



**OUGHTONHEAD COMMON
LOCAL NATURE RESERVE
HITCHIN**

GREENSPACE ACTION PLAN

2011 - 2017





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List of Amendments

Version 2 to version 3

1. Page 4. Updated version of List of Amendments page.
2. Page 16-23 and 26-27. Indication of completed actions in comments boxes in Action Plan and tick boxes on the Management Maps
3. Page 16. In 'Action Plan – Access'. Under comments for 'Create Woodland Path', the addition of 'With Burford Ray project'.
4. Page 17. In 'Action Plan – Site Furniture'. Change text 'Design dog access/bin signs' to 'Design/install dog access signs'.
5. Page 17. In 'Action Plan – Site Furniture'. Change text 'Install dog access/bin signs' to 'Design/install dog bin signs'.
6. Page 17. In Action Plan – Site Furniture'. 'Riverside path / dog bin sites' to relevant entrances.
7. Page 21. In Action Plan – River Restoration. Add text to action by 'contractor'.
8. Page 21. In Action Plan – River Restoration. Add text to comments 'Further work planned for 2015/16'.



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Purpose of This Document

The purpose of this document is to be a guide to the people maintaining and developing Oughtonhead Common. It is intended to be a document that is used on a regular basis and is based on annual management maps. The maps show actions planned for each year with the resulting change represented on the following year's map. The plan will be reviewed annually to ensure it is effective and relevant.

This document also aims to link together the various strategies and objectives of North Herts District Council (NHDC), who manage the site.

These include NHDC's Corporate Core Values, which are -

- Aiming to deliver what customers want
- Delivering high quality services
- Striving to continuously innovate and improve
- Encouraging a listening and learning culture amongst our colleagues
- Promoting equality in service delivery and within our organisation

The following documents have also influenced this Greenspace Action Plan

- A 50 year vision for the Wildlife and Natural Habitats of Hertfordshire (Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan)
- Wetland Restoration Manual – The Wildlife Trusts
- The Chalk Stream Habitat Manual (Wild Trout Trust)
- Oughtonhead Common Management Plan 2003-2008 and previous managements plans
- A Biological Survey of Oughtonhead Common (Lumley 2002)
- River Oughton Rehabilitation plan (Freeman 2002)
- The Manual of River Restoration Techniques – The River Restoration Centre (2002)
- The Effectiveness of Ditch Management for Wildlife in the Broads and Somerset Levels and Moors ESA's
- Cultural Strategy (NHDC)
- Greenspace Strategy & associated action plans (NHDC)
- Tree Strategy (NHDC)
- Sustainable Community Strategy 2009 – 2021 (NHDC)
- Grounds Maintenance Contract 2004 – 2012 and succeeding contract (NHDC)
- North Hertfordshire District Council Green Infrastructure Plan
- North Hertfordshire Landscape Strategy
- North Hertfordshire District Green Infrastructure Plan 2009



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Introduction

Oughtonhead Common is an area of wetland and grassland habitats, woodland and scrub situated along the northwest edge of Hitchin, North Hertfordshire. The River Oughton forms the northern boundary. The site is well used for informal recreation including walking, dog-walking, jogging, horse riding, mountain biking and picnicking. Oughtonhead Common has in the past been considered to be one of the premier wetland sites in Hertfordshire. It is still the largest base-rich marsh on chalk in Hertfordshire and many of its features are priority habitat types in the County Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). The site has long been a magnet for naturalists and much has been recorded and written about the site since the early nineteenth century.

Tenure / Ownership

The site is owned by North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC).

Previous Plans

Oughtonhead Common has had various management plans from 1974. The previous plans all followed a traditional style. Although this plan will incorporate much of the same information it will take the form of a Greenspace Action Plan (GAP). GAP's are simple, map-based management plans designed to be read and understood by a variety of people who might be interested in the management of a particular site. This plan replaces the plan that ran from 2003-2008. Although some actions were not completed, a lot of positive work has happened on the site over that period. As well as positive habitat work to ditches, hedges and ponds, the main focus was around access and interpretation. A total of £63,000 was invested in the site with £50,000 of this secured from external funding sources. Pressures on Local Government finances mean that external funding has become essential in enabling management on sites like Oughtonhead Common. During the course of this plan funding will be sought to fund habitat improvements.



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Legislation / Status / Restrictions

- Part of the extended Metropolitan Green Belt
- Public Open Space
- Common Land
- County Wildlife Site
- Local Nature Reserve
- Invertebrate Site Register.
- Protected Species Site. Pipistrelle Bats are found on site.
- Part of the site (the grazing compartments) are entered into Countryside Stewardship Scheme (started 2002 – expires 2012) which dictates the way the grassland area is managed.
- Strategic Green Infrastructure (NHDC Green Infrastructure Plan)
- Covered by local bye-laws (see Appendix 3).

Site History

A more detailed description of the site history can be found in previous management plans.

Oughtonhead Common has a long history of human use. In size, the site remains very much as it was in the 1800s. Probably because of the inherent wetness of the soils, the Common itself escaped any significant cultivation. Since medieval times it was primarily used for the grazing of livestock, once being an important part of the Common field system of Hitchin. In addition to grazing the economic importance of the river and Common lay in the grain mill built in the late 16th century at Westmill and the growing of willow to provide “withies” for basket making and reed and sedges for thatching.

Under the Commons Act of 1899 the Common was declared available for public recreation and possibly this, coupled with changes in farming practice, led in c1914 to the cessation of grazing. In the 1920s the growing of willow on the north bank of the river was also abandoned and the trees allowed to encroach to improve shooting. By 1922, increasing recreational use of the Common prompted the local authority to issue a set of bye-laws.

The expansion of Hitchin saw urban development move ever closer to the eastern boundary of the site. In 1953 the Common, springs, river and associated woods were listed by the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) because of its wildlife richness and diversity. In 1967 under the new Commons Act the site was re-registered under Hitchin Urban District Council and, since no Commoner registered Common rights at that time, all rights except those pertaining to rights of way, were rescinded. The SSSI was de-designated in 1970 because of the deterioration of the site due to drying out of the peat marsh and lack of water flow from the springs.



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The last 100 years has seen an accelerated decline of the floral diversity of the Common mainly through the loss of grazing and drying out of the site. To illustrate the magnitude of the problem, in his detailed study of the flora, James (1980) sourced previous records and compiled a view of the changing habitats on the Common since 1880. By placing particular plants into broad groups reflecting their preferred habitats (the limitations of which he clearly highlighted) he has illustrated the changing face of the Common. Thus wetland species declined from around 60% of the flora in 1880 to only 26% in 1980. Similarly, the dry and damp woodland species increased over this period (~12% to ~26%) as had the scrub and colonist species (~10% to ~25%); dry grassland remained fairly constant at just over 20% probably reflecting it occupying a “buffer” zone between the declining wetland and increasing scrub and woodland. However, since this study, the installation of a sluice gate to increase water levels on the site and the re-introduction of grazing (see below) has, to some extent, reversed this downward spiral. The area was recorded as a grade A site by the Herts Biological Records Centre.

Most recently, in 2001, in conjunction with English Nature the site was registered as a Local Nature Reserve. Local Nature Reserves are sites that are important for wildlife, geology, education or public enjoyment. Oughtonhead Common was declared in recognition of it's wildlife value and the dedication of the local community to it's continued positive management.

Site Description

Oughtonhead Common (TL168304 centre) lies to the northwest of Hitchin in the county of Hertfordshire. The main site is roughly triangular in shape, covers approximately 16 hectares, is approximately 60m above sea level and contains a variety of habitats including swamp, tall herb fen, fen meadow, dry grassland, dry and wet woodland and scrub.

At it's northern boundary the site abuts the River Oughton, which arises at Oughtonhead Springs. Here a series of springs emanate from the chalk aquifer to the west. The river flows northeast where it passes Westmill Farm, site of a 17th century grain mill. It then runs through Burford Ray, a thin strip of woodland, to eventually join the River Hiz at Ickleford and thence the River Ivel. The Common is bounded to the east by a mixture of arable land and playing fields that adjoin the Westmill estate of Hitchin, and to the west by arable farmland.

Further to the west (2-3km) lies the beginning of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Chilterns stretch from the River Thames in Oxfordshire and are nationally protected as some of the finest countryside in the UK. The Chilterns Conservation Board have in the past funded projects on the Common as it is seen as an important adjunct to the AONB. They are currently promoting the Chilterns Common's Project that will run until 2015.



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To the north of the river, running the length of the main body of the Common, is a densely wooded, thin strip of marshy ground (~6.4ha) that is currently managed as a nature reserve by the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust; beyond this is arable land. Adjoining the south-western tip of the site is a small beech copse, known as the beech spinney which is continuous with the site but not part of the LNR. Other sections of land that form part of this Greenspace Action Plan but are not part of the LNR include 3 paths connecting Burford Ray and the Riverside Path with Burford Way. Also, a section of woodland to the west of the allotments that is owned by NHDC will be considered in the plan and future management designed to compliment the Common.

Access

Oughtonhead Common is a Public Open Space has open access on foot. The site is well used by the general public for a range of leisure activities including dog walking, walking, jogging, mountain bike riding, picnicking and horse riding. Since 1996, the centre of the Common has been fenced to provide three grazing compartments. Public access to these compartments is provided via stiles and kissing gates and a series of informal paths crisscross the site. There are sections of boardwalk through the wetter areas and perimeter paths are currently regularly topped with wood chip. Vehicle access for management purposes is possible from Bedford Rd, Westmill Lane, Swinburne Playing Fields and Oughtonhead Lane.

The main access is along a Restricted Byway (Hitchin Restricted Byway 1) that runs from the A600 at Burford Ray along the southern bank of the river to Oughtonhead Springs. This is more commonly known as the Riverside Path. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 allowed Local Authorities to change 'Roads Used as Public Paths' (RUPP) to 'Restricted Byways'. This now means that motorbike and motor vehicle access is prohibited. The Riverside Path has been surfaced from Bedford Road to the access gate near the Chalky. Also surfaced as part of the easy access route are three paths connecting the Riverside Path to Burford Way and the Westmill Estate. These are Westmill Lane, the path running along side the allotments and Honey Works and the path that runs along side the building currently used as a day nursery. All these paths have easy-access kissing gates to allow wheelchair and buggy access but not motorbike access. The Westmill Lane entrance has RADAR key access to allow access with a motorised mobility vehicle. On Bedford Road, the pavement has been extended from the bus stop to the entrance to the Common to allow safe access at this point. This also now allows walkers to complete a series of circular walks at the Burford Ray end of the site.



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The Common is easily accessed from the Westmill Estate and Hitchin, and is well connected to the wider countryside through the Public Rights of Way network (see map p25).

Approximately 100-300m north of the site runs the Icknield Way an ancient green lane.

There is a car park on Swinburne Avenue playing fields that is used by visitors to the Common.

Thanks to significant investment from NHDC and funding secured from Biffaward, the site is now well sign-posted, has good interpretation and a site information leaflet. Two walks are promoted on the leaflet, one of which – the River Walk - is suitable for all users.

Aims and Objectives

NHDC's Mission Statement for Oughtonhead Common is as follows –

- To recreate a vibrant community-based open space that focuses on maintaining the diverse flora and fauna that can be found at Oughtonhead Common.
- To link with at least one of the Council's Strategic Priorities. To promote the economic, environmental and social well being of the district.

Corporate Vision for Parks and Open Spaces

NHDC manages parks and open spaces throughout the four towns in the District. These form an integral element of the environment and appropriate provision and management is essential to meet the Council's vision to:-

- Provide high quality services which put people first
- Provide value for money by running our services more efficiently
- Promote the economic, environmental and social well-being of the district

Green space forms a vital element in any urban environment. It provides a sense of natural calm in a man made environment. This has a direct affect on the social well-being of residents and helps to support the ecology and bio-diversity of the urban environment.

Corporate Objectives

- To contribute to the implementation of the Council's Environmental and community policies.
- To promote and manage the site to meet the local communities expectations.



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- To ensure contractors and their staff are sufficiently trained to maintain the site to the specified standards.
- To provide long term planning to ensure good planned proactive management.
- To provide a high standard of management and maintenance of Oughtonhead Common.
- To provide sufficient continuing resources to meet the above objectives.

Green Flag

During the course of this Greenspace Action Plan NHDC will be working towards achieving the Green Flag Award for Oughtonhead Common. The Green Flag Award scheme is the benchmark national standard for parks and green spaces in the UK. To be eligible, sites must be freely accessible to the public and perform well against the following eight criteria:

- A welcoming place
- Healthy, safe and secure
- Clean and well maintained
- Sustainability
- Conservation and heritage
- Community involvement
- Marketing
- Management

The Award is given on an annual basis. After the award period ends, sites must re-apply to retain the award.

Management Objectives, Maintenance and Development Arrangements

To maintain Oughtonhead Common as one of the premier wetland sites in Hertfordshire and, through the creation of new wildlife-rich habitat, secure its long-term future as a place for the enjoyment of nature for generations to come.

To this end the **site objectives** are:

- To improve river, ditch and bank-side habitat, to encourage water vole, brown trout, kingfisher and support the features they require to survive.
- To improve and extend wetland habitats and increase biodiversity.
- To continue improving the quality of the existing unimproved grassland and increase the overall proportion whilst diversifying the scrub habitat.
- To involve the local community in the management of the site.
- To control alien and invasive species.
- To maintain and enhance the recreational value of the whole site and increase enjoyment and understanding of it by visitors.
- To retain a balance between use of the site by visitors and wildlife, particularly by encouraging appropriate use of the site.



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These objectives will be achieved through a range of actions described in this plan including:

- Implement flow control measures to increase the rate of flow of the river Oughton.
- Manage bank erosion and improve sections of the bank for wildlife.
- Restore the sedge bed, clear the northern ditch, restore the fen, create ponds and maintain the reed bed.
- Implement a programme of scrub management within the grazing compartments.
- Extend the grazed area with funding from DEFRA's Higher Level Scheme.
- Monitor and control Ragwort, Thistle, Snowberry and Himalayan Balsam.
- Continue to promote the site and the Friends Group through guided walks, leaflet distribution, up-to-date on-site information, consultation around this plan and promotion of the Wetland restoration project.
- Ensure any issues around misuse of the site are reported and dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Support the Friends Group to represent the site locally and to deliver appropriate aspects of the plan.
- Maintain site access structures and signage.
- Apply for funding from sources external to NHDC to enable the above actions.

Management

Site management is directed by the Grounds Team and Countryside Management Service (CMS), with tasks and operations undertaken by the Friends of Oughtonhead Common volunteers and John O'Conner Grounds Maintenance Ltd and other specialist contractors. Bob Williams of Maydencroft Farm is the grazier; he maintains the fencing and water source and is responsible for all husbandry relating to the cattle. He also maintains some of the paths around the grazing area.

In 2002 the site was entered into Defra's Countryside Stewardship Scheme to provide financial support for the grassland management works.

Grounds Maintenance Contract

The grounds maintenance service for the North Herts District is externalised and is currently undertaken by John O'Conner's Grounds Maintenance Ltd.

