Herne Hill Local Nature Reserve

Management Plan July 2023

1.1 Summary

This Management Plan has been drawn up for Herne Hill Local Nature Reserve in Ilminster Somerset. The nature reserve is part of a portfolio of open spaces owned and managed by Ilminster Town Council.

The Countryside Manager has been responsible for compiling this Management Plan, collating various reports, surveys, management recommendations and audit findings. The plan will be available to local groups for their comments which will be incorporated in the future. The plan will be monitored throughout the year and will be updated annually or as required.

The Management Plan is in two sections, the first being a descriptive assessment of the nature reserve, the way it operates and how visitors interact with the site. The second part is a prescriptive section detailing the action plan that will fulfil the aims and objectives. The descriptive sections assess where we are now compared to the eight Green Flag judging criteria.

1.2 Purpose of the Management Plan

The purpose of this management plan is:

- To demonstrate that the management of Herne Hill Local Nature Reserve is informed by a coordinated and fully resourced plan; ensuring continued management and maintenance of the park for a five year period from April 2023 to March 2029.
- To identify how the various areas of responsibility within the open spaces team are coordinated in support of high-quality management and maintenance, and to identify who is ultimately responsible for each aspect of management.
- To identify, discuss and resolve issues relating to conflicts of interest between user groups or between expectations and available resources.
- To provide a reference document for those managing and maintaining the Reserve and for other people who have an interest in the Reserve.
- The Management and Maintenance plan and its appendices will act as the central reference document relating to the management of Herne Hill Local Nature Reserve. This document will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.
- The Management and Maintenance plan; will provide the benchmark at which delivery and performance will be measured.

1.3 Objectives of the management Plan

The objectives of this plan are to:

- To ensure the sites natural vegetation continues to develop, in respect of ancient woodland character.
- To conserve the site and enhance the local native landscape.
- To conserve the site and enhance the local ecology, including managing habitats for species conservation importance.
- To assist in maintaining the stability of steep slopes by maintaining tree cover at vulnerable points.
- To control pests and invasive species, preventing excessive damage.

- Maintain reasonable safety margins for site users and neighboring landowners.
- To enhance access to the site visitors and educate them site users on the history and ecology of the site.
- For the land to be used and accessible for all.

1.4 Ownership & Designation Length

Herne Hill (OS Grid: ST351140) is owned and managed by Ilminster Town Council; it was gifted to the town in 1931 by Major Sir George Davies MP and Walter Trivett in perpetuity and therefore the Town Council has agreed to seek the designation of Herne Hill as a Local Nature Reserve for a minimum of 100 years to be reviewed after 100 years.

1.5 Restrictions on land use

There are a number of stipulations in the 1931 conveyance, when Herne Hill was gifted to the Town Council's predecessor, The Urban District Council of Ilminster, as to how the land could and couldn't be used. Broadly speaking these are:

- That the land should be a public natural park and public open space
- As far as possible the land should be kept in a natural state.
- That Herne Hill should be open and free to the public at all times.
- That the land should be open to the sky, except for the natural growth of tree, shrubs or the like
- Restrictions on construction of buildings and structures
- No advertising
- No brick or tile making.
- The land cannot be used to hold public fairs.
- The land may be used for hunting.
- The land may be used for preserving wild birds and animals.
- That the land should be maintained, and that trees and shrubs may be felled, pruned and thinned with the view and intent to preserve and maintain the natural amenity value of the land.

1.6 Site Description

The Herne Hill site covers an area of 8.25 hectares and consists of a broad range of natural vegetation species, along with a number of introduced species. The species composition of the woodland varies throughout, with the most prevalent tree and shrub species being ash (Fraxinus excelsior), pedunculate oak (Quercus robur), hazel (Corylus avellana), hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna), elder (Sambucus nigra) and holly (Ilex aquifolium).

The field layer within the woodland includes bramble (Rubus fruticosus), bracken (Pteridium, aquilinum), red campion (Silene dioica), dog's mercury (Mercurialis perennis), bluebell (Hyacinthoides non-scripta), primrose (Primula vulgaris) and lords-and-ladies (Arum maculatum).

The ground layer within the woodland is dominated by common ivy (Hedera helix), lesser celandine (Ranunculus ficaria) along with substantial moss, liverwort, lichen and fungi communities. The area at the hill's summit is known as the Fir-Pound and is a plantation which consists of Scots pine, sweet chestnut and beech trees. Even though these species are not local to this habitat, they should remain as a significant part of the site's history and ecology.

Many parts of the woodland's shrub layer are currently sparse, consisting of mostly bramble and bracken. It is proposed a selection of these areas be managed to allow for other species, which require additional light, to germinate and thrive. Over one hundred species of flowering plants have been recorded including two of

Somerset's notable species. Surveys have identified forty-six species of insect including two national rare species and many with local status.

The grassland area, Cleaves Close, includes several distinctive communities. It contains diverse flora and is one of the most important sites on Herne Hill. The area includes bramble, knapweed, primrose, nettles, cocksfoot, false oat grass, Yorkshire fog and soft rush.

The entomological survey (1993-95) showed Cleeve's Close to be one of the richest on the Herne Hill site, including 2 nationally rare beetles. The site provides a habitat for many animal species, including a large population of badgers and a substantial range of invertebrates and wild birds.

1.7 Site History

Herne Hill has a long history having appeared in the Domesday Book of 1086 however the site is not classed as an ancient woodland as it has not been continuously wooded since prior to c.1600. Many of the trees within the woodland, however, are veteran.

In 1982 a five-year tree planting program was carried out, in which 5000 young trees were planted. In the years following this, to the present, a further 2000 new trees have been planted. The initial planting program introduced new non-native species, including many American Red Oak.

The site is now managed as an amenity woodland for members of the public to enjoy, while maintaining the areas valuable wildlife resource, which is reflected in the management objectives. A more in-depth history can be found in Appendix A.

2.0 A Welcome Place

“A welcoming place is one that invites and draws people into it. This means creating a space which, through its visual appearance, range of facilities, standards of maintenance and ease of access, makes people feel that they are in a cared-for place.”

2.1 Welcoming

Finding the site from town or the recreation ground can be a little tricky and a full review on how the site is announced from these locations should be carried out.

At present the main entrance to Herne Hill is somewhat underwhelming to a visitor, not familiar to the area, they may be uncertain that they are entering the nature reserve. A little past the main entrance there is an orientation board highlighting some of the circular routes.

A review of this entrance should be undertaken to ensure that an appropriate sense of arrival is achieved.

Figure 1: Herne Hill Ridge Path Entrance 2023

2.2 Good and Safe Access

In addition to the main entrance, there are 5 other access points to Herne Hill. These access points can be reached by following public rights of way.

The footpaths on site are often very slippery and waterlogged throughout the winter months which make access extremely difficult. Using traditional techniques and arisings from management operations, pedestrian walkways have been created to help with this issue and work will continue prioritizing the worst affected areas first.

Waymarkers make people feel safe knowing they are heading in the right direction. Unfortunately, the waymarkers that corresponded to three promoted routes have disappeared and require replacing.

Figure 2 Example of surfacing works to help visitors avoid boggy areas.

2.3 Signage

At present there are three interpretative orientation boards located at the three most used access points. These boards highlight the three circular walks throughout the reserve as well encouraging visitors to look out for wildlife.

Temporary signage has been installed to inform visitors of what and why certain management techniques are happening.

On some of the entrances No cycling signs stand out along with temporary warning signs of slippery paths. When the entrances are reviewed, a more appropriate method

of conveying these messages should be considered.

2.4 Equal Access for All

Access for people with disabilities is limited as Herne Hill is located some way away from parking and other facilities.

During the winter months the extremely wet ground isn't passable for anyone in a wheelchair or with a buggy or pram and even for the most able walkers, can be a challenge.

There is significant potential to improve certain aspects of site infrastructure to be more friendly to those with limited mobility.

More benches at regular intervals to allow for people to rest and the replacement of kissing gates with a more suitable alternative.

There are a number of kissing gates that restrict access to those who may be able to access, where possible these should be replaced with a less restrictive alternative.

Figure 3: Waterlogged path after significant rain

Welcoming Places Improvement and Maintenance Objectives	
2.1	Maintain signage and other entrance infrastructure
2.2	Maintain pathways and access to an acceptable standard
2.3	Review entrance signs

3.0 Healthy, Safe and Secure

This section looks at the sites users and their needs, encouraging them to enjoy healthy activities using appropriate, safe-to-use facilities and activities, and to feel personally safe and secure.

As part of the Council's commitment to the Health and Safety at Works Act 1974, the Countryside Manager has the key responsibility of health and safety and monitors this accordingly. The following methods and/or procedures are utilized to ensure that there is a safe environment for both the public and members of staff. This list is illustrative, and not comprehensive:

- Risk assessments
- COSHH assessments
- Safe working procedures
- Safe chemical storage, application, and disposal (where chemicals are used)
- Specific training and certification e.g., PA 16 and Chainsaw Usage
- Defined roles and responsibilities.
- Effective communication methods
- Emergency procedures
- Effective reporting and investigating procedures.
- Recognized first aiders.
- Manual handling procedures
- The provision of safety equipment and consumables
- A regular inspection regime

3.1 Appropriate provision of quality facilities and activities

With Herne Hill being a local nature reserve and on the outskirts of town, the facilities provided should be in keeping with the environment and not take away from the natural nature of the site.

There are no toilets or other buildings present on this hill. As the land was gifted to the council, the conveyance stipulates how the land can and cannot be used. Part of this restricts buildings and other permanent structures being built on Herne Hill.

The main users of the hill are dog walkers, walkers with a wildlife interest, walkers for fitness and educational groups such as the local schools forest school and scouts.

Currently litter and dog bins are strategically located near main entrances and within the picnic areas.

There are no facilities such as picnic tables or benches located in the picnic areas at present, though the prospect of picnic benches in these areas should be explored to provide a suitable place to sit down and eat, as well as a useful area for educational activities.

Figure 4: one of two picnic areas

A number of benches have disappeared over the years, so these should be reinstated and installed to provide rest points and places for quiet contemplation and to watch nature.

In the first instance, basic benches using available materials should be installed creating regular rest points.

The Council has agreed to a design of bench that compliments the natural feel of the woodland, and these should be used when someone is donating a bench as a memorial

or when a new bench is being purchased. Details of the design and the memorial bench policy can be found in Appendix B.

Improving the offer of activities that will attract families to visit the site and can also be used on educational visits should be explored. This could include activity trails, rubbing posts and events.

As for engaging the elder community, participation in wildlife recording and guided walks can be used to enhance their visit, and also compliment other management objectives.

3.2 Safe Equipment and Facilities

There is a program of maintenance and inspection for the facilities detailed below: -

- Twice weekly emptying of litter/dog bins.
- Twice yearly inspection to cover all site features and structures.
- Maintenance staff undertake condition checks of facilities as part of routine maintenance visits to the site.
- Regular tree safety surveys in accordance with the Tree Safety Management Plan.

Issues reported by the public are addressed by the open spaces team. Routine maintenance issues are forwarded to the Countryside Manager and matters of policy are initially considered by the Open Spaces Committee. Any issues that have maintenance implications are then jointly evaluated by all relevant officers with input from the Town Councilors and newly established Herne Hill Users' Group.

