

Valley Park Woodlands Local Nature Reserve Chandlers Ford

Management Plan 2022 - 2032



Prepared by Boyce Jeffery
Senior Countryside Officer
Community and Leisure Service
Test Valley Borough Council
www.testvalley.gov.uk
Community&leisure@testvalley.gov.uk

Contents

A Vision for Valley Park Woodlands Local Nature Reserve (LNR)

Section 1 – Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Valley Park Woodlands LNR at a glance
- 1.3 A brief history
- 1.4 Recent history
- 1.5 Land use
- 1.6 Protection and designation
- 1.7 Policy Context
- 1.8 Delivering the Council's Corporate Objectives

Section 2 – What Happens Now?

- 2.1 Managing the woodlands
- 2.2 Maintenance
- 2.3 Resources
- 2.4 Finance and budget
- 2.5 Working with the community
- 2.6 Community events
- 2.7 Health and safety

Section 3 – Issues and Initiatives

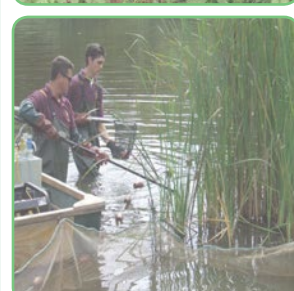
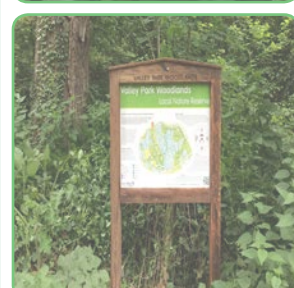
- 3.1 Community safety
- 3.2 Nature conservation
- 3.3 Ecological survey
- 3.4 A sustainable future
- 3.5 Increasing awareness
- 3.6 Consultation / User feedback

Section 4 – Future Management of the Woodlands

- 4.1 Vision statement
- 4.2 Aims 2022 - 2032
- 4.3 Specific objectives for 2022 - 2032
- 4.4 Monitoring and review

Appendices

- 1. Detailed management prescriptions and compartment maps
- 2. Friends of the Parks constitution
- 3. Events guide - January to December 2023
- 4. Ecological Survey (Ancient Woodland Indicators)
- 5. Health and Safety – example of task risk assessment
- 6. Valley Park leaflet



Acknowledgements

We would like to thank those individuals and groups who have helped to manage and improve Valley Park Woodlands LNR, making it the resource it is today:

- The Friends of the Parks
- Gristwood and Toms
- Natural England
- Butterfly Conservation
- Hampshire Bat Group
- Dr Jonty Denton
- Environmental Services
- Stonbury
- Tytherley Countryside Management
- Daniel Brown
- Groundlord
- Purbeck Civil Engineering

For further details, please contact:

Boyce Jeffery
Senior Countryside Officer
Test Valley Borough Council
Community and Leisure Service
Beech Hurst
Weyhill Road
Andover
SP10 3AJ

01264 368000

Community&leisure@testvalley.gov.uk
www.testvalley.gov.uk



A vision for Valley Park Woodlands Local Nature Reserve

Valley Park Woodlands LNR is a place where local residents and visitors of all ages come together with the natural environment and enjoy a first class leisure experience within an urban setting. By visiting the site, residents and visitors will leave with an enhanced appreciation of the woodlands unique historic environment, a clearer understanding of the distinctiveness of the Test Valley location and become enthused by biodiversity and environmental issues.



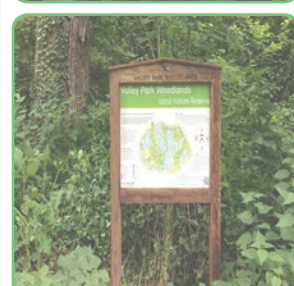
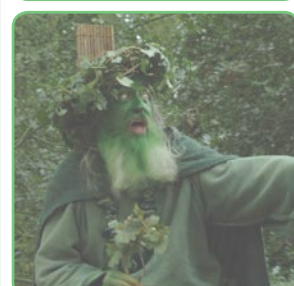
Section 1 – Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

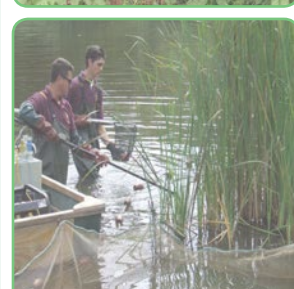
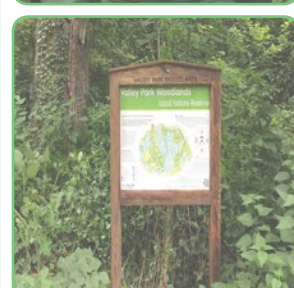
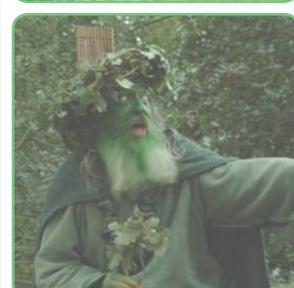
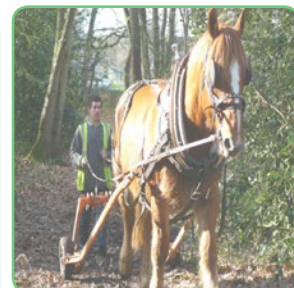
- 1.1.1 Valley Park Woodlands Local Nature Reserve (LNR) has been managed by Test Valley Borough Council since 1998. This is the third management plan for the woodlands which considers comments from Natural England, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency, Friends of the Parks, woodland users, local organisations, conservation volunteers, and those responsible for maintaining and managing the site employed by Test Valley Borough Council.
- 1.1.2 The plan will steer the future direction of the reserve for the period 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2032. It is important that the management plan is not viewed as a rigid document, but a framework for improvement, and should not limit the development of the Reserve if circumstances change. An annual review of the plan will ensure that objectives are assessed, amended or removed to ensure focus is maintained.
- 1.1.3 The first section of the plan puts the Reserve in its historical and policy context, given its characteristics and contribution to the quality of life of Valley Park residents. Sections 2 and 3 describe the current management arrangements and the initiatives currently underway to address challenging issues. The fourth and final section outlines a future vision, objectives and how the management plan will be monitored and reviewed. Specific management compartments and prescriptions which describe in detail the types of work required can be found in Appendix 1.

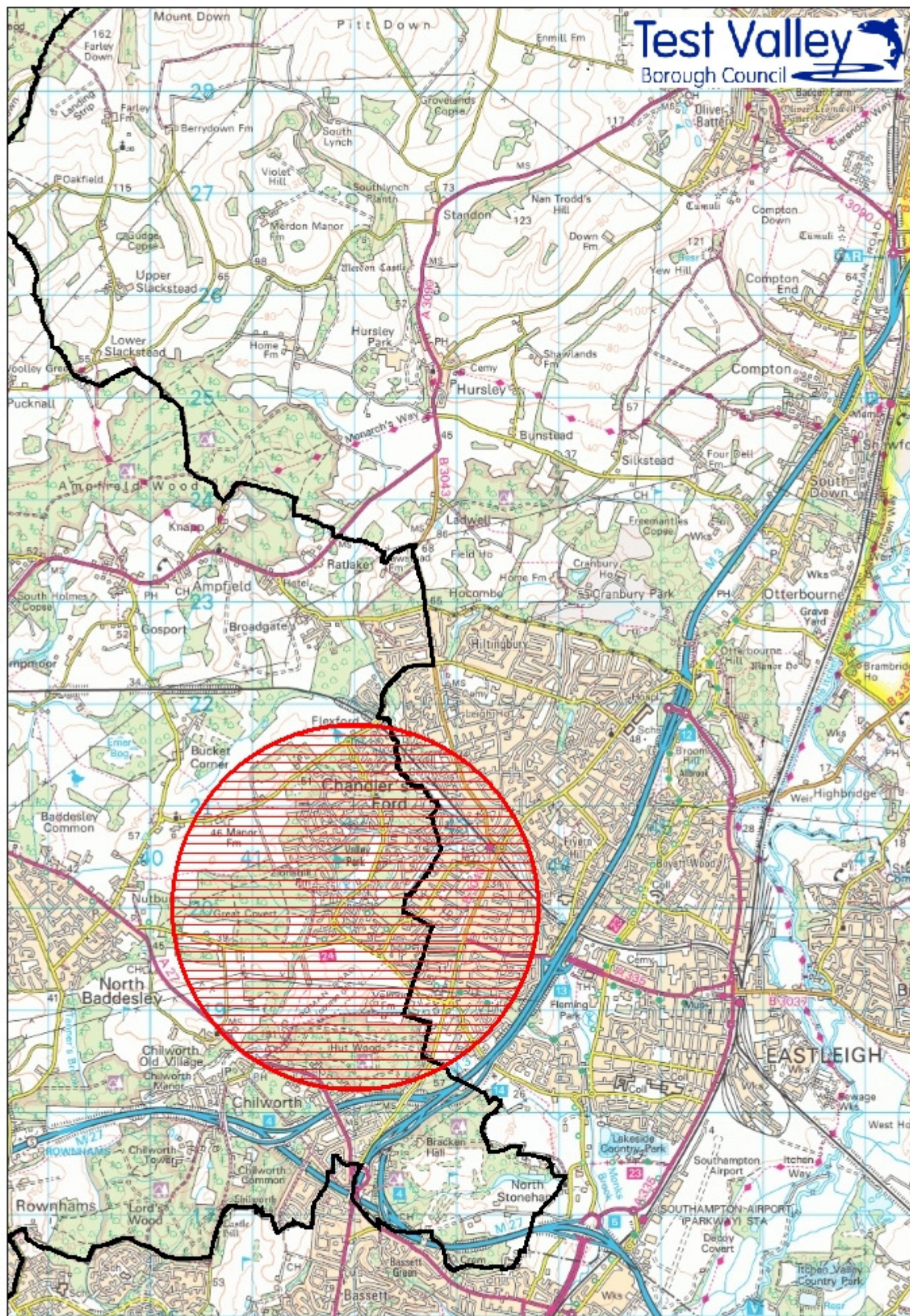
1.2 Valley Park Woodlands LNR at a glance

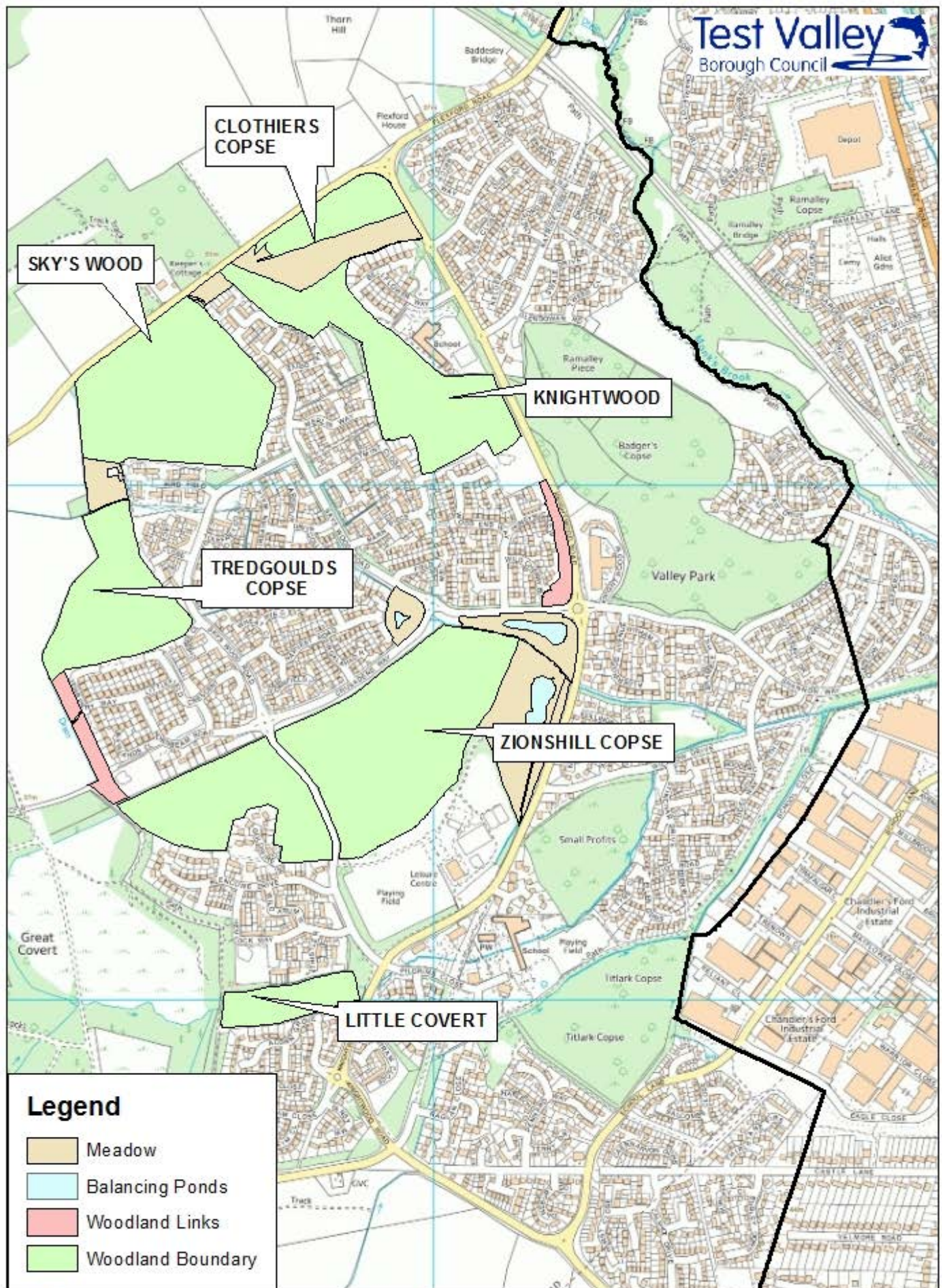
- 1.2.1 Valley Park Woodlands is situated to the north of Chilworth and east of Chandlers Ford in the south of the Borough of Test Valley. Flexford Road borders the site to the north, Great Covert to the east, Knightwood Road to the west and Castle Lane to the south. There are six separate woodland blocks which make up Valley Park Woodlands, Zionshill Copse, Little Covert, Tredgoulds Copse, Skys Wood, Clothiers Copse and Knightwood which surround a large housing development built on former agricultural land. The site includes areas of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, alder and willow carr, recently planted areas linking the woodlands together, balancing ponds, rides and meadows.



Land Owner	Test Valley Borough Council
Council ward	Valley Park
Elected members	Councillor Alan Dowden (Liberal Democrat) Councillor Christopher Thom (Liberal Democrat)
Size of the reserve	43 hectares
Location Map	Map 1
Access and Car Parking	<p>The main car parking for Valley Park Woodlands is located at Knightwood Leisure Centre and is accessed off Skys Wood Road. Satellite car parking is available at Crusaders Way, Bird Field, Morgan Le Fay, Littlefield Crescent, Acorn Grove and York Close. Pedestrian access is principally off Knightwood Road and Skys Wood Road. There are no formal path surfaces within the woodland however, a small number do exist where access is particularly difficult due to ground conditions. Board walks are also provided. Although cycling is discouraged within the woodland we are keen to encourage cycling as a means of visiting the site. To facilitate this, cycle parking is located at Knightwood Lesiure Centre along with a regional standard BMX track.</p> <p>The woodlands are accessed via way marked routes which link the six woodland blocks. There are no formal path surfaces within the woodland but where access is difficult due to ground conditions boardwalks are provided.</p>
Reserve facilities	Litter bins and dog bins are located around the site at main entrances and in the meadow area behind Knightwood Leisure Centre. Benches are located within the meadow area overlooking the balancing pond, while other seating is found at prominent positions throughout Valley Park. Public conveniences are located at Knightwood Leisure Centre.
Natural environment	The woodlands are classed as Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, and are home to a unique variety of wildlife found mostly in woodlands which have existed since at least 1600. The woodlands are a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR).
Information boards	There are interpretation boards on the site. These contain information about the reserve and contact details for the Countryside Officer / Test Valley Borough Council. Interpretation boards are also located in 4 coppiced areas within the wood to inform visitors of what management is being carried out around the site.







