

Three Rivers District Council

Chorleywood House Estate

Greenspace Action Plan

2023-2028



OVERVIEW

Greenspace Action Plans

Greenspace Actions Plans (GAPs) are map-based management plans which specify activities that should take place on a site over a stated period of time; these activities will help to deliver the agreed aspirations which the site managers and stakeholders have identified for that site.

Public Engagement

Engagement with stakeholders is at the centre of effective management planning on any site. An initial engagement period was held during November 2022, to establish core aims and objectives for the site; these are reflected in Section 3. A second stage of engagement will be completed in early 2023 enabling stakeholders to comment on the proposed management actions for the site. An associated engagement response document, published online as an appendix to this plan, will summarise comments received, and any amendments made to the plan as a result.

Version Control

Version	Issue Date	Details	Author	Reviewed	Approved

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1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 Site Summary

Site Name: Chorleywood House Estate (CWHE)

Site Address: Rickmansworth Road, Chorleywood, WD3 5SL

Grid Reference: TQ 034 970

Size: 64.6 ha

Owner: Three Rivers District Council (TRDC)

Designations:

Level	Designation	Detail
Statutory	Local Nature Reserve (LNR) (Local Nature Reserves (England) Local Nature Reserves (England) Natural England Open Data Geoportal (arcgis.com))	The site was designated as an LNR in 2007. Local Nature Reserves are special places for wildlife, geological features, education, scientific research and/or enjoyment by local communities. As such LNRs recognise the importance of a site for both people and wildlife. In declaring the site as an LNR, TRDC accepted responsibility to ensure that the special interest of the site is maintained.
Statutory	Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	Located within the boundary of the Chilterns AONB, which has the primary purpose to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Natural beauty includes wildlife,

		physiographic features and cultural heritage.
Statutory	Metropolitan Green Belt	The site falls within the London Metropolitan Green Belt, which restricts the growth of development in strategic rural areas on the edge of conurbations.
Non-Statutory	Local Wildlife Site: 82/013 Chorleywood House Estate 82/023 River Chess (part)	These two wildlife site designations together comprise 40 ha of the total area of Chorleywood House Estate LNR. The wildlife sites support important grassland, woodland and chalk stream habitat. Local Wildlife Sites are considered to be of “critical natural capital”.
Non-Statutory	Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW)	Woodland that has had continuous native tree and shrub cover since at least 1600AD and may have been managed by coppicing or felling and allowed to regenerate naturally. The woodland pockets surrounding the Scout Camp, Chorleywood Dell and Dell Mound are classified as ASNW. There are ASNW features present in other woodland areas on site, such as the Wood Walk.

1.2 Vision Statement

Chorleywood House Estate will be managed as a sustainable Local Nature Reserve, rich in history and wildlife, with beautiful views and numerous opportunities for

recreation and quiet enjoyment. Management activities will aim to maintain a site which:

- is rich in biodiversity
- is welcoming and accessible for recreation
- retains and enhances its historic landscape character
- provides opportunities for visitors to connect with and enjoy their local environment

1.3 Policy context

This plan is set in the context of several Council policies and strategies which relate directly to site management.

1.3.1 HCC Strategies

1.3.1.1 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.

1.3.2 TRDC Strategies

1.3.2.1 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 \(threeivers.gov.uk\)](https://www.threerivers.gov.uk)

1.3.2.2 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 also adapt to and build resilience to a changing climate.

1.3.2.3 Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy

TRDC have produced a Nature Recovery Strategy (currently at draft stage) 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 will be published on the TRDC website shortly.

1.3.2.4 Pesticide Strategy

This strategy sets out how TRDC will reduce the unnecessary use of harmful chemicals. The full Pesticide Strategy can be viewed on the [Open Spaces Management Plans](#) section of TRDC's website.

1.3.2.5 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.

1.3.2.6 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.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Introduction

Chorleywood House Estate LNR is a significant, well used and valued green space in the parish of Chorleywood. The site is owned by Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) and managed in partnership with the Countryside Management Service (CMS) and a dedicated Friends Group (the Friends of Chorleywood House Estate – FoCWHE). The site was designated as an LNR in 2007 and has been awarded the prestigious Green Flag status annually since 2009. Management of ‘Chorleywood Dell’ located within the centre of the site was returned from Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust to TRDC in 2010.

The LNR originally formed the grounds of the 200-year-old Chorleywood House, which remains a prominent feature on site. The LNR combines parkland with diverse and locally important wildlife habitats, including chalk and neutral grassland as well as ancient woodland and veteran trees. Much of the conservation grassland is grazed by cattle which maintain a diverse grassland sward, with the remainder managed by cut-and-lift operations.

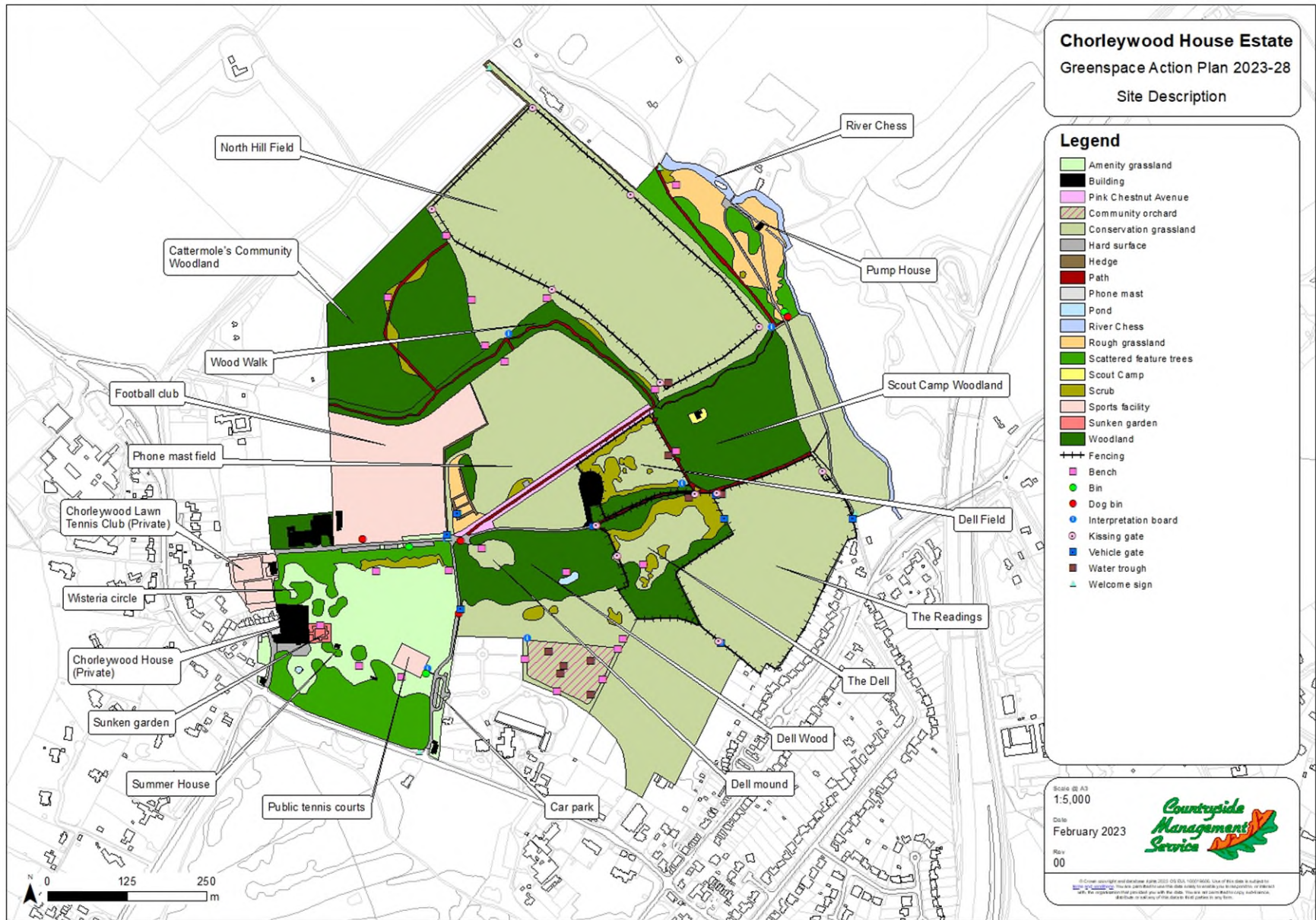
The house and surrounding grounds have been prominent in the community of Chorleywood since the late 19th century. Originally providing the grounds for harvest festivals and village fetes, the site continues to provide a variety of recreational opportunities. Throughout the grounds, features of the site’s rich cultural and natural heritage can be seen, such as the Lady Ela Russel Summer House, the wisteria circle and the wrought iron fencing which provide glimpses of the former Victorian estate.

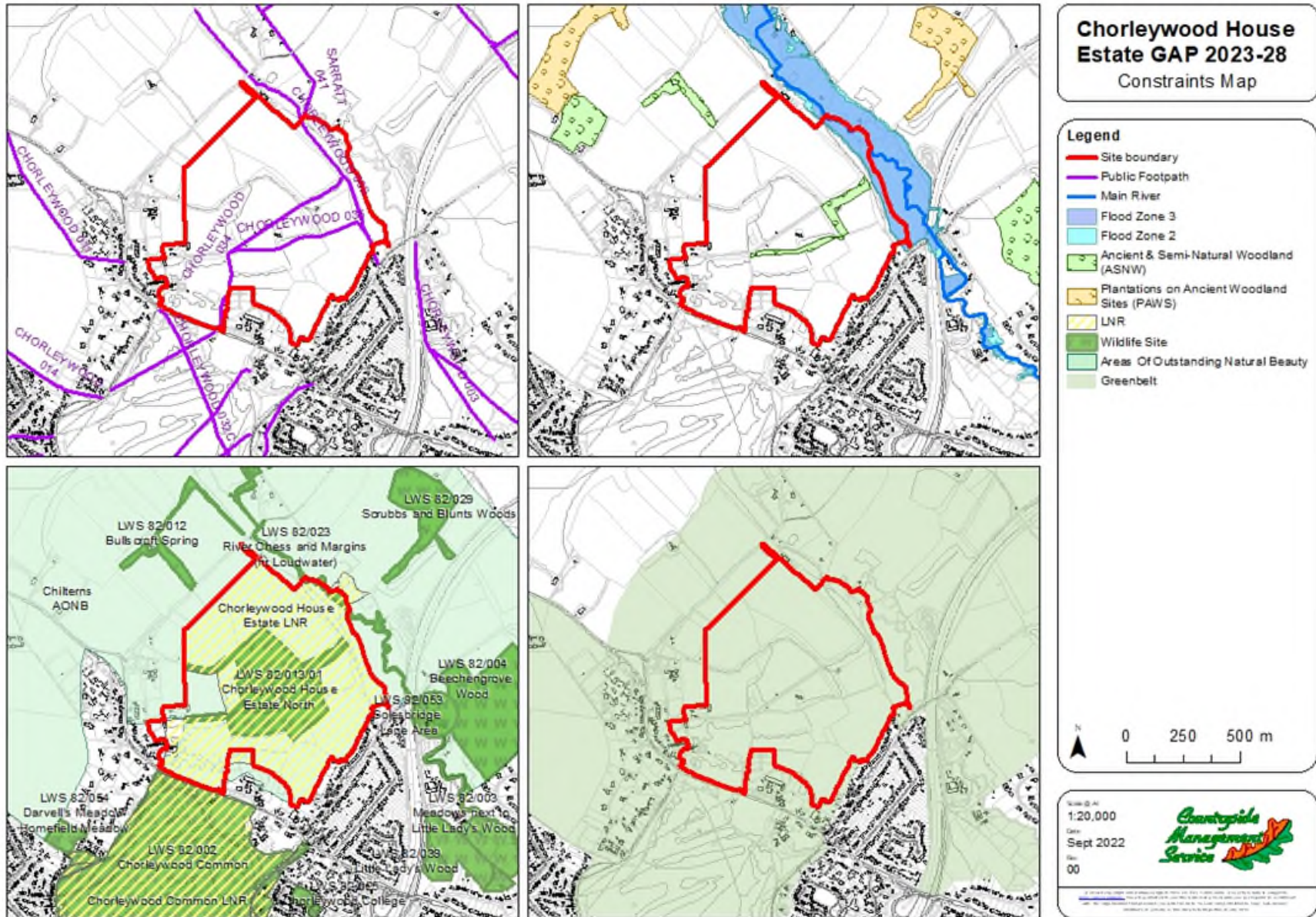
This Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) sets out the management, maintenance and development framework for the site over the next five years. It is recognised that the systems in place to manage the LNR are already very well established and described in previous plans. As such the GAP seeks to identify subtle improvements and further refinement to the established systems.

The structure of the plan has been based on the Green Flag criteria, to explore the range of issues that are important for a successful green space. The plan includes

map-based annual management programmes and a pragmatic and resource informed timetabled action plan, both located towards the end of the document. The action plan will be reviewed annually so that actions can be revised as necessary over the life of the plan.







2.2 Geography and Landscape

2.2.1 Landscape

Situated within the boundary of the Chilterns AONB and on the plateau above the Chess Valley, the site is rich in both natural and cultural heritage. The site falls within several Landscape Character Assessments (LCAs) which have been developed by Hertfordshire County Council, Natural England and the Chilterns Conservation Board. The LCAs group together areas which are similar in their geography, land use and landscape character, with all three of the LCA strategies emphasising the importance of retaining the historic context of this area, whilst maximising recreation and environmental stewardship. The LCA descriptions and recommended management for Chorleywood House Estate LNR are summarised below.

