**Frensham Parish Council**

**Tree Management Policy**

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| 16th March 2022 | Version 1.0 | Adopted Minute Reference  107/21 |
| September 2023 |  | 64/23(e) |
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This Tree Management Policy supersedes any previous policy document issued by Frensham parish Council

Frensham Parish Council (the Council) seeks to enhance the significance of the parish’s tree resource generally, including its contribution to landscape, ecosystem services, biodiversity and social benefits throughout the parish. In the case of land owned by the Council, biodiversity is particularly important, given the adjoining Frensham Common and its status as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Protection Area (SPA), and the status of Shortfield Common as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI). Landscape considerations are also important as much of the parish lies within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and because trees make a significant contribution to the visual attractiveness of the Hollowdene Recreation Ground and Shortfield Common, both owned by the Council.

The Council, as a reasonable and prudent landowner, also recognises that while no tree can be guaranteed to be safe it has a legal duty of care to the general public to ensure that, so far as practicable, tree-related risks on its land are kept to an acceptable level. To this end, the Council follows the guidance set out in the National Tree Safety Group’s publication ‘*Common sense risk management of trees (Landowner summary of guidance on trees and public safety)’, Forestry Commission 2011)*. The guidance is based on the following key principles to which the Council subscribes:

* Trees provide a wide variety of benefits to society
* Trees are living organisms that naturally lose branches or fall
* The overall risk to human safety is extremely low
* Tree owners have a legal duty of care
* Tree owners should take a balanced and proportionate approach to tree safety management

The Council is also aligned, but not constrained by, the Tree Management Policy of Waverly Borough Council’s ‘*Tree and Woodland Policy & Action Plan’* (current V0.9 22/12/2021) with specific reference to the following:

* To protect, conserve, manage and increase tree and woodland cover on Council managed land.
* The pruning or removal of trees, woodlands and hedgerows shall be resisted, unless there are sound Biodiversity or Arboricultural reasons and in accordance with approved management plans.
* Managing its existing tree stock, aims to increase the age and species diversity, to provide resistance to climate change.
* Improvements to biodiversity across the village can be achieved by protecting and appropriately existing woodlands and veteran trees.
* New planting will encourage wildlife, also ensuring and increasing tree stock throughout the parish.

The Council therefore takes reasonable precautions to maintain the safety of the public and property both on its own land and in adjacent areas where the falling distance of trees for which it is responsible extends beyond its boundaries, for example on to public highways.

The trees are inspected by a consultant arboriculturalist at a minimum of two-year intervals with any necessary remedial work being carried out by an approved Tree Surgeon as soon as reasonably practicable, taking into account the level of perceived risk, the scope of the work required, and the resources available.

Trees in well-used areas (such as those in the children’s playground; recreation ground car park; along heavily trafficked public highways; and large lone trees on the recreation ground) may be accorded higher priority for remedial action than those trees in lesser-used areas (such as around the boundary of the recreation ground and in the wooded areas of Shortfield Common). Interim inspections of higher priority trees are undertaken as necessary. In the case of any tree identified as presenting a potential hazard, either immediate remedial action will be taken or its condition will be closely monitored through interim inspections as recommended by a consultant arboriculturalist. The results of all tree inspections are documented, with records being lodged with the Parish Clerk and added to the Parish Council Web Page.

The Council aims to take a proactive and systematic approach to tree management in order to both conserve and enhance its tree stock and the amenity value of its land. Its tree management strategy aims to be proportionate and to attempt to maintain an appropriate balance between the real risks and the benefits.

The Council avoids felling trees unless absolutely necessary. This will predominately be for health and safety reasons; to prevent the spread of serious tree diseases and pests; or to remove poor specimens. The Council does, however, reserve the right to fell trees in order to prevent overcrowding; to improve habitats; or to restore landscapes in line with site management objectives. Trees may also be removed where they are inappropriate to their location; have a significantly detrimental impact on the appearance or amenity of a site; or the costs of their maintenance are disproportionate to any identified benefits.

The Council undertakes tree planting either where trees have been removed or where the amenity value of the land could be enhanced. The Council selects tree species for replacement or additional planting with a view to their providing variety for the interest and education of the public, and to their having low maintenance costs.

The Council encourages interest and community engagement in the management of its tree resource.

Frensham Parish Council

March 2022

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