Legend

- Meadow
- Balancing Ponds
- Woodland Links
- Woodland Boundary



Valley Park Woodland Local Nature Reserve

Test Valley Borough Council
Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road,
Andover, Hants. SP10 3JF.
Tel. 01264 368000
Fax. 01264 368899

1.3 A brief history

1.3.1 The site is possibly derived from woodland pasture from the historic Baddesley Common complex and therefore has many similar characteristics with other woodland pastures. The closest surviving remnant of this type of woodland in Hampshire is the New Forest. The site also contains an above average number of Ancient Woodland Indicator Species (specifically plants) for woodlands of this size.

1.3.2 The existence of possible Bronze Age (1700 to 600 BC) and Iron Age (600 BC to 43 AD) features within the woods suggests that the site was farmed by extended families and the resulting landscape would typically have been areas of woodland with large clearings for arable crops. These field systems have been disturbed by Roman ploughing after the invasion of Britain in 43 AD. Intensive farming systems introduced, coupled with technical advances in agriculture (eg curved blade of plough), led to widespread woodland clearance over all of Britain. This intensive agricultural system and close proximity to the Roman road to the east of Zionshill suggests that the majority of the site was historically agricultural and not woodland.

1.3.3 Extensive features of archaeological interest were confirmed within the woodlands in 1999. A survey was commissioned and undertaken by Berkshire Archaeological Services between December 1998 and January 1999. The findings of this survey can be found on the Test Valley Borough Council website www.testvalley.gov.uk (Valley Park Local Nature Reserve - Management Plan 2022 - 2032).

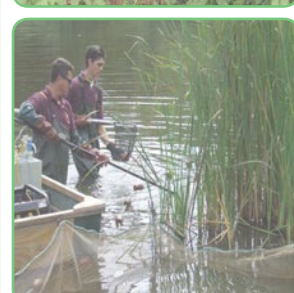
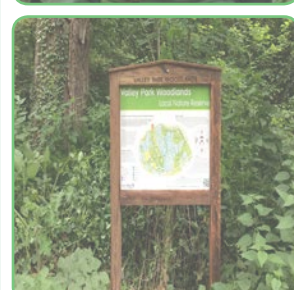
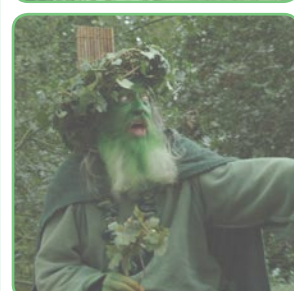
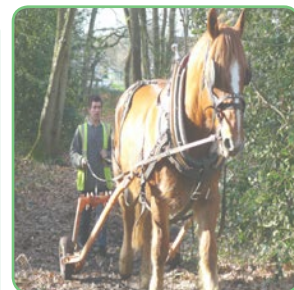
1.3.4 By 1588, Ralph Treswell's map of Hursley shows the area of Valley Park as being part of Baddesley Common – an expanse of rough grassland and heathland. By 1802 the first Ordnance Survey map shows the woodland boundaries as seen today, but by 1826 a survey of Thomas Chamberlayne estates which included Valley Park, showed the woodland boundaries of Tregoulds Copse, Skys Wood, Clothiers Copse and Zionshill Copse.

1.3.5 The 1867 Enclosure map and 1872 Ordnance Survey map show changes had occurred since 1826, the most noticeable being that Clothiers Copse and Knightwood had been established on an area of former pasture. As the woods were part of the Baddesley Common complex, they were probably used as woodland pasture for foraging pigs and the like, until the two former farms on site (Zionshill and Knightwood) claimed the area for themselves during the Enclosures Act.

1.4 Recent history

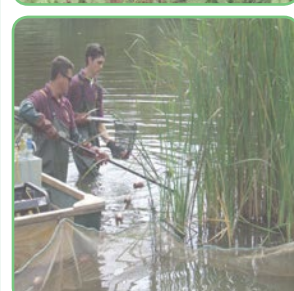
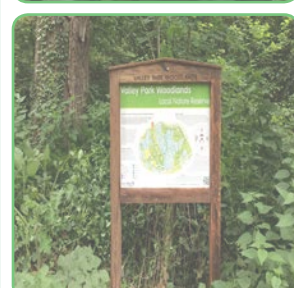
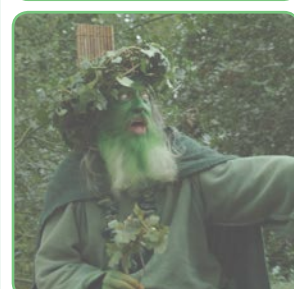
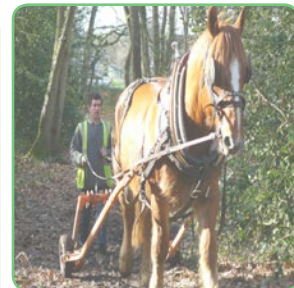
1.4.1 Prior to 1998, there has been no specific conservation management carried out in Valley Park Woodlands, with prescriptions designed to further the suitability of the site for country sports and forestry. Test Valley Borough Council took ownership of the woodlands, beginning in 1998, as part of a Section 106 obligation for the housing development west of Knightwood Road.

1.4.2 Since the transfer of the woodlands a significant amount of work has been undertaken to discover more about the history of the woodlands, reintroduce traditional forms of management to achieve favourable conservation status and at the same time work to involve the community. Restoration work has included the reintroduction of coppicing, felling and thinning of standards and the use of heavy horses for timber extraction.



1.5 Land use

- 1.5.1 Historic woodland activities are evident throughout the woodland including hazel coppice in Zionshill Copse, Knightwood and Clothiers Copse and alder coppice in Tredgoulds Copse and Little Covert. More recent activity can be seen from the stumps of felled mature oaks throughout the site, probably carried out during the Second World War (1939 - 1945) as the demand for home produced war materials rapidly increased with the threat of blockade by German U-boats
- 1.5.2 There was more recently a sporting interest in the area, and remnants of this can be seen in some of the woodlands with release pens, areas cleared for game crops and shooting rides. In 1988, an area of 0.8 hectares of Zionshill Copse was cleared of mature oaks (supposedly with the aim of increasing the sporting potential of the wood), and is now regenerating with heather which could be a historic link to when the area was part of the Baddesley Common.
- 1.5.3 The most prominent habitats are oak, and ash high forest, with some reinstated hazel coppice with oak/ash standards, alder carr and small areas of heathland. Beech and yew are less frequent and mainly confined to the north of the site on inroads of alluvial soils. Birch is also present in the canopy where bare ground has allowed colonisation. The majority of the stands are of a limited age range.
- 1.5.4 An area in Zionshill Copse was cleared in the late 1980's and the ground flora now includes heather, heath speedwell, sedges, heath bedstraw and blinks. The woodland species include common Solomon's-seal, bracken, wood-sorrel, wood anemone, bluebells, common figwort, yellow archangel, stitchwort, violets, cowslips and lower plants such as the mosses *Leucobryum glaucum*. There are orchids within the north-east corner of Zionshill Copse which include early purple (*Orchis mascula*) and common spotted (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*).
- 1.5.5 The grass area adjoining Zionshill Copse is improved pasture with a line of mature oak trees located to the south. To the north east of the site is a large balancing pond with a channel of open water bordered by scrub. Another grass area is located between Tredgoulds Copse and Skys Wood known as Bird Field. This area of marshy grassland supports a variety of plant and invertebrate species. Of significant importance is the pyralid moth – *Eudonia pallida* which is thought to feed on mosses growing amongst the lower levels of tussocks within marshy grassland. This moth species is scarce in Hampshire and further research is required to establish population levels along the woodland edge.



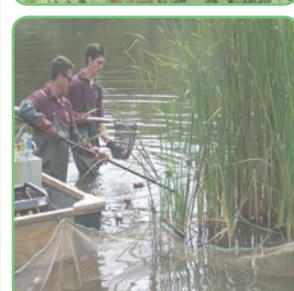
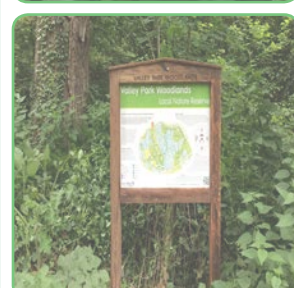
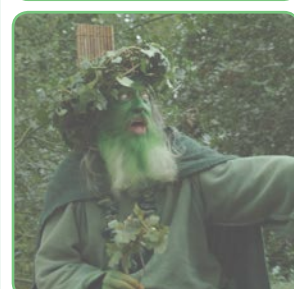
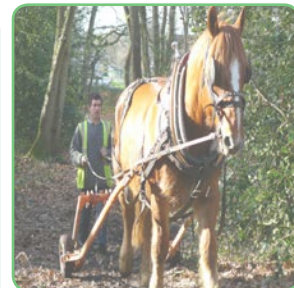
1.6 Protection and designation

- 1.6.1 Valley Park Woodlands are classed as *Ancient Semi Natural Woodland*¹ or (ASNWs) which are woods that have persisted in the landscape since the Middle Ages, from a date of approximately 1600AD. This continuity of a woodland cover has created a long standing complex ecosystem supporting both specialist and generalist groups of species which requires focused management prescriptions to maintain.
- 1.6.2 Valley Park Woodlands were declared a Local Nature Reserve in 2002 under sections 19 & 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949. An extension to this declaration boundary was agreed by Natural England in 2009 to cover all areas of woodland. Natural England defines Local Nature Reserves as “*places for both people and wildlife. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. They offer people special opportunities to study or learn about nature or simply to enjoy it.*”
- 1.6.3 The woodland is defined as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) which is a county wide record of important wildlife sites recognised in the planning system. SINC's represent a legacy of good management and rely upon continued stewardship by landowners and managers.
- 1.6.4 The whole of Valley Park Woodlands is covered by a group Tree Preservation Order which ensures that all trees within the site are protected, and permission must be sought from the Planning Department at Test Valley Borough Council before any works can be carried out. The only exception to this is for trees which are deemed dead or dangerous.

1.7 Policy context

- 1.7.1 Valley Park Woodlands provides a valuable local amenity for the people of southern Test Valley, and in a wider sense contribute to the delivery of policy at local and national level.
- 1.7.2 Good quality green space enhances urban living and can contribute to wider Government objectives such as improved health, reducing our carbon footprint, more sustainable neighbourhood renewal and better community cohesion. In recognition of this and the valuable contribution quality parks and green space make to improving peoples lives, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) document ‘How to Create Quality Parks and Open Spaces’ has created a target of delivering cleaner, safer, greener public spaces and improve the quality of the built environment across the country.

Foot note ¹ As categorised by English Nature in the Hampshire Ancient Woodland Inventory, 1995.



1.7.3 25 year Environment Plan 'A Green Future' : - Our 25 Year Plan to improve the Environment (2018), seeks to deal with the past negative impact of the environment and sets out ten goals to achieve over the life time of the plan. These are:

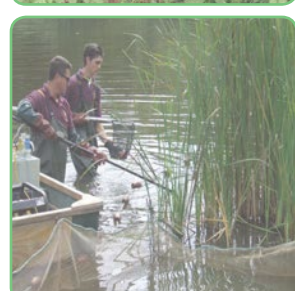
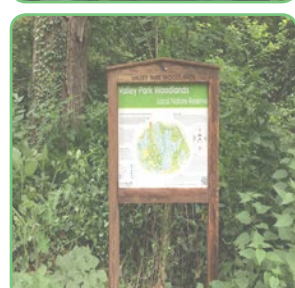
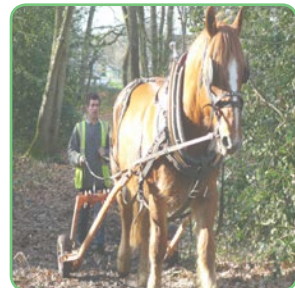
1. Clean air
2. Clean and plentiful water
3. Thriving plants and wildlife
4. A reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as drought and flooding
5. Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently
6. Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment
7. Mitigating and adapting to climate change
8. Minimising waste
9. Managing exposure to chemicals
10. Enhancing biosecurity

Four key policies from this plan directly relate to the Council's Green Space Strategy:

- Using and managing land sustainably
- Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes
- Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing
- Increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste

1.7.4 The aims and ethos of the Green Flag Award have been embraced within the Council's Green Space Strategy which sets out our vision for Test Valley's green spaces, including Valley Park Woodlands LNR, for 2020 to 2030. The specific objectives of the Green Space Strategy are:

- Meeting the increasing demand for access to green space
- Meeting the needs of the community
- New housing development
- Maintaining safe spaces
- Maintenance standards
- Health and wellbeing
- A climate emergency



- Disease and invasive species
- Biodiversity and access to nature

1.7.5 A key objective within the strategy is also to retain a Green Flag Award for Valley Park Woodlands LNR. The Green Flag Award is the national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales. The award scheme began in 1996 as a means of recognising and rewarding the best green spaces in the country. It was also seen as a way of encouraging others to achieve the same high environmental standards, creating a benchmark of excellence in recreational green areas.

1.8 Growing Our Potential - the Corporate Plan 2019-23

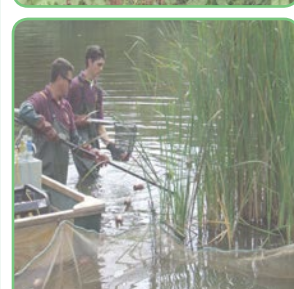
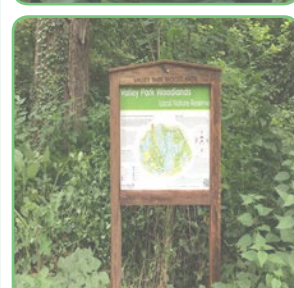
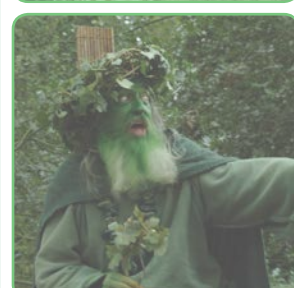
1.8.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2019 - 2023, sets out four strategic aims for maintaining and improving quality of life in Test Valley over the next four years and beyond. It will set our direction and provide a focus for our activities and services. As a result, it will inform decision making and allocation of resources across the Council. The plan has been developed using a robust evidence base which takes into account the views of local people, statistical information and external influences, such as government policy. Action plan updates are produced annually and contain key actions for delivery of the Corporate Plan's objectives in the coming year.

The plan recognises that good quality jobs and homes lie at the core of our resident's quality of life, as does access to open spaces, the countryside and recreational facilities. Therefore one of our Corporate Plan's 4 objectives is "Growing the potential of the local environment for current and future generations". As such, the management plan for Valley Park Woodlands directly contributes to the Corporate Plan's aims and objectives in the following way:

- Providing high quality green infrastructure such as green spaces and nature reserves for our communities to access and enjoy for generations to come.

Another of the Council's priorities is "Growing the potential of communities to be empowered, connected and able to build upon their strengths". From dog walking to running, from practical conservation to wildlife surveys, from quiet contemplation to volunteer tasks, Valley Park Woodlands offer ample opportunities for people to meet others and take part in events. As such, Valley Park Woodlands directly contribute to delivering on the Corporate Plan's aims and objectives in the following way:

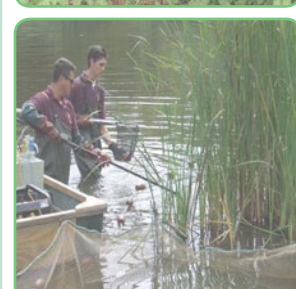
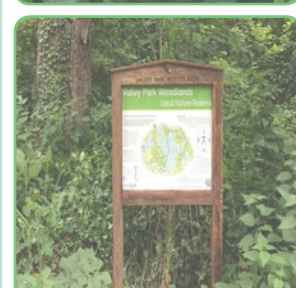
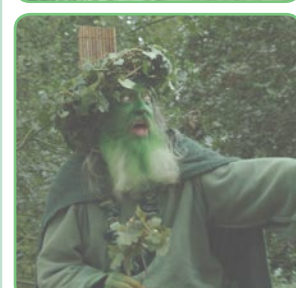
- Building upon our positive track record of working with communities, by harnessing the strengths that exist within the communities, so that local people are able to contribute and play an active role.



1.8.2 Several other strategies and partnerships influence the management of Valley Park Woodlands LNR. Table 1 provides a summary of these.

