

Appendix F - Tree management FAQs

We love trees and so do our residents. We're dedicated to protecting and expanding West Northamptonshire's canopy and we have a team of officers dedicated to looking after them.

West Northamptonshire Council takes its tree ownership responsibilities very seriously and may take action against vandalism against its trees. Unauthorised planting and any unauthorised works to trees will be treated by the Authority as vandalism, with the exception of 'Common Law Right'.

To find out if trees are owned by West Northamptonshire Council please [Contact us | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#).

[Tree and hedgerow protection | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#)

[Ecology, Trees, and Landscape | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#)

For council issues, please use www.westnorthants.gov.uk/your-council/report for tree and highways.

<https://www.nph.org.uk/> for council housing issues, might be wise to advise that they contact their landlord in any other case.

A. Questions relating to protected trees and hedgerows – Tree Preservation Orders, Conservation Areas and development sites

How do I find out if a tree is protected?

Some trees are protected under law: they may be covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO); they may be growing in a Conservation Area; and they may be retained or planted as part of a Planning Consent.

The management of a tree protected with a TPO, or in a Conservation Area, remains the responsibility of the tree owner, subject to any necessary planning consent. The Council is not responsible for the maintenance of privately-owned trees.

A Tree Preservation Order is placed on a tree (or group of trees) to protect those that make a significant impact on their local surroundings. It is an order made by a local planning authority which makes it an offence to cut down, top, lop, uproot, willfully damage or willfully destroy a tree without the planning authority's permission.

[Find out more about protected trees. - Tree and hedgerow protection | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#)

All trees and shrubs in a Conservation Area are protected if they have with a stem diameter equal to or greater than 75mm (that's about 23.5cm in girth) measured 1.5m above ground level. It does not matter how tall the tree is, or what species or age it is. Further information on the legislation governing Tree Preservation Orders and tree protection in conservation areas can be found here: [Tree Preservation Orders and trees in conservation areas - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Conservation Area boundaries in West Northamptonshire can be viewed here - [Maps | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#)

If a tree is affected by building work, it is likely that the owner will have made an application to the planning department. Details of the development, including which trees are to be felled, retained or new trees planted can be found under 'Planning applications and enforcement' here: [View and comment on a planning application | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#):

On a nearby building site, the builders are felling/pruning trees. Is this permitted?

Trees on sites to be developed (their retention, felling, pruning, and replacement) are part of the planning application and approval process. Any work to trees must be agreed between the developer and the Planning Authority and have explicit consent. **Full** planning permission will override the legal protection of Tree Preservation Orders or trees in Conservation Areas. The application, plans and decisions relating to the application can be viewed here: [View and comment on a planning application | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#).

If an application is pending but tree felling is taking place without agreed planning consent, you can report a breach of planning control here: [Planning enforcement | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#) Planning may impose conditions during the planning approvals process to help ensure trees receive adequate protection during the construction phase.

My tree has a TPO but I think it is dangerous. What should I do?

A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is an order made by us, giving legal protection to trees or woodland. A TPO prevents cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, willful damage or destruction of trees (including cutting roots) without our permission. The owner of a tree protected by a TPO must get prior written planning consent before going ahead with works to that tree.

Visit our **[Tree preservation orders](#)** [Tree Preservation Orders \(TPO\) | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#) section of the web site for details including application forms and guidance on how to fill in the forms.

All tree owners (whether protected trees or not) have a duty of care to other people in both civil and criminal law to take reasonable steps to avoid foreseeable injury or harm. This means that you should check on your tree to look for broken branches that may fall and cause damage to your neighbour or adjacent property, including roads and footpaths, particularly after storms.

We advise that you employ a professional Arboricultural Consultant to check the tree for you, and if pruning work is advised to your TPO tree they will be able to help with the application forms, especially any technical terms required to describe the type and extent of work required.

If you are looking for a tree surgeon to work on trees on your property, you should make sure they are fully qualified and insured. Visit the [Arboricultural Association's website](#) to see its list of approved contractors.

