

Cholsey Parish Council

Tree Risk Management Plan.

Introduction

Organisations such as Local Authorities must ensure public safety, whilst at the same time maintaining a natural and environmentally diverse landscape. It is only reasonable that organisations and landowners manage their trees so that their land is relatively safe for people to visit who can reasonably expect not to be harmed.

The following Tree Risk Management Plan has been developed by Cholsey Parish Council following current guidance from the National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) in their document 'Common Sense Risk Management of Trees'.

A 'Tree Risk Management Plan' (TRMP) is, in essence, a pro-active tree survey system that identifies the issues of management and records the way in which trees are assessed and managed so that a realistic response to the issue of tree risk and management is given.

It is a systematic approach that can help to demonstrate that the Council has dispensed its duty with 'reasonable care' and takes appropriate action as necessary to protect the general public.

Despite how proactive a tree inspection regime is, trees are living organisms and their circumstances and conditions can alter over relatively short time frames. In some cases decline or the causes of failure are not always obvious and, even with a proactive inspection regime in place, it will not always be possible to predict when a tree might fail. The implementation of a TRMP will not provide a zero risk environment.

Cholsey Parish Council's TRMP is underpinned by these 5 principles;

- trees provide a wide variety of benefits to society
- trees are living organisms that naturally lose branches or fall
- the overall risk to human safety is extremely low
- Cholsey Parish Council have a legal duty of care
- Cholsey Parish Council take a balanced and proportionate approach to tree safety management

Tree Safety Strategy

By a "strategy", we mean a plan that guides management decisions and practice, in a reasonable and cost-effective way, typically covering three essential aspects:

- zoning: appreciating tree stock in relation to people or property (see table below)
- formal tree inspection: assessing obvious tree defects, the frequency will be every 28 months for red zone and approximately, every 5 years for green zone.
- managing risk at an acceptable level: identifying, prioritising and undertaking safety work according to level of risk as identified in the formal tree inspections.

Risk Zones Areas

The trees which should come under 'Red Zones' are the trees near houses, roads, play areas, benches and those areas that have high levels of public use.

The trees in areas which do not fall into these categories should be categorised as 'Green Zones'

Ultimately, the trees in 'Red Zones' should receive more regular checks and have any recommended work carried out by a suitably qualified tree surgeon as soon as possible and take priority over trees in 'Green Zones'.

NB Maps showing the different areas are in appendix.

Millennium Wood

Where a woodland or copse is to be surveyed it is not cost effective to survey, record their data and tag each tree. Therefore, the process for a copse or woodland will consist of a walked survey though the woodland noting when it has been surveyed. If features of a tree that require remedial works are identified, then the tree should be tagged, and the works recorded against that tag number. The tag ensures that the specific tree is easily identified, and the remedial works carried out on the correct tree.

Table of Risk Zone areas

	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Number of Trees</u>	<u>Frequency of survey</u>
<u>Recreation Ground</u> <u>Whitehead Meadow</u> <u>Jubilee Field</u>	Red Zone	139	Every 28 months
<u>St Mary's Burial Ground</u>	Red Zone	87	Every 28 months
<u>The Forty</u>	Red Zone	2	Every 28 months
<u>Ilges Lane Allotment site</u>	Red Zone	4	Every 28 months
<u>The Millennium Wood</u>	Green Zone	Originally 80	Every 54 months?

Inspections

- 1) Informal observations of trees which are essentially those day-to-day observations of trees made by owners and employees of the area with a reasonable local knowledge of the trees and location and see them during the course of their daily lives and work. While not going out of their way to make an assessment of the condition of the tree, they are nonetheless aware of it and any changes that may occur. Informal observation may be considered reasonable and appropriate and reports of problems by staff or members of the public are a fundamental part of informal observations and should be acted upon.

Frequency of inspection: informal observations contribute significantly to public safety, being important for deciding when action is needed and when more formal assessment is appropriate. they are generally on-going and undertaken as a given part of daily life on a site with trees and public access.

