



SOUTH OXHEY PLAYING FIELDS

GREENSPACE ACTION PLAN

2024 – 2029

OVERVIEW

Greenspace Action Plans

Greenspace Actions Plans (GAPs) are map-based management plans which specify activities that should take place on a site over a stated period of time. These activities will help to deliver the agreed aspirations which the site managers and stakeholders have identified for that site. All specified actions are aspirational and are not guaranteed to occur within the period prescribed – their completion is subject to relevant budgets being available to achieve them.

Public Engagement

Engagement with stakeholders is central to effective management planning on any site. An initial engagement period was held for 4 weeks in October/November 2023 to establish core aims and objectives for the site; these are reflected in Section 3.

Version Control

| Version | Issue Date | Details | Author | Reviewed | Approved |
|---------|------------|---------|--------|----------|----------|
| 1.0 | 25.04.2024 | Draft | DC | AT | KB |
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1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 Site Summary

Site Name: South Oxhey Playing Fields

Site Address: Green Lane, Watford WD19 4LS

Grid Reference: TQ1062193744

Size: 49 hectares

Designations: Local Wildlife Site 90/005/01

Owner: Three Rivers District Council

1.2 Vision Statement

To maintain and enhance the semi-natural character and recreational value of South Oxhey Playing Fields, celebrate the heritage of the site, and support community participation in site management. This plan sets out a framework for this vision to be achieved through reintroducing traditional habitat management, improving site facilities and infrastructure, and providing structured volunteering and public engagement opportunities.

The structure of this plan is based on Green Flag Award criteria, to reflect the standards that are important for a successful green space. This document includes annual maps and schedules which identify the location, responsibility, and timing of management actions. The progress of the plan will be reviewed annually, allowing for revision of actions as appropriate, in line with the objectives and long term vision for the site.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Introduction

South Oxhey Playing Fields is an extensive area of greenspace, located in the post-war housing developments of South Oxhey, owned and managed by Three Rivers District Council (TRDC). The site is composed of a semi-natural habitat matrix which includes an extensive area of amenity managed grassland and ancient hornbeam-oak woodland, which is designated as a Local Wildlife Site. A variety of recreational opportunities are available on-site including Parkrun events, football pitches, green gym equipment, an enclosed dog enrichment area, a skate park, two artificial tennis courts, a multi-use games area (MUGA), and two play areas - Hayling Road Play Area and Ashburnham Drive Play Area.

The site has a rich and varied history which has shaped the character of the site today. The tree avenue along Green Lane is a relic of the former parkland landscape of historic Oxhey Place Estate. In the early half of the 20th century the site was managed as a golf course and grassland with scattered tree groups remains the most extensive habitat. A deep depression on the north boundary of the site, under woodland canopy, is a medieval chalk pit.

The parkland type landscape of South Oxhey Playing Fields creates an openness which contrasts with the seclusion of nearby Oxhey Woods Local Nature Reserve. Parts of the site offer views of the landscape which extends beyond the surrounding residential development, creating a rural feel to the site which is in contrast with its urban location.


South Oxhey Playing Fields

Greenspace Action Plan

2024 - 2029

Location Map

Legend

 Site Boundary

South Oxhey Playing Fields
Grid Ref: TQ112938
Easting: 511295
Northing: 193850

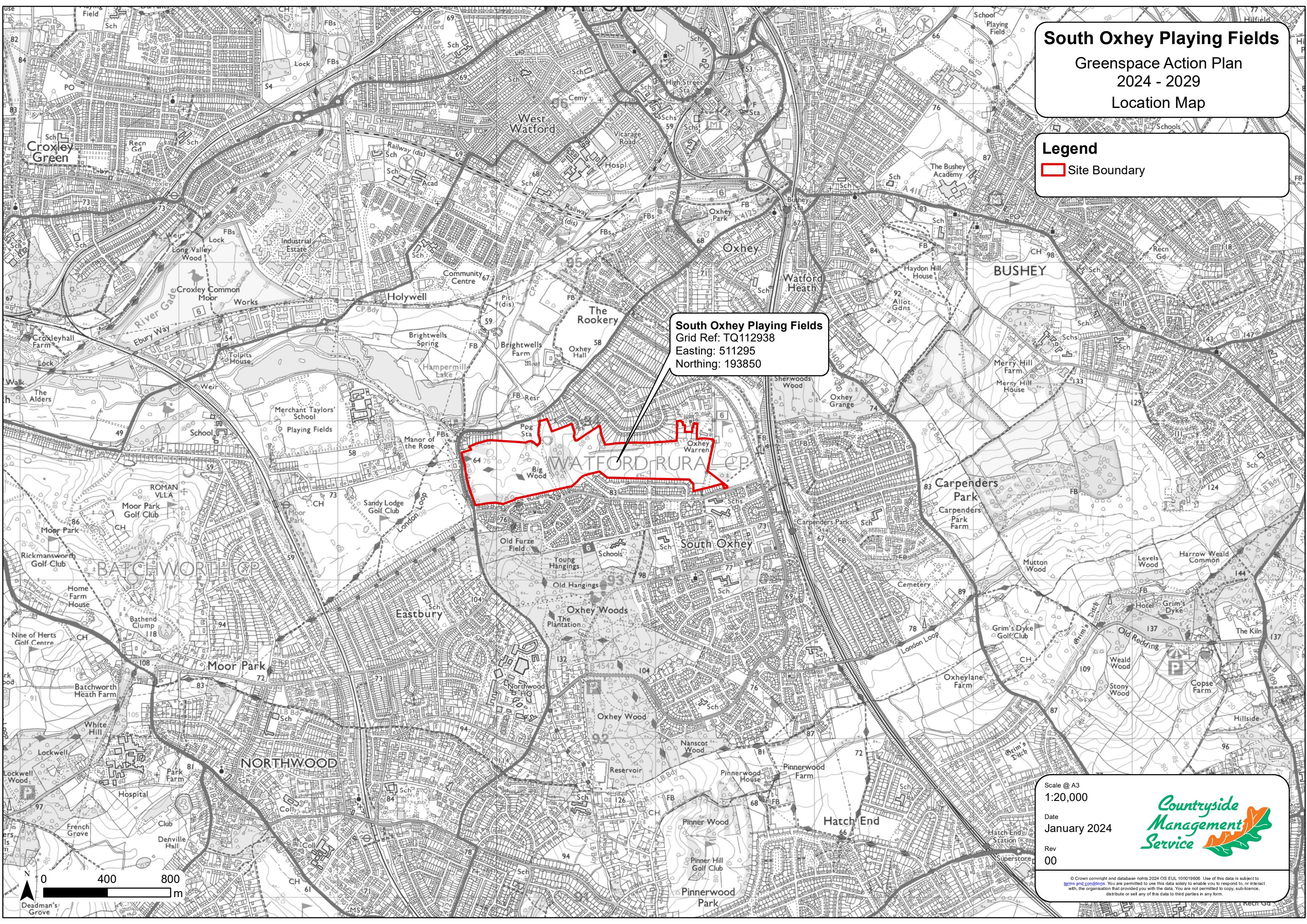
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South Oxhey Playing Fields

Greenspace Action Plan

2024 - 2029

Site Description Map

Legend

- Site Boundary
- ▲ Barriers, Motorbike Inhibitor
- ↘ Barriers, Chicane
- Bench
- Bench, Picnic
- Bin, Dog
- Bin, Litter
- Bin, Recycling
- Gate, Vehicle
- Gate, Pedestrian
- Goal Structure
- Scattered Trees
- i Sign, Interpretation
- ▲ Sign, Leisure Facilities Information
- Sign, London Loop Fingerpost
- Sign, London Loop Waymarker
- Sign, South Oxhey Circular Walk Waymarker
- Sign, Timber Monolith
- Sign, Welcome
- ◆ Street Light
- Culvert
- - - Grass Path
- Line of Trees
- Grassland, Conservation
- Building
- Grassland, Rough
- Grassland, Amenity
- Leisure
- Scrub
- Sports Pitch
- Surfaced Path
- Woodland

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Hampermill Lane West Entrance
Motorbike Inhibitor

Hampermill Lane North Entrance
Pedestrian (Kissing) Gate
Vehicle Gate

Conservation Grassland
Dominated by agricultural grasses (typical of grazing pasture), with some wildflowers.

Conservation Grassland
Most diverse grassland on site, supporting native grasses and wildflowers associated with hay meadows.

Ancient wood bank topped by ancient multi-stem hornbeam.

Green Lane Entrance
Pedestrian (Mobility Kissing) Gate
Vehicle Gate

Green Lane Car Park Entrance
Bollards

Leisure Facilities Entrance
Bollards

Highlands Entrance
Motorbike Inhibitor

Scout Hut

Green Lane Car Park

HAYLING ROAD

Bramshot Way Entrance
Motorbike Inhibitor
Pedestrian (Kissing) Gate

Hayling Road South Entrance
Motorbike Inhibitor

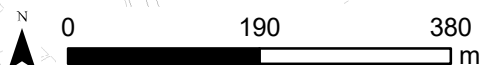
Green Lane / Hayling Road Entrance
Pedestrian (Mobility Kissing) Gate

Hayling Road East Entrance
Chicane Barriers
Pedestrian Gate

Sandy Lane Entrance
Motorbike Inhibitor
Vehicle Gate

Ashburnham Drive Entrance
Motorbike Inhibitor
Pedestrian (Mobility Kissing) Gate
Vehicle Gate

- Leisure**
1. Skate Park/Chess/Table Tennis.
 2. Dog Enrichment Area
 3. MUGA
 4. Tennis Courts
 5. Hayling Road Play Area
 6. Green Gym
 7. Ashburnham Drive Play Area
 8. Climbing net play equipment



South Oxhey Playing Fields

Greenspace Action Plan

2024-2029

Constraints Map

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Footpath
- Culvert
- Main River
- Secondary River
- Tertiary River
- Flood Zone 3
- Flood Zone 2
- Potential Surface Water Flooding
- Scheduled Monument
- Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW)
- LNR
- Wildlife Site
- Greenbelt

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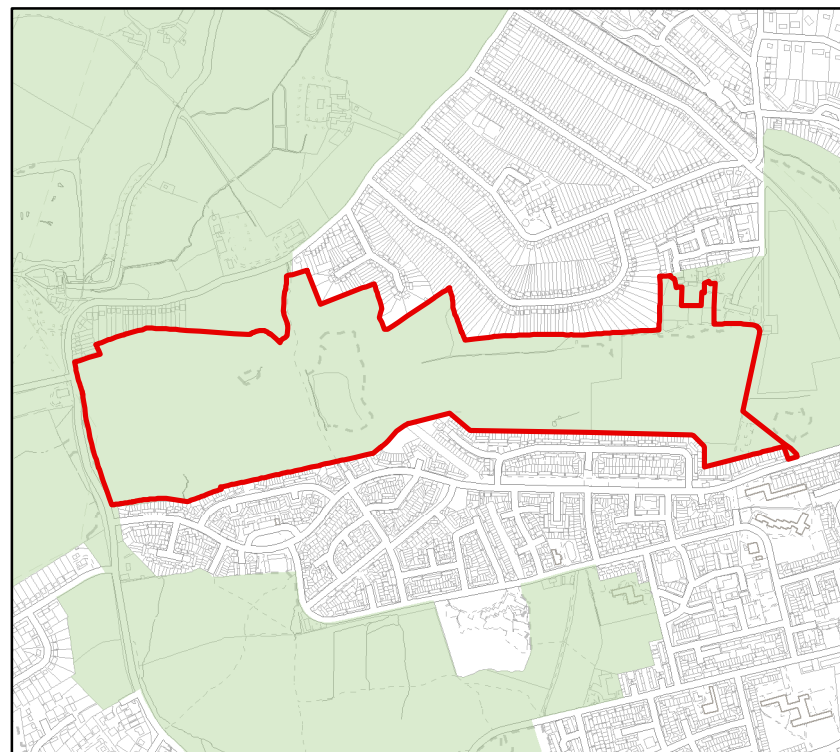
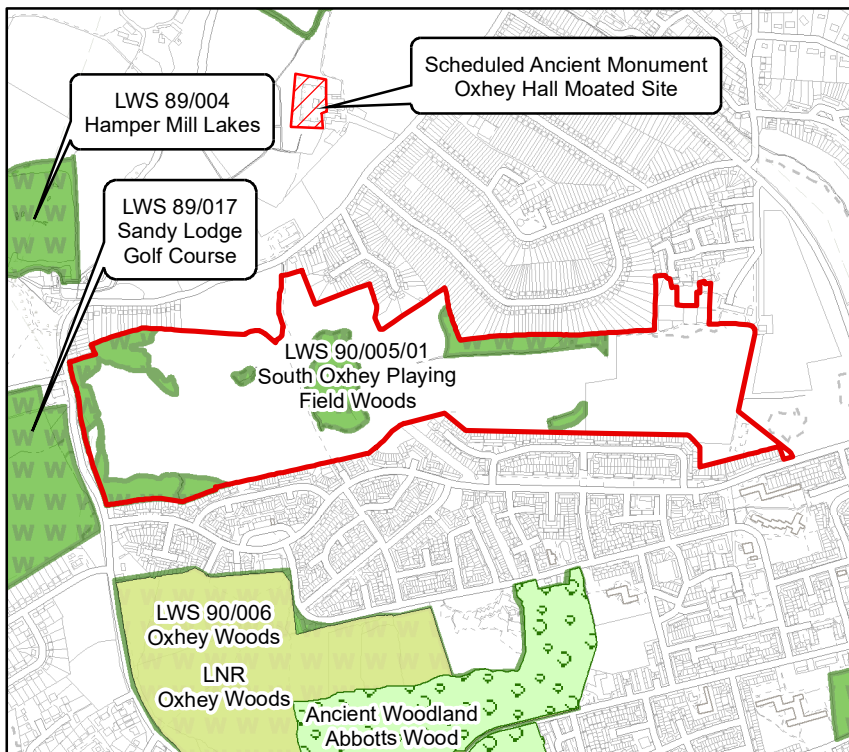
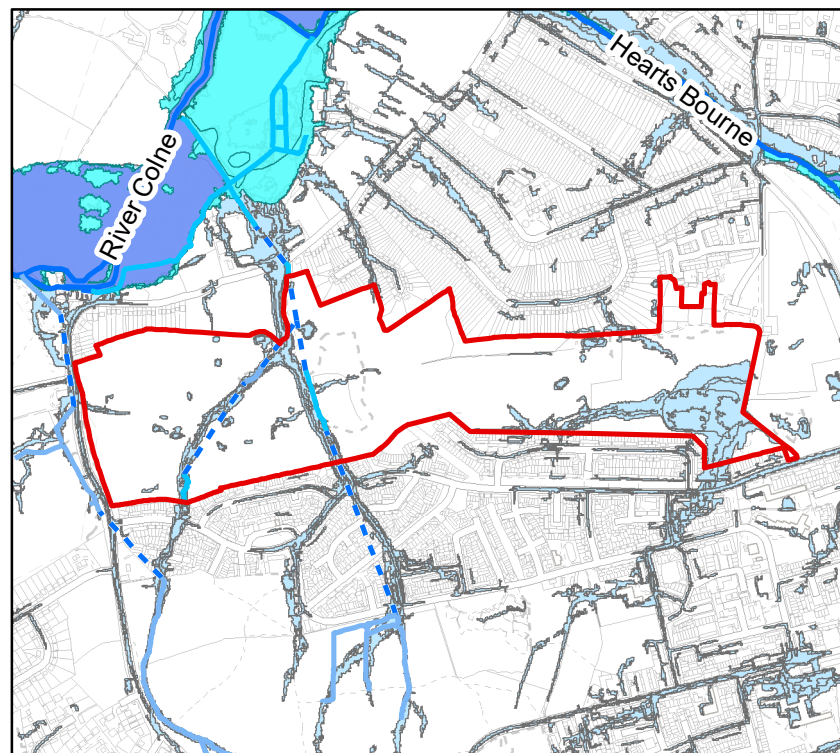
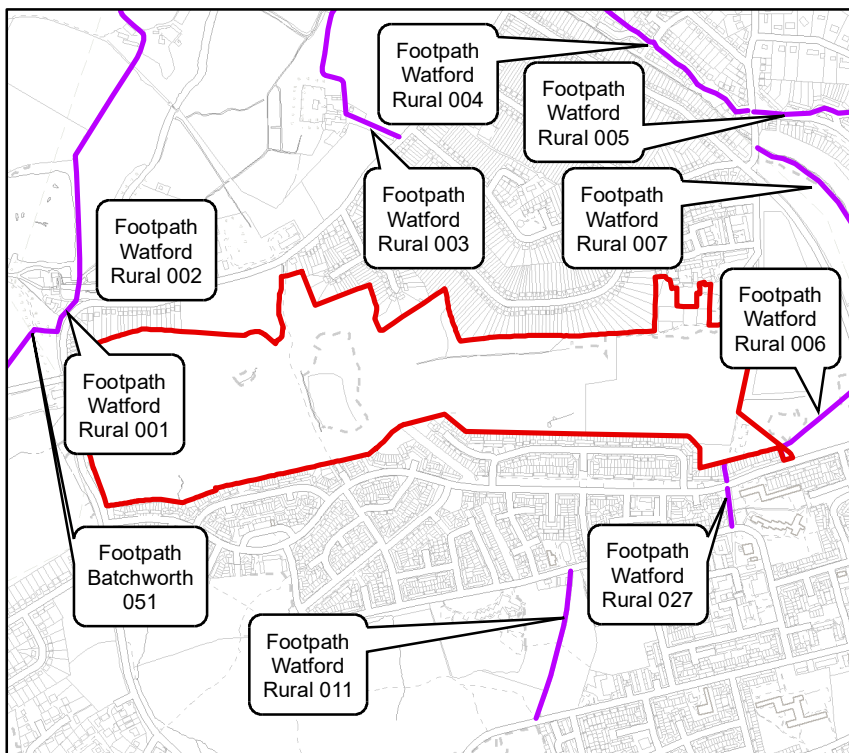
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2.2 Site Designations