3.3 Personal safety

It is very important to both the staff and the council that Herne Hill is a safe place to come and visit at all times. Between 7:30am and 4:30pm Monday – Friday members of the open spaces team are present.

On the maps located at the entrances, the main council office number is visible allowing people to report issues. Staff out on site can be contacted via work mobile phones and can deal with any issues or emergencies as they arise.

The grounds staff are encouraged to talk to members of the public. They are all approachable and happy to talk to visitors, which is a valuable route to gain feedback about the site.

It has been recognised however, that the site does suffer from occasional acts of vandalism. These are frustrating to the staff who manage and maintain the site, and most importantly the public who use the site. Prompt action to repair or replace the damaged/stolen equipment is seen as the most effective method of tackling this issue.

A good relationship with the local PCSO allows a proactive approach to anti-social behaviors and when reported, the PCSOs are more than happy to increase patrols to deter any would be vandals.

Other management to help will include maintaining line of sight on the paths and entrances to allow people to see what is around them, and what to expect coming around the corner

3.4 Control of dogs and dog fouling

A number of dog bins are located on the hill and are well used by visitors. These bins are emptied twice weekly to ensure they don't overflow, and generally speaking, dog fouling isn't an issue in this location.

At present some dogs are let off the lead in the woods, which could pose a threat to some of the conservation targets that are trying to be achieved. The situation should continue to be monitored and potential sensitive areas should be dead-hedged to prevent disturbance. Monitoring the effect this has on wildlife and using a limit of acceptable change method will allow management to know when further action is required.

Healthy safe and secure improvement objectives	
3.1	Keep risk of harm from trees to a minimum
3.2	Maintain infrastructure to an acceptable standard
3.3	Explore potential facilities and activities to broaden the experience
3.4	Monitor the impact of dogs and dog walking
3.5	Maintain a sense of personal security

4.0 Well Maintained and Clean

For aesthetic, as well as health and safety reasons, issues of cleanliness and maintenance must be addressed, in particular; litter and other waste management issues must be adequately dealt with; grounds, buildings, equipment and other features must be well maintained; a policy should be in place regarding litter and vandalism, and maintenance should be in place, in practice, and regularly reviewed.

4.1 Litter and Waste Management

Herne Hill attracts a mix of different visitors. Issues such as maintenance, litter collection and bin emptying must therefore be carried out routinely and effectively. The site is served with 5 litter/dog bins.

These are emptied twice weekly or more often in peak periods. All maintenance staff are encouraged to hand pick litter when observed. The full site is litter picked on a weekly basis while emptying bins.

During the summer months, although against the byelaws and actively discouraged by the council and staff, members of the public barbeque and have fires in the wood. When reported or found in routine inspections, these are cleaned up immediately and the area checked from broken bottles.

All waste is stored in a bin shed located at the Wardens Buildings located on the recreation ground where it is collected weekly by Somerset Council's waste team.

4.2 Horticultural works

Weekly cuts of the pathways throughout the woodland due to the size ensures each path has been cut at least once a month. The grounds staff have a good presence on site and are able to respond to complaints of overgrown paths rapidly. Pathways are cut to 2m width where possible with shrubs and trees being kept clear with another 2m either side of this to prevent overhang and the risk of snags.

4.3 Arboriculture and woodland maintenance

As part of the Town Council's Tree Safety Management Plan, the woodland has been zoned accordingly and this can be found in Appendix C and dictates the minimum number of inspections that should be carried out annually for each zone.

A working list is then added to the works program and prioritized accordingly with advice being sought from an arborist when required. Periodically, the site will be inspected by an external qualified surveyor.

In addition to this, staff do a full sweep of the woodland paths after high winds to ensure that there are not any caught up hanging branches or fallen trees other any potential high-risk zones.

A survey in 2011 identified and mapped many of the species present on Herne Hill (Appendix D), the site has a large number of ash trees and ash dieback is evident. At present this is being monitored closely with the help of volunteers, however, this will likely have a significant impact on the feel and view of the Nature Reserve in the future. This is a key element that should be considered in the Interpretation Plan to start educating the public on the matter.

Dead wood standing is left where it is safe to do so and where appropriate trees felled, because of safety, are stacked and left as habitat piles.

Some timber is extracted for firewood and bean poles which are sold from the Warden's Buildings. There is definite potential to expand this offering as a suitable source of income in the future. A lot of the

timber is utilized for projects on site such as surfacing and stakes for hedge laying.

4.4 Building and infrastructure maintenance

Over a period of years, the majority of paths have degraded in condition. This is due to a number of reasons, including the clay soils, increased footfall and wetter conditions. The staff have been monitoring and targeting specific areas where the paths are in the worst condition, and this is an ongoing process. Paths should be surveyed annually to identify further improvements and monitor the success of works.

The site has a number of steps and handrails as well as gates and fence lines which are surveyed twice annually as part of the full site risk inspection. Identified works are added to the works programme and prioritised accordingly.

4.5 Equipment maintenance

The grounds staff keep an inventory of all machinery, equipment and tools kept on site. This is checked annually with any losses documented. A copy of the inventory is sent to the Town Council offices where it is signed off.

Many items are powered machines that require annual maintenance, and a machinery file can be found in the Wardens office. This lists the schedule of service as well as holding the daily check sheets which are carried out on any ride on or self-propelled bits of equipment.

The equipment used to maintain the site is maintained on a regular basis and used by trained and experienced staff. Risk assessments have been undertaken for operations and staff provided with appropriate safety equipment to use the equipment safely.

Well maintained and clean improvement objectives	
4.1	Seek to reduce littering and dog fouling
4.2	Maintain site infrastructure
4.3	Maintain good horticultural standards
4.4	Maintain good arboricultural standards
4.5	Maintain vehicles and machinery

5.0 Environmental Management

5.1 Managing Environmental Impact

Ilminster Town Council are committed to reducing their environmental impact and this is reflected in Ilminster Town Councils Strategic Plan where the Ilminster environment is one of three key strategic areas highlighted.

The town also declared a climate emergency on 21st January 2020 and also agreed to the One Planet Principles on the same date.

5.2 Pesticide Use

No pesticides have been used on the hill for many years and this should continue. The Town Council has agreed to reduce, and where possible, eliminate pesticide use though it should be noted that under certain circumstances, such as should Japanese Knotweed be identified, there may be no other alternative.

5.3 Peat Use

There is no peat usage on the site.

5.4 Waste Minimization and Recycling

Managing the woodland for conservation. Almost all waste is utilised, wood is stacked to form habitat piles, where appropriate, or used as makeshift benches.

The brash is used to help firm up boggy areas or it is woodchipped to form path surfacing. Occasionally the brash will be used to top up dead hedging.

Any green waste such as grass clippings are composted on site with the aim to use on other sites around the town in the future. Burning waste is kept to a minimum and only carried out when necessary and when an alternative use for the waste is not appropriate.

5.5 Climate Change Strategies

There are several strategies that could be considered to help fight and reduce the impacts of climate change. These include:

- Windthrow risk
- Wildfire risk
- Pest and disease risk
- Drought risk
- Frost risk
- Flooding and waterlogging risk

These strategies can help minimize the impact of our natural habitats and local communities and should be explored as soon as possible.

Environmental Improvement Objectives	
5.1	**Use local and recycled materials for new structures**
5.2	**Sustainable use of airings**
5.3	**Managing Environmental Impact**
5.4	**Explore Climate Change Strategies**

6.0 Biodiversity, landscape & heritage

6.1 Management of natural features, flora and fauna

The Town Council aims to maintain and increase the biodiversity of Herne Hill keeping its great natural features and encouraging the natural vegetation to develop in respect of ancient woodland character.

6.2 Natural Features

6.2.2 Boundaries

The site is surrounded by earth banks and ditches which has a historical value attached to it.

Bramble and bracken are to be cleared from the boundaries to encourage hedge growth. This should be carried out to about 2m from the boundary, and to any enclosing fences on the opposite side. Brushcutters and hand tools will be required for this, and it should be carried annually.

Dead hedging should be used in areas where access is required to be limited such as close to badger setts or other potentially sensitive areas. These should be topped up regularly using brash and arisings from other management operations, and dead hedges should be 1m by 1m to provide a useful habitat for wildlife.

The hedgerows around the site should be laid on rotation. This rotation is highlighted in Appendix E, and a traditional method should be used here. After being laid, the section should then be cut on a three year cycle to encourage growth for wildlife, sides close to paths should be cut annually or as required, and the height of cut increased by 0.1m with each three year cycle until its ready to lay again, and then it should then be left tall.

The above works should be carried out between the months of October and March to avoid the bird nesting season.

6.2.3 Veteran Trees

The site has several trees that fall into the ancient or veteran classifications. Over the next five years, five of these should be recruited and brought under management.

This will include hallowing as management. Hallowing involves the removal of young, competing trees from around the ancient trees, that without intervention, would overshadow and outcompete them. This may release ancient trees from competition and allow them to survive for longer.

It should be noted that sudden light exposure can cause stress and damage to these old trees, therefore it should be carried out over an extended period of time. Working out two metres from the trunk each year.

6.2.4 Hazel Band

The hazel band which runs through the woodland should be coppiced on a 14 year cycle to allow enough time for the hazel to produce nuts, a key food source for dormice and other animals.

This coppicing regime will prolong the life of the hazel, encouraging new growth from the stools and allowing light to hit the ground and field layer species to thrive.

Positively managing the coppice section will also encourage wildlife to inhabit the area as well as providing a sustainable source of timber for various tasks around the site.

The schedule of coppicing can be found in Appendix F.

6.3 Management of flora

6.3.1 Woodland glades and rides

Areas of path should be scalloped on rotation to provide useful habitat for insects and other invertebrates. The aim is to cut one scallop each year and then leave it to re-grow for a period of

between 8 years depending on the site and species present.

In an ideal program, a new scallop should be created each year on a continuous cycle. Cutting should take place between October and the end of February. The scallop should be about 50 metres wide and at the very least 15 metres deep at the scallop centre.

6.3.2 Rank grassland

The northern slopes of the nature reserve, known locally as Cleaves Close, should be managed as rank grassland as past surveys have identified a number of locally rare beetles.

The area should be cut to create a mosaic habitat which will help support inderborites throughout their life cycle. This should be carried out using brush cutters and the Ferris walk behind mower.

Scrub should be removed to prevent succession taking place and planting of trees should be avoided in this area, however the mature trees present provide a useful habitat for birds of prey.

6.3.3 Bracken

Bracken was originally a woodland species but has expanded its range as it is very invasive and grows vigorously and tends to outcompete other plants. Now it occurs in a wide range of habitats in the UK. It is becoming a noticeable threat to ground flora through its invasive nature.

Sections of bracken should be controlled to keep it from smoothing the understory, a technique called bracken bruising should be carried out. This will be required three times annually in June, July and August, using hazel beaters, and the bracken should be hit to snap the stem. This is a long term management process and can take up to ten years for the effects to take hold.

