



MANAGEMENT PLAN 2022-2032

Odiham Common

March 2022

Version control

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	Name	Position	Date
Author	Liz Vango-Smith	Senior Ranger	12.05.2022
Reviewed by	"Enter text"	"Enter text"	"Enter text"
Authorised	Steve Lyons	Operations Manager	"Enter text"
	Nicky Williamson	Ecology Officer	"Enter text"
	Leigh Wallace	Visitor Services Manager	"Enter text"
	Adam Green	Countryside Manager	"Enter text"
Cabinet or Portfolio Holder approval	David Neighbour	Leader of the Council	"Enter text"
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1. Priorities

1.1 Corporate Priorities

This management plan has been written in accordance with Hart District Council's (HDC's) corporate priorities, which have been identified in the Corporate and Service Plans. This includes, but is not limited to, the following priority areas: -

Hart 2040 Vision and Corporate Plans - <https://www.hart.gov.uk/our-vision-values>

Climate change emergency, carbon sequestration and Hart's Climate Change Action Plan - <https://www.hart.gov.uk/climate-change-0>

Any relevant environmental legislation and in line with Hart's Biodiversity Action Plan - <https://www.hart.gov.uk/local-countryside-projects>

As a Local Authority, we also have a duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity under the NERC Act. The site will be managed accordingly and is subject to review at any time, in response to any amendments or additions to these priorities.

1.2 Vision

1.2.1. Countryside vision

A crucial part of the work of Hart Countryside Services is to make the experience of visiting the countryside come alive. There is a welcoming ranger team, lots of opportunities to join in guided activities, volunteer and to learn more about the natural world. A visit to a Hart Countryside site is a special experience. Providing an excellent service for our visitors is a core value for Hart Countryside Services. The Ranger team is committed to making this available to everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief.

1.2.2. Fundamentally, Hart Countryside services is managing these spaces for the benefit and enjoyment of the local community with the core aim of improving health and wellbeing, in line with the individual site needs for biodiversity, wildlife protection and enhancement and in line with HDC's Corporate Priorities. Site vision

Odiham Common is a beautiful, tranquil space, rich in wildlife and steeped in cultural heritage. It is used by local people for quiet recreation and to connect with nature, contributing directly to their health, well-being and local sense of place. It continues to receive relatively low public use, compared to sites more suited to attracting high footfall, such as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs). As a result, the disturbance to wildlife from people and dogs remains relatively low, promoting high wildlife value. All parts of the SSSI have achieved Favorable Condition Status.

The Common supports a mix of wood pasture, ancient woodland, and meadows - habitats rich in plant, animal and fungi species that have evolved through the interaction between people and their environment over centuries. These habitats are managed with a range of techniques to maintain and enhance the mixture of natural open space, woodland and ponds, and ensure the continuity of the site's precious veteran and mature trees. A network of naturally surfaced paths allows visitors to feel safe and secure while enjoying the site. Path surfacing and other site infrastructure are made of natural materials where possible, retaining a rural feel. Effective engagement with members of the public and other stakeholders means that the wildlife and historical interest of the site are understood, and that management is supported; site users appreciate Odiham Common both as a wild place and a cultural landscape.

1.2.3. Woodland Vision

Odiham Common is a vibrant and diverse wood pasture that directly contributes to local people's quality of life and community spirit; and where the diversity of landscape, habitats and cultural heritage are better understood so as to enhance public enjoyment and improve management of the Common. There is a varied age structure of open-crowned trees and a new generation of pollards and protected areas of rotational coppice connecting locals and visitors with place, nature and tradition. The shifting kaleidoscope of grassland and scrub species that form the understorey and carpet the glades, rides and open spaces are bursting with nectar sources and dotted with saplings rising through the natural protection of thorn and briar to become the veteran trees of the future, meanwhile maintaining the sense of 'discovery' so valued by users

of the Common. Light is dappled through the canopy with openings enough that the trees grow with an open crown to a respectable age, whilst still sustaining moisture and ambient temperatures to the benefit of lichens, liverworts, hornworts and mosses. Standing and fallen deadwood pervades the forest, supporting a wealth of plants, fungi and creatures that rely on deadwood for part, or all of their lifecycle, and complimenting the prevalent microhabitats of the ancient and veteran trees, which themselves support multiple species of bat, birds and other species. Wherever possible, products from management activities feed into the local economy or else benefit the site directly for biodiversity, or the enjoyment of visitors and the local community. Grazing animals may or may not be present, but in their absence are imitated by hand or mechanically to mimic the unique disturbance, varied sward and browsing action that maintains diversity in a natural ecosystem. A string of open ponds connects the fragile habitats of species such as the Great Crested Newt and through careful management are maintained for posterity as permanent aquatic habitat. There is strong agreement between all people (including local residents, those responsible for managing the Common, and other interested organisations) over what is special about the Common and why it needs to be protected, conserved and enhanced. The resources and services that the Common provides to the community are newly appreciated and made relevant to 21st century living, in line with national and local government policies.

2. General Information

2.1 Customer Care Standards

All site management and related activities will be carried out with a commitment to excellent customer care standards, in line with Hart's core values. Further details of Hart's Customer Care Standards can be found on our website, here:
<https://www.hart.gov.uk/customer-care-standards-0>

2.2 Location and status

Grid Reference	SU753528 (central point).
Site Name	Odiham Common
Location	Just to the northeast of Odiham (from which it is separated by the Basingstone Canal) and south of Winchfield in north Hampshire
Site Status	Countryside Site
SSSI Name (if applicable)	Part of Odiham Common with Bagwell Green and Shaw SSSI
Date Notified	7 February 1992
Date Renotified	N/A
District	Hart
County	Hampshire

Local Planning Authority	Hart District Council
Total Area	115ha
Legal Right of Access	Open access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Dedication of the Common under Section 193 (2) of the Law of Property Act (1925) coupled with the High Court judgement R v SoS Environment ex part Billson 1998, gives horse riders a general right of access for air and exercise. A Public Right of Way (PRoW) footpath crosses the site from the B3106 in the north west to the footbridge over the Basingstoke Canal on the southern boundary, where two shorter PRoW footpaths also enter the site.
Byelaws	There are byelaws to prevent nuisance and preserve order on the Common (see Appendix 1)

2.3 Site Map

See Map 1

2.4 Land Tenure

All tenure documents are held by the Legal Unit of Hart District Council at the Civic Offices.

Ownership	Hart District Council
Type of holding	Freehold
Date of acquisition	1945

This is not a legal document. Please refer to the original tenure documents before taking any decision or action which may have legal implications.

2.5 Access and Structures

2.5.1. Footpaths, Bridges and other Access Structures

A length of boardwalk runs through the woods adjacent to the meadows in the south-west corner of the site leading to a bridge over the stream. There are 5 low footbridges crossing ditches in the meadows. There are numerous paths through the site (see Map 2), including three ProW which all lead from Broad Oak footbridge over the Basingstoke Canal on the southern boundary. The Three Castles Way runs adjacent to the site along the Basingstoke Canal.

2.5.2. Green Corridor

Odiham Common provides a green corridor in an otherwise arable and urban landscape, linking Park Hall Copse/Forest Park and Broad Oak Common and other Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) to the south-east to the SSSI component sites Bagwell Green and Shaw to the east and providing a stepping stone to woodland parcels at Winchfield and Phoenix Green to the north some of which are also SINCs.

2.5.3. Furniture

Four notice boards are situated at the key entrance points to the site (see Map 2). There is a bench beneath the Jubilee Oak in the Southern Pastures (east).

2.5.4. Car Park and Access Track

Odiham Common can be accessed via the underpass at Colt Hill Lane from Basingstoke Canal Car Park. There are also two laybys with room for 2-3 cars on the B3016 (see Map 2).

2.5.5. Access Points and Restrictions

The site can be accessed from numerous points as it is largely unfenced. Key access points are from the car park and laybys and where public rights of way enter the site (see Map 2). Removable bollards restrict vehicular access at the northern layby.

2.5.6. Fencing

The site is largely unfenced, although there is partial fencing around the Southern Meadows along London Road and at the foot of the A287 embankment.

2.6 Legislation and other Requirements

Law of Property Act (1925): Odiham Common was dedicated under Section 193 (2) of the Law of Property Act (1925) in May 1938. This includes legislation affecting the extent of works permitted on common land - the statutory consents process previously applicable under this act has now been superseded by the Commons Act 2006

Commons Registration Act (1965): Odiham Common was registered as common land under the Commons Registration Act 1965 which required local authorities to establish registers of common land within their areas. A list of registered commoners is held by Hart District Council (Hart DC); rights include grazing livestock and undertaking other specific activities.

Commons Act (2006): This act supersedes/builds upon the 1925 Law of Property Act and is now the main legislative reference point regarding the protection and management of common land. The Act enables commons to be managed more sustainably by commoners and landowners working together through commons councils, with powers to regulate grazing and other agricultural activities. It also provides for better protection for common land and greens by streamlining the consents system for works and fencing on commons and ensuring that existing statutory protections are applied consistently. It recognises that the protection of common land has to be proportionate to the harm caused and provides that some specified works can be carried out without the need for consent. The Act prohibits the severance of common rights, preventing commoners from selling, leasing or letting their rights away from the property to which rights are attached.

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000: Due to its common land status, the Common is mapped as having open access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Wildlife Countryside Act, 1981: Odiham Common falls within the Odiham Common with Bagwell Green and Shaw Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which was notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife Countryside Act (1981) in 1992 on account of the many examples of rare flora and fauna. This protects the interest features

of the SSSIs from development, from other damage, and from neglect by ensuring that the SSSI interests are considered properly against other factors and requires the owners/occupiers to obtain consent for any operations likely to damage the SSSI interest. Local authorities must take reasonable steps to conserve and enhance the special features of SSSIs when carrying out statutory duties and giving others permission for works

Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006: Much of Odiham Common is Woodpasture and Parkland and Deciduous Woodland in addition there are areas of Good quality semi-improved grassland and Lowland Meadows, which are habitats listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 as being of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity in England. The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers, including local authorities, when in implementing their duty to have regard to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity when carrying out their normal functions.

Environment Act 2021: This updates the NERC Act's duty on all public authorities to have regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving **and enhancing** biodiversity.

Climate Emergency Declaration

Hart District Council has declared a climate emergency and set a target for the district to be net zero carbon by 2040 (*Climate Emergency Declaration & 2040 Net Zero Target*: <https://hart.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g162/Public%20minutes%2029th-Apr-2021%2019.00%20Council.pdf?T=11>). Science based target defines Net Zero as “at least 90% emissions reductions”, with the remaining 10% neutralised i.e., “the permanent removal and

storage of carbon from the atmosphere”, for example through nature-based activities within Hart District.

The sites Hart currently manages can play a part in meeting the 2040 Net Zero target through nature-based carbon reduction. However, we need to understand how we can improve carbon sequestration while also insuring we improving biodiversity. The management plan will need to take into account future biodiversity and carbon offsetting delivery strategy (due 2022/23), which will seek to baseline the current carbon sequestration and biodiversity on sites Hart currently manages and will sets out projects that could improve both.

2.7 Health, Safety and Security

All work undertaken is in line with our Corporate Health and Safety Policy and our departmental Health and Safety documents.

An independent Health and Safety audit of the Countryside Service was last carried out by QLM (Quality Leisure Management) in 2014 and scored highly. QLM deliver industry best practice health and safety consultancy, supporting leisure facilities (including open spaces) with practical and cost-effective health and safety solutions. They work with industry lead bodies and have been instrumental in the development of industry standards and guidance publications. They are also available for specialist advice.

2.7.1. Emergency Planning

An Emergency Plan was produced in partnership with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service. This identifies special danger areas, danger periods, fire prevention methods, organisation and an incident procedure. A copy of this plan can be found in the

Countryside Workshop and electronically on the Hart District Council system.

2.7.2. Site Safety

Hazard trees in high and medium risk areas are surveyed annually in line with our corporate Tree Safety Policy by the Hart District Council Tree Officer. Trees in low-risk areas that do not receive a high level of footfall are checked ad hoc by the site ranger whilst undertaking normal day to day duties.

Where appropriate, vegetation from path edges is cut back to provide good sight lines and visibility to make users of the site feel safe and secure. Structures such as bridges and boardwalks are either covered in a non-slip mesh or non-slip inserts to help reduce the risk of trips and slips.

The site ranger surveys all site structures annually for safety issues and any damage or repairs needed. Records of these surveys are kept electronically on the Hart District Council system.

2.7.3. Enforcement

All of Hart's land is under an Open Space Protection Order, which makes it an offence to not pick up after your dog or to not be carrying the means to pick up after your dog, under the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Part 4, Section 59. To help enforce this we have dedicated enforcement officers, who are able to give on the spot fines of for dog fouling or littering. This is provided through a contract with East Hampshire District Council. If there is a problem area, we can ask the enforcement officers to target this area until the issue has been resolved. In addition, the public are able to inform us of an area through our 'report a litter hot spot' function on our website (<https://www.hart.gov.uk/report-litter-hotspot>) or through the 'fix my street' function (<https://hart.fixmystreet.com/>).

If we have identify a particular hotspot then we will liaise with East Hampshire District Council. For specific problems with dogs or fouling at a site, we are able to run a 'pop up' stall in conjunction with the dog warden to educate members of the public and utilise social media campaigns if required.

A water safety risk assessment was last carried out on 30th June 2021 and is reviewed annually.

2.7.4. Contractor expectations

Hart DC Countryside Team work with reputable contractors and ensure they have valid insurance and appropriate qualifications to carry out training and work operations. In addition, we expect contractors to adhere to best practice, including consideration or current sustainability and climate change issues and initiatives.

2.8 Historical and social context

2.8.1. Past management for nature conservation

Odiham Common is managed and maintained by Hart DC. A timeline showing main events since Hart DC took ownership of the site in 1978 is provided in Appendix 1.

Since designation as an SSSI in 1992, a range of management activities have been carried out on Odiham Common with the aim of restoring its ancient character and retaining and improving its habitat value and visitor access. Management has included:

- Scrub treatment/clearance within the Southern Meadows
- Bracken and Rhododendron control;
- Tree felling and removal to enlarge rides;
- Rotational coppicing in defined coupes;
- Mowing, temporary fencing and grazing;
- Pond restoration; and
- Monitoring of flora and fauna.

In addition, Hart DC Rangers carry out routine maintenance tasks including:

- Maintaining the network of paths/rides by clearing obstructions, cutting back vegetation where necessary and mowing;
- Litter picking on paths, roadside edges, pull-ins, parking areas and the whole of the Common;

- Maintaining drainage channels to serviceable condition, cutting back encroaching vegetation and removing all debris and blockages;
- Carrying out annual hazard tree surveys, completing works as necessary or arrange for specialist works to be completed; and
- Checking safety condition of all footbridges, signs, drop bollards, dragons teeth, fencing, safety rails etc.

Statutory undertakers carry out maintenance works as required to maintain wayleaves for utilities/ services which run under and over the Common. Works proposed are reviewed, approved and monitored by Hart DC Senior Ranger.

