

# Pryor's Wood

## GREENSPACE ACTION PLAN (GAP)

2018 – 2023



Produced by the Countryside Management Service  
On behalf of North Herts District Council



NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL



## Amendments Table

Amendment Date	Section Updated	Details	Officer

## Contents

1.0 Introduction .....	3
1.1 Ownership and Management .....	3
1.2 Previous Management .....	3
2.0 Landscape, Geography and Designations .....	4
Map 1 – Constraints Plan .....	5
3.0 Site Description and Analysis .....	6
3.1 Woodland Habitat.....	6
Veteran Trees and Deadwood .....	8
Map 2 – Site Description.....	9
3.2 Wildlife .....	10
3.3 Access and Infrastructure .....	11
4.0 The New Plan .....	12
4.1 Community Engagement .....	12
4.2 Vision.....	13
4.3 Objectives.....	13
4.4 Action Plan .....	13
Abbreviations .....	14
Action Plan Maps .....	14
Map 3 – Year 1 Action Plan .....	19
Map 4 – Year 2 Action Plan .....	20
Map 5 – Year 3 Action Plan .....	21
Map 6 – Year 4 & 5 Action Plan .....	22
Appendix 1 – Specifications .....	23
Appendix 2 – Local Wildlife Site Survey .....	30

## 1.0 Introduction

The Countryside Management Service (CMS) working in partnership with North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) have developed a new Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) for Pryor's Wood, located near Stevenage. This GAP covers the management of the site over a five year period, from 2018 to 2023. Although this is a standalone document governing the management of Pryor's Wood, this plan can be viewed as an appendix to the Greenspace Action Plan for Great Ashby Woodland and District Park. Great Ashby Woodland and District Park is the collective name given to an arc of woodland and green space owned and managed by NHDC, and borders Pryor's Wood to the north. Several of the woodland pockets are Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW), and are connected by the district park, an open recreational space for local people. Through the management objectives set out within this GAP, Pryor's Wood is to become integrated with the Great Ashby Woodland and District Park (referred to hereafter as the District Park).

GAPs are map based management plans that aim to:

- Determine what actions are required over the lifetime of the plan to meet agreed objectives and core aspirations for the site.
- Give focus and direction to the running and improvement of Pryor's Wood and enable funding and resources to be allocated for improvements.
- Provide opportunities for people to be involved in the development of their local green space.
- Inform people about works that may have to be carried out for health and safety or access reasons.

## 1.1 Ownership and Management

Pryor's Wood is owned by North Herts District Council (NHDC) and was formerly managed by the Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) as a community Nature Reserve until 2016. Current management by NHDC is supported by the Countryside Management Service (CMS). As the owner and manager of Pryor's Wood, NHDC are responsible for ensuring that the site is managed as effectively as possible for the benefit of both people and wildlife.

## 1.2 Previous Management

During the management of Pryor's Wood by HMWT, a number of actions were taken to improve public access including the installation of entrance signs and kissing gates, surfacing of paths and the implementation of tree safety works. Some tree planting was also conducted along the site boundary for screening purposes. Hazel and hornbeam coppicing was re-introduced to the site in selective areas located towards the western and northern boundary. Within the coppice coupes the ground vegetation was regularly cut and raked in an attempt to encourage the growth of rich ground flora. Coppiced material was used to create woven hazel 'baskets' to protect coppice stools from deer, and to create a dead hedge to protect the small population of Violet Helleborine from being trampled by walkers. It is understood that the majority of these actions were delivered during 2006 to 2011. Although attempts to diversify ground flora and woodland structure were made through the re-introduction of coppicing, there has been no proactive management of the canopy trees in recent years. A Local Wildlife Site Survey was completed by HMWT in June 2016, and has been used to guide management proposals within this GAP (see Appendix 2).

## 2.0 Landscape, Geography and Designations

Pryor's Wood is located in the residential area of Great Ashby on the eastern edge of Stevenage. The Pryor's Wood site covers an area of 8 ha and is contiguous with Box Wood (24.4 ha) to the south-east and the District Park to the north (see Map 1 and Map 2). Farmland is present to the north-east of the site. Gresley Way borders the site along its Western boundary, beyond which are the residential houses of Great Ashby. The bordering woodland area, Box Wood, is privately owned and the boundary between the two woodlands is defined by a historic woodbank with veteran hornbeams.

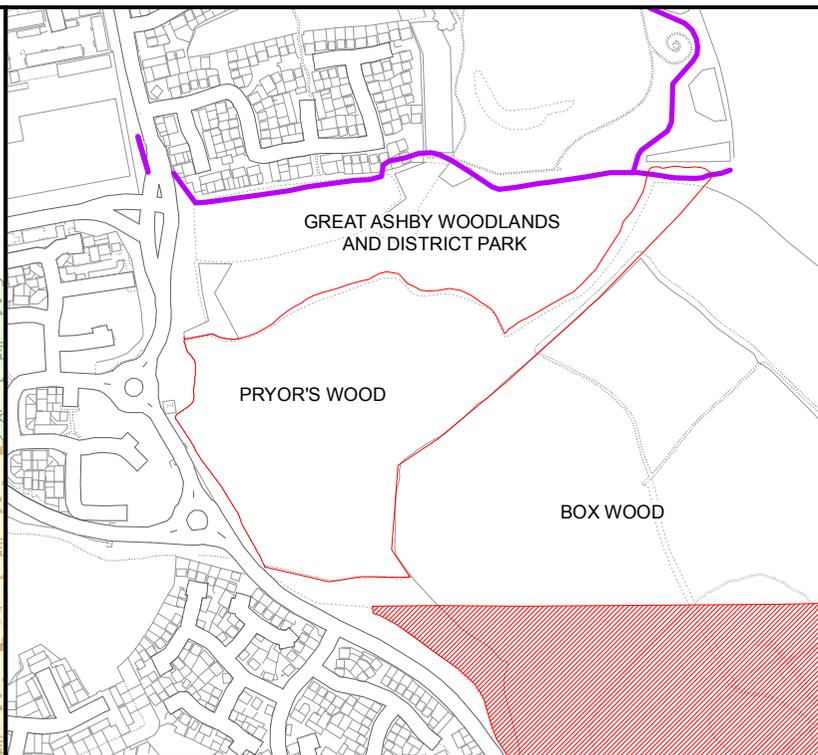
The wood is situated on a site falling slightly towards the north-east at an altitude of about 130 m on deep fine loamy soil over clays, with slowly permeable subsoils possibly subject to some seasonal water-logging. From the composition of the flora it is likely that there are variations in soil pH with some areas more acidic than others.

Pryor's Wood forms part of a Local Wildlife Site designation which also encompasses the adjacent woodland areas of Box Wood, and Thirlmere Wood, the latter being a small woodland fragment connected to the west of the site (see Table 1; Map 1). Pryor's Wood is classified as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) which means the site has had continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD. However, the woodland has been influenced by human activities for many centuries. The first Ordnance Survey map of 1878 illustrates that some woodland clearance has occurred within the site's history. Subsequent OS maps demonstrate the progression of the area to wood pasture in 1899, and back to complete woodland cover by 1956. A disused chalk pit located along the northern boundary of the wood adds to the site's structural and floristic diversity.

Pryor's wood comprises a narrow strip of woodland which extends to the north-east. Although tree cover extends beyond the southern boundary of Pryor's Wood (being contiguous with Box Wood) the composition of Box Wood is very different to that of Pryor's Wood. Box Wood is classified as a Plantation on an Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) and as such is dominated by coniferous trees. In contrast, Pryor's Wood is classified as ASNW, and the woodland canopy is dominated by pedunculate oak and hornbeam.

Table 1: Pryor's Wood Designations

Level	Designation	Detail
Non-Statutory	Local Wildlife Site (22/006)	Local Wildlife Sites are considered to be of "critical natural capital". The designation encompasses the adjacent Box Wood and Thirlmere Wood.
Non-Statutory	Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW)	Woodland that has had continuous native tree and shrub cover since at least 1600 AD and may have been managed by coppicing or felling, and allowed to regenerate naturally. The entire woodland of Pryor's Wood is designated as ASNW.



### Legend

-  Site Boundary
-  Footpath (Public Right of Way)
-  Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW)
-  Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)
-  Scheduled Monument
-  Wildlife Site
-  Greenbelt



Site Name		<b>Pryor's Wood</b>	
Title			
<b>Map 1 - Constraints Plan</b>			
Scale @ A4	1:8,000	 	
Date	March 2018		
Rev	00		

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## 3.0 Site Description and Analysis

### 3.1 Woodland Habitat

Pryor's Wood is characterised by a dense stand of pedunculate oak, particularly within the centre of the woodland (see Map 2). Hornbeam is also a dominant feature, mainly along the historic woodbanks which delineate the woodland boundary. Additionally, old coppice and single stem hornbeams dominate the western section of the site. Other tree species which are present at a lower frequency include ash, wild cherry, sycamore, silver birch, sweet chestnut and elm. The understorey is dominated by hawthorn (common and midland) and hazel, with elder, field maple, blackthorn, goat willow, Norway maple and holly also present.

The narrow north-eastern section of Pryor's Wood is very different in size and character to the rest of the woodland. This area has a much more developed understorey and field layer in comparison, mostly comprising hazel coppice, in addition to hornbeam, field maple, and hawthorn. Although tree regeneration is evident in this section of Pryor's Wood, this is not uniform across the woodland. A small area of hazel coppice is also present to the west of the site, forming a well-developed but localised understorey cover.

