



Butts Close Open Space

GREENSPACE ACTION PLAN

2022 – 2027

Produced by:

On behalf of:



**North
Herts**
Council

OVERVIEW

Greenspace Action Plans

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

Public Engagement

Engagement with stakeholders is at the centre of effective management planning on any site. An initial engagement period was held for 4 weeks in October 2021, to establish core aims and objectives for the site; these are reflected in Section 3. A second stage of engagement for a further 4 weeks ending on March 28th enabled stakeholders to comment on the proposed management actions for the site. An associated engagement response document, published online as an appendix to this plan, summarises comments received and any amendments made to the plan as a result.

Version Control

Version	Issue Date	Details	Author	Reviewed	Approved
0	21/02/2022	Draft	KW	AT	AM
1	10/04/2022	Final	KW		AM

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1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 Site Summary

Site Name: Butts Close

Site Address: Bedford Road
Hitchin
SG5 1HA

Grid Reference: TL 1808 2960

Size: 4.5 ha (11 acres)

Designations: Common Land (CL49, CL57, CL71)

Owner: North Hertfordshire Council and The Cow Commoners Trust

Client: North Hertfordshire Council

1.2 Vision Statement

The aim of this GAP is to continue to maintain Butts Close as a valuable site for both recreation and biodiversity and a popular and pleasant green space in the heart of Hitchin, enjoyed by the whole community.

This GAP will provide the management framework over the next 5 years from 2022 – 2027, through detailed action plans and management maps.

The GAP will be reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with the appropriate bodies to monitor its progress, ensure it remains relevant and allow outstanding tasks to be rescheduled.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Introduction

Butts Close is the oldest open space in Hitchin with a long history of use stretching back to late medieval times, when it was a sporting ground for archery. It covers 4.5 hectares (11 acres) and is owned partly by NHC and partly by the Hitchin Cow Commoners Trust. It is managed by NHC in partnership with CMS. The majority of the site is registered common land (CL49, CL57 and CL71) and the whole site lies within a Conservation Area.

The Park is situated in a central location within the town and is divided by use into two areas. The larger western area of the site is mostly managed as amenity cut grassland, suitable for recreational use. This popular area plays host to several community events throughout the year as well as being utilised as a space to run classes by outdoor fitness groups. Within this area there are several sections of longer grass maintained as part of the conservation grassland found in other areas of Butts Close.



Western amenity section of Butts Close (Courtesy of FoBC)

The eastern part of the site is smaller with a wilder and nature conservation focus. Its main feature is a wildlife pond, surrounded by marginal vegetation and with common reed throughout. There are a small number of trees around the pond, mostly alder with several sallow and a single large weeping willow at one end. This pond is further encompassed by recently sown wildflower meadow with several paths cut through it. There is a mixture of mature trees alongside the wall south of the pond and a scrub filled hedgerow to the north, along the boundary with the swimming pool.



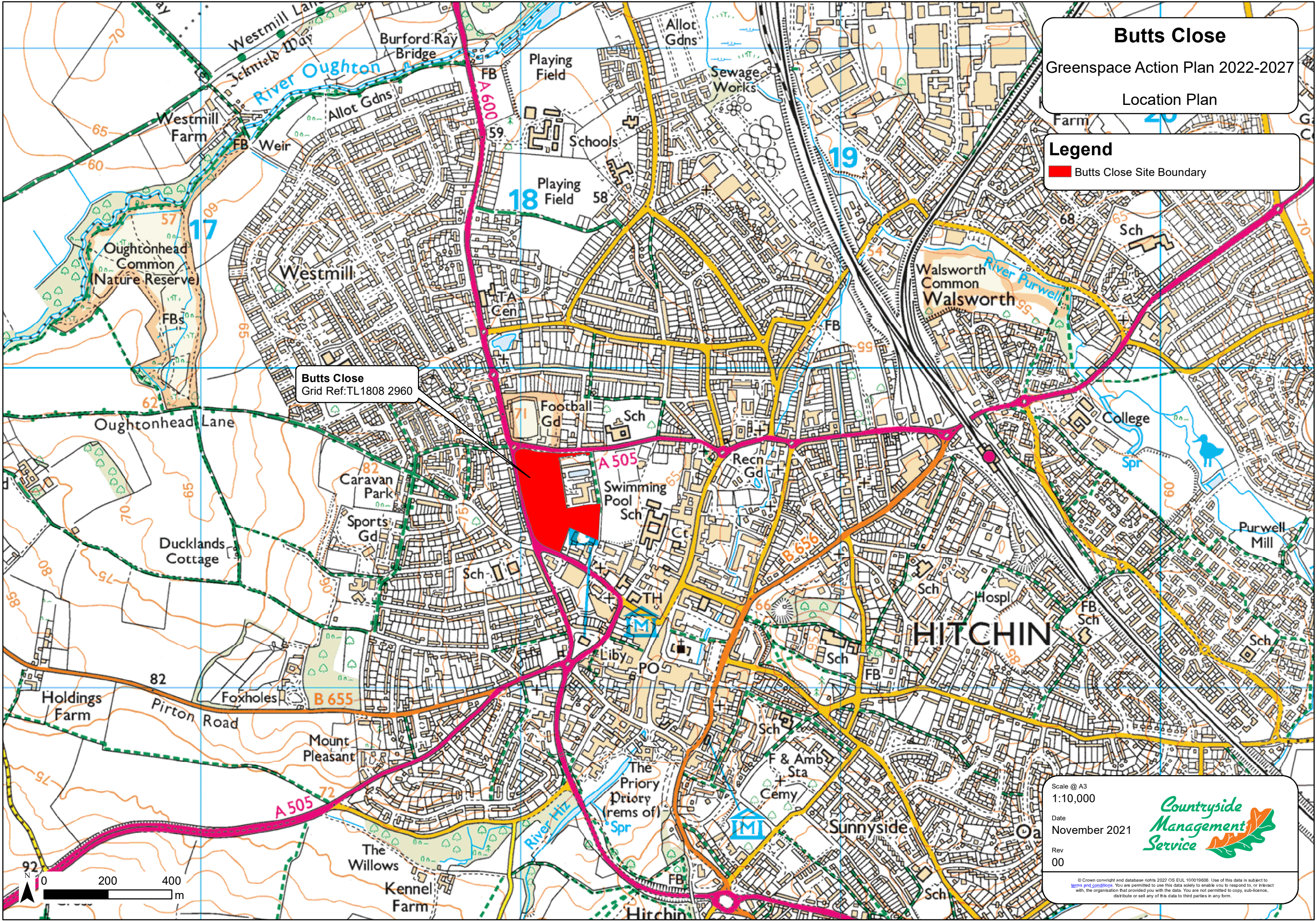
Eastern wildflower enhanced grassland and pond

There is a tree-lined central avenue running across the site alongside a tarmac path, dividing the western and eastern sections of Butts Close. These are a mixture of horse chestnut and alder. A line of large-leaved lime trees continues along the whole southern and western boundaries of the site with several maple in the north-western corner.

Butts Close

Greenspace Action Plan 2022-2027
Location Plan

Legend
■ Butts Close Site Boundary



Butts Close
Grid Ref: TL1808 2960

Scale @ A3
1:10,000
Date
November 2021
Rev
00



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Butts Close

Greenspace Action Plan 2022-27

Site Description

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Trees
- Bench
- Buoy
- Interpretation board
- Litter bin
- Vehicle access
- Amenity Grass
- Building
- Conservation Grassland
- Hard Surface
- Hedgerow
- Mown Path
- Pond
- Tall Vegetation
- Wildflower Meadow

Knee rail fencing
This replaces the concrete bollards along the northern boundary

