



RAUNDS TOWN COUNCIL

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TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

1.0 Introduction

This policy sets out how Raunds Town Council manages its own tree stock and the councils overall strategy in relation to increasing the tree population/canopy in Raunds.

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The Council has adopted the principals set out in East Northamptonshire's supplementary planning document "Tree Management Guidance and Principles" (this can be viewed and downloaded from the Town Council website)

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Tree Management and Guidance contains key information for individuals who require information about the management of trees on their own, or a neighbouring property. Topics covered include:

- Tree Preservation Orders
- Management of existing trees
- Queries regarding neighbour's trees

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1.2.0 Policy strategy:

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1.2.1 We wish to see people enjoying the presence of trees and receiving the benefits that trees bring to the environment and landscape.

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1.2.2 The Town Council aims to increase the tree population/canopy cover across East Northamptonshire, this is supported by the Raunds Neighbourhood Plan.

1.2.2-3 The council seeks to manage its trees so that they make a positive contribution to the locality, are reasonably safe and do not cause excessive nuisance.

1.2.4.1-3 The Council has a policy of inspecting all its trees ~~on a based on risk, but as a minimum all trees are inspected on a triennial basis. A tri-annual rolling review.~~ The purpose of the survey is to identify a programme of works needed to maintain the trees in a healthy safe condition. In intervening years, the Council's tree surgeon is asked to visually re-inspect the trees, ~~when working in that location as required.~~

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1.2.4-5 Both the Council's tree programme and grounds maintenance programme is aligned to improve the areas in which the trees grow in order to make the local environment cleaner, greener and safer.

3.0 Policy Context

Raunds Neighbourhood Plan
Policies within the Raunds Neighbourhood Plan support
improvements to the Green Infrastructure in the Town.

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4.9 Landscaping of residential developments and public open space should include trees that are suitable for residential areas

POLICY R16 – BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT The green infrastructure network within the Parish will be protected and enhanced. Proposals should have no detrimental impact on the historical environment or any adverse impact, either alone or cumulatively on the Special Protection Area, Site of Special Site of Scientific Interest or RAMSAR site which lies adjacent to the Town and forms a part of the sub-regional green infrastructure corridor. Where appropriate, proposals will be assessed for the contribution they make to the following: a) improved access to watercourses; b) links to encourage walking to the major employment areas; c) links from the town centre to the surrounding green infrastructure network in the rural parts of the town council area; d) reduce habitat fragmentation and creation of inter-connecting green and blue corridors; e) maintain and enhance green corridors to open countryside and create new ones; f) new tree planting along roads and streets; and g) new allotments and community gardens.

POLICY R17 - GREENING THE TOWN Proposals that would lead to the greening of Raunds will be encouraged, including: a) tree planting in appropriate locations and of appropriate species; b) creation of new, or enhancement of existing wildlife habitats; c) proposals that protect or increase biodiversity; d) new and improved access to watercourses; and e) greener cycleways and footways.

2.0 Process of Survey

2.1 The Council's tree surgeon will survey all the Council's trees to provide a risk assessment of each tree at the point of inspection and to identify a programme of works aimed at striking a balancing between the mitigation of future risks to safety, while recognising the benefits and beauty that trees bring to the environment and landscape.

2.2 In addition, the survey should identify any trees which create a 'real risk' of causing property damage and evaluate the appropriate pruning and maintenance regime to mitigate this risk.

3.0 Managing its trees

The Council will not normally undertake any tree pruning works or removal of trees in direct response to any natural or seasonal phenomena, for example

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Falling leaves

Sap exudation

Falling fruits nuts or seeds

Bird droppings

Blossom or pollen

Reduction or increased moisture in gardens

Germinating seeds from council owned trees

Blocked or obstructed drain, gutters, flat roof from tree deposits and leaves; or Presence of algae or moss

The Council will not normally undertake any tree pruning work due to:

Loss or interference with TV or satellite signal reception;

Loss of sunlight or man-made lighting during any part of the day;

Damage or "heave" to adjacent surfacing due to a nearby tree;

Blocking or obstruction of a view from a residence.

The Council will not normally prune trees to avoid shading solar panels.

The Council will not remove or prune a tree even if someone is willing to pay.

Any trees identified and confirmed to be supporting roosting bats will not be worked on until Natural England is consulted. The Council will then act upon the advice received

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Birds

~~3.1 We will not prune or fell a council tree to remove or reduce bird droppings from trees, or remove bird droppings from private land.~~ We will not undertake tree or hedging works in the vicinity of nesting birds unless risk to life is present.

Blossom

~~3.2 We will not prune or fell a council owned tree to remove or reduce blossom from trees or remove fallen blossom from private land.~~

Carriageway obstruction due to trees

3.3 We will undertake work to a tree in council ownership to maintain a minimum 5.5 metres height clearance over the carriageway - where reasonably practicable having regard to the street, road or highway.

Crime and anti-social behaviour

3.4 Where a council owned tree is situated in an area associated with criminal activity and or anti-social behaviour, measures to reduce the problem will be considered on a site-by-site basis.