2.2.1 Non-statutory

The site falls within the London Area Greenbelt, which restricts the growth of development in strategic rural areas on the edge of conurbations.

The fragmented woodlands within the site, which are a mixture of woodland with ancient features and woodland that is secondary as more recently developed, are collectively designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) which has a recorded name of South Oxhey Playing Field Woods, ref. 90/005/01. The woodlands meet LWS criteria because: there are ancient woodland remnants with a semi-natural canopy and field evidence suggesting an ancient origin; some fragments are shown on Bryant's map (1822); and woodland indicators are present.

2.3 Geology and Hydrology

South Oxhey Playing Fields is in the National Character Area (NCA) 111, Northern Thames Basin, which is characterised by areas of high development pressure interspersed with river valleys, heathland, and woodland. The underlying geology of South Oxhey Playing Fields comprises Tertiary Clay overlaid with clay, fine loam and silt with some brown subsoils (Windsor series). Soils are predominantly slightly acidic and slowly permeable, and therefore experience seasonal waterlogging. There are, however, some areas - such as around Green Lane – which have a lighter loamy soil and *should* be less prone to waterlogging.

A number of small streams which are incorporated as ditch features within the site run off the undulating slopes towards the River Colne, a designated Main River approximately 125m to the north-west of site at its nearest point. Hearts Bourne is the other Main River nearby which runs to the north and east of site, at the closest distance of approximate 290m to the east.

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 which means there is a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea. There are, however, areas within the site which are at risk of surface water flooding due to the topography of the landscape - gently undulating, mostly falling from the nearby elevated Oxhey Woods to the south, and secondary valleys, such Big Wood, where there is also a disused quarry. Surface water generally flows easterly towards Green Lane where there is the greatest risk of standing water within the site, or northerly towards the Colne.

As well as impacting property and infrastructure, surface water flooding can impair tree structure and stability. Surface water flooding, however, can also be beneficial by washing excess nutrients away from grassland.

2.4 Landscape Character

South Oxhey Playing Fields occupies a large area of Hertfordshire's Landscape Character Area (LCA) 12, Oxhey Golflands. This LCA is described as a quiet landscape, strongly influenced by current and former golf course management. Despite being located in an area of extensive residential settlement, parts of the LCA offer uninterrupted views of an undulating semi-natural landscape towards Oxhey Woods, Moor Park and the Colne Valley.

Land use in the Oxhey Golflands LCA is predominately recreational with grassland being the dominant habitat feature, although small woodlands and scattered copses do contribute to the LCA's rural character.

To retain and strengthen its unique landscape character, guidelines for managing Oxhey Golflands include: developing management plans which enhance the ecological value of grassland, woodland and scrub; encouraging local community groups to engage with management of woodlands; and encouraging restoration of parkland landscape associated with the historic Oxhey Warren (also called Oxhey Lodge) and Oxhey Place Estate.

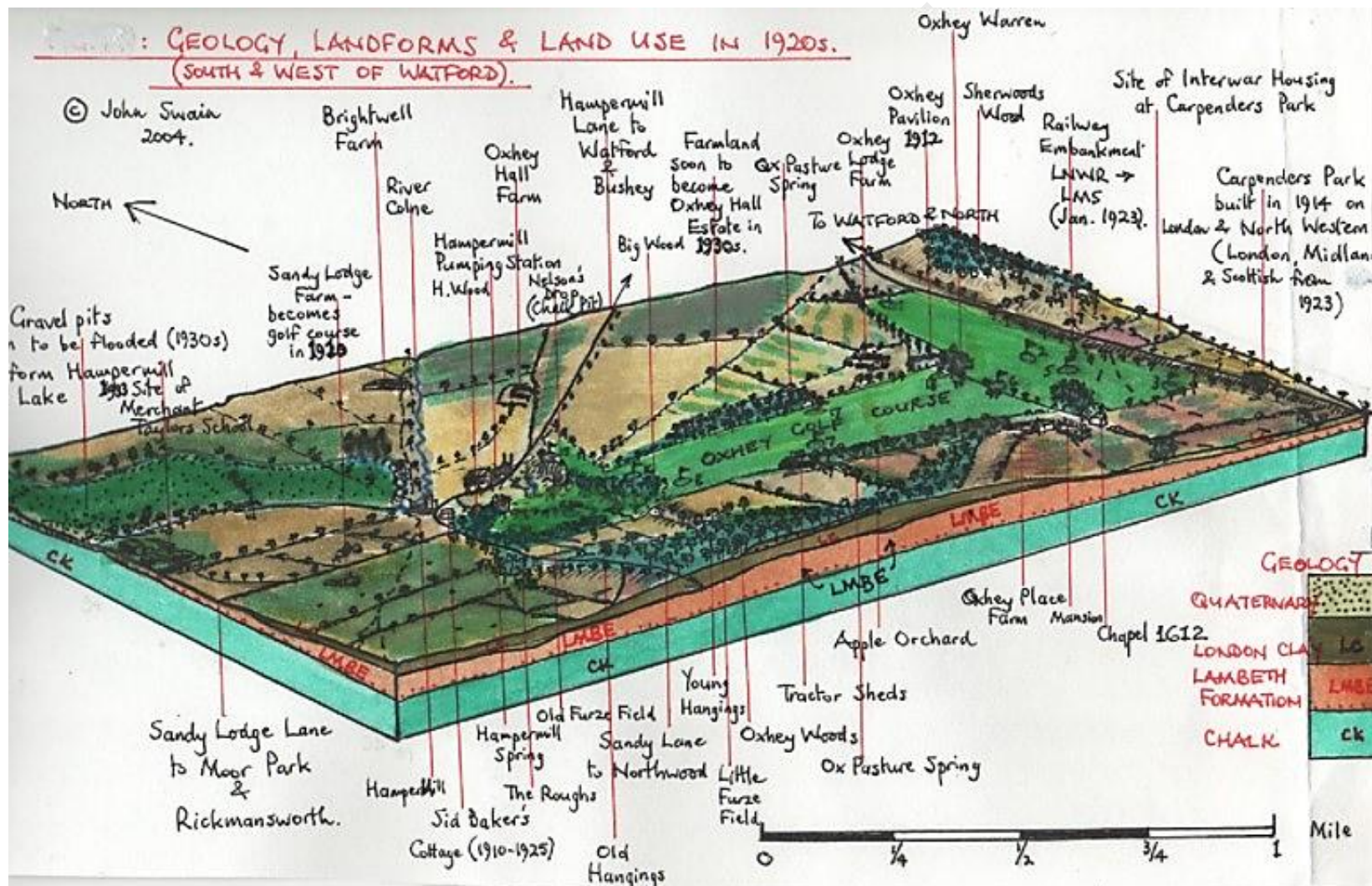


Figure 1: Hand drawn block diagram of South Oxhey Playing Fields' geology, landforms and land use in the 1920s (John R. Swain).

2.5 History and Archaeology

In the medieval period, the site of South Oxhey Playing Fields formed part of land named Oxonage or Oxon given to St Albans Abbey in the early 9th century and later part of Oxhey Hall Manor (dating from 1066). A medieval path route is visible on the edge of Big Wood, and links to an old charcoal production site in Oxhey Woods.

In the post medieval period the site was part of the parkland landscape surrounding Oxhey Place Estate and Oxhey Warren. Remnants of this former parkland landscape include the tree avenue along Green Lane.

The 1872 Ordnance Survey map shows the 'Old Chalk Pit' located in open grassland. Now located under the canopy of secondary woodland, this deep and steeply sided pit is a remnant of surface chalk extraction. In 2006 a test shaft was discovered in the pit (15m deep) which was likely excavated to investigate the depth of the chalk. The test shaft is securely covered and inaccessible.



Photo 1: A mine entry shaft in South Oxhey, photo credit: Peter Brett Associates via www.ukgeohazards.info

Prior to 1912 the site was divided into irregular parcels of grassland and woodland which were likely grazing pasture and hornbeam coppice with oak standards.

Between 1912 and 1952 the site was managed as a golf course. The conversion to a golf course likely resulted in landscape modification, for example to reduce woodland cover and create a distinct site profile (flat in the east, undulating in centre and west).

Several shallow depressions across the site may be the result of various influences including quarrying, golf bunkers, chalk solution hollows (e.g. sink holes), dry ponds, ditches (watercourses on site are culverted), and possibly World War II bombing.

In 1947 Oxhey Place Estate was compulsory purchased by the then London County Council for post war housing development, resulting in the extensive residential settlements which now surround the site. From 1952 the site has been managed for public access, providing varied formal and informal recreational opportunities for local residents. In 1974 the newly formed TRDC took over management of the site.

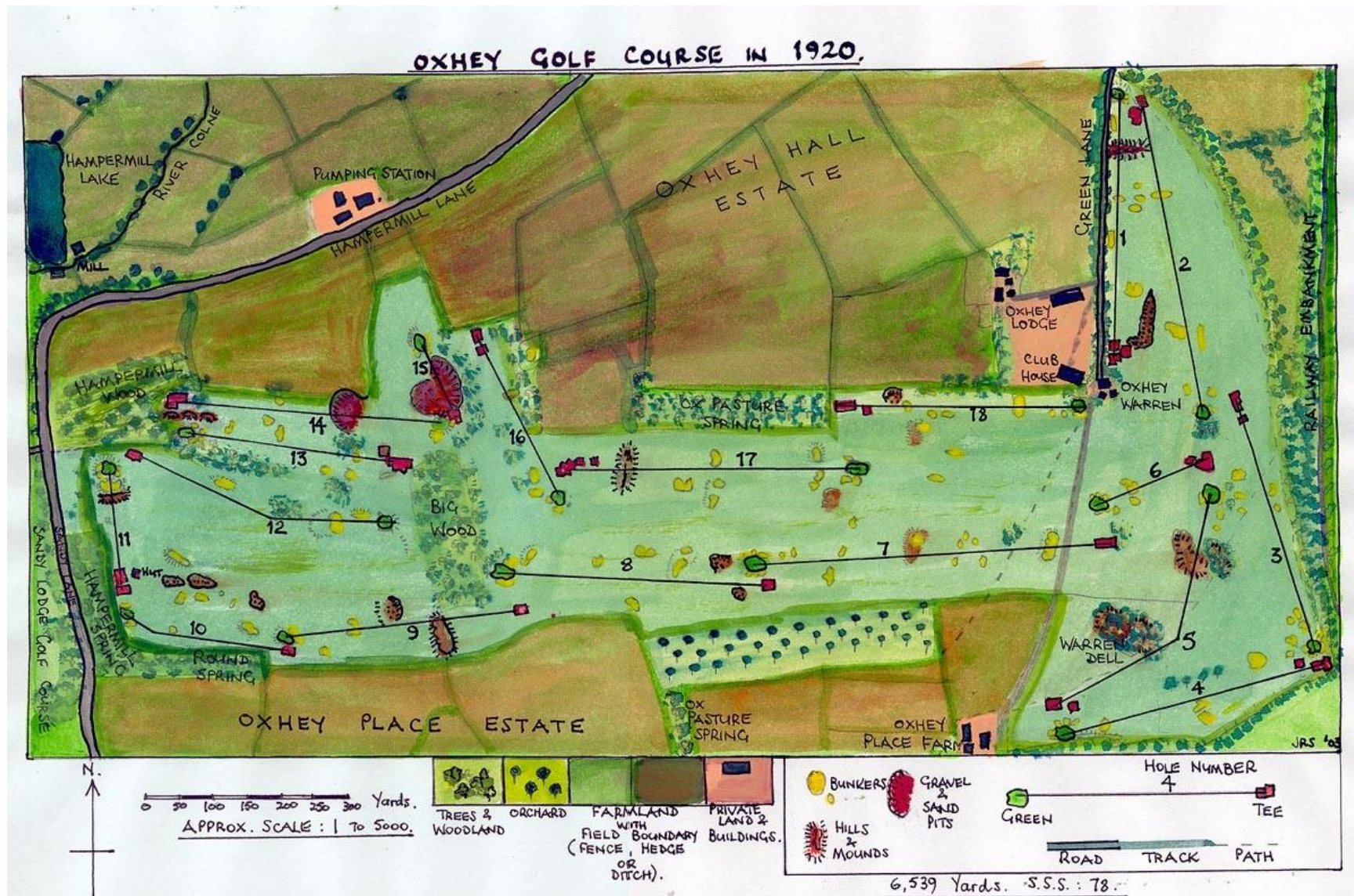


Figure 2: Hand drawn map of Oxhey Golf Course (operated 1912-1952), prior to residential development of Oxhey Hall Estate in the late 1930s (John R. Swain).