Table 1 – Strategies, policies and plans influencing the management of Valley Park Woodlands LNR

Council Strategy	Relationship with management of Valley Park Woodlands LNR
Local Plan /Local Development Framework	Sets context for the level and quality of open space throughout the borough and protects green spaces against development.
Community Plan	The Community Plan brings together agencies and the community to deliver agreed shared objectives across six key areas. Of those six the Reserve contributes to the delivery of two, 'Leisure and Culture' and 'Environment'.
Equality and Diversity Framework	<p>Test Valley Borough Council are following the equality framework for Local Government.</p> <p>Test Valley Borough Council have an Equalities Action Plan which provides us with challenges to ensure all services we deliver reflect the needs of the community and ensure that any plans that are put in place consider the wider community.</p> <p>This ensures that any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and any opportunities for promoting equality are maximised.</p>

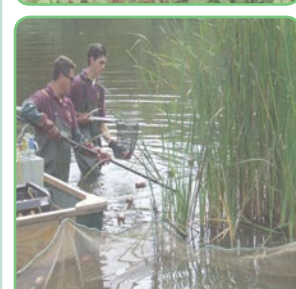
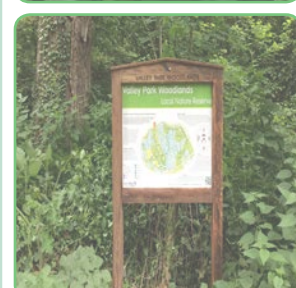
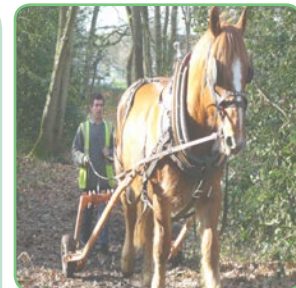
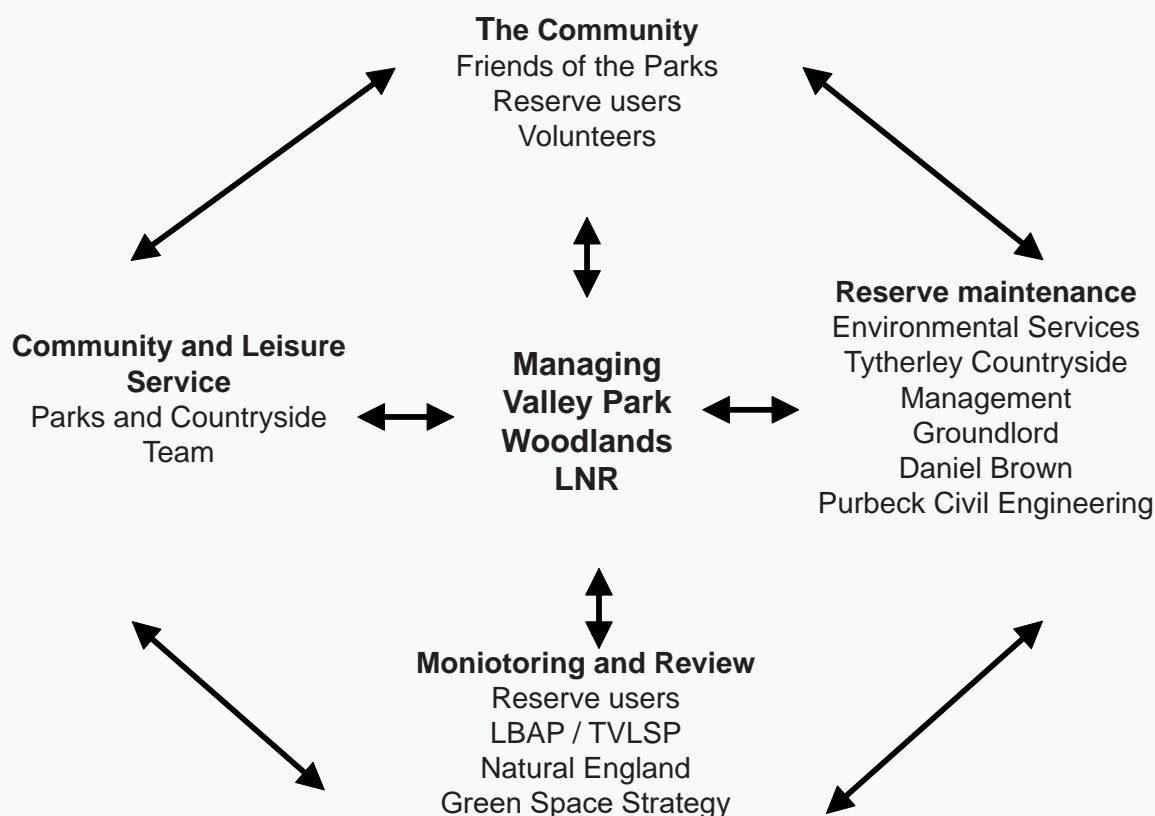


Section 2 - What happens now?

2.1 Managing the Woodlands

- 2.1.1 The management of Valley Park Woodlands is directed by the Parks and Countryside Team. To enable the greatest operating flexibility and to ensure value for money, management operations are split. The 'in house' Environmental Services grounds team carry out grass cutting and litter collection, and to meet the more specialist requirements a range of ecologically trained contractors are employed working towards set specific prescriptions and specifications for differing habitats.
- 2.1.2 The benefits of this method of management are that appropriately skilled contractors manage specific habitats as highlighted in this management plan. Official purchase orders will be raised at the start of the year and sent to relevant contractors to undertake the work as required for the whole year. A further benefit is that working with these contractors allows a certain amount of flexibility to overcome problems with changing weather patterns or early and late emerging invertebrates. See Figure 1 for management structure.

Figure 1. Valley Park Woodlands Management Structure



2.2 Maintenance

2.2.1 Careful maintenance of the woodlands is carried out by contractors who are selected based on price, operating location and the level of habitat management knowledge. All of the works carried out on the site are guided and overseen by Test Valley Borough Council Countryside Officers. The site is of great conservation value and provides habitats for common as well as European Protected Species. Key indicator groups include:

- Higher and lower plants
- Small mammals (yellow neck mice)
- Dragonfly and damselfly
- Bats
- Birds
- Butterflies

The overriding management principles are:-

2.2.2 Cutting of grass swards at differing heights along woodland rides and path edges will favour many species of insects, invertebrates and birds. This will also favour native plant species as the cutting and removal of cuttings will reduce the nutrient levels maintaining a wider diversity (ride management).

2.2.3 The coppicing of alder and hazel trees on rotation will allow more light onto the woodland floor and encourage the growth of woodland flora. This will be done during the winter months to encourage early growth in the spring. The left over brash will be utilised to create dead hedges which form an enclosure around the coppice coupe to discourage deer from eating the coppice re-growth. Dead hedges also provide an ideal habitat for invertebrates and nesting birds. Where dead hedging is not appropriate deer mesh is being installed to reduce browsing.

2.2.4 The thinning and removal of mature trees which are of good vigour will ensure light levels reaching the woodland floor are increased providing a more suitable condition for natural regeneration to occur. This is also aided by the replanting of local provenance species. Extraction of timber is carried out by a team of heavy horses to reduce damage to the ground and avoid compaction. This work is prioritised during the winter months to minimise damage to sensitive plants.

2.2.5 The removal of non-native species for example, Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) is carried out by volunteers and contractors to systematically remove these species from the site. Rhododendron and sycamore are notorious for shading and out-competing native species for nutrients. Sycamore is now being managed on an 8 year coppice rotation to maintain below seed bearing age whilst still maintaining adverse canopy cover in light of dividing ash stodes due to ash die back.



2.2.6 Long term aims for the site can be categorised into four broad management options which are:

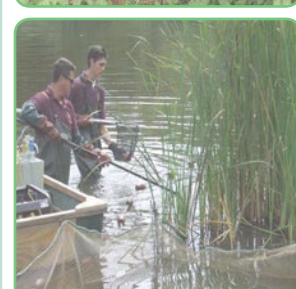
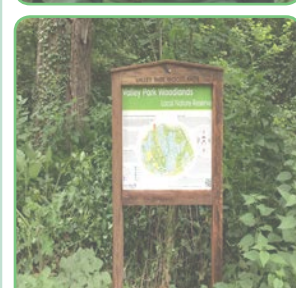
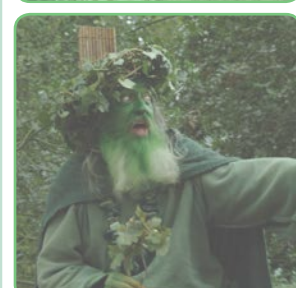
A - Active Conservation Management B - Monitoring and Research
C - Education and Access D - Administration and Public Relations

2.2.7 A summary of these management prescriptions is summarised in Table 2. A detailed breakdown of habitats and prescriptions linked to management compartments is in Appendix 1.

Table 2 – Outline of management at Valley Park Woodlands LNR

Feature / Habitat	Management Option	Outline Prescription
Ancient Semi Natural Woodland	A	Coppice hazel and alder to prevent loss of stools - use contractors. Use brash to form dead hedges to deter deer browsing (October - February) or install deer fencing where necessary
Open grassland	A	Cut grass and remove arisings from site cut in Spring (before April) and Autumn (before late September). Small sacrificial piles to be left onsite to benefit reptiles
Butterflies	B	Involve and support local residents with butterfly transects on site to compile base line information. Send results to Butterfly Conservation (April - September)
Birds	B	Conduct a Common Bird Census (CBC) with assistance from British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) members and local residents (All year)
Mammals	B	Record and note species seen by local mammal group, local residents and Parks and Countryside Officers to compile database (March - December)
Other invertebrates	B	Survey area for invertebrates (April - September)
Public access	C & D	Maintain permissive paths throughout site (All year)
Non Native species	A	Remove from site where possible. Leave sycamore in compartment 12a as established on archaeological features (All year)
School involvement	C	Involve local children in projects on site. Produce Teachers Pack for educational use in line with national curriculum
Control of invasive species	A	Control where appropriate or possible (All year)
Increase public awareness	D	Through interpretation boards, talks, local newsletters, guided walks and work parties (All year)

2.2.8 Management options provide a broad guide for the operational management of the site if used in conjunction with appropriate objectives. They also provide a standard reference for inter-site comparisons.



2.3 Resources

2.3.1. The pressure on council resources coupled with the high expectation of Reserve users, means that we have to look for new and innovative ways to maximise our resources to ensure continuous improvement. We achieve this in the following ways:

- **Working in partnership with local groups and people.** This is the most vital resource we have to improve the woodlands. Working with groups and organisations as well as individual volunteers has provided not only access to knowledge and support, but a vast amount of volunteer support. This has enabled the delivery of project work over and above what could be achieved with the annual revenue budget.
- **Grants.** Valley Park Woodlands is until recently been under a Woodland Grant Scheme (WIG) which started in 2011 and ran until 2021. This reserve funded the creation of a new more concise management plan for the site.
- **Community led sponsorship.** Supporting community groups has led to successful grant applications for further work throughout the woodlands. To date grants and contributions have funded gates, tools, bird boxes, access improvements and promotional material.
- **Section 106 contributions.** Should a development be approved within the ward which cannot feasibly include public open space, an 'off site' contribution is collected to improve a space within the vicinity.

2.4 Finance and Budget

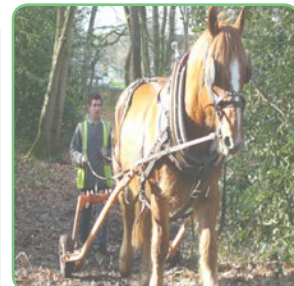
2.4.1 The annual budget for maintenance is approved by Council in February each year and is summarised across the broad management areas in Table 3. In order to create a balanced budget, council services are required to find savings each year in order to bridge any gaps. Recent savings have not impacted directly on the sites management but no increase has been received either. It is anticipated that we can expect a 'stand-still' budget in 2023/24 with further exercises to ensure we are demonstrating 'value for money'.



Table 3 – Outline budget expenditure for Valley Park Woodlands 2023/24

Management operation	Approximate expenditure	Outline minimum frequency of operation per annum
Forestry operations	£9,655	Subject to felling licence
Tree surgery operations	£6,200	When required during year
Pond / ditch management / restoration	£3,000	November - February
Path maintenance	£2,500	May - August
Ride/meadows management (including grass collection)	£4,115	March and September
Tree planting & post planting maintenance	£1,000	November - March
Maintenance of fences, seats, gates, signs and bins	£4,000	November - March or as required
Litter collection and bin emptying	£1,200	Weekly or when required
Equipment & materials purchase	£2,080	When required
Support for volunteers	£300	Throughout year
Sub total TVBC revenue	£34,050	
Volunteer hours offset	£1,957	(£9.50 per hour x 206)
Total	£36,007	

2.4.2 The Councils Asset Management Plan will ensure capital works will be initiated for works including path reconstruction and any bridges or fencing which require replacement.



2.5 Working with the community

2.5.1 Volunteers are vital to the management of the site and formed the basis of much work in the early years of the woodlands development. In 2002 a volunteer group was formed to assist Test Valley Borough Council with the management of the woodland. Knightwood Conservation Group was the instigator of much of the early work in and around the woodlands to enhance the sites value for nature conservation. Towards the end of 2002 the group changed its name to the Friends of The Parks. The group have since led over 131 tasks ranging from tree planting, hedge laying, rhododendron and sycamore removal and coppicing. In 2022 the group celebrated their 20th Anniversary.



2.5.2 Volunteer's involvement has played a huge part in how the site has developed over the last ten years with 283 annual equivalent days worked. However over the last few years volunteer hours have severely been effected by Covid 19 . However , enthusiasm from members remains high with a full events programme anticipated for 2023.

2.5.3 The partnership with Southampton University Faculty of Environmental Sciences began in 2002 and has evolved to benefit the university, students and council through the provision of practical habitat management training and the environment for scientific study.

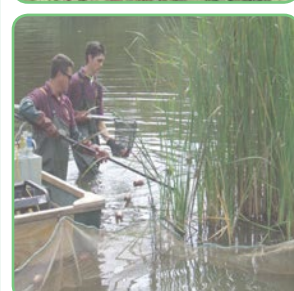


2.5.4 During November we welcome first year students from the University to Zionshill Copse for their first field trip and group awareness session. This sees over 30 new Environmental Science degree students carry out practical tasks and at the same time gaining an awareness and understanding of the woodland ecology, and pressures on the site. The work within the woodlands provides vital 'hands on' experience for students wishing to gain employment in the field of conservation. No visit was held during 2020, 2021 and 2022 due to ongoing Covid restrictions and change in curriculum.

2.5.5 In the past, four students have used the site as a learning resource for their dissertations guided by the Countryside Officer. To date all four students have achieved Honours in their degree and MSc. Wherever possible survey information gathered by students is used to monitor the effectiveness of management prescriptions.

School Education Programme

2.5.6 Local Schools and children's group's (Cub & Scouts) are vitally important to successful site management, therefore every effort is made to involve children in projects and studies. Each year all the boroughs primary schools are invited to attend educational visits at Valley Park Woodlands. The aim of these visits is to teach children about their local environment and the different habitats and the biodiversity in the woodlands. Aimed at Key Stage 2, the pupils have been assisted by the Hi-Tech Wild-Trek Trailer, a mobile ecology laboratory that allows children to see mini beasts up close via a digital microscope and power point projector. As of 2015 the owner / operator has retired. Test Valley Borough Council has continued the Educational Visits and from 2016 ran independently from the trailer. All schools are encouraged to provide feedback about the visits with questionnaires given to teachers and pupils. The results help shape the following years programme. No visits were held during 2020, 2021 School terms due to ongoing Covid restrictions. In 2022, 10 Schools attended visits across the Borough.



2.6 Community Events

2.6.1 Throughout the year the woodlands play host to a variety of events for the community with a strong emphasis on nature conservation and participation. These events are marketed through our website, Knightwood Leisure Centre and Tourist Information Centres. Table 4 provides an outline of the event programme during 2023, a full programme listing can be found in Appendix 3.