The combined presence of old hornbeam coppice stools and mature oak, suggests Pryor's Wood was historically managed by the traditional system of coppicing with oak standards. For several centuries ancient woodlands have provided a valuable and sustainable source of timber, fuel and smaller diameter woodland products. Larger oaks were primarily grown for timber, with hornbeam coppice cut on rotation used for charcoal production. The wildlife communities associated with ancient woodlands have developed as a result of these historical management techniques. Rotational coppicing and thinning allows pockets of light through the canopy, encouraging the development of ground flora, scrubby margins, and the regeneration of trees. The result is a diverse woodland structure which supports a wide variety of plants, birds and invertebrates.



*The tree canopy of Pryor's Wood dominated by pedunculate oak and hornbeam*

Pro-active management should be re-introduced to Pryor's Wood, to maintain and enhance a diverse woodland structure. The dense stand of oak present in the central part of the woodland has resulted in tall, narrow mature trees which cast a shadow on the understorey and woodland floor below. This section of the woodland will benefit from selective small-scale thinning, through a method of Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF). This is a term used to describe forest management methods which maintain continuous woodland conditions. Primarily this is done by manipulating the over-storey through removal of individual trees or small tree groups, thus controlling the light regime and allowing natural regeneration to occur, without encouraging detrimental weed growth.

Implementing CCF will provide the opportunity to enhance the structure of the central woodland compartment and should be introduced sensitively within this ancient woodland context. An initial trial involving the felling of two small tree groups will be introduced within this plan period. Felling will be in favour of specimen oak trees, and involve targeting less healthy trees and non-native species, such as cherry and sycamore, for removal (see Appendix 1, Specification 5). This approach will provide the remaining trees with more space, allowing the development of a broad crown. It will also allow increased light levels to reach the woodland floor, encouraging natural tree regeneration and an understorey of small shrubs and trees, as well as diverse woodland flora. The result will be uneven aged woodland, where all age classes of tree co-exist.

The area of hazel coppice located to the west of the site has reached maturity and is ready to be re-coppiced. To ensure good regrowth, the stocking density of this coppice coupe should be increased through planting young hazel trees (See Appendix 1, Specification 4). This will complement efforts made through CCF to diversify the structure of the woodland. In order to protect re-growth from browsing by deer, any coppiced stools will be protected by sufficient fencing, or through the creation of deer baskets. Woodland scallops will also be created along the circular footpath which extends through the woodland (See Map 2 and Appendix 1, Specification 7). Creating woodland scallops will involve cutting and coppicing trees in a 'D' shaped area adjacent to the footpath, with one scallop cut each year, and then left to re-grow. This continuous cycle creates a varied and changing habitat structure, in addition to providing opportunities for the adjacent footpath to dry out in the sun.

Through the combination of CCF, coppicing, and scalloping a number of open pockets will be created throughout the woodland canopy. As previously described this will increase light levels within the woodland, encouraging the growth of plants, wildflowers and tree regeneration. To ensure that efforts are successful, CCF groups will be re-stocked. Open areas will also be monitored regularly for conifer regeneration from the adjacent Box Wood. Two small stands of invasive non-native species (INNS) have been identified within Pryor's Wood and include Buddleja and Cotoneaster. INNS can spread rapidly and negatively impact woodland flora. As such removal will be prioritised following the method outlined in Specification 6 (see Appendix 1).

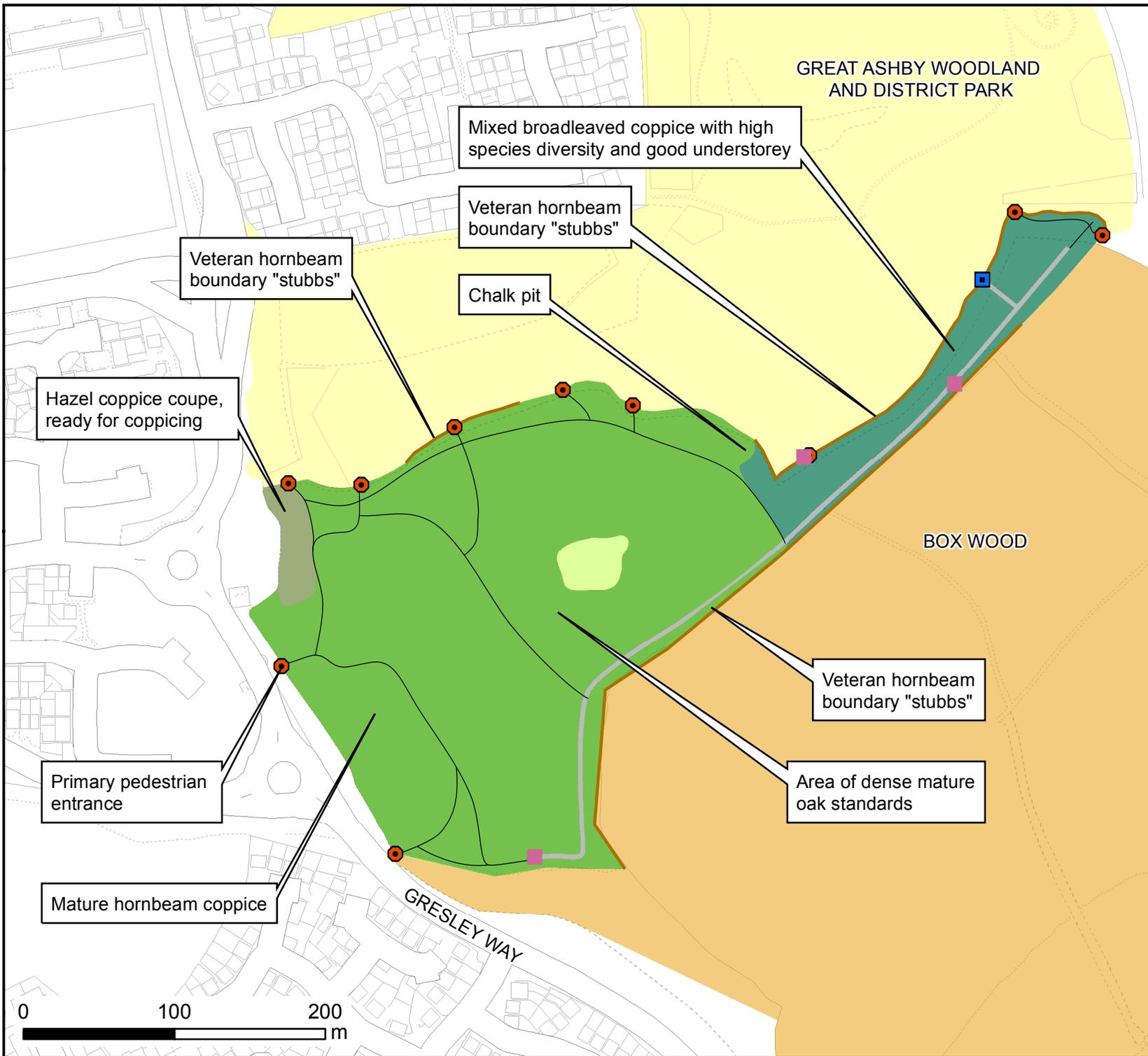
### Veteran Trees and Deadwood

With exception to the hornbeam stubs present along the woodland boundaries, and a mature ash coppice providing an interesting feature towards the west of the site, there are a limited number of large mature veteran trees. Although the implementation of CCF will encourage the growth of young trees, this method also focuses on the retention of specimen oak trees, which can be maintained across future plan periods to veteran tree status. Supporting the development of veteran trees will improve the age diversity across the woodland and provide habitat for specialist and sensitive species. In addition fallen wood and standing decaying/ dead wood will be retained (wherever safety permits), with the aim to achieve the minimum standard of 20 m<sup>3</sup> of decaying/ dead wood per hectare, as set by the Forestry Commission. Veteran trees and deadwood within woodlands provide a significant contribution to biodiversity, as they support a wide variety of rare fungi, invertebrates and lichens, as well as hole-nesting birds and bats.

The veteran hornbeam coppice stubs present along the woodland boundaries, have not been managed for many years, and as a result the limbs have become large and heavy. The health of these hornbeam stubs should be monitored, and restoration should be considered when necessary to prevent the splitting of limbs and subsequent damage to stools. When required, restoration should be carried out sensitively, on a tree-by-tree basis, and should be combined with the felling of individual adjacent trees which overshadow the hornbeams. This would give any regrowth the best possible chance of success. The majority of the hornbeam coppice stubs are located along the woodland edge. As such, care will need to be taken not to remove too much tree cover and leave the remaining trees susceptible to wind throw.



*Hornbeam coppice along the historic woodbanks which delineate the woodland boundary*



### Legend

- Pedestrian access
- Vehicle access
- Bench
- Historic woodbank lined with hornbeam
- Footpath / desire line
- Broadleaved woodland
- Hazel coppice
- Mixed broadleaved coppice
- Woodland glade
- Surfaced path
- Great Ashby Woodland & District Park: Owned by NHDC
- Box Wood: Private Ownership

N  
▲

Site Name		<h2>Pryor's Wood</h2>	
Title		<h3>Map 2 - Site Description</h3>	
Scale @ A4	1:3,500		
Date	March 2018		
Rev	00		
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## 3.2 Wildlife

Pryor's Wood supports a vast array of wildlife, including several species of birds and mammals. Records obtained from the Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre indicate that a total of 59 different species of bird have previously been recorded within the woodland. Records have included sparrowhawk, woodcock, tawny owl, lesser spotted woodpecker, hawfinch and wood warbler. Historically, the site was known for its hazel dormouse population, with the most recent observation recorded in 1983. Although there are no recent records, management efforts should aim to maintain and enhance suitable habitat for supporting the native hazel dormouse. The woodland management actions proposed in this plan, such as coppicing, opening up the canopy, encouraging a diverse understory, and retaining dead/ decaying wood will create a mosaic of different aged trees and a varied structure, which will benefit a range of species including dormice.

