



**Brundall Parish Council**

**In association with**



**The Broadland Tree Warden Network**

# **A Tree Strategy for Brundall**

**1 September 2021**



# **A Tree Strategy for Brundall**

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# 1. Supporting Statement from the Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

- 1.1. Most parishioners will be aware of the ever-growing volume of law and policy on environmental issues. Whilst this includes the natural world generally, there is a great deal of emphasis not only on protecting but also enhancing our store of woodlands, hedgerows and veteran trees. Local authorities nationally are committing to planting millions of trees in the coming years as part of attempts to offset carbon emissions.
- 1.2. However, there is more to this than simply planting trees. They must be the right trees. They must be planted in the right place. They must be watered and generally cared for in their early years. They must be valued and protected in subsequent years and they must be retained in a safe condition.
- 1.3. Worldwide, estimates suggest that there are around three trillion trees, of which around 15 billion are felled annually and five billion planted. Obviously, we must address this imbalance if we are to halt the current destruction of our natural environment.
- 1.4. Today our trees face more threats than ever before. Pests and diseases appear rampant. More than 25 million elm trees (*Ulmus* spp) have died in the UK alone from Dutch elm disease, caused by the fungus *Ophiostoma novo-ulmi*, leaving very few mature elms in Britain or much of continental Europe. Those that we have are small and rarely live beyond thirty years.
- 1.5. The common ash *Fraxinus excelsior* is our third most common tree, but ash dieback *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* threatens to kill 90% of them, just as it has across continental Europe.
- 1.6. Our national tree, the oak *Quercus robur*, is not safe either with the onset of AOD (acute oak decline) and OPM (the dangerous oak processionary moth).
- 1.7. The tree stock here in Brundall compares favourably with the national average. Nevertheless, it must be appreciated that trees help with the quality of our air, contribute to our food supply and our rural economy and support our health and well-being. Therefore, it can be no surprise that Norfolk County Council and Broadland District Council is aiming to increase our tree stock through the combined efforts of the county and district councils, parish and town councils, volunteers and residents.
- 1.8. Brundall Parish Council has responded by creating this Tree Strategy. We can all work together to keep Brundall green and make a positive contribution to the environment. I urge you all to support us.

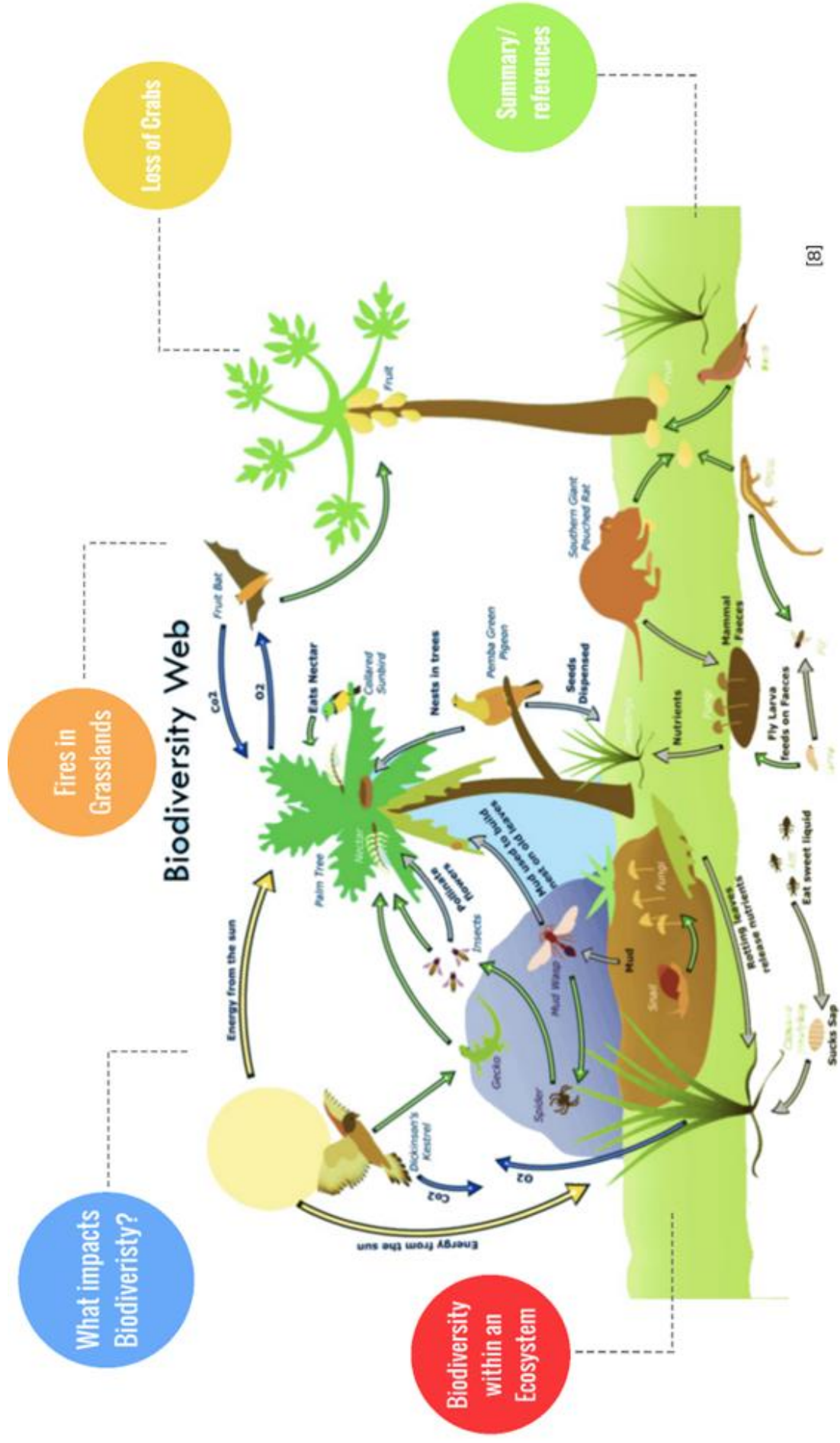
**Kevin Wilkins, Chairman of Brundall Parish Council**



