



PRESTWICK ROAD MEADOWS

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE PLAN

2026 - 2036

BRIEFING DOCUMENT



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1. INTRODUCTION

A new Management and Maintenance Plan is being produced for Prestwick Road Meadows. This briefing document provides an overview of how the plan will be produced and sets out how stakeholders can contribute to shaping the plan.

Management and Maintenance Plans 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 Management and Maintenance 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 ten years, commencing in April 2026.

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

The engagement period will run from 1st September to 22nd September 2025. A further engagement period in November 2025 will provide an opportunity to assess the draft version of the Management and Maintenance Plan. Please use the contact details in Section 6 to comment on the aspirations for the site.

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

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

Section 3 reviews recent management of the site.

Section 4 contains the core objectives for the Management and Maintenance Plan.

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

2. BACKGROUND

Prestwick Road Meadows is an important area of public open space located within the densely populated residential area of South Oxhey and is owned and managed by Three Rivers District Council. It forms an important 'green finger' with access and ecological links to the wider countryside.

It is a designated Local Nature Reserve, consisting of several open areas of species-rich neutral unimproved grassland, divided and punctuated by large blocks of thorn scrub with occasional mature oak trees. The site contains a pond which has been known to host amphibian populations. The layout of the site is still that of a remnant medieval field system with ancient hedgerow boundary features intact. The network of grass paths and access routes from the housing estate makes it a well-used site for informal recreation such as dog walking.

To the north of Prestwick Road, smaller in size and of less biodiversity value, this area was once open and grassy and formed part of the Local Wildlife Site, with recorded populations of slow worm. A gradual succession to woodland saw its value decrease and the designation removed. In 2014, this part of Prestwick Road Meadows underwent significant change with the construction of a new play area and path network, and tree works took place to open up a wide ride through the woods. The management of the play area will not be included in the Management and Maintenance Plan.

Prestwick Road Meadows

Legend

— Site Boundary

Prestwick Road Meadows

WD19 6XU

Grid Ref: TQ116922

Easting: 511659

Northing: 192297

Scale @ A4
1:20,000
Date
August 2025
Rev
00

*Countryside
Management
Service*

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3. REVIEW OF PROGRESS

Previous management plans have been produced for the site by the Countryside Management Service, most recently covering the period from 2015-2020. Scrub removal works took place in 2024 to improve access and prevent encroachment onto the grassland, and over the next five years we aim to continue this work, improving the site for wildlife and people.

The site is managed by Three Rivers District Council (TRDC), with regular grounds maintenance in place. This includes mowing grass pathways through the meadow, an annual cut and collect of the meadow and litter picking.

4. MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE PLAN 2026-2036

The Prestwick Road Meadows Management and Maintenance Plan 2026-2036 will be a simple, easy to read plan for use by officers of Three Rivers District Council and members of the public and will act as a guide to the work of volunteers. The plan will be largely map based, with sequential, annual management maps to show the actions planned for each year. The resulting change will be represented on the map for the following year. The document will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and relevant.

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

The aim and objectives of the Management and Maintenance Plan will be as follows:

Aims

Prestwick Road Meadows will be a welcoming and accessible greenspace, enjoyed by the local community. It will provide opportunities for informal recreation both on the site and through footpath connections extending out into the local countryside. Historic landscape features and ecologically rich habitats of the Local Nature Reserve will be re-established and conserved, restoring its inherent ecological value.

