

# Tree Risk Management Plan and Policy

For trees on land managed by  
Shaftesbury Town Council

For Shaftesbury Town Council,  
The Town Hall,  
High Street,  
Shaftesbury,  
SP7 8LY

Prepared by Nick Baxter *BSc(Hons) TechArborA*  
13<sup>th</sup> December 2019

## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1	Background information	2
1.2	Policy statement	2
<b>2</b>	<b>Tree Risk Management Strategy</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1	The fundamental approach	2
2.2	Target zoning	3
2.3	Frequency of inspection	3
<b>3</b>	<b>Tree Surveys</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1	The survey approach	4
3.2	Prioritizing recommended works	4
<b>4</b>	<b>Tree Management Works</b>	<b>5</b>
4.1	Use of appropriate contractors	5
4.2	Nature conservation and tree works	5
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Project Management</b>	<b>6</b>
5.1	Management responsibilities	6
5.2	Maintaining records	6
5.3	Monitoring & reviewing the strategy	7

Appendix 1: Tree Risk Zone Plan (ZP-1)

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background information

Shaftesbury Town Council manages extensive areas of land around Shaftesbury Town in Dorset. The parcels of land under management of Shaftesbury Town Council are occupied by a wide range of tree species in both high use and low use areas.

As managers of the land, Shaftesbury Town Council has a duty to ensure that members of the public and staff are not put at risk because of any failure to take all reasonable precautions to ensure their safety. Accordingly, there is a need to inspect trees in or near public places, or adjacent to buildings or working areas to assess whether they represent a risk to life or property, and to take remedial action as appropriate.

There are 10 tree preservation orders (TPOs) that relate to trees managed by Shaftesbury town Council; these are administered by Dorset Council.

### 1.2 Policy statement

Shaftesbury Town Council has the following policy with regard to trees under their management:

*Trees are important landscape features that contribute to the character and appearance of Shaftesbury as well as improving the health and well-being of the people that live locally. Trees are integral to carbon sequestration and also provide valuable habitat for wildlife. We recently declared a climate emergency and so we have a responsibility to manage trees in a way that minimises the loss of value to both people and wildlife. To uphold our duty of care, we also have an obligation to protect people and property from hazardous trees so far as is reasonably practicable.*

## 2 Tree Risk Management Strategy

### 2.1 The fundamental approach

In order to keep tree risk management works proportionate to the level of risk that trees represent the tree survey methodology has been designed so that most resources are directed to areas where there is potentially most risk to people and property. In order to do this the land is periodically surveyed by a qualified arboricultural consultant using the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) methodology<sup>1</sup>. If any risks are observed they are assessed using a standard methodology called Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA)<sup>2</sup>. The arboricultural consultant will specify management works if their assessment finds that a tree represents a significant risk of harm to people or property. Shaftesbury Town Council will then arrange for these management works to be carried out within an appropriate time-frame.

An annual budget for tree management at Shaftesbury Town Council will be set each year. This will first be used to cover the costs of essential risk management works. Any remaining budget

---

<sup>1</sup> Mattheck, C. and Breloer, H. (1995). *The Body Language of Trees: A handbook for failure analysis*. Research for Amenity Trees 4. HMSO, London.

<sup>2</sup> Ellison, M.J. (2005). *Quantified Tree Risk Assessment Used in the Management of Amenity Trees*. J. Arboric. International Society of Arboriculture, Savoy, Illinois. 31:2 57-65.

will be spent on trees that are assessed to be a moderate risk during the tree survey, and these trees will be addressed in order of priority until the budget runs out.

## 2.2 Target zoning

With knowledge of site use different areas can be categorised into target zones according to their level of use. The system of categorisation that has been used for zoning the area is detailed in Table 1. A Zone Plan (ZP-1) has been drawn to indicate the two areas of zoning, the plan is provided at the rear of the document. The plan will be used to dictate which areas are included in annual tree surveys as explained in section 2.3 (but this may be refined by further judgement during the tree survey).

