

West Suffolk Council Tree Management Policy

Appendix 4: Current tree stock – historic SEBC areas

Trees previously under the management of St Edmundsbury Borough Council can be categorised into the following seven areas:

- trees in parks and open spaces
- trees in residential areas
- woodlands and tree belts
- village and rural trees
- trees in cemeteries and churchyards
- car park and estates trees
- veteran trees

Trees in parks and open spaces

The council owns 335 hectares of parks and open spaces. These include: 46 formal parks and recreation grounds; country parks at Nowton (Bury St Edmunds), East Town (Haverhill) and West Stow. There are a number of new parks and open spaces in new developments on the western side of Haverhill and the outskirts of Moreton Hall awaiting adoption. Adoption of these areas will include the management of the trees which stand within them.

There are an estimated 8,000 individual open growing trees and approximately 225,000 woodland trees in council parks and open spaces. The nature of the tree populations at the different parks and open spaces is as variable as is the character of the sites themselves.

Of greatest interest in tree terms are:

- Nowton Park with its 23 hectares of majestic Victorian tree belts, the avenue of some 98 magnificent lime trees and a developing arboretum containing many unusual species.
- Hardwick Heath with its 250 year old cedars and other fine, mature specimen trees.
- Abbey Gardens with its historically well maintained collection of some 250 individual trees, including several unusual and particularly interesting specimens. These include the Turkish Hazel (*Corylus colurna*), Fern Leaved Beech (*Fagus sylvatica Heterophylla*), False Acacia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) and Weymouth Pine (*Pinus strobus*) – all planted in the 183s - and a rare native female black poplar which is even older.
- East Town Park, which, again, has large, mature tree cover, including another fine Lime and Horse Chestnut avenue.

Within the borough there are a number of newer parks and open spaces, which vary considerably in size. Within some of these sites there is scope for additional tree planting.

For the tree population of our parks and open spaces two important factors emerge:

- They are often the most significant trees in an area with many sites containing landmark trees or old and unusual specimens that may also be of exceptional wildlife value.
- The trees are fundamental to each park's structure having a profound effect on their appearance and, consequently, their users' leisure experience.

Trees in residential areas

Individual trees have been planted as part of the designed landscapes of the council's residential areas for many decades.

In June 2002 the council's housing stock and the soft landscaped areas on housing estates transferred to Havebury Housing Partnership. Under the terms of the transfer agreement Havebury Housing became responsible for the management of approximately 1,200 trees.

The council however still has management responsibilities for those trees which are located on many communal pieces of council owned land. It is estimated that there are approximately 3,000 individual trees in such locations.

Woods and tree belts

Local well-managed woodland provides many benefits that improve the quality of life for the council's residents and visitors.

Eight hundred years ago a much greater proportion of the land in historic St Edmundsbury was covered in woodland. This was an important resource as it provided materials for everyday life, including fuel and timber for buildings. Today 10 per cent of this land is covered by woods. One third of this is coniferous and two thirds is broadleaved.

Although a considerable proportion (23 per cent) of woodland cover within historic St Edmundsbury is ancient semi-natural woodland most of the woodland, under the council's management, is more recently planted, ranging from 18th and 19th century to modern tree belts. Some grew up spontaneously as past land uses were abandoned.

West Suffolk Council is responsible for the management of 134 hectares (74 sites) of mainly broad-leaved woodland and tree belt (79 sites), which amounts to 4 per cent of the council's land. The following table provides an inventory of council-managed woodland. In the list, tree belt is defined as a wooded area of less than 15 metres depth (and, therefore, unlikely to be eligible for funding under the Forestry Commission's England Woodland Grant Scheme); wood is any woodland site of greater than 15 metres depth.

