



# Lullingstone Country Park Management Plan 2014-2019 Updated January 2015

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Country Parks, West Kent Team



## **Contents**

*News for 2014-2015*

*About this document*

*Introduction*

### **Part A – General Information**

*1 – Site Location and Description*

*2 – Vision for the Site*

*3 – Conservation Management*

*4 – Heritage Management*

*5 – Visitor Management*

*6 – Education*

*7 – Site Maintenance*

*8 – Health and Safety*

*9 – Community Involvement*

*10 – Financial Overview*

### **Part B – Management Objectives and Actions**

*Conservation*

*Visitors*

*Legal Obligations*

### **Part C – Appendices**

*Appendix 1 – Management objectives*

*Appendix 2 – compartment map.*

*Appendix 3 – woodland prescriptions*

*Appendix 4 – Tree inspections*

*Appendix 5 – Grassland prescriptions*

*Appendix 6 – Health and safety policy statement.*

*Appendix 7 Wardens checklists*

*Appendix 8 – Notable species*

*Appendix 9 \_ Annual inspections*

*Appendix 10\_ Birthday party options*

### ***Green Flag award.***

Lullingstone Country Park was the proud recipient of the green flag award for 2014. This award means that Lullingstone has met the required standard for this award scheme managed by “keep Britain Tidy”. It is a bench mark that demonstrates best practice that is recognised nationwide.

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### ***South and Southeast in Bloom***

Lullingstone Country Park was awarded a Gold Medal in the Country Parks category of the South and Southeast in Bloom. The award recognises outstanding facilities and resources for enjoyment of the countryside.

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### ***Christmas meals at Lullingstone!***

During November and December Lullingstone visitor's centre hosted a number of Christmas meals for groups from the local community. Before each meal visitors were treated to a guided walk of the park with one of the site wardens. Some of the largest groups had over 70 people in attendance. The meals are always a great success using locally sourced produce and generating valuable extra income into the sites budget.

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### ***Footpaths & Horse routes***

Rangers have continued work to keep clear 6.16km of horse route and a further 5.52km of footpaths right through the summer months to enable visitors to enjoy site fully.

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### ***Parkrun.***

During the winter months we have been working with “Park run” which is an organisation which runs 5k running events at a number of Country Parks all over the Country. People will be able to turn up on a Saturday morning and run a 5k route which is marked and marshalled around the site. The event will be held all year round and will be run completely by volunteers.

At other sites that we have, around 70 people regularly take part each week in this type of event. As well as promoting healthy living this activity will bring in extra valuable income into the Country Park. The first event is scheduled to place on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

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## Grassland management.

At the end of the summer Rangers worked alongside staff from Sensio Leisure at the golf club to cut and collect grass/scrub from the valuable chalk grassland habitat around the site.

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### ***Volunteers***

Volunteers have assisted with our visitor service team and helped lead regular guided walks through out the year. Also they have help with the running of the visitor's centre dealing with visitor enquiries and assisting kitchen staff.

Out on site our Wednesday group assisted with a number of tasks at Lullingstone and this year were a great help clearing numerous stretches of footpath and bridleway.

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### ***Education.***

Education wise Lullingstone has had its busiest year. We have delivered education to over 1600 children and collected over £10,600 of income during 2014. It's probably worth noting that over 30% of visiting schools are new to the park with around 70% of visits being returning satisfied customers. We have delivered a number of INSET teacher training courses including the accredited Level 1 Forest School leader course.

Between one of our other sites and Lullingstone we have delivered 25 funded visits. These were funded through the Natural England HLS scheme and were used to provide educational access to these sites for schools that may not ordinarily be able to visit.

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## ***About this document***

Kent Country Parks Rangers prepare and work to this management plan in line with the Kent Country Parks Strategy document which runs in conjunction with this plan. A copy of which is available to view at the Visitor Centre, upon request.

