

PHEASANT'S AND SOLOMON'S WOOD

GREENSPACE ACTION PLAN

2024 - 2029

BRIEFING DOCUMENT



CONTENTS

Contents.....	2
1. Introduction.....	3
2. Background.....	4
3. Review of Progress	6
4. Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) 2024-2029	7
4.1 Aims	7
4.2 Objectives	7
5. Community Engagement and Plan Production Process	10
5.1 Greenspace Action Plan production process . Error! Bookmark not defined.	
5.2 Stakeholders	10
6. Stakeholder Feedback.....	11

1. INTRODUCTION

A new five-year Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) is being produced for Pheasant's and Solomon's Wood. This briefing document provides an overview of how the GAP will be produced and sets out how stakeholders can contribute to shaping the plan.

GAPs are essentially map-based management plans that provide focus and direction for the running and improvement of open spaces. They provide a clear, logical process to determine the activities that should take place over a stated period of time to achieve the objectives for the site.

The GAP is being produced by the Countryside Management Service (CMS), part of Hertfordshire County Council's Countryside and Rights of Way Service, on behalf of and in partnership with Three Rivers District Council (TRDC). The completed document will inform the management actions to be undertaken over the next five years, commencing in April 2024.

Engaging communities is integral to the production of GAPs, to ensure that stakeholders are fully aware of and able to interact with the plan production process. This briefing document initiates and supports this community engagement.

The engagement period will run from 13th November to 11th December. A further engagement period in 2024 will provide an opportunity to assess the draft version of the GAP. Please use the contact details in Section 6 to comment on the aspirations for the site.

This document has been broken down into easy-to-read sections:

Section 2 provides an overview of the site and location map.

Section 3 reviews recent management of the site.

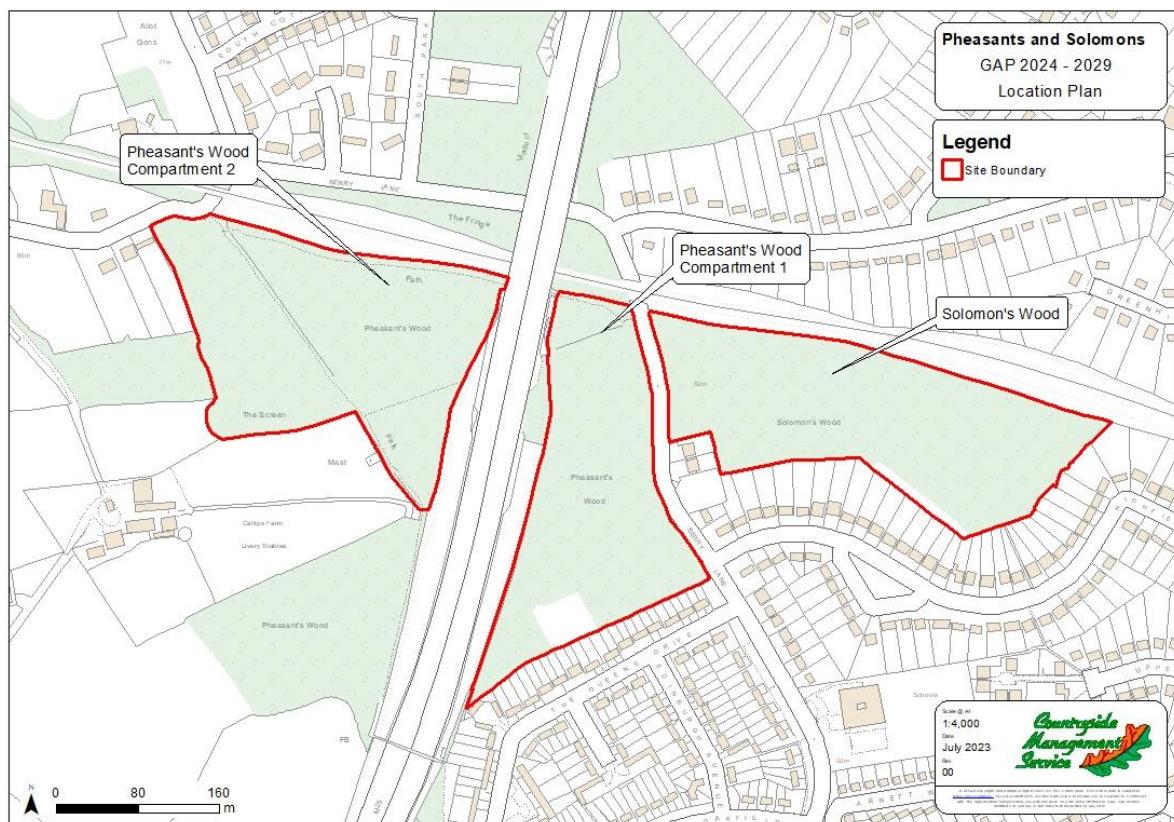
Section 4 contains the core objectives for the Pheasant's and Solomon's Wood GAP.