Concrete bollards
Along the whole length of the western and southern border

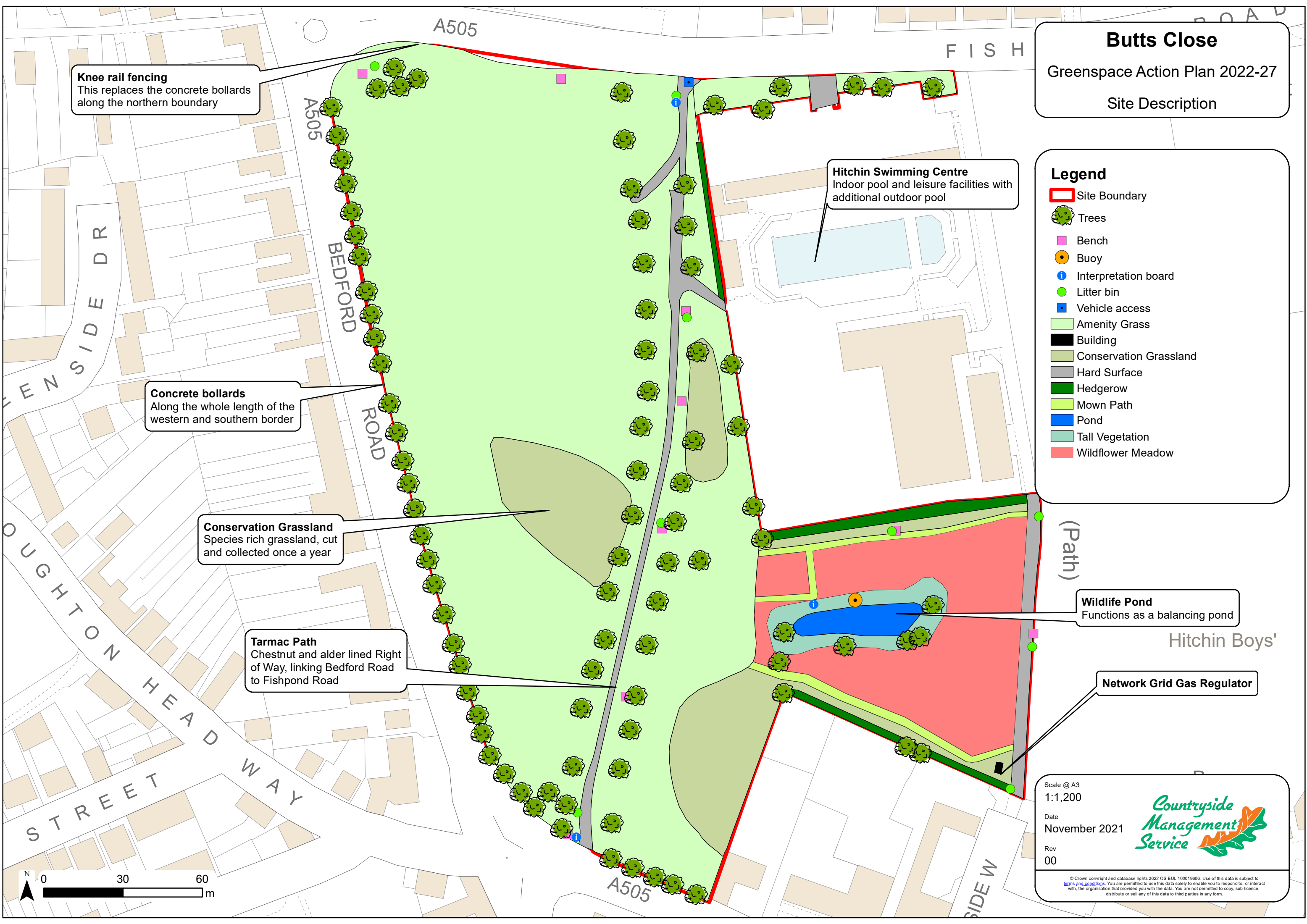
Conservation Grassland
Species rich grassland, cut and collected once a year

Tarmac Path
Chestnut and alder lined Right of Way, linking Bedford Road to Fishpond Road

Hitchin Swimming Centre
Indoor pool and leisure facilities with additional outdoor pool

Wildlife Pond
Functions as a balancing pond

Network Grid Gas Regulator



Scale @ A3
1:1,200

Date
November 2021

Rev
00




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Butts Close

Greenspace Action Plan 2022-27

Constraints Plan

Legend

 Butts Close Site Boundary

Public Rights of Way


 Restricted Byway

 Footpath

Flood Zone Categories:

