



Broomfield Parish Council

Dear Councillors

You are summoned to attend Broomfield Parish Council's Environment Committee meeting be held on **Wednesday 18th February at 8.00pm** at Broomfield Village Hall for the transaction of business as set out below.

Press and public are warmly invited to attend. Meeting packs for this agenda are available on the website www.broomfield-pc.gov.uk

Abi Wood, Clerk to the Council

Agenda

E26/001	To receive apologies for absence
E26/002	To receive Councillors announcements, declarations of interests and dispensations requests
E26/003	To approve the minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 17th December 2025
E26/004	Public Participation session
E26/005	Make Space for Girls project update (Mrs Hance)
E26/006	Green spaces in the parish To receive an update on the Berwick Avenue questionnaire and to discuss the forthcoming meeting with Chelmsford City Council
E26/007	Children's playground To receive an update on the Angel playground equipment replacement
E26/008	Church Green To receive any updates
E26/009	Centenary Wood To consider a quote for a willow dome
E26/010	Allotment Site/Association - To consider a quote for replacement entrance gate (Mrs Hance) - To discuss the need to fill potholes in access road up to the car park (Mrs Hance)
E26/011	Environment Enhancement - To agree a biodiversity policy to run alongside existing work in this area - To consider a tree policy for the parish council
E26/012	Items for inclusion in the next agenda
E26/013	Chair to close the meeting The next Environment Committee meeting is on Wednesday 18th March 2026 at 8.00pm



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Broomfield Parish Council

Minutes of the Environment Committee of Broomfield Parish Council
held in Broomfield Village Hall
on Wednesday 17th December 2025 at 8.00 p.m.

Members in attendance	A Faulds (Chair), G Garfield, D Howell, S Boreham, C Taylor
Members not in attendance	G Scott
Others in attendance	A Wood, Clerk and RFO D Hance, Events and Fundraising

E25/185	To receive apologies for absence Apologies were received and accepted for Cllr Scott Proposed: Cllr Taylor Seconded: Cllr Garfield All agreed
E25/186	To receive Councillors announcements, declarations of interests and dispensations requests None were presented.
E25/187	To approve the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 19th November 2025 The minutes were approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by Cllr Faulds. Proposed: Cllr Taylor Seconded: Cllr Garfield All agreed
E25/188	Public Participation session No members of the public were in attendance.
E25/189	Green spaces in the parish • To receive an update on the recent meeting with Chelmsford City Council Officers Cllrs Faulds and Garfield and the Clerk gave a report to the committee on the recent meeting held with Chelmsford City Council Officers about the green spaces in the parish. It was noted that a collaborative arrangement was needed and that the parish council is to create a wish list in advance of the next meeting. Cllr Garfield's notes on the meeting will be circulated to councillors. The following action points were agreed. ○ Councillors to meet on the 6th January for site visits ○ Councillors to meet with the Clerk on the 14th January to draft publicity for residents and agree action points / wish list. • To continue the discussion on the green space at Broomfield Place The Clerk was asked to revisit email conversations to obtain and update on the site and to report back to the next committee meeting.
E25/190	Children's playground Options for the replacement piece of play equipment were considered, and it was agreed that the decision is delayed until Chelmsford City Council provide their quote.
E25/191	To approve a volunteering policy A policy was presented and it was RESOLVED that this policy be presented to full council for approval and adoption. Proposed: Cllr A Faulds Seconded: Cllr S Boreham All agreed

E25/192	Church Green The Clerk provided an update on the no parking signs.
E25/193	Centenary Wood Mrs Hance reports that bat and owl boxes are to be installed in the new year and that the action plan is up to date at this time.
E25/194	Allotment Site/Association Mrs Hance reported that the tree works have been completed and that she was working with Mr Earley on a management plan for future works. She also advised that a grant request will be presented to the parish council for a replacement entrance gate. At the recent AGM, she was elected to remain as Chair and that the Secretary and Treasurer were newly appointed.
E25/195	Environment Enhancement Cllr Faulds reported that hanging baskets will be planted next year once the watering system has been installed. A biodiversity policy is being prepared and will be presented to full council for ratification in the new year.
E25/196	Items for inclusion in the next agenda It was noted that Cllr Faulds will not be at the January meeting. It was therefore agreed that the next meeting will be in February. There are no pressing items at this time.
E25/197	Chair to close the meeting Cllr Faulds closed the meeting at 8.30pm The next Environment Committee meeting is on Wednesday 18th February at 8.00pm

