

Halesworth Town Tree Policy

January 2024 RK

September 2024 RK

Forward

Trees are an essential part of our environment and vital to the healthy living of humans other animals and plants. At a time of growing awareness of global climate change, trees and the care of trees is more important than ever. Trees are part and parcel of our towns biodiversity and as such cannot be separated from the environment in which it exists.

National policies identify trees and urban 'green spaces' as among the community's most valuable features.

EXAMPLE Millennium Green

The XXX charter recognises the right of every citizen to have access within walking distance to a good quality public green space

This policy and strategy sets out the council's approach to the management of its trees for the overall benefit of its residents, the council's commitment to protect, enhance and maintain trees in the town. It describes how this commitment will be delivered and measured.

Why are trees good for us?

Trees include individual trees from indigenous to non indigenous to ornamental, woodland, and hedgerow.

Trees play an important role within an urban environment. There has been extensive research in recent years demonstrating the significant benefits trees bring to our physical and mental health, our social and economic wellbeing, to biodiversity, to the air we breathe, and the soil beneath our feet.

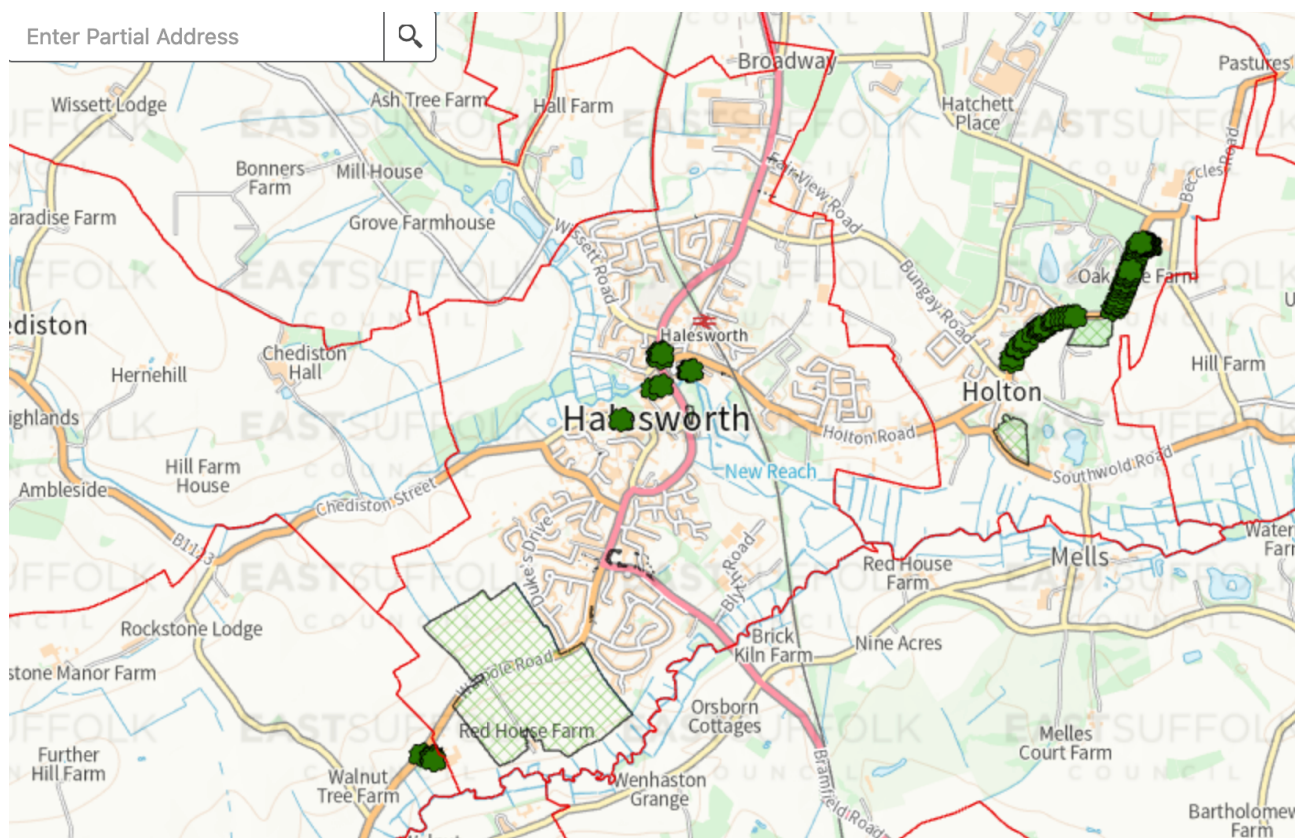
- They help offset the effects of heavy rainfall, helping to mitigate flood risk, and offset the urban heat island effect.
- They capture and store carbon and particulates which pose an increasing risk to human health.
- Trees bring beauty to the town but it is central to the management approach that they are not simply considered individually as aesthetic objects, but recognised as a key element of the town's green infrastructure essential to the quality of life in Halesworth
- Trees create an attractive environment where people will want to live
- Provide wildlife habitats
- Replenishing oxygen and absorbing greenhouse gasses

