

The Stonehouse Community Arboretum Management Plan: Summary document

A tree and woodland strategy for Stonehouse.

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Please note that this is an edited version of the full Stonehouse Community Arboretum Management Plan (SCAMP) CONSULTATION DRAFT, which is available on the Stonehouse Town Council website.

Background and purpose

Trees deliver a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits to communities. They provide a link between the past and the future and bring us closer to nature, but it can be easy to overlook their importance and forget that they require proper care and attention if they are to flourish and fulfil their potential. Within the boundaries of Stonehouse there are many different tree owners and managers but there has never been an overarching strategy which regards the urban forest collectively and coordinates its management in line with best practice and the wants and needs of the community. The aim of this management plan is to do just that – to provide relevant information about trees to the people of Stonehouse and to create a structured, responsible and realistic framework for the management and care of the urban forest of Stonehouse to ensure that everyone in our community, of present and future generations, benefits equally from the Stonehouse Community Arboretum.

The Stonehouse Community Arboretum

An arboretum can be broadly defined as a collection of trees intended for people to enjoy, and which are to be studied for scientific purposes. Most arboreta in the UK are in clearly-defined areas, often surrounded by fences and walls with gates through which access is allowed only with a ticket. The trees in these collections are often grouped together taxonomically by species, labelled and mapped. The Stonehouse Community Arboretum is rather different. Its boundaries are the boundaries of Stonehouse, and no ticket is required to visit. It encompasses all of the trees on public and private land (although Stonehouse Town Council only have management responsibilities for relatively few trees, and private trees will of course remain the responsibility of the landowner), in the urban and rural parts of Stonehouse. Ultimately its intention is to create a diverse collection of trees, responsibly and sustainably planted and cared for, which will deliver a wide range of benefits to the Stonehouse community and encourage people to visit the town. It is there for everyone – for current and future generations, regardless of gender, race or socioeconomic factors. It is a long-term project, not a quick fix, and those involved in implementing the policies presented in this management plan will do so knowing that they will never see it completed in full.

Policy commitments

At the heart of this strategy is a set of five policy commitments from STC which describe the Town Council's approach to managing the Stonehouse Community Arboretum and which can collectively be described as the Stonehouse Tree Charter. All other organisations managing trees in Stonehouse and all private landowners, large and small, and those renting property, are invited to subscribe to these commitments, which are:

1. Trees will be regarded as an asset, not a liability.

2. Existing trees will be cared for and managed appropriately.
3. New trees will be established responsibly and sustainably.
4. The urban forest of Stonehouse is a Community Arboretum, for everybody.
5. Collaboration will be at the heart of urban forest management.

As a first step towards meeting these policy commitments, the Stonehouse Community Arboretum Management Plan contains fifteen actions. These state that STC will:

ACTION 1	Actively promote trees as an asset, not a liability.
ACTION 2	Protect and retain trees wherever possible to do so.
ACTION 3	Increase tree canopy cover in Stonehouse to 30% by 2040.
ACTION 4	Inspect all Town Council-owned trees annually and keep records of inspections.
ACTION 5	Only engage competent, qualified arboricultural professionals to undertake tree work.
ACTION 6	Produce a woodland management plan to protect and enhance Doverow Wood.
ACTION 7	Plant and establish a diverse range of trees, responsibly and sustainably.
ACTION 8	Only plant trees which are UK-grown or, if imported, have gone through an appropriate period of quarantine.
ACTION 9	Work to ensure that at least 95% of all newly planted trees are still alive three years after planting.
ACTION 10	Seek to invest resources in tree planting, establishment, and care equally across Stonehouse.
ACTION 11	Work actively with local schools to promote the importance of trees and nature.
ACTION 12	Actively engage landowners and renters to sign up to the principles of the Stonehouse Community Arboretum Management Plan.
ACTION 13	Create an online map of all Town Council trees and encourage others to participate.
ACTION 14	Set up a Stonehouse Tree Group to help deliver the objectives of this strategy.
ACTION 15	Respond to any questions, complaints, or concerns about trees openly and honestly.

Please refer to the full Stonehouse Community Arboretum Management Plan (CONSULTATION DOCUMENT) for more information about the policies and actions contained within this summary.