

Policy for the development and maintenance of the parcel of land known as “The Arbour” in Farnhill.

The Council has sought local and expert opinion as follows in the process of developing its plans for the development and improvement of the Arbour and in particular the lower Arbour.

1. Report on a botanical survey of the Arbour – 12 September 2008 – Dr PM Canaway
2. Inventory of trees at the Arbour 9 October 2008
3. Parish Meetings to determine priorities for village development
4. Annual Tree inspections
5. Planting proposal for the Arbour – A. Shaw – Mar 2015
6. Site meetings and public participation in Council meetings by local residents.
7. Survey and calculations for possible access paths and passages – Counc. M Scarfe

The Arbour.

The parcel of land known as the Arbour which stretches through the centre of the village, from Grange Road in the North to Main Street in the South was gifted to the Parish Council in 1966 for the purposes of recreation.

It falls naturally into two parts; the Upper Arbour to the north between Grange Road and Craglands and the much steeper Lower Harbour to the South and West below between Craglands and Main Street.

The Upper Arbour.

- The South of the Upper Arbour is mainly a grassed area with a track to the West connecting Grange Road and Castlegate. The grassed area contains a number of semi mature trees and small sections of planting mainly alongside the former quarry face.
- The track provides a right of vehicular access to the houses at Arbour Top and is used by delivery and refuse collection vehicles servicing the houses. *The right of access does not imply any level of structural adequacy for vehicular use and does not extend to large vehicles of a size or type likely to damage the concrete or grassed areas.* The concrete track was constructed by local residents with the permission of the Council
- The North of the Upper Arbour lies between the grassed area to the South, the track to the west and Grange Road to the North and consists of a steeper rougher area with several semi mature trees. Part of the Upper Arbour was once a tip. Within this area there is a small piece of land accessed directly from Grange Road which is subject to a private long term lease.
- At the lower end of Arbour Top adjacent to Arbour Cote there is a small walled area containing five silver birch trees which are subject to preservation orders.
- There is a public footpath which connects Grange Road to further public footpaths running along Castle Gate and alongside Craglands.
- Camping, fire lighting and the use of the grassed for parking is prohibited.

Proposed Development of the Upper Arbour

- The land to the North of the Upper Arbour shall be cleared of debris, self - seeded saplings, overgrown ground cover and ivy which is intruding on the properties to the East. Trees within this area will be inspected and any necessary action taken (see maintenance below).

The Council welcome the active support of local residents who have offered to assist with this development.

Maintenance of the Upper Arbour

- The Council will maintain a watching brief on all trees in the Northern, Southern and Small Walled Area adjacent to Arbour Cote. The Council will arrange for the trees to be inspected by a professional arboriculturist every three years in line with the requirements of the Council's Insurers and will undertake a visual inspection annually. It will take any appropriate action as necessary (after seeking permission where required) to:
 - Maintain the health and appearance of the trees with the aim of keeping residents and passers – by safe
 - Maintain the right of access along the track
 - Remove any damaged or dangerous trees
 - Help to preserve the integrity of the former quarry face
- The land at the North of the Upper Arbour shall be maintained in a semi rough and wild state following the clearance work undertaken as part of the development plan for this area (see above). The Council will welcome support from the local residents, subject to approval, to help to keep the area from becoming overgrown and a nuisance to residents.
- The grassy part of the South of the Upper Arbour shall be regularly mown and maintained as “parkland grass”. Cultivation of small non - intrusive planted areas will be encouraged. The current arrangement whereby local residents maintain the grassed and planted areas using Council equipment is welcomed, subject to adequate health and safety consideration.
- The trees and shrubs alongside the track shall be cut back as appropriate to enable access along the track to the houses. The current practice whereby the local residents take this action subject to approval by the Council will be encouraged. The residents will also be encouraged to maintain the fabric of the concrete track which they previously installed to ensure the health and safety of pedestrians and suitability for continued safe use by vehicles.
- Access to and along the public footpath will be maintained.

