



Corfe Mullen Town Council

Tree Management Policy

1. Introduction

1.1. This policy sets out Corfe Mullen Town Council's (the 'Council's') approach to managing Council-owned trees, ensuring their safety and sustainability. Trees provide numerous environmental, social, and aesthetic benefits, including:

- Improving air quality and mitigating the urban heat island effect.
- Enhancing mental well-being and community spaces.
- Contributing to the village's character, landscape, and flood mitigation efforts.
- Providing vital habitats for wildlife, particularly in urban areas.
- Acting as Ancient, Veteran, or Notable trees with high biodiversity, cultural, and heritage value.
- Supporting carbon storage and climate change mitigation.

1.2. The Council manage numerous sites within Corfe Mullen with trees near footpaths, roads and buildings. The Council has a duty to ensure site users, members of the public, staff and occupants are not put at risk due to any failure to take all reasonable precautions to ensure their safety.

2. Tree Policy Statements

2.1. The following policies guide the Council's tree management, ensuring compliance with legal, health and safety responsibilities, and sustainability best practices.

3. General

3.1. All agents, partners, and contractors working with Council-owned trees must adhere to this policy.

4. Public Safety

4.1. The Council will manage its tree stock in accordance with its legal obligations under relevant legislation, including the [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#), the [Highways Act 1980](#), and the [Occupiers' Liability Act 1984](#).

4.2. Regular tree inspections and maintenance will be carried out based on industry guidelines, with adjustments made to reflect local needs and budgets. The Council will ensure an inspection of all trees is undertaken every 3 years by qualified arboriculturists. Inspections will provide the following information:

- Location map.
- Tree species (common name).
- Size:
 - a) Diameter at Breast Height, Diameter of the main trunk measured at 1.5m.
 - b) Estimated height (m) from ground level.
- Age class.
- Physiological Condition.
- Notes on structural conditions and local environment.
- Target Range - (Highest value target that the most significant part likely to fail could strike. Ranges from 1-6 where 1=high and 6=low value occupancy.
- Size Range – Size category of the most significant part likely to fail. Ranges from 1-5 where 1=large and 5=small. Alternatively, P=Property if the most likely target is a building/structure or parked vehicle.
- Probability of failure – Probability of failure from the relative hazard.

- Risk of Harm – The result of the calculation where the target range, size range and probability of failure are qualified using the Qualified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA) calculator. The results show the probability of harm over the next 12 months.
- Management Recommendations.
- Priority:
 - a) Urgent = Control the risk immediately.
 - b) High = As soon as is reasonably practical.
 - c) Non-Urgent = As funds allow.
 - d) Pragmatic = Before the next tree survey.
 - e) Advisory = No time frame.
 - f) N/A = No recommendations made.

4.3. Where trees obstruct essential CCTV coverage for public safety, additional pruning may be considered on a case-by-case basis, balancing public safety with the welfare of trees.

5. Arboricultural Standards, Maintenance, and Biodiversity

5.1. All tree work will adhere to British Standards BS3998:2010 (Tree Work) and BS5837:2012 (Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition, and Construction). The Council will comply with legislation including the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#), the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations](#), and the [Plant Health \(Forestry\) Order 2005](#). Tree management will align with the Councils biodiversity goals, ensuring conservation and enhancement of local wildlife habitats.

6. Tree Removal

6.1. The Council prioritises retaining trees unless there is a sound arboricultural reason for removal. Alternative management methods such as coppicing, pollarding, or canopy reduction will be considered to enhance biodiversity and public safety. Trees will only be removed if:

- They are dead, dying, or dangerous.
- They cause significant structural damage, verified through subsidence claims.
- They are deemed an inappropriate species for their location.
- Their removal is part of an approved management plan or enhancement project.

6.2. Advance notice of removal will be posted on the tree, except in urgent cases, and members will be informed.

7. Tree Planting

7.1. The Council is committed to maintaining and increasing its tree stock by planting appropriate species suited to each location, with a focus on biodiversity and climate resilience.

7.2. The Council will integrate tree planting into its climate change initiatives and community engagement initiatives.

7.3. The Council will actively pursue funding opportunities to purchase new trees and will apply for free trees through the [Woodland Trust](#) as they become available.

7.4. Any tree planting on land not owned by the Council will only be carried out with the landowner's permission.

8. Tree Pruning

8.1. The Council will not have trees pruned or removed for the following reasons:

- Obstructing light or views.

- Falling leaves, flowers, seeds, or honeydew from aphids.
- Interference with renewable energy systems.
- Impact on satellite/digital TV reception or telephone lines.
- Presence of nesting birds or associated droppings.
- Perceived excessive size.
- Allergies related to pollen or seed dispersal.
- Private offers to pay for tree removal or replacement.
- Pavement or kerb disturbance (engineering solutions will be sought).

9. Damage to Council-Owned Trees and Compensation

9.1. The Council will seek compensation from any individual or organisation responsible for significant damage to, or unauthorised removal of, Council-owned trees. Compensation will be calculated using the nationally recognised Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees (CAVAT) shown in Appendix 1.

10. Review and Amendments

10.1. This Tree Management Policy was presented to the Full Council, for approval and adoption on 22 April 2025, minute no. TC 24/396.

10.2. Future reviews will be carried out bi-annually or when any changes are made to related legislation and best practices, whichever is sooner.

11. References

- 11.1. [Dorset Council Tree Policy](#)
- 11.2. [London Tree Officers Association's CAVAT](#)
- 11.3. [NB Tree Management](#)

Appendix 1 –

[Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees](#) (CAVAT) is a system used in the UK to estimate the financial value of trees, particularly in urban environments. It was developed by the [London Tree Officers Association](#) (LTOA) to help local authorities and professionals justify tree management, protection, and replacement costs.

CAVAT considers several factors to determine a tree's value:

- Tree Size – Based on trunk diameter.
- Community Value – How much the tree benefits the local population.
- Functional Value – The tree's condition and expected lifespan.
- Amenity Value – The tree's contribution to the landscape and environment.

How CAVAT is Calculated:

CAVAT is based on a formula that estimates the public benefit of a tree, using trunk diameter as a key measurement. The system has two approaches:

- [Full Method](#) – Used for strategic tree management and high-value assessments.
- Quick Method – Used for rapid valuations, often in legal cases or planning.

Key Considerations in CAVAT

- Older, larger trees have significantly higher value.
- Trees in busy urban areas have higher value due to greater public benefit.
- Poorly maintained or damaged trees have lower values.

Example Calculation (Simplified)

A mature oak tree in a busy town with a trunk diameter of 80 cm and good condition may have a CAVAT value of £50,000 - £100,000.

How to Use CAVAT

- Local authorities use it for tree protection and management.
- Developers use it to calculate compensation for tree loss.
- It supports legal claims (e.g., damage due to tree removal).