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THE GREEN & STONES ORCHARD MANAGEMENT PLAN

2025-2030

Contents

1.0	Welcome & Introduction	1
2.0	History & Heritage	8
3.0	Habitats & Wildlife	12
4.0	Orchard Trees	17
5.0	Visitor Information	19
6.0	Community Spirit & Events	30
7.0	Site Management & Sustainability	31
8.0	Delivering Aims & Objectives	30
9.0	Action Plans	38
10.	Appendices.....	34

1.0 WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Future for The Green and Stones Orchard

- 1.1 The vision for The Green is to provide a network of welcoming green spaces for the enjoyment of the local community, preserving and celebrating the heritage of the site as well as its biodiversity. Public recreation is balanced with wildlife conservation through a mosaic of grassland cuts, alongside proactive community engagement through events and interpretive signage.
- 1.2 In Stones Orchard, exquisite veteran trees are tended carefully among a diverse and evolving age structure to ensure the orchard's sustainable legacy. The vibrant wildflower meadow supports a breadth of wildlife and offers an accessible green backdrop for neighbourhood events.
- 1.3 This plan outlines the management responsibilities for the orchard and grasslands and explores opportunities for site enhancement from both conservation and community engagement perspectives. The future actions of this plan are aspirational and will be subject to external funding.

Site Description

- 1.4 The Green is a large and cherished area of Common Land on the western edge of the Croxley Green, widely known as 'the triangle.' This grassland stretches from Croxley House to All Saints Church. On the border lies Stones Orchard, a 1.4ha public open space rich in history and biodiversity. Once part of a vast 19th-century orchard (Croxley Green History Project), this area is now a thriving habitat, with a range of veteran fruit trees, including apple, plum, cherry and pear standing among the wildflower-rich grassland and hedgerows. These natural features enhance the site's beauty, alongside supporting local wildlife.
- 1.5 The Green and Stones Orchard serves as a community hub, where locals and visitors visit to enjoy dog walking, informal sport, and picnics. The Green is home to the Croxley Revels, a traditional midsummer fair.
- 1.6 Both sites hold formal status as public open spaces and Local Wildlife Sites (designated due to unimproved grassland habitat), adding to the ecological and cultural significance. The land also sits within the Croxley Green Conservation

Area. Stones Orchard is also designated as a Traditional Orchard, a UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) priority habitat.

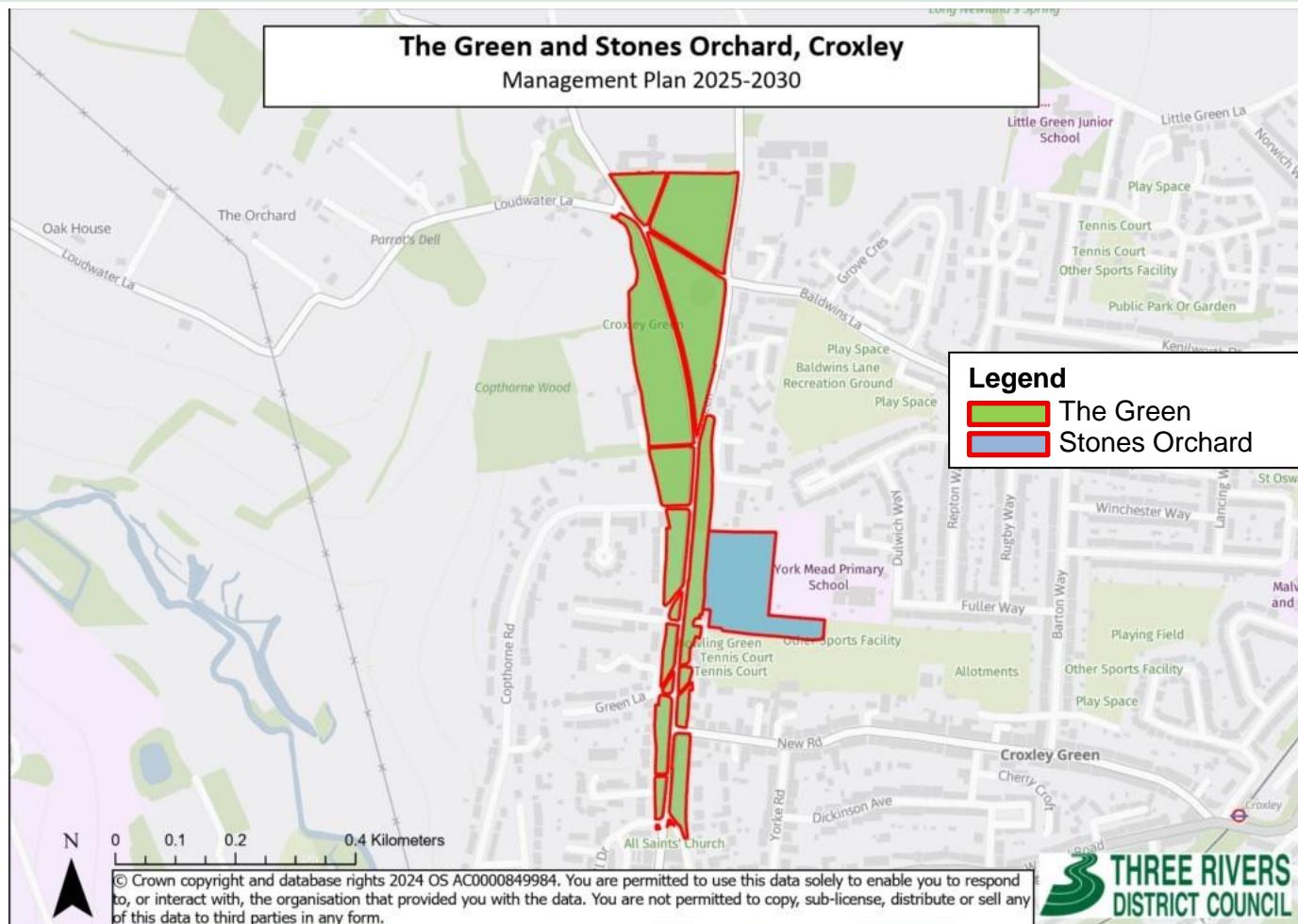
- 1.7 Hertfordshire County Council's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) identifies Local Wildlife Sites as 'Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity' strengthening both sites as remarkable green spaces. At Stones Orchard, targets within in the LNRS include to manage, restore and prevent further loss of existing traditional orchard sites and to create new traditional orchard habitats. For The Green, LNRS aims include to manage existing grassland to maintain the biodiversity of existing good quality habitats and enhance poor quality sites. The neutral and acidic grassland on The Green, and the traditional orchard at Stones Orchard are also priority habitats under the LNRS.
- 1.8 Accessible and welcoming, The Green and Stones Orchard offers strong transport links to Rickmansworth and Watford via the A412.
- 1.9 Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) are the landowners; with the site managed in partnership with Croxley Green Parish Council (CGPC).



Purpose of This Management Plan

- 1.10 It was decided to create the first joint management plan for The Green and Stones Orchard to safeguard the future of these two green spaces, this five-year management plan sets out a strategy of more than just maintenance. It is a vision for enhancement, addressing conservation, accessibility, and community engagement. The plan will guide ongoing, yearly, and future projects, including but not limited to, structured maintenance, and proposed historical schemes, subject to funding.