I think my protected tree is dead. Can I remove it?

Under an exemption in the legislation any protected tree that is dead, dying or dangerous can be removed without the need to submit an application. However, unless the tree is imminently dangerous, please give five days' notice so that we can arrange any inspections needed. This is in your interests – you could be prosecuted if you have carried out unauthorised work or have used the exemption without good reason. We strongly advise that removal (or any other emergency) works is undertaken by reputable and suitably insured local tree surgery contractors. If you think your protected tree is dead, dying or dangerous, please email us and include photographs of the tree so that we can assess the trees condition at; planning@westnorthants.gov.uk or by letter to:

Planning
West Northamptonshire Council
The Guildhall
St Giles Square
Northampton
NN1 1DE

If I see work being carried out on a protected tree, how can I find out if the owner (or neighbour) has Council permission?

All planning applications, including Tree Preservation Orders, are available to view here: [View and comment on a planning application | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#)

I live in a Conservation Area. Can I cut down the tree in my garden?

Trees in Conservation Areas that are already protected by a Tree Preservation Order are subject to the normal TPO controls and you will need to apply for consent to undertake work on your tree.

For other trees over 75mm in diameter at 1.5m above ground (23.5cm in girth as a guide) in a Conservation Area you must give six weeks' prior written notice to the Local Planning Authority (by letter or email) of any proposed work to the tree, describing where the tree is and what you want to do. This gives the Planning Authority an opportunity to consider protecting the tree with a Tree Preservation Order to safeguard the tree for the benefit of the wider community.

You must not carry out any work during that six-week period without prior written consent. If you do, you could be fined. You may also have to plant a replacement tree.

You do not need to give notice if the tree is less than 75mm in diameter, measured 1.5 metres above the ground (or 100mm if thinning to help the growth of other trees).

There are trees which I think should be protected by a Tree Preservation Order. What can I do?

If you feel that a tree should be protected by a Tree Preservation Order, you can apply online or download and complete an application form here: [Apply for or notify us about tree works | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/apply-for-or-notify-us-about-tree-works).

I would like to remove a hedgerow on my land, do I need to report this?

Information on hedgerows and their protection is available here: [Hedgerows and their protection | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/hedgerows-and-their-protection)

B. Questions relating to council trees

I'm worried about the condition of a tree on council-held land, what can I do?

If you are concerned about a tree near your property, in your neighbouring area or local park, please report this to us

Every year I get falling fruit, leaves and bird mess from the council's/neighbour's tree – can I have the tree pruned or removed?

The seasonal shedding of leaves, fruits and flowers is a natural function of a tree's biology. The tree owner (council or privately owned) is under no obligation to prune or remove trees for this reason. A range of brushes, guards, meshes and grids are widely available to help with household maintenance and stop gutters and drains from blocking.

If you are aware of a public path that has become slippery please report it to [Report | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#) OR [FixMyStreet \(northamptonshire.gov.uk\)](#) as an obstruction of the highway, or if you are a council tenant, please report the issue to <https://www.nph.org.uk/>

I am a Housing tenant; how do I get my tree pruned?

If you are a council tenant, please contact <https://www.nph.org.uk/>

We do not prune deciduous trees in relation to light in your house or garden, or any trees in relation to TV/satellite reception. Housing estate trees in public spaces are inspected on a regular, cyclical basis and any remedial pruning is arranged as necessary.

If you are a tenant in private rented accommodation contact your landlord.

A Council tree overhangs my boundary. Can I have it pruned?

We do not undertake unscheduled inspection/pruning of a tree(s) solely due to overhanging foliage. If the overhanging vegetation is causing or may cause damage to an adjacent property this would be deemed a "legal nuisance". In the case of legal nuisance, we will remove (abate) the nuisance by arranging for the overhanging vegetation to be pruned away from boundary walls, fences, buildings or sheds.

Branches are touching my building from one of the council's trees. Can I have it pruned?