## 2. Background

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- 2.1. So, let us consider the question “why are trees important?”
- 2.2. Firstly trees make our village more attractive and desirable. What would The Street look like without that wonderful canopy of mature trees? It welcomes the visitor to Brundall and is soothing when returning home from work.
- 2.3. Trees absorb air pollution and noise, making our village a safer and more pleasant place to live.
- 2.4. Trees intercept rainfall and reduce run-off and flooding. With the modern fashion of hard surfacing drives etc this is becoming ever-more important.
- 2.5. Trees provide shade and shelter for people and animals. We all know that ambient temperatures are rising and therefore we need protection from the sun’s potentially dangerous ultra-violet rays. In particular, we have a primary school in our village and trees can give our younger generation protection.
- 2.6. Trees create a variety of habitats for wildlife. The Parish Council has already embarked on a number of projects that can offer such habitats. Low Farm Wood is an excellent example. Not only providing a lovely shaded walk, but you will notice that the formative thinning of the wood, necessary after a number of years of neglect removed no material at all from the site. All felled material was either chipped to provide a surface for the pathways or, in the case of larger diameter “logs”, stacked to provide a variety of habits from shelter for small creatures to a food larder where birds can feed on the insects.
- 2.7. Trees help to emphasize the changing season and, in so-doing, provide an excellent learning resource for our younger generation, not to mention a guide for gardeners.
- 2.8. Trees produce fruits, nuts and seeds, not only producing food for humans but also for our wildlife.
- 2.9. Unfortunately, trees produce firewood, offering us a cheap form of heating but, alas, also allowing us to deposit increased levels of carbon into our fragile atmosphere.
- 2.10. Trees help to combat climate change by sequestering CO<sub>2</sub> and that is why governments worldwide was us to plant more.
- 2.11. Trees are a source of inspiration and have health and well-being benefits. Take a walk in Low Farm Wood or Brundall’s excellent Church Fen Local Nature Reserve. Breath in the air, listen to the wildlife and feel the tensions of modern-day life rapidly being released form your troubled soul.
- 2.12. Trees have far more importance than you may at first imagine but the answer is not simply to plant more trees. What point is there in planting trees if we are constantly removing them ... mainly because they are in our way? It is not simply for the construction of new roads or railways, or sites upon which to build new homes. We are all guilty of wanting to remove trees because we would rather plant flowers in the garden and the tree casts shade. Or maybe the tree is just where you wish to site your children’s paddling pool.
- 2.13. Brundall Parish Council fully appreciates to benefits of protecting and enhancing our existing tree stock.





### 3. Positive Action to Protect and Plant Trees

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- 3.1. Throughout Norfolk, medium sized elm trees are still dying from Dutch elm disease, caused by the fungus *Ophiostoma novo-ulm*. The latest victims of a disease which has killed millions of trees in Norfolk and the rest of the UK. Probably many hundreds in every parish and town.
- 3.2. As ash dieback *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*, an Ascomycete fungus, is rapidly becoming more prevalent, many more dead trees are appearing. Ash is the third most common species in the UK and this parish is no exception. While the elms that die are relatively small trees and often go unnoticed, there are many large ash which are susceptible and their loss will be a very significant visual loss to the village.
- 3.3. We must also consider the fact that many of our infected larger ash trees will need to be made safe and as the wood in the tree becomes so brittle tree surgeons face a dangerous, and therefore expensive, job of reducing their size or removing them altogether. As there is currently no financial assistance available to cover the cost of such work, home and land owners may well be tempted to delay such work, even at the risk to others.
- 3.4. The only native tree not currently at risk from pest or disease is the sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, but unfortunately it is widely and very wrongly considered a weed. Perhaps we have to change our minds.
- 3.5. Broadland District Council has the power to place a Tree Protection Order (TPO) on a tree that they consider under threat from human activity and, indeed, many of Brundall's trees are subject to TPOs. TPO's are considered in the following section, 4. Trees and the Law.