 RoFSW_Extent1in30

 RoFSW_Extent1in100

 RoFSW_Extent1in1000

Services

 Foul Sewer

 Electricity Cable

 Gas Main

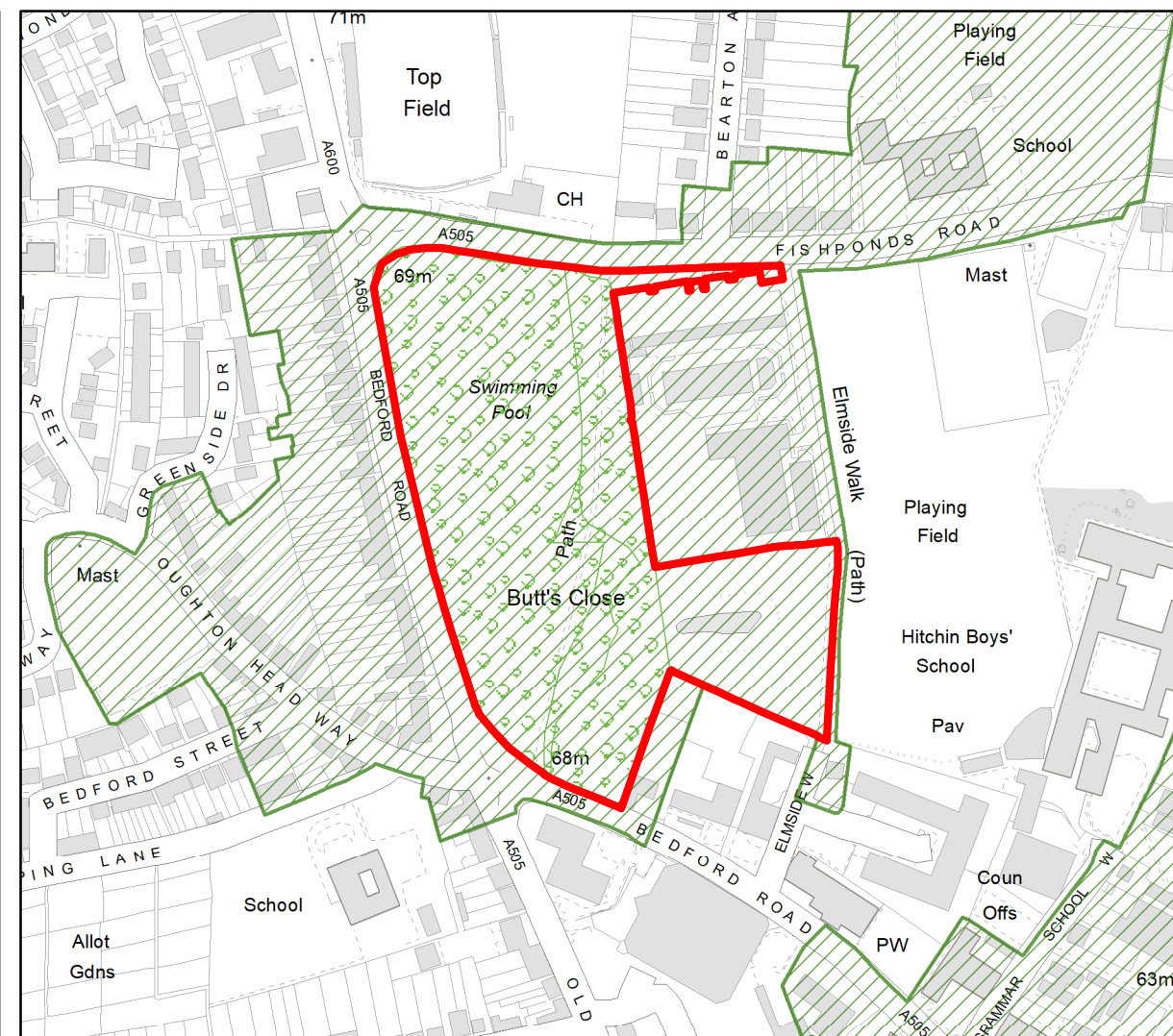
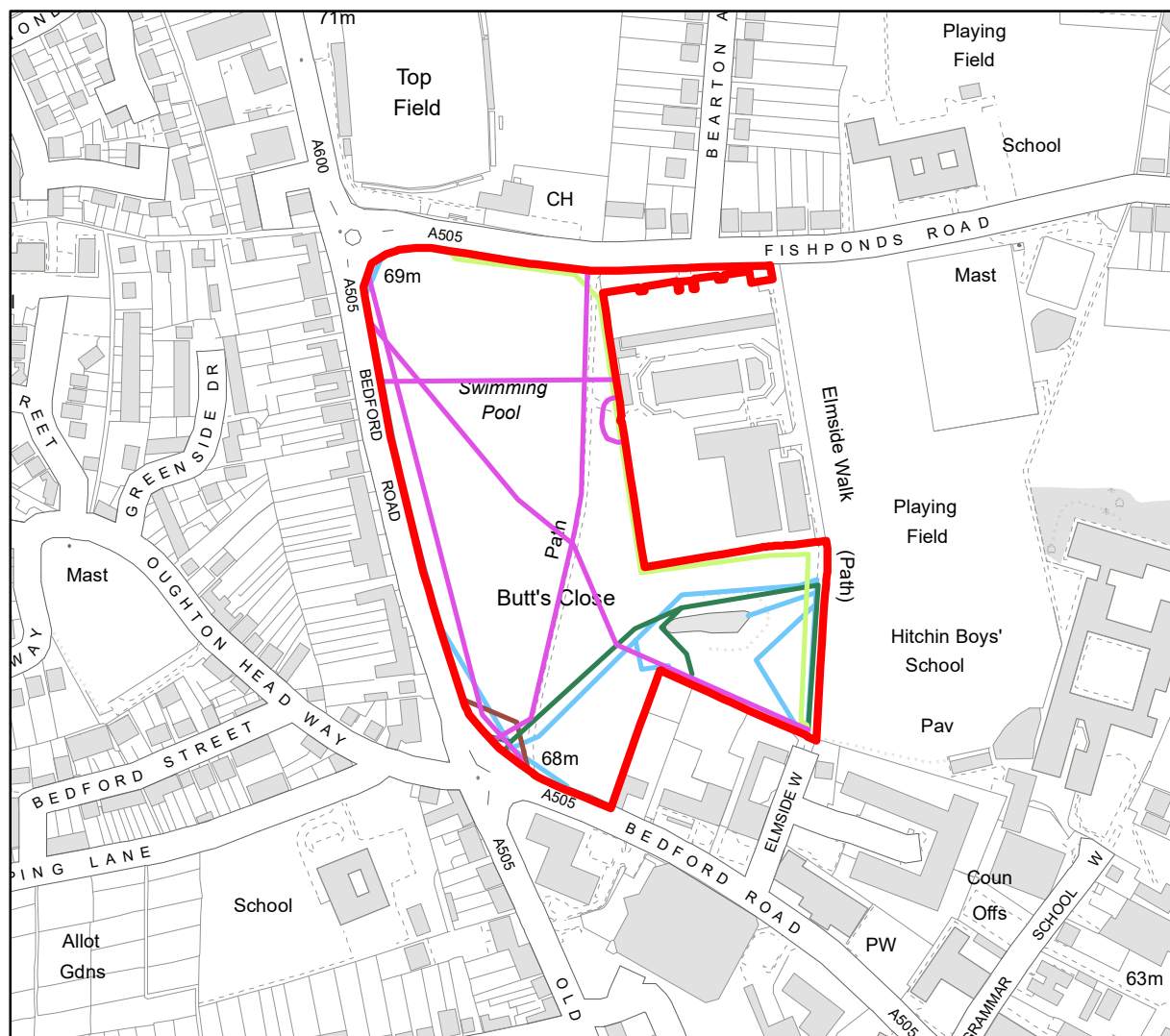
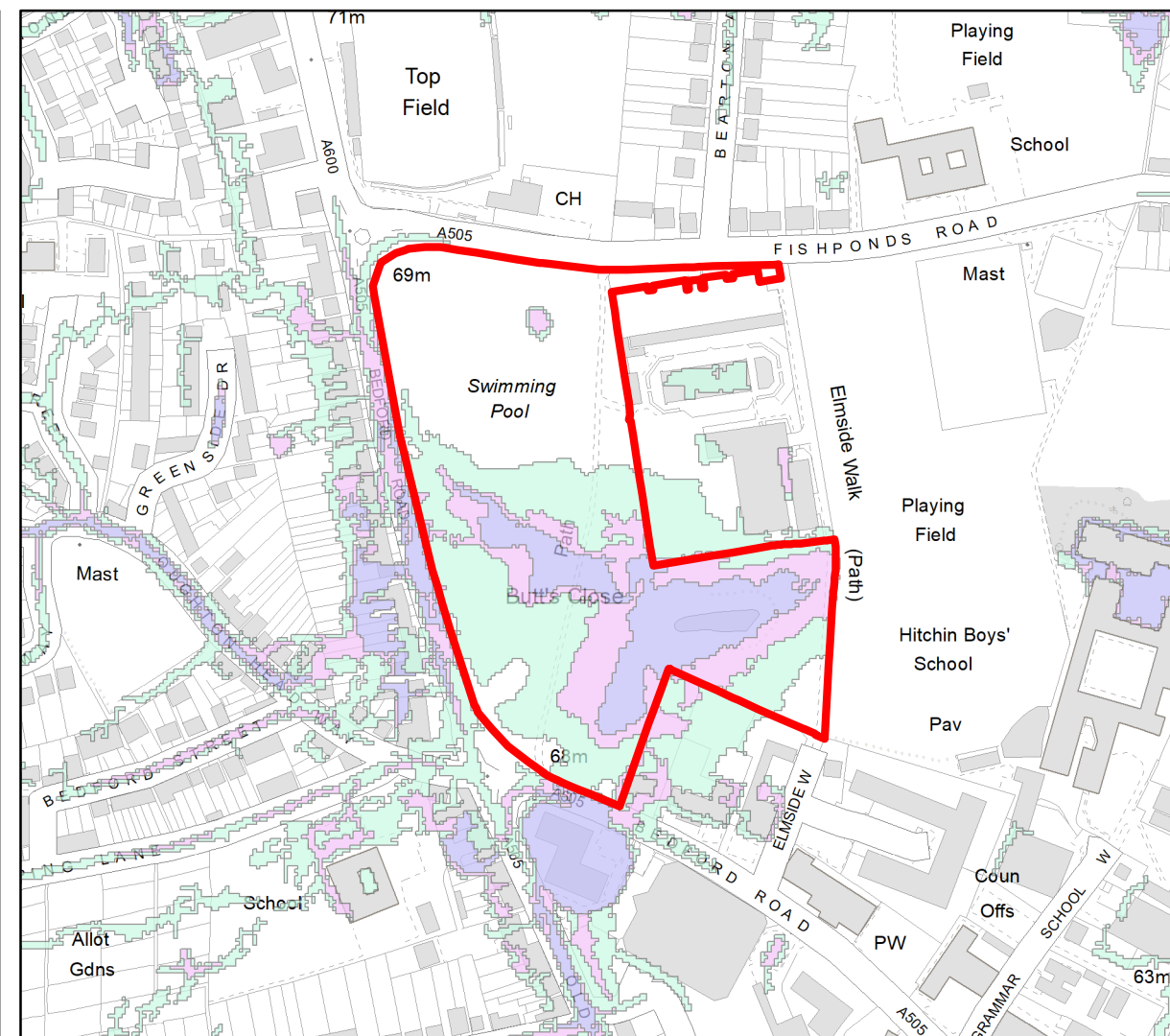
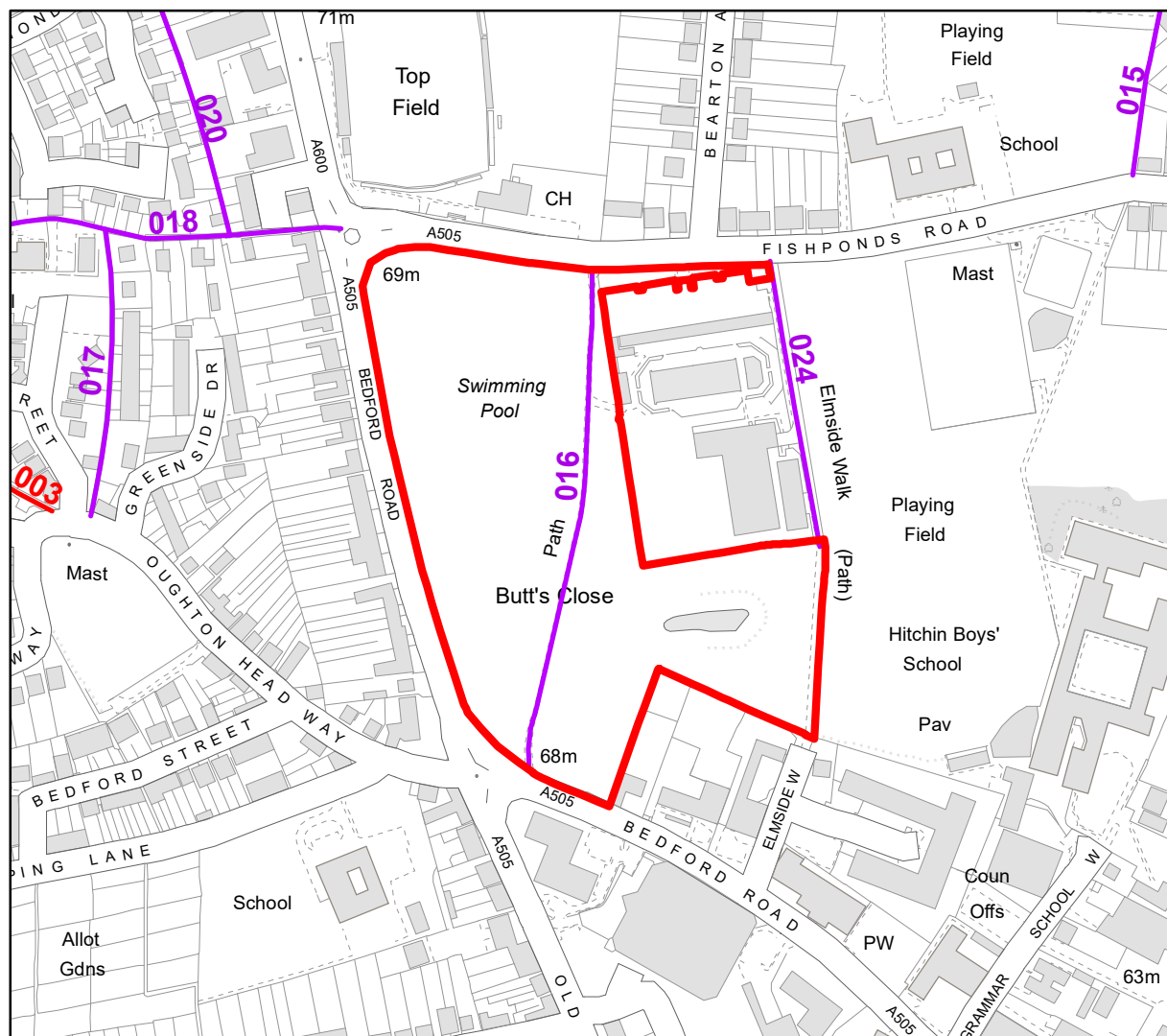
 Surface Sewer

