



Saxilby with Ingleby Parish Council

Non-confidential

Tree request

Report to: Planning and Development Committee 25-07

Report by: Assistant / Clerk

Power/duty which decision falls under: Environment Act 2021

Which council objective(s) it falls under:

- Maintain and improve community facilities and amenities
- Protect and enhance our green spaces and street scene
- Preserve and enhance heritage assets, environmental assets and wildlife
- Retain and encourage employment and tourism opportunities
- Improve the well-being of residents
- To foster public participation and engagement
- To recognise the climate and biodiversity emergency and consider as the basis of all decision and policy making

Public Sector Equality Duty

Consider how policies/decisions affect those protected under the Equality Act)

This matter relates to the use of public open space, which is shared by all residents. Any decision made must consider the impact on access, enjoyment, and environmental equity for all members of the community, including those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Decisions on the use of council land needs to reflect the collective benefit, whilst considering individual's preference's.

Duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity

Consider how the policy/decision will contribute to conserving or enhancing biodiversity

Consideration on carbon reduction:

Introducing non-native or dense evergreen planting can have a negative impact on the council's efforts to reduce carbon and enhance biodiversity. Unlike native wildflower or meadow schemes, evergreen tree cover can reduce undergrowth diversity, block light, and ultimately limit habitat potential for insects and pollinators. Native habitat creation remains the preferred low-carbon option.

Consideration of risk management in relation to the proposal¹

It is impossible to list every risk faced by a local council. Risk, in the general sense, means the likelihood of an event happening, and the severity of the negative consequences. The insurance industry regards risk as representing loss or damage. Risk always involves uncertainty. When protecting a local council effectively, it is important to consider if risk is present in the following areas (SLCC AN241)[Tick]

<i>Decision making</i>	<i>Legal</i>
<i>Finances</i>	<i>Inspections</i>
<i>Property</i>	<i>Written/verbal</i>
<i>Staff</i>	<i>communication</i>
<i>Events</i>	<i>Insurance</i>

Does the report consider any new activity? If 'Yes', has a risk assessment, including risk management proposals, been included for consideration and adoption by the council?

(Financial Regulation 17b)

☐ **Yes**

This report involves a request for new planting activity on council-owned land. Risks identified include:

- Long-term maintenance responsibility for trees on council-maintained land
- Health and safety concerns (e.g., root damage, loss of visibility, obstruction)
- Negative biodiversity impacts due to shade and monoculture planting

These risks would require mitigation through clear policies and biodiversity assessments.

¹Risk areas to consider - strategic/operational, likelihood/impact, add to risk register? Any contingency planning needed?

REPORT

A resident has submitted a request to plant **tall evergreen trees** on a section of **Parish Council-owned land** located behind their property.

While the council appreciates community interest in greening efforts, the proposal needs to be assessed in-line with current environmental duties, biodiversity policies, and land management practices.

Key considerations include:

- **Biodiversity Impact:**
Evergreen trees (especially dense conifers) can limit ground flora, reduce native species diversity, and shade out wildflower habitats. This contrasts with the council's current focus on promoting open, biodiverse corridors under the Environment Act 2021.
- **Public Land Use:**
Parish land is maintained for the benefit of all residents. Authorising private planting on public land sets a precedent and may create future conflicts around expectations and land use rights.
- **Maintenance and Liability:**
Once planted, trees become the responsibility of the land manager (i.e. the Parish Council). This includes management of height, roots, overhang, and safety checks—adding a long-term cost burden.
- **Alternative Options:**
The council may wish to consider planting native trees to such as [field maple](#), [hornbeam](#), or [rowan](#)

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Planning and Development Committee:

1. Does not to support the resident's request to plant tall evergreen trees on council-owned land, on the grounds that it does not align with the council's biodiversity strategy, environmental responsibilities under the Environment Act 2021, or permission for private planting on public land.
2. Puts forward an alternative solution to the resident, for them to fund native trees suitable for the site condition, protectors, and stakes, which the council will then purchase and plant in autumn.