2.6 Habitats and Wildlife

2.6.1 Grassland

Grassland in South Oxhey Playing Fields is the most continuous and extensive semi-natural habitat on site, occupying approximately 30 hectares. The majority of grassland, approximately two-thirds, is frequently cut for amenity management which maintains a short sward for recreation.

Due to the history of the site the grassland has escaped intensive agricultural management (ploughing and reseeded) and can be characterised as species poor semi-improved grassland. An extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey (B Tranter Ecology, 2017) described three distinct areas of grassland on-site, varying in plant species composition and diversity.

The most diverse grassland is located in the centre of the site and supports native grasses and wildflowers typically associated with hay meadows including sweet-vernal grass, fine leaved grasses, bird's foot-trefoil, common knapweed, autumn hawkbit and glaucous sedge.



Photo 2: Conservation grassland in the centre of site.

Grassland occurring in the east of the site, on flat ground where football pitches are located, is relatively species poor and supports plant species which tolerate compacted soils including creeping buttercup and knotgrass. Parts of this grassland experience water logging in winter which can impact recreation such as use of football pitches and affecting parkrun routes.



Photo 3: Amenity species-poor grassland in the east of the site.

Grassland in the west of the site is dominated by agricultural grasses (typical of grazing pasture), with few wildflowers. Species include perennial rye-grass, white clover, and sorrel.



Photo 4: Conservation grassland in the west of the site.

There are historic records for less common wildflower species, such as harebell and devil's bit scabious, which are associated with species-rich low intensity-managed grassland. The last records for these species are from 2001. Grassland on South Oxhey Playing Fields declined in botanical diversity prior to 2019, likely due to frequent cutting and heavy recreational use.

Where grassland is maintained as a short sward, or when conservation grass is cut, a buffer of slightly longer rough grass is maintained around woodland and scrub to soften habitat divisions. Where small areas of grassland have historically been left uncut, such as on the boundary of Hampermill Wood, distinctive nests of meadow ants can be found. Meadow ants are typically associated with grassland with a long history of grazing.



Photo 5: Longer, rough, grassland buffers along woodland edge on site.

2.6.2 Woodland

Woodland and scrub occupies approximately 18 hectares of the site. Wooded habitat is fragmented and is a mix of secondary woodland and woodland with ancient features. Woodland with ancient features, including stands of multi-stem hornbeam and wood banks, are collectively designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) named 'South Oxhey Playing Fields Woodland.'

Much of the LWS woodland on site would have been managed historically under the typical Hertfordshire system of hornbeam coppice with oak standards. Rotational coppice maintains structured woodland which supports regeneration of a diverse ground flora and shrub layer. Woodland management has more recently been non-intervention, with the exception of tree safety management. The neglected hornbeam coppice stools have developed into uniformly structured stands of mature multi-stem or maiden (never been coppiced) single-stem canopy trees. Secondary woodland areas tend to be more diverse, supporting native and non-native tree and shrub species.



Photo 6: Woodland on site with poor structure due to neglected hornbeam coppice which has resulted in uniform mature multi-stem or maiden single-stem trees which form a closed canopy preventing the growth of ground flora, scrub and understorey layers.

The most significant areas of ancient hornbeam coppice can be found in Ox Pasture Spring, on the site's north boundary, and Hampermill Spring in the site's south-west corner. An ancient wood bank is located on the southern edge of Ox Pasture Spring topped by ancient multi-stem hornbeam, although much of this historic feature can become obscured from view by successional scrub. Secondary woodland which has developed around Ox Pasture Spring supports ash, lime sp. and non-native sycamore. A thin understory layer includes hazel, midland hawthorn and, historically, invasive rhododendron.



Photo 7: Ancient wood bank on the southern edge of Ox Pasture Spring, topped by ancient multi-stem hornbeam.

The largest area of LWS woodland on site is Big Wood which is located in the centre of South Oxhey Playing Fields and is therefore a significant landscape feature. Secondary woodland has developed around the LWS compartment, connecting Big Wood to woodland on the fringes of the site. This woodland is generally well structured with a dense shrub layer. Canopy species include oak, ash, hornbeam, birch, wild cherry and the non-native sycamore and Norway maple. Scrub includes holly, hazel, midland hawthorn and non-native Cherry laurel. A distinct feature of this woodland is the steep sided chalk quarry in which secondary woodland of ash and oak canopy has developed, with areas of blackthorn and hawthorn scrub. Open habitat at the centre of the quarry is encroached by bramble, nettle and other tall herbs. Hampermill Wood is also relatively diverse with oak, cherry, ash, holly, hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple and elm.



Photo 8: The well-structured Big Wood with dense shrub layer, scrub and canopy trees.

Woodland on site is generally heavily shaded due to dense secondary regeneration and closed canopies of over-stood hornbeam. Ground flora is therefore generally sparse, although patches of wildflowers occur including a spring carpet of bluebells in Hampermill Spring and Ox Pasture Spring as well as Dog's Mercury, Broad Buckler-fern, Giant Fescue, Wood Meadow-grass and Three-nerved Sandwort.

Woodlands are widely accessible through informal unsurfaced paths which may contribute to the low cover of ground flora.

2.6.3 Trees

Aside from larger areas of woodland there are some small groups of trees scattered across the site which, with scattered single trees, create a parkland landscape.



Photo 9: Trees scattered across South Oxhey Playing Fields create a parkland landscape.

2.6.4 Wetland

There are a number of potential ponds and ditches in and on the boundary of woodlands in South Oxhey Playing Fields, however these are dry because watercourses running into the site have been buried in culverts. The lack of a permanent water supply limits the potential for the site to support a range of wildlife.

2.6.5 Birds

Birds have been observed across the site with records characteristic of the woodland habitats including Great Spotted Woodpecker, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Blackcap and Nuthatch.

2.6.6 Mammals

Rabbits and Foxes have been observed across the site, and there are reports of bat activity in the woodlands with a record of Common Pipistrelle. Mature trees, especially those with standing deadwood and cavities, provide bat roost potential. All UK bat species are European Protected Species. There have also been field signs that suggest badgers might use the site.

2.6.7 Insects

Meadow ants are known to be present on site, a species that thrives on grassland that has been grazed for a long time. The mounds of their nests can be found sporadically in woodland grass buffers.

South Oxhey Playing Fields is an under recorded site for butterfly species, but some have been observed. Comma, Orange Tip, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell and Large White butterflies have been recorded in Big Wood. As well as these Holly Blue, Common Blue, Red Admiral, Speckled Wood, Gatekeeper, Ringlet, Small White and Marbled White butterflies have been observed across the wider site. There are also historic records across the site of Essex Skipper, Small Skipper, Large Skipper, Small Copper, Meadow Brown and Green-veined White butterflies.



Photo 10: Common Blue butterfly seen within an area of conservation grassland in the site.

2.6.8 Invasive Non-Native Species

2.6.8.1 Oak Processionary Moth

Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) was introduced into England in 2005 and has since become established in London, gradually spreading into surrounding counties. While the moth is harmless, caterpillars pose a risk to public health through microscopic hairs which cover its body. Contact with hairs typically causes skin rashes, although symptoms can include eye irritation, sore throats and in extreme cases breathing difficulties and allergic reactions.

In 2018 a large number of male moths were caught in pheromone traps on the margin of the site. This suggests that a breeding OPM population is likely to be in close proximity. The site is in the established zone where control is the responsibility of the landowner (TRDC). Control of OPM follows guidance from the Forestry Commission and has included pesticide spraying.

2.7 Access, Facilities and Infrastructure

The site can be accessed at 12 locations: from Hampermill Lane at the west of site for pedestrians only, known as Hampermill Lane West, or at the north of site for pedestrians and authorised vehicles, known as Hampermill Lane North; for pedestrians from Highlands, Green Lane Car Park and the Leisure Facilities (via Green Lane) all at the north-east of site; pedestrian and authorised vehicle access from Green Lane at the north-east of site; pedestrian access off Hayling Road (via Hayling Road Play Area) to the south-east of site, known as Hayling Road East; pedestrian access off Green Lane/Hayling Road to the south-east of site; pedestrian access off Hayling Road to the south of site, known as Hayling Road South; pedestrian access off Bramshot Way at the south of site; pedestrian and authorised vehicle access off Ashburnham Drive to the south of site; and pedestrian and authorised vehicle access off Sandy Lane to the south-west of site.

The Green Lane car park, which is associated with the neighbouring former Pavilion Pub, can be used by site visitors for free.

Facilities for organised sports on site are provided by grass football pitches and artificially surfaced tennis courts, skate park and multi-use games area (MUGA). Facilities for informal recreation are provided by outdoor play and green gym equipment. The extensive grassland provides opportunities for walking and running.

Dogs are welcome at South Oxhey Playing Fields and while open aspects of the site provide a great space for exercising dogs, there is also an enclosed dog enrichment area.




A number of benches are located at ideal resting points that also provide views across the site and toward the wider landscape.

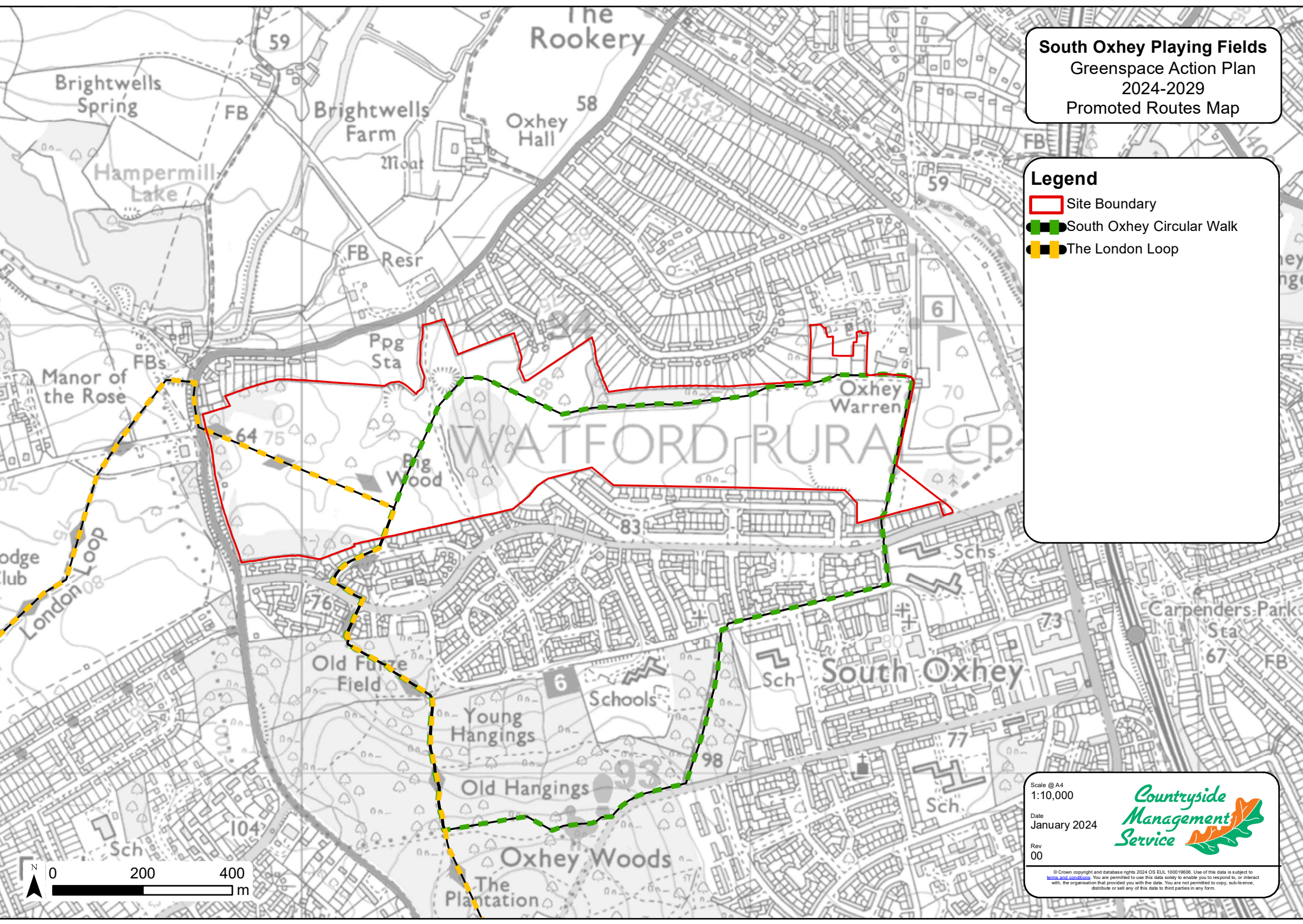
There are a number of signs around the site. Signage within the site includes waymarkers, site name and ownership-branded welcome signs, informative interpretation panels, control of dogs and dog fouling, and guidance for use of facilities. Outside of the site boundary, on the junction of Prestwick Road and Green Lane, there is also a sign which advertises the site however this is old and does not feature the correct site name.

Footpaths Watford Rural 001, 002, 006 and 027 lead to site entrances, although no Public Rights of Way pass within the site boundary. There are two trails which cross the site though - a 6.1km section of the London LOOP (Moor Park to Hatch End) and the 4km South Oxhey Circular Walk which is waymarked.

South Oxhey Playing Fields
Greenspace Action Plan
2024-2029
Promoted Routes Map

Legend

-  Site Boundary
-  South Oxhey Circular Walk
-  The London Loop



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2.8 Community and Events

Weekly Saturday events are held by [parkrun](https://parkrun.blog.com/) across the site. This is a free event which is open to anyone who can complete the 5km course. In South Oxhey Playing Fields, the parkrun course follows a circular loop around the eastern section of the site and is almost entirely on grass. Participants are encouraged to travel to the event on foot, wheel or public transport where possible, and to give way to other site users while taking part.