 Water Main

Conservation Areas

 Conservation Area

 Common Land



Scale @ A3

1:4,200

Date
January 2022

Rev
00



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2.2 Geography and Landscape

The site is located centrally within Hitchin, largely surrounded by residential areas. It is bordered to the north by Fishponds Rd, and the south and west by Bedford Rd, both part of the A505. There is a swimming pool complex and a playing field to the east. Hitchin Town Football Club is located on Top Field, immediately North of Fishponds Rd.

Butts Close is at significant risk of surface water flooding, as is shown on the constraints map in section 2.1. The risk on a 1 in 30-year basis is focused on the area around the pond where the land slopes from the west. This is the main reason for an area of conservation cut grass in the slight depression, west of the path.

There are no wildlife conservation designations in place on the site. The status of the western section of Butts Close as common land has some constraining influence on how the site is managed. Butts Close is at the heart of a Conservation Area, in recognition of the value of its landscape, and this designation confers some protection on that landscape, including for the trees in Butts Close.

There are many underground services running across Butts Close; the approximate locations of these are shown on the constraints map (2.1). These make any work which involves breaking the surface difficult. The scrub planting which took place along the boundary north of the pond in 2007 was also planned along the boundary south of the pond but had to be abandoned due to the electricity cable in this area.

2.3 History and Archaeology

Butts Close has a long history of use as an open space. Its name refers to the archery butts which were placed on the site when it was used as a sporting ground for archery in late medieval times. The butts were first recorded in 1465. In 1543 the statute making practice with the longbow a legal requirement was revived in response to the threat of French invasion, and the butts extended to a new statutory length of 220 yards.

Until 1829 Butts Close was surrounded by an earth bank. More recently there was a tank, a gun and another military vehicle at the northern end to commemorate the First World War, but these were taken away and melted down prior to the Second World War.

The site has for a long time – certainly since at least the 19th century – been used to host travelling fairs. This is ongoing with several yearly events to this day.

2.4 Habitats and Wildlife

2.4.1 Grassland

The site is predominantly semi-improved neutral grassland. It is managed for amenity use via regular mowing, making it suitable for recreation, and capable of supporting the events which occur here. Within the western section of the site there is a damp hollow containing a mixture of grasses and few flowering plants, managed through an annual conservation cut and lift regime in early autumn. This management regime is further utilised in the larger grassland area south-east of the surfaced path and the wildflower diverse grassland around the pond.

This area around the pond was chosen to be enhanced by trialling sowing wildflower seed in the previous GAP. This has been successful in creating a diverse and vibrantly colourful area, both pleasant to look at and beneficial to wildlife. In the spring and summer months this grassland is abundant in black knapweed, oxeye daisy, tufted vetch and bird's-foot-trefoil, and sounds alive with the buzz of pollinating insects.



Wildflower enhanced grassland

There is a small area of grassland between the surfaced path and the boundary of the swimming pool, previously used as temporary access for construction vehicles during works to the pool. The previous GAP proposed this be returned to amenity,



Longer vegetation adjacent to swimming pool

however it has been allowed to grow becoming further wildlife habitat. While this area is largely dominated by nettles due to the fertile soil, some of the flowering species from the nearby wildflower rich grassland have appeared suggesting it would be suitable for seeding with wildflowers.

2.4.2 Trees and Scrub

The site has a line of large-leaved lime trees along its southern and western boundaries, a central avenue of horse chestnut and alder, willow around the pond and several others along the boundaries. Unfortunately, all of the remaining chestnut in the park have succumbed to bleeding canker and will require removing once the harm caused by the disease is too great. There is a large and striking weeping willow next to the pond, which underwent a crown lift in 2016 as part of restoration works.

An area of native shrubs was planted north of the pond in 2007 has reached maturity. These were growing beyond the height of purpose and a section was coppiced by volunteers in 2017. These have regrown well and now once again act as a screen for the nearby swimming pool.

In line with the objective of community involvement, in 2020 the Council supported Friends of Butts Close in planting 130 native hedge saplings along the eastern edge of the Close, adjacent to the west-facing boundary of the swim centre. These hedgerow plants are in their infancy and will require management to ensure they exhibit good bushy lateral growth and become an excellent habitat.

2.4.3 Pond

The small pond on the eastern side of Butts Close was designed to act as a balancing pond for the water flowing from the direction of Bedford Road. The concrete dam is positioned to prevent flooding further east during heavy rains. Here the flow exits the pond through a culvert, going beneath Hitchin Boys School and eventually ending in the River Hiz.

The pond with its surrounding vegetation has the highest wildlife value on site and has undergone two major restoration projects. The first in 2007 where the western end of the pond was reengineered to improve its value for wildlife: its banks were reprofiled to allow wildlife to exit the pond, marginal and emergent species were planted along the margins and pre-planted coir pillows installed along the remaining steeper bank. A floating reedbed was established in the eastern section to act as a bio-filter for nutrients.



Pond prior to desilting works in 2016

When work was underway on the 2016- 2021 GAP it was found that this work was largely successful, with the western section of the pond surrounded by emergent vegetation, and the pond had remained free of algal blooms. The eastern portion however was again shaded by the willows, with abundant algae, silt, leaf litter and debris. Both sections of the pond had a large volume of silt accumulated at the base and work was carried out to pollard the willows and desilt the pond, increasing its capacity and effectiveness as a balancing pond. This allowed the reedbed to be re-installed and further floating vegetation to be established within the pond.

Now the pond is a pleasant and attractive wildlife area with good floral diversity both in and around the pond. The interpretation board installed next to the pond and mown path through the wildflower grassland allows visitors to better experience the pond. There is, however, some signs of minor algal growth on the surface of the pond and nettles and other robust vegetation are starting to out compete other species. This is in part to the regrowth of the willows which are starting to block light from reaching the marginal vegetation and drop leaf litter within the pond.



Wildlife pond in eastern portion of Butts Close

2.5 Access, Facilities and Infrastructure

As designated common land Butts Close offers unrestricted access to the public. There are formal access points from Fishponds Road at the northern end and Bedford Road at the southern end, and these are linked by a tarmac path. There are two further access points on Elmside Walk along the eastern edge of the site. Mown grass paths provide a link from here to the main amenity area, running to the north and south of the pond. In addition to these, there are only limited boundary features around much of the site – a row of concrete bollards along the western boundary and a low wooden barrier along the northern boundary. Pedestrians can circulate freely throughout the site.

The only vehicular access is from Fishponds Road and is controlled by a locked gate. It can be used by grounds maintenance contractors, and for access for vehicles and equipment involved in events on the site.

There are numerous benches and litter bins around the site. Most of these bins were replaced by a more closed design during the previous GAP. There are two information boards placed at the entrances to the open space at either end of the tarmac path that cuts across the site. These outline the history of the site and its use over the previous 600 years. A further information board is alongside the pond which highlights the ponds impressive array of wildlife benefits. The life belt next to the pond has been previously vandalised so a sign highlighting its importance was installed during the previous GAP.

There are underground services widely distributed across the site, which are a significant constraining influence on some potential actions. Shrub planting was planned along the boundary south of the pond in 2007 but proved impossible due to an underground electricity cable and any tree planting along the northern boundary suffers from the same problem. The approximate locations of these services are shown on the map in 2.1.

2.6 Community and Events

Butts Close is a popular and well used open space for the community. It is frequently used for walking, exercising, and picnicking during better weather as well as being regularly utilised by fitness groups. It is one of the major venues for travelling fairs in Hitchin, hosting 2 fairs and a circus annually.

Direct community involvement in the site has in recent years has been organised by The Friends of Butts Close (FoBC) a local community group with an interest in the management and protection of Butts Close. They are regularly involved in litter clear up events such as the twice yearly Big Hitchin Clean-Up organised by the Hitchin Forum and in April 2020 planted up a native hedgerow of hawthorn, crab apple, dog rose, damson in the park to help prevent anti-social behaviour and benefit wildlife.