The Kent Country Parks strategy revolves around three Strategic aims:

- Aim 1 ***To provide country parks for access and enjoyment and protect their landscape, heritage and wildlife.***
- Aim 2 ***Increase understanding of the environment and countryside for all.***
- Aim 3 ***To ensure that Country Parks is well-managed, sustainable, innovative, and is securely financed to enable the delivery and development of key services and meet future visitor and site needs.***

To realise these aims there are key objectives that are set out in the document. It is with these objectives in mind that the management of the park is realised.

Each year the management plan for the park is revised and updated to reflect the changes in work completed, and the forthcoming requirements to meet the objectives of the strategic plan.

In 2008 an ecological management plan was commissioned by Kent County Council for each of its country parks. The plan for Lullingstone is still current and is intended to inform this management plan. The ecological management plan is available upon request and is intended to be referred to in support of this document.

This document is intended as a public document and as such reflects that in its language and summary of the relevant areas.



*Looking across the grassland over the golf course*

## ***Introduction***

Lullingstone Country Park is one of 16 sites owned and managed by the Country Park team. The site is managed by the West Kent Area Team, based at Trosley Country Park. This park is one of the team's three main country park sites.

The park is internationally renowned for its collection of ancient trees, with over 300 veteran oak, beech, ash, hornbeam and sweet chestnut, some of which are thought to be 800 years old. The site caters for all types of visitors and is one of the most popular sites in the area. In summer months, particularly during the summer holidays, it is often full. People enjoy the variety of activities and the space available for recreation.

Alongside its amenity value the site is also important for its ecological management. Lullingstone Country Park is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), based on its importance as a site for chalk grassland. Visitors can enjoy the diverse range of woodland habitats and open parkland. The variety of flora and fauna that is found at the site ensures that there is something for everyone all year round.

Part A  
*General Information*



# 1

## Site Location and Description

Lullingstone Country Park covers an area of approximately 200 hectares in the Darent Valley between the villages of Eynsford and Shoreham and is within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It is largely ancient broad-leaved woodland 62 hectares of which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and various grassland communities that are designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI).

Lullingstone Country Park has been managed as a deer park since medieval times and is renowned for its veteran trees. The ownership passed to Kent County Council in 2005, which manages the site for nature conservation and recreation. The site is open to visitors and has a golf course, a visitor centre, classroom, and a network of footpaths.



*Lullingstone Country Park - south of Eynsford*

Lullingstone Country Park is situated in the Parishes of Eynsford and Shoreham close to Junction 4 of the M25 motorway. The park can be accessed from the A225 from Sevenoaks coming from the south and from the north coming from the M25 and the A20. The site is served by public transport via the railway station at Eynsford (2.5 miles away). There is no bus service for the park. Visitors may arrive at the park from the Golf Club which is situated at the far western edge of the park and is accessed from the minor roads from Orpington.

Lullingstone Country Park is managed for public recreation and nature conservation. The site is open every day except Christmas Day. The park opens at 8.00 am and closes at 4.30pm or dusk - whichever is the later. Locking times are displayed on entering the site. The Country Park supports extensive recreational facilities.