## 4. Trees and the Law

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- 4.1. The benefits of trees are many and varied and are not described in detail here, but importantly the retention and planting of trees on new developments significantly improves the quality of life of the people who subsequently occupy the development, work within it, or visit it.
- 4.2. The Broadland District Council Tree Officer will carefully consider development proposals in order to determine whether the retention or removal of trees is sustainable and in keeping with the relevant planning policies. If only small changes to planning proposals are required, it is sometimes possible at this point for developers to amend their plans in order to retain trees that would otherwise be removed.
- 4.3. The Broadland Tree Warden for Brundall, in association with the Parish Council, considers all planning applications, highlighting those which may have an impact on trees and commenting to the Planning Authority where appropriate.
- 4.4. After considering the proposals the Broadland District Council Tree Officer will give advice to the Planning Officer for consideration within the wider planning context. Part of this advice will often focus on whether a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) should be made, or whether tree related planning conditions should be imposed, if the application is to be granted consent. The Tree Officer will often also be the officer who considers soft landscaping and tree planting schemes for new development.
- 4.5. Within the TPO system if an application is made to carry out works to trees protected by a TPO then it is normally the Tree Officer who makes the decision whether the works should be permitted or refused.
- 4.6. On all matters relating to trees, the Parish Council will seek the advice of the Broadland Tree Warden for Brundall.

### 4.7. Tree Planting

- 4.7.1. Even well-intentioned tree planting may raise objections and be in conflict with the interests of others, although few involved in planting schemes plan to break the law. It is important, therefore, that tree planting is carefully planned.
- 4.7.2. On your own land you can plant what you want, where you want, provided the growing tree does not damage third parties and their property. A tree planted close to a boundary is likely to overhang it, which may be a nuisance, but does not in itself constitute an infringement of the neighbour's property. Nevertheless, it may be prudent, before buying a tree, to consider the likely branch spread at maturity.
- 4.7.3. It is essential to gain the owner's permission when trees are to be planted on someone else's land. That applies equally to publicly- and privately-owned land.
- 4.7.4. Under the Highways Acts it is necessary to obtain a licence from the Highway Authority before planting along a roadside. Responsibility for any trees planted under licence will normally rest with the Highway Authority, but it must be confirmed that responsibility is accepted.
- 4.7.5. Many householders object not only to loss of light, but also to loss of a view and loss of television reception. There is no legal right to a view across the land of a third party. Similarly, there is no legal right to receive television signals across somebody else's land. Nevertheless, such potential conflicts should be considered when judging the suitability of a location for tree planting.
- 4.7.6. Not everybody loves trees. Those who dislike trees complain about falling leaves and twigs, fruit and other debris such as bird droppings and honeydew. While so far there have not been any successful prosecutions of a tree owner for debris falling from a tree, it is sensible to try to avoid disputes. For example, large-leaved trees cause more problems than those with small leaves, hard and fleshy fruits are more likely to generate concerns than small wind-blown seeds.

## **4.8. Dangerous Trees**

- 4.8.1. The safety of trees is nearly always the responsibility of the owner of the land on which they grow but there are some exceptions, such as when a rental agreement requires the tenants of a property to manage the trees.
- 4.8.2. The tree owner or manager has a 'common law' duty of care to 'take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which they can reasonably foresee would be likely to injure their neighbour'.
- 4.8.3. The tree owner also has a duty under the Occupiers Liability Acts to take reasonable steps to ensure visitors or trespassers on their land are safe. In practice this means that if a tree fails and causes damage to a person (even if trespassing) or property then the tree owner may be liable. The chances of making a claim, however, would usually depend on whether the owner had been negligent; for example, if the tree was obviously unsafe through damage or disease and they failed to act to prevent the incident occurring. Therefore it is sensible for the owner of trees to have them regularly inspected by a competent arboriculturist.
- 4.8.4. The best way to deal with a dangerous tree on neighbouring land is to write to the tree owner as soon as possible, politely expressing any concerns the complainant has and asking them to have the tree inspected by an arboriculturist. However, the complainant may be required to cover the cost of the inspection if the tree is found to be safe. If a satisfactory conclusion still cannot be reached then it may be helpful to ask a third party who is known to both parties to mediate before relationships break down completely. As a last resort it may be possible to obtain a court injunction requiring the owner to deal with the tree, or in limited circumstances Broadland District Council may be able to help using their discretionary powers under the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976.

