ALDERHOLT PARISH COUNCIL
TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Trees add variety and character to our landscape, provide valuable habitats for many species and contribute to cleaner healthier air. The Parish Council aims to preserve the trees on Parish Council land for future generations to enjoy and to support its biodiversity duty.

Duty of Care
A principle of English Common and statute Law is that land and tree owners have a duty of care towards visitors, residents, passers-by and in certain circumstances, trespassers when they are on or near their land. Accordingly, the Parish Council has a responsibility to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of death or injury arising from trees situated on Parish Council land.
Any queries on trees belonging to Alderholt Parish Council should be made to the Parish Council Office:
Telephone: 01425 657587 or email: clerk@alderholtparishcouncil.gov.uk

Trees situated within the highway, adjacent to roads or on roadside verges or on public footpaths and rights of way are generally the responsibility of Dorset Council. Issues concerning such trees should be reported directly to Dorset Council by telephone on 01305 221000 or via the following online reporting service:
Report a hedge, tree or verge issue - Dorset Council self-service portal - Information

Important Legal Note
If any aspect of this policy conflicts with statutory planning law, common law or any other applicable legal requirement or liability, the relevant law will take precedence over this policy.

Procedure
1. Annual Visual Inspection
The Clerk and a nominated member of the Parish Council will carry out an annual visual inspection of trees considered to present a higher level of risk. For the purposes of this policy, a hazardous tree is one situated close to a road, pavement, right of access, playground, or other location where a failure of the tree or its branches could present a risk to people or property. Where the inspection identifies concerns regarding the condition or safety of a tree, advice should be sought from a suitably qualified arboriculturist.
2. Professional Tree Inspection
A suitably qualified arboriculturist will inspect all trees on land owned by the Parish Council at least once every three years, or more frequently where circumstances or professional advice indicate that this is necessary. Before appointing an arboricultural contractor or consultant, the Parish Council should obtain evidence of appropriate insurance, including:

- Public Liability Insurance; and
- Professional Indemnity Insurance, where appropriate, to cover potential financial loss arising from errors or omissions in professional advice.

3. Remedial Work
Following an inspection, appropriate action should be taken to arrange the pruning or removal of branches, or the removal of trees, where they are identified as dead, broken, diseased or otherwise unsafe. Any work should be undertaken by a suitably qualified and appropriately insured contractor, where professional tree work is required.

4. Trees Subject to a Tree Preservation Order

Where a Parish Council-owned tree is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), the Parish Council will liaise with Dorset Council and comply with all applicable legal requirements before any works are undertaken.

5. Complaints or Requests Concerning Parish Council Trees

Where a complaint or request is received concerning a tree owned by the Parish Council, the Clerk and/or a nominated member of the Parish Council should undertake a site visit where appropriate. The findings should be reported to the Parish Council so that the following appropriate decision is made:

i. Tree Considered Dead, Broken or Unsafe

If the tree is found to be dead, broken or unsafe, the Parish Council will take appropriate action in accordance with Section 3 of this policy.
Where a tree presents an immediate risk to public safety, the Clerk may arrange appropriate urgent action before the matter is reported to the full Parish Council, where this is reasonably necessary to mitigate the risk.

ii. Healthy Tree Causing an Adverse Impact

If the tree is considered healthy but, in the opinion of the Parish Council, is causing a significant adverse impact to a neighbouring resident, for example by severely overhanging their property or causing a significant obstruction to light, the Parish Council may grant written permission for the resident to instruct a suitably qualified tree surgeon to undertake appropriate pruning.
Any proposed work:

- must not compromise the health, stability or long-term survival of the tree;
- must be undertaken by a suitably qualified and appropriately insured contractor;
- must receive the prior written approval of the Parish Council before any work commences; and will be undertaken entirely at the resident's expense.

Permission will not automatically be granted and will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the condition, species, location and amenity value of the tree and any relevant legal restrictions.

iii. Healthy Tree Not Causing an Adverse Impact

If the tree is considered healthy and, in the opinion of the Parish Council, is not causing a significant adverse impact to the resident or surrounding property, the Parish Council may refuse permission for pruning or removal. The resident should be notified of the Parish Council's decision in writing.

Date	Min	Action
23/09/10	PC 124/10.6	Adopted
23/02/15	P&F 07/15	Reviewed and Amended – refer to minutes
09/03/18		Reviewed as part of handbook. Removed sentence that Planning to deal with issues
Next Review	Oct 2021	
14/09/26	PC 162/26	Dorset Council online reporting link added, format and wording amended.