

EAST FARNDON PARISH COUNCIL TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Trees are a highly valued feature of the parish of East Farndon, making an enormous contribution to the character and beauty of our landscape. Trees create and maintain environments rich in biodiversity. East Farndon Parish Council recognises both the human and environmental benefits of having a healthy and sustainable tree population.

East Farndon Parish Council has appointed Tree Wardens to undertake the following:

1. To carry out regular inspections of the trees protected under a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) within the parish;
2. To provide a report to the Parish Council for each meeting, and recommend action regarding trees if appropriate;
3. To respond to any proposals which could entail the removal of trees, including planning applications; and
4. To draw the attention of residents to good practice in relation to the management of trees protected under a TPO.

The ownership of trees in East Farndon can be divided into three groups:

- Trees on Parish Council land;
- Trees on private land protected under a TPO; and
- Trees on private land not protected by a TPO.

Trees on Parish Council Land

East Farndon Parish Council owns the following land:

- The Burial Ground and its Extension
- The Village Green
- The land on which the Village Hall sits

The Tree Wardens will inspect all individual trees that are situated on Parish Council-owned land at least 4 times a year.

As pruning can weaken the structure of trees, the Council will only conduct or allow pruning if necessary. Similarly, the Parish Council will avoid felling trees unless it is absolutely necessary, and each case will be carefully judged on its merits. Examples where pruning or felling may be considered include where a tree is:

- Dead, dying or infected by a disease that has a significant detrimental impact on the host.
- A danger to public safety.
- Causing an obstruction to a public highway, right of way, access to property or footpath.
- A major contributor to serious structural damage to buildings or infrastructure.
- Clearly of a size and species deemed by the Council to be inappropriate to their situation.

Trees on private land protected under a Tree Preservation Order (TPO)

TPOs are created by the Local Planning Authority in respect of trees or woodland that are considered to have a significant impact on the amenity of a local area. It is a criminal offence to cut down, uproot, top, lop, wilfully damage or wilfully destruct any tree protected by a TPO. Any proposed works relating to a tree protected by such an order requires the submission of a planning application to the Local Authority.

Details of all TPOs within East Farndon Parish are available via this link:

<https://eastfarndon.org/parish-council-tree-protection/>

The Tree Wardens will, as far as possible, inspect TPO trees at least 4 times a year.

Trees on private land not protected by a TPO

Trees on private land are the responsibility of the landowner/householder who has a responsibility, in law, known as the 'duty of care', i.e. the householder should take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which they could reasonably foresee may result in harm or injury. When a householder fails to exercise their responsibility, and harm or injury results, the householder may be subject to a claim for negligence.

One of the problems occurring on private land is trees obscuring or blocking light onto an adjacent neighbour. A right to light may be earned in circumstances where a neighbour has enjoyed light uninterruptedly to a window or other opening associated with a dwelling for 20 years before the obstruction appeared. A growing tree may eventually create such a problem.

The key word in caring for trees on private land is "management". Some trees require an occasional review of their well-being. Does the tree look healthy, are the branches and foliage well balanced, or are there any large fungi attached to the tree? Where necessary, residents are advised to use a reputable tree surgeon, to seek three quotes for work and to avoid using those who knock on doors without invitation.

Pruning: Expert advice is strongly recommended. Pruning will encourage trees to grow upwards rather than outwards, but should be avoided unless necessary because pruning can weaken the structure of trees through introduced disease. Where pruning is required, residents are advised to make a clean cut with a good pruning saw close to the main trunk of the tree. The cut should be made square to the branch and preserve the bulge at the base of the branch, known as the branch collar.

To prevent disease and decay, it is important not to damage the bark of the tree. Cutting the branch flush with the main stem is likely to create a larger wound. Most native trees are best pruned in winter when dormant, except field maple, cherry and walnut which need pruning in summer to reduce risk of disease and sap bleeding.

Coppicing: This involves cutting a tree near to its base to encourage new growth. Trees could be ready to coppice after 7–10 years, depending on species and growth rate.

Thinning: Thinning involves felling some planted trees to reduce the competition for light, water and nutrients. By giving the remaining trees more room, they develop a better shape, grow stronger and are less likely to blow over in adverse weather. Thinning will not usually occur until Year 10 at the earliest, but it depends on how close together the trees were planted.

Nesting Season: You should avoid maintenance and cutting back on trees during the bird nesting season from March to August. For further advice on nesting season, go to the RSPB website via this link: [rspb.co.uk](https://www.rspb.co.uk)

Overgrown trees/hedges affecting highways, pavements or paths: If there is a hedge or tree that is affecting you or you think it's creating a risk to safety from a neighbour's property (for example, an overgrown hedge meaning you have to walk in the road), talk to them first. If this does not work or you feel unable to talk to them, then you should contact Street Doctor via this link: <https://fixmystreet.northamptonshire.gov.uk/>. This also applies to dead or dying trees.

High Hedges: High hedges are often leylandii, which can grow very tall in a short time. They require regular maintenance to keep them under control. East Farndon Parish Council requests that residents with leylandii have consideration for neighbours by restricting a leylandii hedge to a height that will not affect the reasonable enjoyment of adjoining property.

In cases where a neighbour is affected by fast growing evergreen hedges, the High Hedges Act may be applied to require the owner of an evergreen hedge to reduce its height. If a resident thinks that a neighbour has let a hedge grow to an unreasonable height, the neighbour can complain to the Local Authority. Before taking any action, the Local Authority will expect the resident to provide evidence to show that all other means of resolving the dispute have been tried and have failed. Consulting a solicitor for advice may be an alternative.