## **4.9. Overhanging Trees and Encroaching Roots**

- 4.9.1. It is generally best to discuss concerns with the tree owner beforehand, but under established 'common law', a person should be able to prune branches and roots that grow over their boundary, with or without the owner's consent subject to the conditions of any Tree Preservation Order that may be in effect. There is also a legal duty, however, to take 'reasonable care' whilst undertaking the works, and a person may be liable if they damage their neighbour's tree, or cause it to become unstable. It is therefore unwise to undertake works without first consulting an arboriculturist. The parts cut off from the tree remain the property of the tree owner, so they should be offered back, but the tree owner cannot be made to dispose of them and the complainant must be prepared to cover the cost of that.
- 4.9.2. If overhanging trees or encroaching roots have caused damage to a property then the owner should contact his or her building insurer for advice. The insurer will usually contact the owner of the trees asking them to abate the nuisance and will arrange for any repairs to be undertaken. If damage has not yet occurred, but a person believes there is a foreseeable risk that the trees will cause damage in the future, then he or she should discuss such concerns with the owner and write to them asking them to have the trees inspected by an arboriculturist. Copies of any letters sent should be retained as they prove that such concerns have been highlighted, should damage occur in the future.

## **4.10. Tree Protection**

- 4.10.1. There are a number of ways that trees can be protected by law within the UK. These include Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), Conservation Areas (there are no Conservation Areas currently designated in Brundall), the Felling Licence system, Restrictive Covenants and planning conditions within the planning system. It is important to find out from Broadland District Council whether any legal restrictions apply before work is undertaken on trees as a person may be liable to prosecution if permission is not first obtained. The Broadland Tree Warden for Brundall will be able to advise.



## **4.11. Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)**

- 4.11.1. TPOs are administered by Broadland District Council in its role as the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and are made to protect trees that provide a significant amenity benefit to the area. All species of tree can be protected (but not hedges, bushes or shrubs) and a TPO can protect anything from a single tree to all trees within a defined area or woodland, but no species is automatically protected by a TPO (not even an ancient oak!).
- 4.11.2. A TPO makes it a criminal offence to cut down, top, lop, uproot, wilfully damage or wilfully destroy a tree protected by that Order, or to cause or permit such actions, without the authority's permission. Anyone found guilty of such an offence is liable to prosecution, and an unlimited fine can be imposed for destroying or removing a protected tree without consent from the LPA.
- 4.11.3. To make an application to carry out works to a protected tree, an application form must be completed and submitted to Broadland District Council. No work can be undertaken until the written permission of Broadland District Council has been obtained.
- 4.11.4. A Tree Preservation Order is a written order made by a local planning authority. In the case of Brundall that is Broadland District Council, The Broads Authority or Norfolk County Council. The Order, in general, makes it an offence to cut down, top, lop, uproot, wilfully damage or wilfully destroy a tree protected by that Order without the authority's permission.
- 4.11.5. The purpose of a Tree Preservation Order is to protect trees which bring significant amenity benefit to the local area. This protection is particularly important where trees are under threat.
- 4.11.6. To find out if a tree is protected by a Tree Preservation Order the Parish Council will consult the LPA. Similarly, the Broadland Tree Warden for Brundall will advise the Parish Council if permission has been obtained to carry out works on a protected tree.
- 4.11.7. The Parish Council will consult the Broadland Tree Warden for Brundall if there are trees which it thinks should be protected by a Tree Preservation Order.
- 4.11.8. Tree Preservation Orders come into effect immediately. Provisional protection comes into effect as soon as Broadland District Council makes the Order. The authority will then need to confirm the Order to provide long-term protection.
- 4.11.9. The Broadland Tree Warden Network Co-ordinator will immediately forward a copy of a new TPO to the Tree Warden for Brundall and the Clerk to the Parish Council. The authority will write to those who may have a right to work on the tree, generally the tree owner and sometimes others, such as tenants and neighbours. Copies of new Orders are also available for inspection at the Broadland District Council offices.
- 4.11.10. Objections against or support for a new Tree Preservation Order must be made by writing to Broadland District Council within the period it allows for comment (usually 28 days), identifying the tree or trees in question and giving the reasons. The authority will take all comments into account when deciding whether or not to confirm the order. The authority can also modify an order when it confirms it, for example to exclude some of the trees.
- 4.10.11. Broadland District Council does not become responsible for looking after protected trees. Owners remain responsible for trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders, their condition and any damage they may cause, but the authority's permission is usually required before any work is carried out to the trees. The authority may be able to offer help and advice on how the trees should be managed.
- 4.11.12. If a person wants to work on a tree covered by a Tree Preservation Order, then apart from special exceptions (listed in 4.11.15. below) the owner (or his or her agent) must seek permission from Broadland District Council by submitting a standard application form. The form is available from the Broadland District Council Planning Portal. It is important to clearly specify the work to be done and provide information to support the case (such as professional advice on the health of the tree and, in cases of alleged subsidence, professional evidence on the soil, the structure affected and the tree).