Photo 11: A parkrun event at South Oxhey Playing Fields, photo credit: parkrun.blog.com, 10th July 2018.

Community involvement on a site can add value to it while enhancing a sense of place for local people. Volunteers have been involved in site management tasks however this has been irregular. Although it has been an aspiration for some time, there is no Friends of Group dedicated to the site to take on stewardship under the guidance of the Countryside Management Service (CMS).

2.9 Site Management

TRDC manage the play areas, green gym equipment and surfaced facilities, and conduct regular actions across the rest of the site - primarily grass cutting, litter picking and bin emptying.

CMS lead on the delivery of some tasks to manage the site with volunteers or contractors. In the past this has included invasive non-native species (INNS) plant control, installing waymarker posts ,and clearing scrub around scattered trees.



Photo 12: CMS volunteer task on site managing invasive rhododendron within woodland.

3.0 ANALYSIS & EVALUATION

3.1 A Welcoming Place

There are a number of pedestrian entrances around the site which provide access for local residents and other park users to different areas of the site.

A number of entrances are not clearly visible because they are set back from the road or they are either narrow or can become encroached with vegetation. This particularly affects the entrances off Hampermill Lane and Sandy Lane where they access directly into woodland. There was also a lack of any access features at some of these entrances that also limited their visibility along the boundary of the site. As well as impacting users ability to find ways into a site, indistinct access points also reduce the welcoming feel of a site as visitors consider those they feel comfortable using.

Signage in general – whether that be informative interpretation signs, structures displaying the site name, or directional signs for user orientation – impacts the sense of welcome for visitors. This was lacking across many of the access points, including the most visible site entrances off Ashburnham Drive to the south and Green Lane to the north-east. Directional signage was also deteriorating where present across the site.

During the last five years, a number of improvements were made to site entrances, and directional signage across the site: CMS volunteers replaced waymarkers across the site for the London LOOP; aesthetic timber site welcome monoliths were installed at entrances off Ashburnham Drive, Bramshot Way, Green Lane/Hayling Road and Green Lane; interpretation signs installed off Ashburnham Drive and Green Lane detail interesting site information and include illustrations that show site features as well as the London LOOP and South Oxhey Circular Walk routes; new metal kissing gates were installed off Hampermill Lane and Bramshot Way for users on foot, while those that are mobility-friendly were installed off Ashburnham Drive, Green Lane/Hayling Road and Green Lane; new vehicle barriers were installed off Hampermill Lane and Ashburnham Drive; new metal motorbike inhibitor barriers were installed off Hampermill Lane, Sandy Lane, Ashburnham Drive, Bramshot Way, Hayling Road, Green Lane, Green Lane Car Park and Highlands; vegetation was managed around entrances off Hampermill Lane to improve visibility from the road; the surfacing around entrances off Ashburnham Drive and Green Lane was levelled out to remove trip hazards and improve ease of access; and a large visually interesting welcome sign that reflects the setting of, and opportunities provided by, the site was designed and installed at the Green Lane Car Park entrance.

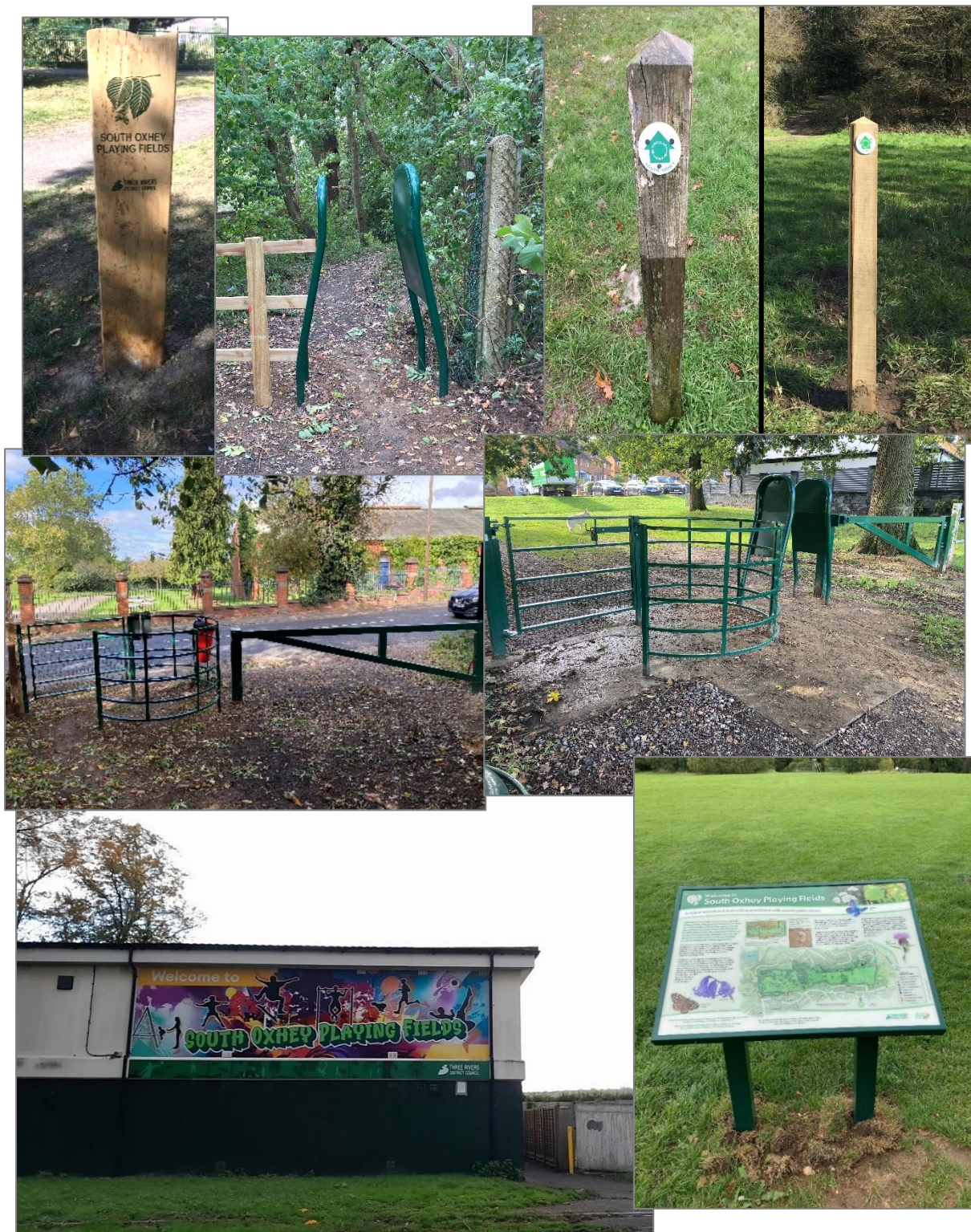


Photo 13: Improvements made to access points around South Oxhey Playing Fields including timber monoliths, motorbike inhibitors, waymarkers, metal kissing gates, vehicle barriers, and welcome and interpretation signs.

Improvements over the next five years to ensure the site is a welcoming place for visitors should include continuing to manage vegetation from encroaching across, and therefore reducing the visibility of and access through, entrances. This will promote the quality and safety of access to the site and, inevitably, will have a greater focus around entrances directly into woodland or tree groups – Bramshot Way, Sandy Lane, Hampermill Lane West and Hampermill Lane North.

Also to improve visibility at less well-used or less prominent access points, and to welcome visitors into the site, installing features that highlight the presence of the greenspace and indicate to visitors that they have entered the site should be considered. Again this will inevitably focus on the above named entrances, but also at Highlands, Hayling Road East, Green Lane/Hayling Road and Hayling Road South. This could be more of the aesthetic timber site welcome monoliths or alternatives such as metal twin-leg name plates or metal directional fingerposts with the site name.



Photo 14: Installing features such as site name plates at less prominent entrances will improve the welcome for visitors and demarcate entering the site.

Old signs have the potential to deter visitors. The old sign at the entrance to Green Lane from Prestwick Road is in poor condition, weathered, and has the incorrect site name – stating “Oxhey Playing Fields” instead of “South Oxhey Playing Fields.” The location of the sign also suggests visitors have entered the site immediately upon turning into Green Lane from this direction. The sign on the Green Lane/Prestwick Road junction should either be removed, or replaced with a new sign. A design scheme to be implemented on all site signs across the district is being considered and therefore any new sign should have a design consistent with that scheme.



Photo 15: The sign at the Green Lane/Prestwick Road junction that should be removed or replaced.

Additional features of interest should be considered across the site. Additional interpretation signs that provide specific information relevant to their location would also enhance visitor experience – these could be located within woodland with information about woodland management, or at specific features of heritage interest. Establishing a wildflower maze on site will provide an additional feature of interest that should improve the quality of access for visitors by enhancing the site experience and landscape, while also supporting additional biodiversity.

An interesting new route within the site will also be created, with fingerposts touring the holes of the old golf course from 1920 and passing interesting heritage of landscape features where possible. Designing and promoting new walking routes within the site, linking to a number of entrances, should encourage regular park users to explore a wider area and will introduce new visitors to different features of the site.

The design, structure and install of any features placed within the site will be considerate to ensure they are accessible for all as much as is safe.

3.2 Healthy, Safe and Secure

Visitors to South Oxhey Playing Fields should feel safe and secure. The site is generally well used throughout daylight hours and there are views into the site from residential properties on Ashburnham Drive, Sidmouth Close, Fulford Grove and Hayling Road. The first stage of consultation for the South Oxhey Playing Fields Greenspace Action Plan did identify concerns from local residents and the wider community over site misuse, primarily illegal motorbike access and fly-tipping.

The TRDC Small Woodland Management Plan (2012-2032) recommended improving barriers to vehicle access to discourage motorbike use and fly-tipping, and working closely with police where illegal antisocial behaviour persists. In 2020 kissing gates and motorbike inhibitors were installed, and vehicle barriers were replaced, at appropriate entrances.



Photo 16: Vehicle barrier improvements were implemented at access points around the site in 2020 with kissing gates and motorbike inhibitors installed.

Visitor safety and site security will be supported in the future of the site with an increase in visitor numbers which helps deter antisocial activity. This will be led by promotion, engagement and community involvement. Visitors are encouraged to report any illegal activity to the police. Safety information, including contact details for TRDC, are also displayed on the interpretation signs.

Habitat management to open-up dense secondary woodland will reduce concealment of fly-tipping and other anti-social behaviour. Continuing to establish a varied grassland structure across the site to include areas of varying tall sward will reduce the area of open short sward grassland attractive to motorbike users.

Trees are surveyed and actively managed for safety by TRDC where they present a risk to people or property. In line with national good practice, tree safety is risk-based with the rigour and interval of inspections based on the level of risk trees may pose. Tree safety work is completed through a periodic tree safety survey, which recommends any necessary works through recording on a digital database known as Ezytreev which produces work orders for contractors. If issues with trees are encountered at other times by staff, or reported by the public, reactive tree works are carried out. Safety work is restricted to areas where there are relatively high levels of public use and, wherever possible, trees are allowed to go through the natural cycle of decay. This will continue in future management of the site in line with the [TRDC Tree Strategy 2022 - 2027](#).

Dog walking, walking, children's play and sport are the primary activities on site. There are few surfaced paths across the site, for which is appropriate for the open naturalised landscape and general nature of the outdoor activities most visitors use

the site. Surfaced paths are all found within the east of the site at pertinent locations along, and leading from, Green Lane to cater for the heavier and more concentrated footfall of visitors accessing the site to reach the leisure facilities, 14th/2nd Bushey and Oxhey Sea Scouts, and Hayling Road Play Area. Path surfaces are adequate for the pedestrian traffic.

In 2023, TRDC updated the leisure facilities on site. The existing pathways, tennis courts and skate park were refurbished and the five-a-side football pitch was replaced with a multi-use game area (MUGA) along with table tennis tables and chess. The first council-owned dog enrichment area within the Three Rivers District was also installed.

Facilities and equipment are managed by TRDC. Regular surveys are completed and any issues identified are rectified as required to maintain their safety for users. Any faults can be reported by site users using contact details on signage.



Photo 17: The new skate park, table tennis tables, chess tables and MUGA leisure facilities installed on site in 2023, photo credit: www.theschoolrenovationcompany.co.uk/project/south-oxhey-activity-park.



Photo 18: The new dog enrichment area and tennis courts leisure facilities installed on site in 2023.

Dog waste bins and signs advising for control of dogs and fouling are located at pertinent locations around the site - particularly play areas, leisure facilities and access points.

The control of dogs on site will continue to be managed with signage, maintenance of dog waste bins, and implementation of the [Public Spaces Protection Order \(PSPO\)](#) which is in effect across the entirety of the Three Rivers District in relation to dog control. This order imposes certain legal responsibilities on dog owners in Three Rivers District including the requirements to: pick up dog waste; put dogs on a lead if directed to by an authorised officer of the Authority; not allow dogs to enter children's play areas, courts, outdoor gyms, or skate areas; keep dogs from entering land used for grazing livestock; and be in charge of a maximum of four dogs per one person at a time.

3.3 Well Maintained and Clean

The TRDC maintenance contract includes provisions for responding to vandalism and graffiti. Surfaces, equipment, facilities and furniture are regularly inspected and maintenance to clean any vandalism or graffiti is completed as required.

Issues of fly tipping on site are managed through TRDC working closely with police where illegal antisocial behaviour persists, visitors are encouraged to report any illegal activity to the police or TRDC, and habitat management to open-up dense secondary woodland to reduce concealment of fly-tipping

Litter and dog waste bins are provided at the main entrances to the site, and are emptied regularly by TRDC's in-house team. A continued programme of regular litter picking across the site will help keep the site clean and give a well maintained appearance.

Enforcement of anyone responsible for antisocial behaviour on site such as littering, graffiti, vandalism or fly tipping is in line with TRDC's [Environmental Protection Enforcement Policy](#).

South Oxhey Playing Fields should continue to be maintained to a good standard. Hard features - equipment, structures, furniture, facilities, and path surfaces – across the site will be maintained, repaired and replaced as and when required. This includes controlling any weeds on path surfaces; resurfacing paths; repairing damaged or faulty features, or replacing any that are beyond repair; and painting furniture, equipment and grass pitch markings. Any replaced furniture will be of a similar style to establish consistency across the site.

3.4 Environmental Management

TRDC has a strong commitment to sustainability and recognises its responsibility to mitigate the impact of its operations on the environment.

All management operations at South Oxhey Playing Fields should be as sustainable as possible, both financially and in terms of environmental impact. The management has been reflected through initiatives including: no use of peat; no use of herbicides, except where there is a greater environmental benefit (e.g. control of INNS); regular monitoring for tree health issues; using only FSC-certified timber where requiring wood materials; and following the “Check, Clean, Dry” procedure for machinery, materials and people entering and leaving site for works, to uphold biosecurity.