Location Maps



This map outlines the boundaries of The Green and Stones Orchard.

2.0 HISTORY & HERITAGE

History

2.1 The Green in Croxley Green has served as a central gathering place for the local community for many years. Originally common land, it was used for grazing livestock and local markets, followed later by events such as fairs and social gatherings. In the 19th century, the area began to see development with the arrival of the railway in 1912 (Croxley Green History Project), which sparked growth in housing and businesses nearby. The Green remained a vital part of the community, with the surrounding landscape gradually transforming from farmland to residential areas. Today, it continues to serve as a public space, hosting events and offering a green retreat amidst the development of the village.

2.2 A series of commemorative trees have been planted along The Green since the late 19th century, stretching from just outside All Saint's Church and up to Stones Orchard (Croxley Green History Project). The first oak was planted in 1897 to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, and many more oak trees have since been planted to celebrate the history of the nation's Kings and Queens. A memorial bench was situated and oak trees planted to commemorate the lives of those lost during WWI, including 100 Croxley residents, and to celebrate the end of WWII and the ringing in of the new millennium in 2000. A conifer was planted by Croxley House following the death of Winston Churchill, and a walnut was planted in 1995 to mark 50 years since the end of WWII. A further 3 English Oaks were planted for Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee within the same area. Most recently in 2023, a traditional commemorative oak tree was planted in honour of the coronation of King Charles III.



2.3 Once a vibrant mixed-fruit orchard known for its cherries, originally over 12 acres, Stones Orchard was managed by tenant farmers Walter Stone & Sons from 1893

to 1960 as part of the Parrotts Farm Estate (Croxley Green History Project). During this time, the orchard underwent regular pruning and replanting, while the surrounding grassland served as grazing land and was also used for hay. Local families gathered at The Green in late June and July for "Cherry Sundays," when fresh fruit was sold directly from the orchard. The orchard had a host of livestock including horses, cows, and pigs to graze the meadow and would supply fresh milk to the locals.

- 2.4 In 1960, the land was sold to John Dickinson & Company, but without proper management it soon fell into neglect, and progressive housing and leisure developments reduced the size of the site over time. In 1983, the orchard was sold to TRDC for £1 but remained in a poor condition until the early 1990s, when a renewed effort to restore the site began.
- 2.5 With growing community interest, a new management plan was put forward by TRDC and CGPC, with support from Hertfordshire County Council's Countryside Management Service (CMS) in 1994. Key activities included removing ragwort, coppicing, and replanting hazel hedgerows, and planting new fruit trees with local schools over several years.
- 2.6 Advice from CMS has helped shape the management of the orchard alongside input from the Parish Council rangers, and maintenance by TRDC. In 2013, a habitat survey by the Herts Biological Records Centre (HERC) led to a report on grassland management, followed by a 2014 report on fruit tree care. Some recommendations from both reports have been incorporated into the current management plan.
- 2.7 The history of Stones Orchard is well documented, notably in a booklet by former Croxley Green Parish Councillor Margaret Pomfret, available at the local library and online at [Croxley Residents Association](http://www.croxleyresidentsassociation.org).



© Margaret Pomfret - 'Another tree planted,' 1995



© Watford Observer - The Orchard, April 1939

Archaeology and Interesting Findings

- 2.8 Excavations on The Green were conducted in 1915 on behalf of the British Museum (British Museum). Palaeolithic artefacts were found around the sites of Rickmansworth and Croxley Green, including handaxes and Levallois flake implements.
- 2.9 There are several Grade II listed buildings throughout the site, namely The Artichoke Ale House, The Coach and Horses Public House, Crossley Wylde, Croxley House, Gallopers Cottage, Halewood Cottage, Killingdown Farmhouse, Providence House, and the Well House at Croxley House (Historic England). All were constructed sometime between the 17th and 18th centuries, besides Providence House which is thought to have been built in C16.
- 2.10 At Croxley House, the Wellhead Gear is a series of large and small cogs seated in a wooden frame, which would have been operated by hand to draw up water from the well in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. A monument behind the Coach and Horses Public House commemorates the site of a post-medieval Blacksmith's Workshop.



© Croxley Green History Project - Providence Hall (Doggetts), Reuben Doggett stands at the gate

- 2.11 In 2001 at Stones Orchard, a flint-lined circular depression was observed in the ground lying north of the entrance (Croxley Green History Project). When first examined by archaeologists the depression was approximately 1.1m in diameter and 70cm deep; it was thought to be the remnants of a well or soak-away for the nearby buildings. Excavation was conducted to a depth of 1.2m, revealing in-fill material of relatively modern origin – ceramic building material (CBM) and litter from confectionary and ring pull cans, dating the most recent in-fill at approximately 20 years ago or less. Some of the CBM was typical of material covered from the remnants of farm buildings that had been recorded on a map dated 1839, however, as this material is widespread in the local area, its presence in the pit was not useful for dating the feature. An absence of flint in the northeastern section of the feature could indicate a past partial collapse or could

Draft

be evidence of its function as a soakaway; this opening being the entry point for a rainwater culvert. Due to the risk and expense associated with further excavation the project was paused, with the recommendation to explore the site further by examining its Geophysical survey history.



© David Harding - Stones Orchard Excavation, 3rd February 2001

3.0 HABITATS & WILDLIFE

Underlying Landscape

3.1 The geology in the local area is a combination of plateau gravel and river-terrace drift overlying a foundation comprised of predominantly Seaford and Newhaven Chalk Formations (BGS Geology Viewer). Soils are characterised as well-drained, flinty, coarse, and loamy or sandy with a relatively flat topography, but the wider surrounds also include hill, and valley features as well as chalk deposits typical of the Chilterns.

Grassland

3.2 The grassland at The Green comprises of a range of UKHab classified types; neutral grassland, acid grassland and other neutral grassland.



3.3 The triangular centre of the green has been recorded to host the more locally uncommon species including Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*), Heath-grass (*Danthonia decumbens*) and Petty Whin (*Genista anglica*). Other species include Heath Bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Sheep's Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*), Common Sorrel (*R. acetosa*), Field Wood-rush (*Luzula*

campestris), Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) and Brown Bent (*Agrostis vinealis*).

- 3.4 The current maintenance of this grassland consists of an annual cut and lift operation and further sporadic mowing to facilitate community events. The amenity grassland is cut on a tri-weekly cycle.
- 3.5 The northern area of grassland at Stones Orchard consists of 'unimproved neutral grassland,' which is listed in the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan as a priority habitat, meaning that this is scarce in the county and further declining. The southern area is where the orchard trees preside, where the fallen fruit and leaves can lead to excess nutrients in the soil and therefore reduce species diversity. This grassland is categorised as 'semi-improved neutral,' as well as 'semi-improved and unimproved acid grassland.' The final area of grassland along the eastern edge is separated by a dense hedgerow and is categories as 'species poor neutral grassland.'



