

Tree damage



Basingstoke
and Deane

Tree damage

Sometimes tree roots can cause damage to surrounding buildings and landscaping. As roots expand, they can push over small walls and lift hard standing. Sometimes tree roots can cause blockages in underground water pipes.

Occasionally larger structures can be damaged by subsidence. This is a complex interaction between the soil, building, rainfall and vegetation that occurs on shrinkable clay soils. Damage can become progressively worse unless the tree is removed or work is carried out to stabilise the building.

Tree root damage

As tree roots expand in diameter, they can cause paths to crack and push over small walls. Hard standing can be replaced with a more flexible surface such as shingle which allows for root expansion. Root pruning can allow for a surface to be re-laid or a wall to be rebuilt. However, as tree roots are necessary to support the weight of a tree, you should always ask a specialist before pruning them.

Occasionally tree roots can block underground water pipes. Normally, this happens in older pipes that have already become cracked, allowing for root ingress. When the pipe is repaired or replaced, it can be protected with special materials to prevent damage from reoccurring.



Subsidence damage

Trees lose water which is then replenished from the soil, via tree roots. If the tree takes more water from the soil than is replaced by rainfall the soil will gradually dry out. Sometimes a clay soil supporting all or part of a building dries out and consequently shrinks, resulting in part of a building moving downwards.

Trees are not the only factors that can cause building movement. Other causes include leaking drains, settlement and substandard construction. If vegetation is involved there will be a cyclical pattern to the movement with cracks widening during the summer as the soil reduces in volume as it dries out and closing during winter as the soil increases in volume as it rehydrates. It is important that monitoring should be continued long enough to establish the nature of the building movement.

Neighbouring trees

If you have received a request from a neighbour to remove a tree that is causing damage to their property you should contact your own insurance company who will be able to advise you on the best course of action.

Council owned tree

If you believe that a council-owned tree is causing damage to your property then you can request the tree to be pruned or removed.

In some cases, where it is not obvious that the tree has caused the damage, we would require technical evidence to demonstrate that on the balance of probabilities, the tree is responsible before we will carry out any work. Normally, the first step would be to speak to your insurance company who would handle a claim on your behalf.

Protected trees

If you are applying to remove a protected tree that is causing damage, we would require sufficient evidence to demonstrate that, on the balance of probabilities, the tree in question is an influencing cause. For subsidence related cases, you should speak to your insurance company who would normally make the application on your behalf.

Where can I get more help?

The Arboricultural Association has a list of independently approved arboriculturists who can advise you on tree maintenance. They have a website at www.trees.org.uk or you can contact them by telephoning 01242 522152.

If you would like to enquire about a council-owned tree or to find out if a tree is protected, you should contact us by emailing communityservices@basingstoke.gov.uk or telephone 01256 844 844.

www.basingstoke.gov.uk | 01256 844844

customer.service@basingstoke.gov.uk

Follow us:  BasingstokeGov

If you need this information in a different format, for example large print, CD or braille, please contact the council.

© Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council January 2017