Community Woodfair

2.6.2 In 2000 a small event was organised in Zionshill Copse aiming to inform local people about the importance of woodland management and conservation. Since then the Community Woodfair has grown in size and now attracts over 2000 people a year. The Woodfair is free and open to everyone and attracts over 50 exhibitors demonstrating traditional woodland crafts, from hurdle making, pole lathes and oak shingles to pimp making. Local conservation and charities groups such as Hampshire Bat Group and Hampshire Butterfly Group along with many others attend to raise the importance of these species and why woodland management is so important. Many of the activities are aimed to encourage children to ‘have a go’ and interact with the environment. Since the Woodfair began in 2000 it is estimated that over 29,000 people have attended this event. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, no Woodfair was held in 2020 or 2021. The event is sadly no longer expected to return for its 20th year but we will be looking to run a number of smaller events to target local audiences.

Picture of Community Woodfair

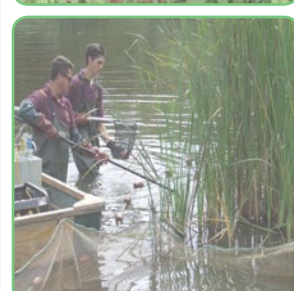
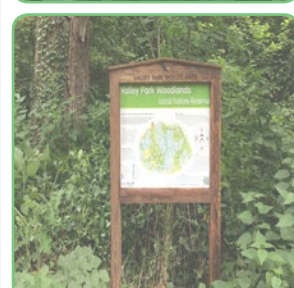
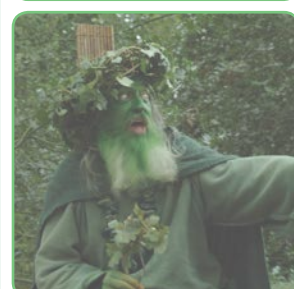
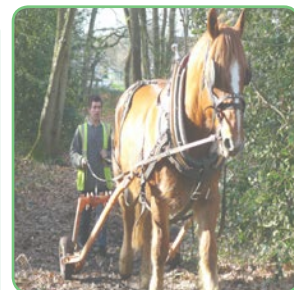


2.6.3 Butterflies are an excellent indicator of the health of a nature reserve. Since 1999 a butterfly transect survey has been undertaken by volunteers around the site from April to September. This information is used to flag up any possible adverse management techniques and is shared with Hampshire Biodiversity Records Centre and Butterfly Conservation.

Table 4 - Events Programme for Valley Park Woodlands LNR 2023

Task	Date	Event co-ordinator
Holly thinning and bonfire - Knightwood Copse	15 January	TVBC & FoTP
Tree planting - Skys Wood	26 February	TVBC & FoTP
Coppicing - Zionshill East	26 March	TVBC & FoTP
Tree Guard Removal - Clothiers Copse	16 April	TVBC & FoTP
Boardwalk repairs	14 May	TVBC & FoTP
Heath management - Zionshill East	18 June	TVBC & FoTP
Bracken management - Tredgoulds Copse	9 July	TVBC & FoTP
Coppicing - Skys Wood Copse	17 September	TVBC & FoTP
Coppicing - Skys Wood Copse	22 October	TVBC & FoTP

KEY: FoTP = Friends of the Parks
TVBC = Test Valley Borough Council



2.7 Health and safety

- 2.7.1 The value of keeping site visitors safe cannot be over stated. Risk assessment inspections for the reserve as well as for one off events and work parties are carried out and reviewed annually. (See Appendix 5). These inspections include paths, bridges, benches, boardwalks and general site furniture, The Countryside Officer takes responsibility for any actions which arise from these inspections and ensures they are completed within the designated timescale. Formal inspections of the reserve are carried out by Test Valley staff. These include inspection sheets and risk assessment forms. These visits are recorded and result in immediate action.
- 2.7.2 Tree management is ongoing annually in Valley Park both with planned and reactive tree works being carried out in response to customer enquiries, identified safety issues, routine walk by inspections and the result of storms.

Individual trees along the key woodland boundaries are surveyed and their condition logged on the Ezytreev Management System. All works to ensure existing specimens remain healthy and safe have been carried out inline with tree preservation order consents and the approved felling license.

In addition to the recorded re-survey regime carried out by a qualified Arboriculturist, monthly walking inspections are completed on rotation by Countryside Officers to identify immediate hazards in between formal inspection periods and issues are raised with the Tree Officer for action.

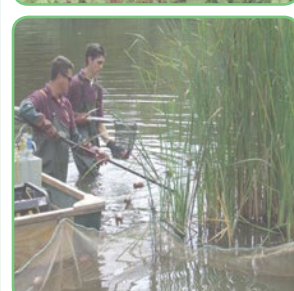
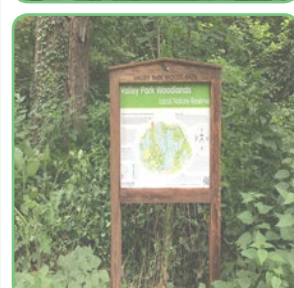
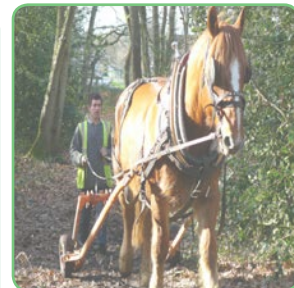
The value of dead wood habitat is important for the woodlands and where possible it is retained in trees where it does not pose a safety risk and the debris from the tree works is often left on site within the woodland for habitat piles for wildlife in addition to leaving standing trees as monoliths for standing deadwood habitat.

During 2020 we have been surveying ash in detail within the woodlands and drawing up a plan to manage the infected trees. We have worked alongside the Forestry Commission to prepare felling licences and obtain relevant Tree Preservation Order consents and have carried out ecological assessments to assess the impact of the planned essential felling and coppicing works.

Given the scale of the woodlands and quantity of ash within the woodlands affected by Ash dieback, the essential works will be phased over a number of winters to try to minimise the impact across the whole woodland site whilst addressing the highest risk areas as a priority. Trees infected with Ash dieback (A fungus called *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) present a significant health and safety risk, therefore we will prioritise works alongside roads, public rights of way, well used woodland paths and woodland boundaries.

To aid recovery we will be restocking areas where ash has been removed with native / local provenance whips (small trees).

For more information on ash die back and the impacts in woodlands and the environment please see this link - <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/pest-and-disease-resources/ash-dieback-hymenoscyphus-fraxineus/>



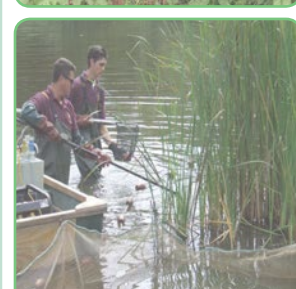
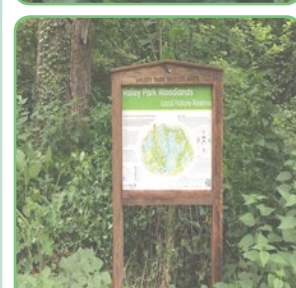
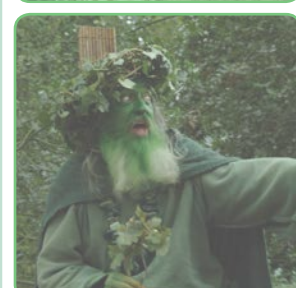
Section 3 – Issues and Initiatives

3.1 Community safety

- 3.1.1 A strong on-site presence from the Countryside Officer is key to ensuring visitors feel safe and secure. Although this service cannot be provided seven days per week, every effort is made by the team to maintain this presence. This involves the Animal Welfare Officer, the Parks and Countryside Manager, Tree Officer and Environmental Services Grounds Maintenance staff who visit the site on a regular basis. This presence enables the staff to build a good rapport with regular visitors.
- 3.1.2 A recorded inspection of the lifebelts, positioned around the balancing ponds is checked four times a month by the Environmental Service team with additional inspections carried out by the Countryside Officer. These are replaced as required.
- 3.1.3 With a site open 24 hours a day, it would be wrong to give the impression that the reserve does not suffer from anti-social behaviour, but in general incidents are minor. The Countryside Officer provides a friendly but visible presence throughout the year which is backed up by Eastleigh Police.
- 3.1.4 The main problems and anti-social behaviour that we have to deal with at Valley Park Woodlands LNR are set out in Table 5 with recommendations on how to address them:

Table 5 - Issues and recommendations

Problem	Recommendation
Loss of lifebelts	Replace when required
Dogs under control	Encourage and educate why dogs should be under control in a LNR. Involve Animal Welfare Officer
Wet and muddy footwear	Design boardwalks where areas of path becomes regularly flooded
Access to sensitive areas	Increase signage and wardening
Fly tipping	Increased wardening and education of those caught. Involve Enforcement Officers
Vandalism to bins, benches, tree guards and fences	Maintain high standard of cleanliness and increase wardening at appropriate times. Graffiti is removed within 48 hours of notification
Littering	Maintain high standard of cleanliness and increase numbers of litter picks and education to encourage responsible visitors



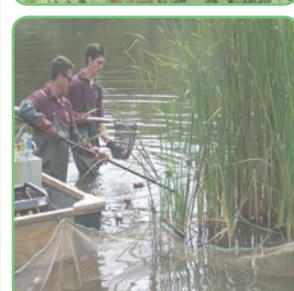
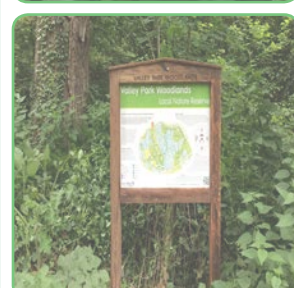
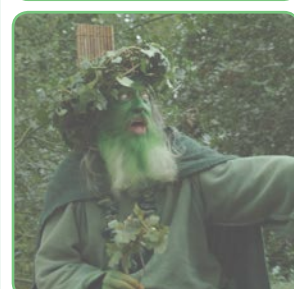
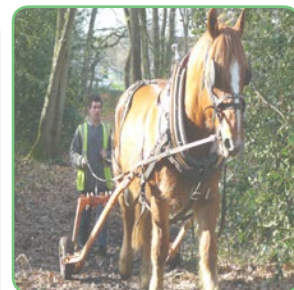
3.2 Nature Conservation

- 3.2.1 The role of urban green space in providing habitats for some of the UK's most threatened species is now being recognised. Well managed areas can not only contribute to halting the long term decline in species diversity, but offer excellent opportunities to educate and inform the public on the part they can play in encouraging wildlife in their own gardens.

Valley Park Woodlands LNR provides a variety of different habitats and species in the reserve including:

Summary description of the main habitats are:

- **Management of deadwood** - Deadwood is left on the trees where it poses no risk to public health. Where wood is removed deadwood piles are created at the base of the trees within the vicinity to provide an additional habitat for insects and bryophytes. Standing deadwood is left where it provides an additional habitat at the edges of the reserve.
- **Trees and bats** - The woodland provides important feeding and roosting habitats for bats. The site is used by several species including the daubenton, noctule, serotine, brown long eared, soprano and common pipistrelle bats that use the woodland edge for foraging and summer roosting. Roosting bats have been recorded in the reserve include pipistrelle and noctule.
- **Ponds and open ditches** - The three balancing ponds around the site have been maintained as areas of open water. The marginal plantings have been created to encourage wildlife including dragonflies. Surveys of the ponds have been carried out with species list provided by the schools that have visited the site (see Appendix 4 and the Test Valley Borough Council Website for results and recommendations for future management). The ditches that surround many of the woodlands must be maintained to ensure that the risk of flooding is reduced. Marginal vegetation should be managed to increase the diversity and habitat for invertebrates.
- **Seasonal Woodland pools** - These are present within Clothiers Copse, Skys Wood and Little Covert and their presence in woodland greatly increases the site's species diversity. The seasonal pools are short lived and commonly dry up in the summer period but the benefits during the Winter and Spring months cannot be under estimated. These pools provide a valuable spawning ground for frogs, toads and newts alike and benefit from drying up early which limits the possibility of predators colonising the pools.
- **Coppice coupes** - Throughout the site there are areas of over stood hazel coppice the remaining stools are neglected and of poor vigour resulting from shading and lack of competition deriving from a low stool density. There are seven areas of existing coppice-with-standards within Zionshill Copse, Clothiers Copse and Tredgoulds and a further two areas of planned reinstatement of coppice in Zionshill Copse and Clothiers Copse. It should be noted that coppice coupes are now benefitting from installation deer fencing (plastic mesh) and interpretation explaining why this has been done at locations throughout the woodland.



In 2000 the process of reinstating these areas of coppice began, it is hoped that over time the whole of the coppice areas will be brought back into an eight year rotation. The main reason for coppicing is to allow light demanding wild flowers to thrive as the canopy is reduced periodically. This also benefits invertebrate species associated with food plants, such as butterflies. Increasing stool density will be aided by the process of layering and restocking where necessary.

- **Meadows** - These areas have been managed since 1998 and where the yearly cutting and collection of arisings has persisted the once improved pasture has now become of great interest for conservation. A variety of wildflowers and grasses are now present within these areas. One area of importance is the damp grassland located at the top of Bird Field between Tredgoulds Copse and Sky's Wood. Over time with constant management it is hoped that these areas become more floristically diverse.

3.3 Ecological survey

- 3.3.1 Survey's have been carried out at Valley Park Woodlands LNR since 1975 and these have helped shape our management of the site. It is recommended that further surveys be instigated in the appropriate seasons to gain further understanding of species diversity and distribution. A summary of ecological surveys carried out since 1990 is shown in Table 6, a full account of the surveys undertaken across the site is listed in Appendix 4, and at www.testvalley.gov.uk.

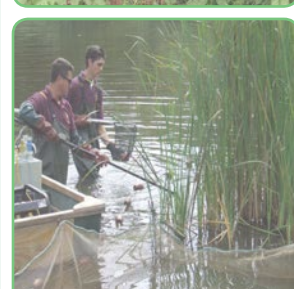
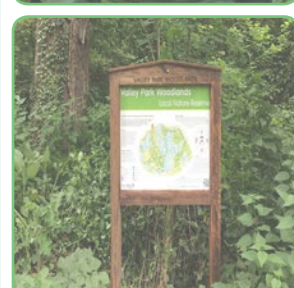
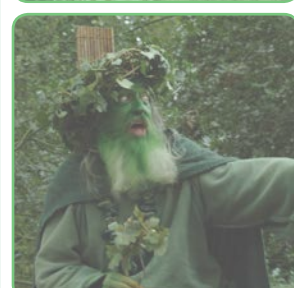
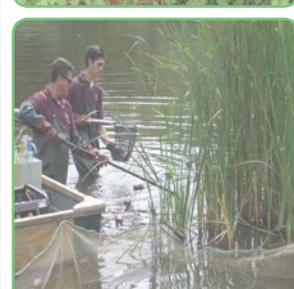
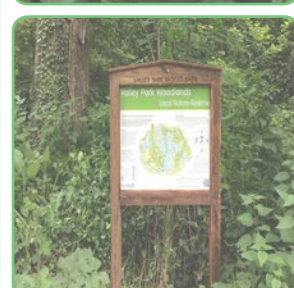
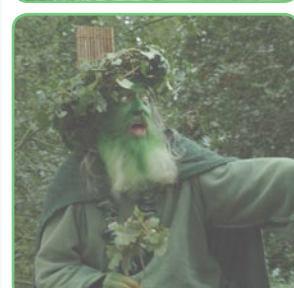
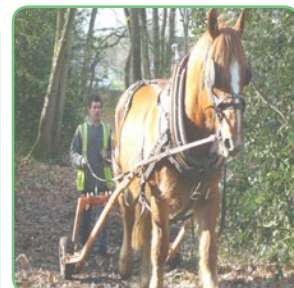


Table 6 - Summary of ecological survey since 2007

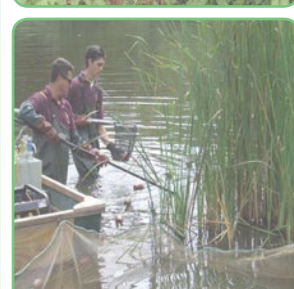
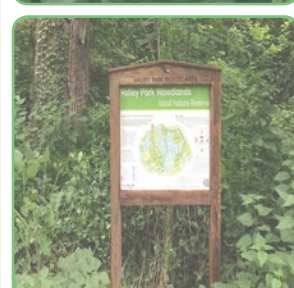
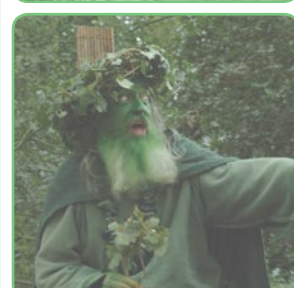
Surveyor	Survey	Area	Date
Dr Jonty Denton	Terrestrial invertebrates	Whole site	June – September 2007 June - September 2020
Charlotte Carter	Small mammals	Whole site	April – September 2009
Philip Budd	Lepidoptera	Whole site	April - September 2009
Dr Richard Osmond	Aquatic survey of streams	Little Covert / Tredgoulds Copse	May 2009
Dr Richard Osmond	Aquatic Survey	Balancing Ponds	April 2010
Philip Budd	Lepidoptera	Phase 2 - Whole site	April - September 2010
Volunteers	Aquatic	Knightwood Balancing Ponds	2018
Volunteers	Lepidoptera	Whole site	