6.4 Management of Fauna

6.4.1 Squirrels

Damage from grey squirrels should be monitored, and if it is considered that the damage that the greys squirrels are posing to the trees in the area is significant, population management should be considered.

6.4.2 Badgers

Badgers and their setts are protected by law, so disturbance in areas of badger setts should be kept to a minimum where possible. Where badger setts are close to paths or areas accessible to the public, and it is thought there is a high risk of disturbance, dead hedges can be used to limit access to the area.

6.5 Heritage

The history of the site previously described in section 1.7 shows how the hill has been used throughout history in a variety of different ways which isn't immediately obvious to the users on the ground. This can be far better communicated with the user through interpretation which will be discussed later in the plan.

It is however recommended that the Town Council work closely with local history group to identify these features and the significance they may have.

6.1	**Manage Cleaves Close as rank grassland**
6.2	**Maintenance of boundaries and hedgerows**

6.3	**Continue to maintain and enhance the Coppice band**
6.4	**Create a system of scallops along the northern slopes**
6.5	**Manage and maintain veteran trees**
6.6	**Manage site fauna and flora**
6.7	**Investigate history of the site**
6.8	**Investigate links with local historical interest groups**
6.9	**Educate and inform visitors of historical significance of the site**

7.0 Community Involvement

7.1 Community involvement in management and development

Community involvement in the management of the park is key to providing a facility that people will use, respect, and enjoy.

Herne Hill is a unique opportunity for community involvement in the area, and this is borne through the enthusiasm of the community that use and enjoy the area.

Volunteer sessions in the park have been successful. The Council will continue to build relationships with our volunteers and Voluntary Sector organizations to ensure that the volunteer offer is strengthened. A key aspect of future volunteer management is to explore how we can recognize and celebrate their contributions.

The Council has recently established a Herne Hill Users Group (HUG), which will meet with staff and councillors regularly, giving residents the opportunity to raise issues around the management and maintenance and will be consulted on the future development plan within the nature reserve.

Though every effort was made to seek representation from a broad range of users with the HUG, it should be noted that it may not represent the needs of every part of the wider community, and therefore it is still necessary to find other ways to engage people.

7.2 Appropriate provision for the community

Herne Hill has a wide variety of users including,

- Children from the area attend school visits to the park, helping children to develop an understanding of nature outside of the classroom.
- Dog walkers use the site on a daily basis to exercise their dogs.
- Wildlife spotters – use the site to spot birds and other wildlife.
- Walkers – use the site for recreational purposes.
- Walkers for health – use the site to get healthy and improve fitness.
- Runners – use the site as part of their longer circuits.

Though at first glance the conflict between users isn't obvious, there can be occasions when the above intrude on others recreational activities. Encouraging users to use the site responsibly will reduce these conflicts.

There is a significant opportunity through interpretation and events that can enhance the experience for all users mentioned previously and even encourage new users to venture into the woods and learn about what we have to other events.

A visitor survey to help establish visitor needs and patterns would be extremely useful.

Community involvement improvements	
7.1	Continue to work with volunteer groups
7.2	Consult and receive feedback from the community
7.3	Explore participation in caring for the park
7.4	Explore the potential of a visitor survey/questionnaire

8.0 Marketing and Communication

8.1 Marketing and promotion

It is essential that we shout about what a great resource we have on our doorstep as it gives residents of Ilminster better opportunities to learn about and enjoy nature close to home. Creating a place where families can come to visit and enjoy informal outdoor recreation.

This on its own could help improve the local economy by keeping people in and around the town with secondary spending in shops and cafes.

We should be promoting the site as;

- A great value family day out with lots to see and do.
- A place to enjoy nature in a friendly safe environment right on your doorstep.
- A place to relax, learn and play in the woodland.

8.2 Appropriate information channels

We are strongly committed to developing Herne Hill as a place where people can volunteer, learn and acquire new skills. These principles will be shared and communicated in several ways. Although at present very effort is made to share good news stories there is still a lot of room where we can utilize national campaigns such as hedgerow week to really push what we are doing.

Social Media

Social media is a great way to communicate with the public, and we often have great feedback when highlighting projects we have been carrying out. There is still lots of room to utilize national days and events to highlight the great opportunities and activities that are being carried out in the nature reserve. Though social media is a great way to promote what's happening not everyone is online, therefore other methods of communicating should be upheld.

Press Releases

The Council currently seeks, whenever possible, press coverage for events and activities taking place in and around Ilminster, providing a connection to members of the community who may not be online.

Website

The Town Council website is somewhat dated and a little hard to follow. Updating the website is in the pipeline, and when this is done, key information such as access details and maps should be included for Herne Hill and the other sites managed by the council.

Signage

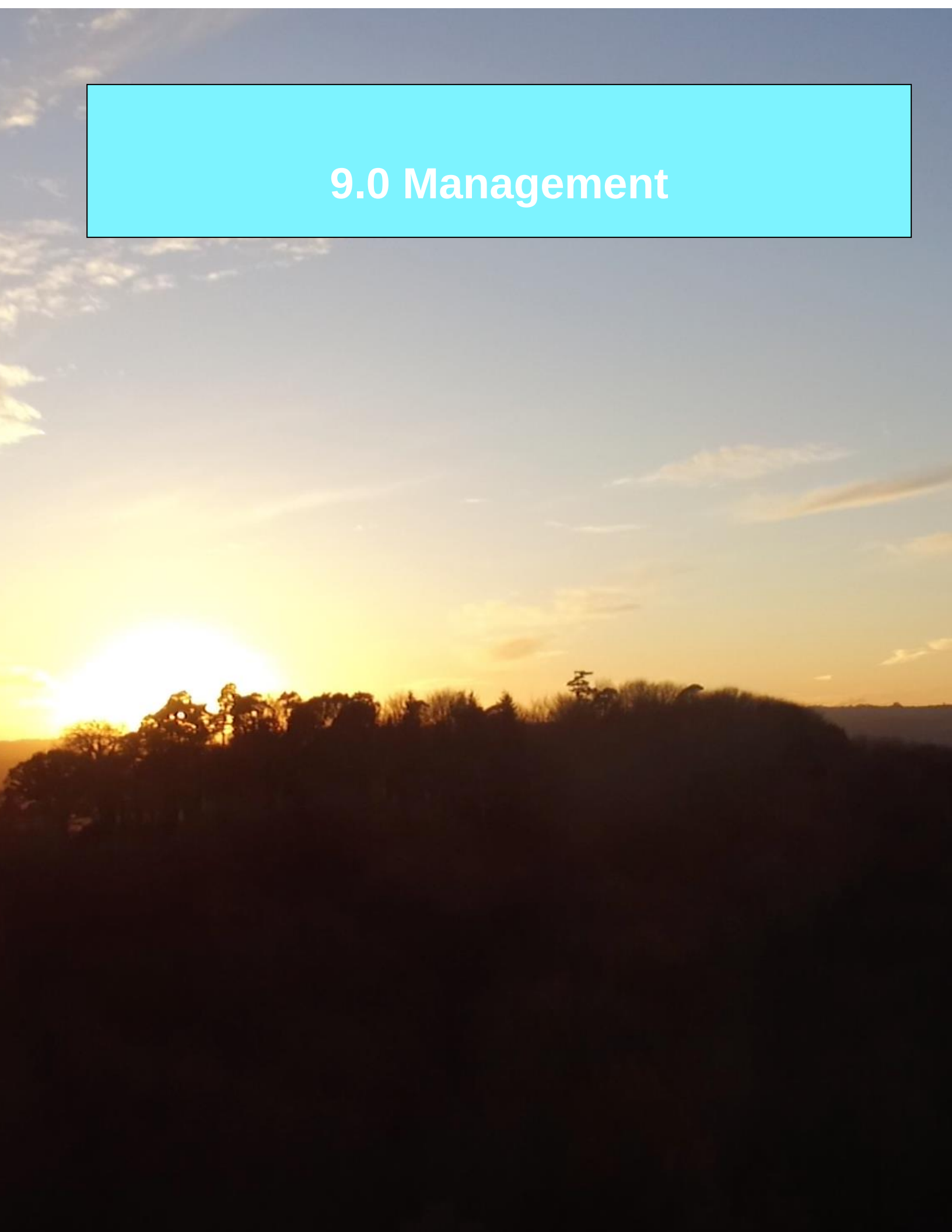
At present there is very little interpretative signage on Herne Hill. There are three orientation boards that highlight the three promoted routes and temporary signage has been created to help educate people on our coppicing rotation, though there is significant room for improvement here. Temporary signage should be erected when removing benches and where appropriate showcase the history and value of the site.

Staff

Staff provide a key point of contact for users of the site and are well equipped with the knowledge of what the Management Plan for the site is, and why we are doing it in this way. They are always happy to answer any questions and queries that the public may have.

Marketing and communication	
8.1	Provide visitors with relevant information
8.2	Consult and receive feedback from the community
8.3	Improve content on website

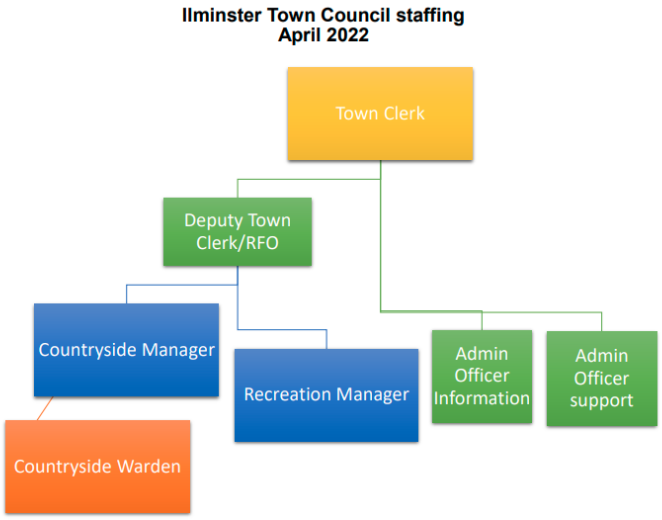
9.0 Management



9.1 Personnel and staff structure

The Open Spaces team is currently lead by the Countryside Manager who has overall management responsibilities for all maintenance of the site and issues that arise. The Countryside Manager works closely with the Recreation Manager to ensure the site complies with all Town Council policy and relevant legislation.

In terms of on-site maintenance, most of the work is undertaken by all three members of the open spaces team, carrying out the grass cutting, tree felling and general maintenance. Whilst this work is all scheduled, there is flexibility to meet the demands of the changing seasons and to ensure that the site looks at its best and is hitting conservation goals.



Ilminster Town Council has a forward thinking training and devolopment policy (Appendix G) and staff are encouraged to persue continual professional devolopment in their areas of responsibility.

9.2 Finance

The plan recognises the importance of forward financial management and the need to record how budgets are spent and where opportunities for raising revenue can be maximized. In terms of future funding sources, the Council's current

budget for the site is broken down below:

2023/24	
Budget	Amount
Herne Hill Improvements	£10,000
Green Flag Award	£2000
Herne Hill Maintenance	£750

The Herne Hill Improvement budget is a standalone one-off budget to allow us to make improvements required to access and for interpretation.

The Town Council has a budget setting workshop called Members Day in October to plan for the next financial year and beyond.

