

Great Ashby Woodland & District Park Green Space Action Plan 2015 - 2020

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



INTRODUCTION	3
SITE DESCRIPTION	4
SITE DESCRIPTION MAP	5
CONSTRAINTS	6
CONSTRAINTS MAP	7
PREVIOUS MANAGEMENT	8
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	9
VISION	10
OBJECTIVES	10
ACTION PLAN	11
YEAR 1 (2015/16).....	12
YEAR 2 (2016/17).....	14
YEAR 3 (2017/18).....	15
YEAR 4 (2018/19).....	15
YEAR 5 (2019/20).....	16
ACTION PLAN MAPS	17
YEAR 1 (2015/16).....	17
YEAR 2 (2016/17).....	18
YEAR 3 (2017/18).....	19
YEAR 4 (2018/19).....	20
YEAR 5 (2019/20).....	21
DISTRICT PARK ACTIONS YEAR 1	22
DISTRICT PARK ACTIONS YEAR 2	23
SPECIFICATIONS	24
1. FORESTRY	24
2. LANDSCAPE AND HABITAT	26
3. ACCESS & RECREATION	28
4. MAINTENANCE	30

Introduction

Countryside Management Service (CMS) working in partnership with North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) have developed a new 5 year Management Plan for Great Ashby Woodlands & District Park, nr Stevenage. As the owner and manager of Great Ashby, NHDC are responsible for ensuring that the site is managed as effectively as possible for the benefit of both people and wildlife.

The aim of the management planning process is to;

- Determine what actions are required on the site over the lifetime of the plan to meet agreed objectives.
- Give focus and direction to the running and improvement of Great Ashby and enable funding and resources to be allocated for improvements.
- Provide opportunities for people to be involved in the development their local open space.
- Inform people about works that may have to be carried out for health and safety or access reasons; for example the management of trees and vegetation on the boundaries of people's homes.

Site Description

Great Ashby Woodland & District Park is the collective name given to an arc of woodland and green space owned and managed by NHDC (North Herts District Council). The landscape of Great Ashby has changed significantly over recent years with the development of new housing in the area. The woodland and green space now provides important recreational areas for local people.

Much of the woodland of Great Ashby is ancient, meaning it has been wooded for at least 400 years and maybe up to 10,000 years, since the end of the last ice age. However, the woodland has also been influenced by man over many centuries and each wood has a distinct character.

Brooches Wood contains many planted conifers, such as Western Red Cedar, Larch and Scots Pine; Claypithills Spring is dominated by large Beech and Sweet Chestnut trees; Serpentine Wood is unusual in that it contains a number of healthy Elm trees (Elm has been devastated by Dutch Elm disease in many other areas) and Thirlmere Wood was once managed traditionally as coppice with standards, where large Oak trees were grown for timber and Hazel, cut on rotation provided smaller diameter wood.

Connecting these ancient woodlands is the District Park, which was created in recent years as an open recreational space for local people. It contains a range of facilities such as; play equipment; areas of lawn for informal sports activities and picnics and car parking for visitors. When the park was originally landscaped plantations of trees were established and areas of meadow were created for the benefit of wildlife.

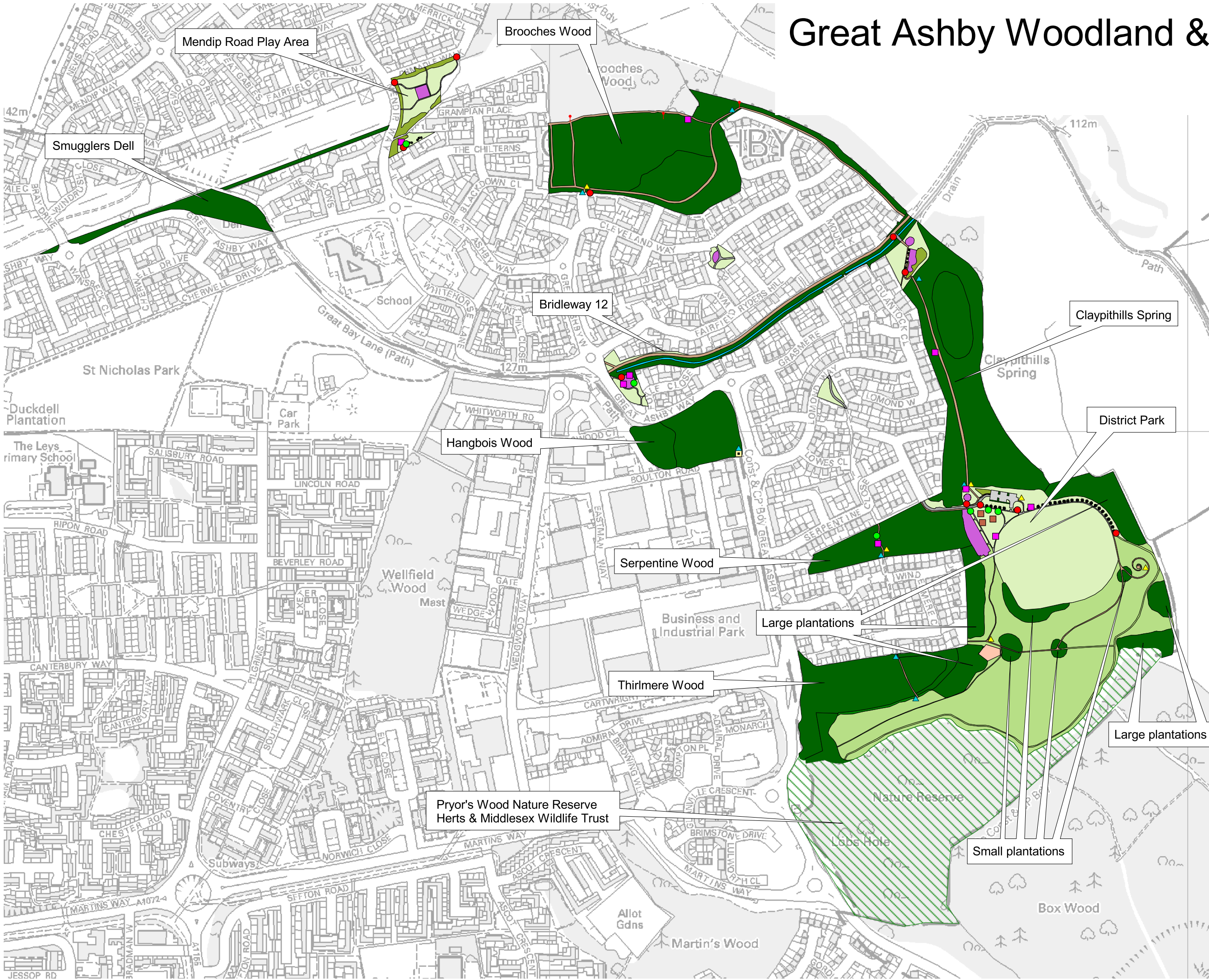
Several other sites are included within the plan for Great Ashby, smaller fragments of woodland, such as Hangbois Wood and Smugglers Dell (parts of which are ancient in character) and several play areas across the community.

Many of the green spaces within Great Ashby also connect with Rights of Way into the wider countryside and neighbouring woodlands, notably Pryor's Wood, a nature reserve owned by NHDC and managed by the Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT).

Great Ashby Woodland & District Park

Site Description

- Key**
- ▲ Entrance sign
 - ▲ Interpretation sign
 - ▲ Notice board
 - ↑ Fingerpost
 - Litter bin
 - Dog bin
 - Bench
 - Picnic table
 - Gate
- Amenity grass
 - Building
 - Car park
 - Grass path
 - Hard surfaced path
 - Hedgerow
 - Permeable path
 - Play area
 - Road
 - Scrub
 - Summer meadow
 - Wetland vegetation
 - Woodland
 - Water
 - Existing trees
 - HMWT Reserve



© Crown copyright and database rights 2014
 Ordnance Survey 100019606.
 Use of this data is subject to terms
 and conditions. You are not permitted to
 copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any
 of this data to third parties in any form.
 (This restriction may not apply to HCC and its
 licenced contractors agents and partners.)