- Reducing particulate air pollution
- Reducing noise
- Contributing to energy conservation by reducing wind speed
- Providing shade
- **Provide** a link with the natural environment for local communities
- Our natural heritage - Trees form the largest and the oldest single living element in our natural environment.

For people

- **Trees** reduce everyday stress levels
- Contribute to the well-being of communities
- Bring beauty to the town
- Positively affect property values
- Create an attractive physical environment that encourages investment
- Creating a pleasant working environment for workers
- Creating an inviting place to visit

This Council has NOT declared a Climate Emergency
NOR declared Halesworth an Earth Protector Town.



Definitions/ Terms

Area defined

Map of Halesworth and environs, showing Parish Boundaries and TPOs

<https://mymaps.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0ec5fb549c7a42368c5174f3b517e81f>

Locations encompassed

- Cemetery
- Open spaces
- Roadsides/Highways
- Council owned land
- Private land/gardens

NOW AUDIT

While there is no overall audit of all trees, there are groups already defined

1. TPO trees

Norwich Road - TPO No. 255, 1998 Maple

Norwich Road TPO No. 255, 1998 Sycamore

Norwich Road TPO No. 255, 1998 Ash

Norwich Road TPO No. 255, 1998 Cyprus

Norwich Road TPO No. 255, 1998 Sycamore

Quay Street - Halesworth TPO No. 375, 2005 3 Copper Beeches (Elizabeth garden)

Thoroughfare back TPO No. 358, 2004 Conifer

Thoroughfare back TPO No. 358, 2004 Horse Chestnut (GONE)

Chediston Street TPO No. 387, 2008 Silver Birch

East Suffolk County Council Tree Preservation Order No. 35 Redhouse Farm, Walpole Road