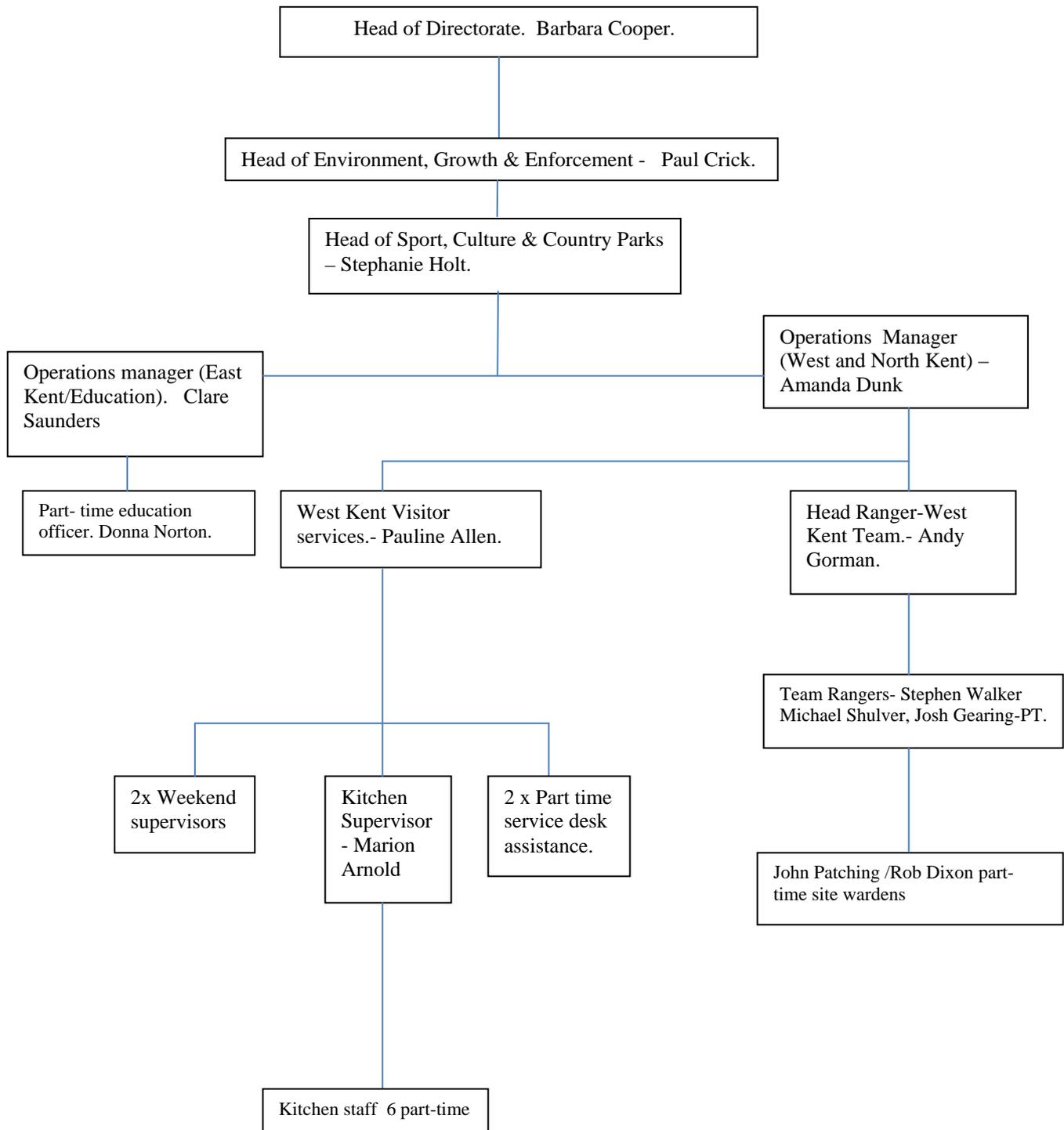
Toilets are provided adjacent to the car park adjoined to the Visitor Centre and accessible from the outside when the Visitor Centre is closed. Male, female, disabled and baby changing facilities are available.

The main car park has marked parking bays. Car parking charges are; £1.50 on Mondays to Fridays and £2.00 at weekends and Public Holidays. Car parking is free for disabled badge holders. The price of a season ticket is £40.00. This represents exceedingly good value for money as it allows the visitor to park free of charge at all Kent County Council Owned Country Parks.

A site leaflet for Lullingstone Country Park is available for download from [www.kent.gov.uk/countryparks](http://www.kent.gov.uk/countryparks). The leaflet provides visitors with a site map showing the way-marked trails and footpaths. In addition, the leaflet provides further information as to the sites history, recreational facilities and a summary of the wildlife that may be seen during a visit.