At Oughtonhead Common, the grounds contract currently covers the maintenance of the following items –

- Dog bins
- Litter picking and collection from litter bins
- Leaf Collection/Removal



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Conservation/ Biodiversity Management

NHDC works with CMS to maintain and enhance the biodiversity of the site. CMS is part of Hertfordshire County Council and its work is co-funded by the majority of District and Borough Councils within the County, including NHDC. In return the Districts receive advice and technical expertise that would not otherwise be available. Additionally CMS are experienced in managing volunteer task groups, liaising with local interested groups and developing friends of groups with the District Council involved as a key element throughout.

The Friends of Oughtonhead Common, supported by NHDC and CMS, are actively involved with the site's management. CMS volunteers and the Friends are currently involved in undertaking the following activities:

- Path maintenance
- Site furniture maintenance
- Litter clearance
- Hedge management
- Scrub management
- Pond maintenance and improvement
- Management of invasive species
- River and bank-side habitat work

Many of the actions in this Greenspace Action Plan are outside the scope of what can be achieved by volunteers. These actions will be carried out by specialist contractors under the supervision of CMS Officers. More detail can be found in the Action Plan (pages 16 - 23).

Issues

The main issues relating to the site are:

- Drying out of the site, due to a decrease in rainfall and abstraction of underground water.
- Invasive species including Mink, Signal Crayfish, Sycamore, Himalayan Balsam, Ragwort, Thistles, Water Fern.
- Litter.
- Dog mess and erosion of the river bank at dog entry points.
- Unauthorised use by off-road motorbikes and quad bikes. This has been less of an issue since the site was fenced and access points improved in 2007.
- Damage to the grazing area fence by unknown parties.



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Consents

Much of the river and wetland works will require consent under the Land Drainage Act 1991. Under the Floods and Water Management Act 2010 Hertfordshire County Council is the lead local flood authority of Ordinary Watercourses in the county. Consent should be sought from the HCC's Environmental Resource Planning Group in the first instance. Contact details can be found in appendix 2.

Removing material from the Common and disposing of it onto nearby agricultural land will require a Waste Transfer Licence and other permits from the Environment Agency.

Community Involvement

The site enjoys the active involvement of the Friends of Oughtonhead Common, who were established in 2003.

Working with NHDC and CMS, the Friends group takes part in:

- Twice-yearly meetings to agree work programmes and an annual meeting to discuss and shape the Greenspace Action Plan.
- Ad hoc site meetings as required
- Regular practical tasks on site, led by members of the Friends group, trained in leadership and first aid.

In addition to the involvement of the Friends group, the development of this plan has been advertised by:

- Contacting a list of individuals who have registered an interest in the site over the past 10 years.
- Articles in the local press
- Display at the local library
- A specific guided walk to highlight the site and Greenspace Action Plan proposals
- On-site information on temporary notice boards
- CMS and NHDC websites

Support for the Friends group has included a range of training to enable them to work in safety with increased independence. This has included Task Planning and Leadership, First Aid and Publicity.



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Marketing

Oughtonhead Common is already a popular resource for the residents of Hitchin. The site enjoyed extensive promotion through the recent work funded by Biffaward. This included new signage, interpretation panels, site leaflet, guided walks, a bat and a moth evening and lots of coverage in the local media. The site is also now promoted on the CMS, NHDC and HCC websites and a leaflet entitled "Where to See Wildlife in North Hertfordshire" (to include Oughtonhead Common) is planned for 2012.

Health Walks are held here. This is a programme of free, led walks aiming to help people get outdoors and get more active. 1500 leaflets are distributed every 4 months and are advertised on NHDC, HCC and national web sites.

The Common also features on the Hitchin Outer Orbital Path, a 12 mile circular route around the town of Hitchin.

Monitoring and Review

All activities on the Common are monitored by NHDC's in house Grounds Monitoring Team. The monitoring is undertaken as part of the Grounds Contract Performance Monitoring System which is flexible enough to highlight any areas of deficiency.

Oughtonhead Common is formally inspected at least once a month which is reported at each monthly contract meeting. Any contract failures are discussed at each meeting with agreements reached with regards remedial actions.

The Grounds Maintenance Contract also includes the development of partnership arrangements between NHDC and John O'Conner's which are discussed at a quarterly review meeting.

Oughtonhead Common is identified within Officers own annual work programs and also in the Grounds Teams' work programme which is also reviewed as part of individual one to ones and the annual appraisal process.

The GAP will be reviewed at least once annually with a representative from CMS the DC and the Friends Group. This meeting will have minutes taken and agreement will be reached regarding any alterations to the plan contained within this document.



Action Plan

Access

Action	Location	Timing	Frequency	Action by	Funded by	Cost	Year					Priority	Comment
							2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		
Path clearance	Whole site	Winter	Annual	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	H	Done 2011 → 14
Spreading woodchip	Paths adjacent to grazing	Winter	Annual	FoOHC / contractor	NHDC	CMS/Vol time + £300	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	L	Done 2011 → 14
Path mowing	Riverside path	Summer	Biannual	RoW	HCC	£500	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	H	Done 2011 → 14
Path mowing	Westmill Lane	Summer	Biannual	RoW	HCC	CMS/Vol time	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	H	Done 2011 → 14
Path mowing	Grazing area	Summer	Every 6 weeks in Summer	Grazier	Natural England	Within CSS grant	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	H	Done 2011 → 14
Repair steps	Riverside path	Summer	One-off	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time + £40	✓					M	Done
Replace 3x stiles with KG's	Grazing compartments	Summer	One-off	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time + £400	✓					L	Done
Repair boardwalk	Piccadilly Circus	Summer	One-off	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time + £110	✓					M	Done
Replace boardwalk	Piccadilly Circus	Summer	One-off	FoOHC	Grant (with wetland funding)	CMS/Vol time + £165 plm = £7500			✓			M	Done
Create woodland path loop	Burford Ray - Bedford Rd	Winter	One-off	employee volunteers	NHDC	CMS/Vol time				✓		L	With Burford Ray project



Site furniture

Action	Location	Timing	Frequency	Action by	Funded by	Cost	Year					Priority	Comment
							2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		
Strim all	Whole site	Summer	Annual	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	M	Done 2011 → 14
Inspect all	Whole site	Summer	Annual	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	M	Done 2011 → 14
Maintain all	Whole site	Summer	Annual	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	M	Done 2011 → 14
Design/install dog access signs	Riverside path / dog bin sites	No constraints	One-off	CMS	NHDC	tbc					✓	L	
Design/install dog bin signs	Relevant entrances	No constraints	One-off	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time					✓	L	CF: Review with NHDC
Install 2 x benches	Outside grazing area	Summer	One-off	FoOHC	Biffa	£300 + CMS/Vol time	✓					L	Done

Litter / waste

Action	Location	Timing	Frequency	Action by	Funded by	Cost	Year					Priority	Comment
							2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		
Litter picking	Whole site	All year	Weekly	O'Connors	NHDC	within J'OC contract	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	M	Done 2011 → 14
Litter/dog bin emptying	Whole site	All year	Weekly	O'Connors	NHDC	within J'OC contract	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	H	Done 2011 → 14
Fly tipping/abandoned vehicles		As required	As required	NHDC	NHDC	Unknown	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	H	



Hedges maintenance

Action	Location	Timing	Frequency	Action by	Funded by	Cost	Year					Priority	Comment
							2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		
Hedge cutting and/or laying	Northeast side of Westmill Lane,	Winter	Every 2 years	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time Materials sourced on site		✓		✓		M	Laid 2014
Maintain new hedges	Mulch, replace etc	Winter	Annual until established	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time		✓			✓	L	Review condition of hedge
Maintain dead hedges	Repair & strengthen	Winter	Annual	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	L	Done 2011 → 14
Hedgelaying	Southwest side of Westmill Lane	Winter	Every 10 - 15 years	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time Materials sourced on site		✓				M	Complete 2013
Hedgelaying	Boundary near honey works	Winter	Every 10 - 15 years	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time Materials sourced on site					✓	M	Review
Hedgelaying or coppice and gap up	Allotment boundary	Winter	Every 10 - 15 years	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time Materials sourced on site					✓	L	In conjunction with Burford Ray project
Hedge / tree planting	One small section by buzzworks	Winter	One-off	FoOHC	NHDC	£120 + CMS / Vol time		✓				L	Done 2011



Invasive Species

Action	Location	Timing	Frequency	Action by	Funded by	Cost	Year					Priority	Comment
							2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		
Azolla	Ditch at Piccadilly Circus	As required	As required	CMS	Environment Agency	£400	✓					M	Done
Snowberry	Riverside path near West Mill	Winter/Spring	As required	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time		✓		✓		M	Cleared 2011 strimmed 2012. Dug out 2013/14
Sycamore	Various	Winter	As required	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time		✓	✓		✓	M	Smaller trees removed 2013
Himalayan balsam	River	July	As required	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time		✓	✓			L	Done 2011 → 14
Ragwort	Grazing compartment 1&2	July	Annual	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time	✓	✓				H	Done 2011 → 14
Thistles	Grazing compartment 1&3	July	Annual	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time	✓	✓					Done 2011 → 14



River Restoration

Action	Location	Timing	Frequency	Action by	Funded by	Cost	Year					Priority	Comment
							2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		
River clearance - litter/fallen trees (see guidance on large woody debris)	River	As required	As required	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time + £50 per application to HCC			✓			M	Some completed 2012. Consent required from HCC for each.
Ditch maintenance	Whole site	Winter	As required	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	M	Done 2011/12/13/14
Reed removal from river channel	From LNR sign to mill pond	tba	tba	Contractor	Grant	£2,700			✓			L	Complete 2014
River bank erosion control	Opposite new steps	As required	One-off	Contractor/ FoOHC	NHDC/RoW	£2,250	✓					H	Done 2011
River bank erosion control	The Chalky	Early winter 2013	One-off	Contractor / CMS	Grant	£6,000			✓			H	Complete 2013
Install groyne in river	From LNR sign to mill pond	tba	As required	Contractor	Grant	£36,000			✓			M	Project adjusted, now not including groyne
Install monitoring dip wells	Various	As required	One-off	EA	Environment Agency	N/A	✓					L	Unable to complete
Flow change measures (deflectors)	Bedford Road	spring	One-off	Contractor/ FoOHC	Grant	£9,000			✓			M	Now ongoing through volunteer programme. Consent granted.

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Flow gauge weir - re-profiling		tba	One-off	Contractor	Grant	£5,000			✓			L	No longer considered appropriate use of funding
Coppicing south bank	Burford Ray	Winter	One-off	FoOHC / Contractor	NHDC	CMS/Vol time			✓			✓	Done 2011 Further work planned for 2015/16

Wetland Restoration

* A sum has been bequeathed by a former volunteer to help fund these actions.

Action	Location	Timing	Frequency	Action by	Funded by	Cost	Year					Priority	Comment
							2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		
Reed cutting and removal	Northern reed bed	Winter	1/3 each year	Contractor	Grant / NHDC	£1,500 (total)			✓	✓	✓	M	Not complete. Ground too wet to be financially viable
Create open water in sedge marsh	Sedge marsh	Winter	One-off	Contractor	Grant	£3,000			✓			M	Complete 2014
Maintain open water in sedge marsh	Sedge marsh	Winter	Annual	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time					✓	M	
Fen restoration	Between grazing compartment and riverside path	Winter	One-off	Contractor	Grant	£7,500 (total for both fen and pond work.)			✓			M	Complete 2014
Excavation of new ponds	Between grazing compartment and riverside path	Winter	One-off	Contractor	Grant				✓			M	Complete 2014

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Access to new pond	Between grazing compartment and riverside path	Summer	One-off	Contractor	Grant	£10,000							✓		M	Complete 2014
Interpretation at fen and pond	Between grazing compartment and riverside path	No constraints	One-off	CMS/Contractor	Grant	£4,000								✓	M	Expected to be complete early 2015
Re-profiling & clearance north ditch	South side of riverside path	Winter	One-off	Contractor	Grant	£6,800							✓		L	Complete 2014
Pond restoration	South end of grazing compartment 1	Winter	As required	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time	✓								L	Done 2012
Install 2nd oak bund	Middle of grazing compartment 1	Winter	One-off	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time							✓		M	Done 2012

Other Habitat Work

Action	Location	Timing	Frequency	Action by	Funded by	Cost	Year						Priority	Comment
							2011	2012	2013	2014	2015			
Habitat protection wattle hurdles	Various	Winter	As required	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		M	Still in tact 2012/13/14
Scrub clearance	See scrub management map	Winter	On going	FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		H	Done 2011/12/13

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Enlarge grazing area + cows Relocating the fence will require permission from the Secretary of State.	to be agreed	tba	One-off	Contractor	Natural England	Remove 1945m @ £1.20 plm = £2334 Install 2050m @ £5plm = £10250 Total £12584						✓	M	Funding dependent / permission dependant
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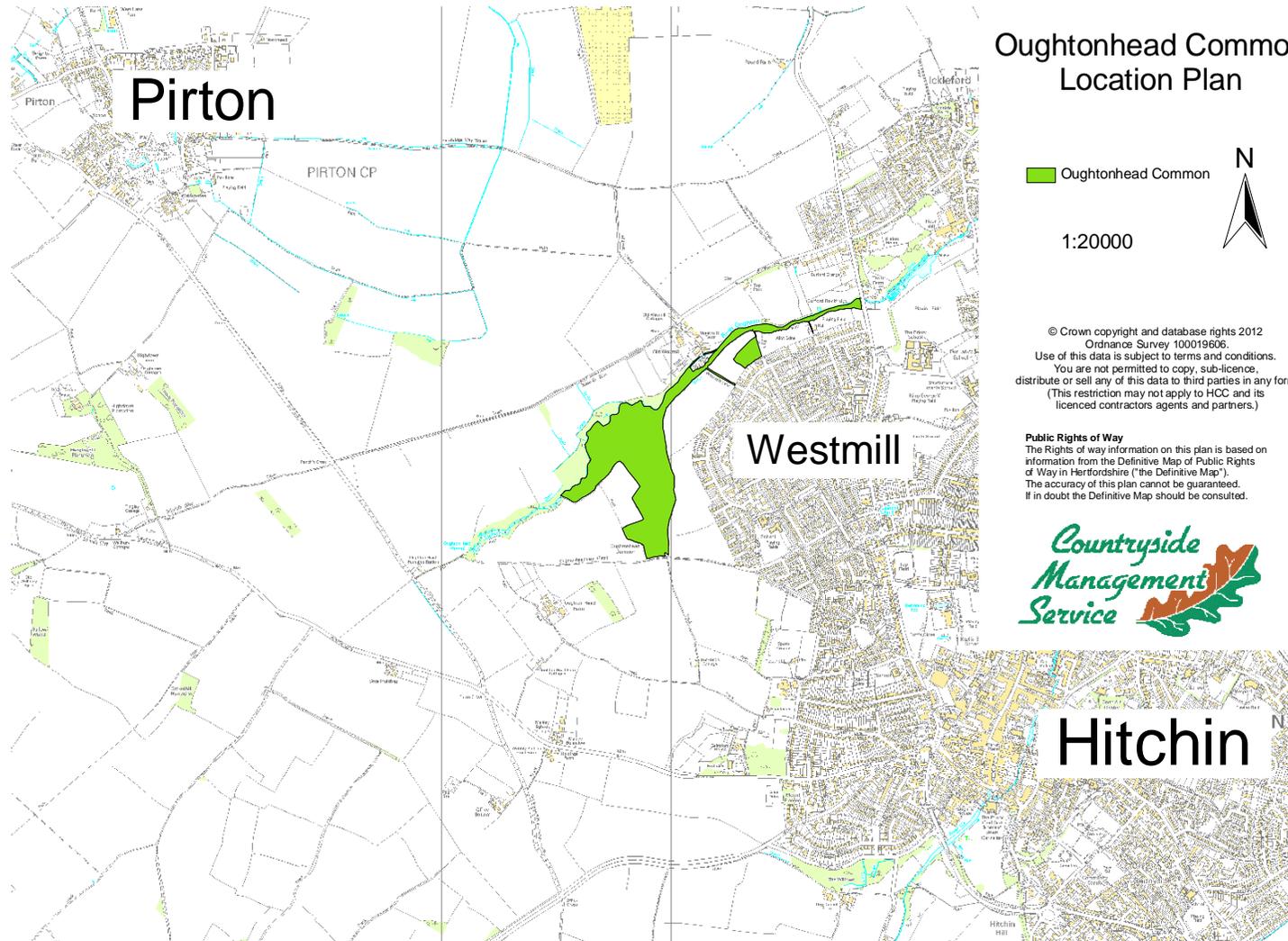
Miscellaneous

