



Shere Parish Council

Tree Safety and Management Policy

Shere Parish Council recognises its legal¹ and moral duty of care with respect to trees on owned or leased land. The council is responsible to reasonably protect members of the public, contractors and staff which live, work or play in these public areas. Inspection and maintenance of the trees will be reasonable and proportionate to the low risk posed by trees, to the benefits of trees and to the health and safety obligations of the council.

Managing Risk

Shere Parish Council will manage the risks from trees in a balanced way to maximise the benefits from trees, whilst taking reasonable precautions to protect the safety of its members, employees, contractors and members of the public. It will achieve this by adopting procedures for the inspection, management and maintenance of trees proportionate to the risks as suggested by the National Tree Safety Group².

Trees form a dynamic biological resource subject to the vagaries of pests and diseases, extremes of weather and the influence of human activities. Furthermore, as trees grow and mature, they may develop dead wood, cavities or other potential defects as a part of the natural aging process. Where a tree's condition has some weakness that renders it significantly likely to fail, it becomes a 'hazard'. Where there is both a hazard and a target (i.e. people or property) that may be damaged by failure of a tree or part of a tree, then there is a quantifiable risk that requires assessment and management.

Zoning by level of Risk

The high-risk areas are adjacent to the highway, neighbouring properties and structures and where members of the public congregate. The low-risk areas are in the middle of the green areas that are less frequently accessed by people and where falling trees or parts of trees will not interfere with the high-risk areas.

Inspection Regime

There will be tree types of inspections:

1. Casual observation
2. Formal inspections supported by detailed inspections
3. Detailed inspections

The different levels of inspection require differing level of competence. Written records will be kept.

¹ Occupiers' Liability acts of 1957 or 1984 and Health and safety at Work etc act 1974

² National Tree Safety Group: "Common sense risk management of trees: Guidance on trees and public safety in the UK for owners, managers and advisers". Forestry Commission FCMS024, ISBN 978-0-85538-840-9, www.forestry.gov.uk/publications

Casual observation

Members of the public may report concerns about the state of a tree to the Parish Clerk or Parish Staff may raise a concern while carrying out their normal activities. This will instigate a higher level of inspection (Formal or Detailed Inspection) dependant on the observation.

Formal Inspection

A member of the Parish Council, Parish Staff or contractor will undertake a visual “walk-over” assessment of the trees annually in late summer to identify dead or diseased parts (obvious defects). In addition, Formal Inspection will be performed after strong winds and/or heavy rain or similar adverse weather. There will be no requirement for specific qualifications for the persons mentioned above but they should have an understanding of the basic signs of poor health. The annual inspection will provide one of the following three outcomes:

1. The tree(s) has no observed significant defects and therefore requires no further action.
2. The tree(s) requires a more detailed inspection; the tree will be prioritised a risk.
3. Work is required as an emergency. The area around the tree(s) will be cordoned off to ensure public safety. In emergency situations, the Clerk should instruct a suitably qualified contractor to complete the work required and make the tree(s) safe. (See note below regarding consent).

Detailed Inspections

The need for a detailed inspection typically applies to individual, high value trees which have been identified from a casual or formal inspection as having a high-priority concern in a well-used, high risk zone.

Some trees identified as a high priority in a high-risk zone will be inspected on a regular basis (every year). These trees will be identified and recorded individually.

The Council will commission a suitably qualified person (if appropriate the council contractor). The extent of the assessment (visual or more sophisticated) will be determined by the risk level of the area of trees.

The detailed inspection will provide one of the following three outcomes:

1. The tree(s) has no observed significant defects and therefore requires no further action.
2. The tree(s) requires a more detailed inspection, and/or more frequent monitoring.
3. Work is required.

Remedial Works

If any defects or concerns are identified, the Clerk will instruct a suitably qualified arboriculturist with accreditation to the [The Arboricultural Association](#) to assess the tree and provide a written report as to its condition and any remedial works required. The Clerk will obtain three quotes for all tree works required and will present them to the Parish Council prior to instructing the contractor to complete the works. Necessary consent shall be obtained before any tree work starts.

In emergency situations, the area around the tree(s) will be cordoned off to ensure public safety. The Clerk has delegated powers to instruct a suitably qualified contractor to make safe trees that are dangerous and pose high risk to life or property. Consent for work on a tree in the conservation area and/or with a TPO must be sort from Guildford Borough Council but not at the detriment of safety. Any emergency work should be documented and submitted to Guildford Borough Council at the next opportunity.

Records

Records, including maps, provide the basis for safety management reviews and, in the extremely rare event of an accident, can support evidence of reasonable tree management. It is may not be necessary to record every tree inspected. However, records of trees presenting a serious risk and requiring treatment are useful, as is a record of how they have been treated.

Shere Parish Council will keep records of inspections: when carried out, by whom and any recommendations made. In addition, records of action (including remedial work) should be recorded (when and by whom).

Adopted	Reviewed	Re-adopted
8 th September 2020	3 rd September 2024	3 rd September 2024
	To be reviewed June 2026	