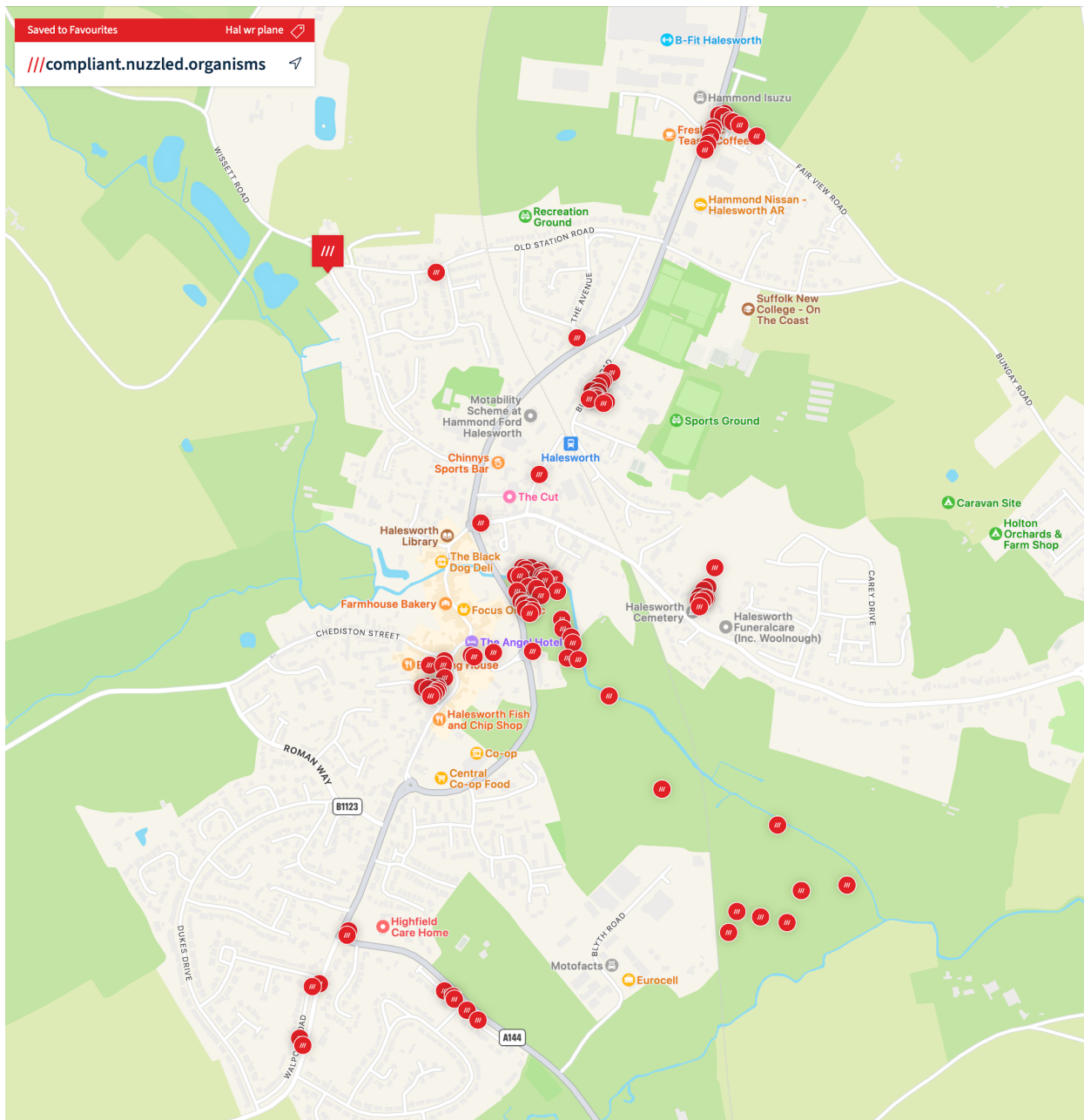
A guide to tree preservation procedures

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a756b9ee5274a3edd9a4c79/2127793.pdf>

2. Heritage Trees

Originally surveyed and defined by Richard Woolnough, then Linda Grey and Lisa Simmonds, (1980?) these are the among the oldest and most spectacular trees of our town. Many are in the Cemetery, but not all, with some on private land and common footpaths.

<https://kaliwood.wordpress.com/2019/09/19/halesworth-heritage-trees-a-walk-2019/>
NEW MAP



LINK TO NEW WEB PAGE WITH MAP AND IMAGES

NOW Canopy Cover

Tree canopy cover can be defined as the area of leaves, branches and stems of trees covering the ground when viewed from above. It is a two dimensional measurement of the spread of canopy cover over a given area. Repeat assessment of the canopy over time can provide an effective means of monitoring the tree population, setting targets and tracking the effectiveness of planting programmes.

Includes private and public space

eg Southend on Sea 2019 the canopy cover of the entire borough was measured at 12%. The cover ranged from a high of 23.3% in Belfairs Ward down to 8.5 % in Westborough Ward. This reflects the high density tree population growing in Belfairs Park and Nature Reserve as compared to the very urban nature of wards such as Westborough where hard surfaces are the predominant ground material.

In comparison with other studies (Urban Tree Cover, 2018), the canopy cover in Southend-on-Sea is below the national average of 17% which was estimated in the 320 towns and cities surveyed in the UK.

Policy remit

This policy sets out the Council's legal obligations as well as the challenges, priorities and plans for maintaining and developing its tree stock. This policy focuses on the management of land and trees owned by this Council. However, the Council also plays an important role in influencing the land-use and behaviour of people and organisations, including through making recommendations on planning decisions.

Challenges

- Insufficient succession planting in past years resulting in a high percentage of declining trees within the overall tree population
- Changes in climate require a greater diversity in tree type in order to mitigate loss and maintain current levels
- The urban environment is now a much harsher place for trees requiring high levels of management intervention in both maintenance of existing stock and the establishment of new trees
- The need for increased understanding and tolerance about living close to trees. People are passionate about trees but perceptions differ greatly from those who see all urban trees as a nuisance and liability to those who would preserve every tree at all cost
- Reluctance of local councils to plant larger trees on highways and council owned land. Oaks, Ash, Hornbeam, Maple are replaced with small cherry, crab apple and other 'decorative' and less 'intrusive' trees

Aims

All sections of this policy should be read in line with the following aims:

- Management of the Council's tree stock, including pollarding, pruning, coppicing and removing trees where this has overall benefit to the environment and tree stock
- Compliance with relevant planning and health and safety laws and trees will be managed accordingly.
- Provide a sustainable and improving tree stock, including through succession planting, to help address the climate emergency and have regard to biodiversity.
- Champion trees and the environment, including through influencing other parties (including through the planning system), entering relevant partnerships, developing Heritage Tree Walks, and taking advantage of relevant initiatives.
- Maintain and improve landscape quality in a sustainable manner and improve the quality of life for residents and visitors, including through tree management measures where appropriate to do so.