Management Quarter	Ward	Site	Management type	Area (ha)
East	Abbeygate	Cullum Road and Grindle Gardens	Tree belt	0.19
East	Abbeygate	Saxongate Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	Wood	1.56
East	Abbeygate	Tannery Drive	Tree belt	0.10
East	Eastgate	Bury Football Ground	Tree belt	0.64
East	Eastgate	Compeigne Way Open Space	Tree belt	0.21
East	Eastgate	Ram Meadow Car Park	Tree belt	0.03
East	Eastgate	The Crankles	Wood	0.98
East	Eastgate	Unicorn Place	Tree belt	0.21
East	Haverhill East	Chalkstone Way	Tree belt	0.48
East	Haverhill East	East Town Park	Wood	3.14
East	Haverhill East	Osprey Road	Tree belt	0.09
East	Haverhill East	Railway Walk (large area of scrub) (LNR)	Wood	5.20
East	Haverhill East	Railway Walk - Manor Road to Reeds Lane (LNR)	Tree belt	0.83
East	Haverhill East	Shetland Way	Wood	0.70
East	Haverhill East	Sturmer Road	Wood	0.25
East	Haverhill East	Sturmer Road	Wood	2.85
East	Haverhill East	Wratting Road	Tree belt	0.28
East	Moreton Hall	Appledown Road	Wood	4.04
East	Moreton Hall	Barton Road / Orterwell Road junction	Wood	0.30
East	Moreton Hall	Bederic Close (Rear)	Wood	0.52
East	Moreton Hall	Bedingfield Way	Wood	2.07
East	Moreton Hall	Beech Plantation	Tree belt	0.08
East	Moreton Hall	Bluebell Avenue	Wood	1.75
East	Moreton Hall	Carmichael's Clump (LNR)	Wood	0.12
East	Moreton Hall	Home Covert (LNR)	Wood	1.06
East	Moreton Hall	Layhill Covert (LNR)	Wood	1.00
East	Moreton Hall	Mount Road	Wood	1.15
East	Moreton Hall	Mount Road - Oak Plantation	Wood	0.45
East	Moreton Hall	Mount Road Plantation (LNR)	Wood	1.47
East	Moreton Hall	Natterers Wood (LNR)	Wood	6.56
East	Moreton Hall	Ortewell Road	Tree belt	1.57
East	Moreton Hall	Pipestrelle Wood (LNR)	Wood	0.53
East	Moreton Hall	Pond Covert (LNR)	Wood	1.12
East	Moreton Hall	Moreton Hall industrial estate	Wood	4.05
East	Moreton Hall	Skyliner Way	Wood	0.73

East	Moreton Hall	Symonds Road	Tree belt	1.79
East	Moreton Hall	Symonds Road	Wood	1.26
East	Moreton Hall	The Clump (LNR)	Wood	0.14
North	Gt. Barton	Conyers Way	Wood	0.26
North	Gt. Barton	Diomed Drive	Wood	1.28
North	Gt. Barton	Downing Drive	Wood	0.43
North	Haverhill North	Railway Walk - Wratting Road to Howe Road (LNR)	Tree belt	0.33
North	Ixworth	Kettleborrow Close	Tree belt	0.16
North	Ixworth	Thistledown Drive	Tree belt	0.43
North	Risbygate	Bullrush Crescent	Wood	5.89
North	Risbygate	Parkway	Tree belt	0.21
North	Risbygate	Raynham Road	Tree belt	0.07
North	St Olaves	Oakes Road	Wood	2.23
North	Stanton	Parkside	Wood	0.37
South	Clare	March Place	Wood	0.29
South	Clare	The Granary	Tree belt	0.06
South	Haverhill South	Cleves Road	Wood	0.77
South	Haverhill South	Puddlebrooke	Wood	1.31
South	Haverhill South	Railway Walk - Bumpstead Road (LNR)	Tree belt	0.79
South	Horringer and Whelnetham	Nowton Park	Wood	27.83
South	Keddington	Risbridge Drive	Wood	1.41
South	Southgate	Grange Walk	Wood	0.49
South	Southgate	Hardwick Heath	Wood	6.21
South	Southgate	Josh's Wood, Hardwick Lane	Tree belt	0.11
South	Southgate	Mayfield Road	Wood	1.24
South	Southgate	Watson Close	Wood	0.23
West	Fornham	Culford Road	Wood	0.55
West	Fornham	Cumberland Avenue	Wood	1.49
West	Fornham	Larks Gate	Tree belt	0.08
West	Fornham	Northern Way	Wood	2.40
West	Haverhill West	A604	Wood	0.76
West	Haverhill West	Bergamot Road	Wood	1.92
West	Haverhill West	Chimswell Way	Wood	2.07
West	Haverhill West	Hanchett End	Wood	0.09
West	Haverhill West	Hopton Rise	Wood	0.37
West	Haverhill West	Horsham Close	Wood	0.08
West	Haverhill West	Spindle Road	Wood	0.63
West	Haverhill West	Strawberry Fields	Wood	1.05
West	Minden	Maltward Avenue	Wood	1.05
West	Risby	West Stow Park	Wood	16.86
West	Westgate	Horringer Road	Tree belt	0.28
West	Westgate	Lindisfarne Road / Bristol Road	Wood	0.30
West	Westgate	Westgate Tree Belt	Wood	1.90
West	Westgate	Winthrope Road / River Linnet	Tree belt	0.39
			Total	134.12