- 3.6 Grassland indicator species include Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*), Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), Wild Basil (*Clinopodium vulgare*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*) and Prickly Sedge (*Carex muricata*). A survey was undertaken in 2013 to gain knowledge of the grassland species on this site; however, one has not been completed since to gain an updated understanding of the site.
- 3.7 The current maintenance regime on the orchard grassland consists of sporadic standard grass cutting alongside an annual cut and lift operation. The area around the base of the trees is cut less frequently with the aim to protect the tree from

damage, however this does lead to recurrent rootstock suckers growing. The amenity grassland is cut on a tri-weekly cycle.



3.8 Neither site has any formal, surfaced paths. This has resulted in 'desire lines' that have been created by the public. These areas frequently get muddy during the winter periods and lead to grassland areas around them being trampled to avoid the muddy sections.



3.9 Ragwort is present in both The Green and Stones Orchard grassland areas. Livestock do not use either of these sites for grazing, and the arisings from the cut and lift are not used for animal feed. Ragwort is not an issue and rather a positive. It is the main food source of cinnabar moths, which is a priority species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. The ragwort should be maintained to allow cinnabar moths to thrive, but not to take dominance over the grassland.

3.10 An area to the top of The Green shows potential for the creation of a pond/wetland. This area may have historically held water, possibly as a seasonal or permanent feature. Restoring this would enhance local biodiversity, supporting amphibians and aquatic invertebrates, while providing a valuable water source for other wildlife. It would also enhance the natural drainage of The Green. Any plans to develop this feature will be subject to funding.

Deadwood

3.11 The deadwood present both on The Green and in Stones Orchard should be preserved where safe to do so. Deadwood contributes to biodiversity through creating habitats for invertebrates, birds, and small mammals.

Fauna

3.12 Site-specific species surveys have not been undertaken on either of the sites in the last >10 years. The below species have been recorded via HERC and have been requested by TRDC for the purpose of this management plan.

3.13 Brown long-eared bats have been recorded in the vicinity of The Green, but are not confirmed as roosting, or landing within the site. However, it is likely this is the case due to the presence of roosting potential, in terms of hollow sections of veteran trees and foraging potential in the grassland. Badger setts have also been identified in both sites.

3.14 Multiple bird species have been recorded on both sites, this includes but is not limited to song thrush, blackbird, redwing, wren, starling, dunnock, coal tits and red kite.

3.15 Many invertebrate species have been recorded including emperor dragonfly and butterflies: red admiral, small tortoiseshell, common blue and small copper. An invertebrate survey was undertaken at Stones Orchard in 2005 and noted an abundance of Roesel's bush-cricket, meadow grasshopper and small and large white butterflies. Cinnabar moths and their caterpillars have also been observed on the common ragwort.

3.16 Although there are low levels of species recordings, this however does not mean that these species are not present on site. There are appropriate habitats for reptiles such as slow worms and common lizards, bats and small mammals such

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as European moles and field mice. Other common bird species are likely to frequent the area due to the good foraging areas and nesting potential.



4.0 ORCHARD TREES

Fruit Trees

- 4.1 The orchard stands out due to its impressive range of tree ages, from newly planted saplings to old, veteran trees, most of which are gathered in the southern half of the site.
- 4.2 The original orchard layout is thought to have followed a loose grid pattern, a design that promotes efficient grassland management and fruit harvesting while preventing excessive shading. While the mature trees show signs of this grid structure, the younger trees have been planted in a more free-form style, giving the orchard a more scattered appearance as it evolves.
- 4.3 The veteran trees, mainly apples, plums, and cherries, are particularly striking. Many in standard-form are grafted onto vigorous rootstocks, and feature characteristic aging traits such as hollow trunks, deadwood, and woodpecker holes. These features make them valuable for biodiversity, supporting deadwood-dependent insects and offering nesting spots for birds and bats. Only a few of exact varieties of fruit are known or have been identified by testing, including Granny Smith and Bramley's Seedling apples, Golden Hornet crab apples, Early Rivers cherry, and Early Rivers and Early Laxton plums. There is a documented history of Hertfordshire Black cherries having been planted at the orchard, and some regeneration stock of this type was planted recently in 2024.
- 4.4 The "mature" trees include apples and cherries in half-standard form, on less vigorous rootstocks. These trees are healthy, with little or no deadwood. Younger trees, primarily cherries, are also present and well-established. Recent plantings include cider apples, pears, plums, and medlars, some of which are heritage Hertfordshire cultivars. Memorial plaques are placed under several trees, including a walnut tree planted in 1995 near the main entrance.



Hedgerows

4.5 The orchard is surrounded by mature hedgerows that are currently overgrown, dense, and in need of management. These hedgerows are notably dominated by holly and English elm, the latter appearing as scrub, which is of particular interest due to its potential role as a food source for the white letter hairstreak butterfly. Hazel is another key species within the hedgerows, much of which has previously been managed through coppicing. Other species present include blackthorn, elder, English oak, field maple, ash, hawthorn, and sycamore, with several trees hosting ivy.

Specimen Trees

4.6 The full breadth of the site is home to many veteran fruit trees which are remnants of the original orchard. Despite their potential structural frailty, veteran trees are desirable landscape features for their unique beauty, heritage value, and the provision of habitat niches specific to declining and decaying wood.

4.7 Hollow and decaying trees are more vulnerable to failure in extreme weather conditions and so these trees will require specialist management to retain them safely in the long term, such as phased canopy reductions and the implementation of bracing and propping systems.



4.8 Healed and partially occluded wounds give information about the traditions, successes and failures of historic pruning practices, a useful focus for educational heritage projects.

5.0 VISITOR INFORMATION

Getting There

- 5.1 Stones Orchard and The Green are well connected open spaces in Croxley Green with Croxley Underground train station ~900m away. The TFL metropolitan line links directly to Watford, Euston, Kings Cross St Pancras, Farringdon, and Liverpool St. While bus routes 320, 322 and 352 are all within a ~300m walk and offer easy access from/to Watford, Rickmansworth, and Hemel Hempstead.

Parking and Entrances

- 5.2 Though there is no dedicated parking at either site, formal parking is available ~300m walking distance from Stones Orchard, near Croxley Green Parish Council offices called 'Community Way' and informal parking along surrounding roads.
- 5.3 There are a number of private access points which cross The Green and are used by some of the adjoining residents.
- 5.4 There are two Public Rights of Way (PROW) through The Green. Croxley 009 runs north to south along the western boundary, and Croxley 010 exits south of the Bowling Green.
- 5.5 Stones Orchard's main entrance has a ~25m track from the closest road, The Green, welcoming both pedestrians and authorised vehicles. Two additional pedestrian entrances connect to the nearest car park and the playing fields.

Facilities for Visitors

- 5.6 Stones Orchard offers benches, including a memorial and picnic bench. The Green provides only memorial benches, placed near the division of site.
- 5.7 Stones Orchard is well-equipped with dog waste bins with one strategically placed at the main entrance. The site also has general litter bins near the benches on site. The Green has dog waste bins and litter bins conveniently placed close to the

roads. Regular maintenance by Croxley Green Parish Council ensures all bins are emptied on a formal schedule.