It's suggested that in this process, an annual budget for Herne Hill activities, including Green Flag projects, be in the region of £2000 annually for the foreseeable future but for a minimum period of the length of this Management Plan to ensure the site is maintained sustainably moving forward. A breakdown of year 1 and 2 expenditure is highlighted in Appendix H.

The plan must also recognize the challenging financial climate faced by local authorities and the threat of a reduced budget may restrict some of the actions within the action plan.

Moving forward the investigation of rural payments and other woodland related grants should be sought to help fund some of the projects suggested in the action plan.

9.3 Monitoring and plan review

The Management Plan will be continually reviewed, revised and re-written. The cycle for the Management Plan is to:

- Revise and adopt the Management Plan;
- Operate according to the aims and objectives held within the plan;
- Monitor the operation of the Management Plan;
- Review the working of the Management Plan; and
- Revise and improve the Management Plan where necessary.

The Management Plan covers a period of 5 years starting from insert date. Ilminster Town Council's Countryside Manager will carry out an annual review of the Management Plan to enable any improvements and alterations to be made as necessary, whilst continuously working towards the aims and objectives therein.

The annual application to the Keep Britain Tidy Green Flag Award will provide an annual monitoring tool and baseline annual assessment from which further improvements will be made.

Management improvements and objectives	
9.1	Ensure Management Plan is an effective working document
9.2	Ensure staff are well managed and receive training and development
9.3	Ensure the successful management of the LNR is recognized through the accreditation
9.4	Secure sustainable funding to carry out the plan for future years

10.0 Action Plan

	Project	*Priority*	*Partner*	*Year/Month*	*Cost*	*Done*
A Welcome Place Ensure that Herne Hill Local Nature Reserve is welcoming and accessible						
2.1	**Maintain signage and other entrance infrastructure**					
2.1.1	Ensure entrance signs and clean, presentable and in good condition	H		Monthly		
2.1.2	Clean/repair/Repaint entrance gates	H		Y1-5, M6		
2.2	**Maintain Pathways and access to an acceptable standard**					
2.2.1	Cut paths to a width of 2m	H		Y1-5 M4-9		
2.2.2	Keep 2 m width either side of pathways clear from scrub and saplings	H		Y1-5		
2.2.3	Routes that become difficult in winter should be signed and alternative routes signed posted			Y1-5 M10-2		
2.2.4	Areas which are known to be problematic in winter should be improved where possible	H	Volunteers	Y1-2		
2.2.5	Tree safety inspections to be carried out after high winds and annually on all main access routes	H	SSDC	Y1-5		
2.2.6	Steps, gates and other access furniture to be checked annually	H		Y1-5, M4, M10		
2.2.7	Keep paths clear from overhanging	H				
2.2.8	Review waymarking of site	H		Y1,M4		
2.2.9	Implement findings from way marking review	H		Y1 M4	338.10	
	25 x 100x100x2100 posts				338.10	
2.2.10	Explore the possibility of replacing kissing gates with a more suitable and accessible alternative	M		Y3	1200	
	3 x wooden disabled friendly kissing gate				1200	
2.2.11	Meet with disabled ramblers or similar group to discuss what we can do to improve accessibility	H		Y2 m3		
2.2.12	Carry out winter path survey					

2.3	**Review Entrance Signs**					
2.3.1	Review entrance signage	H	HUG	Y1, M4		
2.3.2	Purchase Signage and install (as per Review)	H		Y1,M8	4642.50	
	Entrance ladder boards x 5				2,278.50	
	Main entrance map and noticeboard				2,364.00	
Healthy Safe and Secure Work towards keeping risks as low as reasonably possible						
3.1	**Keep risk from of harm from trees to a minimum**					
3.1.1	Outsource an independent tree safety survey of all main walking routes and picnic areas annually and action any identified risks	H		Y4		
3.1.2	Respond to any reports of trees being damaged or down promptly	H		Y1-5		
3.1.3	Ensure the ITC Tree Safety Management Plan is implemented	H		Y1-5		
3.2	**Maintain infrastructure to an acceptable standard**					
3.2.1	Carry biannual safety checks of all infrastructure	H		Y1-5 M4, M10		
3.2.2	Carry out identified works	H		Y-1-5		
3.3	**Explore potential of improved facilities and activities**					
3.3.1	Replace missing benches with rustic replacements	H		Y 1 M7-8	180	
	3 x 300 x 25x 4800 boards				180	
3.3.2	Add additional benches at regular intervals to make green route more accessible	H		Y2	180	
	3 x 300 x 25x 4800 boards				180	
3.3.3	Create a scratch post trail highlighting some of the wildlife on Herne Hill	H		Y2	1200	
	OXFORD rubbing post 100x100x1500mm with a sloped top Zinc rubbing plaque				1200	

3.3.4	Explore the potential of creating regular events calendar of guided walks and activities	H		Y2		
3.3.5	Create a wildlife watch volunteer group to record sightings	H		Y2		
3.4	**Monitor impact of dogs and dog fouling**					
3.4.1	Create a list of limits of acceptable change to monitor the impact of dogs and dog fouling	H		Y2		
3.5	Create a sense of personal security					
3.5.1	Continue to maintain site lines (see section)	H		Y1-5		
3.5.2	Regularly patrol the site to show staff presence	H		Y1-5		
3.5.3	Continue to work with PCSO on vandalism and anti-social behavior	H		Y1-5		
Clean and well-maintained To maintain a good level of cleanliness and site maintenance						
4.1	**Seek to reduce littering and dog fouling**					
4.1.1	Continue to empty dog bins weekly (summer x 2 winter x 1)	H		Y1-5		
4.1.2	Litter pick site and known litter hot spots whilst emptying bins	H		Y1-5		
4.1.3	Use social media to highlight the negative impact of anti-social behavior and discourage fires and BBQs	H		Y1-5		
4.2	**Maintain site infrastructure**					
4.2.1	See section 1.1	H		Y1-5		
4.2.2	Strim and cut vegetation around infrastructure to keep them open and useable	H		Y1-5 M4-9		
4.2.3	Clean and treat infrastructure to prevent rot and rust	H		Y1-5		
4.2.4	Maintain visibility from key viewpoints					

4.3	**Maintain good horticultural standards**					
4.3.1	See section 1.2					
4.4	Maintain good arboricultural standards					
4.4.1	See section 2.1					
4.4.2	See Section 1.2					
4.4.3	Seek to explore funding for a Woodland Management Plan	H		Y2		
4.5	Maintain equipment and vehicles					
4.5.1	Continue daily/weekly checks on equipment before use	H		Y1-5		
4.5.2	Continue carrying out annual services on vehicles and equipment	H				
Sustainability Adopt environmental management principles to reduce the impact of management operations on the environment						
5.1	**Use local and recycled materials for new structures**					
5.1.1	Investigate opportunities on a case-by-case basis	H		Y1-5		
5.2	**Sustainable use of airings**					
5.2.1	Where appropriate wood will be stacked as habitat piles	H		Y1-5		
5.2.2	Brash will be used in dead hedging or as base layer for surfacing where appropriate	H		Y1-5		
5.2.3	Where required other brash will be wood chipped to use to help maintain surfacing of pathways	H		Y1-5		
5.2.4	Where appropriate larger bits of wood will be used for benches of other infrastructure projects	H		Y1-5		
5.2.5	Coppiced wood that has not been used for the above will be sold to residents	H		Y1-5		
5.2.6	Other soft airings will be composted and used around site where possible	H		Y1-5		

5.3	**Managing Environmental Impact**					
5.3.1	Products containing peat will not be used			Y1-5		
5.3.2	Stihl BioPlus chain oil will be used as a more environmentally friendly alternative to traditional lubricants			Y1-5		
5.3.3	Work operations will be carried out at the appropriate time of year to avoid disturbance to wildlife			Y1-5		
5.3.4	Consideration will be given to the least impactful management techniques to minimize disturbance			Y1-5		
5.4	**Climate change policy**					
5.4.1	Explore how policy can be introduced to reduce risk of fire, windthrow and other risks			Y2 M1-3		
Biodiversity Landscape and Heritage Continue to ensure that the woodlands vegetation continues to develop in the character of ancient woodland. Continue to manage areas on rank grassland for the benefit of invertebrates. Continue to develop and enhance the West Crescent wildflower meadow.						
6.1	**Manage Cleaves Close as rank grassland**					
6.1.1	Remove saplings and sucker growth from the area	H	Volunteers	Y1-5 M11-2		
6.1.2	Cut area in mosaic pattern as highlighted in Appendix A on a three-year rotation at a height of 30-50mm	H		Y1-5 M10		
6.1.3	Cut criss cross paths area to 30-50mm every year	H		Y1-5 M10		
6.1.4	Cut incline as highlighted in Appendix A on a three-year rotation at a height of 30 - 40mm	H		Y1-5 M10		
6.2	**Maintenance of boundaries and hedgerows**					

6.2.1	Remove bramble and bracken from boundaries to encourage new growth 2 metres in width where possible	H	Volunteers	Y1-5 M11-2		
6.2.2	Hedges should be cut on a three-year cycle as described and highlighted in Appendix B	H	Volunteers	Y1-5 M11-2		
6.2.3	Dead hedges should be topped up annually to 1m in height and 1 m in width to be utilized as corridors for wildlife	H	Volunteers	Y1-5 M11-2		
6.2.4	Hedges should be laid on a cycle as described in Appendix C	H	Volunteers	Y1-5 M11-2		
6.2.5	Undertake a hedgerow survey to identify condition and gaps in boundaries	H	Volunteers	Y1 M9		
6.2.6	Create a planting restoration regime with the findings from 5.2.5	H		Y1 M10		
6.3	**Continue to maintain and enhance the Coppice band**					
6.3.1	Continue to maintain the coppice band on a 14-year cycle as described in Appendix	H	Volunteers	Y1-5 M11-2		
6.4	**Manage sections along northern slopes as scallops**					
6.4.1	Cut and continue to maintain areas of scallops to promote a varied structure as described in Appendix	H		Y1 M10-12		
6.5	**Manage Veteran Trees**					
6.5.1	Identify and map locations of veteran trees	H		Y1 M10-12		
6.5.2	Recruit three veteran trees annually to start active management process	H		Y1 M10-12		
6.6	**Management of Fauna**					
6.6.1	Identify appropriate surveys to help guide management	H		Y1 M10-12		
6.7	**Identify notable history of the site**					

6.7.1	Review what is known about the history of the nature reserve and land it was formed on and adjacent to			Y1 M11		
6.8	**Investigate links with local historical interest groups**					
6.8.1	Liaise with Ilminster History Society	H	IHS	Y2		
6.9	**Educate and inform visitors of historical significance of the site**					
6.9.1	Using results from 6.1.1 explore on site interpretation to highlight these features where possible			Y2 M1		
6.9.2	Consider heritage and historical features in interpretation plan			Y2 M2		
Community involvement To recognize and encourage further community involvement in the conservation site through consultation, events and activities.						
7.1	Continue to work with volunteer groups					
7.1.1	Continue to provide monthly volunteer tasks	H		Y1		
7.1.2	Explore providing more regular opportunities to volunteer	H		Y2		
7.1.3	Find an appropriate way of recognizing and thanking volunteers	H		Y1-5		
7.2	Consult and seek feedback from the community					
7.2.1	Consult with interest groups such as Green Ilminster on relevant projects	H				
7.2.2	Create a Herne Hill Users' Group to meet quarterly to receive feedback and	H		Y 1		
7.2.3	Consult visitors about developments and major improvement projects	H				
7.3	Encourage participation in caring for the park					
7.3.1	Explore working with local groups as business for corporate volunteering	H		Y2-5		
7.3.2	Explore providing work placements for schools	H		Y3-5		
7.3.3	Hold seasonal guided walks to help interpret our work	H		Y2-5 M4-9		