Section 5 summarises the public engagement methodology, setting out how and when stakeholders can contribute to the plan.

2. BACKGROUND

Pheasant's and Solomon's Wood comprise of a series of three compartments located to the north and west of Rickmansworth. The woods are bordered to the north by the Metropolitan Underground line with Pheasant's Wood compartment 2 divided from compartment 1 by the M25, connected a footbridge in the south side and an underpass in the northern area.

Solomon's Wood is separated from Pheasant's Wood by a busy minor road known as Berry Lane. Both Pheasant's Wood Compartment 1 and Solomon's Wood are bounded to the south and east by residential development. Pheasant's Wood Compartments 2 is bordered by a small area of unregistered woodland and fields to the west and an unregistered area of woodland to the south.



Solomon's Wood is a 5.2ha woodland located on a north-facing slope bordered by the railway line to the north and residential development to the south. It is a mix of predominantly broadleaved secondary and ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) where past quarrying activity has, in places, caused damage to the ASNW character. Non-native species have also been planted, as well as evidence of the spread of invasive species such as cherry laurel and rhododendron.

Pheasant's Wood Compartment 1 is a 4.4ha wood located immediately to the east of Solomon's wood on the west side of Berry Lane and also on and also on a north-facing

slope down to the railway line. The M25 defines the western boundary. To the north, large mature beech is dominant with ash, sycamore, and hornbeam with oak further to the south. The wood becomes more open to the south, with a glade opening up against housing to the south-east of Queens Drive. There is evidence of garden waste disposal in this area. The woodland has a sparse understorey in places, with rhododendron and cherry laurel present.

Pheasant's Wood Compartment 2 is the largest compartment at 6.2ha, dropping down to the north to meet the railway line. The compartment is dominated by single age structure, with little regeneration or understorey. There is a conifer avenue which runs east to west along the north boundary which leads from the underpass which connects the woodland to Compartment 1. Repeated motorcycling in this area has created deep gulleys and erosion around some of the mature beech, exposing their root plates. There is also some fly tipping in areas.

The woodlands have informal paths but no formal walking routes. There is no obvious signage of the woodland at any entrances, or any interpretation of the site.

Pheasant's and Solomon's Wood
GAP 2024 - 2029
Location Plan

Legend

Site Boundary

Pheasants Wood Cpt.1
Grid Ref: TQ037954
Easting: 503790
Northing: 195488

Pheasants Wood Cpt.2
Grid Ref: TQ040953
Easting: 504016
Northing: 195331

Solomon's Wood
Grid Ref: TQ042954
Easting: 504290
Northing: 195425

Scale @ A4
1:20,000
Date
July 2023
Rev
00

Countryside Management Service

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3. REVIEW OF PROGRESS

With some areas of the site being of ancient semi-natural origin, Pheasant's and Solomon's Wood is likely to have been managed in the past primarily as oak / beech standards with hazel coppice understorey. There is also evidence of wood banks and boundary beech and hornbeam stubs along old rights of way.

Very little active management has been carried out in the recent past. Following disturbance associated with work to the Metropolitan Line, a glade in the northern part of compartment 3 of Pheasant's Wood was replanted with a small number of standard trees and under sown with a wildflower mixture. In 2020, Three Rivers District Council commissioned a Forestry Commission Woodland Management Plan for this site. Targets and objectives for works within the woodlands were identified and outlined, but actions from the plan have not yet been delivered. This management plan focused solely on the woodland from a woodland management perspective.

This new Greenspace Action Plan will encompass the targets set out in the Woodland Management Plan, while also looking at other aspects, such as access, promotion of the site, and engagement with the local residents.

4. GREENSPACE ACTION PLAN (GAP) 2024-2029

The Pheasant's and Solomon's Wood GAP 2024 - 2029 will be a simple, easy to read plan for use by officers of TRDC and members of the public and will act as a guide to the work of volunteers. The plan will be largely map based, with sequential, annual management maps to show the actions planned for each year. The resulting change will be represented on the map for the following year. The document will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and relevant.

The plan will be costed, and potential funding sources identified. Once the final GAP is agreed, external funding will be sought to enable the plan to be delivered.

The aim and objectives of the GAP will be as follows:

4.1 Aims

The aim of the Pheasant's and Solomon's Wood GAP 2024 – 2029 is to maintain and enhance the woodland as an ecologically valuable resource using sustainable management, as well as to encourage public recreation and enjoyment.

4.2 Objectives

A. A WELCOMING PLACE

Provide a welcoming green space for the enjoyment of the local community.

- A1 Design, produce and install welcome signage and interpretation at major entrances.
- A2 Formalise the network of footpaths through the site.
- A3 Install timber benches at strategic locations around the site.
- A4 Improvement of the entrance off Berry Lane to Solomon's Wood.

B. HEALTHY, SAFE AND SECURE

Ensure that all visitors to Pheasant's and Solomon's Wood feel safe and able to enjoy the site at all times.

