



POND WOOD

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE PLAN

2026 - 2036

BRIEFING DOCUMENT



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1. INTRODUCTION

A new Management and Maintenance Plan is being produced for Pond Wood. 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 Plan 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 (TRDC). 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

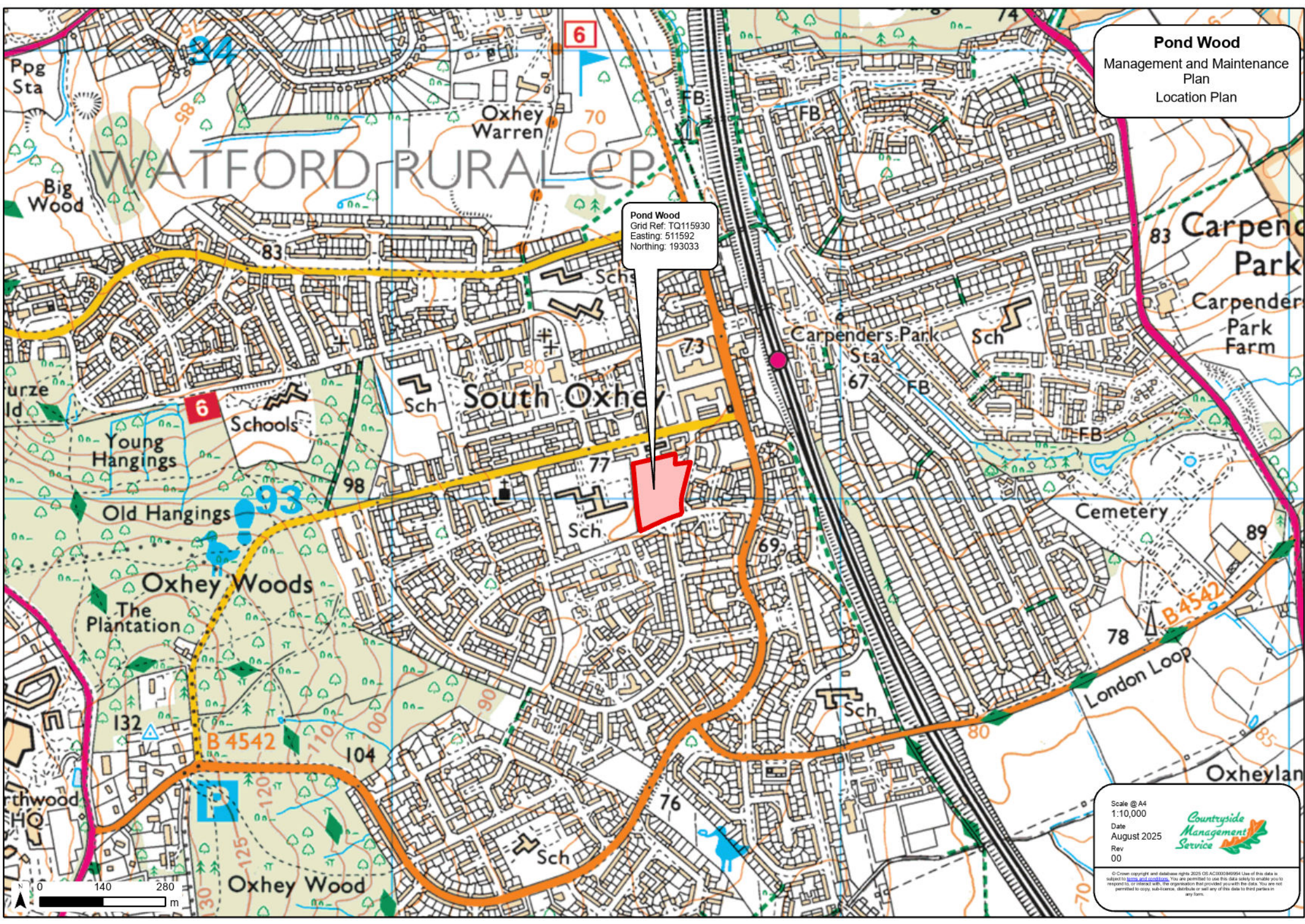
Pond Wood is a small (1.5ha), isolated block of ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) in South Oxhey, surrounded by residential areas. The site is fairly flat with a low valley containing a stream and a wet flush to the north.

The wood is designated as a Local Wildlife Site due to its ancient woodland status. It contains large remnant pedunculate oak standards with hornbeam coppice and notably hornbeam pollards. Some ash and sycamore are also present, together with hazel coppice, elder and hornbeam in the understorey.

The ground flora supports several woodland indicators, in particular bluebell, with previous records of other species including broad buckler-fern, enchanter's nightshade and three-nerved sandwort. Pendulous sedge and wood sedge occur in the wetter areas. Ground flora is generally suppressed by shading from the mature trees, including the hornbeam pollards.

The woodland is heavily used for recreation, including dog walking and children on bicycles, through a network of informal footpaths. A large pit has been used for fly-tipping.

Pond Wood
Management and Maintenance
Plan
Location Plan



Scale @ A4
1:10,000
Date
August 2025
Rev
00

*Countryside
Management
Service*

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3. REVIEW OF PROGRESS

Pond Wood does not currently have a site-specific management plan. It is included in a Forestry Commission Woodland Management Plan encompassing twelve small woodlands owned by Three Rivers District Council. This ten-year plan was agreed in 2020 but contains only generic management recommendations for Pond Wood.

Recent management has mainly reactive, including tree risk surveying and tree works. Wooden monoliths were installed at both entrances to the site by volunteers from Countryside Management Service (CMS) in November 2024.

4. MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE PLAN 2026-2036

The Pond Wood 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

Post Wood's valuable ancient woodland habitat will be protected and enhanced, with a focus on ensuring its notable hornbeam pollards are brought back into active management and preserved into the future. It will be welcoming and accessible for the local community, providing opportunities for visitors to connect with and enjoy their local environment.

Objectives

A. A Welcoming Place – *To provide a welcoming green space for the enjoyment of regular users and visitors*

- A1 Improve public access into and around the woodland, ensuring pathways and entrances are kept clear and open and maintaining clear sight lines

B. Healthy, Safe and Secure – *To provide and maintain clear and safe public access onto and around Pond Wood*

- 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 Pond Wood are kept clean and well maintained*

- C1 Manage and maintain paths, access infrastructure and signage
- C2 Undertake regular litter picking, 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 key habitats of Pond Wood*

- E1 Undertake a sensitive and structured programme of restoration of veteran hornbeam pollards, in consultation with experts in this field
- E2 Recognise the value of mature and veteran trees and provide optimum conditions for their longevity.
- E2 Remove invasive species
- E3 Clear vegetation from around seasonal stream
- E4 Management of pond to maintain habitat in the long term and implement pond creation to support amphibian communities

- E5 Protect and celebrate heritage features, and conserve the historic landscape character of the site and its relationship with the wider landscape, including further developing heritage interpretation on site
- E6 Develop a long-term plan for a sustainable woodland management in accordance with the Forestry Commission Woodland Management Plan to enhance value for biodiversity and people
- E7 Explore opportunities for natural flood management within the woodland

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

G. Marketing and Communication – *To promote awareness and interest in Pond Wood*

- G1 Improve the visitor experience and enhance opportunities for informing and educating by repositioning interpretation panels

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 1pm**, meeting at the entrance on Seacroft Gardens.
- 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
- Hertfordshire County Council Flood Risk Team
- Butterfly Conservation Trust
- Herts & Middlesex Moth Group
- Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust
- Forestry Commission Woodland Officer
- 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 Pond Wood 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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