

HERTFORDSHIRE SCOUTS

TREE SAFETY MANAGEMENT POLICY

September 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

This document sets out how Hertfordshire Scouts, in line with the guidance published by The National Tree Safety Group and in line with the Scouts guidance tree management guidance FS320008 will take a balanced and proportionate approach to tree safety management, reflecting that:

- The overall risk to humans from trees is extremely low (1 death per 10 million people per year)
- Trees provide many benefits in terms of, landscape, biodiversity, amenity, climate, economic and human wellbeing including mental health.
- The benefits above generally increase with age and size as does the associated risk.
- Trees are living organisms that naturally lose branches or fail.
- A landowner on which a tree stands has responsibility for the health and safety of those on or near the land, and has potential liabilities arising from a falling tree or branch.

2. HOLDING

Hertfordshire Scouts operate 5 Activity Centres comprising Harmergreen, Locearnhead, Phasels, Tolmers and Well End covering some 270 acres of land of which around 120 acres are woodland.

Each Activity Centre contains a variety of trees and hedgerows forming its woodland. Camping and activities are carried out within the woodland areas including walks by visiting groups
The centres combined have around 100,000 visitors per year

3. OWNERSHIP / CONTROL OF MANAGEMENT

Hertfordshire Scouts has overall responsibility for managing its affairs.

Hertfordshire Scouts employ a Manager Activity Centres and Support Functions (Manager ACSF), who has the responsibility for its centres and works alongside the Experience Managers . They report through to the Hertfordshire Scouts Trustee Board. A person is also employed in a Safety and Compliance role (Responsible Officer) who is responsible for ensuring that Hertfordshire Scouts obligations for risk assessments are properly met.

The Manager ACSF must ensure that a designated person(s) can identify most common trees and obvious signs that a tree may be hazardous. The designated(s) person must have attended the Lantra Awards Basic Tree Survey and Inspection Course. The designated person(s) has been tasked with making the Experience Managers aware of any tree defects identified at a centre. The Experience Managers have been tasked with making the Manager ACSFs and Hertfordshire Scouts aware of any tree defects identified at the centres.

An external arboricultural consultant is available to give ad-hoc advice on tree related issues, and maintains the tree safety report with periodic full surveys

4. ACCESS

Harmergreen is a private estate just for prebooked day visitors and are currently not used for camping although the local neighbours cross the woodland without permission, primarily dog walking. There is also a public footpath/bridleway adjacent which is used by the general public.

Locearnhead is subject to the right to roam law in Scotland and public are encouraged to use a core path diversion whilst the centre is occupied. There is also a road adjacent which is used by the general public.

For Phasels and Tolmers, access is restricted as they are both a private estate just for prebooked visitors but a public footpath, bridleway and road exist adjacent to these centres which are used by the general public.

Well End is a private estate just for prebooked visitors but has a public footpath that crosses the centre and passes through woodland and a road adjacent which are used by the general public.

5. TREE SAFETY MANAGEMENT

Management	A formal inspection of trees at our Activity Centres has been carried out since 2009 by a qualified arboricultural consultant. Since then as and when Hertfordshire Scouts and staff became aware of any problems or reports received by the consultant, they have been addressed and tree safety report updated.
Areas of Risk	The Activity Centres have been classified into different areas according to risk: High – Camping within fall area of a tree but tents placed outside of drip line of trees i.e woodland or field edge camping. This also includes any frequently used roadways and pathways. Medium– Activity areas under trees i.e buildings, backwoods areas or Low Ropes. Low – No overhead risk – all camping and activity (middle of field or open area).
Inspection Regime	All the zones above will be inspected by an independent forestry or arboricultural consultant every 2 years to review and update the tree management plan. Annual visual inspections will be carried out by the appointed person who has attended a Lantra Awards Basic Tree Survey and Inspection Course in the years between specialist inspection. It is expected that visitors will report any concerns to the Activity Centre immediately so it can be recorded and action taken.
Additional Precautions	Following incidences of exceptionally high winds/gusts above 32mph/force 7, heavy snow, and first heavy rain after any drought period (re summer branch drop). Manager ACSF/Experience Managers will arrange to have carried out a visual tree survey looking for obvious defects before resuming woodland use by the appointed person . Visitors are reminded to follow the areas of risk usage requirements and to abide by any decision made regarding the safety of the woodland by the Activity Centre and regarding moving of their tents/equipment due to wind or snow. Visitors will receive safety guidance prior to arrival.

	<p>Prioritising Remedial Work</p> <p>When remedial work is necessary it will be carried out according to the perceived urgency/hazard/chance of failure and appropriate action will be arranged within the timescales given and at times when safe to do so. Managed in simple cases by the Manager ACSF and Experience Managers with support on urgent work specifications provided by Consultant/tree surgeon as required.</p>
Competence	Designated person(s) to be able to recognise obvious tree defects and have attended Lantra training in basic tree inspection. An arboricultural consultant is available for detailed inspections or consultation. Urgent remedial felling work can be undertaken by contractors, employees or volunteers with appropriate qualifications and equipment/PPE at the Activity Centres. Remedial work of a more specialist/extensive nature will be undertaken by specialist tree surgery contractors.
Records	The results of all formal inspections will be kept on the OTISS system and viewable online along with a record of the remedial work carried out. A record of all other incidences of trees being reported/tree failures/after high winds and action taken will be recorded by the HCSC Visual Tree Check electronic form and submitted to all managers
Reasonableness	Hertfordshire Scouts believes that, in the unlikely event of an accident involving one of their trees, that the Tree Safety Management Policy they have put in place is enough to demonstrate that ' <i>the conduct to be that expected from a reasonable and prudent landowner</i> '.