**Table 1: The system used for target zoning at the site.**


Target Zone	Colouring on Map	Description	Frequency of inspection
High risk (Zone 1)	Red	Areas of high use where veteran/mature trees are in falling distance of roads, footpaths, car parks and play areas.	Every year
Low-Medium risk (Zone 2)	Blue	Areas of low-medium use away from Zone 1. Areas where only young/early mature/ regularly pollarded trees are located.	Every 2 years

## 2.3 Frequency of inspection

The land managed by Shaftesbury Town Council is extensive and it would be excessive to carry out a survey of every tree each year. Therefore, in order to concentrate attention where it is most required, the land has been divided into two risk zones. Trees in Zone 1 will be surveyed every year and trees in Zone 2 will be surveyed every two years. These time intervals are detailed in Table 2. But it should be noted that there may be situations when there is concern for a tree that is in Zone 2 and may recommend it for a more regular inspection than the other trees in that zone.

**Table 2: The time-table for surveying each risk zone for land managed by Shaftesbury Town Council.**

Year	Zone 1	Zone 2
2019		
2020		
2021		
2022		
2023		
2024		
2025		
2026		
2027		
2028		
2029		

 = Year that a tree survey is carried out

### 3 Tree Surveys

#### 3.1 The survey approach

The tree survey will include every tree in the relevant zone, but trees forming cohesive arboricultural features (visually, culturally or aerodynamically) will be assessed as a group where appropriate. During the survey each individual tree surveyed will be tagged and its location added to the tree plan. A condition assessment will be carried out and recorded for each tree that is tagged. The data should include the date when the survey was made, the name of the tree surveyor, the tag number, the species of tree, a simple assessment of the height of the tree, its age class, its physiological condition, notes on its structural condition and any relevant site features.

If the surveyor does decide to survey a tree from a group, that tree will be tagged and its location added to the tree plan. When carrying out repeat tree surveys each of the trees that have been tagged in previous years must be given an individual tree assessment.

Any trees of safety concern will be surveyed using a simple version of the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA) methodology<sup>3</sup>. QTRA applies established and accepted risk management principles to tree safety management. The outcome of the QTRA assessment is a score and this value can be used to prioritise management works.

If the tree is assessed to have a significant risk of harm then appropriate management recommendations should be prescribed. Appropriate management will fall into three broad categories:

1. The risk is assessed as low and so no works are required;
2. Management works are prescribed;
3. A visual assessment is inconclusive and further investigation is required.

Further investigation would be appropriate if:

1. The tree is high value such as for amenity or wildlife, and you believe that it cannot be made safe without significantly reducing its value;
2. The symptoms are inconclusive, e.g. the extent of trunk decay is unclear;
3. Investigation of the hazard requires specialist knowledge and experience;
4. An aerial inspection of a tree is advised following a visual assessment from the ground.

#### 3.2 Prioritizing recommended works

The risk assessments will produce a probability of harm (within the next year), and these figures will be used to prioritise recommended tree works. The system used is based on the QTRA assessment and the tolerability of risk framework and detailed in Table 3. Accordingly tree risk management works that are identified to have a risk of harm greater than 1/100 will be treated

---

<sup>3</sup> Ellison, M.J. (2005). Quantified Tree Risk Assessment Used in the Management of Amenity Trees. J. Arboric. International Society of Arboriculture, Savoy, Illinois. 31:2 57-65.

immediately and without any delay, and trees calculated to have a risk score between 1/100 and 1 in 10,000 will be carried out as soon as reasonably practicable, but in any event in no more than 8 weeks. Risks that are between 1 in 10,000 and 1 in 1,000,000 will be programmed into annual works schedules.

There will be standard tree maintenance works appropriate for some trees such as the lifting of low crowns or the removal of ivy or epicormic growth. These works will be specified as part of the tree survey as 'advisory' works.

During tree risk assessments features within the falling distance of the tree (targets) can be people, property or road traffic. When considering the risks posed by the tree the inspection considered the usage of the target zone, the size of the part that could impact the target, and the likelihood of that part failing.