Objectives

A. A Welcoming Place – *To provide a welcoming green space for the enjoyment of the local community*

- A1 Improve access into and around the site, ensuring pathways and entrances are kept clear and open and maintaining clear sight lines
- A2 Update and improve signage around the site

B. Healthy, Safe and Secure – *To provide and maintain clear and safe public access to Prestwick Road Meadows*

- B1 Carry out tree risk surveys in line with TRDC tree strategy and reactive tree works to address safety issues
- B2 Respond promptly to reports of misuse of the site

C. Well Maintained and Clean – *To ensure that all aspects of Prestwick Road Meadows are kept clean and well maintained*

- C1 Manage and maintain paths, access infrastructure and signage
- C2 Remove fly-tipping, undertake regular litter picking, empty dog bins and carry out small scale vegetation management along access routes
- C3 Ensure a good standard of general site maintenance is upheld through grounds maintenance operations

D. Environmental Management – *To ensure all aspects of site management are undertaken with sustainability as a guiding principle*

- D1 Ensure all site activities adhere to relevant TRDC policies and strategies, including all work undertaken by contractors
- D2 Ensure ongoing maintenance costs are financially sustainable
- D3 Secure external funding to ensure the viability of capital works
- D4 Ensure impacts of climate change are considered in management decisions
- D5 Carry out management according to environmental best practice, including a presumption against the use of herbicide
- D6 Monitor results of delivery to evaluate the success of management activities

E. Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage – *To conserve and enhance the important wildlife, landscape, and heritage features of Prestwick Road Meadows*

- E1 Manage unimproved neutral grassland to promote wildflower diversity through annual cut and collect of the meadow
- E2 Re-establish the valuable historic landscape of Prestwick Road Meadows through a funded project to address the serious issue of scrub growth and re-establish original hedge lines.
- E3 Implement a programme of management to help turn reclaimed land back into rich grassland meadow.
- E4 Management of pond to maintain habitat in the long term and implement pond creation to support amphibian communities

- E5 Work with local groups to ensure protected and important wildlife populations are supported

F. Community Involvement – *To ensure engagement and involvement of local communities*

- F1 Support volunteer activity and ensure all involved operate towards achievement of the Management and Maintenance Plan
- F2 Support and encourage the local community to become further involved in the management of Prestwick Road Meadows in a structured and supported way

G. Marketing and Communication – *To promote awareness and interest in Prestwick Road Meadows*

- G1 Improve the visitor experience and enhance opportunities for informing and educating by reposition interpretation panels
- G2 Promote volunteer events

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PLAN PRODUCTION PROCESS

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

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

- For the first stage (this briefing document), stakeholders and site users will be invited to make comment on the core aspirations in Section 4; it is hoped that any further aspirations and/or issues will be identified through this information gathering process. This first stage of community engagement will run between **1st September and 22nd September 2025**. To support this stage, we will be holding a guided walk and engagement session for any users or interested groups that may wish to discuss the proposals or a particular aspect in more detail. This will take place on **Tuesday 16th September at 10am**, meeting at the main entrance on Prestwick Road, WD19 7EA.
- For the second stage, stakeholders and site users will be invited to read through and make comment on the draft plan, which will include the detailed proposals and actions. This stage is intended to run in **November 2025**.

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

We will aim to respond individually to comments received through the public engagements; we will produce a summary of comments, noting any amendments made to the plan as a result. We will retain contact details only for the purpose of keeping respondents informed about the plan development process.

5.1 Management and Maintenance Plan production process

1. Production of briefing document and outline proposals.
2. Stakeholder engagement on briefing document. Engagement will run from approximately 1st September 2025 to 22nd September 2025
3. Production of draft Management and Maintenance Plan.
4. Stakeholder engagement on the draft Management and Maintenance Plan. Engagement will run from approximately 3rd November 2025 to 24th November 2025.
5. Production of final Management and Maintenance Plan.
6. Publicity and promotion.

5.2 Stakeholders

- Hertfordshire County Council portfolio holder and local member
- Three Rivers District Council portfolio holder and local members
- Relevant Hertfordshire County Council officers
- Relevant Three Rivers District Council officers
- Watford Rural Parish Council
- Hertfordshire Ecology
- Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record
- Butterfly Conservation Trust
- Herts & Middlesex Moth Group
- Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust
- Local Community
- Ramblers Association

6. STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Thank you for taking the time to read this document. We are keen to receive feedback from you on our proposals for the Prestwick Road Meadows Management and Maintenance Plan 2026-2036.

Please return your comments using the contact details below by **Monday 22nd September** at the latest.

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