3.4 A sustainable future

3.4.1 Ensuring resources are maximised and waste is minimised, is a core theme within the Council's corporate plan, but translates locally to how we manage various aspects of our parks and open spaces, including Valley Park Woodlands LNR. Minimising waste and considering our actions at a local level will contribute to the global movement to minimise human impact on the environment and combat climate change. The Council signed the Nottingham Declaration in 2008 to demonstrate its commitment to combating emissions which contribute to climate change and later declares a climate emergency in the scale of the challenge means that all sectors of the community have to be involved if we are to meet targets for reducing emissions and adapting to climate change. Our obligation to manage the Reserve in a way to reduce energy consumption and waste is achieved in the following ways:

- **Reduction in chemical use** - Every effort is made to minimise the use of chemicals in the reserve with mechanical methods favoured where possible. The use of chemicals is only considered if no other viable or successful alternative exists. Where chemicals are applied only licensed operatives who have been specifically trained carry out this work using products from an approved list, which ensures the impact on the environment is minimised. Specific safe operating procedures have been written and all staff using pesticides and herbicides have received training to ensure they protect themselves as well as the environment. The current chemicals used are Roundup Bioactive which has been chosen for their minimal impact on the environment.
- **Peat free plant growing** - All trees planted within the Reserve are purchased locally to avoid over long journeys, with the majority being bought from Hillier Nurseries who supply plants of local provenance. All trees and plants are grown using peat free compost. The UK's lowland raised peat bogs are amongst the most important and valuable habitats with only a fragment of near natural bog remaining. This option is more expensive but demonstrates the Council's commitment to supporting the reduction in overall UK peat usage.
- **Recycling and reuse** - The council has a target to recycle 34% of household and green waste. The obligation to reuse and recycle is not confined to the home with the initiative embraced across various site management activities.
- **Re-use of timber** - The wood felled during the thinning process is often extracted by heavy horses and processed locally into useable timber for use on site. The timber is used to manufacture benches, way marking posts and fencing that is then used on Test Valley Borough Council open spaces. Shrub cuttings and wood chippings are often reused and offered to local schools for projects to help with their gardening clubs or are distributed around shrub borders in open spaces to mulch plants reducing the need for herbicides and watering.
- **Tree guard recycling** - In a commitment to reduce the use of plastics on site. All tree guards that are removed are reused where possible (Tubex). Where this is not possible tree guards are collected and recycled through Kitson Recycling.



The Council are currently investigating the use of more environmentally friendly alternative biodegradable tree guards for future tree planting across Valley Park Woodlands

- **Recycling green waste** - Wherever possible, all cut green material is left on site. All woody material cut on site is stacked to form dead wood habitat piles. Grass cuttings are left on site in carefully selected areas to minimise increasing nutrients in areas where these would be detrimental to the ground flora.
- **Accessing the Woodland** – The site can be easily reached by foot but people do use cars. Valley Park Woodlands main car park is located at Knightwood Leisure Centre and is spacious and can easily accommodate over 50 cars. However, with the Council's obligation to reduce the amount of Co₂ in the atmosphere it will be important to establish reasons for car travel and work with the Council's Transport planners to reduce the number of journeys. This will become a specific future objective.
- **Bike Rack** - A cycle rack is located at the entrance to the Leisure Centre.
- **Climate Change** is one of the greatest challenges we face, locally, nationally and globally. It is a challenge that will continue to grow over the coming years, becoming ever more critical for future generations.

The Council declared a climate emergency in September 2019 and committed to identify steps we can take to achieve carbon-neutrality as soon as possible.

In June 2020 the Council approved its climate emergency action plan. It concentrates on what the Council can do to make a difference. More information on this can be found at:

<https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/corporatedirection/environmentandsustainability/climate-emergency-action-plan>

3.5 Increasing Awareness

- 3.5.1 **Signage** – There are a number of interpretation boards at key locations around the woodlands. Key routes are way-marked throughout the 43 hectare site. A leaflet which includes a map of the site is available for anyone wishing to visit the site. This has been compiled by Friends of The Parks aided by funding from Test Valley Borough Council (see Appendix 6 for leaflet).
- 3.5.2 **Website** - The Council website includes information about Valley Park Woodlands LNR.
- 3.5.3 **Events** - Events held around the woodland attract not only local visitors but also people from outside Valley Park. See section 2.6 for further details.



3.6 Consultation / User feedback

- 3.6.1 Customer feedback is encouraged all year round and is informally collected by the Countryside Officer who is on site on a regular basis. Volunteer groups are encouraged to comment on the management of the woodland and where feasible these comments are acted on. If this is not possible feedback is provided. Contact details for the Community and Leisure Service can also be found on the Councils website and on the information boards at the entrances to the site.



Section 4 – Future Management of Valley Park Woodlands LNR

4.1 **Our vision** for Valley Park Woodlands LNR is to be a place where local residents and visitors of all ages come together with the natural environment and enjoy a first class leisure experience within an urban setting. There are not many public open spaces so close to a major development where residents can interact with their environment. By visiting the reserve, residents and visitors will leave with an enhanced appreciation of Valley Park's unique historic environment, a clearer understanding of the distinctiveness of the Test Valley location and become enthused by biodiversity and environmental issues.

4.2 **We will achieve this vision by the following aims:**

- Providing a safe and well managed Local Nature Reserve which can be accessed and enjoyed by everyone.
- Continually improving the range of activities within the reserve to cater for everybody.
- Continue to maintain or increase the habitats on site for nature conservation.
- Minimising the impact on the environment by incorporating sustainable management practices and encouraging reserve users to adopt similar practices.

4.3 **Specific Objectives for 2023 - 2024**

4.3.1 A series of management objectives have been developed through consultation with professional bodies, volunteer groups and supported by ecological surveys carried out throughout a five year period. Appendix 1 outlines these management priorities and prescriptions within each woodland block which have been subdivided into management compartments to correspond with specific habitat requirements. Each compartment has a detailed programme of the work that needs to be undertaken to achieve the set objectives.

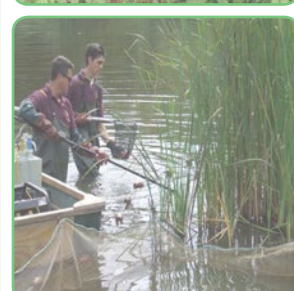
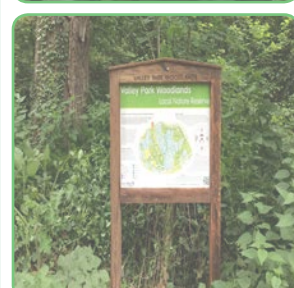
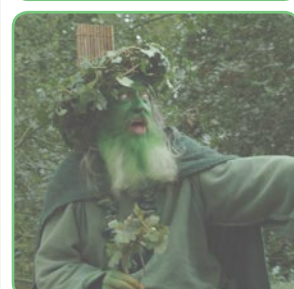
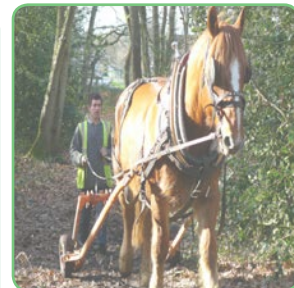
4.4 **Monitoring and review**

4.4.1 The management plan must be seen as a live document which can be amended or changed to reflect new opportunities or changing circumstances.

4.4.2 It will be important to share with the public where we have achieved our targets but also where things have not been achieved and why. A summary of our past year's performance against the key objectives will be included each year in the management plan to ensure progress is tracked.

4.4.3 Key ways in which our success will be measured:-

- Feedback from our customers
- Increased attendance at events.
- Local Biodiversity Action Plan measures.
- Achieving and keeping the Green Flag Award.



APPENDIX 1

DETAILED MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS

AND

COMPARTMENT MAPS

Management Prescriptions Table

OBJECTIVE	PRESCRIPTION	COMPARTMENT	YEAR									
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Reinstate 8 year rotation hazel coppice with standards	Selectively fell existing trees and restock with hazel at required density with standards at 16 metres spacing	3e(i)									*	
		3e(ii)			*							
		3e(iii)				*						
		3e(iiii)	*	*								
Coppice existing hazel and create dead hedges around coupes	Cut stools to ground level between October and February. Gap up where required by slashing. Stump back existing hazel, maintain 5 coupes on rotation of 8 years.	2e(i) (2016)					*					
		2e(ii) (2015)				*						
		2e(iii) (2020)								*		
		2e(iiii) (2018)							*			
		2e(v) (2017)						*				
		3e(iiii)										*
		3g(i)(2018)						*				
		3g(ii)(2021)									*	
		3g(iii)		*								
		3g(iiii)(2020)								*		
		4g(2017)				*						
		5a(i)									*	
		5c(ii)(2020)							*			
		5c(iii)(2019)						*				
		5f(i)		*								
		5f(ii)(2018)					*					
		5f(iii) (2009)	*	*								
		5f(iiii)				*						
		5j(i)	*	*							*	

		5j(ii)								*		
		5j(iii)				*						
		5j(iiii)						*				
		5j(v)			*							
		5j(vi)					*					
		5j(vii)							*			
		5j(viii)		*								*
		4g(2017)				*						
Coppice alder	Count stools and divide by 20 to achieve yearly cut rate between October and February	4a, 6	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Retain archaeological features	Sympathetic management of trees + monitor	1a, 5d ,5k	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Coppice sycamore	Coppice trees on an 8 year rotation	1a	*	*								
		1b		*								
		1c							*			
		2a		*								
		2b			*							
		2d								*		
		2f				*						
		2g										
		3a			*							
		3c				*						
		3e									*	
		3g										
		4a				*						

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Control bracken	Cut in mid June and late July and remove material. Continue for 3-4 years or until under control. Monitor regrowth.	3f	*	*	*								
		1b	*	*	*								
		4d	*	*	*								
		3b	*	*	*								
		5h	*	*	*								
		4f	*	*	*								
		5g	*	*	*								
OBJECTIVE	PRESCRIPTION	COMPARTMENT	YEAR										
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Non-native species	Control regrowth of non- native species.	Whole site	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Coppice salix / birch	Coppice salix and birch on rotation.	5c, 5f, 5e, 5i,			*						*		
Leave deadwood where possible	Leave deadwood where possible	Whole site	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Thin to favour best form trees	Selectively thin around trees of best form to encourage crown growth and to allow light to woodland floor. Between October and January	1a			*					*			
Maintain boardwalk	Replace when necessary and monitor	6	*	*									
		4a		*	*								
Clear ponds	Remove trees around pond to allow light to	2c	*	*			*						
		3c		*				*					

[illegible]

Management Prescriptions

This section describes the management objectives in detail and sets out specific prescriptions to achieve them. The woodlands have been divided into compartments that largely relate to either habitats or areas requiring different management.

Knightwood

Remove ash from woodland boundaries, road side and 15m from footpath in all compartments.

Compartment 1a: *Oak/Beech dominated ASNW*

- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation
- Remove and treat holly to achieve 10% cover over 5 years
- Thin to favour best form trees.

Compartment 1b: *Open Area- Remaining Beech and Oak Crown Damaged ASNW*

- Control bracken by cutting in mid June and late July and remove material. Repeat for 3-4 years or until under control.
- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation
- Remove and treat holly to achieve 10% cover over 5 years
- Maintain dead hedge around beech to divert footfall away from the canopy.

Compartment 1c: *Oak/beech Dominant ASNW*

- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation
- Remove and treat holly to achieve 10% cover over 5 years

Clothiers Copse

Compartment 2a: *Ash/Birch Secondary Woodland and Oak/Beech ASNW*

- Area of Veteran Beech Tree – remove holly from base of tree and use material to dead hedge to maintain path diversion away from canopy
- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation.

Compartment 2b: *Ash/Birch Secondary Woodland with Open areas*

- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation
- Remove ash from boundary and 15m from path. Restock where necessary.
- Replant with local province understory at 2m x 2m spacing (use biodegradable tree guards)

Compartment 2c: *Cherry/Oak ASNW*

- Area with pond – monitor and maintain sycamore to 25% coverage of the pond.
- Clear vegetation around pond on a rotational basis

Compartment 2d: *Ash/Oak ASNW*

- Minimal intervention
- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation
- Reduce holly to 10% cover across the compartment

Compartment 2e: *ASNW Invaded by Birch/Robinia*

- Monitor robinia regrowth and control if necessary
- Maintain fence deer protection
- Coppice existing hazel on rotation/maintain new planting
- Maintain 5 coupes (on 8 year rotation), do not coppice adjacent coupes in consecutive years.
- Mow grasses and remove material. Cut grass at 3 different sward heights around glade: Divide the ride into roughly 3 parallel zones with scalloping along edges. Cut the central area to a short sward twice yearly–cut in October. Cut the second zone (2-3 metres), on a 4-year cycle; again at the same times as for the central zone. Cut the third zone (2-3 metres), on an 8-year cycle following the same time frame as above.

Compartment 2f: *ASNW Strip between bank and Road, Invaded by Sycamore/Robinia*

- Coppice robinia and sycamore were necessary

Compartment 2g: *Mature Oak Dominated ASNW*

- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation
- Remove any trees interfering with mature oak crowns under 30cm DBH
- Remove ash from roadside

Compartment 2h: *Open Glade Area*

- Mow grasses and remove material. Cut grass at 3 different sward heights around glade: Divide the ride into roughly 3 parallel zones with scalloping along edges. Cut the central area to a short sward twice yearly–cut in October. Cut the second zone (2-3 metres), on a 4-year cycle; again at the same times as for the central zone. Cut the third zone (2-3 metres), on an 8-year cycle following the same time frame as above.
- Scallop edges of glade and coppice any hazel, oak or ash trees below 15cm DBH

Skys Wood

Compartment 3a: *Area of Semi-mature Oaks Outside of ASNW Boundary*

- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation
- Maintain as high oak woodland through natural regeneration
- Thin around most favourable trees by removing 40% of those trees interfering with crowns of mature oaks

Compartment 3b: *Open Glade Area*

- Control bracken by cutting in mid June and late July and remove material. Repeat for 3-4 years or until under control.
- Mow grasses and remove material. Cut grass at 3 different sward heights around glade: Divide the ride into roughly 3 parallel zones with scalloping along edges. Cut the central area to a short sward twice yearly—cut in October. Cut the second zone (2-3 metres), on a 4-year cycle; again at the same times as for the central zone. Cut the third zone (2-3 metres), on an 8-year cycle following the same time frame as above.
- Scallop edges of glade and coppice any hazel, oak or ash trees below 15cm DBH

Compartment 3c: *Secondary Woodland with High Density of Sycamore and Chestnut*

- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation
- Encourage natural regeneration of native species
- Remove trees to maintain pond cover at 25%
- Coppice and brash up available hazel along ride edges
- Keep rides open for permissive paths and extraction

Compartment 3d: *Area of Previously Cleared Oak ASNW for Game Crops*

- Maintain planting where necessary
- Allow natural regeneration

Compartment 3e: *Oak/Ash Dominated ASNW with Open Rides*

- Remove ash 15m from path
- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation
- Allow natural regeneration
- Encourage stand of Aspen (*Populus tremula*), between 3e & 3f
- Coppice hazel as in compartment 2e on 8 year rotation.

