



Tree Charter

THIS CHARTER IS FOR OUR CITY, ESPECIALLY OUR PARKS, PLAYING FIELDS, OPEN SPACES, ROADS AND GARDENS. IT IS NOT AIMED AT THE RURAL LANDSCAPE OUTSIDE THE CITY, BUT NATURALLY THE URBAN PARTS OF THE GREEN BELT WILL COME INTO ITS SCOPE.

TREES REALLY MATTER to our city and the people who live and work in it. They are individually beautiful and in groups they can have as great a visual impact as architecture. But they are much more than decoration – they are the lungs of the city and a major natural engine for removing carbon emissions and pollutants from the air that we breathe. At a time when Earth's ecosystem is under extreme threat from Man's mismanagement, we cannot afford to ignore the vital role of trees. They must be respected as beautiful and dependable allies, not treated as a nuisance or a disposable resource.

The trees that touch us most are those that live among us, along our street, in the local park, beside our school or place of work, and in our gardens. Trees give the best urban landscapes their distinctive character. Like us, they grow and change, and eventually die. They need space to breathe and support to thrive.

- Trees are a vital part of the environment, both rural and urban. They provide variety in colour, form, texture and balance. Their aesthetic value contributes to our quality of life and sense of well-being. They induce peaceful contemplation and help to reduce the stresses that we experience in our busy lives.

- Trees filter the air, reducing pollutants such as ozone, oxides of nitrogen, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide, smoke, dust and ash. They capture and absorb carbon dioxide and instead release life-giving oxygen.

- Trees are a living presence, both in themselves and in the abundance and variety of life that they support – every tree is in turn a city of biodiversity, sustaining insects, birds and mammals.

- Trees can have further value in the built environment, where if appropriately selected they help to

reduce the destructive power of wind, protect us from the heat of the Sun, suppress noise levels, control flood water and limit soil erosion.

- The role of trees should be widely recognised so that their value is taken seriously. We should encourage them to prosper for our own good. In urban situations trees need special care to flourish, and when they die they need replacement. Well-informed planning is essential to providing sustainable benefit. Local community networks have a vital role to play in caring for the City's trees, ensuring their health and longevity.

HOW SHOULD WE TREAT TREES?

Different species of trees have different life spans and different preferred environments. They grow at different speeds and to greatly different sizes. They are also susceptible to a variety of diseases that are changing quite rapidly with the climate. Our intervention is often necessary to ensure that they are looked after, develop appropriately and flourish alongside city life.

Properly informed and skilled reduction or pollarding of trees may be needed but there must be objection to the felling of trees unless they are demonstrated and independently verified to be diseased or unsafe, or where felling can be justified by approved planning permission for new developments. The default position should be not to fell. In all cases there should be commensurate planting of new trees in an optimum location. There should in any case be a strong policy for widespread planting of new trees as part of our defence against climate change.

There may be special cases where tree growth results in damage to foundations or underground services. This should also be taken into account in the planting of new trees. Judgement in these circumstances will need to be carried out by those with demonstrated expert knowledge.

The wonder of trees lies between the earth and the sky, bringing life, beauty and joy to the planet and humankind. Trees are poetry, a part of Nature's journey of life through the organic elements of earth, air and water.