7.4	Explore the potential of a visitor survey/questionnaire					
7.4.1	Explore which style of survey is most appropriate	H		Y1 M7		
7.4.2	Explore the most suitable methodology	H		Y1 M7		
7.4.3	Carry out survey	H		Y1 M9		
Marketing and communication To actively promote the LNR to all potential users						
8.1	Provide visitors with relevant information					
8.1.1	Review quality of current leaflets	H		Y1 M8		
8.1.2	Commission map of Herne Hill	h		Y1 M8	150	
8.1.3	Re-design leaflet	H		Y1.M8		
8.1.4	Explore potential of themed trails for adults	H		Y2		
8.2	Improve content on website					
8.2.1	Review what content is currently available online	H		Y2		
8.2.2	As result of the review put together key information to update website	H		Y2		
8.3	Continue to use Facebook					
8.3.1	Continue to use Facebook to update and inform people of activities that are occurring in the LNR	H		Y1-5		
8.3.2	Encourage users to share their photos online with the #myilminster	H		Y1-5		
8.3.3	Explore creating a photo moment somewhere in the woods	H		Y2		
8.3.4	Write a Quarterly newsletter for the nature reserve	H		Y1 M9		
Management To provide a responsive, flexible and high quality management service.						
9.1	Ensure Management Plan is an effective working document					

9.1.1	Prepare an annual action plan reviewing previous ones	H		Y1-5 M12		
9.1.2	Ensure the plan is available for consultation with community groups	H		Y1-5		
9.2	Ensure staff are well managed and receive training and development					
9.2.1	Hold monthly team meetings	H		Y1-5		
9.2.2	Carry out regular one to one appraisal with staff	h		Y1-5		
9.2.3	Identify and meet training needs, keep records	H		Y1-5		
9.2.4	Induction for new staff and volunteers	H		Y-1-5		
9.3	Ensure the successful management of the LNR is recognized through the accreditation					
9.3.1	Apply for the Green Flag award	H		Y2 M2		
9.3.2	Continue to apply for the Green Flag award annually	H		Y2-5		
9.4	Secure sustainable funding to carry out the plan for future years					
9.4.1	Request that the Town Council earmark a Herne Hill budget for at least the length of this Management Plan	H		Y1 M10		
9.4.1	Explore potential grant funding to help supplement cost of works and woodland management	H		Y1 M12		

11.0 APPENDICES

Appendix A – History of Herne Hill

Following the ice-age, ffees returned to Britain during a period between 12,000 to 4500 BC (Rackham, 1990). Natural forest developed which are today known as wildwoods. These covered the whole of Somerset except for the wettest parts of the Somerset Levels. The wildwood that would have covered Heme Hill would have been predominately oak, hazel with ash and lime. The lime did eventually die out (Rackham, 1990).

During the agriculture era, around 4500 BC, it is-likely that Neolithic man would have commenced clearance on the slopes of the valleys to develop fields and pastures. By the Iron age,.650 BC to 60 AD, permanent settlement would have penetrated the Ilminster area and the size of the woodland would have shrank as demand for resources increased.

By Roman times, it is likely that the woodland would have been organised and managed to yield a continuous supply of wood and timber. Excavations on the Somerset Levels have revealed that man had been managing and coppicing woodlands for several thousand years before the Romans arrived (Renfrew, 1986). It is impossible to say what the management on Herne Hill would have been; woodland, wood pasture or whether the slopes of the Hill had been cleared to give permanent pastures or even arable land.

It could also be argued that the Hill would conform to the requirements of a hillfort site. These are normally located on a hilltop where approach is difficult from at least one direction. This is provided by the northern scarp. In many cases hillforts can be approached across more level and gently sloping ground, where they are placed on ridges; again, the Hill conforms to a hillfort site. In addition, a large marsh area existed to the south-western side of the Hill which would have made access difficult.

Man's activities in the period of pre-history have long been obscured by later changes made to the Hill, particularly in the eighteenth century. There remain remnant embankments on the northern slopes that are difficult to explain. There has been no systematic archaeological field survey that would support the use of the Hill as a hillfort. The only reported significant find was in 1886 when "a black flint with secondary workings was found with twenty two other specimens, mostly scrapers in a field near the foot of Herne Hill" (Somerset Sites and Monument Records Extracts, p. 1). These artifacts were perhaps left by a party of hunter/gatherers of the Mesolithic period. From the Roman period there is a coin of Claudius Gothicus that was ploughed up by a fanner (Sfieet, 1904).

It is now considered that after the departure of the Romans the management of the land would have continued much as before (Rackham, 1986). During the Saxon period the first wHtten source of evidence comes, albeit from a forged charter dated 725 AD, in which the west Saxon king, Ine, granted lands to the Abbey of Muchelney (Bates, 1899). Although the charter is a forgery the contents are widely considered to be creditable (Bates, 1899). Attached to the document are the details of a perambulation

indicating the ancient boundary for the parish of Ilminster. The perambulation lists a number of landmarks to the west of Donyatt and Ilminster: proceeding from Chelkwillies (the spring at the Chink the chalk well) westwards to the whiteway and as far as the stikelpape (now to the hamlet of Sticklepath) returning by what is now Crockstreet to Dunnezete (Dunn's Gate or Gap), now Donyatt to Dunnepool (Dunpole) and to Dungraf (Dunna's Grove) and onwards to the Chalkwell (Map 1). The parish was therefore outside the woodland on Herne Hill (Bates, 1899).

If the above landmarks are followed a grove of trees existed on the southern slopes of the Hill. In the Anglo-Saxon language it is considered the word 'graf' means a small grove of trees or wood (Rackham, 1986). The name Dunnegrave occurs again in an entry the Cartulary for the Abbey of Mulchelney in the year 1286. During this era, William of Montecute, the Lord of the Manor of Donyatt was paying rent to the Abbot (Bates, 1899).

With the arrival of the Non-nans the lands of the Manor of Donyatt were given to the count of Mortain (Colinson, 1791). The entitlement of the Abbey of Mulchelney to the Parish of Ilminster had been confirmed in the Charter of 995 AD (Bates, 1899).

A Deer Park for Donyatt was recorded in the 1086 AD Domesday book (Victoria County History, Somerset, 1911, vol. Il, p. 547). In the 13th century it is considered that the deer park occupied the northern slopes of the Hill. At the beginning of the 14th century William of Montecute extended the deer park to perhaps occupy 400 acres.

The deer in the park would be fallow (Dama dama). These were more manageable than the native red deer which are found on Exmoor (Rackham, 1989). The existence of the deer park is confirmed in a survey for the Earl of Pembroke in 1567 (Straton, 1909) suggesting that the whole of the Hill was within the deer park. It was perhaps dis-parked towards the turn of the sixteenth century, if not cefiainly in the first decade of the seventeenth century (Somerset Records Office, DD/CM, 199).

The manor of Donyatt was in the hands of the Montecute, Earls of Salisbury, and their heirs until 1547 when it was passed to the Duke of Somerset (Dunning, 1988). In 1553 it came into the hands of the Earl of Pembroke until 1613 when Sir Edward Coke had it until 1755. The lands to the south of the Hill remained under the control of the Abbott of Mulchelney until the dissolution in 1539 (Dunning, 1988). Apart from Dunna's Grove no woodland appeared to have existed after the 13th century.

The survey carried out for the Earl of Pembroke in 1567 included the existence and size of the deer park and field sizes. Fields on average were no more than four acres (Straton, 1909). There is a record of deer having been hunted in the park in the 14th century. The survey for the Earl in 1567 also revealed only one wood, Stybeare, was present for the manor and palish. Therefore it is likely that the park, including Herne Hill, was managed as wood pasture with some coppicing over a period of some 500 years.

In 1755 the Manor of Donyatt and other land in the area was acquired by Richard Combe of Earnshill (Sömerset Records Office, DD/CM, 199). He eventually demolished the ancient manor house at Donyatt

(Somerset County Herald, 16 January 1926). The fields belonging to the present Cold Harbour Farm and Park Farm were rented out, including the northern slopes of Herne Hill. In 1757 Combe acquired Dunpole (Dumpole) farm and the fields immediately to the south of the present Fir Pound (Somerset Records Office, DD/CM, 199). An estate map covering the whole area shows no details of how the land and fields were leased or managed at the time.

Richard Combe was responsible for creating the crown of pines on the top of the Hill around 1757. Combe went to considerable trouble to create the Fir Pound; the ancient parish boundary bank that crossed the head of the Hill was levelled; the hedges that abutted it from the south were gubbed out and the land was flattened to form the southern plateau.

The elliptical shape of Fir Pound was contained within a dwarf wall and a hedge was included in the northern part of the plantation. A new hedge was planted to the south. In 1791 the historian Colinson describes the created landmark as "a circular eminence called Heron Hill, on top of which is a pine plantation of firs intermixed with a few beeches and covering an area which contains near two acres". Colinson continues by stating that, "the plantation made by the late Richard Combe Esq. of Earnshill is in a thriving state"(Colinson, 1791). The original plantation planted somedme after 1757 would have matured. The Scot's pines remaining on the crown of the Hill are what remains of a second planting of approximately 140 years ago (pers. obs. from ring counts taken from trees fallen down during the 1987 storm).

The Combe papers at the Somerset Records Office are very fragmented but they show that there was a management plan for timber. The records show the planting of oak, ash, and elm in the hedgerows. In addition, the records show periodic sales in the early part of the 19th century of oak, ash and elm including pollarded oak and elm. Unfortunately, there is no record of any planting on Herne Hill, especially the Fir Pound.

An estate map of 1755 1791 Sh-oWs the existence of fields to the-north of the present enclosed area of the Hill and incorporated in the present boundary by 1838. It appears as though Combe also removed some hedgelines immediately below the crown of the Hill in order to give the plantation a more visual impact. It can be assumed that the Fir Pound was somewhat of a status symbol as landowners in this period were renowned for this type of creation (pers. comm. with English Nature). Other hedges were grubbed, and parcels of land were gradually incorporated into Herne Hill (Map 2).

The ordnance survey of 1886 does not conform to conventional land identification for woodland and pasture. It indicates that rough ground is contained in symmetrical sections with rides or small avenues between. Based on the anecdote of an old estate worker some years ago the northern slopes of the Hill, although leased as pasture in 1838, came back directly to the Combe family and were used as a 'shoot' with about 200 rabbits being shot in a day (Chard and Ilminster). It is likely that after the Ground Game Act of 1880, the estate took back the northern slopes of the Hill and created a game warren. Although rabbits became a pest to farmers in the 19th century, it was not until the Ground Game Act became law

that tenant farmers won the right to kill rabbits on their holdings. This was previously the right of the landlord and "every well organised sporting estate should comprise a warren of rabbits"(Carnegie, 1884).