- 2) Detailed inspections may be undertaken by an appropriately competent person, experienced in the field of investigation that is to be carried out. Whoever is commissioning the detailed inspection should satisfy themselves as to the suitability of the inspector's qualifications, experience and professional indemnity and public liability insurance. A specialist involved in conducting a detailed tree inspection should be able to demonstrate the reasonable basis for allocating risks according to priority and identify cost-effective ways of managing those tree-related risks.

Frequency of inspection: Detailed inspection of a tree will normally be undertaken every 28 months, giving an inspection in full leaf and in winter dormancy. Alternatively, if the tree is a special tree it may be placed on a regular inspection regime that is determined by its location and the risk it poses.

- Inspections will cover the protected species under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 and any evidence of bats will be investigated. Where evidence of birds nesting is found no work will be carried out until the nesting season is over.
- The Council will respond to enquiries from the public within ten working days and emergency calls as soon as is practicable given the circumstances of the case.
- Maintain a programme of proactive tree inspections to ensure the risks to people and property from Council owned trees are as low as reasonably practicable.
- All identified works necessary to alleviate health & safety concerns will be undertaken following risk assessment inspections.

Managing Risks

Reducing risks by maintaining the health of trees and actioning the detailed inspection report as soon as possible.

Ways to reduce risks in well-used areas include:

- deterring informal parking beneath trees; damage to roots may not be apparent for many years and increases risk of failure
- re-locating facilities such as play equipment, seats, picnic tables, information boards, commemorative plaques,
- re-routing paths and tracks where legally allowed
- redesigning mown paths in areas of long grass, a proven method of directing people away from high-risk zones
- placing structures and assembly points beyond the falling range of trees.

Effective ways of deterring access area:

- planting brambles and thorny shrubs
- using logs or piles of deadwood
- allowing grass to grow
- leaving brushwood around the tree
- temporary exclusion in adverse weather conditions

Keeping Records

Records, including maps, provide the basis for safety management reviews and, in the extremely rare event of an accident, can support evidence of reasonable tree management. It is not necessary to record every tree inspected. However, records of trees presenting a serious risk and requiring treatment are useful, as is a record of how they have been treated. When inspections are carried out, records can demonstrate that the owner or manager has met a key component of their duty of care.

Other useful ways of demonstrating reasonable assessment and management of trees include recording recommendations for work and when tree work has been carried out.

General

The Council will resist the removal of any tree unless it is:

- i) dead, dying, or diseased
- ii) identified for removal following a risk assessment procedure or planning consent.
- iii) a tree causing an obstruction to a public highway, public right of way, where the obstruction cannot be removed by pruning the tree or other reasonable measures.
- iv) a tree causing a legal nuisance to an adjoining property, where pruning would not address the problem. Felling would only be acceptable when justified by the facts of the case and where pruning would not remedy the problem.
- v) circumstances where pruning has been undertaken to remedy a severe problem and proved to be unsuccessful.
- vi) thinning out young and developing trees following principles of best arboricultural practice.

The Council will also resist;

- vii) unnecessary pruning of the Cholsey village tree stock, whilst ensuring resources are allocated to remedy health & safety concerns.
- viii) pruning works undertaken by the Council will follow best arboricultural practice and where possible be scheduled, so as not to be detrimental to the tree species involved.