Ground flora across the woodland is diverse, with 64 different plant species identified in a Wildlife Site Survey of Pryor's Wood and the adjacent Thirlmere Wood, conducted by the HMWT in 2016 (see Appendix 2). Of these, 23 species were ancient woodland indicators, including honeysuckle, wood speedwell, wood millet, pignut and wood anemone. The site predominately comprises bramble, bluebell, yellow archangel, dog's mercury and bracken. In particular, the site is well known locally for its carpet of bluebells in the spring. Two species of orchid have previously been recorded within the woodland, including violet helleborine and early purple orchid. However, these have not been observed in recent years.

Under previous management a number of Schwegler bird and bat boxes were installed. Management in recent years has involved cleaning out the bird and bat boxes annually. Maintenance of the bird boxes should continue, and advice is to be sought from the Hertfordshire and Middlesex Bat Group (HMBG) with regards to the future maintenance of the bat boxes. A monitoring programme will be established to understand how the bird and bat boxes are being used in order to determine which species are present within the woodland.



*The bluebell carpet which adorns Pryor's Wood in the spring*

### 3.3 Access and Infrastructure

The landscape of Great Ashby has changed significantly over recent years with the development of new housing in the area. The Great Ashby Woodlands and District Park provide important recreational areas for local people.

Pryor's Wood is frequented by local residents for running, walking and dog walking. The main pedestrian access point into the site is from Gresley Way, which borders the site and separates it from the surrounding residential estate to the West (see Map 2). There are numerous informal access points into the woodland from the adjacent meadow, which forms part of the District Park. At present the entrances are unwelcoming with a distinct absence of signage. In order to incorporate Pryor's Wood into the District Park, some of these entrances will be formalised to establish Pryor's Wood as a welcoming place for visitors, and to make the boundary of the District Park clear. Entrances will be made more inviting by clearing back over hanging vegetation, and installing welcome signs. Interpretation will be installed at the main entrances to Pryor's Wood, to show the walking routes available, and provide information on associated wildlife and management. Interpretation and welcome signs will also establish ownership of the site by NHDC.

Informal access can also be gained into the woodland from the adjacent Box Wood, which is privately owned. We do not propose fencing this boundary as this would be detrimental to the wildlife of the area. However access through this woodland is strongly discouraged, and should be made clear through appropriate signage and provision of maps/ interpretation at entrances.

Public footpath No 13 extends across the District Park to the north-eastern entrance of Pryor's Wood, and runs for a short section along the northern boundary of the woodland. This entrance point was previously overgrown with vegetation and overhanging trees. As a result, an alternative entrance had been created, which led over the historic woodbank before joining the route of the public footpath. The overhanging vegetation has recently been cleared back to open up the official entrance. A welcome sign will be installed, directing walkers along the public footpath, and as such limiting potential damage to the historic woodbank.

Although there are no public Rights of Way which extend through Pryor's Wood, there is an established surfaced path in addition to a wide network of informal desire lines. This surfaced path is in need of top dressing to improve its durability and prevent the formation of soft spots, which can impede access by walkers. In order to facilitate essential woodland management, a vehicle access point will be established at the western entrance to Pryor's Wood, providing vehicle access into the woodland from the roundabout on Gresley Way. The existing surfaced path will be extended to connect to this entrance point.

Under previous management of the site by the HMWT, a way-marked circular route had been established through the woodland. This is no longer way-marked and parts of the route have become overgrown. Under this new plan, a new circular route will be established within the woodland. This route will be regularly maintained to ensure that it is not encroached by vegetation. In addition, woodland scallops will be created along the route to open up the path, which will help to maintain the paths in better condition, and provide the opportunity for them to dry out in the sun (see section 3.1).

There is no formal parking provision directly next to the woodland, however, public parking is available for the District Park, and can be accessed via a network of footpaths. A circular woodland walk has been developed by CMS in partnership with NHDC, which extends across the District Park and connects the surrounding residential community with the community centre, in addition to the various woodland and parkland pockets. This circular woodland walk will be extended to incorporate Pryor's Wood, which will improve the connection of this site to the other diverse habitats associated with the District Park. Although beyond the scope of the Pryor's Wood GAP, the Great Ashby Community Council (GACC) is also exploring opportunities to extend the existing woodland walk. Their aim is to incorporate the surrounding woodland pockets to the west, which are privately owned.

The extended circular walk will need to be communicated to visitors and the local community, through amendments to the maps on the interpretation boards, as well as updating the accompanying site leaflets. Reviewing and refreshing interpretation provision across the whole District Park, will promote a wider understanding and awareness of the biodiversity and historic value of the area, as well as the walking routes which are available.

## **4.0 The New Plan**

The new Pryor's Wood GAP will develop and expand upon the actions implemented through previous management. The GAP will be a simple, easy to read plan accessible to interested members of the public. It is intended for use by NHDC and CMS officers and volunteers, guiding the management of the site for a five year period.

The focus of the GAP is to manage the woodland in accordance with the Forestry Commission's best practice guidelines for Ancient Woodland; as such the proposed GAP is sensitive to the ancient ecological characteristics of the site. The document will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and relevant.

The vision and key objectives developed for the Great Ashby Woodland and District Park are also applicable for Pryor's Wood. From these key objectives, actions have been identified specific to Pryor's Wood and costed for the five year period. Detailed specifications have also been produced, outlining timing, materials and methods to complete the actions. These are described in Appendix 1.

### **4.1 Community Engagement**

The local community has been active in the management and promotion of the site. During previous management, a number of volunteers were trained and regular work parties and guided walks were delivered. Previous work parties have conducted coppicing, fence installation and erecting and maintaining bat and bird boxes. Furthermore, a volunteer warden and assistant warden have been involved with the management of the site for the past 25 years. Throughout this time, the wardens have conducted essential maintenance tasks, such as litter picking, path clearance and ecological surveys. It is hoped that through the new GAP, the previous volunteer contributions can be developed and formalised through the creation of a 'Friends of Group', with the local community being active partners in the delivery of the new plan.

It is important to provide opportunities for the local community to get involved with the management of their local greenspace. There has been some interest in establishing a 'Friends of Group' to support the management of the District Park. The development of a 'Friends of Group' will be actively supported by NHDC and CMS, and encouraged through the promotion of volunteer opportunities and the provision of training where appropriate. In addition, to promote awareness and understanding of the actions within this plan, the public will be kept informed of major activity and works in the woodland.

## 4.2 Vision

The Pryor's Wood 2018-2023 Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) sets out the long term vision for the sustainable management of Pryor's Wood, securing its health and resilience, and enhancing its value for wildlife and people. During this plan period, Pryor's Wood will become incorporated into the District Park for management and public accessibility purposes. As such, the next GAP for the Great Ashby Woodland and District Park (2020-2025) will integrate the actions proposed in this plan for Pryor's Wood.

The greater vision for the Great Ashby Woodland and District Park is to create and maintain a continuous arc of ancient woodland and open grassland, providing a quiet recreational space for the local community, and a home for a wide variety of wildlife.

## 4.3 Objectives

1. Ensure Pryor's Wood is a welcoming and accessible open space for visitors by creating inviting entrances and good access routes through the woodland.
2. Improve the connectivity between Pryor's Wood and Great Ashby Woodland and District Park by extending the circular woodland walk to include Pryor's Wood.
3. Enhance visitor experience by installing interpretation to make the site more visible to potential users, and allow existing users to enjoy all the benefits the site has to offer.
4. Conserve the wildlife and landscape of Pryor's Wood for future generations by diversifying the age structure of the woodland, and protecting mature specimen trees.
5. Encourage participation of local community volunteers in the management of Pryor's Wood through the development and support of a Friends of Great Ashby Group (FoGA), the delivery of guided walks and events, and a programme of volunteer activities.
6. Maintain Pryor's Wood as a clean, safe and secure open space.

## 4.4 Action Plan

The plan comprises annual work programmes, which address management activities that fall outside of the contracted grounds maintenance operations. They cover the period from April 2018 to March 2023 inclusive. In some cases, tasks are ongoing and so appear on more than one action plan. The actions have been established to achieve the objectives set out in Section 4.3.

The action plan briefly describes each action, and provides reference to the management objectives met, and a detailed specification for each action. In some instances, an action will fulfil a number of the objectives. An estimated cost for carrying out the works is also provided, in addition to the organisation/s responsible for delivery of the stated action (see list of abbreviations).

### Abbreviations

CMS	Countryside Management Service
Con	Contractor
FoGA	Friends of Great Ashby
GACC	Great Ashby Community Council
JOC	John O’Conner (Grounds Maintenance Contractor)
NHDC	North Herts District Council
Vols	Volunteers

At the end of each annual period, the action plan will be updated to show the progress of the activities for that year. In theory, all should be marked as complete, but, if for any reason actions haven’t been achieved, details are to be recorded here. If appropriate, remnant activities can then be moved in to one of the future actions plans.

### Action Plan Maps

For each year of the plan there is an annotated map showing the actions to be carried out in that year, with the changes shown on the following year’s map (Maps 3- 6).

