

Valley Park Woodlands Local Nature Reserve Chandlers Ford

Management Plan 2022 - 2032



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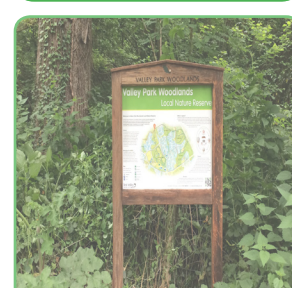
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We would like to thank those individuals and groups who have helped to manage and improve Valley Park Woodlands LNR, making it the resource it is today:

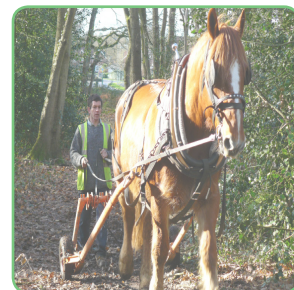
- The Friends of the Parks
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- Aquatic Solutions
- Tree Technique

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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.

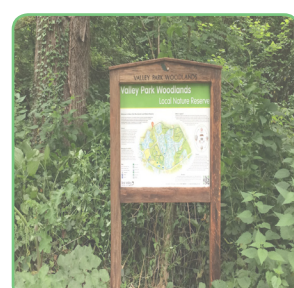
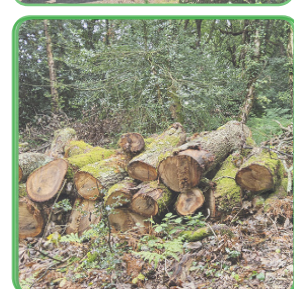
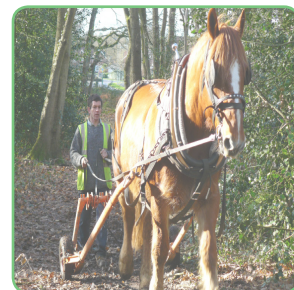
1.1.3 The first section of the plan puts the Reserve in its historical and policy context, given its characteristics and contribution to the quality of life of Valley Park residents. Sections 2 and 3 describe the current management arrangements and the initiatives currently underway to address challenging 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.

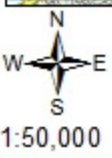
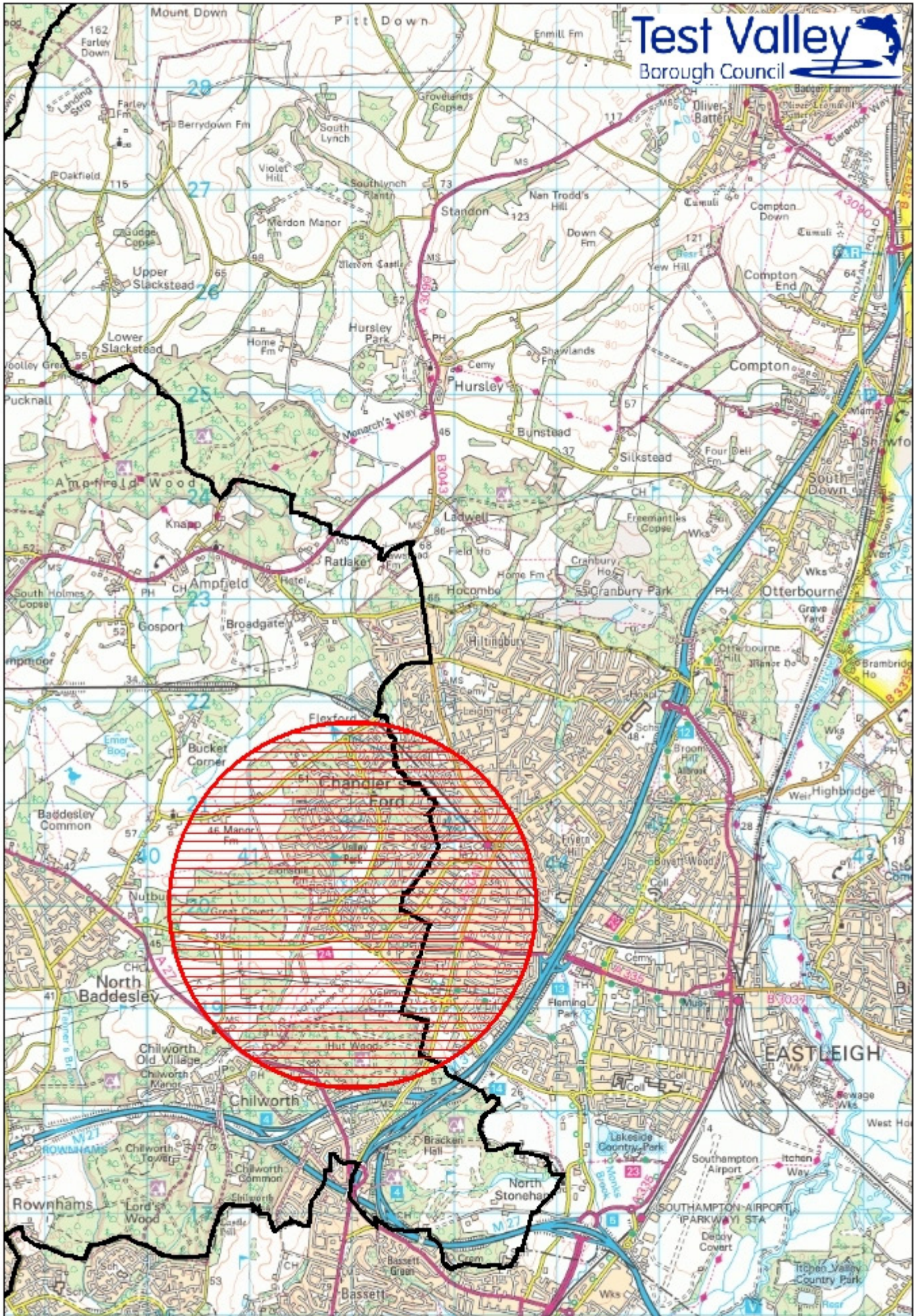
1.2 Valley Park Woodlands LNR at a glance

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.