Responses Overview Active

Responses

16

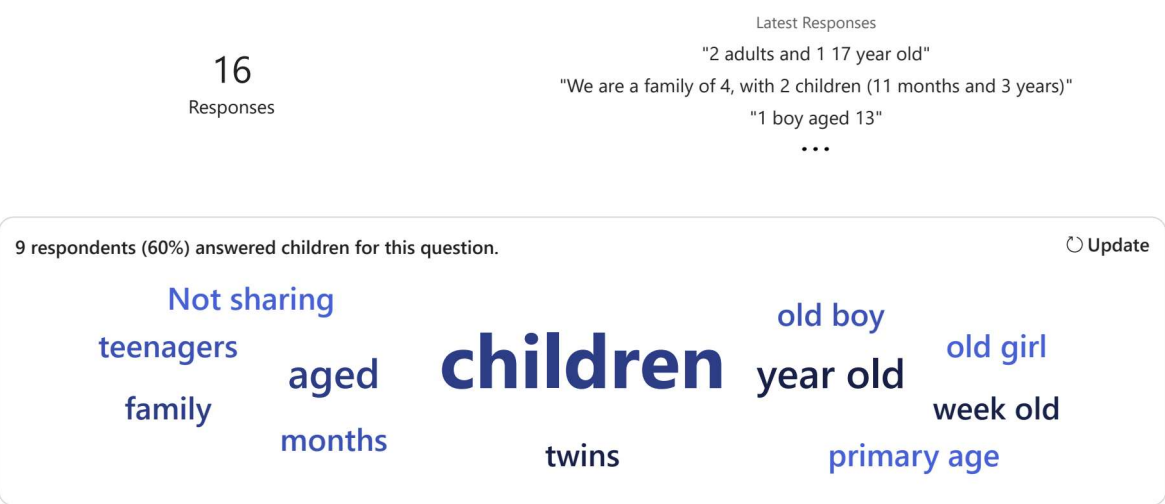
Average Time

12:16

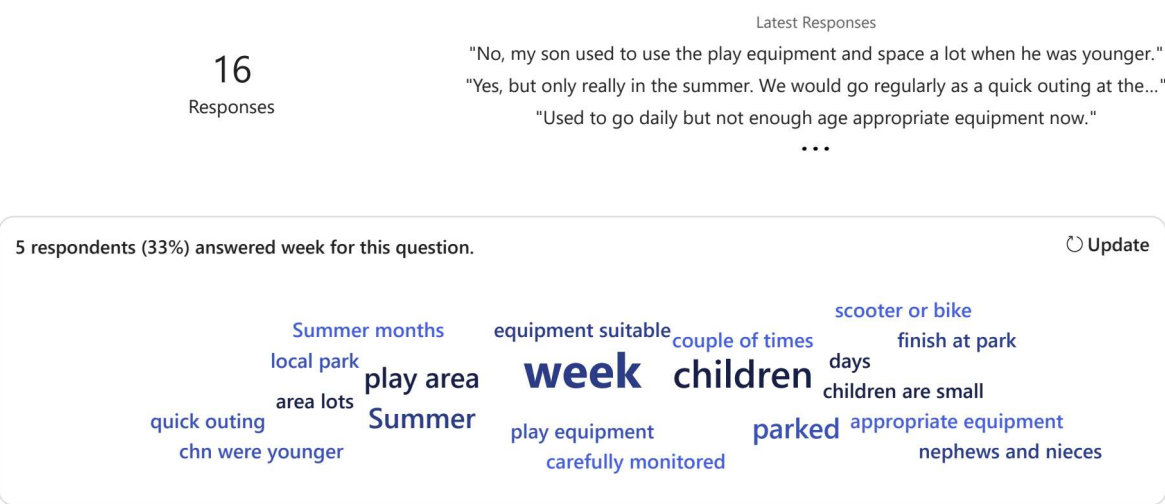
Duration

27 Days

1. Please tell us a little about your household, for example, do you have children? What age are they? (please only provide information you are comfortable sharing)



2. Do you or your household use the Berwick Avenue Play area? If yes, how often and for what reason? If no, why not?



3. What do you **LIKE** about the Berwick Avenue play area?

16
Responses

Latest Responses

"The equipment was always fun for my son and his friends to play on. It's a nice lar..."
"It's very close to home, it's a nice open space where you could play on the grass a..."
"Location and size"
...

6 respondents (40%) answered play for this question. Update



4. What do you **NOT** like about the Berwick Avenue play area?

16
Responses

Latest Responses

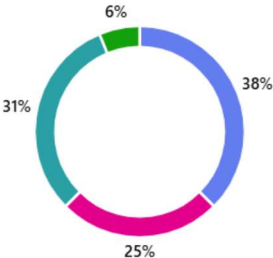
"It attracts a lot of older teenagers who sit and drink or worse during the night an..."
"Swings often covered in bird poo, grass often very long"
"There is not enough equipmeny"
...