LCA	Detail
Hertfordshire County Council's Landscape Strategy	Hertfordshire County Council's Landscape Strategy categorizes Chorleywood House Estate LNR within the Heronsgate Heights LCA. This LCA is characterized by a gently undulating and sinuous plateau, which is locally divided by narrow chalk ways and forms part of the Chilterns Dip Slope. Despite the M25 being a major feature of the skyline to the east, the LCA is relatively wooded, with areas of parkland, and pasture. The LCA has a planned feel with many traditional buildings and parklands. The most current status assessment of the LCA revealed it to have a strong strength of character which is currently in good condition. To safeguard and manage the current landscape quality, several recommendations have been made. These include re-instating and promoting traditional land management techniques, in conjunction with facilitating safe public access and existing recreational uses. Maintaining age diversity within parklands is encouraged through new plantings, which respect the sites historic context, form and character.

<p>Natural England's National Character Areas</p>	<p>Chorleywood House Estate is located within the Chilterns National Character Area (NCA). The countryside of the Chilterns NCA comprises a patchwork of arable land, grassland, and woodland with numerous commons and pockets of ancient woodland. The extensive hedgerow network provides potential connections between the scattered semi-natural habitat fragments, including chalk grassland and common land. Relict features of traditional management techniques are widespread and include coppice woodland, orchards, laid hedgerows, veteran/ancient trees and commons. The management of woodlands, hedgerows and parklands should focus on enhancing biodiversity, restoring the historic landscape and securing ecological resilience. The potential for recreation should also be maximised, with good access provision for communities to enjoy the countryside.</p>
<p>Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan</p>	<p>Produced by the Chilterns Conservation Board, the management plan identifies the landscape character of the Chorleywood area as River Valley Landscapes (The Chess Valley). The natural and built features of the countryside within the AONB are recognised as special and attractive. The management plan sets out several broad management aims. In reference to Chorleywood House Estate LNR, the management plan encourages sustainable land management practices to enhance and maintain biodiversity, natural beauty and heritage features in the long-term. Another key aim is to enhance public awareness and understanding of wildlife conservation, land management practices and heritage features. In particular, enjoyment of the countryside and involvement with conservation of habitats and heritage should be promoted.</p>

2.2.2 Geology and Hydrology

The underlying geology of the LNR and surrounding area is a combination of plateau and river terrace drift, forming part of the clay-with-flints area. The soils are characterised by a mix of fine and coarse loamy over clayey soils, with localised slight seasonal waterlogging.

The River Chess lies on the north-eastern boundary of the site, which the Environment Agency has currently classified as of moderate ecological quality (2019 assessment). Over time, the course of the River Chess has been utilised and modified by human activity. In particular, the frequent spring sources were modified in the 19th century to form the now derelict watercress beds. Within Chorleywood House Estate LNR, a flint-lined man-made drainage channel (the leat) runs through the site. This channel was redefined in 2002 as part of the restoration of a former inert waste tip at Dell Wood.

2.2.3 Visual amenity

Visual amenity is an important consideration at Chorleywood House Estate, both in terms of the historic parkland landscape of the site, along with its place in the wider Chilterns landscape and the views offered from the estate.

2.3 History and Archaeology

Chorleywood House Estate LNR has a rich history which has shaped and influenced the footprint of the site that we enjoy today. The dominant building is Chorleywood House, which was created following the acquisition of the Estate in 1892 by the 10th Duke of Bedford. The house was re-fashioned into a Victorian style to house a dowager aunt. The aunt died before the refurbishment of the building was completed, and the house was occupied by Lady Ela Russell, the sister of the 10th Duke of Bedford. Lady Ela lived in the house until her death in 1936. During her time Lady Ela developed the Estate to be self-sufficient and laid out formal gardens, parkland, and woodland across the grounds, whilst also building the Summer House adjacent to the main house.

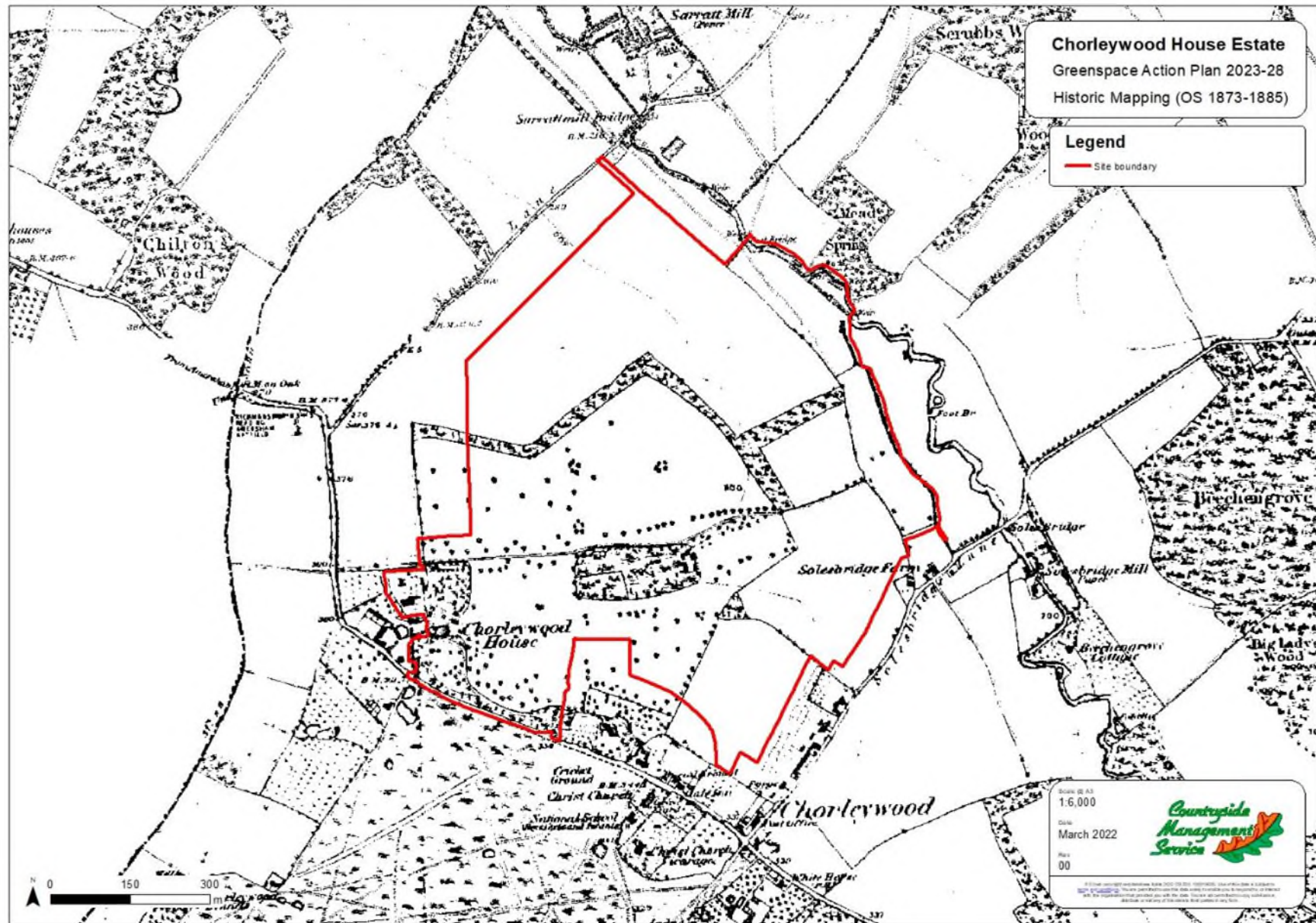
The house and grounds were purchased by Chorleywood Urban District Council (now Three Rivers District Council) in 1939 for use as their council offices and as a

public library. The Estate was used extensively during World War 2, with evacuees housed in the mansion, and prisoners of war housed within the Estate outbuildings. Furthermore, the Summer House was used by the Women's Voluntary Service. The house now consists of private residences, but the Estate grounds remain in the ownership of TRDC and form the Chorleywood House Estate LNR which is open for enjoyment by the public.

In addition to the house itself, several old timber buildings remain within the grounds, including the Summer House. Other historic buildings on site include the pump house, generator house, and several private residences.

Additionally, the site comprises numerous landscape features such as the wisteria circle, the leat, the Pink Chestnut Avenue, and the Wood Walk which reflect the history of the site. The Chorleywood Community Orchard, created in 2008, echoes the earlier use of the Estate for market gardening and crops. Fragments of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) and the presence of veteran trees further contribute to the historic significance of Chorleywood House Estate LNR.

The OS map below from the late 19th Century reveals the historic presence of features such as the Wood Walk and Dell Wood, whilst also showing how little field boundaries have changed since this time.



2.4 Habitats and Wildlife

2.4.1 Grassland

2.4.1.1 *Amenity grassland*

Much of the area around Chorleywood House is managed as amenity grassland, including the main lawn. Bulb planting within this area adds to the interest and visual amenity.



Main lawn amenity grassland



Bulb planting on main lawn

2.4.1.2 *Rough grassland*

Areas of rough grassland and ruderal vegetation can be found around the edges of hay meadows, providing buffer habitat to surrounding scrub and woodland. There is also a larger area of rough grassland at the northern edge of the site around the pump house which is currently managed through an annual flail cut. The presence of patches of meadowsweet suggest the area retains some wetness for periods of the year.



Rough grassland around edge of hay field



Rough grassland around pump house field

2.4.1.3 Conservation grassland

The Estate contains a network of semi-natural chalk and neutral grasslands, which support a variety of wildflowers, insects, small mammals and birds. The areas of grassland located within Chorleywood Dell and Dell Field contain priority chalk grassland habitats, their importance highlighted by the inclusion of these fields within the Local Wildlife Site designation. Dell Field also includes numerous anthills, an indicator of historic unimproved grassland.



Conservation grassland in The Dell



Anthills in Dell Field

Traditionally, the whole of the Estate would have been grazed, and grazing has gradually been re-introduced by the Council, originally prioritising those grassland areas which are most significant (i.e. those within the Local Wildlife Site). Grazing was re-introduced first to Chorleywood Dell and Dell Field under a Countryside

Stewardship Scheme (CSS) agreement, which was secured for the LNR from 2003 to 2013.

The area of grazing has since been expanded under successive GAPs, firstly to incorporate The Readings field and most recently to a large part of North Hill Field, made possible by a 10-year Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Agreement with Natural England (2013 – 2023).



Cattle grazing The Readings

A number of the grassland compartments are included within the HLS agreement, including Chorleywood Dell, Dell Field, The Readings, and Mast Field (not grazed). The HLS has supported a change in stock from sheep to cattle, in response to previous problems with dogs. As such, grazing has not occurred continuously and more recently has been restricted by poor fencing conditions in Chorleywood Dell and Dell Field.



Fencing in The Dell damaged by a fallen tree



Broken fence in Dell Field

Grasslands managed by conservation grazing have long been recognised as having high nature conservation value, typically comprising a great variety of native plant species. Grazing enhances the diversity of wildflowers and results in a varied grassland structure of different heights, which in turn supports a vast array of insects providing a healthy food supply for many mammals and birds. This has been observed on site where the ecological quality of the grassland sward has continued to improve since the re-introduction of grazing. For example, re-instating grazing in The Readings field has resulted in an observed increase in species diversity and has largely been successful in controlling scrub cover. In particular, a reduction in the dominance of false oat grass, thistles and docks has been observed, coupled with an increase in herbaceous plants and grasses.

Other areas of grassland in the LNR are not as diverse but are still of value. These areas have been managed as meadows through a cut-and-lift operation at the end of the flowering season. This includes the area of grassland at the north-eastern part of the site nearest the River Chess, which shows remnants of flood meadow vegetation communities dominated by meadow foxtail grass.



One of the meadows following management by a cut-and-lift



Grassland with remnant flood meadow vegetation communities

2.4.2 Invasive grassland weeds

Certain weeds if left unchecked have the tendency to spread and become dominant in the landscape. Grazing alone is not always effective at keeping these weeds at

bay, especially those that are woody, spiky or unpalatable, properties which a high proportion of invasive weeds have. Where necessary, these weeds have been controlled by other means, with a general target from the HLS agreement of ensuring their coverage is less than 5% within each grassland compartment.

2.4.2.1 Scrub and bramble

Scrub is an important component of grassland habitats providing sheltered, sunny spots and nectar sources for invertebrates, such as butterflies and hoverflies, as well as important habitat for birds and small mammals. This is particularly true of the edges of grassland areas where scrub provides a graduated margin to surrounding woodland habitats. However, grasslands are dynamic habitats, and successional change can occur rapidly with areas quickly progressing to scrub and eventually woodland. Vegetation succession also leads, in the short term, to an increase in nutrient levels in the soil and a decline in species diversity.



Marginal scrub habitat



Scattered young scrub in The Readings

Management is therefore required to control the extent of scrub and bramble cover, in order to increase the area of grassland available for wildflowers, and the conservation value of this habitat. Where bramble and scrub has encroached, it has been generally been controlled by rotational cutting, predominately through volunteer activities. A network of discrete patches of scrub and bramble are retained for species diversity and for invertebrates, birds and small mammals, particularly in The

Dell, where scrub patches help create a mosaic of grassland, scrub and woodland habitats.