Constraints

There are a number of aspects that have been taken into consideration during production of the plan and which may place constraints on the management of the site. These are also shown on the constraints map.

Rights of Way - There are a number of RoW's (Rights of Way) across Great Ashby, including footpaths and bridleways. Any proposed works on RoW's will require consent from Hertfordshire County Council's Rights of Way Unit.

Protected Species - There are a range of wildlife species that are legally protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. At Great Ashby a number of species are present, including two species of Bats, and Badgers. Dormouse has also been recorded in neighbouring woodland. These species have been taken into consideration when developing the management actions and works on site will need to be mindful of these species and their requirements to prevent disturbance.

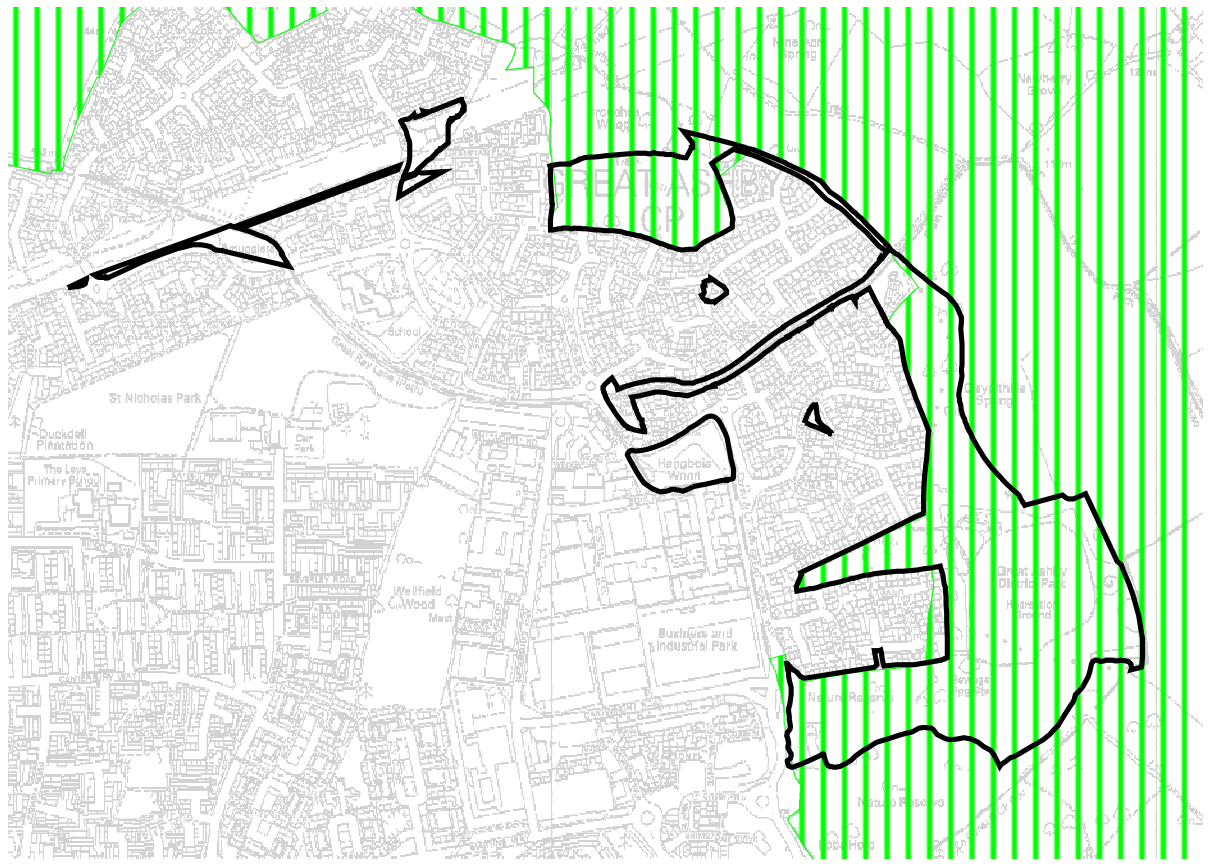
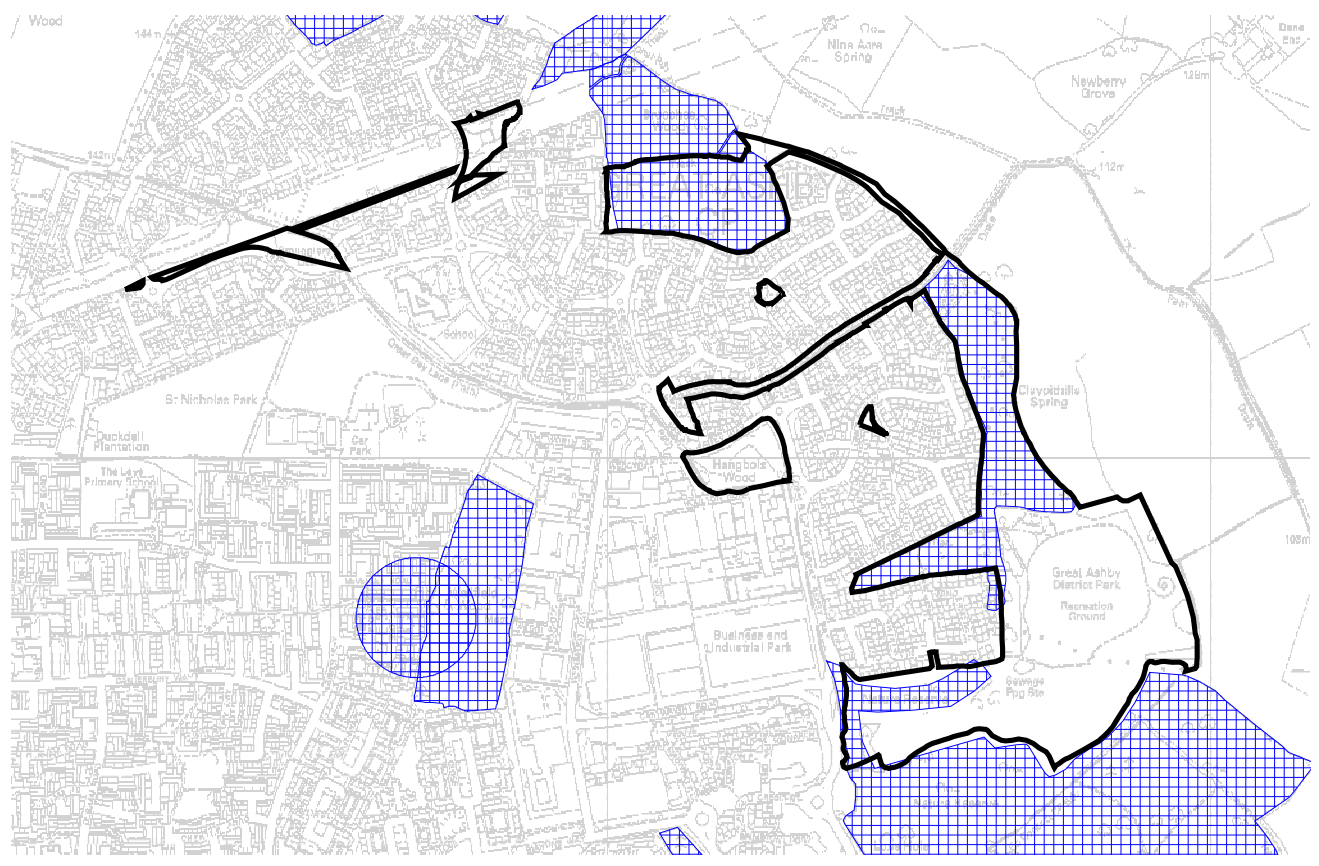
Greenbelt - Great Ashby is situated within the green belt, a planning designation designed to prevent urban expansion beyond its current limit. Any proposed development within the greenbelt requires planning consent from the local planning authority.