4 respondents (27%) answered grass for this question. Update

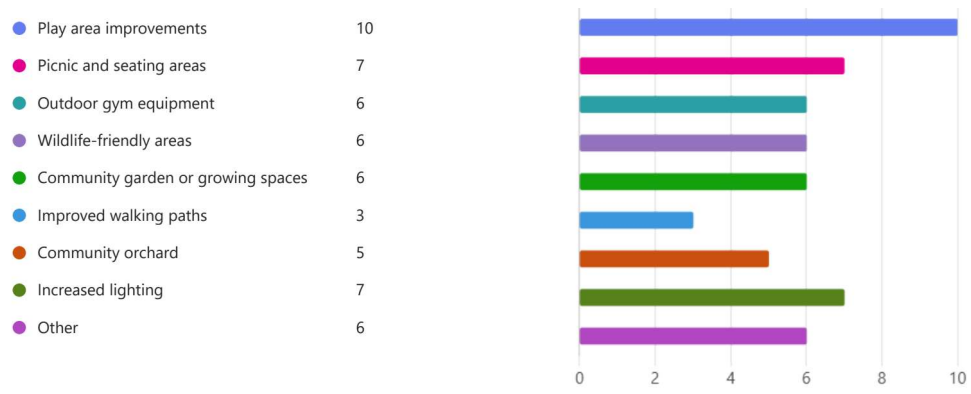


5. How important is it to improve this space?

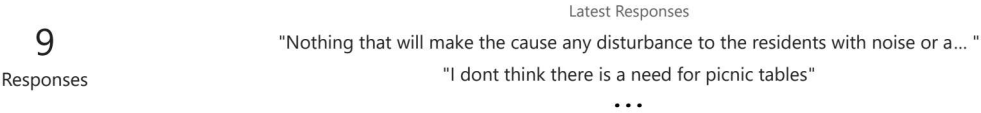
Very important	6
Somewhat important	4
Neutral	5
Not so important	0
Not important at all	1



6. What additions or improvements would you most like to see? (Tick as many as you like and add any other suggestions)



7. Are there any facilities you feel should **NOT** be included?



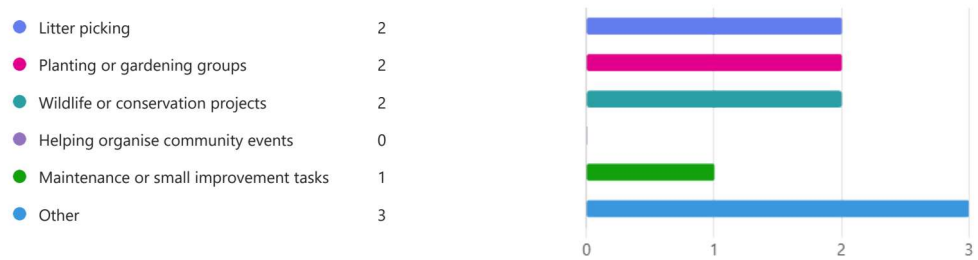
4 respondents (50%) answered areas for this question. Update



8. Would you be interested in taking part in community activities linked to the recreation space?



9. What types of community activities would interest you?



10. If you are open to volunteering, please leave your email and contact details below (this information will be used for this project only)

6
Responses

Latest Responses
"Stuartcherise@gmail.com"
...

11. Final thoughts - Is there anything else you'd like to share about your hopes for the space?

10
Responses

Latest Responses
"As a full time worker, I don't have time to litter pick and plant, I thought that is w... "
"Improvements to the wooded area just next to the park, a designated pathway/m... "
"I would really like there to be something for older children so they have somethin... "
...

5 respondents (56%) answered park for this question.

🔄 Update



Quote

D J Hart

168 Church Lane

Bocking

Essex CM7 5SG

01376 324360 or 07909 521511

12/2/26

Chelmsford City Council

Essex

To provide:

A bower 4m across, with living uprights and random weave filler

Willow inc. postage from Somerset	£390
--	-------------

Labour	£500
---------------	-------------

Fuel 44 miles @ .45ppm	£19.80
-------------------------------	---------------

Total	£909.80
--------------	----------------

Deborah Hart

C.Q SURFACING LTD

59 Peregrine Drive, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 8XY
Mob: 07809 711102

Donna
Broomfield Village hall
158 Main Road
Broomfield
CM1 7AH

Date: 10th February 2026

Quote

ITEM	COST
To supply galvanised gate 6ft x 8ft along with fittings and posts Labour to complete task Using rapid concrete for posts enabling gate to be used after 12 hours	£1,980.00
Total	£1,980.00 Plus VAT

Colin Quilter

Unique Tax Reference: 7247604649

National Insurance: WL610722B C. Quilter

VAT Reg: 972 997 448

WHITE COLNE PARISH COUNCIL

BIODIVERSITY DUTY

Introduction - Statutory Duty

Under the 2021 Environment Act, public authorities (including town and parish councils) who operate in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England.