Lullingstone Country Park is owned and managed by Kent County Council and forms part of the Sport Culture and Country Parks Division of the Environment, Growth and Enforcement Directorate. Below is a summary chart showing the management structure.

Staff structure of Lullingstone Country Park.





A ranger service provided by Kent County Council is responsible for the maintenance and running of these provisions. The Country Park receives large numbers of visitors and this does have implications for management. Regular tree safety checks are conducted along all the paths and any trees considered to present a risk to the public are felled or otherwise made safe (see *Section 6 - Health and Safety* for further details on Tree Inspections, *Appendix 9 - Tree Inspection Policy* also outlines the procedure for tree safety).

Recommended activities include walking in the park (to relax and provide exercise), picnicking, or taking part in one of the organised events for children and the whole family. The site welcomes responsible dog walkers. To help others enjoy their visit, the site staff request that dogs are kept under close control at all times and that owners pick up any mess from their dog and use the supplied dog bins to dispose of it.

The park is assessed annually against the Country Parks' Customer Service Standards. The site is assessed by a visit from a mystery shopper. The assessment covers the following areas: a pre-site visit; first impressions; safe passage; state of repair and cleanliness; information on what's on in the area; experience of cafés and or picnic areas; staff interaction; finishing touches; and lasting impressions.

The site is promoted by roadside brown tourism signing, and is marked on the Ordnance Survey map as Lullingstone Park along with the OS symbol for Visitor Centre.

Each Kent County Council Country Park has its own dedicated page on the Council's website [www.kent.gov.uk/countryparks](http://www.kent.gov.uk/countryparks)

# 2

## ***Vision for the site***

Country Park aims to provide a welcoming, safe environment for all ages and backgrounds whilst protecting and conserving the Country Parks Environment. The site aims to raise awareness of habitat management, wildlife protection and healthy living through its events and interpretation.

### ***General Aims***

The overall vision for the country parks in Kent is for the county to be renowned for its great country parks, operating a service which meets the needs of the people of Kent and its visitors, and which is securely funded into the future.

### ***Conservation Management Objectives***

- Maintain the existing mosaic of habitats within the park
- Ensure the recruitment and maintenance of mature/veteran trees in the park
- Reintroduce pollarding, where possible
- Maintain areas of scrub, but prevent encroachment into grassland
- Removal of non-native and invasive species
- Restoration of meadow grassland to favourable condition
- Encourage habitat diversity along the margins of the woodland and golf course
- Preserve the current range of notable plant and animal species

### ***Visitor Services Development***

Public enjoyment and recreation is a key feature of the site. The site aims to attract more visitors at all times of year, particularly off peak (mid-week & winter months). The site also aims to educate and inform the public on conservation and environmental issues whilst also promoting healthy living and wellbeing.



*Lizard Orchid on the Orchid Bank*

# 3

## **Conservation management**

### **Conservation Management Objectives**

The park is managed to provide mixed woodland and grassland habitat for a wide range of flora and fauna.

The woodland areas are subject to different forms of management to ensure a range of habitats and to meet the obligations of Natural England or the Forestry Commission.

Grassland areas within the woodland – in the form of glades and ride edges – are maintained to create a mosaic of variable lengths of sward to improve the biodiversity of flora and fauna.

The open grassland – predominantly calcareous grassland is maintained to prevent the development of scrub and the encroachment of woodland. The grass is cut regularly and the arisings removed as hay to maintain a nutrient-poor soil allowing a more diverse range of species to develop without the competition of quick-growing herbs.

The long-term goal for the park is to manage the woodland within the SSSI boundary with biodiversity as the key objective. The immediate goal is to continue to maintain the SSSI areas in *favourable* status, as identified by Natural England.

For a full description of the Management Principles applied to the conservation of Lullingstone Country Park please refer to *Part B* of this document – *Management Objectives and Actions*.

