



High Woods  
Country Park

# Management Plan 2021 - 2025



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## 1.0 Introduction and Site Description

High Woods Country Park is an extensive park located north of Colchester's town centre within the suburb wards of Mile End and High Woods, lying close to the town's main railway station. Surrounded by busy roads, new housing and businesses, it provides a vital green retreat for local residents where they can relax, play, exercise and enjoy the attractive woods and scenic countryside. The Park also provides a pleasant route on the way to and from a cluster of nearby schools, and for commuters to the station.

The Park was opened in 1987 after land acquired as a result of housing development was combined with land already owned by Colchester Borough Council. In 1991 a visitor centre was built and opened which was extended in 2012. In 2000 the park has expanded to its present 150 hectares. The care taken by Colchester Borough Council in planning its layout has ensured it has become a well-used and much-loved local park. The on-going commitment of the Council to maintain the high standard of countryside management including maintaining the play areas, car parks and public toilets, cycle paths, walking routes as well the wildflower meadows, woodland, lake and ponds means the park is more popular than ever.



**1978** *High Woods, East Wood & Brinkley Grove within farmland (from west)*



**2008** *High Woods Country Park & Brinkley Grove within housing (from west)*

### Address & Contact Details

High Woods Country Park, Visitor Centre, Turner Road, Colchester CO4 5JR.

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E-mail [countryside@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:countryside@colchester.gov.uk)

Web site [www.colchester.gov.uk/countrypark](http://www.colchester.gov.uk/countrypark)

O. S. grid reference of visitor center: TL 997271.

### Purpose of this plan

This management plan sets out what management strategies are currently in place for the park and what improvements could be made to further enhance it. Although the current period of financial restraint means there is a need to be realistic and pragmatic, the plan maintains an aspirational approach, and identifies potential avenues of additional funding.

### Wards

Mile End and Highwoods. The boundary between the two wards lies on the line of the north-south stream.

## Soils & Hydrology

Lying on fluvial sands and gravels interleaved with clays. A heavy loam with seasonal seepage lines is a feature of the central and south-western areas. Some of the woodland soils are free draining as are those on the slopes north-east of the lake and on the rising ground east of the marsh.

Two small watercourses join on the north-west boundary to form an unnamed tributary of the River Colne. It follows a widening valley. Midway it flows into an on-line lake, which acts as a storm water reservoir for the Highwoods estate. Although attenuated at the discharge point from the lake the volume of water entering the stream at times of heavy rain can be flashy. The stream spreads forming a marsh on the southern boundary before leaving the park through a sluice and an underground conduit.

## Tenure & Rights of Access

All of the area covered by this plan is owned by Colchester Borough Council.

Anglian Water has way leave access to sewers which run from Highwoods to Turner Rise through the country park, and to the water main which follows the public right of way from Turner Road to Pampas Close on the Highwoods estate. Ardleigh Reservoir Committee has way leave access to their high-pressure water pipe which crosses the southern marsh and leaves the park to the north of Friars Grove.

The entrance off Broadlands Way to the south, a public footpath, crosses Network Rail land to enter the park north of the pedestrian tunnel through the railway embankment. Access furniture and signage was erroneously installed on Network Rail land over 20 years ago without any subsequent challenge.

Many public rights of way cross the park and form the main arterial access routes from north to south and east to west.

## Designations & Accreditations

High Woods Country Park currently holds;

- Local Wildlife Site status (LoWS).
- Awarded Green Flag Award every year since 2004.
- Trip Advisor - listed number 6 out of the top 70<sup>th</sup> things to do when visiting Colchester with an overall 4.5 out of 5-star rating.

### **Trip Advisor 5-star comments:**

29 Jan 2020 Fantastic Park

A nice stroll can be had here in the winter / spring months. The lake is one of my favourite spots so look out for that.

-----  
17 Aug 2020 Great Park!

Great for a walk with a dog, family or friends. Lots to explore and do including a park, lake and great picnic spots. I done a parkrun here and it was muddy but that was in February. Overall, a great green space with lots of activities.

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27th Aug 2020.

Me and my family always enjoy visiting high woods as there are many walks to do there. Big lake to have a picnic beside and play equipment for children.

-----

27 Dec 2020 Lovely place to walk

Beautiful place, lovely and clean- I am so lucky to have this on my doorstep. I used to go here when I was a little girl, and I still love it 20 odd years on!

-----

6 Jan 2021 One of my most favourite places!

I have been enjoying Highwoods for around 5/6 years now! We are very lucky enough to live very close to it and during the lockdowns have spent a great deal of time walking around and learning every section! It's perfect for getting those steps in and you can make your routes as little or as long as you like! It's home to many wildlife and animals and is very tranquil! Gorgeous to visit in all seasons! There are many locations to take beautiful pictures too especially as sunrise/sunset.

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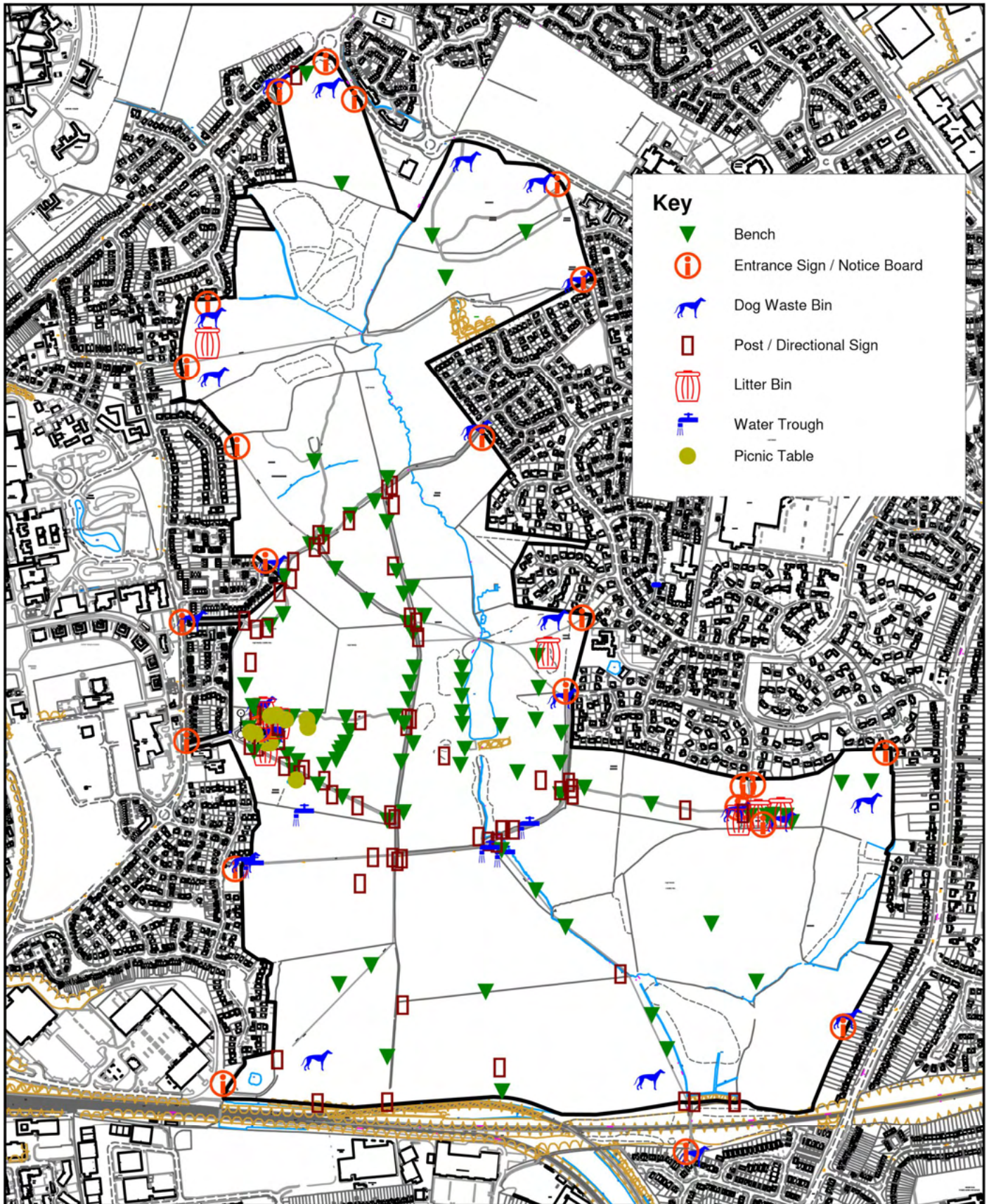
14 Apr 2021 Real surprise in Colchester

I wasn't expecting this wood to be so big in a town of 200k people. There's a fantastic picnic area by the car park & visit centre. You can follow a choice of three walks ranging in distances or just follow paths & choose your own route. There are quite a few openings in the wood & around the outside is houses but once you get into the wood you could be anywhere. There is quite a nice lake here to. Also by the car park is a small climbing wall & play park. We were here for over three hours but could have been longer. I have never seen so many squirrels as I did in our visit to here. Will certainly be coming back next time in Essex.

### **Green Flag judge's comments 2021**

'I spoke to several families with young children and all were full of praise for how well the site was being managed/maintained. Bearing in mind the budget reductions, the site is an excellent place to visit and I would recommend it to all ages'.

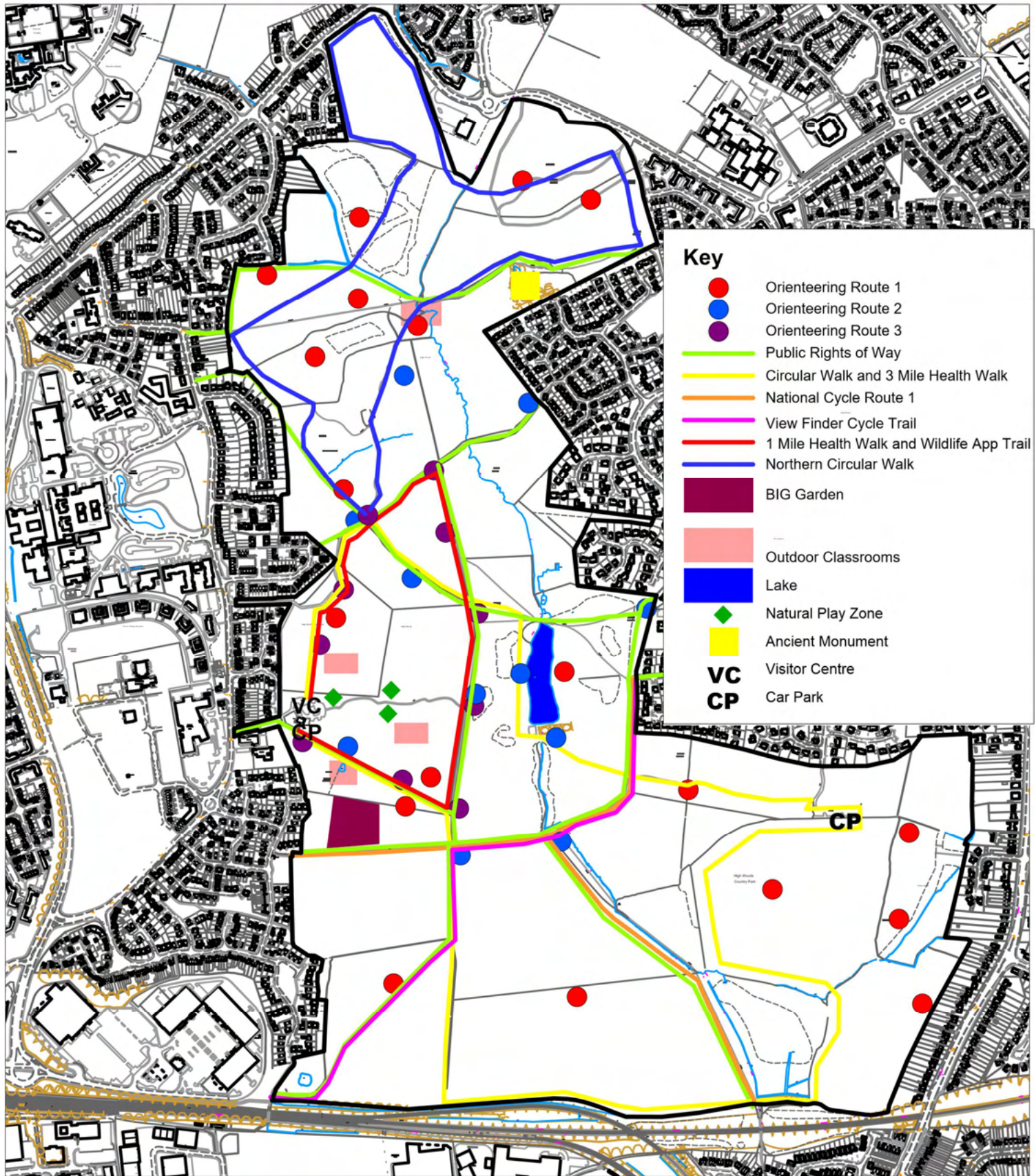
## 1.1 Site Furniture Asset Map



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## 1.2 Recreation and Access Asset Map



**Key**

- Orienteering Route 1
- Orienteering Route 2
- Orienteering Route 3
- Public Rights of Way
- Circular Walk and 3 Mile Health Walk
- National Cycle Route 1
- View Finder Cycle Trail
- 1 Mile Health Walk and Wildlife App Trail
- Northern Circular Walk
- BIG Garden
- Outdoor Classrooms
- Lake
- ◆ Natural Play Zone
- Ancient Monument
- VC** Visitor Centre
- CP** Car Park

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## 1.3 Park Features, Facilities & Infrastructure

### Benches

- Over one hundred benches located throughout the park. All tagged with a reference number, inspected regularly to keep in good order.

### Bins (litter and dog waste)

- Litter bins provided at key entrances emptied twice weekly.
- 20 out of the 22 official entrances to the park have dog bins located nearby.
- Dog waste bins are emptied weekly or more often as required.

### Boma

- For many mobility-restricted walkers, access to the countryside is limited to 'easy-access' trails.
- Since 2012 the park has provided a permanent home for a Boma 7 – it is a lightweight off-road all-terrain wheelchair. It opens the park up, offering disabled and mobility impaired the real possibility of access on an equal basis with non-disabled walkers and cyclists. The Boma is a Walk Colchester project. For more information [www.walkcolchester.org.uk/the-colchester-boma](http://www.walkcolchester.org.uk/the-colchester-boma)



### Car parks

- Customer surveys show that approximately over half of visitors live in the surrounding area and walk to the park.
- For those who do drive to the park there are two car parks with a combined space for approximately 120 vehicles. Accessed from the Turner Road and Chanterelle entrances. The former is a pay and display car park overseen by the North Essex Parking Partnership whilst the latter smaller car park is available to park-users free of charge.
- Both car parks are locked and unlocked daily. From 1<sup>st</sup> April to the end of September 7:30am and 10:00pm. Between 1<sup>st</sup> October and the end of March 7:30am and 7:00pm.

### Compound/yard/store

- The compound and yard are used by park staff and volunteers only. It is security fenced and locked at all times. It is covered by the park's CCTV system and there are signs on the gates warning the public to keep out.

### Community garden

- The Big Garden at High Woods Country Park is run by Together We Grow, a not-for-profit Community Interest Company set up in October 2017. The two-acre plot is a community vegetable garden and traditional orchard near to the Visitor Centre that promotes health and well-being for the local community by producing food in a sustainable way.
- The project was set up by a former community gardener / horticulture trainer and two former community volunteers who now work in the public health sector. They work with a range of partners improving lives through access to therapeutic and educational horticulture.
- The project is supported by 40 volunteers who help with the running of the garden, education sessions and well-being programmes, as well as with outreach work in the community and local schools.



- People of all ages and abilities are welcome to volunteer. It provides a supportive setting for people with a range of health needs to learn practical and personal skills.
- Designed and constructed in 2006 with a Heritage Lottery grant and run-in house for the first 10 years.
- Maintained using organic techniques. Wildlife habitats developed to encourage beneficial predators. Heritage fruit tree varieties are conserved.

### E bike and trailer

- In spring 2020 the park took delivery of an eCargo bike and eTrailer as part of a borough wide sustainable transport project. It was funded through a grant from the Energy Saving Trust. The bike and trailer can be used to transport tools and materials around site, reducing the journeys carried out by the diesel powered 4x4s. All staff and volunteers must complete level 3 bikeability training before using the e vehicles. Currently 4 members of staff and 12 volunteers have completed this training, with 6 volunteers due to take the training.



### Cycling

- Permitted throughout. Good, surfaced paths for general use with links to external network including a section of National Cycle Route 1 (NCR1).