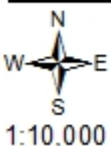
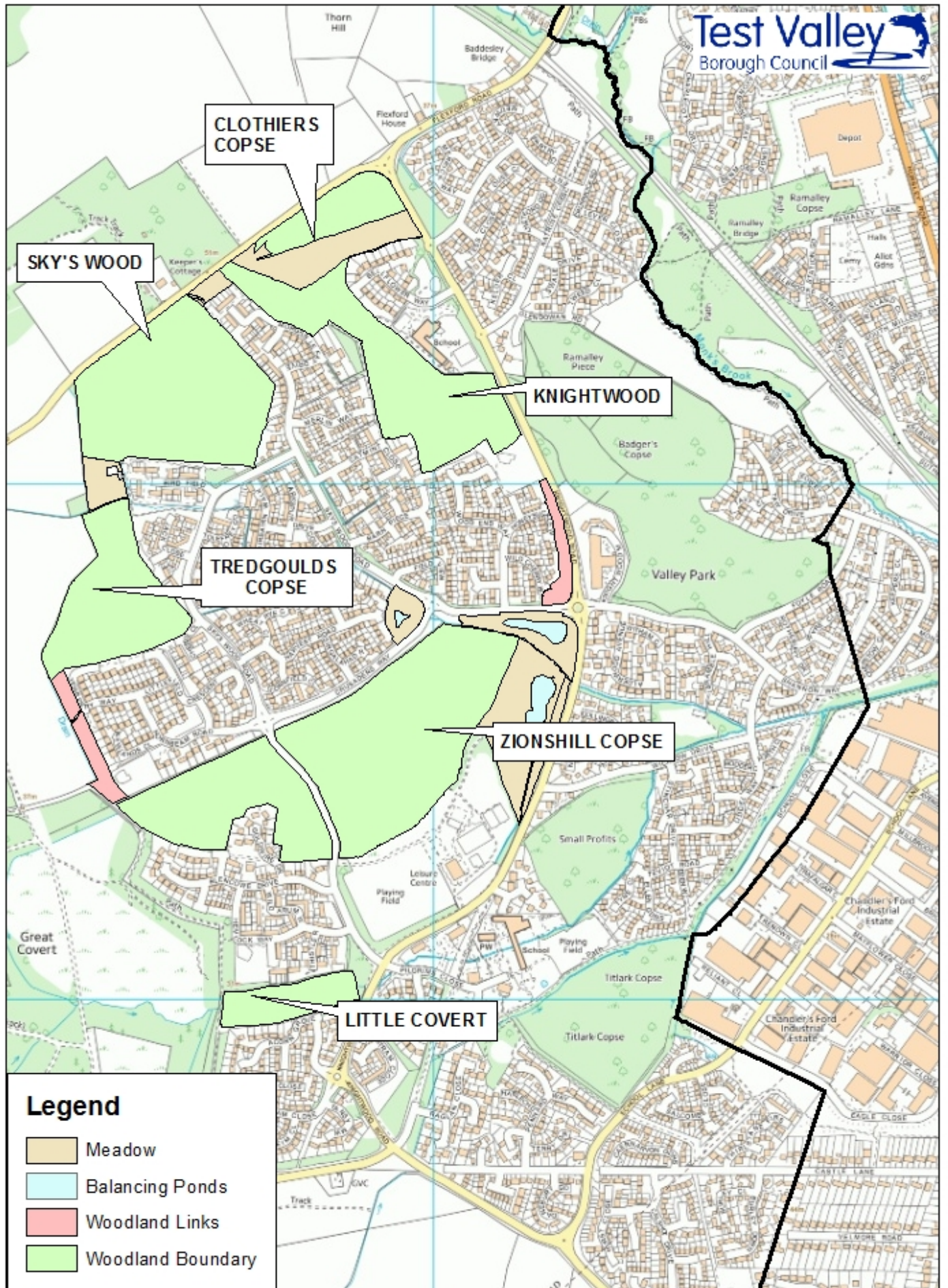
Land Owner	Test Valley Borough Council
Council ward	Valley Park
Elected members	Councillor Alan Dowden (Liberal Democrat) Councillor Celia Dowden (Liberal Democrat)
Size of the reserve	48 hectares
Location Map	Map 1
Access and Car Parking	<p>The main car parking for Valley Park Woodlands is located at 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 waymarked 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.





**Community and Leisure Services
Valley Park Management Plan
Map 1. Location Plan**

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Valley Park Woodland Local Nature Reserve

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 Tredgoulds 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, with re-instated hazel coppice with oak 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 2021 to 2031. The specific priorities of the Green Space Strategy are:

1. To respond to the increasing pressure for more (and more diverse) green space to meet current and future demand
2. Provide resilient spaces in the face of a changing climate
3. Connect green spaces to form part of an ecological network
4. Maintain safe and accessible green spaces
5. Encourage community participation in green space management



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 A place for Everyone - Supporting our communities to thrive (Corporate Plan 2023 - 2027)

1.8.1 The Council's Corporate Plan sets out five strategic aims for maintaining and improving quality of life in Test Valley. It provides a focus for our activities and services. As a result, it informs our decision making and allocation of resources across the Council. Community engagement is at the heart of how we develop our corporate plan at Test Valley. It provides us with a rich understanding of what matters most to our residents and helps us gain a unique insight into community aspirations. Based on the results of our Community Engagement with residents, the Corporate Plan outlines five strategic priorities that will provide the focus for our activities over the next four years. As part of our ongoing commitment to work in a way that recognises the varying needs of our borough communities, we tailor our approach where needed, to make sure it is relevant and appropriate.

Our strategic priorities are:

Sustainability - Delivering lasting benefits for our communities

Connection - Building upon the identity, strengths and ambitions of our communities

Inclusion - Working together to create opportunities for our communities

Environment - A greener borough for our communities

Prosperity - Economic growth that impacts positively on our communities

The natural **environment** is for everyone to enjoy. This, and tackling climate change, really matters to the people of Test Valley. We recognise that we have an important community leadership role to play, in supporting our communities to adapt to the challenges presented by climate change. We will take positive action to become a carbon neutral organisation as soon as possible through delivery of our Climate Emergency Action Plan. This will include creating opportunities to innovate in how we deliver our services – which will support more environmentally-friendly working practices. We will take opportunities to further invest in and nurture the natural environment and biodiversity across Test Valley, to enhance and protect our fantastic local environment. This will include delivering a new local nature recovery strategy and continuing to invest in a network of accessible green spaces and facilities that everyone can enjoy – be it for nature, recreation and sport, and events, to improve the quality of life for residents both now and in the future. Valley Park Woodlands contributes directly to this priority by providing local residence with access to high quality green infrastructure that is well connected.

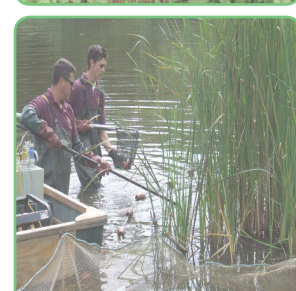


Our commitment to **Inclusion** is also evident through numerous opportunities for residents and volunteers to take part in volunteer tasks, quiet contemplation, as well as physical sport and recreation including health walks around the woodlands. This also helps to foster a sense of **Connection** by harnessing the skills and strengths that exist, so that people can contribute and play an active role in shaping how our woodlands are managed and used.

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>
Climate Emergency Action Plan	The Climate Emergency Action Plan for Test Valley Borough Council sets out a framework for collective actions on climate change to achieve an ambitious reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. This includes the transfer to electric fleet vehicles, as well as electric chainsaws and strimmer's used in woodland management.