TRDC’s dedication to protect the environment is reflected in Council policies, strategies, commitments and partnerships. It is these duties that outline initiatives already implemented on site, and that will continue to be aligned with.

Natural regeneration should be utilised for restocking trees and vegetation wherever appropriate - it is low cost, dynamic, it adapts to local conditions, and reduces the risk of importing pests and diseases. Replanting should be considered if natural regeneration does not achieve the required stocking levels, presenting an opportunity for some species diversification, with the aim of improving the resilience of the woodland against pressures from a changing climate and pests and diseases.

3.5 Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage

3.5.1 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

A formal habitat and condition assessment survey has not been undertaken as part of the development of this management plan. However, indicative current and potential habitat types and conditions for the main habitats within South Oxhey Playing Fields are provided in the tables below.

| Area Habitats | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------|--|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Main Habitat Type | Area (ha) | Biodiversity Metric Current Habitat Type | Biodiversity Metric Proposed Habitat Type | Current Habitat Condition | Potential Habitat Condition | Potential BNG (Biodiversity Units) |
| Grassland | 16.30 | Modified grassland | Modified grassland | Poor | Poor | 0 |
| Grassland | 4.29 | Other neutral grassland | Other neutral grassland | Moderate | Moderate | 0 |
| Grassland | 5.18 | Other neutral grassland | Other neutral grassland | Moderate | Good | 61.54 |
| Woodland | 13.26 | Lowland mixed deciduous woodland | Lowland mixed deciduous woodland | Moderate | Good | 197.79 |
| Heathland and shrub | 2.80 | Mixed scrub | Mixed scrub | Moderate | Moderate | 0 |
| Individual Trees | 1.62 | Rural tree | Rural tree | Good | Good | 0 |
| | | | | | Total | 259.34 |

| Linear Habitats | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Main Habitat Type | Length (km) | UKHab Current Habitat Type | UKHab Proposed Habitat Type | Current Habitat Condition | Potential Habitat Condition | Potential BNG (Biodiversity Units) |
| Hedgerow | 0.38 | Species-rich native hedgerow | Species-rich native hedgerow | Not present | Moderate | 2.93 |
| Watercourse | 0.98 | Culvert | Ditches | Poor | Poor | 3.67 |
| | | | | | Total | 6.60 |

It is clear from the table that the main opportunity for change in the context of biodiversity net gain within South Oxhey Playing Fields is in the conservation grassland, specifically the area to the west of site, and woodland. Improving the condition of the grassland primarily requires increased diversity of plant species per square metre and a reduction in the extent of thistles. Improving woodland habitat condition relies on establishing a varied structure, greater range of tree age classes, promoting veteran trees and ensuring the complete eradication of invasive species. De-culverting the existing watercourses to create ditches will provide additional BNG through creating open water habitat that can be accessed by wildlife.

In order for South Oxhey Playing Fields to be put forward as an offsetting site for biodiversity net gain, a detailed survey of habitat type and condition would need to

be carried out to confirm the habitat baseline, and a biodiversity net gain habitat management plan would need to be produced.

3.5.2 Grassland

Historic records indicate that species diversity of grassland on site had declined in recent decades, notably the loss of localised wildflowers such as harebell and devil's-bit scabious. Amenity grass management maintains a short sward suitable for recreation, however this frequent cutting regime suppresses flowering and seed set for the majority of wildflower species and does not allow wildlife habitats to develop. Leaving cut grass arisings also increases soil nutrient levels which favour competitive grasses.

Historically, grassland management is likely to have included extensive grazing, as part of the historic Oxhey Place Estate, and a variable cutting regime under golf course management. These less intensive management approaches allow grassland to support a range of wildflower species through providing an extended flowering period, and wildlife habitats as longer grassland is suitable for invertebrates, small mammals and reptiles.

In more recent times habitat management on site was primarily amenity focused with grassland across the site managed under a regular cutting regime. Grassland in South Oxhey Playing Fields is extensive and can therefore accommodate a variety of land uses, including recreation and conservation. Through the period of the previous GAP, a greater balance has been struck to ensure grassland habitat provides value for both people and wildlife.

Suitable areas of grassland were selected to expand conservation management by ceasing cutting in summer months to allow flowering and seed set. This less intense management has not only promoted botanical and invertebrate diversity to the visitors, but has allowed an increased diversity of flora to begin to establish. Increased floral diversity works hand-in-hand with diversity of fauna – thin woodland buffer strips of rough grassland support the prominent hills of yellow meadow ants which are not seen elsewhere on site; and a variety of pollinating insects such as bees and butterflies who have sensitive lifecycles, often with niche floral associations, will be able to be hosted. As a habitat feature, these more biodiverse grassland areas have increased the diversity of the habitat mosaic across the site which, as well as beneficial for wildlife, enhances the landscape character reminiscent of historic times. With regularly mown paths incorporated into these areas, an attractive habitat feature has been created that also retains access throughout for visitors.



Photo 19: Conservation grassland with regularly mown paths to support both access and diverse habitat.

Future management will continue to maintain existing grasslands with the prescribed mix of amenity, rough and conservation cutting regimes. Cut grass arisings will continue to be removed to encourage wildflowers by reducing soil fertility and dominant grass species. Localised native wildflower seeding of small plots within the area of conservation grassland in the west of the site, where agricultural grasses dominate, will be implemented to increase floral diversity.

A wildflower maze will be created on site to the west of Big Wood by seeding with wildflowers and appropriate subsequent management. This will be beneficial for pollinators and caterpillar food plants. Bird's-foot Trefoil and Black Knapweed, particularly useful floral species, are already noted on site and could be utilised for creating the maze.

Going forward, this future management will retain the semi-natural character of the site as well as the balance for it to be a valuable space for people and nature, which in turn will maintain its significance as an asset to the community. As appropriate, advice will be sought from Butterfly Conservation - the largest invertebrate conservation group in Europe - on grassland management so that it can be tailored to benefit specific butterfly species known to be on site.

3.5.3 Woodland

Woodland in South Oxhey Playing Fields provides the clearest visual link to the rich history of the site. Stands of mature multi-stem hornbeam with oak standards are a remnant of traditional coppice management and raised wood banks mark ancient land boundaries. Secondary woodland regeneration over the last few decades has increased the area of semi-natural broadleaved woodland on site, and created a more connected habitat.

The approach to woodland management on site had been non-intervention for some time, with the exception of tree safety works. The cessation of woodland management has resulted in woodlands which are generally densely shaded with

relatively sparse ground flora (with the exception of bluebells in spring). Stands of invasive Cherry laurel and rhododendron were scattered throughout woodland on site, and non-native Norway maple and Sycamore trees dominate some areas of secondary woodland (e.g. around Big Wood).

TRDC have a vision for woodlands - especially those with ancient features - in the District to be healthy, characterised by native species, structurally diverse for good regeneration, and managed in reflection of historic practices such as hornbeam coppicing. Challenges to achieving this vision are identified as presence of non-native species, lack of active management, illegal motorbike use, and dense holly suppressing regeneration. Woodland management priorities across TRDC sites are therefore the eradication of non-native species, controlling site misuse, and re-introduction of historic management practices which diversify woodland structure and promote regeneration of native species. Management to enhance the diversity of woodland habitats is beneficial for biodiversity and for the visitor experience, for example by increasing light access to woodland paths and increasing cover of woodland wildflowers such as bluebell.

Although woodland management had been limited for some time, some progress has been made over the last 5 years. Motorbike inhibitors at site access points have reduced illegal motorbike use and therefore reduced their impact on woodland ground flora. Invasive laurel and rhododendron - where located across all woodlands - was cut, the stumps treated with approved herbicides to limit regrowth, and any regrowth was managed similarly. The historic wood banks on the boundary of Ox Pasture Spring were also revealed through scrub management.

Future management of woodland habitat will improve the balance between managing for amenity and conservation. Aspirations are that a site-specific Forestry Commission Woodland Management Plan will be produced that will cover all areas of woodland within South Oxhey Playing Fields. Implementing a Woodland Management Plan which gives detailed information on, and prescriptions for, the management of the woodland on site will support TRDC objectives in the [Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy 2023-2028](#).

Scrub and grass along woodland edges will continue to be managed sympathetically. Grass will be kept longer to create a buffer and soften the transition between habitats which benefits wildlife - harsh transitions can act as a barrier and the longer grass provides a sheltered passage for movement. Scrub will be managed in rotation to prevent domination, succession, and to retain exposed historic features such as the ancient wood bank on the Ox Pasture Spring boundary.

A traditional rotational coppice regime will be reinstated, reviving the valuable historic practice. Staged coppicing will be applied to overstood maiden and old multi-stem hornbeam to promote vigour and an extended life for the trees. Combined with selective thinning of dense secondary regeneration, woodland canopies will be carefully opened up to allow sunlight through to the woodland floor and encourage a greater cover and diversity of woodland wildflowers. Selective thinning will prioritise

removing non-native Norway maple and Sycamore trees gradually and as appropriate where located.

Where secondary woodland regeneration has increased the area of semi-natural broadleaved woodland on site and created a more connected habitat, this will be supported by extending further. Woodland tree planting should be implemented to best connect existing woodland wherever possible – at South Oxhey Playing Fields, the most suitable location will be to connect Big Wood and Hampermill Wood.

The continued control of non-native rhododendron and laurel regrowth in Ox Pasture Spring and Big Wood will also be essential. Stands will be regularly monitored and further management through cutting back or treating with an approved herbicide will be implemented as required. Maintaining non-native species control will prevent its invasive spread and therefore domination of woodland understoreys which, in turn, will also support the growth of woodland wildflowers.

3.5.4 Trees

Scattered single trees and groups of trees with scrub create a parkland landscape which reflects the heritage of South Oxhey Playing Fields as part of former Oxhey Place Estate.

Over the last five years, improved management work to groups of trees with scrub focussed on controlling scrub and vegetation encroachment around tree groups. This enhanced the parkland landscape by creating a more formal appearance through improving the visibility of mature trees, particularly characteristic oaks. Work to control scattered scrub and trees also supported the promotion of heritage features within the site, and deters antisocial behaviour within site by selectively opening up otherwise discreet areas.

Scrub within groups of trees will continue to be managed to prevent succession, open up dense areas of vegetation and allow heritage features to become visible. Management of scrub within scattered groups of trees will be brought in line with other scrub across the site, within woodlands, by being managed on a rotation.

Work to encourage the establishment and growth of scattered single trees included marking out of self-set oak saplings within conservation grassland to ensure they were not damaged during grass cutting. As opposed to planting new brought-in tree saplings, encouraging natural regeneration likely results in healthier trees that have greater vigour and resilience to poor health because they will, genetically, be well adapted to specific site conditions having seeded from parent trees existing on site. Marking out of self-set oak saplings had varying success and alternative methods will be explored going forward.

The next generation of parkland trees can continue to be established through the course of this GAP to conserve the historic landscape. As well as identifying suitable self-set saplings to mark out for protection, planting of scattered native trees will be implemented in appropriate locations within open conservation grassland. Parkland

tree planting will be a mix of bringing year-old 'whips' on to site, and ad-hoc collection and planting of seeds that originate on site. All self-set and planted parkland trees will be marked out and supported with attractive timber tree guards for ongoing monitoring and protection.

In addition to planting scattered parkland trees, a small mixed native species scrub and tree copse will be planted in the south-east of site. This will follow either traditional planting practice or, possibly, using the Miyawaki planting technique. Named after the Japanese botanist Dr Akira Miyawaki, this planting method involves careful soil preparation and densely planting a range of native woodland plants that are beneficial to wildlife on an area usually around the size of a tennis court. Trees planted using the Miyawaki practise grow up to ten times faster than trees planted in conventional woodland planting schemes at around one metre per year and, because of this as well as having been planted densely, they absorb more carbon and water than conventional woodland schemes. Planting a small copse, regardless of technique used, should help absorb surface water that accumulates in the proposed location.

3.5.5 Wetland

Water is a scarce habitat on site, limiting the potential for diverse wildlife habitats. The historic names of ancient woodlands on site however, such as Ox Pasture Spring and Hampermill Spring, suggest that water was at one time a characteristic feature of the site. Dry ponds and water channels are also visible on site, in particular in Big Wood and Hampermill Spring.

Culverted (buried) watercourses are present on site, as indicated on the constraints map. Potentially, the culverting could be fully or partially removed – known as daylighting - to create open ditches and therefore flowing springs which could go on to restore ponds or damp and marginal grassland areas. An investigation into feasibility and funding options for daylighting should be completed.

3.5.6 Hedgerows

Hedgerows are valuable habitats as they provide sheltered opportunities for wildlife nesting, rest and feeding. Habitats, particularly patches of woodland and scrub, are often fragmented and hedgerows provide links for these isolated areas - this improved habitat connectivity provides opportunity for sheltered wildlife passage. Flowers, berries and seeds that grow on hedgerows provide a great source of pollen, nectar and food for a range of insect, bird and mammal species, as well as providing – through foraging - a source of nature engagement for people. Hedgerows are also a valuable boundary feature that can enhance the landscape of a site through providing seasonal colour and a visual buffer between natural, semi-natural and more urban spaces and features.

There are currently no defined hedgerows across South Oxhey Playing Fields. The Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy 2023 – 2028 identifies restoration of

hedgerows, including planting, as an objective for the District. Planting hedgerows on site would increase biodiversity, enhance habitat connectivity and improve the overall landscape from within the site. The most appropriate place for a hedgerow on site has been identified along the south boundary at the north of Sidmouth Close and Fulford Grove. Planting a hedgerow along this boundary would: connect existing trees, scrub and woodland; and provide a visual buffer from within the site to improve the perception of a semi-natural space for visitors by reducing the intrusion of built structures including residential properties, fences and gates.

3.6 Community Involvement

The local community should be kept informed of, and given an opportunity to engage with, management of the site.

The production of this GAP followed a structured two stage public engagement process to enable local residents and the community to influence the development of achievable and supported objectives for site improvement.

To ensure the GAP benefits a wide range of stakeholders in the local community, those engagement included: local residents; park users; local councillors; local historians; local biodiversity and heritage record centres; local environmental organisations; and site neighbours. Consultation opportunities are promoted to park users with posters, guided walks, and digital media.

A structure for local community and wider volunteer group participation in positive management of the site is a valuable tool for success delivery of objectives. Friends and community volunteer groups care for, protect and improve their local spaces. Such groups add value through their work, improving biodiversity, engaging local communities and providing fun, sociable days for people to get together and work collaboratively.

Previous attempts have been made through running taster sessions on site to establish a Friends group specifically for the site, however this has been unsuccessful due to limited local interest.

