

Coffinswell Parish Council

Tree Management Policy

This policy was adopted by the Council at its Meeting held on Thursday 18 July 2019.

The next date for review is 21 May 2020.

This policy has been produced to guide and influence decisions affecting the management of trees and hedges in the village.

The policy will dictate how the Parish Council manages trees on land within its own jurisdiction and guide landowners and residents when considering work to their own trees and hedges.

Every landowner is responsible for trees and hedges on their own property as well as parts of trees rooted on their property that overhang neighbouring property/ies. By adopting this policy, Coffinswell Parish Council in no way accepts liability for trees and hedges not owned by the Council.

The law always takes precedence in any situation where this policy conflicts with statutory planning policies.

The aim of this policy is to act in partnership with the community to allow effective and appropriate management of trees.

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1. Introduction

Trees are a significant part of the parish. Coffinswell is designated as a village and an Area of Great Landscape within Teignbridge District Council's Local Plan¹.

In a well-managed environment trees provide shelter, a habitat for wildlife, a beautiful village backdrop and flora and fauna.

Trees reduce the Greenhouse Effect and improve air quality by naturally filtering the air of noxious dust and gases. Trees also provide a natural sound barrier.

Most people see trees as beneficial but do not want the adverse effects caused by the lack of tree management. Trees can shade gardens and protrude onto paths and highways. Additionally, they shed

¹ TDC Local Plan 2013-2033 (S21 and Policy EN2A)

leaves, destroy views and can affect television reception. Whilst there is no right to a view or TV signal, tree management can reduce the likelihood of causing these sorts of issues.

A common sense approach must be adopted to ensure that the pleasure and benefit of trees are gained without allowing them to cause issue to individuals.

2. Purpose and aims of the Tree Management Policy

There is a need to identify a strategy for the future planning of trees within the village. This includes pruning, felling, planting and encouragement of land and property owners to manage trees on their land for the benefit of themselves and the community.

This policy will apply to trees in the care of Coffinswell Parish Council but will also apply to the management of all trees within the parish. It will also be used as a tool when determining planning applications.

The aims of the policy are:

- To ensure that the management of trees contributes to making the environment safe, attractive and healthy
- To ensure the sustainability of trees perceived as beneficial
- To enable land and property owners to remove or replace inappropriate trees
- To allow for swift action to protect the public from dangerous trees
- To ensure a varied tree population which is in harmony with other land users
- To promote awareness of the value and importance of trees
- To ensure that trees enhance the landscape
- To ensure efficient management and sustainability of trees.

3. Tree Resource Management

Tree Survey

Coffinswell Parish Council will carry out an initial tree survey so that it has the information to manage its own trees and provide help and advice to land and property owners to best manage the tree population in the parish. It will obtain from the relevant authority, a list of all trees with Tree Preservation Orders and this will form an annexe to the plan. This document will be updated annually.

Tree Management Strategy

The Parish Council will develop a long-term strategy so that felling, pruning, planting and replacement contributes to an overall plan of which the community can have ownership.

Any working carried out should be to established arboriculture standards. However, this should be flexible to allow a common sense approach to householders to prune sensibly without incurring unnecessary costs.

All timber produced by felling or pruning should, where be possible, be reused or recycled, with any other cuttings disposed of for woodchip or used in wood burning stoves. Additionally, some logs can be left to provide habitat for insects and other species.

4. Trees in a village environment

Damage to property

Trees may pose problems when they are close to buildings. Some may damage walls, grow into drainage systems and damage pathways. Trees close to residential properties may also affect insurance.

Coffinswell Parish Council will consider proximity to buildings and the type of tree in place (or proposed) when dealing with any application.

Although there is no 'right to light' in law, or the enjoyment of views, common sense will influence decisions to allow for felling, pruning or replacement of trees causing problems to land and property owners. Applications will be considered carefully to support owners and will examine replacement planting solutions or sympathetic pruning.

Other general nuisance issues will be given careful consideration, on a case by case basis.

Tree removal

Mature and veteran trees are an important part of the parish landscape. They provide habitat and are vital to conservation. The larger the tree, the greater its significance or historical value. Similarly, some veteran trees show characteristics that provide valuable habitat and provide interest to the landscape. They may not necessarily be old or large. Removal should only be considered as a last resort and every effort made to plant replacements.

Coffinswell Parish Council will not approve applications to remove mature trees unless they are dying, dangerous or causing serious nuisance which cannot be alleviated by other means.

Coffinswell Parish Council will recommend the removal of mature or veteran trees which can be identified as causing serious risk to the public. Suitable replacements would be required as a condition of approval.

Phased felling and replacement

To ensure public safety, all trees should be identified and regularly inspected to ascertain condition and necessary maintenance. Significant trees should have a cyclical replanting scheme in place to plan for their eventual loss. Planting of a given tree does not imply that the older tree may be removed.

Emergency situations

Any tree can become hazardous i.e. in bad weather. There is a need for prompt procedure to ensure action to protect people and property.