The following sections are a brief overview of the management for the conservation of the site, for full management method statements for each compartment refer to the tables in *Appendix 1 – Management Principles* and *Appendix 2 – Woodland Prescriptions & Appendix 5-Grassland prescriptions*

### **Woodland areas**

Very tall mature trees, particularly Beech as well as Hornbeam, Sweet Chestnut, Ash, and Pedunculate and Sessile Oak, dominate the woodland. The ground vegetation is dominated by Bluebell, Dog's Mercury, Bracken and Bramble. Some areas of woodland are managed as high forest with maintenance limited to some thinning to give diversity of age to the structure. Others are kept as open woodland and all the constituent parts are actively maintained, including scrub, hedges and glades, with the main objective of preserving an articulated mosaic of different habitats. Coppice rotation has traditionally been the primary management form for Home Wood; this not only produces a regular crop of timber but also creates a diverse age structure within the woodland. The harvested timber can then be used as logs to heat the visitor centre at Trosley Country Park or sold to the public to create an income stream; to make fencing poles, posts; or used to make charcoal.

The Natural England citation states that the site was designated for its old pollard trees and woodland, which supports important communities of invertebrates, lichens, breeding birds and fungi.



*One of the ancient Oak trees that Lullingstone is renowned for*

The citation states that some of the trees were planted in the 18th century, but many of the pollards are thought to be 400 or more years old. These trees are very large, with girths up to about 10m, but have not been maintained for about 150 years. Their bark supports over 60 species of epiphytic lichens.

The long continuity of woodland habitats, including abundant deadwood and many fungi, has encouraged the development of a species-rich invertebrate fauna. Over 340 beetles have been recorded, including over 30 nationally scarce and 2 nationally rare species, and more than 270 moths and butterflies. The scarce Roman Snail is also known from the site. Over 500 species of fungi have been identified from this site including several rarely recorded in Britain and one, *Amanita inopinata*, which is new to science and has yet to be described and named.

The well-developed woodland structure and abundance of invertebrates supports an outstanding community of breeding birds, including Greater Spotted Woodpecker, Tawny owl, Sparrow hawk and buzzard.

More than half the total area of the park is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). This area predominantly covers an area to the north of the park that comprises a fine collection of ancient - mainly oak - pollards and rough, unimproved chalk grassland with a few copses, all within the area of the golf course.

### ***Grassland areas***

The park's chalk grassland is a habitat of conservation priority and is particularly rich in species. As all grassland communities, it requires active management to prevent encroachment of scrub and eventual succession to woodland. Each year areas of grass are cut in rotation the hay harvested is removed to avoid enriching the soil. Some of this hay is used to feed our livestock on some of our other sites over the winter.



*The grassland margins at the edges for the golf course fairways*

### ***Conservation Management of the Golf Course***

A significant proportion of Lullingstone is occupied by two golf courses that require regular mowing of grass. Most of the golf sward is consequently closely short cut, with very limited ecological interest, although there are marginal areas of 'roughs' that are cut with less frequency. For further information on the golf course management and the collaborative working between Sencio and Kent Country Park Rangers see *Section 5* of this document.

### ***Rare and important species***

Across the site there are many notable or rare species that have been recorded. See *Appendix 8 - Rare and Notable Species* for a full list of these species.

## *Heritage Management*

# 4

Lullingstone has its origins as a medieval deer park, possibly created as early as the 13th century, but certainly established by the 1570s (LUC 1987). The original park probably resembled a wood-pasture, with scattered pollards over deer-grazed grassland. Because of the height at which they were cut, pollards were not grazed and could be used for wood. There were two ponds, providing water to the deer. Documentary evidence suggests that extensive areas of scrub, dominated by Hawthorn and Bracken, existed in place of Upper and Lower Beechen Wood.