The Council reserves its right to exercise discretion in its management of tree stock, with due consideration of arborist or other expert advice where relevant, where this supports the aims above and where a net gain in tree stock is maintained.

Management of the tree stock

A risk-based system of tree management has been adopted which relies on a programme of inspection prioritised by potential hazard. This can be undertaken with the support of an arborist.

An annual inspection of all Heritage Trees and TPO trees, with a councillor and arborist.

A high-risk tree may be inspected more frequently

A tree with negligible risk inspected a maximum of five years after the initial survey and repeated as necessary.

A prioritised programme of tree work will be maintained, based on the inspections and with an emphasis on planned rather than reactive tree maintenance. The risk and nuisance to persons and property will be balanced against the environmental and other aims of this Policy.

The climate emergency and the environment

The Council will take measures to manage dead and dying trees and will actively seek to manage its tree stock to reduce and address disease risks. As part of the Council's commitment, it will replant any tree felled including in the course of arboricultural maintenance, with two trees and an additional two orchard trees.

Tree planting will be considered within all new environmental projects.

Public requests for works to council trees

Inheritance of Open Spaces and trees

MORE

Difference between East Suffolk / Suffolk CC / Halesworth Town Council ownership?

MORE

All of the Council's trees are on Council land. Many residents live close to trees and this proximity needs to be considered and managed. Within the town's tree population there are a number of common sources for complaint:

- Physical size
- Overhanging branches
- Shade
- Blocking sunlight
- Leaf and fruit fall
- Sticky deposits
- Interference with utilities
- Affecting TV and satellite signal reception
- Fear of tree safety
- Root encroachment related matters
- Preventing car parking on verges
- Obstructing a view

The above 'problems' which lead to a high volume of requests for tree work from the general public are not considered 'nuisance' in legal terms and the Council, as with any private tree owner, is not obliged to take action in these circumstances. It is a widely held perception that the Council has increased responsibilities in law in this respect. This is not the case. The requirements in law are the same as any private tree owner.

Environmental and biodiversity are a high priority for this Council and tree maintenance resources are finite. The Council will manage its resources with a priority to the environment, health and safety and the effective and sustainable management of its tree stock. Adopting a prioritised programme of tree work will mean that risk assessed lowest priority work will not be attended to until such times as the risk rating changes. Lowest priority work will generally refer to requests received from the public. In many cases it is not possible to resolve issues to a resident's satisfaction. However, the Council will communicate its position clearly to the resident. The Tree Policy will be published on the Council's website. The Council reserves its discretion to deviate from the generality of this position, having considered advice from an arborist where relevant and where it is satisfied that the prioritising of resident concerns does not adversely prejudice the important tree stock management and environmental objectives of this policy.

Nurturing Hedgerows

Hedges support up to 80% of our woodland birds, 50% of our mammals and 30% of our butterflies. They enable wildlife to move through the countryside, protect soils from wind erosion, and provide shelter for people and livestock and habitats for pollinators. . When planting your hedge, try to let some trees grow through the hedge to their full height.

Tree policy statements (TPS) - LOWESTOFT

These tree policy statements should be read in line with the aims of this Policy:

TPS1 - We will take all reasonable steps to fulfil duties and obligations to ensure tree safety for public and property.

TPS2 - We will take all reasonable steps to fulfil duties and obligations to ensure trees do not cause damage to property or life

TPS3 - We will take all steps to ensure that trees continue to contribute to the development of biodiversity, landscape quality and environmental enhancement.

TPS4 - We will generally only remove trees where there are justifiable arboricultural, structural or legal reasons. (see TPS6)

TPS5 - In delivery of the arboricultural service, we will provide the highest standards of tree care by adherence to relevant British standards and best practice guidelines.

