

Agenda Item 13 – Tree Management

Introduction

Willand Parish Council has a responsibility to ensure that trees on land it owns or leases within the village do not pose an unacceptable risk of harm to people and property and are managed to provide public benefit.

This would include regular assessment. Whilst historically this has been carried out in some locations, there is no schedule or Tree Management Policy in place.

The Clerk attended training provided by the Council's insurer and following this developed a Tree Management Policy for approval with an appendix listing the trees the Council is responsible for, which can be amended as required. A local Arboriculturist reviewed the initial draft policy for no fee and suggested amendments which have been incorporated into the final draft.

Tree Management Policy

A draft Tree Management Policy accompanies this report. It is **recommended** that the Parish Council approve the Policy.

Tree Assessments

As set out in the policy it is **recommended** that trees are assessed for risk every four years by default, following advice from an Arboriculturist. More frequent assessment may be recommended if the assessor considers it necessary due to age and condition of the tree/trees following an inspection.

The assessor will also recommend a frequency to carry out a tree management review. This is likely to be more frequent than the risk assessment and addresses a range of issues including improving the health of trees, identifying disease progression and avoiding nuisance such as overhanging branches, impeding of paths etc... These reviews will be carried out at the discretion of the Parish Council.

It is **recommended** that the following assessments are carried out as soon as possible:

1. Jubilee Field – The Parish Council is responsible for the oak tree in the leased area of the field, which is subject to a Tree Preservation Order, and the hedge abounding the back of the tennis courts and the Youth Club. The trees in the hedge were last inspected in January 2023 and some work carried out at that time. The Clerk has done a visual inspection taking photos and considers that work is required to raise the crown and reduce the tree height – this also coincides with the resurfacing of the tennis courts where there is a known impact on the ground level due to the tree roots. There is no record as to when the oak tree in the field was last formally inspected but the Clerk has had some dead wood removed and the tree may benefit from crown raising of low branches.
2. Orchard Way Open Space – The Parish Council is responsible for the trees within the open space area. There are several and there are no records as to when these

were last formally inspected. The Clerk has done a visual inspection taking photos and taken advice from the Mid Devon Tree Officer - some of the trees would benefit from crown raising of the low branches and minor pruning. A formal risk assessment is required for insurance purposes.

3. Willand Cemetery – there are several trees in the Cemetery and along the boundary. The hedge is cut and topped annually but there are no records as to when the trees were last formally inspected. The Clerk has done a visual inspection and taken some photos. Whilst there are no obvious issues or work required a formal risk assessment is required for insurance purposes.

Overall cost for the three inspections is £989. The cost to be split equally between the Jubilee Field earmarked reserve, the Orchard Way earmarked reserve and the Cemetery Expenditure Sundry Costs budget.

Allotments - The large oaks on the boundary with Blenheim Court were last assessed in July 2024 and a four year re-assessment recommended for risk (2028) with a 2 year and three-month timescale (Sept/Oct 2026) recommended for a tree management review. Ivy was removed from the trees as recommended. The hedge was topped and cut around the rest of the boundary in 2024 and work undertaken to two trees to improve visibility when exiting by vehicle onto the B3181, and to cut back a tree overhanging one allotment. The trees within the allotment hedge will be inspected for risk on the same schedule as the large oaks.

South View – the tree at South View was assessed in Autumn 2023 and re-pollarded in January 2024 and it was recommended that this be done every 5 years.

An allowance to be made within the annual budget for tree assessments and tree work, where not already included.

Tree Work

Any tree work recommended in the assessments will be brought to Council for approval unless there is an imminent risk, in which case the Clerk will instruct the work under the delegated powers set out in the Financial Regulations.

The Council will ensure that the appropriate permissions are in place where work is to be undertaken on legally protected trees.

Debbie Bird
Clerk to Willand Parish Council
August 2025