Scrub patches within The Dell

2.4.2.2 Ragwort

Whilst an important constituent of the grass sward, providing habitat and food for a number of invertebrates, common ragwort is poisonous if consumed by cattle. Consumption is most likely to occur when ragwort is pulled and left in situ as it becomes more palatable after drying. The Weeds Act 1959 requires the Council to control certain “injurious weeds” including common ragwort, with levels within grasslands regularly monitored. Ragwort is periodically hand pulled and removed from the grazing compartments by CMS volunteers and disposed of appropriately by the grazier.

2.4.3 Hedgerows

A network of hedgerows is found within Chorleywood House Estate (CWHE), mainly bordering grassland compartments and connecting with the mosaic of woodland patches, both across the site and in the wider landscape. A number of these hedgerows have been restored, planted and layed (layered). Hedge laying is a traditional form of management used to create a dense, stock-proof barrier, which is also valuable to wildlife, such as a nesting habitat for birds. Many of these layed hedgerows are now well developed and require a longer-term maintenance schedule.



Previously layed hedgerow



Base of previously layed hedgerow

There are several young hedgerows around the site that could potentially be layed in the near future, particularly around the Readings field.



Potential hedge for laying

Remaining hedgerows on site are periodically trimmed as part of the Grounds Maintenance Contract.

2.4.4 Woodland

There are several woodland compartments across the Estate, some of which are included within the LWS designation. Furthermore, parts of these woodland compartments are classified as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland, which means that there has been woodland present on the site for over 400 years. Secondary woodland is also present to the west of Chorleywood Dell and within Cattermole's Community Woodland. Wood Walk, Dell Mound Woodland, and the Scout Camp

Woodland are also included within the Natural England Higher Level Stewardship Agreement.

2.4.4.1 Cattermole's Community Woodland

Cattermole's Community Woodland was planted between 1992 and 1994 and was named after the head gardener of the former Estate. During the 2013 – 2018 GAP, a scalloped ride was established through the woodland creating areas of temporary open space and providing edge habitat to benefit butterflies and other insects. The woodland is in need of thinning, currently being characterised by a dense stand of narrow trees, which cast a shadow on the understorey and woodland floor below.



Dense straight lines of planting with limited understorey



Scallop along woodland ride

Along ride edges and woodland edge, coppiced hazel adds both an additional wildlife habitat and feature of interest.



Coppiced hazel

2.4.4.2 Wood Walk

The species-rich semi-natural Wood Walk forms part of the Local Wildlife Site.

Typically, this area supports a diverse mix of bluebell, primrose, wood melick and yellow archangel, while the rare coralroot bittercress, which has a limited distribution in Hertfordshire, has been historically recorded in this area. More recent recordings of this notable species have been made in the local area, but not within the grounds of the LNR.



Bluebells along the Wood Walk



Bluebells and yellow archangel

The Wood Walk has become dominated by a dense understorey of holly in places, which is casting a significant amount of shade to the detriment of ground flora. Whilst holly is a native species and a perfectly valid component of woodlands, it becomes an issue when it out-competes everything else. As a result, in places where holly is becoming dominant, there is little light reaching the woodland floor which is detrimental to the development of wildflowers, and natural tree regeneration. The absence of tree regeneration is a particular concern as the woodland comprises many mature trees which are now at the end of their lives. If re-stocking does not occur, there is a risk that the footprint of this historic feature will be lost over time.



Area of dense holly along the Wood Walk

2.4.4.3 Dell Mound Woodland, and Scout Camp Woodland

These two woodland pockets also form part of the Local Wildlife Site designation, reflecting their importance for local biodiversity. The western end of Dell Wood was previously restored, after suffering from large amounts of unauthorised tipping over a number of years. Since then, management has focused on maintaining levels of rhododendron, and controlling the cover of non-native laurel. With the exception of managing the cover of rhododendron and laurel, these areas have received minimal intervention in recent years. Pole-stage trees within these woods are dense in places and would benefit from being thinned.



Dense pole-stage trees in Dell Wood



Scout camp woodland

2.4.5 Parkland Trees

The LNR includes a number of landscaped elements which reflect the historic context of the Estate, particularly within the open amenity grassland area which

surrounds the house. Tree and shrub groups are scattered across this area leading the eye to certain vistas within the Estate. This a key feature of the site that requires conservation from both an historic landscape point of view and a biodiversity perspective due to the wildlife that this parkland habitat supports, for example, feeding bats. Over recent years the FoCWHE, have crown-lifted a number of these parkland trees to enhance views across the estate, whilst a number of new parkland trees have also been planted.



Parkland tree

Tree groups, mainly consisting of maples and conifers, were planted between the house and the tennis courts with the original intention that specimen/feature trees would be selected from these groups to continue into mature and veteran stages. This did not occur as planned, leaving tight groups of even-aged, ill-formed trees. Specimen conifers are also found at the northern end of the site, between the River Chess and North Hill Field,



Specimen trees near main house



Specimen conifers

2.4.5.1 *Pink Chestnut Avenue*

The Pink Chestnut Avenue is another historic feature of the Estate. The area is undergoing a long-term phased removal and replacement of the chestnut trees that have been severely affected by bleeding canker and pose a safety risk.



Pink Chestnut Avenue



Pink chestnut flowers

Trees along the avenue have also been susceptible to storm damage in recent years. The area is also currently overgrown, with the planted chestnut trees being encroached by bramble scrub.



Pink chestnut with top split out



Pink Chestnut Avenue showing both mature and younger replacement trees

2.4.5.2 *Rhododendron*

There are a number of established rhododendron shrubs within the woodland areas, particularly along Wood Walk. Although generally rhododendron is removed from

wildlife habitats due to its invasive nature and threats to native wildlife (as identified in the TRDC Woodland Management Plan), in the Estate context it is an attribute of the historic landscape. Management aims to maintain the current extents of rhododendron, whilst preventing further increases.



Rhododendron bush near main entrance



Rhododendron bush along the Wood Walk

2.4.6 Scrub

During previous management plans, an ecotone was created along the north-eastern corner of the amenity grassland in front of the house, and adjacent to the car park. An edge habitat transitioning from tall canopy trees down through to scrub, and amenity mown grassland was created. This woodland edge habitat is south facing and provides sunny sheltered spots for insects to feed on nectar-rich plants like bramble. Scallops were created, which are now cut on a rotational basis to provide a mosaic of growth stages. The regrowth of scrub provides sunny sheltered spots with good nectar sources for feeding insects e.g. butterflies and hoverflies.

In recent years, scrub has been cleared along the southern boundary adjacent to the Rickmansworth Road to open this area up and provide views into the site. Selected shrub groups e.g. historic rhododendrons were retained to provide an element of screening from the road, and amenity mown grassland established between the shrub groups.

2.4.7 Chalk stream

The River Chess is a chalk stream that flows from the Chilterns and along the north-eastern boundary of the site. Chalk streams are priority habitats and support a number of key species including brown trout, water crowfoot and water vole. The river is a significant feature of the LNR, with the 'beach' area by the footbridge providing a focal point for visitors, particularly in the summer when it is busy with picnicking families and children paddling and playing in the river. Due to this popularity, recreational use has impacted on bank erosion rates, and unsuccessful attempts have previously been made to stabilise the bank and re-establish vegetation.



River Chess



'Beach' area near footbridge

The mill stream diverges from the main river near the Pump House and would have originally driven the water wheel. In addition, a ditch runs along much of the northern edge of the site before joining the main river near the mill stream. This ditch has variable water levels and often runs dry along most of its length.



Ditch along northern edge of site

2.4.8 Ponds

A pond is found in Dell Wood, fed by the leat. Water levels are variable, and the pond can dry up completely during the summer. Although the sides are man-made and vegetation is limited, this can be a good location for dragonflies.



Pond in Dell Wood



Pond in Dell Wood when dried out

2.4.9 Orchard

The Chorleywood Community Orchard project was launched in 2008 by local residents with support from FoCWHE, CMS and TRDC. This project has resulted in the successful establishment of 140 fruit trees, several of which are local varieties. The orchard provides a link with the local community whilst also being an asset of the LNR, adding to the overall mosaic of varied wildlife habitats across the site.

Pruning is carried out at different times of the year for different species. Apples and pears are pruned whilst the tree is dormant (November – March), and plums and cherries are pruned whilst actively growing (May – July).

The grassland within the orchard is incorporated within cut-and lift-operations to help combat nutrient enrichment from annual fruit and leaf fall. The area is mown in late summer after the majority of wildflowers have set seed and the vegetation removed before nutrients can be returned to the ground.

During the period of the last plan, a water supply was installed in the orchard with a number of troughs aiding watering of the fruit trees in periods of drought. The Community Orchard group has a long-term aspiration to have grazing within the orchard.



Chorleywood Community Orchard



Orchard water supply

2.4.10 Important species

The rich mosaic of habitats associated with the LNR has the potential to support a wide range of species. The Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre ([Herts Environmental Records Centre | Biodiversity data for Hertfordshire \(hercinfo.org.uk\)](https://www.hercinfo.org.uk)), which is part of Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, holds survey information relating to the Local Nature Reserve. This information can be readily accessed and has been utilised to inform the current GAP.

2.4.10.1 Mammals

Deer (certainly muntjac and roe) and European rabbits are known to be present in the LNR, and observations have been made of gnawed bark and browsing on young tree regeneration. Grey squirrels are fairly abundant, and damage within the crowns of young trees has been observed in Cattermole's Community Woodland. There are also records of European mole and badger on site. Furthermore, water voles have previously been recorded on site along the River Chess.

Historically Chorleywood House Estate has been a significant site for bats. Past surveys revealed that Chorleywood House itself supported nursery roosts of brown long-eared bats. At the eastern end of Dell Wood, within the ruins of the old buildings, a structure is set into the northern bank, known as the icehouse. Historically this was a hibernation site for Natterer's bat, and during past management, a bat access point was created when a new door was fitted.

Records from the Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre also reveal that common pipistrelle and noctule bats have been observed foraging across the LNR in the recent past. Bat species have also been recorded foraging across the surrounding landscape, and include Natterer's, brown long-eared, noctule, Daubenton's and soprano pipistrelle. Considering the mosaic of semi-natural habitats within the LNR, including woodland, grassland, and water features, the site can be considered highly suitable for supporting foraging and roosting bats.

2.4.10.2 Birds

Summer migrants include blackcap, chiffchaff, willow warbler, swallow, whitethroat, house martin and swift, whilst winter visitors include fieldfare and redwing. Birds of prey found on site include sparrowhawk, kestrel, buzzard and red kite whilst other notable species include coal tit, treecreeper kingfisher and bullfinch. Skylarks have previously been recorded nesting in North Hill Field.

2.4.10.3 Invertebrates

A number of informal butterfly surveys have previously been conducted across the LNR, although records for the site are generally thought to be under-recorded. Species of interest include silver washed fritillary and marbled white. Moth species recorded have included barred sallow, brindled green, and cinnabar moths. Most

notably the Maple-seed pigmy moth has been recorded onsite which is a rare species in Hertfordshire.

A total of seven different species of dragonfly have been recorded within the LNR, most notably in Chorleywood Dell, including emperor dragonflies.

Grassland habitats more generally will provide habitat for a wide range of invertebrates including pollinators, spiders, beetles, crickets and grasshoppers.

2.4.10.4 Reptiles and Amphibians

There are past records of great crested newt (GCN) associated with the ornamental pond, located adjacent to Chorleywood House. There are also unconfirmed reports of the presence of GCN in the pond located within Dell Wood. This species is protected by law, and as such surveys to establish their presence should be undertaken before any habitat management work is carried out that may impact on the species. If found, a protected species licence may be required for habitat management work conducted in the pond and adjacent area.

2.4.10.5 Flora

The site supports a number of protected and locally significant plant species, as well as ancient woodland indicators. In particular, Wood Walk comprises bluebell, snowdrop, wild daffodil, and wood anemone, all of which are ancient woodland indicators. Furthermore, there are historic records of 'rare plants in Hertfordshire' associated with the LNR, including coralroot bitter-cress and umbellate hawkweed.

The grassland areas within the LNR are considered to be of good quality and species rich. The grasslands comprise a number of calcareous and neutral grassland indicators, including sweet vernal grass, bird's-foot trefoil, agrimony, field woodrush, black knapweed, meadow buttercup, and cowslip. Following the re-introduction of grazing to The Readings field, the diversity of wildflowers has improved, and a number of calcareous species have been observed. In particular, common agrimony, wild basil, mouse-ear hawkweed, perforate St John's-wort, field scabious, grass vetchling, and ox-eye daisy. A localised distribution of pyramidal orchid has also been observed.

The meadow adjacent to the football pitches also comprises high species diversity, dominated by a high proportion of grasses including Yorkshire fog and red fescue. Bird's-foot trefoil, ribwort plantain, creeping buttercup and germander speedwell have also been observed.

2.4.10.6 Veteran Trees and Lichens

The Friends of Chorleywood House Estate Local Nature Reserve undertook a survey of veteran trees in 2002, as part of the Hertfordshire Veteran Tree Survey co-ordinated by the Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre (HBRC). A total of 26 veteran trees were noted, species which included cedar, oak, sweet chestnut, beech and walnut. A lichen survey from 2004 recorded 37 different species of lichen around Chorleywood House Estate.

2.4.10.7 Fungi

The mosaic of habitats at Chorleywood House Estate provides conditions for a wide variety of fungi. Deadwood is left in situ where possible to encourage fungi to thrive.



Fungi on deadwood



Mushroom within grassland

2.4.11 Invasive species

Oak processionary moth (OPM) was introduced into England in 2005 and has since become established in London, gradually spreading into surrounding counties including Three Rivers District. Though not currently observed at CWHE, monitoring of the site is undertaken. While the moth is harmless, caterpillars pose a risk to public health through microscopic hairs which cover its body. Contact with hairs

typically causes skin rashes, although symptoms can include eye irritation, sore throats and in extreme cases breathing difficulties and allergic reactions. Control of OPM follows guidance from the Forestry Commission and has included pesticide spraying.

