



1. About

Heddon Parish Council recognise the importance of trees, hedges and green spaces for the environmental, aesthetic and social benefits they provide to our community. However, we also acknowledge that at times some trees and hedges may pose a risk to public safety, property or infrastructure, or may interfere with the enjoyment of public or private spaces. Therefore, we have adopted this policy to guide the management of trees, hedges and green spaces on village land.

The management of trees, hedges and green spaces in the Heddon on the Wall parish is the responsibility of Heddon on the Wall Parish Council, Northumberland County Council and Karbon Homes dependant on their location.

The policy takes into account the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (section 40) which imposes a biodiversity duty requiring all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity when carrying out their functions. And the Highways Act 1980 which requires that tree owners prevent trees or shrubs overhanging roads or footpaths.

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or as required by changes in legislation or community needs.

2. Scope

This policy relates to the felling or pruning of trees and management of hedges and green spaces on land owned or managed by Heddon on the Wall Parish Council.

3. Aims

- To protect the public and property from reasonably foreseeable hazards posed by trees and hedges.
- To conserve and promote local biodiversity, local character and visual amenity.
- To encourage a healthy and sustainable local tree population and prevent the unnecessary removal or damage of trees and hedges
- To protect Parish Council trees from unnecessary felling, pruning and avoidable damage to the trees above and below ground.
- Promote the planting of appropriate native and non-invasive species.
- Resolve disputes and complaints involving trees, hedges and green spaces in a fair and consistent manner.

4. Inspections

The Parish Council will regularly conduct ground-level visual checks of the trees hedges and green spaces, looking for evidence of safety concerns, hazards, disease and management requirements. Inspections will pay particular attention to trees that



are likely to pose the greatest risk, for example larger trees and those within falling distance of buildings and structures, playgrounds, roads and well-used footpaths.

Every three years (in line with best practice) we will ensure that a professional tree survey takes place and acted up where required.

The Parish Council will seek advice from a qualified tree surgeon or horticulturalist to support any action that may be taken.

5. Tree maintenance

Felling

The Parish Council may decide that felling is necessary for the following reasons.

- Proven safety reasons, including trees that are likely to cause harm because they are dead, dying, seriously diseased or otherwise structurally unsound.
- To prevent the spread of harmful diseases or pests in accordance with UK guidance.
- As part of a site-specific plan to promote biodiversity or visual amenity, including thinning of trees to promote healthy and sustainable growth.
- In exceptional circumstances, where a tree is growing in an unsuitable location where it is likely to become a legal nuisance, cause unreasonable damage, or prevent the intended use of the land. Examples would include trees growing from within a boundary wall or similar feature, trees on allotments, trees close to the edges of buildings or paths. These trees are often self-sown and vigorous, growing opportunistically in concealed positions.

Pruning

The Parish Council may decide that pruning is necessary for the following reasons.

1. The four reasons stated within the 'tree felling section.
2. To remove branches obstructing or reducing visibility on roads or footpaths.
3. To promote healthy tree growth and development.

Where tree works don't align to the categories within felling and pruning and the work is not essential but can be desirable, often to benefit adjacent land or property owners would be classed as "cosmetic" work. The Parish Council is unlikely to approve or fund these works on their property. Examples would include crown lifting, thinning or reduction.

If residents wish to carry out the work at their own cost, they will need this to be agreed by the Parish Council ahead of any work being carried out by a specialist arboricultural contractor.



Replanting

Where a tree has been felled the Parish Council will replant one or more trees on its land, close to the original if practicable.

6. Hedges and green spaces

The hedges will be regularly maintained in line with specifications detailed in our maintenance contracts. Members of the public are not allowed to plant and maintain these spaces unless this is with prior agreement through the volunteer opportunities to ensure that risk assessments and health and safety precautions are duly considered.

7. Specialist approach

All work will be carried out by a specialist contractors appointed by the Parish Council with any relevant Tree Preservation Orders dealt with in the correct manor.

8. Resident responsibilities

Where residents have allowed their trees or hedges to become overgrown to the point that they impede public walkways, they will be asked to address this. Northumberland County Council and Highways Agencies will be involved where required.

9. Complaints and reports

Where a member of the public makes a complaint or report about a tree, hedge or green spaces, the Parish Council will direct the request to the relevant agency. Where the Parish Council are responsible for the area, this will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting unless there is immediate risk in which case it will be addressed as a matter of urgency.

10. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every three years (or sooner where legislation and regulatory changes are made), with any amendments to be agreed at the relevant Parish Council Meeting. All policies will be made available on the Parish Council website where you can find all contact details of the Parish Council clerk.

Policy controls		
Version	Date agreed	By
1.0	8/11/2023	Developed and agreed by Heddon PC