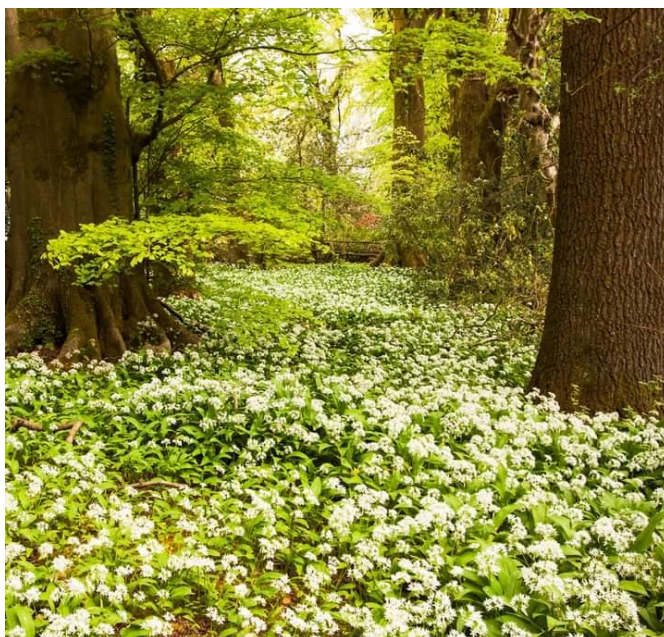
- 4.11.13. Before making an application, the applicant may find it helpful to consult a tree surgeon or arboricultural consultant to help clarify what needs to be done. It may also be helpful to refer to the Broadland District Council website for information on tree protection in the local area.
- 4.11.14. A Forestry Commission felling licence is not needed to fell trees in gardens. However, for trees outside gardens, it may be necessary to apply to the Forestry Commission for a felling licence, whether or not they are covered by a Tree Preservation Order.
- 4.11.15. Broadland District Council's permission to work on a tree covered by a Tree Preservation Order is always needed, except for:
- a) cutting down trees in accordance with one of the Forestry Commission's grant schemes, or where the Commission has granted a felling licence;
  - b) cutting down or pruning a tree
    - which presents an urgent and serious safety risk – however you must give written notice (by letter or email) of the proposed work to Broadland District Council as soon as practicable after the work becomes necessary;
    - which is dead – however you must give at least five working days written notice (by letter or email) of the proposed work to Broadland District Council;
    - which is directly in the way of development that is about to start for which detailed planning permission has been granted;
    - in a commercial orchard, or pruning fruit trees in accordance with good horticultural practice;
    - to prevent or control a legal nuisance (you may find it helpful to check first with a solicitor);
    - in line with an obligation under an Act of Parliament;
    - by or at the request of certain organisations listed in the regulations; and
  - c) removing dead branches from a living tree.
- 4.11.16. If a person carries out work on a protected tree without permission, then if that person deliberately destroys a protected tree, or damages it in a manner likely to destroy it, he or she could be liable to an unlimited fine. A person could also be fined if he or she causes or permits such work. Other offences can lead to fines of up to £2,500.
- 4.11.17. A replacement tree has to be planted:
- a) if you cut down or destroy a protected tree in breach of a Tree Preservation Order, or because the tree is dead or dangerous;
  - b) if Broadland District Council gives you permission to cut down a protected tree but makes replanting a condition of its consent;
  - c) in most cases where the Forestry Commission grants a felling licence.
- 4.11.18. Local planning authorities have legal powers to ensure that you plant a replacement tree when required.
- 4.11.19. If an application to carry out work under a Tree Preservation Order is refused, or somebody objects to the conditions imposed by Broadland District Council then you can appeal to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in writing within 28 days of receiving the local planning authority's decision. Broadland District Council will give you the address. The Secretary of State may allow or dismiss the appeal, or vary the original decision.
- 4.11.20. It is possible to claim compensation if an application to carry out work under a Tree Preservation Order is refused or conditions are imposed. In certain circumstances which are set out in the legislation you can seek compensation from the local planning authority for loss or damage which results from the authority refusing consent or granting consent with conditions. However, the legislation sets limitations and strict criteria that must be met.
- 4.11.21. Claims should be sent to the local planning authority within 12 months of its decision, or within 12 months of the Secretary of State's decision if you appealed.



