

Management Policy for Ivy

Ivy, lichen, moss and algae have been allowed to develop extensively at Arnos Vale over the last 20 years. Ivy now covers and almost obscures many monuments. It has also colonised many of the older trees.

It is the vision and policy of the AVCT to retain and encourage the growth of the Ivy, lichen, moss and algae and prevent destruction of the habitats these have created through the implementation of a strict management policy.

Ivy

The management policy for ivy at the cemetery has to balance two opposing aspects of this species:-

Negative

- Ivy can become top heavy and/or its roots invade built structures to the extent that it causes damage to stonework.
- It can add so much extra weight to older or vulnerable trees that it may make them more susceptible to storm damage.
- The detailed stonework and inscriptions on the monuments are hidden from view.
- Careless removal can damage delicate lettering and stonework.

Positive

- Ivy is an extremely important plant ecologically, providing nectar for late summer insects and berry food for birds over winter; shelter for birds, bats and invertebrates; nesting opportunities for some bird species. There are two sub-species of ivy growing in the Bristol area and *Hedera helix ssp hibernica* is the host plant for the locally uncommon, parasitic plant ivy broomrape, which occurs at Arnos Vale.
- Ivy has aesthetic value, softening the appearance of the monuments and enabling their integration into the landscape.
- The ivy layer can protect the underlying stonework and lettering from erosion.

Ivy Policy

1. Work on ivy is only to be carried out between November and February.

2. When it becomes apparent that it would be beneficial or is necessary to trim or remove ivy from a grave or other structure then a proposal should be presented to AVCT Trustee Mary Wood and Nick Bull, Estate Manager who are the decision makers for all matters regarding ivy, lichen, moss and algae. Approval must be gained from either before any action is taken.
3. Complete removal of ivy, lichen, moss and algae should only be undertaken in exceptional cases which have been approved by Nick Bull or Mary Wood. Such circumstances may include damage to the stonework or structural instability.
4. Where ivy is becoming top heavy, or simply looks untidy in an area clearly visible to the public, then permission can be sought from Nick Bull or Mary Wood to trim the excess growth as directed by them.
5. Where ivy is confirmed as causing tree damage or has the potential to increase storm effects (refer to current Tree Report by Bartlett), then this situation should be reported to Nick Bull or Mary Wood who will decide on what action is to be taken. An annual safety inspection of the trees will be maintained.
6. The owner of a grave is entitled to remove ivy from their grave stone or have it removed through the Cut and Tidy service. However, they will be advised of the Ivy Management Policy and discouraged from having the ivy removed when making the booking.
7. Where stonework has been revealed through necessary ivy clearance, then the AVCT Administrator should be advised so that a photographic record can be made, in case there is ivy re-growth and the inscriptions should become obscured again.
8. Where someone who is not a member of the family is seeking ivy removal in order to read an inscription for research interests, an arrangement must be made with the Arnos Vale Trust Administrator (and of course with the family if possible) who will consult Nick Bull or Mary Wood prior to permission being given for the ivy to be cleared.

Methodology

When it has been agreed by Mary Wood or Nick Bull that the Ivy can be partly or completely removed, then;

1. A risk assessment should be carried out to assess the risk of damage to or collapse of the stone.
2. An appropriate method of removal must be agreed by Nick Bull or Mary Wood for each individual case.
3. Care must be taken to ensure that roots are not cut and ivy attached to the monument must not be pulled off.

4. Work must be done carefully by hand, and strands of ivy must not be pulled in case they are attached to a stone or providing support to a structure.
5. Overhanging ivy should be carefully trimmed back from the top to create balance, but not removed.

When cutting grass in the vicinity of an ivy-covered monument, great care must be taken to ensure that the ivy roots are not damaged. (N.B. brush cutters must not be used).

Communication of the Policy

Key aspects of the Ivy Management Policy will be displayed on public notices at the entrances to the site.

A grave maintenance (Cut and Tidy) service is available to families and owners of graves. Details of the Ivy Management Policy will be provided with details of the service and the owners will be discouraged from seeking to have the ivy removed.