



DISLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. Purpose

This Policy sets out how Disley Parish Council ("the Council") will manage trees on land for which it is responsible, ensuring:

- Public safety
- Compliance with statutory obligations
- Environmental stewardship
- Biodiversity protection
- Adherence to recognised arboricultural standards and good practice

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all trees situated on land owned, leased, or managed by Disley Parish Council, including:

- Parks and recreation grounds
- Open spaces
- Car parks
- Land associated with community facilities

This Policy does not apply to trees in private ownership.

3. Legal Framework

The Council will discharge its responsibilities in accordance with relevant legislation, including but not limited to:

- Occupiers' Liability Act 1957
- Occupiers' Liability Act 1984
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)
- Conservation Area legislation

The Council recognises its duty of care to take reasonable and proportionate steps to ensure that trees are inspected and managed in a safe condition.

4. Objectives

The Council aims to:

- Maintain trees in a condition that is safe and appropriate to their location
 - Preserve and enhance amenity value
 - Promote biodiversity and habitat value
 - Protect veteran and significant trees
 - Apply proportionate and evidence-based risk management
 - Ensure appropriate replacement planting where tree loss occurs
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5. Tree Inspection Regime

The Council will operate a structured and proportionate inspection system based on risk and site usage.

5.1 Formal Inspections

- A suitably qualified and insured arboricultural contractor will undertake professional tree inspections at intervals determined by risk assessment, typically every 1–3 years depending on location, condition, and level of public use.
- Inspection frequency may be adjusted where site-specific risk justifies variation.

5.2 Informal Inspections (Passive Assessments)

- Passive assessments shall consist of informal visual observations undertaken by parish staff and councillors in the course of their normal duties whilst present on parish land.
- Any observed defects or concerns shall be reported promptly in accordance with established Council procedures.

5.3 Post-Severe Weather Inspections

- Additional informal visual inspections may be undertaken following periods of severe weather, including storms or high winds.

Records of inspections, findings, and resulting works will be retained in accordance with the Council's document retention procedures.

6. Risk Management

The Council adopts a proportionate, risk-based approach to tree management, recognising that:

- Trees are living organisms with inherent and natural risk.
- The complete elimination of risk is neither achievable nor desirable.
- Risks must be balanced against environmental, biodiversity, and amenity benefits.

Priority attention will be given to trees located in high-use areas, including play areas, car parks, footpaths, and frequently used public spaces.

7. Tree Works

All tree works commissioned by the Council shall:

- Be undertaken by suitably qualified and insured contractors
- Comply with **BS 3998 – Tree Work: Recommendations**
- Be planned to avoid the main bird nesting season (March–August) where reasonably practicable
- Be informed by ecological advice where required

Emergency works may be authorised where immediate action is necessary to address a risk to public safety.

8. Tree Planting

The Council supports tree planting initiatives, where appropriate to:

- Replace trees that have been removed
- Increase canopy cover
- Improve biodiversity and habitat connectivity
- Contribute to climate resilience

Species selection will consider:

- Preference for native species where appropriate
- Site suitability and soil conditions
- Long-term maintenance implications
- Avoidance of foreseeable nuisance (e.g., excessive shading, root damage, subsidence risk)

9. Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas

Where trees are subject to statutory protection:

- The necessary permissions shall be obtained prior to works being undertaken.
- Emergency exemptions shall only be relied upon where legally justified and properly evidenced.

10. Public Requests and Complaints

The Council will consider requests for tree works where there is:

- A demonstrable and evidenced safety concern
- Structural damage supported by appropriate professional evidence
- A verified statutory nuisance

The following will not normally constitute sufficient grounds for tree removal:

- Leaf fall
- Bird droppings
- Shading
- Seasonal debris
- Fear of subsidence unsupported by evidence

All requests will be assessed objectively and proportionately.

11. Veteran and Significant Trees

The Council recognises the particular importance of:

- Veteran trees
- Trees of historic or cultural significance
- Ecologically valuable specimens

Such trees will be managed conservatively and retained wherever reasonably practicable, having regard to safety considerations.

12. Budget and Resources

An annual budget will be allocated, subject to Council approval, to provide for:

- Professional inspections
 - Routine maintenance
 - Emergency works
 - Replacement planting
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13. Climate and Biodiversity Commitment

In exercising its tree management responsibilities, the Council will have regard to:

- Carbon sequestration benefits
 - Habitat creation and ecological connectivity
 - Retention of standing and fallen deadwood where safe to do so
 - Avoidance of unnecessary felling
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14. Review

This Policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required due to changes in legislation, statutory guidance, or recognised best practice.

Adopted by Disley Parish Council, 12th March 2026.