Action	Location	Timing	Frequency	Action by	Funded by	Cost	Year					Priority	Comment
							2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		
Apply for funding		As appropriate	On-going	CMS/ FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time	✓		✓			H	Complete for major projects
Guided Walks/events		As appropriate	On-going	CMS/ FoOHC	NHDC	CMS/Vol time	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	M	2 guided walks in 2011/12/13/14
Volunteer training		No constraints	Annual	CMS/ FoOHC / NHDC	NHDC	NHDC/CM S/ Vol time	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	M	1 st aid refresher due Jan 2013. Brushcutter training requested
Review annual programme							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	H	Due Feb 2015



Maps

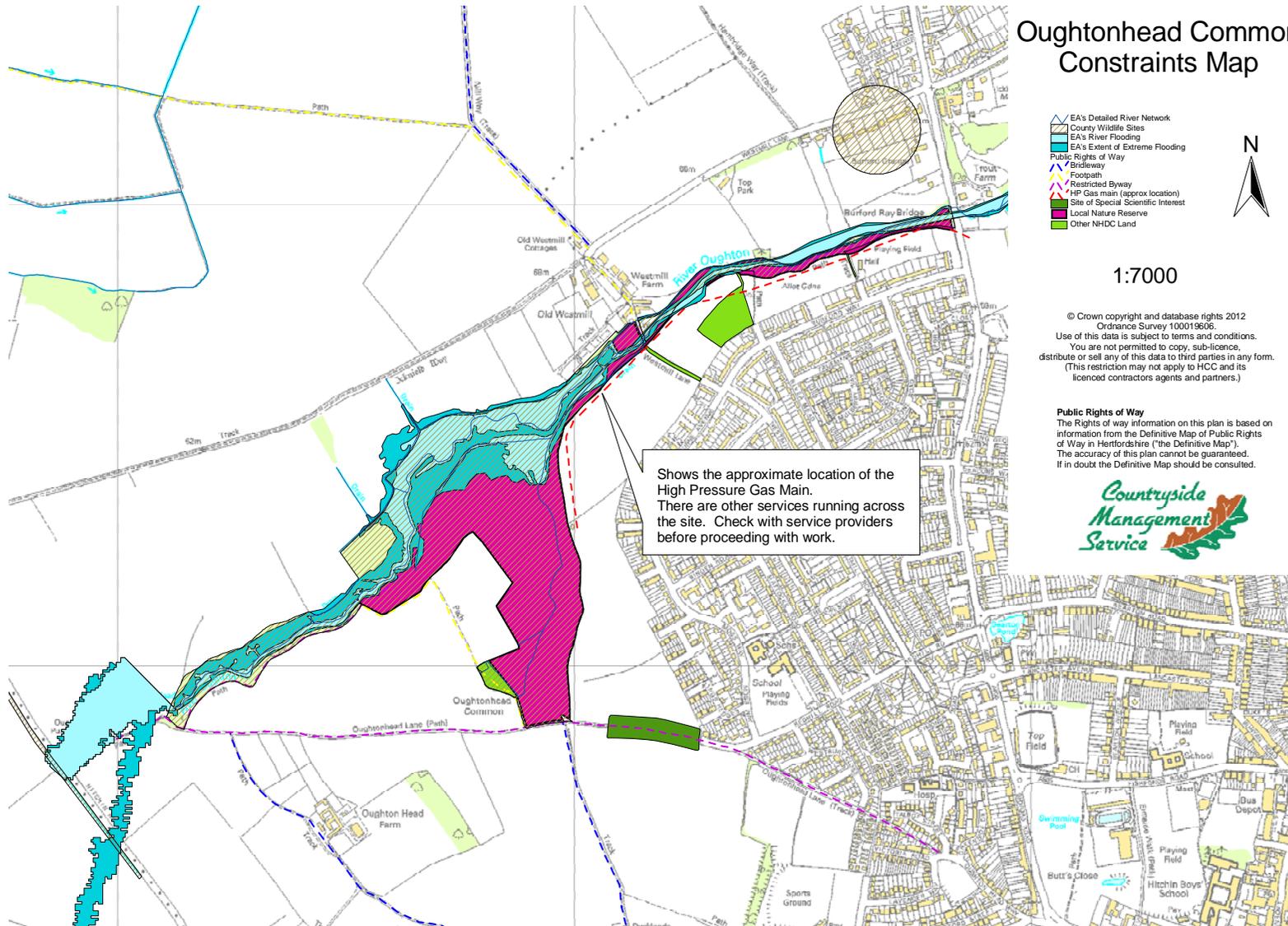
Site Location Map





Constraints Map

**Oughtonhead Common
Constraints Map**



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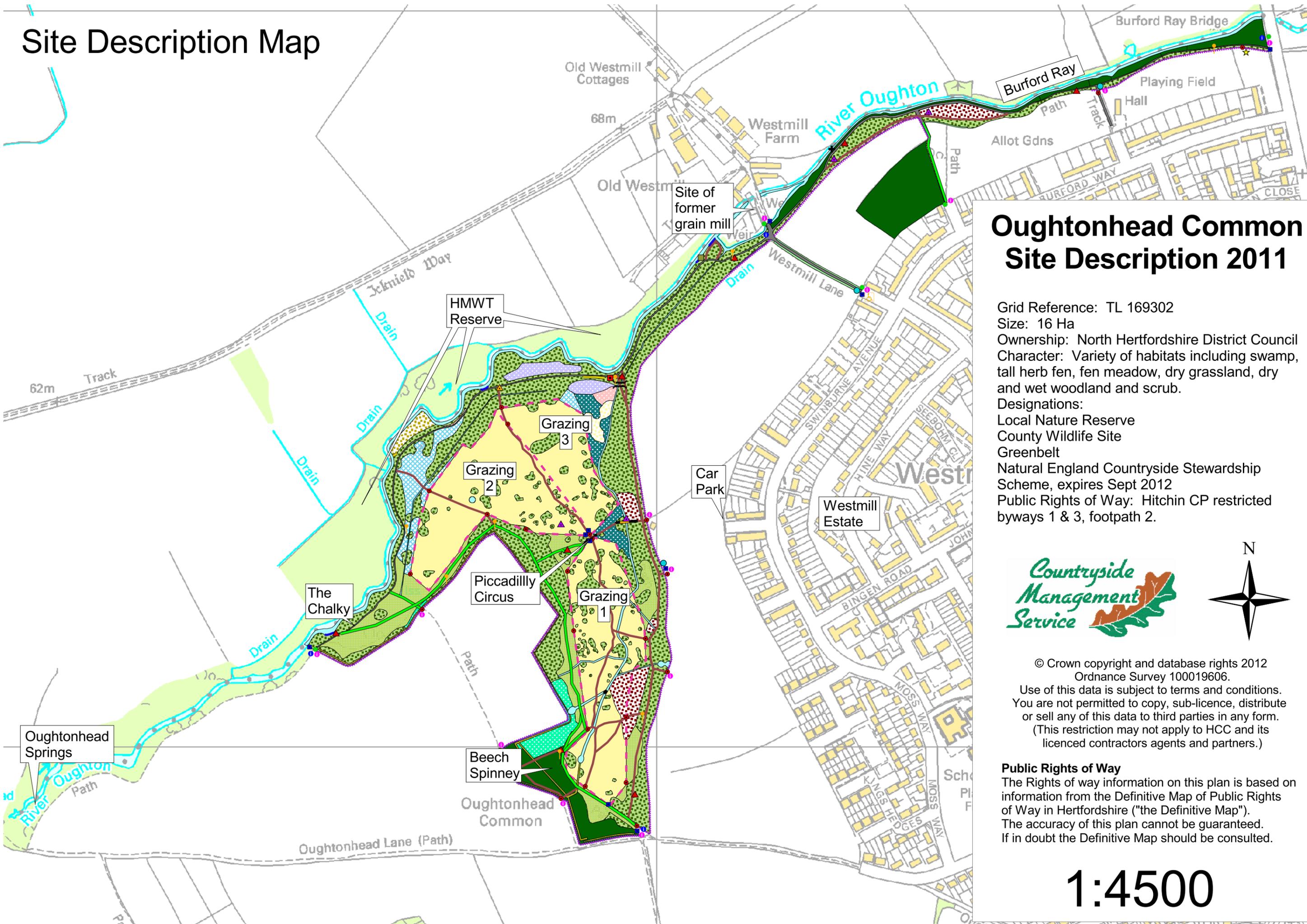
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



**Key for the Site Description Map and Annual Management Maps
(pages 27-33)**

- vehicle access
- bridle + pedestrian access
- pedestrian access
- ♿ RADAR access
- ▲ bench
- ★ waste bin
- ↑ finger post
- ▲ steps
- interpretation
- welcome sign
- + EA weir
- dog bin
- sign
- dog ramp
- ≡ footbridge/sluice
- ▲ invasive species
- Public Rights of Way
- ↗ Bridleway
- ↘ Footpath
- ↖ Restricted Byway
- fence / grazing compartment
- unsurfaced path
- mown path
- perimeter fence
- bank control
- boardwalk
- oak bund
- willow hurdle
- grassland
- ditch
- dry ditch
- hedgerow
- pond
- scrub
- woodland
- grazing
- river
- reed bed
- sedge bed
- path (surfaced)
- dead hedge
- bog
- willow coppice
- hazel coppice
- mixed coppice
- willow carr
- fen

Site Description Map



Oughtonhead Common Site Description 2011

Grid Reference: TL 169302
 Size: 16 Ha
 Ownership: North Hertfordshire District Council
 Character: Variety of habitats including swamp, tall herb fen, fen meadow, dry grassland, dry and wet woodland and scrub.
 Designations:
 Local Nature Reserve
 County Wildlife Site
 Greenbelt
 Natural England Countryside Stewardship Scheme, expires Sept 2012
 Public Rights of Way: Hitchin CP restricted byways 1 & 3, footpath 2.



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Annual Management Maps



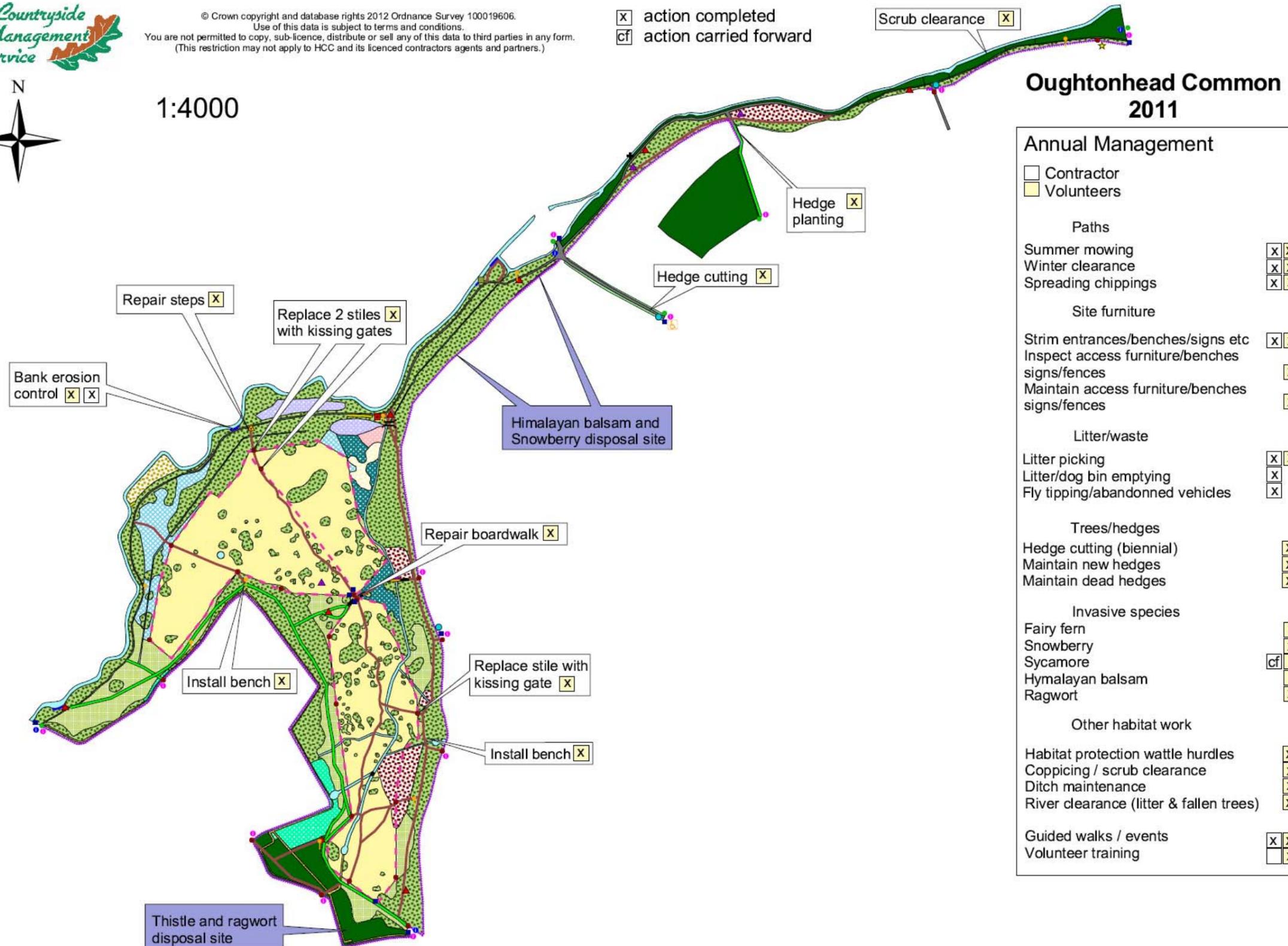
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action completed
 cf action carried forward