Lesley Caswell

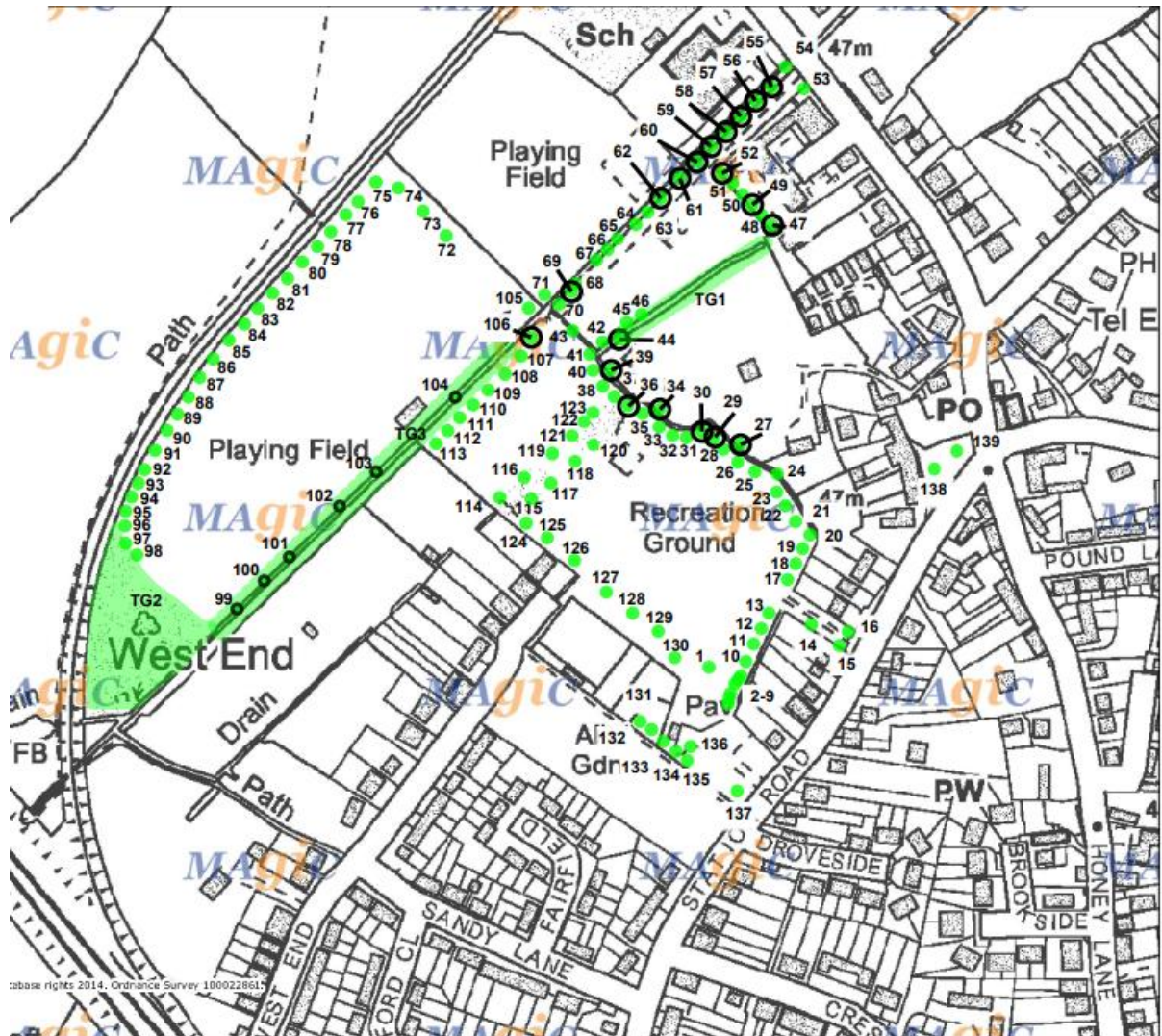
Estate Manager

Cholsey Parish Council

22/05/2024

Appendix

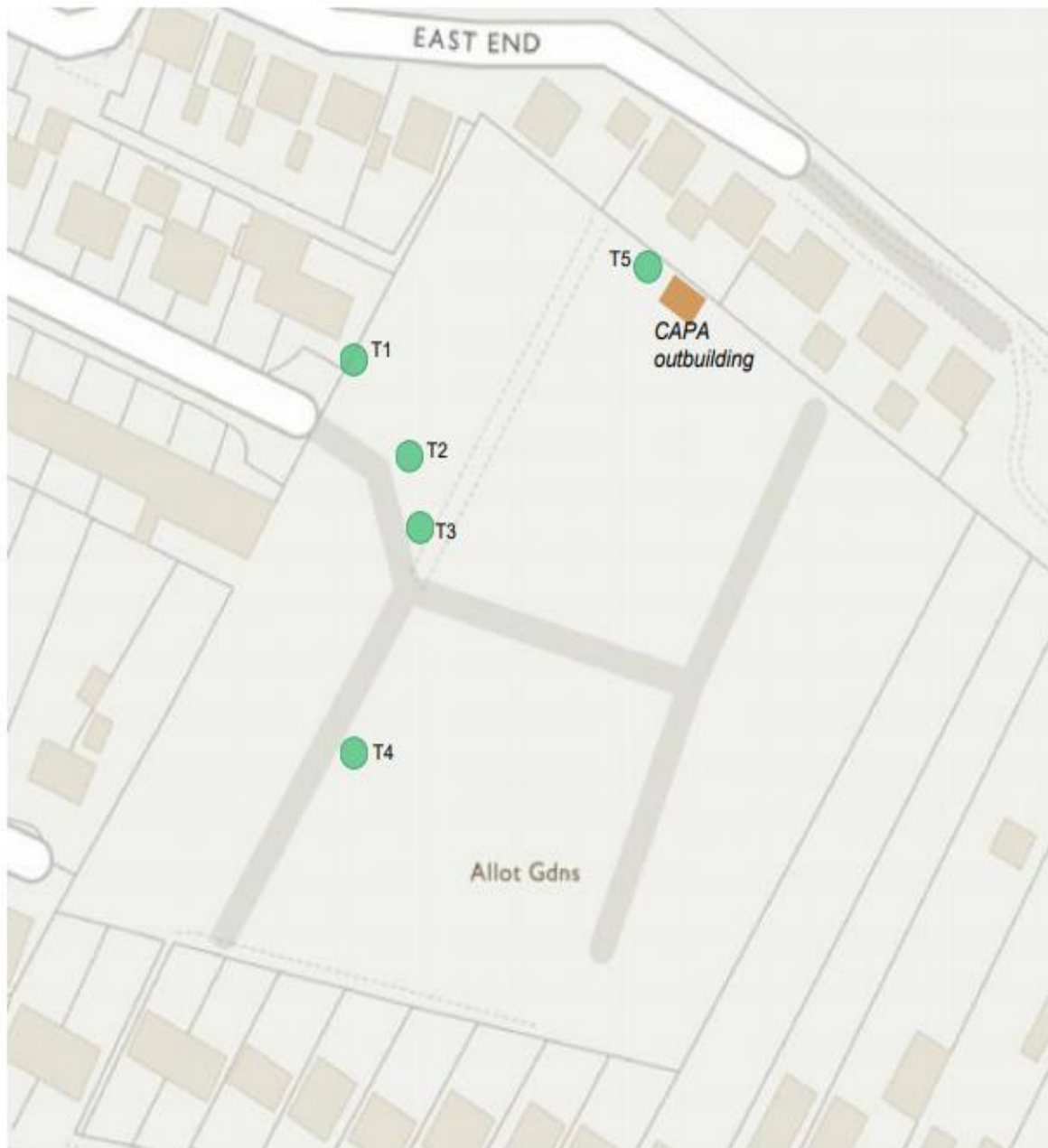
Recreation Ground, Whitehead Meadow, Jubilee Field Tree Map (2022)



St Mary's Church Tree Map (2022)



Ilges Lane Allotment Site Tree map (2022)



T1 – self seeded sycamore now felled beginning 2024.

Millennium Wood

Original Planting of trees