Yes. Any necessary pruning will be undertaken at the earliest opportunity. Please **report it here** [Report | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#) . If it is not a council owned tree we will not be able to help, and you should discuss the matter with the tree owner.

If you are a council housing tenant and have issues involving trees on housing land, you should contact <https://www.nph.org.uk/>.

Can the Council come and prune my tree (on private property)?

No. We recommend you seek advice from an independent arboricultural professional.

You can search for professional help from consultants on the [**Arboricultural Association website**](#).

Before any work is undertaken check to see if there are **Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)** on any trees or whether they are in a **Conservation Area**.

There is a sticky mess (Honeydew) on my car/garden/decking; can I have the tree pruned or removed?

No. We are under no obligation to carry out work on a tree for this specific reason. The production of 'Honeydew' is a natural process resulting from aphids feeding on

foliage sap. This cannot be stopped or effectively controlled. 'Honeydew' can be removed from hard surfaces by washing or scrubbing with warm, soapy water. Honeydew is essentially sugar-water and is harmless to people, textiles and vehicle paintwork.

Honeydew may attract wasps. Wasps are important in the environment – they are predators and eat the aphids causing the honeydew as well as many caterpillars. They play a vital ecological role. Bumblebees will also opportunistically feed on the sugar-rich honeydew, which provides them with carbohydrates, in a similar way to nectar.

There are lots of bees and other insects in a tree close to my garden. Can the council remove them and if possible remove the tree to stop them returning?

We will not prune or fell a tree to remove or reduce incidence of perceived insect pests, such as bees or wasps.

Bees are a desirable species which provide many environmental benefits. The council will endeavour to protect bees wherever possible. It may be necessary to treat a wasps nest if there is a genuine risk to the public; this would depend on the outcome of a risk assessment.

Insects colonise most trees and are an important part of the ecological cycle. They provide food for birds and other animals.

We will remain vigilant for any notifiable invasive pests which we may have been alerted to and take the appropriate recommended action if discovered.

The footway/pavement is damaged by tree roots and needs repairing. Who should I contact?

The highways (including footways) are inspected at regular intervals. However, if you discover a problem with the pavement surface, please report the issue here: [Report | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#) OR [FixMyStreet \(northamptonshire.gov.uk\)](#)

Light to my property is blocked by a council tree outside my house; can the tree be pruned/removed?

We do not prune or remove trees for this specific reason alone. Residents have no legal right to light as far as deciduous trees are concerned. However, our planned tree maintenance may help to alleviate the situation.

A tree planted by the council a few years ago is now blocking my view. Can it be felled or pruned?

We will not prune or fell a council-owned tree to improve the view from a private property. There is no legal right to a view.

My TV/satellite reception is poor, can I have a tree pruned or removed?

There is no legal right to TV/satellite reception and, therefore, we are not obliged to prune or remove the tree(s) for satellite reception. It could be that your TV aerial or satellite dish may need to be repositioned, or that you may need to consider the use of aerial/satellite signal reception 'boosters'.

Will the council fell or prune a tree which is shedding blossom?

The council will not prune or fell any tree to remove or reduce blossom fall or remove fallen blossom from private land.

Tree blossom usually heralds the start of spring. Blossom is a natural occurrence, which cannot be avoided by pruning and blossom is not regarded in law as a statutory nuisance.

I'm allergic to tree pollen. Will the council remove the tree on the green space next to my property to reduce the amount of pollen in the air?

The council will not fell or prune a tree to remove or reduce the release of pollen. In general, the benefits trees provide towards improved health far outweigh any negative effects from pollen.

Tree pollen is ever present during certain times of the year with billions of spores carried in the air. The removal of a single tree will offer no noticeable improvement to tree pollen sufferers.

There are birds roosting in a tree close to my property and bird droppings are falling from the tree on to my decking. Will the council remove the overhanging branches and remove the bird droppings?

The council would not prune or fell a tree to remove or reduce incidences of bird droppings from trees; or clean up bird droppings from private land.

