

# Tree Policy - Alderbury Parish Council

## Introduction

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 in Alderbury and Whaddon in recent years. Large housing estates have been erected with little or no regard to impact on the natural environment. The wildlife habitat has depleted. It is the Parish Council's aim to protect and enhance our existing trees and support greater biodiversity in the wider environment.

## Why the Parish Council should influence 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 trees needing management and replacement. Without action 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) Create seasonal differences in colour and appearance.
- h) Produce fruits, nuts and seeds encouraging animals, insects, birds, butterflies.
- i) Preserve 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.

## Tree Protection

Trees can be protected by Wiltshire Council through either:

- a. Tree Preservation Orders.
- b. Falling within designated Conservation Area.

Background. APC owns only a small percentage of the land in the village, eg the recreation ground, the majority being owned by private individuals or bodies like

Wiltshire Council. Most of the more significant trees in the centre of the Village are protected in this way.

Other established trees in the Parish may deserve protection but are sited on land in the ownership of bodies or individuals such as the Longford estate who are considered to be responsible and unlikely to damage or fell the trees without good cause.

***Who Can Request a TPO?** Anyone can ask for a Tree Protection Order if they have reason to believe there is an imminent threat to a healthy established tree.*

**8. 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 and healthy trees, being felled.

**9. Limitations of TPOs.** A TPO does not necessarily stop trees being felled if they are dying or dangerous.

To help compensate for tree losses we will commit to the following:

## **Actions**

### **A) Planning Applications**

**1. Monitor EIAs.** Alderbury Parish Council believes that “sustainable development” should not have a net environmental deficit to our village hedgerows and trees. All applications will be monitored for comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA).

**2. Request Replanting.** When consulted by WC about planning applications which include felling trees, within the Conservation area or otherwise, where subsequent agreement is given, the PC will request a replanting condition on or near the felled tree(s) or on an alternative site to be agreed with the owner.

**3. Object to tree loss.** APC 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 in the check list used “**significant net loss of trees and hedgerows.**”

**4. Monitor Compliance.** The PC, through its Tree Warden network, will liaise with WC’s Tree Officer and monitor:

- a. Developer compliance with specific planning conditions related to replacement tree planting.
- b. Ongoing Household/Landowner compliance; where the location of new trees planted by developers has been a planning condition, these should not be removed - however, it may be possible to negotiate a more suitable location for replacement trees through APC.

**5. Pursue Enforcement action.** There is an obligation on developers to maintain or replace new trees (if they fail to thrive) for a period of 5 years. The PC will report any

losses to Wiltshire Council for enforcement action where necessary. This will also inform the proposed tree register.

## **B) Review of TPO Trees In Alderbury**

**10. Recommendation on new TPOs.** When important trees or hedgerows are considered to be under threat from the owners or the actions of others, such as developers, particularly where deliberate ring-barking is suspected, APC will request the urgent imposition of additional TPOs through Wiltshire Council.

## **C) General**

**11. Ongoing Monitoring.** A report on trees owned by APC is commissioned every three years. Additionally, tree wardens provide regular monitoring of trees around the village.

**12. Guidance on replacement trees.** Where significant trees in the Parish are in need of felling for good reason (eg safety due to disease or threatened infrastructure damage) and without requiring any consent, the PC will encourage owners to plant suitable native species likely to withstand climate change. This policy will be widely publicised.

**12. Tree Planting.** APC, alongside residents and local volunteers, will try to identify opportunities for tree planting on amenity and other land, continuing our annual tree planting policy to develop additional community orchards, hedges or woodland in the village. The relatively low cost of this could be met from the Parish precept or Community Infrastructure Levy funds.

**13. Tree Nursery** APC will continue to rent an allotment to act as a tree nursery for local saplings which can be used to create or repair hedgerows, and develop other woodland.

**14. Communications.** Future feedback and planting sites will be sought by consulting residents using The Fountain, Alderbury Residents Facebook or other local contact points. APC will work to produce a parish digital map showing existing and potential sites.

**15. Tree Wardens.** The PC will explore opportunities to recruit and provide training opportunities for more volunteer Tree Wardens to ensure that the above policy is enacted.

**16. Working with others.** The PC will collaborate with other stakeholders eg the Footpath Group/ other volunteer groups, to maximise effort and cost effectiveness. We will aim to influence landowners to help preserve or enhance the environment.

**17. Budget.** APC has a limited budget for capital expenditure and maintenance of trees under our control so actions required from the three-yearly tree reports we commission are constrained by this. If needed, we will try to identify and aim to pursue appropriate sources of funding for any major projects.

18. This policy will be reviewed three yearly and the PC welcomes ongoing comments or suggestions.

Amended and Reviewed April 2025