Coffinswell Parish Council will notify owners of trees on private land which are considered a risk. The Parish Council will always act to deal with any trees on land under its control to ensure public safety and will warn or advise on trees which are imminently dangerous.

Diseased trees

Coffinswell Parish Council will notify landowners of trees (and other plants) identified as being diseased or at risk of disease. This does not remove the requirement of the landowner to monitor and care for trees on their land and professional advice should be sought from reputable and qualified arboriculturists or from APHA (Animal and Plant Health Agency) where necessary or appropriate.

Self-set trees

Self-set trees may be treated as weeds and removed. No permission is required providing that the tree is not more than 75mm in diameter or under 1.5m in height.

Environmental Best Practice

All tree work should be avoided during bird nesting season between the beginning of March and end of August. Emergency, safety critical work is exempt. It is a criminal offence to interfere with nesting birds. Disturbing nests accidentally is considered negligence and carries the same penalties as deliberately disturbing nests.

Coffinswell Parish Council will consider attempts to prevent birds nesting such as netting trees as detrimental to any application.

5. Tree planting, establishment and design

Actions and decisions made now will shape the landscape of the parish for decades.

Consideration should be given to planting new trees which are semi-mature to have an instant impact on the landscape.

Coffinswell Parish Council will support property and land owners with the selection and placement of trees as part of the planning process.

Young trees

Young trees are vulnerable. They are more likely to die in the first five years than at any other time.

The Parish Council will monitor planting as part of the planning process and act to ensure that proper arboriculture practice is followed and that any tree which fails to thrive is replaced.

The right tree in the right place

Careful selection of tree species can reduce problems in the future. Consideration should be given to the probable height of the fully-grown tree, which should form part of the planning process.

There are 33 trees native to the UK and they provide the best wildlife value. Where conservation is an issue, these should be preferred although long term appearance can be considered for any tree species.

6. Amenity Trees

Private land

Trees on private land give a sense of place and character. Mature trees should be retained wherever possible. Consideration should be given to the type of tree and its location.

If a tree encroaches on a highway, it is the property or landowner's responsibility to prune it appropriately. Consideration should be given to the stability of the tree when pruning and advice should be sought from a qualified arboriculturist.

Coffinswell Parish Council will actively guide and encourage tree provision and care within the parish.

Open Spaces and Woodland

There are no public open spaces within the village.

Applications from owners of private woodland will be considered sympathetically to care for trees as part of management strategies, however clearance will not be accepted without appropriate permissions.

7. Tree Preservation and Conservation Areas

Coffinswell Parish Council has no control over Tree Preservation Orders. An owner of a protected tree must have written permission from Teignbridge District Council prior to doing any work.

The Parish Council will support TDC in the use of Tree Preservation Orders and will report any unauthorised works on protected trees.

Positive tree management

A protected tree can be pruned or felled if the relevant permission is given. Replacement will usually be required.

Coffinswell Parish Council will encourage the highest standard of work on any tree covered by a Tree Preservation Order and will attempt to raise awareness of the significance of these trees.

Management of trees in the Conservation Area

Coffinswell Parish Council will act to ensure the care and management of trees in the Conservation Area. It will encourage planting to enhance the appearance of the setting, along with appropriate pruning.

8. Trees and development

In any new development, the planting of semi-mature trees can enhance the development and protect any immature trees.

Coffinswell Parish Council will encourage the planting of semi-mature trees of suitable species where possible in any development. However, trees should not be considered sacrosanct and a long-term view will be taken at the possibility of replacement planting. The Parish Council will monitor mature trees to ensure they are protected during works.

Retention of trees

Where considered necessary, a tree survey will be required for any forthcoming development sites. Any failure to protect trees as part of the planning process will be reported and contested.

The additional planting of trees will be encouraged in new applications.

9. Hedgerows

Important hedgerows are protected² and are an important feature within the parish. They may be historical markers and provide invaluable habitat to rare birds and other organisms. Any loss of hedgerow is to be discouraged.

Coffinswell Parish Council will seek to protect hedgerows and encourage new planting.

Removal in contraventions of the regulations is a criminal offence.

The Parish Council will seek to raise awareness of the value of hedgerows within the community.

All hedge work should be avoided during bird nesting season between the beginning of March and end of August. Emergency, safety critical work is exempt. It is a criminal offence to interfere with nesting birds. Disturbing nests accidentally is considered negligence and carries the same penalties as deliberately disturbing nests.

Coffinswell Parish Council will consider attempts to prevent birds nesting such as netting hedges as detrimental to any application.

High hedges

A high hedge is defined as a barrier to light or access which is formed wholly, or predominantly by, a line or two of ever-green hedges of above 2m high³. The Act covers hedges that affect homes which are defined as a dwelling or associated gardens.

² Hedgerows Regulations 1997

³ Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003

10. Community Engagement

Coffinswell Parish Council will seek to raise awareness of the importance of trees to the community but stresses the need to communicate with Teignbridge District Council, Devon County Council.

Communication empowers the community. Coffinswell Parish Council will use its website, social media and notice boards to inform on issues affecting trees.

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