Government guidance published on 17th May 2023 clarifies that, as a public authority, town and parish councils must:

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- Act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

Town and parish councils, unlike other authorities, are not obliged to publish a report on their actions, but the Government guidance requires all public authorities to complete their first consideration of what action to take for biodiversity by 1 January 2024. They must agree their policies and objectives as soon as possible after this and may reconsider the selected actions within 5 years of completing their previous consideration, or more frequently if they choose.

To comply with the guidance, town and parish councils could as a minimum:

- Have biodiversity as an agenda item for a meeting before the end of 2023.
- Note what action in respect of biodiversity is already taking place locally.
- Agree what further steps to take at this stage.

Such steps may include:

- Reviewing what biodiversity or nature recovery plans are already in place from other local authorities.
- Making contact with local voluntary groups working on nature conservation.
- Carrying out a biodiversity audit of council landholdings and/or the whole council area
- Gathering expert advice on possible actions in support of biodiversity.
- Drafting an action plan that covers action that the council will take itself as well as support for the actions of other local bodies.

Whatever action is agreed, as a minimum local councils could ensure they address biodiversity concerns when commenting on planning applications.

BIODIVERSITY POLICY

PREAMBLE

In accordance with the duty imposed on town and parish councils by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, updated by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, White Colne Parish Council will in exercising all its functions have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

This duty also means that town and parish councils can spend funds in conserving biodiversity.

DEFINITION

According to Defra (Biodiversity 2020), biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants – everything that is alive on our planet.

Biodiversity is important for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value. A number of studies have shown this value also goes further. It is the building block of our 'ecosystems'. These provide us with a wide range of goods and services that support our economic and social wellbeing. These include essentials such as food, fresh water and clean air, but also less obvious services such as protection from natural disasters, regulation of our climate, and purification of our water or pollination of our crops. Biodiversity also provides important cultural services, enriching our lives.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The object of this policy is to work towards enhancing and protecting the biodiversity of White Colne Parish Council

The council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

In particular, White Colne Parish Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the area in the following ways:

- consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
- support local businesses & council operations in the adoption of low impact practices.
- support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

ACTIONS

Planning applications

- The council, when commenting on planning applications, will support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.
- It will support protection of sensitive habitats from development and will consider whether the development would mean the loss of important habitats for wildlife in respect of all applications.
- It will consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain.
- It will include policies in support of biodiversity within the neighbourhood plan.

Land and property management

- The council will carry out a biodiversity audit of its landholdings.
- The council will consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of its open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices with regarding to cutting and removal of vegetation, application of chemicals and timing of maintenance work.
- Special care will be taken in the specification of grounds maintenance contracts to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment.
- The council will consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings.

Local community

- The council will raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and newsletters.
- The council will engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.
- It will, where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land including for example tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making.

Partners

- White Colne Parish Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within areas of White Colne.
- It will review any local nature recovery strategies, species conservation strategies, or protected site strategies in respect of local sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) and consider how it may become more involved in implementing the strategies' recommendations.

This policy will be reviewed each year at the Annual Meeting, together with a summary of how the policy has been implemented in the previous twelve months.

ACTION PLAN

SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
Whole council area	Raise local awareness of biodiversity.	Gain local support for action.	Ongoing	Newsletter
Protect and support biodiversity	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity.	Connect & diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species	Ongoing	Mapping
	Continue to identify grants			
The Meadows including the Heritage Orchard and Common/ Open Spaces, including land to the rear of the hall	Sympathetically maintain hedging. Leave some areas unmown. Only use environment friendly pesticides where absolutely necessary and only in ideal weather conditions. Adopt a management plan. Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs. Work with the county/district council on verge management Encourage residents to adopt areas to look after. Continue to identify free resources eg hedging plants	Food sources & cover Encourages insects. Sustain & enhance natural habitats. Sustain & enhance natural habitats. Protecting habitats Protecting/enhancing habitats Regular attention. Enhancing habitats.	Ongoing	
SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
The Built Landscape	Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan	Protecting/enhancing habitats	Ongoing	

	Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries	Extending habitats.		
Increase community awareness of biodiversity	Ask residents for their views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity within the parish. Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife, with possible actions highlighted in the parish magazine. Create a page on the parish council website for photographs / information / links Encourage local farmers to contribute. Provide seed bombs / bulbs etc. for residents' use. Discourage floodlighting. Discourage the use of pesticides, herbicides and poisons on farms and within private gardens.	Engagement/ownership of biodiversity Promote biodiversity. Promote biodiversity. Promote biodiversity. Extending habitats. Protect nocturnal animals. Sustain and enhance natural habitats.	Ongoing	
Support Community Projects	Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas. Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations.	Extending habitats. Promote biodiversity.		