The majority of tree belts are located adjacent to the arterial roads which run through the recent developments in Moreton Hall and Haverhill. These linear woodland strips (tree belts) were planted up in the 1980s and 1990s. They are now maturing and provide a very valuable resource in terms of visual amenity and, increasingly, as a habitat for wildlife.

The woodland areas of the country parks are being managed primarily for nature conservation, with education, recreation and landscape as other objectives.

The techniques used to manage the woodlands will vary between sites but might well include:

- Thinning - thinning out young trees to allow the best specimens to flourish. Unless some of these areas are thinned-out during the next few years, they will not be able to develop into mature woodland areas that are capable of supporting a variety of flora and fauna.
- Coppicing - coppicing is the art of cutting of trees and shrubs to ground level allowing vigorous re-growth and a sustainable supply of timber for future generations. Many species respond well to coppicing, including willow, sweet chestnut, and hazel.
- Improvements to access for quiet recreation, where appropriate.
- Measures to tackle misuse of sites. The council will vigorously address vandalism, fly tipping and encroachment in woodlands and tree belts and develop a standard approach for cases where any damage can be traced to specific individuals.
- Control of invasive species.
- Control of weeds around newly planted or regenerating trees.
- Appropriate management of standing and fallen deadwood - Deadwood is essential to the ecology of woodland. It provides food and a home for numerous fungi, insects, birds, mammals, amphibians and other creatures.
- Group selection - small scale management of this kind - selective felling of mature trees to allow young ones to grow - is vital to helping maintain the delicate balance between woodland and sunny glade, which encourages the richest variety of wildlife.
- New enrichment planting and the encouragement and protection of suitable natural regeneration to ensure continuous tree cover the council will plant more trees where appropriate and will ensure that adequate aftercare maintenance regimes are put in place.

The council will seek opportunities to expand the total area of woodland in appropriate locations.

The council will realise any economic potential of woodlands and tree belts through the marketing of timber and other woodland products where this does not conflict with nature conservation and biodiversity objectives.

Village and rural trees

The rural landscape of historic St Edmundsbury is characterised by a rich and diverse tree population from landscape parks with mature exotic trees, to ancient woodlands and hedgerows studded with old oak pollards. The villages have unique character, much of which is achieved by the historic tree planting within them and beyond in the surrounding countryside.

Many of the trees in the villages and rural areas are privately owned. The council nonetheless, does own and have responsibility for a significant number of trees which form a defining part of the landscape in those communities. It owns approximately 3,000 open - growing trees in areas outside Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill.

It is important that the distinctive village scenes are maintained and where possible enhanced. New and replacement tree planting should make use of species - usually suitable native species - which will perpetuate this distinctiveness.

All village and rural trees under direct council control will be incorporated into the ongoing four-year management cycle.

Trees in cemeteries and churchyards

Trees in churchyards and cemeteries are an essential part of creating the tranquil and reflective environment expected of such sites. Yew trees have traditionally been planted in and around burial sites as icons of everlasting life. The Yew trees were usually planted in a deliberate manner: one beside the path leading from the funeral gateway of the churchyard to the main door of the church and another beside the path leading to the lesser doorway. In early times, the priest and clerks would gather under the first yew to await the corpse - bearers.

The council is responsible for 2 cemeteries (12.3 hectares) and 13 closed churchyards (5.2 hectares).

Cemeteries

Both cemeteries contain some fine mature trees, a high percentage of which are evergreen. Many of these trees date from the Victorian era and the early part of the 20th century. Then from around the time of the Second World War until the 1980s there was a noticeable lack of replanting, before a spate of ad hoc planting in the last 20 years.

Cemeteries trees will, like all council-maintained trees, be managed under the council's continuous four-year management cycle. As part of the implementation of this routine system of management in cemeteries, the council will seek to protect historical cemetery structures from damage being caused directly by the action of trees.

