

Palgrave Parish Council



Tree Risk Management Strategy 2025

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1. Mission Statement

Palgrave Parish Council owns The Green situated in the heart of the village on Priory Road, and the Cemetery off Millway Lane, both of which are rich in trees, which bring considerable benefits to the local community. The risk associated with these trees is extremely low.

However, to meet our legal obligations, reassure public concerns, ensure a joined-up approach and to comply with industry best practice. Palgrave Parish Council (PPC) has a formal policy to outline how and why it manages the risks from trees.

A survey will be carried out on a 4-yearly cycle for the majority of our trees. In the intervening 2 years, a 'Recommendation of Works' will be carried out highlighting any immediate concerns.

Palgrave Village green's tree stock is a valuable resource and asset, situated as it is in the very centre of the village. It requires managing, not just in relation to risk, but also more widely in terms of maximising the benefits related to trees, and the long-term viability of the tree resource.

The Council is reluctant to remove or carry out works to trees on land that it owns unless it is absolutely necessary for sound management reasons and / or good Arboricultural practice or for safety reasons.

Risk management must form an integral part of a wider process of strategic tree management.

2. Policy, Service Scope and Standards

This policy relates to those trees which grow on land which is owned or under the responsibility of Palgrave Parish Council. It is not designed to cover trees within private ownership.

This policy is not intended to cover the risks associated with direct or indirect damage to property (i.e. damage via tree related subsidence or by the physical incremental growth of the tree interacting with property). It is intended to cover the risks posed by the failure of trees, or parts of trees, with the potential to cause damage or injury.

This Tree Risk Management document will provide part of an audit trail of action taken in response to the potential risks posed by trees and will demonstrate that the Council has met its responsibilities and duty of care as a tree owner in a systematic and reasonable manner.

Palgrave Parish Council will manage its trees in such a way as to meet or exceed the minimum standards outlined by the accepted industry best practice documents. The Council will operate a prioritised system for managing the risk from trees whereby those trees which pose the greatest risk will be assessed and managed first.

The PPC Tree Risk Management Strategy helps to fulfil the Council's objectives for strategic management of the environment and a commitment to managing public safety.

3. The Benefits of Trees

The benefits trees can provide are well documented. These include significant improvements in air quality, mitigation of the effects of climate change, the management of storm water runoff, improving the perception of the local area, reducing crime levels, psychological and physical health benefits and bring about a sense of community. Trees are also essential wildlife habitats, contributing significantly to local biodiversity and creating urban green corridors for wildlife to use.

Trees can help improve health and attract investment to the area and give considerable visual interest throughout the year by their form, colour, leaves and fruits. Trees can help to break up harsh vistas and soften and give a sense of scale to our neighbourhoods.

Adopted 11 September 2025.

For review Sept 2027

4. The Risks from Trees

Trees pose a very low risk to people and property. Approximately 6 people a year are killed in tree related incidents. In relation to the number of trees within falling distance of people or property this equates to a very low likelihood of harm occurring.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) states that such a level of risk is broadly acceptable i.e. 1 in 10,000,000 risk of death. To put this low risk in context, there is a 1 in 16,000 risk of death associated with driving but we all still drive our cars every day and witness incidents all the time.

Unfortunately, the news reports and sensationalises every tree that fails heightening the concerns from the public, but car incidents barely get a mention in the press.

Despite this low risk, the law requires that the risks from trees are managed in a reasonably practicable manner.



5. Frequency of Inspection

There is little formal guidance on appropriate time scales or intervals for tree inspections. The industry consensus is generally that between 1 and 5 years is appropriate (The Department for Transport's 'Well Maintained Highways' (2016) recommends that highway trees require an Arboricultural inspection every 5 years).

Palgrave Parish Council will order a full survey every 4 years, with an interim 'Recommendation of Works' in the intervening 2 years. Reports will be logged and held on record by the Clerk.

Additional to this the PPC's appointed Tree Warden will carry out visual ad hoc inspections and report back on any immediate concerns.

