



Carpenters Wood

GREENSPACE ACTION PLAN, 2024 - 2029

BRIEFING DOCUMENT



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1. INTRODUCTION

A new five-year Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) is being produced for Carpenters 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. 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 Monday 30th October to Sunday 10th November 2023. A further engagement period in early 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 Carpenters Wood GAP.

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

2. BACKGROUND

Carpenters Wood is an Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) located within the village of Chorleywood, near Rickmansworth on the Hertfordshire/Buckinghamshire border. It is bordered by housing, a railway, and open farmland. It largely occupies a plateau above the surrounding housing and is locally very prominent in a suburban landscape. The woodland is owned by Three Rivers District Council.

The site lies within the Chiltern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and is designated as a Local Wildlife Site for its ecological interest. A Tree Preservation Order covers the whole woodland. There is evidence of badgers and bat species breeding on site.

The woodland covers an area of 22.8ha, and comprises three compartments - Hillas Wood, Whitelands Wood and Carpenters Wood, which are collectively referred to as Carpenters Wood. It is primarily ancient, semi-natural Beech woodland with Oak, Ash and Hornbeam. It contains a diverse ground flora and supports a wide range of ancient woodland indicator species. Much of the western boundaries of the woodland are old wood banks with veteran hornbeam stubs. Areas of mature Beech were blown down during the storms of 1987, and subsequently replanted with a mixture of Larch and Oak.

There are three main access points into the woodland where Rights Of Way enter the site. A definitive bridleway runs through the wood and a definitive footpath runs along the eastern edge. There are informal footpaths throughout and a circular permissive bridleway. Archaeological features include wood banks and sawpits. The woodland is frequently used by dog walkers, walkers and horse riders, and there is an active Friends Group undertaking a variety of maintenance and management operations.

In addition to the existing GAP, TRDC hold a Forestry Commission approved Woodland Management Plan (WMP) for the site, designed to ensure the woodland is managed in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard and the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS).