Action	Obj. Ref	When	Responsibility	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref	Status
<b>ANNUAL OPERATIONS</b>							
Conduct tree health and safety survey	6	Biannually	NHDC	NHDC	-	N/A	
Clear vegetation at entrances	1,6	Biannually	CMS/ CMS Vols/ FoGA	Officer time	-	4	
Path clearance across site	1,6	Biannually	FOGA	-	-	4	
Mow new path route to designated northern entrance	1	Summer	JOC	NHDC	JOC Contract	N/A	
Litter picking across site	1,6	All year (Ad hoc)	JOC/ FoGA	NHDC	JOC Contract	N/A	
Emptying of litter bins in District Park	1,6	All year (weekly)	JOC	NHDC	JOC Contract	N/A	
Emptying of litter bins adjacent to District Park	1,6	All year (weekly)	Urbaser	NHDC	Urbaser contract	N/A	
Emptying of dog bins on/adjacent to District Park	1,6	All year (weekly)	JOC	GACC	JOC Contract	N/A	
Guided walks/ events	1,3,4	As appropriate	CMS/ FoGA	Officer time	-	N/A	
Support of Friends Group including training	1,4, 5,6	As necessary	CMS/ NHDC/ FoGA	Officer time	-	N/A	
Review annual programme	All	Annually	CMS/ NHDC/ FoGA	Officer time	-	N/A	
Monitoring of bird and bat boxes	4, 5	Spring/ Summer	FoGA	-	-	3	
Maintenance of bird boxes	4, 5	Autumn	FoGA	-	-	3	

**Year 1 Actions: 2018 - 2019**

Action	Obj. Ref	When	Responsibility	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref	Status
<b>ONE-OFF ACTIONS</b>							
Connect Pryor's Wood to Great Ashby woodland circular walk – install waymarkers	1, 2	Spring/summer	CMS/ CMS Vols/ FoGA	NHDC/ Officer time	£200	N/A	
Seek advice from Herts & Middlesex Bat Group regarding maintenance of bat boxes	4, 5	Spring/summer	CMS	Officer Time	-	N/A	
Remove old wooden furniture from vehicle access point along the north-west boundary	1, 6	Spring/summer	CMS/ NHDC/ CMS Vols	Officer time	-	N/A	
Promote and support establishment of a Friends of Group for Great Ashby	5	Spring	CMS/ NHDC	Officer time	-	N/A	
Top dress and extend surfaced path route	1, 4, 6	Summer	CMS/ NHDC	NHDC	£25,000	N/A	
Establish vehicle access point for woodland management purposes	4, 6	Summer	CMS/ NHDC	NHDC	£1,500	N/A	
Remove invasive non-native species including buddleja and cotoneaster	4	Autumn/winter	CMS/ NHDC/ Contractor	NHDC	£800	4, 8	
Enhance entrances by clearing overgrown/ overhanging vegetation	1, 6	Winter	CMS/ CMS Vols/ FoGA	Officer time	-	1, 4	
Establish a circular route in the woodland - cut back/ trim vegetation to open the route up and install way markers	1,2	Winter	CMS/ CMS Vols/ FoGA	Officer time NHDC	£350	4	
Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) implementation – fell two 0.1 ha groups	4	Winter	CMS/Contractor	NHDC/ Officer time	£2000	4, 6	

### Year 2 Actions: 2019 - 2020

Action	Obj. Ref	When	Responsibility	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref	Status
<b>ONE-OFF ACTIONS</b>							
Review and refresh interpretation provision in Pryor's Wood and across the Great Ashby District Park	1, 3	2018/ 2019	CMS/ NHDC/ GACC	NHDC	£13,000	1	
Enhance entrances by installing welcome signs	1, 6	2018/ 2019	CMS/ CMS Vols	Officer time	-	1, 4	
Install bench (at cross roads of circular path)	1	Summer	CMS/ CMS Vols/ FoGA	NHDC	£115	2	
Monitor vegetation for reappearance of invasive non-native species, remove if necessary	4	Summer, winter	CMS/ CMS Vols/ FoGA	Officer time	-	8	
Manage the route of the circular path by scalloping the edge to create a glade area	1, 4	Winter	CMS/ CMS Vols/ FoGA	Officer time	-	4, 9	
Coppice hazel coppice coupe along western boundary and re-stock	4	Winter	CMS/ CMS Vols/ FoGA	Officer time	-	4, 5	
Review the CCF approach	4	Winter	CMS/ NHDC	Officer time	-	6	
Re-stock in CCF felling units and identify and protect natural regeneration	4	Winter	CMS/ FoGA	NHDC	£900	7	

### Year 3 Actions: 2020 - 2021

Action	Obj. Ref	When	Responsibility	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref	Status
<b>ONE-OFF ACTIONS</b>							
Maintenance of tree planting	4	Spring/ Summer	FoGA	-	-	5, 7	
Monitor vegetation for reappearance of invasive non-native species, remove if necessary	4	Summer, winter	CMS/ CMS Vols/ FoGA	Officer time	-	8	
Manage the route of the circular path by scalloping the edges to create a further glade area	1, 2, 4	Winter	CMS Officer and contractor	NHDC	£250	4, 9	

**Year 4 Actions: 2021 - 2022**

Action	Obj. Ref	When	Responsibility	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref	Status
<b>ONE-OFF ACTIONS</b>							
Maintenance of tree planting	4	Spring/Summer	FoGA	-	-	5, 7	
Monitor vegetation for reappearance of invasive non-native species, remove if necessary	4	Summer, winter	CMS/ CMS Vols/ FoGA	Officer time	-	8	

**Year 5 Actions: 2022 - 2023**

Action	Obj. Ref	When	Responsibility	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref	Status
<b>ONE-OFF ACTIONS</b>							
Maintenance of tree planting	4	Spring/Summer	FoGA	-	-	5, 7	
Monitor vegetation for reappearance of invasive non-native species, remove if necessary	4	Summer, winter	CMS/ CMS Vols/ FoGA	Officer time	-	8	

**Task Responsibility**

- North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC)
- Countryside Management Service (CMS)
- Volunteers (CMS & Friends Group)

Establish vehicle access point □ ■

Remove invasive non-native species □ ■

Enhance entrances ■ ■

Remove old wooden furniture □ ■ ■

Re-align entrance with public footpath ■ ■

Expand wider woodland walk  
Install waymarkers ■ ■

Establish short circular walking route □ ■ ■

Top dress surfaced path ■

Selectively fell two 0.1 ha groups  
Location to be determined □ ■

Extend route of surfaced path to vehicle access point ■

**Legend**

- Pedestrian access
- Vehicle access
- Bench
- Historic woodbank lined with hornbeam
- Footpath / desire line
- Broadleaved woodland
- Hazel coppice
- Mixed broadleaved coppice
- Woodland glade
- Surfaced path

**Annual Management**

**Paths**

- Summer mowing (District Park) □
- Winter clearance ■

**Site furniture**

- Strim entrances/ benches/ signs etc ■ ■
- Inspect access furniture/ signs ■
- Maintain access furniture/ signs etc □

**Litter/ waste**

- Litter picking □ ■
- Emptying litter/ dog bins adjacent to site □
- Fly tipping □

**Other**

- Tree safety survey (biannual) □
- Guided walks/ events ■ ■
- Friends group support □ ■
- Review plan progress □ ■

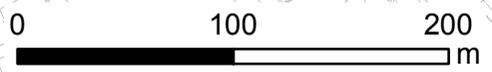
Site Name  
**Pryor's Wood**

Title  
**Map 3 - Year 1 Action Plan**

Scale @ A4  
1:3,500

Date  
March 2018

Rev  
00



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- Task Responsibility**
- North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC)
  - Countryside Management Service (CMS)
  - Volunteers (CMS & Friends Group)

Monitor for reappearance of invasive non-native species

Enhance entrances and install welcome signs

Install bench

Coppice hazel and re-stock

Install interpretation at designated entrance points

Create woodland scallops along circular path

Review CCF approach

Re-stock in CCF felling units

- Legend**
- Pedestrian access
  - Vehicle access
  - Bench
  - Entrance sign
  - Interpretation sign
  - Historic woodbank lined with hornbeam
  - Footpath / desire line
  - Broadleaved Woodland
  - Hazel Coppice
  - Mixed Broadleaved Coppice
  - Woodland Glade
  - Surfaced Path

- Annual Management**
- Paths**
- Summer mowing (District Park)
  - Winter clearance
- Site furniture**
- Strim entrances/ benches/ signs etc
  - Inspect access furniture/ signs
  - Maintain access furniture/ signs etc
- Litter/ waste**
- Litter picking
  - Emptying litter/ dog bins adjacent to site
  - Fly tipping
- Other**
- Tree safety survey (biannual)
  - Guided walks/ events
  - Friends group support
  - Review plan progress

Site Name  
**Pryor's Wood**

Title  
**Map 4 - Year 2 Action Plan**

Scale @ A4  
1:3,500

Date  
March 2018

Rev  
00



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### Task Responsibility

- North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC)
- Countryside Management Service (CMS)
- Volunteers (CMS & Friends Group)

Monitor for reappearance of invasive non-native species

Aftercare of newly planted trees

Coppice one new scallop along circular path

Aftercare of newly planted trees

### Legend

- Pedestrian access
- Vehicle access
- Bench
- Entrance sign
- Interpretation sign
- Historic woodbank lined with hornbeam
- Footpath / desire line
- Broadleaved Woodland
- Hazel Coppice
- Mixed Broadleaved Coppice
- Woodland Glade
- Surfaced Path