- 5.8 A Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for dog control is active across the Three Rivers District, with clear signage at the entrance. For details, see <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk/service/public-space-protection-order-pspo>
- 5.9 The Byelaw for Pleasure Grounds, Public Walks and Open Spaces applies to Stones Orchard and the Byelaw for Common Land applies to Stones Orchard. For details, see [Byelaws | Three Rivers District Council](#)



Interpretation

- 5.10 While both the Green and Stones Orchard boasts rich heritage, they currently lack interpretation boards. Adding information about local history and ecology could enhance the visitor experience, offering educational insights alongside the natural aesthetics of the site.

6.0 COMMUNITY SPIRIT & EVENTS

6.1 The Green and Stones Orchard are cherished green spaces in Croxley Green, where locals gather for exercise, outdoor recreation, and dog walking. The health benefits of spending time in nature are well-known, and encouraging use of these spaces will help boost both mental and physical wellbeing.

Annual Highlights

6.2 Since the early decades of the 1900's, Croxley Revels has brought history and tradition to life each summer. This fair is held on The Green and hosts a vibrant scene of market stalls, music, and dance. Drawing crowds of 5,000-10,000 people, it is an event that residents and visitors alike look forward to each year ([Croxley Revels](#)).

6.3 The Green also hosts other popular events, including New Year's Eve fireworks and Croxfest, an annual music event, adding to the site's reputation as an area for community gatherings.

6.4 Stones Orchard keeps local traditions alive with its annual wassailing event. This celebration, complete with Croxley Green's own song, reflects the site's cultural heritage. Prior to WW2, The Green was also home to a cricket pitch. The Croxley Mummers brought traditional wassailing songs to The Green until the 1930's, with sporadic performances in later years.

Historical Events

6.5 The Green has staged many historical celebrations, and community milestones including:

- In the 1920's, May Day festivities
- In 1935, King George V's Silver Jubilee celebrations
- In 1951, Croxley's 'Festival of Britain', providing post-WW2 respite
- In 2013, Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee celebrations
- In 2025, 80th VE day celebrations

6.6 In the Victorian times, Stones Orchard hosted cherry fairs during the time of harvest.

7.0 SITE MANAGEMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

7.1 The management of The Green and Stones Orchard is a collaborative effort led by Three Rivers District Council, as the landowners with support from Croxley Green Parish Council and Hertfordshire County Council's Countryside Management Service.

Site Management

7.2 Three Rivers District Council oversees:

- Grounds maintenance through their in-house team
- Budget management and administration
- Grant applications and claims
- Member involvement and reporting
- Tree Health and Safety Management

7.3 Croxley Green Parish Council supports through:

- Grass cutting and litter picking
- Maintenance of dog and litter bins
- Upkeep of site entrances
- Conducting visual inspections and reporting to TRDC as needed

Environmental Sustainability

7.4 Sustainability is at the centre of TRDC's approach, reflecting a strong commitment to environmental responsibility through:

- Peat-Free Policy: No peat is used on site
- Sustainable Materials: All timber used is FSC certified, and cleaning products are phosphate-free

Health and Safety

- 7.5 Tree safety surveys are conducted regularly at all TRDC open spaces, including The Green and Stones Orchard. The council ensures at-risk trees are managed appropriately while retaining safe deadwood in situ for habitat and biodiversity value.
- 7.6 Comprehensive task specific risk assessments guide all site work, including volunteer activities and adhere to requirements for training, PPE, equipment, and COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002) standards.
- 7.7 Visitors should always feel safe, with regular patrols by TRDC officers, as well as Croxley Green Parish Council. Reports of anti-social behaviour or vandalism are addressed promptly, typically within 24 hours.
- 7.8 To maintain clear entrances, vegetation and overhanging trees are cut back regularly to improve light levels and visibility. Public access is prioritised, and only authorised vehicles are permitted on-site.
- 7.9 The Parish Council offices are located ~300m away, providing a convenient contact for visitors. A strong relationship between TRDC and the Parish Council ensures public feedback is efficiently managed and acted upon.

8.0 DELIVERING AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The aim and objectives of the management plan are as follows:

Reference	Objective	Description	Department	When?
A. A Welcoming Place – To provide a welcoming green space for the enjoyment of the local community, finding a balance between biodiversity and public access.				
A1	Maintain site entrances to form welcoming, appealing gateways to the sites	The entrance gates will be maintained to ensure they remain fully functional, offering ease of access for all visitors. Regular maintenance will preserve their working condition alongside improving the site entrances appearance. Surrounding vegetation will be managed, with overgrown vegetation and trees routinely cut back. This will improve visibility and light levels, promoting a sense of safety and a more inviting entrance.	CGPC	Monthly
		Any necessary repairs and/or replacements will be addressed, either through ground maintenance or contractor delivery.	TRDC Grounds Maintenance	To be made safe within 1 working day and replaced/repaired within 8 weeks (subject to resource)

A2	Maintain a suitable network of access routes across the site	<p>Regular grass management will keep pathways clear and accessible, enhancing the visitor experience. Maintenance of the amenity cutting. To further improve accessibility, there is a possibility of introducing a formal footpath through Stones Orchard, subject to funding and consultation. This addition would provide a defined and durable route, reducing the need for 'desire lines' and therefore the trampling of the grassland and wildflowers.</p>	CGPC	Monthly
		Hay cut on both sites	TRDC Grounds Maintenance	2x per year
A3	Ensure upkeep of signage at main entrances to ensure clear communication to site users	<p>The main entrance signage will be maintained to ensure it remains clear and informative, helping visitors to understand where they are and what site they are at.</p>	CGPC	Monthly
		<p>There are aspirations to introduce directional signage, guiding visitors to key features and points of interest. The potential for interpretation boards would add an engaging insight to the site's history and ecology. Both the directional signage and interpretation board proposals would be subject to funding.</p>	TRDC Leisure and Natural Infrastructure	Subject to external funding
A4	Manage the hire of grounds process to support ongoing community events	<p>Events will be managed through the current hire of grounds process monitored by the Leisure and Natural Infrastructure team at TRDC. Damage deposits to be taken by TRDC in the event; in the event of damage CGPC to assess and report to TRDC with costings of repairs claiming against the damage deposit.</p>	TRDC Leisure & Natural Infrastructure Team	Response within two weeks of submission

B. Healthy, Safe and Secure – To provide and maintain clear and safe public access onto, and around The Green and Stones Orchard				
B1	Conduct planned and reactive tree works to address safety issues	Urgent safety works will either be rectified the day they are observed, or the immediate drop zone cordoned off until the tree can be made safe. High priority works will be undertaken within 6 weeks of a defect being observed. Low priority, or routine works will be undertaken within 6 to 9 months. In this instance competitive quotes for work will be sought from tree work contractors.	TRDC Leisure & Natural Infrastructure Team	To be made safe within 1 working day and rectified within the timeline stated depending on priority.
B2	Respond promptly to reports of misuse of the sites, ensuring a proportionate response to anti-social behaviour	General site misuse will continue to be proactively managed through the existing grounds maintenance team. Any reports of misuse, either by the public or the Parish Council will be promptly actioned by TRDC. The Parish & District councils will continue to work together to try to prevent illegal parking and unwarranted vehicle incursion to the sites”	TRDC	To be made safe within 1 working day and replaced/repaired within 8 weeks (subject to resource)
B3	Conduct regular tree surveying to prevent safety issues	As per the 2021-2026 tree strategy, the main visitor routes and public areas of The Green and Stone's Orchard will be formally inspected on an annual basis. Any actionable defects will be recorded, and works will be times according to the level of risk.	TRDC Leisure & Natural Infrastructure Team	Annually