A wide range of site users will continue to be encouraged to use the site. A site that is well used and for a diverse range of purposes will thrive long into the future as a valuable community asset through providing space for exercise, relaxation and recreation.

3.7 Marketing and Communication

South Oxhey Playing Fields is listed on [ParksHerts](#), a website providing a single information point for Hertfordshire's key parks and open spaces, and the [TRDC Parks and Open Spaces website](#).

In recent years guided walks led by CMS and TRDC have been carried out across the site. These walks were a great opportunity to show members of the community around habitats on site, provide insight into the benefits of the habitats and how they are managed, and highlight the heritage and biodiversity value of ancient woodland.

The sites valuable assets, features and events will continue to be promoted online at various sources. Self-guided walking routes are available on the [CMS Walking and Cycling Routes](#) website, including the South Oxhey Circular Walk and the section of London LOOP which is also waymarked on site. The weekly 5km South Oxhey parkrun event is publicised on the parkrun website. Site-specific updates and information can be promoted on the TRDC website and [TRDC Facebook](#) page, supported as appropriate through the [CMS Facebook](#) page. CMS volunteer tasks delivered on site that are led by CMS will also be promoted on the CMS Facebook page. Should a Friends group be established volunteer tasks can be promoted on their social media channels too, with updates and photos after tasks, both of which should help attract new participants from the community.

4.0 AIM & OBJECTIVES

The aim and objectives of the GAP are as follows:

Aim

To conserve and enhance the semi-natural character of the site – in particular promoting healthy and diverse woodland and grassland habitats – and maintain the site as a safe and enjoyable place to visit for all members of the local community.

Objectives

A. A Welcoming Place

- A1 Improve visibility of, and access to, the site at less prominent entrances by managing vegetation and reducing shading of desire lines.
- A2 Improve visibility of the site at less well-used entrances by installing welcome posts, information signs, and improving entrance structures.
- A3 Install additional features of interest, such as supplementary signage at pertinent locations to celebrate site heritage and conservation values.
- A4 Design and promote walking routes through the site.
- A5 Establish a wildflower maze to the west of Big Wood.

B. Healthy, Safe and Secure

- B1 Promote appropriate recreational use of the site to a wide diversity of user groups in the local community and discourage site misuse or anti-social behaviour.
- B2 Carry out scheduled tree safety surveys, and complete reactive and planned tree works to address safety issues.

C. Well Maintained and Clean

- C1 Enforce TRDC Public Space Protection Order.
- C2 Remove graffiti and fly tipping.
- C3 Maintain site infrastructure.
- C4 Regularly empty bins and litter pick.
- C5 Deliver grounds maintenance contract including amenity grass cutting in east of site.

D. Environmental Management

- D1 Ensure ongoing management costs are financially sustainable.
- D2 Carry out management according to environmental best practice by avoiding the use of pesticides and herbicides, planning vegetation management operations to limit disturbance to wildlife, and identifying opportunities to enhance biodiversity potential (i.e. retaining deadwood from tree safety operations).
- D3 Identify and apply to external funding sources for capital works where available.

E. Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage

- E1 Thin dense tree stands in woodland compartments to promote healthy tree growth and a diverse species and age structure.
- E2 Reinstate coppicing across a proportion of over-stood hornbeam in woodland to promote vigour and longevity of these historic features.
- E3 Control non-native rhododendron and laurel regrowth in Ox Pasture Spring and Big Wood.
- E4 Manage woodland edges to reduce scrub encroachment on historic wood banks and to create a soft/graduated boundary between woodland and grassland habitat.
- E5 Develop and implement a Forestry Commission woodland management plan inclusive of all areas of woodland within the site.
- E6 To conserve the historic parkland landscape and prepare the next generation of scattered trees plant, or protect self-set, oak saplings in open conservation grassland.
- E7 Plant new hedgerow along the south boundary of the site to increase habitat and connectivity, and improve the landscape within the site.
- E8 Maintain conservation management of grassland areas to promote botanical and invertebrate diversity.
- E9 Plant a small copse of trees and scrub in the south-eastern corner of the site.
- E10 Plant additional woodland to connect Big Wood and Hampermill Wood, increasing habitat and connectivity.
- E11 Daylight culverted watercourses, creating open ditches, for the benefit of wildlife and to restore the historic landscape.

F. Community Involvement

- F1 Create opportunities for local community involvement in the management of the site with structure and support through regular CMS volunteer tasks, ensuring all involved have the opportunity to contribute towards achievement of the GAP objectives.
- F2 Encourage use of the site by a wide range of user groups including organised sports groups using pitches and tennis courts, dog walkers, parkrun, adjacent land users, and individuals.

G. Marketing and Communication

- G1 Engage the local community at every stage of the GAP engagement process.
- G2 Promote the site as a valuable community resource to a wide audience through various media platforms, including websites and social media.

5.0 ACTION PLANS AND MAPS

5.1 Annual and Regular Actions

Actions are aspirational and their completion is subject to work programs and budget.

| Ref no. | Action | Obj. Ref | When | Lead | Delivery | Funding | Est. Cost | Spec. Ref. | Status |
|---------|---|--------------|-----------------|------------|------------|-----------------|-----------|------------|--------|
| 0.1 | Paths - Scrape/pull weeds and repair surfacing as required. | C3 / C5 | All year | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | | |
| 0.2 | Site Misuse - Reactive ad-hoc work to resolve e.g. flytip/graffiti clearance. | C2 / C5 | All year | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | | |
| 0.3 | Hard Features - Restore as required. | C3 / C5 | All year | TRDC | TRDC / CMS | Contract budget | | | |
| 0.4 | Dog/Litter Bins - Frequent regular emptying. | C4 / C5 | All year | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | | |
| 0.5 | Cleansing - Frequent regular litter picking across site. | C4 / C5 | All year | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | | |
| 0.6 | Marketing and Communication - Ensure websites are regularly updated as required. | G2 | All year | CMS / TRDC | CMS / TRDC | Officer time | - | | |
| 0.7 | Marketing and communication - Publicise the site, tasks and achievements in e-news. | G2 | All year | TRDC | TRDC / CMS | Officer time | - | | |
| 0.8 | Community – Consider ideas to form Friends group, recruit volunteers and, if a group forms, support startup e.g. agree constitution and deliver training. | F1 | All year | CMS | CMS | Officer time | - | | |
| 0.9 | Leisure – Inspection and ad-hoc repairs to maintain safety, function and appearance of sport/play areas and equipment. | B1 / C3 / F2 | All year | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | | |
| 0.10 | Amenity Grass - Frequent regular cut and removal of arisings for recreational areas | C5 / F2 | April - October | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | | |

| Ref no. | Action | Obj. Ref | When | Lead | Delivery | Funding | Est. Cost | Spec. Ref. | Status |
|---------|---|----------|---------------------|------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|--------|
| | including mown paths through conservation grass and parkrun route. | | | | | | | | |
| 0.11 | INNS – Survey to monitor regrowth of laurel and rhododendron. | E3 | May | CMS | TRDC / CMS | Officer time | - | | |
| 0.12 | Scattered Trees – If appropriate, mark out select naturally self-set or planted saplings. | E6 | July | CMS | CMS | Officer time | - | | |
| 0.13 | Conservation Grass – Annual summer cut and removal of arisings. | C5 / E8 | July - August | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | 6.2 | |
| 0.14 | INNS – If required and most appropriate method, manage regrowth through applying approved herbicide. | E3 | September | CMS | Contractor | Additional budget | £700 | 6.6 | |
| 0.15 | INNS – If required and most appropriate method, manage regrowth through cutting and removing arisings. | E3 | September - October | CMS | CMS | Officer time | - | 6.6 | |
| 0.16 | Conservation Grass – Annual autumn cut, removal of arisings and optional seeding. | C5 / E8 | October | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | 6.2 | |
| 0.17 | Trees - Annual tree safety/health survey. | B2 | October | TRDC | TRDC | Officer time | - | | |
| 0.18 | Trees – Reactive ad-hoc tree safety works. | B2 | October - February | TRDC | TRDC / Contractor | Additional budget | Variable | | |
| 0.19 | Access – Cut back vegetation as required around entrances and along surfaced paths to maintain clear and safe access. | A1 / C5 | October - February | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | | |
| 0.20 | Scattered Trees – If appropriate, plant seeds/saplings. | E6 | October - February | CMS | CMS | Officer time | - | 6.7 | |
| 0.21 | Community – Create a structured annual volunteer task schedule for forthcoming year; if a Friends group establishes, create and deliver in partnership. | F1 | March | CMS | CMS | Officer time | - | | |

South Oxhey Playing Fields Greenspace Action Plan 2024 - 2029 Annual and Regular Actions

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Barriers, Motorbike Inhibitor
- Barriers, Chicane
- Bench
- Bench, Picnic
- Bin, Dog
- Bin, Litter
- Bin, Recycling
- Gate, Vehicle
- Gate, Pedestrian
- Goal Structure
- Scattered Trees
- Sign, Interpretation
- Sign, Leisure Facilities Information
- Sign, London Loop Fingerpost
- Sign, London Loop Waymarker
- Sign, South Oxhey Circular Walk Waymarker
- Sign, Timber Monolith
- Sign, Welcome
- Street Light
- Grass Path
- Line of Trees
- Grassland, Conservation
- Grassland, Rough
- Grassland, Amenity
- Leisure
- Scrub
- Sports Pitch
- Surfaced Path
- Woodland

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Task Responsibility

- District led
 - CMS led
 - District led
 - CMS led
- Officer/ Contractor delivered
Volunteer delivered

Conservation Grass

- Annual summer cut and removal of arisings.
- Annual autumn cut, removal of arisings and optional seeding.

- Amenity Grass** - Frequent regular cut and removal of arisings for recreational areas including mown paths through conservation grass and parkrun route.

Invasive Non-Native Species

- Survey to monitor regrowth of laurel and rhododendron; and
- If required and most appropriate method, manage regrowth through applying approved herbicide; or
- Manage regrowth through cutting and removing arisings.

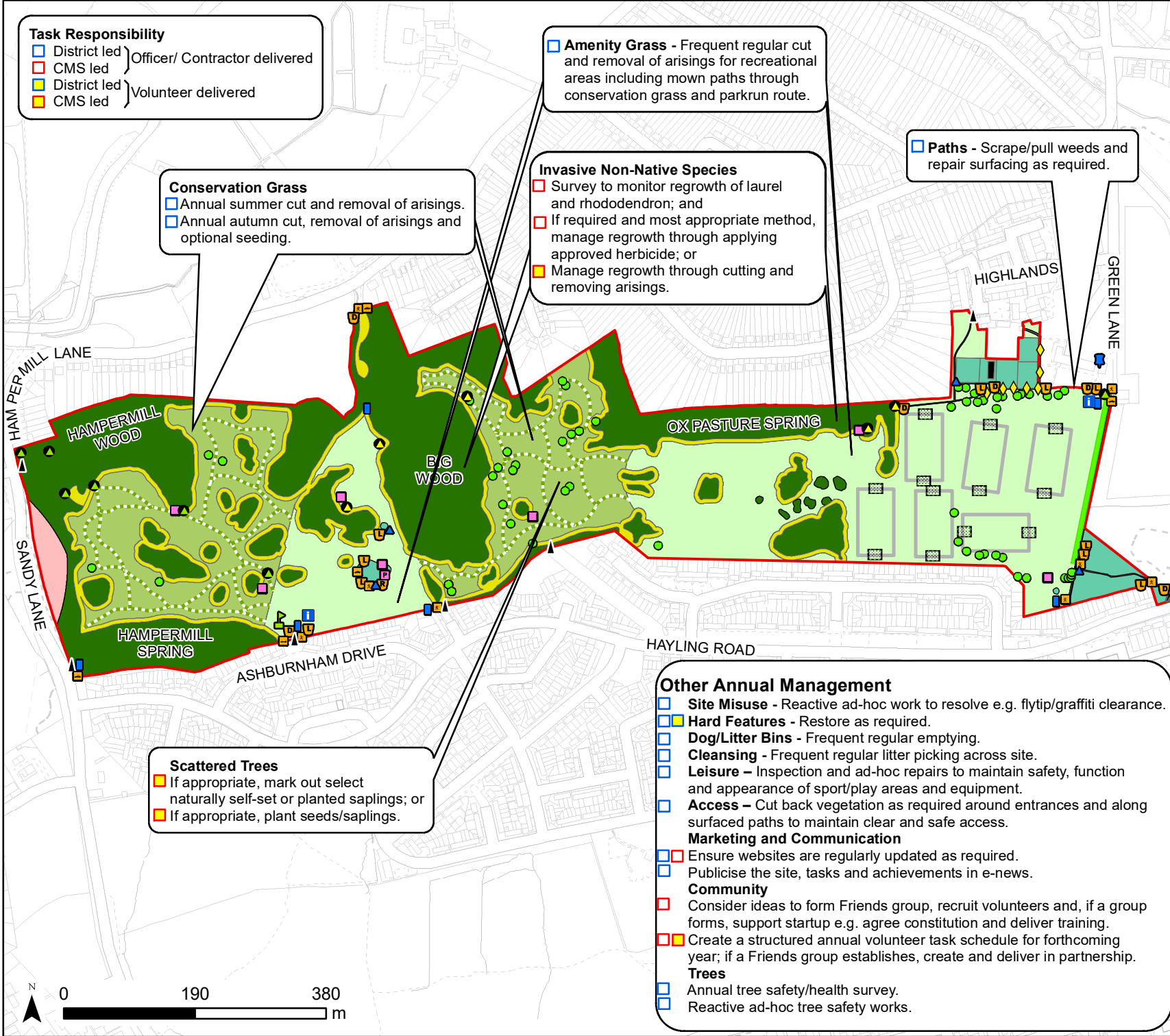
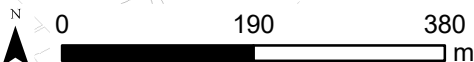
- Paths** - Scrape/pull weeds and repair surfacing as required.

Scattered Trees

- If appropriate, mark out select naturally self-set or planted saplings; or
- If appropriate, plant seeds/saplings.

Other Annual Management

- Site Misuse** - Reactive ad-hoc work to resolve e.g. flytip/graffiti clearance.
- Hard Features** - Restore as required.
- Dog/Litter Bins** - Frequent regular emptying.
- Cleansing** - Frequent regular litter picking across site.
- Leisure** - Inspection and ad-hoc repairs to maintain safety, function and appearance of sport/play areas and equipment.
- Access** - Cut back vegetation as required around entrances and along surfaced paths to maintain clear and safe access.
- Marketing and Communication**
- Ensure websites are regularly updated as required.
- Publicise the site, tasks and achievements in e-news.
- Community**
- Consider ideas to form Friends group, recruit volunteers and, if a group forms, support startup e.g. agree constitution and deliver training.
- Create a structured annual volunteer task schedule for forthcoming year; if a Friends group establishes, create and deliver in partnership.
- Trees**
- Annual tree safety/health survey.
- Reactive ad-hoc tree safety works.