1:4000

**Oughtonhead Common
2011**



Annual Management		
	Contractor	Volunteers
Paths		
Summer mowing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Winter clearance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Spreading chippings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Site furniture		
Strim entrances/benches/signs etc	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Inspect access furniture/benches signs/fences		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maintain access furniture/benches signs/fences		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Litter/waste		
Litter picking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Litter/dog bin emptying	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Fly tipping/abandoned vehicles		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Trees/hedges		
Hedge cutting (biennial)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Maintain new hedges	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Maintain dead hedges	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Invasive species		
Fairy fern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Snowberry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Sycamore	<input type="checkbox"/> cf	<input type="checkbox"/>
Himalayan balsam		<input type="checkbox"/>
Ragwort		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other habitat work		
Habitat protection wattle hurdles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Coppicing / scrub clearance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Ditch maintenance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
River clearance (litter & fallen trees)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Guided walks / events		
Guided walks / events	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer training	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



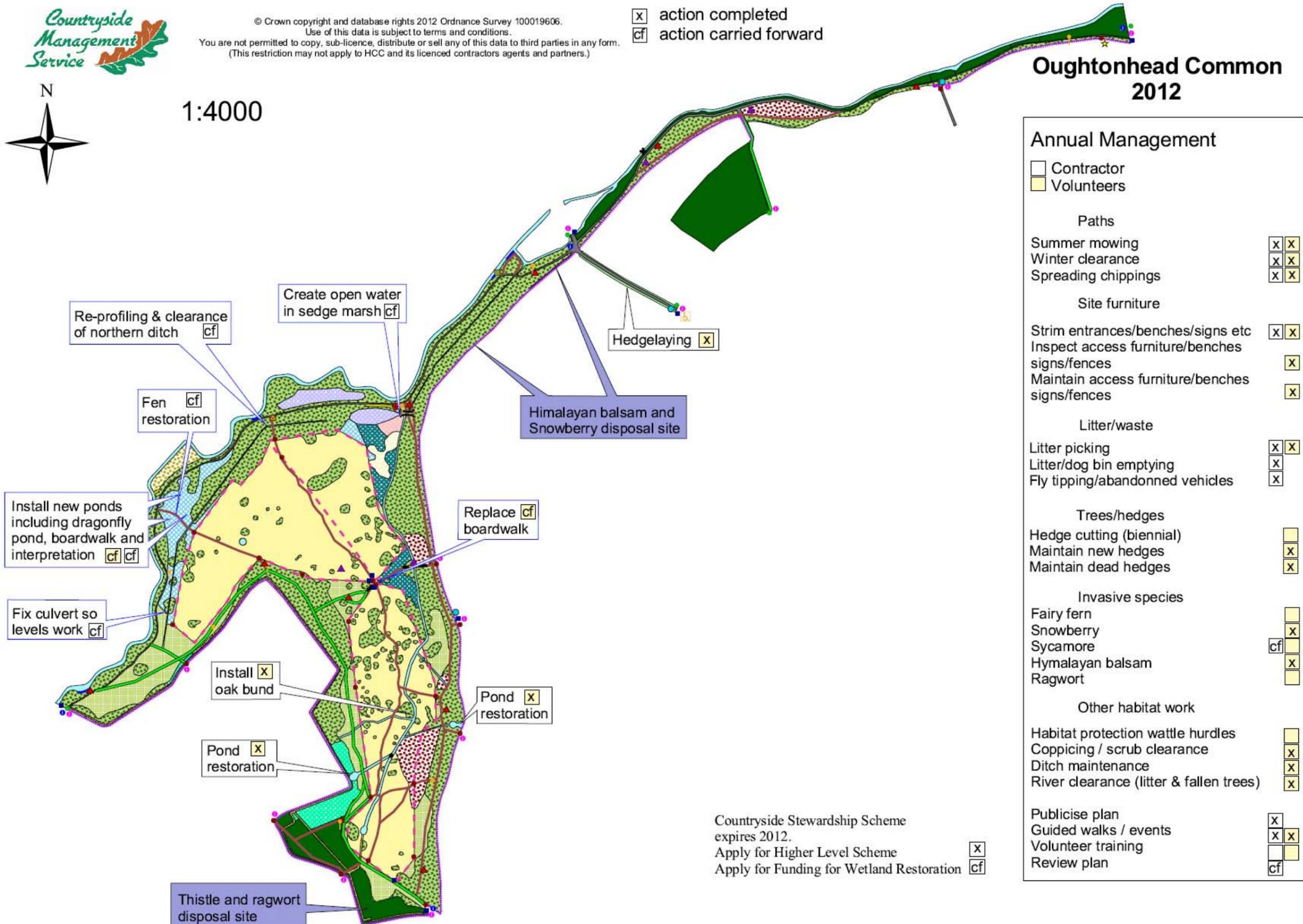
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action completed
 cf action carried forward



1:4000

Oughtonhead Common 2012



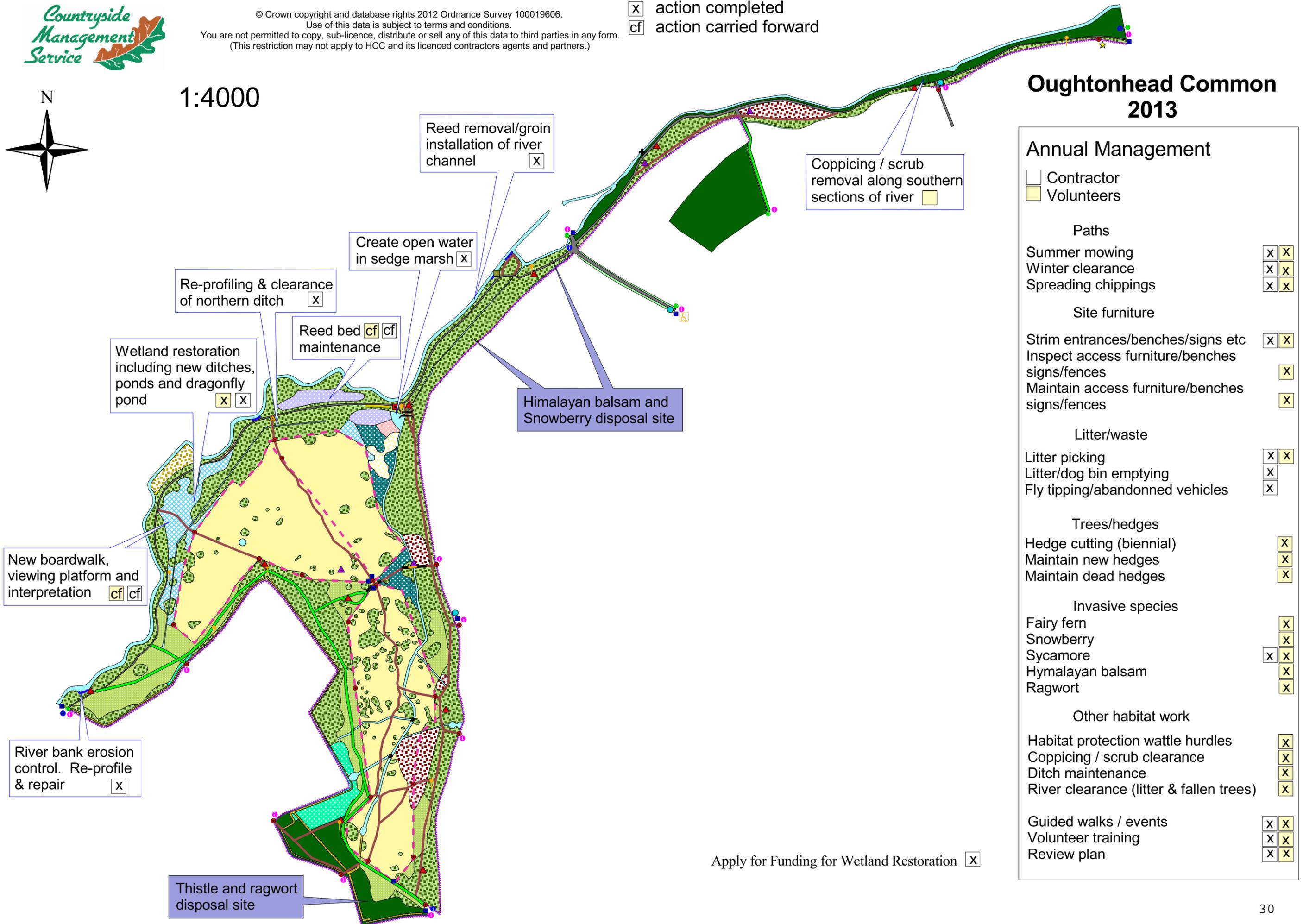
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<input type="checkbox"/> Contractor	
<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteers	
Paths	
Summer mowing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Winter clearance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Spreading chippings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Site furniture	
Strim entrances/benches/signs etc	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Inspect access furniture/benches signs/fences	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maintain access furniture/benches signs/fences	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Litter/waste	
Litter picking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Litter/dog bin emptying	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fly tipping/abandoned vehicles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Trees/hedges	
Hedge cutting (biennial)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain new hedges	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maintain dead hedges	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Invasive species	
Fairy fern	<input type="checkbox"/>
Snowberry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sycamore	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Himalayan balsam	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ragwort	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other habitat work	
Habitat protection wattle hurdles	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coppicing / scrub clearance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ditch maintenance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
River clearance (litter & fallen trees)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Publicise plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Guided walks / events	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer training	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Review plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Countryside Stewardship Scheme expires 2012.
Apply for Higher Level Scheme
Apply for Funding for Wetland Restoration



1:4000

Oughtonhead Common 2013



Annual Management

<input type="checkbox"/> Contractor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paths		
Summer mowing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Winter clearance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Spreading chippings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Site furniture		
Strim entrances/benches/signs etc	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Inspect access furniture/benches signs/fences	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain access furniture/benches signs/fences	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Litter/waste		
Litter picking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Litter/dog bin emptying	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fly tipping/abandoned vehicles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trees/hedges		
Hedge cutting (biennial)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain new hedges	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain dead hedges	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Invasive species		
Fairy fern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Snowberry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sycamore	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Himalayan balsam	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ragwort	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other habitat work		
Habitat protection wattle hurdles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Copping / scrub clearance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ditch maintenance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
River clearance (litter & fallen trees)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guided walks / events		
Guided walks / events	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer training	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Apply for Funding for Wetland Restoration

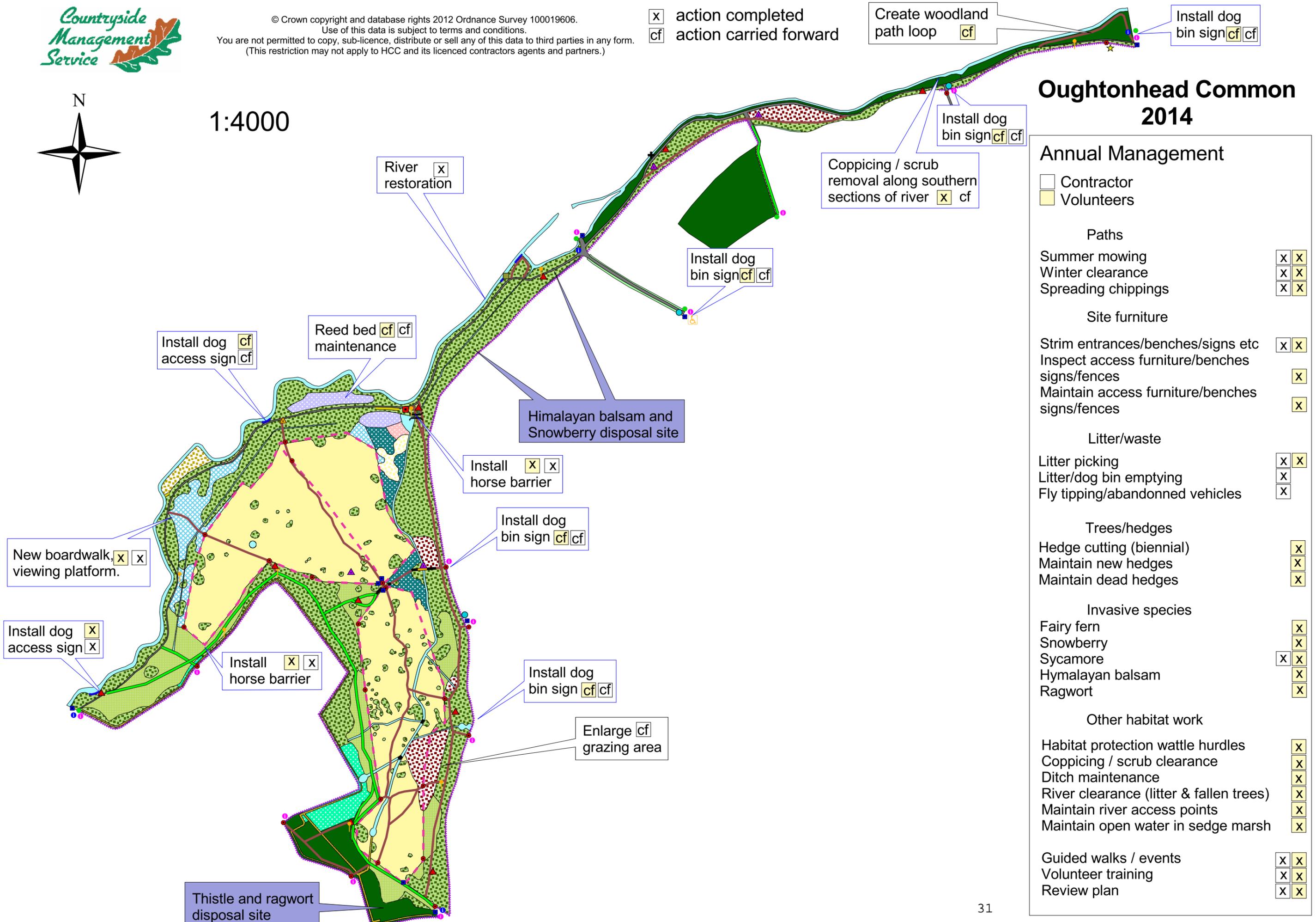
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Create woodland path loop **cf**