C. Well-maintained and Clean – To ensure that all aspects of The Green and Stones Orchard are kept clean and well maintained				
C1	Manage and maintain paths, benches, access infrastructure, the war memorial and signage	Entrances and footpaths will be maintained, ensuring they remain clear of encroaching vegetation through proactive grounds maintenance operations. The Parish Council will regularly monitor the standard of existing benches. Other infrastructure, including signage and fences will be closely monitored during routine site visits by the Parish Council.	CGPC	Weekly visual inspections
		Monitor and conduct repairs for the War Memorial.	CGPC	Weekly visual inspections
		Any necessary repairs and/or replacements will be addressed, either through engaging volunteer task days, ground maintenance or contractor delivery. Replacements will be like-for-like whenever appropriate.	TRDC Grounds Maintenance	To be made safe within 1 working day and replaced/repaired within 8 weeks (subject to resource)
C2	Remove undertake regular litter picking, empty litter bins and conduct small scale vegetation management along access routes	The core maintenance items such as litter picking, emptying litter and dog bins and small-scale vegetation management will be undertaken by the Parish Council. It is anticipated that reports of fly-tipping will be submitted by both the Parish Council and the public.	CGPC	Dog bin collection – 2x p/w. Litter bin – 1x p/w. Small scale vegetation management – checked weekly. Daily litter picking in Stones Orchard, weekly litter picking on The Green.

		Regular spot checks on CGPC maintenance items. Ongoing monitoring will ensure that any required adjustments are implemented	TRDC Leisure and Natural Infrastructure	2x per year
		Fly tipping removal Please refer to council website: https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/waste-and-recycling/street-care-and-cleaning#Fly-tipping	TRDC Grounds Maintenance	Within 7 days of report
D. Environmental Management – To ensure all aspects of site management are undertaken with sustainability as a guiding principle				
D1	Ensure all activities adhere to relevant TRDC policies and strategies, including any work undertaken by contractors	Management at The Green and Stones Orchard will be guided by all relevant TRDC policies and strategies including the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy, Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Tree Strategy.	TRDC	Annually
D2	Ensure ongoing maintenance costs are financially sustainable	Budgets are reviewed annually to ensure ongoing maintenance is financially sustainable. As future/aspirational projects are planned, consideration will be given to their potential impact on the financial viability of the maintenance of said plans. By implementing well-planned maintenance strategies, this will ensure long term sustainability for the next five years and into the future. Consideration will be given to future projects on whether they are feasible to be funded by the council or if external funding is required.	TRDC	Monthly

D3	Ensure impacts of climate change are considered in management decisions, both in terms of the effect of climate change on wildlife and habitats and of carbon emissions from management operations	Climate change impacts will be a key consideration in management decisions and in future planning. Including selecting tree species for planting that are resilient to changing conditions and adjusting the timing of grassland management in response to shifts in weather patterns. This will also include fire break cuts adjacent to properties where required. The environmental impact of management operations will be assessed, such as evaluating the necessity of machinery and exploring more sustainable alternatives. When tendering contracts for the site management, environmental sustainability practices/efforts to reduce carbon emissions will be within the evaluation criteria.	TRDC	Annually
D4	Conduct management according to environmental best practice	The council has a strong commitment to environmental sustainability and recognises the impacts its operations have on the environment; reflected in TRDC's policies. Key initiatives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- A presumption against the use of peat- Exclusive use of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified timber across the district- All cleaning materials are phosphate free	TRDC	Annually

E. Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage – To conserve and enhance the important wildlife, landscape and heritage feature of The Green and Stones Orchard

E1	Control invasive species	When invasive plant species are identified, action will be taken promptly to limit their spread and mitigate their impact on native fauna. This may include physical removal and the use of environmentally responsible control methods.	TRDC	To be made safe within 1 working day and treatment within 10 working days
E2	Protect and celebrate heritage features	Subject to funding, the site will be enhanced with informative interpretation designed to educate the public about its rich history and wildlife. In addition, engaging events will be proposed to celebrate and highlight the sites unique past and current biodiversity. These potential projects will connect the community with the site and offer educational experiences and opportunities to engage with its history and ecology.	TRDC	Subject to funding
E3	Enhance and manage the habitats on both sites	Amenity grassland will be cut as and when needed in line with events on The Green.	CGPC	Every 3-6 weeks, weather dependent
		The grassland on both sites will be managed by seasonal cutting. Hedgerows will be enhanced by a schedule of management, beginning with a rotational flail and further selective trimming and potential gap planting. Orchard tree management will be maintained through pruning where necessary and regular checks by TRDC tree team. Existing trees will be regularly monitored according to the Tree Strategy.	TRDC	Grassland cutting - 2x per year Hedgerow management – 1x per year on rotation Orchard tree and existing tree

Draft

					maintenance - Annually
E4	Provide marketing and community events to celebrate the ecology and history of the sites	The TRDC website will be updated with history and ecology information on both sites. These sites will also be promoted via social media channels using photos taken at the sites. A history project and event will be made, subject to funding, which has the potential to include a new interpretation board and an event detailing the rich history of Stones Orchard. Any community events held will be posted on social media and the website.	TRDC	Website update – Once Promotion – 2x per year History project – subject to funding Community events - Annually	

9.0 ACTION PLANS

Annual and Regular Actions

Action	Timeline	Responsible Authority	Delivery	Funding
Habitats				
Grass Cutting (hay cut) – The Green	Up to 2x per year – Late July & early September	TRDC	TRDC Grounds Maintenance	TRDC
Grass Cutting (woodland edge management) – The Green	Up to 1x per year – Autumn (encroachment prevention, undertaken approximately 6 foot from select hedgerows)	CGPC	CGPC	CGPC
Grass Cutting (hay cut) – Stones Orchard	Up to 2x per year – Late July & early September	TRDC	TRDC Grounds Maintenance	TRDC
Grass Cutting (amenity)	Depending on weather conditions – between every 3-6 weeks.	CGPC	CGPC	CGPC
Hedge Management	Annually on rotation (hedges show on site description map) Selective trimming and scrub clearance – 1x per year	TRDC	TRDC Leisure and Natural Infrastructure	TRDC
Tree Maintenance (including orchard trees)	Annually and in the event of severe weather	TRDC	TRDC Leisure and Natural Infrastructure	TRDC