Bird droppings can be a nuisance, however they are naturally occurring in the urban environment and it is not normally considered a viable option to prune or remove a tree for this reason. Nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and other wildlife laws). Warm soapy water will usually be sufficient to remove bird droppings.

I am considering installing solar panels on my property but are concerned that trees in the nearby park will make them less effective. Can some work be done to ensure they are effective?

The council will not prune or fell any tree owned or managed by the council to improve the performance of solar water heating collectors or solar panels such as photovoltaic cells.

Whilst we appreciate that there is a need to provide renewable energy resources, trees have an important role in maintaining and improving the local environment, in addition to contributing to local and national targets in tackling climate change. The presence of trees must be fully appreciated when considering a suitable location for the placement of solar collectors and panels. Your solar panel provider may be able to suggest an alternative solution to the problem.

I feel unsafe when walking in certain areas of the park where there are lots of trees and shrubs. Can anything be done to make these areas safer?

Where any tree owned or managed by the council is perceived to be associated with criminal activity or anti-social behaviour, measures to reduce the problem will be considered on a site-by-site basis.

Some research shows that areas with lots of trees help to make places safer. But, neglected spaces with overgrown trees and untidy areas can encourage criminal activity and/or anti-social behaviour. The council's tree and grounds maintenance

programme tries to improve these areas by making the local environment cleaner, greener and safer.

Trees obstructing a public footpath

We will undertake work to trees owned or managed by the council to maintain a minimum 2.5 metre height clearance over a footpath associated with a street, road or highway, and three metres where there are cycling rights. Any works necessary to prevent an obstruction to the width of a footpath associated with the highway due to the presence of a council-owned tree will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If privately owned trees or bushes are causing an obstruction to a footpath associated to a highway, powers exist under the Highways Act to make the owner of the tree or bushes to remove the obstruction.

Trees obstructing traffic signals and street signs

A tree should not obstruct the vision of an approaching driver. We will undertake work to trees owned or managed by WNC to maintain clear lines of sight for traffic signals and street signage (associated with a street, road or highway).

If a privately owned tree is causing an obstruction to a traffic signal or street sign, powers exist under the Highways Act to make the owner remove the obstruction.

Trees obstructing street lamps

We will undertake work to trees owned or managed by WNC to ensure that street lights are not substantially blocked by the presence of trees.

If a privately owned tree is causing an obstruction to street light, powers exist under the Highways Act to make them remove the obstruction.

Road sight line obstruction

We will undertake work to trees owned or managed by WNC to maintain clear lines of sight for traffic and pedestrians at junctions and access points (associated with a street, road or highway).

Standards for visibility vary according to the class and speed limit in force. If a privately owned tree is causing an obstruction to the visibility at a road junction (sight line), powers exist under the Highways Act to make the owner of the tree remove the obstruction.

The shoots that grow from the base of some trees in council ownership such as Lime trees are removed as part of our tree maintenance programme, this is usually done on an annual basis for trees growing in the street.

The removal of basal shoots for aesthetic reasons is done as and when funds allow or when it is necessary to inspect the base of a tree.

Trip Hazards

The council will undertake measures to make safe any potential trip hazards caused by trees on footpaths in parks and council-owned open spaces.

Tree stumps

When a tree is felled, it is not always possible to remove the stump at the same time.

If a tree is felled in a footway the stump is temporarily left at approximately one metre in height so it can be easily seen and not become a trip hazard. Occasionally it is not possible to remove a stump due to the close proximity of underground services.

Stumps in unmanaged areas, shrubberies and woodlands will normally be left in place for wildlife and ecological reasons.

Vandalism and damage to trees

We will investigate any reports of vandalism to any tree owned or managed by the council and use enforcement and legal action to bring about the prosecution of offenders. Vandalism includes wanton damage of newly planted trees, ring barking,

deliberate poisoning, encouraging a dog to strip bark from a tree or chew on branches and any unauthorised pruning felling or similar work to mature trees.

