



CROXLEYHALL WOODS

ACTION PLAN 2025 – 2030

ENGAGEMENT DOCUMENT



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1. INTRODUCTION

A new five-year action plan is being produced for Croxleyhall Woods. This action plan will be inserted as an additional Appendix to Croxleyhall Woods Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) 2019-24. It will guide management of the site between 2025 and 2030 based on established aims and objectives. This engagement document sets out how stakeholders can contribute to shaping the action plan.

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

The new action plan is being produced by the Countryside Management Service (CMS), part of Hertfordshire County Council's Countryside and Rights of Way Service, on behalf of and in partnership with Three Rivers District Council. The completed document will inform the management actions to be undertaken over the next five years, commencing in April 2025.

Engaging communities is integral to the production of GAPs, to ensure that stakeholders are fully aware of and able to interact with the plan production process. The engagement period will run from May to June. Please use the contact details in Section 6 to comment on the aspirations for the site.

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

Section 2 reviews recent management of the site.

Section 3 describes the structure of the new action plan and its relationship with the existing GAP.

Section 4 contains the draft action plan.

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

2. BACKGROUND

Croxleyhall Woods is a 15.6-hectare (39 acre) woodland located in Croxley Green, between Rickmansworth and Watford in the south-western corner of Hertfordshire. It is owned and managed by Three Rivers District Council, with support from the Countryside Management Service and the Croxley Green Parish Council. The woodland is a Local Wildlife Site (89/008) and lies within the London Metropolitan Green Belt.

The woodland occupies gently sloping ground rising from the floodplain of the Colne River to the south. It is surrounded on the other three sides by housing and school grounds, making up the southern extent of the settlement of Croxley Green. It is divided into three distinct compartments, separated by railway tracks and a new housing development; all three compartments are linked by a surfaced track, designated as a public bridleway. A number of public footpaths connect to this bridleway. There is a network of informal, unsurfaced walking routes throughout the woodland which appear well used by the local community.

The site is predominantly ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW), meaning that there has been woodland present on the site for over 400 years. Some parts are considered to be plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS), where the ancient woodland composition has been modified, and other parts are secondary woodland, having established in the last 50-100 years following quarrying works. The primary canopy tree species are oak, beech, birch and cherry, with a diverse mixture of minor species, including an unusual abundance of mature rowan trees. Hazel is abundant in the understorey in most parts; the structure of the woodland suggests that much of it was once managed as hazel coppice with oak standards, a practice which declined in Hertfordshire nearly a century ago. Parts of the woodland contain old gravel extraction pits from the early 1900s, and there is evidence of old wood banks with beech boundary stubbs. In the spring the ground flora is abundant with bluebells.

3. REVIEW OF PROGRESS

The previous iteration of a Greenspace Action Plan for Croxleyhall Woods covered the period between 2019 – 2024, with a one-year extension to 2025. While not all actions in the previous plan were completed, the majority of the objectives set out were delivered through this period.

During the previous plan, the ladder steps were replaced in Long Valley Wood, replacing the older existing steps that were falling into disrepair. This has allowed continued access to this compartment for the public. These remain in a good condition, however, will continue to be monitored and spot repairs will be carried out if necessary.



Figure 1 Steps into Long Valley Wood

One item not completed during the previous period which is included in this plan is improving the site access from Harvey Road onto Lavrock Lane (into Cpt. 4). This is currently a jumble of prohibitive structures – there is a hinged barrier across the bridleway, and a second across the footpath leading into Cpt. 4, with bollards between the two. We will look to rationalise these, ensuring the site remains safe and secure, controlling unwanted vehicle access whilst improving the visual appearance of the area and improving access for woodland management operations.



Figure 2 Entrance off Harvey Road

Another entrance requiring improvements is the entrance off All Saints Lane into Compartment 1. There is currently a vehicle gate that is overgrown and has become an eyesore and unable to be used. The vegetation should be cleared around this and the vehicle gate removed and replaced with lockable bollards to retain vehicle access into this area of the woodland.



Figure 3 Entrance of All Saints Road

At the entrance to Compartment 1 further south along All Saints Road there is a bin which is old and outdated and does not fit the site furniture seen elsewhere at the site. This should be removed and replaced with a new bin.



