



## Country Days The Leys Nature Reserve Policy for Tree Risk Management

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Organisation	Country Days
Document reference	Policy for tree risk management
Date document introduced and approved	November 2022
Responsibility of policy	Dr Esme Watkinson Co -founder
Date of Review	<b>March 2025</b>
Person responsible for informal inspections	All Country Days Staff visiting the Leys and report any tree concerns to Roy Horner and Dr Esme Watkinson
Routine Inspections	Roy Horner (Leys estate manager )Malcolm Day (tree surgeon)
Detailed inspections	Oakbank Game and conservation Ltd

- **Introduction:**

All Landowners have a statutory duty of care. Estate users, members of the public and staff must not be put at risk because of any failure by any landowner to take all reasonable precautions to ensure their safety. There is a need to inspect trees in or near highly utilised or high use public places; adjacent to buildings and working areas to assess whether they represent a risk to life or property. This Tree Risk Management Policy sets out the standards of inspection, competence and record keeping Country Days Charity will apply.

*This policy is based on the “Common Sense Risk Management of Trees” published in December 2012 by the National Tree Safety Group. The purpose of this document is to “outline an acceptable standard of tree management, including risk assessment and, where appropriate, routine checks by a competent person”.*

- **What is the risk:**

Each year between 5 and 6 people in the UK are killed when trees fall on them. Thus, the risk of being struck and killed by a tree falling is extremely low – the risk of being struck and killed by a tree growing in a public space is even lower.

Up to 3 people are killed each year by trees in public spaces, but as almost the entire population of the UK is exposed, the risk is about one in 20 million. However, the low level of risk may not be perceived in this way by the public, particularly following an incident.

The average risk is firmly in the “broadly acceptable” region of the tolerability of risk triangle published in HSE’s “Reducing Risks Protecting People”. However, “Reducing Risks, Protecting People” explicitly states that “broadly acceptable” is a general guide and not a definitive statement of what is reasonably practicable in law.

- **What is required:**

Employers, people carrying out undertakings and people in control of premises all have duties under the HSW Act. **In particular, there is the duty to do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure that people are not exposed to risk to their health and safety.** Doing all that is reasonably practicable does **not** mean that all trees have to be individually examined on a regular basis. A reasoned decision has to be taken on what is reasonable in all the circumstances and this will include consideration of the risks to which people may be exposed. The HSE note that - given the large number of trees in public spaces across the country, control measures that involve inspecting and recording every tree would be disproportionate to the risk.

Whilst we may regard the average risk posed by trees as extremely low, the law requires that where reasonably practicable, measures to control this risk should be taken. All occupiers have duties under the Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 and 1984 to manage their land so as to protect visitors and others.

Around half of all the fatalities are due to falling trees in public spaces, such as a park or beside a road, so Section 3 HSW Act may be applicable.

The main pieces of relevant legislation are the Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 and 1984, which place duties on owners of land to protect visitors and others from risks on their land, including from falling trees; they provide for remedies in civil law.

- **Hazard and Risk:**

In order to arrive at a Risk Assessment, the two separate factors of **Hazard** and **Risk** must be addressed.

**Hazard is the potential to cause harm.** Like all living organisms, trees are subject to decline, senescence and collapse and they can be damaged physically or invaded by pathogenic organisms. As trees deteriorate so they are increasingly likely to shed limbs or fall in strong winds and the potential to cause harm increases.

**Risk is the level of likelihood that a hazardous tree will cause actual damage.** Risk is related to the location of the tree. It reflects the intensity of use of the immediate surroundings of the tree and the proximity of the tree to roads, car parks, buildings or other occupied locations.

Ancient and decaying trees are often beautiful and uniquely valuable as habitat for wildlife. However poor the physical condition of a tree, remedial action is only necessary where there is a clearly perceptible risk to life or property. This might mean removing part of the tree or reducing the level of public access in the vicinity.

## **Managing the risk:**

Country Days Charity effective and defensible system for managing trees will contain the following elements:

1. An overall assessment of risk (Desktop study leading to Risk Zone classification)
2. An assessment of hazard; (identified by physical inspection)
3. A prescription for remedial action.
4. Carrying out of the prescribed remedial actions.

These need not all be undertaken by the same person.

### **1. An overall assessment of risk (Desktop Study)**

For a programme of tree inspections to be manageable, most resources need to be directed to areas where there is potentially most risk to people and property. The majority of the tree stock across the Country Days Charity; Leys Nature Reserve site does not offer a significant hazard due to its young age, but as visitors are liable to go anywhere the overall risk posed by the trees present across the site is considered to be medium. It has been decided that due to the limited tree population and the overall age structure being young, the most efficient inspection process is to inspect all the trees at each inspection interval rather than divide the population up for inspection over multiple years. Therefore, all trees on site will be mapped (Tree Risk Management Zoning Map) to identify all that are to be included within the inspection process. A simple Tree Management Register (TMR) database will then be produced which will identify in what year and at what level (routine or detailed inspection) the trees are to be inspected in the future.

### **2. An assessment of hazard**

A planned inspection programme is to be attributed to those trees within all High and Medium Risk Category Zones identified from the overall assessment of risk process. The assessment of hazards arising from individual trees / groups of trees is undertaken by an appropriate person depending on the level of inspection required.

Many trees are potentially hazardous but only the conditions most likely to lead to injury or damage to people or property can reasonably be addressed by inspectors. These are physical or physiological conditions which might lead to a breakup or collapse of the tree. They are identified and recorded during a programme of inspection.

Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) techniques will be employed for all inspections which in practice means only visible defects are likely to be identified. Techniques available to assess the structural integrity of standing trees, such as electronic sensors and hand operated borers, will not be used as a matter of course. Rather the recommendation for such additional investigations will be recorded at the time of the VTA and they will be used only where it is necessary to assess the extent of decay in particularly important trees already showing visible symptoms of

decline.

Knowledge of the propensity of some species to break up or decay more rapidly than others is necessary but most rural staff who routinely work with trees would be competent to undertake routine inspection after receiving basic introductory training.

## **Inspection Types**

### **Informal Observation**

**These are routinely carried out by Charity employees and other visitors in the respect that if and when a perceived tree hazard is spotted, it is reported to the appropriate person.**

A periodic tool box talk will be delivered to the most appropriate Charity staff, which instructs them to be aware of and report the trees' health and condition, identifying dead or trees with structural weakness or actual failure (hung up branches for example) that pose a threat to public safety.

The requirement to report damage to trees and trees that appear to be in a dangerous condition will be publicised to site employees and other relevant persons.

These observations are acknowledged as being one of the main contributors to tree safety across the UK as they have been continuously happening for generations and it is these that are considered to fulfil the "adequately controlled" element to the HSE risk category so that it falls into the "broadly acceptable region". Essentially, this means that due to informal observations by everybody in society fulfilling the "adequately controlled" element of tree safety, the risk is broadly acceptable so no further risk control is necessary.

### **Formal Inspections**

These are where people visit the tree with the specific purpose of performing an inspection that is not incidental to other activities and is on a planned basis. These form the basis of the Country Days Charity policy in respect to demonstrating proactive tree safety activity. Formal inspections will be conducted at 2 levels – Routine and Detailed.

#### **Routine Inspections:**

Routine inspections will need to be carried out by someone who is competent to do so such as the Charity Management Team. To be competent they will require a working knowledge of trees and their defects but need not be an arboricultural specialist. These can be undertaken by a competent person who has ideally received suitable basic tree inspection training, such as the LANTRA award for basic tree inspections.

#### **Detailed Inspections:**

Detailed Inspections need to be undertaken by:

- a person possessing a minimum of Level 5-6 QCF in Arboriculture (Qualifications and Credits Framework).
- a person who has a professional qualification in woodland management or arboriculture and who has successfully passed an accredited higher-level course in dangerous tree inspection (e.g. the Arboricultural Association Professional Tree Inspection course).

## **Inspection Frequencies**

**Routine Inspection** – biennial inspection of all trees identified on the Tree Risk Management Zoning Map will be conducted. Routine inspection of all trees will also be conducted after exceptionally severe weather events such as high winds that might have caused damage to trees.

**Detailed Inspection** – biennial inspection in alternate years of all trees identified on the Tree Risk Management Zoning Map unless an earlier requirement is identified during a routine inspection or through informal observation.

### **3. A prescription for remedial action**

#### **Records of Inspection**

Tree Inspections will report by exception, only recording trees with identified defects and so no tree that appears to be sound during formal inspection requires individual documented record of their condition.

Trees that are identified hazardous or potentially hazardous must be clearly identified both on the inspection record and by appropriate marking or tags on each specified tree.

#### **Determining Remedial Action**

The appropriate remedial action must be prescribed by a competent person.

The priority for implementing remedial action will depend on both the assessment of risk and hazard.

In a high-risk area trees which show obvious signs of imminent collapse or are otherwise seriously hazardous should be dealt with immediately on the best advice available.

### **4. Carrying out of the prescribed remedial actions**

Once a tree has been identified by an inspection as having a defect requiring remediation, this work should be planned and undertaken to correct or manage the risk within the individual tree risk category time frame below:

High Risk Tree	–	within 1 week
Medium Risk Tree	–	within 4 months
Low Risk Tree	–	within 12 months.

# **Country Days Charity Tree Risk Management**

## **Tree Risk Zone Map**



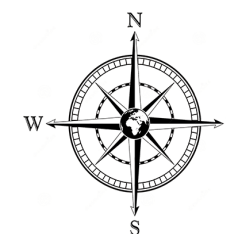
# Country Days Charity Tree Risk Zone Map

Scale 1:2,500

## Key

-  Tree Risk Zone
-  Site Entrance

- A- Drive to admin hut
- B- Pond and Forres
- C- Shelters
- D- Main road





# **Country Days Charity Tree Risk Management**

## **Tree Risk Register**

## Country Days Charity - Leys Nature Reserve Tree Risk Register

YEAR	Date of Detailed Inspection Biennial	Date of routine Inspection	Date of inspection after storm damage	Date tree work completed
2022	<b>November 2022</b> Max Battison Oak bank Conservation			
2023		February 2023 Roy Horney		March 2023 Roy Horner
2024	<b>July 2024</b> Max Battison Oakbank conservation	February 2024 Roy Horner	January 2024 Esme Watkinson & Roy Horner	
2025		March 2025 Roy Horner & Esme Watkinson	February 2025 Roy Horner and Malcolm	
2026				
2027				
2028				
2029				
2030				

Inpsection of all Trees Identified on Tree Risk Management Zoning Map	2022	Complete	2023	Complete	2024	Complete	2025	Complete	2026	Complete	2027	Complete	2028	Complete	2029	Complete
Level of Inspection Required	D	✓	R	yes	D	yes	R		D		R		D		R	

D = Detailed Inspection  
R = Routine Inspection



# **Country Days Charity Tree Risk Management**

## **Tree Inspection Form for Inhouse Inspections**

# Tree Inspection Form

## For Inhouse Use:

### Country Days Charity

Tree Inspector Name: .....

Reporting is by exception only:

Signed: .....

[illegible]