2.4.12 Heritage features

The buildings situated across the Estate represent an important historic component and are in various states of repair. Works have previously been carried out to improve the internal and external fabric of some of these buildings. Buildings include:

- Summer House
- Grade II listed Pump House
- Generator House
- Well House



The Summer House



The Pump House

Other historic features found within the Estate include the formal pond, the wisteria circle, the leat and the sunken garden, which date from the time when Lady Ela owned the grounds. These features are largely maintained by the FoCWHE as part of their regular work programme. The Friends ensure that the leat is regularly cleared of debris, the wisteria circle is pruned and trained, and the sunken garden is maintained and enhanced throughout the year.



The wisteria circle



The leat

The Friends of Chorleywood House Estate have conducted extensive research into the history of the Estate and have gathered together several documents and photographs, which are displayed in the Summer House. This information is shared with visitors through talks and open days hosted by the FoCWHE. The Council aspires to expand upon the historical research already gathered and make it readily accessible to visitors whenever they visit the LNR.

2.5 Access, Facilities and Infrastructure

2.5.1 Access

Chorleywood House Estate is extremely popular and highly valued by the residents of Chorleywood, as well as visitors from further afield. The site is extremely well connected, being located approx. 0.5 miles from the M25, and approx. one mile from Chorleywood Tube station.

2.5.1.1 Car parks

Two public car parks are located within the LNR grounds, one adjacent to the main vehicular entrance from Rickmansworth Road (A404), and the other located further along Lady Ela Drive near the football pitch.



Car park near main entrance



Car parking near football pitch

The increasing popularity of the LNR for sports and recreation, particularly football and tennis, places high pressure on the parking facilities, particularly the car park located adjacent to the football field. The parking provision in this area (south of the access track) was improved during previous management plans, by re-aligning the bays and extending the area of surfacing. At present there is often insufficient space for parking, resulting in parking on the grass verges. Further work is required to extend the usable all-weather surface to improve parking provision within the current footprint.

2.5.1.2 Cycling infrastructure

Cycle hoops are located in the main car park to encourage visitors to cycle to the site.



Cycle hoops

2.5.1.3 Site entrances

The LNR is well signposted for visitors arriving by car or public transportation, with directional signage from the M25 to the main entrance off Rickmansworth Road.

There are a number of access points situated along the northern and eastern boundary, providing pedestrian access for the local community. These entrances link the site to the Chess Valley Walk between Chesham to the north and the neighbouring Rickmansworth to the south.

2.5.1.4 Entrance signage

As part of the recent interpretation refresh, a new welcome sign was installed at the main entrance off Rickmansworth Road. At minor site entrances, timber monolith signs inform visitors they are entering the site.



Main entrance welcome sign



Wooden welcome monolith

2.5.1.5 Interpretation

The recent interpretation refresh included the production of attractive bespoke interpretation panels to show visitors how they can explore the LNR and identify the wildlife and heritage features they may observe. The interpretation panel nearest the main entrance includes a noticeboard to communicate updates to site users. A new site leaflet has also been produced.



Interpretation panel and noticeboard



Wildlife interpretation panel

A number of leaflet holders are located around the site, topped up with site leaflets by the FoCWHE.



Leaflet holder

2.5.1.6 Behaviour signage

Small signage boards are found around the site to communicate expected behaviours, regulations, and contact information. These are currently in a variety of styles and would benefit from a common, standard sign being produced to consolidate information.



Existing behaviour signage



Existing behaviour signage



Existing behaviour signage

Further signage is located at the entrances to cattle grazing compartments.



Signage at entrances to grazing compartments

2.5.1.7 Benches

Wooden benches are found across the site in a variety of styles.



Example of bench



Example of bench

A single picnic bench is located near the Summer House.



Picnic bench

2.5.1.8 Bins

There are both general waste and dog waste bins positioned at strategic locations across the LNR.



General waste bin



General waste and dog waste bins

2.5.1.9 Grazing infrastructure

Stock fencing surrounds the fields grazed by cattle (North Hill Field, the Dell, Dell Field and the Readings), with water troughs located in each. In addition, corrals are located in North Hill Field and the Readings to aid cattle management.



Corral in the Readings

2.5.1.10 Parkland fencing

In places around the site, the original Victorian metal fencing is visible. The condition of this varies greatly, with some sections intact and secure while other sections are damaged and fallen.



Intact metal railings



Damaged, fallen metal railings

Post and rail fencing surrounds part of the football pitches. This is largely intact, although is starting to deteriorate in places.



Post and rail fencing

2.5.1.11 Bollards

Wooden bollards demarcate the parking areas near the football pitches, and line Lady Ela Drive.



Bollards along Lady Ela Drive



Bollards in car park

2.5.1.12 Kick rail fencing

Kick rail fencing lines the site boundary along Rickmansworth Road and splits the main car park area. The fence along the road is recent and in good condition, while the fencing in the car park requires repair in places.



Kick rail fence along Rickmansworth Road



Damaged kick rail fence in the main car park

2.5.1.13 Sculptures

Wooden sculptures are found surrounding the pond in Dell Wood, including a sculpture bench. Where maintenance of these has been possible (such as regular oiling), these are in good condition, although some of the higher up sculptures have deteriorated where the height has made maintenance more difficult, and a number have recently collapsed.



Sculpture next to ornamental pond

2.5.1.14 Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and promoted routes

There are three Public Rights of Way which extend through the site, some of which are surfaced. Footpaths 34 and 35 extend either side of Dell Field, while Footpath 02 extends along the eastern boundary of the LNR adjacent to the River Chess and links the site to the Chess Valley Walk, connecting Chesham to the north with Rickmansworth to the south. A large section of Footpath 02 has recently been surfaced.

Public Rights of Way and footpaths are kept clear and open through a combined effort between Grounds Maintenance staff, the FoCWHE, and CMS volunteers.



RoW finger post



RoW waymark post

2.5.1.15 Path surfacing

Footpath 34 is largely surfaced, with the southern half running along Lady Ela Drive, and the northern half running along the Pink Chestnut Avenue. Most of Footpath 02 is surfaced, with the western half having been recently completed. The eastern half connecting to Solesbridge Lane has older surfacing and is currently in poor condition.



Surfacing of track along Footpath 02

2.5.1.16 Walking routes

Waymarked trails are important to encourage exploration of the mosaic of habitats across the LNR, particularly for new or inexperienced walkers. In particular, waymarks provide direction and reassurance for walkers when the route of the trail becomes unclear, such as when a path changes direction, or where one or more paths join. Three waymarked routes are provided around the LNR; the Park Walk (blue), Wood Walk (orange) and Valley Walk (red), which are displayed on interpretation panels and the site leaflet. However, there is a lack of directional signage around the site as many of the waymarks are rotten or been removed. As

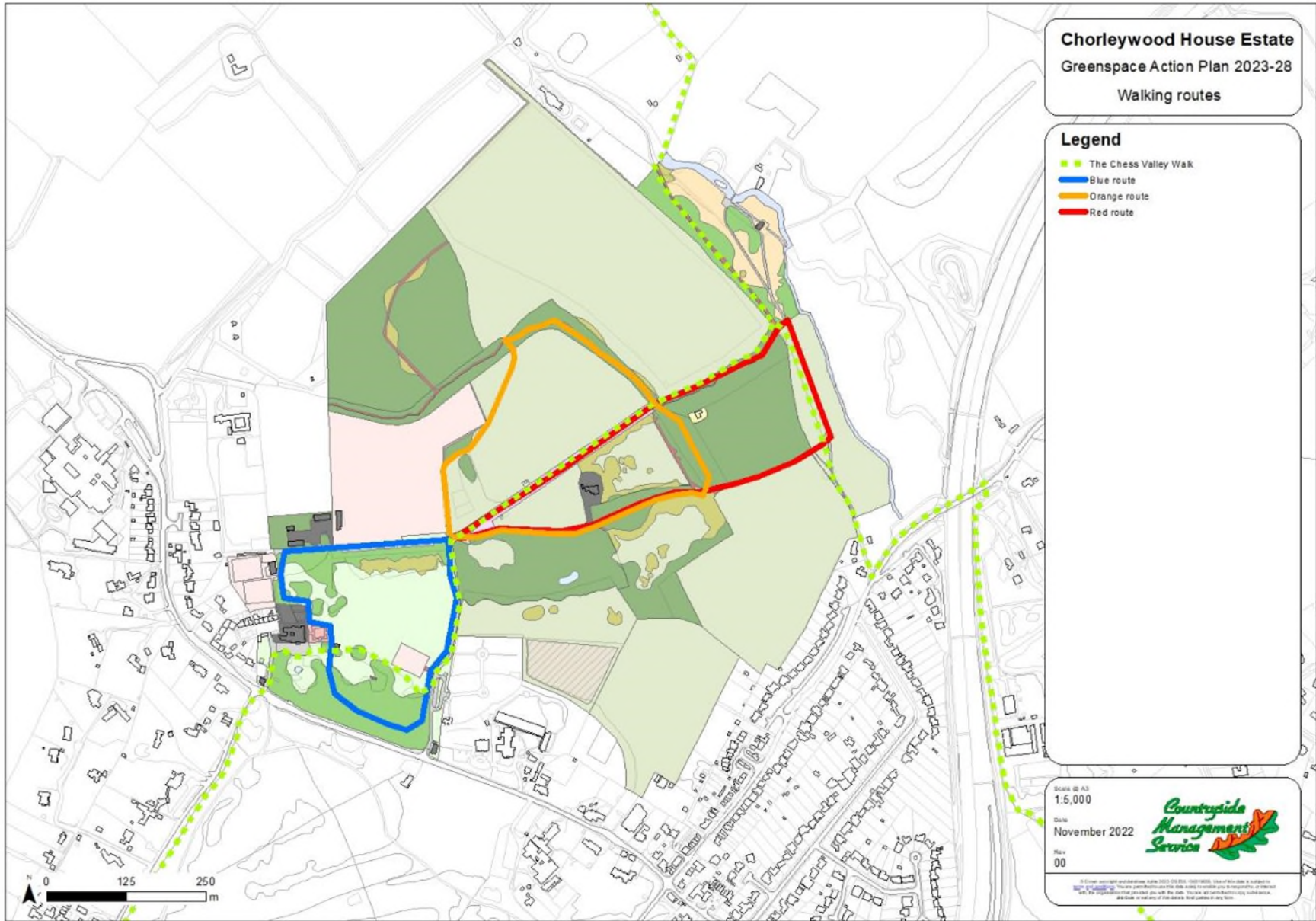
such the routes are unclear, and visitors may be unaware of the walking routes available.



Waymark post for walking routes



Waymark for Chess Valley Walk



2.5.1.17 Informal paths

In addition to the three walking routes, there is an informal network of paths allowing further exploration across the site, most of which are unsurfaced.

2.5.1.18 Steps

Steps are found along some of the steeper paths through Dell Wood. These are in moderate condition with some repairs likely needed in the near future to replace rotten timbers.



Steps in Dell Wood

2.5.1.19 Sports and recreation facilities

The LNR is an important recreational green space providing sports pitches, public (free) and private tennis courts, in addition to a range of opportunities for informal recreation.



Tennis courts



Football club

2.6 Community and Events

2.6.1 Volunteer activity

2.6.1.1 Friends of Chorleywood House Estate

The Friends of Chorleywood House Estate (FoCWHE) are a constituted Friends Group that delivers voluntary practical action within the site. As well as providing critical input into the decision-making processes and management planning, they are a regular presence onsite providing eyes and ears reporting to TRDC. This type of visible presence and activity helps to deter anti-social behaviour and improves the perception of safety. FoCWHE also contribute to the ongoing monitoring of the plan.

Community engagement and participation has continued to play a valuable role in the management and development of the LNR. The FoCWHE are valued ambassadors for the site and for almost twenty years they have implemented a regular programme of volunteer activities which has improved habitat quality and restored heritage value across the LNR. On top of the volunteer activity they deliver, the FoCWHE are able to respond to the public and provide immediate feedback to the Council from park users.

The FoCWHE represent local people who have an interest in the site. Volunteers range from members of the local community to residents of Chorleywood House. The Friends maintain close links with the Chorleywood Common Rangers, and with CMS working parties. The FoCWHE conduct working parties onsite twice a month, planning their activities for the LNR within the guidelines and overall priorities of the GAP Action Plan, and contributing greatly to the programme of volunteer works

The group has built up a very impressive record of the history of the Estate, and they display this in the Lady Ela Russell Summer House, opening the Summer House to the public on Bank Holidays and other days each year. They have developed and undertaken a number of projects including the restoration of the fire pond, the sunken garden and the pond in Dell Wood, all of which are key features of the LNR's historic landscape and gardens. The group has a website, www.chorleywoodhouse.org.uk which provides information on the Estate and news about events, as well as featuring valuable insights into the history and ecology of the LNR. Their membership is open to anyone interested in taking an active part in

the work and aims of the group. They have an elected committee and hold a formal meeting open to all members at least twice a year.

CMS provide a “Friends of pack” which enables the Friends of Chorleywood House Estate to work to agreed guidelines. The pack includes completed and template risk assessments, training requirements, key contact details, insurance and work programming information; all reviewed as part of the biannual review meeting.