During the 18th century, the park underwent several landscape enhancements according to the vogue of the time. Follies and ornamental copses were created amongst the ancient pollards, including a Summer House Knoll and an obelisk. Much planting was concentrated in the areas of Upper and Lower Beechen Wood, introducing a mixture of native and exotic species such as Horse Chestnut, Sweet Chestnut, Beech and Pedunculate Oak. In this way, an increasingly thicker cover of trees gradually surrounded the isolated pollards, although at the time woodland was yet to achieve proper establishment. Home Wood, on the contrary, was already managed as coppice but did not form part of the site. By the end of the 18th century, open woodland with bracken glades was established to the south, and other exotic specimens were added to the park.

The arrival of the First World War marked the end of the deer park and formal deer shoots stopped. There followed a brief period of tree felling. In 1938, under the Green Belt Act, Kent County Council (KCC) purchased the majority of the original parkland, an area largely corresponding to the present layout. The Second World War caused significant impacts to Lullingstone Country Park, including major tree felling operations, use of some portions as a decoy airfield, and, for the first time in the history of the park, cultivation of land.

After the war, the park became a Public Open Space devoted to public recreation and, in the following years, it was adapted to host a golf course. In 2005 the management of the site returned under the direct control of KCC, and it aims to strike a balance between the different vocations of the site, as landscape feature, historical park, wildlife site and recreational area.

# 5

## **Visitor Management**

### **Visitor Management Objectives**

Public enjoyment and recreation is held as the key feature of the site. Each year the aim is to attract more visitors to the site – to educate and inform them about the conservation and environment whilst promoting a healthy lifestyle.

### **The Facilities**

The Visitor centre comprises a cafeteria, toilets, a gift shop, tea gardens and a classroom. The cafeteria is located on the ground floor and includes 60 seats. It serves hot and cold meals, provides snacks and can be booked for group meals. Wheelchair access to the ground floor includes the gift shop, disabled toilet and cafeteria.

In the immediate surroundings of the Visitor Centre there are other facilities such as a picnic area and an educational pond, which is accessible for booked groups only.

Recommended activities include walking one of the parks waymarked routes, picnicking, orienteering or undertaking one of the many organised events for children and the whole family.



*The abundance of native flora is evident across the grassland*

### **The Wider Site**

The West Kent Ranger Team, based at Trosley Country Park near Wrotham, manages the outdoor areas of the park. The team are responsible for the on-going works and the conservation areas of the park. The team maintain the conservation grassland through the year to ensure preservation of species and the continued enjoyment by the visiting public. Each year the areas of grassland adjacent to the Visitor Centre and certain areas that abut the golf course are mowed and the cuttings removed as conventional hay-bales to use for feeding the team's livestock at the nearby Preston Hill Open Space and Trosley Country Park. Where this is impractical the areas are flailed and the cuttings are removed. The team are also responsible for the maintenance and safety of the woodland areas – paying particular attention to the veteran trees. All the major paths and boundaries are monitored annually for unsafe trees – an external qualified arboriculturalist carries this out. The team have a duty to assess the remainder of the paths and to undertake – or ensure contractors undertake – the work required on these trees.

The team ensure that all paths and park furniture and play equipment is regularly checked for defects and breakages. These are reported and then replaced or repaired as necessary.

The Rangers work to a pattern of planned works that are set at the beginning of each financial year. Alongside this there are the ad-hoc projects and jobs that result from the daily use of the park environment and the seasons (see *Part B - Management Objectives and Actions*).

On occasion the Ranger team lead guided walks covering a variety of topics and areas.

The Rangers are supported by Country Park Wardens who work seven days a week, with the main bulk of hours on weekends. They are responsible for litter picking, removal of dog waste, site patrols, safety checks, enforcement of site rules, and reporting problems to the Rangers. The Wardens responsibility for general tidiness and safety on the site is recorded using checklists. These checklists are filled out weekly as an aide memoir and to ensure we have fully documented evidence that safety checks are completed. A copy of one of these checklists can be found at *Appendix 7 - Warden Checklist*.

