



Freshwater Parish Council

Tree Management Policy

2026

Approved and Adopted 2nd September 2025
Amended 7th April 2026
Reaffirmed 19th May 2026



Freshwater Parish Council

Working For The Community

Freshwater Parish Council Tree Management Policy

1. Introduction

This policy sets out Freshwater Parish Council's approach to the management of trees owned and managed by the Freshwater Parish Council. It seeks to adopt a balanced approach that recognises both the substantial benefits provided by trees and the responsibilities of the Parish Council to ensure public safety.

Trees provide a wide range of quality-of-life benefits, including:

- Enhancing the landscape and village character.
- Reducing climatic extremes, cooling air, improving air quality, provide shade, stabilising soil, filtering pollution, and reducing noise.
- Providing habitats for wildlife and supporting biodiversity.
- Contributing to residents' wellbeing by creating attractive, tranquil spaces.

The Freshwater Parish Council has a duty of care to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of death or injury to those on Parish Council land, while preserving the village's trees for future generations. Whilst the presence of trees is hugely beneficial their respective growing habits can create varying degrees of inconvenience to, and conflict between, residents living nearby.

Where removal of trees is required, replacement planting, where practical, with native non-invasive species, will be sought wherever possible. Queries regarding Parish Council trees should be directed to the Clerk at clerk@freshwater-parish.gov.uk or 01983 752000.

2. Tree Inspection

- All Parish Council-owned/leased trees will be inspected every 3 years by a qualified tree inspector.

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- Additional inspections may be arranged following storm events or where concerns are raised.
 - Recommendations will be considered by the Parish Council in line with this policy.
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3. Tree Maintenance

The Freshwater Parish Council adopts a proactive but preservation-focused approach to maintenance:

- Only necessary works will be undertaken.
 - All works must be carried out by a qualified tree surgeon appointed by the Parish Council.
 - Works will comply with British Standards, BS 3998:2010 Treework.
 - Routine works will be scheduled outside of the bird nesting season (February–July). Where works are unavoidable in this period, thorough checks will be carried out to ensure no nesting birds or bats are disturbed.
 - Where safe and appropriate, deadwood will be retained on site to benefit wildlife habitats.
 - Where it is not possible to retain dead/chopped wood on site then an alternative local site will be sought for the logged wood (circa 30 cm lengths and suitable for wood burners) to be accessed without charge by local residents.
 - Only where there is no safe or available local site will the contractor be charged with disposal.
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4. Tree Works

Works will be carried out when:

- A tree or branch is hazardous and poses an unreasonable risk to public safety.
- Trees or branches cause unreasonable obstruction to highways, rights of way, signage, or property access.
- A tree causes an unacceptable trip hazard.

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- A tree is proven on the balance of probability to cause serious structural damage, confirmed by an independent professional.

Works may also be carried out when:

- The species is inappropriate for its location.
- Trees obstruct streetlighting, heritage vistas, or maintenance operations.
- Thinning benefits adjacent or more favourable specimens.
- Works protect biodiversity or heritage structures.

The Parish Council will not carry out works solely to:

- Reduce the size of a healthy tree or cut back branches overhanging private property.
 - Remove leaves, sap, blossom, fruit, nuts, or bird droppings.
 - Remove wildlife considered a nuisance (e.g. bees, wasps).
 - Improve natural light, views, or TV/satellite reception.
 - Prevent shading of solar panels.
 - Remove roots from drains or repair damage unless the tree is proven to be the principal cause.
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5. Residents Carrying Out Works

Property owners may exercise Common Law rights to cut back encroaching branches to their boundary, provided that:

- Only overhanging growth is removed.
- The health and stability of the tree is not compromised.
- The Parish Council is notified in advance if works are to Freshwater Parish Council-owned trees.
- Checks are made for Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) or Conservation Area status, and any required consent is obtained from the Local Planning Authority before works commence.

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- It is strongly advised that a professional tree surgeon is consulted for guidance on how best to prune back encroaching trees, unless the works are trivial meaning that works could be carried out with hand secateurs or similar.