Carpenters Wood

Greenspace Action Plan 2024-29

Location Plan

Legend

Site_Boundary

Carpenters Wood
Grid Ref: TQ 015 967
Easting: 501500
Northing: 196700

Scale @ A3
1:15,000

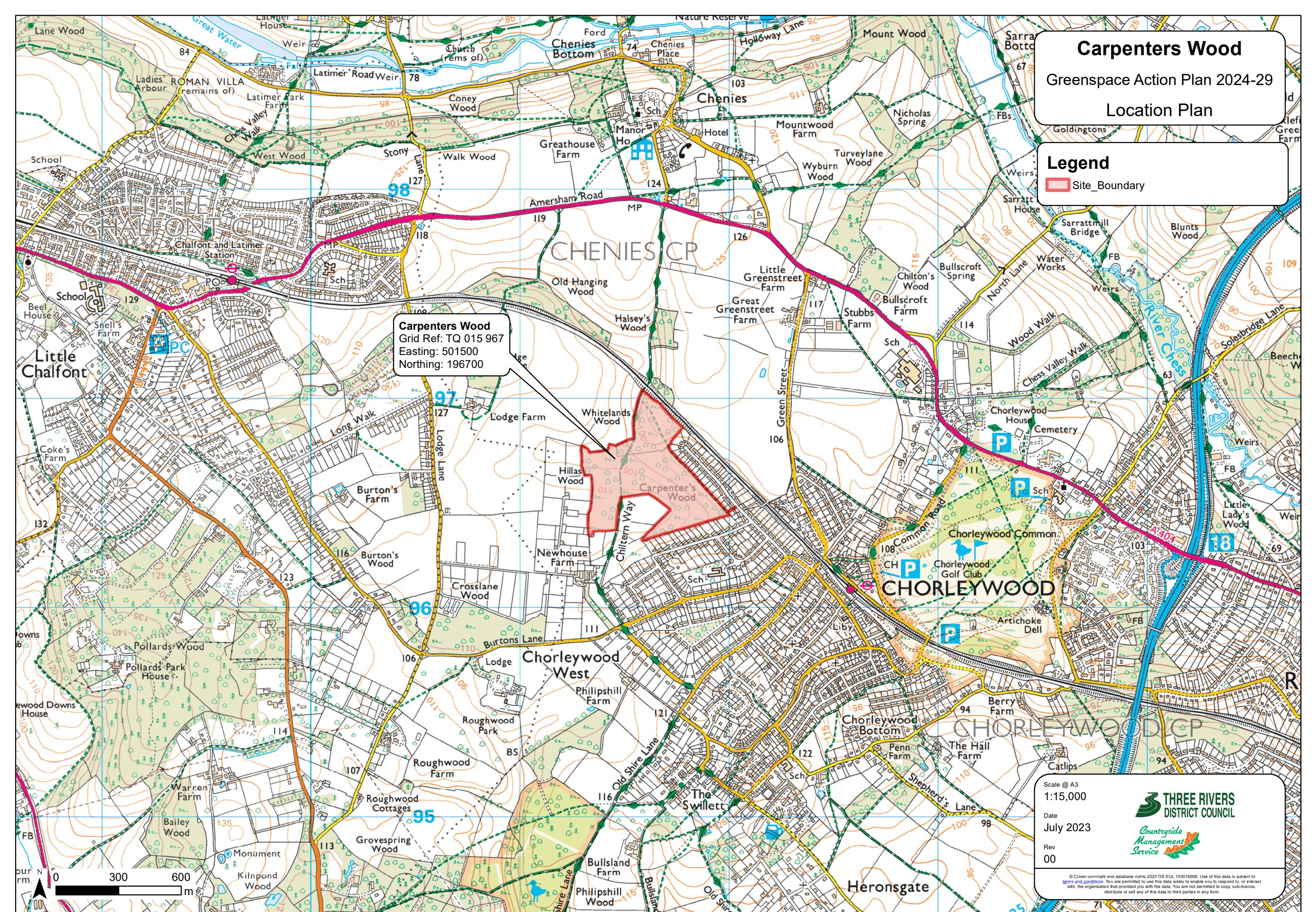
Date
July 2023

Rev
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THREE RIVERS
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Countryside
Management
Service

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3. REVIEW OF PROGRESS

There have been several previous iterations of Greenspace Action Plans for Carpenters Wood running from 2008, the most recent of which covering from 2018 to 2023. This plan built on the high forestry management of the 2012 – 2017 plan where the focus was on glade creation, ride management, invasive species control, the start of PAWS (Plantation on Ancient Woodland) regeneration work and developing a work programme for the Friends of Carpenters Wood.

The 2018 – 2023 GAP saw a more extensive programme of forestry work which looked to continue remove the areas of Larch dominant plantation from Hillas and Carpenters Wood. This was planned in a phased removal over the 5-year GAP period. However, the delays caused by covid restrictions and a requirement under the new Forestry Commission woodland management plan resulted in the majority of the felling work being carried out in one phase.

Further work was done on improving the central rides by implementing a 3-zoned successional management system; biannual mowing, 4 yearly cycle and 10-year scallops progressing outwards from the main path. This was implemented in collaboration with the Friends of Carpenters Wood, the CMS volunteer teams and some contractor work. This was focused on the ride within the more western part of Carpenters Wood towards Hillas Wood.

The Ash glade which regenerated after the 1987 storms as well as some recent areas of regenerating ash in Whitelands wood have unfortunately succumbed to Ash Dieback disease and are in poor condition. While some survive the disease a significant portion of the young trees have been badly affected, losing the majority of their crown and structural strength. With a number of paths running through or adjacent to these trees work was undertaken to fell the area before they became a significant safety concern. Working with contractors and the friends of Carpenters Wood these have been taken down with a diverse species mix planted in their place.