- 4.11.22. Trees are protected in a conservation area as follows. Normal Tree Preservation Order procedures apply if a tree in a conservation area is already protected by a Tree Preservation Order, but if a tree in a conservation area is not covered by an Order, you have to give written notice (by letter or e-mail) of proposed work to the local planning authority, describing what you want to do, at least six weeks before the work starts. This gives the Authority an opportunity to consider protecting the tree with a Tree Preservation Order.
- 4.11.23. If a person deliberately destroys a protected tree, or damages it in a manner likely to destroy it, he or she could be liable to an unlimited fine. A person could also be fined if he or she causes or permits such work. Other offences can lead to fines of up to £2,500. So if you are not sure about what you should do, check with the Broadland District Council.
- 4.11.24. Trees on development sites can be protected by a Tree Preservation Order or by a condition attached to a planning permission, or both. A planning condition may also require trees to be planted, which may then be protected by a Tree Preservation Order.
- 4.11.25. Getting a Tree Preservation Order imposed on trees on a site cannot stop planning permission being granted or prevent approved development being carried out. However, Broadland District Council will consider the risk to protected trees when deciding planning applications.
- 4.11.26. Once detailed planning permission is granted, felling that is directly required to enable the development to go ahead may be carried out.
- 4.11.27. You can only cut down or cut back protected trees if they are directly in the way of development which is about to start and for which detailed planning permission has been granted.
- 4.11.28. If you have outline planning permission or if the development does not require planning permission (a small home extension for example) you must still apply to Broadland District Council for permission under the Tree Preservation Order in the normal way.

## **4.12. Restrictive Covenants**

- 4.12.1. A restrictive covenant is a promise by one person to another, (such as a buyer of land and a seller) not to do certain things with the land or property. It binds the land and not an individual owner. This means that the restrictive covenant continues over the land or property even when the current owner(s) sells it to another person.
- 4.12.2. Covenants or other restrictions in the title of a property or conditions in a lease may require the consent of a third party prior to carrying out some sorts of tree work, including removing trees and hedges. This may be the case even if TPO, Conservation Area and felling licence regulations do not apply. In such cases it may be advisable to consult a solicitor.



## 5. Trees and the Planning System

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- 5.1. Under the UK planning system, local planning authorities (LPAs) have a statutory duty to consider the protection and planting of trees when granting planning permission for development. The effect of development on trees, whether protected (for example by a TPO or Conservation Area) or not, is a material consideration that is taken into account when considering planning applications.
- 5.2. The amount of information required to enable the LPA to properly consider the effects of development proposals on trees varies between stages of the planning process and in relation to what sort of development is proposed. Table B.1 of British Standard 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations provides advice to both developers and LPAs on an appropriate amount of information that will need to be provided either at the planning application stage or via conditions (see below).
- 5.3. Planning conditions are used by LPAs as a means of securing the retention of trees, hedgerows and other soft landscaping on sites during development and for a period following completion of the development. If planning conditions are in place, then anyone wishing to undertake work to trees shown as part of the planning condition must ensure they liaise with the LPA and obtain any necessary consent or variation.





## **6. Action to Address Tree Loss and Promote Planting \_\_\_\_\_**

- 6.1. When applications are made to fell trees and agreement is given, the Parish Council will, whenever possible, request that a suitable replacement tree, or trees, are planted, either on or near the felled tree or on an alternative site to be agreed with the owner. For every tree lost then as far as possible a new tree will be planted.
- 6.2. The Parish Council will seek an agreement with Broadland District Council (as Local Planning Authority) that, where reasonable, a replanting condition will be included in all consents which are granted in the Parish. An agreement will be sought with Broadland District Council in respect of replacement planting.
- 6.3. The Parish Council will take an active interest in ensuring that all trees, shrubs and hedges which are planted on development sites (as a condition of planning consent) are complimentary to the area, actually planted and that they survive. The Parish Council will notify the District Council of non-compliance with planting conditions on development sites.
- 6.4. The Parish Council will take an active role in finding suitable sites for planting new trees and have an annual tree and shrub planting programme. The relatively low cost of this will be met from a variety of sources including the Parish precept or Community Infrastructure Levy, S106 funds, or the Broadland Tree Warden Network planting budget. Unlike high tiers of Local Government, their precept is not presently capped. As tree planting is a relatively low-cost activity and parish councils are close to the 'grass roots' of local affairs, they are well placed to take tree planting initiatives. In some location's shrubs may be preferable to trees. The Parish Council will identify opportunities for tree planting in the parish, help with funding packages for tree planting (if practicable) and involve the Broadland Tree Warden for Brundall where possible.
- 6.5. If ready identification of sites for tree planting proves difficult, a local survey will be conducted to identify suitable planting sites. Notices will be placed in local publications asking the public to offer up or identify sites which could then be explored to check their suitability. The Parish Council will then endeavour to produce a parish map showing sites which are considered suitable. Some sites may be more suitable for new shrubs rather than trees, in locations under overhead cables for example. Working in co-operation with local landowners, the Council will endeavour to identify and encourage further opportunities for tree planting in the wider area of the Parish.
- 6.6. The Parish Council will continue to value the appointment of a Broadland Tree Warden for Brundall who will be asked to advise on suitable actions and lead on the co-ordination of tree planting projects.
- 6.7. The Parish Council will use reasonable endeavours to support the creation of new community woodlands and the maintenance of existing community woodlands and community orchards in the parish. The Parish Council will promote, publicise and support the creation of new community woodlands and community orchards and the maintenance of existing ones in this parish.
- 6.8. The Parish Council will, wherever practical, engage with Brundall Primary School, the local Scouting groups and other volunteer organisations to ensure that the importance of trees is spread as widely as possible, but whilst observing the right tree in the right place.
- 6.9. Brundall Parish Council shall only plant native species trees of known biosecure provenance in order to obviate this risk of spreading pests and diseases. The temptation for a parishioner to dig up an oak sapling in their garden and plant it out in the wider environment must be resisted at all times as that will possibly be the ideal vehicle for the spread of problems. The untrained eye cannot possibly be expected to identify a pathogen on a seedling.