### ***Collaborative Working***

Within the country park is are golf courses (an 18 hole course and a 9 hole course) run by Sencio Leisure. The Lodge building, or Club House, offers catering services, including a cafeteria and a bar, and a professional shop for golfers. It is located near the western entrance to Lullingstone where a car park is also provided. Sencio has made substantial investment since taking over the grounds maintenance and has appointed an in-house green keeping team to carry out maintenance works.

The Head green keeper and the Head Ranger hold regular meetings to plan collaborative work and to bring to each others' attention any planned work within their own team that may impact on the other's management of visitors or site areas.

The teams have collaborated to ensure the control of scrub and Ragwort on the conservation grassland areas that intersperse the golf course. There are many points at which the conservation grassland and the veteran trees form part of the golf course wider surroundings. It is imperative that the collaboration of the work on these is planned to ensure the correct regime of conservation management can be followed.

In late summer both Sencio staff and Rangers work together to carry out the annual cut and collect operations around the various grass margins dotted around the golf course. Sencio staff use their tractor alongside the country parks and thus we are able to use the tedder and cutter at the same time. We also used our various machines to aid carting bales to various points on the site.

When Sencio recently looked into replacing their tractor they first consulted with the Country Parks staff and tried the park's implements on a demo tractor before going ahead to make a purchase.

This ensures that Sencio staff can continue to assist Rangers with any grassland management in the future.

### ***Management responsibilities of Sencio Leisure***

The team from Sencio Leisure that manage Lullingstone Park Golf Course have sole responsibility for the tees, greens and fairways of all 27 holes on the two golf courses. They are also responsible for the driving range that sits adjacent to the north eastern corner of the park.

The team manage the grass of the greens, fairways and tees by mowing. The arisings are collected across all parts of the course and transported back to the green keepers' compound where they are composted. It is also within their responsibility to maintain the bunkers and obstacles that form part of the course. In winter months the club do not allow any buggies to be used by players to help protect the grass and particularly the shared areas between the holes. No buggies or play is allowed within the areas of the Orchid Bank

and the conservation grassland running alongside the majority of the 18-hole course – particularly holes 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 15, and 18. For reasons of protecting the veteran trees the golf club consult with the Ranger Team relating to tree work within the areas surrounding the northern edge of the golf course (holes 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18). Resulting from work carried out by contractors on behalf of the Ranger Team and the team themselves the pitch and putt course along the northern boundary by hole-18 has been able to be reopened by the club. By managing the trees (veteran and future veteran) in this area the club have been able to make better use of their facilities and the management by the club will preclude any use of chemicals or unnecessary intervention around these trees.



It is the policy of Sencio Leisure to not use chemicals on the courses without prior discussion between the Head Green Keeper and the Head Ranger. Where this has been necessary in the past the chemical used has been strictly controlled and only applied by qualified staff. The project undertaken was to remove Ragwort – an invasive species – from the grassland surrounding holes 11, 14 and 15. Both teams carried out the spot treatment of the Ragwort using Barrier H, naturally occurring oil from the Lemon Balm plant (*Citronella*). This is harmless to both humans and the local fauna, but individually treated plants of Ragwort wither. Further follow-up treatment included the flailing of the area by the KCC Ranger Team.

### **Monitoring the Visitor Experience**

The country park is assessed against the Country Parks’ Customer Service Standards on an annual basis by a ‘mystery shopper’. The site assessment covers the following areas; pre-site visit, first impressions, safe passage, state of repair and cleanliness, information on what’s on in the area, experience of cafés and or picnic areas, staff interaction, finishing touches and lasting impressions. Kent County Council are also in the process of establishing customer focus groups for key Country Parks so that they can understand more about what customers want and to make improvements to the service.

A notice board informs visitors of any new events or issues within the park.

There is a customer feedback policy in place and Kent County Council aims to acknowledge all queries within five days and respond in full within 20 days. Comments cards are available in the visitor centre and a visitor comments book is also available.