As part of the new GAP, occasional volunteer work parties should be organised by CMS to carry out some of the practical habitat management tasks detailed in the plan, giving those within the community interested in the management of Butts Close the opportunity to get involved. All community involvement should be directed towards achieving the aims of the GAP.

3.0 AIM & OBJECTIVES

The aim and objectives of the GAP are as follows:

Aim

The aim of the Butts Close GAP is to maintain and enhance Butts Close as a popular and well-used green space in Hitchin. Butts Close will provide both recreation and biodiversity for the local community to be involved with and enjoy.

A. A Welcoming Place

A1 Ensure interpretation boards at the entrance to the site and adjacent to the pond are clear of graffiti and damage

A2 Continue to maintain the mown access path around the pond and vegetation around the interpretation board

A3 Extend the mown paths through the wildflower grassland around the pond

B. Healthy, Safe and Secure

B1 Carry out 3-year tree risk safety survey and actions as well as reactive tree works to address immediate safety concerns

B2 Respond proactively to any misuse to the site

B3 Carry out regular assessment of the equipment, structures, and natural features of the site

B4 Investigate the potential for the installation of lighting along the central avenue

C. Well Maintained and Clean

C1 Upgrading of litter bins to separated recycling bins

C2 Litter picking, emptying of bins, and small-scale vegetation works

C3 Site infrastructure is well maintained including bins, benches, and paths

C4 Maintaining a regular amenity cut and an annual conservation cut of the grassland where appropriate on site

D. Sustainability

D1 Ensure ongoing maintenance costs are financially sustainable

D2 Securing external funding to ensure the viability of capital works

D3 Carry out management according to environmental best practice and in response to challenges to the environment ([NHC council plan for 2022-27](#))

E. Conservation and Heritage

E1 Complete selective tree works around the pond, opening it up by focusing on the large willow at the eastern end

E2 Replicate the successful enhancements to the meadow adjacent to the pond with the remaining conservation cut grassland areas.

E3 Carry out minor further habitat management on and around the pond to build on gains achieved through desilting work during the previous GAP

E4 Expand the conservation cut and lift management regime where appropriate

E5 Carry out further bulb planting along the bank in the west of the site

E6 Retain a small portion of approximately 1/5 of the wildflower seeded grassland as over wintering habitat for wildlife

F. Community Involvement

F1 Encouraging more engagement by the local community in the management of Butts Close

F2 Provide an opportunity for stakeholders, including residents and community groups, to influence the new GAP through a structured engagement process

G. Marketing

G1 Ongoing promotion of future volunteer works and events at Butts Close

G2 Hosting of GAP and promotion of Butts Close on the NHC website

4.0 MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS

4.1 A Welcoming Place

Butts Close is an open welcoming space with good clear views across much of the park and good accessibility. The welcome signs providing information on the park and its history which were installed during the previous GAP have done a great job of enhancing the space. These are clear of damage but do have some minor pieces of graffiti which require addressing as part of the general ongoing maintenance of the site.



Newly installed welcome signs front and back

The mown paths around the pond have been a success with visitors able to walk through the wildflower grassland and improving visibility to both the pond and interpretation board. There was no return to the levels of litter previously found within the pond once the vegetation was cut back. These mown paths will be maintained to allow visitors to have continued access to the pond, wildflowers and interpretation board. Additional desire lines have arisen through the conservation grassland around the pond. To help limit further desire lines and encourage users to avoid walking through the taller vegetation a 1.5m wide path should be mown along these routes.

4.2 Healthy, Safe and Secure

Tree risk surveys are undertaken over a three-year cycle, in line with NHC's [Greenspace](#) and [Tree Strategies](#). A programme of planned and reactive tree risk

management is carried out by specialist contractors and managed by the NHC Tree Officer. Further reactive tree works should be carried out to address more immediate dangers identified and a proactive approach taken to any reports of misuse of the site.

The large weeping willow is once again of a size able to create a darker section of the pond when the growth of the surround vegetation is high. Although this is currently not as problematic as when identified in the previous GAP, it would be prudent to act before it becomes a more significant issue. This has the added benefit of opening the eastern reed filled section of the pond up once again and decreasing the leaf litter entering here.

The grounds maintenance contract for the site ensures that any issues regarding equipment, structures or natural features is quickly identified and minor issues can be dealt with. More significant issues which cannot be dealt with are reported to the contract manager. Where required the feature or area can be marked as unsafe until appropriate action has been taken.

The central route through the park is currently unlit. However, there has been desire expressed for the installation of low-key lighting along the central avenue. The feasibility, desirability, and environmental impact of such action can be investigated, and stakeholders consulted as part of this plan.

4.3 Well Maintained and Clean

With its prominent location within the town there is no issue arising from fly tipping and a regular litter pick is undertaken around the open space as part of regular checks by the ground maintenance team. The Hitchin Forum also organises a litter pick twice a year and the FoBC carry out some additional picks more frequently. Litter bins are maintained under the ground maintenance contract, dog bins are not provided at NHC greenspaces. Dog owners are expected to remove fouling from site, although dog waste can be disposed of in litter bins.

This grounds maintenance contract should be monitored to ensure that both the mown and surfaced paths are well-maintained and the appropriate grassland mowing regime is being carried out as specified, with the annual cut and lift of

conservation grassland carried out in July as best management practice. To maintain the diversity of species found within the grassland areas and reducing the level of soil nutrients favoured by a select few species which can out compete others, it is important that the material is removed from site once cut.

4.4 Sustainability

The grounds maintenance contract is reviewed and tendered periodically to ensure the service remains effective and efficient. Environmentally sustainable practices are built into the ground maintenance contract, benefiting biodiversity and reducing cost.

There are no significant changes proposed which would affect the ongoing maintenance of Butts Close and costs should therefore remain stable. Many of the tasks proposed within this GAP can be achieved by modifying existing maintenance and the involvement of volunteer groups.

The site may offer some small, limited, potential for inclusion to gain funding through local Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) projects. BNG is an approach to development that aims to leave the environment in a measurably better state than it was previously. This enhancement can be either on site, such as creating tree cover on the development land, or off site such as funding the creation of wildflower meadows in local parks and open spaces.

4.5 Conservation and Heritage

The area of conservation cut grassland around the pond was enhanced through wildflower seeding in 2017 as a trial to see if this would be cost effective. The decision taken was to select hardy species able to compete with rank grasses in fertile soil. These included black knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), ox-eye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) and common bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*). This has been a success and there is now an improved floral diversity able to support a greater abundance of wildlife. Based on this success the other areas of conservation cut grassland will undergo the same enhancement, utilising the same seed mix. To aid wildflower establishment and reduce the vigour of the long grass, yellow rattle, which struggles with the initial amenity mow, can be retroactively spread through small areas of the conservation areas in subsequent years by volunteers.

The process for creating wildflower rich grasslands is an involved process in the first year to aid establishment, requiring prior ground preparation work and regular mowing to inhibit faster growing species. While this preparation work is being carried out it provides an opportunity to enlarge some of the conservation cut grassland into adjacent areas which are currently underutilised. This would bring the current wildflower grassland around the pond further west towards the path and expand the most southern portion of conservation cut grassland south towards the boundary of Bedford Rd. The area of conservation grass adjacent to the swimming pool will also be moved into the mapped areas of conservation grassland for the site.

This will significantly increase the amount and the value of wildlife friendly habitat within Butts Close and management of this aims to further enhance this. Retaining a small area of conservation cut grassland over winter each year by leaving this out of the cut and lift can provide valuable winter habitat for wildlife. Butterflies especially rely on safe places to lay eggs and hibernate, and amphibians will seek shelter within long grass. As the grassland is already divided by location this can be achieved by leaving one section uncut, around 1/5 the total area, and rotating the chosen area each year so that no area is left uncut for 2 years in a row. Undertaking similar management of the longer scrub type material along the boundary north and south of the pond, by carrying out alternate yearly cuts, provides additional year-round habitat while remaining manageable.

The work that went into the pond during the previous GAPs greatly benefited the pond and so only minor work is required to ensure it remains an excellent area for wildlife. As mentioned in 4.2 the large willow is again at a point where a crown reduction is appropriate to allow light to enter the pond and reduce the amount of leaf litter falling into the eastern portion.

This will allow the floating reedbed to continue to flourish both on the framework and on the surrounding banks, filtering nutrients and pollutants from the water. The reeds within the pond have been successful, spreading from this eastern section and the surrounding banks to more central portions of the pond but risk taking over the whole pond. Some light work, removing a portion of the reeds and algal growth allows small sections of open water to be retained and a more mixed habitat to the benefit of the previously added *Potamogeton natans* which is in low abundance. To further complement this the marginal vegetation around the pond can be cut and lifted along

one bank per year to improve the diversity within. This work both within and around the pond is suited to volunteer teams.

