



CHORLEYWOOD HOUSE ESTATE

COMMUNITY ORCHARD

GRAZING PROPOSAL ENGAGEMENT



1. PROPOSAL

1.1 Introduction

The Chorleywood House Estate Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) 2023-28 contained an ambition to introduce sheep grazing to the community orchard and included an action to run an additional stakeholder engagement specifically for the project. This document outlines further detail on the proposal and offers an opportunity for site users and stakeholders to comment and contribute to how the project will be delivered.

1.2 Grazing infrastructure

Approximately 400m of fencing will be required to enclose the orchard. The fencing along three sides will consist of stock netting, two strands of barbed wire and one strand of plain wire, as used elsewhere on Chorleywood House Estate and other green spaces across the District. For aesthetic reasons, the fence along the northern edge will be constructed using timber post and rail fencing.

1.3 Public access

Public access to the community orchard will be retained, with three kissing gates installed at appropriate locations where current paths run through the site. In addition, a field gate will be installed to allow vehicle access for management operations. The fence line will also be set back from adjacent boundaries, allowing a walking route around the edge of the orchard.

For animal welfare reasons, dogs will not be permitted into the orchard while sheep are grazing.

1.4 Benefits of sheep grazing

The Community Orchard is currently managed with an annual cut-and-lift operation in late summer. The proposed management by conservation grazing would enhance the overall biodiversity of the grassland by creating a more varied sward with different structures of grasses and flowering plants that are not able to develop through an annual cut-and-lift. Grazing the Community Orchard will manage the grassland in a gradual, low intensity way which causes less disturbance to wildlife, making it a more favourable option than cutting.

In addition to the wildlife benefits, the introduction of grazing has been a popular addition to other local green spaces, including elsewhere on Chorleywood House Estate, with the grazing animals becoming an attraction in their own right. In the long term, grazing should also reduce the cost of managing the grassland within the orchard.

1.5 Grazing specification

The proposed fenced area will be approximately 1 hectare in size. There is already a water supply and network of troughs installed in the orchard to assist with watering fruit trees, these can also be used for supplying sheep with water when grazing. An initial suggested grazing regime consists of ten sheep grazing for eight weeks between mid-July and mid-September. This would be subject to monitoring and review, changes to stocking numbers and timings may be made to ensure management produces positive grassland habitat conditions for flora and wildlife.



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2. STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Thank you for taking the time to read this document.

Please return your comments using the contact details below by 31 January 2024 at the latest.

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