Figure 4 Bin on All Saints Road

Also along All Saints Road, there is a picnic area which is not well utilised. The bench and litter bin present in this picnic area could be better served elsewhere. These should be removed and relocated to a more appropriate area of the woodland. The exact location for the relocation should come as a result of discussions with the users of the site to ascertain the most appropriate location.



Figure 5 All Saints Road Picnic Area

The benches present on site are of differing styles and do not match with the current Three Rivers District Council 'house style' across their other sites. These should all be replaced with benches in keeping with those seen across TRDC's woodland sites.

There is currently an interpretation board in the northeast of Compartment 5, however this is set far back from the path and is surrounded by brambles. It is also at a height which is not suitable for a range of site users. The vegetation around this should be cleared and the sign should be brought forward and installed so that it sits lower off the ground.



Figure 6 Interpretation board by Compartment 5

Selective felling across the compartments, as well as targeted coppice rotations have helped to preserve the ancient woodland features, improve structural diversity, support the long-term sustainability of the woodland, as well as improve its aesthetic and amenity qualities. We will look to build upon the forestry management started in the previous plan, continuing to focus on a sustainable coppice rotation. After the significant interventions during the last six years, the intensity of woodland management will be much lower.

Care will be taken to protect the coppiced stumps to secure re-establishment from all previous and future coppicing activities at the site. Holly will also be selectively thinned where it is outcompeting and overshadowing nearby species. Work will be undertaken to eradicate invasive non-native species (INNS) from the woodland, in particular cherry laurel which will be removed and monitored for reestablishment. Where possible, the laurel will be grubbed out with an excavator to stop reestablishment.

During the previous plan, rides were established within the woodland to create diversity of canopy cover. These should be flailed on a rotation to reduce the presence of brambles and encourage a diverse habitat.

4. GREENSPACE ACTION PLAN (GAP) 2025 – 2030

The Croxleyhall Woods Greenspace Action Plan 2019 – 2024 was agreed in 2019 following engagement with stakeholders and the local community. The document includes a description and evaluation of the site and sets out broad aims and objectives. The objectives have not changed since 2019, and we therefore intend only to produce a new five-year action plan as a new Appendix to the existing GAP.

Croxleyhall Woods Greenspace Action Plan 2019 – 2024 can be downloaded for reference from the following link:

[Croxleyhall Woods | Three Rivers District Council](#)