There are few tree planting opportunities due to the constraints imposed by underground services which cross Butts Close. The brick wall alongside Gregans House in the south of the open space is one suitable area, free from underground constraints. Here there is currently an area of scrub and bramble from which the conservation grassland extends into the park. This 80m section can be planted with species rich hedgerow, creating further diverse habitat for wildlife in compliment with the enhancement work to the meadows.

Otherwise consideration should be given to the trees planted along the central avenue, which will continue to be monitored for signs of disease or poor health and replaced as required.

The hedgerow planted alongside the swimming pool in 2020 by the FoBC has started to establish and can be brought into the program of works to ensure its ongoing success. This includes incremental trimming of the hedgerow every few years to encourage lateral growth and replacing any failures to avoid developing gaps. There has been a desire to extend this along the boundary with the swimming pool carpark. However, this is not a particularly suitable location for a hedgerow which would require intensive management to keep it at an appropriate height and scale to retain sight lines into Butts Close and meet common land requirements. With evergreen trees casting shade which would further impact the hedge these factors would lower its value with little leaf and fruit produced.

In early spring the bank alongside Bedford Rd becomes white with snowdrops.

These are accompanied by crocuses which remain from planting carried out by the rotary club in 2010. This is a pleasant wash of colour along the boundary and further bulb planting along this bank will allow them to bloom in the future with the variety of colourful springtime flowers a more formal complement to the wildflower enhanced grassland.



Crocuses west of the tarmac path

Members of the local community have expressed a desire to see part of the site become a local wildlife site. While the significant improvements made to the pond and surrounding grassland, alongside the ongoing maintenance plans outlined in this GAP, may in the long term produce an area which achieves similarly high standards for biodiversity, there are two key factors which will prevent the site becoming a local wildlife site. Firstly, its long history as an area of nutrient-enriched amenity grassland has greatly reduced its natural botanical diversity. Secondly, while its subsequent artificial enrichment through seeding is beneficial for wildlife, this is not a natural process, something required by the assessment criteria. Ongoing management will nevertheless aim to maintain and enhance this area as a valuable site for wildlife.

4.6 Community Involvement

As part of the new GAP, occasional volunteer work parties will be organised by CMS to carry out some of the practical habitat management tasks detailed in the plan, giving the Friends of Butts Close the opportunity to get involved in practical management with the CMS volunteer team. All community involvement will be directed towards achieving the aims of the GAP.

4.7 Marketing

Community and volunteer events, including but not limited to the Regiment Fitness exercise groups and travelling fairs which use Butts Close, should be promoted to maximise the use of the site by the local community, while maintaining the responsibilities of NHC for licensing and environmental health issues.

NHC regularly produce news articles which, alongside the CMS own quarterly newsletter, promote planned management activities and achievements across greenspaces. Opportunities to engage with the development of new management plans are promoted online and through site notices.

Significant projects to improve the site and engage the community will be shared with local Councillors and celebrated through press releases.

5.0 ACTION PLANS AND MAPS

5.1 Annual and regular actions

Ref no.	Action	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
0.1	Manage amenity grassland area according to mowing regime	C4	Monthly	NHC	GM	GM Budget	-		
0.2	Cut and lift of conservation grassland and wildflower seeded areas including the removal of arisings	C4	July	NHC	GM	GM Budget	-		
0.3	Amenity mow of pathways through wildflower area adjacent to the pond	A2/A3	Apr - Sep	NHC	GM	GM Budget	-		
0.4	Monitor wildflower areas for species dominance which may require action	B3	Mar-Sep	NHC	GM/Vol	GM Budget/ Vol	-		
0.5	Tree risk safety survey and remedial actions	B1	Every 3 years	NHC	External Contract	Capital Budget	-		
0.6	Maintain surfaced pathways throughout site	C3	All year	NHC	GM	GM Budget	-		
0.7	Health and safety risk monitoring and actioning any arising issues	B2/B3	Ongoing	NHC	GM	GM Budget	-		
0.8	Prompt removal of graffiti and litter including emptying of bins	A1/B2/C2	All year	NHC	GM	GM Budget	-		
0.9	Maintenance of site furniture, signs, and interpretation	A1/C3	All year	NHC	GM	GM Budget	-		
1.0	Alternate cutting scrub boundary north or south of the of the pond each year	C4	Aug/Sep	NHC	GM	GM Budget	-		
1.1	Retain small portion of grassland each year on a rotation basis according to map	E6	Ongoing	NHC	GM	GM Budget	-		
1.2	Annual action plan review	D1/D2/B3	Ongoing	NHC/ CMS	NHC/ CMS	Internal Resource	-		

5.2 Year 1 2022-23

Ref no.	Action	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
1.1	Sow Wildflower seeds within the remaining areas of conservation grassland	E2	Oct	NHC/CMS	CMS	Capital Budget	£2500	6.2	
1.2	Crown reduction of weeping willow adjacent to the pond	E1	Oct	NHC/CMS	CMS	Capital Budget	£1500	6.1	
1.3	Cut and lift of Wildflowers around pond area	C4/E5	July	NHC	JOC	GM Budget	-	6.2	
1.4	Clear marginal vegetation from around 1/2 the pond	E3	Nov	CMS	CMS	Vol. Time	-	6.4	
1.5	Clear algae and some of reeds from western side of pond	E3	Nov	CMS	CMS	Vol. Time	-	6.4	
1.6	Expand conservation cut and lift management in south-eastern portion of the park	E4	Aug/Sep	NHC	JOC	GM Budget	-		
1.7	Carry out further bulb planting on the bank alongside the western boundary	E5	Nov	CMS/NHC	CMS/NHC	Vol. Time	£200		
1.8	Prune hedgerow alongside swimming pool to promote lateral growth	E7	Nov	NHC	CMS	Vol. Time	-	6.3	
1.9	Upgrade litter bins to dual recycling	C1	June	NHC	NHC	Capital Budget	£5000		
2.0	Extend the mown pathways along desire lines through grassland around pond	A3	Apr - Sep	NHC	NHC	GM Budget	-		
2.1	Sow yellow rattle in conservation grassland around the pond	E2	Nov	CMS	CMS	Vol. Time	£50		

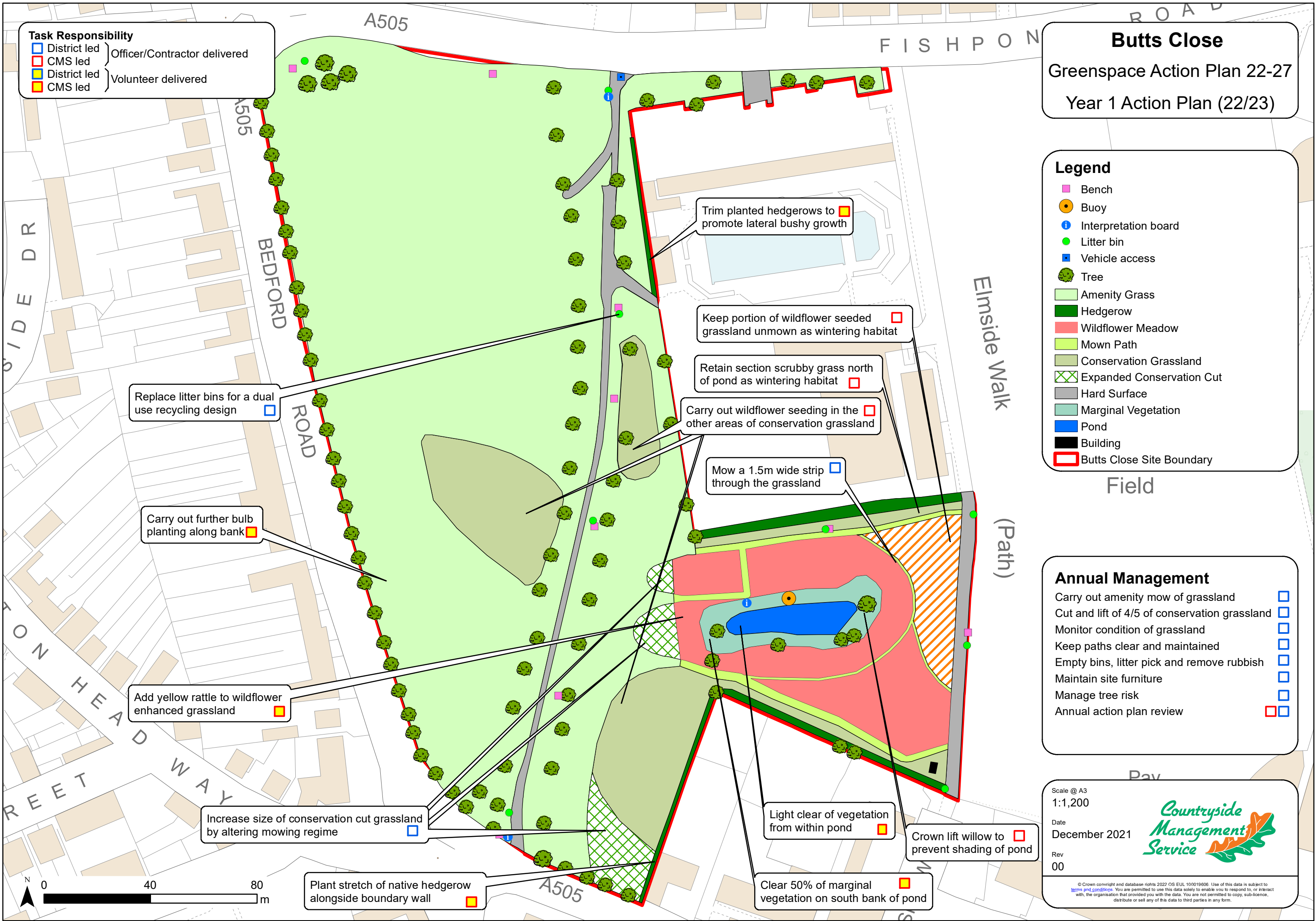
Task Responsibility

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<input type="checkbox"/> District led	} Volunteer delivered
<input type="checkbox"/> CMS led	