2.8.2. Past status of the site

A Scheme of Regulation and Management (approved in 1949 under the authority of the Commons Act (1899) sets out what the Council may do to protect and improve the Common and sets parameters for its access and use, stating that ‘the inhabitants of the district and neighbourhood shall have a right of free access to every part of the commons and a privilege of playing games and of enjoying other species of recreation thereon subject to any byelaws made by the Council under this scheme.’ Management of the Common has as a result been statutorily controlled and guided by the Scheme in conjunction with the relevant legislation.

Management has also been controlled through the designation of the site under the Wildlife Countryside Act (1981) in 1992 which ensures that the SSSI interest features are properly considered.

2.9 People

2.9.1. Local communities, partnerships and stakeholders

Hart DC has worked with a broad partnership on the management of Odiham Common. The Odiham Consultative Group was specifically formed to help inform development of the previous 2009-2019 management plan, in line with the ‘Common Purpose’ process. The committee consisted of representatives from the following groups and organisations:

- Hampshire CC
- Hart DC Councillor, Hartley Wintney Ward
- National Trust
- Natural England
- Odiham Biodiversity Group
- Odiham Parish Council
- Odiham Society
- Open Spaces Society
- Potbridge Residents Association

There are also good links established with Basingstoke Canal Authority Rangers (who manage and maintain the canal), Hampshire County Council (public rights of way officers) and other local landowners/managers.

The above management plan has now been completed and future communications will be directly through the Parish Councils as the local ward and subject to future corporate and service communication strategies.

The core mechanisms for future engagement will consist of the following methods, in line with Countryside's emerging Engagement Plan: -

- Future communications on general site management will be delivered by direct liaisons with Parish Councils, as well as via social media and website updates.
- Hart DC will continue to uphold any legal requirements in terms of engaging with other organisations on management of the site.
- Future projects will be subject to the identification and liaison with key stakeholders that may be impacted by the results of the project being implemented on site. This engagement will be based on the needs of such projects in line with the 'Common Purpose'. Where appropriate, engagement will be constitutionalised with clearly defined engagement periods that are project-specific.

2.9.2. Volunteers

There are currently limited opportunities for volunteers to participate in the management of Odiham Common, in part due to the isolated nature of the site and lack of parking. Future volunteer involvement will be through working parties arranged by the Hart DC Ranger Service

2.9.3. Access and tourism

Odiham Common has been freely accessible to the public for 'air and exercise' since 1936 and is valued for its landscape, history, wildlife and amenity. It is predominantly used by local people for informal recreation, including walking, dog walking and horse-riding. The site is also in close proximity to the Basingstoke canal, as well as the Hunting Lodge at Wilk's Water, which is owned and managed by the National Trust.

2.9.4. Past and current provision

As described in sections 1.5.1, 1.5.3-5 above, provision is for general public access and includes information panels, small footbridges, and a short length of boardwalk. There are numerous informal paths criss-crossing the site.

2.9.5. Past and current use

There is currently little information available about the past and current use of Odiham Common. The 2008 consultation included a questionnaire, which was completed by a subset of users, and indicated that the site is mainly used by local people for quiet recreation including walking, dog walking and horse riding. Due to the limited availability of parking, most users are likely to access the site on foot or on horseback.

2.9.6. Educational use

There is currently no formal educational use made of the site. However, there are low levels of educational use on site from local groups. Infrastructural constraints (the lack of parking and the unmade nature of the paths) mean that, with the exception of very local use, it is not general suitable for regular use by groups.

2.10 Site description

2.10.1.1. Physical

Odiham Common lies to the south of the M3 and is separated from Odiham village by the Basingstoke Canal and the A287. The site is dissected by Odiham Road (B3016), Bagwell Lane and Potbridge Road. A significant pylon wayleave crosses the east of the site with a smaller wayleave across the north of the site. There are a number of properties located within the common (outside of the SSSI boundary and Hart DC ownership).

2.10.1.2. Climate

The annual mean temperature for North East Hampshire is around 10°C, or slightly above this where urban heating effects are a factor. Summer temperatures are high, the region being one of the warmest in Britain. The mean daily maximum temperature in July is about 21.5°C. The 25-year average is of 91 days per year when the afternoon maximum exceeds 20°C.

The mean daily temperature in January is about 4°C, but the mean minimum for the month is 1.2°C. These figures may be lower in a low-lying, wet site. The average number of nights with air frost per year is 53, but ground frosts may double this total and occur in every month except July. The air frost-free period is late May until late September.

The average annual total of bright sunshine at Farnborough is 1510 hours: the monthly average varies from 206 hours (June) to 42 hours (December).

Rainfall is extremely variable, between a low of 3.1 mm (February 1993) to a high of 181.7 mm (November 1974). The mean annual average at Farnborough is 670 mm.

2.10.1.3. Hydrology

Odiham Common lies between the River Whitewater to the west and an un-named seasonal tributary to the north and east. In the southwest of the site there are a number of ditches, while small streams rise from springs to the north west and drain westwards towards the River Whitewater. The site becomes very wet in winter.

2.10.1.4. Geology

The Common lies at the junction of the London Clay, Plateau Gravel and Lower Bagshot Beds, with most of the site dominated by London Clay.

2.10.1.5. Geomorphology

Odiham Common forms a dome with the highest point at Cherry Hill (88m), from which the land slopes away to 68m at the lowest point. The landform is fairly consistent, although a large clay pit occurs between Cherry Hill and Hazel Cottage with smaller extraction pits scattered throughout the Odiham Common, particularly to the northeast.

2.10.1.6. Soils

Flinty, sandy and loamy soils occur over most of the site and are seasonally waterlogged in the surface layers. Lower land around the edges of the site have more protracted seasonal waterlogging due to the underlying London Clay. The soil pH varies across the site (and is reflected in the vegetation). Moderately acidic soils dominate the centre of the site with neutral to slightly acidic soils occurring to the south.

2.10.2. Cultural

2.10.2.1. Archaeology and Past Land Use

The history of Odiham Common is described in *Odiham Common – a report on common rights, historic use and encroachments on the Common* by Mary Bennett (Appendix 5 of the 2010-2020 management plan). This provides an account of how the Common was used on the past for grazing cattle and sheep, for timber, brushwood and underwood (coppice), and for sand, gravel and clay extraction. There was also a limited amount of turf cutting.

There were a number of encroachments on the common, some of which are now listed buildings (see Map 4).

A number of listed buildings lie within or on the edge of Odiham Common, including The Hunting Lodge (Site UID 4249) a late 18th century 'folly', Wilks Water (Site UID 4250) a two storey house dates from the 18th century and late 19th century, a 19th century Milestone (Site UID 4404) on the London Road south of the Junction with Bagwell Lane, Garden Cottage (Site UID 4434), part of which is 17th century and timber framed, Potbridge Farmhouse (Site UID 4435) a 17th century, early 18th century two storey timber framed farmhouse, Woodside and Gregor Gates (Site UID 4436 & 4437) a 18th/19th century irregular two storey timber framed block, now two cottages

There are a number of other buildings and archaeological sites which are included on the Hampshire County Council Archaeology and Historic Buildings Record including Green Hill (Site UID 55455) the only structure remaining on the site of the brickworks, Broad Oak Bridge (Site UID 54206) the canal bridge built in 1792 which links the southern part of Odiham Common with Broak Oak Common, Potbridge Farm (Site UID 38306), Site of Toll House and Toll Gate (Site UID 58580), Site of Odiham Brickworks (Site UID 55454) 19th Century, Section of Pale of Odiham Deer Park (Site UID 28838) (the boundary of the original deer park is marked by a continuous line of hedgerows and field boundaries). Site of Roman Tile Kiln (Site UID 28836)

2.10.3. Present Conservation Status

Odiham Common falls within the Odiham Common with Bagwell Green and Shaw SSSI (see Map 3) which was notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife Countryside Act, 1981 in 1992 (See Map 3).

A small area of Odiham Common (in the southeast corner around Wilks Water) is not SSSI but is designated a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and is protected in relation to development by Policy NBE 4 Biodiversity of the Hart Local Plan.

A smaller area of woodland between Trotters Lane and Potbridge Road in the north of the site has no nature designation but is Woodpasture and Parkland Habitat of Principal Importance.

2.10.4. Surrounding Landscape

Odiham Common falls within the area covered by Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032. It is noted that the Local Plan makes provision for 111 houses as set out in the Odiham and North Warnborough Neighbourhood Plan.

The landscape surrounding the site is described as follows:

Northern boundary:

The northern boundary of Odiham Common lies within a few hundred metres of the M3. The Common is bordered by the hamlet of Potbridge and an area of rush pasture, also part of the Odiham Common with Bagwell Green and Shaw SSSI; this compartment is currently in unfavorable condition. Beyond the M3 are the semi-rural villages of Phoenix Green and Hartley Wintney.

Western boundary:

Odiham Common bordered by agricultural land to the west, with North Warnborough 1km to the south west, beyond which are two small SSSIs (Warnborough Green and Greywell Fen) SSSIs. About 2km further west lie two larger SSSIs, Butter Wood, and Hook Common and Hartley Heath, with the town of Hook to the north.

Southern boundary:

The southern boundary is delineated by the A287 and Basingstoke Canal (SSSI), south of which is Odiham village and Broad Oak Common. Nearby Dogmersfield Park to the southeast of the Common is included as Grade II on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest and includes Dogmersfield Water, part of the Basingstoke Canal SSSI.

Eastern boundary:

Bagwell Green and Bagwell Shaw, component woodland sites of the Odiham Common with Bagwell Green and Shaw SSSI are adjacent to the east, together with agricultural land including some permanent pasture and a livery yard. Agricultural land extends for some 4km, beyond which is Fleet, the major town of Hart District.

2.10.5. Ecological

2.10.5.1. Surveys

A range of ecological baseline data is available for the site, with subsequent information collated from the following sources:

- Odiham Common with Bagwell Green and Shaw SSSI citation document¹ and associated SSSI Condition Assessment²;
- Odiham Common/Wood SSSI – Phase II (vegetation) survey (2018);
- Survey of aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates of Odiham Common, Hampshire (2018).
- Odiham Common fungi survey (2011);
- A Management Plan for Odiham Common (2010) - the site's previous management plan;
- Odiham Common SSSI Bird Survey (2010);
- Odiham Common – Understanding the Place (2009);
- Entomological survey and assessment of Odiham Common (2009);
- Odiham Common felled area, grassland areas, and wayleaves - Phase II (vegetation) survey (2009);
- Odiham Common Woodland Management Plan (2010-2020);
- Odiham Common moth survey (2002);
- List of birds found on Odiham Common in the spring and summer of 1986, 1995, and 2002; and,
- A map of Priority Ponds (including those supporting Great Crested Newt) supplied by Natural England.

¹<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1002756.pdf>

²<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ReportUnitCondition.aspx?SiteCode=S1002756&ReportTitle=Odiham%20Common%20with%20Bagwell%20Green%20and%20Shaw%20SSSI>

Summary descriptions of the contents of each of the targeted survey reports listed are provided in Appendix 2.

Additional records of relevant taxa may also be held for the site by Hampshire Biodiversity Information Center (HBiC), Hampshire and Isle of Wight Amphibian and Reptile Group and the British Trust for Ornithology amongst other local natural history groups.

Odiham Common has been subject to surveys for a range of habitats and taxa, with particular historical emphasis upon its important plant and invertebrate communities (for which recent, detailed, survey information is available). The potential presence of additional protected/noteworthy species, including bats and reptile species, are however detailed in some of the non-survey specific data sources highlighted previously (e.g. the Odiham Common Woodland Management Plan).

Specific future surveys for the site have been identified (see Section 4).

2.10.5.2. Habitats and communities

Odiham Common consists of an extensive mosaic of wood pasture, meadows and rush pasture with smaller areas of mire and swamp communities. It formerly supported large areas of wood pasture, but this habitat became threatened by the cessation of traditional grazing activities. Nevertheless, an important array of acid grassland species still typifies the woodland ground flora, and an impressive number of ancient woodland indicator species have been recorded from the site. Drainage within the woodland, and other areas of the site, is facilitated by a network of ditches, although several of these are currently close-ended.

The majority of the woodland consists of oak, with holly, birch, or Hazel as the dominant shrub layer species (W10, W10c). Areas of Ash woodland (W8, W8a, W8d), supporting a good ancient woodland flora, are also found on site, with stands of wet woodland (W1, W4, W6a) also present. Coppicing continues in isolated areas and the central area of woodland is identified on the Ancient Woodland Inventory as Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland. Active management of the site over the last 15 years has opened up several of the rides and glades within the woodland areas, and wood pasture habitat has been restored by felling and subsequent management. Rush pasture is also locally found within areas of structured wood pasture, with remnants of former wood pasture found in association with old/veteran oaks present within the site.

The wayleaves and rides across the site, as well as the southern meadows, comprise more established open areas. These support neutral grassland (MG1, MG1c, MG1e, MG5a, MG5c, MG6b) and acid grassland (MG25, M25a, U1e) communities, in addition to rush pasture, mire and swamp (M23, M23a, M23b, MG10, MG10a, MG27c, M30, S7) and areas of bracken and scrub (W24, W25). Several ponds are also found across the site, with the largest supporting significant aquatic vegetation.

2.10.6. Ecological Assessment of Significance

Odiham Common forms a core component of the nationally designated Odiham Common with Bagwell Green and Shaw SSSI. A small section of the site (in the southeast corner, around Wilk's Water), beyond the SSSI boundary, is designated as a SINC (i.e. a Local Wildlife Site). The site also supports several important habitat types. These comprise:

- Ancient and semi-natural woodland;
- Wood pasture;
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland;
- Wet woodland;
- Lowland dry acid grassland (including remnant/recovering wood pasture);
- Lowland meadow;
- Good quality semi-improved grassland;
- Purple Moor-grass and rush pasture; and,
- Ponds.

Within these broader habitat types a range of important features are also located. These include:

- Boundary banks;
- Fallen and standing deadwood;
- Glades and open rides; and,
- Veteran/notable trees.

The habitats and features identified support a range of important flora and fauna, including:

- A single nationally Vulnerable plant species (Lesser Spearwort), and 11 nationally Near Threatened species (namely: Heather, Cross-leaved Heath, Wild Strawberry, Marsh Pennywort, Field Scabious, Wood Sorrel, Tormentil, Sanicle, Devil's-bit Scabious, Heath Speedwell, and Marsh Speedwell);

- The nationally Near Threatened Petty Whin was also known historically from the site, although it may have been lost due to the cessation of grazing;
- 2 plant species/genera listed on Annex 5 of the EU Habitats Directive (Butcher's-broom and *Sphagnum*);
- A single plant species identified as Scarce in North Hampshire (Floating Club-rush);
- 53 Ancient Woodland Indicator plant species;
- An important invertebrate assemblage associated with woodland, grassland, and wetland habitats. Surveys carried out in 2017 identified 1,097 invertebrate species on site including 26 Nationally Rare or Scarce, and 24 Nationally Notable, in addition to 4 Red Data Book and 3 S41 Priority Species. The site's saproxylic invertebrate community, and population of the Forester Moth, are both assessed as being of County importance. The site has historically been particularly noted for flies, and many of the rarer species are associated with dead or dying trees within its woodland areas.
- An array of bird species (45 recorded within the boundary, of which 34 species are breeding), including 6 Red-listed Birds of Conservation Concern³ (Woodcock, Cuckoo, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Mistle Thrush, Marsh Tit, and Greenfinch), and a further 13 Amber-listed species, during the most recent targeted survey. Nevertheless, a small number of former specialist breeding species (including Wood Warbler and Nightingale) have been lost in recent decades, against a backdrop of more widespread national declines. There are historic records of a single breeding bird species (Firecrest) listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- Two reptile species (Common Lizard and Grass Snake) listed on *Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*. Have recently been recorded from the site, alongside historic records of Adder;
- Great Crested Newts, comprising a European Protected Species and listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Odiham Common also has potential to support Otter, Dormouse, and several bat species, all of which would comprise European Protected Species and be listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). These have been recorded from localities within proximity to Odiham Common, but their presence on site has not yet been confirmed via targeted survey work. The habitats present suggest that all may however potentially be present, or at least occasionally use habitats within, the site boundary.