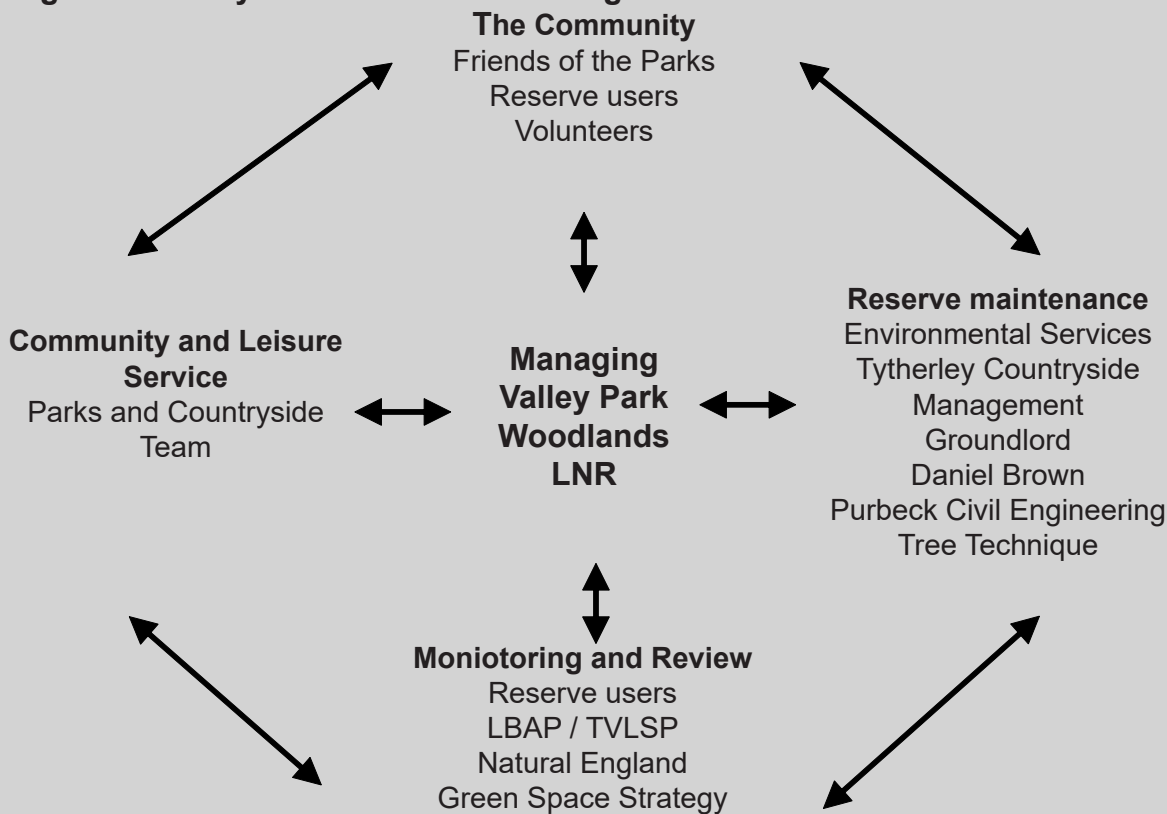
Section 2 - What happens now?

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

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 brush 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 2025/26 with further exercises to ensure we are demonstrating 'value for money'.



Table 3 – Outline budget expenditure for Valley Park Woodlands 2025/26

Management operation	Approximate expenditure	Outline minimum frequency of operation per annum
Forestry operations	£8,455	Subject to felling licence
Tree surgery operations	£5,400	When required during year
Pond / ditch management / restoration	£2,800	November - February
Path maintenance	£2,500	May - August
Ride/meadows management (including grass collection)	£3,055	March and September
Tree planting and post planting maintenance	£1,000	November - March
Maintenance of fences, seats, gates, signs and bins	£3,850	November - March or as required
Litter collection and bin emptying	£1,200	Weekly or when required
Equipment and materials purchase	£2,080	When required
Support for volunteers	£300	Throughout year
Sub total TVBC revenue	£30,640	
Volunteer hours offset	£7,104	(£11.44 per hour x 621)
Total	£37,744	

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 involvement has played a huge part in how the site has developed over the years in excess of 600 hours given in 2024. Enthusiasm from volunteers remains high with a full events programme anticipated for 2025.

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 visits have been held since 2019, however we are working in partnership with Southampton University to reinstate this relationship going forward.

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 to successful site management, therefore every effort is made to involve children in projects and studies. Each year all 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. 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. In 2024, 10 schools attended visits across the Borough, of which 2 attended events at Valley Park.

2.5.7 Volunteers from The Duke of Edinburgh Gold Awards Scheme provided statistical analysis of footfall within the Reserve which was a joint arrangement between Thornden High School's Mathematics faculty and the Council in 2024. Their results helped inform the footpath management of the woodland and will become an ongoing collaboration.



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 2025, 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 will no longer return but we will be looking to run a number of smaller events to target local audiences.

Picture of Community Woodfair

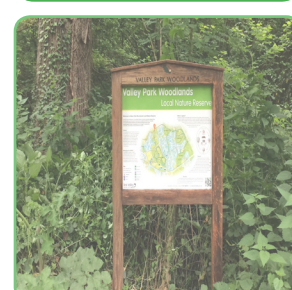


2.6.3 Butterflies are an excellent indicator of the health of a nature reserve. Since 1999 a butterfly transect survey has been undertaken by volunteers around the site from April to September. This information is used to flag up any possible adverse management techniques and is shared with Hampshire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

Table 4 - Events Programme for Valley Park Woodlands LNR 2025

Task	Date	Event co-ordinator
Holly thinning and bonfire - Knightwood Copse	5 January	TVBC & FoTP
Tree planting - Zionshill East (Whites)	16 February	TVBC & FoTP
Coppicing - Clothiers Copse (1 or 3)	16 March	TVBC & FoTP
Sycamore bashing - Skys Wood	13 April	TVBC & FoTP
Heath management - Zionshill East	8 June	TVBC & FoTP
Bracken management - Tredgoulds Copse	6 July	TVBC & FoTP
Coppicing - Skys Wood (Nr 1)	14 September	TVBC & FoTP
Holly Management - Zionshill West (5B)	12 October	TVBC & FoTP
Ride Management - Zionshill West (5E)	16 November	TVBC & FoTP
Sycamore - Knightwood	7 December	TVBC & FoTP
Holly Wreath Making - Zionshill Copse	14 December	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. Recorded site inspections are carried out fortnightly by Countryside Officers using the PSS Live recording system. This allows for any faults to be recorded and actioned promptly and a record kept of when work has been completed. All actions are the responsibility of the Countryside Officer. These include visual assessments of paths, benches, bins, gates and fencing as well as other site furniture. Annual operational inspections of bridges and boardwalks are also recorded on PSS Live. This helps to inform the development of our task based risk assessments, one of which can be seen in Appendix 5. These are used for on site management by staff and during volunteer activities and provide a framework for dynamic site specific risk assessment.

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.

Since 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/>



In order to maintain site safety, following on from periods of strong winds (named storms), the site will be inspected by an officer with a minimum of Lantra Basic Tree Assessment training to ensure any storm damage is identified and rectified swiftly. Protocols and risk assessment for this are currently under review.



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.

