

1. We are in a very fortunate position to live and work in the New Forest area, with thousands of visitors flocking to the region each year to appreciate the lush, picturesque landscapes that surround us. New Milton, Barton-on-Sea and district also benefit from many specimens of tree that have been standing for hundreds of years, far outdating some of the housing in the town. Thankfully proposed new developments are mindful of the value of trees, in particular native species, often significantly adding to the biodiversity for a site and bound by planning conditions.
2. Significant changes in our environmental responsibilities have occurred since this policy was first issued, not least the widening actions needed to combat the effects of climate change. Furthermore, the Town Council has been proactive in managing the environment and seeking ways to encourage others to appreciate biodiversity. In recognition of this, the authority has enshrined within the Neighbourhood Plan a Biodiversity policy that is part of the review taking place in 2025, stating developments will need to 'maximise the opportunities available for tree canopy cover including tree retention and planting'. There are several areas in the town, including Barton Common and Ballard Meadow and woodland that are Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (S.I.N.C.). These sites support an estimated 20,000 trees.
3. The Town Council is a major landowner in the town. As landowners responsible for trees, we have a duty of care to manage the land in the best interests for nature conservation, to support and encourage public access whilst taking reasonable steps to prevent foreseeable harm to people or property. To fulfil this, Town Council trees are proactively assessed on a cyclical basis, through a Tree Management contract with New Forest District Council. We have prioritised categories of sites as below (para. 9), and their Arboriculturist inspects the sites and advises us of the work necessary which is then instructed.
4. **Pruning can reduce a tree's amenity value and cause damage which could lead to decay or disease.** A tree's value is not only aesthetic, collectively they also
 - control storm water, reducing the risk of flooding
 - conduct the capture & storage of carbon dioxide
 - increase sense of well-being
 - the presence of trees can add 5-15% to the value of property, up to 27% to the value of undeveloped land
 - buffer cold winds therefore lower heating costs
 - remove air pollutants
 - provide invertebrate, bird and bat habitats

Many of these can be reduced when non-essential pruning takes place.

5. There is a presumption against pruning or felling of any tree on Town Council land unless it is
 - As part of our Tree Management contract with New Forest District Council;
 - To prevent foreseeable injury to persons (assessed by Town Council with NFDC);
 - To prevent foreseeable damage to property (Subsidence concern must be first addressed to your house insurance company who will contact us directly. The safety of a tree will be assessed by NFDC, and their decision is final);
 - Statutory works to maintain clearances for paths and roads;
 - Necessary on designated S.I.N.C. as part of an agreed management policy where nature conservation interests require minimal tree removal to create a mosaic of habitats for wildlife;
 - To improve the growth of other trees;
 - To reduce or prevent the spread of disease or other works in the interests of good tree management.

The Town Council will ensure that at least 2 trees of native origin are planted for each tree felled on Town Council land. (Separate policy document applies).

6. This policy supersedes any previous arrangement of tree maintenance of Town Council land. If the advice is to fell a tree for one of the above reasons, the Town Council will adhere to its own Tree Replacement Policy.

7. Circumstances where the Town Council **will not** prune or fell trees include

- Overhanging branches
- Loss of light
- Loss of TV reception
- Nuisance from fallen leaves, twigs, cones, Honeydew drip, deposits e.g. bird droppings etc.

8. Things you can do

Trees that are covered by Tree Preservation Order or in a Conservation Area

Neighbours must seek consent for the work from the Local Planning Authority. Most of the town is covered by the New Forest District Council tree team, contactable on 02380 285345. The northern part of Bashley ward is covered by the National Park Authority, contactable on 01590 646620. The Town Council Planning Committee is advised of all applications for works to these protected trees and will comment accordingly.

Trees that are **not** covered by a Tree Preservation Order or in a Conservation Area

Neighbours have a ***right in common law to prune overhanging growth back to the***

boundary line, ensuring those actions do not unbalance the crown. Height reduction is not

permitted in this common law right. Please see next paragraph regarding the arisings from such pruning.

In both circumstances

Although the land we own is public open space, residents nor their contractors can enter the land to carry out works to trees without Town Council consent. If employing the services of a contractor for pruning, the tree surgeon will only be able to prune from your side of the boundary. If they require access to the Town Council side, they must contact us to provide a copy of their Public Liability (£5m), Health & Safety and Environmental Sustainability policy documents, as we have a duty to safeguard others using the land. If a resident's actions/instructions leave a tree in such a condition that works are needed to make it safe, or damage or injury is caused, they are likely to be liable. Any works should be kept to an absolute minimum. Arisings remain the property of the tree owner and by law should be offered back. It is the Town Council's policy to decline their return and therefore any arisings should be disposed of appropriately and not be deposited over the boundary. This can damage trees (preventing root access to air and water), can make tree assessment more difficult (important defects may be invisible beneath piled up arisings) and can also lead to damage of boundary fences. In most cases it is acceptable to appropriately dispose of arisings, by being taken off site to the green waste area at your local amenity site or removed by your contractor.

9. Tree Management Cyclical Inspections

The highest risk areas will be subjected to annual inspections. We will carry out in-house inspection of the same sites the next working day following a storm event as advised by the Met Office, as case law has determined appropriate (Whitley Parish Council vs Cavanagh 2019) All other sites will be inspected as indicated below.

ANNUAL					
1	War Memorial Recreation Ground	High use year-round	35	Fernhill Lane	Matures near primary road
7	Great Ballard Lake (SINC)	High use year-round	37	Carrick Way/Caird Avenue	High use path to supermarket
16	Fernhill Lane	Matures near primary road	41	Ashington Park	High use path to supermarket
21	Danewood Estate (SINC)	Matures near primary road	42	Forest Oak Drive	Matures near primary road
24	Rear of Western Avenue	High use, predominant			
				2026/27	
	2025/26		2	Ashley Sports Ground	
8	Brook Avenue	Opposite Ballard	3	Lower Ashley	Former playground
11	Oakwood Avenue		10	Ashley crossroads	
13	Upper Ashley allotments	Allotment site	12	Willowdene Copse	
14	Middle Ashley allotments	Allotment site	15	Lower Ashley allotments	
16	Fernhill Lane		17	Faircourt, York Avenue	
19/21	Danewood estate		18	Lymington Road allotments	
26	Hollands Wood Drive	Part of Danewood estate	32	Carrick Way woodland	SINC
28	Cull Lane	Part of Danewood estate	37	Carrick Way/ Caird Avenue	
33	Fernhill Lane	Same area as 16/42	41	Ashington Park	
42	Forest Oak Drive				
45	Earlswood Park			2028/29	
			7	Great Ballard Lake	
	2027/28		27	Chatsworth Park	
1	War Memorial Recreation Ground		35	Fernhill Lane	
4	Chaucombe Green		36	Fernhill Lane	
5	Barton Common	SINC	38	Deer Park estate	
6	Long Meadow		43	Ballard Meadows	SINC
20	Fawcetts Field	Including football club	44	Stem Lane	Same area as 38
24	Rear of Western Avenue				
25	Becton Lane				
30	Moore's Close	Part of Fawcetts			
46	Fawcetts north field	Part of Fawcetts			