### Dog walking

- Dog walkers welcomed in line with the Code of Good Practice (leaflet available in the visitor Centre, plus information is given on our web page). Facilities include dogs-on-lead-zones, a watering point, dog waste bags and 'dog parking' at the Visitor Centre.

### Entrances

- The majority of the twenty-two entrances around the park's perimeter support welcome signage and dog waste bins.
- Several entrances have been designed to allow easy access for cyclists and mobility-restricted users.

### Events

- An annual programme of themed and specialist events, and guided walks. The park is popular venue for third party community events.



### Wellness Walks

- Led by trained volunteer leaders on alternate Friday and Sundays. Attended primarily but not exclusively by older people seeking health benefits associated with walking.
- Venue for commercially run Nordic Walking sessions.



### Orienteering

- Three orienteering courses of differing lengths and degrees of difficulty; beginner, intermediate and full permanent. Developed with the Essex Stragglers Orienteering Society (SOS). Maps available from the Visitor Centre. Mainly used by schools, Scout / Guide groups and the military. Training and competitive events organised by SOS.



### Outdoor classrooms

- Six outdoor classrooms for staff-led and self-led environmental education sessions, forest school and other activities. Bookable spaces for private use in line with hire agreement and payment.
- Main use is by the Visitor Centre Officer who is the lead officer for educational visits.
- Trees in the outdoor classrooms are subject to an annual gross defect / safety survey and inspected by Rangers.

### Paths and trails

- Approximately 20km of paths in the park comprising cycle paths with fibredeck wearing course and footpaths constructed from hoggin, type 1 MOT, planings or earth. Many are part of the network of public rights of way.
- An annual programme of resurfacing works and a dedicated budget ensures paths are maintained to a good standard.
- Three circular walking trails around the park, each colour-waymarked and of differing lengths.
- Installed in 2015 a 1-mile all-season Nature Trail app for families. Comprises a wildlife quiz and ten QR code marker points along the way.

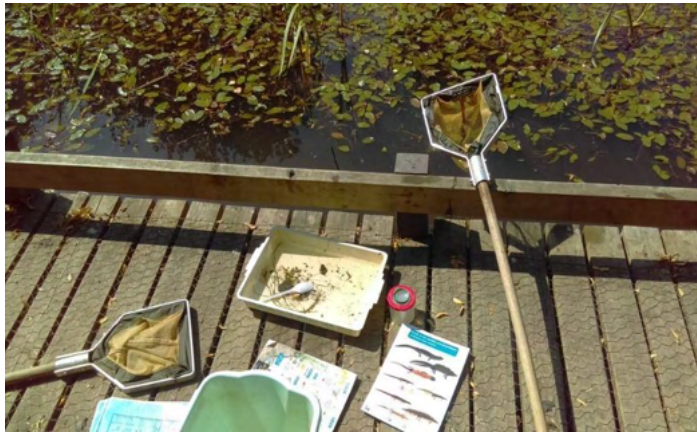


### Play zone

- Natural Play Zone installed in 2011 following extensive public consultation with local schools and drop-in events.
- Implemented with £45,000 award from DCFS Playbuidler programme along with £10,000 of Section 106 funds to provide play equipment for children 8-13 years.
- Spread over three woodland locations near the Visitor Centre car park and providing natural play opportunities.
- Patrolled and litter picked before 10am daily by staff. RoSPA accredited equipment inspections are carried out weekly.

### Pond seating and dipping area

- Situated within woodland near the Visitor Centre. Comprises seating, decking and dipping platforms. One of the platforms was replaced in 2014 and other in 2017.
- Popular with education, community groups and family groups.
- Annual maintenance of the pond and its margins ensures its biodiversity and recreational value.



### Signage and information

- New good quality welcome signs were installed at all park entrances in 2017.
- Directional signage at key points and external white-on-brown tourist signs on approach routes. Consideration will be given to improving these when resources are available.
- Visitor information panels and community notice boards at the visitor centre and car parks were installed in 2011.
- Wildlife information panels mounted in the Visitor Centre along with camera boxes in 2015.

### Toilets

- Toilet block built in 2012 following a successful capital bid. Includes disabled and baby changing facilities.
- Opened and cleaned by cleaning company daily except for public holidays.



### Visitor Centre

- Opened in 1991. Office area refurbished in 2012. Comprises offices and storage for staff and volunteers and provides information and retail for visitors.
- A refit of the serving counter and installation of an automatic front door are due to take place October 2021 improving accessibility.
- Open daily 1<sup>st</sup> April –31<sup>st</sup> Aug, weekends only from 1<sup>st</sup> Sep – 30<sup>th</sup> Mar and run by a team of visitor centre staff and volunteers.
- Planned maintenance carried out in compliance with Condition Surveys and responsive repairs by the Council's Technical Services Team.
- Monthly inspections of fixtures, fittings and fabric. All portable electric equipment and fire extinguishers are tested annually.
- Security provided by intruder alarm system, CCTV and private security key holder.
- Contractors working in and on the Visitor Centre must hold a permit to work and – if working in hazardous areas – complete the 5Cs Register

### Watercourses

- In addition to the ponds, lake and marsh there are many ditches and drains that run through the country park. Their clearance and maintenance are the responsibility of the team.

## 1.4 Historical background and land use

The park was opened in 1987 after land acquired as a result of housing development was combined with land already owned by Colchester Borough Council. In 1991 a visitor centre was built and opened off the Turner Road. In 2000 the park expanded to its present 150 hectares.

Before 1987 the park was a mixture of woods, and arable and pastoral farmland, situated within the curtilage of the former medieval Royal Forest of Kingswood. Originally valued for its native timber and underwood much of the woodland was converted to plantations of sweet chestnut coppice within the last two hundred years or so.

An earthwork, of undetermined origin, is situated within the woodland and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). Working with CBC's archaeological advisor and English Heritage a specific SAM management plan will be written for this site including installation of an interpretation / information panel.

The northern woods retain some of their medieval boundary wood banks and ditches. Some veteran trees occur, mainly alongside boundaries and linear features. Fields to the south have yielded roman coins as well as musket balls associated with the 1648 Siege of Colchester. Discarded brick and tile waste can be found to the north indicating past links with the historic local brickmaking and pottery industries. More information about the history of the park can be found in the 'Landscape in the Making' (R Mash) booklet.

## 1.5 Biodiversity and Landscape

One of the aims of Colchester Borough Council's Parks and Green Space Strategy is: "to support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in accordance with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC)". Most of High Woods Country Park is designated a Local Wildlife Site and as such supports a wide variety of habitats and species. These include diverse woodlands, hedgerows, grasslands, marsh and wetlands which in themselves support over 70 species of bird, over 25 species of butterfly, at least 15 species of Odonata (Dragonflies and Damselflies), at least 121 species of moth, at least 258 species of fungus, at least 19 mammal species and 7 reptile and amphibian species. See appendix for bird, butterfly and Odonata species lists. Other species lists available on request.



White Admiral P. Beard



Blackcap P. Beard

## Woods and Trees

High Woods Country Park supports a variety of woodland types covering over 50 hectares, including ancient semi-natural, younger broad-leaved woodland, 19th century plantations and coppice. Since 1987 Colchester Borough Council has managed the existing woods and increased woodland cover to the south through tree planting. Wherever possible trees and woods are managed sustainably. For example, timber is sold as firewood, left as standing dead wood habitat,

left as rotting log piles or chipped. At least five per cent of all felled timber and wood is left on the ground or in piles as habitat for invertebrates and fungi. Some of it is used as an educational resource to show visiting school children the ecosystems to be found in the park. Chippings are used as mulch for new plantings or used in the Big Garden or left as piles to be used as reptile incubation sites.

Following the storms of the late 1980s coppicing was reintroduced in the Central Valley and Brinkley Grove with resultant public safety improvements, and improvements for landscape and wildlife. Over the last decade this approach has been more planned and extensive helped by the introduction of a Felling License and a no-cost coppicing contract. However, 3 winters ago the coppicing contractor did not seek to renew this contract, so we are seeking another suitable contractor, there are 2 years left on the current felling licence. The value of timber and the costs associated with its extraction vary greatly, it's an unpredictable business, however the value of timber is currently rising dramatically so a no-cost contract may become viable again. Notable species that have returned or prospered as a direct result of coppicing include the white admiral butterfly, common cow-wheat and heather.

The main aims of future woodland and tree management are to:

- Protect and improve their biodiversity.
- Maintain them as a visitor amenity and educational resource.
- Take all reasonably practicable precautions to ensure trees are in a safe condition.

These aims will be achieved in the following ways:

- Review the extent and success of the woodland management over the last 10 years and plan future priorities this will include considering re-establishing areas of rotational coppicing in compartments A1, A4, A5 and A6. A6 in particular suffers from windthrow of overgrown coppice stools.
- Seek no-cost coppicing contractor and set up an agreement.
- Obtain a new Felling License from the Forestry Commission for 2023 – 2027 to enable future works.
- Continue with rotational coppicing; up to 1 hectare a year split into 2 half hectare coups. Thus, continue rotational coppice of sweet chestnut coupes in compartments A3 and A7; continue rotational coppicing of mixed woodland in compartment B.
- Within the coppice coups select 10 -12 per hectare to develop as standards
- Restock coppiced areas in line with felling licence, but not in compartment B as it is classed as high-quality ancient woodland. Here natural regeneration and layering should be used instead to avoid compromising genetic integrity.
- Continue with white poplar, false acacia and sycamore clearance to prevent these tree species dominating the woodland habitat. Cut stumps to be treated with herbicide enclosed / sealed in pellets called Ecoplugs.
- Start thinning the areas of 1980's plantation woodland (compartments I and J) in which the trees have grown tall and leggy, prone to windthrow and shade out all ground flora. This will allow more light in and increase diversity.
- Assess for bat roost potential before undertaking felling.
- Monitor holly growth in coppiced areas; where starting to dominate remove.
- Maintain the woodland glades and their connections in compartments A4 and A5 which were enlarged between 2011 and 2015.
- Retain partially shaded, climbing and trailing honeysuckle (the sole food plant of the white admiral butterfly).
- Leave standing dead wood and dead wood in situ wherever safe to do so.
- Provide visitors with on-site information about woodland management work.
- Monitor tree diseases present in the park – specifically Acute Oak Decline and Ash Dieback. Only fell diseased trees if they present a safety hazard i.e. dead trees next to the

path network, near outdoor classrooms or near boundary properties. Keep up to date with tree disease guidance issued by the Forestry Commission.

- Contribute where possible to the wider Colchester Woodland and Biodiversity Project with natural regeneration and selective additional tree planting where it will provide habitat improvements and wildlife benefit without impacting on existing quality habitats.



### Grasslands

High Woods Country Park contains approximately 50 hectares of conservation grassland – mainly on the slopes to the south - which was, for many years, maintained by a local farmer for hay and grazing on an add hock basis. In January 2017 this was replaced by a formal Farm Business Tenancy Agreement (FBT) with the Legacy Grazing Project. Legacy Grazing use Red Poll, a traditional East Anglian breed, to carry out conservation grazing throughout East Anglia. More information can be found [www.legacygrazing.org.uk](http://www.legacygrazing.org.uk) . It was an initiative set up by Essex County Council.

Legacy Grazing has entered the land into a Countryside Stewardship Agreement with Natural England. This runs until end Dec 2021 and is due to be renewed for a further 5 years from Jan 2022. The FBT agreement runs until 2025.

Under this project Boat Field (Compartment F2), Old Ley Field (F1), Farthing Bottom (F3), The Slipe (E1) and Further Meadow (E2) are managed as summer wildflower meadows and grazed in rotation by the cattle from April onwards. The grasslands of the Southern Slopes (D1-3) (which support breeding skylarks), Mayors Spinney (D4), Woodcock Down (H) (home to common lizards) and Brinkley Grove Field (G) are cut annually for hay in late July.

Farthing Bottom Field, approx. 3 ha, has become particularly scrub encroached so Legacy Grazing are proposing goat grazing to restore this meadow. This method uses natural processes with minimal mechanical input and without the need to use chemicals. The process will however take some time, maybe up to 3 years before reverting back to using cattle grazing as the main method of meadow management.

A team of seven volunteer 'cattle lookers' has been set up as part of the project so the stock's health and welfare are checked every day. Legacy Grazing provide the specific training for this role. All Countryside Team staff have undertaken this training. Volunteers also help conduct condition surveys of the meadows, conduct Skylark surveys (see appendix for survey results) and pull ragwort from the meadows in summer.

### Wetlands

There are a considerable number of small ponds, ditches and streams within the park in addition to the fishing lake. Collectively they support important assemblages of plants and animals.

The fishing lake, which acts as storm water balancing pond, is the largest area of open water in the park. It has no draw-down zone so supports a relatively narrow band of emergent plants at the edge, mostly reed-grass, reedmace and yellow flag. There are also few floating plants, mainly water lily, and the water is turbid due to the high silt content. It supports populations of common wildfowl and freshwater fish including carp.

Woodland ponds support significant amphibian populations, particularly significant is the palmate newt population. The ponds in the more open locations support an important dragonfly and damselfly fauna. Long-winged conehead, short-winged conehead and roesel's bush cricket are present in the enclosed wet grassland by the Turner Rise South Pond.

The dipping pond in compartment A1 does contain invasive non-native Australian swamp stonecrop (*Crassula helmsii*). Annually as much as possible is removed by hand to prevent it from choking the pond.

The 4-hectare marsh – formerly grazing pasture supports up to 40 species of birds including teal, willow warbler, bullfinch and snipe. The pond within the marsh is silted and supports submerged plants such as fennel pondweed and horned pondweed. Areas of reedmace and reed are managed as fringe vegetation. It supports a fantastic population of common frog and toad.

The narrow stream flowing through the north of the park – with its natural meanders - is used by schools to study erosion and deposition. In places the stream bottom is gravelly, the banks steep and the flow slight whilst in other places it is silty and shaded. After heavy rain there is a substantial flow of water from the lake causing erosion to the steep sided banks to the south. The water quality of the stream is generally good.



## Hedgerows

There are over 6.5 kilometres of hedgerows consisting mainly of hawthorn and mixed native species with standard trees. Some of the hedges derive from the old, farmed landscape others the result of more recent planting. They are important, ecological units within the park providing links between areas of woodland and are important valuable habitats in their own right. Some hedgerows have been neglected and have become over mature with the hedge plants turning into trees which shade out remaining hedgerow growth resulting in a gappy, poor structured, remnant hedges. We aim to restore approximately 200m of hedgerow annually. This is achieved by reducing tree numbers on the line of the hedgerow leaving only a few standard hedge trees, coppicing and /or laying and gapping up the remaining hedge plants.

## Heathland

In the past there were significant areas of heathland on the acid soils within the park and beyond its northern boundary. Small areas have been restored through tree clearance, natural regeneration and germination of heather seed on disturbed ground. These areas are maintained by removing scrub and bramble encroachment.

## Scrubland

Woodcock Down (compartment H), Tubswick (compartment L) and the Parkland (compartment C) all contain areas of dense and scattered scrub. All have benefits for wildlife particularly where the scrub is varied in age and species, and where sunny grassy rides, bays and glades are present. These sheltered areas provide excellent habitat for reptiles – see specific reptile action plan below. The scrub provides nesting sites for birds such as whitethroats and blackcaps. Up until recently one or two Nightingale used the site but not in the numbers of the past. In maintaining mixed age scrub we hope to improve the habitat to entice Nightingales back, however nationally numbers are so reduced this may be a hard task. Good berry years attract large flocks of winter thrushes. We aim to coppice 1 or 2 blocks of approx. 50m x 50m of mature scrub each year on rotation. We also aim to maintain wide rides and glades within the scrubland

## Reptile Action Plan

The common lizard, slow worm and grass snake populations in Britain have greatly declined over the course of the last century. This rapid decline has been caused by a combination of factors, including loss and fragmentation of habitat due to urbanisation, agricultural intensification and poor management. As a result, all three species have been designated Species of Principal Importance under section 41 of the NERC Act (Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act). Specific areas within High Woods Country Park have traditionally been home to a healthy population of reptile species, and there are a number of factors which make it an ideal habitat for them:

- It forms part of a wider mosaic of varied habitats.
- Its open informal character, varied landscape and habitat network means the reptiles can move freely.
- The presence and maintenance of suitable basking areas, winter hibernacula, breeding sites and warm egg laying sites.
- The abundance of amphibian and insect prey.

The Action Plan below has been designed to maintain and hopefully increase the population of these often hidden and endangered creatures.