### Annual Management

#### Paths

- Summer mowing (District Park)
- Winter clearance

#### Site furniture

- Strim entrances/ benches/ signs etc
- Inspect access furniture/ signs
- Maintain access furniture/ signs etc

#### Litter/ waste

- Litter picking
- Emptying litter/ dog bins adjacent to site
- Fly tipping

#### Other

- Tree safety survey (biannual)
- Guided walks/ events
- Friends group support
- Review plan progress

Site Name

Pryor's Wood

Title

Map 5 - Year 3 Action Plan

Scale @ A4

1:3,500

Date

March 2018

Rev

00



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### Task Responsibility

- North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC)
- Countryside Management Service (CMS)
- Volunteers (CMS & Friends Group)

Monitor for reappearance of  
invasive non-native species

Aftercare of newly  
planted trees

Aftercare of newly  
planted trees

### Legend

- Pedestrian access
- Vehicle access
- Bench
- Entrance sign
- Interpretation sign
- Historic woodbank lined with hornbeam
- Footpath / desire line
- Broadleaved Woodland
- Hazel Coppice
- Mixed Broadleaved Coppice
- Woodland Glade
- Surfaced Path

### Annual Management

#### Paths

- Summer mowing (District Park)
- Winter clearance

#### Site furniture

- Strim entrances/ benches/ signs etc
- Inspect access furniture/ signs
- Maintain access furniture/ signs etc

#### Litter/ waste

- Litter picking
- Emptying litter/ dog bins adjacent to site
- Fly tipping

#### Other

- Tree safety survey (biannual)
- Guided walks/ events
- Friends group support
- Review plan progress

Site Name

Pryor's Wood

Title

Map 6 - Year 4 & 5 Action Plan

Scale @ A4

1:3,500

Date

March 2018

Rev

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## Appendix 1 – Specifications

1 Installing Interpretation and Welcome Signs	
<i>Purpose</i>	Attractive welcome signs will identify the site and provide useful information to visitors. Interpretation panels will outline what opportunities exist for visitors to explore their local environment and highlight what wildlife and habitats they may observe. Current interpretation within Great Ashby Woodland and District will require updating to reflect the addition of Pryor’s Wood to the district park network, and route of the circular woodland walk. New directional signage will both orientate visitors, and increase overall awareness of the key link that this site provides to other walking routes and trails throughout Great Ashby.
<i>Method</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Install welcome signs at the seven entrances marked on the map. Entrance signs to consist of semi-seasoned oak monoliths and a (single) signboard to be fitted to the existing access gate. Signs to comprise wood name and NHDC branding.</li> <li>▪ Cut back over hanging/ overgrown vegetation to enhance the entrances into the woodland.</li> <li>▪ Interpretation panels to be designed in collaboration with the Great Ashby Community Council.</li> <li>▪ Walks displayed on panels are to be colour coded with information provided about each walk, such as length, estimated time to complete and grade/ level of difficulty.</li> <li>▪ Install interpretation panels at the two main entrances to Pryor’s Wood from Gresley Way. Panels will show the features of Pryor’s Wood and an illustrated map. The text will outline the site’s history, habitats, wildlife, and management. The map will show walking routes including the circular woodland walk, larger district park circular walk, and connecting countryside walks.</li> <li>▪ Update all interpretation panels and frames across The District Park (six in total). This will include three map panels at the community centre, Serpentine / Thirlmere Wood, and the meadow mosaic, to show the addition of Pryor’s Wood to the larger district park circular walk.</li> </ul>
<i>Who</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contractor for panel/ sign design and production, with installation by CMS Volunteers</li> </ul>
<i>Style/ design</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Panels are to be consistent with other NHDC greenspaces, and those in use in the District Park.</li> <li>▪ Structure to be consistent with style across the district park – Bowman Option C</li> </ul>
<i>Future management</i>	Cleaning and monitoring conducted by the FoGA.

2 Installing benches and site furniture	
<i>Method</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The woodland bench type should be in keeping with the existing style of furniture currently used in the Great Ashby Woodland and District Park. Currently two types are used:</li> <li>▪ Type 1 Woodland bench in green oak with a back rest, this type could also be used for the donated seats scheme and should be sited in the more well used areas of the site.</li> <li>▪ Type 2 is a more rustic, simple timber bench, for use in quieter, less accessible parts of the site.</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Type 1</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Type 2</p> </div> </div>
<i>Who</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Installation by CMS volunteers and/ or the FoGA</li> </ul>
<i>Future management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring the condition of site furniture will be conducted by the FoGA. When a bench reaches the end of its life, a decision should be made as to whether it should be replaced or removed.</li> </ul>

3 Monitoring and Maintaining Bird and Bat Boxes	
<i>Purpose</i>	Bird and bat boxes are to be monitored in order to determine which species are present and whether the current box location is successful.
<i>Method</i>	<p><b>Monitoring bird boxes for breeding activity (spring):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look for bird regularly going in and out of box, first with nesting material and then later, if birds have hatched, with food. Chicks will also be heard calling for food.</li> <li>• Record observations along with date, time and position of box.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cleaning bird boxes (late summer/ early autumn):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspect the box and remove any nest material or other debris.</li> <li>• Wash out with mild disinfectant diluted with water.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Monitoring bat boxes (summer):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look for droppings and urine-staining below the box. Bat droppings will break into dust when rolled.</li> <li>• Listen for ‘chattering’ during the day.</li> <li>• Watch the box for an hour either side of sunset to observe any bats leaving to feed, or around dawn to see any bats returning to their roost.</li> <li>• Record observations along with date, weather conditions, design and position of box.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cleaning bat boxes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All bats and their roosts are protected by law. Disturbance should be kept to a minimum, and a suitably licensed bat worker must be present when opening bat boxes.</li> <li>• Considering the law, advice is required from Herts &amp; Middlesex Bat Group to establish a suitable maintenance regime or the replacement of existing boxes with those which are self-cleaning.</li> </ul>
<i>Who</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FoGA with advice/ assistance from Licenced bat worker</li> </ul>

4 General prescriptions relevant to all woodland management operations	
<i>Habitat Retention</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Significant <b>oak</b> or <b>hornbeam</b> trees to be retained.</li> <li>▪ Retain all standing and fallen <b>dead wood</b> when this does not compromise ground flora, or does not contravene safety requirements.</li> <li>▪ Care should be taken to protect <b>ancient woodbanks</b> from mechanical damage.</li> <li>▪ Any native natural regeneration is to be identified and protected</li> </ul>
<i>Visitor Safety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Members of the public should be kept a safe distance from active tree works with signs, and/or, banksmen. Access routes may require temporary closure.</li> <li>▪ Site users should be informed of tree works in advance via on site posters and communication with GACC.</li> </ul>
<i>Timing</i>	Unless otherwise stated, all habitat management work will be undertaken between 1 <sup>st</sup> November and 28 <sup>th</sup> February.

## 5 Coppicing Hazel and Re-stocking

<i>Purpose</i>	<p>The coppicing of hazel trees is a traditional and sustainable woodland management technique which involves the cutting of trees at ground level which generates the growth of several small diameter rods from the cut stool. Traditionally these rods would be harvested for crafts and woodland products.</p> <p>To ensure good regrowth, stool density should be between 1250 and 2000 stools per ha. Low stool densities reduce yield and quality of the crop, and can also facilitate the dominance of invasive plants like bramble and coarse grasses. Once suitable stocking density is achieved the coppice coupe at Pryor’s Wood should be cut on a rotation of 6 – 10 years.</p> <p>Rotational coppicing creates temporary clearings which allow pockets of light to reach the woodland floor. Increased light levels facilitate the development of a diverse ground flora, scrubby margins, and the regeneration of trees. The result is a diverse woodland structure (a variety of aged trees) which supports a wide variety of plants, birds and invertebrates.</p>
<i>Method</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Each stem is to be cut at least 10 cm above the existing stool to retain a collar of healthy bark. All cuts shall slope upwards towards the centre of the stool to aid water shedding. No other trees should be cut or damaged.</li> <li>▪ Natural hazel regeneration is to be identified and protected.</li> <li>▪ Coppice coupe is to be re-stocked with hazel trees to achieve recommended stocking density of between 1250 and 2000 stools per ha. New plants are to be protected by clear spiral guards and bamboo stakes.</li> <li>▪ Plants will be supplied to conform to BS3936 and BS8545. Plants are to be of UK provenance and sourced from Seed Provenance Zone 402, with Zones 405 and 406 also acceptable.</li> </ul>
<i>Who</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Volunteers</li> </ul>
<i>Arising</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stakes approx. 1.5 m in length and 2.5 – 5 cm in diameter should be separated from the cut material and stacked to the edge of the coppice coupe, away from the footpath. Brash which is less than 3 cm in diameter, should be stacked at the edge of the coppice coupe, away from the footpath. This material will then be used to create fencing to protect the stools and the newly planted trees from browsing.</li> <li>▪ Brash greater than 3 cm in diameter is to be scattered under existing trees, avoiding the newly opened areas.</li> </ul>
<i>Future management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor re-growth of stools and planted trees</li> <li>• Planting area to be kept weed free within 1m of each plant, and stakes and guards to be maintained.</li> <li>• Establish a suitable rotation length</li> </ul>