2.6.1.2 Chorleywood Community Orchard

The Chorleywood Community Orchard group provides a vital link with the local community and holds volunteer opportunities throughout the year on the first Saturday of each month. The Chorleywood Community Orchard group have their own website, www.chorleywoodorchard.org.uk which provides more information on the aims of the group and the tree varieties which can be found in the orchard.

2.6.1.3 CMS volunteer group

In addition to FoCWHE volunteer activities, management is supported through task days carried out by the CMS midweek volunteer group.

2.6.2 Community Engagement

There are several opportunities for the local community to be involved in the management of the LNR:

- Through joining the Friends Group and/or the Chorleywood Community Orchard and participating in their tasks.
- Additional organised volunteer events, provided through the CMS Midweek Volunteer programme.
- Participating in events such as guided wildlife and history walks.

The creation of a new Greenspace Action Plan re-enforces the partnership between the Council, CMS and the Friends Group (as well as any other interested parties), and provides an opportunity to discuss, programme and deliver a variety of projects that contribute towards the achievement of the overall aims and objectives for the LNR.

2.6.3 Promotion

Raising awareness of site values and encouraging more people to visit would help support the long-term management of the LNR by ensuring that it continues to be valued by the local community. Chorleywood House Estate is promoted through a range of channels, including:

- The [Three Rivers Leisure](#) website has a page dedicated to Chorleywood House Estate including a map, the management plan, related documents and details of the FoCWHE. Events.
- CMS and Three Rivers District Council social media. The estate appears as a “Landmark & historical place” on Facebook with links to www.chorleywoodhouse.org.uk This allows users to check-in or tag photos to the location.
- Updates to councillors relating to planned works.
- Council notice boards located around the district, which also provide wider information about news and activities within the district.
- Onsite noticeboard at main site entrance.
- Site leaflets.
- Signage, including off-site directional signage (brown signs), on-site entrance signage and interpretation.
- The websites of FoCWHE and Chorleywood Community Orchard
- Three Rivers Times, an in-house publication reaching 38,000 households.
- ParksHerts website, a mobile-first website application providing a single information point for over one hundred of Hertfordshire’s parks and open spaces, from recreation grounds through to woodlands and award-winning flagship parks, irrespective of administrative ownership. It provides a way for people to discover and enjoy these places, supporting people to make outdoor exercise part of their everyday lives.
- Chorleywood Magazine.
- Chorleywood Residents Association website.

2.6.4 Informal recreation

The LNR is regularly used by local people for informal exercise, such as walking, dog walking, bird watching and running, and serves as a local resource for activities that enhance health and well-being. There are also a variety of events and activities available at the LNR which promote healthy living through physical activity and healthy lifestyles. For example, the following activities have been/are on offer at the LNR:

- Nordic Walking
- Guided walks
- Volunteer days – fortnightly morning working parties organised by the Friends on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month, and by the Community Orchard group on the 1st Saturday of each month
- Orienteering
- Tennis – free courts are available as well as a private club
- Chorleywood Common Youth Football Club
- Scouts
- Guided photography walks

2.6.5 Events

The FoCWHE enjoy celebrating the LNR and the work they have contributed to its management. The group run events and activities for park users including guided walks and history focused events. In particular, the FoCWHE support TRDC with biannual photography related walks on the Estate. They also hold stalls and information stands at the annual Chorleywood Village Day in order to promote the LNR and their Friends Group. In addition, the Chorleywood Community Orchard group hold an annual ‘Apple Day’ event for the public in autumn.

2.6.6 Site misuse

The TRDC grounds maintenance contract includes provisions for responding to vandalism and graffiti.

A Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in relation to dog control is in effect across the entirety of the Three Rivers District. For details, see <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk/service/public-space-protection-order-pspo>. The dog control order places restrictions on dog fouling (fixed penalty scheme), and the number of dogs under charge by any one person.

2.7 Site Management

2.7.1 Management Structure

Three Rivers District Council as landowners are responsible for the implementation of the plan. Their role includes responsibility for:

- Management works carried out by their in-house team of Landscape Officers and Grounds Maintenance staff.
- Administration and budget management.
- Acting as signatory for grant applications and claims.
- Member involvement and reporting.
- Appropriate support for FoCWHE.

CMS advises on management, particularly where it relates to nature conservation and community involvement. They are responsible for:

- The production of Greenspace Action Plans for the woodland including engagement with partners and subsequent monitoring.
- Production of specifications, procurement, and contract monitoring for management works.
- Running volunteer task days through the mid-week volunteer group.
- Providing support to the FoCWHE through work programmes, training, tools, risk assessment and governance.
- Support with events and PR.

2.7.2 Agreements and Grant Funding

Management of the site has been supported by a Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreement which was due to expire in 2023. This has recently been extended to continue to support management for the period of this plan.

2.7.3 Environmental management and sustainability

The council has a strong commitment to the environment and environmental sustainability and recognises the impacts its operations have on the environment. Three Rivers District Council's dedication to protect the environment is reflected in council policies, strategies, commitments and partnerships. Some relevant initiatives include:

- Peat will not be used on any of our sites.
- Pesticides will not be used unless there are no alternative means of control.
- Only FSC timber is used across the district.
- All cleaning materials are phosphate free.

2.7.4 Health and Safety

The main contact number and web address for TRDC are listed on the site interpretation boards. The phone line includes an out-of-hours service, allowing members of the public to contact the council as required.

Tree safety surveys are carried out in all TRDC parks, woodlands and open spaces, including Chorleywood House Estate, with the resulting data entered into tree management software and essential remedial works undertaken to secure visitor safety. All dead wood, including standing dead wood, is left in situ where safe to do so for habitat and biodiversity benefits. Trees which have to be reduced or removed for safety reasons are stacked into habitat piles or chipped and removed from the site.

CMS supply task specific risk assessments which are read and understood by staff and volunteers before any work is undertaken. These risk assessments include requirements for training, PPE, equipment and the information required to be COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002) compliant.

Work site specific risk assessments are carried out before tasks are underway to assess local hazards and environmental conditions.

Visitors to Chorleywood House Estate should feel safe and able to enjoy all areas of the site at all times. The FoCWHE are present on site twice per month, and the Community Orchard at least once a month. This type of regular presence and activity helps to prevent anti-social behaviour and improves the perception of safety.

The LNR is regularly visited and inspected by the Council and CMS. Reports from the FoCWHE, user groups, and members of the public are also noted. Any vandalism is inspected as soon as possible after a report has been received, normally within 24 hours.

Previous work has focused on improving visibility and sense of security. Actions were taken to improve the woodland edge habitat bordering the car park (adjacent to the football field) which has not only improved the quality of this habitat for wildlife but has also opened up the car park making it safer and more welcoming for visitors. Regular management is required to keep this area open. Vegetation and trees which overhang and encroach the footpaths are regularly cut back to improve light levels and sense of security for visitors. There is a speed limit on site (15mph) to restrict vehicular movement to a sensible speed within the LNR.

Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) visit the LNR on a regular basis as part of their patrol routes. The Parish Council offices are located on the grounds of CWHE (just inside the main site entrance) which enables the public to make contact if necessary. TRDC has a good working relationship with the Parish Council and they are able to pass on requests from the public.

2.7.5 Leases

2.7.5.1 Scouts

The Scouts hold a lease over the Scout Camp and surrounding woodland.

3.0 AIM & OBJECTIVES

The aim and objectives of the GAP are as follows:

Aims

To maintain Chorleywood House Estate as a sustainable Local Nature Reserve, rich in biodiversity whilst retaining and enhancing the historic landscape character of the site. Chorleywood House Estate will be welcoming and accessible for recreation, whilst also providing opportunities for visitors to connect with and enjoy their local environment.

Objectives

A. A welcoming place – *To provide a welcoming green space for the enjoyment of the local community, finding a balance between biodiversity, heritage and public access*

A1 Improve public access to and connectivity between the diverse habitats associated with the Estate through improved waymarking of promoted walking routes

A2 Enhance an area of grassland near main car park and Chorleywood House through wildflower seeding to create a feature of interest

A3 Investigate improvements to car parking provision on site

A4 Develop a 'green screen' along the main Chorleywood Road

B. Healthy, safe and secure – *To provide and maintain clear and safe public access onto, and around Chorleywood House Estate*

B1 Carry out planned and reactive tree works to address safety issues

B2 Respond promptly to reports of misuse of the site, ensuring a proportionate response to anti-social behaviour

C. Well-maintained and clean – *To ensure that all aspects of Chorleywood House Estate are kept clean and well maintained*

C1 Manage and maintain paths, bridges, benches, access infrastructure and signage

C2 Remove fly-tipping, undertake regular litter picking, empty litter bins, and carry out small scale vegetation management along access routes

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

D1 Ensure all site activities adhere to relevant TRDC policies and strategies, including all work undertaken by contractors

D2 Ensure ongoing maintenance costs are financially sustainable

D3 Secure external funding to ensure the viability of capital works

D4 Ensure impacts of climate change are considered in management decisions, both in terms of the effect of climate change on wildlife habitats and of carbon emissions from management operations

D5 Carry out management according to environmental best practice, including a presumption against the use of herbicide

D6 Monitor and record improvements to habitats and wildlife, including evaluating success of grazing through undertaking rapid grassland assessments and commissioning extended Phase 1 survey for North Hill Field

E. Biodiversity, landscape and heritage – *To conserve and enhance the important wildlife, landscape and heritage features of Chorleywood House Estate*

E1 Carry out appropriate responsive management to conserve and enhance the mosaic of important wildlife habitats

E2 Maintain a diverse range of grassland habitats, maximising areas for wildflowers and pollinators through continued grazing and hay-cutting, whilst also maintaining areas for recreation and amenity

E3 Manage woodland habitats for their nature conservation value, maintaining a diverse structure and range of species present

E4 Manage veteran and feature trees to enhance both aesthetic and ecological value

- E5 Develop a long-term plan for the management of hedgerows, including those previously laid, to maximise their contribution to biodiversity and enhance parkland views
- E6 Develop a long-term plan for the sustainable management of Cattermole's Community Woodland in order to enhance value for biodiversity and for people, including undertaking a thinning operation during this plan period
- E7 Integrate the habitat management aims of the Chorleywood Community Orchard project within the wider context of the Estate to optimise the potential of the orchard for supporting wildlife, including investigating potential for grazing the orchard with sheep
- E8 Protect and enhance chalk stream habitat through both management of areas directly under TRDC control and engaging with wider catchment partners and projects, such as the Smarter Water Catchment project.
- E9 Enhance habitats within Chorleywood House Estate by creating a new pond on site
- E10 Control invasive species, whilst maintaining existing cover of rhododendron where this forms an historic feature
- E11 Protect and celebrate heritage features, and conserve the historic landscape character of the site and its relationship with the wider landscape, including further developing heritage interpretation on site

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

- F1 Work with and engage key stakeholders
- F2 Support volunteer activity at Chorleywood House Estate and ensure all involved operate towards achievement of the GAP
- F3 Support the Friends of Chorleywood House Estate and Chorleywood Community Orchard volunteers, and encourage the local community to become further involved in site management in a structured and supported way

G. Marketing and communication – *To promote awareness and interest in Chorleywood House Estate*

G1 Widely promote volunteer and community events at Chorleywood House Estate, using both traditional and electronic media

G2 Utilise newly installed noticeboards to update site users of developments on site

4.0 MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS

A1 Improve public access and connectivity

Replacement waymark posts will be installed along the routes of the three advertised walking routes to ensure these are easy to follow for visitors to the site. In addition, new waymark discs will be installed at key viewpoints across the LNR, with QR codes directing visitors to online resources and audio links which reveal historic views or highlight significant points in the Estate's historical timeline. This will enable visitors to engage with the site's heritage in an interactive and stimulating manner.

Through Rights of Way and the Chess Valley Walk, the site is well connected to the surrounding countryside, in particular the adjacent Chorleywood Common. Many visitors may also visit the Common whilst visiting Chorleywood House Estate, with movement between the two sites likely only to increase with the opening of the new café at the nearby Cricket Pavilion. Moving between the two sites requires crossing the busy Rickmansworth Road, investigations will take place to look at options for facilitating safe crossing between the two sites.

There is currently no access to the site for horse riders, although the Briefing Document engagement revealed an appetite for this amongst the local population. Whilst TRDC have no current plans to provide horse access, this will be investigated in further detail during this plan.

A2 Grassland enhancement next to Chorleywood House

A new area of wildflower grassland will be created by seeding a section of the amenity grassland adjacent to Chorleywood House, both to increase wildflower habitat and create a focal point for visitors entering the site. Following establishment, this will be managed through a cut-and-lift regime.

A3 Car parking improvements

Parking options to increase capacity will be investigated with Three Rivers District Council Planning Department. Any improvements are likely to require the securing of external funding.

A4 'Green screen' along Rickmansworth Road

Works during the last plan to replace the fence and remove scrub along the boundary with Rickmansworth Road have opened up this area greatly. Whilst the views created into the site are welcomed, an element of further screening will help reduce traffic noise in the area whilst still maintaining the more open feel and connectivity to the wider area created. This will be achieved through coppicing shrub species such as holly along the site boundary and allowing a green screen of low, shrubby growth to develop.

B1 Tree safety

Tree risk surveys are undertaken in line with TRDC's Tree Strategy. A programme of planned and reactive tree risk management is carried out by specialist contractors and managed by TRDC Tree and Landscape Officers.

Management of oak processionary moth will follow the latest Forestry Commission guidance regarding control requirements, the current process is outlined in Appendix 7.1.