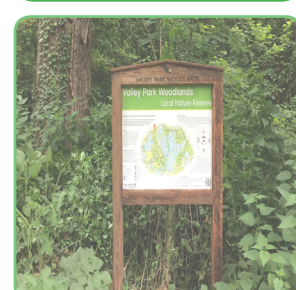
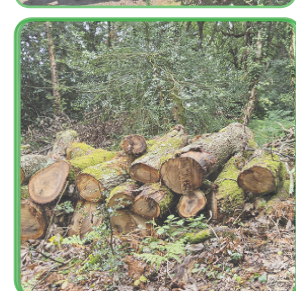
3.3 Ecological survey

- 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 April 2023
Philip Budd	Lepidoptera	Phase 2 - Whole site	April - September 2010
Volunteers	Aquatic	Knightwood Balancing Ponds	June 2024
Volunteers	Lepidoptera	Whole site	
Volunteers	Flora	Tredgoulds Bird Field	March 2024



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 36% 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 45 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 2025 - 2026**

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

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 plashing. Stump back existing hazel, maintain 5 coupes on rotation of 8 years. 2e(iii) (2020) 2e(ii) (2015) 2e(i) (2016) 2e(v) (2017) 2e(iiii) (2018)	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)								*				

OBJECTIVE	PRESCRIPTION	COMPARTMENT	YEAR										
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Ride management	Divide ride into 3 parallel zones. Cut central ride twice yearly, second zone every 4 years and third zone every 8 years. All cutting to be done before April and before late September. Material to be removed and cut to add sinuosity to path. Scalloping of trees along ride edge	3h	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*
		3f	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
		3b	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
		4f	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
		5a	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
		5h	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
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	*	*	*								
Non-native species	Control regrowth of non- native species.	Whole site	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Coppice salix / birch	Coppice salix and birch on rotation.	5c, 5f, 5e, 5i,			*						*		

Management prescriptions/ Operations

This section describes the management objectives in detail and sets out 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 use material to dead hedge to maintaining path diversion away from canopy
- Coppice sycamore on 8 year rotation. C

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 spacings (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 Glad 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 brush 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% coverage, 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
- Remove tree guards in year 5.

Balancing ponds

Compartment 7a: *Crusaders way balancing pond*

- Cut meadow once yearly and remove arisings.
- Treat parrots feather with glyphosate and adjuvant twice annually
- Maintain 30% maximum tree cover across entire pond. Manage willow on rotation.
- Cut 1/3 of riparian zone per year to achieve varying age structure and prevent bramble encroachment.

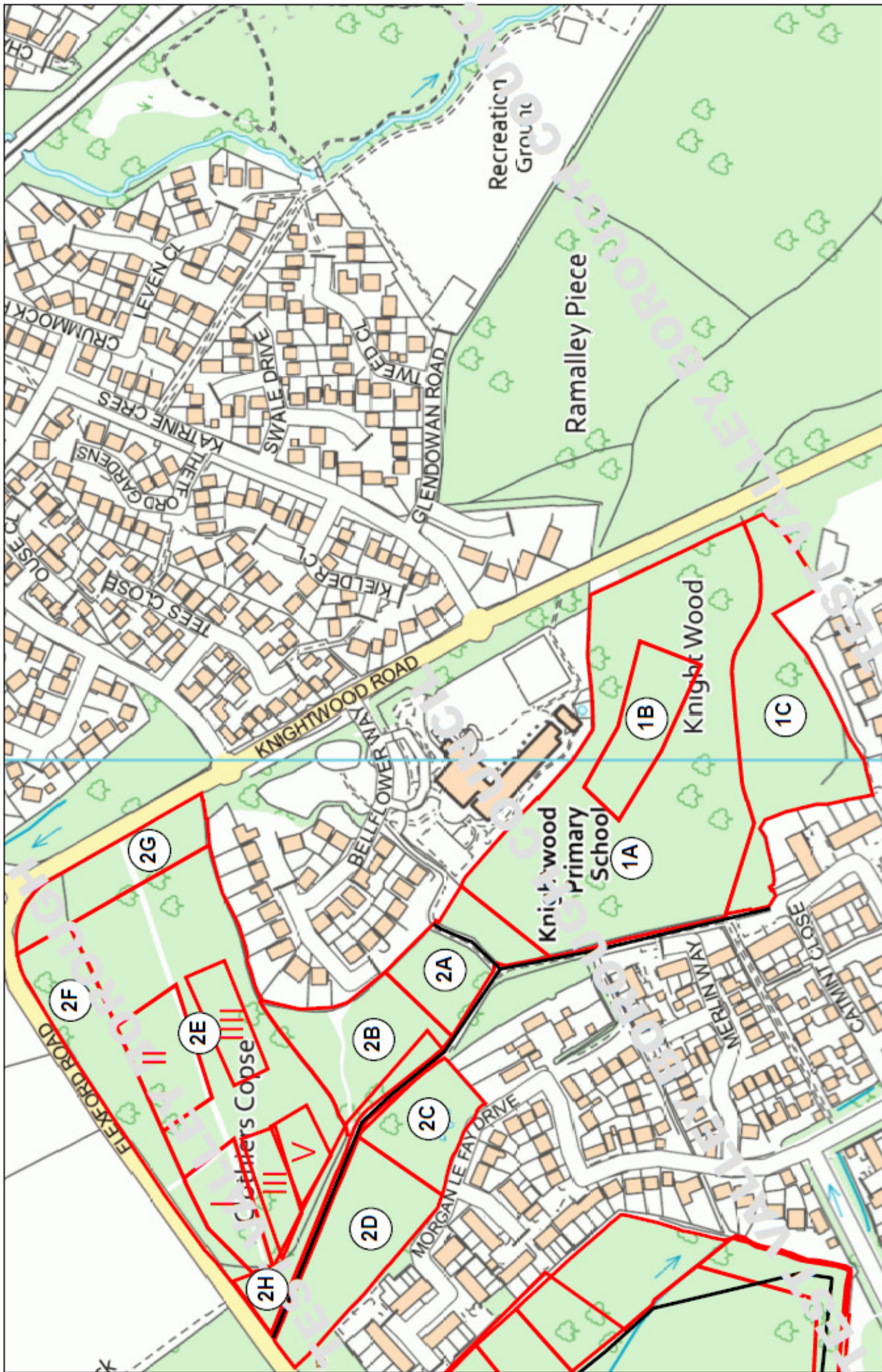
Compartment 7b: *Sky's Wood balancing pond*

- Cut meadow once yearly and remove arisings.
- Treat parrots feather with glyphosate and adjuvant twice annually
- Maintain 30% maximum tree cover across entire pond. Manage willow on rotation.
- Cut 1/3 of riparian zone per year to acieve varying age structure and prevent bramble encroachment.

Compartment 7c: *Knightwood balancing pond*

- Cut meadow twice yearly and compost on site to create habitat for reptiles.
- Treat parrots feather with glyphosate and adjuvant twice annually. Remove and monitor regrowth when necessary.
- Maintain 30% maximum tree cover across entire pond. Manage willow on rotation.
- Cut 1/3 of riparian zone per year to achieve varying age structure and prevent bramble encroachment.
- Maintain tree cover on ditch to 30% maximum.