TPS6 - All requests for arboricultural works will be assessed after consideration of advice from an Arborist or other relevant expert. Priorities for inspection shall be on a risk-assessed basis and urgent health and safety issues will be prioritised and action taken by the Clerk. In general, TP9 and TP10 will apply and the Council reserves its right to consider or refuse these and other works. Tree planting or felling will be referred to the Assets, Inclusion and Development Committee and Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee for their consideration. Each committee will make a recommendation direct to Full Council that will make a decision. Where trees have Tree Preservation Orders they will be referred to the Planning Committee for consideration.

TPS7 - A public safety risk assessment of each tree inspected shall be undertaken. This assessment will shape:

- If works are required
- The specification for works where required
- The priority of works to be completed
- Targeting of finite resources allocated for arboricultural maintenance.
- Communicating where no work is deemed necessary within the terms of this Policy.

We will institute and maintain a risk-based system of tree management relying on a programme of inspection prioritised by potential hazard.

TPS8 - We will not authorise members of the public to undertake works to council owned trees. This does not affect common law rights.

TPS9 - We will not undertake any tree pruning works or remove trees in direct response to any natural or seasonal phenomena, for example:

- falling leaves
- sap exudation, (honeydew)
- falling fruits, nuts or seeds
- bird droppings
- blossom
- reduction or increase moisture to gardens

- sucker growth
- germinating seeds from council owned trees
- blocked or obstructed drains, gutters, flat roofs from tree deposits and leaves
- presence of algae, moss build up

TPS10 - We will not ordinarily carry out tree pruning or removal directly attributable to:

- TV or satellite signal reception;
- Obstruction of direct sunlight or man-made lighting during any part of the day
- blocking or obstruction of a view from a residence
- obstruction of car parking on verges

TPS11 - We will try to develop and promote a better understanding and awareness of the value of trees to

the community and communicate our strategy for the management of the urban tree stock on the LTC web site and through service request responses.

TPS12 - We will undertake selective tree pruning for trees identified as obscuring the function of CCTV

cameras at the request of the Policing Authority.

TPS13- We shall pay attention to local distinct landscape character and shall afford particular attention to

the safe retention of veteran trees and trees with a particular landscape heritage value.⁵

Lowestoft Town Council Tree Policy. Adopted April 2018. Reviewed May 2019, May 2020, February 2021, May 2021, May 2022

and May 2023. Next review date May 2024

TPS14 - We will explore and develop opportunities to directly utilise or market the arisings (woodchips,

logs and timber) generated by arboricultural operations for greater environmental sustainability and to

provide service improvement.

TPS15 – We will carry out an audit and establish a database of all trees owned by LTC coupled to an IT

based management information system.

TPS16 – We will encourage community involvement in carrying out and maintaining the audit through both

our “Friends” groups, local schools and other interested community organisations.

TPS17 – Once the audit is completed we will publish on the LTC website a catalogue of the Council’s Tree

as well as labelling trees with information about the species and age etc.

TPS18 - We will maintain the tree population by replacing each tree felled with two replacement trees and

two additional orchard trees unless there are compelling reasons why this should not be the case.

TPS19 - We will develop the town’s tree population. The population will be expanded with new tree

planting where possible and practical.

TPS20 - New trees will be planted of both indigenous and non-native origin to establish a wide diversity of species to best anticipate the continued effects of climate change. Indigenous tree species used will complement existing species to maintain the local distinct landscape character and be sourced to have local provenance where possible

TPS21 - Newly planted trees will be provided with protective guards where appropriate, and if required grills, and will receive systematic post-planting maintenance until they are established. Newly planted trees shall be watered, as required, for up to two years following establishment.

TPS22 - Private sponsorship of commemorative tree planting shall be encouraged in areas deemed suitable under the terms of landscape design best practice.

TPS23 - We will actively monitor the tree stock for infection and spread of tree diseases and take action as specified to control the spread of diseases that may affect the well-being of the tree stock. We will maintain professional links to monitor and identify a programme of preventative and remedial works, advice and notification.

TPS24 – We will actively consider trees for their local, environment and aesthetic importance both on council property and in the wider community and, where needed, seek to place Tree Preservation Orders on them following the normal procedures.

TPS25 - We will ensure that the management of trees and their vital importance to the environment are considered and embedded within all future strategies, policies, planning and council plans where applicable.

TPS26 – We will consider the importance of the environmental impact when considering both planning applications and Neighbourhood Planning and encourage the planting of trees whenever feasible.