Ancient Woodland - The Woodlands of Great Ashby are recorded on the Ancient Woodland Inventory. The proposed management prescriptions all accord with best practice for management of ancient woodland as promoted by the Forestry Commission, the government's advisor on woodland management.

Great Ashby Woodlands & District Park Constraints Map



- Key**
- Byway Open to All Traffic
 - Bridleway
 - Footpath
 - Site boundary
 - Ancient Woodland
 - Greenbelt
 - Wildlife sites



© Crown copyright and database rights 2014
 Ordnance Survey 100019606.
 Use of this data is subject to terms
 and conditions. You are not permitted to
 copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any
 of this data to third parties in any form.
 (This restriction may not apply to HCC and its
 licenced contractors agents and partners.)

Previous management

Much management work has taken place at Great Ashby in recent years. There has been extensive surfacing of footpaths across the green space and entrance improvements to some of the woodlands to enable all year round access. A leaflet has been produced that hi-lights various walking routes in the area and provides information on the wildlife and history of the green space. Interpretation panels and entrance features have been installed in several locations to provide information to visitors and hi-light walking routes further afield.

The vegetation has also been managed for the benefit of wildlife: woodland management work has been carried out in recent years to create different habitats within the woods and encourage the natural regeneration of trees. In selected areas glades have been created by felling existing, poor quality stems, this has enabled new tree seedlings to establish and has been supplemented by new planting. Part of the hedgerow along the boundary of Claypithills Spring has been layed, a traditional management technique, creating a dense bushy hedge that provides cover for wildlife.

Many areas of the district park are managed as meadow and are cut on rotation to maintain areas of long grass and wildflowers to benefit to insects, particularly butterflies.

The new plan

The new Great Ashby Woodland & District Park Management Plan aims to lead on from the positive and successful work previously carried out on the site. It is designed to be a simple, easy to read plan for use by Council officers and members of the public, and to guide the work of volunteers and contractors.

The plan is largely map based, with annual management maps to show the actions planned for each year and the resulting change represented on the map for the following year. The document will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and relevant.

A vision and a series of key objectives have been developed, from these key objectives, specific actions have been identified and costed for the 5 year period. Detailed Specifications have also been produced, outlining timing, materials and methods to complete the actions.

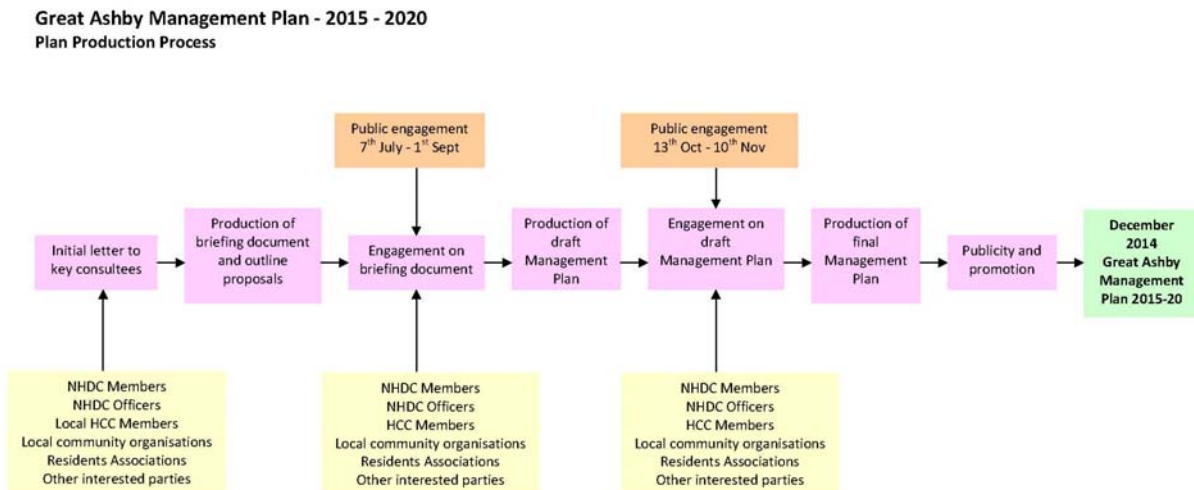
Community Engagement

Effective community engagement is at the centre of a successful Management Plan. The value of a plan comes from balancing the thoughts and aspirations of users, and interested groups throughout the writing process. In order to enable all interested groups the opportunity to feed into the production of the new Management Plan a two-stage approach to engagement has been adopted.

For the first stage, people were invited to make comment on the key objectives and outline actions put forward and any further objectives and/or issues were addressed during this information gathering process.

To support this stage, engagement sessions were hosted for users and interested groups to discuss the proposals or particular aspects in more detail. A guided walk was also held to introduce people to the wildlife of Great Ashby and discuss some of the previous management that has taken place.

For the second stage, people were invited to read through and make comment on the draft Management Plan. Following this exercise, the final document will be produced and published. The following diagram shows the Management Plan production process which was issued to all consultees at the start of the project:



NHDC - North Hertfordshire District Council
HCC - Hertfordshire County Council

Vision

Great Ashby - A continuous arc of ancient woodland and open grassland providing quiet recreation for local people and a home for a wide variety of wildlife.

Objectives

1. Ensure that Great Ashby Woodlands & District Park are welcoming and accessible open spaces for visitors
2. Conserve the wildlife and landscape of Great Ashby Woodlands & District Park sustainably, and over the long term.
3. Involve the local community and volunteers in the maintenance and development of Great Ashby Woodlands & District Park.
4. Promote Great Ashby Woodlands & District Park to new users through a variety of means
5. Maintain Great Ashby Woodlands & District Park as clean, well maintained, safe and secure open spaces
6. Improve the connectivity of the open spaces of Great Ashby Woodlands & District Park.

Action Plan

The plan comprises of annual work programmes, which address management activity that falls outside of the contracted grounds maintenance operations. They cover the period from April 2015 to March 2020 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 the previous section.

Column 1 of the action plan briefly describes each action, with Column 2 providing a reference to a detailed specification for the action. Column 3 references which management objectives are met by each action. In some instances, an action will fulfil by a number of the objectives. Column 4 gives an estimated cost for carrying out the works and Column 5 sets out the organisation/s responsible for delivery of the stated action (see list of abbreviations below).

ABBREVIATIONS

CMS Countryside Management Service

NHDC North Herts District Council

Vols Volunteers

Con Contractor

GM Grounds Maintenance Contractor

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. Following the annual maps, the actions for years 1 and 2 in the District Park are also shown in more detail on enlarged maps to aid understanding.