In addition to preserving and improving habitat for reptiles, the policies instigated under this Action Plan improves the overall biodiversity of the park; this plan also provides ways of involving and reconnecting the public with wildlife and green spaces. College groups and other youth groups have helped build hibernacula and volunteers carry out reptile surveys.

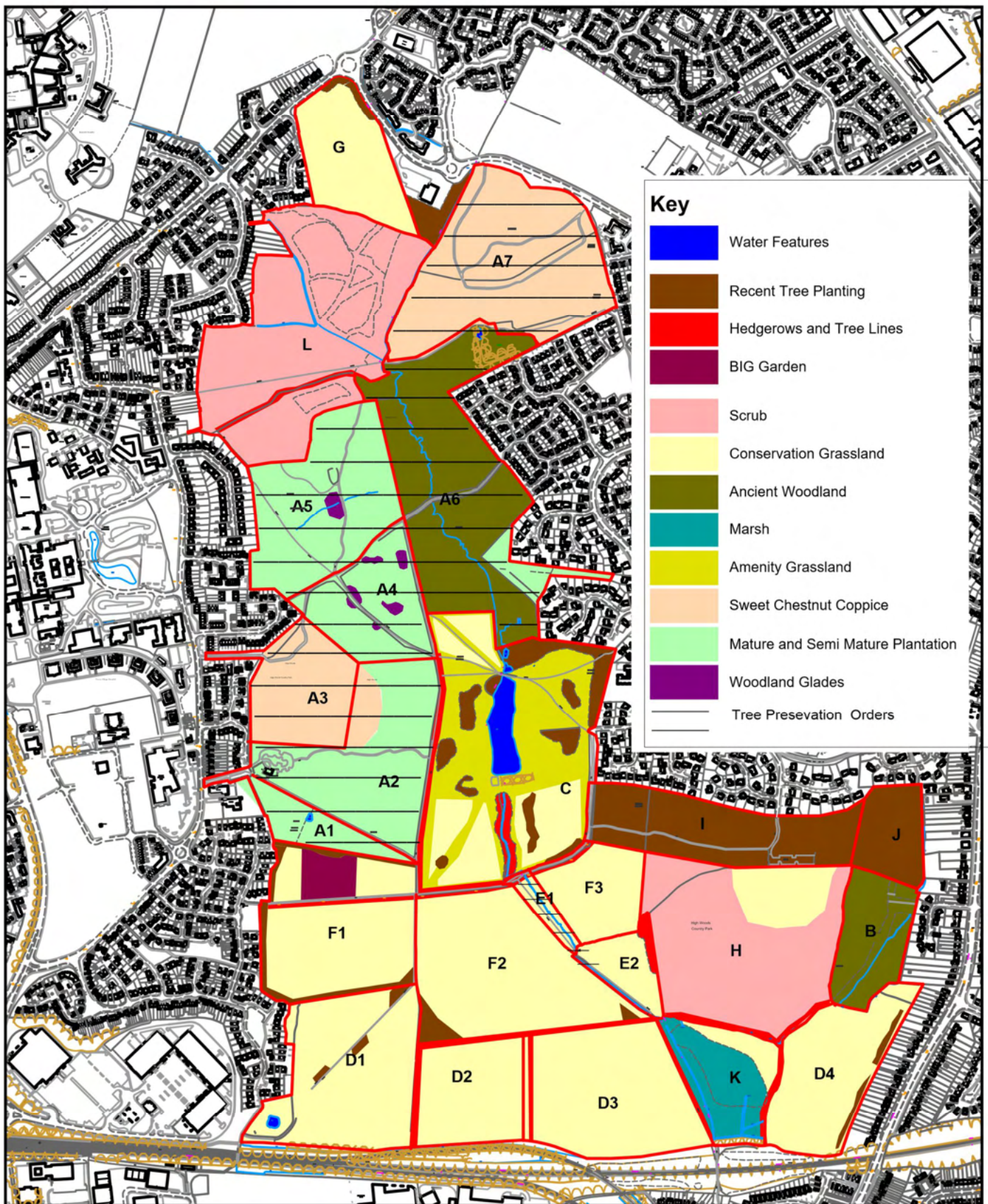
## Reptile Action Plan

- Creation of additional “grass snake piles” or mounds in suitable areas to provide a greater number of sites containing potential egg laying opportunities. These piles mainly consist of piled, decomposing cut grass.
- Manage scrub in areas of known slow worm and lizard populations to ensure a varied grassland/scrub mosaic for basking and foraging.
- Create additional hibernation areas by creation of log piles with arisings stacked on top.
- Continuation of reptile survey work.
- Informing and involving the public in survey work.
- Provide additional basking areas by placing rock debris and wood piles or creation of bare areas on southern facing slopes.
- Increase connectivity of known sites to the wider landscape and green wildlife corridors.





## 1.6 Landscape Compartments Map



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## 2.0 Policy Context

### Colchester Borough Councils Strategic Plan

Five strategic priority themes:

- 1. Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability by**
  - Responding to the Climate Emergency
  - Conserving and enhancing biodiversity
  - Enabling more opportunity for walking and cycling around Colchester
- 2. Creating safe, healthy and active communities by**
  - Building on community strengths and assets
  - Tackling the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people
  - Providing opportunities for young people
3. Delivering homes for people who need them
4. Growing a fair economy so everyone benefits
- 5. Celebrating our heritage and culture by**
  - Strengthening Colchester's tourism sector, welcome more visitors each yr
  - Protecting, enhancing and celebrating Colchester's unique heritage

One, two and five above are where the park can most contribute. Under each of these themes there are 3 priorities. Those where the park can most contribute are listed above. To see the full plan, go to [www.colchester.gov.uk/strategic-plan/2020-2023](http://www.colchester.gov.uk/strategic-plan/2020-2023) .

Colchester Borough Council's vision for High Woods Country Park is: "To work with the community to create a nationally recognised, vibrant and safe country park that promotes biodiversity, health and learning, and is accessible to all". A five-year plan designed to achieve this vision is provided in Section 5.

### Parks and Green Spaces Strategy

This strategy is currently under review but can be found by searching 'Parks and Green Spaces Strategy' on the Colchester Borough Council web site. The areas that apply to the park and its management are as follows (PGSSS – Parks and Green Spaces Strategy Statement i.e. targets):

7.1.3 Accessibility - PGSSS 11, 12, 13

7.2.1 Meeting community needs - PGSSS 14, 15, 16

7.2.2 Subheading - Improving the quality of existing open space - PGSSS 19, 20

7.2.3 Creating healthy spaces - PGSSS 21, 22

7.2.4 Creating sustainable spaces - PGSSS 23, 24

7.2.5 Maintaining quality spaces - PGSSS 25, 26

7.2.6 Managing parks & green spaces for biodiversity and heritage - PGSSS 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32

7.2.7 Encouraging use and appropriate behaviour - PGSSS 33, 34

## 3.0 Neighbourhood, Volunteering and Community Use

### 3.1 Stakeholders and partners

Park staff working with Neighbourhood Warden Team staff target their resources and that of volunteers in reducing antisocial behaviour, littering, dog fouling, and fly-tipping in the park. This is achieved through a combination of facilities, education and enforcement. Crime and antisocial behaviour in High Woods Country Park are infrequent and it is considered a safe environment for families with 60% of respondents to the 2021 customer satisfaction survey rating Safety within the park as either 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

Park Rangers also work in partnership with The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) in Essex, the community volunteering charity, taking positive action to improve the environment of the park. Local people of all ages from all backgrounds are welcomed.

The park is a work placement provider for 14yrs+ students from local schools providing industry experience in countryside management, grounds maintenance, and rangering, usually consisting of a 2 week placement.

Stakeholders, partners and supporters in the park include:

- Colchester Countryside Volunteer Rangers (CCVR), currently 60 active volunteers
- Big Friendly Gardeners and Together We Grow
- Walx to Wellness Nordic walking group
- Walk Colchester
- Colchester Natural History Society
- Essex Wildlife Trust
- Essex Bat Group
- Essex Stragglers Orienteering Society
- St Helena Hospice
- Queen Boudica Primary School
- Colchester in Bloom
- Legacy Grazing
- The Conservation Volunteers

### 3.2 Consultation

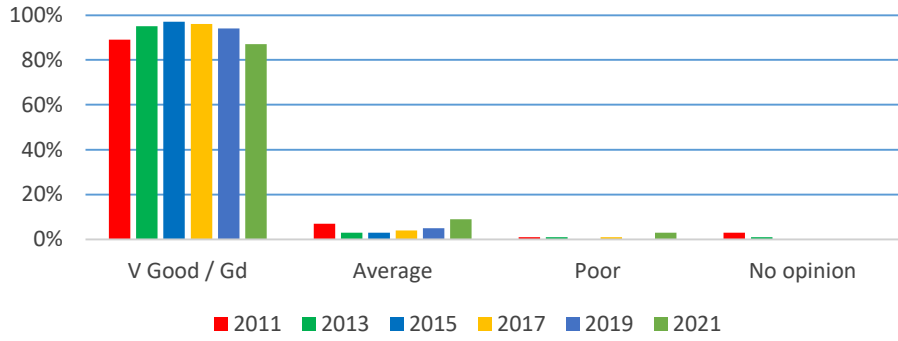
Since 2004 Customer Satisfaction Surveys have been completed every other year across parks and recreation grounds in Colchester, including High Woods Country Park. Park users are interviewed face to face using a standard questionnaire. This identifies patterns of use and customer improvement ideas which are recorded in a report and fed into the management plan and annual Action Plan. The survey in 2021 was conducted slightly differently, partly due to the covid pandemic and partly due to limited staff resources. The majority of the questionnaires were filled out by public scanning a QR code on posters displayed in the park linking to the questionnaire online rather than being asked face to face. A total of 143 visitors were surveyed in 2021 compared to 328 visitors in 2019. The full report can be found on Colchester Borough Council's web site.

#### **Key findings 2021 Customer Satisfaction Survey:**

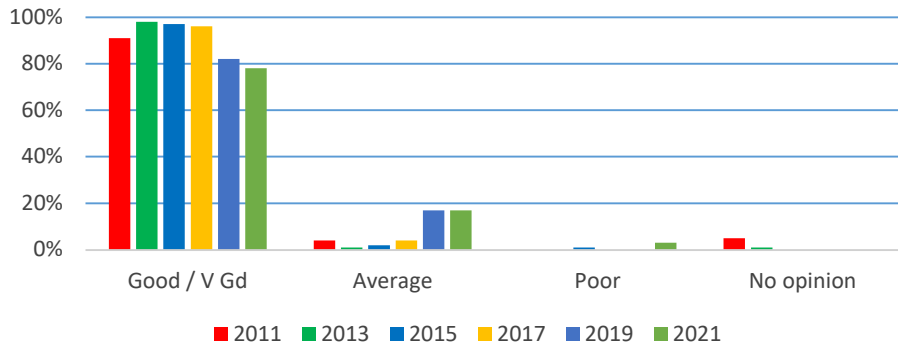
- Main motives to visit the park are to go for a walk, to get some fresh air and relax.
- The most popular method to travel to the park is on foot (58%), a change from 2019 when visiting by car at 51% was the most popular method.
- Overall, 90% of respondents rated cleanliness of the park as either 'Good' or 'Very Good'.
- 78.3% of visitors said that they considered the maintenance around the park to be either 'Good' or 'Very Good'.
- 94.4% of respondents rated their overall impression of the Country Park 'Good' or 'Very Good'.
- 95.8% of respondents said 'Yes' they would recommend visiting the park to friends or relatives.
- The top 3 priorities for the future of the park were 'improved paths', 'more bins / dog bins' and 'improved signage'.
- The top 3 priorities for the future of the Visitor Centre were 'more hot drink choices', 'improved catering provision' and 'improved information displays'.

The charts below show the trends in opinion over the last 11 years. All show the majority of opinions were in the v good / good category but with a slight decrease. Our aim will be to keep these high ratings and try to improve on them year on year.

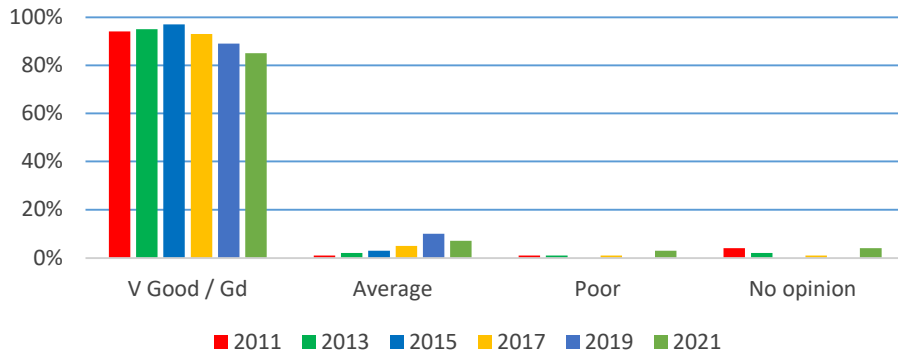
### Comparison of Cleanliness



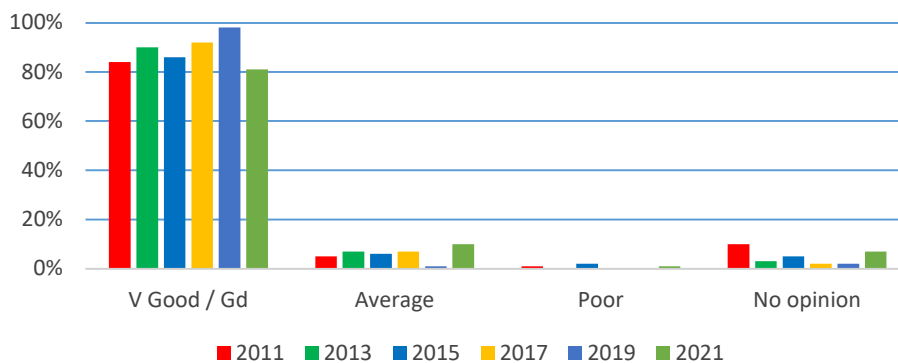
### Comparison of Maintenance

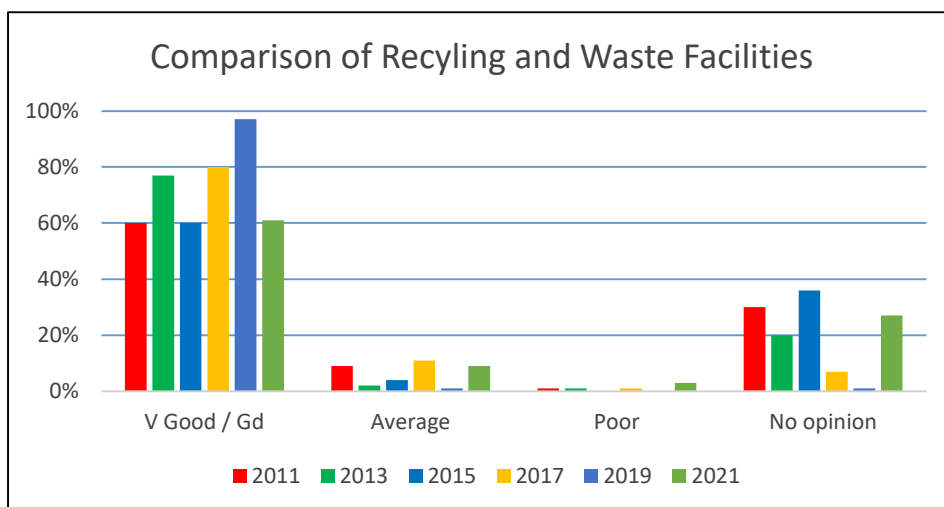
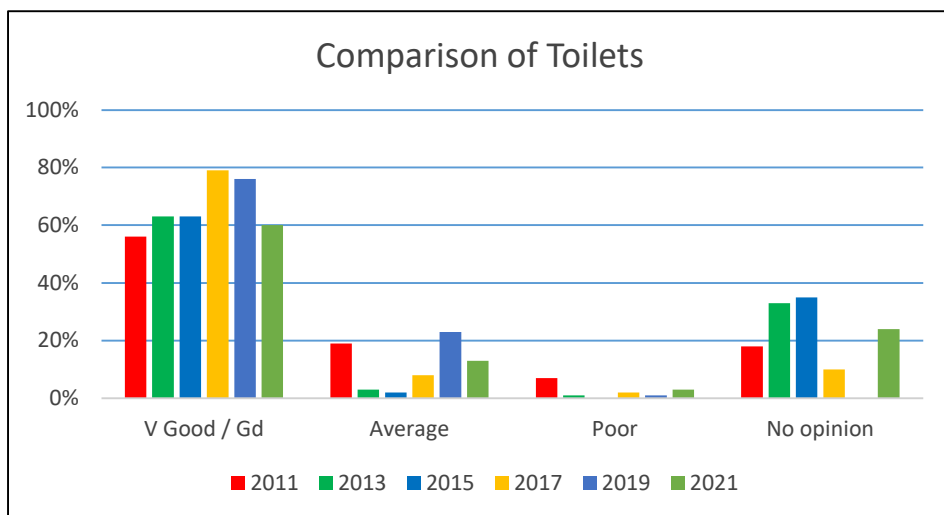


### Comparison of Access



### Comparison of Ease of Finding the Visitor Centre





### 3.3 Events

- The park is not licensed for the performance of plays, films, live music, recorded music and dance. However, Colchester Borough Council does encourage community groups and event organisers to use the site as a venue, and to apply for Temporary Events Notice Licenses if required. The park is a popular events venue especially for charities, filming, education and sports.
- Park staff organise and promote an annual event programme including events for families e.g. Easter and Halloween as well training events for young people e.g. Fishing for Beginners and nature events.
- Events are publicised on the Visit Colchester web page

### 3.4 Volunteering

Colchester Borough Council promotes many different ways to volunteer in the park including:

- Joining Colchester Countryside Volunteer Ranger Service (CCVR)
- Joining the Monday volunteering group.
- Joining the weekend volunteer rangers.
- Volunteering in the visitor centre.
- Volunteering to be a Wellness Walk Leader.
- Becoming a volunteer ‘cattle looker’
- Joining The Conservation Volunteers in Essex when they carry out practical work conserving the landscape, amenity and wildlife in the park.
- Joining the Big Friendly Gardeners (BFG) and Together We Grow.