³ <https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/publications/bocc-5-a5-4pp-single-pages.pdf>

2.10.6.1. Rarity of Features

The areas of Ancient Woodland (including associated remnant/recovering wood pasture) and lowland meadows on site comprise nationally important habitat types. The former is still abundant within the county of Hampshire, due to the presence of the New Forest, but constitutes an important national resource where found. Wood pasture has been lost from many areas due to changes in land management, and particularly as a result of changes in grazing. The woodland on site incorporates a number of veteran trees, as well as standing and fallen deadwood, which are likely to be localised in the landscape.

The extent of sympathetically managed lowland meadows has declined dramatically on a national level over the last century, largely due to changes in farming practices and land management, with those remaining areas comprising important biodiversity features. Ponds have also suffered a national historic decline in abundance and quality, with those still present subject to pressure from pollutants, drainage, and development.

Large-scale mosaics of semi-natural habitat, as found in the SSSI, are also declining, and risk isolation within agricultural or urban matrices.

Please refer to Section 1.10.6 for details on the rarity of notable plant and animal species found (or potentially found) on site.

2.10.6.2. Fragility of Features

The veteran trees on site are susceptible to trampling impacts and associated soil compaction, which may be exacerbated if future ditch improvements (and associated drainage) make veterans in wetter areas more accessible. Any impact upon veteran trees could also impact species or species groups dependent upon them (e.g. cavity nesting bird species or roosting bats). Reduced recruitment is also considered to increase the fragility of the site's woodland areas (on a multidecadal scale).

Veteran trees, and standing deadwood, are also susceptible to climatic effects (including storms and drought), and any major or sustained removal/moving of fallen deadwood from the forest floor (via management or access activities (e.g. den building)) has the potential to damage, or cause changes, to associated micro-habitats important for invertebrate and fungal species.

The areas of wood pasture on site require active management and, in the absence of grazing, newly opened glades and rides will require regular cutting to avoid scrubbing up. This includes cutting recently established open space where scrub encroachment is already apparent. Similarly, the lowland meadows on site need active management. In the absence of grazing, cuttings must be removed from meadow areas to avoid nutrient build up. Both habitats are susceptible to the effects of pollution and scrubbing up.

Several of the ponds on site are in recovery following management intervention. Ephemeral bankside habitats will change as succession occurs, and loss of existing open/bare areas will lead to the loss of invertebrate specialists associated with open habitat/exposed mineral substrates, in the absence of targeted management. Any increase in shading over time of newly “opened up” ponds will also comprise a longer-term issue for their aquatic plant and invertebrate communities. All wetland habitats on site are also particularly at risk from pollutants.

The continued presence of rare or notable plant and invertebrate species on site is dependent upon the continued availability of their specific habitats. If individual species on site occupy only a small area (e.g. species found only in ponds, relict populations of Heather, etc) then they will also be more susceptible to stochastic processes.

The breeding bird assemblage on site is has potential to be diminished by the loss of rarer species, as has happened historically with, for example, Wood Warbler, which may be on the edge of range or subject to ongoing national declines. The core assemblage of commoner species is however likely to be robust to anything but major changes in habitat quality or extent.

The reptile and amphibian species found on site will be susceptible to disturbance and potential killing or injury through specific access (e.g., dogs) or management actions. Great Crested Newts are also at risk from any activity negatively impacting their breeding ponds, or terrestrial activities which may hamper movement between ponds/metapopulations.

2.10.6.3. Typicalness

Odiham Common represents an impressive remnant of former common land, with the areas of woodland on site subject to recent positive management and supporting an exceptional number of Ancient Woodland indicator plant species. The presence of a saproxylic invertebrate community of County importance is also noteworthy. As such, parts of the site are typical (or even exemplary) of recovering wood pasture systems in the UK.

The areas of lowland meadow present on site are atypical in terms of their management (i.e., lack of grazing). Although areas of rank grassland are present alongside areas exhibiting a shorter, more species-rich, sward, a suite of typical grassland flora is nevertheless present.

A breeding bird assemblage typical of lowland English woodland and grassland mosaics is also present, alongside the more notable species identified in Section 1.10.6.

2.10.6.4. Potential for improvement/restoration

There is potential to close any gaps in Ancient Woodland/veteran tree age structure, resulting from reduced recruitment, through veteranisation of existing standards. This could potentially increase the number of features associated with veteran trees within the site, and consequently benefit associated flora and fauna. The continued haloing of secondary woodland surrounding existing veterans could also increase the biodiversity value of these features.

The ongoing management of glades and the linking of open rides across the site, should be focused upon areas supporting mature trees, which should lead to an increase in invertebrate species richness. Any fallen deadwood within these areas should be left *in situ* where possible, and the provision of boxes for cavity-nesting birds and roosting bats considered.

Shading of many of the site's woodland ponds under closed canopies has led to an impoverished invertebrate fauna within them. There is therefore scope to open up the canopy above a selection of such waterbodies and increase invertebrate species richness within them. Care should still be taken however to maintain some areas of shaded/wet woodland however to benefit associated invertebrate specialists. Rewetting of the quarry pits would also benefit wetland flora and fauna, and potentially increase breeding opportunity for the Great Crested Newt metapopulation.

Areas of rank lowland meadow on site may potentially lose important plant and invertebrate species in the absence of changes in current management practices. Currently, undesirables such as hemlock water dropwort are beginning to dominate areas of lowland meadow and have the potential to contaminate hay cuts. This is particularly apparent near roadsides and where water overflows from ditches in the meadow areas; active management of the ditches could help alleviate this issue. Early cuts and removal of material should be considered to promote removal of undesirable species before they set seed, without compromising floristic or invertebrate diversity. Grazing would be the preferred management technique to increase structural diversity and reduce the proportion of rank grassland species present. In its absence, the continued operation of hay cutting is essential. Nevertheless, traditional summer cutting is generally a suboptimal management technique for promoting invertebrate diversity in the long run, as many species will be negatively impacted by hay removal in the summer months. Therefore, areas should be left uncut each year on rotation, to create a more diverse mosaic habitat.

The reintroduction of grazing would also benefit grassland and scrub habitats within the main wayleave, as scrubbing up there has led to this particular area being considered in an unfavourable condition. Grazing would here, as in the lowland meadows, increase habitat structure and diversity, although rotational cutting would have a similar effect. The use of the latter, in the absence of grazing, would also be more beneficial to the invertebrate community than an "all in one" cut, allowing an array of microhabitats to develop.

2.10.7. Factors affecting the management of Ecological features

2.10.7.1. On site natural factors

Negative trends

Numerical trends are not generally available. It is known that a small number of breeding bird species (e.g. Wood Warbler and Nightingale) have been lost from the site subsequent to the designation of the SSSI. These losses are a symptom of larger scale reductions in their national populations and range, driven by a range of factors thought to be largely external to individual site management.

The arrival of Ash Dieback disease on site, subsequent to its arrival in the UK in 2012, has already led to declines in Ash tree health. Its presence in Ash standards on site, and the potential risk posed to site users by disease-mediated treefall as a result, will necessitate the planned and well-considered removal of infected trees from localities used for access for the foreseeable. This will be addressed through Hart DC's development of a wider tree strategy, in collaboration with partnerships at County level.

Although data is not currently available, it is also considered probable that global climate change is already negatively impacting some of the site's important ecological features. Increased drought or storm frequency, in particular, has the potential to directly impact the site's veteran trees and wetland habitats.

Positive trends

Numerical trends are again unavailable, but the most recent invertebrate survey of the site identified the presence of a small number of adventive or recently colonising UK species. Colonisation by continental species may therefore continue to increase invertebrate species richness in the future.

2.10.7.2. On site human-induced factors

Negative trends

Numerical trends are not available, but there are indications that significant scrub encroachment within the main wayleave has led to a decrease in habitat and structural diversity. Changes in habitat structure, linked to an absence of grazing (or active management in its absence), has also potentially led to the loss of some rarer plant species from the site (e.g. Petty Whin).

Recent botanical surveys have also identified that the current grassland management regime is not optimum, with indications that the grasslands present are becoming rougher and more dominated by ranker species, such as False Oat-grass, with Bracken also spreading. Aftermath grazing, or a second cut (with arisings removed), may be required to mitigate the situation.

Trampling and damage to paths, with associated soil compaction, has been identified as a concern by site users, particularly in wetter areas. This is largely due to the nature of the site and ground conditions. Whilst horse riding has been identified as having a contributory impact, as a Commons site with rights to access, this factor is difficult to manage directly. Necessary access for site maintenance, including for statutory maintenance duties (e.g. for National Grid works), is a further contributing factor to route conditions. Some control is possible through appropriate communications and timings of work to be carried out, e.g. during drier ground conditions and with remedial works.

Intermittent fly-tipping has also been identified as having negative impacts upon habitats on site.

Positive trends

The number of Ancient Woodland Indicator Plant Species found on site has increased from 48 in 2004 to 53 in 2017 due to improvements in forestry and coppice management. Areas of rush pasture and restored wood pasture (with scrubby components) have increased in the same period, increasing structural diversity.

Only a single notable plant species was identified on site during NVC surveys carried out in 2009, whilst 12 notable species were identified in 2017. It is not clear how directly this change is linked to changes in site management.

The creation of open areas and glades, and the reinstatement of coppicing, between 2009 and 2018 has led to a more open woodland/parkland habitat with a developed acid field-layer community and structurally complex scrub components.

Invertebrate species richness within the lowland meadows also increased within this period (from 315 species to 472 species) as a result of changes in management. A large increase was also observed in woodland areas (155 species to 597 species), although it was difficult to identify whether this was entirely due to changes in management or to greater survey effort/targeting of cryptic species.

Clearance and partial opening up of the pond in the northeast corner of the Common is likely to have improved conditions significantly for a range of aquatic and wetland invertebrates.

2.10.7.3. External factors

Surface runoff from adjacent roads has the potential to pollute adjacent areas of terrestrial and aquatic habitat and/or other areas of habitat linked to the site's ditch network.

There is also potential for aerial eutrophication as a result of vehicle emissions on adjacent roads to impacts on habitats across the site (although perhaps most relevant to the areas of lowland meadow and acid grassland).

Drift of chemical pesticides and fertilisers from nearby areas of farmland and adjacent properties is considered a negligible risk. Care should however be taken to monitor on site for the presence of invasive/alien plant species potentially present in nearby gardens.

2.10.7.4. Opportunities

There is the opportunity to enhance the wildlife interest at Odiham Common through:

- Ongoing veteran tree management, including the creation of future ancient trees through veteranisation and haloing of younger trees;
- Potentially expanding the area of ancient woodland under coppice management to benefit the ground flora and increase structural diversity (e.g. for breeding birds, Dormouse);
- Enhancing the deadwood resource;
- Preventing existing open areas from scrubbing up (such as the wayleave);
- Improving the diversity of the meadows through traditional meadow management include grazing or an improved cutting regime;
- Undertaking sensitive pond restoration;
- Potentially re-wetting quarry pits using the existing ditch system;
- Managing ditches where lack of management has a detrimental impact on surrounding flora

There have been previous challenges to reinstatement of grazing in the past, but there are opportunities to work with the local community, including through walks, talks, volunteer events and improved communications to seek mutually acceptable outcomes. Recent use of no-fence grazing on other Hart DC managed land is proving effective and this is a potential option that could be explored further.

Opportunities for funding through nearby development may be limited and there are no real commercial opportunities (although timber produced from Odiham Common could be used on site and on other Hart DC properties); however, a new Countryside Stewardship agreement began in 2021 and will provide funding for a variety of woodland, wood pasture, meadow and pond management.

Odiham Common is found within a landscape of isolated patches of semi-natural habitat. Opportunities should be sought to connect Odiham to nearby sites – there may be potential through the Landscape Recovery agri-environment scheme.

3. Site assessment, and objectives

3.1.1. Assessment and analysis

Strengths:

Biodiversity – semi natural ancient woodland, wood pasture, semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, semi-natural grassland, lowland meadows and ponds are all of great importance for biodiversity, with veteran trees in particular providing unique habitats for rare and specialised species, particularly lichens, fungi and invertebrates associated with wood decay..

Carbon - native broadleaved woodlands are reliable carbon sinks that continue to take up carbon over centuries with benefits for biodiversity and other ecosystem services⁴. Although sequestration rates decline over time, old woodlands are substantial and important carbon stores, with carbon both in above ground biomass, below ground biomass, dead wood, litter and within the soil. Wood pasture can play a greater role than closed canopy ancient semi-natural woodland by increasing carbon sequestration through allowing natural regeneration – trees growing in an open location with more access to light can grow faster compared to those in a closed canopy woodland. Large old trees in particular, store a large amount of carbon for the long-term. Undisturbed wood pasture soils may also be a valuable carbon store. Semi-natural grasslands are also important, storing carbon in the undisturbed soil, and store and sequester more carbon than modern agricultural landscapes.

Climate - lowland mixed deciduous woodland and wood pasture both have a lower climate change sensitivity than some other lowland woodland types e.g. Beech woodland, wet woodland⁵.

Health and well-being –low-key access contributes to the health and wellbeing of the local community.

Weaknesses:

⁴ R Gregg, J. L. Elias, I Alonso, I.E. Crosher and P Muto and M.D. Morecroft (2021) Carbon storage and sequestration by habitat: a review of the evidence (second edition) Natural England Research Report NERR094. Natural England, York.

⁵ Climate Change Adaptation Manual NE751 - <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5679197848862720>

The historic cessation of traditional management - resulting in the loss of open spaces around veteran trees (although this is being addressed), scrub encroachment (e.g. under the wayleave) and the gradual deterioration of the meadows.

Fragmentation – major roads including the M3, A287, B3016, Bagwell Lane and Potbridge Road create barriers to wildlife and are likely to be impacting on the conservation interest of the site. In addition, smaller, isolated land parcels are more challenging to manage.

Ride condition - the naturally wet nature of the site means that ride conditions can deteriorate during the winter, potentially leading to a conflict of interest between different user groups and ride-widening as people seek to avoid churned up areas.