- B1 Ensure that visitors feel safe and secure in all areas of the site.
- B2 Complete all formal tree inspections, update records, and carry out any reactive tree works to address safety issues.
- B3 Continue to monitor and respond proactively to antisocial behaviour within the site, for example the use of motorcycles and dirt bikes.

C. CLEAN AND WELL MAINTAINED

Ensure that the site is kept clean and that all aspects of the site are well maintained.

- C1 Maintain all site infrastructure – benches, motorcycle barriers, interpretation boards, signage etc. in a good condition.
- C2 Maintain ease of access by managing vegetation encroaching paths and access points
- C3 Promptly remove any fly tipping and carry out regular litter picking.
- C4 Actively discourage dumping of garden waste from neighbouring properties.

D. SUSTAINABILITY

Ensure all management operations are as sustainable as possible.

- D1 Encourage natural regeneration of tree species. Where restocking is required, use as an opportunity for species diversification to improve resilience.
- D2 Seek to maintain and enhance the long-term ecological and economic viability of the wood through a programme of sustainable woodland management in line with the UK Forestry Standard.
- D3 Only use chemical herbicides to control weeds where no alternative exists and in line with council policy.
- D4 Ensure all wooden site furniture is of FSC standard.
- D5 Ensure all contractors used on site adhere to sustainability and environmental policies.
- D6 Ensure ongoing maintenance costs are financially sustainable; offset against timber sales.
- D7 Secure external funding to ensure the viability of works.

E. BIODIVERSITY AND HERITAGE

Conserve and enhance the woodland's habitats, wildlife, and archaeological features.

- E1 Restore, value, and protect the ancient semi-natural woodland ecology and continue to enhance woodland biodiversity in line with Pheasant's and Solomon's Wood Woodland Management Plan (2020 - 2030).
- E2 Control the spread of invasive non-native species (INNS), in particular cherry laurel and rhododendron.
- E3 Actively manage the woodland canopy through thinning in plantation areas to improve light conditions and encourage regeneration.
- E4 Ensure the woods are protected from unauthorised damaging activities to conserve the ancient woodland ecology, soils, and integrity of the woodland.
- E5 Conserve and protect heritage features associated with the wood, such as wood and hedge banks and boundary veteran trees.

- E6 Seek to mitigate the potential effects of climate change and tree pests and diseases by developing ecosystem resilience via species and age class diversification from phased thinning and careful species selection and regeneration.
- E7 Improve the structure of key woodland glades and rides by following a three-zone ride management regime.
- E8 Improve the understorey in areas through glade and ride creation.
- E9 Improve abundance of deadwood by using some felled material in habitat creation across the site.
- E10 Investigate ownership status and opportunity to adopt the unregistered land to the west and south of Pheasant's Wood Compartment 2.

F. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Provide opportunities for the local community to engage with and participate in woodland management activities.

- F1 Organise events to spread awareness and increase community involvement, such as guided walks and volunteer events.
- F2 Involve stakeholders, the local community, and user groups in all stages of the GAP development, as well as in future management plan revisions and decisions on key issues throughout the plan period.
- F3 Encourage the local community to become involved in the management of the site in a structured and supported way and ensure all involved operate towards achievement of the objectives of the GAP.

G. PROMOTION

- G1 Promote the woodland through website content, magazines, and other opportunities.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PLAN PRODUCTION PROCESS

Effective community engagement is at the centre of successful management plans. The value of a GAP is maximised when it incorporates and balances the aspirations of stakeholders and interest groups.

In order to provide all interested stakeholders and groups with the opportunity to feed into the production of the new GAP, we have adopted a structured two-stage approach to community engagement.

- For the first stage (this briefing document), stakeholders and site users will be invited to make comment on the core aspirations in Section 4; it is hoped that any further aspirations and/or issues will be identified through this information gathering process. This first stage of community engagement will run between **13th November and 11th December**.
- For the second stage, stakeholders and site users will be invited to read through and make comment on the draft GAP, which will include the detailed proposals and actions. This stage is intended to run in **2024**.

Please be aware that we will not respond individually to comments received through the public engagements; instead, we will produce a summary of comments, noting any amendments made to the plan as a result. This engagement response document will be published online alongside the briefing document, draft plan and final plan. We will retain contact details only for the purpose of keeping respondents informed about the plan development process.

Following the second stage exercise, the final document will be produced, published and the actions will commence.

5.1 Stakeholders

- Relevant Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) officers
- Hertfordshire County Council and Three Rivers District Councillors
- Relevant HCC officers including CMS Communities Team, Rights of Way, Ecology, Archaeology
- Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust
- Herts and Middlesex Butterfly Conservation
- Forestry Commission
- Chorleywood Parish Council
- Ramblers Society
- Pheasant's and Solomon's Woods users and local residents

6. STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Thank you for taking the time to read this document. We are keen to receive feedback from you on our proposals for the Pheasant's and Solomon's Wood Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) 2024 – 2029.

Please return your comments using the contact details below by **11th December** at the latest.

FAO Frankie Downes

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