A photograph of the Hill taken during the early years of this century, c. 1902, show clearly the management of land as indicated for shooting purposes (Plate l). The invasion of bracken (Pteridium aquilinum) is well advanced and there are no trees on the northern slopes. The photograph, viewing the northern slope, also shows the hedgerows are laid and managed. The only trees of any size, apart from those in the Fir Pound area, occur along the northern and eastern hedgelines as well as in the south eastern hedge.

The Combe estates and most of the farms in Donyatt and those to the south of the Hill were sold in 1918. They were acquired by the Somerset County Council, under the Land Settlement Facilities Act (1918), for the settlement of ex-servicemen. The land encompassing Herne Hill does not seem to have been included in the sale to the County Council. The Hill was conveyed to the town in 1931 as a gift from Major Sir George Davies and Walter Trivett to be permanently maintained as a public natural park and open space (Conveyance to Ilminster Urban District Council, 7 January 1931). A sum of $200 was paid for its acquisition.

The land conveyed identified that Heme Hill was mostly in the parish of Donyatt which it probably had been for some 1200 years. The present boundary, drawn some 10 years ago, brought the whole of Heme Hill to within the parish boundary. The conveyance using Tithe number identifies four parcels of land incorporating 24.383 acres of land (Map 3):

No. 375 - all sectors of land north of the Fir Pound (section A).
No. 377 - that part of the fir Pound in Donyatt Parish (section B).
No. 376 - parts of Herne Hill and a field to the west known as Bellows Nose (section C and D).
No. 690 - part of the Fir Pound in the Ilminster Parish (section E).

During the inter war period there is anecdotal evidence that the Hill was grazed by sheep (Chard and Ilminster). When the Hill was given to the management of the Ilminster Urban District Council in 1931 the main flora growth appeared to consist of ash and hazel. The hedgelines appears to have been managed. Hazel (Corylus avellana), ash (Fraxinus excelsior) and field maple (Acer campstre) stools indicating coppicing occurred. Additional land, known as Bellows Nose, was incorporated into the Hill at the time of acquisition. This area was planted with a mono-culture hedge consisting of hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna) (Map 2).

An aerial photograph of 1948 shows the hillside with mature trees in the northern hedgelines. The majority of the Hill is covered with scrub apan from an area to the north west which remains rough pasture or early stages of succession. This apparently was the last area to be grazed as pasture.

Nature took its course in the post-1945 period with growth from coppiced hazel and ash. The Fir Pound which was densely planted provided a tight canopy over the area until other 1960's and substantial losses

occurred during the gales of 1987. Some planting had taken place on the crown of the Hill in the latter part of the 1960's when the Ilminster Urban District Council planted out beech (Fagus sylvatica) and hornbeam (Carpinus betulus). Chestnut (Castanea sativa) trees appear to have gained in numbers within the last 40 years. Sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus) was probably introduced when the rabbit warren was created. Other groups of trees were planted from time to time including American red oak (Quercus rubra), poplars (Populus spp,) and an odd specimen of walnut (Juglans regia) and plane (Platanus sp.). There are also two groups of trees at the approach to the crown of the Hill on the eastern side, whitebeam (Sorbus aria) and a group of a species of Lleyandi (leyland cypress). The school plantation was created by pupils from Swanmead School between 1988 and 1989. Species planted include guelder rose (Viburnum opulus), spindle (Euonymus europaeus), field maple (Acer campstre), wayfaring tree (Viburnum lantana), wild service (Sorbus torminalis) and hazel.

Ancient woods are those occupying sites which have been wooded continuously for several hundred years at least since the time when the first reliable maps were made. In England and Wales ancient woods are known to have been present by around 1600 AD. In addition, 1600 AD is considered a convenient starting point since tree planting in woods was relatively unusual while afterwards it became increasing popular.

An ancient woodland may be over 400 years old although many of the trees are not that old. An ancient woodland refers to an area where woodland has been present on the site continuously without intervening periods under other land uses. The presence of certain plants growing on the Hill, known as indicator species for ancient woodland, were used as the determinant and the basis for reforestation. These plants include town hall clock (Adoxa moschatellina), pignut (Conopodium majus), bluebell (Hyacinthoides non-scripta), dog's mercury (Mercurialis perennis), primrose (Primula vulgaris) and figwort (Scrophularia nodosa). The majority of these plants are now considered to have a mild affinity for ancient woodlands (Peterken, 1993). However, they do occur sparingly in other woods. From the hist01ical data collected it appears as though Herne Hill has undergone considerable changes over the centuries. Trees have been cut down and regrown and during the last few centuries certain exotic species have been introduced.

Appendix B - Memorial Bench Policy and Approved Design

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Memorial Bench policy

June 2022

To be reviewed by June 2024

Introduction

The intention of this policy is to provide guidelines for the siting of Memorial benches on land that Ilminster Town Council (ITC) is responsible for. This will include the ability to put plaques on existing benches should there be availability and also to allow the siting of suitable benches where none currently are sited but which may be considered suitable.

The Town Council will consider requests for benches to be installed in memory of a deceased friend or relative. The deceased must have lived in Ilminster or its immediate surrounds immediately prior to their death or had a significant association with the parish in the past.

Memorial bench and/or plaque

When a request is made for a memorial bench, each request will be treated on its own merits and may involve one of the three options detailed below depending on the individual circumstances available. These options are;

The installation of a brand-new bench with plaque

The replacement of the top slat of an existing bench so that a memorial plaque can be inserted flush with the back rest. (Some benches are not suitable for a plaque to be fixed to the existing top slat)

The fixing of a plaque to an existing wooden bench

ITC will be mindful of the location and the quantity of benches and therefore a specific requested location may not always be possible, in which case an alternative location may be suggested. Any bench that is newly located will take into account the type of benches that are already in use in that area and will be sympathetic to those already in place.

A number of the benches that have been purchased by ITC are of an environmentally friendly type and as such will be relatively maintenance free and suitable for the top slat to be replaced with one that allows a memorial plaque to be inserted.

Memorial plaque on a bench will be of an agreed size that will fit within in the middle of the upper slat of the backrest. The plaque will be put into place by ITC. The plaque may be required to be of a type that is suitable for inserting into a recess in the slat of exiting benches. This will be confirmed once an application has been agreed and a bench identified.

Wording on the plaque will be subject to approval by the Town Council and should in no way cause offence to users of the bench.

ITC, and only ITC, will be responsible for placing the orders for benches and engraved plaques and for arranging the installation. Where applicants request for only a plaque to be installed the town council will consider the applicant sourcing their own plaque providing it is suitable for the location agreed.

Additional mementoes (e.g., statues, flowers, wreaths, vases) must not be placed or planted on or around the bench at any time.

Costs

The total cost of the bench, replacement slat or the plaque should be paid once the application has been approved and the cost of the required items have been obtained and submitted to the applicant. Once payment has been received an order will be placed by the Town Council and the applicant will be given an approximate date for completion of the request.

Memorial Bench Cost – Total Cost for a memorial bench will include:

The cost of the bench

The cost of the plaque including engraving

The cost of installation, including any base and fixing

A 10% contribution equal to the cost of the bench towards future maintenance of the bench and base.

Memorial Bench Slat and plaque cost for existing bench

The cost of a replacement Slat

The cost of the plaque including engraving

A 10% contribution equal to the cost of the slat towards installation and the future maintenance of the bench

Plaque only

Cost for the plaque and engraving.

Nominal one off charge of £20 towards installation and maintenance of the bench.

Ownership

To ensure that all benches are kept in good order and in keeping with the surrounding area, ITC will take ownership of the benches on installation and take responsibility for on-going maintenance. The Council will endeavour to maximise the life of the bench but once a bench gets beyond the point where it is reasonable to repair, the Council will make a reasonable effort to contact the applicant or members of the deceased family and inform them that it is the council's intention to remove it and give them the opportunity to replace it at their cost.

Application process

Upon receipt of an initial enquiry applicants will be asked to complete the “Memorial Bench Application Form”. This should only be submitted after the death of an individual(s) for whom the bench is to be purchased in memory of. The form can be obtained from the town council offices and is appended to this policy.

To be reviewed – April 2024

Application – Request for a Memorial Bench

Applicant’s details

Full Name:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Telephone: (landline and mobile)	
Email:	
Relationship to the person for whom the bench is being provided to remember:	
Please ensure that you notify the Town Council of any change in contact details so that we can contact you if necessary.	

Details of the Memorial Bench

Dedicated to:	
Association with Ilminster	
Preferred location	
Request for	The installation of a brand-new bench with plaque The replacement of the top slat of an existing bench so that a memorial plaque can be inserted flush with the back rest. (Some benches are not suitable for a plaque to be fixed to the existing top slat) The fixing of a plaque to an existing wooden bench

Declaration by the applicant. I declare that I have read and understood Ilminster Town Council's Memorial Bench Policy.

Signed: ..... Date:

Approved style for Nature reserve

Appendix C – Tree Risk Management Plan

Tree Risk Management Plan

For Council Owned Trees

Version: Draft

1.0 introduction

There is an increased awareness in the potential risks associated with tree failure by members of the public. This is as a result of increasing media attention on incidents of tree failure, especially those resulting in death or injury and recent court cases. With increasing attention given to personal and organisational responsibility, legal proceedings have become more commonplace and there have been a

number of high-profile cases brought by the Health and Safety Executive under the Health and Safety at Work Act.

Whilst there is an increased level of interest, it is important to keep this in context – it is estimated that nationally on average there are around 6 deaths per year caused by trees failing; this is in comparison to around 3,285 deaths per year as the result of road traffic accidents. It is estimated that the risk per person of being injured by a tree failing is one in 20 million.

The risk, per tree, of failure causing a fatality is of the order of one in 150 million for all trees and one in

10 million for those trees in or adjacent to areas of high public use. Organisations such as Local Authorities must ensure public safety, whilst at the same time maintaining a natural and environmentally diverse landscape. It is only reasonable that organisations and landowners manage their trees so that their land is relatively safe for people to visit who can reasonably expect not to be harmed.

This document aims to highlight how Ilminster Town Council will approach tree safety across its site.

(Image 1: Sudden limb drop of oak tree on the Rec 2020)

2.0 Approach to Risk Management

2.1 The councils legal Duties and liabilities

Ilminster Town Council, in common with other landowners, has a legal 'duty of care' to ensure that users and neighbors of its land are reasonably safe. The council must also ensure that risks to its employees and contractors are reduced as far as is 'reasonably practicable'.

Trees are constantly changing as they grow and vary with the seasons. They can also reach considerable size and can become damaged by the elements or affected by pests and diseases that can weaken them. Trees can fall over or lose branches meaning they have the potential to cause harm where they grow in areas of public access or within falling distance of structures or highways (within this document, the people and property that might be injured or damaged by trees or branches are referred to using the standard arboricultural term 'targets'). We must balance this risk with the aesthetic, ecological, environmental, and social benefits that trees bring. “Reasonableness” is a key legal concept when considering the risks of trees to the public and tree owners’ obligations.

