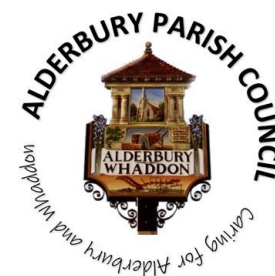


# ALDERBURY PARISH COUNCIL

*Caring for Alderbury and Whaddon*



## Tree policy

The county of Wiltshire, with its distinctive chalk landscape, contains opportunities for local councils to adopt positive tree planting policies. It is becoming more apparent that the nature of the village of Alderbury is changing. Despite being described by Wiltshire Council as a place where trees are important, and situated on the edge of the New Forest, many established trees have been lost, culminating in the removal of a very large number behind a house in Southampton Road. There are several mitigating actions which the Parish Council could take to reduce losses, some of which are through natural causes. In the past large housing estates have been erected in Alderbury with little or no regard to impact on the natural environment.

### **Why the Parish Council should take positive actions to protect and plant trees**

Along the main road into the village there are many varieties of trees, ash, oak, yew, sycamore, copper beech etc the majority of which are large and medium sized trees over 100 years old, and some of which will eventually die from elm, ash die back or other diseases. There are also ancient hedgerows which create visual impact along the Southampton Road, contributing to the rural landscape and wildlife.

As ash dieback and other tree diseases become more prevalent over the next few years we are likely to see many more dead trees appearing. Ash is the most common species over much of England. While the elms that die are relatively small trees, there are many large ash which will be susceptible and the loss of these would have a significant visual impact in the Parish.

### **Why trees and hedges are important**

- a) They make our village more attractive and desirable.
- b) Absorb air pollution and noise, particularly traffic noise.
- c) Produce oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide.
- d) Intercept rainfall and reduce runoff and flooding.
- e) Provide shade and shelter for people and animals
- f) Create a variety of habitats for wildlife
- g) Help to emphasize the changing season.
- h) Produce fruits, nuts and seeds.
- i) The legacy we have for future generations.
- j) Significantly help to combat climate change by sequestering CO<sub>2</sub>
- k) Are a source of inspiration, have psychological health benefit.
- l) Can be valued – a developer was fined £12,000 for destroying a tree.
- m) Hedgerows also have a value – they are important for visual impact and wildlife. It is desirable to protect rural hedgerows as well as trees that are in danger of being lost.

### **Actions to address continuing tree loss.**

To help compensate for these losses:

1. When applications are made to fell trees within the Conservation area and agreement is given, the PC will, whenever possible, request that a suitable replacement tree, or trees, are planted, either on or near the felled tree or on an alternative site to be agreed with the owner.
2. The PC is likely to object to planning applications which have significant overall reduction in trees and hedgerows (including felling or ring barking prior to the application) so will include a new element to the planning check list of “significant net loss of trees and hedgerows.” Alderbury Parish Council believes that “sustainable development” should not have a net environmental deficit to our village hedgerows and trees. The Planning Authority will also be requested to include a replanting condition, wherever possible, in all consents granted in Alderbury.

3. The PC will perform a monitoring role where trees are included in new developments as part of a planning condition. Where trees fail to thrive the developer has an obligation to replace any losses for a period of 5 years. The PC is in a good position to monitor losses and notify Wiltshire Council that enforcement action be taken where necessary. This will also inform the proposed tree register.
4. Where significant trees in the Parish are removed or are to be removed for good reason (eg where the tree is causing damage to infrastructure or is unhealthy) and without requiring any consent, the PC will encourage owners to plant replacements on or near the site of the removed tree and can provide advice about suitable native species, likely to withstand climate change. This policy will be widely publicised.
5. In some cases occupants of new houses may not welcome the trees in their gardens which have been subject to a planning condition and attempt to remove them. Removal of such trees without prior contact with APC will always be referred to Wiltshire Council for enforcement action. It may be possible to negotiate a more suitable location for replacement trees by agreement with all parties.
6. The PC will develop an annual tree planting policy and explore opportunities to plant a community orchard or woodland in the village. The relatively low cost of this could be met from the Parish precept or CIL funds. Residents and local volunteers will be invited to assist in finding sites and helping to plant the trees.
7. Alderbury Parish Council will support a local survey to identify potential sites for tree planting to help secure a higher tree population for the future. Relevant channels such as the Fountain, Alderbury Residents Facebook or other local contact points will be used to obtain feedback from the public to offer up or identify suitable sites. A parish map will be produced showing such potential sites.
8. The PC will explore opportunities to recruit one or more volunteer Tree Wardens to ensure that the above policy is actioned.
9. This policy will be reviewed annually and the PC welcomes ongoing comments or suggestions.

#### **Review of TPO trees in Alderbury**

There are a small number of trees in the Parish which are already protected, either by specific TPOs or by being within the Conservation Area designated by Wiltshire Council. A brief survey last year conducted with the Tree Officer revealed that most of the more significant trees in the centre of the Village are protected in this way.

There are other significant trees in the Parish which may deserve protection but many of these are on land in the ownership of bodies or individuals who are considered to be responsible and unlikely to damage or fell the trees without good cause. For example some in the Churchyard, or on land owned by the Parish Council eg the recreation ground. Others are owned by longstanding local residents including Lord Longford eg near Waleran Close.

#### **Wiltshire Council attitude to Tree Preservation Orders.**

Officers at Wiltshire Council will normally only impose new Orders where there is evidence of a risk to significant trees which are in good order, being felled. A TPO does not necessarily stop trees being felled if they are dying or dangerous and Council Officers will be mindful of this.

#### **Recommendation on new TPOs.**

In view of the above points, no requests will be made to Wiltshire Council for extra TPOs, except where important trees are considered to be under threat from the owners or the actions of others, such as developers. This is particularly important where it is suspected deliberate ring-barking is taking place or is likely to take place. In these cases the Tree Warden or Parish council should make immediate requests to Wiltshire Council for action to protect our trees.

Adopted October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2019