



KINGSMEAD

PARISH COUNCIL

231 Hartford Road, Davenham, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 8JT

(www.kingsmeadpc.org.uk)

Wildlife Policy

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A vision for the biodiversity of Kingsmead Parish

Kingsmead Parish Council cares for the environment through its own practices and by encouraging others. The Council will try to be as conscientious as possible about recycling, efficiency, biodiversity, conservation, and the use of resources and recycling. Our vision is for a parish rich in wildlife that people can enjoy. We aim to raise the profile of biodiversity and make it a natural and integral part of policy and decision making. The Parish Council will, wherever possible, raise public awareness of biodiversity issues. It will, where possible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land including for example tree planting, wild flower meadows, birdbox making. The Parish Council will communicate information and raise awareness of biodiversity through its website and newsletters.

Tree management

This policy identifies the Parish Council's approach to the management of trees on land owned by the Parish Council. It is intended to act as a point of reference for the public, Councillors and Council employees to ensure a clear, consistent and structured approach to the management of trees.

As landowner, Kingsmead Parish Council has a duty of care to ensure that all the trees on its land are kept in an acceptable condition and do not put persons and property at unreasonable risk.

Inspections of trees will be carried out by a qualified arboriculturalist on all land owned by the Parish Council. The frequency and timings of inspections will be informed by independent advice provided by an arboricultural expert taking account of the Parish Council's duty of care.

Save for the purposes of dealing with proven cases of harm to property which would otherwise place undue financial burdens on the Parish Council, or where it would be good arboricultural practice to ensure the long-term amenity of trees which are of significant amenity value; only dead, dying, diseased or dangerous trees will be removed or made safe, whichever is deemed necessary. Removed trees (as a consequence of danger or disease) will be replaced if deemed necessary by native species sourced by specialist contractors.

A programme of tree work will be maintained based on the inspections and with an emphasis on planned rather than reactive tree maintenance.

The Parish Council will allocate sufficient resources to ensure that it is able to manage the trees that it owns.

Consideration will always be given to the impact of any tree pruning or felling on local wildlife. Tree work will be scheduled to take place in periods where the impact on local wildlife is minimised. Opportunities in the vicinity or elsewhere within the Parish to provide wildlife habitats and reuse/recycle the waste wood produced will be pursued wherever practicable.

The Council will ensure all tree works are carried out to the most up to date and relevant British Standards for Tree Work. Tree pruning will only be undertaken where there is sound justification for the work. Where pruning is undertaken it will be in accordance with good arboriculture practice to ensure minimum harm to the tree and every effort will be made to ensure the general shape and character of each tree is retained.

The Council will not fell or prune trees on Council owned land solely to alleviate problems caused by natural and/or seasonal phenomena. The Council will not fell or prune trees for reasons of light.

The Parish Council will not fell or prune trees solely for the reason that they are causing interference with television or satellite reception, unless complainants have taken other measures to improve reception without success and it can be proven that pruning will improve reception. In considering any action the Council will take account of the amenity value of the trees concerned.

The Parish Council will give consideration to any complaints or requests regarding trees on Council owned property, taking into account its tree management policy and/or advice from a qualified arboricultural expert.

Ponds and the culvert

When the Parish Council was formed in 2011, the ponds in Kingsmead had not been maintained since the village was originally built. Most of them were badly overgrown and, in some instances, full of invasive weeds and litter and/or dumped rubbish. Since 2011, the Parish Council has embarked upon a plan of renovation which has transformed the ponds into tidy wildlife amenities for all to enjoy. The Parish Council has taken advice from the Freshwater Habitats Trust as to how best conserve the ponds for the enjoyment of all and to attract local wildlife whilst maintaining a tidy appearance and bearing in mind safety considerations.

There are seven ponds in Kingsmead; with a wide range of biodiversity and all are considered to be important habitats for wildlife as well as providing residents of the Parish with a green and pleasant back-drop to their lives. The Council has created a management plan for the ponds in Kingsmead with a view to preserving them for all to enjoy.

The ponds/waterways are found and named as follows.

- Dukes Way little pond
- Dukes Way duck pond (with duck-house)
- Sluice pond (by Fisherman's Wharf)
- Bickerton Way pond
- Moor Park Way top pond
- Moor Park Way bottom pond (with duck-house)
- Coronet Avenue pond (formerly with duck-house)
- The Culvert

The Council has established, in association with local wetland specialists, an annual maintenance programme for each pond to ensure that the ponds are kept tidy and free of litter and invasive weeds. This involves a general tidy-up during the summer months and a more intensive buffer-strip tidy and tree maintenance in the winter months. As with all things 'wild', the Council will have to be flexible and modify its plans according to weather and conditions.

As a general-rule, a buffer strip of vegetation is left around the edges of each pond to form a wildlife corridor and provide a natural barrier so that small children are discouraged from going near the pond edges. The Parish Council does, however, instruct the wetland specialist to tidy up biannually the pond edges to remove large bushy growth and brambles.

The Council policy to leave buffer strips around the ponds is for the following reasons:

- They provide a natural and effective barrier to prevent small children (and adults) from falling in since the edges are clearly defined by dense undergrowth. In the past, when this has been cut this away, the Council has been asked to fence in the ponds.
- As advised by the Freshwater Habitats Trust, this buffer strip forms a simple but effective way to provide a safe-haven for fresh water wildlife.

