



CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

PEST CONTROL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

Chesham Town Council is committed to maintaining and providing excellent services for the local community and to ensuring the efficient and effective use of its resources in support of this objective. Central to its service provision is its management of Parks and Open Spaces. A number of factors determine how best to ensure our open spaces remain sustainable and as environmentally diverse as possible but the control of pests and vermin is central to this.

LEGISLATION

The Council always ensures it adheres to the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) which stipulates which wild animals are protected and the procedures for the trapping and killing of pests and vermin where appropriate. The Council adheres to the Animal Welfare Act (2006) which protects animals from unnecessary suffering when under the Council's control.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- The Council will only use its own trained employees and reputable pest control companies when carrying out any necessary pest control requirements.
- The Council will only trap and kill pests and vermin using permitted methods under the terms of the legislation.
- The Council will rigorously ensure that poisons and traps will kill only those pests and vermin they are intended for.
- The Council will only use approved UK traps.
- The Council will undertake inspections at least twice a day when pest control measures are in place.
- For the control of wildfowl, please see the Council's separate Wildfowl Policy.



PESTS AND VERMIN

The Council has a range of pests of pests and vermin on its land which need careful control in numbers to ensure our Parks and Open Spaces remain safe for the public and in the best possible condition while maintaining diverse and sustainable ecosystems. Under specific conditions, the following animals may need to be controlled:

Rats

Main Location

Across all sites.

Problems Caused

Rat bites and scratches can result in disease and rat-bite fever. Rat urine is responsible for the spread of leptospirosis, which can result in liver and kidney damage. Complications include renal and liver failure, as well as cardiovascular problems.

Current Measures of Control

Poison bait, humane traps and shooting under licence.

Mice

Main Location

Across all sites but particularly in the roofs of Council premises.

Problem caused

Mice spread numerous diseases. The diseases are spread to humans directly: through contact with mice faeces, saliva or urine, mouse bites and mere contact. Mouse diseases, however, can also be spread indirectly: ticks, fleas and mites that have fed, at some point, on the infected mouse and then transmit that infection to humans. Mice can also contaminate foodstuffs due to pathogens in their urine and faeces.

In buildings, notorious for gnawing through electric wiring which has been a specific problem with the Gym and Swim Centre.

Current Measures of Control

Poison bait and humane traps.



Grey Squirrels

Main Location

Across all parks and open spaces. Also in Council buildings' roof spaces.

Problems caused

Grey squirrels can cause serious problems for native wildlife. The bark stripping from tree trunks during the months of May and June damages natural woodland and has caused significant problems for the Council's tree stock. In spring, the taking of eggs and young chicks can be devastating for songbird and ground-nesting bird populations. Squirrels can also get into roof spaces of the Council's buildings and damage the electrical wiring. An additional problem is caused by squirrels ripping open rubbish bags in the public bins, helping to spread rubbish around the open spaces.

Current Measures of Control

Grey squirrels have limited legal protection and can be controlled all year round. It is an offence under section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) to introduce and release grey squirrels into the wild. The purpose of controlling the squirrels on Council land is to keep the population to a manageable level where the amount of damage caused is minimised.

Poison bait and humane traps.

Moles

Main Location

Sports pitches.

Problems caused

Moles cause damage to sports turf (fine and rough) affecting playable surfaces and molehills can cause damage to mowing equipment. The molehills can escalate to a major trip hazard relating to a health and safety issue for sports players and members of the public. However, at present, there is limited mole activity on Council land.

Current Measures of Control

None presently, and not looking to control in the near future, but humane traps to be considered is a problem develops.



Rabbits

Main Location

Across all sites but particularly in the Upper Lowndes Park area.

Problems caused

Rabbits cause damage to land, wildflower areas, woodland trees and saplings. Their scrapings and burrowing can cause a trip hazard to members of public.

Current Measures of Control

We have a legal duty to control rabbits to manage the population on our land under the Pests Act 1954. No control is currently undertaken, but live trapping will be considered if significant rabbit damage develops.

Pigeons

Main Location

Across all sites, but particularly the Town Hall.

Problems caused

Nuisance created by pigeons perching on buildings and fouling the surrounding pavements. There is little health risk in terms of infectious diseases, but it is unsightly and might create a slip hazard in some conditions.

Current Measures of Control

Bird spikes are installed on the Town Hall to prevent birds from land and perching.

Mink

Main Location

Riparian habitats.

Problems caused

Mink are voracious predators of waterfowl and water voles. The water vole is the UK's fastest declining mammal and the population on the River Chess is one of only two indigenous populations in the county. The population nearly became extinct in 2003 at least in part due to predation by mink.



Current Measures of Control

The Council permits the placement of mink rafts on its land to check for the presence of mink. If signs of mink are detected, the Council will allow BBOWT and the Chilterns Chalk Streams Project to control mink following The Wildlife Trusts' policy on mink control. Only live-capture traps will be used so that non-target species can be released unharmed. Trapping will be done between September and March to avoid killing nursing females that will have dependent young. Captured mink will be shot by an air weapon or by shotgun if there are personnel with firearms licences. Mink control alone is not permitted as the sole means of water vole protection; it must be accompanied by beneficial habitat management for water voles.

Glis Glis

Main Location

Woodlands and buildings.

Problems caused

Damage to the tops of trees, predation of woodland birds (including sleeping adults, eggs and nestlings) and damage to electrical wiring in buildings.

Current Measures of Control

We currently do not control Glis glis on our land, but they are known to be causing problems in Chesham woodland. If control becomes necessary we will use licensed contractors.

Wasps

Main Location

Open spaces.

Problems caused

Wasps nests present in close proximity to human activity can increase the likelihood of people experiencing painful stings. For people with allergies, this can be life-threatening.

Current Measures of Control

Chemical control.

Please note that whilst bee nests or swarms may present a nuisance in some



circumstances, the Town Council will not kill bees, but will use contractors to move bees if required.

TRAPPING AND CULLING

The humane traps the Council currently uses are the 'Fenn MK4' and the 'Kania 2000' which are approved in the UK under the Spring Traps Approval (England) Order 2012. The Fenn MK4 operation is with a tread plate that activates and releases the full force of the spring which forces the two arms to snap the neck of the pest it is intended for, resulting in instant death. This trap will be housed in a 4 to 6ft long secure box with a mesh at both ends. No member of public or non-target species can be harmed while this trap is in use as it is in a secure wooden box. There will be a clear warning sign located on the box.

The Kania 2000 trap is another type of spring trap. That will be set a minimum of 3.5m above ground level in suitable tree locations or buildings. The Kania 2000 is a self-contained unit widely considered one of the safest traps in the world today. Its power makes it humane, especially for grey squirrels. To fire this trap, the target pest is in the perfect position for the trap to kill it instantly.

The specific attractant baits used, the careful placement of the traps, the size of entrance holes in the enclosing boxes and the use of mesh will minimise the risk of non-target species entering the traps. However, in the event that non-target species are captured, the use of these traps will be reviewed.

TRAINING

The Deputy Parks and Premises Manager has been trained in pest and vermin control, permitting him to purchase the specialist poisons to manage pest control in-house.

POST-CONTROL DISPOSAL

Carcasses are safely disposed of by incineration.

TRAP AND CHEMICAL STORAGE

A pest control risk assessment will be conducted, along with COSHH assessments for poisons. A chemical store will be used for poisons and all traps and chemicals will be kept in a locked container.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on a four year cycle. However, it will also be reviewed and revised as relevant legislation changes, should new pest problems develop and as pest control technology evolves.



Policy version 1 adopted: 16 October 2017

Policy due for review: October 2021