Compartment 3f: *North to South Alignment Open Ride - Previously ASNW*

- Cut grass using a tractor-drawn swipe or mower and the material removed for the benefit of butterflies and invertebrates. Divide the ride into roughly 3 parallel zones with scalloping along edges. Cut the central area to a short sward twice yearly—cut in October. Cut the second zone (2-3 metres), on a 4-year cycle; again at the same times as for the central zone. Cut the third zone (2-3 metres), on a 8 year cycle following the same time frame as above.
- Prevent brambles swamping ride
- Control bracken by cutting in mid June and late July and remove material. Repeat for 3-4 years or until under control.

Compartment 3g: *Dense Birch with Aspen and Oak ASNW*

- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation
- Allow natural regeneration

Compartment 3h: *Woodland Edge ASNW*

- Keep grass areas open by mowing
- Cut brambles etc in scalloped areas on long term rotation so as to create ecotones along side of track
- Coppice any hazel 2 metres either side of track and brash up

Tredgoulds Copse

Compartment 4a: *Late Pole Stage Alder Coppice with Semi-Mature Oak ASNW*

- Continue to coppice alder (at a height of 6-9”), on 20 year rotation. Count stools and divide by 20 to achieve yearly cut rate.
- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation.
- Coppice derelict hazel stools and brash up
- Maintain boardwalk replace when needed with locally sourced timber. Inspect annually.

Compartment 4b: *Open Spaced Oak ASNW*

- Monitor for rhododendron regrowth

Compartment 4c: *Oak ASNW Over Depleted Hazel*

- Control regrowth of non-native species
- Allow natural regeneration
- Leave remaining conifer trees

Compartment 4d: *Oak ASNW Cleared in the Past / Failed Replanting Scheme*

- Cut and collect bracken to manage as in 3b

Compartment 4e: *Open Spaced Oak ASNW*

- Control regrowth of non-native species (rhododendron)
- Allow natural regeneration which will shade out bracken

Compartment 4f: *Open Ride of North South Alignment*

- Maintain open space and create differing sward heights for butterflies following prescriptions as for compartment 3b
- Scallop woodland edge
- Control regrowth of non-native species
- Control bracken following prescriptions as for compartment 3b

Compartment 4g: *Area of Oak ASNW over Depleted Hazel*

- Coppice and plash remaining hazel on 8 year rotation
- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation
- Maintain fence around coppice coupe

Compartment 4h: *Wet Fen Meadow*

- Cut half each year on rotation and remove arisings (compost on site)

Zionshill Copse

Compartment 5a: *Oak Dominated ASNW with Hazel/Cherry*

- Rotational coppicing/plashing of hazel in north west corner of compartment on 8 year rotation.
- Maintain deer fencing around coppice coupe.
- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation

Compartment 5b: *Oak Dominated ASNW with Dense Holly Understory*

- Reduce holly density to achieve 10% coverge, select best trees for butterflies.
- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation.

Compartment 5c: *Oak/Ash Dominated ASNW with Hazel Understory*

- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation
- Conservation coppicing and plashing of hazel
- Maintain deer fencing around coppice coupe

- North east boundary, maintain as ride. Coppice salix and birch on rotation.

Compartment 5d: *Sycamore Dominated ASNW - Area of Archaeological Importance*

- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation.
- Reduce holly to achieve 10% cover. Treat stumps with Roundup biactive.

Compartment 5e: *Sycamore Dominated ASNW*

- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation
- Maintain ride as in 5c.

Compartment 5f: *Semi-mature Oak Dominated ASNW*

- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation
- Maintain coppice coupe on 8 year rotation
- Maintain deer fence around coppice coupe.
- Maintain ride alongside road as in 5c.

Compartment 5g: *Small Glade on ASNW with Birch Colonisation*

- Remove birch in centre of glade allowing density of heather and wild flowers to increase
- Allow birch regeneration to reach glade sides to create less severe boundary
- Coppice woodland edge on long term rotation (12-15 years) so as to create woodland edge/ecotone
- Remove any bracken by cutting in mid June and late July and removal material. Repeat for 3- 4 years or until under control.
- In year 2 deer fence edge to allow for natural regeneration. If insufficient regrowth by year 5 plant with woodland edge species.
- Mow grasses and remove material. Cut grass at 3 different sward heights. Divide ride into three parallel zones. Cut the central area to a short sward twice yearly—cut in October. Cut the second zone (2-3 metres), on an 4-year cycle; again at the same times as for the central zone. Cut the third zone (2-3 metres), on an 8 year cycle following the same time frame as above.

Compartment 5h: *Cleared Area of Oak ASNW with Heather Regeneration*

- Maintain holly at 10 % coverage leaving best individual trees for butterflies (e.g. holly blue), and as feed source for small birds
- Continue to remove all birch/rhododendron and control regrowth
- Control bracken by cutting in mid June and late July and remove material. Repeat for 3-4 years or until under control.
- Allow heather to regenerate

Compartment 5i: *Oak Dominated ASNW*

- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation
- Allow natural regeneration of oak
- Manage holly at 10% coverage with attention to basal area around mature oak trees. Treat stumps with roundup bioactive.

Compartment 5j: *Oak Dominant ASNW over Archaeological Features*

- Remains of prehistoric settlement
- Sensitive management required – remove trees which may be prone to wind-throw and therefore liable to destroy subsoil archaeological remains

Compartment 5k: *Oak/Ash Dominated ASNW with Low Density of Beech and Sycamore*

- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation
- Remove ash 15 m from footpath and woodland boundary
- Allow natural regeneration

Compartment 5l: *ASNW Invaded by High Density of Sycamore*

- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation
- Allow natural regeneration of ash and oak
- Reestablish coppiced hazel where required i.e. over areas of tway blades and orchids to south-west of compartment
- Install deer fencing to allow regeneration of coppice

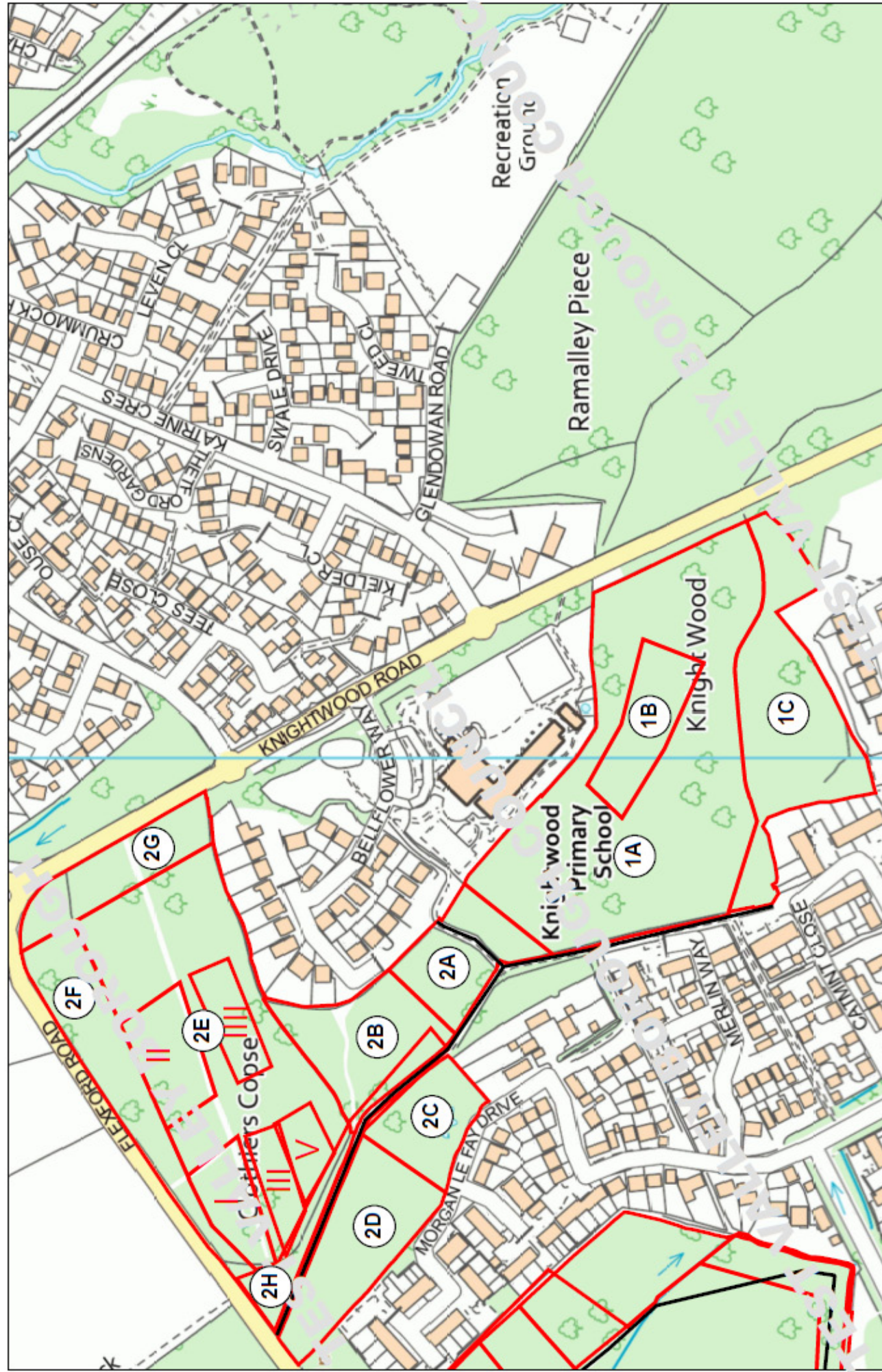
Little Covert

Compartment 6a: *Neglected Alder Coppice Dominated Secondary Woodland*

- Maintain coppicing of alder to prevent loss of habitat - count stools and divide by 20 for each years cut (20 year rotation)
- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation
- Maintain boardwalk and replace when necessary
- Maintain coverage of ponds at 25% to prevent shading.

Compartment 6b: *Linking Strip*

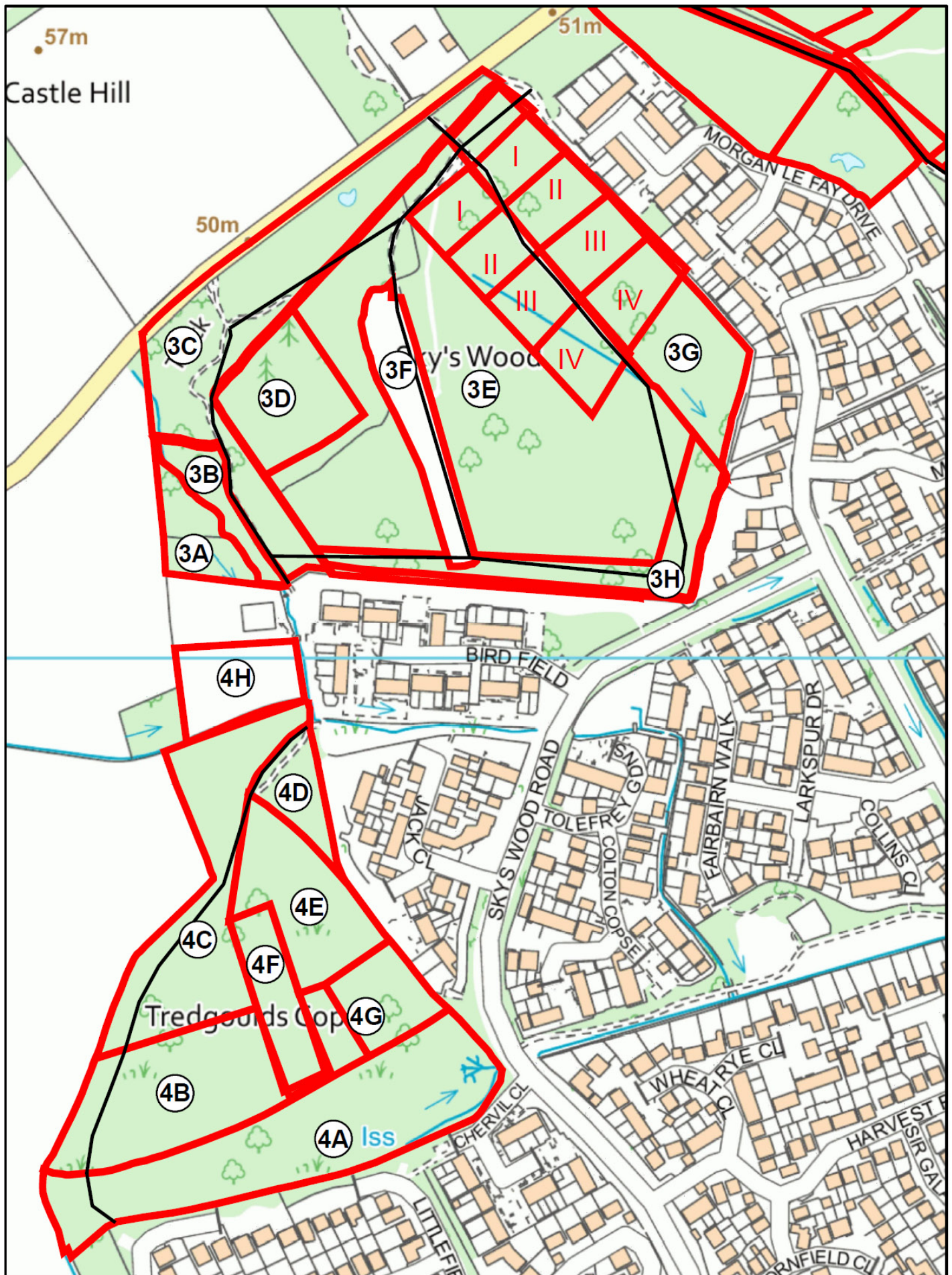
- Removal of ash
- Replant with native species (hazel/hawthorn/guilder rose)
- Maintain planting for first 3 years



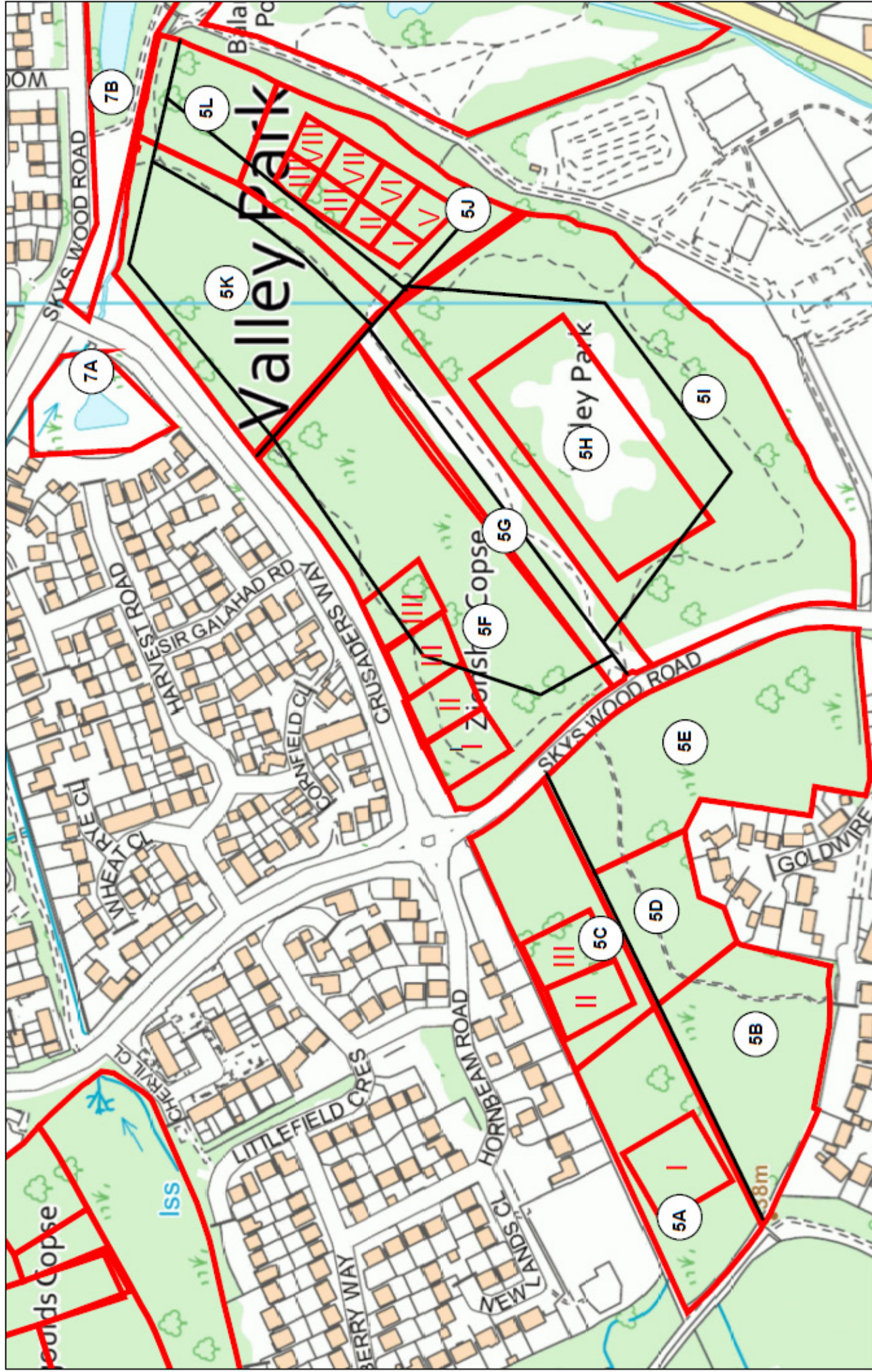
Clothiers Copse and Knightwood
Management Compartments