**Table 3: The system for prioritising recommended tree works.**

Level of Risk	Probability of Harm	Works Priority	Timescale
<b>Very High</b>	1 – 1/1000	Urgent	Immediately, without any delay
<b>High</b>	1/1000 – 1/10,000	High	As soon as reasonably practicable
<b>Moderate</b>	1/10,000 – 1/1,000,000	Non-urgent	In order of priority and as funds allow
<b>Acceptable</b>	<1/1,000,000	N/A	N/A
<b>None</b>	-	Advisory	N/A

## 4 Tree Management Works

### 4.1 Use of appropriate contractors

Tree work is inherently dangerous and so only experienced contractors/arborists will be used. All staff must be suitably trained, certificated and insured for the necessary operations. Tree work good practice is set out in British Standard BS3998:2010 - Recommendations for Tree Work<sup>4</sup>.

### 4.2 Nature conservation and tree works

Any arborist working at the site must comply with all statutory requirements concerning flora, fauna and habitat in accordance with relevant nature conservation legislation. The arborist should make sure that they are familiar with current best working practices to minimize disturbance to flora and fauna.

The arborist must consider the risk of impacting protected species prior to carrying out arboricultural works, especially when dealing with trees that have veteran characteristics. Natural England must be notified if there is reason to believe that arboricultural operations may disturb bats because a licence for the works may be required. If nesting birds are found to be present then the tree work must not commence, or if the tree surgery has already started and nesting birds are then discovered then the work must stop immediately and be re-scheduled for later in the year.

<sup>4</sup> British Standards Institution (2010). *BS3998 Recommendations for Tree Work*. BSI, London.

The responsibility for protecting wildlife will be held by the contractor but Shaftesbury Town Council accepts that this is a necessary constraint to tree works. Shaftesbury Town Council also understands that the need to protect wildlife may result in some works being delayed, and this requirement may also result in increased costs for tree management.

## **5.0 Project Management**

### **5.1 Management responsibilities**

The Services Officer is responsible for maintaining records and ensuring that tree surveys are carried out at the right time. It is also the Head Groundsman's responsibility to communicate the tree risk management policy to the grounds maintenance staff.

The Services Officer will be responsible for ensuring that the necessary tree management works are carried out. The Services Officer must also make sure that a professional arboriculturist is consulted for any tree related hazards that have been reported by members of staff or the public (if a check reveals that the defects are outside of the knowledge or experience of grounds management staff).

Following the tree survey any trees that are considered to have a very high risk of harm will require immediate arboricultural works. The Services Officer must ensure that there are systems in place to ensure that these works are carried out as soon as possible. High priority trees must be carried out as soon as reasonably practicable, but in any event within 8 weeks. Remaining works will be addressed in order of priority and as funds allow.

There are 10 tree preservation orders (TPOs) assigned to trees on the land managed by Shaftesbury Town Council and some of the land is within a Conservation Area. The local planning authority must be notified of any intended works to trees protected by a TPO, and they have 8 weeks to respond. Urgent risk management works to trees protected by a TPO may be carried out under a five day notice<sup>5</sup>. No works will be done to the protected trees without first gaining the proper permissions from Dorset Council.

### **5.2 Maintaining records**

Records must be kept for the following:

1. Annual tree reports including details of when the survey was carried out, who surveyed the trees, and notes on tree condition;
2. A prioritised list of recommended management works;
3. A record of risk management operations undertaken including all contractor related documentation such as contracts, invoices, conservation area consents etc;
4. Records of all other reported faults from staff or members of the public;
5. Records of any other remedial actions and follow on observations;

---

<sup>5</sup> Written notice (by letter or email) of the proposed work must be given to the planning department of South Somerset Council as soon as practicable after the work becomes necessary.

6. All records will be kept for a minimum of 5 years in case a claim is made against the Shaftesbury Town Council. This is to ensure that there is a clear evidence trail that can be referred to following an incident.

### **5.3 Monitoring & reviewing the strategy**

A suitable budget available for tree management at Shaftesbury Town Council must be set each year. This will be based on the cost of tree management in previous years, along any other relevant factors.

The tree management strategy will be reviewed by the Shaftesbury Town Council every five years. This meeting would also be an opportunity to consider the relationship between the Estate, the arboricultural consultant, and the arborists. Under this system the next review will take place in 2024.





Zone 1 - Trees surveyed every year



Zone 2 - Trees surveyed every two years

**Shaftesbury Town Council  
Zone Plan**

SCALE :  
1 : 4600

@ A3

DATE :  
13/12/2019

N



MAP FILENAME :

ZP-1

**TREEMANAGEMENT**