It is clear from guidance that it is not essential for all trees to be proactively inspected. The key to a reasonable system is to prioritise those trees which pose the greatest risk and to focus resources on their management. Because of the very low risk that trees pose, it is reasonable not to individually inspect trees on low use sites.

6. Tree Works that Palgrave Parish Council will carry out on PPC Owned Trees

In maintaining our trees, we will:

- Remove dead, dying and dangerous trees
- Remove dangerous and damaged limbs
- Regularly inspect the trees both with our Tree Warden and an arboriculturist

It is our policy to survey trees on a regular basis, but if trees require work under this section, members of the public should contact the Parish Clerk : clerk@palgrave-pc.gov.uk. The trees will be inspected and if works are required this will be carried out as necessary.

7. Work that Palgrave Parish Council will NOT carry out to PPC owned Trees

We have no obligation to carry out the following tree works:

- Cut back branches overhanging private property
- 'Top' trees or remove branches to increase daylight or decrease height in relation to property
- Remove branches or trees affecting views or interfering with TV reception
- Remove branches or trees to prevent falling leaves, honeydew from aphids or other minor debris
- Remove roots from drains or repair root damage to structures, where the tree has not been clearly demonstrated to be the principle cause
- Remove branches or trees to prevent potential root damage to structures
- Remove branches nearly touching buildings, walls, roofs, fences etc

If members of the public would like tree work carried out as per this section, they should make their own arrangements as described below. The Parish Council reminds residents and land owners that pruning may be carried out on unprotected trees (i.e. not subject to a Tree Preservation Order) where they overhang your property, VERTICALLY in line with your boundary.

8. Carrying out Tree works yourself and Pruning Guidance

In common law, a property owner can cut back overhanging branches to the boundary of his/her property. All pruning material must not be thrown back over the boundary, as this could be classed as fly tipping.

The Parish Council would usually have no objection to property owners carrying out tree work or engaging a contractor at their own expense, provided that:

- Access is not gained onto neighbouring land or to a tree within that land; if access to our land or to a tree on that land is required, our permission must be sought.
- Where trees are in public community areas and access is required to carry out pruning, you will require written permission before carrying out such work from the community area.
- The tree is not situated in a Conservation area or protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).
- Any work done to a tree is not detrimental to its health or stability; for their own protection members of the public are advised to obtain advice from a qualified tree surgeon
- For tree pruning work, whoever does the work, it is carried out to an acceptable standard, in accordance with the British Standard Recommendation for Tree Work 3998:1989
- The property owner notifies us (before the work begins) of the proposed work and commencement date

The Council does not carry out work to privately owned trees

9. Tree Removal

The Parish Council will avoid felling trees unless it is necessary. Tree felling will usually be for the health and safety purposes, or to prevent the spread of serious diseases and pests. The Parish Council reserves the right to fell trees to prevent overcrowding, to improve habitats, to restore landscapes in line with site management or to remove a tree that is inappropriate to its location and has significantly detrimental impact on the appearance or amenity of a site. Remedial works will be discussed with and approved by the PPC as soon as is practical depending upon the urgency of the matter. Guidelines are as follows:

- Urgent - Immediate or as soon as reasonably practicable (generally within 24 -36 hours)
- High Priority - Up to 1 month
- Medium Priority - 2 month to 4 months
- Low Priority - 4 months to 12 months

10. Emergency Procedures

If a tree presenting a hazard is observed by a member of the public and is deemed potentially dangerous and constitutes an emergency, then the appropriate authority should be notified to enable a prompt response to be made.

An emergency would be classed as:

- Imminent danger to property or persons
- A blocked road resulting from a fallen tree

For trees that are causing imminent danger to property or persons please contact the Parish Clerk 07899 857351 clerk@palgrave-pc.gov.uk.

If you are in doubt as to the rights you may have or actions you are considering taking regarding trees owned or managed by the Parish Council, please contact the Parish Clerk to discuss before proceeding.

11 Record Keeping

All tree inspections will be properly recorded by the Clerk and the reports retained.

The date of inspection and the name of the contractor will be logged at each inspection, along with any relevant details relating to the condition of the tree, changes to site usage, or any necessary remedial works.