## 7. Management of Existing Trees

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- 7.1. Brundall Parish Council is aware that in the past the planting and management of trees in the parish has been neglected, particularly by residents on their own properties. In particular hedges adjacent to public footways have been allowed to become overgrown and encroach into the public footway.
- 7.2. It is not uncommon for even a “managed” hedge to encroach 0.5m into the footway or for a hedge to overhang a footway encroaching into the headroom of pedestrians.
- 7.3. Such neglect presents a serious hazard to footway users, particularly the elderly and infirmed as well as mothers pushing prams and pushchairs
- 7.4. Equally as serious is the number of hedges on corner plots that obscure the junction sight splay of drivers using the highway.
- 7.5. Brundall Parish Council will encourage all parishioners to ensure that their hedges are maintained and not allowed to encroach on public spaces. Any parishioner failing to respond will be reported to the local authority and/or highway authority for action to be taken.
- 7.6. Brundall Parish Council shall inspect all of its own trees, shrubs and hedges annually to ensure safety, health and lack of nuisance. Such inspections shall be carried out by suitably qualified personnel and any action recommended by the inspection shall be promptly carried out by suitably qualified personnel.
- 7.7. Inevitably, any Tree Strategy must address the threats posed by tree pests and diseases and therefore we shall address them now. In the coming years Brundall’s trees will suffer from some of these and, indeed, some that have yet to be identified. The Parish Council, whilst ensuring the safety of its own tree stock, will help and advise parishioners on any necessary actions on their own trees.
- 7.8. The Parish Council works closely with the Tree Warden appointed to the parish by the Broadland Tree Warden Network and will continue to support the valuable work of that Network of volunteers. The Tree Warden will advise both the Parish Council and parishioners on matters regarding tree pests and diseases.
- 7.9. In his introduction to this document, Parish Council Chairman Kevin Wilkins highlighted some of the threats currently being faced by our tree stock and it is worth considering them further here.
- 7.10. Ash dieback is now rampant in the UK and Brundall is no exception. Whilst there is currently no cure for the disease, nor is there likely to be, scientists have recommended that we retain diseased trees for as long as it is safe to do so. Rather than felling them at the first signs of the disease, tree owners are asked to have the tree reduced in size to a safe state and then the main trunk of the tree retained for as long as possible. Such a retained trunk can make a wonderful bird table!
- 7.11. AOD (acute oak decline) is increasing and we see the crowns of our wonderful trees gradually die back. Again, there is no known cure but felling of the tree at the first sign of symptoms can never be justified.
- 7.12. Perhaps the most worrying tree pest is currently OPM (the oak processionary moth) *Thaumetopoea processionea*. OPM is established in southern, central and western Europe as far north as Great Britain, northern Germany and The Netherlands. In the UK, it is established in most of Greater London and in some surrounding counties in south-east England. Whilst it has not yet been recorded in Norfolk, it has been recorded in northern Essex and eastern Hertfordshire and Suffolk is currently under alert. OPM is expected to migrate closer to Norfolk during 2021-2022.
- 7.13. OPM is a tree pest because its caterpillars feed on the leaves of several species of oak trees. Large populations can strip whole oak trees bare, leaving them more vulnerable to other pests and diseases, and to other stresses, such as drought.



7.14. Older caterpillars develop tiny hairs containing an irritating protein called thaumetopoein, from which the species derives part of its scientific name. Contact with the hairs can cause itching skin rashes and eye irritations, as well as sore throats and breathing difficulties in people and animals. The risk of exposure to these hairs is highest in May and June.



7.15. The caterpillars can shed the hairs when threatened or disturbed. The hairs can be blown by the wind and they accumulate in the caterpillars' nests, which can fall to the ground. They can stick to trunks, branches, grass and clothing as well as to equipment, such as ropes, used by tree surgeons and forestry and ground-care workers.

7.16. Among the groups most vulnerable to the health hazards are curious children; curious pets; people who work on or close to oak trees; anyone spending time close to infested trees; and grazing and browsing livestock and wild animals.

7.17. Any sightings of OPM must be reported immediately to the Broadland Tree Warden for Brundall who will confirm the outbreak before immediately reporting it to Forest Research via immediately via the TreeAlert website.