As and when trees are to be felled or coppiced on the grounds of public safety, gaps in the canopy will be created. Each new gap will be assessed individually to determine whether any restocking is required, whether to retain as open space, or whether natural regeneration will be sufficient to ensure a variety of age stands are present within the woodland belt and that the footprint of historic woodland features is maintained. All re-stocking will require effective protection from browsing, and tree aftercare to prevent competition from weeds.

B2 Site misuse

General site misuse will continue to be managed through the Grounds Maintenance contract.

C1 Site infrastructure maintenance

Footpaths and entrances will be kept clear of encroaching vegetation through volunteer activity and Grounds Maintenance operations.

A number of existing benches are in poor condition and require replacement. A programme of bench replacement will be undertaken as required, using the TRDC standard design.

Monitoring of further site infrastructure, for example interpretation boards and waymarkers, will be undertaken as part of regular site visits, and repairs/replacement arranged as necessary, either through volunteer task days or contractor delivery.

A thorough annual inspection of all grazing infrastructure will take place prior to the grazing season and repairs arranged as required before cattle arrive.

C2 Site cleanliness

The core maintenance items such as cleaning, grass cutting and emptying of bins are scheduled as part of the Council's in-house Grounds Maintenance Contract, which is checked and audited on a regular basis. Monitoring of the delivery of grounds maintenance activities will continue so that any required adjustments are implemented in an informed and responsible manner so that the impact on the site as a whole is a positive one.

In addition, removal of fly-tipping will continue through the Grounds Maintenance contract and litter picking will form part of volunteer activities.

The FoCWHE and the grazier help to keep an eye on the safe maintenance of the park. The FoCWHE contribute towards the cleanliness and maintenance of the Estate through their work party activities, which improves landscaping and maintains access to the various areas of the Estate.

D1 Adherence to relevant TRDC policies and strategies

Management at Chorleywood House Estate should be guided by all relevant TRDC policies and strategies, including the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy, Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Pesticide Strategy and Tree Strategy.

D2 Financially sustainable

Where specific projects are planned, it is important to be aware of the impact these will have on the general maintenance operations both visually and financially.

Through continued well-planned maintenance regimes and projects, we aim to

achieve this not just for the next five years but well into the future for Chorleywood House Estate.

D3 External funding

Funding of management is currently supported through the HLS scheme for the site, which has recently been extended by five years to cover the period of this plan.

Opportunities to enter the site into a Countryside Stewardship or Environmental Land Management scheme will be assessed, and an application made either during or at the end of the five year HLS extension, subject to the results of a botanical survey of North Hill Field.

D4 Impacts of climate change

Impacts of climate change will be considered in all management decisions and when planning for the future. Examples of where this may be implemented include when choosing tree species for planting or adjusting timing of grassland management due to changes in weather/seasonal patterns.

In addition, the impacts of management operations on climate will also be considered. Examples of this include evaluating methods used (e.g., necessity for using machinery). Environmental sustainability of contractors and reducing carbon emissions also forms part of evaluation criteria when tendering contracts for site management.

D5 Environmental best practice

All management operations within Chorleywood House Estate will aim to be as sustainable as possible, both financially and in terms of environmental impact. The Council has a strong commitment to the environment, and environmental sustainability and recognises the impacts its operations have on the environment. TRDC's dedication to protecting the environment is reflected in Council policies, strategies, commitments and partnerships. Some of these initiatives include:

- A presumption against the use of peat.
- Pesticides only used where there is no alternative; glyphosate only used on Japanese knotweed.

- Only Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified timber is used across the district.
- All cleaning materials are phosphate free.
- TRDC was first certified with ISO 14001 in 2010. Although no longer certified, the Council strives to maintain the principles of the accreditation.

The management of woodland compartments will be in accordance with the principles of Sustainable Forest Management and the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS). The Council is committed to safeguarding the natural environment by reducing damaging activities.

When choosing products to use on site, consideration will be given to using products that can be recycled at the end of their lives will be used. Where materials need to be removed, the Council will ensure these are disposed of in the correct manner, further supporting the sustainable management of the LNR.

Natural regeneration will be utilised for restocking wherever appropriate; it is low cost, dynamic, adaptable to local conditions, and reduces the risk of importing pests and diseases to the woodland. However, replanting will be considered if natural regeneration does not achieve the required stocking levels. This presents an opportunity for some species diversification, with the aim of improving the resilience of the woodland against pressures from changing climate, pests and diseases.

Working closely with organisations (such as the Forestry Commission and Hertfordshire County Council) in relation to biosecurity will provide up to date information on plant and tree health issues across the county and further afield.

D6 Monitoring

Wildflower surveys were conducted in North Hill Field prior to the introduction of grazing to establish a baseline of data. Further surveys will be undertaken to monitor vegetation changes from this change in management, including a repeat Extended Phase 1 survey and UKHab assessment in 2024. Survey results will also inform the entering of North Hill Field into a Countryside Stewardship application if appropriate.

To further monitor conservation grasslands across the site, a programme of Rapid Grassland Assessments will be introduced to allow continual monitoring. Results

from these surveys will inform any required adjustments to management operations, for example livestock density and timing of cut-and-lifts, to create desired ecological conditions.

We will seek to establish a programme of wildlife surveys in collaboration with wildlife organisations, with all records transferred to the HERC. A review of current survey data for the site will be undertaken to identify gaps and priorities for future surveys. Likely to be of particular interest would be a programme of bat activity surveys to establish if hibernation sites are still in use, to understand how the site is being used and determine which species are present. Also of interest would be repeats of previous surveys, e.g. veteran tree and lichen surveys, to monitor how these have changed.

In addition, volunteers will be encouraged to contribute to citizen science schemes, for example, establishing a butterfly transect across and chalk stream monitoring of the River Chess through the site.

A programme of fixed-point photography monitoring will also be initiated to monitor changes in habitat conditions and the success of management operations.

E1 Responsive management of important wildlife habitats

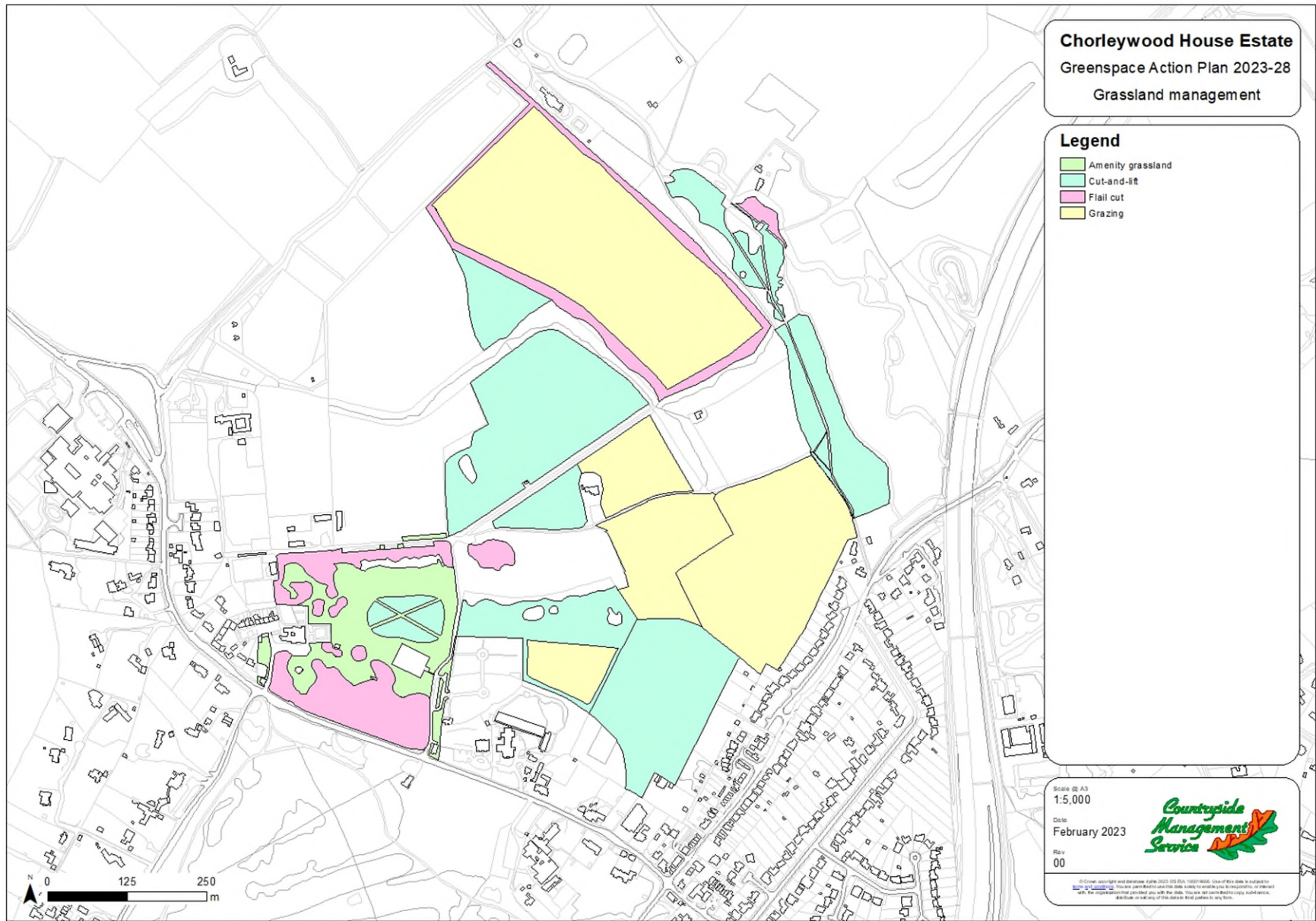
Some aspects of general management of the site will be reactive to specific circumstances that cannot be accurately programmed or predicted, such as increased visitor usage and weather conditions.

E2 Grassland management

Grazing will continue in North Hill Field, the Readings, the Dell and Dell Field, in line with the HLS agreement. Cattle will generally be present for 12 weeks, from late June to mid-September, though these timings may differ depending on growing conditions. Where possible, cattle will be rotated between fields to provide slight variations in management between years to benefit as wide a range of species as possible.

Grass cutting will follow the prescriptions set out in the Grounds Maintenance for the site, with cuts following three prescriptions. Amenity grass will continue to be cut in areas near Chorleywood House. For conservation grasslands not grazed, a cut-and-

lift regime will continue, with the area near the Pump House added to this regime to increase the conservation value of the grasslands here. Areas marked as rough grassland will be managed through an annual flail cut, these include Dell Mound to maintain this as open space and the perimeter around North Hill Field to prevent scrub encroaching across paths.



Boundary scrub will be maintained to provide a graduated margin between grassland and woodland habitats. Each autumn, a site visit between TRDC, CMS and the FoCWHE will be held to assess scrub and choose which areas are to be managed the forthcoming winter, with areas chosen to maintain a variety of ages and structure of scrub.

E3 Woodland management

Management will focus on developing sustainable woodlands, which are:

- rich in biodiversity
- offer opportunities for public recreation and enjoyment
- contribute to the sustainable network of broadleaved woodlands across the district.

This means that management will be proactive, over and above minimum safety requirements, and will aim to deliver:

- Creation of multi-age structure in the canopy and understorey.
- Creation and maintenance of permanent and temporary open space within woodlands.
- Increase in the diversity of woodland species (trees and ground flora).
- Encouragement of ground flora development and natural regeneration of self-set trees and shrubs which will form the canopy and understorey of the woodland in the future.
- Provision of dead wood habitats.

Specific actions to deliver these aims in established woodlands during the next five years are:

- Targeted removal of shrub species (predominantly holly), particularly along the Wood Walk where this is shading out woodland understorey and regeneration. Specimen holly trees will be retained; however, dense stands of smaller holly thickets will be actively managed. Three management actions will be identified for the smaller thickets and will consist of: (1) retention, (2)

coppicing, and (3) felling. This will ensure that a variety of growth stages of holly are retained, whilst controlling its cover.

- Thinning of dense pole-stage trees within Dell Wood.
- All mature or over-mature standing trees and all standing and fallen deadwood will be retained, unless it is a genuine safety hazard.

E4 Veteran and feature trees

The scattered individual trees throughout the formal parkland are historic features from the designed gardens associated with Chorleywood House, and as such will be retained and protected. The areas of scattered parkland trees either side of Chorleywood House will be enhanced by reducing vegetation management to an flail cut, and planting woodland flora to develop the area in to a 'woodland garden'. As the existing parkland trees mature and die, they will be left as standing dead wood (wherever possible), and replacement trees will be planted in suitable locations across the formal parkland. As these trees grow and mature, they will be managed to become specimen features, ensuring the longevity of specimen trees as a parkland feature for enjoyment by future generations.

Along the Pink Chestnut Avenue, regular clearance is required to provide younger trees with space to grow. The scrub habitat found along the avenue is a valuable wildlife habitat, particularly for butterflies, and so scrub management will be rotational to ensure an element of this scrub is retained whilst ensuring it does not develop in to mature scrub. In addition, grass cutting is required to maintain a grass sward along the side of the trackway to prevent scrub encroachment over the path. As required, additional tree planting will replace any failed tree planting of chestnut trees to maintain this historic feature into the future.

Within the crowded tree groups found near the tennis courts, specimen/ feature trees will be identified to be retained, and surrounding trees removed. Retained trees will be allowed to develop in to future veteran trees, where they will provide attractive landscape features and valuable habitat.

E5 Hedgerow management

The previously layed hedges on site will have reached a suitable size for re-laying during the period of this plan. Hedges will be re-layed in staggered stages across the five years of the plan to ensure a mix of ages and development is present across the site. Planted hedges adjacent to the Readings will also be layed. Remaining hedges will be managed for the benefit of wildlife, cut every three years, unless more frequent management is required for access.