Infrastructure - Lack of car parking restricts events, including volunteer work parties. Water retention in winter months restricts access for some site users during this time, although this is largely due to the nature of this type of site and introducing properly surfaced paths across the site will likely have a negative impact on the site's significant wildlife value.

Opportunities:

Habitat management – ongoing reinstatement of management as wood pasture, with the potential for grazing in the longer term; potential to restore ponds across the site – in addition to biodiversity benefits (e.g. for Great Crested Newt), ponds, if well managed, could be carbon sinks (however, ponds prone to drying out can switch from carbon sinks to carbon sources)

Engagement - there is opportunity for wider engagement with the local community e.g. through liaison with Parish Councils and low-key on-site and off-site events such as guided walks, talks and volunteer work parties plus the use of social media platforms would help facilitate joint understanding about the value and management needs of the site. Three schools in Odiham are within walking distance of the Common - opportunities for real-world learning within Odiham Common would both enrich the educational experience of the students and enhance local community understanding about the site, where schools are open to engagement.

Agri-environment support – landscape scale agri-environment schemes could in the future facilitate more joined up management with adjacent and nearby semi-natural habitats, including commons and woodland.

Threats:

Climate change – an increase in drought conditions is likely to impact sensitive trees on clay soils, conversely, an increase in water-logging may constrain root growth and results in more wind-blow (as will an increased frequency of storms), with the potential loss of veteran trees.

Biodiversity - apparent loss (as with other lowland woodlands) of characteristic species (e.g. Nightingale and Wood Warbler).

Lack of grazing – grazing is the optimal management for woodpasture and grasslands. Cutting is a partial substitute for grazing, but the current cutting regime is resulting in the slow deterioration of the meadow flora, invertebrate fauna and increased scrub encroachment in the wayleave.

Engagement - lack of meaningful engagement with the local community could result in the lack of dialogue about stakeholders' values and aspirations for the site and jeopardise future management. To ensure clear continued communications, future engagement will be carried out as set out in Section 2.9 People.

Drainage - Inappropriate drainage could contribute to the release of carbon through oxidation.

Ash Dieback disease – loss of Ash through Ash Dieback *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* and related tree safety issues (Ash is not an abundant species but is present in Potbridge East and West the South East Woods and the Southern Pastures East and West, and Ash Dieback is already present in the Southern Pastures).

Housing within Neighbourhood Plan - an increase in housing within the neighbourhood that is not within easy walking distance of Odiham Common could lead to issues surrounding over-use of laybys for parking (e.g. anti-social parking, damage to vegetation).

3.1.2. Environmental Relationships and Implications for Management

Odiham Common supports a mosaic of wood pasture (much invaded by secondary woodland), closed canopy woodland, coppice, open rides and meadow.

Managed wood pasture is dynamic, slowly changing over long-time spans as individual new trees become established in the protection of scrub and the oldest trees gradually decay. Shaped by centuries of grazing, the open-grown trees characteristic of wood pasture require light and space for their unique assemblages of invertebrates and lower plants flourish, and gradually decline if enclosed by cohorts of new young trees. Management is therefore required, particularly in the absence of grazing and on small sites, such as Odiham, where there is little space for dynamic change. It is particularly important for veteran trees where these have been adversely impacted by the growth of secondary woodland

Managed in rotation, coppice provides diversity in the structure of the woodland, creating niches for birds such as warblers and allowing light to reach the ground flora. Without rotational cutting, coppice becomes overgrown and the structural diversity of the woodland is lost and species-richness diminished.

Meadow (grassland that was created and maintained by a combination of grazing and summer haymaking) is by its very nature, a transitional stage in the process of succession. To prevent it from being colonised by scrub and later woodland, management is again required.

Another key feature of the site is its hydrology – the underlying soils mean that it is naturally wet, with a number of ponds and historic drainage ditches. A balance is needed between ensuring paths are usable and that the water levels in ponds are maintained and retaining the overall wet character of the site.

3.1.3. Visitor and site usage and Implications for Management

Visitors to site mainly comprise of local people - the site is not promoted for recreational use and parking is very limited. The site is greatly valued by the local community. Those who participated in the 2009 consultation on the management of the site emphasised the need to maintain the Common's tranquil and wild nature for the benefit of the local neighbourhood.

The views of the local community need to be taken into account, e.g., through the relevant Parish Councils, with regard to the ongoing management required to safeguard the interest features of the SSSI and the cultural history of the site.

3.1.4. Management Rationale

Odiham Common preserves examples of habitats that are rare or scarce within lowland Britain. These habitats are all semi-natural, a result of the interaction between humans and their environment over many centuries. Ongoing management of some form is therefore needed to ensure that the plant and animal communities that are rare or no longer commonplace and are dependent on these habitats can be maintained and where possible enhanced and so that the site can act as a reservoir and refuge from which species can spread to the wider countryside.

To target management most effectively to the benefit of the widest variety of species a management plan is an essential tool. Few nature reserves are large enough for the natural processes of succession, death, decay and regeneration to provide sustainable diversity. To maintain this unique mosaic of differing habitats, carefully planned, monitored and reviewed management is essential.

3.2 Management Objectives

Hart DC sets biodiversity objectives and targets to deliver our policy commitments. Objectives and targets are:

- a. based on the significant species and habitats as determined by the assessment of significance;
- b. based on biodiversity policy commitments;
- c. reviewed periodically and revised as appropriate, and
- d. documented.

In order to enhance and maintain the features of Odiham Common, 10 main objectives have been identified:

1. To maintain and enhance biodiversity of ancient woodland, wood pasture, meadow, ponds and ditches and safeguard all rare and notable species according to the objectives in the Forestry Commission-approved Woodland Management Plan: [link to online document to follow](#)
 - Manage veteran trees, identify and manage future veteran trees in accordance with the Odiham Common 'Arboricultural Veteran Management Report' (SMW Consultancy Ltd, August 2021) Consultancy.

- Bring existing coppice coupes into a 12-14 year rotation to create structural diversity and prioritise fruiting.
 - Sustain a balance of native woodland species whilst enhancing structural diversity.
 - Address ash dieback
 - Create and maintain deadwood habitat in line with UKFS guidelines⁶ to sustain significant saproxylic and saprophytic diversity and provide a medium term carbon sink.
 - Encourage owners of nearby woodlands and land with ancient and veteran trees to manage positively for deadwood.
 - Maintain open space in wood pasture through mowing and scrub/bracken control, allowing the recruitment of open crown trees and shrub species in sunny positions within short and taller grassland
 - Maintain the diversity and extent of glades, rides and the acid grassland under the wayleave through cut and collect, scrub removal and some thinning
 - Maintain and increase diversity in the Southern Pastures grasslands through hay making, cut and collect. Maintain extent through scrub control
 - Restore and manage existing ponds
2. Improve aquatic habitat connectivity and improve path condition through undertaking a feasibility study for recreating ponds that have dried out by using existing draining ditches; implement findings as appropriate.
3. Continue to explore viable options for the reintroduction of grazing in the future to sustain the rare and threatened habitat of ancient wood pasture (there are no immediate plants to reintroduce this historic practice, however, it is a valued and well-documented sustainable management technique).
 4. Monitor and control non-native invasive plant species.
 5. Maintain the accessibility of the site through the ongoing provision of a network of adequately waymarked, naturally-surfaced paths and encouraging use of open access to disperse visitor across the site and retain the tranquil, wild-feeling nature of the site. Maintain drains as required (see also Objective 2).
 6. Increase efforts to engage with stakeholders, including those from other sectors, and involve local people in caring for the Common to encourage understanding and enjoyment of the site and its wider value.
 7. Promote health and wellbeing, without compromising the nature conservation interests of the site.
 8. Obtain quantitative data on trends for key biodiversity features to assess and inform management activities.
 9. Manage the site in line with Hart DC's sustainability goals, maintaining carbon and water storage on site.
 10. Meet all legal and other obligations.

3.2.1. Targets and Performance Indicators

Objective 1: Maintain and enhance biodiversity

⁶ <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/documents/6947/FCPG020.pdf>

Target 1.1 – condition of 66 veteran trees improved with reduced danger of crown collapse, all over-shaded trees released and secondary growth interfering with branches removed by end of 10-year plan period (see veteran tree plan for detail).

BPI: No. of veteran trees appropriately managed that are stable with no threat of preventable collapse healthy epicormic growth on the main stem

Target 1.2 – 79 potential future veteran trees identified and managed to enhance veteran features through halo release, formative pruning and pollarding carried out as required over 10-year plan period.

BPI: No. of future veterans that have received surgery and are alive with healthy epicormic growth on the main stem.

Target 1.3 – 10 existing coppice coupes brought into 12-14 year rotation within 10 year plan period (see coppice plan for detail)

BPI: No. of coupes coppiced within plan period and showing healthy regeneration

Target 1.4 – woodland structure improved through 10-30% thinning at locations specified in Woodland Management Plan (WMP) and reduction of Holly to 33% (see WMP) within the 10 year plan period

BPI: % thinning and Holly cover in specified locations within plan period

Target 1.5 – all fallen and standing deadwood retained in situ, aiming for 20 m³/ha (unless there are over-riding H&S considerations⁷ or ProW are blocked).

BPI: Cubic metres of fallen and standing deadwood retained.

Target 1.6 Rapid Deadwood Assessment⁸ undertaken and deadwood plan created and implemented by 2023

KPI: Plan created and implementation started within specified timeframe

⁷ See National Tree Safety Group document 'Common Sense risk management of trees: Landowner Summary'.

⁸ <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/InPractice56jun2007.pdf>

Target 1.7– Maintain existing open space within wood pasture through cutting and scrub control so that by year 10 there is:

- 5-20% cover of open grown shrubs;
- A sward of patches of taller and shorter vegetation over at least 70%;
- Clear evidence of planned wood pasture succession with trees species including oak present at irregular spacings and varying densities, with an overall canopy of 5-20%, representing a range of ages classes and allow open growth grown trees to develop (ongoing scrub work across the site will be planned/reviewed annually, depending vegetation growth/regeneration).

BPI: % cover of open grown shrubs, sward of taller/shorter vegetation and canopy age classes with plan period

Target 1.8 – Glades created within woodland to allow 30-35% ground cover of transitional scrub and natural regeneration within 10 year plan period.

BPI: % ground cover of transitional scrub and natural regeneration within plan period

Target 1.9 – a structurally varied herb layer maintained with Desirable/important/characteristic species for lowland wet acid grassland, wet grassland and heathland present (Ling, Cross-leaved Heath, Lesser Spearwort, Heath Wood Rush, Tormentil at least occasional/locally frequent) and 40% flowering during May to July. Scrub controlled in woodland glades through annual mowing according to WMP

BPI: % cover of bare ground

BPI: Frequency of desirable/important/characteristic species and % flowering during specified time period

Target 1.10: Birch and Bramble scrub under wayleave controlled by pulling, cutting and treating so that by year 3, scrub cover is no more than 5-10% and bare ground provided through scrub removal is 2-10%.

BPI – % cover of scrub and bare ground by year 3

Target 1.11: Bracken stands managed rotationally each year by cutting/bruising/spraying to reduce cover of bracken to less than 10% by year 10

BPI: % cover of bracken by year 10

Target 1.12 - 4 main rides maintained through annual mowing and where necessary thinning, according to WMP

KPI: No. of main rides cut annually

Target 1.13 –. Ash dieback regularly monitored and works prioritised following monitoring and recommendations, in accordance with Odiham's current Ash Dieback Plan until holistic approach to managing ash dieback across Hart sites has been formalised and agreed.

KPI: Removal of grade 3-4 ash trees near boundaries/footpaths

Target 1.14 Grassland diversity improved and maintained (in accordance with Countryside Stewardship agreement) through haymaking over 0.98ha + 3.30 ha of Southern pastures so that from year 1 at least 2 moderate value indicator species and from year 2 at least 2 high value indicator species are present; wildflower cover is 10-50% with 40% flowering during May-Jul; and bare ground cover is 1-5% in small patches

BPI: No. of moderate and high value indicator species present in southern pastures from year 1 and year 2 respectively

BPI: % cover of wildflower and % flowering in specific time period

BPI: % cover of bare ground in small patches

BPI: Diversity of plant species compared with 2017 NVC baseline in 2027

BPI: Continued presence of Forester moth

Target 1.15 – scrub controlled with Southern Pastures so that cover is no more than 2% in management parcels by year 10

BPI: % scrub cover in management parcels by end of plan period

Objective 2: Pond and ditch restoration and creation

Target 2.1 – ditches maintained, ensuring that adjacent ditches are not cleared within 2-5 years of one another

Target 2.2 – restore 2 key ditches plus additional ditches as required on rotation so that drainage flows freely by throughout 10-year plan period.

KPI: No. of ditches restored within plan period

Target 2.3 – Restore 1 existing pond every 5 years according to CS agreement so that 75% of southern margins are unshaded; cover of submerged and floating aquatic plants is at least 25% and marginal and emergent vegetation cover is 25-100%. One pond dredged as necessary every 5 years

KPI: No. of ponds restored every 5 years

BPI: % of southern margins unshaded and % cover of submerged and floating aquatic plants and marginal and emergent vegetation

BPI: Presence of typical desirable species.

Target 2.4 –pond re-creation feasibility study undertaken by 2027 and implement as appropriate (any drain modification to be agreed with Natural England)

KPI: Completion of study and implementation within specified time period

Objective 3: Grazing viability

Target 3.1 –grazing viability assessment produced by 2030

KPI: Grazing viability assessment completed by specified date

Target 3.2 –stakeholder visit(s) to a site with No Fence virtual fencing operations (e.g. Hazeley Heath) organised by 2030

KPI: No. of visits organised within specified period

Objective 4: Non-native invasive species

Target 4.1 – non-native invasive species survey carried out annually (to include waterbodies) and actions identified and implemented as necessary

KPI Surveys completed annually and any actions implemented

Objective 5: Access

Target 5.1 – path survey undertaken annually to ensure all paths are mapped and described according to a simple categorisation including size/use and condition (e.g. RAG). Use to inform drain management in combination with path maintenance

KPI Updated path map by specified date, surveys completed annually and any actions implemented

Target 5.2 – low key consultation carried out with local horse riders to look for common ground and identify potential preferred horse-routes by 2025

KPI: Preferred horse route identified by specified date

Target 5.3 - interpretation panels at key site entrance points updated with preferred horse routes to inform both riders and pedestrian Include smaller paths to help distribute access across the site.

KPI: No. of panels updated by specified date

Target 5.4 - Low key, unobtrusive waymarkers installed as required to help distribute access across site by 2025

KPI: Waymarkers installed by specified date

Objective 6: Engagement

Target 6.1 – 4 onsite and 2 off-site events held per year covering a diverse range of topics (e.g. traditional guided walks with the ranger, fungal forays, foraging/herb walks, volunteer work parties etc.) and hold events with other stakeholders e.g. Odiham Society, other local history societies etc.)

KPI: No. of on-site and off-site events held annually

Target 6.2 – at least annual liaison with relevant parish councils and statutory stakeholders including Natural England

KPI: Annual liaison achieved

Objective 7: Health and wellbeing

See targets under 5 and 6

Objective 8: Monitoring

Target 8.1 – quantitative data obtained on trends for key biodiversity features as set out in Target Features monitoring table below, commissioning surveys as required.