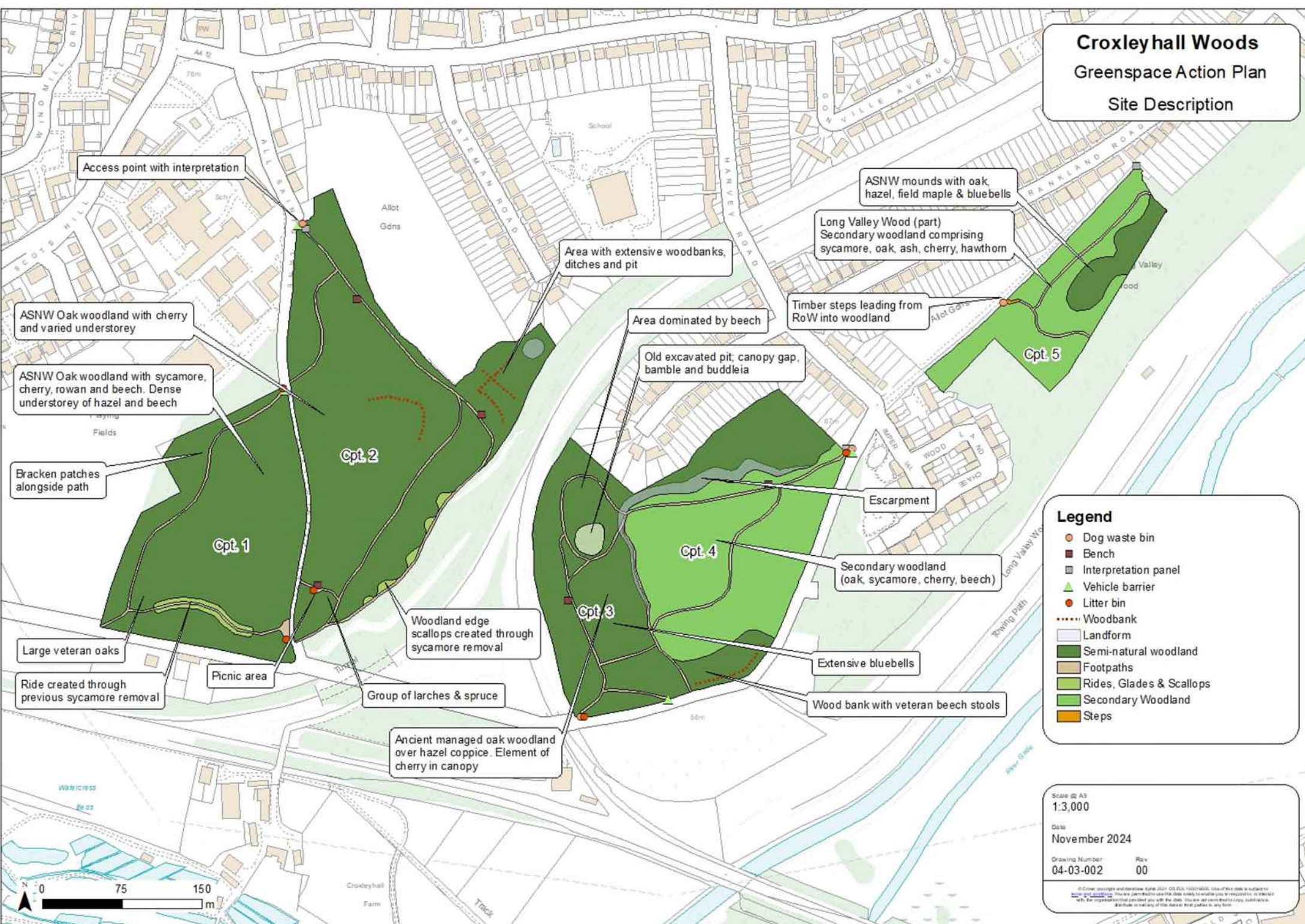
The new five-year action plan is a simple, easy to read plan for use by officers of Three Rivers District Council and the Countryside Management Service and members of the public. It also acts as a guide to the work of volunteers. The plan is largely map based, with sequential, annual management maps to show the actions planned for each year. The resulting change is represented on the map for the following year. The document will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains effective and relevant.

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

Croxleyhall Woods

Greenspace Action Plan

Site Description



Scale @ A3
1:3,000

Date
November 2024

Drawing Number
04-03-002

Rev
00

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5. ACTION PLANS AND MAPS 2025 – 2030

5.1 Annual and Regular Actions

Abbreviations: CMS – Countryside Management Service, TRDC – Three Rivers District Council, GM – Grounds Maintenance Contractor, Vols – Volunteers

Ref	Action	Cpt.	When	Lead	Delivery	Est. Cost
0.1	Clean and maintain existing signage and interpretation	All	April	TRDC	TRDC GM	
0.2	Ride management – mow / strim ride edges	1,3	May/Sep	TRDC	TRDC GM	
0.3	Vegetation clearance – entrance points and picnic area	All	June	TRDC	TRDC GM	
0.4	Bracken crushing in recently established patches	1	July	CMS	Vols	
0.5	Coppice sycamore in woodland edge clearings, protect young oaks with tree tubes	2	Nov-Feb	CMS	Vols	Officer Time
0.6	Coppice holly where it is impacting on other species	1,2,3	Nov-Feb	CMS	Vols	Officer Time
0.7	Tree safety audit and remedial work	All	Ongoing	TRDC	TRDC	
0.8	Empty dog bins	All	Ongoing	TRDC	TRDC GM	
0.9	Empty litter bins	All	Ongoing	TRDC	TRDC GM	
0.10	Respond proactively to garden waste dumping	All	Ongoing	TRDC	TRDC	
0.11	Annual review of GAP action plan	-	March	CMS/ TRDC	CMS/ TRDC	Officer Time