Reviewed: 16 January 2024
Minute ref: 631(a)
Next review: May 2025



Ingatestone and Fryerning Parish Council Tree Management Policy

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Introduction

Ingatstone and Fryerning Parish Council (IFPC) has drafted a Tree Management Policy which is relevant to maintain a consistent approach to tree management in the parish of Ingatstone and Fryerning. This policy will be subject to review as and when required.

Trees make an enormous contribution to the character and beauty of our landscape and create /maintain environments rich in biodiversity. IFPC values its trees and recognises both the human and environmental benefits of having a healthy and sustainable tree population.

The council also recognises that although trees are a positive feature, they can be the cause of a range of problems, from being a nuisance or inconvenience to potentially causing serious injury or even death. As a tree owner we have a direct responsibility for ensuring our trees do not pose a danger to the public or property and are managed appropriately. This policy sets out our approach to tree management.

We aim to inspect our tree stock at an appropriate frequency, depending upon number of pedestrians, vehicles and other targets either passing beneath or within falling distance of the tree, to ensure continued public safety. Following inspection, the trees will be assigned a risk classification which will inform their prioritisation for maintenance works.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to all trees under IFPC ownership / management, which are located within the parish boundary.

Although, we believe this policy to be as comprehensive as possible, we acknowledge it does not cover every situation. We reserve the right to exercise discretion in application of this policy when to do so would be in the best interests of the Council and its residents.

Legislation

There is a range of legislation which has been considered during the development of this policy, for example:

IFPC recognises that Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), in respect of trees or woodland, which is considered to have a significant impact on the amenity of a local area.

In addition to those trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order, the Parish & Country Planning Act (1990) also makes special provision for trees in conservation areas.

The Hedgerow Regulations (1997) introduced powers allowing important rural native hedgerows to be protected.

We work to a risk-based approach to tree management: a programme of inspection identifying and prioritising potential hazards. The cycle of inspection for trees will be set according to their location and area of risk.

Tree Maintenance

Tree maintenance work will be conducted because of information gathered during proactive tree inspections. However, reactionary tree maintenance will always form a key element of overall tree maintenance operations and normally originates from the following:

- programmed and routine inspections by a qualified tree inspector/consultant.
- ad-hoc inspections by IFPC staff following enquiries, reports and service requests;
- reports from residents;
- enquires from County and Borough Councillors;
- reports from utility companies;
- cyclic maintenance;
- emergency works (e.g., resulting from high winds).

A tree could warrant immediate attention if, for example:

- it has snapped or blown over;
- it is rocking (roots are damaged);
- it is uprooted but held up by another tree or building;
- a large branch has broken off or is hanging off the tree;
- it or its branch is blocking the road or footpath;
- it or its branch is blocking access to property;
- it has fallen on to a structure, such as a building or car;
- it is dead

A tree may be a risk to people or property but does not require immediate attention if, for example:

- it is dying (few leaves in summer or dieback in the crown);
- its bark is loose and falling off;
- mushrooms or fungi are growing on or near the tree;
- old splits and cracks are in the trunk or large branches;
- Smaller branches or twigs are falling from the tree.

Trees will be made safe via pruning or felling, and we would use the most cost-effective approach. However, for certain High Value trees we would consider other options to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. This would include options to reduce the likelihood of the tree failing or the likelihood of persons being close to the tree if it did fail.

Publicising tree felling / pruning

Where works are minor such as pruning (including repeat cyclical pruning of trees) or involve removing trees that are less than 15 cm diameter (6 inches) at a height of 1.3 metres, we will not publicise the works.

Where works are more impacting, for example, felling larger trees, carrying out works to a veteran tree or a tree with a Tree Protection Order (TPO), we will erect an informative site notice on or very close to the affected tree. If more than one tree at the same location is affected, it may be more appropriate to erect a site notice including a map / schedule.

If a tree scheme (felling, pruning or planting) is judged to be more impacting on the local area we will consider more publicity as appropriate.

Where a competent officer has determined that the tree should be felled on public safety grounds there will be no public consultation and no right of objection.

Dealing with tree care

It is important that individual issues are dealt with consistently and that decisions are balanced against the positive contribution that trees make to the environment and enjoyment of the Parish by local residents and visitors. Many of the complaints received involve minor or seasonal issues that are generally considered to be foreseeable or social problems associated with living near trees, which can often be minimised through careful pruning and careful species selection when planting.

In all cases, consideration will be given as to whether the tree in question meets the necessary criteria for protection.