5.2 Year 1 Actions 2024 – 2025

Actions are aspirational and their completion is subject to work programs and budget.

| Ref no. | Action | Obj. Ref | When | Lead | Delivery | Funding | Est. Cost | Spec. Ref. | Status |
|---------|--|----------|---------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|--------|
| 1.1 | Entrances – Review less prominent access points and consider new features. | A2 | July | TRDC | CMS | Officer time | - | | |
| 1.2 | Welcome Sign – Remove/replace old sign at the Green Lane/Prestwick Road junction | A2 | July | TRDC | TRDC / CMS | Additional budget | £4,000 | | |
| 1.3 | Site Interest – Review features of interest to identify opportunities for additional signage. | A3 | July | TRDC | TRDC / CMS | Officer time | - | | |
| 1.4 | Rough Grass – Annual cut and removal of arisings of buffer strips in the west of site only; leave rough grass in the east uncut. | C5 / E4 | August - September | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | 6.1 | |
| 1.5 | Wildflower Maze – Establish area by seeding wildflower meadow. | A5 | September - October | CMS | Contractor | Additional budget | £500 | 6.3 | |
| 1.7 | Scrub – Thin select compartments of scrub and remove arisings. | C5 / E4 | October - February | TRDC / CMS | TRDC / CMS | Contract budget | | 6.8 | |
| 1.8 | Woodland – Coppice 2no. coupes. | E2 | October - February | TRDC / CMS | Contractor | Additional budget | £7,500 | 6.4 | |
| 1.9 | Woodland – Select thinning of dense tree stands in 1 st of 2 thinning compartments. | E1 | October - February | TRDC / CMS | Contractor | Additional budget | £7,500 | 6.5 | |
| 1.10 | Watercourses - Investigate feasibility and funding options for daylighting. | E11 | January | TRDC | Contractor | Additional budget | £4,500 | | |
| 1.11 | Review Year 1 Actions. | N/A | March | CMS | CMS | Officer time | - | | |

Task Responsibility

- District led } Officer/ Contractor delivered
- CMS led }
- District led } Volunteer delivered
- CMS led }

South Oxhey Playing Fields

Greenspace Action Plan

2024 - 2029

Year 1 Action Plan 2024 - 2025

Legend

- Site Boundary
- ▲ Barriers, Motorbike Inhibitor
- ▼ Barriers, Chicane
- Gate, Vehicle
- Gate, Pedestrian
- Sign, Interpretation
- ▲ Sign, Leisure Facilities Information
- Sign, Timber Monolith
- Sign, Welcome
- Grass Path
- Culvert
- Woodland Thinning
- Coupes to be Coppiced
- Scrub Thinning
- Rough Grass to Cut
- Wildflower Maze
- Grassland, Conservation
- Building
- Grassland, Rough
- Grassland, Amenity
- Leisure
- Scrub
- Sports Pitch
- Surfaced Path
- Woodland

■ ■ Welcome Sign - Remove or replace the old sign at the Green Lane/ Prestwick Road junction

■ ■ Woodland - Coppice coupes 1 and 2.

■ Watercourse - Investigate feasibility and funding options for daylighting.

■ ■ Woodland - Select thinning of dense tree stands in Woodland Thinning Compartment 1.

■ Wildflower Maze - Establish area by seeding wildflower meadow.

■ Rough Grass - Annual cut and removal of arisings of buffer strips in the west of site only; leave rough grass in the east uncut.

Other Year 1 Management

- Entrances - Review less prominent access points and consider new features.
- Site Interest - Review features of heritage or conservation interest to identify opportunities for additional signage.
- ■ Scrub - Thin select compartments of scrub and remove arisings.

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5.3 Year 2 Actions 2025 – 2026

Actions are aspirational and their completion is subject to work programs and budget.

| Ref no. | Action | Obj. Ref | When | Lead | Delivery | Funding | Est. Cost | Spec. Ref. | Status |
|---------|--|----------|--------------------|------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|--------|
| 2.1 | Produce Forestry Commission Woodland Management Plan. | E5 | April | CMS | CMS | Officer time | - | | |
| 2.2 | Entrances – Install new entrance features, if appropriate, to highlight access points. | A2 | April | TRDC / CMS | CMS / Contractor | Additional budget | £300 / item | | |
| 2.3 | Site Interest – Install additional signage at features of heritage or conservation interest, if appropriate. | A3 | April | TRDC / CMS | CMS | Additional budget | | | |
| 2.4 | Walking Routes – Create new route. | A4 / F2 | July | TRDC | TRDC / CMS | Additional budget | £2,500 | | |
| 2.5 | Wildflower Maze – Establish wildflowers with frequent regular cut and removal of arisings. | A5 / C5 | April - October | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | 6.3 | |
| 2.6 | Rough Grass – Annual cut and removal of arisings of buffer strips in the east of site only; leave rough grass in the west uncut. | C5 / E4 | August - September | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | 6.1 | |
| 2.7 | Watercourses – If appropriate, daylight culverts to create open ditches. | E11 | January | TRDC | Contractor | Additional budget | TBC | | |
| 2.8 | Scrub – Thin select compartments of scrub and remove arisings. | C5 / E4 | October - February | TRDC / CMS | TRDC / CMS | Contract budget | | 6.8 | |
| 2.9 | Trees – Plant a small copse. | E9 | January - February | TRDC | CMS | Additional budget | £500 | | |
| 2.10 | Hedgerow – Plant hedgerow along south boundary to the east of site. | E7 | January - February | TRDC / CMS | CMS | Additional budget | £1,200 | 6.9 | |
| 2.11 | Woodland Planting – To connect Big Wood and Hampermill Wood. | E10 | January - February | TRDC / CMS | CMS | EWCO Grant | £3,500 | 6.10 | |
| 2.12 | Review Year 2 Actions. | N/A | March | CMS | CMS | Officer time | - | | |

Task Responsibility

- District led } Officer/ Contractor delivered
- CMS led }
- District led } Volunteer delivered
- CMS led }

South Oxhey Playing Fields

Greenspace Action Plan

2024 - 2029

Year 2 Action Plan 2025 - 2026

Legend

- Site Boundary
- ▲ Barriers, Motorbike Inhibitor
- ▲ Barriers, Chicane
- Gate, Vehicle
- Gate, Pedestrian
- Sign, Interpretation
- ▲ Sign, Leisure Facilities Information
- Sign, Timber Monolith
- Sign, Welcome
- Grass Path
- Hedgerow
- New Walking Route
- Culvert
- Coppiced Woodland
- Tree Planting
- Scrub Thinning
- Rough Grass to Cut
- Wildflower Maze
- Grassland, Conservation
- Building
- Grassland, Rough
- Grassland, Amenity
- Leisure
- Scrub
- Sports Pitch
- Surfaced Path
- Woodland

■ ■ **Woodland Planting** - To connect Big Wood and Hampermill Wood.

■ **Watercourse** - If appropriate, daylight culverts to create open ditches.

■ ■ **Walking Routes** - Create new route following former golf course by installing associated waymarkers, fingerposts and/or relevant interpretation.

■ **Rough Grass** - Annual cut and removal of arisings of buffer strips in the east of site only; leave rough grass in the west uncut.

■ **Hedgerow** - Plant along south boundary to the east of site.

■ **Tree Planting** - Small copse.

■ **Wildflower Maze** - Establish wildflowers with frequent regular cut and removal of arisings.

Other Year 2 Management

- ■ **Entrances** - Install new entrance features, if appropriate, to highlight access points.
- ■ **Site Interest** - Install additional signage at features of heritage or conservation interest, if appropriate.
- ■ **Walking Routes** - Install directional signage for any new interesting short and long routes, if appropriate.
- ■ **Scrub** - Thin select compartments of scrub and remove arisings.

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5.4 Year 3 Actions 2026 – 2027

Actions are aspirational and their completion is subject to work programs and budget.

| Ref no. | Action | Obj. Ref | When | Lead | Delivery | Funding | Est. Cost | Spec. Ref. | Status |
|---------|--|----------|---------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|--------|
| 3.1 | Wildflower Maze – Design and establish route with initial amenity cut through. | A5 | May | TRDC / CMS | TRDC | Contract budget | | | |
| 3.2 | Wildflower Maze – Frequent regular amenity cut and removal of arisings throughout route. | A5 | May - August | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | | |
| 3.3 | Wildflower Maze – Annual cut and removal of arisings. | A5 | August | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | 6.3 | |
| 3.4 | Rough Grass – Annual cut and removal of arisings of buffer strips in the west of site only; leave rough grass in the east uncut. | C5 / E4 | August - September | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | 6.1 | |
| 3.5 | Wildflower Maze – If required, improve wildflower meadow e.g. seed yellowrattle. | A5 | September - October | CMS | CMS | Officer time | - | 6.3 | |
| 3.6 | Scrub – Thin select compartments of scrub and remove arisings. | C5 / E4 | October - February | TRDC / CMS | TRDC / CMS | Contract budget | | 6.8 | |
| 3.7 | Hedgerow – Maintenance, including pruning to promote thick growth and mulching. | C5 / E7 | October - February | CMS | CMS | Contract budget | | 6.9 | |
| 3.8 | Woodland Planting - Maintenance, including mulching. | C5 / E10 | October - February | CMS | CMS | Contract budget | | 6.10 | |
| 3.9 | Woodland – Coppice 2no. coupes. | E2 | October - February | TRDC / CMS | Contractor | Additional budget | £7,500 | 6.4 | |
| 3.10 | Woodland – Select thinning of dense tree stands in 2 nd of 2 thinning compartments. | E1 | October - February | TRDC / CMS | Contractor | Additional budget | £7,500 | 6.5 | |
| 3.11 | Review Year 3 Actions. | N/A | March | CMS | CMS | Officer time | - | | |

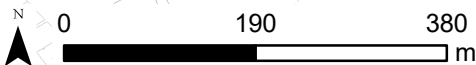
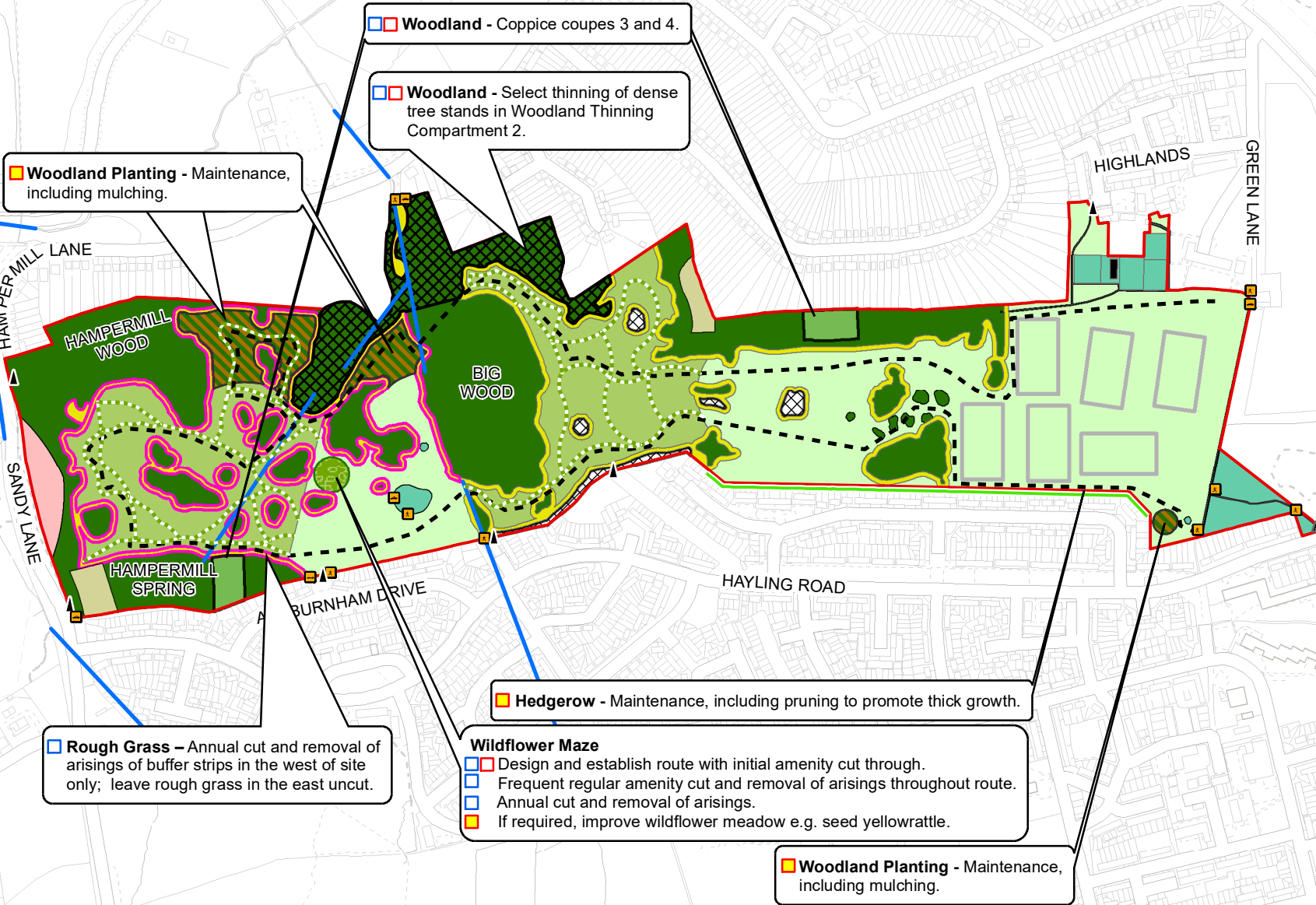
South Oxhey Playing Fields Greenspace Action Plan 2024 - 2029 Year 3 Action Plan 2026 - 2027

Task Responsibility

- District led } Officer/ Contractor delivered
- CMS led } Officer/ Contractor delivered
- District led } Volunteer delivered
- CMS led } Volunteer delivered

Legend

- Site Boundary
- ▲ Barriers, Motorbike Inhibitor
- ▼ Barriers, Chicane
- Gate, Vehicle
- Gate, Pedestrian
- Hedgerow
- ... Grass Path
- - - New Walking Route
- Culvert
- Tree Planting
- Woodland Thinning
- Coppiced Woodland
- Coupes to be Coppiced
- Scrub Thinning
- Rough Grass to Cut
- Wildflower Maze
- Grassland, Conservation
- Building
- Grassland, Rough
- Grassland, Amenity
- Leisure
- Scrub
- Sports Pitch
- Surfaced Path
- Woodland



Other Year 3 Management

- ■ **Scrub** - Thin select compartments of scrub and remove arisings.