The Council will endeavour to keep the buffer zones contained to a 1.5 metre strip around the pond and not expanding over the grassed areas. Please note that the pond on Coronet Avenue contains the non-native invasive weeds called Crassula and Parrots Feather from New Zealand; most likely introduced by a well-meaning resident releasing fish into the pond. The disposal of invasive alien weed is strictly regulated by DEFRA to prevent their spread, and the cost of cleaning out the pond has been high due to strict rules regulating waste disposal. The Council realise that it will never be

able to get rid of these species from the pond and will have to clean it regularly; every three or so years.

For more information see the following link:

<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/checkcleandry/documents/species-guide.pdf>

Bird boxes and duck houses

The Council has installed and will maintain bird boxes within the woodland on Moor Park Way together with two duck houses; one on the lower pond on Moor Park Way and one on the large pond on Dukes Way. The Council may consider installing a duck house on the Coronet Avenue pond if funds are available to replace the one removed a few years ago.

Urban foxes

In common with many other authorities, Kingsmead Parish Council does not support or practice lethal control. It supports coexistence and humane deterrence. Foxes are not vermin; they are part of our urban wildlife. There is no legislation to compel local councils to undertake control of foxes. Residents are given advice and encouraged to adopt humane solutions to their perceived fox problems. The Council does not support or permit fox hunting or culling on its land.

Bats

All bats are European Protected Species, which means it is an offence to harm or disturb bats or their roosts whether this is deliberate or unintentional. Roosts are protected whether bats are present or not. Full details of legislation relating to bats can be found at: www.naturalengland.org.uk.

Badgers

In common with many other authorities, Kingsmead Parish Council does not support or practice lethal control. It supports coexistence and humane deterrence. Badgers are not vermin; they are part of our urban wildlife. There is no legislation to compel local councils to undertake control of badgers. The Council will take and act on advice from the Badger Trust in cases of issues with badgers and setts on Parish land. The Council does not support or permit badger hunting or culling on its land.

Dog and cat (pet) fouling

Kingsmead Parish Council will not tolerate any instances of dog or cat fouling on Parish Land. The Council provides over 30 bins for residents to bag and dispose of dog faeces. The Council actively promotes responsible disposal of dog and cat faeces using the bins provided.

Collaboration with knowledgeable trusts

Policy to collaborate with knowledgeable trusts such as the Freshwater Habitats Trust, the Cheshire Wildlife Trust, the Bat Conservation Trust, the Badger Trust, etc. The Council will endeavour to take and act on advice given whenever possible.

Amenity areas

Kingsmead Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance of all the amenity areas, parks and green open spaces within the community.

All the Parish hedges, verges and wooded areas are included in the tree management statement in this document:

- The tree corridor on Kingsmead (spine road) corner next to the clock-tower
- The wooded area at the sides of the culvert from the Northwich Fire station to the River Weaver
- The tree corridor along the A556
- The wood near Fisherman's Wharf
- The hedges and trees in St. George's field
- The orchard at St. George's field
- The tree corridor along St. George's field
- The tree corridor separating Kingsmead from houses along London Road
- The tree corridor along both sides of Kingsmead (spine road)
- The trees and hedges in the wildlife meadow near the River Weaver
- The tree corridor along the 'top path' from the end of Blandford Drive to Fisherman's Wharf

Grass cutting

- Grass verges and parks will be mowed every 2 weeks, from 1st April to 31st October
- Daffodil areas and arboretum banks will be mowed monthly
- Daffodil areas will be left uncut until the daffodils have died back
- All grassed areas will be cleared of litter before cutting
- All grass cuttings will be removed from site if weather conditions prevent complete mulching of cuttings
- All grass edging will footpaths to be cleared to path edging each year in Autumn
- No herbicide will be used unless otherwise consent is specified in writing by the Parish Council
- Weed control to obstacles in grassed, shrub areas, walls and hedges will be applied as required (during growing season)

Hedge cutting

- As per advice from DEFRA, all hedges will be cut annually between August and October, one cut in the autumn and a second cut, only if required, before March, upon written request from the Parish Council clerk
- The exception to the above is for hedges that cause an obstruction to paths may be cut upon written request from the Parish Council clerk
- All trimmings/clippings will be removed from site and composted or recycled
- No hedges are to be cut between 1st April and 31st August unless a path or paths is/are being obstructed.

Ivy & Ragwort

- Ivy on the Kingsmead wall to be cut back twice yearly
- Ivy on the wall behind the war memorial to be cut back twice yearly (or similarly controlled)
- All trimmings to be removed from site
- Hand remove any ragwort, including roots, which appears around all areas of the site and remove from site

Debris screens on the culvert

- All debris screens on the culvert from Stretton Walk to the River Weaver to be cleared quarterly and removed from site in order to prevent flooding and to enable the culvert to flow freely into the River Weaver
- 2 culvert screens on Waystead Close
- 2 culvert screens on Moor Park Way
- 2 culvert screens on Kingsmead (spine road) (A533)

Wildflower areas

- Grass to be cut down twice yearly at end March and end September
- Any tree saplings next to the brick walls to be cut down
- Haystacks to be left as small neat piles for wildlife

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