To ensure that requests for works to trees are dealt with efficiently, consistently and fairly, our policy in relation to the more common types of requests are outlined below.

Obstructing / Overhanging Tree Branches

Tree branches can cause obstructions to public footpaths, roadways / signs, streetlights and open spaces. Appropriate pruning to eliminate hazards caused by obstructive branches will normally be acceptable, providing efforts are made to retain the shape of the tree.

We will not prune trees that overhang neighbouring properties unless the trees are dangerous or causing an actionable nuisance (i.e., touching the walls, roofs, windows, gutters, garage etc.). This will ensure that damage to property such as aerials, tiles or gutters is avoided.

Adjacent Landowners do have a common law right to prune back tree branches to their boundary, providing that this would not lead to tree death and providing that the tree in question is not protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or situated within a Conservation Area. **It should be noted that the prunings should not be deposited on the council land without informing IFPC first as this constitutes fly tipping.**

Shading and Loss of Light

Trees are often perceived to block light to nearby properties. However, pruning or removal of trees will often have a negligible impact on the amount of light reaching a house or garden. Therefore, tree works to improve light levels will not normally be considered. However, we will consider taking action (pruning or felling) in the following circumstances:

- if the height of the tree is more than 12 metres and the distance between the base of the tree and the window of the nearest habitable room is less than 5metres;
- if the height of the tree is less than 12 metres and the distance between the base of the tree and the window of the nearest habitable room is less than half the height of the tree (where the separation between the edge of the tree canopy and a vertical line through that window is less than 2 metres).

A 'habitable room' is a dining room, lounge, kitchen, study or bedroom but not a WC, bathrooms, utility room, landing or hallway.

Loss of View

Trees will only be pruned or removed to restore views when necessary to retain important public viewpoints or there is potential to bring about significant public benefit and/or enhance the local landscape. Historical records may be used to determine the level of management required. Pruning of trees for highway sight-line requirements will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Trees affecting reception (Television / Satellite / Solar Panels)

Pruning in the short term may help improve television reception. However, in the long term the flush of quick, extra growth associated with pruning can exacerbate the problem. In most cases the problem can be resolved by relocating the aerial or satellite dish, or alternatively using a booster. Residents are advised to contact their satellite or TV provider for

specialist advice. Removal or pruning of trees to enable a clear television reception would only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Similarly, we will not prune or fell a tree in our ownership / management to improve natural light to a solar panel. Whilst we recognise the need for renewable energy sources, trees are also important in tackling climate change.

Overhead Cables / Telephone Wires

Utility companies have certain legal rights to carry out works to public or privately owned trees to address health and safety problems and to maintain a clearance between trees and their apparatus to ensure continuity of supply. This may sometimes involve the loss of trees. Where works to trees are necessary as a result of proximity or conflict, we will encourage utility operators to adopt the most appropriate long-term solution, giving consideration to tree health, local tree cover and visual amenity.

Problems caused by branches interfering with privately owned telephone wires can usually be eliminated through appropriate pruning and tree removal would not usually be considered.

We will not prune or fell a tree in our ownership / management to prevent or reduce interference with telephone wires. We would recommend contacting the telephone service provider in such circumstances.

General / Minor Nuisances

We will not fell or prune trees solely to alleviate problems caused by natural and/or seasonal phenomena, which are largely outside of our control. There are a variety of potential nuisances associated with trees, most of which are minor or seasonal and considered to be normal and acceptable consequences of living near trees. Examples of such problems are:

- Falling leaves, twigs, sap, blossom, fruit, nuts, bird and insect droppings;
- Insects associated with trees (spiders, wasps, flies etc.);
- Reduction or increase of moisture to gardens;
- Suckers or germinating seedlings in gardens;
- Leaves falling into gutters, drains or onto flat roofs;
- The build-up of algae on fences, paths or other structures.

Clearing of leaves from gutters and pathways and weeding of set seeds are normal routine seasonal maintenance which property owners are expected to carry out.

Falling leaves, twigs, sap, blossom, fruit, nuts, bird and insect droppings are not readily controllable by pruning and cleaning of affected surfaces can be considered to be routine maintenance. Pruning will not normally be considered solely as a way of alleviating problems with these issues alone.

We would not normally prune or fell a tree under our ownership / management that bears poisonous fruit / foliage (such as laburnum or yew). However, where it is known that unsupervised young children are likely to be exposed to berries or foliage that will make them ill if eaten, we will investigate and act, where appropriate.

Trees considered too big / too tall

We will not prune or fell a tree under council ownership / management because it is considered to be 'too big' or 'too tall' for its surroundings.

Personal Medical Complaint

We will normally not prune or fell a tree under our ownership/management where a request has been made to do so because of a personal medical complaint. However, where it can

be established that the presence of a tree is causing a detriment to the health of resident, further consideration will be given to the management approach of trees.