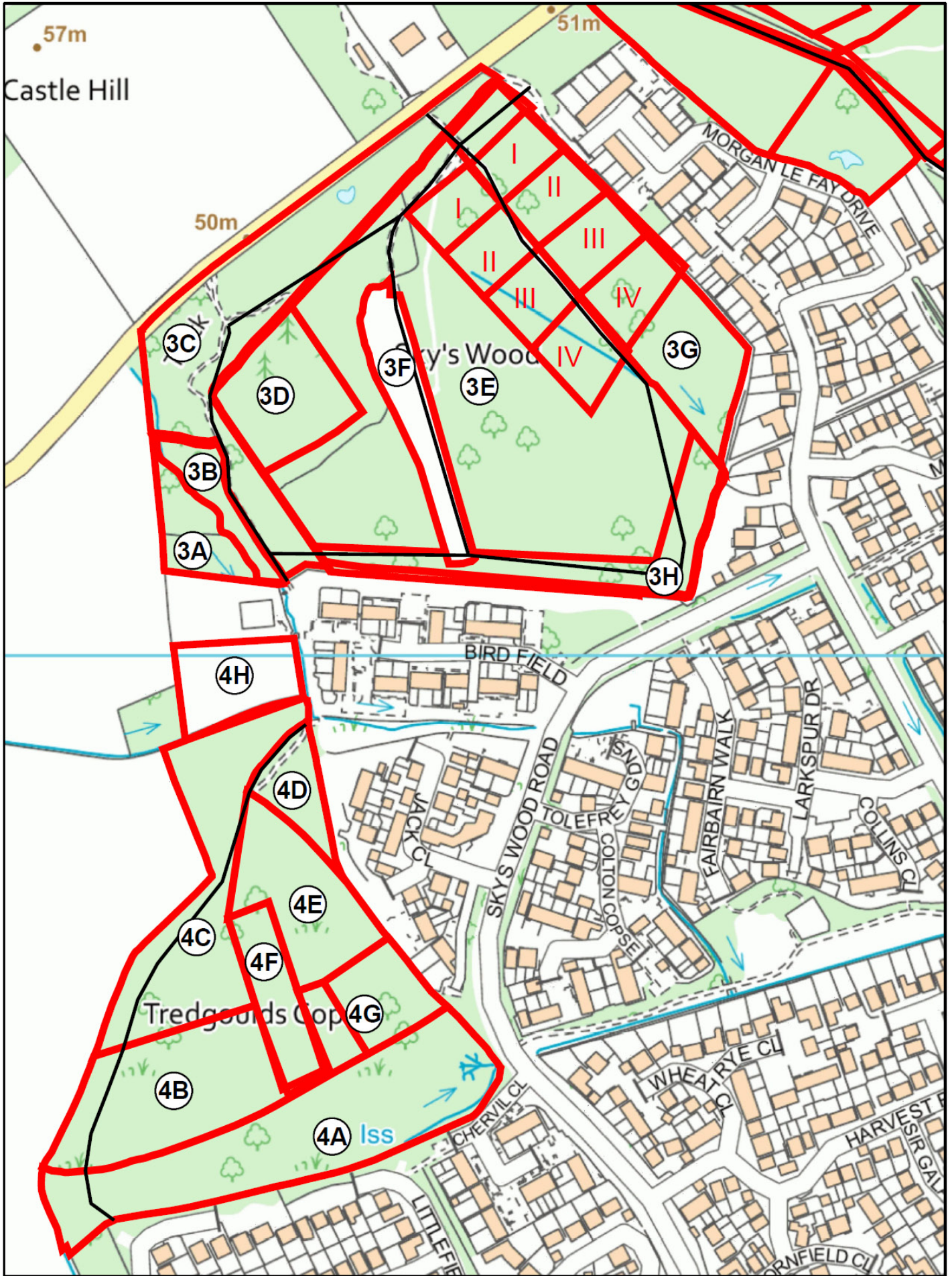
Maps no change



**Clothiers Copse and Knightwood
Management Compartments**



Not To Scale

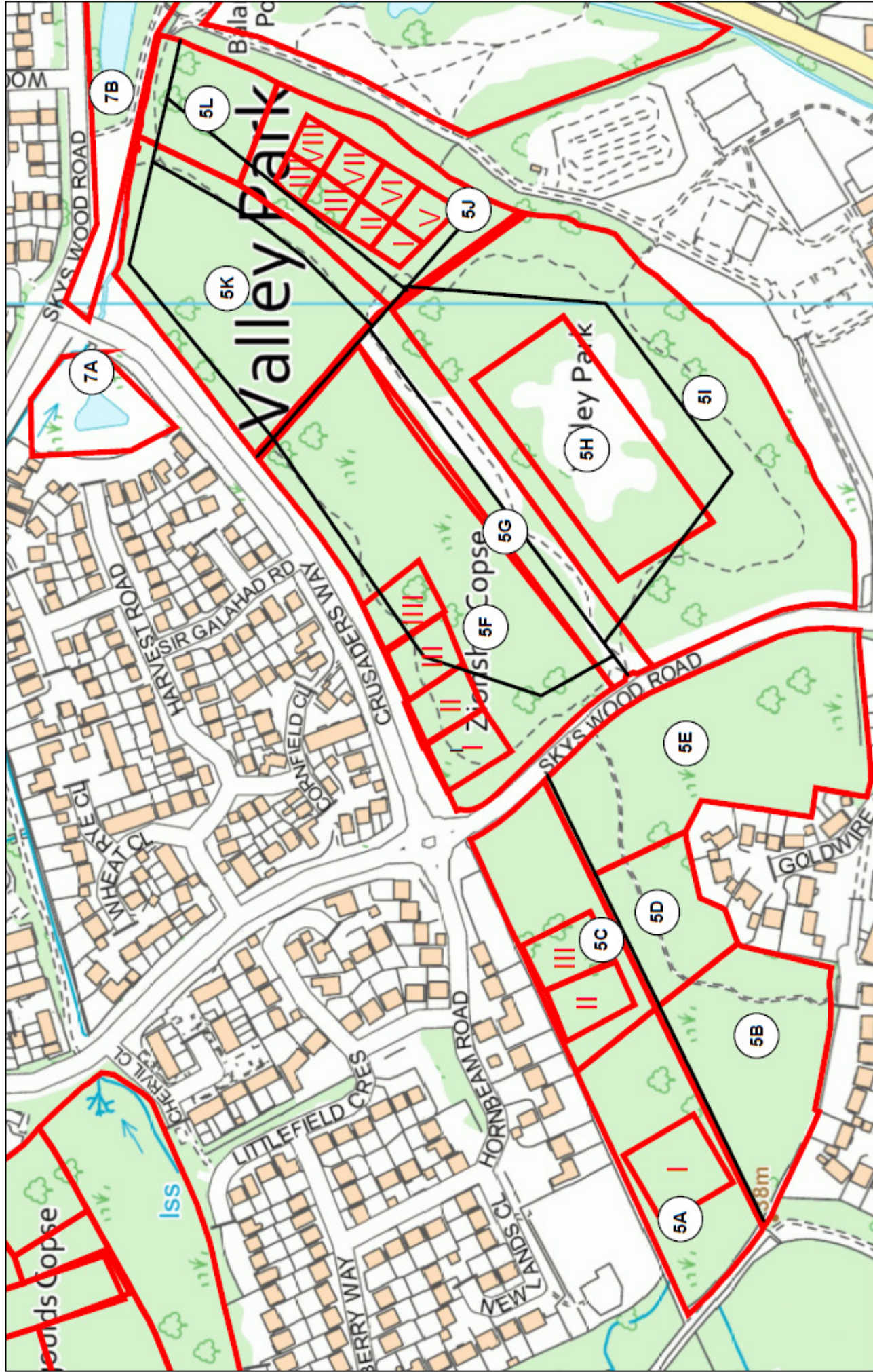


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**Sky's wood & Tredgoulds Cope
Management Compartments**





