



SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

At Chapel Tree Services we endeavour to maximise all opportunities for environmental enhancement while carrying out our business activities. We aim to protect wildlife and habitats, use resources efficiently, reduce waste and minimise any adverse environmental impacts of our activities. We are also committed to continual improvement in our work processes to ensure we find ways to reduce our impact on the environment and improve sustainability. We take our duty of care, under section 34 of the 1990 Environmental Protection Act very seriously and always ensure waste is properly managed and that we work within the guidelines and legislation designed to protect wildlife and habitats.

Cutting our emissions

We believe that it is a shared responsibility to reduce our carbon footprint and are always looking at ways to reduce ours, as well as partner with organisations and use suppliers who are working more sustainably.

We carefully plan our routes for work and woodchip drops to minimise travel and share vehicles whenever possible. We have invested in 3 woodchippers, so avoid burning brash and wood chip is now used in local biomass boilers or on a local organic farm as mulch or cattle bedding.

We have also worked to reduce the amount of chipping we do, instead encouraging customers to leave brash stacked in habitat piles. This reduces the use of diesel-powered chippers and creates important habitats for wildlife.

In 2022 our office building was insulated and in 2023 we added double glazing in order to reduce energy consumption for heating. We are looking at adding solar panels to the roof to provide electricity from a sustainable source rather than traditional fossil fuel and are reviewing and trialling the use of electric chainsaws.

Minimizing pollution

We will ensure reduction of pollution by effectively operating and maintaining vehicles, plant and machinery. These are checked with a weekly check system for each vehicle so any issues that could cause leaks, spills or excess air pollution are identified and fixed immediately.

Our vehicles now all comply with the Euro 6 regulation and we are considering trialling an electric vehicle for our surveyor.

We use bio-chain oil for our chainsaws on environmentally sensitive sites. We can also offer our customers Aspen fuel usage in our saws which is a cleaner alternative to petrol (at a supplement).

We carry fuel spill/pollution kits on all vehicles to ensure we properly deal with any incident on site.

Waste Management

We recycle 99% of the waste produced by the work we do. All wood chip is taken to an organic farm and used as cattle bedding/for spreading on crops or left on site where garden owners will use it as mulch.

Where possible we encourage customers to keep brash on site, stacked in habitat piles to improve biodiversity of woodland and rough areas. Wood is either left for land owner or taken and processed for firewood or biomass.



The firewood we produce is processed on site before being naturally air dried. This ensures that there are no additional energy sources used for this process and offers our customers a more sustainable product than kiln dried wood. Also our logs are a mixture of shapes and sizes because we believe that wood should come in its natural form rather than being trimmed to a standard shape and size. This reduces waste and the energy required to process the logs.

Recycling

Within our staff areas/office/workshop we currently recycle 75% of our waste. Recycling bins are now provided in all staff areas and emptied monthly, along with general waste bins (which now only need emptying fortnightly due to reduced rubbish). We recycle all scrap metal, plastic, glass, cardboard, paper, tetra packs, cans at our local recycling centre. Any used oil or contaminated fuel is taken by a local Waste Carrier (Wye Valley group, Rotherwas, Waste Carriers licence BUS721858, Waste management licence number 30391).

Waste Carriers licence

Chapel Tree Services holds a waste carriers licence reg no: CBDL56352.

Bio Security

In order to minimise the risk of introducing or spreading harmful pests and diseases we provide staff with the Arb Association and Forestry Commission Guides for Biosecurity. At low risk sites there will be a programme of good housekeeping to keep kit, footwear and vehicles clean each day. For high risk sites we will implement more stringent cleaning measures between sites as specified in the High Risk activity measures on the Forestry Commission guide. At all times in our vehicles we carry storage bags, supply of clean water and paper towels, handwipes, protective gloves and eye protection/wash and disinfectant.

Wildlife, habitat and tree protection

When we initially visit any site we will check with the landowners if they are aware of any restrictions i.e. if the site is located in a conservation area or if any trees are subject to a Tree Preservation Order and also if they are aware of any protected species that are present on the site. This will include nesting birds (protected during nesting season from 1st March to 31st August), EPS such as dormice and bats and also badgers (protected by the 1992 Protection of Badgers Act).

If protected species are thought to be present at initial site visit, then we can arrange for an ecologist to assess the site and support us in a plan. This may mean a site inspection is carried out to formally establish if the species is present and working with the correct authorities to apply for a licence if the work must be carried out on the site where the wildlife is present.

If no protected species are thought to be present but during the course of works team members see signs of them, then work will stop until a proper assessment can be carried out. This may mean we cannot cut certain trees or areas. Teams are briefed in 'tool box talks' about looking out for signs of wildlife and what to do, particularly in times such as bird nesting season.

Our office team will also carry out a desk based exercise to check the local authority records for any restrictions. If a tree is located in a conservation area or is protected by a TPO, we will carry out a planning application, and tree works will only be carried out when and if planning permission is granted for the works.



Planning for the future

We believe we can have a longer term impact on our community's carbon footprint by supporting the education of the wider public and especially our young people, in how important it is to replant and rewild areas to ensure the protection of spaces for nature but also to mitigate the impacts of our own carbon footprints. We have delivered assemblies in local schools about tree planting and tree care as well as about careers within the landscape and tree sector. Also whenever we have to remove a tree, we always encourage and support our customers to replant elsewhere in their gardens.