Target 8.2 – monitoring and surveys continued for lepidoptera, reptiles, amphibians, bats, dormice, birds etc. by local groups

Target 8.3 – deer impact monitoring carried out annually within coppice coupes

Objective 9: Sustainability goals

Target 9.1 - manage the site in line with HDC's sustainability goals, maintaining carbon and water storage on site (see previous targets). Establish baseline for habitat carbon sequestration and consider options to increase sequestration by site management where this does not contradict other site objectives.

Objective 10: Obligations

Target 10.1 - all requirements for statutory consents and approvals for work on the common met

Target 10.2 - regular H&S checks on the features of the common carried out

Target 10.3 - tree safety survey carried out annually and safety works undertaken as required

Target 10.4 - Follow H&S guidelines for warning the public during management activities on the site and ensure that contractors or others working on the Common follow the same procedures

4. Management Plan delivery

4.1 Management Infrastructure and Resourcing

4.1.1. Staffing and Management Structure

Odiham Common is managed as a SSSI by Hart DC Countryside Services, as the owners of the land with overriding responsibility for the site. Ultimately, any management decisions over the land will be made by Hart DC as the legal owners of the land, however we try to accommodate the views and opinions of our various stakeholders where possible or appropriate.

At present, the Countryside Service sits within Environment and Technical Services. Environment and Technical Services is responsible for delivery of the following services:

- Delivery of Harts climate change action plan.
- Management of Harts countryside sites.
- Management of Harts trees and implementation and enforcement of tree preservation orders.
- Management and enforcement of Harts car parks.
- Implementation, management and enforcement of parking restrictions on the public highway on behalf of Hampshire County Council.
- Maintenance of Harts drainage assets and delivery of Environment Agency funded flood alleviation schemes.

The following services which are reported through Environment and Technical Services are delivered as part of a shared service by a neighbouring authority:

- CCTV – Delivered by Rushmoor (due to transfer to Runnymede BC by August 2022)

- Street Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance – Delivered by Basingstoke and Deane
- Litter and Dog Fouling Enforcement – Delivered by East Hampshire

The Countryside department is responsible for operating and co-ordinating the implementation of the Management Plan for the site.

4.1.2. Community Involvement

4.1.2.1. Volunteers

Hart DC Countryside team run regular volunteer activities across the district and offer a variety of different volunteering roles to suit different interests and abilities. There are currently no volunteers specific to Odiham Common, but the Countryside team may hold work parties at the site.

4.2 Budget planning

At present, funding has been secured from the Rural Payments Agency to fund a Countryside Stewardship programme of works on the Commons over the next ten year period. Funded works consist of: -

- Capital items to the value of £6,384 to be delivered between Jan 2022 and Dec 2023. Works to include specific scrub works identified in Central Woods

- Annual payments with an average income of approximately £5,800. This figure will vary and is dependent on the amount of works undertaken each year, particularly in relation to associated veteran tree works. Works funded include aspects of meadow, specifically identified glade, pond and veteran tree management

Other habitat works that would benefit management of the site are identified in Appendix 3, but do not currently receive specific funding. Future funding will be sought where possible for relevant activities and projects that have been identified through this management plan and will be prioritised accordingly. This may include exploration of a Great Crested Newt Recovery Programme.

4.3 Marketing

Marketing of our countryside sites is important to ensure we are engaging with our site users encouraging responsible use of our sites and facilitating recreational activities. Marketing and publicity for Odiham Commons and any associated activities will be carried out in accordance with Hart's emerging Engagement Plan.

4.4 Action plan and timetable

The Action Plan sets out management tasks by feature and divides the work up into 10 years. The total amount of work needed may not be finished in this timeframe, but at the end of this time a review of the work should be completed, and the Management Plan updated. The Action Plan acts as a guide for management tasks and should be flexible if necessary.

‘Y’ indicate when the tasks should be carried out; ‘N’ indicates that the work should absolutely not be carried out during these months e.g. due to the bird breeding season or to protect other wildlife. a/w – As and when necessary or when time and resources allow.

SITE NAME:		Odiham Common					Timings											
Objective	Prescription	Location	Additional target details	Target years	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M		
1 – Maintain and enhance biodiversity	1.1	Manage veterans and future veterans	Potbridge West (a), Potbridge East (b), Central Woods (c), South East Woods (e), Southern Pastures East (f), Southern Pastures West (g)	Halo release and formative pruning, maintain existing halos – follow Veteran tree plan	a,b: 6-10 c: 1, 3, 5, 6-10 e: All f: 2, 6-10 g: 6-10							Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
1 – Maintain and enhance biodiversity	1.2	Create future veterans	Potbridge West (a), Potbridge East (b), Central Woods (c), South East Woods (e), Southern Pastures East (f)	Halo release, formative pruning, including creating new pollards	a,b: 6-10 c: 1, 3, 5, 6-10 e: All f: 2, 6-10							Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
1 – Maintain and enhance biodiversity	1.3	Coppice	Central Woods (c), South East Woods (e)	Cut coupes in rotation and protect new growth from deer, remove protection after 2 years.	c:All e: 2, 4, 6-10													
1 – Maintain and enhance biodiversity	1.4	Improve structural diversity within woodland	Potbridge West (a), Potbridge East (b), Central Woods (c), Southern Pastures East (f)	a: 10% thinning, holly removal b, c: 30% thinning, holly removal. f: 10% thinning to create small glades	a, b: 6-10 c: 4, 6-10 f: 1, 2, 6-10	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	
1 – Maintain and enhance biodiversity	1.5	Create Deadwood	Potbridge West (a), Potbridge East (b), Central Woods (c), North Eastern Woods (d), Southern Pastures East (f), Southern Pastures West (g)	Retain standing and fallen dead wood in line with UKFS guidelines and deadwood plan (1.6). Large diameter and length cut deadwood	a, b, d, e, g: All c: 1, 3, 5, 6-10 f: 6-10							Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		

SITE NAME:		Odiham Common				Timings											
Objective	Prescription	Location	Additional target details	Target years	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	
			stacked in shaded, undisturbed location near (not against) the tree from which is came.														
1 – Maintain and enhance biodiversity	1.6	Deadwood plan	Potbridge West (a), Potbridge East (b), Central Woods (c), North Eastern Woods (d), Southern Pastures East (f), Southern Pastures West (g)	Undertaken rapid deadwood assessment and create plan	1	Y	Y										
1 – Maintain and enhance biodiversity	1.7	Open areas within wood pasture and meadows	Central Woods (c) Wayleave, Southern Pastures	Scrub control through pulling, cutting, treating, remove cut material so that cover of scrub is no more than 5-20% in wood pasture							Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
1 – Maintain and enhance biodiversity	1.8	Open areas within woodland	Potbridge West & East, Central Woods, North Eastern Woods, South East Woods, Southern Pastures East, Southern Pastures West.	Intermittently clear routes into and around compartments, maintaining transitional scrub/natural regeneration	All	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	
1 – Maintain and enhance biodiversity	1.9	Open areas within woodland	Potbridge East (b), Central Woods (c), North Eastern Woods (d), South East Woods (e) Southern Pastures East (f)	Mow glades (cut and collect where possible) (no more than 30% of wayleave in c in one year).	c:All b,d, e, f: 1, 3, 5, 6-10						Y	Y					
1 – Maintain and enhance biodiversity	1.10	Scrub control	Wayleave	Birch and Bramble scrub controlled by pulling, cutting and treating	1-2, 6-7	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	
1 – Maintain and enhance biodiversity	1.11	Bracken control	Central Woods (c) Wayleave, Southern Pastures	Bracken control through cutting/bruising/spraying	All (or as necessary)		Y	Y	Y	Y							
1 – Maintain and enhance biodiversity	1.12	Ride management in	Potbridge East (a), Central Woods (c), South East Woods (e),	Zone 2 Ride management by mowing (cut and collect where possible)	a, b, c, e: 1, 3, 5, 6-10 f: 1, 3, 6-10							Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	

SITE NAME:		Odiham Common				Timings											
Objective	Prescription	Location	Additional target details	Target years	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	
	woodland and wood pasture	Southern Pastures East (f), Southern Pastures (g)		g: 2, 4, 6-10													
1 – Maintain and enhance biodiversity	1.12 Ride management in woodland and wood pasture	Central Woods, Southern Pastures East, Southern Pastures West	Zone 3 Ride management by tree thinning and mowing , maintaining pinch points where branches meet	5							Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
1 – Maintain and enhance biodiversity	1.13 Ash dieback	Potbridge West (a), Potbridge East (b), South East Woods (e), Southern Pastures East (f), Southern Pastures West	Remove grade 3 & 4 affected Ash trees near boundaries/ footpaths	a: 1-3 b: 6-10 e: 2, 3, 4 f: 1, 2, 6-10 g: 1-4, 6-10							Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
1 – Maintain and enhance biodiversity	1.14 Haymaking	Southern Pastures East and West	Make field dried hay over 4.3 ha annually according to CS agreement. Leave 10-20% of any parcel uncut each year. Remove hay.	All				Y	Y								
1 – Maintain and enhance biodiversity	1.15 Maintain extent of meadows	Southern Pastures East and West	Cut and remove scrub, leaving up to 2% in each management parcel														
2 – Pond and ditch restoration and creation	2.1 Drainage	Central Woods, Southern Pastures East	Ensure drainage flows freely, clearing adjacent ditches 2-5 years apart, every 5 years	All, as needed						Y	Y	Y					
2 – Pond and ditch restoration and creation	2.2 Pond management	Central Woods, South East Woods	Restore one pond every 5 years through dredging, retain overhanging trees, bushes and any submerged deadwood, manage margins by cutting to control scrub, ensure no more than 25% of southern side of pond is shaded	2, 6													
2 – Pond and ditch	2.3 Pond creation	Central Woods, Southern Pastures East	Undertake feasibility study into rewetting clay pits via	5													

SITE NAME:		Odiham Common				Timings											
Objective	Prescription		Location	Additional target details	Target years	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
restoration and creation				existing drainage ditch network Explore possibility of a new pond to help with drainage issues													
3 – Grazing viability	3.1	Grazing – viability assessment		Undertaken viability assessment by 2030	By 10												
3 – Grazing viability	3.2	Grazing – stakeholder visits		Organise 2 stakeholder visits to sites using innovative grazing solutions	By 10												
Objective 4: Non-native invasive species	4.1	Non-native invasives	All	Regular surveys for non-native species (including aquatic; implementation of any control measures required)	All		Y	Y	Y								
Objective 5 - access	5.1	Path survey	All	Ensure all paths are mapped and described according to a simple categorisation including size/use and condition (e.g. RAG). Use to inform drain management in combination with path maintenance, waymarking and possible identification of horse route.	1												
Objective 5 - access	5.2	Riding route	All	Undertake low key consultation with local horse riders to look for common ground and identify potential preferred horse-routes	2-3												
Objective 5 - access	5.3	Info panels	All	Update panels at key site entrance points to reflect new horse route, if identified	3												

SITE NAME:		Odiham Common					Timings											
Objective	Prescription		Location	Additional target details	Target years	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	
Objective 5 - access	5.4	Waymarking	All	Install low key, unobtrusive waymarkers to help distribute access across	1-2													
Objective 6 - engagement	6.1	Events	Any	Hold on-site and off-site events and use social media platforms build relationship with site users and other stakeholders	All													
Objective 6 - engagement	6.2	Liaison		At least annual liaison with relevant parish councils and statutory stakeholders including Natural England	All													
8 - Monitoring	8.1	Tree safety	All areas	Conduct tree safety survey, carry out required safety works	All							Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
8 - Monitoring	8.2	Biodiversity trends	All areas	Undertaken monitoring as set out in Target Feature Monitoring Plan below	Various													
8 - Monitoring	8.3	Survey groups		Facilitate surveys with local groups as appropriate	Various													
8 - Monitoring	8.4	Non-native invasives	All	Survey for and monitor changes in abundance and distribution of non-native invasive species	All		Y	Y	Y									
8 - Monitoring	8.5	Annual deer impact survey	Coppice coupes	Annual deer impact survey	All	Y	Y											
10 - Obligations	10.1	Statutory consents		Meet all requirements for statutory consents and approvals for work on the common														

SITE NAME: Odiham Common					Timings												
Objective	Prescription		Location	Additional target details	Target years	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
10 - Obligations	10.2	H&S checks	All	Carry out regular H&S checks on the features of the Common	All												
10 - Obligations	10.3	Tree safety	All	Carry out tree safety monitoring, undertake safety works as required	All												
10 - Obligations	10.4	H&S procedures	All	Follow H&S guidelines for warning the public during management activities on the site and ensure that contractors or others working on the Common follow the same procedures	All												

5. Monitoring

5.1 Operational activity summary

Example of record keeping for operational activities for Potbridge East (PE), Potbridge West (PW) Central Woods (CW), Northeast Woods (NeW), South Pastures East (SPE), South Pastures West (SPW) and Southeast Woods (SeW)

Action	Activity	Additional operational details	Target years	Location (compartment, specific area)	2022 Planned	Completed	Details (e.g. area completed, percentage cut)	2023-2031 etc.
1.1	Manage Wayleave	<i>Cut and remove arisings</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Central Woods</i>	X			
1.2	Manage Wayleave	<i>Scrub control</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Central Woods</i>	X			
1.3	Manage Wayleave	<i>Top wayleave between Aug and Oct (no more than 30% annually)</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Central Woods</i>	X			
2.1	Manage glades	<i>Scrub management</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>CW, NeW, SeW</i>	X			
2.2	Manage glades	<i>Annual cut between July and Feb</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>CW, NeW, SeW</i>	X			
3.1	Manage waterbodies	<i>Tree and scrub control around ponds</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>			
3.2	Manage waterbodies	<i>Pond aquatic works</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>			
3.3	Manage waterbodies	<i>Ditch management as per rotational program</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>All</i>				

Action	Activity	Additional operational details	Target years	Location (compartment, specific area)	2022 Planned	Completed	Details (e.g. area completed, percentage cut)	2023-2031 etc.
4.1	General woodland management	Tree thinning	All	All	X			
4.2	General woodland management	Scrub management	All	All	X			
4.3	General woodland management	Invasive species	All	TBC	X			
4.4	General woodland management	Ash dieback monitoring	All	All	X			
4.5	General woodland management	Tree operations to target ash dieback	All	All	X			
4.6	General woodland management	Zone 2 ride cuts, scallop alternative areas on 2-3 year rotation	All	PE, CW, SeW	X			
4.7	General woodland management	Zone 3 ride cuts, manage scrub on 8-20 year rotation	Year 5	CW				
4.8	<i>General woodland management</i>	<i>Manage veteran trees as per veteran tree management plan</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>All</i>	X			
4.9	General woodland management	Coppice and fence hazel as per rotational coppice plan and FC requirements	All	PW, CW, SeW	X			
4.10	General woodland management	Deer Monitoring survey as per FC guidance	All	PW, CW, SeW	X			
4.11	General woodland management	Tree safety inspections	All	All	X			