Damage and tree roots

Many tree conflicts arise because of the presence of tree roots and the perception that they are causing damage. Where damage is alleged, each complaint will be investigated on an individual basis. The following guidance will be used in assessing levels of nuisance and identifying appropriate action.

Root invasion in gardens

Tree roots in gardens are a natural occurrence and root presence is unlikely to be affected by tree pruning or removal. Landowners do have a common law right to prune back tree roots to their boundary, providing that this would not lead to tree death and providing that the tree in question is not protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or situated within a Conservation Area.

Most species of deciduous tree will re-sprout from the stump when cut down. Many species will produce a new growth shoot from a root if it becomes exposed to sunlight through ground erosion. Some species readily produce shoots from their buried roots as a way to regenerate and this is often stimulated by stresses, such as heavy pruning or felling. Numerous tree species (including Cherry and Poplar) are therefore likely to produce vigorous root suckers as a response to being felled. Poisoning a stump to prevent such suckering is not always successful since application of herbicide onto a stump face often only affects the stump and the upper roots.

Tree felling or branch pruning in response to root invasion in gardens would not normally be appropriate, as such works are likely to worsen existing problems. The pure encroachment of roots into adjoining land is not considered to amount to actionable nuisance.

Damage to walls and fences

It is often possible to rebuild or repair garden walls and fences to take account of adjacent trees.

This can be achieved in a number of ways (for example installing a section of railing or bridging foundations around the base of a tree). Therefore, where trees are considered to be causing damage to walls or fences, we will only consider tree removal if the walls or fence is irreplaceable and of exceptional importance e.g., a retaining wall or of historical interest, or if there is a risk to public health in leaving the tree which cannot otherwise be mitigated. If a damaged wall or fence was constructed after planting of the tree, it may mean that the design or construction has failed to take the presence of nearby trees into account.

Damage to paths

It is often possible to repair paths to take account of adjacent trees and tree roots. Where roots protrude, they can be root pruned, or the path re-laid around the tree with flexible materials such as asphalt to provide a smooth surface. Where trees are considered to be causing damage to paths or footpaths, we will not normally consider tree removal except where there is a risk to public health which cannot otherwise be mitigated.

Damage to drains or water pipes

There is no evidence to suggest that the tree roots can actively penetrate an intact pipe or drain, but they can find their way into drains by any existing fault and increase damage. In these situations, the owner of the drain should seek to get the drain repaired at their own expense. Tree removal will not normally be considered.

Subsidence

While we recognise our responsibilities for the trees in our ownership / management, we will expect any claim against our own trees to be supported by sufficient evidence by relevant authority/ industry body to show that the tree in question is a contributory factor in the subsidence. Where this evidence is provided, we will obtain expert specialist advice to verify submitted evidence as necessary. We will therefore require the following information in order to consider a claim associated with tree related subsidence:

- description of type of damage;
- indication of seasonal movement;
- levels and distortion survey;
- visual evidence of damage;
- depth of foundations demonstrated from excavated trial holes;
- analysis of soil type under foundation;
- presence and identification of tree roots.

We will not normally subject our trees to regular heavy pruning to deal with suspected damage. Instead, we will where feasible, opt for removal and replacement planting with an alternative species that is less likely to cause future problems.

Heave

When a tree is removed in a clay sub-soil, the soil will rehydrate and swell in volume. The expansion may lift the foundations and cause cracking to the property. This is known as 'heave'. This is more likely to occur if the removed tree was mature and had a high-water demand such as an oak tree. No liability, at present, falls upon a local authority for damage due to heave resulting from tree removal where this is requested by the third party.

Protected trees (Tree Preservations Orders)

A TPO is a legal document made, administered and enforced by the local planning authority, to protect specified trees and woodlands with public amenity value.

A TPO prevents cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage or destruction of trees (including cutting roots) without permission.

The Parish Council recognizes its responsibilities regarding its trees that are protected by TPOs.

Trees in Conservation Areas

It is an offence to cut down, prune, lop, top, uproot or wilfully damage or destroy a tree in a conservation area without giving prior written notice to Brentwood Borough Council.

The Parish Council recognizes its obligations when undertaking works to trees in conservation areas.

Other factors constraining work to trees

Birds

Under the Wildlife & Conservation Act 1981 (as amended) it is an offence to kill, injure or take wild birds, their young, their eggs or nests. Non-urgent major tree work involving tree removal / reduction and hedge cutting operations should not normally be undertaken during bird nesting / breeding season, which is considered to be from 1st March to 31st July.

Bats

Bats are a European Protected Species and are protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Causing damage to a roosting / nesting site is a criminal offence which can lead to imprisonment. Trees displaying signs of roosting bats will be referred to an Ecologist before any work commences. Any trees supporting roosting bats will not be worked on until Natural England is consulted.