The Parish Council reserves the right to recover costs for corrective works if its trees are damaged. The Council cannot intervene in disputes over non- Parish Council trees.

6. Replanting

- Where felling is necessary, at least two replacement trees will be planted where practical, either adjacent or at another approved location.
 - Replacement trees will be selected with regard to their position, long-term value, and maintenance needs. It is preferred that these trees will be native non-invasive and climate-resilient species where practical.
 - Any newly planted tree that dies within five years will be replaced.
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7. Protected Trees

- Trees subject to a TPO or located within a Conservation Area are legally protected. A TPO protects trees that make a significant contribution to the local landscape, whether for visual, historic, or ecological reasons.
 - No works may be carried out without permission from the Isle of Wight Council.
 - Offences include felling, topping, lopping, uprooting, or wilful damage.
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8. Woodland Management – Stroud Coppice

Freshwater Parish Council owns Stroud Coppice (1.53 hectares of Designated Ancient Semi Natural woodland (or ASNW)). Management aims include:

- Preserving and enhancing native species and encouraging natural regeneration.
- Retaining deadwood for biodiversity where this does not pose an unreasonable risk, preferring pruning to felling.

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- Managing the woodland as a sustainable resource.
 - Producing and implementing a detailed woodland management plan.
 - Supporting community involvement and responsible access.
 - Maintaining and developing pathways, while discouraging anti-social behaviour and fires.
 - Endeavouring to manage and maintain the woodland in accordance with accepted forestry, arboricultural and nature conservation best practice,
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9. Statutory Obligations

The Freshwater Parish Council will:

- Fulfil obligations under relevant Town and Country Planning Acts and Tree Regulations.
 - Seek to ensure trees of amenity value are retained through TPOs and Conservation Area controls.
 - Act as a Consultee to the Isle of Wight Council on planning applications affecting trees.
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10. Dangerous Trees Not on Council Land

- Where hazardous trees on private or unregistered land pose a risk to the public using Freshwater Parish Council land, the Parish Council will liaise with the Isle of Wight Council under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
 - Land owners may be required to undertake remedial works.
 - In urgent cases, works may be carried out by the IOW Council, with costs recovered from the land owner.
 - Residents should report hazardous trees to Island Roads with FixMyStreet or via the Freshwater Parish Clerk.
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11. Freshwater Parish Council-Owned/Managed Land

The Parish includes stretches of the Heritage Coast Line, Isle of Wight National Landscape, Conservation Areas including Afton Marshes. These are critical areas of

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importance as they offer a significant number of differing habitats. Many of the trees in Freshwater Parish are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's), including the whole of Stroud Coppice which is designated as Ancient Semi Natural Woodland and other Conservation Areas. Work cannot be carried out on TPO's trees without the appropriate consent from the Local Planning Authority.

This policy applies to all Parish Council land including (but not limited to):

- Brookside Road to include areas on either side of the footpath above and into the Brook including roadside and the area around the electricity substation to the tree line and Banks of the Brook - Area off main pavement into the brook
- Granny's Meads, Jubilee Field, Library Gardens, Spinfish, Old Fire Station
- Stroud Coppice, Stroud Recreation Ground,
- Moa Place and triangle
- Land from Black Hut Green to Moa Place car park including the back ditch and the area in front of Moa Place toilets, area inside of the Skate Park.
- Norton Green - all grassed areas fronting residences in Norton Green and areas of grass fronting Pixley Hill,
- Pound Green - all grassed areas including inside the Pound
- Queens Road from Brookside to Pound Green including area outside of Freshwater Conservative Club
- West Green Middleton including the area in front of Sheepwash Farm

Certain sites are excluded from tree planting: Freshwater Bay Boat Park, Promenade Shelter and Revetment. Moa Place Toilets, Gate Lane Toilets and surrounding land, Skate Park, MUGA and School Green Road opposite the Vine Public House.

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed every **three years** or sooner if required by changes in legislation or local circumstances.

Adopted by Freshwater Parish Council on 2nd September 2025

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