Year 1 (2015/16)

Location	Action	Spec. ref.	Obj. ref.	Cost estimate	Who
Brooches Wood	Re-coppice Hornbeam stools at entrance	3g	1,5	£50	CMS/Con
Brooches Wood	Remove old kissing gate and fencing and create surfaced access into wood	3e	1,5	£800	CMS/Con
Brooches Wood	Cut back overhanging vegetation and mow path edges	3h	1,3,5	N/A	CMS/Vols
Claypithills Spring	Clear Box-leaved Honeysuckle and rabbit fencing at the entrance to Claypithills Spring	2g	2,3,5	N/A	CMS/Vols
District Park	Plant a variety of parkland trees on the periphery of the playing field	2b	2,3	£8,000	CMS/Vols
Bridleway 19	Replace/remove existing structures on the Bridleway	3f	1,5	£1,500	CMS/Con
Claypithills Spring	Remove old fence and repair interpretation panel	4e	3,5	N/A	CMS/Vols
District Park	Move picnic benches closer to the car park and install new picnic benches in the play area	3a	5	£2,000	NHDC/GM
District Park	Cut and collect the hi-lighted area of rough grass	2d	2	N/A	NHDC/GM
District Park	Remove old rabbit fencing, tree stakes and guards from plantations in the District Park	4c	3,5	N/A	CMS/Vols

District Park	Cut and collect the summer meadow	2c	2	N/A	NHDC/GM
District Park	Plant hedgerow to screen pumping station in District Park	2f	1,2,3	£200	CMS/Vols
District Park	Dig three test wet scrapes for a wetland area	2e	2	£1,500	CMS/Con
District Park	Thin smaller plantations within the District Park	1d	2,3,5	N/A	CMS/Vols
All open spaces	Update the boundary ownership and maintenance responsibilities	4g	5	N/A	NHDC
Total				£14,050	

Year 2 (2016/17)

Location	Action	Spec. ref.	Obj. ref.	Cost estimate	Who
Brooches Wood	Maintenance of tree planting	4f	2,3,5	N/A	CMS/Vols
Claypithills Spring	Clear and replant a section of Claypithills Spring	1b	2,3	£1,500	CMS/Vols
Claypithills Spring	Coppice 0.3 Hectare of Hornbeam	1b	2	N/A, See Spec.	CMS/Con
Hangbois Wood	Coppice sycamore and thin broadleaved trees in Hangbois Wood	1c	2	N/A, See Spec.	CMS/Con
District Park	Cut and collect the hi-lighted area of rough grass	2d	2	N/A	NHDC/GM
District Park	Create new path link and road crossing from Claypithills Spring into District Park	3b	1,5	£1,500	CMS/Con
District Park	Create new entrance focal point and interpretation for the District Park	3c	1,4,5	£5,000	CMS/Con
Thirlmere Wood	Coppice and replant a section of Thirlmere Wood	1b	2,3	N/A, See Spec.	CMS/Vols/Con
Thirlmere Wood	Restore a section of hedgerow on the boundary of Thirlmere Wood	2a	2	£2,500	CMS/Con
District Park	Cut and collect the summer meadow	2c	2	N/A	NHDC/GM
District Park	Thin larger plantations in the District Park	1e	2	N/A, See Spec.	CMS/Con
Total				£10,500	

Year 3 (2017/18)

Location	Action	Obj. ref.	Spec ref.	Cost estimate	Who
District Park	Maintenance of tree planting	4f	2,3,5	N/A	CMS/Vols
District Park	Cut and collect the hi-lighted area of rough grass	2d	2	N/A	NHDC/GM
District Park	Cut and collect the summer meadow	2c	2	N/A	NHDC/GM
Thirlmere Wood	Restore a section of hedgerow on the boundary of Thirlmere Wood	2a	2	£2,500	CMS/Con
Claypithills Spring	Restore a section of hedgerow on the boundary of Claypithills Spring	2a	2	£3,500	CMS/Con
Total				£6,000	

Year 4 (2018/19)

Location	Action	Obj. ref.	Spec. ref.	Cost estimate	Who
Brooches Wood	Carryout selective tree thinning of Brooches Wood	1a	2	N/A, See Spec.	CMS/Con
Claypithills Spring	Coppice 0.3 Hectare of Sycamore	1b	2	N/A, See Spec.	CMS/Con
All play areas	Review and refurbishment of play areas	3d	1,2	Existing funding	NHDC
All open spaces	Maintenance of tree planting	4f	2,3,5	N/A	CMS/Vols
District Park	Cut and collect the hi-lighted area of rough grass	2d	2	N/A	NHDC/GM
District Park	Cut and collect the summer meadow	2c	2	N/A	NHDC/GM

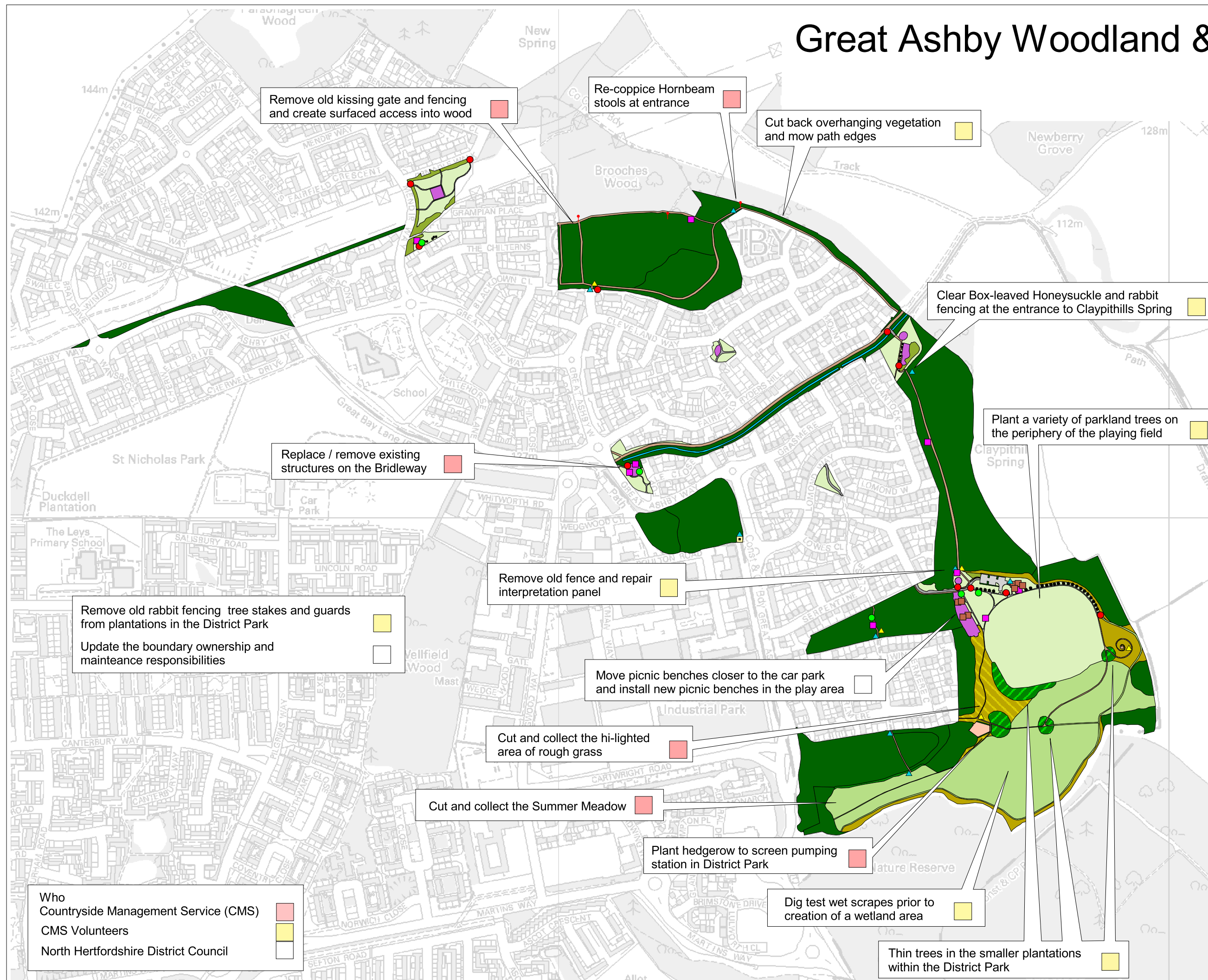
Total	N/A	
--------------	------------	--

Year 5 (2019/20)

Location	Action	Obj ref.	Spec ref.	Cost estimate	Who
All open spaces	Maintenance of tree planting	4f	2,3,5	N/A	CMS/Vols
District Park	Cut and collect the hi-lighted area of rough grass	2d	2	N/A	NHDC/GM
District Park	Cut and collect the summer meadow	2c	2	N/A	NHDC/GM
Total				N/A	

