



FOWLMERE PARISH COUNCIL

TREE POLICY

This Tree Policy was adopted by Fowlmere Parish Council on 16th September 2025. It is to be reviewed annually which is notated at the end of this document.

Summary:

This policy sets out the Fowlmere Parish Council position regarding trees on its land. It does not apply to trees located on land owned by Cambridgeshire County Council Highways or any other organisation or individual. It sets out the broad principles of how existing trees will be managed and where new tree planting may take place. Fowlmere Parish Council recognises the importance of trees to the nation and to Fowlmere.

Trees have an important role in the natural environment. Trees help to clean the air, maintain soil structures, provide habitats for a diverse ecology and manage water runoff.

Nationally and internationally trees play an important part in helping to control the rate of climate change due to CO2 levels and at a local level help to reduce air pollution. Fowlmere Parish Council is committed to the preservation of existing trees and the appropriate planting of new trees where this supports the national and local strategies in respect of tree planting.

Policy Statement:

Land owned by Fowlmere Parish Council contain a significant proportion of all the trees within the parish boundary. As such it performs a vital function in reducing pollution, absorbing rainfall, binding soil and providing an environment for local flora and fauna. Trees also play an important role in the wellbeing of local residents.

Existing Mature Trees:

Fowlmere Parish Council is committed to the maintenance of its mature trees. The pruning or felling of trees will only be carried out when one or more of the following apply: -

- To maintain the tree in a healthy condition which includes the regular removal of basal growth to the base of the tree at no detriment to the health or amenity of the mature tree.
- Where the tree is diseased and will not recover.
- Where a tree is touching or about to touch a structure with the likelihood of damage to that property.
- The tree has become dangerous to the point where there is an unacceptable risk to people or property.
- Where it is necessary as part of the development of the Council's assets, and full consideration has been given to alternatives.
- When trees are obstructing a road or path, in this case trees will be cut back to a height of 2.5 meters (if appropriate) and additional balancing work may be required (advice regarding this will be sought from a suitably qualified Arboriculturist).
- When it has been advised by a suitably qualified Arboriculturist.

Trees will not be pruned or felled for: -

- Cosmetic reasons
- Dropping of leaves
- Overhanging into neighbouring properties
- Blocking of light

Where Tree Preservation Orders are in place or trees are within the Conservation Area, trees may only be maintained or felled where appropriate permissions have been granted from the appropriate authority.

Planting of Trees:

Wherever possible, where existing mature trees have had to be removed due to disease or damage, a new tree will be planted. This will be of a suitable type for the environment and species (or variants of them) native to the U.K or the near continent will generally be preferred.

Tree planting in new locations will have regard to the surroundings. Consideration will be given to the proximity of buildings or structure that might be overshadowed or could suffer from root damage from newly planted trees. Where planting is in proximity to other trees or habitat, such planting will have regard to the existing ecology so as to enhance rather than damage this.

Risk Management:

The Council will contract arboriculturists to undertake a tree survey every 3-5years. The results of this Tree survey will contain details of individual specimen trees or clusters of trees where these form part of a wider wooded area of the same species. It will detail the health of the tree, any associated tree management work that may be required, and the timeline for that work to be undertaken.

The Council does not employ its own arboriculturist and relies on contractors to undertake examination and tree surgery.

The Clerk and Councillors noted as Tree Officers are responsible for monitoring any trees in risk areas, and to undertake a walk around these areas on a regular basis but especially after any storms or high winds. If they are concerned about the condition of a tree, the Clerk will contact the specialist for further input.

A budget for tree management is in place and this will need to be reviewed each year as part of the budget process to ensure it is adequate.

Complaints and Requests:

There are regular requests from neighbours of Council land for trees to be pruned or felled. This is often in response to autumn litter or trees reducing light into gardens. In many cases the tree predates the building and very often predates the occupation of the property by the complainant. The policy statement in relation to existing mature trees will be followed.

Rights of Neighbours:

Common Law Right

Property owners have a Common Law right to remove a nuisance associated with trees.

The following advice is given to anyone wishing to exercise their Common Law right:

- a) You can only consider removing those parts of the tree from the point where they cross the boundary of your property. You have no legal right to cut or remove any part of a tree that does not overhang your property.
- b) You are strongly advised to consult an Arboricultural Association Registered tree surgeon for guidance on how best to prune back encroaching trees, unless the works are small enough to do with hand secateurs or similar.
- c) Before you consider doing any works to a tree(s) you must find out if it is protected by a Tree Preservation Order or whether it is within a Conservation Area. If the trees are protected, you will need to gain consent by making an application / give notice to South Cambs District Council. If you fell or prune a tree that is protected, you may be subject to prosecution and unlimited fines.
- d) Whilst the law requires you to offer any wood back to the tree owner, where the wood is not wanted, you are responsible for making adequate provision to dispose of any wood or cuttings at your own cost.

For clarity Fowlmere Parish Council does not require the return of the wood or cuttings. Please do not place, return or tip this on to Council land. If you do so the Council will seek to recover the cost of disposal and associated administration costs which are likely to be higher than your own cost of disposal.

Monitoring and Review:

To be reviewed annually.



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TREE POLICY ADOPTION AND REVIEW PAGE

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Review Date	Reviewed by	Review accepted by Full Council
19th May 2026	Full Council	19th May 2026
next review May 2027		