Action	Activity	Additional operational details	Target years	Location (compartment, specific area)	2022 Planned	Completed	Details (e.g. area completed, percentage cut)	2023-2031 etc.
5.1	Access management	Mow main paths	All	PE, CW, SeW, SPE, SPW	X			
5.2	Access management	Mark PRow route	2022	All	X			
5.3	Access management	Manage drainage on footpaths where appropriate	TBC	TBC				
6.1	Structures	Update notice board	All	CW	X			
6.2	Structures	Survey safety inspections	All	All	X			
6.3	Structures	Upkeep of furniture	2022, 2025, 2027	NeW	X			

5.2 Target Feature Monitoring

Target Feature Monitoring:

Feature	Target	Location (compartment, specific area)	Target year	Target reached?	Year achieved
Lowland wet acid grassland, wet grassland and heathland	Ling, Cross-leaved Heath, Lesser Spearwort, Heath Wood Rush, and Tormentil all at least occasional/locally frequent (10-50% cover) and 40% flowering during May to July	Central woods, Wayleave	2026		
Lowland meadows	At least 2 moderate value indicator species; from year 2 at least 2 high value indicator species; 10-50% cover of wildlife flowers, 40% flowering during May-July; 1-5% bare ground in small patches Improved diversity of plant species (2017 NVC baseline)	Southern Pastures	2023, 2024 – 2032 NVC 2027		
Invertebrates - wetlands	Maintain or increase species richness, including specialists associated with newly created early successional marginal habitats	Ponds	2023		
Invertebrates - woodland	Maintain or increase species richness	Woodland	2023		
Invertebrates – lowland meadows	Maintain or increase species richness and ensure continued viability of Forester Moth population.	Lowland meadows	2023		
Breeding birds	Carry out update of 2010 survey and identify species gains/losses. Aim to maintain presence of remaining rarer species (including Lesser Spotted Woodpecker).	Entire site	2024		

Reptile species	Continue monitoring of reptile species and produce population estimates/identify key localities. Targeted surveys to confirm Adder presence.	Wayleaves, lowland meadows, wetlands, and woodland edge	2024		
Great Crested Newt	Monitor presence in Whitehall Pond via surveys and/or e-DNA assessment.	Whitehall Pond	2024		
Dormouse	Continue presence/absence surveys within site, including nest boxes and nut searches	Areas of woodland and scrub	2023		
Bats	Establish monitoring programme with local bat group	Entire site/bat boxes where relevant	2023		
Veteran trees	Veteran tree health check	All veteran trees	Rolling programme		

6. Appendices

6.1 Appendix 1: Odiham Common timeline

1978: Land provided as exchange land was conveyed to Hart District Council by Hampshire County Council.

1980: Land from the Common taken to construct the A287 bypass was conveyed to Hampshire County Council by Hart District Council.

1992: Designation by English Nature (now Natural England) as an SSSI. A short draft management plan developed by the Hampshire Wildlife Trust.

1993/4: Last known grazing by commoners.

1994/5: Hart District Council commissioned consultants to prepare a detailed management plan for the site.

1997: Application to PINs (under Section 194 of the Law and Property Act, 1925) for Secretary of State consent for perimeter fencing around the north-east compartment of Odiham Common for a temporary 5-year period on an experimental basis (to facilitate grazing management of the Common).

1998: Consent given for temporary fencing following a Public Inquiry associated with the above application resulting in consent being given.

Ten year agreement between Hart District Council and Rural Development Service (latterly Natural England) under Countryside Stewardship Scheme commenced.

1999: Felling and removal of timber from around 10ha in NE Compartment started. Some grazing took place (mainly cattle).

2002: Application made to PINS (under Section 194 of the Law and Property Act, 1925) for Secretary of State consent for permanent fencing on the Common to facilitate grazing.

2002: 'An assessment of Odiham Common Management Plan and progress so far' was prepared by Richard Burden for Odiham Parish Council.

2002: 'Public and Parish Council consultation on the Odiham Common Management Plan and its implementation so far' was prepared by Richard Burden for Odiham Parish Council.

2003: 'A Community Management Plan for Odiham Common' was prepared by Richard Burden for Odiham Parish Council.

Public inquiry associated with application for permanent fencing. The Inspector recommended that the application for consent for the erection of 4,795m of permanent fencing with foot/horse/field gates be refused.

2003: Temporary consent for fencing expired and grazing ceased on the Common.

2004: Taskforce established by Hart District Council to agree future management needs.

2005: Interim Management Dossier for Odiham Common SSSI 2005-2010 prepared to guide future management.

1992 - to date: Various research, survey, monitoring work and associated reporting prepared looking particularly at the ecology but also history and land management of the Common.

2008: Hart District Council Members' proposal to put the development of a new management plan on hold and follow the

procedure outlined in 'A Common Purpose: A guide agreeing management on Common Land' (University of Gloucester 2005) was supported by the Parish.

6.2 Appendix 2: Further details of ecological surveys identified in the Management Plan

Odiham Common/Wood SSSI – Phase II survey (2018)

This report, carried out by Joel Miller of HBiC in June 2017, comprises an updated National Vegetation Classification (NVC)/botanical survey of the entire Odiham Common and Bagwell Green and Shaw SSSI (similar to that carried out in 2009 – see below). It describes the habitats present on site, the specific NVC floral communities, and plant species lists (including notable species). The survey recorded an exceptional total of 53 ancient woodland indicator species, and an impressive number of 10 grassland indicator species, alongside 11 species Near Threatened in England. It also identifies the positive impact of conservation management being carried out on site.

A survey of aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates of Odiham Common, Hampshire (2018)

The report details the results of monthly invertebrate surveys carried out across Odiham Common between April and October 2018, by Scotty Dodd and Dr Jonty Denton. 1,097 species were identified, including 57 with nationally recognized conservation designations and a further 205 with a nationally Local distribution. All of the sampled terrestrial assemblages were found to be in a favourable condition, using the Natural England Pantheon/ISIS programme for

2009: Management Plan for Odiham Common 2009-2019 developed in line with 'A Common Purpose' guidance.

2021: Countryside Stewardship agreement and Woodland Management Plan agreed.

SSSI assessment, whilst none of the sampled wetland assemblages were.

Odiham Common fungi survey (2011)

A fungal survey of the broad-leaved woodland areas of Odiham Common was carried out between February and November 2011, recording 416 species in total, with 31 of the species new for the Vice County of North Hampshire.

Odiham Common SSSI Bird Survey (2010)

This report provides the results of a breeding bird survey carried out on Odiham Common between March and July 2010, by John Eyre and John Collman. 45 species were identified across the site, with 34 confirmed as breeding within the site boundary. Several notable species/species of conservation concern were recorded, including Cuckoo and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, although not all were confirmed as breeding.

Odiham Common felled area, grassland areas, and wayleaves - Phase II survey (2009)

A precursor to the 2017 HBiC surveys detailed above, carried out by the same surveyor between June and August 2009. It includes similar information to that detailed under the later report.

Entomological survey and assessment of Odiham Common (2009)

This report provides the results of an entomological survey and assessment carried out between April and October 2009, at key localities across Odiham Common, by Mike Edwards and Peter Hodge. A total of 513 species were recorded, including 41 with nationally recognized conservation designations.

Odiham Common moth survey (2002)

A targeted survey, carried out in June 2002 by Tim Norriss, recorded 45 species of moth on Odiham Common, including the Forester moth

List of birds found on Odiham Common in the spring and summer of 1986, 1995, and 2002

A total of 51 bird species were recorded from Odiham Common across the three years, with 32 identified as breeding in 2002. A range of notable species/species of conservation concern are listed, including Nightingale and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.

6.3 Appendix 3: Further details of Site Management Planning documents

Woodland Management Plan 2022-2031 (Approved by Forestry Commission, 2022)

Sets out permitted site operations and limits for identified woodland areas of Odiham Commons over a ten-year period.

Countryside Stewardship Agreement 2022-2031 (Approved by Natural England and Rural Payments Agency (RPA), 2022)

Legally binding agreement between landowner and RPA relating to funding that has been agreed to cover specific operations on site

over a ten-year period, to include specific areas for capital scrub works, as well as annual operations relating to glade, meadow and veteran tree management.

Arboricultural Veteran Management Report (SMW Consultancy Ltd, 20th August 2021)

Independent report that was part-funded by RPA's PA1 feasibility study prior to entering into the Countryside Stewardship Agreement. Report identifies veteran and mature trees for future veteran management and prescriptions for managing those trees and immediate surrounding habitat.

Odiham Commons Operational Monitoring Plan 2022-2031 (Internal departmental document)

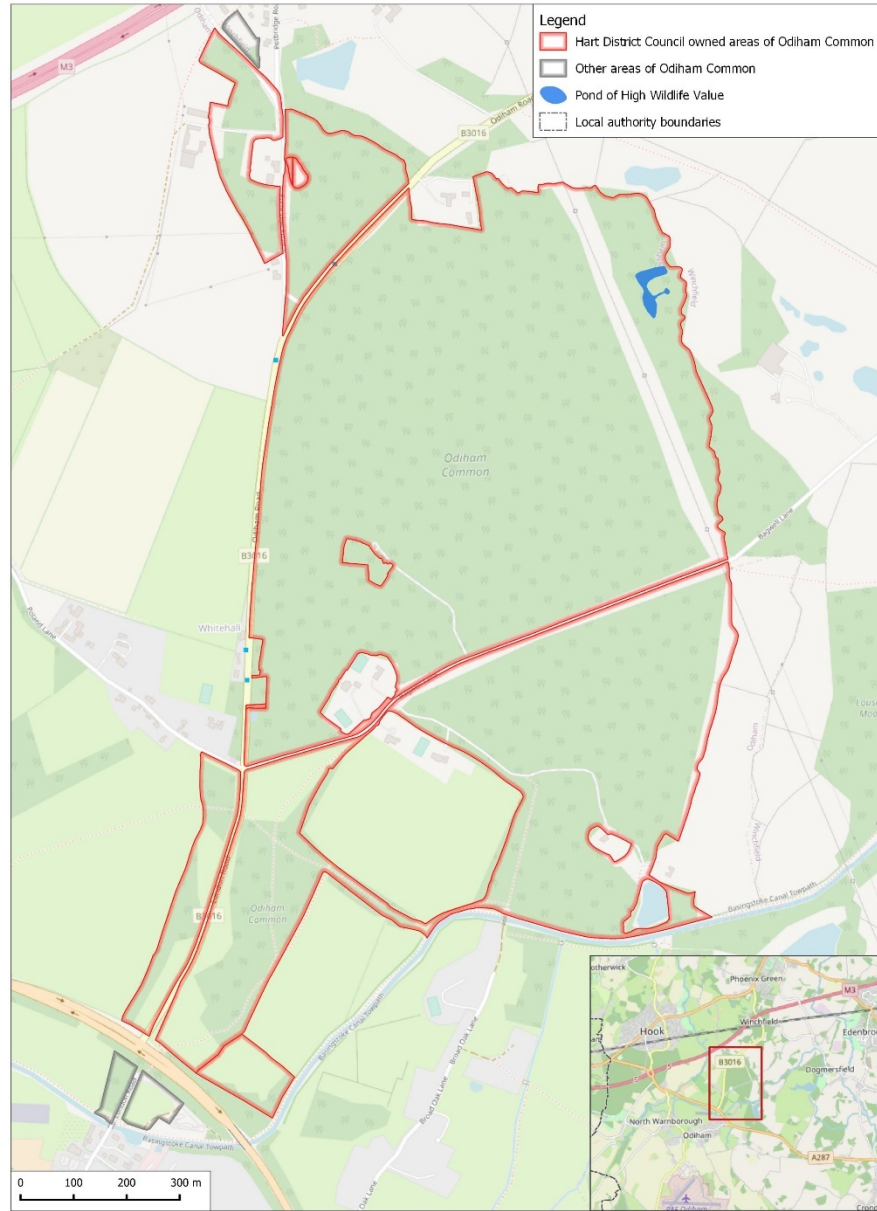
Internal document summarising overall plan of habitat operations across site. 'Operations Summary' tab below shows operational activity summary and includes any currently secured funding streams. 'Stewardship' funding refers to the current Countryside Stewardship Agri-Only Scheme that is funded through the Rural Payments Agency.

Compartment Name	Parcel Number	Funded works	CS code	Target operation
Central Woods	SU 75523791	Stewardship	GS13	Cut wayleave, incl. scrub management
		Stewardship	GS13	Top wayleave between Aug and Oct (no more than 30% per annum)
		Stewardship	WD4	Cut glades, incl. scrub management
		Stewardship	WT5	Pond management
		Stewardship	BE6	Veteran tree management
Central Woods	SU 75523791	Not at present	N/A	Coppice (Woodland Management Plan)
		Not at present	N/A	Deer monitoring on recent coppiced areas
		Not at present	N/A	Ride management
		Not at present	N/A	Glade management (non-CS)
		Not at present	N/A	Tree thinning (Woodland management plan)
		Not at present	N/A	Ash dieback
		Not at present	N/A	Ditch management
		Not at present	N/A	Pond management (non-CS)
South Pastures East A	SU 7452 9202	Stewardship	GS15	Hay making
		Stewardship	GS6	Cut and remove arisings
South Pastures East B	SU 75523791	Stewardship	BE6	Veteran tree management
South Pastures East	SU 75523791	Not at present	N/A	Ride management
		Not at present	N/A	Glade management (non-CS)
		Not at present	N/A	Tree thinning (Woodland management plan)
		Not at present	N/A	Ash dieback
		Not at present	N/A	Ditch management
South Pastures West	SU 74528111	Stewardship	GS15	Hay making
		Stewardship	GS6	Cut and remove arisings

		Stewardship	BE6	Veteran tree management
South Pastures West	SU 75523791	Not at present	N/A	Ride management
		Not at present	N/A	Glade management (non-CS)
		Not at present	N/A	Tree thinning (Woodland management plan)
		Not at present	N/A	Ash dieback
		Not at present	N/A	Monitoring surveys
Southeast Woods	SU 7552 5451	Stewardship	WD4	Cut glades, incl. scrub management
Southeast Woods	SU 75523791	Stewardship	BE6	Veteran tree management
Southeast Woods	SU 75523791	Not at present	N/A	Coppice (Woodland Management Plan)
		Not at present	N/A	Deer monitoring on recent coppiced areas
		Not at present	N/A	Ride management
		Not at present	N/A	Glade management (non-CS)
		Not at present	N/A	Tree thinning (Woodland management plan)
		Not at present	N/A	Ash dieback
		Not at present	N/A	Ditch management
		Not at present	N/A	Pond management (non-CS)
		Not at present	N/A	Monitoring surveys