You are not allowed to remove living material from council-owned land without consent and unauthorised persons are not allowed to use a chainsaw of any type in parks, public open spaces or other council land.

Where a tree has been damaged by a vehicle, we will take appropriate action to deal with the damage or fell the tree if necessary. Wherever we have the appropriate details we will claim damages against the driver's insurers.

Trees on allotments

Work must not be carried out to trees in or around allotments by allotment holders or unauthorised persons, which involves the use of a chainsaw. Only minor pruning to branches from the ground using hand tools or trimming a hedge with a powered hedge trimmer from the ground is acceptable.

Planting trees other than fruit trees within an allotment is discouraged.

Any concerns regarding trees should be reported to the responsible Parish Council within which the allotment sits, or to www.westnorthants.gov.uk/your-council/report.

Trees in cemeteries

The trees in cemeteries under council management will be managed in a similar way to trees in parks and open spaces and any work carried out will be in accordance with the council's tree management policy.

However trees may be removed where they are causing direct or indirect damage to graves or gravestones.

Grave owners are not allowed to plant trees on top of or close to graves and the council reserves the right to remove them without notice.

Self seeded trees which have grown on or close to graves will be removed over a period of time as part of the winter maintenance programme.

For enquires about trees in cemeteries please see www.westnorthants.gov.uk/your-council/report

Trees in playgrounds

A visual inspection in line with the council's tree management policy is carried out on trees in and around playgrounds on an annual basis.

Trees which are considered dangerous such as trees within falling distance of the play area containing extensive decay or dead wood are made safe as a matter of urgency. If necessary the playground will be closed while the work takes place.

More obvious hazards such as hanging branches will be picked up as part of the regular playground safety inspections and dealt with as necessary.

We will avoid planting any trees which contain poisonous, leaves, flowers or fruit in and around play areas.

Commemorative trees

The council runs a commemorative tree scheme in order to encourage planting trees within parks and open spaces.

Members of the public or an organisation can sponsor a commemorative tree at Daventry Country Park or Borough Hill

C. Questions about tree planting and replacement

A tree in my street or park has a felling notice on it. How can it be replanted?

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There is an empty tree pit in my street/outside my property, how can I get a tree planted in it?

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I love trees, how can I get more involved?

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D. General questions

I've been told trees are not allowed to grow above a certain height. Is this true?

There is no legislation relating to the height of trees. Fear of large trees is usually perceived, not actual: statistically trees are very safe. The Health and Safety Executive state that *"the risk of being struck and killed by a tree or branch falling is extremely low (in the order of one in 10 million for those trees in or adjacent to areas of high public use).*

Trees have evolved over millennia to thrive and survive in all types of adverse conditions. They are bio-mechanically equipped by nature to cope with wind loading. The tree *should* move and flex with the wind. Seeing it moving does not mean an increased likelihood of failure. It is important though, that owners of large trees near any potential target, arrange for periodic inspections by suitably qualified arborists, and that any necessary maintenance is arranged accordingly.

Of course, no-one can predict how any structure, natural or man-made, will behave in extremes of weather. This underlines the importance of having a competent arborist assess the tree(s) for any reasonably foreseeable hazards or defects.

My Insurance Company / Estate Agent / Solicitor wants to know how tall the tree is and how far away it is from my house. It's a Council tree. Can you tell me?

Sadly, we don't have the resources to prioritise this type of request. There are many apps available that will help assess the general height of trees and others that will help measure distance from your property, as well as for tree identification.

There is no legal or scientific basis for insurance companies to penalise customers with surcharges or increased premiums because of a nearby tree – so long as it is being reasonably managed and periodically assessed by a competent arborist.

There is a tree on land next to my house and I don't want it there so I'm going to cut it down. What will happen if I'm found out?

Unauthorised cutting back, pruning, "lopping", "topping", or removal of a tree on privately held land, or land held by the Council **is illegal** and could result in legal prosecution. Charges of unlawful trespass or criminal damage may be applied – resulting in significant fines and legal fees.

