



# Ross-on-Wye Town Council

## Tree Policy

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Protocols for tree work on Council owned land and consideration when making Planning recommendations regarding work to trees

Trees in parks and public open spaces are managed to reflect the context of the site and their type, age and condition. Trees in parks generally have more room to grow compared to street trees. They usually grow to their full height and spread. Ongoing maintenance includes removing dead wood, formative pruning ( to remove problems in tree form when the tree is young, thus avoiding expensive problems later ), removing low branches from pathways and removing trees when they come to the end of their safe and useful life.

Whenever a tree is removed it should be replaced in a timely fashion. Trees will be selected and sited to complement and enhance the park or green space and to maintain tree cover in these areas. Old tree stumps can be retained to provide habitat.

There are approximately 20 000 cemeteries and churchyards in England, encompassing approximately 10 000 hectares of land. This represents an extremely valuable ecological resource. The closed churchyard for which the Council is responsible for contains large specimen trees which should be protected and preserved. The site is a valuable place that can offer a sense of calm and relaxation.

Whilst regrettable, in a number of circumstances trees need to be felled. The decision to fell a tree should not be taken lightly. Usually, trees should only be felled because it is the only option to reduce the risk of harm to an acceptable level ( e.g., dead, dying or diseased specimens ). Substantial pruning of a tree can allow decay organisms to enter exposed and vulnerable tissues and can also weaken the structure of the tree. Pruning of a healthy tree will usually cause it to respond by producing vigorous new growth. This can cause imbalance and greater risk of wind throw. Older trees do not tolerate pruning as well as younger ones. Any substantial pruning can pose significant risk to the survival of the tree, particularly in species which are not naturally tolerant of cutting. Pruning should therefore be avoided for reasons other than reducing the risk to people and property. Pruning for any other reason should be exceptional and at the discretion of the Town Council. The Council should not recognise crown reduction, lopping, topping or pollarding as a general form of management of trees. Such work can be detrimental to the health and future safety of trees and should only be undertaken in exceptional cases. A tree should not be felled because it is considered to be too big or too tall. A tree is not dangerous because it is considered to be too big for its surroundings. Other problems would need to be present e.g. disease, rot etc., for it to be considered dangerous. Where a tree is removed, a tree replacement order should be made. Where possible bird and bat boxes should be sited on trees.

All decisions will be taken on a case-by-case basis taking a risk-based approach and in line with observations made through the annual Tree Inspection Report

*Adopted by Full Council February 2022*