## 6 Selective Felling – Continuous Cover Forestry

<i>Purpose</i>	<p>A term used to describe management methods which maintain continuous woodland conditions. Primarily this is done by manipulating the over-storey through removal of individual trees or small groups, thus controlling the light regime and allowing natural regeneration to occur, without encouraging detrimental weed growth. This encourages an understorey of shrubs and trees, giving rise to uneven aged mixed woodland where all age classes of tree co-exist within one woodland. There may also be financial benefits such as savings on planting and pruning costs, as the less desirable/ un-healthy trees are removed and the remaining trees are given more space to develop.</p> <p><b>Selection of felling groups to be agreed on the ground each year between CMS, and NHDC.</b></p>
<i>Method</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Two 0.1 ha groups (approx. 18 m radius) will be felled at 5 year intervals in the area indicated in the plan. Groups are to be of sufficient size to ensure that intermediate light demanding species such as Oak can thrive.</li> <li>▪ Felling groups should be positioned over locations where natural regeneration of desirable tree species is already present; the additional light will allow the young trees to fully establish.</li> <li>▪ When selecting groups, consideration should also be given to the positive visual impact this can have on the woodland – opportunities should be identified to open up internal views and vistas.</li> <li>▪ Trees to be felled by contractor with a chainsaw,</li> <li>▪ Stumps to be left as low to ground as possible.</li> <li>▪ Opportunities should be taken to remove any larger holly trees (too big for bowsaws) in the vicinity of the CCF coupes whilst contractors are on site. Process into manageable sections and leave in situ.</li> </ul>
<i>Who</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contractor.</li> </ul>
<i>Arising</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access for timber extraction from roundabout on Great Ashby Way. Existing bund at access point needs to be removed prior to works and re-instated following completion of works.</li> <li>▪ All timber will be cut to 3 m lengths, and stacked at the vehicular access point, pending removal from site for sale.</li> <li>▪ If timber extraction needs to be delayed to the summer then timber can be stacked for the short term along the boundary of Pryor’s Wood adjacent to the meadow. Stacks are to be located flush against the woodland boundary so as to reduce the stacking area within the grassland.</li> <li>▪ Commercially unviable brash will be chopped into 1-2m lengths and scattered under existing trees (not in newly opened areas) and some left as habitat piles.</li> </ul>
<i>Future management</i>	<p>The CCF approach, including group unit size and interval length, should be evaluated in Year 2 (as part of the new GAP for Great Ashby District Park which will include Pryor’s Wood and associated action plan).</p>

7 Re-stocking CCF groups	
<i>Purpose</i>	Cleared areas are to be re-stocked with broadleaved native trees to ensure tree density of between 1250 and 2000 trees per ha and a diverse species composition.
<i>Method</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Natural regeneration is to be identified and protected, with the possibility for transplanting whips/ seedlings from the adjacent meadow area explored.</li> <li>▪ Trees will be supplied to conform to BS3936 and BS8545. Plants are to be of UK provenance and sourced from Seed Provenance Zone 402, with Zones 405 and 406 also acceptable.</li> <li>▪ Trees to be planted at 2 m spacing</li> <li>▪ Trees to be protected from browsing with 1.2 m tubex guard and stake</li> <li>▪ Put a layer of well composted bark chip mulch around each tree</li> </ul>
<i>Who</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ FoGA</li> </ul>
<i>Future management</i>	Planting area to be kept weed free within 1 m of each plant for 3-5 years, and stakes and guards to be maintained. Re-apply mulch as necessary.

8 Removal of Invasive Non-native Species	
<i>Purpose</i>	Invasive non-native species (INNS) have the characteristics to spread rapidly and become dominant within an area. This can negatively impact native woodland flora. Two stands of INNS have been identified within and adjacent to Pryor's Wood and include Buddleja and Cotoneaster. Removal is necessary to prevent the spread of these INNS. Considering the sensitivity of the ASNW site, preference is for mechanical rather than chemical control. However, the effectiveness of mechanical control is limited for large infestations.
<i>Method</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Small plants, including root systems are to be excavated in order to prevent regrowth</li> <li>▪ For larger Buddleja plants treatment should be to directly inject/ plug herbicide into the plant.</li> <li>▪ For larger cotoneaster plants treatment should be to cut back and treat stumps with herbicide.</li> </ul>
<i>Who</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contractor</li> </ul>
<i>Arising</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bag up seed heads of INNS and removed to licenced landfill as controlled waste. Woody parts of the plant can be burnt onsite.</li> </ul>
<i>Future management</i>	Monitor every 6 months, and cut and dig out any new growth. Any future seedlings should be pulled.

9 Creating Woodland Scallops	
<i>Purpose</i>	The purpose of creating woodland scallops is to create sunny areas, varied in structure and species, ideal for birds and invertebrates (especially butterflies). These will form successional habitat on the woodland edge. They will have a diverse structure ranging from short flowers, herbs, and grasses (in the first few years after cutting) to taller shrubby bramble, honeysuckle and Oak.
<i>Method</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scallops approx. 15 m in width and depths of 10 m are to be cut into the woodland edge at intervals along the circular path route.</li> </ul>
<i>Who</i>	Suitable for contractor.
<i>Arising</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access for timber extraction from roundabout on Great Ashby Way. Existing bund at access point needs to be removed prior to works and re-instated following completion of works.</li> <li>All timber will be cut to 3 m lengths, and stacked at the vehicular access point, pending removal from site for sale.</li> <li>Commercially unviable brash will be chopped into 1-2m lengths and scattered under existing trees (not in newly opened areas) and some left as habitat piles.</li> </ul>
<i>Future management</i>	The scallop will be left to re-grow providing a succession of habitats from scrub back to woodland into the future. Scallops to be cut in years 2 and 3, so that there is a mosaic of growth stages across the woodland. This is essential for birds, butterflies and other invertebrates.

## **Appendix 2 – Local Wildlife Site Survey**

Survey conducted by the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust in 2016 of Pryor's Wood and Thirlmere Wood.

## Wildlife Site Survey Report for: Pryor's Wood area only of LWS 'Box Wood & Pryor's Wood'

This report is in no way intended as a criticism of the current land practices. It is recognised that the current condition of the site is entirely down to the way it has been managed in the past. The management advice offered in this report is designed to enhance the floral quality and diversity, and its benefits to wildlife. It is understood that the adoption of this management advice is entirely at the discretion of the landowner. The Wildlife Sites Officer based at HMWT would welcome the opportunity to visit the site and discuss the proposals in this report in greater detail with the landowner.

<b>LWS Site Ref:</b>	22/006	<b>Site size (ha):</b>	37.09		
<b>Local Authority:</b>	East Herts/North Herts	<b>Central Grid Ref:</b>	TL270263		
<b>Date1 of survey:</b>	19/5/2016	<b>Weather:</b>	Overcast	<b>Duration on site:</b>	3.h hours
<b>Surveyors:</b>	J.Wise, J.Williamson, A.Burton, L.Baldwin, A.Judges, J.Eggington, M.Eggington				
<b>Spp list by:</b>	AB, JWilliamson	<b>Form by:</b>	J Wise, A.Judges	<b>Map by:</b>	A.Judges, J.E

<b>Geology:</b>	<b>Bedrock:</b>	LEWES NODULAR CHALK FORMATION AND SEAFORD CHALK FORMATION (UNDIFFERENTIATED) - CHALK
	<b>Superficial Deposits:</b>	Clay, Silt, Sand and gravel

<b>Original criteria:</b>	H.1.1.1	<b>Habitat:</b>	Pedunculate oak-hornbeam woodland, Broadleaved, semi-natural, coppice with standards, Woodland: mixed, plantation, Scrub,
<b>Criteria met:</b>	H.1 AWI (23)		
<b>Recommended changes to boundary</b>	None. Note Box Wood area was not surveyed (did not have permission)		
<b>Original Site Description:</b>	<p>Ancient Hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>) coppice with Pedunculate Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) standards woodland plus some Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>), Wild Cherry (<i>Prunus avium</i>) and Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>). The wood has been extensively cleared and replanted with Larch (<i>Larix decidua</i>), Corsican Pine (<i>Pinus nigra</i>), Douglas Fir (<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>), Western Red Cedar (<i>Thuja plicata</i>) and Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>). Pryor's Wood is the nature reserve consisting of mostly old secondary woodland grown up on the site over the past 150 years. It is dominated by Pedunculate Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) with Silver Birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>), Wild Cherry (<i>Prunus avium</i>), Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>) and some Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>). There is an area of ancient Hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>) coppice. A diverse assemblage of flowering plant species have been recorded including the local species Green Hellebore (<i>Helleborus viridus</i>) and Violet Helleborine (<i>Epipactis purpurata</i>). Pryor's Wood contains many woodland indicator species including Wood Anemone (<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>), Yellow Archangel (<i>Lamiastrum galeobdolon</i>), Primrose (<i>Primula vulgaris</i>), Dog-violets (<i>Viola spp.</i>), Bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>), and the very local species Great Wood-rush (<i>Luzula sylvatica</i>) has been recorded here. Other records include the nationally notable beetle (<i>Platycis minutus</i>) and the local White-Letter Hairstreak (<i>Satyrium w-album</i>). The bird fauna is particularly rich with numerous breeding species including past records for Hawfinch (<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>) and Wood Warbler (<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>). 17 species of mammal have been recorded including</p>		

	the Hazel Dormouse ( <i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i> ). At the eastern edge of Box Wood, within Rough Ground, is a disused chalk pit. Other earthworks within the site add further habitat diversity. Wildlife Site criteria: Ancient Woodland Inventory site; woodland indicators.
<b>Overall General Site Description:</b>	<p>A mixed broadleaf woodland most closely resembling a W10 community. The dominant canopy trees include Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) and Hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>). Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) dominates the central area of the woodland while Hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>) is dominated along the borders of the woodland. The understory is dominated by Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>) and Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>).</p> <p>The ground flora is dominated by Bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>) and Bracken (<i>Pteridium aquifolium</i>). Bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>) and Yellow Archangel (<i>Lamiastrum galeobdolon</i>) are common throughout the woodland. There is a bank separating the two woods. This bank is lined with old Hornbeams (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>). An old pit is also present along the north eastern boundary. This pit supports a large amount of Dogs Mercury (<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>). There is an old coppiced Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>) bordering the pit.</p>