3.5 Such measures may include involving other agencies such as Police. Tree works, i.e. pruning or felling are unlikely to answer the problem. However, ensuring the area is adequately maintained usually helps deter such activity.

Danger to highway (private tree)

3.6 In the first instance the County Council should be made aware using the County Council's Street Doctor system. If this fails the matter will be escalated to the local County representative.

Danger to land other than highway (private tree)

3.7 If a tree in private ownership is shown to be a danger to non-highway land, the landowner will be contacted and instructed to make the tree safe (under the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976). If it is necessary that the council undertake this work, then the owner will be charged in full for the council's costs.

Dangerous trees requiring immediate action

3.8 If a council owned tree is in such a condition that it poses a very high risk to people or property and is considered to be an emergency situation, the Town Clerk shall issue instruction under delegated authority and our tree contractor to make the tree safe.

Signs to look for which may mean that a tree is in such condition to warrant immediate attention include a tree which is:

- Snapped or blown over
- Rocking at its base – roots are damaged
- Uprooted but held up by another tree or building
- Large branch has broken off or is hanging off the tree
- Blocking road, footpath, access to property
- Fallen on to house or car

Signs to look out for which may mean that a tree is a risk to people or property but the risk does not require an emergency response include a tree which is:

- Dead
- Dying - few leaves in summer or dieback in the crown
- Bark is loose and falling off
- Mushrooms or fungi growing on or near the tree
- Old splits and cracks in the trunk or large branches
- Smaller branches falling from the tree

3.9 Trees will be made safe by pruning or felling. Typically, the Council will employ the most cost effective measures available.

Dangerous tree requiring action but not imminent danger

3.10 If a tree is identified as dangerous, but the risk to the public is not high then the tree will be made safe depending on the degree of risk identified at the time of inspection. Our standards are 'within 6-months if High Risk', or 'within 12-months if Medium Risk'.

Fruit / berries / nuts

3.11 We will not prune or fell a council owned tree to remove or reduce the nuisance of fruit / berries or nuts, or remove such fallen fruit from private land. However, where fallen fruit is leading to a significant anti-social behaviour problems we will consider measures to reduce the problem including whether a phased removal and replacement with alternative species is reasonable.

3.12 Fruit trees have the benefit of spring blossom and autumn fruit. The fruit is good for wildlife and a source of free food.

Leaves

3.13 We will not prune or fell a council owned tree to remove or reduce leaf fall or remove fallen leaves from private property, unless there are special

circumstances where this is desirable. The loss of leaves is part of the natural cycle and cannot be avoided by pruning.

3.14 Land owned by the Council such as parks and open spaces are periodically cleared of leaves as part of our grounds maintenance contract. Footpaths are the responsibility of the County Council who clear leaves within their own policy.

Common Law Right

~~3.15 The public has a Common Law right to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto their property.~~

~~3.16 The following advice is given if you wish to exercise your Common Law right with respect to encroaching trees:~~

- ~~• 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;~~
- ~~• You are strongly advised to consult a professional tree surgeon for guidance on how best to prune back encroaching trees, unless the works are trivial meaning you could do the works with hand secateurs or similar.~~
- ~~• Before you consider doing any works to a tree / trees you should find out if they are protected by a Tree Preservation Order or are within a Conservation Area. If the trees are protected, you will need to gain consent by making an application / give notice to the council. To find out if the trees are protected and guidance on how to apply for works if they are protected contact East Northamptonshire Council on 01832 742000.~~
- ~~• You are advised to discuss with your neighbour your intention to prune encroaching branches. Legally you do not own the encroaching branches and you should offer these to your neighbour. But in all likelihood, you should consider disposing the arisings yourself. If the encroachment relates to a council owned tree, any cuttings must be disposed of appropriately and not returned to Council land.~~

Light

~~3.17 We will not prune or fell a council owned tree to improve natural light in a property. Generally, in law there is no general right to light.~~

- ~~• Note: If natural light is being blocked by the growth of a hedge then action may be taken to reduce the problem under the High Hedges Act, Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act, 2003.~~

Claims for subsidence

~~When investigating claims of subsidence/heave and damage to properties from underground tree roots, the Town Council will inform their insurers who may make~~

Commented [KH1]: We have referred people to East Northamptonshire Council tree management and guidance principles which contains more detailed guidance on this issue. It is perhaps more prudent to refer people to this guide rather than to try and replicate this guidance here.

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site visits and may require evidence from claimants by way of a report from an appropriately qualified person.

Removal of wood

3.18 You are not allowed to remove wood (or other parts of a tree) from parks or open spaces owned by the Council without consent. Generally, our contractor will either remove cut timber from site or in certain circumstances left in place as a wildlife habitat.

3.19 Un-authorized persons are not allowed to use a chainsaw of any type in parks or open spaces. If you see someone who may be removing wood without consent (person not associated with a relevant sign written vehicle and / or without clothing that clearly identifies who they are) or they are using a chainsaw then call the police on their non-emergency number: 101 and please inform Raunds Town Council on 01933 622087.

Policy adopted April 2015

To be reviewed ~~Tri-Annually~~tri-ennially