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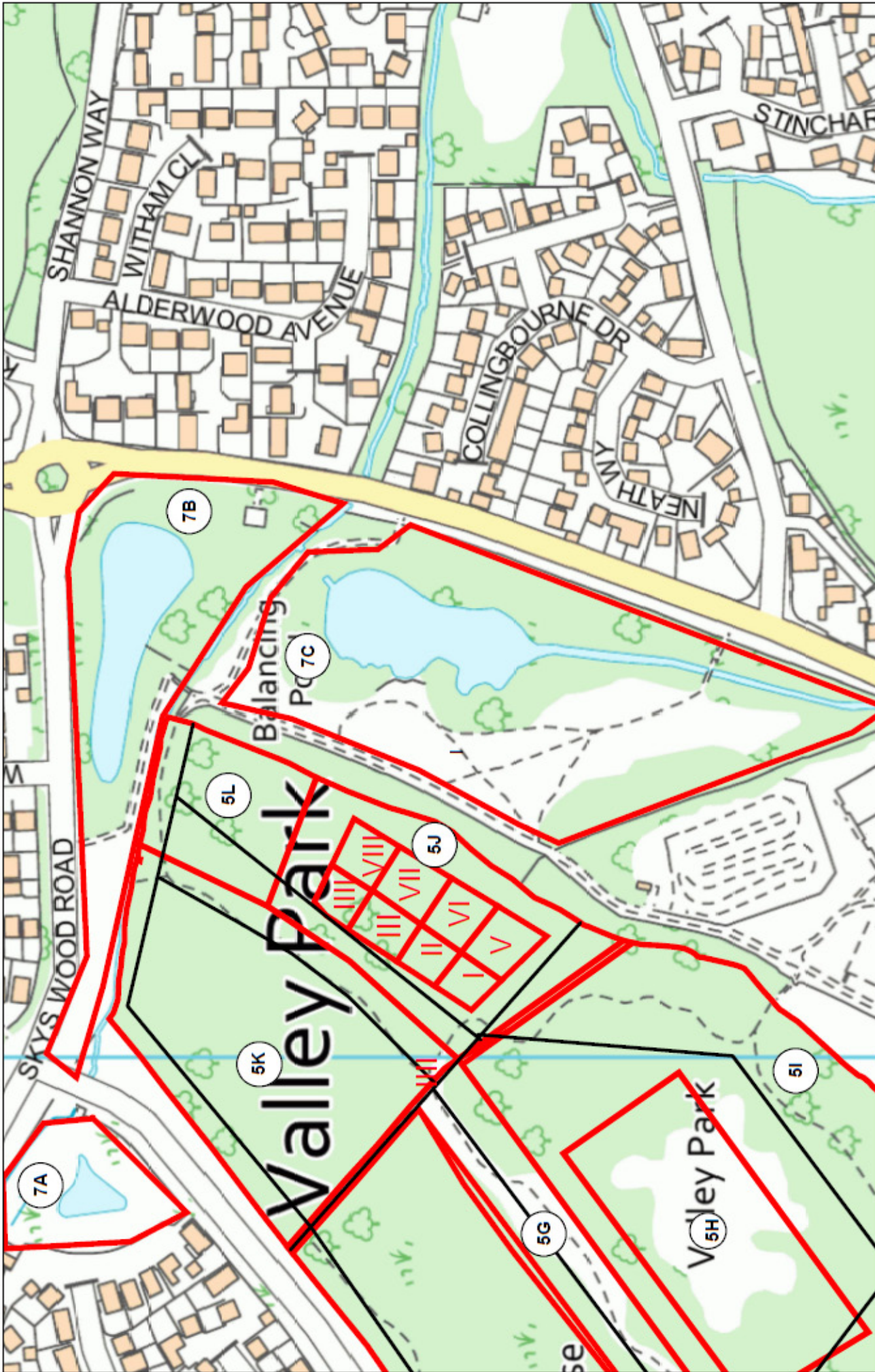
Zionhill Management Compartments



Little Covert management Compartments



Not To Scale



Zionhill and Balancing Ponds Management Compartments



Not To Scale

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 members 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 KG, KT
Registered Office: BTCV, 36 St Mary's Street, Watlington,
Oxfordshire OX10 0BA



PRESIDENT: The Lord Norrie
Registered Charity No 264809 Registered in England as a
Company Limited by Guarantee No 976410

APPENDIX 3
EVENTS GUIDE
JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2025



Valley Park Woodlands Local Nature Reserve, Chandlers Ford

Grid reference: SU420203

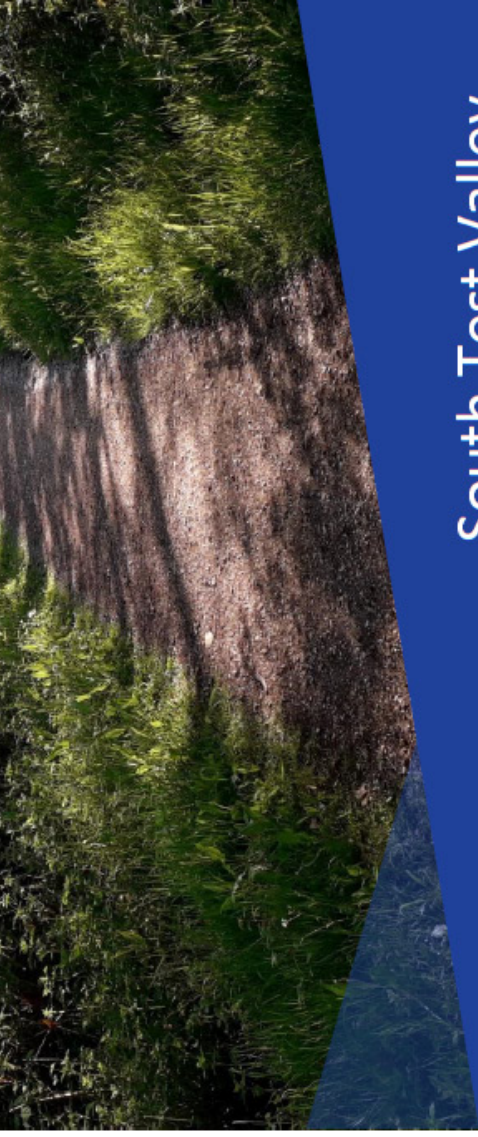
Comprising of ancient woodland with a mixture of woodland rides, open glades, ponds and rough grassland, the woodlands have been managed by Test Valley Borough Council since 1998. Rich in wildlife as well as archaeology the woodland is home to a variety of species including pipistrelle bats, roe deer 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.



