

### The Arboricultural Association

Ullenwood Court, Ullenwood, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL53 9QS

Tel **01242 522152** Fax **01242 577766**

email: [admin@trees.org.uk](mailto:admin@trees.org.uk) website: [www.trees.org.uk](http://www.trees.org.uk)

### Communities and Local Government publications

[www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/treeshighhedges/highhedges/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/treeshighhedges/highhedges/)

**Citizens Advice Bureau** - You should find the location of your nearest office in the telephone directory. Website [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

**Community Legal Service** - Helps people to find the right legal advice and there are Community Legal Service Information points in most libraries.

Tel **0845 608 1122** website [www.justask.org.uk](http://www.justask.org.uk)

**Mediation UK** - A panel of professional mediators who are able to respond to a range of disputes. Tel **0117 904 6661** website [www.ukmediation.net](http://www.ukmediation.net)

### Useful contacts and references:

Contact the Tree Team by e-mail at [trees@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:trees@westberks.gov.uk) or phone on **01635 551111** for Council owned trees and general queries.

Contact the Tree Officers for tree works applications, trees and planning applications and trees in Conservation Areas.

#### The Tree Officer for the Eastern Area is Jon Thomas

Contact Jon at [jon.thomas@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:jon.thomas@westberks.gov.uk) or on Tel: **01635 519611** ext **2611**

#### The Tree Officer for the Western Area is Andrew Giles

Contact Andrew at [andrew.giles@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.giles@westberks.gov.uk) or on Tel: **01635 519349** ext **2349**

### West Berkshire Council

#### Environment

Market Street  
Newbury  
Berkshire  
RG14 5LD

[www.westberks.gov.uk](http://www.westberks.gov.uk)

If you require this information in an alternative format or translation, please call 01635 5191111

## Environment

# Pruning a neighbour's tree



**Under common law, a person may cut back any branch (or root) from a neighbour's tree that overhangs or encroaches onto their property. In cutting back any overhanging branches (or encroaching roots).**

### **The following points must be observed**

- You must not trespass onto the land on which the trees are growing
- Branches or roots must not be cut back beyond the boundary in anticipation of them overhanging
- Any branches, fruit or roots that are removed must be carefully returned to the tree owner unless they agree otherwise
- All work must be carried out carefully. For example you should avoid damaging property or carrying out work that would leave the tree unsafe or dangerous to avoid any comeback against yourself.
- You cannot alter the height of trees or hedges on neighbouring land.

While not required under common law, it would be courteous to notify the tree owner of your intentions to help allay any misunderstanding.

Please be aware that your common law rights are intended to allow you to carry out the minimum amount of work. If you carry out extensive works and in so doing you make the tree unsafe, the tree owner may have a case against you for criminal damage. You should be especially careful if you are pruning roots.

You may wish to obtain qualified arboricultural advice before carrying out any work.

If the tree owner agrees to works that are in addition to your common law rights, or if they give you permission to enter their land to undertake the work, it would be prudent to obtain their written consent.

If the trees in question are subject to a tree preservation order or are growing in a conservation area then an application (in the case of tree preservation orders) or 'Notice of Intent' (in the case of trees growing in a conservation area) may be required and the following points will apply:

- The person intending to submit an application or notice must inform the owner of the land on which the trees are growing that an application or notice is to be made
- The granting of consent in the case of a tree preservation order or the raising of no objection in the case of trees in a conservation area means that the tree work applied for is acceptable in arboricultural and planning terms only. It does not give the person submitting the application or notice an automatic legal right to carry out the work. The question of ownership is a civil rather than a planning issue and the landowner's permission must be obtained in addition to any planning approval
- Any application or notice relates to the land and the landowner may also carry out the approved works if they so wish.

Please be aware that any applications or notices received are judged on their own merits. If work is proposed that is in excess of what would normally be permitted under common law, consent may not be granted if the pruning of over-hanging branches is considered unacceptable in arboricultural or planning terms, for example, if pruning branches back to the boundary would leave large pruning stubs or unbalance the tree.

### **Trees growing on borough council land**

If the tree that overhangs your garden is growing on land managed by the West Berkshire council, you are advised to contact one of the Tree Officers and their number can be found on the back of this leaflet.

### **High hedges and trees blocking light**

The High Hedges Regulations 2005 apply to evergreen or semi-evergreen hedges. No maximum height is given, each case is assessed on its merits. Before making a complaint about a high hedge to the council, you need to be able to show that you have taken reasonable steps to resolve the situation yourself.

The Department of Communities and Local Government has produced a free leaflet entitled 'Over the Garden Hedge' that gives advice on how to resolve an issue with a high hedge, copies of which are available from the borough council or from Communities and Local Government Publications, telephone **0870 122 6236** or email **communities@twoten.com**

Currently there is no legislation that governs what deciduous trees can be planted in domestic gardens and how high they can be allowed to grow.

### **Dangerous Trees**

If you feel that a tree on your neighbours land represents a danger to you and/or your property you are advised in the first instance to approach your neighbour direct. West Berkshire Council does have some limited powers under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to deal with private trees that represent an imminent danger to people or property. These powers are dealt with by the Arboricultural Officers and you are advised to contact them direct if you do not receive a favourable response from the tree owner.

**If you are in doubt about any of these issues, you should seek independent legal advice. For additional advice on trees:**

#### **Arboricultural Advisory and Information Service (AAIS),**

Alice Holt Lodge, Wrecclesham, Farnham, Surrey, GU10 4LH

Tel **01420 22022** Fax **01420 22000**

Tree Helpline: **0897 161147** calls charged at 1.50 per minute