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**GREAT CORNARD PARISH COUNCIL**

**TREE SAFETY POLICY**

1. **Introduction**

1.1 Great Cornard Parish Council recognises its duty under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and otherwise under the law to protect employees and members of the public, so far as is reasonably practicable, from danger arising from trees on its premises for which Great Cornard Parish Council is responsible.

1.2 The main area of trees that are the responsibility of Great Cornard Parish Council are those which are situated at the Recreation Ground, Great Cornard Cemetery, St Andrews Churchyard, Stacey Ardley, Village Hall and The Hedgerows, Great Cornard Country Park and Shawlands LNR.

Great Cornard Country Park and Shawlands LNR are managed by Sudbury Common Lands Charity on behalf of the Council.

1. **Managing Risk**

2.1 Great Cornard Parish Council will manage the risks from trees in a balanced way to maximise the benefits from trees whilst taking reasonable precautions to protect the safety of its members, employees, contractors and members of the public. It will achieve this by adopting procedures for the inspection, management and maintenance of trees proportionate to the risks as suggested by the National Tree Safety Group\*.

2.2 Trees form a dynamic biological resource subject to the vagaries of pests and diseases, extremes of weather and the influence of human activities. Furthermore, as trees grow and mature, they may develop dead wood cavities or other potential defects as a part of the natural ageing process. Where a tree’s condition has some weakness that renders it significantly likely to fail, it becomes a ‘hazard’. Where there is both a hazard and a target (i.e. people or property) that may be damaged by failure of a tree or part of a tree, then there is a quantifiable risk that requires assessment and management.

1. **Zoning by Level of Risk**

3.1 The highest risk areas are adjacent to the highway and to neighbouring properties and structures. The lowest risk areas are in the middle of the green areas that are less frequently accessed by people and where falling trees or parts of trees will not interfere with the high risk areas.

1. **Inspection Regime**
   1. There will be three types of inspections:

* Casual observation
* Formal inspections supported by detailed inspections, and
* Detailed inspections

The different levels of inspection require differing level of competence. Written records will be kept.

1. **Casual Observation**

Members of the public may report concerns about the state of a tree to Council staff. This will instigate a higher level of inspection dependent on the observation.

1. **Formal Inspection**

The Parish Tree Warden or Council Manager will undertake a visual assessment of the trees annually. In addition, Community Wardens as part of their weekly inspection, will inspect areas after strong winds and/or heavy rain or similar adverse weather. There will be no requirement for specific qualifications for the persons mentioned above but they should have an understanding of the basic signs of poor health. The annual inspection will provide one of the following three outcomes.

* The tree(s) has no observed significant defects and therefore requires no further action.
* The tree(s) requires a more detailed inspection; the tree will be prioritised risk.
* Work is required as an emergency. The area around the tree(s) will be cordoned off to ensure public safety. In emergency situations, the Council Manager will instruct a suitably qualified contractor to complete the work required and make the tree(s) safe. (see note below regarding consent).

1. **Detailed Inspections**

Based on the assessed risk of each site, The Council will commission a full tree survey by a suitably qualified person every one to three years (depending on recommendation of previous survey). The person completing the full tree surveys will be trained to a minimum of Level 3 Arboricultural qualification with at least two years’ practical experience of tree management and surveying. The extent of the assessment (visual or more sophisticated) will be determined by the risk level of the area of trees.

The detailed inspection will provide one of the following three outcomes:

* The tree(s) has no observed significant defects and therefore requires no further attention.
* The tree(s) requires a more detailed inspection and/or more frequent monitoring.
* Work is required.

1. **Remedial Works**

5.1 If there are any defects or concerns identified, the Council Manager will instruct a suitably qualified arboriculturalist list to assess the tree and provide a written report as to its condition and any remedial works required. The Council Manager will obtain three quotes for all tree works required and will present them to the Parish Council prior to instructing the contractor to complete the works. Necessary consent shall be obtained before any tree works start.

5.2 In emergency situations, the area around the tree(s) will be cordoned off to ensure public safety. The Council Manager has delegated powers to instruct a suitably qualified contractor to make safe trees that are dangerous and pose a high risk to life or property.

5.3 Consent for work on a tree in a conservation area and/or with a TPO must be sought from Babergh District Council but not at the detriment of safety. Any emergency work should be documented and submitted to Babergh District Council at the next opportunity.

1. **Records**

6.1 Records, including maps, provide the basis for safety management reviews and, in the extremely rare event of an accident, can support evidence of reasonable tree management. It may not be necessary to record every tree inspected. However, records of trees presenting a serious risk and requiring treatment are useful, as is a record of how they have been treated.

6.2 Great Cornard Parish Council will keep records of inspections: when carried out, by whom and any recommendations made. In addition, records of action (including remedial work) should be recorded (when and by whom).

**This Policy was adopted by Great Cornard Parish Council on 23rd September 2019**

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\*National Tree Safety Group: “Common sense risk management of trees: Guidance on trees and public safety in the UK for owners, managers and advisers”. Forestry Commission FCMS024, ISBN 978-0-85538-840-9, [www.forestry.gov.uk/publications](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/publications)