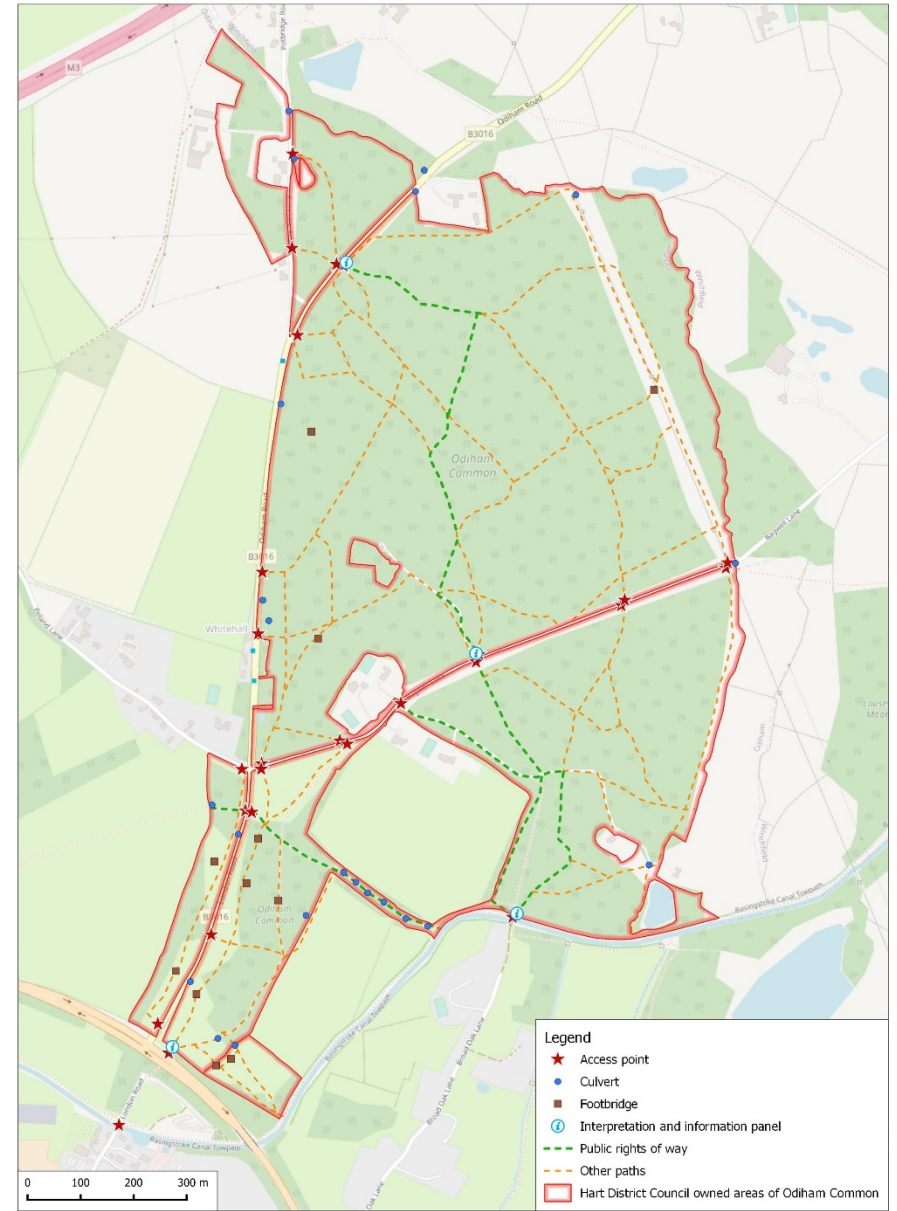
7. Maps

Map 1: Odiham Common location and extent



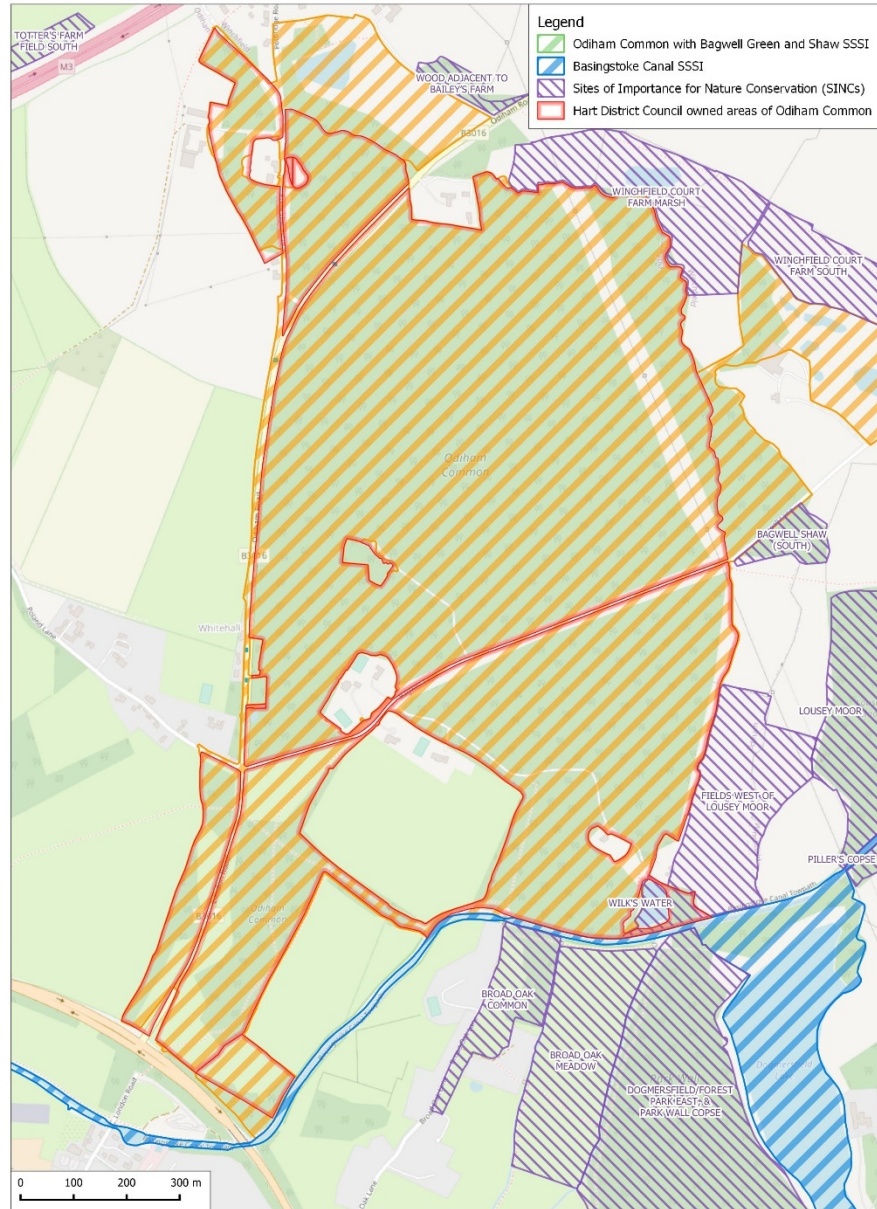
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Map 2: Access and infrastructure



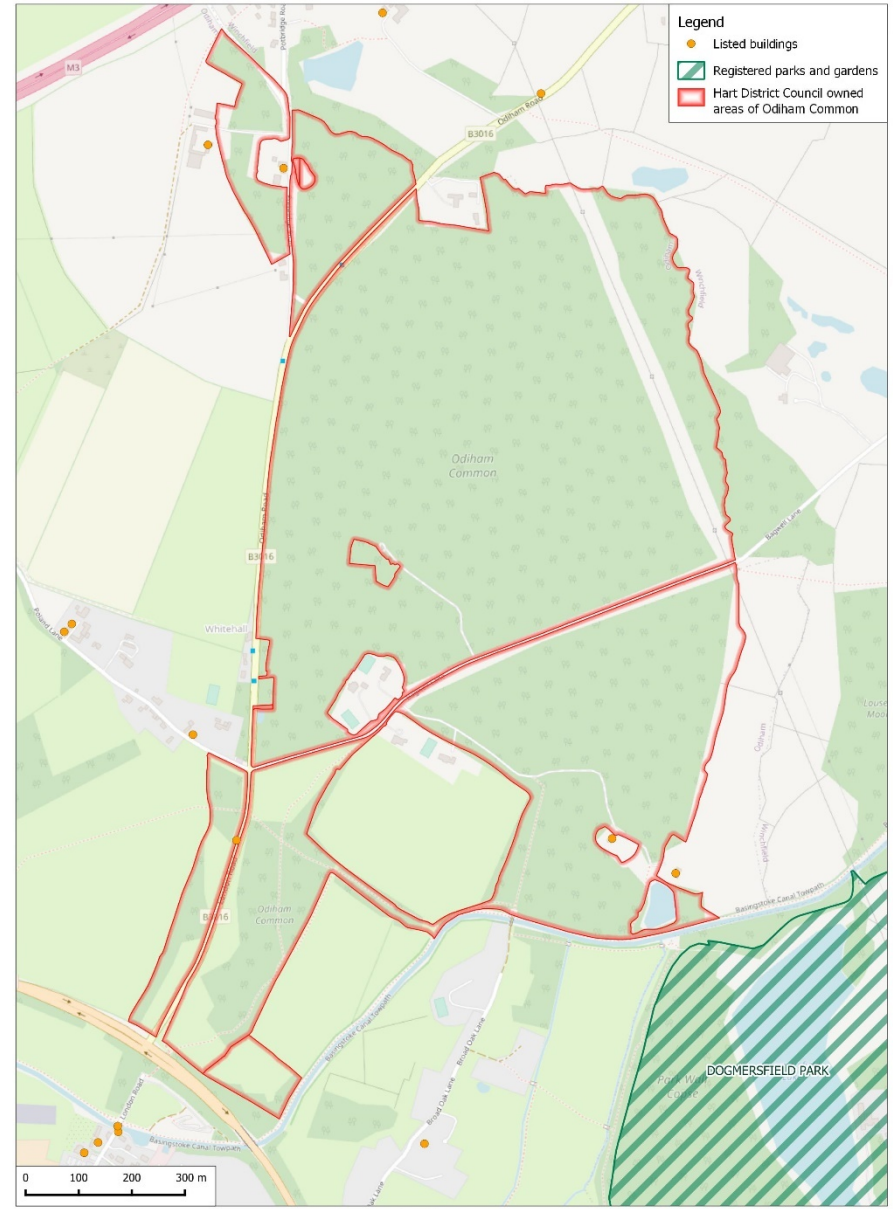
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Map 3: Nature conservation designations



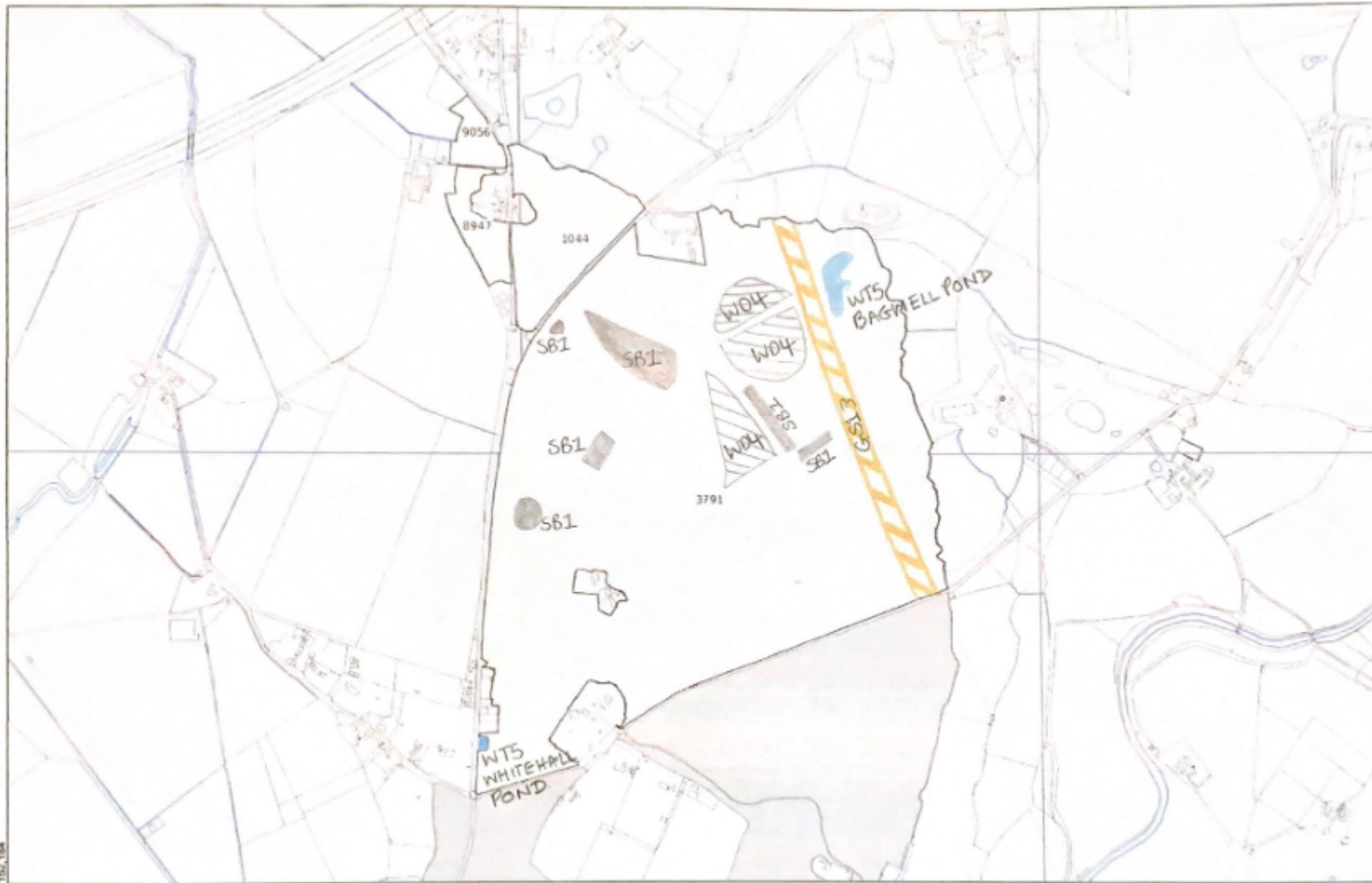
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Map 4: Heritage features and landscapes