E6 Cattermole's Community Woodland

Regular management in Cattermole's Community Woodland mainly involves ride management where a scalloped path has been successful in increasing the growth of diverse woodland flora and provides favourable conditions for birds and invertebrates (especially butterflies). The ride and scallops will be managed to maintain a dynamic habitat mix of grass, bramble and scrub at varying ages by cutting vegetation on rotation. This will include coppicing of previously coppiced hazel along the ride and woodland edges.

The woodland would benefit from thinning in order to enhance the age structure of the trees and allow an understorey to develop. Thinning will target the removal of unhealthy and crowded trees, particularly those with substantial squirrel damage. This approach will provide the remaining trees with more space, allowing the development of a broad crown. Thinning will also allow increased light levels to reach the woodland floor, encouraging natural tree regeneration and an understorey of small shrubs and trees, as well as diverse woodland flora. This regeneration will form the canopy and understorey of the woodland in the future.

As part of thinning works, a glade will be created, adding further structural diversity within the woodland and maximising the provision of edge habitat for wildlife with minimal loss of trees.

E7 Chorleywood Community Orchard project

Annual fruit trees within the Community Orchard will continue to be managed by the dedicated volunteer group who undertake annual pruning and tending.

In order to further promote the orchard to site users, a directional sign will be located along Lady Ela Drive, directing visitors to the orchard's location.

Sheep grazing has been an ambition for the orchard for some time to manage the grassland within the orchard in a traditional way, and will be introduced during this plan. There is already a water supply to the orchard, and so infrastructure needed will be to stock fence the orchard area, to include access gates for both vehicles and people. To protect livestock, this area would be a dog-free area while sheep are grazing.

E8 River Chess

Erosion of the bank at the 'beach' area will be monitored, and interventions made as necessary to minimise erosion if it becomes a problem. Any intervention should include the aim to make the bank safe and accessible for use by visitors.

Opportunities to work collaboratively with stakeholders at a wider catchment level, such as through the Chess Smarter Water Catchment, will be taken to contribute to improving the health of the river.

E9 Pond creation

A new pond will be created within the site, both to enhance wildlife habitats and add an additional point of interest. Further investigation will look to identify an ideal location, taking account of availability of water and links to other complimentary habitats.

E10 Invasive species control

The cover of rhododendron will be monitored in order to determine the risk of spreading and whether control may be required in future plan periods.

E11 Heritage features and historic landscape character

The proposed habitat management within this GAP will re-enforce the historic footprint of the Estate whilst enhancing public enjoyment and understanding of the site's rich natural heritage. Specific actions for this plan regarding heritage features are to:

- Work with the TRDC property team to establish plans for maintenance and improvement of historic buildings, particularly the Grade II listed Pump House.
- Conserve garden features and sow woodland wildflower seeds in areas near Chorleywood House to create areas of 'woodland garden'.
- Development of an interactive trail, using QR codes to link with online content.
- Running of guided walks and events with a focus on the history of the site.

F1 Stakeholder engagement

The production of this Chorleywood House estate Greenspace Action Plan 2023-28 follows a structured two stage engagement process to enable stakeholders the opportunity to feed into the production of the GAP. To ensure that the GAP serves the local community, stakeholders engaged in the consultation process include FoCWHE, the Parish Council, local Councillors, local residents, site users, Resident Associations and wildlife interest groups.

Throughout the life of the plan, promotional activities will keep stakeholders informed of management activities on site. In particular, TRDC will proactively engage with residents of the estate where they are affected by management activities.

Where possible, opportunities for collaborative working will be investigated, such as with Chorleywood Parish Council as owners of the adjacent Chorleywood Common.

F2 Volunteer activity

Regular task days from the CMS Wednesday volunteer group will continue to support management of the site. In addition, further opportunities for volunteering will be encouraged, particularly around wildlife surveying.

F3 Friends of Chorleywood House Estate

The Friends of Chorleywood House Estate will continue to be supported in delivering management activities. Regular meetings will be held between TRDC, CMS and representatives from the Friends to discuss and plan work programmes.

G1 Promote and celebrate

Online content should be kept under regular review to ensure information is up to date. Upcoming site activities and events should continue to be promoted using the promotional tools detailed in 2.6.4.

Completion of larger projects should be celebrated with events involving Cllrs. and the local community to further promote improvements to the site.

The council will look to extend the range of activities on offer through its Community Biodiversity Officer and its Community Parks and Sustainability Officer.

G2 Noticeboards

Noticeboards will be regularly updated to raise awareness and inform visitors of management at Chorleywood House Estate and any issues that arise.

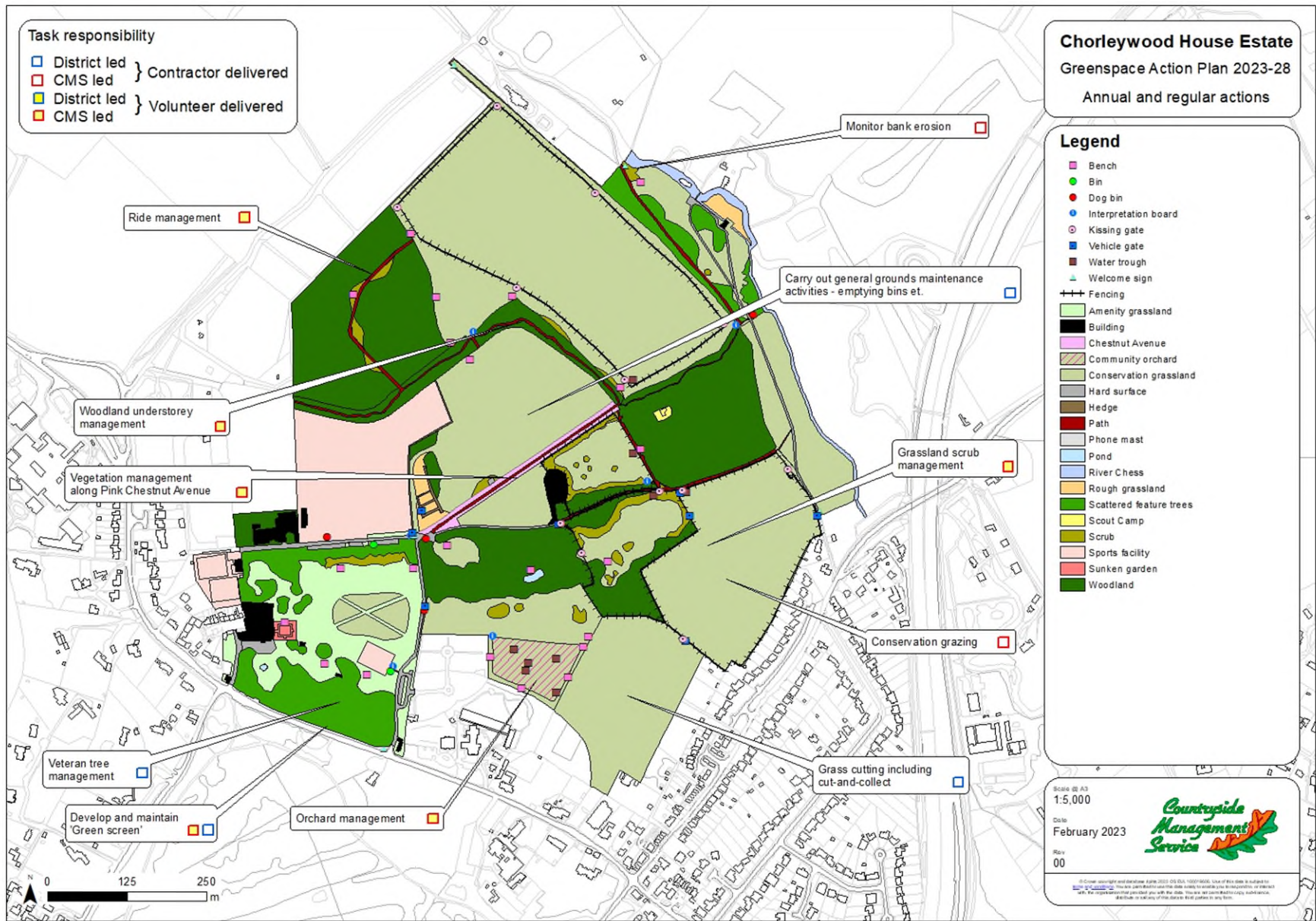
5.0 ACTION PLANS AND MAPS

5.1 Annual and regular actions

Ref no.	Action	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
0.1	Submit annual claim to Rural Payment Agency for Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) and complete scheme monitoring requirements.	D3	May	TRDC	TRDC	Officer time			
0.2	Tree survey and proportionate risk management	B1	Winter	TRDC	GM contract	General budget			
0.3	Carry out vegetation management along rides	E6	Sept to Feb	TRDC	Vols	General budget			
0.4	Annual flailing of the vegetation under scattered parkland trees, either side of main house.	E4		TRDC	GM contract	General budget			
0.5	Woodland understorey management	E3	Sept to Feb	CMS	Vols	Officer time			
0.6	Pink Chestnut Avenue vegetation management	E4	Sept to Feb	CMS	Vols	Officer time			
0.7	Veteran tree management	E4	Sept to Feb	TRDC	TRDC	Officer time			
0.8	Grassland scrub management	E2	Sept to Feb	CMS	Vols/ contractor	Officer time			

0.9	Grazing	E2	Jun to Sept	CMS	Contractor	General budget			
0.10	Grass cutting	C2/ E2	Mar to Oct	TRDC	GM contract	General budget			
0.11	Orchard tree pruning	E7	All year	Vols	Vols	Officer time			
0.12	Collaborate with catchment stakeholders for River Chess	E8	All year	CMS	TRDC/ CMS	Officer time			
0.13	Monitor bank erosion along River Chess	E8	All year	CMS	CMS	Officer time			
0.14	Monitor invasive species	E10	All year	CMS	CMS	Officer time			
0.15	Monitor and maintain site furniture, signs and interpretation	C1	All year	TRDC	Vols/ contractor	General budget			
0.16	Prompt removal of graffiti and fly-tipping	C2	All Year	TRDC	GM contract	General budget			
0.17	Prompt response to incidences of site misuse	B2	All Year	TRDC	GM contract	General budget			
0.18	Regular emptying of bins	C2	All Year	TRDC	GM contract	General budget			
0.19	Develop and maintain 'green screen' of low, shrubby growth along Rickmansworth Road	A4	All year	CMS	Vols/ GM contract	General budget			
0.20	Ensure site visitors are informed of management activities	G1/ G2	All Year	TRDC	TRDC/ CMS	Officer time			

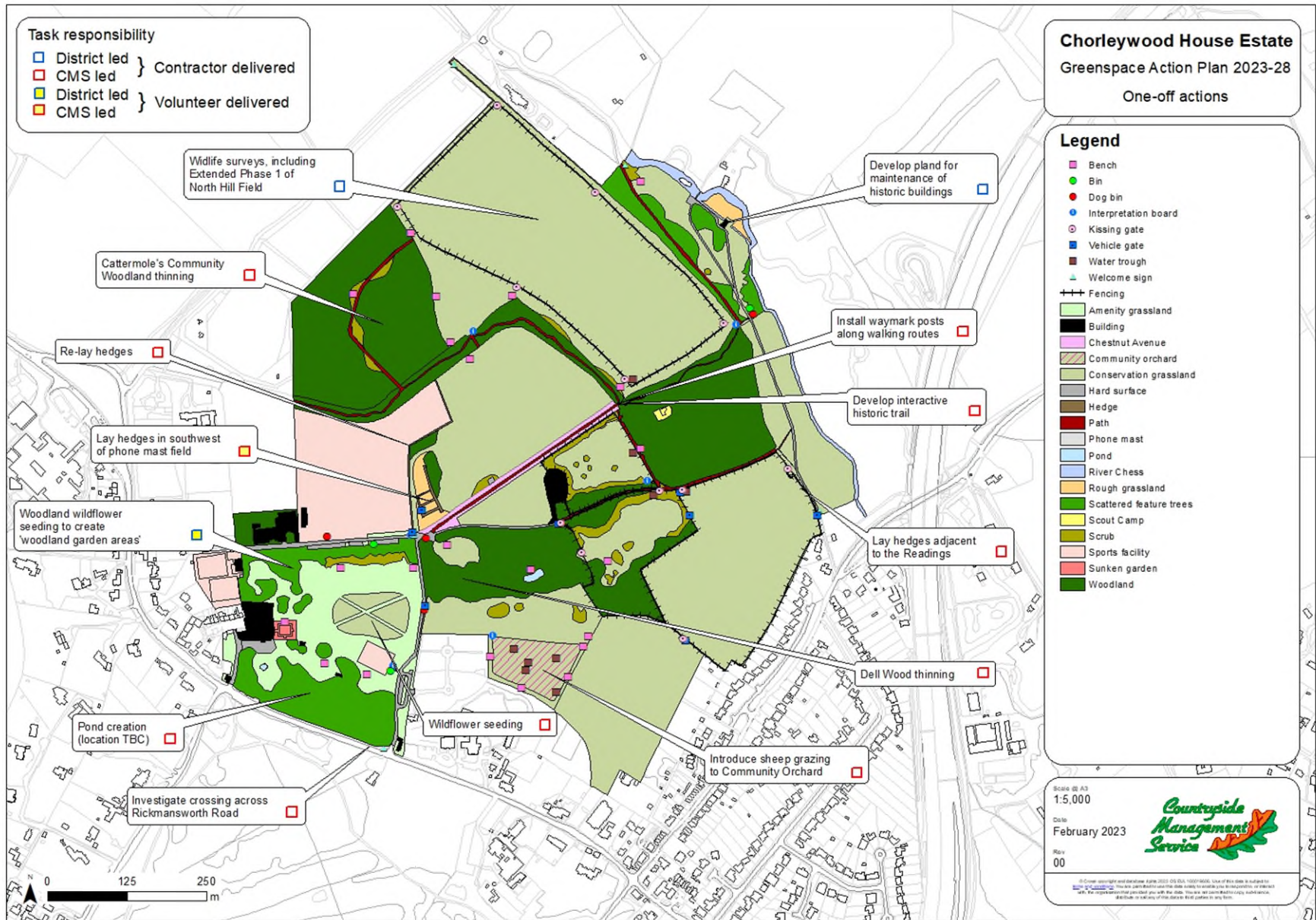
0.21	Fixed point photography monitoring	D6	Jan/Apr Jul/Oct	CMS	Vols/ CMS	Officer time			
0.22	Rapid Grassland Assessment monitoring	D6	Jun/Jul	CMS	Vols/ CMS	Officer time			
0.23	Develop and promote FoCWHE and Community Orchard volunteers	F3	All year	CMS	CMS/ TRDC	Officer time			
0.24	Proactive engagement with residents	F1	All year	TRDC	CMS/ TRDC	Officer time			
0.25	Deliver a programme of walks and events	G1	All Year	TRDC	TRDC	Officer time			
0.26	Promote volunteer and community events	G1	All year	TRDC	TRDC/ CMS	Officer time			



