



1 CHAMPIONING YOUR LOCAL TREES

Thank you for being part of The Tree Council's Tree Warden Scheme – a national project that depends very much on local tree champions like you.

Your contribution as a Tree Warden to your local network makes a real difference to the quality of your neighbourhood. There has never been a more vital time to be involved in conserving your community's treescape.

This handbook is designed to help you in your role by giving some basic information and suggesting where to find out more. It has been designed to be practical – you can take all or part of it out in the field – and flexible. New sections will be added from time to time. We have ideas for these, but would also like to hear what you would find helpful (please contact us at the address on the back page).



The Tree Council's
Tree Warden Scheme

THE TREE
COUNCIL

in partnership with National Grid and supported
by the Government's Cleaner, Safer, Greener Initiative

The Tree Warden Scheme

The Tree Council launched the Tree Warden Scheme in 1990 to harness the power of local volunteers for the good of their communities' trees. It has co-ordinated it nationally ever since, working with local authorities, voluntary organisations, parish councils and local partnerships to set up and develop Tree Warden networks in town, city and countryside across the UK.

Since 1997, The Tree Council's Tree Warden Scheme has been supported by National Grid. In 2005, the Government began backing the scheme, through its 'Cleaner, Safer, Greener' initiative, to help extend Tree Wardening further into urban areas.

The role of Tree Wardens

The Tree Council's Tree Warden Scheme gives people who feel that trees matter an opportunity to champion their local trees and woods by carrying out or encouraging practical projects and involving their neighbours whenever possible. Community involvement is a central aim of the scheme.

Volunteer Tree Wardens work closely with local authority officers and conservation bodies, who are fundamental to the scheme's success – whether by co-ordinating local networks, offering practical advice or providing training.

The range of Tree Warden activities includes:

- ▶ planting and caring for trees, and managing local woods

- ▶ setting up tree nurseries using seeds collected locally
- ▶ surveying trees and gathering information about them
- ▶ providing early warning of threats, disease, decay, or vandalism
- ▶ getting together with like-minded people for training and field trips
- ▶ working with local groups and schools – teachers often welcome projects that link with the National Curriculum
- ▶ developing imaginative initiatives, such as tree adoption, to encourage others to value the community's trees – and so help to reduce vandalism
- ▶ leading guided tree walks and giving talks to local groups
- ▶ spearheading Tree Council initiatives, such as its Hedge Tree Campaign to reverse the decline of trees in hedges
- ▶ helping farmers to lay hedges or tag hedge trees for protection.

Tree Wardens are not expected to be experts – and they do not have any special powers. The idea is that this handbook (and its suggestions about where to find out more), together with training provided locally, will give volunteers the necessary fundamental knowledge.

As a Tree Warden you should not:

- ▶ advise whether or not a tree is safe: if it falls you would be liable and you are not insured for this
- ▶ undertake practical work outside your ability or without appropriate permission
- ▶ enter private land without the owner's agreement
- ▶ attempt to handle tree disputes yourself

- ▶ carry out chemical weed control without having completed the certificated training
- ▶ use a chainsaw without having completed the certificated training or without insurance
- ▶ allow anyone carrying out work on trees to disturb wildlife during the breeding or nesting seasons.

Involving the public

The Tree Council is an umbrella body for organisations working together for trees – planting, caring for and enjoying them.

Founded in 1974, today it is the UK's lead tree campaigning partnership.

Its goals are:

- ▶ to make trees matter to everyone
- ▶ more trees, of the right kind, in the right places
- ▶ better care for all trees, of all ages
- ▶ to inspire effective action for trees.

Tree Wardens are key to achieving these goals. Their support is vital to the success of Tree Council initiatives which are aimed at getting as many people as possible involved in planting, caring for and enjoying trees and woods.

These initiatives include:

- ▶ Seed Gathering Season (23 September to 23 October) – making the most of trees for their seeds, nuts, fruits and autumn colours. People can go for a walk to collect seeds from local parks and woods or take part in organised events.

- ▶ National Tree Week (end of November/ beginning of December) – the annual winter tree planting festival and celebration of trees and woods. As well as tree planting at sites throughout the UK, activities include tree dressing, woodcrafts, walks, talks and story telling.
- ▶ Tree Care Campaign (March to September) – highlighting the need for better care for all trees, of all ages, to ensure their survival and increase their number. People are particularly encouraged to care for trees they have recently planted.
- ▶ Walk in the Woods (throughout May) – encouraging more people to get out and enjoy trees in woods, parks and tree-lined streets. They can either go for a healthy walk with friends and family or take part in guided walks, open days and other events in town, city and countryside.

The Tree Council also works with its member organisations and other partners on tree issues of particular concern, and Tree Wardens have an important part to play in these, too. They include:

- ▶ the Green Monuments Campaign, a major drive for proper safeguards for heritage trees and for them to be designated as 'green monuments' (see section 7, *The law and its impact on trees*)
- ▶ the Hedge Tree Campaign to increase awareness of why and how hedge trees matter, reverse their decline by planting new ones and saving existing saplings, and manage and maintain ancient trees in hedges. This supports the Government's Hedgerow Biodiversity Action Plan.

Sponsors of The Tree Council's Tree Warden Scheme

National Grid, one of the world's largest utilities, has worked in partnership with The Tree Council since 1990 and supported its Tree Warden Scheme since 1997. The expert advice National Grid receives from The Tree Council, together with the support of Tree Wardens, is vital in helping the company to manage trees in a safe and sustainable way.

nationalgrid

Communities and Local Government is backing The Tree Council's Tree Warden Scheme with a grant from their Special Grants Programme in support of the Government's 'Cleaner, Safer, Greener' agenda. This funding is helping to extend Tree Wardening further into inner cities and other urban communities.



You and your local network

The amount of time you devote to Tree Wardening is up to you. We hope, however, that you will be as active as possible. What is important is that you feel that trees really matter – to your local community and to the wider world. You will find the contact details for your network co-ordinator and other useful numbers, such as your local authority officers, in the back of your folder.

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