Training days for prospective volunteers are held throughout the year by park staff. Application is by means of an application form accessed by emailing [countryside@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:countryside@colchester.gov.uk) or on line. For more information about volunteering go to section 4.2.

### 3.5 Contribution to health and wellbeing

One of park's aims is to promote and develop its role in contributing to the town's health and wellbeing. There are worrying trends relating to the nation's health. Obesity and less active lifestyles have led to a rise in preventable diseases which is placing increasing pressures on the National Health Service. High Woods Country Park provides a wealth of opportunities for exercise. Add to this the positive impact of exposure to nature and green space on stress and mental health and the full picture in relation to health and wellbeing and access to green space can start to be understood. All these benefits were really highlighted during the corona virus pandemic.

High Woods Country Park offers activities that contribute to the national and local health agenda:

- Play areas, including natural play equipment.
- Opportunities to volunteer and feeling part of a local community.
- Gardening for health sessions in the Big Garden.
- Organised health walks on Fridays and Sundays.
- Waymarked and publicised trails, including a Wildlife App trail for families.
- Grassed areas for informal sports.
- Events and activities programme to get people involved and participating.
- Permits for health and fitness clubs.
- Permits for Forest School activities.
- Permits for fishing.
- Use of the Boma.

## 4.0 Current Management

### 4.1 Vision for the park

One of the aims of Colchester Borough Council's Parks and Green Spaces Strategy is: "to develop the range, quality and accessibility of public open space to encourage social inclusion, improve community health and enhance biodiversity". The management of High Woods Country Park contributes towards achieving this aim.

Achievements of the last 5 years

- New section of path installed in Frias Grove area of the park.
- Accredited with green flag award every year.
- Maintained volunteer numbers of above 60 throughout this period, many volunteers achieving their 10 and 20 yearlong service awards.
- Working with the Colchester Orbital Project.
- Working with the Colchester Woodland and Biodiversity Project.
- Fenced the dipping pond to create a safe area for school groups.
- Installation of a Defib cabinet donated by Nordic walking group so now the defib is available 24/7 to the public.
- Fishing permit purchase and event ticket sales now available online.
- Volunteer application form, education and event enquiry forms now available on line.
- 500m of hedgerow restoration.
- Achieved savings by reducing the visitor centre opening times from 7 days per week April to September to 7 days a week from April to August. The opening hours per day were also shortened slightly. The savings have been used to employ staff to cover the visitor centre at

weekends all year round. Previously this role had been filled by volunteers but it had become an increasingly difficult volunteer post to fill.

- Coffee machine installed in the visitor centre offering wider hot drinks range.
- Accessible, powered opening / closing door fitted to entrance of visitor centre.

#### 4.2 Staff and volunteers

The park is managed by a team, based within Environmental Services. Management operations are diverse and include visitor services, estate management and maintenance, enforcement, nature conservation, access, retailing, education and events. In addition to High Woods Country Park, the team has responsibility for another 270 hectares of country parks and nature reserves in Colchester. They are known as the Countryside Team.

Staffing	Full time equivalent
Senior Countryside Ranger	1
Countryside Rangers	2
Visitor Centre Officer	1
Visitor Centre Assistants	0.6 (Apr – Aug)
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.6</b>

Rangers are also responsible for the day-to-day use, safety, fuelling and maintenance of fleet vehicles, machinery and equipment. A number of relevant procedures are in place including:

- Daily Vehicle Checks.
- Annual driving license checks.
- 6 monthly servicing of the vehicles at the transport workshop.
- Annual servicing of machinery by local specialist companies.
- Annual review and update of the Tools and Equipment Inventory.
- Daily patrols and fishing permit checks.
- Weekly play zone equipment inspections.
- Monthly Visitor Centre health & safety inspections.
- Daily toilet cleaning (Kingdom Cleaning Services Ltd).

Colchester Borough Council provides marketing, communications and fund-raising support. The Country Park values its staff and offers training and development linked to an appraisal scheme. This scheme has been developed to manage individual performance and support the delivery of organisational goals. It sits alongside the Council’s talent management tool, CareerTrack; outcomes and insight gained from appraisal discussions feed into the CareerTrack matrix and succession planning.

CCVR (see 3.4) were formed 20 years ago. They are an external constituted group with 60 + volunteers, led by a committee which has been successful in attracting external grants for training to help develop the service. The work of the CCVR is directed and overseen by the 3 Countryside Rangers and Visitor Centre Officer who plan and run the maintenance, services and facilities of the Country Park and other Countryside Sites. Volunteer recruitment and training, led by the staff, takes place throughout the year.

CCVR activity incorporates - Wellness Walk volunteers / Weekend volunteers / Visitor Centre volunteers / Monday volunteers / Cattle lookers.

The delivery of site maintenance is a critical part of site management. In the absence of the CCVR essential site maintenance / management would have to be delivered by costly external contractors. The approximate annual contribution of CCVR activity on behalf of Colchester Borough Council was:

Year	No volunteer days	Estimated Economic Value
2018 - 2019	1853	£153,580
2019 - 2020	1739	£144,130
2020 - 2021	666 (Covid Pandemic)	£55,200

The economic value volunteers contribute to our organisation has been calculated by multiplying the total volunteer hours by an hourly wage rate. The hourly wage rate used is the average between the national minimum wage and the median hourly wage for 2020. Using the minimum wage alone would underestimate the value, while the median wage alone may overestimate it, so an average was used.

### 4.3 Maintenance specification

Id verde (trading as The Landscape Group) was awarded a 7-year grounds maintenance contract (GMC) with Colchester Borough Council, which began on 1st April 2016. A full grounds maintenance specification and standards was written and applied to High Woods Country Park summarised below and including:

- Grass maintenance.
- Hedge maintenance.
- Litter clearance.
- Site security

Item code	Quantity	Unit	Description	No of Occasions
B502AG13	12492	m2	Cut grass - rotary no collection	4
B502AG3	98256	m2	Cut grass - rotary no collection	8
B502SLG	1540	m2	Strim grass	3
B502WW1	5990	m2	Cut woody vegetation - rake & dispose of arisings	1
B502WW2	8000	m2	Cut woody vegetation - no collection	1
L1001LPB	7510	m2	Litter pick	12
L1003GCP	2	each	Lock/unlock gates	365
L201LCP	7	each	Empty litter bins	82

In addition to the GMC a range of smaller firms are employed under the terms of a Small Works Framework to implement an array of premises-based maintenance and improvement works.





#### 4.4. Expenditure and income

High Woods Country Park base budget 2020/21

Year	Site	Salaries £'000	Premises £'000	S & S & Trans £'000	Income £'000	Direct Cost £'000
2020/21	High Woods Country Park	95.9	80	32.4	(93.5)	114.8

The Country Park salaries budget includes 1.5FTE Countryside Ranger to reflect the resource that is required on sites other than High Woods Country Park.

Premises related costs includes the costs associated with the physical aspects of the site:

- Programmed grounds maintenance through the GMC including some S106 obligations.
- Responsive maintenance including response to vandalism and deterioration.
- Tree and woodland management.
- Utility costs; gas, electric water.
- Toilet cleaning / Site security / NNDR /Business Rates.

Supplies services and transport include:

- Materials for resale through Visitor Centre.
- Telephones / Uniforms.
- Tools, equipment and general office expenses.

The following supplement the park's ongoing base budget:

- Income derived from sale of items at the Visitor Centre.
- Car parking income.
- Public events.
- Educational sessions.
- S106 commuted sums allocated to specific items and offsetting expenditure.
- Fees and charges for fishing permits, health & fitness businesses, forest schools and other commercial uses.

#### 4.5 Future opportunities for income generation or cost savings

- Increase income from retail - the Visitor Centre annual income is variable as it is reliant on seasonal sales with particular impact of ice cream sales. The sales breakdown for 2019 is:
  - 79% food and drink (of which 26% ice cream, 19% hot drinks).
  - 12% souvenirs.
  - 9% other e.g. maps, donations, crafts, birdboxes and miscellaneous.
- Increase income from catering - the current catering offer is limited and reliant on Visitor Centre staff and volunteers making teas and coffees. There is no food preparation. Options include:
  - Continued or developed in-house.
  - Quality vending offer. One space in the main car park can be hired as a 'market pitch'.
  - External catering including mobile catering and concession.
  - Re-establish the no-cost coppicing contract

Commercial ideas that have been considered but not to the extent of a full business case:

- Segway - A potential operator was not forthcoming.
- High Ropes – Similar to Thetford Forest (Go Ape) and Braintree's Sky ropes at Notley Country Park. Sustainability is a concern and very high installation costs, limits on numbers possible due to insufficient parking.
- Improved catering offer as per above.

#### **4.6 Performance monitoring and standards**

The service uses the following to plan its work, monitor its performance and meet the standards required of an excellent Green Flag Park:

- Analysis of Customer Satisfaction Surveys which is carried out every other year.
- Annual work planning and personal appraisal.
- Industry accreditation, schemes and awards.
- Daily inspection and patrol.
- Monthly quantified statistics.
- Independent inspection of play zone.
- TripAdvisor feedback. Currently rated Great 4.5/5.
- Compliance with Colchester Borough Council's Financial Regulations, audit and Standard Operating Procedures.
- Certificates of Competence of staff kept up-to-date.

#### **4.7 Marketing**

Marketing of High Woods Country Park forms part of Colchester Borough Council's Marketing and Communications Plan and is achieved by:

##### **Informal Marketing**

"Word of mouth" recommendations, satisfaction received by visitors and interest articles in local newspapers all raise awareness of the services offered and encourage re-visits.

To get the benefits of informal marketing staff:

- Use results from Customer Satisfaction Surveys to provide feedback and guide management decisions.
- Encourage interaction with visitors.
- Analyse customer comments and complaints to ensure a high level of visitor satisfaction.
- Seek to regularly publish an 'interest article' in local newspapers, bulletins, newsletters and social media.

##### **Targeted Marketing**

Targeted marketing is undertaken either by type of visitor, service or event in the following ways:

- Park leaflet available as a download or hard copy available from the Visitor Centre.
- Working closely with the Communications and Marketing team by providing events information and the impact of works.
- Monitoring the park's TripAdvisor site to obtain feedback and update customers [www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction\\_Review](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review)
- Advertising as many events as possible in local newspapers, social media and [www.visitcolchester.com](http://www.visitcolchester.com)
- Ensuring up-to-date information on all events, educational services, fees and charges, self-serve forms and attractions on [www.colchester.gov.uk/countrypark](http://www.colchester.gov.uk/countrypark).
- Producing regular information posters on services and events at poster sites in the Country Park.

#### **4.8 Safety, security and dog control**

Customers view the park as a safe and secure place because:

- It is surrounded by residential housing so benefits from significant surveillance from local residents.
- There are many and varied types of users which means that it is busy especially in the summer months.
- The play zone is situated near to the main car park and Visitor Centre and is visible from the main path to the lake.

- It is patrolled by Rangers and volunteers, who monitor it during the week and at weekends. They ensure dog owners act responsibly, bailiff the fishing lake, deal with rough sleeping and ensure the site is free of graffiti, littering and vandalism.
- The presence of private security staff during the evenings in spring and summer.
- Visitor centre, yard and car park covered by CCTV.
- Both car parks are locked by grounds contractor in the evening 365 days a year.
- Rangers undertake an annual survey of park's boundary to check for encroachment and tipping by residential properties.
- Staff are accredited first aiders.
- Management activities and operations are done in accordance with a comprehensive set of Standard Operation Procedures (method of work statements).
- Dogs-on-leads zones apply to the central Parkland area and car parks. Other provision relating to dogs is described below.
- A Woodland Tree Safety Management Policy (2014) applies and guides staff as does a set of procedures derived from the Colchester Borough Council's Tree Policy. Tree safety work is prioritised so as to deal effectively in the first instance with areas of highest volume of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, e.g. play areas, picnic areas, outdoor classrooms, fishing swims, car parks, neighbouring roads, and properties and gardens. The park is divided into three risk zones based on high, medium and lower use areas as put together from an initial survey in 2015. Annual gross defect tree surveys are carried out by a professional arboriculturist and there is an active programme of remedial work. Trees are made safe, in so far as is reasonably practicable, and a record is kept of these activities.

There is a borough wide Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) against the anti-social behaviour of dog fouling in public areas. It applies to all public land and enables Colchester Borough Council to enforce against dog fouling following national legislation. PSPO notices have been installed in the park.

The Council's Community Wardens have the power to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice in the park for dog fouling including a fine of £100. If a dog owner fails to pay, court prosecution and a £1,000 fine can result.

In addition to enforcement the park provides dog waste bins at its many entrances.

The park is a wonderful place to exercise dogs and dog owners derive significant health benefits from this exercise. The published Country Park Dog Walking Code (leaflet available from the visitor centre) requires that all dogs are kept under control, and on a lead in the car parks, around the Visitor Centre, near livestock, runners and cyclists.

#### **4.9 Environmental management and sustainability**

A high number of environmental principles apply to High Woods Country Park:

##### **Inputs**

- Peat is not used. New plantings are bare rooted.
- Only pesticide used is glyphosate based for the control of invasive non-native and injurious weeds as per the Government website and the treatment of cut tree stumps for habitat conservation purposes. A precautionary approach applies - 'no pesticide use at the Country Park if an alternative method can be used'.
- Rangers hold Certificate of Competence for Safe Use and Storage of Chemicals plus Use of Hand Applicator.
- Pesticides stored in a locked and appropriately signed store.
- No fertiliser use on the hay meadows.

### Green waste and recycling

- Majority of the green waste generated – timber and wood, hay and other soft vegetation – is used, re-used or recycled. Majority of cut timber and wood will be taken as part of no-cost coppicing contract once reinstated. Remainder re-used as habitat piles or recycled as stakes and edging or chipped and used on path surfaces or to make mulch.
- Approximately 450 bales of hay made each summer and used as winter feed for livestock.
- Approximately 4 cubic metres of ragwort is pulled, dug or cut from the Country Park each year, and disposed to landfill. Ragwort, defined as a specified weed under the Weeds Act 1959, is industrial waste. Its disposal must comply with Waste Management Regulations and it is policy to do this in line with Defra's guidance (PB 11050).
- Waste food, tea bags, coffee grounds from the Visitor Centre go out for the 'doorstep' compost collection weekly.
- The recycling of plastics is to be increased.
- Small recycling facility for glass, cans, plastic and paper next to the Visitor Centre.
- Textile recycling point located in the visitor centre car park.
- Office paper waste is recycled.
- Use of building and surfacing products from recycled / salvaged materials where possible e.g. recycled plastic picnic benches.

### Other waste

- Rubbish bins provided, but restricted to car parks, Myland Chase and Field View entrances.
- Litter bins emptied twice weekly.
- Collection of litter at entrances, car parks and lake area.
- Visitors encouraged to take a responsible attitude to rubbish disposal.
- Clinical waste removed using sharps boxes and disposed to nearby Microbiology Laboratory.

