



Policy Document

Memorial Tree Policy

Adopted: Policy, Governance & Finance Committee. Minute no: F76

Review Date: 02.02.2028 – 2 years

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Witney Town Council understands the wishes of anyone wishing to plant a memorial tree. The Council will only consider requests for trees to be planted on land under the direct ownership and management of the Council. The application for a memorial tree must be seen as the donation of a tree to the town of Witney and not a personal memorial.
- 1.2 The policy is also intended to address the donation of trees not intended to be in memory of a lost one.
- 1.3 This Memorial Tree Policy does not relate to trees in Witney Town Council's cemeteries or closed churchyards.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to address the below points.
 - To be respectful and sympathetic to those seeking to plant a tree.
 - To establish responsibility for the maintenance, repair and replacement of memorial trees.
 - To ensure trees are maintained, in keeping with the area and will not cause future problems once matured.
 - Enhance the enjoyment of the area by all users.

3. Tree Species & Planting Locations

- 3.1 Witney Town Council officers will select an appropriate tree for an area it is to be planted in. The below factors will all be considered when selecting a species:
 - Mature height and spread of the tree.
 - Species of other trees in the area. It may be necessary to add trees with autumn colours or that provide berries or nuts for wildlife.
 - Replacement of recently felled trees or trees that have been identified to be near the end of their lifespan.

- Sun level requirements of species.
- 3.2 Witney Town Council restrictions or management plans in any one area including:
- Native British species in Windrush Cemetery.
 - Creation of an arboretum at Tower Hill Cemetery.
 - Lake and Country Park clearing of overgrowth from felled trees and coppicing.
- 3.3 The below factors are all considered with planting locations:
- Proximity to properties.
 - Nearby installations that could be affected by root growth.
 - Underground services.
 - Accessible to be watered.
- 3.4 Tree locations on offer for each planting season may only be based on where trees have been felled or where planting project locations have been identified.

4. Maintenance

- 4.1 Trees will be assessed every 5 years by an external surveyor.
- 4.2 Surveyors will recommend works to a tree that will be carried out in the timeframe recommended by the surveyor. These works would be seen as essential, and the applicant of the tree will not be made aware of these works to avoid delay in maintenance and care for trees.
- 4.3 Outside of the 5 years assessments, it may be the case that an officer from Witney Town Council trained in tree surveying may also recommend necessary works.

5. Planting and Maintenance

- 5.1 All trees will be planted in line with Witney Town Council tree planting processes. Trees will be planted during the autumn and winter planting season by Witney Town Council:
- Three-times the volume of the rootball is excavated and loosened.
 - A suitable soil conditioner is used to increase the survival rate in the first year of planting.
 - The tree is then planted and topped with a mulch layer to help aid soil moisture.
 - All necessary tree planting accessories are then installed tree stakes and ties, irrigation accessories and tree guard.
- 5.2 Based on the area a tree is being planted a suitable tree guard will be installed. This would include one of the solutions below:
- Full steel tree guard.
 - Staked galvanised mesh.
 - Biodegradable plastic-free tree shelter guard.
- 5.3 Irrigation accessories can include the following and will be installed based on the tree size requirements to give it the best chance of survival:
- Irrigation bags
 - Tree irrigation rings
- 5.4 Tree stakes and ties are installed based on the size of the tree.

5.5 All newly planted trees will be maintained by Witney Town Council in line with guidance from 'The Tree Council – Caring for newly planted trees'.

<https://treecouncil.org.uk/guidance-resources/caring-for-newly-planted-trees/>

6. Tree Donation

6.1 It may be the case that a person or persons wish to donate a tree to Witney Town Council. In this event, all items in this policy that are relevant will be considered.

6.2 A tree donation can come in the form of payment for Witney Town Council to purchase a tree or a physical tree that has been grown by the donator.

7. Memorial Plaques and Memorial Items

7.1 Memorial plaques and memorial items will not be permitted on or near any memorial tree(s).

7.2 If an applicant chooses to install a plaque or item on or near a tree(s) then it will be removed by Witney Town Council staff.

8. Removal

8.1. In the rare case, a tree has to be removed, all efforts will be made to relocate it. Relocation will only be possible when the tree is dormant (early spring and autumn) and if it is of a manageable size.

8.2 A location will be identified in line with this policy, and the original applicant will be made aware of the new location. All reasonable endeavours will be made to contact the original applicant.

8.3 If a tree has to be felled the applicant will be made aware of the process. The tree will then be replaced at the cost of Witney Town Council. This is Witney Town Council's process to maintain its tree stock.

8.4 If an applicant wishes to assist in the purchase of a new tree purchase with a more mature tree it is welcomed. The difference in cost will be invoiced to the applicant.

9. Application Process

9.1 Anyone wishing to make an application can source an application form online or at the Witney Town Council offices.

9.2 The application form must then be submitted via email to info@witney-tc.gov.uk or via post to Witney Town Council, 51B Market Square, Witney OX28 6AG.

9.3 All requests will be considered by officers. This process will take time, and the applicant should allow up to three months for a decision to be made, following receipt of the application form and full information.

9.4 An applicant will then be advised if their application has been accepted or rejected and on what grounds.

9.5 Witney Town Council will attempt to accommodate the wishes of the application, but it may limit the number and type of trees in a particular area or add any stipulations at its own discretion.

- 9.6 Prior planting of trees in any area does not convey any obligation on Witney Town Council to plant future trees in a similar area or a similar manner. Each request will be considered on its own merits at the time of application.
- 9.7 Communication will then be held with the applicant regarding location and tree species.
- 9.8 All trees and planting requirements must be paid for by the applicant prior to purchase and installation by Witney Town Council. Witney Town Council will inform the applicant of the price on receipt of an approved application form.
- 9.9 The applicant will then be invoiced for payment which includes the tree, irrigation equipment, stake and tie, tree guard and work hours to plant. Ongoing watering is not included but will not be charged.
- 9.10 The applicant can then be made aware of the planting date if they wish to be present and assist if practicable and desired. It is important this is not seen as a ceremonial event.
- 9.11 The location, species and planting date are all stored securely on the Council's tree mapping software. The applicants contact information is additionally stored on the Council's tree mapping software.

10. Memorial Tree Contact Information Procedure

- 10.1 The Council will hold the memorial tree applicant's details on file for the sole purpose of the tree management only and will only contact the applicant if there are any issues relating to the tree(s). If there is no response from the applicant within the timescale given, the Council will take the necessary action to ensure safety and resolve the issue.

11. Privacy Statement

- 11.1 Witney Town Council is committed to ensuring that the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 1998 are met. Please refer to the Council's data protection policy and privacy notice here:
[Witney Town Council Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice](#)

12. Monitoring and Review

- 12.1 A formal review will take place every two years or sooner if required by legislation or organisational change.