



## **MEDSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL PARISH COUNCIL OWNED TREES & HEDGES POLICY**

1. Medstead Parish Council (hereinafter referred to as “The Council”) is responsible for the management of all trees located on land it owns. These include trees located at the following locations:
  - i. Medstead Village Green;
  - ii. Medstead Cemetery and extension;
  - iii. The Knapp, South Town Road;
  - iv. Pond area at junction of Upper Soldridge Road with Grosvenor Road;
  - v. Pond and surrounding wooded area at corner of Five Ash Road & Lymington Bottom Road;
  - vi. Wildflower Meadow, land at Cedar Stables, off Trinity Hill.
  
2. The Council has a statutory duty of care under the Health and Safety Act 1974 and the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 and 1984 to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that its trees are safe and do not pose a danger to the public.
  
3. The Council is committed to protecting its tree stock in public places. This will be achieved by a continuous programme of tree surveys and maintenance where the Council will, every three and a half years, instruct a qualified arboriculturist to carry out a hazard evaluation survey on the trees on its land. This time interval allows inspections to be alternated between summer and winter when trees are in full leaf or bare, as certain diseases are easier to spot in one state or the other. If possible, the Council will plant one tree in the parish for each one removed and will select a range of native tree species for new and replacement planting taking into account their suitability for each site.
  
4. The Council’s aim is to keep as many trees as possible and does not remove trees with minor defects, only trees that are identified as being dead, dying or diseased. It may remove parts of a tree that have died or where there is a very high risk of falling branches causing harm or damage due to their size.
  
5. The Council’s priority in the management of its trees will be that of public safety whilst maintaining the health and longevity of the trees. Where a tree constitutes a demonstrable hazard to people or property, the appropriate work will be undertaken to minimise or remove the hazard.
  
6. Trees on Council land will be encouraged through minimal intervention to develop in a natural form characteristic of their species. Work on trees will be carried out to the highest standards of arboriculture practice and contractors will be required to comply with all relevant health and safety legislation.

7. The Council will not unless legally obliged to do so, undertake works to otherwise healthy and well-formed trees for reasons of:

- i. Overhanging branches*
- ii. Size and height*
- iii. Shedding of leaf, seed, fir, cone, twig, flower, litter, fruit debris and general vegetation detritus*
- iv. Loss of light or shading of gardens, rooms or solar panels and the like Interference with transmitted signals*
- v. Reduced security by virtue of concealment or reduced visibility*
- vi. Bird droppings and vermin*
- vii. Interference with Openreach and utility company services*
- viii. Vandalism e.g. thrown apples Hay fever/allergies*
- ix. Dampness, algae or moss*
- x. To create or reinstate private views.*

8. Under Common Law, provided the tree is not subject to a preservation order or within the conservation area, landowners may prune unprotected trees or hedges overhanging their land as far as their boundary without the consent of the tree or hedge owner. If the resultant works cause instability or lead to a decline or death of a tree, liability will attach to the person arranging or carrying out the work. They may not trespass on neighbouring land to carry out the work and must offer to return the cut material (arising). However, the Council will not accept arising from work on its trees and these should be disposed of responsibly.

9. The Council will ensure that trees on its land are retained wherever possible and given appropriate protection from the effects of development and construction activities including the installation of underground facilities.

10. Where possible, the Council will notify local residents in advance where major tree works will take place adjacent to residential properties.

11. **Hedges** are an attractive feature and provide an important habitat for a wide range of wildlife species, offering food, shelter, protection from predators, wintering and nesting sites and act as transit corridors. It is recognised that trimming hedges too severely can have a detrimental impact on their wildlife value. Where there is no negative impact on health and safety (e.g. visibility for motorists), the Council aims to have taller, bushier hedges. However, the Council will ensure that hedge growth does not impair the safety of highway users nor impede their access. Unless for urgent health and safety reasons, hedge cutting will not be conducted between May and August.