Croxleyhall Woods
Greenspace Action Plan
Annual and Regular Actions

Task Responsibility

- TRDC led
- CMS led
- TRDC led
- CMS led

Contractor delivered

Volunteer delivered

0.7 Tree safety audit and remedial work

0.8 & 0.9 Empty dog and litter bins

0.10 Respond proactively to garden waste dumping

0.11 Review of Greenspace Action Plan

0.1 Clean & maintain existing signs & interpretation

0.3 Vegetation clearance: Entrance points

0.4 Bracken crushing in recently established patches

0.2 Ride management: Mow/ strim path edges, twice per year

0.6 Coppice holly in target area where impacting on other species

0.3 Vegetation clearance: Entrance points

0.1 Clean & maintain existing signs & interpretation

0.2 Ride management: Mow/ strim path edges, twice per year

0.3 Vegetation clearance: Picnic area

0.5 Coppice sycamore regeneration in woodland edge scallops & protect oak regeneration

0.3 Vegetation clearance: Entrance points

Legend

- Dog waste bin
- Bench
- Interpretation panel
- Vehicle barrier
- Litter bin
- Woodbank
- Bracken Crushing
- Ride Management
- Vegetation Clearance
- Semi-natural woodland
- Footpaths
- Rides, Glades & Scallops
- Secondary Woodland
- Steps

Scale @ A3
1:3,000
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Rev
00

-  Dog waste bin
-  Bench
-  Interpretation panel
-  Vehicle barrier
-  Litter bin
-  Woodbank
-  Bracken Crushing
-  Ride Management
-  Vegetation Clearance
-  Semi-natural woodland
-  Footpaths
-  Rides, Glades & Scallops
-  Secondary Woodland
-  Steps

Drawing Number	Rev
04-03-004	00

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5.2 Year 1 – 5 Actions

Abbreviations: CMS – Countryside Management Service, TRDC – Three Rivers District Council, GM – Grounds Maintenance Contractor, Vols – Volunteers

Ref	Action	Cpt.	When	Lead	Delivery	Est. Cost
1.1	Improvements to entrance off All Saints Lane	1	Y1	CMS	Contractor	
1.2	Protect coppiced hawthorn to secure regrowth	5	Y1	CMS	Vols	Officer Time
1.3	Replace all benches on site	All	Y1	CMS	Contractor / Vols	£1,500
1.4	Improvements to entrance off Harvey Road	4	Y1	CMS	Contractor	£5,000
1.5	Flail along paths in ride areas	1 & 4	Y1	TRDC	GM	GM Budget
1.6	Replace bin to match the site furniture seen around the woods	1	Y1	TRDC	GM	GM Budget
2.1	Coppice hazel along main footpath	2	Y2	CMS	Vols	Officer Time
2.2	Management of laurel and holly	1	Y2	CMS	Vols	Officer Time
3.1	Protect coppiced stumps to secure re-establishment	2	Y3	CMS	Vols	Officer Time
3.2	Management of laurel	2	Y3	CMS	Vols	Officer Time
4.1	Management of laurel and holly	4	Y4	CMS	Vols	Officer Time
4.2	Improvements to interpretation board	5	Y4	CMS	Vols	Officer Time
5.1	Relocation of bench and litter bin from picnic area off All Saints Road	2	Y5	CMS	Contractor	