5.2 One-off actions

Ref no.	Action	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
1.1	Install replacement waymarks along marked trails	A1	2023	CMS	Vols	Officer time			
1.2	Investigate options for Rickmansworth Road crossing	A1	2023	CMS	CMS	Officer time			
1.3	Wildflower seeding near main entrance	A2	Sept/ Oct 2023	CMS	Contractor	TRDC		6.1	
1.4	Investigate options for additional car parking capacity	A3	2023	TRDC	TRDC	Officer time			
1.5	Review outcome of botanical surveys and consider application to new Countryside Stewardship scheme incorporating North Hill Field	D3	Summer 2025	CMS	CMS	Officer time			
1.6	Subject to decision in 2025, consider application to new Countryside Stewardship scheme at end of HLS extension	D3	Summer 2027	CMS	CMS	Officer time			
1.7	UKHab and Extended Phase One survey of North Hill Field	D6	Summer 2024	CMS	Contractor	TRDC			
1.8	Review of survey data and commissioning of wildlife surveys – likely to include bats, veteran trees, lichens	D6	2023/24	TRDC	Contractor	TRDC			

1.9	Dell Wood thinning	E3	Winter 2023/24	CMS	Contractor	TRDC		6.2	
1.10	Cattermole's Community Woodland thinning	E6	Winter 2023/24	CMS	Contractor	TRDC		6.3	
1.11	Lay previously layed hedges	E5	Winter 2025/26, 2027/28	CMS	Contractor	TRDC		6.4	
1.12	Lay hedges adjacent to the Readings and in the southwest corner of phone mast field	E5	Winter 2023/24	CMS	Vols	Officer time		6.4	
1.13	Develop plans for maintenance of historic buildings	E11	2023/24	TRDC	TRDC	Officer time			
1.14	Develop interactive historic trail	E11	2024/25	CMS	CMS/ TRDC	TRDC	£2k		
1.15	Introduce sheep grazing to the orchard, including installing grazing infrastructure	E2/ E7	2024/25	CMS	Contractor	TRDC	£10k	6.5	
1.16	Creation of a new pond	E9	2024/25	CMS	Contractor	TRDC	£10k		
1.17	Conservation of old garden features and planting of woodland wildflowers either side of the main house to create 'woodland garden' areas	E11	2024/25	TRDC	Vols	TRDC			



6.0 SPECIFICATIONS

6.1 Wildflower meadow creation

Preparation

1. The existing long grass on all sites will have been cut by district grounds maintenance team and arisings taken from site prior to other preparations taking place.
2. The areas should be mechanically scarified so that between 60% and 70% of the topsoil is exposed over a given area.

Seeding

1. The seed mix must be native, not include agricultural varieties and be similar to the suggestions below (a mixture of grasses and wildflowers) and sown as specified by the supplier. **The contractor must provide evidence of where the seed mix will be purchased from in the quote also include this in their method statement.** Any changes must be confirmed by the Supervising Officer:
 - **EM2 - Standard General Purpose Meadow Mixture** (85% grass, 15% wildflowers) [Standard General Purpose Meadow Mixture EM2 - Emorsgate Seeds \(wildseed.co.uk\)](#)
 - **N1 – General purpose meadow mixture** (80% grass, 20% wildflowers) [N1 General Purpose Meadow Mixture | UK Delivery | Naturescape](#)
2. The areas should then be rolled with a grooved or notched roller without additional cultivation to cover or incorporate the seed.

Maintenance

1. **Year 1** – During the first year the area will need mowing every 2 weeks. Cutting height should be between 40mm and 50mm. Cutting height should be higher than the usual amenity cutting height to allow wildflower species that grow in the first year to establish. This will help to reduce the presence of weed species (nettles and thistles). Cutting regularly in the first year will stop

these species from establishing and producing seed. Arisings don't need to be collected in the first year.

2. **Year 2 onwards** – After the first year an annual cut and collect regime should be established. Yellow rattle seed may need to be added if this has been removed the previous year. Following cutting, arisings should be left for 2-3 days in situ for seeds to drop and then arisings should be collected removed.

6.2 Dell Wood thinning

- Carry out targeted thinning of pole-stage broadleaf trees in Dell Wood.
- Fell broadleaf species in marked area, removing no more than 30% of tree cover. Prioritise for removal stems showing poor form and areas of especially dense groups of trees.
- Cut commercially unviable brash to 1-2m lengths and scatter across the woodland floor, clear of any footpaths or rides.
- Where there are sufficient quantities and extraction is viable, timber should be forwarded to the agreed stacking area using the agreed route(s) as shown at initial site visit. Timber should be stacked safely and in a safe and suitable manner for extraction.
- If extraction is not possible, timber should be stacked neatly and safely on the woodland floor to provide dead wood habitat.
- Forward timber from the felling compartment to the agreed stacking area using the agreed route(s) as shown at initial site visit. Timber should be stacked safely and in a safe and suitable manner for extraction.
- Where timber is extracted, retain 10% felled timber on site as deadwood habitat.

6.3 Cattermole's Community Woodland thinning

- Fell/reduce pole-stage mixed broadleaves to increase structural variety and encourage understorey development. Thin to maximum 20% canopy removal within management area, targeting trees with poor form for felling. Thinning should be uneven to produce varying densities and a more natural structure to the woodland.

- Fell one 0.1ha group of trees to increase open space within the woodland through creation of a glade.
- Cut commercially unviable brush to 1-2m lengths and scatter across the woodland floor, clear of any footpaths or rides.
- Where there are sufficient quantities and extraction is viable, timber should be forwarded to the agreed stacking area using the agreed route(s) as shown at initial site visit. Timber should be stacked safely and in a safe and suitable manner for extraction.
- If extraction is not possible, timber should be stacked neatly and safely on the woodland floor to provide dead wood habitat.
- Forward timber from the felling compartment to the agreed stacking area using the agreed route(s) as shown at initial site visit. Timber should be stacked safely and in a safe and suitable manner for extraction.
- Where timber is extracted, retain 10% felled timber on site as deadwood habitat.

6.4 Hedge laying

- Hedges should be laid in the 'East of England style'.
- Staking and binding to use hazel stakes and binders.
- Arisings to be chipped and removed from site.

6.5 Stock fencing

Post and wire fencing

- Straining and turning posts: Top diameter at least 175mm, length at least 2.1m. Spacing not to exceed 50m. Straining posts must be used at the end of all runs. Turning posts must be used for any change in direction or gradient over 15°. Box strainers may be used where appropriate in agreement with the supervising officer.
- Struts used with the above posts in line with the run of wire. They must be at least 75mm top diameter and 1.65m - in length. To be morticed into the post at an angle no greater than 40°. To be retained by a suitable thrust plate, hidden completely underground.

- Intermediate stakes are to be no less than 75mm top diameter, 1.65 in length and 3m spacing. To be knocked in.
- All timber fencing to be machine rounded, hazard class 4 pressure treated softwood.
- The stock net should be HT8/80/15 woven wire netting, galvanised meeting BS 4102, suitable for cattle. The bottom of the netting should be flush with the ground and no more than 50mm above the ground with changing gradients.
- Each wire of the netting is to be double stapled to the straining posts, ended in a neat and consistent fashion. The netting should be attached to intermediate stakes by not completely driven staples on the first, fourth and bottom wires. All staples to be galvanised 40mmx4mm barbed fencing staples.
- Two strands of galvanised mild steel barbed wire are to be run above the stock net, strained and stapled to every upright.
- A single strand of high tensile (HT) galvanised plain wire (3.15mm or more) is to be run along the outside of the fence, level with the top barbed strand. Also strained appropriately and stapled to allow tensioning.
- Final finished height no less than 1.05 meters.
- Fence to be strained appropriately to ensure no sagging along the length and a stock proof finish
- Where straining posts are adjacent to gate posts a 150mmx50mm baton should be used in place of barbed wire, with the stock netting hand strained between the two uprights:

Kissing gates

- Supply and install kissing gates to meet BS 5709:2006, Centrewire 'Oxford' medium mobility or equivalent. To be tamped using spoil or aggregate rather than concreted in.
- All fittings are to be galvanised and installed to ensure full opening and secure closing.
- The base of the installed kissing gate and 1 meter from the entrance/exit should be excavated to a depth of 75mm with 'Type 1 MOT' standard crushed primary granite, ragstone or limestone, to be compacted with camber. Deleterious material to be removed from site.

Field gate

- All timber elements to be pressure treated all metalwork to be galvanised steel.
- Posts to be hazard class 4 treated timber, square four-way weathered on top
- Hanging post to be 2.4 m x 175 x 175mm, set no less than 900mm in the ground, secured by well tamped replaced spoil.
- Slamming post to be 2.1m x 175mm x 175mm, set no less than 0.6m in the ground, secured by well tamped replaced spoil.
- Gates to be 3.6m five bar metal D-loop gates.
- “Self-locking auto field” latches so be installed to ensure proper opening and secure closing of the gate.

7.0 APPENDICES

7.1 Engagement response

Below is a summary of comments received from the second stage engagement process on the Chorleywood House Estate Greenspace Action Plan 2023-28, carried out in summer 2023.

Theme of comments	Engagement response	Outcome
Access	Investigation to increase parking welcomed. Comments on inadequacy of parking provision, particularly on football club days. Also increase in use by visitors to new café.	Comments noted, objective to investigate increased parking included in plan.
	Safer crossing of Rickmansworth Road needed, particularly with increased foot traffic to Chorleywood Common and new café.	Comments noted, objective to investigate safer crossing included in plan.
	Comments around cars blocking access tracks, including for residents – Suggestions for increased signage and marking parking bays.	
	Comments around clarity of permissions for cycle access on site. Concerns particularly around limited space on some routes.	
	Signage improvements welcomed. Comments around need to remove redundant signage when replaced to limit confusion.	Old signage will be removed as part of any new signage installation.

	Comments around the poor state of some paths/tracks, clarity needed around responsibility for repair, particularly with regard to residential properties.	
	Privacy of residents needs to be acknowledged within plan – instances of parking/walking on privately owned areas.	
Facilities	Tennis courts in need of renovation.	
	Comments on benches including need for more regular maintenance and sensitivities around replacement of memorial benches.	
	More dog bins requested.	
Promotion	Request for improved online information to help people plan e.g. informing when large events are due to be held, such as football events.	
Funding	Could a resident sponsorship scheme be introduced to help fund specific projects – similar schemes in nearby areas noted.	
Heritage features	Support for improvements to the Pump House as a heritage feature.	Comments noted, objective to develop plan for Pump House included within plan.
Habitat management	Differing views around introduction of sheep grazing to the orchard.	

	Some welcome the proposal as an added feature, while some have concerns about limiting access to the orchard for visitors and compatibility with dogs on site.	
	Concerns around scrub management removing brambles along Pink Chestnut Avenue.	Scrub management will be rotational, ensuring a variety of ages of scrub, including brambles, will be present along the route.
	Welcome encouragement of further wildlife monitoring	No action required.
	Differing views around developing a green screen along Rickmansworth Road. Some support increased privacy, however, others welcome the increased sense of safety and views into the estate of a more open boundary.	
	Comment against spraying as part of management of OPM risk.	
	New area of wildflower grassland supported	No action required.
	Woodland management supported, particularly for Cattermole's Community Woodland and in the Wood Walk.	No action required.
	Reservations around feasibility of construction of new pond, particularly around availability of water.	Ambition for a new pond retained in plan, however, comments noted. Further investigations will look at feasibility before any works are undertaken

	Reservations around re-laying previously laid hedges and whether they are now too mature for effective laying.	
	Support for conservation cut of grassland area around Pump House.	No action required.
	River Chess – ‘beach’ area very popular with visitors, would oppose attempts to limit access here. Fallen branches require removal.	Comments noted for any further discussions around projects to improve the River Chess for wildlife.
Volunteers	Particular praise for the work of the Friends of Chorleywood House Estate in their work on the site	No action required.
	Concerns around feasibility of some works by volunteers, contractor use suggested	Comments noted. Intention for volunteers to undertake works as a preference, however, if required contractors will be brought in where required.