Install dog bin sign **cf** **cf**

Oughtonhead Common 2014

1:4000



Annual Management

Contractor
 Volunteers

Paths	
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Winter clearance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Spreading chippings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Site furniture	
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Inspect access furniture/benches signs/fences	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Litter/waste	
Litter picking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Litter/dog bin emptying	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fly tipping/abandoned vehicles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Trees/hedges	
Hedge cutting (biennial)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maintain new hedges	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maintain dead hedges	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Invasive species	
Fairy fern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Snowberry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sycamore	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Himalayan balsam	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ragwort	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other habitat work	
Habitat protection wattle hurdles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Copping / scrub clearance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ditch maintenance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
River clearance (litter & fallen trees)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maintain river access points	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maintain open water in sedge marsh	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Guided walks / events	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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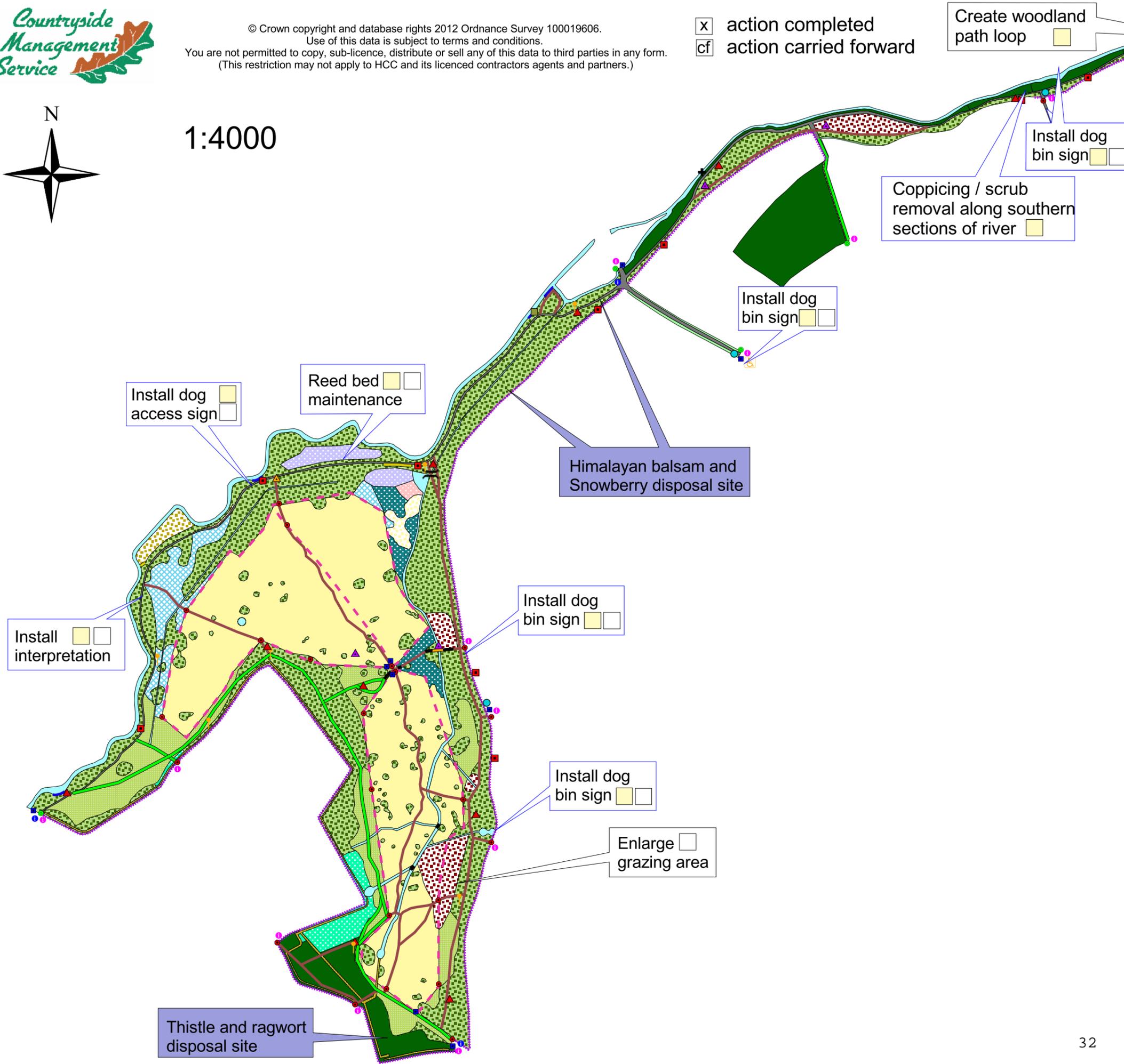
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Create woodland path loop

Install dog bin sign

Oughtonhead Common 2015

1:4000

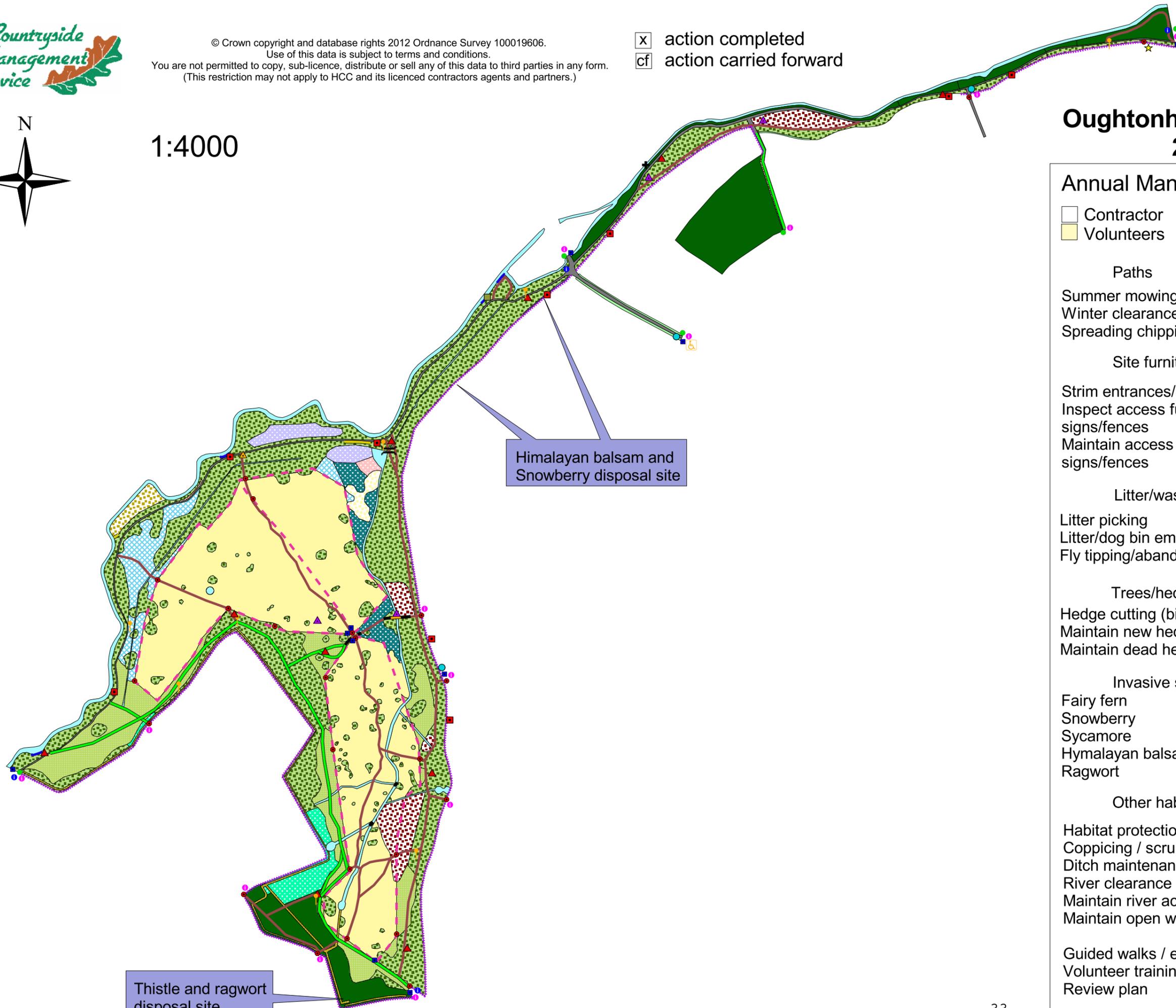


Annual Management		
	Contractor	Volunteers
Paths		
Summer mowing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Winter clearance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spreading chippings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site furniture		
Strim entrances/benches/signs etc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inspect access furniture/benches signs/fences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain access furniture/benches signs/fences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Litter/waste		
Litter picking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Litter/dog bin emptying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fly tipping/abandoned vehicles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trees/hedges		
Hedge cutting (biennial)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain new hedges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain dead hedges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Invasive species		
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Snowberry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sycamore	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Himalayan balsam	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ragwort	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other habitat work		
Habitat protection wattle hurdles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coppicing / scrub clearance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ditch maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
River clearance (litter & fallen trees)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain river access points	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain open water in sedge marsh	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guided walks / events		
Guided walks / events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Review plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Oughtonhead Common 2016



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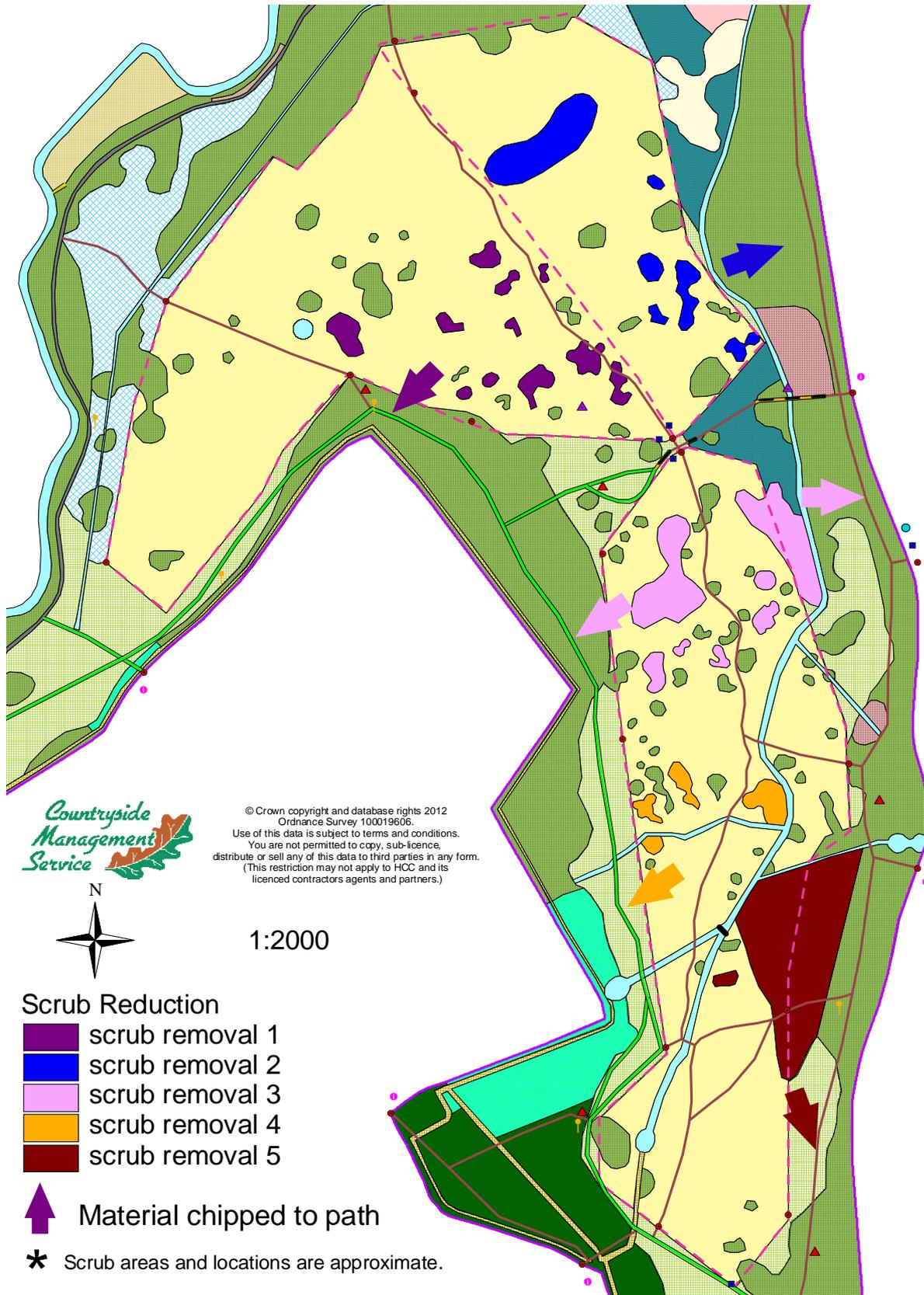


Annual Management

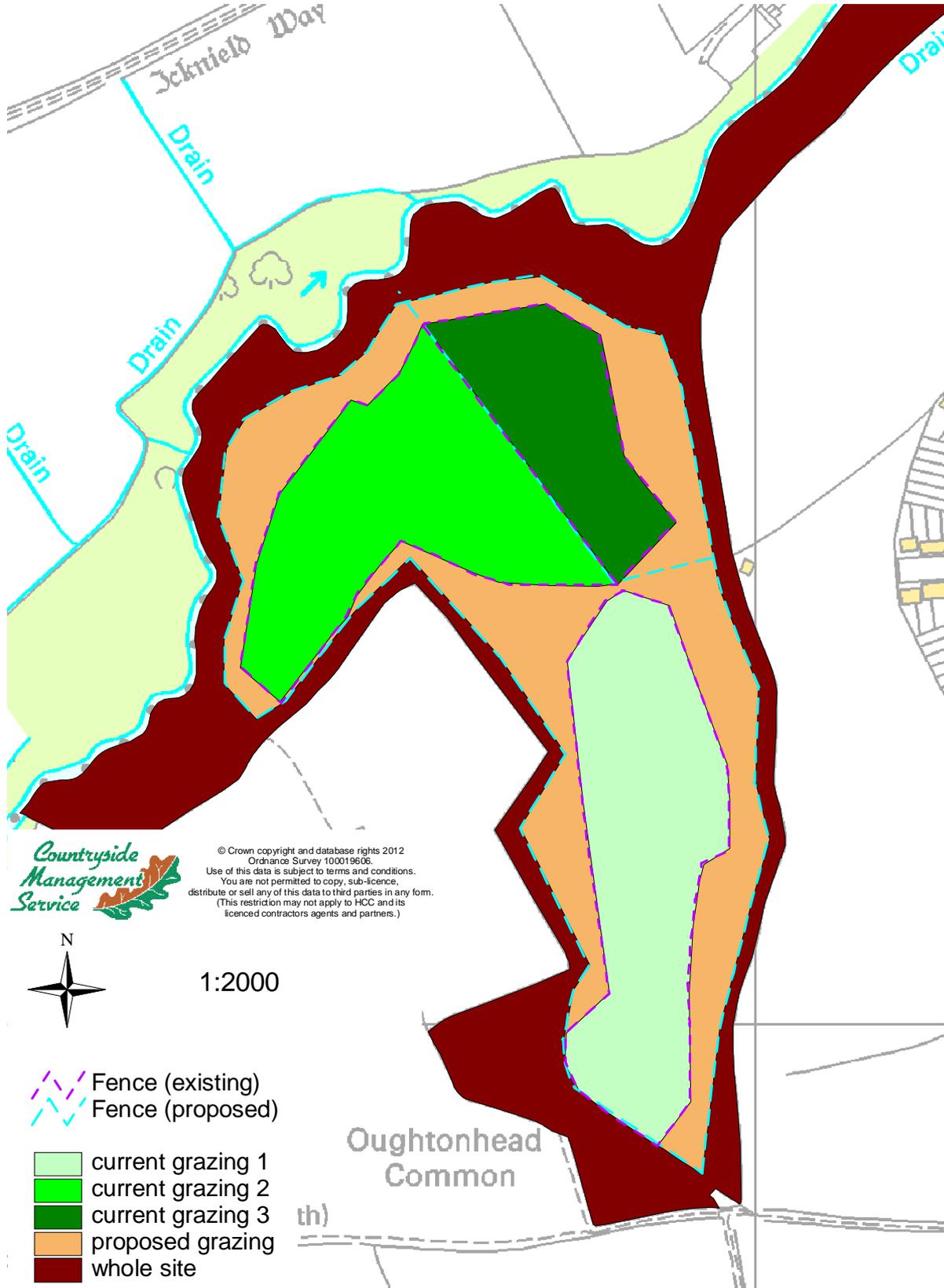
- Contractor
- Volunteers

Paths	
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Winter clearance	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Spreading chippings	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
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Maintain access furniture/benches signs/fences	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Litter/waste	
Litter picking	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Litter/dog bin emptying	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Fly tipping/abandoned vehicles	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Trees/hedges	
Hedge cutting (biennial)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain new hedges	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain dead hedges	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Invasive species	
Fairy fern	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Snowberry	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Sycamore	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Himalayan balsam	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Ragwort	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Other habitat work	
Habitat protection wattle hurdles	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Coppicing / scrub clearance	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Ditch maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
River clearance (litter & fallen trees)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain river access points	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain open water in sedge marsh	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Guided walks / events	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer training	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Review plan	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

