

Farnham Royal Parish Council (FRPC)
Tree Safety Management Policy
Adopted at meeting on 26.02.18

FRPC as owner or leaseholder of trees in the Farnhams is responsible for and has a duty of care to ensure such trees – which provide a wonderful local amenity - do not pose an unacceptable risk to the public or to property. Whilst it is completely impossible to eliminate all risk when dealing with dynamic living systems such as trees, this policy addresses how FRPC will adopt a common sense approach to minimise the risks posed so that they are as low as reasonably practicable.

This policy covers

- How risk will be assessed identifying different risk zones
- The inspection regime FRPC adopts
- How the management team and FRPC operates

In addition FRPC has adopted a tree policy set out in the schedule below.

Risk Assessment

All trees are zoned into higher risk areas or lower risk areas. Higher risk areas are inspected using the visual tree assessment method (that is, a careful search for clear defects is undertaken). Higher risk zones are those trees located within falling distance of roads, properties and public paths. Other areas – lower risk zones - are surveyed using the walkover method (that is visually surveying them from the vantage point of the public path). Trees requiring work are identified marked and mapped.

Inspection regime

- FRPC engages a qualified arboriculturalist to inspect all its trees every other year in November and produce a written tree condition survey and arboricultural report. The arboriculturalist recommends a regime of inspections every two years unless there have been extreme weather conditions.
- In addition FRPC engages a woodland contractor to undertake quarterly visits to the wooded copse it manages. Visual inspections using the walkover method are made and written reports are submitted after each visit highlighting any concerns.

Management Team

The management team consists of the Clerk and the Open Spaces and Environment working group reporting to FRPC for decisions to be taken at public meetings.

The team responds to reports from the arboriculturalist, the woodland contractors following quarterly visits and ad hoc concerns/reports from the public. There is also an emergency procedure.

- When the arboriculturalist's written report is received usually in December each year for one half of the trees in FRPC's care, a meeting of the Open Spaces and Environment Working Group of FRPC is held to consider and agree to recommend to FRPC the action required for approval.
- The Open Spaces and Environment Working Group is scheduled to meet every 4 months in January, May and September in each year. The Working Group includes parish councillors and a woodland contractor. FRPC meets every month except in August and December.
- All work in our woodlands are undertaken by an experienced contractor engaging two types of workers as appropriate. Tree surgeons are qualified to climb and work high up in trees. Ground workers have certain qualifications too (such as using chain saws) but don't climb and they are referred to as woodland contractors.
- FRPC only ever engages qualified tree surgeons to undertake the work recommended by the arboriculturalist's report and always seeks to do so within the timescales recommended.
- When reports are received from the woodland contractors undertaking quarterly visits the Clerk will circulate these to members of the Open Spaces and Environment Working Group and if action is recommended approval is sought at the next FRPC meeting.
- When reports are received from members of the public the Clerk will notify members of the Open Spaces and Environment Working Group and commission a report from its arboriculturalist or woodland contractor as the Clerk deems appropriate; if action is recommended approval is sought at the next FRPC meeting.
- All records – including without limitation reports and details of outcomes are kept for 10 years. They are not made available for public release.
- In the event of emergency situations – particularly after extreme weather or following a report from a resident – its arboriculturalist or woodland contractor as the Clerk or the working group deems appropriate will be asked to re-inspect as appropriate and report back. Decisions to act usually require FRPC approval but in the case of a genuine emergency the Chairman or Vice Chairman and the Clerk can give approval to proceed to remedy the emergency.
- This policy is reviewed annually at the FRPC Annual General Meeting usually in May.

SCHEDULE

In addition FRPC has adopted the following tree policy as we value the importance of the retention of the wooded areas and trees in the Parish and wish that trees should be retained in their natural state as far as possible unless otherwise required for sound arboricultural reasons.

The priority of FRPC is to safely maintain and retain as many native trees as practicable on land under its control.

As part of this policy it follows that FRPC will :-

- 1 Remove foreign harmful invasive species from all land it controls. This would include Japanese Knotweed and Rhododendron.
- 2 Control species which are native but can be invasive – that is, can overwhelm other species - or are difficult to maintain. This would include Ivy and Holly.
- 3 Holly should be removed if it is close to footways or paths and could interfere with the passage of pedestrians.
- 4 Ivy should be controlled (by cutting it away at the base of a tree where necessary) on trees close to footways, paths or public spaces so that trees can be properly inspected for safety.
- 5 In all other areas Ivy should only be controlled where it is observed to be interfering with the health of the tree.
- 6 Where trees and shrubs are to be cleared, then the logs should be stacked neatly off the footways and paths and the cut branches and leaves (especially evergreens such as Pine and Holly) should be removed as far as reasonably practicable.

ends