



Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council Tree Policy

Introduction

This policy defines the intentions, actions and responsibilities of Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council ("the Council") with respect to the stewardship of the Council's trees through planned maintenance, reactive actions and renewal. Its objective is to sustainably manage tree stock, preserve local character, and enhance the town's canopy cover while protecting public health and property as part of the Council's legal obligation to manage risks and prevent damage, injury, or death from falling trees or branches.

It is to be considered in conjunction with Dorset Council's Tree Policy for Council Owned Trees (2021) as the licensing authority responsible for maintaining records of Preservation Orders, granting felling permissions and ensuring government policies are adhered to. A link to this is below. These documents provide the framework within which management decisions regarding trees will be made.

[Dorset Council Tree Policy Adapted.pdf](#)

This policy includes trees that are either owned or managed by the Council in parks, green spaces, footpaths, cemeteries, car parks, woods and other sites where trees exist.

Town Council Duty and Legal Responsibility

The Council has a duty to inspect trees under its management to ensure it meets all legal obligations which include maintaining public safety and knowing the location and condition of the trees for which it is responsible.

As the owner and manager of trees, the Council has a legal duty of care to take all reasonable steps to ensure that any foreseeable hazards can be identified and made safe. This duty is laid down in the Occupiers Liability Act 1984 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 Section 3.

Governance Breaches of this duty may give rise to a claim of negligence. It is not possible to eliminate all risks from trees however there are often indications that a tree may be in decline. The Council will carry out regular inspections to identify foreseeable hazards and specify the works needed to reduce these risks to an acceptable level.

Tree Inspections

The Council will ensure that an inspection of all trees is undertaken every 3 years by qualified arboriculturists. Inspections will provide the following information:

- Location map;
- Tree species (common name);
- Size (height and trunk);
- Age class;
- Condition;
- Recommendations.



In addition to the above, the Council will visually inspect trees:

- As part of their day-to-day work;
- As a result of feedback from third parties regarding a specific tree(s);
- Following periods of extreme weather.

Tree Works

Should the Council deem that works to any tree are necessary within the context of the tree policy, tree strategy and recommendations following inspection, an assessment will be made regarding how the work will be safely undertaken and by whom. At time of writing, members of the Outside Operations Team are professionally qualified in pole pruning, cross cutting and felling. The Council will continue to provide appropriate tools, on-going training and health and safety provision to ensure such works are undertaken safely and professionally.

Assessments will consider the size, location, associated risks, required works and in-house resource available. Based upon this, a decision will be made to undertake the work directly or via engagement of a suitably qualified contractor. It should be noted that Council employees will not climb trees in order to undertake any works.

The Council will wherever possible recycle and reuse any arisings from tree works. This may include creating and retaining chippings, creation of habitat stacks or log piles, dependant on location. Contractors may, with former approval, utilize the Council's green waste pile or, if suitable, tip chippings in the respective piles, located in the overflow car park at the Grove.

Tree Planting

Where possible and practical, LMUTC will look to increase tree stock in recognition of the noted benefits that they provide (cooling, aesthetics, mental wellbeing). However it should be noted that Upton in particular is a predominantly urban environment, and suitable areas, especially for trees of significant size, are limited due to the prevalence of underground utilities, highway sight lines and adjacent buildings.

The Councils' Memorial Tree planting programme has been suspended since 2022 due to the lack of remaining suitable sites, and a separate programme is ongoing to remove tree guards and improvement of these trees health and appearance. This can be found here:

[Tree guards_Plaques\Tree Guards_Plaques.xlsx](#)

Tree Removal/Pruning

Trees provide many important features, particularly in predominantly urban settings. These include improving air quality, mitigating heat buildup, providing wildlife "highways and sources of increased biodiversity and providing green areas increasingly acknowledged for mental and physical health benefits. Consequently, the Council will look, where possible, to avoid felling of trees with the exception of sound arboricultural reasons such as:

- Dead, dying or dangerous
- Proven to be causing significant structural damage in subsidence claims
- Considered by the Arboricultural Team to be an inappropriate species for the location i.e. poplars or Robinia's in pavements.

The following reasons will **NOT** constitute grounds for the pruning or removal of trees by the Council.

- Aphid honeydew, leaf fall, the dropping of fruits, flowers and seeds



- Obstruction of light and / or view
- Renewable energy systems such as solar panels or wind turbines
- To improve satellite / digital television reception
- To clear telephone lines
- Roosting birds in a tree and their droppings
- Where a tree is perceived to be too large
- Allergies associated with trees, for example pollen and seed dispersal
- Someone willing to pay for the removal and replacement of a tree(s)
- Causing disturbance to pavements or kerbs (in such cases an engineering solution will be sought)

However, if it is possible to improve the situation through general maintenance, this work will be carried out at the appropriate time as part of the cyclical maintenance regime:

If trees are removed due to disease or natural fall and the location is suitable for replacement, the Council should seek to replace that tree due to the factors mentioned above. The following factors should be considered when selecting a replacement tree:

Site suitability;

Mature height and spread;

Retainment and extension of canopy;

Disease resistance;

Increasing the diversity of the Council's tree stock;

Climate change, including increased potential for drought conditions;

Access to enable early years watering and tending;

Vulnerability to wind and vandalism.

The exception to this is Lytchett Bay View, where tree management will differ to some extent. Trees here will be managed primarily for habitat and wildlife benefit (i.e. spoil and chipping would remain on site, or left for standing or fallen deadwood). They may be felled in situ due to safety concerns (e.g. willow crossing paths).

All works would be undertaken by either in house teams or approved contractors in accordance with all relevant legislations and regulations.

This document will be reviewed at least annually and in conjunction with changes in relevant legislation and best practice.

**Reviewed and approved by the Environment and Planning Committee on 21 July 2026.
Next review date on or before July 2028.**