Great Ashby Woodland & District Park

Year 1 2015/16



- Key**
- ▲ Entrance sign
 - ▲ Interpretation sign
 - ▲ Notice board
 - ↑ Fingerpost
 - Litter bin
 - Dog bin
 - Bench
 - Picnic table
 - Gate
 - Amenity grass
 - Building
 - Car park
 - Grass path
 - Hard surfaced path
 - Hedgerow
 - Permeable path
 - Play area
 - Road
 - Scrub
 - Summer meadow
 - Wetland vegetation
 - Woodland
 - Rough grass
 - Woodland management
 - Rough grass cutting

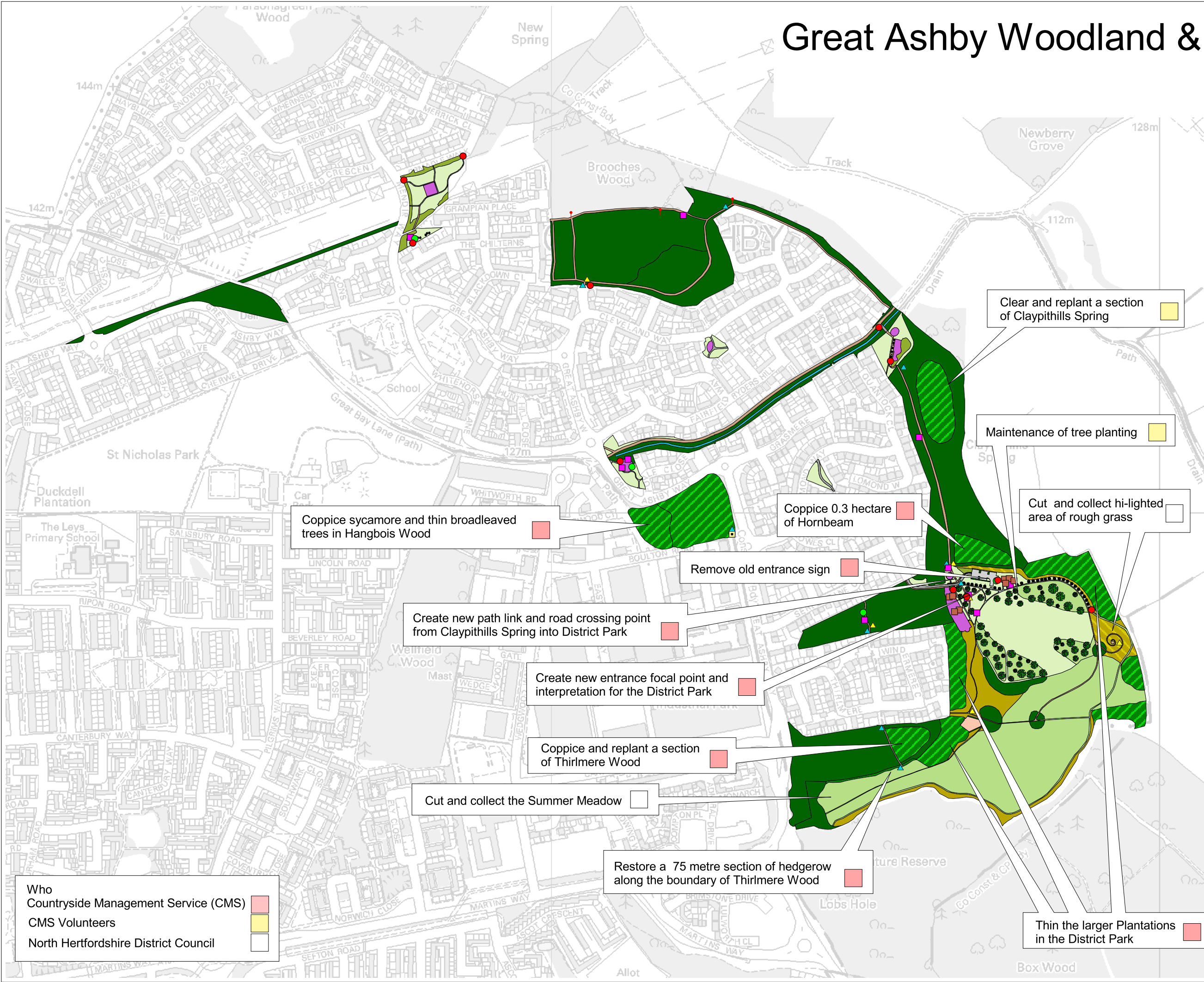
- Who**
- Countryside Management Service (CMS) ■
 - CMS Volunteers ■
 - North Hertfordshire District Council ■



© Crown copyright and database rights 2014
 Ordnance Survey 100019606.
 Use of this data is subject to terms and conditions. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.
 (This restriction may not apply to HCC and its licenced contractors agents and partners.)

Great Ashby Woodland & District Park

Year 2 2016/17



- Key**
- ▲ Entrance sign
 - ▲ Interpretation sign
 - ▲ Notice board
 - ↑ Fingerpost
 - Litter bin
 - Dog bin
 - Bench
 - Picnic table
 - Gate
- Amenity grass
 - Building
 - Car park
 - Grass path
 - Hard surfaced path
 - Hedgerow
 - Permeable path
 - Play area
 - Road
 - Scrub
 - Summer meadow
 - Wetland vegetation
 - Woodland
 - Rough grass
 - Woodland management
 - Rough grass cutting

- Who**
- Countryside Management Service (CMS) ■
 - CMS Volunteers ■
 - North Hertfordshire District Council ■

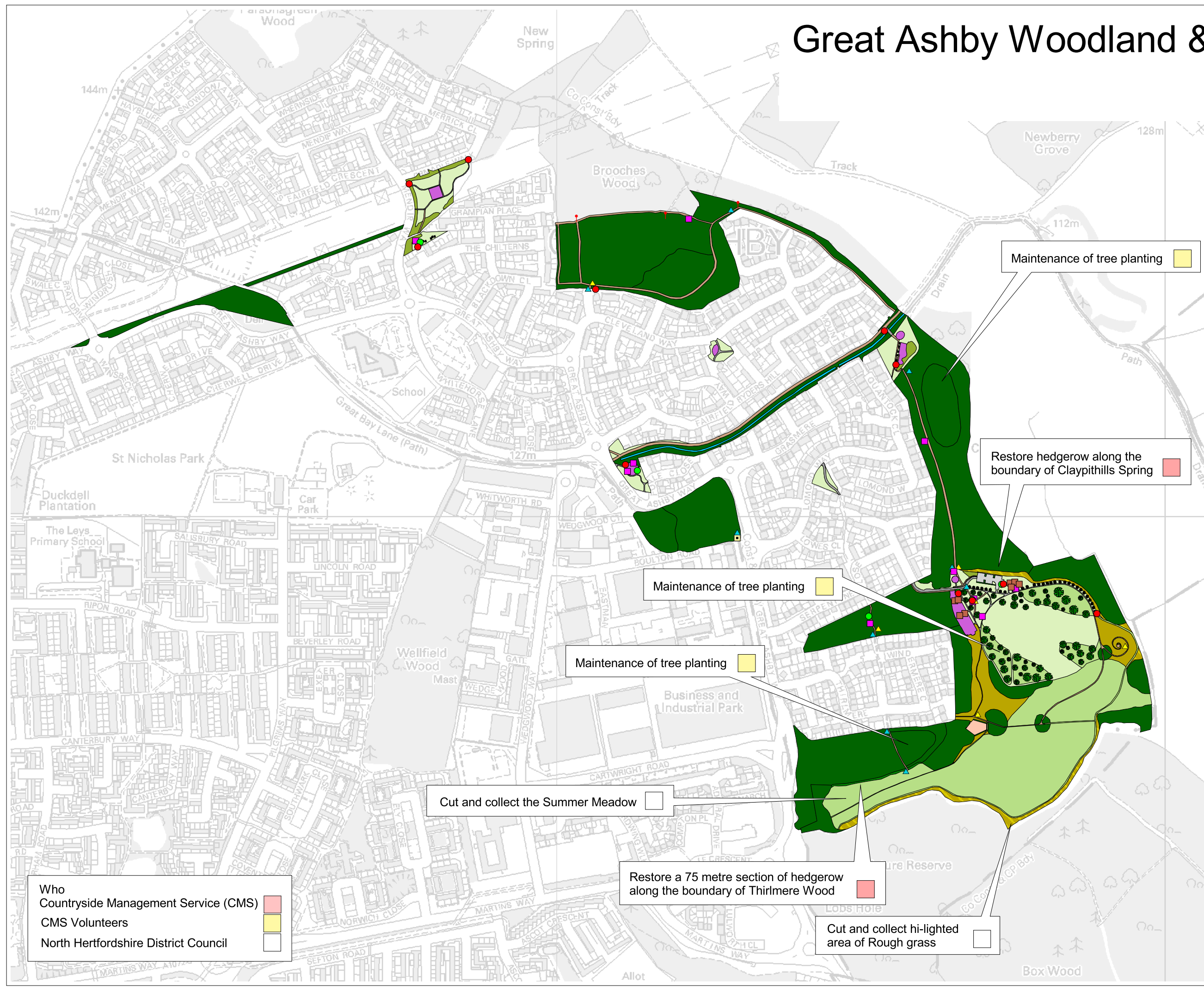
Thin the larger Plantations in the District Park ■