There are a few outstanding items from the previous GAP which include the installation of new benches along the widened ride and the pollarding and coppicing of the hornbeam stubs along the boundary. Both items will be carried forwards into the 2024-2029 GAP subject to suitable funding availability.

4. GREENSPACE ACTION PLAN (GAP) 2024 – 2029

The Carpenters Wood GAP 2024 - 2029 will be a simple, easy to read plan for use by officers of Three Rivers District Council 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:

Aims

To maintain the woodland as an ecologically valuable habitat for wildlife and as a recreation asset for public use. To monitor the regeneration of the woodland after the previous GAPs significant forestry work and undertake sustainable woodland practices to complement this regrowth.

Objectives

A. A Welcoming Place

- A1 Refresh and replace signage and notice boards where needed.
- A2 Install benches to Three Rivers District specifications.
- A3 Utilise brash in an effective manner to define paths through dead hedging.
- A4 Review the path network and signage to ensure the site is serving the needs of all users in a safe and effective manner.

B. Healthy, Safe and Secure

- B1 Vegetation clearance to maintain sightlines on paths, corners, and entrances.
- B2 Carry out annual tree safety surveys and reactive tree works.
- B3 Ensure any safety risks are dealt with in a timely reactionary manner.
- B4 Respond proactively to any misuse of the site.

C. Clean and Well Maintained

- C1 Keep site entrances free from encroaching vegetation.
- C2 Respond to litter and fly tipping in a proactive manner.
- C3 Keep woodland infrastructure and public furniture in good condition

D. Conservation

- D1 Maintain the character and landscape of the high forest through sustainable woodland management, moving to a continuous cover model throughout.

- D2 Build on the work of the FoCW to further coppice the holly understorey to promote a more biodiverse field layer.
- D3 Restore the Veteran Hornbeam stubs along the woodland boundary.
- D4 Monitor the felled areas of PAWS for natural regeneration.
- D5 Establish small deer exclosures to monitor browsing pressure on the woodland.
- D6 Maintain the woodland glade within Hillas Wood.
- D7 Look for further opportunities to implement further areas of zoned ride management where appropriate.
- D8 Remove remaining cherry laurel from Carpenters Wood

E. Sustainability

- E1 Ensure tree work costs are financially viable through the sale of arising timber.
- E2 Secure external funding, including via a Countryside Stewardship agreement.
- E3 Retain deadwood on site where viable to improve woodland biodiversity.

F. Community Engagement

- F1 Support the FoCW across their work programme and provide further opportunities for their involvement.
- F2 Ensure all involved in the management of the site operate towards the objectives of the GAP.
- F3 To maintain good public access provision and promotion of the site as a valuable community asset.

G. Marketing

- G1 Promote active management work through the use of traditional and social media.

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 **Monday 30th October to Sunday 10th November 2023**.
- 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 **January 2024**.

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

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.

5.1 Greenspace Action Plan production process

1. Production of briefing document and outline proposals.
2. Stakeholder engagement on briefing document. Engagement will run from approximately Monday 30th October to Sunday 10th November 2023.
3. Production of draft GAP.
4. Stakeholder engagement on draft GAP. Engagement will run from approximately January 2024.
5. Production of final GAP.
6. Publicity and promotion.

5.2 Stakeholders

- Relevant Three Rivers District Council officers
- Relevant Hertfordshire County Council officer

- Relevant County and District Councillors
- Chorleywood Parish Council
- Friends of Carpenters Wood
- Local Community
- Countryside Management Service volunteers
- Hertfordshire Ecology
- Historic Environment Record
- The Ramblers
- Rights of Way (HCC)
- Hertfordshire & Middlesex Wildlife Trust
- Butterfly Conservation
- Neighbouring Landowners
- Local Access Forum
- British Horse Society
- Local cycling group

5.3 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 Carpenters Wood Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) 2024-2029.

Please return your comments using the contact details below by **Sunday 10th November** at the latest.

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