The Lower Arbour

- The East of the Lower Arbour is essentially a steep bank comprising rough vegetation, shrubs and trees. It is bounded at the top by a dry stone wall.
- The Western part of the Lower Arbour is less steep and grassy.
- An amenity area at the South West which has historically been used by some residents for drying washing and poles for that purpose have been erected.
- Public footpaths run along the Eastern boundary above the dry stone wall alongside Craglands and also along the Southern boundary adjacent to Arbour House.
- There is a permissive footpath which runs from the North Eastern boundary at the junction of the concrete track and Castlegate near Arbour Cote to the “Amenity Area” in the South West of the Lower Arbour.
- Three small parcels of land at the South West boundary which lie next to the properties which face onto Main Street are subject to annual renewable leases.

Proposed development of the Lower Arbour

- The whole of the Lower Arbour shall be made more accessible to members of the public by:
 - Reduction of the overgrown vegetation
 - Re-instatement and improvement to footpath access
 - Clearing of the footpath to the South alongside Arbour House
 - Restructuring the lower part of the permissive footpath from the South of the Amenity Area to the junction with upper part of the path to the Upper Arbour
 - Redesign and reconstruction of the upper part of the permissive footpath which is currently steep, winding and difficult as it twists and rises to exit the Lower Arbour close by Arbour Cote
 - Provision of a seat and resting area next to the path at its exit close by Arbour Cote
 - Provision of steps to replace those spoiled by previous work to reconnect the historical pathway between the entrance to the Lower Arbour between number 30 and 32 Main Street and the newly constructed permissive path in the Amenity Area
 - Development of a mown grass area at the Lower South and West bounded by the new footpath to the East and the houses and leased lands at the west and stretching from the entrance to the Lower Arbour south of 28 Main Street to the Hawthorn and Elder trees at the North West of the Lower Arbour. This area to be made safe for walking and recreation in consultation with those residents who use washing lines and clothes poles in that area.(see also bullet point 2 of Proposed Maintenance
- The steeper parts of the Lower Arbour will be developed into a wilder more natural environment providing a haven for plants, animals, insects, and birds and allowing for observation by the public. This will be achieved through:
 - A planned programme of clearing and planting to the East of the new permissive path and to the North and West adjacent to the upper section of the permissive path where it turns to link to the upper exit from the Lower Arbour.
 - The creation of a diverse range of habitats for a variety of plants and animals in an attractive environment
 - Planting a mixture of wild flowers and grasses

This development, which in the short term may cause some disturbance to the wild overgrown nature of the area will be undertaken sensitively to minimise disruption of habitats and will provide, in the medium and long term, sustainability for the natural existing heathers, a healthier environment for the existing trees, shrubs and plants and a rich and diverse range of habitats for a variety of plants and animal species in an attractive “wilder” environment.

- The dry stone wall to the North East of the Lower Arbour which supports the road along Castlegate will be strengthened alongside Castlegate to reduce the risk of subsidence and collapse.

Proposed maintenance of the Lower Arbour

- The Council will maintain a watching brief on all trees in the Lower Arbour. The Council will arrange for the trees to be inspected by a professional arboriculturist every three years in line with the requirements of the Council's Insurers and will undertake a visual inspection annually. It will take any appropriate action as necessary (after seeking permission where required) :
 - Maintain the health and appearance of the trees
 - Provide a range of natural habitats
 - Enable the right of access along the footpaths
 - Remove any damaged or dangerous trees

- When not in use, washing lines should be taken down by residents to avoid accident or injury to the public
- The grassed area will be regularly mowed and kept tidy.
- The pathways, tracks, steps and seats will be monitored and kept clear of debris and any hazards, including overhanging trees and bushes. Any defects in structure will be repaired as soon as is practicable.
- The wild area to the East and North will be kept sufficiently clear of unwanted vegetation to permit ease of access for maintenance and to avoid build - up of dead vegetation which might lead to a risk of fire.
- The Council will maintain a watching brief to monitor the condition and stability of the wall which runs to the East of the Lower Arbour alongside Craglands
- Camping, fire lighting and the use of grassed areas for the parking of vehicles is prohibited

The Parish Council will encourage any local resident or groups of residents to become involved in supporting this policy.

This policy was agreed by the Council on Thursday 24 November 2016
It will be reviewed at the meeting of the Council in November 2017

Signed:

Gemma Harling

Chair of Farnhill Parish Council