Draft

Control of Invasive Species	To be reported immediately upon discovery	CGPC	CGPC to report	TRDC
	To be made safe within 1 working day and treatment to commence within 4 weeks (if appropriate)	TRDC	TRDC to action	TRDC
Facilities				
Litter Collection	3x per week (aligned with other TRDC open spaces)	CGPC	CGPC	CGPC
Dog Bin Collection	2x per week	CGPC	CGPC	CGPC
Fly Tipping Collection	To be reported immediately upon discovery	CGPC	CGPC to report	TRDC
	To be removed within 7 working days	TRDC	TRDC	TRDC
Site Entrance Maintenance: Hard infrastructure check	Monthly	CGPC	CGPC	TRDC
Site Entrance Maintenance: Vegetation clearance	Monthly	CGPC	CGPC	CGPC
Plaque Maintenance	As and when needed	CGPC	CGPC	CGPC
Utility Maintenance Hole	To be checked monthly and reported immediately upon identification of issue.	CGPC to report any issue to TRDC	TRDC	TRDC

Inspections				
Visual Inspections (including furniture, war memorial, site access infrastructure, plaques, invasive species, health and safety issues, vegetation, fly tipping, vehicle incursion)	Weekly	CGPC	CGPC to report any issues to TRDC	CGPC
	To be made safe within 1 working day and replaced/repaired within 8 weeks (subject to resource)	TRDC	TRDC	TRDC
Contract Management (inc. spot checks)	Seasonally	TRDC	TRDC Leisure and Natural Infrastructure	TRDC
Review site risk assessment	Annually	TRDC	TRDC	TRDC

Future Actions – Subject to funding

Action	Timeline	Responsible Authority	Delivery	Funding
Habitats				
Orchard Planting	2025/2026	TRDC	TRDC – Potential volunteer activity	TRDC or External
Pond / Wetland Creation on The Green	Aspirational*	TRDC	TRDC	External

Site Specific Species Surveys	Aspirational	TRDC	TRDC	External
Hedgerow Restoration Opportunities	Aspirational and will be dependent on the hedgerow reaction to management.	TRDC	TRDC – Potential volunteer activity	TRDC or external
Facilities				
Furniture Replacement	As and when needed	TRDC	TRDC	TRDC
Formal Path through Stones Orchard	Aspirational – Funding & Consultation Dependant	TRDC	TRDC	TRDC or External
Operator Signage inc. Bylaws & Parking Rules	Aspirational	TRDC	TRDC	TRDC
2x Interpretation Boards (History & Ecology)	Aspirational	TRDC	TRDC	TRDC or External
Drop down bollards at the entrance to Stones Orchard & the 'in' and 'out' vehicle entrances on The Green where events are hosted	Aspirational	CGPC	CGPC	CGPC
Entrance Enhancements (for example welcome features including signs, fencing and gates, including improvement to the gate at Stones Orchard)	Aspirational	TRDC	TRDC	TRDC or External

Draft

Seek funding for aspirational items, where applicable	As and when necessary	TRDC	TRDC	N/A
New signage at badger sett to notify of risk	2026	TRDC	TRDC	TRDC
Investigate opportunities to reroute path around badger sett	Aspirational	TRDC	TRDC	TRDC
Marketing and Events				
History Project w/ Three Rivers Museum	2027	TRDC	TRDC & Three Rivers Museum	TRDC
Website Sections for the 2x Sites	2026	TRDC	TRDC	N/A
Promotion of the 2x Sites	2026	TRDC	TRDC	N/A
Various Community Events	Annually	TRDC & CGPC	TRDC & CGPC	TRDC & CGPC

*Aspirational actions could be subject to funding, consultation, applicability or time.

10.0 APPENDICES

a. Site Description Map

Site Description - The Green & Stones Orchard

Three Rivers District Council



b. Site Location and Status

The Green	Site Name	Stones Orchard
The Green, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth, WD3 3JA	Site Address	Stones Orchard, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth, WD3 3HX
TQ069961	Grid Reference	TQ070957
10.5ha	Size	2.1ha
TRDC	Owner	TRDC
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Croxley Green Conservation Area- Local Wildlife Site	Designations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Croxley Green Conservation Area- Local Wildlife Site- Traditional Orchard (Priority Habitat - UKBAP)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sarrat Plateau- Thames Valley National Character Area	Landscape Character Area (LCA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sarrat Plateau- Thames Valley National Character Area



Appendix C - Risk Assessment

Name of Assessor	FC	Time	1300	Date of Assessment	05/08/2025
Head of Service Approval	CG	Date	29.10.2025	Next Review Due Date	29.10.2026

Area/Tasks being Assessed	The Green and Stones Orchard – General Site Risk Assessment				
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What is the hazard?	Who might be harmed ?	How might people be harmed?	Control measures	Risk rating		Additional control measures (if required / after review)	New risk rating (if required)		Action by whom/when ? (if required)
				L	M		H	M	
Badger Setts	Site users / staff	Injury from slip/trip/fall due to the sett itself or from the uprooting of turf Ground uneven or collapsed due to tunnels	Locations of badger setts are mapped and made available to the public and will be referred to in any relevant documents on the site		M		Potential for signage on site to indicate to be careful of badger setts Consider opportunities to reroute path	L	Leisure and Natural Infrastructure, TRDC

What is the hazard?	Who might be harmed ?	How might people be harmed?	Control measures	Risk rating			Additional control measures (if required / after review)	New risk rating (if required)			Action by whom/when ? (if required)
				L	M	H		L	M	H	
Utility Maintenance Hole	Site users / staff	Fatality or serious injury from slip/trip/fall resulting from incorrect placement of cover	Ensure maintenance hole covers are placed back on correctly if removed. Monthly inspection by CGPC on structural integrity and report any issues to TRDC. Inspections should be undertaken after a severe weather event.		M		Ensure contractors are using proper signage / barriers if they are accessing the manhole.				CGPC / Grounds Maintenance, TRDC
Vehicle movements on-site	Site users / staff	Fatality or serious injury from a collision	Vehicle traffic on site confined to essential users.		M		Access revoked from non-essential users.	L			Leisure and Natural Infrastructure, TRDC
Trees	Site users / staff	Fatality or serious injury resulting from a tree failure	Formal inspection on an annual basis, any actionable defects will be recorded and works will be times according to level of risk. Conduction of reactive tree works will be rectified the day of observation, or the immediate drop zone will be cordoned off until the tree is made safe.		M		Additional inspections after high winds and following reports of unsafe trees	L			Trees & Woodlands, TRDC

What is the hazard?	Who might be harmed ?	How might people be harmed?	Control measures	Risk rating			Additional control measures (if required / after review)	New risk rating (if required)			Action by whom/when ? (if required)
				L	M	H		L	M	H	
Extreme Weather events (flooding / high winds / heavy snowfall)	Site users	Fatality or serious injury from slips, trips or falls due to flood water or snow, or falling trees	Advice will be uploaded to social media to recommend that the public stay off the sites during this time.	L			Site safety inspection after extreme weather event. Areas that are hazardous should be cordoned off and safe/relevant repairs are undertaken if necessary	L			Grounds Maintenance / Leisure and Natural Infrastructure, TRDC
Anti-social behaviour (unruly dogs / threatening behaviour / conflict between user groups)	Site users / staff	Fatality or serious injury from dogs or other members of the public	Police alerted to incidents and a record of incidents kept and reviewed regularly Responsible dog ownership promoted and encouraged Public Space Protection Order in place for dog control with clear signage at the entrance PSPO to be enforced when required Byelaws in place to prevent activity such as BBQs		M		Additional patrols by PCSO's and the council's animal welfare officer, if necessary	L			Leisure and Natural Infrastructure, TRDC