Abbotswood Local Nature Reserve, Romsey

Grid reference: SU364228

Abbotswood Local 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 interesting habitats, including wetlands, ancient semi-natural woodland and grassland. These support a wealth of wildlife. 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.

Parks and Countryside

Events and Activities 2025

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 fofp@btinternet.com

Wilder Romsey

A local conservation group working in and around Romsey. For more information, visit www.romseytc.org.uk/wilder-romsey.html

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered throughout 2024 to help maintain and enhance our green spaces.

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

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



TestValleyBC



TestValleyBC

www.testvalley.gov.uk

South Test Valley



Parks and Countryside Events and Activities Guide 2025

South Test Valley

Date	Time	Task	Venue	Meeting Place
Sun 5 Jan	10am to 2pm	Holly thinning & bonfire	Valley Park LNR, Knightwood Copse	Violet Close Playground
Wed 15 Jan	10 am to 1pm	Vegetation Management (Wilder Romsey)	Romsey Barge Canal	Bottom of Mercer Way
Sat 25 Jan	10am to 12pm	Vegetation management	Tadburn Meadows LNR	Eight Acres
Wed 5 Feb	10am to 1pm	Vegetation Management (Wilder Romsey)	Romsey Barge Canal	New Road Car Park
Sun 16 Feb	10am to 12pm	Tree planting	Valley Park LNR, Zionshill East	Leisure Centre
Sat 22 Feb	10am to 1pm	Scrub Management (Wilder Romsey)	Abbotswood LNR	Abbotswood Sports Ground
Sun 9 Mar	10am to 12pm	Meadow Maintenance	Tadburn Meadows LNR	Eight Acres
Sun 16 Mar	10am to 12pm	Coppicing	Valley Park LNR, Clothiers Copse	Top of Catmint Drive
Sun 13 Apr	10am to 12pm	Sycamore coppicing	Valley Park LNR, Skyswood	Top of Morgan Le Fay
Sat 10 May	10am to 12pm	Site Maintenance	Tadburn Meadows LNR	Eight Acres
Sun 8 Jun	10am to 12pm	Heath management	Valley Park LNR, Zionshill East	Leisure Centre
Sun 29 Jun	10 am to 12pm	Balsam Pull	Tadburn Meadows LNR	Eight Acres
Sun 6 Jul	10am to 12pm	Bracken management	Valley Park LNR, Tredgoulds Copse	Top of Yewberry Way
Sat 12 Jul	10am to 1pm	Ragwort Pull (Wilder Romsey)	Abbotswood LNR	Abbotswood Sports Ground
Tue 29 Jul	10am to 12pm	Discovery Day	Tadburn Meadows LNR	Eight Acres
Wed 30 Jul	10am to 12pm	Discovery Day	Abbotswood LNR	Lawes Walk attenuation basins
Wed 13 Aug	10am to 1pm	Ragwort Pull (Wilder Romsey)	Abbotswood LNR	Abbotswood Sports Ground
Sun 17 Aug	10 am to 12pm	Balsam Pull	Tadburn Meadows LNR	Eight Acres
Fri 29 Aug	7:45 PM onwards	Bat Walk	Tadburn Meadows LNR	Eight Acres
Wed 10 Sep	10am to 1pm	Meadow Maintenance (Wilder Romsey)	Abbotswood LNR	Cupernham Lane LNR entrance
Fri 12 Sep	7:30 pm onwards	Bat Walk	Abbotswood LNR	Entrance to LNR by football pitches
Sun 14 Sep	10am to 12pm	Hazel Coppicing	Valley Park LNR, Skyswood	Top of Morgan Le Fay
Sat 20 Sep	10 am to 12pm	Wildflower Meadow Management	Tadburn Meadows LNR	Eight Acres
Wed 8 Oct	10am to 1pm	Orchard Maintenance (Wilder Romsey)	Woodley Open Space	Woodley open space Orchard
Sun 12 Oct	10am to 12pm	Holly Management	Valley Park LNR, Zionshill West	Leisure Centre
Sat 25 Oct	10am to 12pm	Scrub Management (Wilder Romsey)	Abbotswood LNR	Abbotswood Sports Ground

Wed 5 Nov	10am to 12pm	Vegetation management (Wilder Romsey)	Romsey Barge Canal	New Road Car Park
Sun 16 Nov	10am to 12pm	Ride management	Valley Park LNR, Zionshill West	Leisure Centre
Sun 30 Nov	10am to 12pm	Non-Native removal	Tadburn Meadows LNR	Eight Acres
Sun 7 Dec	10am to 12pm	Sycamore coppicing	Valley Park LNR, Knightwood	Top of Catmint Close
Wed 10 Dec	10am to 12pm	Path Maintenance (Wilder Romsey)	Abbotswood LNR	Cupernham Lane LNR entrance
Sun 14 Dec	10am to 12pm	Holly Wreath Making	Valley Park LNR	Valley Park LNR

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	2024
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	2024
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 halipus						*	*
Saucer bug						*	

No School Visits at this location in 2016, 2017, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023

APPENDIX 5

HEALTH AND SAFETY

EXAMPLE OF TASK RISK ASSESSMENT

To be used in conjunction with the following:

- Insert titles of other relevant risk assessments or policies

Activity:	<i>General tasks</i>	Location:	<i>Local Nature Reserves/ TVBC green space</i>
People at risk:	<i>Volunteers Staff Contractors</i>	Date:	<i>Jan 2024</i>
Completed by:	<i>Daisy Cameron</i>	Reviewed by:	<i>Charlotte Rimmer</i>

Location: Local Nature Reserves/ TVBC green space	Department: C&L
Description of Task:	Additional assessments required:
General tasks	No
Staff at Risk:	Risk Rating:
Employee/ Member of Public/ Contractor/Volunteer	LOW or Medium
Date of Assessment:	Review Date:
05.12.2024	Annually or as required.