Butts Close
 Greenspace Action Plan 22-27
 Year 1 Action Plan (22/23)

Legend

- Bench
- Buoy
- Interpretation board
- Litter bin
- Vehicle access
- Tree
- Amenity Grass
- Hedgerow
- Wildflower Meadow
- Mown Path
- Conservation Grassland
- Expanded Conservation Cut
- Hard Surface
- Marginal Vegetation
- Pond
- Building
- Butts Close Site Boundary



Replace litter bins for a dual use recycling design

Carry out further bulb planting along bank

Add yellow rattle to wildflower enhanced grassland

Increase size of conservation cut grassland by altering mowing regime

Plant stretch of native hedgerow alongside boundary wall

Trim planted hedgerows to promote lateral bushy growth

Keep portion of wildflower seeded grassland unmown as wintering habitat

Retain section scrubby grass north of pond as wintering habitat

Carry out wildflower seeding in the other areas of conservation grassland

Mow a 1.5m wide strip through the grassland

Light clear of vegetation from within pond

Crown lift willow to prevent shading of pond

Clear 50% of marginal vegetation on south bank of pond

Annual Management

- Carry out amenity mow of grassland
- Cut and lift of 4/5 of conservation grassland
- Monitor condition of grassland
- Keep paths clear and maintained
- Empty bins, litter pick and remove rubbish
- Maintain site furniture
- Manage tree risk
- Annual action plan review

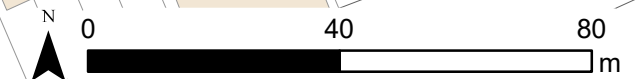
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Date
December 2021

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5.3 Year 2 2023-24

Ref no.	Action	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
2.1	Carry out rough amenity mowing where wildflowers have been sown	C4/E2	Apr - Sep	NHC	GM	GM Budget	-	6.2	
2.2	Clear marginal vegetation from remaining 1/2 the pond	E3	Nov	CMS	CMS	Vol. Time	-	6.4	
2.3	Cut and lift of wildflower area next to pond	C4	July	NHC	GM	GM Budget	-		
2.4	Sow yellow rattle in all other areas of conservation grassland	E2	Nov	CMS	Vol	Vol. Time	£200		

Task Responsibility

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<input type="checkbox"/> CMS led	
<input type="checkbox"/> District led	} Volunteer delivered
<input type="checkbox"/> CMS led	

Butts Close
 Greenspace Action Plan 22-27
 Year 2 Action Plan (23/24)

Legend

- Butts Close Site Boundary
- Tree
- Bench
- Buoy
- Interpretation board
- Litter bin
- Vehicle access
- Amenity Grass
- Hedgerow
- Wildflower Meadow
- Mown Path
- Conservation Grassland
- Bulb Planting
- Hard Surface
- Tall Vegetation
- Pond
- Building

Annual Management

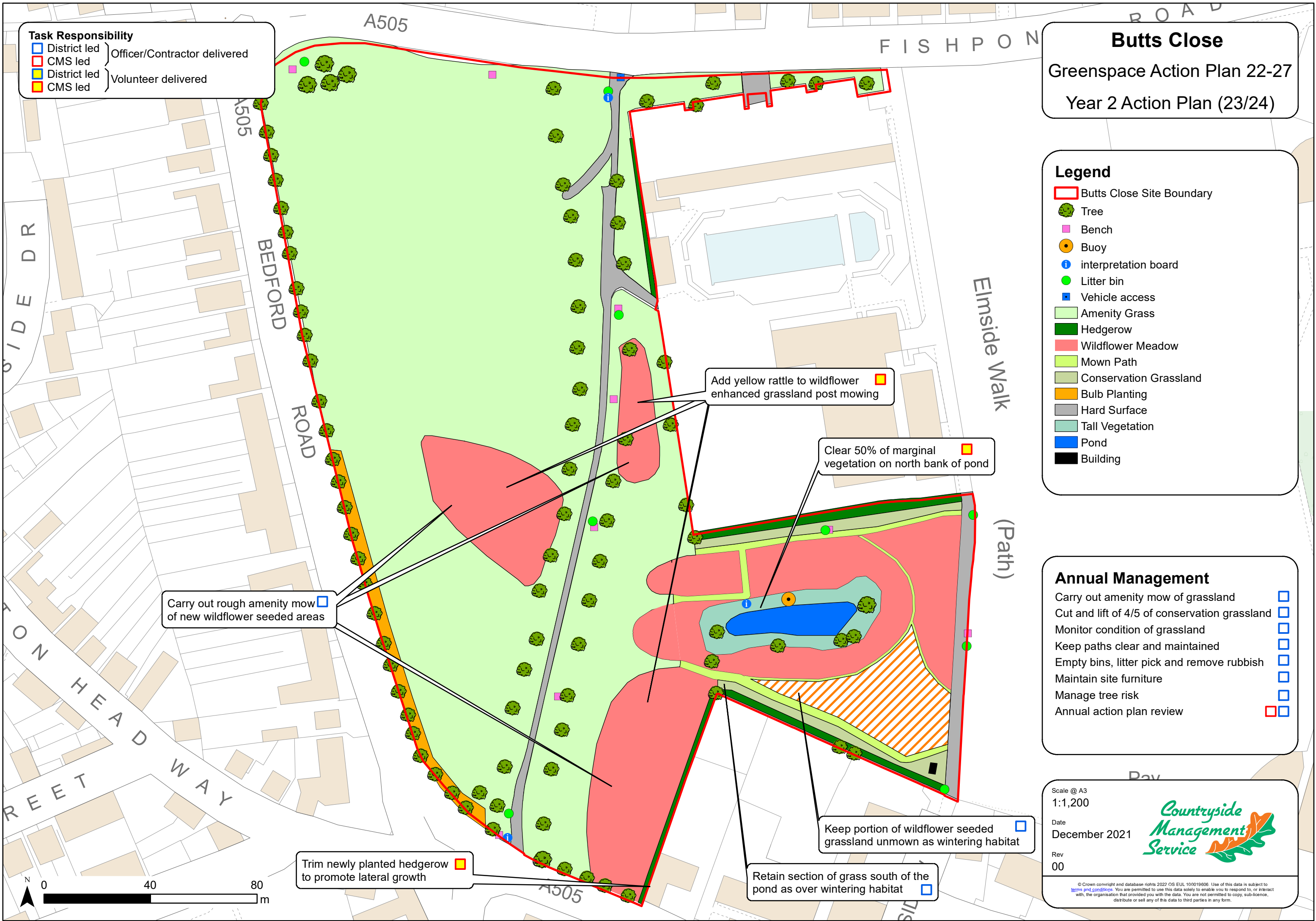
- Carry out amenity mow of grassland
- Cut and lift of 4/5 of conservation grassland
- Monitor condition of grassland
- Keep paths clear and maintained
- Empty bins, litter pick and remove rubbish
- Maintain site furniture
- Manage tree risk
- Annual action plan review

Scale @ A3
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Date
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Carry out rough amenity mow of new wildflower seeded areas

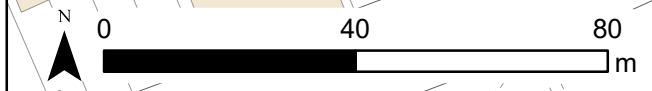
Add yellow rattle to wildflower enhanced grassland post mowing