### Carbon

- Low energy light bulbs used in Visitor Centre.
- External security lights kept to a minimum and work on sensors / timers.
- Vehicles and machinery regularly serviced to ensure maximum operational efficiency.
- Use of electric bike and trailer to reduce journey around the park in the diesel vehicles.

### Biodiversity and Economic

- Large proportion of the park managed for biodiversity.
- Visitor Centre gives choice of Fairtrade drinks ensuring that economic sustainability is passed back to producers.

### 4.10 Safety and risk assessment

- All staff and volunteers using power tools, equipment and off-road vehicles trained to industry standard.
- Staff undertake risk assessments on all operations, activities, tools and equipment used. There is a set of 31 Generic Risk Assessments (GRA) covering the tasks most frequently undertaken. See an example in the appendix.
- A set of 31 Method Of Work (MOW) statements (aka Standard Operating Procedures) accompany the risk assessments. See example in the appendix.
- High Woods Country Park has a site specific risk assessment that can be issued to any contractors etc working on site.
- Cutting machinery is only used by trained staff and volunteers. Chainsaws are only used by staff.
- All staff and volunteers are provided with, and required to wear, appropriate safety equipment and PPE (personal protective equipment).
- All Park vehicles are on a vehicle servicing and maintenance schedule, managed by Riverside Truck Rental Ltd on behalf of Colchester Borough Council.
- Use of fleet vehicles is done in accordance with Colchester's Vehicle Users Handbook.

- Fuel, equipment and machinery is stored in a secure compound.
- Chemicals used are managed in accordance with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) regulations.
- All staff handling herbicides hold PA1 and PA6 Certificates of Competence.
- Staff carry out regular inspections / audits of infrastructure, trees, Visitor Centre and general tools and equipment.
- Staff carry out daily visual and weekly physical play equipment inspections, testing fixings, supports and components of equipment, and report faults to Play Area Officer.
- Staff hold Certificates of Competence in Routine Playground Inspection to RoSPA standards.
- Colchester Borough Council carries out a full independent inspection of all its play areas annually.

## 5.0 Aims and Action Plan 2021 – 2025

Action	How	Resources	Timescale	Review
<b>Buildings, infrastructure and facilities</b>				
Rolling programme of repair and maintenance of existing surfaced paths	Approx. 800m of surfaced paths and driveways will be repaired and maintained annually. Priorities include the lake path and steps including improving drainage and the 'easy access' woodland path. See path works priorities table in the appendix.	In-house plus S106 and external funding	2021 - 25	
Install new surfaced paths	Priorities for new paths are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brinkley Grove entrance to Brinkley Grove East entrance.</li> <li>• Field View Close entrance to Brinkley East entrance or to Squirrels Field.</li> <li>• Southern slopes entrance to Turner Rise South entrance.</li> <li>• If additional Borough S106 funding can be sought, consider a lake all ability access path</li> </ul> All paths to be in keeping with the surroundings and take into account the nature of the soils / ground conditions and the environment.	S106 and external funding	2021 - 25	
Put up directional signage	Fiveways finger post	In-house	2022	
Put up information panel	A 'what can I do in the park?' panel will be installed at the Visitor Centre. Information panels to be installed at Dipping Pond and Heather Area.	In-house	2023	
Install bridge	Replace bridge between two sections of the Tubswick area of the park	In-house	2024	
Tree safety / condition survey	Risk Zones will be surveyed annually in accordance with Woodland Tree Policy. Review Woodland Tree Policy working with CBC Tree Officers	In-house  2024	2021 - 25	
Benches, fences and other furniture	All furniture will be checked regularly and repaired as required.	In-house	2021 - 25	

Review Grounds Maintenance Contract	Review all unit quantities and frequencies for new contract arrangements	In-house	2021 – 23	
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### Health, wellbeing and education

Support and facilitate Big Garden and Boma all terrain mobility scooter projects	Continue to work with Together We Grow and Walk Colchester on these 2 projects hosted at the park.	In-house	2021 – 25	
Support, promote and facilitate volunteer opportunities and recruitment	Hold at least 3 volunteer ‘taster day’ recruitment sessions annually. Continue to work with CCVR.	In-house	2021 - 25	
Continue to offer high quality education and event programme	Offer ranger led and self-led education sessions Put together an annual events programme	In-house	2021 - 25	
Provide opportunity for work experience	Work with local senior schools to offer work experience placements of 2 weeks for approx 4 students annually	In-house	2021 - 25	
Organise and manage wellness walk programme	Once fortnightly volunteer led Friday wellness walk Once fortnightly volunteer led Sunday stroll	In-house	2021 - 25	

### Safety, security and dog fouling

Review safety documents	Review Risk assessments and method of work statements at least every 3 years	In-house	2021, 2024	
Improve security	Continue to work with private security firm to provide reliable out of hours patrols, alarm response and key holder responsibilities.	In-house	2021 - 25	
Work with Police, PCSOs, Wardens to combat and reduce anti-social behaviour.	Review use of Public Space Protection Orders. Key issues include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• littering esp dog waste</li> <li>• motor bikes / quad bikes entering the park</li> <li>• unauthorised fires / BBQs</li> <li>• graffiti</li> <li>• encampments / tents (if homeless involved work with the CBH outreach team)</li> </ul>	In-house	2021 - 25	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Out of control dogs – plan an awareness campaign / event</li> </ul>			
Dog fouling	Continue to work with Community Wardens to reduce dog fouling. Make dog walkers code available on line.	In-house	2021 - 25	

### Environmental sustainability

Wood recycling	Support CCVR with their small-scale fire wood sales project - volunteers will cut, split and bag cord wood produced via woodland management for sale at Visitor Centre.	CCVR fundraising	2021 - 25	
Recycling facility	Review current offer and see if improvements can be made to help recycling i.e. making it clearer which items go in which bin to reduce error and contamination. Relocate to improve the layout of facilities in front of the visitor centre.	In-house	2022 - 23	

### Heritage

Produce management plan for Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)	Working with CBC's archaeological advisor and English Heritage write a specific management plan for the SAM located in the northern end of compartment A6. Start implementing the recommendation including installation of an interpretation / information panel.	In-house	2021 - 25	
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<b>Biodiversity</b>			
Meadows and pastures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with The Legacy Grazing Project (LGP) to make sure all requirements are met as set out in the Farm Business Tenancy and the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.</li> <li>• Continue to support and train volunteer 'cattle lookers'.</li> <li>• Continue with annual sky lark survey and meadow condition surveys. See current reports for both in the appendix.</li> <li>• Pull ragwort, clear fence lines of encroaching vegetation and maintain hedgerows and field margins.</li> <li>• Look into using goat and 'no fence' GPS grazing in Farthing Bottom meadow to achieve meadow restoration in this area.</li> <li>• Look into dogs on leads signage on southern slopes during skylark nesting season</li> <li>• Review and renew Farm Business Tenancy</li> <li>• Review how Government ELMS policy may affect Countryside Stewardship arrangements</li> </ul>	<p>In-house.</p> <p>LGP</p> <p>In-house</p> <p>In-house</p> <p>LGP</p> <p>In house</p> <p>In-house</p> <p>In-house</p>	<p>2021 – 25</p> <p>2021 – 25</p> <p>2021 - 25</p> <p>2021 – 25</p> <p>2022</p> <p>2023</p> <p>2025</p> <p>2025</p>
Silt out of marsh	Set up a working group with Essex County Council, Environment Agency and other bodies to improve wetland habitat whilst improving flood control in the area and also contributing to carbon sequestration.	Seek external grant funding	2022 - 25
Reptile action plan	Deliver the plan as set out in section 1.5.	In-house	2021 – 2025
Biodiversity surveys	Survey selected flora and fauna to guide future management so as to maintain and, where possible, enhance the value of the park for wildlife. Work with local interest groups such as Colchester Natural history Society (CNHS)	In-house and work with local interest groups	2021 - 2025
Woods and trees plan	Deliver the plan as set out in section 1.5.	Mix of no-cost coppicing contract & in-house	2021 – 2025
Scrub management	Tubswick and Woodcock Down areas of the park – maintain mosaic habitat by ride widening, maintaining glades and coppicing scrub on rotation	In house	2021 - 2025
Hedgerow maintenance and restoration	Restore 100 – 200m of hedgerow a year and maintain all other by trimming / flailing	In house	2021 - 2025

### Marketing

Information board	Install board to promote recreational activities available on-site at visitor centre/toilets	In-house	2023	
Customer Satisfaction Surveys	Carry out surveys to help identify visitor issues and priorities.	In-house	2023 and 2025	
Review marketing strategy	Increase the profile of High Woods Country Park by working with the Communications Team to improve how the education programme, events programme and generally what is on offer at the park is promoted.	In-house	2023	

### Income

Increase income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the success of the new coffee machine, offering a wider range of hot drinks, installed in 2021.</li> <li>• Monitor and review the success of the on-line sales of event tickets and fishing permits brought in in 2020 and 2021 respectively.</li> <li>• S106 funding and external grant bids for works such as wetland improvements in the marsh area, installation of new paths and visitor centre improvements.</li> <li>• Increase income from Visitor Centre e.g., investigate an improved catering offer.</li> <li>• Seeking a vendor for the winter 'market pitch' available in the car park.</li> <li>• Improve promotion and increase ranger and self-led education offer.</li> <li>• Increase and improve event programme.</li> <li>• Promote 'site for hire' for external events and recreational groups and activities.</li> <li>• Implement proposal for 'activity bags for hire'.</li> </ul>	To be undertaken in-house	2021 - 2025	
Additional visitor attraction located on site	Investigations will continue to attract a visitor attraction e.g. segway hire.	To be undertaken in-house	2021 - 2025	

## 6.0 Monitoring and Review

The Parks, Countryside, Operations and Greening Manager, the Tree and Country Park Manager and the Senior Countryside Ranger will review the management plan annually to decide on any changes and / or alterations for the following year and work with staff to produce an annual working action plan (available on the website plus on site in the notice board). This review will incorporate discussions with staff looking after the park, and take on board comments and advice given from Green Flag judges each year and the customer satisfaction surveys. Progress will be measured against the 5-year Action Plan set out above.

All country parks staff will be made aware of the High Woods Country Park Management Plan. Where individuals are given specific tasks in relation to High Woods Country Park, it may be appropriate to include the tasks in their Personal Development Plan and, monitor this through the appraisal process.

User surveys based on Customer Satisfaction Surveys and TripAdvisor comments will be carried out on a regular basis and scores will be used to monitor changes in approval ratings amongst park users.

## 7.0 Appendices

### 7.1 Bird Species List for High Woods Country Park 2014 -2020

Total number of species 72

(Thanks goes to Peter Beard, Volunteer Ranger, for this data and maintaining the sites BTO list)

Selected Species	Scientific name	Recs	Rep%	1st Date
Pied/White Wagtail	Motacilla alba yarrellii	1	0.7	18/03/2017
Canada Goose	Branta canadensis	4	2.9	22/04/2016
Mute Swan	Cygnus olor	5	3.6	08/10/2016
Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos	100	69.6	17/06/2014
Teal	Anas crecca	4	2.2	29/12/2014
Goosander	Mergus merganser	6	2.9	09/12/2014
Pheasant	Phasianus colchicus	8	5.8	01/05/2016
Swift	Apus apus	11	8	17/06/2014
Cuckoo	Cuculus canorus	1	0.7	26/05/2018
Stock Dove	Columba oenas	19	13.8	18/02/2017
Woodpigeon	Columba palumbus	142	98.6	17/06/2014
Collared Dove	Streptopelia decaocto	79	57.2	21/04/2016
Moorhen	Gallinula chloropus	113	79.7	17/06/2014
Little Grebe	Tachybaptus ruficollis	1	0	22/03/2015
Black-headed Gull	Chroicocephalus ridibundus	120	82.6	29/12/2014
Common Gull	Larus canus	3	2.2	20/12/2020
Herring Gull	Larus argentatus	84	59.4	04/07/2014
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Larus fuscus	66	47.1	03/04/2016
Common Tern	Sterna hirundo	2	1.4	14/05/2016
Cormorant	Phalacrocorax carbo	7	5.1	17/06/2014
Grey Heron	Ardea cinerea	13	9.4	13/03/2016
Little Egret	Egretta garzetta	11	8	11/03/2015
Sparrowhawk	Accipiter nisus	8	5.8	01/05/2016
Red Kite	Milvus milvus	1	0.7	24/02/2019

## High Woods Country Park Management Plan 2021-2025

Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	24	16.7	08/03/2015
Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>	2	1.4	01/05/2016
Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	2	1.4	15/10/2016
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	108	74.6	04/07/2014
Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	128	89.1	04/07/2014
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	22	15.9	10/01/2017
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	123	85.5	29/12/2014
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	141	97.8	17/06/2014
Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	77	55.1	09/12/2016
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	141	97.8	17/06/2014
Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	91	65.2	21/04/2016
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	141	97.8	04/07/2014
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	139	96.4	04/07/2014
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	53	37	17/06/2014
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	5	2.9	14/04/2015
House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	3	2.2	18/06/2017
Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	10	7.2	21/04/2016
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	119	82.6	29/12/2014
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	29	20.3	18/04/2015
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	53	37.7	04/07/2014
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	44	31.2	17/06/2014
Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	8	5.8	01/05/2017
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Curruca curruca</i>	11	8	10/04/2016
Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>	22	15.9	01/05/2016
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	30	21.7	27/10/2016
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	120	82.6	17/06/2014
Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	68	49.3	03/04/2016
Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	41	28.3	29/12/2014
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	52	37.7	10/04/2015
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	58	40.6	29/12/2014
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	35	23.9	29/04/2015
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	40	28.3	29/12/2014
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	139	97.1	17/06/2014
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	1	0.7	03/01/2021
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	138	95.7	29/12/2014
Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	1	0.7	29/04/2019
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	1	0	15/09/2016
Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	5	3.6	08/01/2017
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	45	32.6	17/04/2016
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	112	79	17/06/2014
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	19	13.8	28/12/2016
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	100	68.8	17/06/2014
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	37	26.1	29/12/2014
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	66	45.7	17/06/2014
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	6	4.3	11/06/2016
[Common/Lesser Redpoll]	<i>Acanthis flammea/cabaret</i>	2	1.4	05/04/2018
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	123	85.5	04/07/2014
Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>	10	5.1	06/02/2016
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	5	3.6	09/04/2017

**7.2 Butterfly Species List High Woods Country Park 2019 – Total 25 species**

Huge thanks to Volunteer Ranger Pete Beard for this data

Date	Location description	Grid Ref	Common Name	Scientific Name
3/1/2019	Lake field.....west	TM002273	Peacock	<i>Aglais io</i>
2/23/2019	hwcp.....hard standing	TM001268	Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>
2/25/2019	hwcp big garden	TM000269	Comma	<i>Polygonia c-album</i>
3/26/2019	hwcp big garden	TM000268	Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>
4/9/2019	hwcp dipping pond	TL999269	Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>
4/10/2019	Hwcp..turner rise	TL999264	Green Veined White	<i>Pieris napi</i>
4/10/2019	Hwcp..turner rise	TL999264	Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>
4/17/2019	highwoods country park	TL999271	Orange Tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>
20/04/19	hwcp butterfly ride	TM000272	Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>
20/04/19	hwcp butterfly ride	TM000272	Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>
02/05/19	hwcp	TM000269	Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>
09/05/19	hwcp big garden	TL999268	Brown Argus	<i>Aricia agestis</i>
09/05/19	hwcp big garden	TL999268	Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>
12/05/19	hwcp boat field	TM002266	Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>
12/05/19	hwcp hard standing	TM001268	Green Hairstreak	<i>Callophrys rubi</i>
15/05/19	hwcp southern slopes	TL999266	Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>
09/06/19	hwcp	TM002269	Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>
18/06/19	hwcp b/g	TM000268	Meadow brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>
18/06/19	hwcp	TM000268	Large skipper	<i>Ochlodes sylvanus</i>
22/06/19	hwcp hard stand	TM001268	Ringlet	<i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>
22/06/19	hwcp	TM001268	Small skipper	<i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>
25/06/19	Dipping pond	TL999269	White admiral	<i>Limenitis camilla</i>
26/06/19	hwcp	TL999266	Essex skipper	<i>Thymelicus lineola</i>
03/07/19	hwcp	TM000268	Gatekeeper	<i>Pyronia tithonus</i>
22/08/19	hwcp dipping pond	TL999269	Purple hairstreak	<i>Favonius quercus</i>