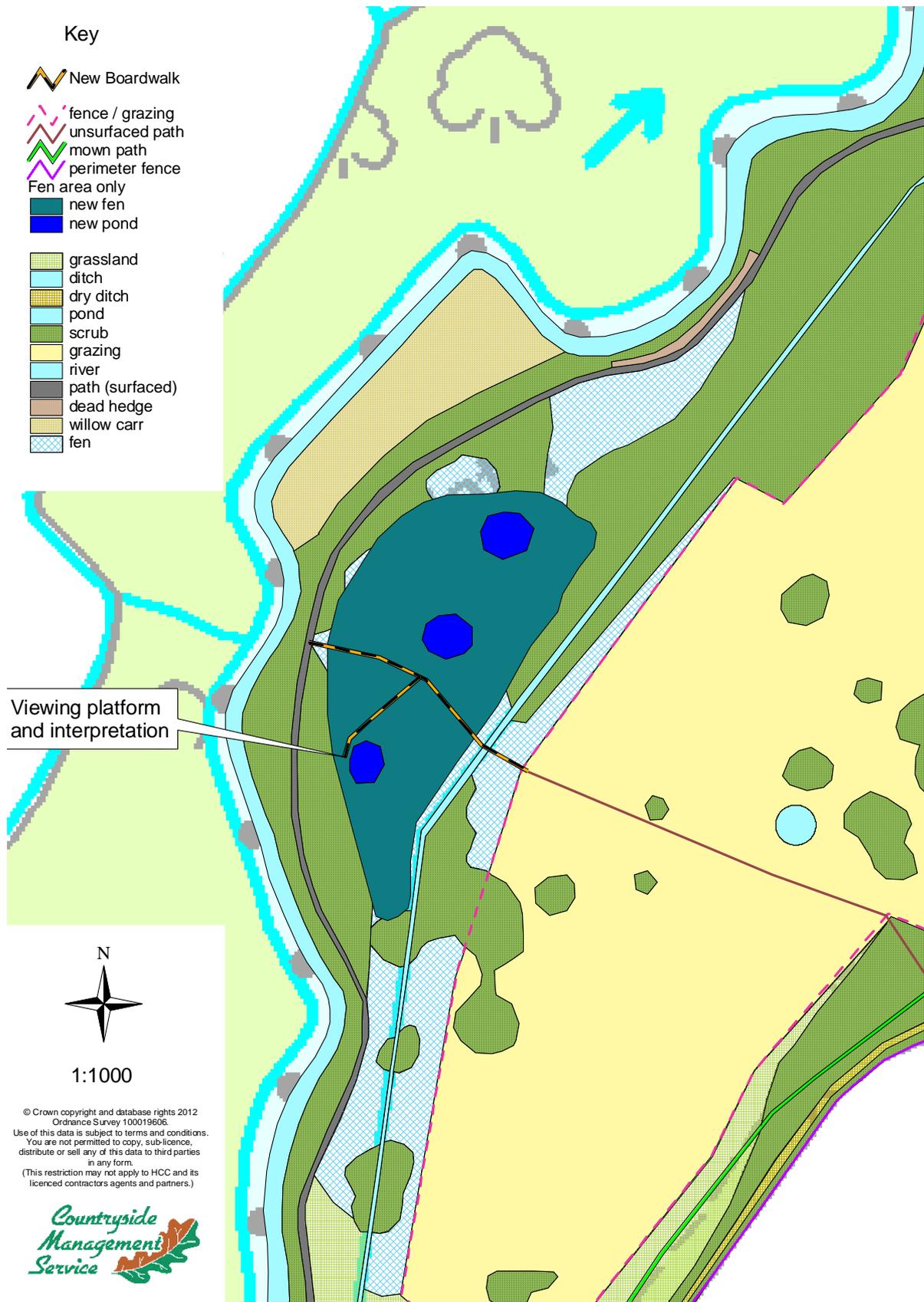
Scrub Reduction in Detail



Extending Grazing Area



Fen Restoration Area

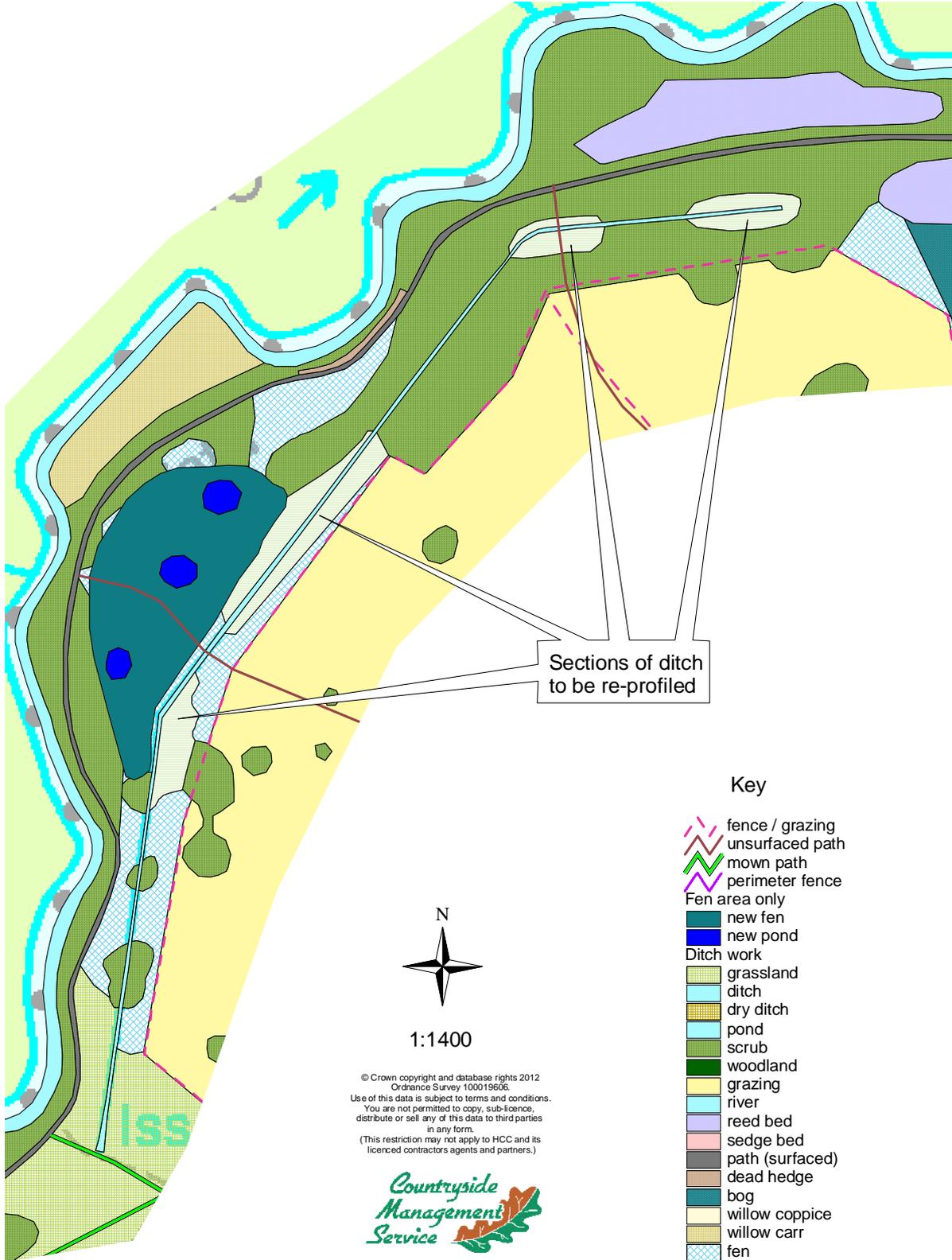




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Northern Ditch Enhancement





Appendices

Appendix 1: Abbreviations

OHC	Oughtonhead Common
GAP	Greenspace Action Plan
CMS	Countryside Management Service
NHDC	North Herts District Council
DC	District Council
LA	Local Authority
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
CWS	County Wildlife Site
FoOHC	Friends of Oughtonhead Common
J'OC	John O'Conner Grounds Maintenance Ltd
HCC	Hertfordshire County Council
RoW	Rights of Way
RUPP	Road Used as Public Path
RB	Restricted Byway
NE	Natural England
CSS	Countryside Stewardship Scheme
HLS	Higher Level Scheme
EA	Environment Agency
HMWT	Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust
HBRC	Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre
Vol	Volunteers
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
Defra	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs



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Appendix 2: Contacts

Name/ Title	Organisation	Tel	Email	Address
Heidi Hutton , Projects Officer	Countryside Management Service	01462 459395	Heidi.hutton@hertsc.c.gov.uk	The Old Dairy, Bedford Road, Ickleford, Hitchin SG5 3RR
Andrew Mills , Service Manager for Grounds	NHDC	01462 474272	Andrew.mills@north-herts.gov.uk	Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth, SG6 3JF
Tom Ayres , Area Monitoring Officer	NHDC	01462 474575	Thomas.ayres@north-herts.gov.uk	“
Karl Wilkins , Tree Strategy Officer	NHDC	01462 474837	Karl.wilkins@north-herts.gov.uk	“
Steve Geach , Parks & Countryside Development Manager	NHDC	01462 474553	Steve.geach@north-herts.gov.uk	“
David Cannon , Task Leader	Friends of Oughtonhead Common		djc.rmc@btinternet.com	
Safer Neighbourhood Team	Hertfordshire Constabulary	999 (Emergency) 101 (non emergency incidents) 0845 3300222 (general enquiries)		
Fire Station Manager	Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue	999 (Emergency) 0300 1234046 (Fire Safety and advice)		
Matthew Ramscar (Common Water Levels)	Environment Agency	01480 483 938	matthew.ramscar@environment-agency.gov.uk	Environment Agency Bromholme Lane Brampton Huntingdon Cambs PE28 4NE
Julie Barker River Oughton Levels	Environment Agency	(01480) 483825	julie.barker@environment-agency.gov.uk	“
Daniel McAulay Land Drainage consent	Environment Agency	01480 483885	daniel.mcaulay@environment-agency.gov.uk	“

North Hertfordshire District Council
Customer Services



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Jack Shephard Land Drainage Consent	Hertfordshire County Council	01992 556498	Jack.shepherd@hert scc.gov.uk	Forward Planning Unit, Environment Department, County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8DN
John O'Conner Ground maintenance	John O'Conner	01438 717 175		Head Office 2 Great North Road Welwyn Hertfordshire AL6 0PL
Tom Williams Grazier	Maydencroft Manor	01462 420851	info@maydencroft.c om	Maydencroft Manor, Maydencroft Lane, Gosmore, Hitchin, SG4 7QA
Andrew Mills Countryside Stewardship Scheme/HLS	Natural England	01462 678497 0776865835 7	Andrew.mills@natur alengland.org.uk	
Nicholas Maddex Countryside Access Officer	Rights of Way Unit HCC	01992 555243	Nicholas.maddex@h ertsc.gov.uk	RoW Unit, County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8DN
Matt Broadhurst Farm Manager	Pilkington Farms	01462 769302	offleyhoo@aol.com	Offley Hoo, Kings Walden Road, Offley, Hitchin, SG5 3ED
Phillip Lawton Farmer	Ashcroft Farm	01462 712267		Ashcroft Farm, Holwell, Hitchin, SG5 3SG

Environment Agency Incident Hotline 0800 807060 (regarding pollution and other incidents)

The web site for North Hertfordshire District Council can be found at –
www.north-herts.gov.uk

The web site for the Countryside Management Service can be found at –
<http://www.hertslink.org/cms>



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Appendix 3: Specifications

Detail regarding timing, frequency, cost and which organisation is responsible for each action can be found in the Action Plan (pages 13 – 20).

For environmental reasons and to discourage inappropriate use, fires are not used in management practices on the Common.

Path Maintenance

Hitchin Restricted Byway 1 or Riverside Path

- Path mown to a width of 4m twice a year with a minimum height clearance of 3m.

Grass paths adjacent to grazing compartments

- Mown as required during growing season.

Un-surfaced paths adjacent to grazing compartments

- Paths maintained to a width of 2m and height clearance of 3m through Friends of Oughtonhead Common volunteer programme.
- All path improvements to be carried out in accordance with HCC RoW Good Practice Guide.

Path Creation

New path at Burford Ray to allow a walk next to the river at this point.

- A 150m length of path will be cleared to a width of at least 1.5m.
- Trees and scrub to be removed to allow access.
- Where possible, lengths of branches and resulting scrub material to be trimmed up and edge the path to guide walkers and help establish its use as a path.