Restrictive Covenants

Occasionally, restrictive covenants attached to the deeds for a property may restrict what work can be undertaken to trees.

Vandalism and damage to council owned / managed trees

Vandalism is an increasing pressure on trees. Usually, it is young newly planted trees that are damaged; however, mature trees are often damaged too. There are various ways in which vandalism can be counteracted, but none of these is 100% effective against determined attack.

The main methods of deterring vandals are to plant large numbers of very young trees, known as whips, or to plant larger robust trees depending on the site. Another method is to put guards or fencing around trees, but these must be large enough and strong enough to offer real protection.

This latter approach tends to be the most expensive method and only appropriate in very high-profile positions. In the long run, increasing environmental awareness within schools and communities should help reduce vandalism. There are cases where trees we own / manage have been irrevocably damaged or removed without permission. We will investigate any reports of vandalism / damage to trees in our ownership / management and try to repair any damage where we can.

Where possible, we will take legal action against the person(s) causing the damage.

Biosecurity / Pest and Epidemic Management

Biosecurity is a set of precautions that aim to prevent the spread of pests, pathogens or invasive species. The threat to trees from these has never been greater and as a large landowner we undertake to follow best practice and specific advice which is regularly published by the Forestry Commission. Attendances to high-risk sites are subject to risk assessment and we employ measures to minimise pest or disease spread.

Tree pruning techniques

We will seek to ensure that tree works are carried out to the highest standards. In carrying out tree works, we and any third party working on trees over which we have a responsibility, will ensure that pruning conserves the overall amenity value, form and shape of the tree and all tree works must be carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998 – Recommendations for Tree Work. Pruning specifications may or may not be appropriate for trees of different ages, species, health and condition, or even between trees of the same species depending on their condition, age and environment. Clear and acceptable pruning objectives are necessary in advance of approval of a pruning specification. The pruning objectives may require implementation of one or more of the following operations:

Crown lifting

The removal of the lowest branches of a tree so that the remaining lowest branches are at a specified height, usually 2.4m over a footpath and 5m over a road. This operation is undertaken for several reasons, such as to allow access under a tree, to clear branches from low structures or to allow light under the canopy.

Crown thinning

The removal of a specified proportion of branch material from the interior of the crown without affecting the shape of the tree. This operation is usually undertaken to reduce crown density, form a healthy branch structure by removing dead, diseased, damaged, crossing and rubbing branches, and allow more light through the canopy. Many tree species evolve a canopy density for adaptive reasons and crown-thinning can increase turbulence and

cause drought stress and branch failures. For this reason, crown thinning is usually only acceptable when carried out as part of crown cleaning or balancing works.

Crown Reduction

Reducing the overall size of the crown area by a specified percentage by pruning back the leaders and branch terminals to lateral branches that are large enough to assume the terminal roles (at least one third the diameter of the cut stem). Crown reduction up to a maximum of 15-20% may be acceptable to semi-mature trees providing cuts do not exceed 5-7cm and where shaping and restricting size and spread is essential. Crown reduction of mature or older trees is not normally acceptable as it can severely affect tree health and may lead to the death or decline of the tree and is generally only acceptable as management of last resort.

Topping

This entails cutting at a certain height to reduce the height of the tree. Topping is not acceptable as it severely affects the public amenity and health of the tree, sometimes leading to death. Topping can also lead to future problems due to a flush of weak re-growth that can represent a danger and also exacerbate existing problems. If height reduction is considered essential and unavoidable, crown reduction (see above) is preferred.

Pollarding

This severe operation entails the removal of the entire tree's branch structure back to the trunk. Pollarding is an ancient way of maintaining trees that is sometimes necessary, particularly on trees that have been pollarded previously. Only certain species will tolerate this degree of pruning, and new growth may be weak and prone to tearing off. This method of management is not therefore normally acceptable.

Dead Wooding or Crown Clean

This operation is similar to a crown thin except that only dead, diseased, crossing and rubbing branches are removed to tidy up the appearance of the tree. No healthy, sound wood is removed. This operation is recommended to help maintain a healthy, safe tree.

Formative Pruning

The removal of problematic or potentially problematic branches, ensuring good tree development.

Stump Grinding Stump grinding is the practice of removing a tree stump to below ground level by mechanical means. We will carry out stump grinding where necessary to enable new trees to be planted or to remove a significant hazard. Where stump removal is not necessary tree stumps will be removed close to ground level so as not to leave a trip hazard.

New Tree Planting

Where it is necessary to remove a tree, Sutton Parish Council will endeavour to plant wherever possible a new "standard" tree to enable succession of Tree Stock