### 7.3 Dragonfly and Damselfly Species list for High Woods Country Park 2016 – 2020

Total species 17

Selected Species	Scientific name	Date
Banded Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>	18/06/2017
Azure Damselfly	<i>Coenagrion puella</i>	18/06/2017
Common Blue Damselfly	<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	23/05/2017
Blue-tailed Damselfly	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>	18/06/2017
Large Red Damselfly	<i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>	23/05/2017
Willow Emerald Damselfly	<i>Lestes viridis</i>	08/10/2018
Emerald Damselfly	<i>Lestes sponsa</i>	16/09/2021
Migrant Hawker	<i>Aeshna mixta</i>	15/10/2016
Emperor Dragonfly	<i>Anax imperator</i>	18/06/2017
Broad-bodied Chaser	<i>Libellula depressa</i>	23/05/2017
Four-spotted Chaser	<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	18/06/2017
Ruddy Darter	<i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i>	30/06/2018
Common Darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>	15/10/2016
Southern Hawker	<i>Aeshna cyanea</i>	31/07/2021
Black-tail Skimmer	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>	25/07/2021
Red-eye Damselfly	<i>Erythromma najas</i>	25/07/2021
Brown Hawker	<i>Aeshna grandis</i>	25/07/2021



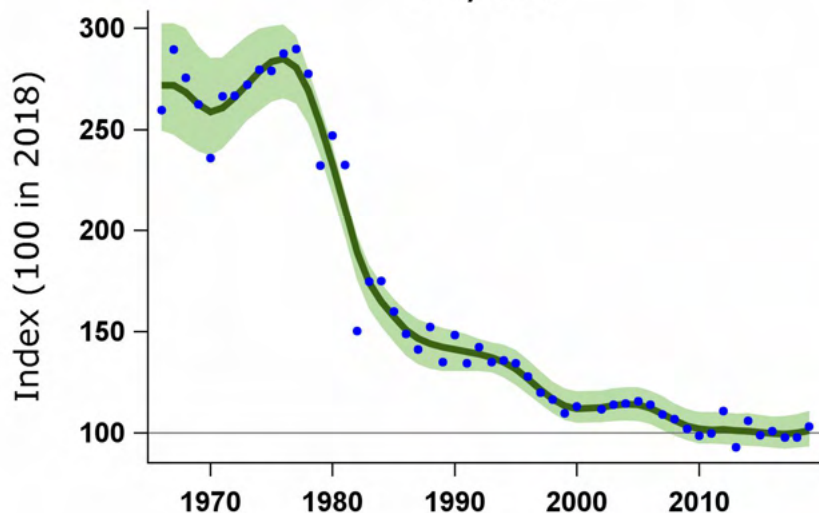
Willow Emerald (Left) Azure and Migrant Hawker female (Right), HWCP dipping pond, P. Beard

## 7.4 Annual Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) Survey Report High Woods Country Park

Skylark - a resident, ground nesting, farmland species, nationally in decline. The Skylark is Red Listed because of this long-term severe breeding population decline. There is good evidence to indicate that the most likely cause of the national decline is agricultural intensification, specifically the change from spring to autumn sowing of cereals, which reduces the number of breeding attempts possible and may also reduce overwinter survival due to loss of winter stubbles.

Diet in summer, mostly insects, otherwise cereal grain and weed seeds, also shoots.

CBC/BBS England 1966–2019  
Skylark



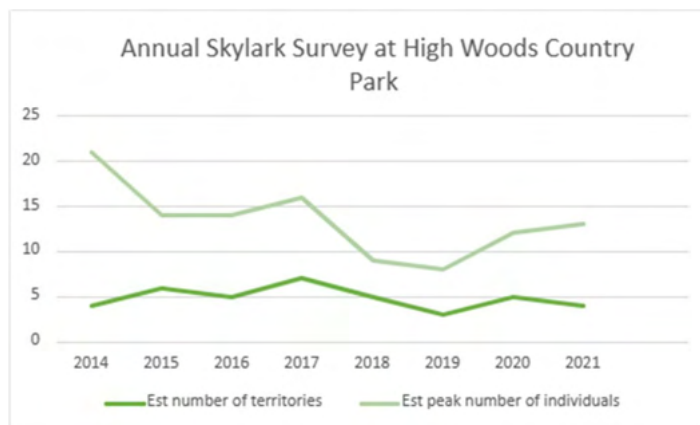
This chart and above information is from the BTO/JNCC BirdTrends Report

CBC / BBS - Common Bird Census / Breeding Bird Survey Trends

### High Woods Country Park Skylark Survey Data

Huge thanks to the volunteer rangers who undertook these surveys.

Year	Number of surveys undertaken	Estimated number of territories	Estimated peak number of individuals
2014	6	4	21
2015	10	6	14
2016	6	5	14
2017	10	7	16
2018	8	5	9
2019	5	3	8
2020	8	5	12
2021	8	4	13



Territory is defined as when a singing male is heard in the same location on two or more survey occasions.

Our data shows a decline in overall numbers, so in line with the national trend, but the number of territories has remained relatively stable. Our hypothesis was that numbers would increase due to improved meadow management following the setup of the stewardship agreement in 2017.

However, our management is not tailored specifically toward Skylark but more for promotion of wildflowers and insects. When the stewardship agreement is renewed in 2022 an additional spring cut may be taken in some areas with the aim to reduce the thatch in the grassland and so promote wildflower proliferation. This may end up giving an added benefit to the Skylark by giving areas of shorter grassland into the breeding season.

Skylark prefer wide expanses of open habitat with few hedgerows so the number of territories we have may be the maximum number we are likely to get with the type and area of habitat we have on offer. BTO studies have found territory size varies greatly depending on the quality of the habitat (BTO research report 129). Birds appear to prefer the south facing meadows numbers 4 and 5 and the territories here seem in closer proximity. The highest peak number of individuals is also in these fields, so perhaps there is higher breeding success in these fields. Does the south facing aspect of these fields play a role?

It does seem that the bigger grazing fields with greater expanse could/should support more territories but this is not the case. Perhaps cattle grazing has an impact, but this is not so on another of our sites we manage with cattle grazing at Gosbecks Archaeological site. Disturbance by dogs and people may be an issue. It may be worth considering installing seasonal signage on the southern slopes asking people to stick to the path network and put dogs on leads during the breeding season. This is already being trialled at Gosbecks Archaeological site. However, it has been noted during our surveys that Skylarks do make use of the paths, especially the diagonal path across Field No 5, as a short grass area to land in then dart into the longer grass tufts i.e. the path is acting like a 'skylark plot', a conservation method used in crops on farms.





## 7.5 High Woods Country Park Meadow Condition Assessment Report

The criteria to pass are the following:

- Cover of undesirable species/negative indicator species less than 5% e.g. creeping thistle, spear thistle, curled dock, broad-leaved dock, common ragwort, hoary ragwort, common nettle, cow parsley, bristly oxtongue, creeping buttercup, white clover.
- Cover of wildflower plants more than 20%
- Bare ground less than 10%
- Cover invasive trees / shrubs less than 5%
- Cover of indicators of water logging less than 30%
- At least two positive indicator species are frequent and at least two positive indicators species are occasional e.g. common agrimony, bird’s-foot-trefoil, black or common knapweed, lady’s bedstraw, meadow vetchling, field scabious, ox-eye daisy, pepper-saxifrage, ragged robin
- A species is rare if it occurs in one or two survey squares out of ten; a species is occasional if it occurs in three or four survey squares out of ten; Frequent species occur in five or more stops out of ten.

### Old ley Field

Date	2018	10/07/2021	2023	2025
% cover of undesirables	Did not survey due to cattle	10%		
% cover of wildflower	grazing in this field	62%		
% cover bare ground		Less than 1%		
% cover invasive trees / shrubs		Less than 1%		
% cover of indicators of water logging		0%		
Number of frequent +ve indicators		3		
Number of occasional +ve indicators		1		
Number of rare +ve indicators		1		
Pass/Fail		PASS		

### Boat Field

Date	26/05/2018	2021	2023	2025
% cover of undesirables	3 'rare' -ve indicators	Did not survey due to cattle		
% cover of wildflower	22%	grazing in this field		
% cover bare ground	0%			
% cover invasive trees / shrubs	0%			
% cover of indicators of water logging	0%			
Number of frequent +ve indicators	4			
Number of occasional +ve indicators	0			
Number of rare +ve indicators	1			
Pass / Fail	PASS			

### Southern Slopes 1

Date	09/06/2018	25/07/2021	2023	2025
% cover of undesirables	1 'rare' -ve indicator	12%		
% cover of wildflower	52%	44%		
% cover bare ground	0%	3%		
% cover invasive trees / shrubs	3%	Less than 1%		
% cover of indicators of water logging	0%	0%		
Number of frequent +ve indicators	2	3		
Number of occasional +ve indicators	1	0		
Number of rare +ve indicators	1	2		
Pass/Fail	PASS just	PASS just		

### Southern Slopes 2

Date	14/06/2018	24/07/2021	2023	
% cover of undesirables	1 rare, 1 occasional, 1 frequent	13%		
% cover of wildflower	53%	17%		
% cover bare ground	1%	6%		
% cover invasive trees / shrubs	2%	Less than 1%		
% cover of indicators of water logging	0%	0%		
Number of frequent +ve indicators	1	1		
Number of occasional +ve indicators	0	1		
Number of rare +ve indicators	1	2		
Pass/fail	FAIL	FAIL		

### Southern Slopes 3

Date	23/06/2018	24/07/2021	2023	
% cover of undesirables	2 rare, 1 occasional, 1 frequent	10%		
% cover of wildflower	45%	41%		
% cover bare ground	0%	8%		
% cover invasive trees / shrubs	1.5%	Less than 1%		
% cover of indicators of water logging	0%	0%		
Number of frequent +ve indicators	1	1		
Number of occasional +ve indicators	2	2		
Number of rare +ve indicators	1	2		
Pass/fail	PASS just	PASS just		

**Mayors Spinney**

Date	27/06/2018	25/07/2021	2023	
% cover of undesirables	4 rare, 1 occasional	9%		
% cover of wildflower	53%	25%		
% cover bare ground	0%	9%		
% cover invasive trees / shrubs	0%	0%		
% cover of indicators of water logging	0%	0%		
Number of frequent +ve indicators	2	2		
Number of occasional +ve indicators	0	0		
Number of rare +ve indicators	2	2		
Pass/fail	PASS just	PASS just		

**Woodcock Down**

Date	01/07/2018	31/07/2021	2023	
% cover of undesirables	5 rare, 1 occasional, 3 frequent	10%		
% cover of wildflower	40%	27%		
% cover bare ground	0%	10%		
% cover invasive trees / shrubs	1%	Less than 1%		
% cover of indicators of water logging	0%	0%		
Number of frequent +ve indicators	0	1		
Number of occasional +ve indicators	1	2		
Number of rare +ve indicators	4	1		
Pass/fail	FAIL	FAIL		

**Farthing Bottom**

Date	12/07/2018	2021	2023	
% cover of undesirables	2 frequent, 1 occasional	Didn't survey automatic fail as there is so much scrub in the field		
% cover of wildflower	72%			
% cover bare ground	0%			
% cover invasive trees / shrubs	8%			
% cover of indicators of water logging	0%			
Number of frequent +ve indicators	3			
Number of occasional +ve indicators	0			
Number of rare +ve indicators	2			
Pass/fail	FAIL	FAIL		

### Further Meadow

Date	12/07/2018	24/07/2021	2023	
% cover of undesirables	2 frequent, 1 rare	26%		
% cover of wildflower	21%	20%		
% cover bare ground	0%	10%		
% cover invasive trees / shrubs	2%	0%		
% cover of indicators of water logging	0%	0%		
Number of frequent +ve indicators	1	1		
Number of occasional +ve indicators	0	0		
Number of rare +ve indicators	1	3		
Pass/fail	<b>FAIL</b>	<b>FAIL</b>		

### Squirrels Field

Date	26/02/2018	24/07/2021	2023	
% cover of undesirables	2 rare	10%		
% cover of wildflower	48%	30%		
% cover bare ground	0%	9%		
% cover invasive trees / shrubs	0%	0%		
% cover of indicators of water logging	0%	0%		
Number of frequent +ve indicators	2	3		
Number of occasional +ve indicators	2	1		
Number of rare +ve indicators	0	0		
Pass/fail	<b>PASS</b>	<b>PASS</b>		

## 7.6 High Woods Country Park Path Priorities

Path No	Location	Condition / description	Approx. length	Maintenance required	Priority	Past maintenance carried out and date
1	Northern edge of Squirrels Field	Good throughout - Smooth tarmac	130m	None in 2021 - Monitor	Low	2015 - Steve Collis organised surface to be re tarmacked. There was an issue with puddling on the bend in the area behind the bench.
2	Through the woodland edge on the Northern end of the Tubswick area as entering into Squirrels Field. Part of the Red Route.	Good throughout - Road Plainings	70m	None in 2021 - Monitor	Low	2019 - 70m new path laid over what had become a (seasonally) muddy, wet natural surface path under the trees
3	Section of the Red Route linking up 2 bridges, the one on the edge of Squirrels Field to the one on the edge of Brinkley Grove Wood	Seasonally poor - Natural surface woodland path which becomes seasonally wet and muddy	60m	None in 2021 - Monitor. If and when funds are available install path surfacing of spec .....	Low / medium	None
4	Section of the Red Route linking up a bridge on the Eastern edge of Tubswick to the Western edge of Brinkley Grove Wood	Seasonally poor - Natural surface woodland path which becomes seasonally muddy and slippery due to the slope	70m	None in 2021 - Monitor. If and when funds are available install path surfacing, grips and drainage of spec .....	Medium	None
5	Woodland path to the main Brinkley Grove Circuit path from Gavin Way Entrance	Seasonally very poor - Natural surface woodland path. Very uneven in places. Path becomes seasonally very wet and muddy esp in narrow pinch points.	220m	None in 2021 - Monitor. If and when funds are available install path surfacing and drainage of spec .....	Medium / high	None
6	Woodland Path West from Brinkley Grove Entrance. Part of the Red Route.	Good throughout - Road Plainings	300m	None in 2021 - Monitor	Low	2018 - 300m new path laid over what had become a (seasonally) muddy, wet natural surface path under the trees
7	Woodland path linking Brinkley Grove Entrance to Brinkley Grove East Entrance. Part of the Red Route	Seasonally poor - Natural surface woodland path. Uneven in places. Becomes seasonally very wet and muddy. Some large areas of puddling	190m	None in 2021 - Monitor. If and when funds are available install path surfacing of spec .....	High	Funding could become available via the Rugby Club development

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8	Woodland path west of Brinkley Grove East Entrance as far as the SAM junction. Part of the Red Route and Public Right of Way.	Seasonally poor - Mainly natural surface woodland path but some areas nearer to the SAM seem to have had hard core put down in the past, pre 2005. Uneven in places. Becomes seasonally very wet and muddy. Some large areas of puddling	260m	None in 2021 - Monitor. If and when funds are available seek SAM permission to install path surfacing of spec ..... Funding could become available via the Rugby Club development or via ECC PROW	High	None
9	Woodland path, North of SAM junction in Brinkley Grove Wood	Seasonally poor - Natural surface woodland path . Uneven in places. Becomes seasonally very wet and muddy. Some large areas of puddling	100m	None in 2021 - Monitor. If and when funds are available install path surfacing of spec .....	Medium / high	None
10	Woodland path dissecting the main Brinkley Grove block from East to West	Seasonally poor - Natural surface woodland path. Some areas still getting enough light to remain grass covered. Uneven in places. Becomes seasonally very wet and muddy. Some large areas of puddling	250m	None in 2021 - Monitor. Leave as natural path as there will be alternative route options (once the other path surfacing work has been carried out) during the winter when this path is in its worst state.	Low	None
11	Woodland path from SAM junction to the central valley Stream - on the Northern boundary of Central Valley and Southern Boundary Brinkley Grove. Part of the red route. PROW	Generally good but showing some signs of water erosion due to the sloping nature of the path - road plainings	190m	None in 2021 - monitor to see if grips are required with topping up the surfacing where erosion has taken place	Low / medium	Pre 2015 - surfacing improved by ECC
12	Woodland edge path West from central valley stream a short distance into the Tubswick area towards Field View Close entrance. Part of PROW	Good for its short distance but leads on to a muddy, sloping section of path underneath scrub trees	20m	None in 2021 - monitor. ECC has proposed to surface the route from Field View Close entrance to this point and officially rerouted the PROW in ..... to follow this route rather than go out to the Bedford Road Entrance and back to this point.	Low	Pre 2015 - drainage and surfacing installed by ECC at the same time as path 11 works took place.
13	Central Valley Woodland Path	Showing signs of deterioration in a number of places - original hoggin path approx. 25 to 30 yrs old, put in when site first became a country park	300m	Keep monitoring for further deterioration	Medium	2018 Topped up 40 meters of path surface eroded by rain runoff at the northern end of the path adjacent to the stream studies area. 2021 - Topped up surfacing with road plainings in 3 different areas totalling 66m where path had become soft and muddy, including wooden path edging near the stream studies area