7.18. All arisings from any tree work carried out by or on behalf of Brundall Parish Council will be disposed of in an environmentally friendly fashion, for example by retaining as log piles to provide habitats or by chipping.

7.19. Under no circumstances shall burning of arisings be carried out on Brundall Parish Council owned sites as burning results in heat sterilisation and desiccation of the soil in the immediate area with the obvious disastrous effects on the site soil ecosystem of bacteria and invertebrates etc. Biological control over the area will have vanished.

7.20. Burning wood is not CO<sub>2</sub> free; it releases carbon, stored over the previous decades, in one quick burst. Smoke forms when wood or other organic matter burns. The smoke from wood burning is made up of a complex mixture of gases and fine particles (also called particle pollution, particulate matter, or PM). In addition to particle pollution, wood smoke contains several toxic air pollutants including benzene, formaldehyde, acrolein and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).

7.21. The biggest health threat from smoke is from fine particles, also called fine particulate matter or PM<sub>2.5</sub>. These microscopic particles can get into your eyes and respiratory system, where they may cause burning eyes, runny nose and illnesses such as bronchitis.

7.22. Fine particles can make asthma symptoms worse and trigger asthma attacks. Fine particles can also trigger heart attacks, stroke, irregular heart rhythms and heart failure, especially in people who are already at risk for these conditions.

7.23. Any trees, shrubs or hedges removed shall be replaced, not necessarily at the same site, as soon as possible with native species of known provenance.

## 8. Rewilding

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- 8.1. Rewilding of housing estate amenity areas, grass verges and other public areas is growing in popularity as the value of such practice become more widely appreciated.
- 8.2. Broadland District Council and Norfolk County Council are both currently seeking further opportunities for rewilding of their sites and Brundall Parish Council supports the practice.
- 8.3. Rewilding can help reverse species extinction, tackle climate change and improve our overall health and wellbeing.
- 8.4. Today nature in Britain is in serious trouble. More than half of our species are in decline and 15% is threatened with extinction. We have already hunted all of our top predators to extinction. Native woodlands cover a mere 2.5% of our land. Life has been torn from our seas to meet unsustainable demand.
- 8.5. Nature is a part of us. It is our life support system: the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, the energy that sustains us. We cannot live without it. All plant and animal species play a role. When they disappear, when we disturb natural processes, our life support system starts to stutter and fail.
- 8.6. 15% of species in Britain are threatened with extinction. Rewilding is an attempt to reconnect and reset, to reverse species extinction and to help nature flourish on a large scale. It is a chance to mitigate the worst effects of climate change. Our lives depend on behaving differently and embracing nature. We must think big and act wild.
- 8.7. It has been calculated that restoring and protecting native woodland, peatbogs, heaths and species-rich grasslands over a total of six million hectares could sequester 47 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. This is more than a tenth of current UK greenhouse gas emissions
- 8.8. Rewilding helps wildlife adapt to climate change. Rewilding key areas and connecting them up through a mosaic of nature-rich habitats will allow wildlife to move and habitats to adapt as climate zones shift north. This has the potential to save a significant number of species from climate driven decline or extinction.
- 8.9. Rewilding reverses biodiversity loss by marking a change in direction, moving from continued managed decline to restoring the abundance of Britain's wildlife and its missing species. We know nature will bounce back on land and in seas, rivers and lakes, but only if we take the right actions to help it.
- 8.10. Rewilding improves our health and wellbeing. More nature is better for all of us, providing us with clean water, flood defences, food, healthy soils, breathable air, and good health. It's important that we work to ensure everyone has access to wilder nature, even in our urban areas.





## 9. Conclusion

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- 9.1. There can be little doubt that Brundall is a fine parish and can rightfully be referred to as “green”. The tree stock is healthy and diverse, but that position is now challenged.
- 9.2. The inevitable demand for housing means that many fields and open spaces are becoming large housing estates and although developers/architects ensure that such developments are created with a cursory number of trees, there is no guarantee that those trees will be allowed to reach full maturity.
- 9.3. Brundall Parish Council realises that the parish is rapidly changing and if it is to play a role in absorbing CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere then action is necessary today ... and trees are the best way the parish can do that.
- 9.4. This Tree Strategy sets out Brundall Parish Council's commitment to both conserve and increase the parish tree cover and its biodiversity by committing to plant the right trees in the right place and ensuring that they become the veteran trees of the future.
- 9.5. This Tree Strategy cannot provide carbon neutrality for Brundall on its own. The Parish Council and parishioners must be prepared to adjust their ways of life. That may be very difficult but the alternative is, quite frankly, unthinkable.
- 9.6. This Tree Strategy is a starting point and, if it is accompanied by other sympathetic Parish Council policies and changes in parishioners' attitudes, it will help to ensure that Brundall continues to be a wonderful parish in which to live.

