



South Norfolk Tree Warden Network Handbook



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1. Welcome

Hello, and welcome!

By becoming a Tree Warden, you've joined a friendly network of local people who care about trees, hedges, and woodlands – and about the communities that enjoy them. Whether you're planting a new tree, spotting early signs of disease, or simply sharing your enthusiasm with neighbours, your contribution really matters.

Trees are at the heart of South Norfolk's landscapes – from ancient oaks and village greens to new orchards, hedgerows, and woodland planting. They provide homes for wildlife, shade for people, clean air, and a sense of place for us all. As a Tree Warden, you are helping to look after this living heritage and shape a greener future.

This handbook has been put together to guide you through your role. Inside, you'll find:

- Practical tips for getting started.
- Guidance on working with your parish council.
- Advice on spotting tree health issues.
- Ideas for involving your community.
- Information on the law, safety, and best practice.

But remember – you're not on your own. You're part of a network. Other wardens, parish councils, and [South Norfolk District Council](#) are here to support you. We also link closely with [The Tree Council](#), which provides training, campaigns, and inspiration nationwide.

Most importantly, your role should be enjoyable. Tree Wardens are not expected to be experts – just people with a love of trees and a willingness to share that enthusiasm. Whether you're able to give a little time or a lot, every effort makes a difference.

So, thank you for joining us. Together, we can make sure South Norfolk's trees thrive for generations to come.



2. About the Tree Warden Scheme

The **Tree Council** founded the Tree Warden Scheme in 1990 and continues to coordinate it nationally. It's a way for people everywhere to play an active role in protecting and celebrating their local trees.

Here in South Norfolk, our Tree Warden Network is run by volunteers like you. We work closely with parish councils, South Norfolk District Council, and community groups to:

- Protect and care for existing trees
- Encourage new planting
- Share knowledge and enthusiasm with others
- Celebrate the importance of trees in our towns and villages

3. What South Norfolk Tree Wardens Do

As a South Norfolk Tree Warden, you'll have the chance to:

- Champion local trees, hedges, and woodlands
- Plant and care for trees and hedgerows
- Carry out small-scale woodland or orchard management
- Collect seeds and establish community nurseries
- Survey and record trees to build a picture of South Norfolk's treescape
- Provide early warning of threats such as disease, decay, or vandalism
- Involve neighbours, schools, and community groups in tree projects
- Join training sessions, field trips, and events with other wardens
- Support national initiatives such as The Tree Council's Hedge Tree Campaign
- Inspire young people by working with schools and youth groups
- Suggest trees for protection under Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)
- Comment on planning applications where trees may be affected (via parish councils and South Norfolk District Council)

You may also be able to apply for grants or funding for local planting and training projects.



4. Tips for New Wardens

Starting out as a Tree Warden can feel a bit overwhelming – but don't worry! You're part of a supportive network and you'll quickly find your way.

Here are some top tips:

- Take your time – you don't need to know everything straight away
- Stay in touch with your parish council and your network coordinator
- Get to know your patch: its trees, hedges, green spaces, and people
- Remember, you're a valued volunteer – not an expert, and that's okay
- Always seek landowner permission before going onto private land
- Avoid disputes – if tricky issues arise, pass them to the local tree officer
- Never use chainsaws or chemicals unless you're trained and certificated
- Don't give technical advice on tree safety – report concerns instead
- Any age, background, or ability can contribute – from planting and surveying to organising events and raising awareness
- Always act in a way that reflects positively on the South Norfolk Tree Warden Network and The Tree Council

5. Get to Know Your Patch

Understanding your patch is one of the best ways to make a difference. The more familiar you are with your local area, the more effective you'll be as a Warden.

Look out for:

- Threatened or neglected trees
- Potential planting sites
- Proposed developments that could affect trees
- Local parks, greens, and community spaces
- Newly planted trees needing care

You can also explore:

- Historic maps and records for clues about old trees and hedgerows.
- Surveys held by the parish council or Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service.



- Designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Local Wildlife Sites, or Conservation Areas.

And don't forget to connect with people:

- Introduce yourself at parish council meetings
- Share updates through parish newsletters or noticeboards
- Set up displays at village fêtes or fairs
- Link with local conservation or gardening groups

6. Working with Your Parish Council

Your parish or town council is a key partner. Building a good relationship helps them, helps you, and benefits the local environment.

Tips for success:

- Get to know the parish clerk – they're your main contact
- Let the council know you're the first port of call for tree matters
- Learn how meetings work – and attend when you can
- Share short, clear updates on your projects
- Be visible at parish and community events
- Be generous with credit and open to compromise
- Consider standing as a councillor if you want to have a bigger voice

7. Tree Health

You don't need to be a tree expert – but you can be an extra pair of eyes. Keep watch for pests and diseases and report them promptly.

For reliable, up-to-date information, see:

- [Forest Research](#) - pest and disease alerts
- [Forestry Commission](#) - Plant Health Service
- [The Tree Council](#) - guidance and campaigns



If you spot something unusual, don't diagnose it yourself. Pass it on to the [District Council's tree](#) officers.

8. Tree Law (in a nutshell)

Tree law can seem complex, but the basics are simple:

- **Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs):** protect specific trees or groups
- **Trees in Conservation Areas:** usually need permission before work
- **Hedgerow Regulations:** prevent removal of important hedgerows without consent

If you're unsure, always check with your parish clerk or the District Council tree officers on 01508 533813 or planning@southnorfolkbroadland.gov.uk

9. Our Seasonal Calendar

Winter (December - February)

- Tree planting season - perfect time for bare-root trees and hedges.
- Check stakes, guards, and ties on young trees.
- Keep an eye on wildlife habitats while planting/working.
- Great time for training, workshops, or planning projects.

Spring (March - May)

- Water young trees as the weather warms up.
- Check for signs of pests or disease as trees come into leaf.
- Avoid disturbing nesting birds when carrying out work.
- Sow seeds or pot on saplings for community tree nurseries.
- Get involved with local school or community events (Earth Day/Arbor Day).

Summer (June - August)

- Regular watering of young trees is vital in dry spells.
- Weed around bases of newly planted trees to reduce competition.



- Survey and record local trees in full leaf.
- Host stalls at fêtes, fairs, or summer shows to raise awareness.
- Enjoy and promote the wildlife supported by trees and hedges.

Autumn (September - November)

- Collect seeds, nuts, and acorns for community nurseries.
- Prepare ground for winter planting.
- Carry out light woodland/hedge management (outside nesting season).
- Reflect on the year's projects – share updates with your parish.
- Host a community planting day to bring people together.

10. A Final Word

Being a Tree Warden is about much more than trees. It's about people, places, and the connections we make in our communities.

Sometimes your work will be hands-on – planting or watering. Sometimes it will be about conversations – encouraging others, raising awareness, or simply answering a neighbour's question about a tree.

Every action, big or small, contributes to a greener, healthier South Norfolk.

Thank you for being part of the South Norfolk Tree Warden Network. Together, we're making a difference.

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