What is the hazard?	Who might be harmed ?	How might people be harmed?	Control measures	Risk rating			Additional control measures (if required / after review)	New risk rating (if required)		Action by whom/when ? (if required)
				L	M	H		L	M	
Site infrastructure (benches / paths, bins, war memorial, signage)	Site users	Fatality or serious injury, or injury from defective infrastructure	Online reporting mechanism for the public to report any issues or concerns and advised to contact 101 if outside of normal office hours. Croxley Green Parish Council (CGPC) to inspect site infrastructure monthly and to be reported to TRDC. Infrastructure will be made safe within 1 working day and replaced/repaired within 8 weeks (subject to resource).		M		Site users and CGPC encouraged to report dangerous infrastructure to the council. Areas of the site deemed unsafe by officers to be closed to the public pending any necessary repair works.			CGPC / Leisure and Natural Infrastructure, TRDC
Stakeholder activity (Croxley Green Parish Council)	Site users / stakeholders / staff	Fatality or serious injury resulting from stakeholder activities	Stakeholders to risk assess their activities and provide a copy to the Council. All events/activities to be authorised through the TRDC Hire of Grounds Procedure		M		Changes to activities agreed where appropriate			CGPC / Leisure and Natural Infrastructure, TRDC
Unsafe activities / hire of grounds by external organisations	Site users / participants	Fatality or serious injury	Event organisers to risk assess their activities. All events/activities to be authorised through the TRDC Hire of Grounds Procedure		M		Any safety incidents occurring during events reviewed and changes made to future events			Leisure and Natural Infrastructure, TRDC

		Low	High	Very High	Very High
		4	8	12	16
Likelihood	Low	Medium	High	Very High	
	3	6	9	12	
	Low	Low	Medium	High	
	2	4	6	8	
	Low	Low	Low	Low	
		Impact			
		Low -----> Unacceptable			

Impact Score

4 (Catastrophic)

3 (Critical)

2 (Significant)

1 (Marginal)

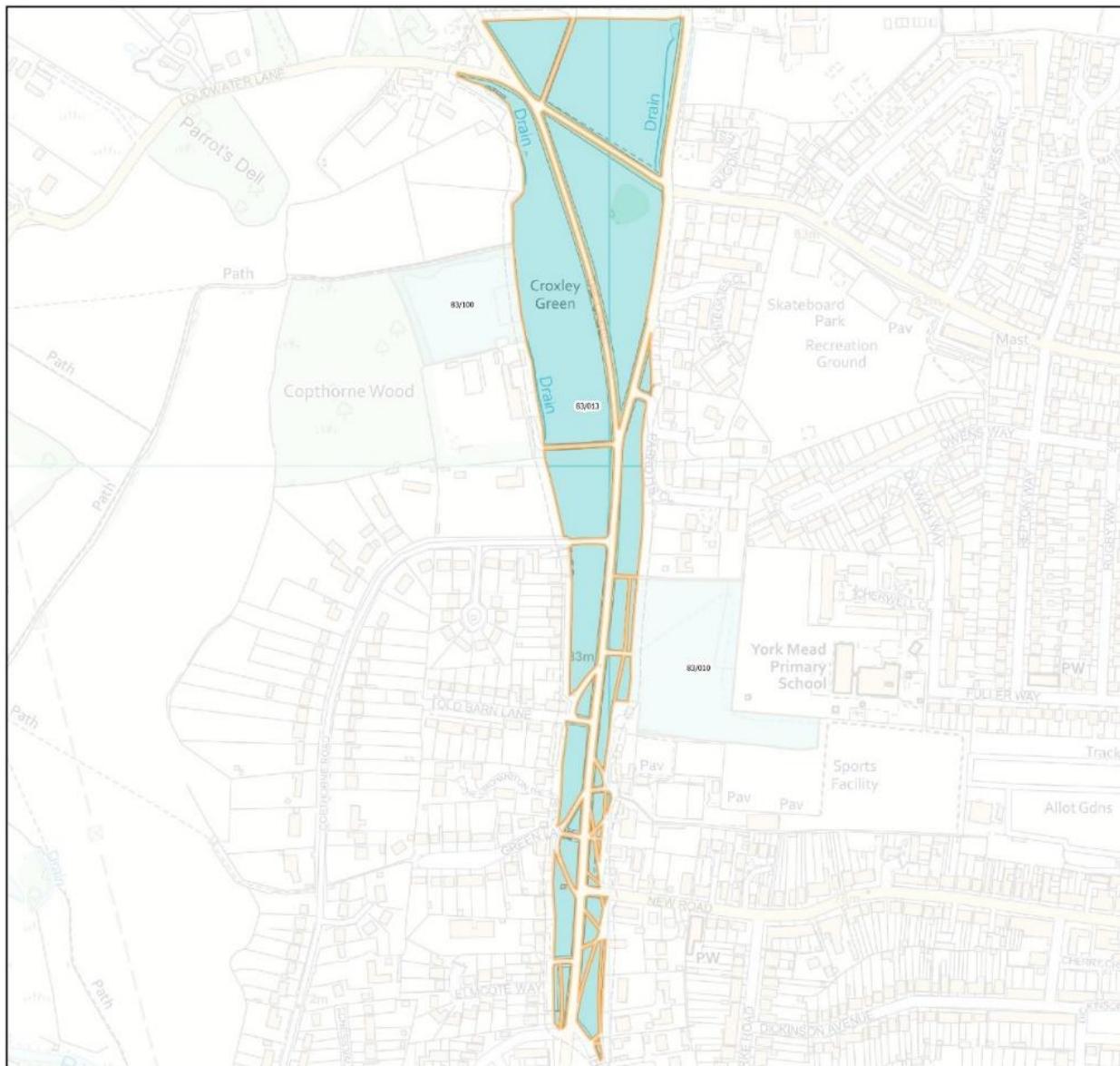
Likelihood Score

4 (Very Likely ($\geq 80\%$))

3 (Likely (21-79%))

2 (Unlikely (6-20%))

1 (Remote ($\leq 5\%$))



