STAPLEFORD TREE PROJECT COMMITTEE

**Terms of Reference**

(Adopted on: 4/04/24)

The Stapleford Tree Project Committee is responsible to act on the Council’s behalf with matters relating to the care and planting of new trees in Stapleford village from 2024.

1. The Committee will be subject to reconstitution annually at the Annual Meeting of the Parish

Council.

2. The Committee shall consist of not fewer than two Councillors appointed by the Parish Council.

3. The quorum of the Committee shall be three Members.

4. The Committee will meet a minimum of four times a year.

5. The Committee’s aims are as follows:

1. To identify, protect and preserve existing trees of particular value to the community.
2. To care for, and improve the condition and resilience of all of our trees in the village.
3. To work with the Parish, County and District Councils to identify areas of council land where new trees could be planted and work with them to ensure the planting and care of these trees.
4. To persuade village landowners/residents to increase the planting of trees on their land (particularly with regards to native species) and to support them in doing so.

6. The Committee pledges to work with local stakeholders such as residents, schools, businesses and community groups to achieve maximum support for and engagement with both the planting process and the care and maintenance of the trees.

7. The Committee will encourage the planting of native species that are suitable to the area in which they are to be planted.

8. The Committee recognises that trees have many benefits including (but not limited to):

Climate change:

Excess carbon dioxide (CO2) is building up in our atmosphere, contributing to climate change. Trees absorb CO2, removing and storing the carbon while releasing oxygen back into the air. In one year, an acre of mature trees absorbs the same amount of CO2 produced when you drive your car 26,000 miles.

Health:

Trees improve air quality. Their canopies act as a physical filter, trapping dust and absorbing pollutants from the air. Each individual tree removes up to 1.7 kilos every year. They also provide shade from solar radiation and reduce noise.

Over 20 species of British trees and shrubs are known to have medicinal properties. The oil from birch bark, for example, has antiseptic properties.

They are a key provider of oxygen which is fundamental for all life. In one year an acre of mature trees can provide enough oxygen for 18 people.

Research shows that within minutes of being surrounded by trees and green space, your blood pressure drops, your heart rate slows and your stress levels come down. Other studies show that patients with views of trees out their hospital windows heal faster and with less complications. Children with ADHD show fewer symptoms when they have access to nature. Exposure to trees and nature aids concentration by reducing mental fatigue.

Natural Cooling:

Trees reduce wind speeds and cool the air as they lose moisture and reflect heat upwards from their leaves. It’s estimated that trees can reduce the temperature in a city by up to 7°C.

This also means they can help save energy. Three trees placed strategically around a family home can cut summer air conditioning needs by up to 50%. By reducing the energy demand for cooling our houses, we reduce carbon dioxide and other pollution emissions from power plants. This will become more important as our climate changes.

Reduction in water pollution

Trees reduce runoff by breaking rainfall thus allowing the water to flow down the trunk and into the earth below the tree. This prevents storm water from carrying pollutants to streams and rivers.

Trees also help prevent soil erosion, absorbing thousands of litres of stormwater.

Boosting Wildlife:

Trees host complex microhabitats. When young, they offer habitation and food to amazing communities of birds, insects, lichen and fungi. When ancient, their trunks also provide the hollow cover needed by species such as bats, woodboring beetles, tawny owls and woodpeckers.

One mature oak can be home to as many as 500 different species.

Strengthening Communities:

They strengthen the distinctive character of a place and encourage local pride. Urban woodland can be used as an educational resource and to bring groups together for activities like walking and bird-watching. Trees are also invaluable for children to play in and discover their sense of adventure.

Forest Schools provide a hands-on learning experience in a woodland environment, helping children develop their social and communication skills, increase their self-esteem and improve their academic achievements.

Trees can also mask concrete walls or parking lots, and unsightly views. They muffle sound from nearby streets and freeways, and create an eye-soothing canopy of green. Trees absorb dust and wind and reduce glare.

Benefiting the Economy

Studies show that the more trees and landscaping a business district has, the more business will flow in. A tree-lined street will also slow traffic – enough to allow the drivers to look at the store fronts instead of whizzing by.

Research shows that average house prices are 5-18% higher when properties are close to mature trees. Companies benefit from a healthier, happier workforce if there are parks and trees nearby.

Fruit harvested from community orchards can be sold and provide tourism interest. Vocational training for youth interested in green jobs is also a great way to develop economic opportunities from trees.

9. The Terms of Reference under which this Committee operates will be reviewed in each scheduled Parish Election year, or annually if the Council so require, at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

10. The Parish Council’s adopted Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct retain precedence over these Terms of Reference.