



Woodland Management and Tree Policy

Approved at the Full Parish Council Meeting October 2024
Reviewed and approved at the Annual Council Meeting 8th May 2025

Vigo Village is situated in a former woodland area in the North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

It was created with open plan front gardens and these, along with the communal wooded areas, allowed many trees to be retained when the village was built.

Most of the trees in Vigo are protected by a Tree Preservation Order.

Living in a wooded area brings many benefits for residents.

The trees:

- provide a pleasant green, rural environment for the benefit of residents and visitors.
- create an extensive wildlife environment for many and varied species of flora and fauna
- provide some shelter from adverse weather conditions, such as strong winds and high rainfall.
- contribute to the reduction of carbon dioxide and reduction of Global Warming

Along with these benefits, residents must accept that some of the problems they experience, such as the accumulation of leaves and twigs and the level of shading are the inevitable consequences of living in a well wooded area.

Sustainability of the Woodland in Vigo

The Parish Council continues the covenant with the land, to maintain and ensure the continued management of the woodland areas for the benefit of all, so that the woodland is secured for perpetuity.

The type of woodland present in Vigo is, with the correct management, self-perpetuating. Should, however, any replanting or restocking be required then consideration will be given to the existing ecology and sustainability in choosing such replanting.

Vigo Parish Council will consider replacing any trees that are felled as part of the ongoing woodland management programme, unless there is sound justification not to do so. Replacement trees will not be planted on a “one for one” basis however, unless felt to be appropriate. The type and number of replacement trees will be considered on a case by case basis

Best Practice

The VPC will by regular inspection and appraisal endeavour to maintain the woods and trees in a safe condition to ensure the Safety of People and Property.

The extent of Vigo means that particular emphasis will be placed at the interface o/f woods with property, paths and roads.

Best practice now favours a risk-based system of tree management relying on regular inspections prioritised by potential hazards.

VPC will always take reasonable action upon robust arboreal advice from suitably qualified persons.

VPC will continue with the conventions and practices established by the VRA and VVT as previous owners of the now Parish Land.

Amenity and Street Trees.

The safety of amenity and street trees will be as above.

Where it is reasonable, further planting and or replacement trees will be considered and will be subject to the following: -

1. Consultation with (a) residents; (b) Planning Authority; (c) Highway Authority where appropriate
2. The funding for such replacements will be by (a) external sources: (b) specific allocated budgets.

Residents requests.

VPC will investigate Bona Fide residents' requests for works regarding trees or shrubs; action will only be taken if there is arboreal justification and compliance with this policy.

Residents should be aware that where pruning of trees is carried out, it often results in vigorous multiple regrowth, which may be subject to decay. It can also encourage the tree to form a dense canopy, possibly adding to the original problem.

Planning Applications.

Residents should note it is the responsibility of the resident to undertake investigation and appropriate engineering steps to ensure that any nearby trees do not affect the structural integrity of the proposed structure, both now and in the foreseeable future. Residents should note that Vigo Parish Council is not responsible for investigating such matters and shall have no liability for damage to the proposed works or consequential damaged caused by trees or tree growth.

Tree Policies

Emergencies will receive a prompt response.

1. The Parish Council will provide a risk-based system of tree management relying on a programme of regular inspection prioritised by potential hazard.
2. The Parish Council will take action to reduce the threats posed by hazardous trees. Where possible remedial work will be undertaken to reduce the risk. Where remedial work is not possible the tree will be felled.
3. The Parish Council will cut back trees where they overhang properties or property boundaries.
4. The Parish Council will maintain its trees to provide the statutory clearance for pedestrians and vehicles over footways and roads.
5. The Parish Council will ensure that branches shall be reduced back where they are touching streetlights, road signs and other street furniture, so as to maintain vehicular and pedestrian safety on the Highways.
6. The Parish Council will not fell or reduce trees solely for the reason that structures such as driveways, footways, patios, lawns etc. are being disrupted
7. The Parish Council will only remove or prune Parish Council owned trees that are proven to be causing damage to the property if it is the most appropriate solution. Subsidence claims will always be referred to the Parish Council insurers. The onus is on the property owner to prove (via their insurance company) that the Parish Council owned trees are implicated in the subsidence,

and this would usually be provided via an in-depth arboricultural report commissioned by the property owner or their insurance company.

8. The Parish Council will not fell or prune Parish Council owned trees solely for the reason that they are reducing light levels into properties or are casting shade over gardens, unless exceptional extenuating circumstances can be proved. Where there are extenuating circumstances, these will be considered by Full Council on a case-by-case basis.
9. The Parish Council will not fell or prune Parish Council owned trees solely for the reason that they are causing interference with television and satellite reception or with solar panels, unless exceptional extenuating circumstances can be proved. Where there are extenuating circumstances, these will be considered by Full Council on a case-by-case basis.
10. The Parish Council will not fell or prune Parish Council owned trees solely to alleviate problems caused by natural and / or seasonal phenomena.
11. The Parish Council will endeavour to maintain high standards of tree work by ensuring that all tree works are carried out to BS 3998 British Standard Recommendations for Tree Work (1989) (and any subsequent revisions). When tree surgery is undertaken, every effort will also be made to ensure the general shape and character of each tree is retained.
12. The Parish Council will assess the wildlife value of trees, under its control and will use its best endeavours to ensure that if any tree is the habitat of a protected species, it will be retained or mitigation measures are agreed in conjunction with the relevant nature conservation agencies.

Methods used to prune trees.

1. **Crown thinning:** some branches within the crown of the tree are removed, thus allowing more light through the crown.
2. **Crown lifting:** branches are removed from the lowest part of the crown, thus allowing more space underneath the tree.
3. **Crown reduction:** the ends of the branches in the crown are shortened, reducing the size of the crown
4. **Coppicing:** this includes cutting the trunk down almost to ground level and allowing it to regrow. **Coppicing of mature Chestnut trees will not be considered.**
5. **Pollarding:** the branches on the tree are cut back allowing twiggy growth to appear at the ends. The new growth is attached more weakly to the tree. Pollarding needs to be repeated regularly. **Chestnuts will not be pollarded.**

Maiden trees will be retained wherever possible.