



## A Manifesto for Protecting Bristol's Existing Urban Forest

Bristol has declared a climate and ecological emergency. An emergency means making radical changes now - in every council department, by every developer, and by all those who own or care for trees. All these proposals fit under Bristol's existing 2011 [Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy - BCS9 Green Infrastructure](#) Policy which should now be implemented. We must stop the needless destruction of so many trees in our city and instead learn to work around and with them.

Everyone from all sides of the political spectrum is talking about planting trees. We fully endorse this, but it will take time for these new trees to mature. In the meantime, retaining existing trees will have the biggest immediate effect.

### We propose that

- ① There needs to be genuine community engagement in Bristol's tree management decisions. The council needs to listen to communities that want to save trees, not just to those who want to remove them.
- ② Urban trees (planted or self-sown) have a tough life. Many bear the wounds and scars of previous damage or interventions. These trees, though they may not be perfect, should be valued for the ecosystem services they provide and retained with appropriate and careful management wherever possible.
- ③ Alternatives to felling must be given priority, whether for street trees, or for those threatened by planning applications, or for other trees in the public or the private space.
- ④ We need to strengthen planning policies to help retain trees on development sites by building around them, especially when the trees are on the edge of the site.
- ⑤ Veteran and ancient trees require specialist management to ensure their retention whenever possible.
- ⑥ When surveys identify trees that present a risk, there should be consultation about the range of options available to mitigate the risk. This should always balance risk with the benefits the tree provides. Felling is only ever a last resort.
- ⑦ If trees must be felled, then more trees need to be planted to replace them. This should be based on [well-established metrics](#) used to calculate how to increase (not just replace) the [natural capital](#) of the lost tree.