

Tree Management on Land Owned or Managed by Harston Parish Council

Areas of Responsibility

- The Parish Council's direct responsibility for tree planting and management is limited to trees and hedges located on land owned by Harston Parish Council (Recreation Ground, Orchard, Meadow and Burial Ground).
- The Council encourages private landowners and developers within the parish to adopt similar principles for tree and hedge management, recognising their positive impact on the local environment. This includes ensuring that growth does not obstruct visibility or movement for pedestrians and road users.
- Trees and hedges located on land that is not owned by the Parish Council or private individuals are the responsibility of Cambridgeshire County Council, as the local Highways Authority. If there is any uncertainty regarding ownership, please verify the responsible party.
- The responsibility for cutting back vegetation overhanging the public highway lies with the owner or occupier of the land whether public or private if it impedes pedestrian or vehicular access or visibility.
- Property owners are also responsible for trimming trees that may interfere with power lines. In such cases, residents should contact the relevant energy company, which may arrange for a qualified tree surgeon to carry out the work safely. If the company does not undertake the work, the owner must do so, and should always use a qualified professional due to the risks involved

Tree Surveys and Inspections

A Tree Survey will be conducted every three years by a qualified arboricultural consultant on Land Owned or Managed by Harston Parish Council.

Each survey will include:

- Updated mapping and species identification of all trees
- Assessment of tree age, condition and structural integrity
- Recommendations for remedial tree work
- Re-inspection frequency guidance
- Identification of tree planting opportunities

Post-Survey Actions

Following the survey:

- Recommended remedial work should be scheduled and carried out by an appropriate person
- Re-inspections will aim to follow the intervals advised in the report
- Additional inspections may be undertaken after severe weather events or upon concerns raised by tree warden.
- Opportunities for new tree planting will be actively pursued, along with the replacement of any damaged or dying trees.

Tree Warden Role

A designated Tree Warden, appointed from within the Parish Council, will:

- Conduct informal inspections between professional surveys
- Recommend early professional assessments if concerns arise
- Identify where action may be required for safety reasons
- Report findings and concerns to the full council

Tree Works and Council Procedures

- All tree-related expenditures will be approved by the Finance Committee
- In case of emergency, the Parish Council may invoke Standing Order 18.1 to ensure immediate tree work. Emergency actions will be authorised by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair or Vice Chair and one other Councillor, with prompt reporting to the Council.

Resident Concerns and Requests

Residents who believe a tree on Parish Council land poses a risk (e.g., dead, dying, or dangerous) should contact the **Parish Clerk** at: clerk@harstonparishcouncil.gov.uk

If a tree is obstructing footpaths, damaging buildings or its roots are affecting foundations, the council may seek professional advice if necessary.

Tree Works the Council Is Not Obligated to Perform

Harston Parish Council is **not responsible** for:

- Cutting back branches overhanging private property
- Topping trees or reducing height for light or view
- Removing branches affecting TV reception
- Clearing leaves, honeydew or other minor debris
- Removing roots from drains
- Removing branches near buildings or fences
- Preventing access by wildlife such as squirrels

The council does not carry out work on privately owned trees. Residents must make their own arrangements for such trees.

Guidance for Residents Undertaking Tree Work

Under Common Law, property owners may cut back overhanging branches to their boundary. Harston Parish Council generally has no objection, provided:

- Permission is obtained if access to council land is required
- The tree is not protected by a **Tree Preservation Order (TPO)** or located in a **Conservation Area**
- Work is not detrimental to the tree's health or stability
- Work is carried out to British Standard BS3998 for tree work
- The Clerk is notified in advance if the tree is on council land