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5.5 Year 4 Actions 2027 – 2028

Actions are aspirational and their completion is subject to work programs and budget.

| Ref no. | Action | Obj. Ref | When | Lead | Delivery | Funding | Est. Cost | Spec. Ref. | Status |
|---------|--|----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-----------------|-----------|------------|--------|
| 4.1 | Wildflower Maze – Establish route with initial amenity cut through. | A5 / C5 | May | TRDC / CMS | TRDC | Contract budget | | | |
| 4.2 | Wildflower Maze – Frequent regular amenity cut and removal of arisings throughout route. | A5 / C5 | May - August | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | | |
| 4.3 | Wildflower Maze – Annual cut and removal of arisings. | A5 / C5 | August | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | 6.3 | |
| 4.4 | Rough Grass – Annual cut and removal of arisings of buffer strips in the east of site only; leave rough grass in the west uncut. | C5 / E4 | August - September | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | 6.1 | |
| 4.5 | Scrub – Thin select compartments of scrub and remove arisings. | C5 / E4 | October - February | TRDC / CMS | TRDC / CMS | Contract budget | | 6.8 | |
| 4.6 | Hedgerow – Maintenance, including pruning to promote thick growth and mulching. | C5 / E7 | October - February | CMS | CMS | Contract budget | | 6.9 | |
| 4.7 | Woodland Planting - Maintenance, including mulching. | C5 / E10 | October - February | CMS | CMS | Contract budget | | 6.10 | |
| 4.8 | Review Year 4 Actions. | N/A | March | CMS | CMS | Officer time | - | | |

South Oxhey Playing Fields

Greenspace Action Plan

2024 - 2029

Year 4 Action Plan 2027 - 2028

Task Responsibility

- District led } Officer/ Contractor delivered
- CMS led }
- District led } Volunteer delivered
- CMS led }

Legend

- Site Boundary
- ▲ Barriers, Motorbike Inhibitor
- ⚡ Barriers, Chicane
- Gate, Vehicle
- Gate, Pedestrian
- Hedgerow
- ... Grass Path
- New Walking Route
- Culvert
- Tree Planting
- Coppiced Woodland
- Scrub Thinning
- Rough Grass to Cut
- Wildflower Maze
- Grassland, Conservation
- Building
- Grassland, Rough
- Grassland, Amenity
- Leisure
- Scrub
- Sports Pitch
- Surfaced Path
- Woodland

■ **Woodland Planting** - Maintenance, including mulching.

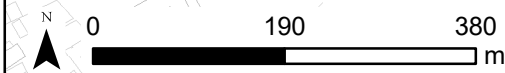
■ **Rough Grass** – Annual cut and removal of arisings of buffer strips in the east of site only; leave rough grass in the west uncut.

■ **Hedgerow** - Maintenance, including pruning to promote thick growth.

Wildflower Maze

- ■ Establish route with initial amenity cut through.
- Frequent regular amenity cut and removal of arisings throughout route.
- Annual cut and removal of arisings.

■ **Woodland Planting** - Maintenance, including mulching.



Other Year 4 Management

- ■ **Scrub** – Thin select compartments of scrub and remove arisings.

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5.6 Year 5 Actions 2028 – 2029

Actions are aspirational and their completion is subject to work programs and budget.

| Ref no. | Action | Obj. Ref | When | Lead | Delivery | Funding | Est. Cost | Spec. Ref. | Status |
|---------|--|----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|--------|
| 5.1 | Wildflower Maze – Establish route with initial amenity cut through. | A5 / C5 | May | TRDC / CMS | TRDC | Contract budget | | | |
| 5.2 | Wildflower Maze – Frequent regular amenity cut and removal of arisings throughout route. | A5 / C5 | May - August | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | | |
| 5.3 | Wildflower Maze – Annual cut and removal of arisings. | A5 / C5 | August | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | 6.3 | |
| 5.4 | Rough Grass – Annual cut and removal of arisings of buffer strips in the west of site only; leave rough grass in the east uncut. | C5 / E4 | August - September | TRDC | TRDC | Contract budget | | 6.1 | |
| 5.5 | Scrub – Thin select compartments of scrub and remove arisings. | C5 / E4 | October - February | TRDC / CMS | TRDC / CMS | Contract budget | | 6.8 | |
| 5.6 | Hedgerow – Maintenance, including pruning to promote thick growth and mulching. | C5 / E7 | October - February | CMS | CMS | Contract budget | | 6.9 | |
| 5.7 | Woodland Planting - Maintenance, including mulching. | C5 / E10 | October - February | CMS | CMS | Contract budget | | 6.10 | |
| 5.8 | Woodland – Coppice 2no. coupes. | E2 | October - February | TRDC / CMS | Contractor | Additional budget | £7,500 | 6.4 | |
| 5.9 | Write new GAP | N/A | January - March | CMS | CMS | Officer time | - | | |
| 5.10 | Review Year 5 Actions. | N/A | March | CMS | CMS | Officer time | - | | |

South Oxhey Playing Fields

Greenspace Action Plan

2024 - 2029

Year 5 Action Plan 2028 - 2029

Task Responsibility

- District led } Officer/ Contractor delivered
- CMS led }
- District led } Volunteer delivered
- CMS led }

Legend

- Site Boundary
- ▲ Barriers, Motorbike Inhibitor
- ▲ Barriers, Chicane
- Gate, Vehicle
- Gate, Pedestrian
- Hedgerow
- Grass Path
- New Walking Route
- Culvert
- Tree Planting
- Coppiced Woodland
- Coupes to be Coppiced
- Scrub Thinning
- Rough Grass to Cut
- Wildflower Maze
- Grassland, Conservation
- Building
- Grassland, Rough
- Grassland, Amenity
- Leisure
- Scrub
- Sports Pitch
- Surfaced Path
- Woodland

■ ■ Woodland - Coppice coupes 5 and 6.

■ Woodland Planting - Maintenance, including mulching.

HAMPER MILL LANE

SANDY LANE

HIGHLANDS

GREEN LANE

OX PASTURE SPRING

BIG WOOD

HAYLING ROAD

BURNHAM DRIVE

■ Hedgerow - Maintenance, including pruning to promote thick growth.

Wildflower Maze -

- ■ Establish route with initial amenity cut through.
- Frequent regular amenity cut and removal of arisings throughout route.
- Annual cut and removal of arisings.

■ Rough Grass - Annual cut and removal of arisings of buffer strips in the west of site only; leave rough grass in the east uncut.

■ Woodland Planting - Maintenance, including mulching.



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Other Year 5 Management

- ■ Scrub - Thin select compartments of scrub and remove arisings.

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6.0 SPECIFICATIONS

6.1 Rough Grassland (Woodland Buffers)

A 1-2m wide buffer strip of rough grassland will be maintained around woodland and tree groups.

Rough grassland will be cut in late summer on a two year rotation, with no more than 50% of rough grassland cut each year. It is beneficial to retain strips of rough grass uncut over winter (rotating uncut areas each year) as an invertebrate refuge.

Leave the rough grass to grow from spring (March/April) to late summer (August-September).

In August or September, cut and lift approximately 50% of the rough grass buffer in mid-summer (mid-July to August), alternating each year generally between the east and west of the site

Care will need to be taken to avoid disturbing ground nesting birds. Rough grass cuts will be immediately preceded by a thorough nesting bird check.

Parkrun will be consulted to ensure running route is kept short throughout the year.

6.2 Conservation Grassland

Leave the conservation grassland, with the exception of mown paths for access, to grow from spring (March/April) to mid-summer (mid-July to August).

Regularly cut mown access paths to 50mm, including to ensure the parkrun route is kept short throughout the year.

To achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity across the rest of the conservation grassland, cut and lift approximately 75% in mid-summer (mid-July to August).

Care will need to be taken to avoid disturbing ground nesting birds. The summer cut will be immediately preceded by a thorough nesting bird check.

The remaining 25% of uncut grass should be strips located randomly across the grassland area, and retained until autumn to allow invertebrates to complete life cycles.

To improve wildflower seed distribution and germination rates, cut and lift the remaining 25% of conservation grassland in autumn (October).

If fertility of the soil (as evidenced by the height of the sward) is too great or wildflowers are limited due to dominant grasses, consider the introduction of yellow rattle from a combination of nearby seed source and a native seed supplier.

Yellow rattle seeds can be scattered across conservation grassland after the autumn cut and should be scattered at random. Care should be taken to ensure seeds

contact soil and therefore can be scattered by scuffing patches of grassland before scattering by hand.

6.3 Wildflower Maze Creation

Preparation

Existing grass should be cut and arisings removed.

Then, in September/October, the wildflower meadow area should be mechanically scarified so that between 60% and 70% of the topsoil is exposed over a given area.

Seeding

The seed mix must be native, not include agricultural varieties, be a wildflower-only mix, and be sown as specified by the supplier. There should be evidence of where the seed mix will be purchased from.

The area should then be rolled with a grooved or notched roller without additional cultivation to cover or incorporate the seed.

Ongoing Management

To ensure the long-term success of newly planted meadows and wildflower areas they should ideally be cut frequently in the first year after sowing. It is suggested that these areas be included with the amenity grass cutting schedule during that year. This ensures good root development of perennials and grasses, meaning they are more likely to establish effectively.

If it is identified that the wildflower meadow requires improvement, after the first year of mowing is a good opportunity. For example, yellow rattle seed may be scattered to assist in outcompeting dominant grasses and therefore promote wildflower growth.

Thereafter, an annual cut-and-lift serves as the most cost-effective long-term management of wildflower enriched grassy areas. This cut should occur from between late July and the end of August, ideally at different times during this window each year.

6.4 Woodland Coppicing

Establish work boundaries with Supervising Officer around two 0.25ha coupes.

Coppice existing hornbeam stubs to previously coppiced level (where visible), or just above (c. 5 – 10cm) junction of stems. Provide consistent, clean cuts using sharp tools, angled away from the centre of the stub (to avoid water rot).

Where maiden hornbeams are growing, undertake first coppice cut on suitable trees. Leave select maiden stems to develop into standard and / or veteran trees.

Coppice hazel and holly where they occur in the coupe as well as any poor quality Ash within the coupe where they may occur.

Retain all oak/ash standards and all native understory tree species (e.g. field maple and cherry).

All retained trees to be marked in agreement with the Supervising Officer.

Trees with bat potential will be retained for assessment by a suitably qualified person.

Lay brash and small diameter poles (<10cm diameter) around coupe boundary as dead hedge.

Forward larger diameter poles (>10cm diameter) to ride-side and stack safely

6.5 Woodland Thinning

In areas of dense secondary woodland dominated by Sycamore and Norway maple, a maximum 30% thin should take place, focusing on path margins and particularly through Big Wood and towards entrances on Hampermill Lane.

Stems showing poor form, those near veteran trees, and areas of especially dense groups of trees should be prioritised. Sycamore and Norway maple should be targeted as much as appropriate, with other species at pole-stage targeted otherwise.

Strip brash from trunks and remove all brash from site.

Utilise approximately 25% of all cut timber as retained deadwood on site. Cut commercially unviable, intermediate diameter, timber into 1-2m lengths and stack into secure habitat log piles as appropriate and in agreed locations.

Where there are sufficient quantities and extraction is viable, remaining timber should be forwarded from the thinning compartment to the agreed stacking area using agreed route(s). Timber should be stacked safely and in a safe and suitable manner for extraction.

6.6 Invasive Non-Native Species Control

Cut mature bushes to ground level and/or treat with a systemic herbicide, applied directly within 48 hours by painting or drilling in herbicide slow release Ecoplugs.

All arisings to be removed from site and disposed at a licensed facility.

6.7 Scattered Trees

If new scattered parkland trees will be planted from seed, seeds (e.g. acorns) will be collected on site and planted out within conservation grassland areas where appropriate.

If planting saplings, trees will be two year bare-root stock, British grown and of local provenance wherever possible. English oak is the appropriate parkland tree, reflecting the heritage of the site.

New parkland trees can be planted in small groups. For the best chance of establishment, construct timber guards to surround parkland trees as they develop. Up to three tree saplings can be planted inside each guard. A single specimen will be selected to continue growing after three to five years. Guards should be placed wide enough apart so that individual trees within groups can develop a spreading crown.

Ground should be prepared before planting (e.g. weeded and dug over/cultivated etc.). Newly planted trees should be adequately supported and protected (with canes, spiral guards, stakes and tree shelters as appropriate). Mulch should be applied following planting.

6.8 Scattered Scrub

Outside the bird nesting season, use hand tools to cut back scrub on wood banks and around select formal tree groups (targeting mature oak which pre-dates the Greenspace).

All arisings should be removed from site.

6.9 Hedgerow Planting

Hedgerow plants will be two year bare-root stock, British grown and of local provenance wherever possible. Appropriate hedgerow species are hawthorn (up to 80%), blackthorn, hazel and dog rose.

To aid establishment the site should be prepared prior to planting. Plough, rotovate or dig a strip 60cm wide by 30cm deep and create a weed free strip about 1m wide, either by cultivation or herbicide.

Plant hedge plants in two rows, with rows 30cm apart offset from each other in a zig-zag formation, and individual plants 40cm apart.

Plant Hawthorn in groups of seven and other species at low frequency in mixed species groups.

Support plants by planting within guards and bamboo canes, both of which should be 0.6m above ground.

Place a 10cm deep and 1.5m wide strip of well rotten bark chip mulch along the planted hedgerow, ensuring the mulch does not touch each plant by maintaining a mulch-free ring around it.

In subsequent years, to aid finding and managing weeds, re-mulch as necessary. An early trim at the end of the first growing season will help to produce a thicker hedge.

After this the aim should be to produce a hedge 2 metres tall by about 1.5 metres wide, with an A-shaped profile.

Losses of plants should be minimal, however during extreme weather losses may be unavoidable and should be replaced the following year.

6.10 Woodland Planting

To prepare the area for planting, cut grass across all areas to be planted to create a short sward immediately prior to planting and remove arisings.

Mark out individual planting locations with bamboo stakes, according to the planting design for trees, scrub and hedgerows detailed below.

Create 1m² weed free areas around each individual planting location.

For main woodland areas plant trees at 2.5m intervals on diagonal lines.

- Plant Oak species in groups of three.
- Plant other species in species groups of five.

Along outside edges plant scrub plants at 1.5m intervals on diagonal lines.

- Plant Hawthorn in groups of seven.
- Plant other species at low frequency in mixed species groups.

Place a 10cm deep layer of well rotten bark chip mulch around 1m² of each plant, ensuring the mulch does not touch the plant by maintaining a 5-10cm mulch-free ring around it.

Plants will become lost amongst grassy areas in the first few years. To aid finding, as well as managing weeds, re-mulch as necessary.

Consider thinning woodland/scrub areas after Year 5 by removing only a few trees to allow the best-established specimens to thrive.