<p><b>Compartment 1 (of 1):</b></p> <p><a href="#">Map link</a></p>	<p><b>Description:</b></p> <p>A mixed broadleaf woodland on the outskirts of residential buildings and arable fields. Great Ashby District Park also borders the wood to the North. The main component canopy trees include Hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>) and Pedunculate Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>). Hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>) is particularly dominant along the boundary of the woodland and lines the old boundary bank separating Pryors Wood to the Box Wood plantation. Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) however is more dominant within the centre of the woodland. Other tree species that occur at a lower frequency include Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>), Wild Cherry (<i>Prunus avium</i>), Field Maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>) and Sycamore (<i>Acer Pseudoplatanus</i>). The understory is dominated by Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>) and Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>). Blackthorn (<i>Prunus spinosa</i>) occurs less commonly and was only found along the border of the wood.</p> <p>The ground flora is diverse and varies throughout the woodland. The most predominant ground flora species include, Bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>) Bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>), Yellow Archangel (<i>Lamiastrum galeobdolon</i>), Dogs Mercury (<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>) and Bracken (<i>Pteridium aquifolium</i>).</p> <p>At the western entrance of the wood, Pignut (<i>Conopodium majus</i>) and Wood Anemone (<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>) was present in high density, Wood Millet (<i>Milium effusum</i>) was also present however this continued to be present in small patches throughout the wood.</p> <p>There is an old bank that defines the border between the two woods, old coppice and pollard Hornbeams (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>) are present along this bank as well as Honeysuckle (<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>), Male Fern (<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>) and Wood Speedwell (<i>Veronica montana</i>). Bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>) is also very dense in this area.</p> <p>There is a pit located on the North eastern boundary of the wood, there is an old coppiced Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>) present on the edge of the pit, Elder (<i>Sambucus nigra</i>) and Field Maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>) were also present along the edge of the pit. Dog's Mercury (<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>) occurred at a high density within the pit. Common Dog Violet (<i>Viola riviniana</i>), Wood False-brome (<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>), Wood Speedwell (<i>Veronica montana</i>) and Meadow Buttercup (<i>Ranunculus acris</i>) were present along the edge of the pit.</p> <p>Along the border of the woodland and the grassland, Wild Raspberry (<i>Rubus idaeus</i>), Rosebay Willowherb (<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>), Wild Clematis (<i>Clematis vitalba</i>) and Knapweed (<i>Centaurea nigra</i> agg.) were recorded. In</p>
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the northern area of the bigger woodland there is a patch of woodland where the ground flora is dominated by Stinging Nettles (*Urtica dioica*) and Garlic Mustard (*Allium petiolata*) this then converts back to ground flora composition that is mainly dominated by Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and Bracken (*Pteridium aquifolium*).  
A badger sett is present in the northern end of the smaller woodland area.

**Current Management:**

Current management is good.

**Management prescription:**

Current management is good, however to ensure diversity in the woodland is conserved the following management advice could be actioned.

- If possible leave more standing dead wood to provide an important resource for insects and birds.
- The creation of scallops along the footpath will be beneficial. The creation of small glades and random open pockets in the woodland will also increase the floral diversity of the wood. This will also create more structure especially if coppicing of younger trees is introduced in conjunction with the creation of scallops and glades (see diagram 1).

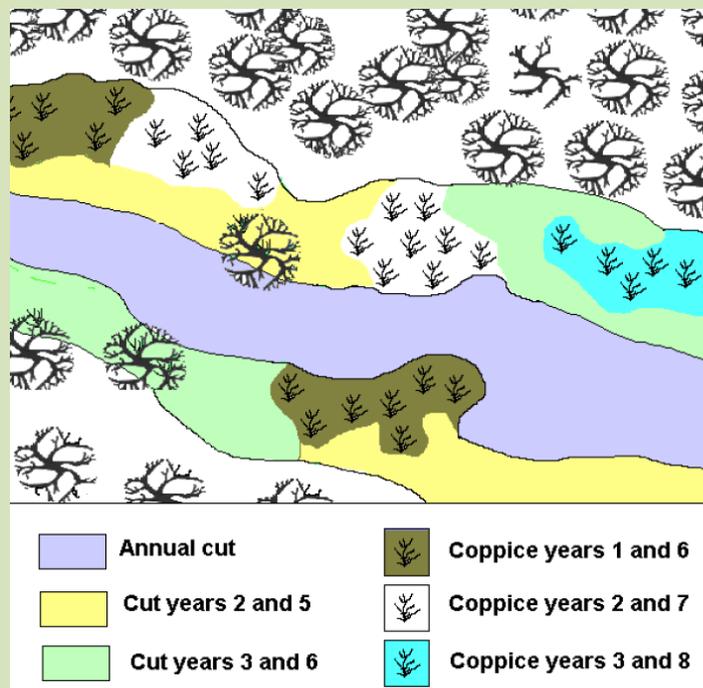


Diagram 1: Creating mixed zones in a woodland ride. (Image taken from, Forestry Commission, Managing woodland open space for wildlife December 2005)

<b>Invasive species:</b>	List: N/A
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<b>Surrounding landuse</b> (briefly describe):	Urban and grassland.
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Table 1: Woodland habitat condition (this is broadly based on Natural England's Common Standards Monitoring 2005)		
Attributes	Targets for positive condition	detail

<b>Structure and natural processes</b>	UNDERSTOREY (2-5m) present over at least 20% of total stand area (NB: Beech ( <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> ) and Oak ( <i>Quercus</i> ) woods often have sparse shrub layer)	yes
	CANOPY COVER present over 30-90% of stand area (Coppiced stands have lower canopy cover)	Yes
	AGE CLASSES (seedlings, saplings, young, semi-mature, early-mature, mature+) – list the age classes present, spread across the average life expectancy of the commonest trees	Mixed, but with no veterans however old Hornbeam and Ash Coppice
	OLD GROWTH FEATURES: Some areas of relatively undisturbed mature/old growth stands or a scatter of large trees allowed to grow to over maturity/death on site (e.g. min of 10% of the woodland or 5-10 trees/hectare)	No
	FALLEN DEAD WOOD: A minimum of 3 fallen lying trees >20cm diameter per ha and 4 trees per ha allowed to die standing	Trees felled cut and left, very few standing dead wood
<b>Regeneration</b>	Are there signs of seedlings and saplings growth by natural regeneration? – describe age classes (seedlings, saplings, young) and density	Both seedlings and saplings
	No more than 20% of areas regenerated by planting as opposed to natural regeneration?	All natural
	Are the new plantings all with natives?	N/A
<b>Composition: trees and shrubs</b>	At least 95% of cover in any one layer of site native or acceptably naturalised species	Yes
	Death/destruction/damage of native woodland species through effects of deer/squirrels/Ash-die-back or other external unnatural factors (e.g fires/flytipping etc) not more than 10% of total area?	None

**Plant Species List:**

22/006 box wood & Pryors Wood- Pryors Wood only 19/05/2016 JWilliamson, ABurton AJudges Id by all				
<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>WS inds (* /a/n/c/w/f) &amp; neg inds (-)</b>	<b>date of record  (if &gt; 1 day)</b>	<b>Comp1  DAFOR</b>
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Maple, Field	*		R
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore			R
<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	Bugle	*/n		R
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Mustard, Garlic			R
<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>	Anemone, Wood	*		R
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Parsley, Cow	- c/n/w		R-
<i>Arctium minus</i>	Burdock, Lesser			R-
<i>Arum maculatum</i>	Lords-and-Ladies			R
<i>Betula pendula</i>	Birch, Silver			R
<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	Brome, False			R
<i>Carex sylvatica</i>	Sedge, Wood	*		R
<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Hornbeam	*		F
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	Chestnut, Sweet			R-
<i>Centaurea nigra agg.</i>	Knapweed, Black/Com'n/Chalk	c/n		R-
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	Willowherb, Rosebay	- a/c		R
<i>Circaea lutetiana</i>	Enchanter's-nightshade	*		R
<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	Clematis			R
<i>Conopodium majus</i>	Pignut	*/a/n		R
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Dogwood			R-
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	*		O-
<i>Crataegus laevigata</i>	Hawthorn, Midland	*		R-
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn			O-
<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	Fern, Broad Buckler	*		R
<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	Fern, Male			R
<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	Willowherb, Great			R
<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	Spindle			R-
<i>Ficaria verna sp</i>	Celandine, Lesser			R
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash			O
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers	- c/n		R
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb Robert			R
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood Avens			R
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy			R
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Bluebell	*		O
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	*		R+
<i>Lamium galeobdolon ssp montanum</i>	Archangel, Yellow (native)	*		O
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Honeysuckle			R
<i>Melica uniflora</i>	Melick, Wood	*		R
<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	Dog's Mercury	*		O-
<i>Milium effusum</i>	Millet, Wood	*		R
<i>Moehringia trinervia</i>	Sandwort, Three-veined	*		R
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Meadow-grass, Rough	- w		R+