Not To Scale



Sky's wood & Tredgoulds Copse
Management Compartments



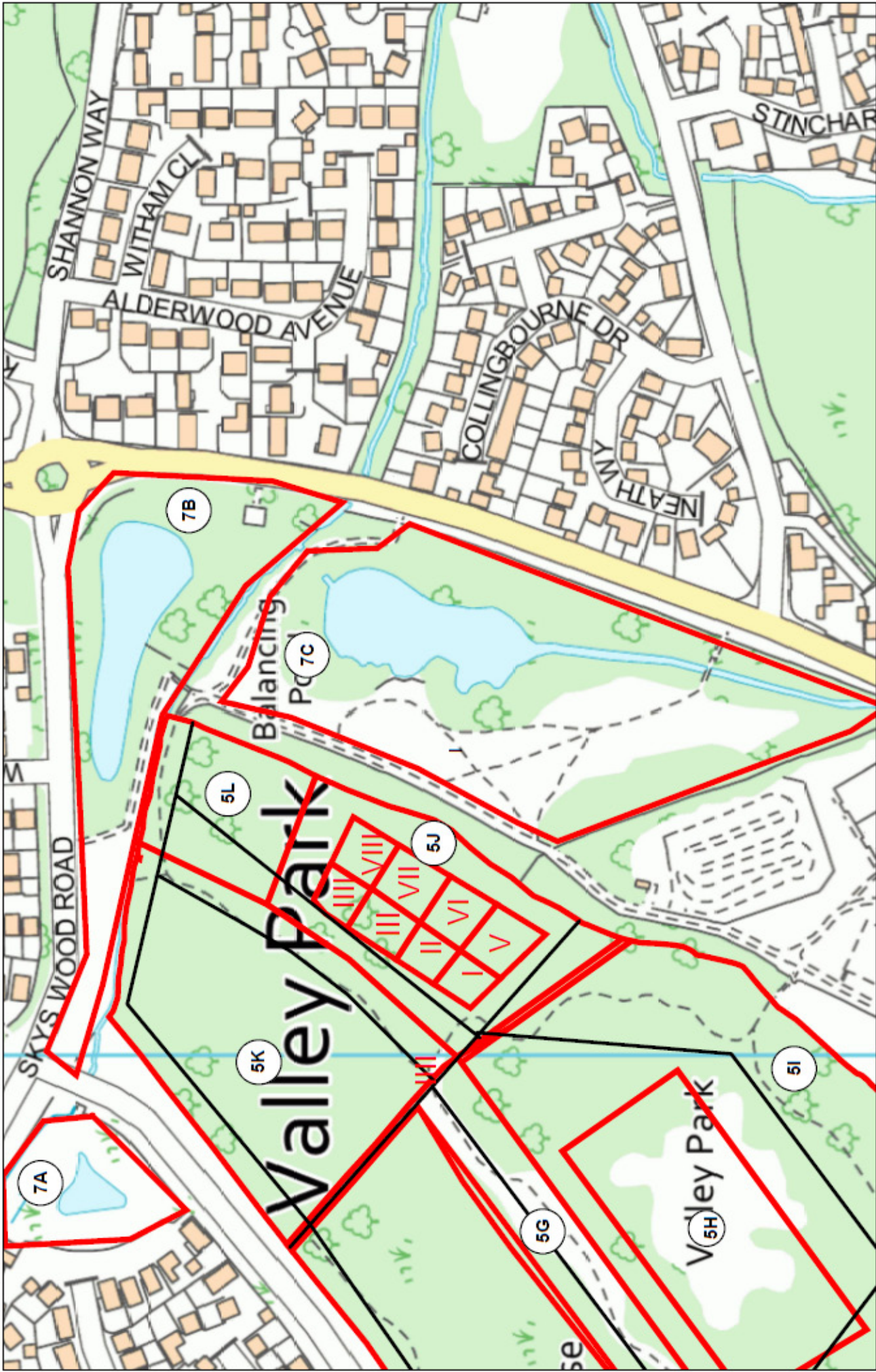
Not To Scale

Zionshill Management Compartments



Not To Scale

Little Covert management Compartments



Not To Scale

Zionshill and Balancing Ponds Management Compartments

APPENDIX 2

FRIENDS OF THE PARK

CONSTITUTION

Appendix 2 - Friend's of the Parks Constitution



Agreed 4/12/02

Constitution

- 1 The group shall be called **Friends of the Parks**
- 2 The aims of the group are to
 - Promote practical conservation through volunteers for the benefit of the public
 - To educate the volunteers in the principles and practice of conservation
- 3 To fulfil these aims
 - a) The group will undertake practical conservation work
 - b) Other activities, in furtherance of the aims or for the benefit of the group, shall also be undertaken from time to time as the member's see fit.
 - c) Money shall be raised when necessary for carrying out the aims of the group
- 4 Projects and activities may be undertaken where is seen fit by the members.
- 5 The organisation shall apply for association to BTCV, and shall observe the conditions of association. £ 25 p.a.
- 6 Membership shall be open to anyone interested in taking part in the work of the organisation.
- 7 The organisation shall hold regular meetings to discuss its policy and administration. All members shall be entitled to attend, and these meetings will be fully publicised, especially on the organisation's projects.
- 8 Such officers shall be appointed as are required to conduct the administration of the organisation. These will include a chairperson and treasurer. These officers shall be in charge of the day to day running of the organisation, but shall be answerable to meetings of members.
- 9 Accounts shall be kept by the treasurer, submitted to an independent inspection and approved at a members' meeting.
- 10 The organisation shall maintain insurance for volunteers on its projects, and for injuries to third persons and damage to property.
- 11 If the organisation shall, by general consent of the members, cease to exist, all assets shall pass to BTCV.
- 12 A simple majority will pass resolutions
- 13 This constitution shall only be altered by consent of a majority of the members of the organisation.
- 14 The group will be non-political benefiting all sectors of the local community.

People working for a better environment

PATRON: HRH The Duke of Edinburgh K.G. K.T.
Registered Office: BTCV, 36 St Mary's Street, Watlington,
Oxfordshire OX10 0BA



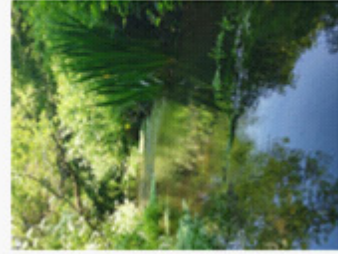
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

PRESIDENT: The Lord Norrie
Registered Charity No 261809 Registered in England as a
Company Limited by Guarantee No 976410

APPENDIX 3

EVENTS GUIDE

JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2023



Valley Park Woodlands Local Nature Reserve, Chandlers Ford

Grid reference: SU420203

Comprising of ancient woodland with a mixture of woodland rides, open glades, ponds and rough grassland, the woodlands have been managed by Test Valley Borough Council since 1998. Rich in wildlife as well as archaeology the woodland is home to a variety of species including pipistrelle bats, roe deer and a host of insects and plant life. The site is thought to be derived from the historic Baddesley Common complex and has close characteristics with the New Forest. It also boasts the remnants of an Iron Age enclosure and associated features.



Tadburn Meadows Local Nature Reserve, Romsey

Grid reference: SU367214

Hidden amongst the houses, Tadburn Meadows covers almost 12 acres and provides a home for a variety of Britain's best loved wildlife and some nationally threatened species. The site boasts a variety of habitats, from a stream more characteristic of the New Forest, to wet woodland and grassland.

Local Conservation Groups

Tadburn Conservation Volunteers

A local volunteers group working on Tadburn Meadows Local Nature Reserve, Romsey. For more information contact: tadburn.meadows@gmail.com

Friends of the Parks

A local volunteer group working in Valley Park Woodlands Local Nature Reserve, Chandlers Ford. Contact Steve White on 02380 263204 or ftop@btinternet.com

Abbotswood Conservation Volunteers

A local group working in Abbotswood Area of Nature Conservation, Romsey. Contact community&leisure@testvalley.gov.uk

Wilder Romsey

A local volunteer group based in Romsey. Lead by local councilors and supported by Test Valley Borough Council.

Abbotswood Nature Reserve, Romsey

Grid reference: SU364228

Abbotswood Nature Reserve, located adjacent to the Abbotswood development, has been designated primarily due to the presence of great crested newts, a European protected species. The site contains a host of habitats, including wetlands, ancient semi-natural woodland and grassland. These support a wealth of wildlife including birds, bats, and insects. The site also boasts veteran oak trees, estimated to be over 300 years old and each a home to hundreds of other species, making them a hugely important part of the site.

Test Valley Parks and Countryside Team

The team work to maintain and develop the borough's green spaces which include countryside sites, Nature Reserves, parks and cemeteries. Please contact the countryside officers in advance for more details. Further information is available on www.testvalley.gov.uk

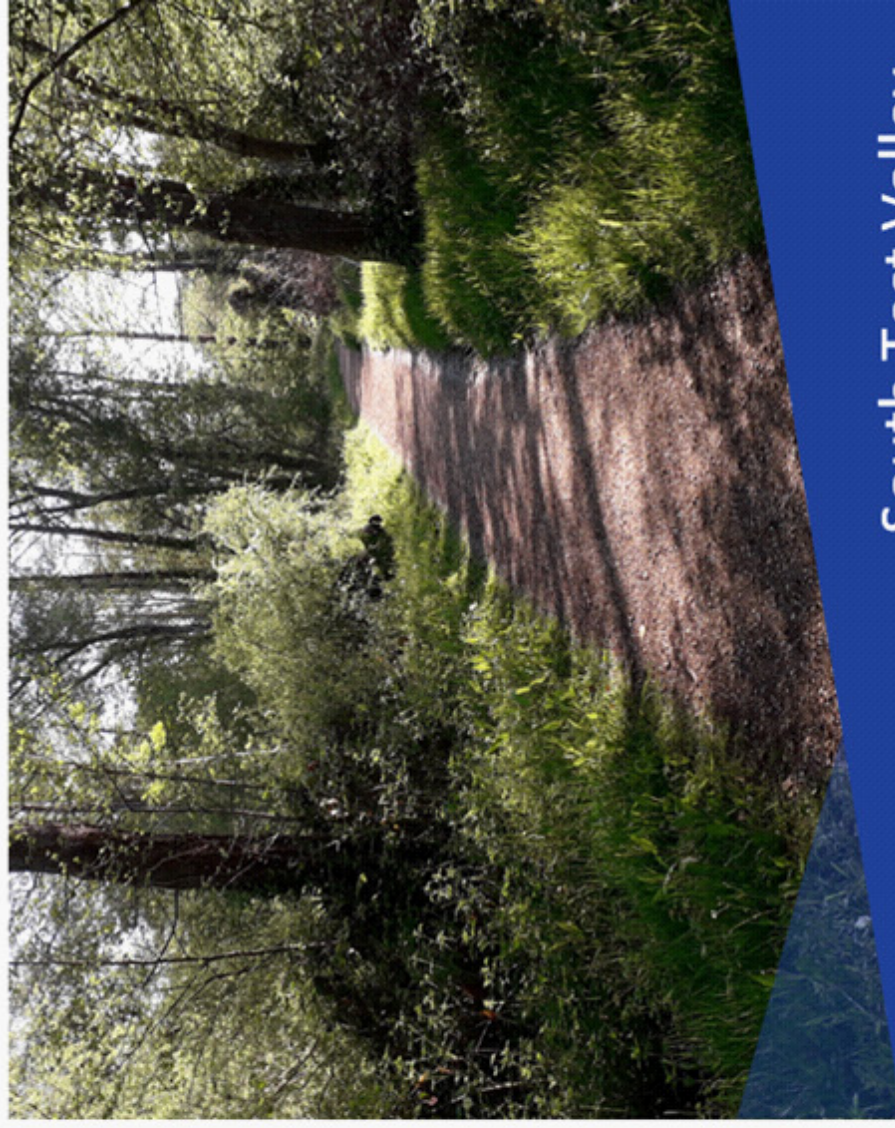
Or contact the countryside officers on 01264 368000, or email community&leisure@testvalley.gov.uk

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered throughout 2022 to help maintain and enhance our green spaces.

New volunteers, including families, are always welcome to help with the on-going programme of event.

Parks and Countryside

Events and Activities 2023



TestValleyBC



TestValleyBC

www.testvalley.gov.uk

South Test Valley

Parks and Countryside Events and Activities Guide 2023

South Test Valley

Date	Time	Task	Venue	Meeting Place
Sun 15 th Jan	10am – 12pm	Holly thinning & bonfire	Knightwood Copse	Violet Close Playground
Sat 28 th Jan	10am – 12pm	River Coppicing	Tadburn Meadows	Entrance to the reserve at Eight Acres
Sun 26 th Feb	10am – 12pm	Tree Planting	Skys Wood	Top of Morgan Le Faye
Sun 26 th Feb	10am – 12pm	Coppicing/scrub clearance	Tadburn Meadows	Entrance to the reserve at Eight Acres
Sun 26 th Mar	10am – 12pm	Coppicing	Zionshill East	Leisure centre
Sun 16 th Apr	10am – 12pm	Tree guard removal	Clothiers Copse	Top of Catmint Close
Sat 13 th May	10am – 12pm	General site maintenance	Tadburn Meadows	Entrance to the reserve at Eight Acres
Sun 14 th May	10am – 12pm	Boardwalk repairs	Little Covert	Leisure centre
Sun 18 th Jun	10am – 12pm	Heath management	Zionshill East	Leisure centre
Sun 25 th Jun	10am – 12pm	Himalayan Balsam Bashing	Tadburn Meadows	Entrance to the reserve at Eight Acres
Sun 9 th Jul	10am – 12pm	Bracken management	Tredgoulds Copse	Top of Yewberry Way
Sat 15 th Jul	10am – 12pm	Discovery day	Tadburn Meadows	Find us on site!
Sun 6 th Aug	10am – 12pm	Himalayan Balsam Bashing	Tadburn Meadows	Entrance to the reserve at Eight Acres
Fri 25 th Aug	7:45 pm onwards	Bat Walk	Tadburn Meadows	Entrance to the reserve at Eight Acres
Sat 9 th Sept	10am – 12pm	Himalayan Balsam Bashing	Tadburn Meadows	Entrance to the reserve at Eight Acres
Sun 17 th Sep	10am – 12pm	Coppicing	Skys Wood	Top of Morgan Le Faye
Sun 22 nd Oct	10am – 12pm	Coppicing	Skys Wood	Top of Morgan Le Faye
Sun 19 th Nov	10am – 12pm	Bramble/ditch Clearance	Tadburn Meadows	Entrance to the reserve at Eight Acres

Important Note

The practical tasks that we carry out on our Green Spaces and Nature Reserves can be strenuous, tiring and involve the use of hand tools that some people may find challenging. Please inform the co-ordinator leading the event if you have any medical conditions or concerns that could be a danger to yourself or other volunteers working around you. We reserve the right to restrict your level of participation in certain circumstances. All children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

APPENDIX 4

ECOLOGICAL SURVEY

(ANCIENT WOODLAND INDICATORS)

APPENDIX 4 - ECOLOGICAL SURVEY

Survey times for habitats and species

Habitat and species	Time to survey
Freshwater	May - September
Woodlands	March - July (Spring: March - April)
Heathlands	June - September
Mosses and lichens	All year, best after rain
Fungi	March - May and September - November
Higher plants	April - November
Birds	March - June (breeding), October - March (overwintering)
Invertebrates	April - October (breeding), October - March (overwintering)
Bats	April - October

Fresh Water Invertebrate Survey Data

The data below has been gathered during school visits. A typical collecting day consists of four sessions. Six groups of children in each session collect from the water using nets with 1 mm mesh. These are sorted through in white trays and a selection of animals taken from the trays and put into smaller pots. Animals from all trays are used to compile a list for the day. Towards the end of the session, each group estimates the numbers of particular animal types in their tray. The numbers shown below are intended to show the contents of a typical tray from the sampling effort of all visits in 2012 to 2019. **All School visits during 2020 and 2021 were cancelled due to ongoing Covid 19 pandemic.**

Although there is considerable variation in the collecting effort and accuracy of each group, the number of repetitions does provide a degree of validity to the data, at least with respect to observing trends, and this is the main reason for gathering the data.