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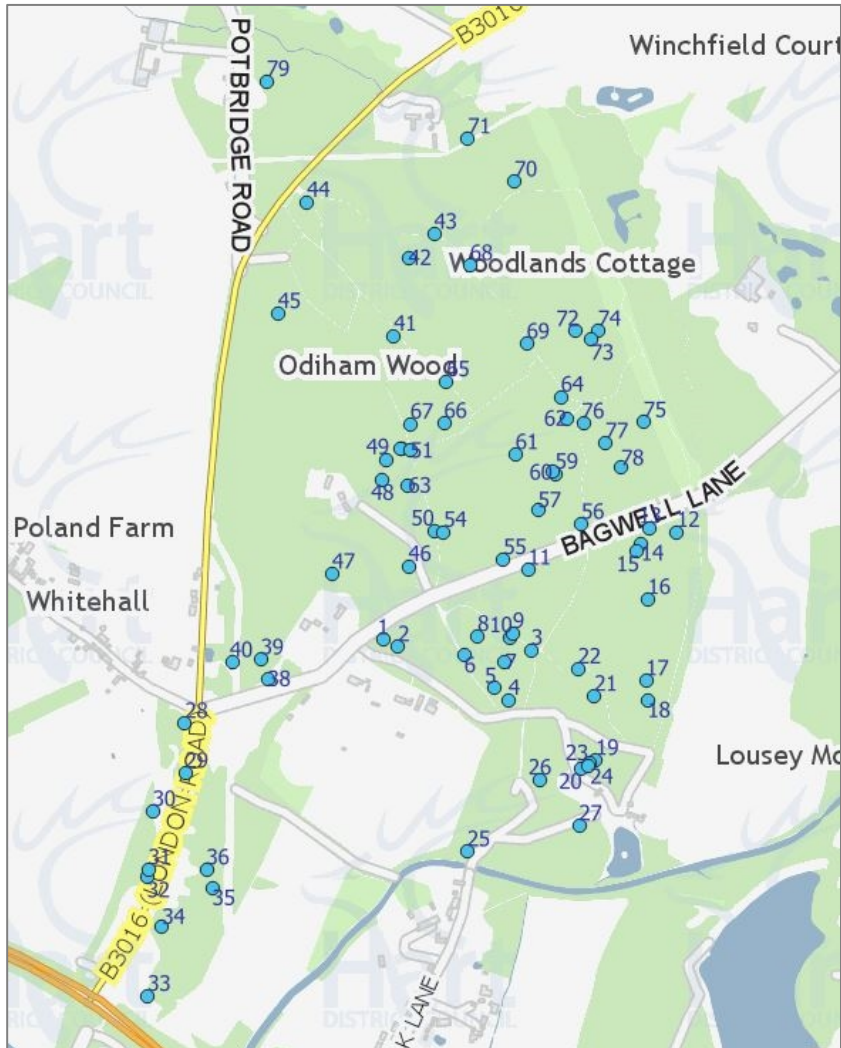
Maps 5: Countryside Stewardship Agreement for Central Woods, Potbridge East, Potbridge West and Northeast Woods (Includes management activities for scrub control (SB1), glade/wood pasture (WD4), ponds excluding Whitehall Pond (WT5) and wayleave (GS13))



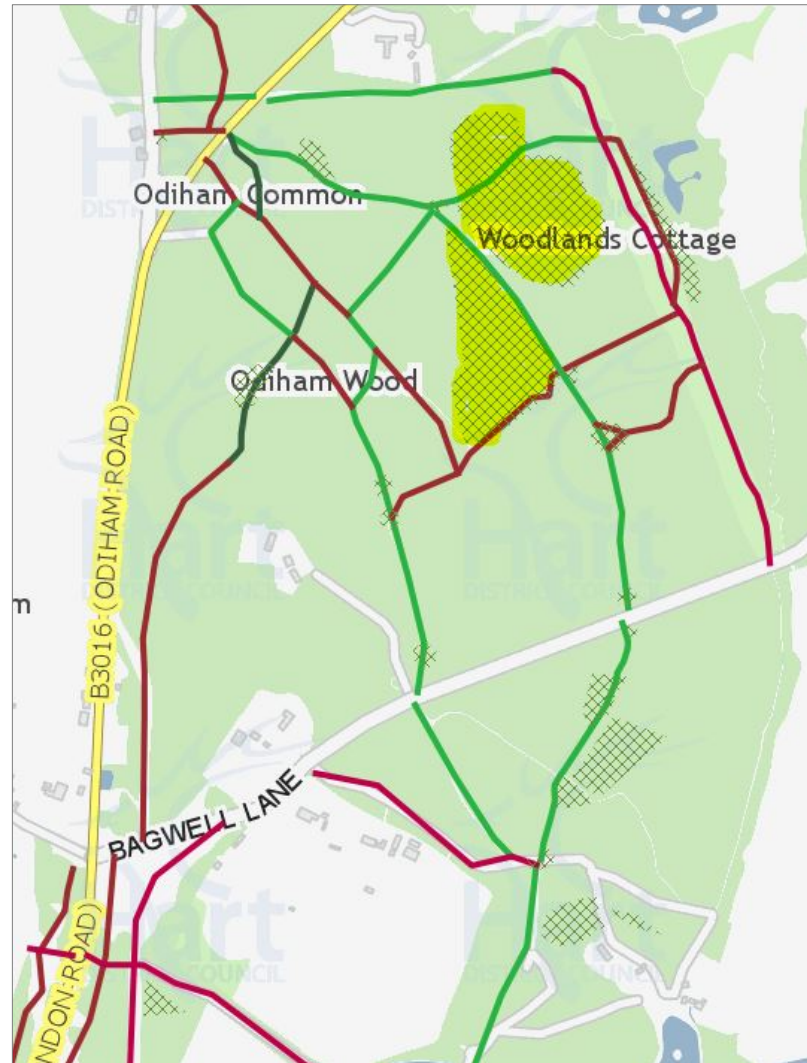
Maps 6: Countryside Stewardship Agreement for Southeast Woods, Southern Pastures East and Southern Pastures West (Includes management activities for grassland (GS6) and hay making (GS15))



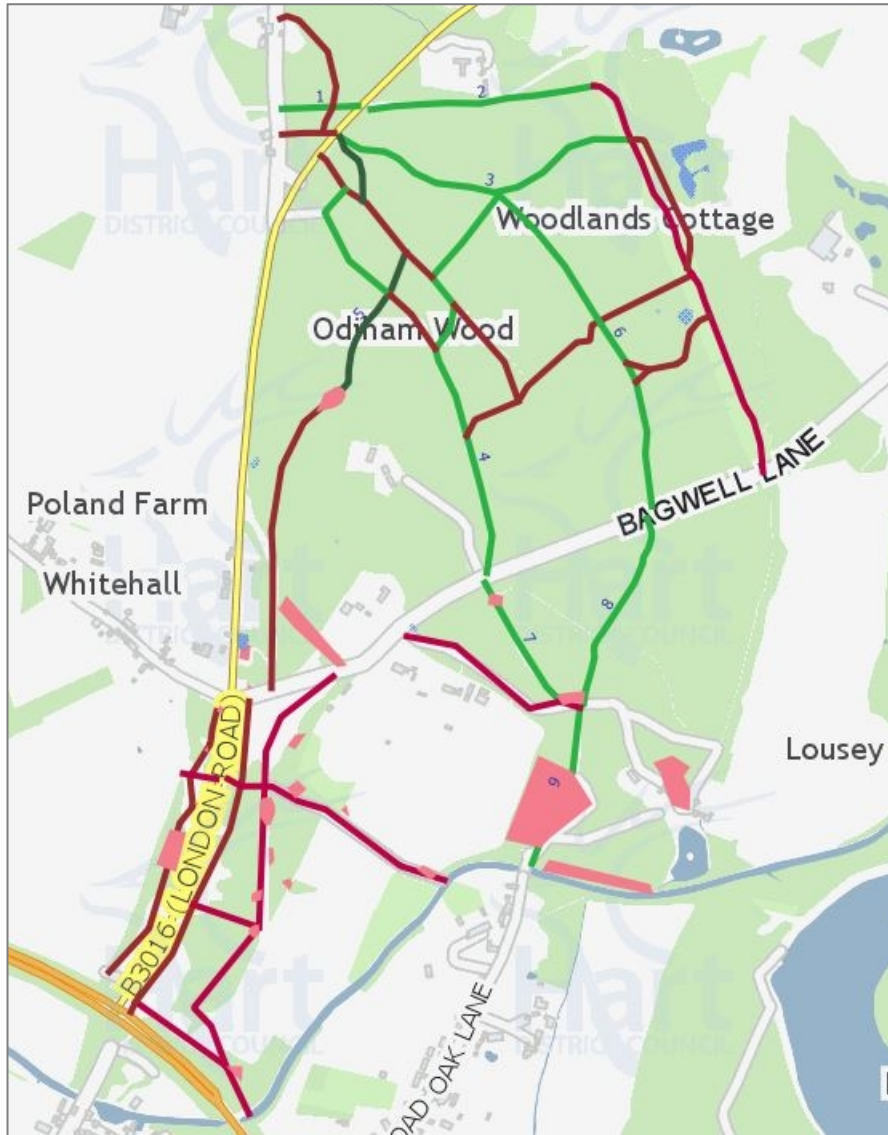
Map 7: Trees identified in the SMW consultancy report for veteran and future veteran tree management, part-funded through Countryside Stewardship



Map 8: Glades (those managed under the Countryside Stewardship agreement are highlighted in yellow)



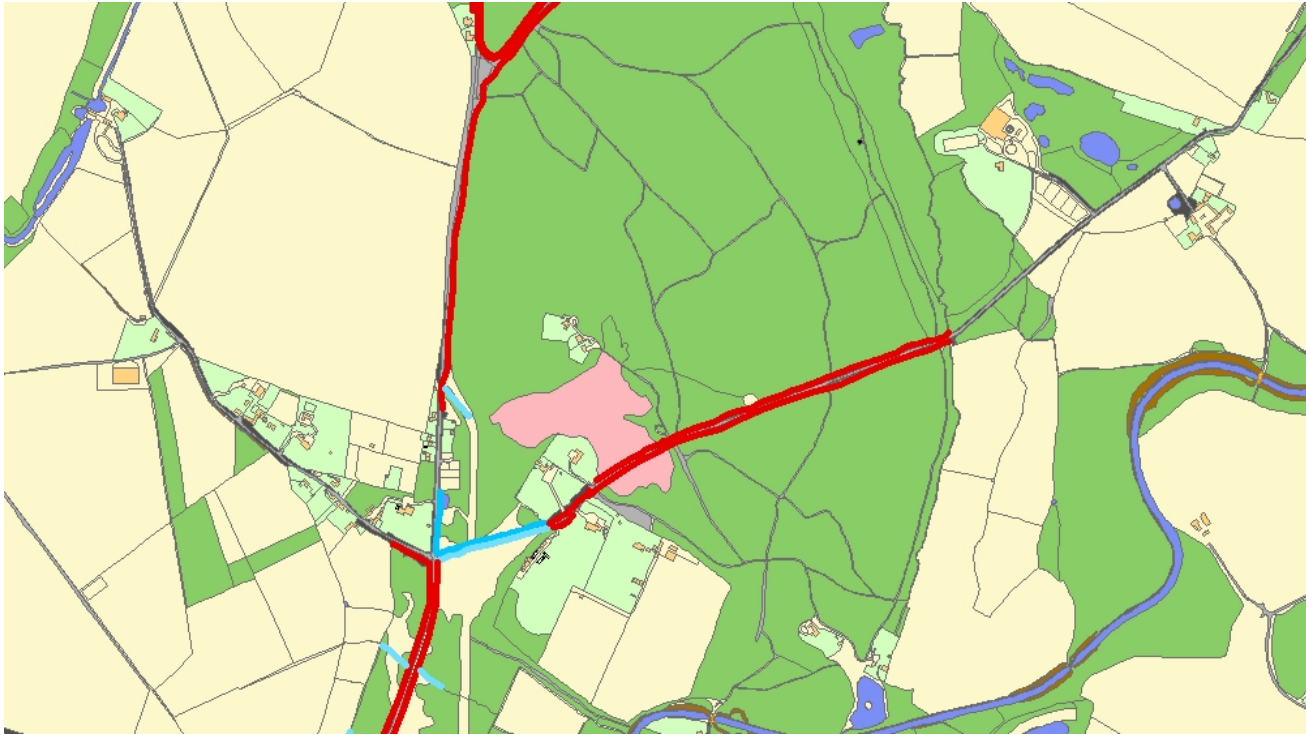
Map 9: Ash dieback based on 2021 site inspection



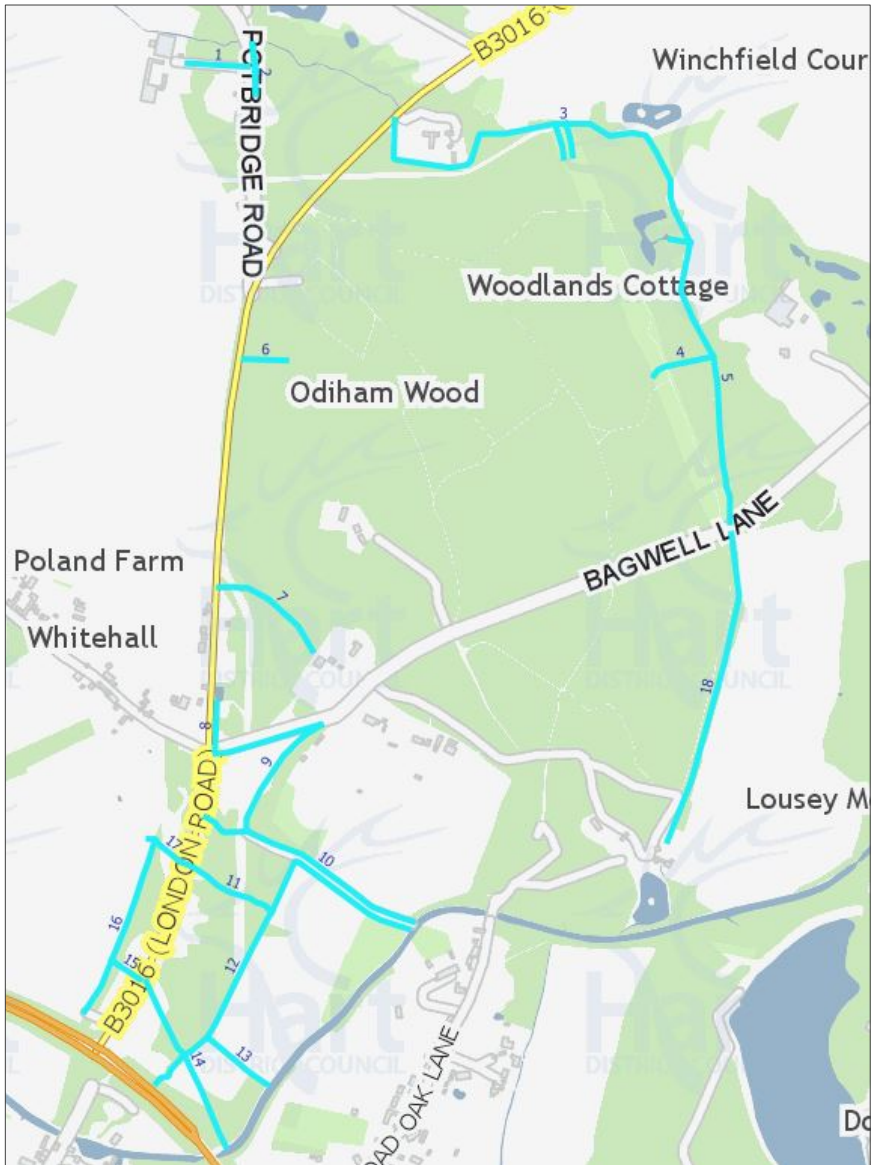
Map 10: Paths and rides - priority rides predominantly under zone 2 management (light green) and zone 3 management (dark green), main paths for general maintenance identified (red)



Map 11: Roadside flailing



Map 12: Ditch management



Map 13: Coppice coupes