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14	Extraction route path. Includes the spur off to the central valley path. Part of the Red Route	Path becoming narrow and overgrown by grass and other plants due build-up of leaf litter over the years providing a growing medium. Can't tell what the condition of the hard surfacing is like under this.	400m	None in 2021 - monitor. If funding allows, clear leaf mulch off of the path to properly assess its condition. Re instate surfacing where required.	Medium	Some hard surfacing put in 1987 to create a path to allow vehicle access to remove the large amount of timber felled due to the hurricane.
15	Woodland glade path going West from the mid point of the Extraction Route path	Seasonally can be muddy in places - Natural surface woodland edge path, uneven in places	100m	None in 2021 - monitor	Low	None - leave as natural surface unless its condition deteriorates significantly
16	Path leading South from Field View Close entrance. Part of the Red Route	Good (Road Plainings) apart from one 9m2 area which is starting to puddle half way along its length where the path dips then raises to cross the ditch.	220m	None in 2021 - Top up the 9m2 area with rood plainings	Medium	New path installed Sep 2016
17	Path from Fiveways Junction to the edge of Tubswick. Part of the Red Route and PROW.	Showing signs of deterioration in a few places ie soft, muddy, puddling areas - original hoggin path approx. 25 to 30 yrs old, put in when site first became a country park. A numbers of repairs have been carried out over the years	220m	Keep monitoring for further deterioration	Medium	2015 50m of path topped up at the Fiveways junction end 2016 French drain and surfacing topped up at Kingswood junction 2021 two areas of path surfacing topped up, 25m and 40m in length
18	Path leading off from the above path (17) to the Kingswood Entrance. PROW.	Mostly good - natural surface woodland path, southern end road plainings	115m	None in 2021 - monitor	Low	2015 - 30m of path surfacing installed at the Southern end of the path to fix problem wet area at the bottom of the slope
19	Waterways path leading to Pampas Close. PROW.	Mostly good but steep and can be slippery. Section East of stream: showing signs of rainwater erosion in places. Path surface probably originating from before the area became a country park. Mainly large stones compacted to create a surface. Section West of stream - road plainings at the Cardiac Hill Junction end of the path.	230m	None in 2021 - monitor	Medium	2016 - 170m of surfacing at the cardiac Hill junction and path edging (wooden sleepers) to fix area eroded by rain water flowing down the path into the stream near the culvert
20	Cardiac Hill - Part of the Blue Route. PROW.	Mostly good but due to the slopping nature of the path it does suffer from rainwater erosion	170m	Keep monitoring for further erosion	Medium	Pre 2015 original hoggin path was replaced with road plainings. 2021 - 30m section became soft and muddy. Path surface topped up with road plainings

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21	Butterfly Ride. Part of the yellow route and PROW.	Good - Road Plainings	250m	None in 2021 - monitor	Low	2015 - 40m path topped up 2016 - Topped up 213m of path
22	Fiveways Junction to the junction with the Turner Road Entrance. Part of the yellow, red and blue routes. The Fiveways junction to Hollymead Entrances is PROW.	Good - areas of Road Plainings and original hoggin path	230m	Keep monitoring	Low / medium	2021 - 30m section became soft and muddy. Path surface topped up with road plainings
23	Hollymead Entrance. PROW.	Good - road plainings	45m	None in 2021 - monitor	Low	2016 - new path surfacing installed
24	Turner Road Entrance	Generally good - alternative vehicle access route into the park. Needs some material put down at the gate as due to the slight incline in wet conditions average vehicle will not have the grip to drive in.	130m	None in 2021 - monitor	Low / medium	None
25	VC Car park to junction of Turner Road Entrance. Part of the red, yellow and blue routes.	Good - road plainings	170m	None in 2021 - monitor	Low	2009 - surfacing re done
26	VC car park to Lake Field path via play areas	Good - road plainings	280m	None in 2021 - monitor	Low	2011 - surfacing re done
27	Easy Access Path	Deteriorating in places especially on the steeper section on the zigzag bend near the burnt pine tree stump. Rain water erosion. The sleepers laid in the path to denote where benches are located to the visually impaired are starting to rot. Wooden edging is rotting. Surfacing is seasonally wet in places and becoming soft. Build-up of rotting leaf mulch causes path to be 'muddy' in places. Hoggin path was put in 25 - 30 years ago when the site first became a country park.	250m + 20m spur off to near the pond	None in 2021 - monitor	Medium / high	2018 - cleared thick layer of rotting leaf mulch off of the path surface on the zig zag bend and got back to the original hard surface.
28	Main maintenance vehicle access route to the whole of the park behind the Visitor Centre. Part of the blue and yellow routes.	Good - road plainings	350m	None in 2021 - monitor	Low	2010 - Path resurfaced with road plainings as part of the cycle path works carried out by EEC. 2017, 2019 - Pudding area in front of the yard gates topped up with granite type 1.
29	Forest Garden path to the Big Garden allotment area including loop	Good - hoggin path with wooden edging	110m	None in 2021 - monitor	Low	2006 - Put in as part of the Big Garden Project



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30	High Woods main central path - grazing meadows junction to play area path junction. PROW and part of the Blue Route.	Good - Road Plainings	260m	None in 2021 - monitor	Low	2017 260m - path surface scraped of composted leaf litter and mud and topped with road plainings 2020 - path edge damaged by fire brigade. Reinstated by building up the path edge and topping with road plainings
31	High Woods main central path - play area path junction to Butterfly Ride junction. PROW and part of the Blue Route.	Good - Road Plainings	190m	None in 2021 - monitor	Low	2017 190m - path surface scraped of composted leaf litter and mud and topped with road plainings 2020 - path edge damaged by fire brigade. Reinstated by building up the path edge and topping with road plainings
32	High Woods main central path - Butterfly Ride junction to the bottom of Cardiac Hill junction. PROW and part of the Blue Route.	Showing signs of deterioration in a few places ie soft, muddy, puddling areas - original hoggin path approx. 25 to 30 yrs old, put in when site first became a country park.	265m	Keep monitoring. The area surfaced with road plainings at the end of 2021 has not firmed up correctly and is acting as a bit of a 'sand trap'. Engineers looking to find a solution.	Medium/High	2021 - 80m section became soft and muddy. Path surface topped up with road plainings
33	Turner Rise North - main path on boundary between Old Ley Field and Big Garden. National Cycle route and PROW	Good - fiberdeck with shingle coating. 3 areas where the surface has dipped slightly thus puddles form. In winter when this freezes it is very slippery.	290m	Contact ECC and put this issue on their maintenance and engineering works list.	Medium	2010 - path totally re done with fiberdeck as part of the cycle path works carried out by ECC. 2015 - due to the amount of cracking in the path surface the western half of the path was re done by ECC
34	Main path on boundary between Old Ley Field and Boat Field. PROW and part of the yellow route.	Showing signs of deterioration in a few places. Original hoggin path topped with road plainings. In places the original hoggin is showing through and some areas are starting to puddle in poor weather	170m	Top the low, puddling areas as a minimum. Monitor and consider resurfacing whole path if and when funds are available.	Medium	2009 - path was topped with road plainings
35	Main path on boundary between lake field and Boat Field. National Cycle route and PROW	Showing signs of deterioration in a few places. Fiberdeck with shingle coating. White lining speed 'bumps' have worn. Surfacing is cracking near the bottom of the hill.	180m	Replace speed humps. Contact ECC and put the issue of the path surface cracking on their maintenance and engineering works list.	Medium/High	2010 - path totally re done with fiberdeck as part of the cycle path works carried out by ECC.

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36	Main path on boundary between lake field and Farthing Bottom. National Cycle route and PROW	Showing signs of deterioration in a few places. Fiberdeck with shingle coating. Path has dipped where a new culvert pipe was installed in 2012. White lining speed humps have worn.	200m	Fix the dip in the path. Replace the speed humps. Contact ECC and put the issue of the path surface cracking on their maintenance and engineering works list.	Medium	2010 - path totally re done with fiberdeck as part of the cycle path works carried out by EEC.
37	Main path south from the Hillridge Entrance to the lake field / chanterelle car park junction. National Cycle route and PROW	Good - fiberdeck with shingle coating.	190m	None in 2021 - monitor	Low	2010 - path totally re done with fiberdeck as part of the cycle path works carried out by EEC.
38	Main path west from Chanterelle car park to the lake field. Part of the yellow route.	Showing some signs of deterioration - road plainings. Some areas near the car park become wet and slightly muddy in poor weather. Original hoggin showing through in places. The south side of the path has grown bushy and in effect 'pushed' the path over to the north slightly so people walk on the mud rather than the surfaced path.	350m	None in 2021 - Monitor muddy areas near the car park and top up if required. Cut back the south side of the path.	Medium	2015 - path was topped with road plainings. There was issue with the quality of the work so the contractors had to come back and make improvements but the surfacing was still on the thin side.
39	Woodland path East out of Chanterelle car park	Deteriorating in places - original hoggin path. Weed control fabric is starting to show at the surface in a few places. The surface becomes muddy in poor weather.	70m	None in 2021 - monitor. If and when fund become available top up the surfacing.	Medium/High	
40	Frias Grove Plantation - North and West path	Good - Road Plainings	250m	None in 2021 - monitor	Low	2016 - where the path joins woodcock down area became wet and muddy in poor weather. French drain installation with 30m of resurfacing. 300m of new path surfacing put in on what was a extremely muddy path for much of the year due to the clay soil in the area.
41	Marsh bund path. Part of the yellow route.	Good - Road Plainings	140m	None in 2021 - monitor	Low	2017 - Original Hoggin path becoming soft and weed control fabric starting to show. Topped up with road plainings
42	Main path on boundary between the marsh and southern slopes. National Cycle route and PROW	Good - fiberdeck with shingle coating. Some cracking where drainage pipes were put under the path.	310m	None in 2021 - monitor especially the areas of cracking where pipes were installed under the path	Medium/Low	2016 - drainage pipes installed under the path to stop water build up on the path surface

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43	Main path on boundary between the Boat Field and Slipe/Further Meadow. National Cycle route	Good - fiberdeck with shingle coating.	370m	None in 2021 - monitor	Low	2010 - path totally re done with fiberdeck as part of the cycle path works carried out by EEC.
44	Turner Rise South pond side path. PROW	Good - road plainings	110m	None in 2021 - monitor	Low	2017 - Original Hoggin path becoming soft and weed control fabric starting to show. Topped up with road plainings

## 7.7 Environmental Impact Assessment

SITE NAME: High Woods Country Park			
LOCATION WITHIN SITE: Woodcock Down			
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: Scrub habitat conservation management - maintaining a mosaic of different age scrub and creating and maintaining open glade areas and rides within the scrub. Achieved by: Coppicing blocks of hawthorn / blackthorn scrub of up to 50m <sup>2</sup> , max of 2 blocks in winter annually. Rotation 12 – 15yrs. Ride widening and maintaining bays and glades throughout the area by cutting and flailing encroaching scrub. Maintain ride width of 8 - 10m			
WHO IS MANAGING THIS PROJECT? Senior Countryside Ranger (SCR)			
POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON OR CAUSED BY:	IF YES DESCRIBE HOW?	HOW WILL THE IMPACT BE REDUCED / MANAGED / MONITORED / MITIGATED?	BY WHO?
1 NATURAL RECOURSES			
1.1 Will there be physical changes to the topography of the area?	No		
1.2 Will construction or operation of the project use natural resources above or below ground such as land, soil, water, materials/minerals or energy which are non-renewable or in short supply?	No only renewable timber resource.		
1.3 Are there any areas on/around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the project, e.g. forestry, agriculture, water/coastal, fisheries, minerals?	Yes - High quality wildlife habitat of the Country Park	The work is being carried out to maintain and increase the wildlife diversity in the area.	SCR
2 WASTE			
2.1 Will the project produce solid wastes? How will this be dealt with?	Yes - Brash and cord wood	The larger logs will be stacked as habitat piles which will, over time, rot down providing habitat for fungi, beetle larva and other invertebrates, hibernacula for reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. Some brash will be used to dead hedge round the coppice blocks to prevent access and used to put over cut stumps to reduce browsing of the regrowth by deer and rabbits.	Volunteers or Arb contractor overseen by SCR

		Any remaining brash will be burnt via a controlled burn (bonfire) at the location.	
<b>3 POLLUTION AND NUISANCE</b>			
3.1 Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	Yes - Bonfire will produce smoke	Coppicing in a carbon neutral process - what is cut down will regrow. Only brash is burnt, leaving the larger logs to rot down thus releasing their stored carbon very slowly. Woodcock Down is not adjacent to any residential properties, being set within the central Eastern part of the park. Leaving too much brash could lead to a fire risk in the dry summer months leading to large areas of habitat being damaged. In the winter months the area is inaccessible to vehicles meaning we are unable to get a chipper into the area to chip the brash.	SCR
3.2 Will the project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat or energy?	Noise if chainsaws are used to fell any larger scrub. Heat and energy from the bonfire. The noise and commotion may put off winter thrushes feeding on the berries in the immediate area during the duration of the works.	Woodcock Down is not adjacent to any residential properties, being set within the central Eastern part of the park. Warning signs erected to inform the public using the site. Keep work to a minimum - each coppice block would take approx. 3 –4 days work. Only do multiple small blocks rather than one big block at a time. The long-term wildlife benefits outweigh the short-term impact on wildlife.	Volunteers or Arb contractor overseen by SCR
3.3 Will the project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	Ash from the bonfire	The number of fire sites is kept to a minimum. Where possible the fire site should be located on bare ground which can be found under areas of mature scrub once the area has been coppiced. If the fire needs to be located on a grass area then the turf will be lifted and kept to one side. Once the fire has cooled, a few days after work is completed, the ash will be collected and used at the onsite allotment. The turf is then re-laid to re-establish causing minimal impact on the area.	Volunteers or Arb contractor overseen by SCR
<b>4 POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH</b>			
4.1 Will there be any risk of major accidents (including those caused by	No in terms of climate change Yes - Risk of uncontrolled wildfire	Carbon neutral process	Volunteers or Arb contractor

climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge) caused by the project?		Work only carried out in winter and bonfires carried out in a safe controlled way adhering to our risk assessment and method of work statement (available on request). Only minimal brash kept on site to achieve the dead hedging and coving the cut stumps.	overseen by SCR
<b>5. WATER SOURCES</b>			
5.1 Are there any water resources including surface waters, e.g. rivers, lakes/ponds, coastal or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project, particularly in terms of their volume and flood risk?	Yes – there is a stream and marsh area on the southern and southwestern boundary of Woodcock Down	Ash will be cleared from the work site. Run off will not increase as the root systems of the cut scrub will remain intact and re growth will take up water.	Volunteers or Arb contractor overseen by SCR
<b>6. BIODIVERSITY (SPECIES AND HABITATS)</b>			
6.1 Are there any protected areas which are designated or classified for their terrestrial, avian and marine ecological value, or any non-designated / non-classified areas which are important or sensitive for reasons of their terrestrial, avian and marine ecological value, located on or around the location and which could be affected by the project? (e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other water-bodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, undesignated nature reserves or parks. (Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local)).	Yes – High Woods Country Park is designated as a local wildlife site. Woodcock Down has been used as a common lizard translocation site. Mosaic scrubland/grassland is a valuable habitat that is in decline and needs preserving.	The work is being carried out to maintain and increase the wildlife diversity in the area. Natural processes that would have existed to maintain this area as a mosaic of different age and structure scrub, grassy glades and rides do not exist anymore. Large herbivores would have roamed around the area keeping the scrub in check. In a suburban modern society management has to be carried out by people and scrub clearing by hand is our method to recreate this process. If work was not carried out the area would eventually turn into one big block of enclosed woodland and we would lose our grassland and scrubland species.	SCR
6.2 Could any protected, important or sensitive species of flora or fauna which use areas on or around the site, e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, over-wintering, or migration, be affected by the project? Remember to consider impacts on habitat connectivity.	Yes in a positive way – Lizards and slow worms recorded in the area, bats forage in the area, nesting birds e.g. whitethroat species, blackcap, garden warbler, Bulfinch use the area. It a forage area for winter thrushes and small mammals. The shaded areas created by the mature scrub are good for mosses and lichens. The glades and rides	Wildlife surveys will continue to be carried out in the area to monitor the impact and benefit of the work being carried out. The mature scrub will be assessed for bat roost potential before felling and be left in situ if suitable cracks or crevices are found. The area will be checked for signs of badger and the area not cut if a set is discovered.	Volunteers overseen by SCR

	support butterfly species such as Skipper species, Small Heath, Meadow Brown, Speckled wood, Ringlet, Gate Keeper.	The area was surveyed for dormice in the past and none were found. The work is only carried out in the winter to avoid the bird nesting season. Its hoped creating patches of younger dense scrub will attract Nightingales back to the area to breed. The log piles rotting down will increase the potential for fungi and invertebrates. More light getting to the glades and rides will result in more diverse plant assemblage. If the habitat was not maintained it would not support such a diverse list of species as is mentioned in the lefthand column.	
7. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL			
7.1 Are there any areas or features on or around the location which are protected for their landscape and scenic value? Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local).	Yes - the site is within the local Country Park	The project is maintaining the mosaic of habitat that is already there so the overall look won't change.	SCR
7.2 Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people? (If so, from where, what direction, and what distance?)	Yes – to park users	The project is maintaining the mosaic of habitat that is already there so the overall look wont change. When the coppice blocks are newly cut they look quite sever but on site information will be given to inform the public and multiple small blocks are cut rather than one big block. The dead hedging softens the visual appearance stopping the area looking quite so open.	SCR
8. CULTURAL HERITAGE/ARCHAEOLOGY			
8.1 Are there any areas or features which are protected for their cultural heritage or archaeological value e.g. SAM, or any non-designated / classified areas and/or features of cultural heritage or archaeological importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project? Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local).	No		