Replacement tree planting will be carried out with particular emphasis on retaining the historical nature of the sites and incorporating rare and unusual species where appropriate.

Churchyards

West Suffolk Council is responsible for managing trees in the following 13 closed churchyards:

Church Name	Location	Size of grounds
		Hectares
The Great Church Yard	Bury St Edmunds	2.3
The Mayors Cemetery	Bury St Edmunds	0.01
St John's	Stoke by Clare	0.46
St Petronillias	Whepstead	0.46
St. Nicholas	Denston	0.24
All Saints	Chedburgh	0.25
St. Peter's	Ousden	0.34
St. Andrews	Barningham	0.25
St Mary's	Haverhill	0.32
St Mary's the Virgin	Cavendish	0.38
St Mary's	Lidgate	0.34
All Saints	Rede	0.24
All Saints	Hopton	0.19
Total Area		5.2

Churchyard trees will continue to be managed on a proactive, cyclical basis continuing emphasis on creating a diverse population of appropriate unusual, attractive trees. The churchyards are currently dominated by trees that are of a similar maturity, and little new planting has taken place for many years.

Car parks and estates trees

West Suffolk Council is responsible for managing trees in the following car parks:

Car park	No of trees
Robert Boby Way (Bury St Edmunds)	28
St Andrews Street North (Bury St Edmunds)	46
Ram Meadow (Bury St Edmunds)	22
Parkway (Bury St Edmunds)	63
Cattle Market (Bury St Edmunds)	27
Vinery Road (Bury St Edmunds)	8
Town Hall (Haverhill)	38
Ehringhausen Way (Haverhill)	33
Lower Downs (Haverhill)	7
Leisure Centre (Haverhill)	21
	293

Management of these trees is incorporated within the council's proactive management and inspection cycles.

Council-owned leased land - individual lease agreements contain details of responsibility for trees within leased areas of land.

Veteran trees

Natural England defines veteran trees as those:

- That have interest biologically, aesthetically or culturally because of their age.
- Are in the ancient stage of their life.
- That are old relative to others of the same species.

Veteran trees are recognised on the basis of a combination of their size and the presence of certain characteristic attributes, such as rot holes, rot sites, dead wood and hollowing.

Historic St Edmundsbury veteran trees can be found in a number of locations; there are, for instance, old gnarled former parkland oaks within the adopted highway at Home Farm Lane (Bury St Edmunds), an ancient field maple and oak in residential open space at Downing Drive (Great Barton) and decaying willow pollards along various riverbanks.

Historically these trees are likely to have been vital assets, valued by our ancestors as an important part of their everyday subsistence and economy. Many if not most, were working trees, providing construction materials, food or firewood. William Cobbett the English journalist, on the road to Bury St Edmunds in 1825 for instance, wrote in his book *Rural Rides*:

'Almost every bank of every field is studded with pollards, that is to say, trees that have been beheaded, at from six to 12 feet from the ground. Then send out shoots from the head, which are lopped off once in 10 or a dozen years for fuel, or other purposes... I have scarcely seen a single farm of a 100 acres without pollards sufficient to find the farm-house sufficient in fuel, without any assistance from coals, for several years.'

In today's more urban society, few of these old trees have been retained; some may be known for their historical connections, but the majority that remain have become forgotten and neglected. Long-lived oak pollards, however, remain a defining, if dwindling, feature of the historic St Edmundsbury landscape which council tree management shall seek to perpetuate.

For all their interest and importance, veteran trees often - by virtue of their age and size - represent a relatively high degree of risk and are potentially very fragile, being especially vulnerable to changes in their growing space. It is therefore important that veteran trees and their environment are managed with expertise and sensitivity.

When managing veteran trees it is essential to consider not just the tree but all other organisms that live on or are associated with them. Many of these species

are an integral part of the veteran tree's ecosystem and a number are protected in their own right under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 or listed in the Red Data Books produced by International Union for Conservation and Nature or in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan because they are considered vulnerable or threatened. This means expert consultation is vital to find out which species are present and to target management activities appropriately.

To provide groups of trees and individual specimens that have the potential to achieve veteran status will be planted or identified to establish or encourage a suitable long-term management strategy. The council identifies opportunities, for instance, to establish new pollards by pollarding young trees of suitable species, size and location.