Animals recorded during the school visits

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2018	2019
Flatworm	*	*		*	*	
Leech - Erpobdella testacea	*	*	*	*		*
Bird Leech	*	*				
Leech - Helobdella stagnalis	*	*	*	*		
Amber Snail			*	*		
Bladder Snail	*	*		*		
Ramshorn Snail	*	*		*		
Waterflea - Daphnia	*	*			*	*
Waterflea - Cyclops	*	*				*
Freshwater Shrimp	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hog-louse	*	*	*	*	*	*
Mayfly (Swimming)		*	*	*		*
Hawker Dragonfly	*	*	*			*
Darter Dragonfly					*	*
Damselfly	*	*	*		*	*
Pond skater	*	*	*	*	*	*
Water measurer	*	*				
Water scorpion						
Water stick-insect	*	*				

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2018	2019
Greater Waterboatman	*	*		*	*	*
Lesser Waterboatman	*	*	*	*		
Caddis - stick case	*	*			*	
Caddis - green leaf case						
Crane Fly Larva	*	*	*			
Soldier Fly		*	*			
Meniscus midge	*	*	*			
Bloodworm	*	*	*	*	*	*
Non-biting Midge	*	*		*	*	*
Scavenger Beetle	*	*				
Diving Beetle - Dytiscidae		*				
Fish Fry	*	*	*			*
Goldfish					*	
Common Toad						
Common Frog	*	*		*		
Palmate Newt						
Smooth Newt						
Newt Tadpole		*				
Biting Midge Larvae					*	
Common bithynia						*
Hair worm						*
Diving beetle haliplus						*
Saucer bug						*

No School Visits at this location in 2016, 2017, 2020, 2021 and 2022

APPENDIX 5

HEALTH AND SAFETY

EXAMPLE OF TASK RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK ASSESSMENT - TEST VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL			
SERVICE: Community and Leisure		LOCATION: Test Valley Borough Council Land	
People Affected*:		Completed by:	Date:
Name		Charlotte Warwick	23/10/2012
Volunteers Staff Members of the Public Students	Name	Reviewed by:	Date:
		Charlotte Warwick	As required or 22/10/2014
		Charlotte Warwick	As required or 22/10/2015
		Charlotte Warwick	As required or 05/10/16
		Charlotte Rimmer	As required or 05/10/2017
		Charlotte Rimmer	As required or 27/10/2018
		Charlotte Rimmer	As required or 01/11/2019
		Daisy Kennard	As required or 04/12/2020
		Daisy Kennard	As required or 16/04/2021
		Daisy Cameron	As required or 15/11/2021
	Catherine Sankey	As required or 17/01/2024	
Assessment Seen By:			
Line Manager:			
Name: Boyce Jeffery	Signed: <i>BA Jeffery</i>	Date:	24/01/2023

	<p>All volunteers/staff to sign to confirm that they have read, fully understand and will abide by control measures. Group leader will be responsible for ensuring this is the case for anyone where English is not their first language.</p> <p>The practical tasks that we carry out in our Nature Reserves can be strenuous, tiring and involve the use of hand tools that some people may find challenging. Please inform the co-ordinator leading the event if you have any medical conditions or concerns that could be a danger to yourself or other volunteers working around you. We reserve the right to restrict your level of participation in certain circumstances.</p> <p>All children under the age of 16 MUST be accompanied by a responsible adult.</p>			
--	--	--	--	--

Workplace Representative:					
Name:	Charlotte Rimmer	Signed:	<i>CRimmer</i>	Date:	24.01.2023

+Attach copies of previous risk assessments carried out during the previous 12 months(retain previous risk assessments for 6 years)

Task or Area Description: Tree felling using hand tools

Hazards Identified and how harm may occur	Control measures in place	Risk Rating H/M/L	Further Action required?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Date Done
---	---------------------------	-------------------	--------------------------	----------------	-----------------	-----------

Biological –Lymes disease, Hep A, B & C, Tetanus, Weil's Disease, Avian Influenza	Keep arms and legs covered. Check for ticks regularly when you are outside and when you get home. Light coloured clothes make ticks easier to see. If you find a tick attached remove immediately using the correct technique. If symptoms occur see doctor. Cover any wounds and clean new wounds immediately. Clean new wounds and cover. Cover all pre-existing wounds. Clean hands with antibacterial hand wash or wipes before consuming food, drinking or smoking. Do not touch dead animals or animal faeces. Refer to up-to-date DEFRA guidance on avian influenza.	M	Advise volunteers of risk and symptoms. Hand out leaflet on Lymes disease. Up to date Tetanus. Use insect repellent if desired (follow manufacturers guidelines). Brief staff and volunteers on avian influenza guidance and not touching dead animals/animal faeces before starting the task.	Group leader/ Countryside Officer	Before task
---	---	---	---	---	----------------

Slips, trips and falls	Be aware of potential uneven ground, rabbit holes etc. Avoid potentially dangerous areas. Wear appropriate footwear with ankle support and good grip. Avoid working in particularly muddy or icy conditions. Ensure equipment left on the ground is easily visible (leave saws at the cut stump whilst moving brash).	M	Remind volunteers of control measures. If conditions particularly slippery due to adverse weather conditions. Group leader to decide whether task continues based on conditions/task and site characteristics.	Group leader/ Countryside Officer	On the day
------------------------	---	---	---	---	---------------

Tools/Equipment to include: Bow saws/Loppers/Litter pickers/Secateurs/Rakes/Wheel barrows	Wear appropriate PPE (gloves/eye protection) to protect from injury from inappropriate usage. Do not wear a glove on the hand holding the saw when felling trees. Do not hang saws/equipment from branches. Count tools back in after finishing.	M	Correct use of tools to be demonstrated.	Group leader/ Country-side Officer	On the day
Billhooks (Hedge laying)	Wear appropriate PPE (eye protection). Ensure tools are sharp. No glove to be worn on the hand use to hold the billhook. Do not hang tools/equipment from branches. Count tools back in after finishing.	M	Correct use of tools to be demonstrated.	Group leader/Countr y-side Officer	On the day
Working near water	If working in or near to water please see risk assessment for working near water.	M		Group leader/ Country-side Officer	Prior to & on day
Sharpening tools	Wear gloves and appropriate eye protection.	L	Correct use of tools to be demonstrated	Group leader/ Country-side Officer	On the day
Insect bites/stings	Wear appropriate PPE. Work wearing long sleeves and trousers. Treat if necessary. Do not work near bee, wasp or hornet nests. Volunteers at increased risk of anaphylaxis should disclose this to the group leader before starting the task and should bring their epi pen with them. Those with allergies should have	L	Remind volunteers of control measures. Alert group leader to any relevant allergies. Be aware of signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis. Phone emergency services immediately if symptoms of anaphylaxis or if sting victim known to be allergic.	Group leader/ Country-side Officer	On the day


	their medication available at all times. Clean sting/bite site immediately.				
Lifting heavy objects	Do not move or lift objects that are too heavy. Two handed lifts may be appropriate. Break down load into smaller manageable loads or seek assistance. Use good lifting technique. Ensure volunteers are comfortable carrying out the task and have taken regular breaks.	M	Demonstrate correct lifting/manual handling technique.	Group Leader/Countryside Officer	On the day

Lone working	Do not work alone – Work in pairs. Carry a working mobile phone at all times (use a waterproof pocket to protect against water damage). Always inform group leader of your location. Report back at regular intervals.	L	Remind volunteers of control measures. Contact details of volunteers. Use Life 360 app to check in on arrival to site. See Lone Working Risk Assessment	Group leader/Countryside Officer	On the day
Refuse, litter broken glass – general injury.	Inspect area for sharps before starting work. Wear gloves and use litter picker if picking up litter. Pick up only general litter. Volunteers must NOT collect medical waste or syringes	L	Remind volunteers of control measures. Refer medical waste/syringes to group leader. Sharps box and PPE to be used by group leader only. See litter pick risk assessment.	Group leader/Countryside Officer	On the day

Falling trees/dead wood	<p>Wear a hard hat. Maintain safe working distance of 2 ½ times the distance of the product being felled. No tree bigger than 4 inches in diameter should be felled. Remain aware of people moving around site. Look around to ensure area clear before tree falls. Wave hands in air to warn people who may not hear in addition to verbal communication. Do not approach somebody to move them away from a falling tree as you may also be hit. Close off area to members of the public using tape and appropriate signage. Wear appropriate PPE (as in tools and equipment). Inspect trees for deadwood prior to commencing task.</p>	M	Remind volunteers of control measures.	Group leader/ Countryside Officer	On the day
Trees, shrubs and irritant/dangerous plants – allergic reaction etc.	<p>Awareness of risk. Site inspection before commencement of work. Identify hazardous plants and avoid. Use gloves/long sleeves/trousers at all times and wash hands after contact and before eating, drinking or smoking.</p>	L	Remind volunteers of control measures. NB. Take particular care when working with Holly. Arms and legs should be covered and eye protection worn.	Group leader/ Countryside Officer	On the day
Fire	<p>If burning material, advise local fire service of</p>	M	Burning should not be carried out during particularly dry	Group leader/ Countryside	

	activities and ensure fire is completely extinguished before leaving the site.		conditions. Water should be stored on site during burning. Fire should not be left unattended.	Officer		
Accidents/incidents	Eye wash and fully stocked first aid box available.	L	Remind volunteers of control measures and location. Identify trained first aider and location of first aid kit. All accidents must be recorded in accident book, on site forms can be located in the vehicle glove compartment. Be aware of suitable access and location for emergency services in advance of commencement of works (Site details can be found in vehicle glove compartment).	Group leader/ Countryside Officer	On the day	
Working near roads	Extra care should be taken when working near roads. Always fell away from the road and ensure footpaths are correctly supervised or closed off. Volunteers should wear hi vis jackets (with sleeves).	M	Felling of trees over 4 inches should be left for felling by a chainsaw by a trained and experienced operative or a tree surgeon.	Group leader/ Countryside Officer		
Animals	Avoid contact with loose dogs. Seek medical attention if bitten or scratched and report to police/dog warden and task organiser. Keep away from aggressive swans and geese or those guarding nests. Do not touch dead animals or animal faeces.	L	Up to date Tetanus vaccination. Remind volunteers of control measures.	Group leader/ Countryside Officer	On the day	

Covid-19	<p>Follow government guidance for social distancing.</p> <p>If any team member shows symptoms of Covid-19, they should test. If they are positive, team members that were in close proximity should also test.</p> <p>Wash hands with warm water and soap, before and after eating, drinking and smoking. Where this is not possible, the use of hand sanitizer of at least 60% alcohol is required.</p> <p>If test positive for COVID, do not come to work for at least five days. Can return to surveying if test negative after five days. If not, can return after the end of day 10. Those returning after COVID infection should consider wearing masks and should wash hands frequently.</p>	M	Check regularly for updated guidance on the government website and follow accordingly	Countryside Officer	On the Day
----------	---	---	---	---------------------	------------

Control Measures in Place		Yes			
Business Unit Manager	Kevin Harrington	Signed:			Date: 24.1.2023

* Staff, Contractors, Visitors., Public, Disabled

APPENDIX 6

VALLEY PARK LEAFLET



Friends of the Parks

Friends of the Parks was formed in November 2002 after a period of public consultation.

The aim of the group is to 'Conserve and enhance the environment of Valley Park and Knightwood Park for the benefit of the community'. The group consists of local volunteers of all ages. We provide support to the delivery of the woodland management plans for both Test Valley Borough Council and the Woodland Trust. There are generally ten tasks a year which can include coppicing, hedge laying, bulb, wild flower and tree planting, Rhododendron and Sycamore management.

There is always more work to be done and new volunteers, including families, are always welcome and appreciated. All tools, equipment and training are provided free. The group hold many social events including walks, quiz teams, curry nights, skittles nights, barbeques.
email: fofp@btinternet.com



Printed on recycled paper



Photography courtesy of www.testvalley.org.uk Cover photograph: Test Valley Borough Council

Welcome to Valley Park



This area contains splendid remnants of ancient woodland and wet grazing meadows along the valley of the Monks Brook. You are welcome to walk

through the valley using the network of paths to discover the rich variety of wildlife on your doorstep. Please respect these sensitive areas by keeping to the footpaths and leaving wildflowers for everyone to enjoy.

The History of Valley Park

For many hundreds of years the Valley Park area was a network of woodlands and wet, cattle-grazed pastures in the valley of the Monks Brook. The first major development in the area was the construction of the Salisbury branch of the London and South-Western railway in 1847. The railway line runs along the edge of what was once Hiltonbury Farm. There was no further development until the late 1980's when major housing schemes were started.

Test Valley Borough Council

Test Valley Borough Council manage the conservation of 43 hectares of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland that has Local Nature reserve status in Valley Park. The woods consist of six stands in five separate blocks: Zionshill Copse,



Tredgoulds Copse, Clothiers and (part of) Knightwood, Sky's Wood and Little Covert.

The woods comprise a variety of habitats including woodland rides, open glades, ponds and rough grassland. The management of the woods includes removal of invasive and non-native species, re-stocking with native species and the re-introduction of traditional coppicing.

The woodlands are rich in wildlife and home to a variety of species, a whole host of insects and vascular plants.

The Council has forged close links with community including school children and recreational users and conservation volunteers such as Friends of The Parks. It also organizes related events including walks, pond dipping and an annual Woodfair.

Tel: 01264 368811
www.testvalley.gov.uk



The Woodland Trust

Founded in 1972, the Woodland Trust is the UK's leading woodland conservation charity and relies on the support of its many members and other supporters to continue its work. The Woodland Trust owns and manages 4 woods in Valley Park: Parts of Clothier's Copse and Knightwood/Badger's Copse east of Knightwood Road, Small Profits Wood and Titlark Copse. The woods are situated on what was part of Baddesley Common and may once have been grazed. They have since developed into high forest and will be managed as such in future.

They have retained much of their conservation value and the flora includes wood anemone, bluebell, yellow archangel and butcher's broom. These wild flowers are all associated with woodland of a long history, probably dating back before 1600 AD.
Tel: 01476 581111
www.woodlandtrust.org.uk



Flexford Nature Reserve

Flexford Nature Reserve is owned by Eastleigh Borough Council and is leased and managed by the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. Flexford Nature Reserve is characteristic of how the countryside would have appeared prior to the major housing developments.

Marsh marigold, southern marsh orchid, ragged robin and yellow flag iris are just a few of the flowers that brighten the wet meadows from the spring to the autumn.

The scrub and woods support, among a host of other birds, willow warbler, blackcap and nuthatch, while the fox, wood mouse, shrew and roe deer continue to live out their secretive lives on the reserve.

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

The Trust is the leading voluntary wildlife charity working in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, responsible for over fifty nature reserves representing more than 6,000 acres of valuable wildlife habitat.
Tel: 01489 774400
www.hwt.org.uk



Eastleigh Countryside Service

As part of Eastleigh Borough Council, the Countryside Service manages over 800 acres of Hampshire's finest countryside, conserving its rich wildlife and historical interest, as well as encouraging recreational and educational use.
Tel: 023 8068 8068
www.eastleigh.gov.uk