© Crown copyright and database rights 2014
 Ordnance Survey 100019606.
 Use of this data is subject to terms and conditions. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.
 (This restriction may not apply to HCC and its licenced contractors agents and partners.)

Great Ashby Woodland & District Park

Year 3 2017/18



- Key**
- ▲ Entrance sign
 - ▲ Interpretation sign
 - ▲ Notice board
 - ↑ Fingerpost
 - Litter bin
 - Dog bin
 - Bench
 - Picnic table
 - Gate
- Amenity grass
 - Building
 - Car park
 - Grass path
 - Hard surfaced path
 - Hedgerow
 - Permeable path
 - Play area
 - Road
 - Scrub
 - Summer meadow
 - Wetland vegetation
 - Woodland
 - Rough grass
 - Woodland management
 - Rough grass cutting

Maintenance of tree planting

Restore hedgerow along the boundary of Claypithills Spring

Maintenance of tree planting

Maintenance of tree planting

Cut and collect the Summer Meadow

Restore a 75 metre section of hedgerow along the boundary of Thirlmere Wood

Cut and collect hi-lighted area of Rough grass

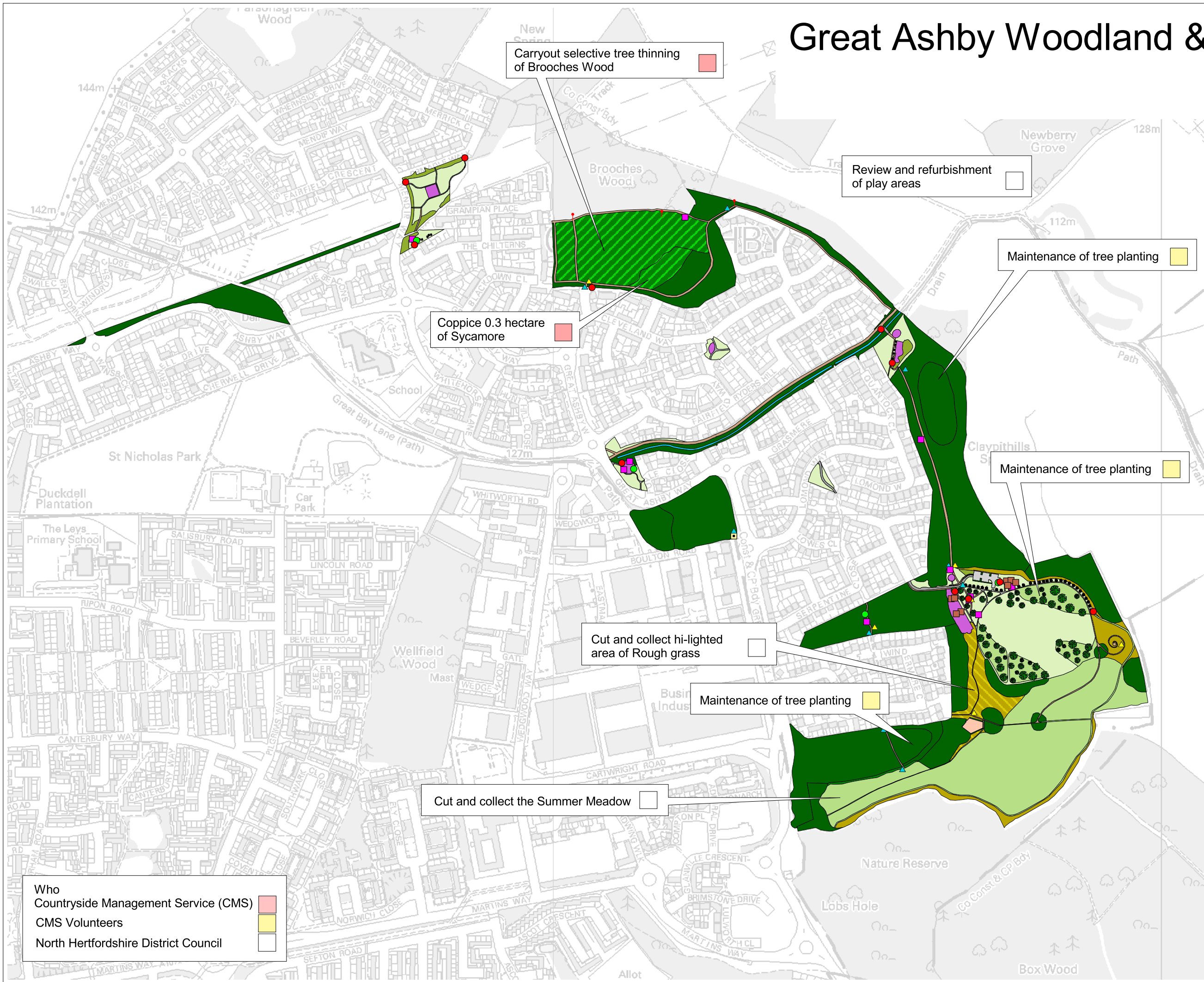
- Who**
- Countryside Management Service (CMS)
 - CMS Volunteers
 - North Hertfordshire District Council



© Crown copyright and database rights 2014
 Ordnance Survey 100019606.
 Use of this data is subject to terms and conditions. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form. (This restriction may not apply to HCC and its licenced contractors agents and partners.)

Great Ashby Woodland & District Park

Year 4 2018/19



- Key**
- ▲ Entrance sign
 - ▲ Interpretation sign
 - ▲ Notice board
 - ↑ Fingerpost
 - Litter bin
 - Dog bin
 - Bench
 - Picnic table
 - Gate
 - Amenity grass
 - Building
 - Car park
 - Grass path
 - Hard surfaced path
 - Hedgerow
 - Permeable path
 - Play area
 - Road
 - Scrub
 - Summer meadow
 - Wetland vegetation
 - Woodland
 - Rough grass
 - Woodland management
 - Rough grass cutting

- Who**
- Countryside Management Service (CMS) ■
 - CMS Volunteers ■
 - North Hertfordshire District Council ■

N

 Scale 1:5000 @ A3



© Crown copyright and database rights 2014
 Ordnance Survey 100019606.
 Use of this data is subject to terms and conditions. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form. (This restriction may not apply to HCC and its licenced contractors agents and partners.)