Task Responsibility

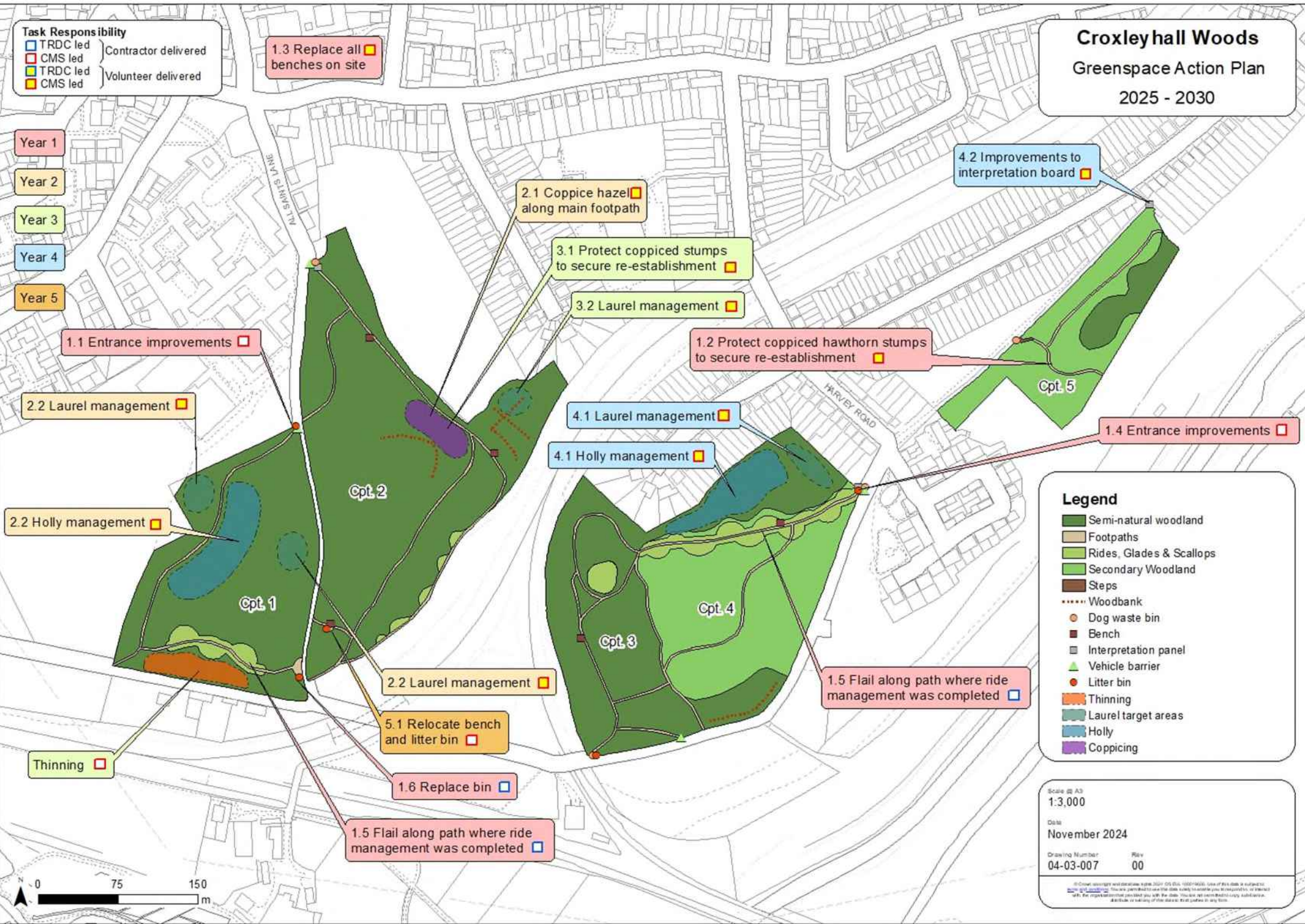
TRDC led	Contractor delivered
CMS led	
TRDC led	Volunteer delivered
CMS led	

Croxleyhall Woods

Greenspace Action Plan

2025 - 2030

- Year 1
- Year 2
- Year 3
- Year 4
- Year 5



6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PLAN PRODUCTION PROCESS

6.1 Action Plan Production Process

Effective community engagement is at the centre of successful management plans. The value of a GAP is maximised when it incorporates and balances the aspirations of stakeholders and interest groups. For this new five-year action plan, we are offering one period of community engagement. Stakeholders and site users are invited to read through and make comment on the draft action plan. This community engagement will run from May until the end of June.

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

6.2 Stakeholders

- Relevant Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) Councillors
- Relevant TRDC Officers
- Relevant Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Councillors
- Relevant HCC Officers
- Relevant Countryside and Rights of Way Officers
- Croxley Green Parish Council
- Friends of Croxley Common Moor
- Croxley Green Residents' Association
- Forestry Commission
- Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust
- Local community and site users

7. STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Thank you for taking the time to read this document. We are keen to receive feedback from you on our proposals for the Croxleyhall Woods Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) 2025 – 2030.

Please return your comments using the contact details below:

FAO Frankie Downes

Countryside Management Service

E-mail: Frankie.Downes@hertfordshire.gov.uk