Clear 50% of marginal vegetation on north bank of pond

Trim newly planted hedgerow to promote lateral growth

Keep portion of wildflower seeded grassland unmown as wintering habitat

Retain section of grass south of the pond as over wintering habitat



5.4 Year 3-5 2024-27

Ref no.	Action	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
3.1	Restore all areas of wildflowers to conservation cut and lift management	C4	Yr3 - July	NHC	GM	GM Budget	-	6.2	
3.2	Incremental cut of hedgerow alongside swimming pool	E7	Yr 3 - Nov	CMS	CMS	Vol. Time	-	6.3	
4.1	Clear marginal vegetation from around 1/2 of pond	E3	Yr 4- Nov	CMS	CMS	Vol. Time	-		
5.1	Remove any remaining tree guards and supports no longer required	E7	Yr 5 - Nov	NHC	GM	GM Budget	-		
5.2	Clear marginal vegetation from remaining 1/2 of pond	E3	Yr 5 - Nov	CMS	CMS	Vol. Time	-	6.4	
5.3	Review the growth of trees around the pond to ensure they are not over shading again	B1/B3	Yr 5 - Summer	NHC/ CMS	NHC/ CMS	Officer Time	-		
5.4	Draft new Green Space Action Plan	F1/F2/B3	Yr 5 - Winter	NHC/ CMS	CMS	Officer Time	-		

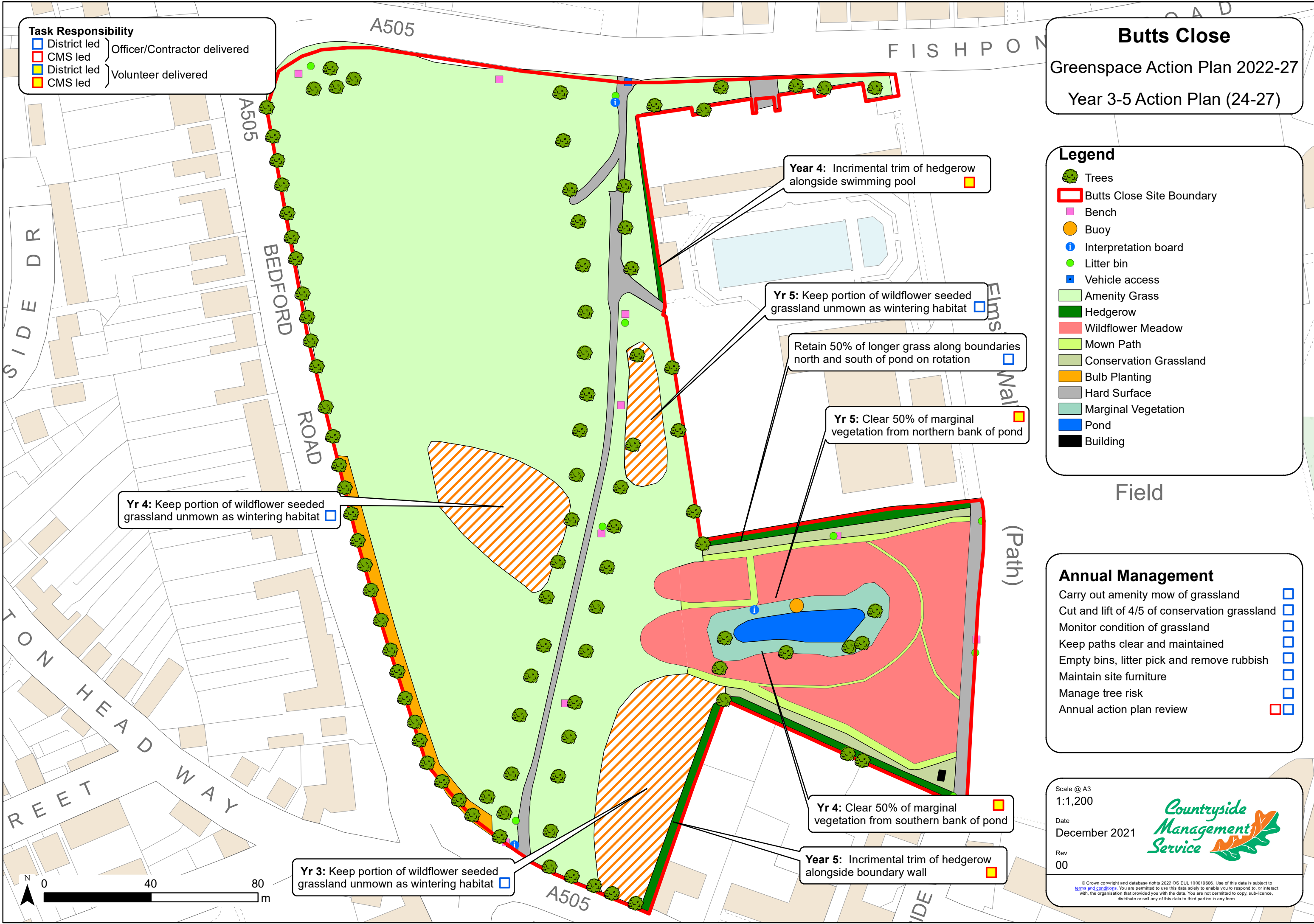
Task Responsibility

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<input type="checkbox"/> CMS led	
<input type="checkbox"/> District led	} Volunteer delivered
<input type="checkbox"/> CMS led	

Butts Close
 Greenspace Action Plan 2022-27
 Year 3-5 Action Plan (24-27)

Legend

- Trees
- Butts Close Site Boundary
- Bench
- Buoy
- Interpretation board
- Litter bin
- Vehicle access
- Amenity Grass
- Hedgerow
- Wildflower Meadow
- Mown Path
- Conservation Grassland
- Bulb Planting
- Hard Surface
- Marginal Vegetation
- Pond
- Building



Field

(Path)

Annual Management

- Carry out amenity mow of grassland
- Cut and lift of 4/5 of conservation grassland
- Monitor condition of grassland
- Keep paths clear and maintained
- Empty bins, litter pick and remove rubbish
- Maintain site furniture
- Manage tree risk
- Annual action plan review

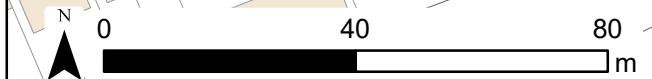
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6.0 SPECIFICATIONS

6.1 Tree works around pond

- a) Weeping willow: Carry out a crown reduction to the level previously achieved in 2016.
- b) Resulting material to be chipped and removed off site

6.2 Hedgerow management alongside swimming pool

- a) The timing of this work must be carried out outside of the nesting season between November and February.
- b) The hedgerow should be cut on a 3-year rotation once established to allow for developing fruits and buds in the second year.
- c) Utilise an incremental cut which retains around 10cm of fresh growth at the top of the hedge each year. The cut should aim to remove more material from the top of the hedgerow than the base to create an A frame shape to the hedge. This retains the thick wide base of the hedgerow while maintaining the height of the hedge and promoting new growth from the fresh cut.

6.3 Establish wildflower seed mix in conservation grassland area

- a) This work should be undertaken while the grass is short, ideally in October.
- b) The work can be undertaken by volunteers or a contractor.
- c) The ground within the sowing area should be scarified using a mechanical scarifier, and approximately 60-70% of the soil should be visible once scarification is complete.
- d) Across the prepared area, seed should be hand sown thinly at approximately 2g of seed per square metre.
- e) Damp sand should be mixed with the seed to act as a carrier and identify where seeds has been sown.
- f) Immediately after sowing the ground should be rolled using a heavy roller, to ensure the seed is fully in contact with the soil.
- g) In the year following sowing, bring the section into the amenity mowing regime. Restore it to the conservation cut regime two years after sowing.
- h) The area where this mix is intended to be established is 0.55ha.

- i) Sow a mixture of hardy native wildflowers which will provide a variety of colours throughout the spring and summer and will be able to compete in a fertile soil.
- j) Example of species list and percentages by weight below:
 - Yellow Rattle *Rhinanthus minor* 5%
 - Cowslip *Primula veris* 7.5%
 - Meadow Buttercup *Ranunculus acris* 10%
 - Black Knapweed *Centaurea nigra* 10%
 - Oxeye Daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare* 10%
 - Field Scabious *Knautia arvensis* 7.5%
 - Agrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria* 2.5%
 - Meadow Cranesbill *Geranium pratense* 2%
 - Harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*
 - Musk Mallow *Malva moschata* 5%
 - Perforate St. John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum* 1.5%
 - Common Toadflax *Linaria vulgaris* 2%
 - Common Verbena *Verbena officinalis*
 - Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum* 7.5%
 - Common Bird's-foot Trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* 5%
 - Tufted Vetch *Vicia cracca*
 - Selfheal *Prunella vulgaris* 7.5%
 - Wild Majorum *Origanum vulgare* 3%
 - Meadow Vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* 2%
 - Wild Carrot *Daucus carota* 10%
 - Yarrow *Achillea millefolium* 2%

6.4 Vegetation management around the pond

- a) A rough cut at least 2 inches in height will be utilised on vegetation along the banks of the pond.
- b) Cut material to be removed and placed under scrub tree line to the north of the pond.