Parties responsible for such action may also be in breach of planning laws, and in breach of Felling License regulations. Failure to provide proof of a Felling License when required may result in prosecution and very sizeable fines.

The roots from a (council/private) tree are damaging garden wall / growing under my house. Can I just cut them off?

Tree roots do not exert enough pressure to dislodge the modern footings of a house or other heavily loaded structure. Occasionally they will affect lighter structures such as garden walls or conservatories, and when this happens there are often engineering solutions available that allow the tree and wall to co-exist.

Your first call should be to your house insurer, informing them that the property/wall is damaged. The insurance company will investigate and if the tree is found to be the cause of the damage, your insurer will notify the owner of the tree (council / private) and indicate what must be done to resolve the matter.

Residents have 'common law' rights to prune back encroaching roots (and branches) to the boundary of their property, but it is **strongly advised** to seek prior professional guidance from a reputable local tree surgery contractor, or an independent consulting arborist, before doing so. This is because the pruning of roots (and large branches) can potentially cause significant damage to the parent tree or cause that tree to become diseased or dangerous – especially if done by inexperienced or unprofessional contractors. Parties responsible for such works could be found liable for any damage caused, or loss of amenity value, resulting from their actions. You can search for professional help from consultants on the **Arboricultural Association website**.

My neighbour has a large tree on the boundary with my garden. It's started to be a problem. Can I force them to manage it or take it down?

Garden trees are often near the edges of a property and on the boundaries. You will need to find out from your deeds/solicitor which boundaries belong to which house. If the tree trunk is growing entirely in the neighbour's ground the tree will belong to them even if the hedge is your responsibility. The **Land Registry** provides further guidance about boundaries.

If the tree straddles the boundary then it is likely that you and your neighbour jointly own the tree. Your best approach is to discuss the matter with your neighbour in an amicable way to come to an agreement about managing the tree and any issues you may have with it. If you own the tree jointly then you will need to obtain the neighbour's consent before undertaking or commissioning work to the tree.

If you believe that the tree is dangerous, (for example, it may have split or dead branches or fungal fruiting bodies) then write to the tree owner as soon as possible politely expressing any concerns you have and asking them to have the tree checked by a suitably qualified and professionally insured consulting arborist, and to have any necessary remedial work undertaken if appropriate. You can search for professional help from consultants on the **Arboricultural Association website**.

If you still can't reach a satisfactory conclusion then it may be helpful to ask a third party who is known to both of you to mediate. As a last resort it may be possible to obtain a court injunction requiring the owner to deal with the tree – you would need to discuss this with a solicitor. The council will not become involved with this type of issue as it is a private matter. You should seek professional legal help from a solicitor.

If, however, the tree(s) in question are within range of an adjacent highway or lawful public access, then the Council will assess any direct and foreseeable threat to the highway or that public access and process any necessary enforcement action accordingly.

My neighbour's tree is overhanging into my private property: how do I get it cut back?

You can ask the tree owner to prune it back to the boundary, but you should note they are not obliged to do so.

Information on your 'common law' rights on the overhanging vegetation.

There is a tree overhanging and obstructing the public highway; what can I do to get it pruned?

Overhanging trees and/or other vegetation from private property onto the public highway are dealt with by our Highways Inspectors enforcing the Highways Act 1980. Please report issues to Street Doctor

We will work to maintain a clearance of at least 5.2 meters in height for branches overhanging the carriageway.

This clearance distance also applies to privately owned trees. If a privately owned

tree is causing an obstruction to a road, powers exist under the Highways Act to make the owner of the tree remove the obstruction.

How do I find out the ownership of trees that concern me or my property?

For a small charge (currently £3 for the plan and £3 for the title - October 2020) you can find out from the Land Registry whether the land is registered and to whom the land is registered (if it has a registered owner)

Visit the **Land Registry** website where you can search for a property by address or browse the map.