Great Ashby Woodland & District Park

Year 5 2019/20

Key

-  Entrance sign
-  Interpretation sign
-  Notice board
-  Fingerpost
-  Litter bin
-  Dog bin
-  Bench
-  Picnic table
-  Gate
-  Amenity grass
-  Building
-  Car park
-  Grass path
-  Hard surfaced path
-  Hedgerow
-  Permeable path
-  Play area
-  Road
-  Scrub
-  Summer meadow
-  Wetland vegetation
-  Woodland
-  Rough grass
-  Woodland management
-  Rough grass cutting



Who	Color
Countryside Management Service (CMS)	
CMS Volunteers	
North Hertfordshire District Council	



© Crown copyright and database rights 2014
 Ordnance Survey 100019606.
 Use of this data is subject to terms
 and conditions. You are not permitted to
 copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any
 of this data to third parties in any form.
 (This restriction may not apply to HCC and its
 licenced contractors agents and partners.)



Great Ashby Woodland & District Park

District Park Actions Year 1

- Who
- Countryside Management Service (CMS) ■
 - CMS Volunteers ■
 - North Hertfordshire District Council ■

- Key
- ▲ Entrance sign
 - ▲ Interpretation sign
 - ▲ Notice board
 - ↑ Fingerpost
 - Litter bin
 - Dog bin
 - Bench
 - Picnic table
 - Gate
 - Amenity grass
 - Building
 - Car park
 - Grass path
 - Hard surfaced path
 - Hedgerow
 - Permeable path
 - Play area
 - Road
 - Scrub
 - Summer meadow
 - Wetland vegetation
 - Woodland
 - Rough grass
 - Woodland management
 - Rough grass cutting

Remove old fence and repair interpretation panel ■

Remove old rabbit fencing tree stakes and guards from plantations in the District Park ■

Move picnic benches closer to the car park and install new picnic benches in the play area ■

Cut and collect hi-lighted areas of rough grass on 3 year rotation ■

Restore a 75metre section of hedgerow along the boundary of Thirlmere Wood ■

Plant hedgerow to screen pumping station in District Park ■

Plant a variety of parkland trees on the periphery of the playing field ■

Thin trees in the smaller plantations within the District Park ■

Dig three test wet scrapes for a wetland area ■

Cut and collect the Summer Meadow ■



© Crown copyright and database rights 2014
 Ordnance Survey 100019606.
 Use of this data is subject to terms and conditions. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form. (This restriction may not apply to HCC and its licenced contractors agents and partners.)

Great Ashby Woodland & District Park

District Park Actions Year 2

Who	
Countryside Management Service (CMS)	
CMS Volunteers	
North Hertfordshire District Council	

Key	
	Amenity grass
	Building
	Car park
	Grass path
	Hard surfaced path
	Hedgerow
	Permeable path
	Play area
	Road
	Scrub
	Summer meadow
	Wetland vegetation
	Woodland
	Rough grass
	Woodland management
	Rough grass cutting

Create new path link and road crossing point from Claypithills Spring into District Park

Create new entrance focal point and interpretation for the District Park

Cut and collect hi-lighted areas of rough grass on 3 year rotation

Coppice and replant a section of Thirlmere Wood

Thin the larger Plantations in the District Park

Restore a 75 metre section of hedgerow along the boundary of Thirlmere Wood

Remove old entrance sign



© Crown copyright and database rights 2014
 Ordnance Survey 100019606.
 Use of this data is subject to terms and conditions. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form. (This restriction may not apply to HCC and its licenced contractors agents and partners.)

Specifications

1. Forestry

1a. Carryout selective tree thinning

Carry out a selective thin of part of Brooches Wood (approx. 1.9 Ha.), retaining hardwoods, and the best conifer stems. Retain a wind firm edge of approx. 10 metres width along the south, east and western boundaries of the wood. The works should be tendered by standing sale, where the cost of the work is met by the sale of timber and may enable a small surplus to be made. Contractors should be required to bid to fell the trees, and extract and sell the timber.

1b. Coppice and replant

Fell all Sycamore within a marked area (approx. 0.3 Ha.) to ground level, leaving a collar of healthy bark on the stumps and retaining a small number of the best stems. All brash should be stacked along the periphery of the coppiced area to form a dead hedge.

The works should be tendered by standing sale, where the cost of the work is met by the sale of timber and may enable a small surplus to be made. Contractors should be required to bid to fell the trees, and extract and sell the timber.

Replanting should be 30-50cm bare rooted whips from Region of Provenance & Native Seed Zone 405. Species mix should include English Oak *Quercus robur*, Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*, Beech *Fagus sylvatica* Hazel *Corylus avellana*, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Field Maple *Acer campestre*. The whips should be planted at 2 metre centres and protected with 1.2m tree tube with a 1.2m square, sawn, softwood stake, and a 50x50cm woven weed control mat.

1c. Coppice Sycamore and thin broadleaved trees in Hangbois Wood

Fell all Sycamore to ground level, leaving a collar of healthy bark on the stumps and retaining a small number of the best stems. All brash should be stacked along the periphery of the coppiced area to form a dead hedge. Carry out a selective thin, up to 30% of other broadleaved trees whilst maintaining a wind firm edge to the woodland. Total area to be coppiced and thinned is approx. 1.3 Ha.

The works should be tendered by standing sale, where the cost of the work is met by the sale of timber and may enable a small surplus to be made. Contractors should be required to bid to fell the trees, and extract and sell the timber.

1d. Thin smaller plantations in the District Park

Selectively thin the smaller plantations in the District Park, (approx. 0.4 Ha. in total) whilst retaining the best quality stems. The work is intended to promote the long term development of good quality trees. Fell the selected stems, leaving stumps of no more 5cm above ground. Any stems of a suitable dimension (Stakes approx. 1600mmx40mm, Binders approx. 3000mmx20mm) for hedgelaying should be retained, all remaining brash should be cut to approx. 1 metre lengths and left scattered across the woodland floor. Stumps of deciduous species should be left to re-grow.

1e. Thin larger plantations in the District Park

Mark approx. 30% of large trees species for thinning (approx. 1.5 Ha. In total), remove weaker, poorer quality specimens whilst retaining the best stems. The work is intended to promote the long term development of good quality trees. Fell selected stems, leaving brash scattered across the woodland floor. Stack timber at an agreed point to enable extraction at a later date.

The work should be tendered by standing sale, where the cost of the work is met by the sale of timber and may enable a small surplus to be made. Contractors should be required to bid to fell the trees, and extract and sell the timber.

1f. Coppice and replant a section of Thirlmere Wood

Fell all trees and shrubs within a marked area (approx. 0.2 Ha.), retaining a small number of the best stems. All brash should be stacked along the periphery of the coppiced area to form a dead hedge. The stools within the coppiced area should be protected from browsing by installation of deer fencing. The fence should be high tensile plastic mesh, 1.5 metres in height and supported with 2 metre length stakes produced from the felled coppice.

The works should be tendered by standing sale, where the cost of the work is met by the sale of timber and may enable a small surplus to be made. Contractors should be required to bid to fell the trees, and extract and sell the timber.

Replanting should be Hazel *Corylus avellana*, 30-50cm bare rooted whips from Region of Provenance & Native Seed Zone 405. The whips should be protected with 1.2m tree tube with a 1.2m square, sawn, softwood stake, and a 50x50cm woven weed control mat.

1g. Clear and replant a section of Claypithills Spring

Clear all scrub and bramble within the marked area (approx. 0.6 Ha.), retaining any good quality, healthy tree saplings. All brash should be stacked along the periphery of the cleared area to form a dead hedge.

Replanting should be 30-50cm bare rooted whips from Region of Provenance & Native Seed Zone 405. Species mix should include English Oak *Quercus robur*, Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*, Beech *Fagus sylvatica*, Sweet Chestnut *Castanea sativa*, Hazel *Corylus avellana*, and Field Maple *Acer campestre*. The whips should be protected with 1.2m tree tube with a 1.2m square, sawn, softwood stake, and a 50x50cm woven weed control mat.

2. Landscape and Habitat

2a. Hedgerow restoration

Sections of hedgerow should be managed in the following ways, according to condition of each section.