Local Sites Map 1

Search Information

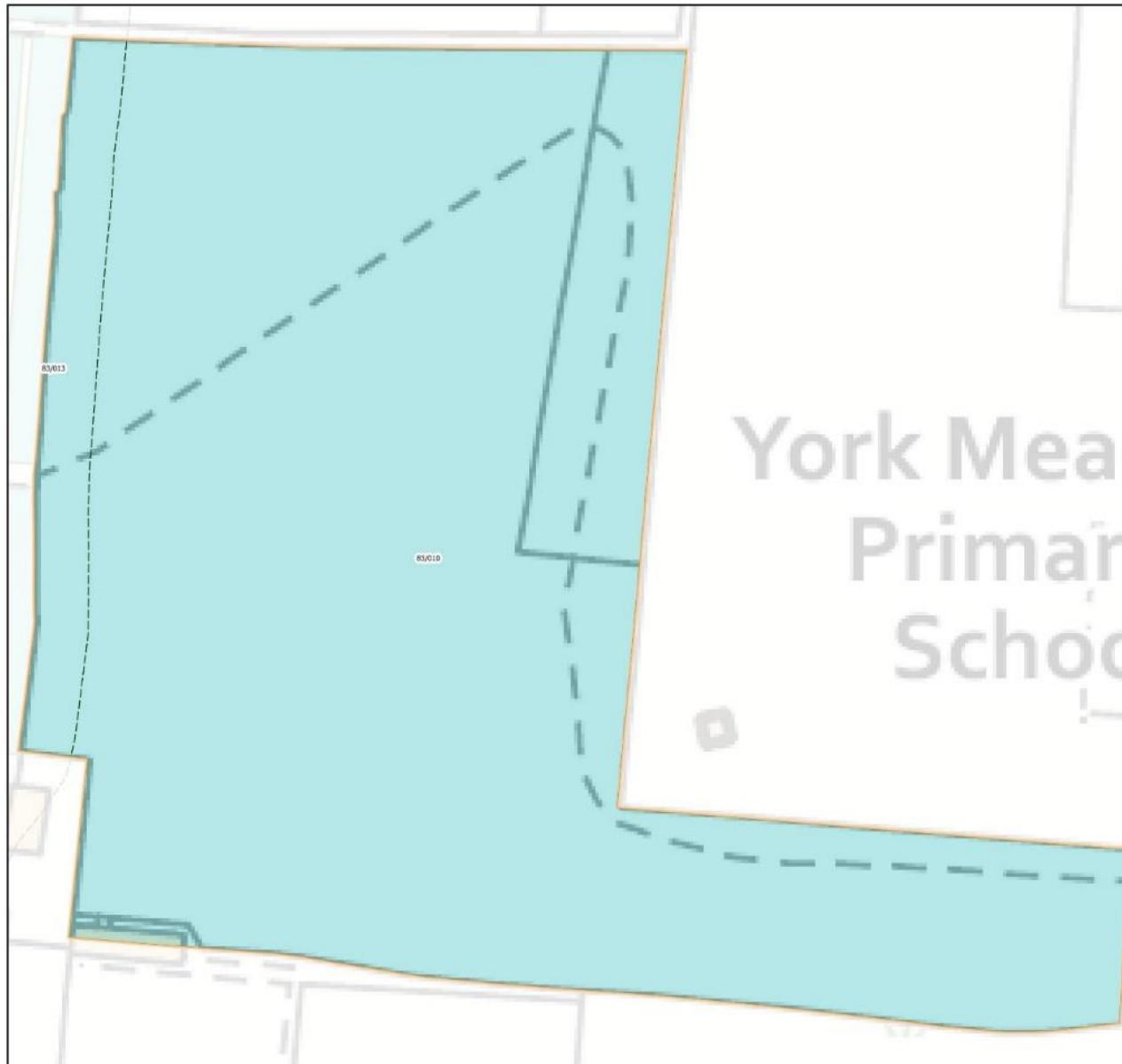
- Search boundary
- Search area

Local Sites

- Local Wildlife Sites

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Local Sites Map 1

Search Information
■ Search boundary
■ Search area

Local Sites
■ Local Wildlife Sites

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UKHab Classification

- Na - often a grassland habitat classifier
- g1a - lowland dry acid grassland
- g1d - other lowland acid grassland
- g3c - other neutral grassland
- g4 - modified grassland
- h3h - mixed scrub
- r1 - standing open water and canals
- u1b5 - Buildings
- u1c - Artificial
- unvegetated, unsealed surface
- w1G - other woodland; broadleaved
- w1f7 - other lowland mixed deciduous woodland
- w1h - other woodland; mixed





c. Byelaws

The Byelaw for Pleasure Grounds, Public Walks and Open Spaces dated 05-10-2020 applies to Stones Orchard. The PDF of this byelaw can be viewed here – [Byelaws | Three Rivers District Council](#)

The Byelaw for Common Land dated 1984 applies to The Green. The PDF of this byelaw can be viewed here - [Byelaws | Three Rivers District Council](#)

e. Policy context

TRDC Strategies

Corporate Framework

Each year, Three Rivers District Council updates its Strategic Plan. This is a document that brings together our high level, medium- to long-term objectives which, following consultation and analysis of data, the Council considers to be its priorities for the district.

It focuses on those areas where the Council has a lead role or can play a key part in delivering or influencing the outcomes. Its purpose is to guide the Council in its annual consultation, planning, resource allocation and performance management process. [Corporate Framework \(threerivers.gov.uk\)](#)

Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy

The council's [Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy](#) sets out how the council can improve and lead by example in our own operations. It also sets out how we will work with and assist the residents, businesses, and other stakeholders in our area to reduce their impact on the environment, improve sustainability and adapt to and build resilience to a changing climate.

Nature Recovery Strategy

TRDC have produced a Nature Recovery Strategy to specifically address the Council's approach to protection of the natural world within the district. The strategy recognises the rich diversity of wildlife already present within the district, both within

protected nature reserves as well as public open space, residential gardens, grass verges, and more.

At the heart of the strategy is a five-year Action Plan, which identifies and prioritises actions to be undertaken by the Council, and others for the benefit of Biodiversity.

The full strategy is available on the [Biodiversity in Three Rivers](#) section of the TRDC website.

Tree Strategy

The [Three Rivers District Council Tree Strategy](#) identifies the actions to be taken over the next five years to protect and sustainably manage existing trees and woodlands. It also sets out the council's plans to increase the number of trees by planting new ones, while ensuring the right trees are planted in the right places and are properly maintained.

Local Plan

The current [Local Plan](#) for the district was published in 2014. Three Rivers District Council is preparing a [new Local Plan](#) that will set out a vision and policy framework for the future levels of growth within the district until 2038. These documents include policies which relate to nature conservation.

HCC Strategies

Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy

Hertfordshire County Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and have since committed to make Hertfordshire cleaner, greener and more sustainable.

HCC want to:

1. Lead in their own operations
2. Enable sustainability with their programmes, policies and decisions
3. Inspire businesses and residents to take action

The ambitions of the [Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy](#) include achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions before 2050, ensuring communities are ready for future climates and improve wildlife in our land and water by 20% by 2050.

f. References

Croxley Green History Project (Stones Orchard) – Accessed at
<https://www.croxleygreenhistory.co.uk/stones-orchard.html>

Croxley Green History Project (Railway) - Accessed at
<https://www.croxleygreenhistory.co.uk/the-railway-to-croxley-green.html>

Croxley Green History Project (Commemorative Trees) - Accessed at
https://www.croxleygreenhistory.co.uk/trees_on_the_green.html

British Museum (Croxley Green) - Accessed at
<https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/x44370?page=2>

Historic England – Accessed at <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

Croxley Green History Project (Stones Orchard Excavation) - Accessed at
<https://www.croxleygreenhistory.co.uk/stones-orchard-excavation.html>

BGS Geology Viewer – Accessed at
https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/?_ga=2.111620484.1070538592.1736436929-199863663.1736436929

Croxley Revels - Accessed at <https://croxleyrevels.co.uk>