Ivy is growing up the trunk of my tree and I think it is going to kill it. Do I need to remove it?

Ivy is not parasitic and does not kill trees. The main problem associated with ivy is that it can significantly increase the 'sail effect' and weight on deciduous trees in winter making them more prone to storm damage. Another problem is that ivy can hide defects in the trunk and main branches of a tree.

Ivy is important ecologically. It flowers late in the year offering one of the last sources of food for insects before winter. The fruit develops during the winter and is ripe in early spring when there is a shortage of food for birds and mammals. Due to its evergreen nature ivy also provides good winter cover. Ivy will probably need controlling if it extends high into the crown of a tree and is growing along the lateral branches.

Ivy is usually controlled by cutting and removing sections of the ivy stems at the base of the tree. If ivy has become rampant it may indicate that the tree is unhealthy. We recommend you seek advice from an independent arboricultural professional. You can search for professional help from consultants on the **Arboricultural Association website**.

My tree has a fungus growing on it. Does this make the tree unsafe?

There are many types of fungi that affect trees. The significance of the fungus can vary from tree species to species. Some fungus can cause tree failure whilst others have little effect on the tree. Removing the fruiting body of the fungus will not remedy the problem, as this is just the reproductive part; the main body of the fungus may be contained inside the tree. We recommend you seek advice from an independent arboricultural professional. You can search for professional help from consultants on the **Arboricultural Association website**.

Where can I find out about Ash dieback?

You can find out more about ash dieback on the Tree Council website here: <https://treecouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/science-and-research/ash-dieback/public-guidance/>

Alternatively, guidance is available from:

The Arboricultural Association here:

<https://www.trees.org.uk/Trees.org.uk/media/Trees.org.uk/Documents/eBooks/AshDieback-GuidanceNote-web.pdf>

Institute of Chartered Foresters: <https://www.charteredforesters.org/icf-and-ash-dieback>

Tree roots are blocking my drains. What can I do?

Tree roots are opportunistic and if a pipe is faulty, or poorly sealed, the joints may leak water into the surrounding soil and attract the roots towards them. Modern techniques mean that many pipes can be lined to make them work efficiently again. The opportunistic roots will be pruned off but there may be no need to remove the tree. You should call your house insurer, informing them that the drains are damaged and for guidance about how to proceed.

I am aware of a tree that is leaning. Should I be worried?

Trees that are leaning can cause concern, but not all leaning trees are dangerous. For example, Oaks have strong wood fibres and the ability to grow additional wood where they need it to keep the tree in the most upright position. They can grow with a lean away from other trees or away from structures without breaking, forming an

“established lean”. Often trees grow at an angle when on the edge of a woodland, or stand of trees, so that they can get the most sunlight available on the edge.

If trees are leaning over a **highway** or **path**, please think about the following before contacting the council. (Please note that if the tree is privately owned and leaning over adjacent private land the council will not become involved – please discuss with the tree owner rather than the council.)

How long has it been leaning? **Has this been a sudden change** or has it been like this for years? Has there been excavation under the canopy spread - perhaps from recent building work? Was there a road traffic accident? Is it a recently planted young tree? Has the ground been washed away from the roots or a land slip?

Please report trees that have a lifted root plate as the roots on these trees are broken and can decay as a result of breakage. You may see that the ground has shifted and perhaps broken roots are showing. Structural support of the trunk has gone, and the tree will need to be inspected and remedial action taken.

Please report trees with vertical cracks in the trunk or main branches as this can be a sign of weakness inside. Wood with cracks is more prone to failure than sound wood.

Contact us to report this problem and include photographs so that we can make an initial assessment.

A council/private tree is tangled with overhead wires – what should I do?

If the overhead wires are electricity cables, then contact Street Doctor. They will be able to assess the problem and undertake any necessary pruning work. You do not need to report this to the council.

If the overhead wires are phone lines and they are damaged or unsafe, then contact **BT Openreach**.