Access Furniture

- Kissing gates will be made of wood to match the existing gates in the perimeter of the grazing compartments. Gates to be compliant with dimensions required to meet BS5709:2006. Surfacing within chamber of kissing gates to be assessed if level of use over winter period requires it.
- Board walks will be a minimum width of 1.2m, but 2m where the terrain allows. The boardwalk between grazing compartments at the area known as Piccadilly Circus needs replacing 1x length of 30m, 1x length of 5m and 1 x length of 10m. Cost in action plan is using recycled plastic. This work may not need doing should the grazing compartments be enlarged, or the location may be moved.
- Dog Access and Dog Bin signs are small wooden routed signs at strategic locations to direct users to the nearest dog bin and dog access point along the river. Finger post or waymark post – 'Dog bin 10m →'.
- Benches are in Oak: *Seat and back* (3) 2m x 150mm x 50mm (planned). *Posts* (2) 1.7m x 150mm x 100mm. *Seat bearers* (2) no. 550mm x 150mm x 100mm.



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Waste / Litter

- Litter picks are carried out on a weekly basis, as well as one-off picks when required.
- The FoOHC also carry out a litter pick at the end of the spring bank holiday. Collection of the rubbish from this pick is arranged with NHDC.
- Dog Bins – These are emptied on a once a week frequency.
- Litter Bins – These are emptied on a once a week frequency.

Hedge Maintenance

- All hedge planting will be carried out in accordance with CMS hedge planting guidelines (see appendix 4). A basic species composition of 75% Hawthorn, 10% Field Maple, 10% Hazel and 5% Dog Rose can be used. Species of local provenance should be sourced.
- Hedge Laying: 140m along the south west side of Westmill Lane. Stakes and binders will be harvested on site and installed at 1m intervals (max). The hedge is in reasonable condition and a good thickness, gapping should not be required.
- Hedge cutting/trimming: 140m along the north east side of Westmill Lane. This is in the volunteer programme for 2011 to be carried out by hand. The aim is to create an A – shaped hedge approximately 2.5m in height. It may be appropriate to lay or coppice this section towards the end of the Greenspace Action Plan period.

Invasive Species

- Azolla or water fern currently being controlled biologically by the Azolla weevil. See Appendix 5
- Snowberry to be controlled by hand, followed up by strimming during the growing season for the duration of this plan, when the success of this method can be reviewed.
- Sycamore trees across the site to be identified and controlled by felling and stump treatment. The resulting material can be stacked into habitat piles on site.
- Himalayan Balsam to be controlled by pulling by hand. Plants can be disposed of at an agreed location on site. The location will be outside the grazing area on dry land where it can rot down with minimal chance of being able to set seed.
- Ragwort to be controlled by pulling by hand. Plants can be disposed of at an agreed location on site. The location will be outside the grazing area where it can rot down with minimal chance of being able to set seed.
- Thistles to be controlled by pulling/digging (spear thistle) and cutting (creeping thistle) by hand in July. Plants to be disposed of at an agreed location on site. The location will be outside the grazing area where it can rot down with minimal chance of being able to set seed.



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Grazing

- Usually grazed at low density by 2-3 cattle all year round. Cattle from Maydencroft Farm, Gosmore.
- Cattle are kept out of compartment 3 until the orchids have finished flowering, usually by the end of July.
- Continue to exclude the use of all natural and artificial fertilisers and chemical control of weeds within the grazing area (see above).

Extending Grazing Area

- See map on page 34.
- This is likely to require an application to the Secretary of State and therefore a full public consultation around this piece of work.
- The aim would be to extend the area of grazing to include a larger part of the Common. The existing fencing would be pushed further out into the more scrubby perimeter. The perimeter path would be retained at a width of no less than 10 metres, except in those places where the width is already less than 10 metres.
- The cattle fencing will need renewing in the next few years, whether the area of grazing is extended or not. The length of the current fence is 1945m. The length of the new fence would be 2050m. Replacement fencing, whether to include the larger grazing area or not would include using Class 4 treated posts and stock netting around the bottom.

The specification below is the minimum required by Natural England under their Higher Level Stewardship.

- Wire fencing should be at least 1.05 metres high. Use galvanised 4mm mild steel plain or 2.5mm barbed wire, or equivalent as stated in BS 4102.
- Straining posts should be at least 125mm top diameter, 2.1 metres long and at a spacing not exceeding 150 metres.
- Struts should be 65mm top diameter, 2.1 metres long and notched into the straining post.
- Intermediate posts should be 65mm top diameter, 1.7 metres long and at a spacing not exceeding 3.5 metres.

Scrub

- See scrub reduction map p33. This map was produced by highlighting areas of scrub from the 2002 aerial photograph and comparing them with scrub shown on the 2010 aerial photograph. The aim of the scrub management will be to reduce scrub by up to 30% within the grazing compartment. Across the whole of the Common however this will be a reduction of no more than 5% in any given year. The map is a guide only. Scrub will be marked up on site before being removed.
- Volunteers tasks will reduce scrub levels encroaching on the grassland.
- Scrub will be cut with hand tools and occasionally supported by a chainsaw used by an appropriately qualified member of CMS staff.
- Stumps are cut to ground level if being removed or to knee height if being retained.



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- Arisings will be chipped by a contractor and spread on perimeter paths by volunteers.
- Work is carried out between the end of September and the beginning of March, outside bird nesting season.

River Restoration

River clearance - fallen trees

Also known as 'Large Woody Debris (LWD)'. In the past, human intervention has meant LWD is now largely absent from many river systems. This stems from concerns that it looks untidy, collects debris around it and could pose a risk of flooding. However recently research has shown that it can be beneficial to river processes and wildlife. Useful guidance on the retention of LWD in river channels, based on West Country Rivers Trust guide can be found in the Chalkstream Habitat Manual, written by the Wild Trout Trust. This guidance should be followed where possible when LWD finds it's way into the River Oughton. Most options for retaining LWD can be carried out through the volunteer work programme.

River bank erosion control

At certain sections along the river the bank is becoming eroded. The problem is exacerbated by dogs entering the river and by Signal crayfish burrowing holes into the river bank, leaving it weak. Volunteers have reinforced some sections by using stakes and pre-planted coir rolls. On other sections a contractor has been employed. The large section of the river bank at the area known as 'the chalky' is well used and suffering the effects of erosion. A specialist contractor will be employed to stabilise the bank using pre-vegetated coir fibre rolls. The soil area between the bank and the path will be stabilised using robust plastic webbing and re-vegetated using seed and turf reinforcing matting. The bank will also be armoured with a nylon revetment curtain to protect against Signal crayfish. A designated access point will be provided.

Groynes – Upstream of the Mill

The aim of river restoration is to narrow selected sections of the river to allow faster flow. This will help move silt deposits further downstream, uncovering the gravel of the natural river bed and providing a more attractive spawning ground for trout and habitat for invertebrates.

This will be achieved by installing groynes along the section of river upstream from the Mill. The River Oughton Rehabilitation Plan cites a case study on the River Avon from the Manual of River Restoration Techniques. Groynes should provide variations in flow characteristics and will cause sediment to accumulate both upstream and downstream, allowing a natural narrowing of the channel. Some reed removal from river channel will aid this process. Groynes face upstream, but the exact angle, length and material used will be discussed with specialised contractors at the time of negotiating the contract. The works will be surveyed both before and after to monitor the success of improving diversity along this section of the river.

Groynes – Downstream of the Mill

Representatives from the Friends of Oughtonhead Common visited the River Shep and Mel in Cambridge where similar work has taken place.



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- Materials will be sourced from the Common, either from scrub clearance work, trees adjacent to the river along the Burford Ray or relocating material already in the river.
- Logs will be dug into the bank and partially across the river, secured by wiring to posts.
- Logs should be submerged over the normal range of flow.
- Face upstream as this will create a scour in the middle of the river and create areas of silt deposition immediately up and downstream which can be planted up. Use sedge from sedge bed.
- Ensure that location of groyne does not encourage silt deposition to a gravel area that may already be used as a trout spawning site.
- Ensure that the top and outside edge of the log you use are squared off so that the water flows over and off the log rather than around the surface. This will help stop the log from being undercut.

Dip Wells

The Environment Agency attempted to install dip wells in 2011. The purpose of this was to monitor the ground water levels across the Common to get a better idea of how they are affected by seasonal changes. The digging was carried out with a hand auger, but this was unable to penetrate the chalk layer. To reach the water table and install dip wells, proper drilling equipment would be required. Currently the EA are unable to finance such work at Oughtonhead Common.

Flow Gauge Weir

Approach the Environment Agency about funding to re-profile the flow gauge weir to allow the easier passage of fish. Work will depend on funding obtained. Low cost option would be to use stone gabions to narrow the structure and a Reno Mattress to create a slope on the downstream end of the gauge.

Culvert

During the River Hiz Alleviation of Low Flows Project a new culvert was constructed from the River Oughton into a ditch that runs parallel to the river. This was intended to allow water to transfer from the river to the wetlands. However the culvert was not successful. A specialised contractor will be employed to assess the possibility of re-engineering the culvert so that it does the job that was originally intended.

Wetland Restoration

Reed management

Northern reed bed between the River Oughton and the riverside path to be cut 1/3 a year. Material produced to be removed from site by contractor to an appropriate waste site.

Sedge Management

Clear sedge to make an area of open water approximately 150m². Area should extend 15m back from the sluice gate along each ditch line to create a 'fan' shape. Hertfordshire County Council's Historic Environment Unit have advised that the whole area around Oughtonhead Common is archeologically sensitive. When



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using digging machinery a 360 working backward bucket should be used, that uses tracks not wheels and has a flat ditching bucket. Some of the sedge may be used to plant up the groynes, the rest should be removed from site.

Fen Restoration

NB The design and final details of fen restoration are under review, while report is compiled as a result of feasibility study. See below.

Create a single large wetland area in the area to the north west of the western grazing compartment. This area lies to the south of the riverside path but to the north of the northern ditch.

- See map on page 35.
- Fen restoration may require an application to the Secretary of State, which will, in turn, require a full public consultation before this piece of work proceeds.
- The project will involve scraping the surface of the area to lower the level of the land down towards the top of the water table.
- Within this area will be two or three deeper, more permanent wetland features, ponds or scrapes.
- With the consent of the adjacent landowner, material will be deposited on a nearby field. The field is currently subject to the constraints of Natural England's Higher Level Scheme and will require a one off exemption from shallow plough. The disposal of material here will also be subject to EA Waste Disposal protocols.
- Following the advice of Hertfordshire County Council's Historic Environment Unit the area will require archaeological monitoring and recording of the soilstrip and ground reduction. If significant archaeological features are identified this may have a small impact on timescales. As such features will need to be adequately recorded and archaeologically sampled, which may result in a short delay to the works. The receptor site should be archaeologically field walked and a metal detected prior to commencement of the works, to remove any artefacts from the topsoil before the area is buried under the spoil.
- It is anticipated that this area that is usually wet during the winter months will be made wetter for longer during the year. In order to maintain and improve access a boardwalk along the existing path that connects the riverside path with the grazing compartment will be installed. From this, another section of boardwalk will lead to one of the permanent ponds. Here a viewing/dipping platform will be created with interpretation.
- The interpretation will focus on invertebrates, particularly dragonflies.

Feasibility

A specialist consultancy will be employed to investigate the feasibility of the fen restoration. The study will:

- Comprise of targeted fieldwork looking at local site conditions.
- Include the levelling of some areas intended for restoration and
- Include soil coring to assess underlying soil conditions and groundwater levels.



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- Provide a report to include:
 - ❖ A review all existing data available for the site.
 - ❖ The results of the above survey work.
 - ❖ A description of the works needed.
 - ❖ A plan of habitat creation.
 - ❖ A description of how the wetland will operate once constructed.
 - ❖ Realistic targets of what types of vegetation are achievable.
 - ❖ A bill of costs and quantities for the work.

Re-excavation and clearance of Northern Ditch

See map page 36.

Along the whole length

Remove the sediment and vegetation from the bottom and the sides of the ditch. This process is called 'slubbing out' and starts a new cycle of plant growth. This process should ideally be done in 2 sections. The downstream half in one year, followed by the upstream section in either the following year or the year after that. The upstream section could easily be done in conjunction with the fen restoration project. It may also prove more cost effective.

Along selected sections

Carry out clearance work along selected sections of the ditch shown on the map. These sections are to be re-profiled, scraping the ditch banks to reduce their angle of slope to 35 degrees. Any vegetation to be cleared back from the ditch 5 – 10 metres each side from the centre of the ditch. Trees will be marked. This will improve habitat quality for invertebrates.

Appendix 4: Hedge Planting Guidance Notes



Hedge Planting

Guidance Notes

Hertfordshire
CountrySide Management
Service

For further information on this or any matter concerned with countryside conservation contact the CMS office.

Phone 01462 459395
northeast.cms@hertsc.gov.uk

or browse the web site at
www.hertslink.org/cms/

Planting a new hedge is a long term commitment and should be considered carefully. This leaflet aims to outline the main points that will ensure success.

Site Preparation

To aid establishment the site should be prepared prior to planting. Plough, rotovate or dig a strip 60cm wide by 30cm deep and create a weed free strip about 1m wide, either by cultivation or herbicide.

Plant Selection

Bare root transplants of 30cm to 60cm should be used, of a species mix which matches surrounding hedges. For further advice on suitable species contact your local CMS officer.

As a basic guide the species mix should be predominantly hawthorn. You may use blackthorn but be aware that it suckers vigorously and you may therefore wish to leave it out.

To this a small proportion of shrubs indicative of the local area could be included, but when doing this avoid regular spacing as this may create a striped unnatural effect.

Planting Out

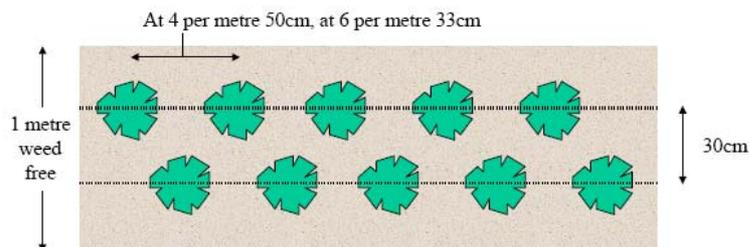
Plant as soon as possible after obtaining the plants. All roots should be protected while exposed to prevent drying out or frost damage. This includes during planting out when a slight breeze can soon dry the roots.

Plant during the Winter, or ideally late Autumn or early Spring to avoid heavy frosts, but while the soil is moist.

If the ground is very soft or has been cultivated then slot planting maybe an option otherwise pit planting is better.

The plants should be spaced in a staggered double row with 4 to 6 plants per metre.

Planting Layout



Sponsored by: HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, CITY AND DISTRICT OF ST ALBANS, DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL, EAST HERTS COUNCIL, HERTSMERE BOROUGH COUNCIL, NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL, THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL and also supported by BROXBORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL and WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL



Protection

Wild animals such as rabbits, voles or deer can decimate a newly planted hedge so protection of new plants is essential. Individual guards are generally the easiest way though fencing may be an option.

Types of Guards

Spiral guards – These expand with the growing plant and protect from browsing animals. Clear guards are generally preferable.

Plastic mesh guards – These can be used where branching is a problem such as with holly.