Laying - Suitable sections of hedge should be laid in midlands or southern counties style, secured using traditional stakes and binders. Where possible brash should be woven into the hedge, any excess brash should be chipped and left on site.

Coppicing - Fell to ground level (leaving a stump approx. 5cm), chip all brash and leave in small piles on site. Any cordwood should be stacked safely adjacent to the coppiced area.

Replanting - Any gaps in the hedge over 300mm should be replanted with bare root, native species shrubs, approx. 40-60cm whips, (e.g. Hawthorn, Field Maple, Hornbeam, Hazel & Dog Rose) as a double staggered row at 4 plants per metre. The newly planted shrubs should be protected with a spiral guard and bamboo cane and be mulched with a 10-15cm layer of composted wood chip mulch.

2b. Plant a variety of parkland trees

Plant a variety of parkland trees in groups of 1, 3, 5 or 7 around the periphery of the playing field in the District Park. Use a range of species, including English Oak *Quercus robur*, London Plane *Platanus X hispanica*, Beech *Fagus sylvatica*, European Larch *Larix europea*, Scots Pine *Pinus sylvestris*, Cedar of Lebanon *Cedrus libani*, Sweet Chestnut *Castanea sativa*. Use bare rooted, 150-175cm 1+2, feathered whips, where appropriate from Region of Provenance and Native Seed Zone 402 or 405.

The whips should be protected with a 600mm tree tube with a 75cm square, sawn, softwood stake, and 50x50cm woven weed control mat, covered with a 10-15cm layer of composted woodchip mulch. A metal tree guard should also be used, approx. 1800mm height and 600mm width, securely attached to the ground.

The trees should be planted in fenced enclosures, using 1 metre height galvanised wire stock fencing. The fencing should be strained using 2.28 x 150mm treated round and peeled, softwood strainer posts with struts, installed at approx. 50 metre intervals and at all changes of the fence direction.

Intermediate 1.83mx75-100mm cleft and round, peeled, treated softwood stakes should be rammed into the ground at approx. 2 metre intervals along the fence line. The fencing should be attached to the stakes using 40mm galvanised staples, with each roll of fencing being attached using Gripple wire joiners.

A 3 metre, treated, softwood field gate should be installed in each enclosure to facilitate access for maintenance.

2c. Cut and lift summer meadow areas once a year in September

The Summer meadow in the district park should be cut once a year in early September. The cuttings should be bailed and removed off site.

2d. Cut and collect the hi-lighted area of rough grass

On the periphery of the District Park three areas of long grass have been identified, these areas provide important hibernation areas for over wintering insects, small mammals, reptiles and amphibians. Each year one of the three areas should be cut to prevent woody vegetation from establishing. Each annual map identifies the extent of the area. The vegetation should be collected and removed off site.

2e. Dig a test wet scrapes for a wetland area

Dig three small scrapes, approx. 4msq² and 30cm deep, as test areas for a wetland feature within the summer meadow. Monitor the water levels in the scrapes over the next 12 months, prior to creating a larger area.

2f. Plant hedgerow to screen pumping station in the District Park

Plant two 20 metre sections of hedgerow using bare root, native species shrubs, approx. 40-60cm whips, (e.g. Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Field Maple *Acer campestre*, Hazel *Corylus avellana*,) as a double staggered row at 4 plants per metre. The newly planted shrubs should be protected with spiral guards and bamboo canes and be mulched with a 10-15cm layer of composted wood chip mulch.

2g. Remove the Box-leaved Honeysuckle and fencing at the entrance to Claypithills Spring

All Box-leaved Honeysuckle should be cut down to ground level, chipped and removed off site. The stumps should be treated with an approved herbicide to prevent re-growth. The fencing should be taken down and removed off site.

3. Access & Recreation

3a. Move picnic benches closer to the car park and install new picnic benches in the play area

Move the picnic benches from their current position closer to the car park and install new picnic benches in the play area.

3b. Create new path link and road crossing

Create a new section of footpath leading from the southern entrance of Claypithills Spring into the District Park. The path link should lead to a new focal point in the district Park, see Spec. 3c.

The path should be constructed to the following specification. Excavate each section to minimum depth of 100mm and a minimum width of 2 metres. All soft spots to be excavated back to firm ground with the purpose of achieving best surface drainage of the finished route, with hollows filled & compacted with sub-base to ensure even, firm base layer. Lay a non-woven geotextile, such as Terram 1500 or similar.

Spread, grade and thoroughly compact a dense, tight, even base course, surface with constant fall, granite aggregate 50 mm to dust to a finished depth of not less than 100mm. Ensure the width of the surfaced area is at least 2 metres wide and that the geotextile membrane is covered at this stage.

Spread, grade and thoroughly compact to a dense, tight, even surface, a layer of well graded granite aggregate 6 mm to dust as surface dressing. Finished compacted depth to be not less than 45 mm, with the Edges lost in adjoining ground and base course to be completely covered. Material must be completely free from deleterious materials and any protruding objects should be removed.

Path to have a final camber or cross-fall (as appropriate to slope) of at least 50 mm over 2 metre width and start of the surfaced section should be edged flush up to existing path surfaces.

Use any spoil to build up the shoulders of the path, backfill any hollows adjacent to the path and level the ground layer. All surplus spoil should be removed off site.

3c. Create new entrance focal point and interpretation for the District Park

Create a new entrance focal point in the District Park, the area should be welcoming and include some form of environmental art, interpretation, notice board and seating.

3d. Review and refurbishment of play areas

Funding will be available in 2018/19 for improvements and refurbishment of the play areas across Great Ashby.

3e. Remove old kissing gate and fencing and create surfaced access into wood

Remove old kissing gate and fencing at the entrance to Brooches wood. Resurface path leading into wood and create sloped access in main path. The new path should be 1.5 metres width and surfaced to the same specification as 3b.

3f. Replace/remove existing structures on the Bridleway

Remove all existing structures and install new field gates and horse hops.

3g. Re-coppice Hornbeam stools at entrance

Coppice two Hornbeam stools at the entrance to Brooches wood, cut to ground level leaving a stump of no more than 10cm.

3h. Cut back overhanging vegetation and mow path edges.

All vegetation overhanging the path should be cut to give at least 2 metres height and width clearance. All bramble and rough grass should be flailed upto 2 metres back from the edge of the path.

4. **Maintenance**

4a. **Benches**

Great Ashby currently has a range of differing bench styles, in varying degrees of condition. When a bench reaches the end of its life a decision should be made as to whether removal or replacement is desirable. Where a bench is to be replaced one of the following two types should be used:

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.

Type 2 is a more rustic, simple timber bench, for use in quieter, less accessible parts of the site. These can be built from scratch by volunteers or a simple version can be purchased.



Type 1



Type 2

4b. **Litter & dog bins**

Litter and dog bins should be replaced as necessary with simple robust, metal bins in dark green, see pictured examples. All bins should be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions.



4c. **Remove old rabbit fencing, tree stakes and guards from plantations**

Take down all old rabbit fencing, remove all tree stakes and collect up old tree guards around recently planted trees. All wire, rabbit netting, guards and posts should be placed in separate skips and removed off site for recycling.

4e. **Remove old fence and repair interpretation panel**

Remove old fencing at the entrance to Claypithills Spring and repair the broken interpretation panel.

4f. **Maintenance of tree planting**

All trees planted should be maintained for the first three years to ensure good establishment. The base of all trees should be weeded once annually in June, either by hand or with an approved herbicide. Trees in open grassland areas should be mulched in the autumn/winter with

composted bark mulch. Where necessary the surrounding vegetation should be cleared to facilitate access for maintenance and competition for light.

4g. Update the boundary ownership and maintenance responsibilities

The boundaries of Great Ashby Woodland and District Park have multiple owners and currently management of these boundaries are the responsibility of each owner. Work will be undertaken in year 1 to simplify the ownership and maintenance of these boundaries.