The council’s fundamental responsibility, in taking reasonable care as a reasonable and prudent landowner, is to consider the risks posed by its trees. The level of knowledge and the standard of inspection that must be applied to the inspection of trees are of critical importance, but the courts have not defined the standard of inspection precisely. Generally, the courts appear to indicate that the standard of inspection is proportional to the size of and resources available (in terms of expertise) to the landowner. It is of note that the HSE states that: “for trees in a frequently visited zone, a system for periodic, proactive checks is appropriate”. Where harm occurs, liability is a matter for the courts to determine.

The question is whether the council has discharged its duty of care, which will be largely dependent upon whether the council has taken a reasonable and proportionate approach to the management of tree safety.

2.2 Quantifying Risk

This plan adopts a methodology to assess and mitigate the risk of harm from trees primarily through a process of cyclical inspections. A purely reactive approach to risk management is vulnerable as being difficult to defend in the event of an incident. To address this flaw Ilminster Town Council has adopted a position for managing tree failure risk by which the condition of individual trees is not seen to be the primary consideration.

The Council’s approach is to firstly consider the extent of usage of the land on which the trees stand, and then to use that information to inform the process of tree assessment. This approach will give a robustly underpinned methodology to an area of litigious uncertainty. It will also provide a basis by which the council can demonstrate that it has done what is 'reasonably practicable' to reduce the risk of harm resulting from its trees.

This methodology evaluates risk in terms of: Target The potential targets, both people and property, situated underneath or within falling distance of trees are assessed and quantified. This assessment places individuals, or groups, of trees into ‘zones’ which are characterized by usage (See Section 3 below). Impact Potential Where necessary, the size of the tree or branch is then considered in terms of impact potential. Probability of Failure An assessment is then made of the likelihood that the tree or branch will fail, based on the observations, technical knowledge, and experience of the inspecting person. Values derived from the assessment of these three components (target, impact potential and probability of failure) are combined to assess the probability of significant harm occurring. This process provides:

A clear structure within which to assess tree safety.

A framework within which trees can be assessed at all levels of detail, from an overview of the municipality to the detailed appraisal of a single tree.

A comparative risk assessment of trees

A basis for the application of a threshold of acceptable risk.

The system moves the management of tree safety away from labelling trees as either ‘safe’ or ‘unsafe’ and thereby away from requiring definitive judgments of the council's tree officers or their advisors. Instead, the method allows for the assessment of the risk of significant harm from tree failure in a way that enables the council to balance safety against limits of reasonable or acceptable risk.

2.3 National Guidance

This Plan implements the National Tree Safety Group guidance ‘Common Sense Risk Management of Trees’. The National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) was convened in August 2007 to develop a nationally-recognised approach to tree safety management and to provide guidance that is proportionate to the actual risks from trees.

The NTSG’s overall approach is that the evaluation of what is reasonable should be based on a balance between benefits and risks from trees. This position is underpinned by a set of five key principles:

Trees provide a wide variety of benefits to society.

Trees are living organisms that naturally lose branches or fall.

The overall risk to human safety is extremely low.

Tree owners have a legal duty of care.

Tree owners should take a balanced and proportionate approach to tree safety management.

The NTSG’s guidance states that tree owners should take a balanced and proportionate approach to tree management that forms the basis of a tree safety strategy which covers three essential aspects:

Zoning: appreciating tree stock in relation to people or property

Tree inspection: assessing obvious tree defects.

Managing risk at an acceptable level: identifying, prioritizing, and undertaking safety work The NTSG’s guidance requires that areas of land are defined according to levels of use, prioritizing the most used areas. High use zones are areas used by many people every day, such as busy roads, other well-used routes, car parks and children’s playgrounds, or where property may be affected. Trees in areas of high public use require an inspection regime. Trees in areas with low public use require less frequent inspection. The risk of death or serious injury from trees in infrequently used areas is so low that it is reasonable that these should receive no formal inspection or visual check. However, owners may need to respond to any reports of problems. If reasonably carried out, the strategy should meet the duty of

care required by law. In the event of an accident, documentation will provide supporting evidence that reasonable care has been taken. according to the level of risk.

2.4 Managing risk at an acceptable level

This Plan manages the annual risk of death or significant harm from trees within the Health & Safety Executive's 'Tolerability of Risk Framework', by assessing risk and recommending control measures that reduce that risk as low as reasonably practicable, and below the 1 in 10,000 thresholds of Tolerable Risk.

People are constantly exposed to, and accept or reject, risks of varying degrees. For example, if society desires the convenience of electric lighting, it must accept that, having implemented control measures such as insulation, there remains a low risk of electrocution; this is an everyday risk taken and accepted by millions of people.

The Health and Safety Executive advises that each year between 5 and 6 people in the UK are killed when trees fall on them. The HSE concludes that the risk of being struck and killed by a falling tree is extremely low. Around people each year are killed by trees in public spaces. Measured against the entire UK population, the average risk of death is about one in 20 million. The risk of the average tree causing fatality is about one in 150 million for all trees in Britain.

3. inspection zones

3.1 Zone analysis

The focus on land use directs the council to deal firstly with trees in busier areas and according to the value of whom or what might be harmed or damaged. This initial 'target' analysis is achieved by placing sites within common categories of target value and occupation. The rationale for this order of assessments is therefore primarily around dealing with the most frequented areas where the potential for harm is greatest.

Such 'zoning' of people and property is the first step recommended in the evolving national guidance. The categories of usage adopted by Ilminster Town Council in this zoning process are as follows:

3.1.1 Very high

This zoning category relates to areas where trees are adjacent to formal playgrounds in parks, or where large numbers of individuals are likely to congregate, such as the events on the Rec, cricket games or football games. These areas are seen to present the most risk, and therefore tree inspection within them should be undertaken twice Annually a year.

3.1.2 High

This zoning category relates to high usage areas such as public open spaces, formal footpaths through woodland and trees adjacent to public highways. These areas are seen to have a high-risk potential, and therefore tree inspection within them should be undertaken once every year.

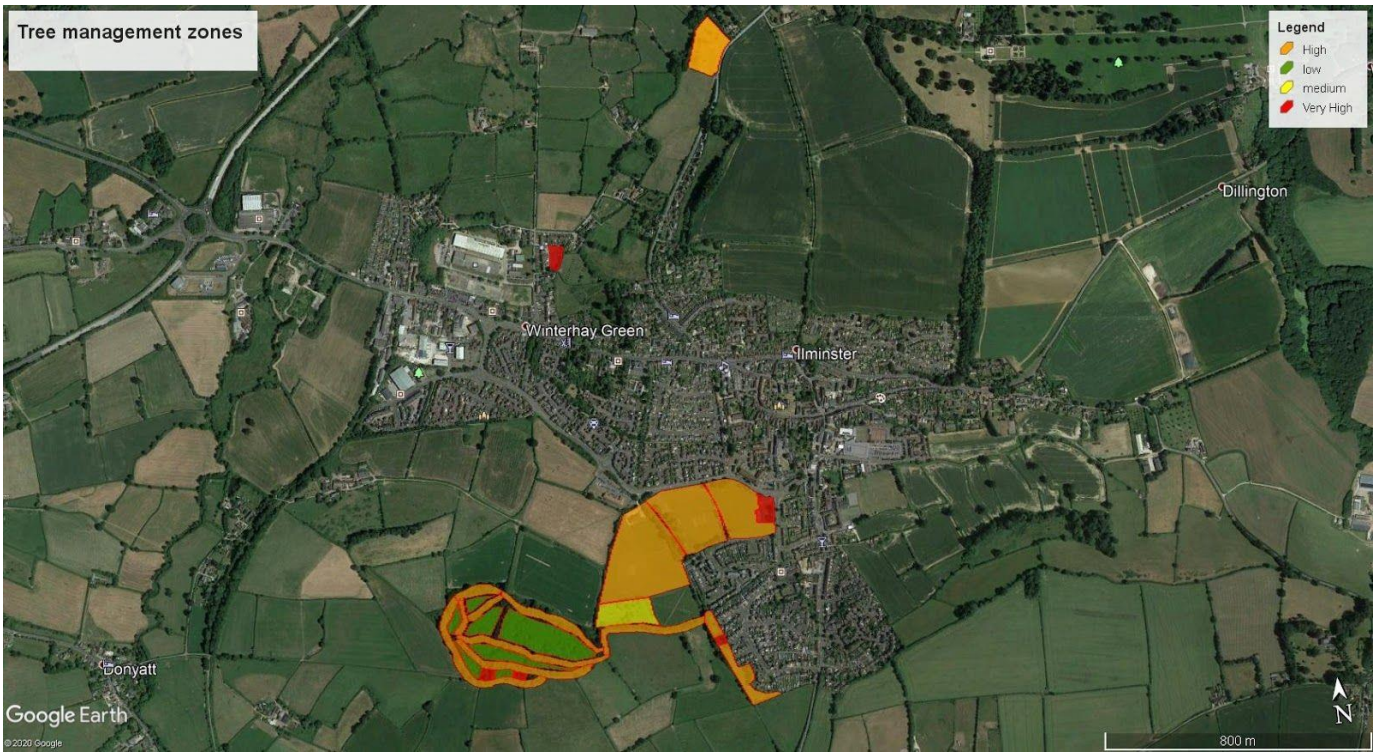
3.1.3 Medium

This zoning category relates to areas of medium usage such as remote or inaccessible areas of public open space, or the interior of woodlands not accessed by footpaths. These areas are seen to have a relatively low risk potential, and therefore tree inspection within them should be undertaken every three years.

3.1.4 Low

This zoning category relates to areas of low usage or areas where trees are not located at the present time. These areas are seen to have an extremely low risk potential and therefore are subject to the least frequent inspection regime of every five years.

3.2 Ilminster zone map



4.0 Inspection regime

4.1 Inspection and risk assessment

The Health and Safety Executive states that: “Given the large number of trees in public spaces across the country, control measures that involve inspecting and recording every tree would appear to be grossly disproportionate to the risk.

Instead, the council’s Groundsman and/or other suitably qualified individuals will carry out risk assessment and inspection of the council's tree population using the methods described below.

Groundsman carrying out inspections will have a Basic Tree survey and inspection certificate as a minimum).

They will also have relevant professional work experience, and take part in Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Where additional expertise is needed to inform an especially complex or contentious tree management decision, this must be sought from an external, suitably qualified arboricultural consultant. The groundsman will have responsibility for monitoring the need for external expertise, on a case-by-case basis.

4.2 Walk around/ Drive by Surveys

Each site identified in Section 3 will be the subject of a 'walk-over' or 'drive-by' survey, at a frequency determined by their assessment of tree population and its relationship with significant targets (drive-by surveys are reported to discover up to 85% of defective trees). Trees identified as posing an unacceptable risk of harm will be recorded and may require an ‘individual tree risk survey’ (see 4.3 below).

4.3 individual Tree Survey

The individual survey will inform management options to reduce the ‘risk of harm’ to within acceptable limits. Risks approaching and exceeding 1 in 10,000 will be considered for remedial action. The individual survey will use the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) process.