No	Component of Task	Hazard	Nos. at Risk	Consequence	Existing Control Measures	Residual Risk Rating		
						L	S	
1	Contact with water/surrounding land	Biological diseases including: Leptospirosis & Weils disease , Hep A, B, and C. Tetenus, Lyme disease, Avian influenza	1>	Serious illness, possible fatality	<p>1) Ticks - Keep arms and legs covered when walking in woodland/grassland. Check for ticks regularly and remove immediately if found. Light coloured clothing makes ticks easier to spot. Please see enclosed leaflet for details.</p> <p>2) Cover wounds with a waterproof dressing. If a new wound occurs seek medical attention.</p> <p>3) Clean hands with antibacterial hand wash or wipes before consuming food, drinking or smoking.</p> <p>4) If symptoms develop seek medical attention immediately.</p> <p>5) Do not touch needles. Do not touch dead animals or animal faeces. Refer to up-to-date DEFRA guidance on avian influenza.</p>	2	4	Med
2	Bending and kneeling in long vegetation	Refuse, litter broken glass – general injury.	1	Minor injury/infection	<p>1) Inspect area for sharps/broken glass before starting an activity.</p> <p>2) Clear any rubbish that is safe to do so or use alternative location.</p>			

3	Working close to deep/fast moving water	Drowning, falling into water.	1	Minor injuries, exposure to cold, risk of fatality	<p>3) Remind visitors of control measures.</p> <p>4) Refer medical waste/syringes to group leader. Sharps box and PPE to be used by trained personnel only.</p> <p>1) Children under 16 must be accompanied by a responsible adult. .</p> <p>2) Assess suitability of site before entering the water.</p> <p>3) Entry based on depth, flow, water quality, substrate type (gravel, silt etc.), bank condition and previous weather conditions.</p> <p>4) Remind of control measures.</p> <p>5) Supervising officer on waters edge should carry a throwline with you at all times.</p> <p>6) Staff should have appropriate, up to date water safety training.</p>	1	3	Low
4	Working outside in extremes of cold/heat/wind/rain	risk of hyperthermia or hypothermia, exposure to sun/heatstroke, high winds/danger of falling objects	1<	Major illness/injury	<p>1) Adjust programme to avoid extremes.</p> <p>2) Wear appropriate clothing, waterproofs, hat, sunscreen etc.</p> <p>3) Take regular breaks and refreshments.</p> <p>4) Have water available take regular breaks.</p> <p>5) Remind of control measures.</p> <p>6) Follow met office guidelines regarding weather warnings.</p>	2	2	Low

5	Walking on non-surfaced routes	Slips, trips and falls	1<	Minor injuries such as twisted ankles, cuts and bruising	7) Do not run school visits during extreme temperatures 30 degrees + 1) Beware of potential uneven ground, rabbit holes etc. 2) Wear appropriate footwear with ankle support and good grip. 3) Inspect site before commencement of visit. 4) Identify areas of greatest risk and avoid. 5) Remind of control measures.	4	1	Low
6	Walking/kneeling in areas accessible to Dogs	Contact with dog faeces/Toxocara	1	Serious illness/ infection (loss of sight)	1) Be vigilant whilst walking around sites. 2) If contact with dog faeces occurs wash hands and other areas of contact thoroughly. 3) Do not touch face.	1	3	Low
7	Interaction with members of the public	Violence and aggression	1<	Verbal/physical aggression	1) Awareness of potential for aggressive or difficult members of the public. 2) Withdraw rather than face conflict. 3) Avoid lone working where possible. 4) Have functioning mobile phone available.	1	3	Low
8	Contact with animals living on or visiting the site	Bites, scratches, Avian Influenza	1	Injury & infection from bites/ scratches	1) Avoid contact with loose dogs. 2) Seek medical attention if bitten or scratched and report to police/dog warden and event organiser.	1	3	Low

9	Contact with biting/stinging insects	Allergic reaction, irritation	1<	Injury/infection/allergic reaction	<p>3) Refer to up-to-date DEFRA guidance on avian influenza</p> <p>4) Up to date Tetanus vaccination.</p> <p>5) Remind of controls.</p> <p>6) Do not touch dead animals or animal faeces</p> <p>1) Inspect area prior to commencement of visit.</p> <p>2) Do not walk near bee, wasp or hornet nests.</p> <p>3) Be aware of signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis.</p> <p>4) Phone emergency services immediately if symptoms of anaphylaxis or if sting victim known to be allergic.</p> <p>5) Those with allergies should have their medication available at all times.</p> <p>6) Clean sting/bite site immediately.</p> <p>7) Alert group leader to any relevant allergies prior to commencement of visit.</p>	2	2	Low
10	Contact with Trees, shrubs and irritant/dangerous plants	allergic reaction	1	Injury/ infection/allergic reaction	<p>1) Awareness of risk.</p> <p>2) Carry out site inspection before commencement of visit.</p> <p>3) Identifying hazardous plants and avoid.</p> <p>4) Wear long sleeves and trousers where possible.</p> <p>5) Wash hands after contact and before eating or drinking or smoking</p>	2	2	Low


11	Working with tools to include - Bow saws/Loppers/Litter pickers/Secateurs/Rake s/Wheel barrows/iron bar/driveall	Using sharp/heavy tools	1	Cuts, scratches, head injuries	<p>1) Wear appropriate PPE (gloves/eye protection/hard hat/bump cap for iron bar and driveall use/steel toe boots) to protect from injury from inappropriate usage.</p> <p>2) Do not wear a glove on the hand holding the saw when felling trees.</p> <p>3) Do not hang saws/equipment from branches.</p> <p>4) Count tools back in after finishing.</p>	2	2	Low
12	Working with large/heavy/ multiple objects	Heavy objects, Manual handling	1	Injuries caused by manual handling	<p>1) Do not move or lift objects that are too heavy.</p> <p>2) Two handed lifts may be appropriate.</p> <p>3) Break down load into smaller manageable loads or seek assistance.</p> <p>4) Use good lifting technique. Ensure volunteers are comfortable in carrying out the task and have taken regular breaks.</p> <p>5) Demonstrate correct lifting/manual handling technique</p>	2	2	Low

* Delete as appropriate

+ Amend cell colour dependant on severity i.e. High / Med / Low = Red / Amber / Green

Outline any necessary *further controls*, related assessments or actions below:

No.	Additional Controls	New Risk Rating		Related Assessments	Action by:	Due Date	Date Complete
		L	S				
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
Further Comments, Details of relevant Permits, Method Statements etc.							

Assessor / reviewer's Name: Daisy Cameron	Signature: 	Position: Reserves Officer
---	---	----------------------------

Risk Evaluation matrix

		Likelihood					
5		5	10	15	20	25	
4		4	8	12	16	20	
3		3	6	9	12	15	
2		2	4	6	8	10	
1		1	2	3	4	5	
		1	2	3	4	5	

Consequence

LIKELIHOOD

5. Almost Certain
4. Probable
3. Possible
2. Possible (under unfortunate circumstances)
1. Rare

CONSEQUENCES

5. Fatality
4. Major Injury, resulting in disability
3. Injury Requires, Doctor's or Hospital attendance.
2. Minor Injury, 1st Aid required
1. Minor Injury, 1st Aid not required

RISK LEVEL	
LOW	1-5
MEDIUM	6 - 12
HIGH	15 - 25

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

Photography courtesy of www.testvalley.gov.uk



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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

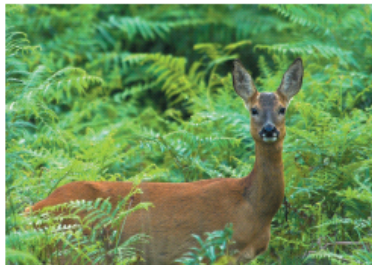
through the valley using the network of paths to discover the rich variety of wildlife on your doorstep. Please respect these sensitive areas by keeping to the footpaths and leaving wildflowers for everyone to enjoy.

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 Clothiers 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