Tree shelters – While protecting the plant these also aid the trees early development by providing a sheltered environment, but will restrict lateral growth.

Guards should be removed once the plants are well established, say in 3 to 5 years, though caution may be needed where large numbers of rabbits are present.

Domestic Animals

Cattle, sheep and horses may all browse and damage new hedge plants. If they are present then a fence will be required. This should be at least 1m from the hedge and ideally 2m to allow maintenance and prevention of browsing.

Weed Problems

This is perhaps the most important operation when establishing a new hedge and is often overlooked. The main way in which weeds harm new trees is by competing for water and nutrients from the soil. Certain weeds can also smother new plants depriving them of light.

Weed competition not only reduces the survival rate of a new planting, it also dramatically reduces their subsequent growth rate. This can mean the difference

between a first year growth rate of 30-40cm and a first year growth rate of just 1-2cm. In extreme cases plants may even experience first year die back. This is more common where standard sized trees are planted.

Weed Control

To prevent weed competition an area 1 metre across should be cleared of vegetation in line with the new hedge. This will require maintenance for the first three years or until the plants become established.

A variety of methods can be used to control weeds as detailed:

Cutting – This will help to control some plants such as nettles and brambles, but will invigorate many others such as grasses and rosette forming herbs, stimulating greater root growth and competition.

Where these weeds predominate cutting will be counter productive.

Hoing – Can be effective but is labour intensive, and great care will be needed around newly established plants in order to not excessively disturb their roots or damage the bark.

Herbicide – This is cheaper than most alternatives, but requires specialist knowledge and equipment. Advice can only be given by a suitably qualified practitioner.

Mulch mats – These are effective but may occasionally harbour small mammals and invertebrate pests.

Organic mulch – An environmental alternative which suppresses weeds before rotting into the soil. The following can be used: wood chips, bark, coconut fibre, grass cuttings, well rotted horse manure or farm yard manure.

A layer about 4" deep will be required to be effective. Some light weeding and topping up of the layer will be needed in following years.

Losses

If all the precautions listed on this sheet are followed then losses should be minimal, however during extreme weather losses may be unavoidable and should be replaced the following year.

Hedge Profiles

An early trim at the end of the first growing season will help to produce a thicker hedge. After this the aim should be to produce a hedge 2 metres tall by about 1.5 metres wide, with an A-shaped profile. If a more vertical profile is needed then chamfered top corners will help to produce a similar effect.

Hedgerow Trees

If hedgerow trees are to be included these should be spaced at least 30m apart to prevent them overshadowing the hedge. To establish trees, they can be planted in the line of the new hedge along with the hedge plants, but use tree shelters to allow their identification during maintenance.

Planting Checklist

- 3 Ground preparation
- 3 Plant selection and species
- 3 Time of year
- 3 Pest protection
- 3 Weed control





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Appendix 5: Technical note - *Stenopelmus rufinasus*

Fairy fern or floating water fern *Azolla filiculoides* has become a problem in the ditch that runs from south to north across the Common near the area known as Piccadilly Circus.

Azolla was introduced into this country from America in the 1800's. It is one of the most invasive plants in the UK today. None of our native insects feed on *Azolla*, so it rapidly colonises our watercourses. It then shades out native plants and reduces the oxygen levels in the water, harming wildlife and causing the water to smell.

Previous efforts to control *Azolla* mechanically with the use of nets have proven unsuccessful. It can be controlled chemically with glyphosate, but this is a non-selective contact herbicide, meaning it will kill any plant that it comes into contact with.

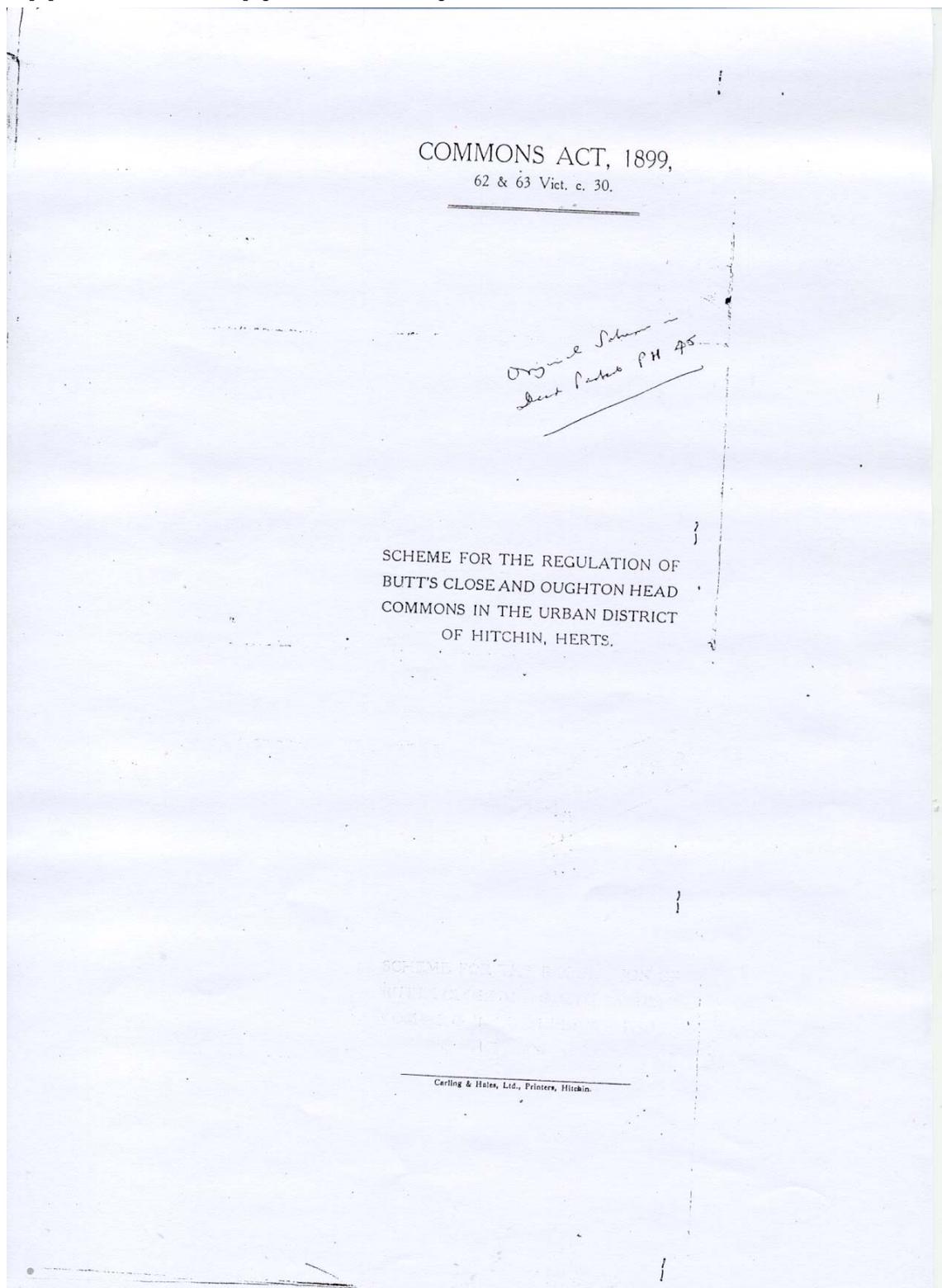
Stenopelmus rufinasus is a weevil that feeds exclusively on *Azolla*. It is already living in the UK. Once the weevil has eaten all the *Azolla* it dies off.



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Appendix 6: Copy of Local Bye-Laws.





COMMONS ACT, 1899.

SCHEME FOR THE REGULATION OF BUTTS CLOSE AND OUGHTON HEAD COMMONS IN THE URBAN DISTRICT OF HITCHIN IN THE COUNTY OF HERTFORD.

Description of Common and Management by District Council.

1.—The pieces of land with the ponds paths and roads thereon commonly known as Butt's Close and Oughton Head Commons situate in the Parish of Hitchin Urban in the Urban District of Hitchin in the County of Hertford and hereinafter referred to as "the Commons" as the same are delineated in the plan deposited at the office of the Urban District Council of Hitchin hereinafter called "the Council" and thereon coloured green being "Commons" within the meaning of the Commons Act 1899 shall henceforth be regulated by this scheme and the management thereof shall be vested in the Council.

Appointment of Officers.

2.—The powers of the Council generally as to appointing or employing officers and servants and paying them under the general Acts applicable to the Council shall apply to all such persons as in the judgment of the Council may be necessary and proper for the preservation of order on and the enforcement of bye-laws with respect to the Commons and otherwise for the purposes of this scheme and the Council may make rules for regulating the duties and conduct of the several officers and servants so appointed and employed and may alter such rules as occasion may require.

Protection and improvement of Commons.

3.—The Council may execute any works of drainage raising levelling or fencing or other works for the protection and improvement of the Commons and shall preserve the turf shrubs trees plants and grass thereon and for this purpose may for short periods enclose by fences such portions as may require rest to revive the same and may plant trees and shrubs for shelter or ornament and may place seats upon and light the Commons and otherwise improve the Commons as places for exercise or recreation but the Council shall do nothing that may otherwise vary or alter the natural features or aspect of the Commons or interfere with free access to every part thereof and shall not erect upon the Commons any shelter pavilion or other building without the previous consent of the Commissioners of His Majesty's Woods Forests and Land Revenues in whom the soil of the Commons is vested.

Against encroachments.

4.—The Council shall maintain the Commons free from all encroachments and shall not permit any trespass on or partial or other enclosure of any part thereof.

Public rights of access and recreation.

5.—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 bye-laws made by the Council under this scheme.

Rights of stint holders.

6.—The Council shall do nothing to interfere with the legitimate rights of stint holders to depasture their stocks on the Commons under the ancient charter or custom of the Manor of Hitchin and shall not interfere with the flow of the River Oughton or divert its course.

Maintenance and construction of paths and roads.

7.—The Council shall have power to repair and maintain the existing paths and roads on the Commons and to set out make and maintain such new paths and roads on the Commons as appear to the Council to be necessary or expedient and to take any proceedings necessary for the stopping or diversion of any highway over the Commons.

Fencing of quarries, &c.

8.—The Council may for the prevention of accidents fence any quarry pit pond or other like place on the Commons.



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Games, &c.

9.—The Council may set apart for games any portion or portions of the Commons as they may consider expedient and may form cricket grounds and may allow the same to be temporarily enclosed with any open fence so as to prevent cattle and horses straying thereon but such grounds shall not be laid out so near to any dwelling-house as to create a nuisance or to be an annoyance to the inhabitants thereof.

Bye-Laws.

10.—The Council may for the prevention of nuisances and the preservation of order on the Commons and subject to the provisions of Section 10 of the Commons Act 1899 make revoke and alter bye-laws for any of the following purposes viz. :—

- (a). For prohibiting the deposit on the Commons or in any pond thereon of road-sand materials for repair of roads dung rubbish wood or other matter.
- (b). For prohibiting any person without lawful authority from digging cutting or taking turf sods gravel sand clay or other substance on or from the Commons and from cutting felling or injuring any gorse heather timber or other tree shrub brushwood or other plant growing on the Commons.
- (c). For regulating the place and mode of digging and taking turf sods gravel sand clay or other substance and cutting felling and taking trees or underwood on or from the Commons in exercise of any right of common or other right over the Commons.
- (d). For prohibiting the injury defacement or removal of seats fences notice-boards or other things put up or maintained by the Council on the Commons.
- (e). For prohibiting or regulating the posting or painting of bills placards advertisements or notices on trees or fences or notice-boards on the Commons.
- (f). For prohibiting any person without lawful authority from bird-catching setting traps or nets or liming trees or laying snares for birds or other animals taking birds' eggs or nests and shooting or chasing game or other animals on the Commons.
- (g). For prohibiting or regulating the drawing without lawful authority upon the Commons of any carriage cart caravan truck or other vehicle and the erecting or permitting to remain on the Commons without the consent of the Council or other lawful authority any building shed tent fence post railing or other structure whether used in connection with the playing of games or not and for authorising an officer of the Council to remove from the Commons any vehicle drawn upon the Commons and any structure erected thereon in contravention of any such bye-law.
- (h). For prohibiting (except in the case of a fair lawfully held) or regulating the placing on the Commons of any photographic cart or of any show exhibition swing roundabout or other like thing and for authorising an officer of the Council to remove from the Commons anything placed upon the Commons in contravention of any such bye-law.
- (i). For prohibiting or regulating the lighting of any fire on the Commons.
- (k). For prohibiting or regulating the firing or discharge of fire-arms or the throwing or discharge of missiles on the Commons.
- (l). For regulating games to be played and other means of recreation to be exercised on the Commons and assemblages of persons thereon.



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- (m). For regulating the use of any portion of the Commons temporarily enclosed or set apart under this Scheme for any purpose.
- (n). For prohibiting or regulating horses being exercised or broken in without lawful authority by grooms or others on the Commons.
- (o). For prohibiting any person without lawful authority from turning out or permitting to remain on the Commons any cattle sheep or other animals ; and for authorising an officer of the Council to remove from the Commons any cattle sheep or other animal being upon the Commons in contravention of any such bye-law.
- (p). Generally for prohibiting or regulating any act or thing tending to injury or disfigurement of the Commons or to interfere with the use thereof by the public for the purposes of exercise and recreation.
- (q). For authorising an officer of the Council after due warning to remove or exclude from the Commons any person who within his view commits or whom he reasonably suspects of committing an offence against any bye-law made under this Scheme or against the Vagrancy Act, 1824.
- (r). For prohibiting the hindrance or obstruction of an officer of the Council in the exercise of his powers or duties under this Scheme or under any bye-laws made thereunder.

Publication of Bye-laws on Commons.

11.—All such bye-laws made under this Scheme shall be published on notice-boards placed on such parts of the Commons (not less than three) as to the Council may appear desirable.

Saving of rights, &c., in the soil and highways.

12.—Nothing in this Scheme or any bye-law made thereunder shall prejudice or affect any right of the Crown as Lord of the Manor or the Commissioners of His Majesty's Woods Forests and Land Revenues to the soil of the Commons or of any person claiming under them which is lawfully exerciseable in over under or on the soil or surface of the Commons in connection with game or with mines minerals or other substrata or otherwise or prejudice or affect any rights of the commoners in or over the Commons or the lawful use of any highway or thoroughfare on the Commons or affect any power or obligation to repair any such highway or thoroughfare.

Copies of Scheme.

13.—Printed copies of this Scheme shall at all times be sold at the Office of the Council to all persons desiring to buy the same at a price not exceeding sixpence each.

The Common Seal of the Urban District Council of Hitchin was hereunto affixed pursuant to resolution at a Meeting of the Council held on the *twentieth* day of *April* One Thousand Nine Hundred and Twenty-One by



Ernest Bowser

Chairman of the Council,

in the presence of

James James

Clerk to the Council.

*Approved by order of the
Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries
the sixth day of May One Thousand
nine Hundred and Twenty-one*

MA
Authorised by the Minister.