<b>22/006 box wood &amp; Pryors Wood- Pryors Wood only 19/05/2016 JWilliamson, ABurton AJudges Id by all</b>				date of record	Comp1
<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	WS inds (*1a/n/c/w/f) & neg inds (-)		(if > 1 day)	DAFOR
<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Primrose	*			R
<i>Prunus avium</i>	Cherry, Wild	*			R+
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn				R
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken				R+
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Oak, Pedunculate				F
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Buttercup, Meadow	n			R
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Buttercup, Creeping	- w			R-
<i>Rosa arvensis</i>	Rose, Field	*			R-
<i>Rosa canina</i> agg.	Rose, Dog, agg.				R-
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Bramble				F
<i>Rubus idaeus</i>	Raspberry				R-
<i>Rumex sanguineus</i>	Dock, Wood				R
<i>Salix caprea</i>	Willow, Goat				R-
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder				R-
<i>Stellaria holostea</i>	Stitchwort, Greater				R
<i>Stellaria media</i>	Chickweed				R
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	Dandelion family				R
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Nettle, Stinging	- a/c/n/w			R
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Speedwell, Germander	c/n			R
<i>Veronica hederifolia</i>	Speedwell, Ivy-leaved				R
<i>Veronica montana</i>	Speedwell, Wood	*			R
<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Guelder-rose^	*			R-
<i>Viola riviniana</i>	Violet, Common Dog	*			R
*=planted/introduced/escape		<b>per compartment totals:</b>			<b>64</b>
^=note whether planted		GR <sub>1</sub> =8 fig grid ref required			
~=check specimen requirements					

<b>Total species (all comp.s)</b>		<b>total indicators</b>						
	<b>64</b>	<b>AWI (H.1)</b>	<b>Neut (H.2.2b)</b>	<b>Acid (H.2.2c)</b>	<b>Calc (H.2.2a)</b>	<b>Wet (H.2.2d)</b>	<b>Fen (H.5.3)</b>	<b>c/a/n/w (H.2.2e)</b>
<b>Comp1</b>								
	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>All Compartments:</b>								
	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>Thresholds:</b>								
min size (ha)	1	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
min indicators	10	8	5	8	5	5	12	
<b>Criteria met</b>	<b>Met</b>							

**DAFOR Scale:**

D	Dominant	>75% cover
A	Abundant	51-75% cover
F	Frequent	26-50% cover
O	Occasional (high)	11-25% cover
O-	Occasional (low)	5-10% cover
R+	Rare (high)	1-5% cover
R	Rare	>5 individual plants up to 1% cover
R-	Very Rare	≥5 (including 5) individual plants

Please note: the total cover for the compartment can exceed 100% because vegetation occurs in layers.

**Faunal Species List:**

Date of Records:		Recorder:	
Common Name	Qualifier (state if sighting, sound or sign)	no. observed (if relevant)	Date if >1 day
Hooded Crow	Sight	1	
Wren	Sound	1<	
Dunnock	Sound	1<	
Great tit	Sound	1<	
Chaffinch	Sound	1<	
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Sound	1<	
Magpie	Sound	1<	
Robin	Sound	1<	
Blackcap	Sound	1<	
Nuthatch	Sound	1<	
Song Thrush	Sound	1<	
Blackbird	Sound	1<	
Chiffchaff	Sound	1<	
Wood Pigeon	Sound	1<	
Blue tit	Sound	1<	
White Tailed Bumblebee	Sight	1	
Grey Squirrel	Sight	1	
Buzzard	Sight	1	

# Survey Map by A.Judges



## Key

### Local Sites

HCC\_Local\_Wildlife\_Sites

No. Photo point, arrow indicates direction taken

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10/06/2016



		WS boundary		
W O O D L A N D & S C R U B		Semi-natural broadleaved woodland		Coppiced BW
		Plantation broadleaved woodland		Relict Coppice BW
		Plantation coniferous woodland		Plantation broadleaved orchard
		Mixed semi-natural woodland		
		Dense-continuous scrub		
		Scattered scrub (NB: notate grassland type beneath)		
		Broadleaved Parkland/scattered trees (NB: notate grassland type beneath)		
		Coniferous Parkland/scattered trees (NB: notate grassland type beneath)		
		Mixed Parkland/scattered trees (NB: notate grassland type beneath)		
		Broadleaved recently felled woodland		
G R A S S L A N D		Coniferous recently felled woodland		
		Mixed recently felled woodland		
		Unimproved acid grassland		Path
		Semi-improved acid grassland		Track
		Unimproved calcareous grassland		Hedgerow
		Semi-improved calcareous grassland		Ditch
		Unimproved neutral grassland		Treeline
		Semi-improved neutral grassland		Bank
		Improved grassland		Veteran tree/other feature
		Marsh/marshy grassland		Stream
Tall herb and fen		Species-poor semi-improved grassland (very low herb-ratio, mainly grasses)		Fence (note if temp or perm)
		Continuous bracken		Photo location/direction
		Scattered bracken (NB: notate grassland type beneath)		
		Tall ruderal vegetation		
WATER		Non-ruderal vegetation (fen, e.g. reed/sweetgrass dominant stands)		
		Standing water		
C U L T I V A T E D		Running water		
		Arable land		
		Amenity grassland		Urban
		Ephemeral/short (e.g. herbal pioneer communities/weedy species)		
		Perennial introduced shrub (eg snowberry, rhododendron, laurel, cotoneaster, bamboo etc)		

**Survey Photos (each compartment should have at least one representative photo):**

Photo 1 (Pignut by entrance):



Photo 2 (Area of bramble and Bracken):

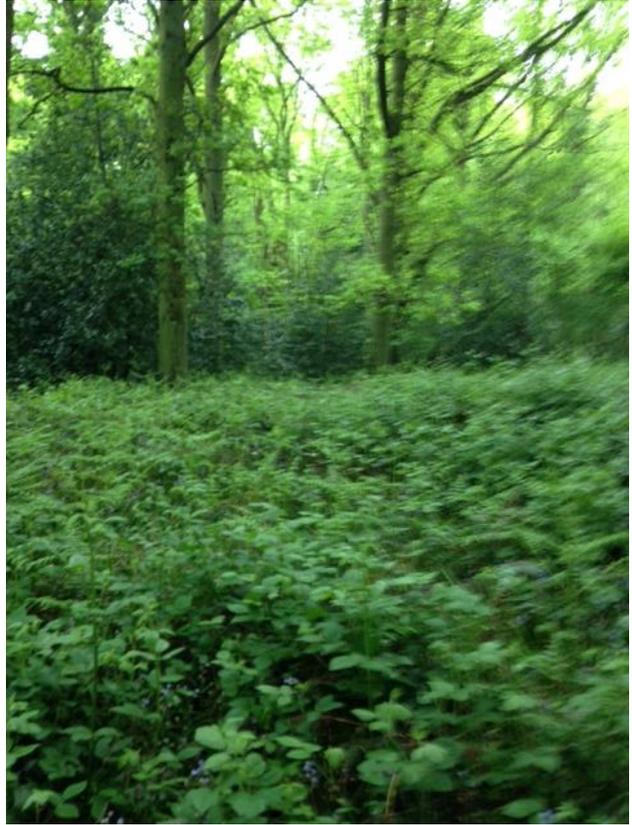


Photo 3 (Line of Hornbeams along bank):

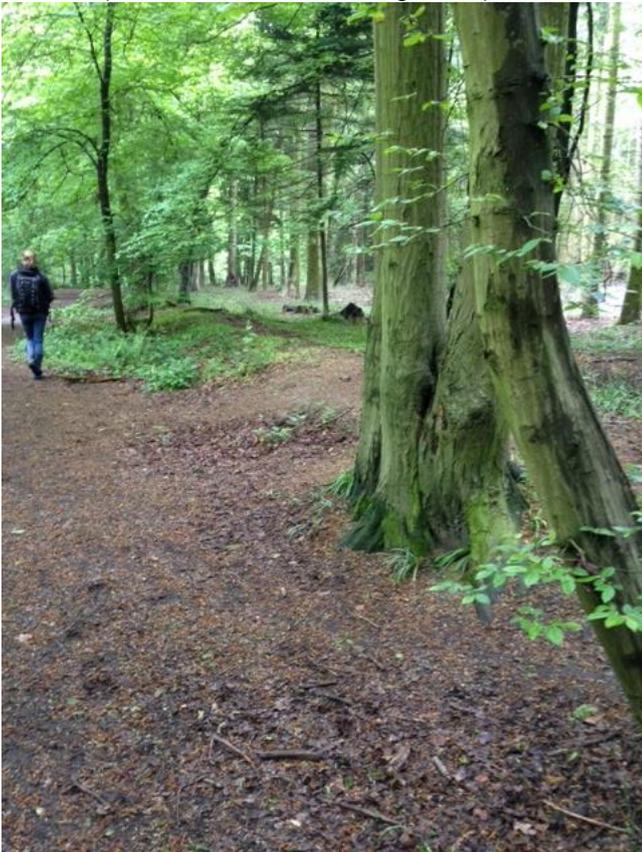


Photo 4 (area of sparser ground flora):



Photo 5 (Pit with coppiced ash ):



Photo 6 (Grassland):



Photo 7 (Woodland):



Photo 8 (Old Hornbeam of boundary ):