<b>9. TRANSPORT AND ACCESS</b>			
9.1 Are there any routes on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project?	Yes – walking routes and running routes pass through the area	Access to the path network in the area would not be affected. Warning signs would be erected when the physical works are being carried out.	Volunteers or Arb contractor overseen by SCR
9.2 Are there any transport routes on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	No		
<b>10. LAND USE</b>			
10.1 Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	No		
<b>11. TRANSBOUNDARY EFFECTS</b>			
11.1 Is the project likely to lead to transboundary effects i.e. will it impact on the neighbours?	No		
<b>14. ANY OTHER IMPACTS?</b>			
14.1			
CONCLUSION: Once all the environmental impact management, monitoring, reduction and mitigation methods above are put in place will the environmental impact caused by this project be within acceptable levels to go ahead?			
YES			
Any further supporting documents or information associated with this Environmental Impact Assessment? Give details below: No			

Assessors name: Sonya Lindsell	Assessment Ref: EIA Scrub Habitat Conservation	Date: 06/12/2019
Signature: S.Lindsell		



## 7.8 Example Generic Risk Assessment

<b>Activity / Event:</b> General Conservation Activities	<b>Location:</b> Countryside Sites	<b>Date:</b> 14.04.2020
<b>Assessor Name:</b> Nicola Downs	<b>Assessor Signature:</b>	<b>Assessment Ref:</b> GRA 1

What are the hazards?	Who may be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control this risk?	What further action is necessary to control this risk (if any)?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
1. Slips, trips and falls <i>environmental</i>	Staff, Volunteers <i>Breaks, strains, sprains, bruising, cuts, grazes</i>	<b>1.1</b> Sturdy footwear to be worn <b>1.2</b> Brief workers on safest areas to work and point out safe extraction routes around site <b>1.3</b> Highlight specific hazards in work area <i>e.g. tree stumps, rabbit holes</i> . Be familiar with site specific risk assessments <b>1.4</b> Use good manual handling techniques and follow manual handling instructions for tools. GRA 2 manual handling applies		<b>1.1</b> All workers <b>1.2</b> Staff <b>1.3</b> Staff <b>1.4</b> All workers	<b>1.1</b> During <b>1.2</b> Start, During <b>1.3</b> Start, During <b>1.4</b> During	
2. Slips, trips and falls <i>equipment</i>	Staff, Volunteers, public <i>Breaks, strains, sprains, bruising, cuts, grazes</i>	<b>2.1</b> Keep site and work area tidy <b>2.2</b> Leave walkways clear		<b>2.1</b> All workers <b>2.2</b> All workers	<b>2.1</b> During <b>2.2</b> During	
3. Soil borne organisms diseases	Staff, Volunteers <i>Tetanus</i>	<b>3.1</b> Wear gloves <b>3.2</b> Wash hands before eating, drinking and smoking <b>3.3</b> Provide hand washing facilities <b>3.4</b> Cover cuts with waterproof plasters <b>3.5</b> Recommended that all workers have up to date tetanus inoculations <b>3.6</b> Brief workers on risk		<b>3.1</b> All workers <b>3.2</b> All workers <b>3.3</b> All workers <b>3.4</b> All workers <b>3.5</b> Staff <b>3.6</b> Staff	<b>3.1</b> During <b>3.2</b> During <b>3.3</b> During <b>3.4</b> Start <b>3.5</b> Before <b>3.6</b> Before	

What are the hazards?	Who may be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control this risk?	What further action is necessary to control this risk (if any)?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
4. Animal faeces	Staff, Volunteers <i>Toxocara parasitic worm</i>	<p><b>4.1</b> Wear gloves</p> <p><b>4.2</b> Wash hands before eating, drinking and smoking</p> <p><b>4.3</b> Provide hand washing facilities</p> <p><b>4.4</b> Cover cuts with waterproof plasters</p> <p><b>4.5</b> Brief workers on risk</p>		<p><b>4.1</b> All workers</p> <p><b>4.2</b> All workers</p> <p><b>4.3</b> Staff</p> <p><b>4.4</b> All workers</p> <p><b>4.5</b> Staff</p>	<p><b>4.1</b> During</p> <p><b>4.2</b> During</p> <p><b>4.3</b> During</p> <p><b>4.4</b> Start</p> <p><b>4.5</b> Start</p>	
5. Harmful plants	Staff, Volunteers <i>Anaphylactic shock</i> <i>Phytotoxicity</i> <i>Contact dermatitis</i>	<p><b>5.1</b> Brief workers on known harmful plants presents and those they may encounter</p> <p><b>5.2</b> Wear gloves</p> <p><b>5.3</b> Suggest wearing long sleeves and long trousers</p> <p><b>5.4</b> Brief workers on exclusions zones around high-risk plants</p>	Physical exclusion zone around high-risk plants	<p><b>5.1</b> Staff</p> <p><b>5.2</b> All workers</p> <p><b>5.3</b> Recommend to all workers, highlighted to those with sensitive skin.</p> <p><b>5.4</b> Staff</p> <p><b>5.5</b> Staff</p>	<p><b>5.1</b> Start, During</p> <p><b>5.2</b> During</p> <p><b>5.3</b> During</p> <p><b>5.4</b> Start</p> <p><b>5.5</b> Start</p>	
6. Bites and stings	Staff, Volunteers <i>Anaphylactic shock</i> <i>Lyme disease</i> <i>Infections</i>	<p><b>6.1</b> Brief workers on biting/stinging animals they may encounter and their associated risks</p> <p><b>6.2</b> Suggest using insect repellent</p> <p><b>6.3</b> Those with known allergies should inform staff carry/use appropriate medication</p> <p><b>6.4</b> Check for ticks after working in long vegetation or woodland.</p> <p><b>6.5</b> Seek advice on tick removal and the symptoms of Lyme disease to look out for.</p>	Tuck trousers in to socks when working in areas with risk of ticks.	<p><b>6.1</b> Staff</p> <p><b>6.2</b> Staff</p> <p><b>6.3</b> All workers</p> <p><b>6.4</b> All workers</p> <p><b>6.5</b> All workers</p>	<p><b>6.1</b> Before, Start</p> <p><b>6.2</b> Start</p> <p><b>6.3</b> During, Before</p> <p><b>6.4</b> During</p> <p><b>6.5</b> During</p>	
7. Brown tailed moth caterpillar	Staff, Volunteers <i>Contact dermatitis</i> <i>Breathing difficulties</i>	<p><b>7.1</b> Brief worker on risks</p> <p><b>7.2</b> Brief workers on exclusion zone around any caterpillars present</p>	Carry out separate risk assessment if work unavoidable	<p><b>7.1</b> Staff</p> <p><b>7.2</b> Staff</p> <p><b>7.3</b> Staff</p>	<p><b>7.1</b> Before</p> <p><b>7.2</b> Start</p> <p><b>7.3</b> Before</p>	

What are the hazards?	Who may be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control this risk?	What further action is necessary to control this risk (if any)?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
8. Thorns	Staff, Volunteers <i>Cuts, splinters, Infection</i>	<p><b>8.1</b> Suggest wear gauntlet gloves</p> <p><b>8.2</b> Suggest wear long sleeves and trousers</p> <p><b>8.3</b> Thorns should be removed and wound cleaned immediately</p> <p><b>8.4</b> Workers briefed on particular risk with blackthorn</p>		<p><b>8.1</b> All workers</p> <p><b>8.2</b> All workers</p> <p><b>8.3</b> All workers</p> <p><b>8.4</b> Staff</p>	<p><b>8.1</b> During</p> <p><b>8.2</b> During</p> <p><b>8.3</b> During</p> <p><b>8.4</b> Start</p>	
9. Weather <i>Wind, rain, sun</i>	Staff, Volunteers <i>Hyperthermia, Hypothermia, dehydration, sun burn, slips on wet ground, lightning strike</i>	<p><b>9.1</b> Activities stopped during severe weather</p> <p><b>9.2</b> Wear a broad-spectrum sun cream</p> <p><b>9.3</b> Cover up to protect from UV (<i>long sleeves, hats</i>)</p> <p><b>9.4</b> Take regular breaks in the shade during hot and sunny conditions</p> <p><b>9.5</b> Dress warmly in cold conditions. Wear waterproof coat in wet conditions</p> <p><b>9.6</b> Provide drinking water</p>		<p><b>9.1</b> Staff</p> <p><b>9.2</b> All workers</p> <p><b>9.3</b> All workers</p> <p><b>9.4</b> All workers</p> <p><b>9.5</b> All workers</p> <p><b>9.6</b> Staff</p>	<p><b>9.1</b> Before, During</p> <p><b>9.2</b> During</p> <p><b>9.3</b> During</p> <p><b>9.4</b> During</p> <p><b>9.5</b> Before, During</p> <p><b>9.6</b> Start</p>	
10. Changeable conditions	Staff, Volunteers <i>See details relating to changing hazard e.g. weather</i>	<p><b>10.1</b> Carry out dynamic risk assessment and change or stop activity if conditions/environment/situation worsens</p> <p><b>10.2</b> All activities to have somebody competent of identifying a changing or unexpected situation and be capable of making the decision to stop work or seek help (<i>able to carry simple dynamic RA</i>)</p> <p><b>10.3</b> Provide workers with mobile phones or ensure they have</p>	Dynamic risk assessment training for volunteers	<p><b>10.1</b> Staff</p> <p><b>10.2</b> All workers (overseen by staff)</p> <p><b>10.3</b> Staff</p>	<p><b>10.1</b> During</p> <p><b>10.2</b> Start</p> <p><b>10.3</b> Before</p>	

What are the hazards?	Who may be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control this risk?	What further action is necessary to control this risk (if any)?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
		their own and are happy to use it.				
<b>11.</b> Using and transporting hand tools	Staff, Volunteers, Public <i>See specific GRA 9</i>	<b>11.1</b> Follow specific hand tool GRA 9 and MOW 9		<b>11.1</b> All workers	<b>11.1</b> Start, During	
<b>12.</b> Travelling in a vehicle	Staff, Volunteers, Public	<b>12.1</b> Follow specific vehicle use GRA 20 and MOW 20		<b>12.1</b> All workers	<b>12.1</b> Before, Start, During	
<b>13.</b> Dog attack	Staff, Volunteer	<b>13.1</b> Ask dog owners to control dogs		<b>13.1</b> Staff	<b>13.1</b> During	
<b>14.</b> Inexperienced Volunteers	Staff, Volunteers, Public <i>Various injuries resulting from poor work methods</i>	<b>14.1</b> Provide training <b>14.2</b> Buddy new volunteers with experienced volunteers <b>14.3</b> Operate discretion when allocating tasks to volunteers, foster development, but not to detriment of individual		<b>14.1</b> Staff <b>14.2</b> All workers <b>14.3</b> Staff	<b>14.1</b> Before, During <b>14.2</b> Staff <b>14.3</b> Staff	
<b>15.</b> Repetitive movements	Staff, Volunteers <i>Muscular and skeletal injuries</i>	<b>15.1</b> Follow specific tool GRA 9 and MOW 9 <b>15.2</b> Follow Manual Handling GRA 2		<b>15.1</b> All workers <b>15.2</b> All workers <b>15.3</b> All workers	<b>15.1</b> During <b>15.2</b> During <b>15.3</b> During	
<b>16.</b> Fatigue leading to complacency	Staff, Volunteers <i>Various injuries resulting from poor work methods</i>	<b>16.1</b> Change tasks regularly <b>16.2</b> Take regular breaks		<b>16.1</b> All workers <b>16.2</b> All workers	<b>16.1</b> During <b>16.2</b> During	
<b>17.</b> Harmful litter	Staff, Volunteers <i>Cuts, puncture wounds, diseases</i>	<b>17.1</b> Remove harmful litter before starting work <b>17.2</b> Use gloves and litter pickers for removing litter <b>17.3</b> Follow GRA 8 litter picking including broken glass and hazardous waste		<b>17.1</b> All workers <b>17.2</b> All workers <b>17.3</b> Staff	<b>17.1</b> Before or Start <b>17.2</b> During <b>17.3</b> During	

**Example Method of Work (MOW) Statement** - accompanies the above risk assessment.

<b>Activity / Event:</b> General conservation activities	<b>Location:</b> Countryside Sites	<b>Date:</b> 09.02.2021
<b>Assessor Name:</b> Nicola Downs	<b>Assessor Signature:</b> N. <u>Downs</u>	<b>Assessment Ref:</b> MOW 01

**Summary of Activity / Event:** Day to day working and practical activities carried out by staff and volunteers on countryside sites. This MOW covers those generic things relevant to most practical work. Specifics are covered by other MOW statements.

**Method of Work:**All workers must have relevant training or competency to complete the activity and understand the hazards. This will be fulfilled by staff recruitment and induction, and volunteer induction processes and followed up my on-the-job training. Staff should determine the competency of any volunteers undertaking the activity and ensure they have the relevant skills, knowledge, and supervision to carry out the task safely. Assessing competency should consider familiarity with the task, tools, site and risk assessments (RA) and methods of work statements (MOW). Training will be delivered initially by staff and can be followed up by experienced volunteers.

All workers should dress in non-slag clothing appropriate for weather conditions. Uniform will be provided for staff and volunteers to ensure they are identifiable as working for Colchester Borough Council (CBC) and have access to appropriate work clothing. Sturdy footwear should be worn such as stout walking boots. Waterproof and steal toe capped footwear is available to borrow when required for specific tasks/tool use and ground conditions. Where uniform is obscured by outer clothing such as waterproofs then branded hi-vis gilet should be worn over the top. Hi-vis should also be worn when specific MOW requires it.

All workers should have access to gloves appropriate to the task, this will usually be rigger gloves or ‘builders’ gloves but additional specialists’ gloves should be available when method of work requires for specific tasks. Additional PPE should be available for all workers where it is specified in task method of work statement.

Any individual or group working together should carry a charged mobile phone with appropriate contact details saved, such as on duty staff member. Small first aid kit should be carried either on person or in a nearby vehicle. Larger first aid kit should be carried for practical tasks involving 5 or more workers or where specific MOW statement requires. If it is expected that workers will break for refreshments whilst on site, then hand washing equipment should be provided including water and soap or hand sanitiser.

Before work begins risk assessments should be carried out. If generic risk assessments are sufficient and relevant ensure these are up to date. All workers should be familiar with the appropriate risk assessment and methods of work, either read or given verbally by task leader. Plan work to avoid hazards and ensure competent persons carry out each part of the task. Where appropriate highlight specific hazards to workers during any briefing at start of task. All tasks should have someone on site able to carry out a dynamic risk assessment and either make decisions in changing situations or contact a member of staff for advice.

During planning decide if any site preparation is required and when this should take place e.g. closing off work area or displaying signs. Prepare a tools list and number of people required and choose appropriate transport to safely carry tools and people to location considering ground conditions. Use of vehicles and loading should following specific GRA 20 and MOW 20.

Workers should be briefed on the task before work begins explaining task, tools, highlighting known hazards and explaining how the work will be organised. Movement around site should be planned to avoid hazards and walkways kept clear. Workers should be appropriately spaced for the task. Tools should be used following specific GRA 9 and MOW 9. Inexperienced workers should be supervised or teamed up with more experienced workers.

Sites should be left clear and tidy. Display appropriate signage or maintain exclusion zones if work not complete.