

# Tree Policy



**WITNEY**  
TOWN COUNCIL

Witney Town Council is responsible for over 9000 trees across the town and surrounding area. These trees provide a valuable amenity with many benefits for the town, parks and surrounding areas. These include maintaining and shaping the environment and align with the Council’s commitment to Climate Change and maximising biodiversity value through proactive tree care and a tree planting programme. Trees also play an important role and structure for the town to help support flood alleviation, carbon sequestration, noise and air pollution, wildlife corridors (both urban and rural), and health and wellbeing.

The Town Council has a duty to inspect these trees and to comply with its legal obligations to manage and maintain. In addition to planned maintenance, the Town Council react to reported issues where there is a risk to the public or where damage has been caused to property.

Where trees are located on land not owned by the Council, the landowner will be responsible and should be contacted directly with any concerns.

The Town Council will respond to urgent matters reported within 24 hours where trees pose a risk to life.

Tree maintenance will only be carried out if necessary and in line with the following criteria:	
Safety	Significant risk to the public Dead trees located near properties or roads
Tree Health	Work which will prolong life and encourage the development of a good tree structure
Removal	Dangerous, diseased, damaging property or to comply with the Highways Act 1980 S.154

Tree maintenance will not be carried out for the following:	
Natural Characteristics	Shade Leaf, blossom, pollen or seed distribution Television reception View
Overhanging Vegetation	Which is not causing damage or a risk to health & safety. Any tree owned by us that is causing any of the above can be cut back to your boundary. (Before cutting back any tree you will need to check whether there is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protected by a Tree Preservation Order</li> <li>In a Conservation Area</li> </ul> If the tree is protected in any way, you will need to seek our permission.

## **Claims for subsidence and damage**

When investigating claims of subsidence and/or damage to properties from tree roots emanating from a tree owned and maintained by the Council, the Council requires the property owner to submit a structural engineers report. This will enable the Council to review the evidence and determine the appropriate course of action.

The report must cover:

- Physical damage
- Presence of live roots of a suitable specie
- Seasonal movement or variation of the damage during different seasons

All claims regarding subsidence will be referred to the Council's Insurer along with a brief report detailing the age, type and condition of the tree and any other factors that may be of importance to the claim.

If evidence is insufficient any claim will be dismissed.