

# **Tree Policy for Ash Parish Council**

## **Background**

### **Why are trees important?**

- a) They make our village more attractive and desirable
- b) Absorb air pollution and noise
- c) Intercept rainfall and reduce runoff and flooding
- d) Provide shade and shelter for people and animals
- e) Create a variety of habitats for wildlife
- f) Help to emphasize the changing season
- g) Produce fruits, nuts and seeds
- h) Produce firewood
- i) Help to combat climate change by sequestering CO<sub>2</sub>
- j) Are a source of inspiration and have health and well being benefits

### **Why should Ash Parish Council (PC) take positive actions to protect and plant trees?**

Throughout the county medium sized elm trees are still dying from elm disease. These are the latest victims of a disease which has killed millions of trees in Somerset and probably many hundreds in every parish and town.

As ash dieback disease also becomes more prevalent over the next few years we are likely to see many more dead trees appearing. The ash is the most common species over much of England and this area is no exception. While the elms that die are relatively small trees, there are many large ash which will be susceptible and the loss of these will be visually a very significant loss to the Village or the Parish.

## **Action to address continuing tree loss and promote tree planting**

- 1) When applications are made to fell trees and agreement is given, the PC 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.

**Action: For every tree lost then as far as possible a new tree will be planted.**

- 2) The PC will seek an agreement with the local district council (as Planning Authority) that where reasonable a replanting condition will be included in all consents which are granted in the Parish.

**Action: An agreement will be sought with the District Council in respect of replacement planting.**

- 3) The PC 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.

**Action: The PC will notify the District Council about non-compliance with planting conditions on development sites.**

- 4) The PC 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 or S106 funds. 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. Local volunteers may be prepared to help plant the trees. In some locations shrubs may be preferable to trees.

**Action: The PC will identify opportunities for tree planting in the parish, help with funding packages for tree planting (if practicable), and involve the community as volunteers where possible.**

- 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 PC 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 wires for example.

**Action: Working in co-operation with local landowners, the Council will endeavor to identify and encourage further opportunities for tree plantings in the wider area of the Parish.**

- 6) The PC will consider the appointment of a dedicated volunteer Tree Warden – who might or might not be a member of the PC.  
**Action: The PC will consider the appointment of a volunteer Tree Warden to inform the Council about tree matters, advise on suitable actions and lead on the co-ordination of tree planting projects.**
- 7) The PC 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.  
**Action: The PC will promote, publicise and support the creation of new community woodlands and community orchards and the maintenance of existing ones in this parish.**