



## GUIDANCE FOR HIGH HEDGES COMPLAINTS

### General notes

These guidance notes are to help you fill in the form to make a complaint about a neighbouring high hedge. You should also read the Government leaflets [High hedges: complaining to the Council](#) and [Over the garden hedge](#).

If you are still unsure how to answer any of the questions, please contact us on (01902) 696000 or email [trees@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:trees@sstaffs.gov.uk).

We will not be able to help you unless you complete the form in full, provide all necessary information and pay the £385 fee.

We will consider reducing the fee by up to half if you claim benefits. If you would like to claim this discount, please submit the [discount form](#) with your complaint.

### 1. Attempts to resolve the complaint

Please keep the descriptions brief. Tell us how you made the approaches to your neighbour (for example face-to-face, by phone or by letter) and what the result was.

#### *Example*

- 17 February—saw neighbour in garden and tried to discuss hedge but was ignored.
- 12 March—wrote to neighbour to ask if we could discuss hedge. Two weeks later still no reply.
- 9 April—wrote again to ask if we could discuss hedge and mediation. Two weeks later still no reply.
- 7 May—wrote to inform neighbour that I would be complaining to the Council.
- 1 May—left it for a couple of weeks, nothing further from neighbour so confirmed in writing that we would be going ahead with the complaint.

#### *Evidence*

You do not need to send us every letter or email you have exchanged with your neighbour about the hedge, especially if the dispute has been going on for a while. You need only show us three or more letters or emails sent to your neighbour within the last four months, along with your neighbour's replies, if any.

### 2. The complaint

- 2.2 'Evergreen' means that the leaves do not fall off the hedge in autumn and winter.



- 2.6** To complain to us about a high hedge, you must be the owner or occupier of the property it affects.

Even if you do not own the property, you can still make a complaint. You should let the owner know what you are doing.

- 2.7** The property does not have to be completely residential, but it must include some living accommodation. If it does not, we cannot help.

### **3. Grounds for complaint**

The more information you can give us, the better. Stick to the facts, and remember that we will send a copy of your form to both the hedge owner and the occupant of the property.

Concentrate on the hedge and the direct effects of its height. We cannot consider problems that its height does not directly cause—that its roots are pushing up a path, for example, or that the stress of negotiating with your neighbour is making you ill.

### **4. Previous complaints**

If you have used this procedure to complain to us about this hedge before, give us the details here. You don't need to tell us about telephone calls or other informal contact with us.

### **5. Who is involved?**

We need all these names and addresses because there are some documents that we must to the owner **and** occupier of the land on which the hedge grows.

- 5.1.** Even if you are submitting a complaint for somebody else, we still need his or her contact details.

If you enter an email address here, we will consider that your agreement to receive documents by email.

- 5.2.** We need this information to arrange a site visit.

- 5.3.** Complete this section if you are acting for someone else. We will send all our correspondence to you.

If you enter an email address here, we will consider that your agreement to receive documents by email.

- 5.4.** This will normally be the person you have talked to when you tried to agree a solution to your hedge problems.

If the property where the hedge is growing does not have a postal address, describe its location as clearly as possible. For example, "Land to



rear of 12 to 18 High Street” or “Open area adjoining Main Road, opposite The Crown pub”.

We need this information because we will have to contact these people for their comments, and to arrange to visit the site where the hedge is growing.

- 5.5 The Land Registry should be able to tell you who owns the hedge. Please visit their [website](#) for further details.

## 6. Checklist

Please provide a **photo** of the hedge and a **plan** showing the location of the hedge and surrounding properties.

Your plan should look something like the example on the next page. Please:

- mark and name any surrounding roads.
- sketch in buildings, including adjoining properties.
- add house numbers or names.
- clearly mark the position of the hedge and how far it extends along the boundary or boundaries.
- mark the direction of north.

Several private companies can provide you with a suitable plan to start you off. Please see the [Planning Portal](#) for details.

If you have ticked the “**any other documents**” box, please list these documents at the end of the form. Please give their date and a title—for example, “January 2016: surveyor's report”.

You can pay the **fee** of £385 [online](#) or by cheque (made payable to “South Staffordshire Council”).

If you are submitting the form by email but will be posting supporting documents to us separately, clearly mark each one with your address and the words “High Hedge Complaint”.