Essentially, the VTA process proceeds in three phases:

Visual assessment for defect symptoms and vitality. If there is no sign of a problem, then the investigation is concluded.

If a defect is suspected based on symptoms, its presence or absence is confirmed by examination.

If a defect is confirmed and has potential to present a significant risk of harm, the tree might be evaluated in more detail using diagnostic tools such as a Resistograph decay test drill.

Tree work decisions are then determined based on the outcome of this inspection (see Section 6 below).

4.4 Documentation

The identified target zones, survey dates and data (including the risk of significant harm), and records of remedial work carried out, will be recorded by the groundman. The recorded information will allow the council to confidently defend claims of liability. Both this plan, and the tree management records it will generate, will form a transparent documentary system of tree risk management across all land for which the Council is responsible.

4.5 Reactive tree Risk Assessments

Each year the council is contacted regarding many concerns over the safety of trees. All reports should be recorded, a site visit should be made a priority and the site made safe, if the reported tree does not belong to the town council, the council will ensure the area is safe and no immediate risk is posed and report to the landowner to ensure that the tree is made safe.

4.6 High winds inspection

After a high wind the grounds team should carry out a walk/drive by inspection as described in 4.2 and record their findings in the high wind check logs.

4.7 inspection frequency

Based on the zones highlighted in section 3, the frequency of inspection should be followed below as highlighted in table 1.

Usage zone	**Frequency of inspection**	**Inspection type**
1 Very high	Twice annually and after severe weather events	Formal inspection of every tree for defects with binoculars, tapping mallet and probe required to be available for use. External Check – on a five-year rotation
2 High	Normally Annually and after severe weather events	Formal inspection of every tree for defects with binoculars, tapping mallet and probe required to be available for use

3 Medium	Normally every two years (with discretion up to 5 years) and after severe weather events	Walk by inspection of every tree looking for obvious defects.
4 Low	During normal routine visits	Informal observation and awareness of the general condition of trees
5 Very low	No inspection required	No inspection required

(Table 1: Frequency of inspections)

5.0 Intervention

5.1 proportionate response

Intervention decisions will be made where the probability of harm from trees has been assessed and exceeds an acceptable limit. The HSE suggests that an appropriate limit for a risk imposed on the public should be set at 1 in 10,000 per annum. Where an unacceptable risk is identified for a tree, or group of trees under council responsibility, the following action will be taken by the officer present or on duty, depending on the circumstances:

The public will be isolated from imminent hazards and remedial work carried out as an emergency.

High risks will be highlighted for remedial action at the earliest opportunity, with the order of work being carried out generally in descending order of risk, unless practical matters such as traffic control permissions mean this is not possible.

Lower risks will be dealt with within the planned management programme for the site or road. A schedule of remedial work will be devised. Completion of the work will be confirmed and recorded.

Where arboricultural intervention could have a significant effect on the value of trees, modification of targets will be considered first. Moving a park bench or obstructing a desireline footpath are examples of modifying targets to eliminate or reduce the need for arboricultural intervention.

6.0 Reviewing the plan

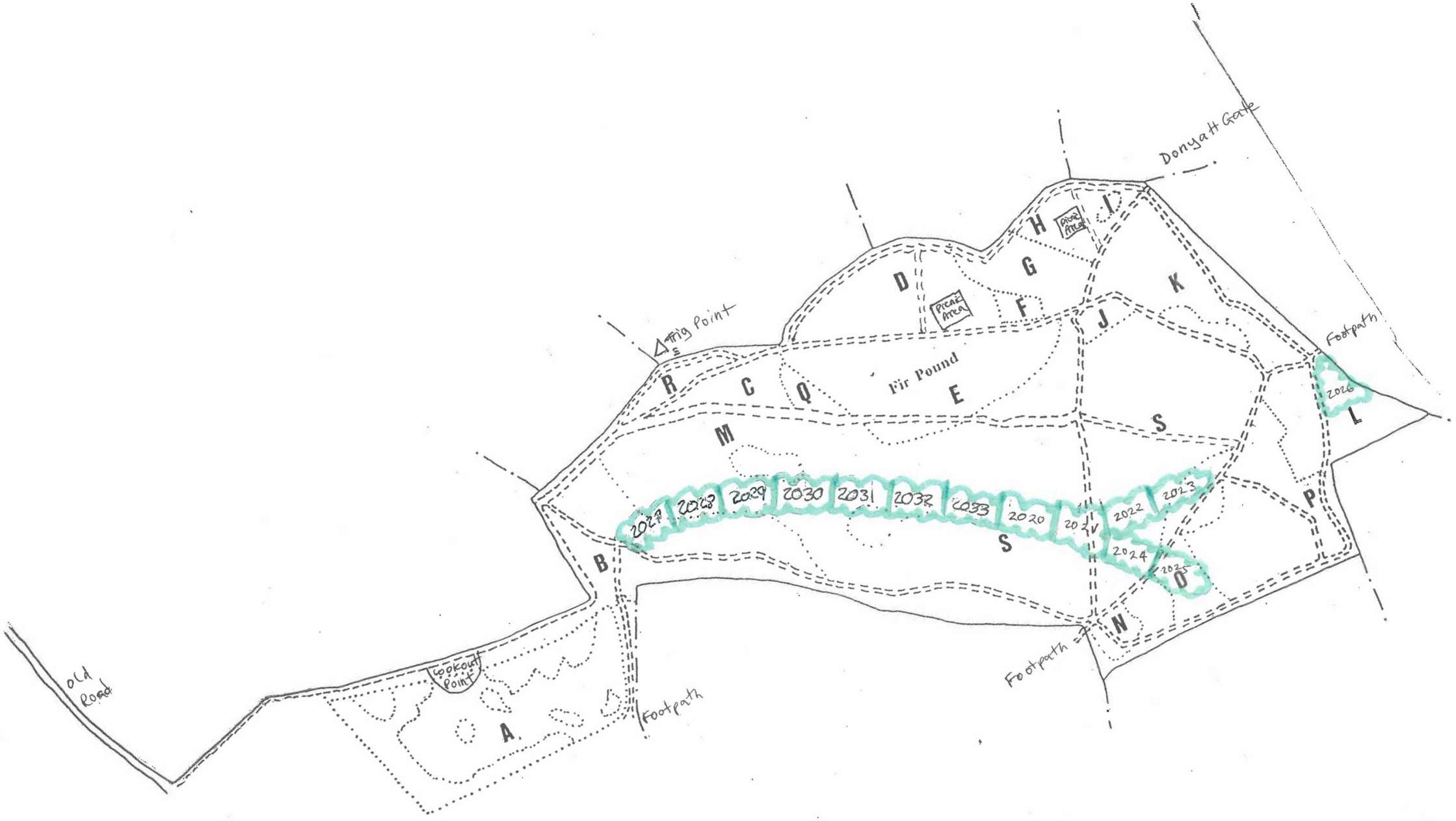
The plan should be reviewed as necessary (for instance new guidance, recent case law and statute law, etc.) and / or at least on a three-year basis.

The purpose of reviewing the plan gives the Council the opportunity to not only ensure it is up to date and accurate but also to make improvements, particularly in methods of working and how data is recorded.


Old Road
2022
2024
2021
2023
Lookout Point
A
B
Footpath
2030
2030
Trig Point
2029
2023
2024
2025
2026
2027
Donyatt Gate
R
C
D
Picnic Area
H
Picnic Area
I
G
F
Q
M
Fir Pound
E
J
K
2030
2029
2028
Footpath
2027
S
S
L
2026
2023
2024
2025
2026
2023
Footpath
2028
N
O
P
2029
2030
2023
2024

Appendix E Hedgerow maintenance

Appendix F Coppicing Regime



Appendix G – Training and Development

Health and safety remain the highest priority in open spaces, and it is acknowledged that training and development are key components of safe working practices. Activities carried out by grounds man in our open spaces vary in the risk they present to employees and non-employees so there are different training/ development requirements.

The three methods used in trading and development are:

1. formal/ accredited train - usually by external trainers and certificated.
2. Competency assessment through informal but documented training
3. Best practice demonstrations such as toolbox talks improvements instigated after accidents/incidents, new skills being shared along with advice and instruction by colleagues/managers.

1. in line with health and safety guidance note 805, recognized and certificated training will be provided for the following activities

- Chainsaw operations
- Aerial tree work
- Tractor use including the use of implements and PTO.
- First aid
- Brushcutting
- Woodchippers
- Road vehicle driving
- Mini digger work
- Use of pesticides
- Play equipment checking/ maintenance and repair for certain play equipment.

Refresher training will be provided before end of the recommended 5-year timeframe for

- Chain sawing
- Aerial tree work
- First aid
- Brush cutting
- Wood chipping

Or sooner if there are concerns about competency or confidence in addition experience and practice will be monitored through records maintained by operative and checked by managers.

2. Competency assessment that is documented will be provided for the following activities following best practice and the type of equipment in use

- All-terrain vehicles
- Strumming
- Driving off road
- Manual handling
- Industrial ride on mowers
- Hedge trimmer
- Pole saws

At managers discretion industrial ride on mowers and pole saw competencies should be assessed by someone who has received accredited training refreshed within the last 5 years

3. Informal training will be provided for the following activities

- Accident reporting
- Customer service
- Hand tools
- Play equipment daily monitoring

Volunteers will not be allowed to undertake anything but activities where informal training is applicable unless there is a clear need/capability and a highly structured volunteer management system in place. This should be at managers discretion.

Manufacturers training should be provided for major machinery when new and thereafter there should be a manual available for every piece of machinery alongside cascade training.

Training in maintenance of equipment and machinery

To ensure safe use all equipment and machinery will be of the required standards, maintained in a satisfactory condition and checked before each use or daily. Training on how to do this through use of manufactures guidelines operators manual and checklists provided with the equipment itself plus internal checklists where applicable.

Major repairs and annual servicing will be carried out by specialists.

Use of hired equipment

If equipment can be hired from a high street provider, then training provided by the hirer will be considered sufficient if only the person who has been shown uses it.

Appendix H: Estimate outline expenditure year 1 – 2

Year 1 : Budget		
Budget Title	Amount	Code
Herne Hill Improvements	10000	1
Green flag award	2000	561/17
Herne Hill maintenance	750	561/8

Year 1: 2023/24		
Project Description	Est cost	Budget
Notice Board Ridge Path	2364	1
Ladder signage for entrances	2278	1
Replacing Missing Bench's	200	561/17
Green Flag Application	500	561/17
Waymarking Project	500	561/8
Graphic Design for maps etc	750	561/17

Year 2 : Budget		
Budget Title	Amount	Code
Herne Hill Improvements	5358	1
Herne Hill Management *	2000	561/17

Year 2: 2024/23		
Project Description	Est cost	Budget
Interpretation panel old oak	800	1
Rubbing posts	1300	1
green flag application	500	561/17
leaf boards	200	1
General maintenance	500	561/17

Year 3 : Budget		
Budget Title	Amount	Code
Herne Hill Improvements	3058	1
Herne Hill Management *	2000	561/17

Year 3: 2024/25		
Project Description	Est cost	Budget

*Budget Subject to approval from Town Council