction

Trees are a vital part of Durrington's landscape, contributing significantly to the village's character and environmental health. They enhance the visual appeal of open spaces, provide wildlife habitats, improve air quality, and help mitigate the effects of climate change. Trees also reduce noise, stabilise soil, provide shelter, and create a sense of tranquillity within the community.

Some of the trees in Durrington are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), and planning permission is required for work on these trees or for any tree within a Conservation Area.

While trees bring many benefits, their growth and characteristics can occasionally create inconvenience or conflict with nearby properties. The purpose of this Tree Management Policy is to ensure a balanced, consistent, and responsible approach to the management of trees for which Durrington Town Council (DTC) has responsibility.

2. Objectives

This policy sets out Durrington Town Council's approach to the management and care of trees on land owned or managed by the Council, and clarifies its relationship with Wiltshire Council in its statutory planning functions.

It also serves as a reference document for residents, contractors, and community groups regarding the management of trees within Durrington.

3. Land Owned or Managed by Durrington Town Council

Durrington Town Council manages trees across the following areas:

- The Recreation Ground
- Avon Fields Open Spaces
- The River Park
- The Cemetery
- Small areas of open space within the Avondown Estate and Millenium Park Allotment Area surrounding amenity land

3.1 Tree Planting

Durrington Town Council will encourage and undertake new tree planting in accordance with good arboricultural practice and British Standards. Trees will normally be planted in sizes ranging from whips to heavy standards (14–16cm girth), depending on location.

The Council will aim to plant a mix of native and appropriate non-native species, selecting trees suited to each site's conditions and conservation value.

The aims of tree planting are to:

- maintain and enhance tree cover within Durrington;
- contribute to climate change mitigation;
- encourage biodiversity;
- provide wildlife habitats and green corridors;
- offer shade, screening, and windbreaks;
- replace removed or damaged trees;
- commemorate community events or individuals;
- improve air quality and soil stability; and
- promote community involvement and awareness.

Tree species and locations will be selected with consideration for long-term maintenance and landscape impact.

3.2 Strategy for Tree Planting and Management

Durrington Town Council will, with professional support as required, develop a programme of proactive tree management. This will include:

- maintaining a healthy and sustainable tree stock;
- prioritising the planting of native species where appropriate;
- promoting public understanding of the value of trees;
- supporting school and community planting projects;
- ensuring all tree works conform to BS 3998:2010 Tree Work – Recommendations;
- managing tree safety in public areas; and
- resisting unnecessary felling or reduction unless justified by safety, arboricultural, or legal reasons.

3.3 Tree Pruning

The Council will not normally undertake pruning or removal solely in response to:

- falling leaves, sap, or honeydew;
- fruits, nuts, seeds, blossom, or pollen;
- bird droppings;
- shading, moisture variation, or blocked views;

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- interference with TV, satellite, or solar panel reception.

Requests for works will be assessed based on safety, health, and arboricultural merit.

If a resident requests a reduction or other tree surgery and the Council agrees to the work the resident will be asked to pay for all or some of the work which must be undertaken by a qualified tree surgeon approved by the Council.

3.4 Trees Adjacent to Structures

The presence of nearby structures does not automatically justify tree reduction or removal. The Council may approve reasonable works that align with sound arboricultural practice and maintain public safety.

The Council will not:

- remove or heavily reduce trees solely due to solar panel shading;
- carry out works without confirmation of cause; or
- disturb trees supporting nesting birds or roosting bats.

Where wildlife is present, Natural England guidance and relevant legislation will be followed.

3.5 Utilising Tree Arisings

Where feasible, Durrington Town Council will seek to reuse or recycle woodchip, logs, or other by-products of tree maintenance for community or environmental benefit.

3.6 Statutory Undertakings

Utility providers (gas, electricity, water, telecoms) have powers to carry out tree works to maintain essential services. They will be encouraged to liaise with Durrington Town Council before carrying out any works affecting council-managed trees.

3.7 Requests for Tree Work

All formal requests or complaints regarding trees on council-managed land will be investigated. If action is required, a programme of works will be prepared, and the Council will respond in writing explaining its decision and reasoning.

3.8 Overhanging Branches

Residents may, at their own expense, cut back overhanging branches from Council trees to their boundary line, provided necessary permissions are obtained for protected trees.

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Arisings remain the property of the Council. They should approach the Council before removing branches to ensure the tree is not unbalanced.

4. Subsidence or Damage to Property

When investigating claims of subsidence or other damage allegedly caused by council-managed trees, the claimant must provide expert evidence including:

- details of damage and building structure;
- monitoring data and soil analysis;
- root identification (DNA testing if necessary);
- arboricultural and structural recommendations.

All claims will be assessed objectively before any decision on tree works is made.

5. Inspection and Maintenance

The Council will maintain a programme of tree inspections to identify health or safety risks. Each tree or group will be categorised (High, Medium, Low) according to condition and risk level.

Inspections and remedial works will be recorded. All works will comply with BS 3998:2010 and current health and safety standards.

6. Statutory Obligations

Durrington Town Council will:

- comply with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Tree Preservation (England) Regulations 2012, and related legislation;
- liaise with Wiltshire Council in its role as the local planning authority regarding TPOs and trees in Conservation Areas; and
- act as a consultee on planning applications affecting trees within the parish.

7. Dangerous Trees on Private Land

Where trees on private land pose a potential danger to the public, Durrington Town Council will notify Wiltshire Council under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Wiltshire Council may then require the landowner to undertake remedial work. In urgent cases, works may be carried out in default with costs recoverable from the property owner.

8. Council-Owned or Managed Land

The following areas are currently owned or managed by Durrington Town Council:

- The Recreation Ground
- Avon Fields Open Spaces
- The River Park
- The Cemetery
- Avondown Estate Open Space and Millenium Park Allotment Area surrounding amenity land

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if legislation or local circumstances require.