

## ***Policy M1***

# **Managing trees on Parish Council land**

*Adopted 2003, updated 2012, reviewed 2013, amended 2017, February 2019, amended July 2022*

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This policy has been created in an effort to balance the needs of the village and its environment, the concerns of residents, and the requirements of the Council's insurance company. Under normal circumstances the Parish Council will not remove healthy trees. However, they may be felled for the following reasons:

- They are dead/dying and therefore dangerous.
- They are causing subsidence or damage to property. Evidence in the form of reports from bona fide companies (funded by the resident or their insurer) will be required before any action is taken. After a site inspection the Parish Council may make a decision regarding whether to fell the tree or ask its own company to carry out an inspection and report as to the validity of the claim that the tree is causing subsidence to property.
- If the report from the Council's own company confirms that the tree is causing subsidence, then arrangements will be made for the tree to be felled.
- First permission from South Cambridgeshire District Council must be obtained when the tree has a Tree Preservation Order on it.

Trees may be pruned for the following reasons:

- Branches are obscuring street lights or signs
- Branches are too close to any of the Council's properties
- Lower branches are obstructing grass cutting operations
- Branches are causing a reduction of natural light to the property
- In each of these cases, site visits will be made before any decisions are made. The site visits may be made by the Councillor responsible for the area or by a member of the Environment Committee.
- If the Council's decision is contrary to the resident's request, the resident may offer to fund the work providing it is carried out by a licensed and insured contractor and details submitted to the Council before the work commences.
- Trees can only be felled or pruned outside of the bird-nesting period (March to Sept) unless the tree is a danger to life or property.
- They are causing damage to property. Evidence in the form of reports from bona fide companies (funded by the resident or their insurer) will be required before any action is taken.

## **Boundary line Trees and Shrubs**

Bar Hill Parish Council recognises that residents may wish to plant shrubs and similar greenery adjacent to boundary lines but on land owned by the Parish Council.

Boundary lines are normally marked by fences and walls and either belong to residents or, in a number of cases, to the Parish Council. Areas of 'Open Plan' grassland are normally marked by concrete edging at ground level.

The Council appreciates that such planting on their land can:-

- Improve the appearance of the village
- Assist residents to improve their personal safety by reducing the risks of becoming a victim of crime
- Reduce the risks of damage to Parish Council owned property

However, the planting of such greenery, if not managed appropriately, may lead to:-

- Damage to property owned by the Parish Council
- Impede grass/verge maintenance
- Increase maintenance costs
- Have an adverse impact on appearance of the village

It is therefore essential that any policy that allows planting by residents on Parish land must be balanced, taking into account the wishes of residents and the needs of the Parish Council to protect the overall interests of the village for its residents. It therefore supports the principle of planting adjacent to boundary lines walls and fences on land owned by the Parish Council subject to the following conditions: -

- Residents shall apply in writing to the Parish Clerk for permission to plant in land owned by the Parish Council
- Requests will be considered, and approval or rejection shall be communicated in writing with a copy of this policy
- Planting will be restricted to within 0.5 metres from the boundary line and not allowed to spread beyond 1.5 metres from the boundary line or the edge of the footpath if closer.
- The applicant/resident shall be responsible for ensuring that growth is restricted and maintained
- Plants shall be of a type as to reduce the likelihood of damage to Parish Council property e.g. walls, fences and footpaths
- Planting of trees will not be permitted
- Planting outside the 0.5 of a metre will not normally be permitted
- The Parish Council reserves the right to remove planting where a resident fails to comply with this policy having first been given one months noticed in writing to take appropriate action.

The Parish Council acknowledges that a large number of residents have existing planting which are creating a problem. Requests for retroactive permission for the planting of trees, bushes and shrubs will be considered on a case-by-case basis but are unlikely to be granted if they breach this policy. A site visit will be made to assess the problem and, if necessary, action taken to redress it. Councillors may not make judgements in pursuance of this policy, reporting their observations at the next meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee.

## **Tree Replanting**

When possible, Bar Hill Parish Council aims to replant trees to replace those that are felled, if a suitable alternative location can be found. This policy only applies to trees that were planted by the developer or the Parish Council. Trees that have been cut down due to property damage or related to an insurance claim, will not be replaced in the same location. Self-set or resident planted trees will not be replaced. All new trees planted will be native to the United Kingdom.