Visitor surveys are carried out to ensure constant feedback is received about the park. The park is also 'mystery shopped' by non Country Park staff and feedback reports are given to the sites. In addition Green Flag judges provide detailed feedback reports, which provide invaluable annual feedback on park management.

A visitor survey was undertaken in April 2004 this survey was then repeated in 2007 and 2011, along with a visitor customer care standards survey. In response to this feedback from the customer surveys the park increased the number of way-markers on routes, changed signage, increased the number of benches and also increased the number of trails to include the Discovery trail for families and a newly configured horse route.



*Lullingstone Open Days are always popular with the visitors*

### ***Kent Country Parks Events Programme***

On offer to the Visitors throughout the year are a number of events held at the Country Parks. Lullingstone Country Park has a history of activities aimed at children that are held during school holidays. The previous years have included trails and scavenger hunts along with more structured events led by the education rangers. We have also offered a series of annual events, including Park Open Days and Christmas Walks and Lunch.

### ***Events for 2014***

The events are as follows:

***Activity Trails*** - For £2.50 per activity sheet children (and adults) can follow the clues to answer the questions and complete the trail. Every completed trail wins a prize. The trails are available for February half-term, the Easter holiday, the spring half-term, the summer holidays and October half-term. These trails are self-led and require no booking.

***Open Days*** - Each year the park has a free *Open Day*. In 2014 this was held in May. The day include woodland walks, pond-dipping, geo-caching, a scavenger hunt to win a small prize, face painting, special offers in the café Den building and bush crafts with our education ranger team.. This free event is open to all and requires no booking.

***Visits and Tours*** - During the summer the Country Park teamed up with other local attractions to offer combined visits and tours. Throughout the summer season a total of 390 visitors either attended visits to the nearby Lavender Farm with guided tours of the fields and distillery, including tasting and sampling of the lavender products. Or a guided tour of Lullingstone Castle and World Gardens, followed by a lunch at Lullingstone Café. These events varied in price and required booking.

***Christmas Walk and Lunch*** - Since the days before Lullingstone was managed by Kent County Council the Café and Visitor Services staff have offered a Christmas Walk followed

by tradition Christmas dinner. These are extremely popular every year and are available throughout November & December on selected dates during the week. This year wardens escorted groups booked for that day on a suitable guided walk around the park which ended in time for a delicious lunch. In total 542 visitors participated for 2014

***Birthday parties.***- During 2013/14 birthday parties have been hosted by our visitor's service team as a means of developing another income stream. There are six themes to the parties that have been developed to give the children a special outdoor experience in the Countryside of the park (*see appendix 10*).

During 2014 there have been 372 children take part in parties at Lullingstone . Children's parties brought in an extra £5,580.00 to the park's income during 2014/15.

***Other Events*** - throughout the year other organisations approach the Visitor Services team with requests to use the park and its facilities for their own events.

***Healthy walking groups***\_ we run a healthy walking group term time only throughout the year on a Tuesday led by two volunteer walk leaders current membership is 16. Walk volunteers take the group on a two hour walk and then return to the visitor centre for a healthy lunch option.

# 6

## **Education**

The site welcomes educational groups including schools and local organisations, although booking should be made in advance. Site staff can help plan visits and provide input on the day by request. The programme of Education Officer-led activity sessions is based on the science and geography sections of the National Curriculum and covers topics such as food chains, rivers, senses, history, habitats, trees, environmental geography, conservation and tourism. Schools are welcome for half- and full-day visits. A fully equipped classroom provides shelter from wet weather, allowing visits to take place all year round.

Lullingstone has always had a dedicated education ranger, experienced in delivering Environmental Education Sessions. The Education Ranger and Education staff from other Kent Country Parks are responsible for delivering Kent Country Parks 'Outdoor Learning Programme' which offers a wide variety of educational opportunities which enhance the curriculum for all ages. The programme is available all year round and caters for Early Years, Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, and GCSE and 'A' Level groups carrying out fieldwork.

Students can experience the Park's biodiversity by exploring the woodland and grassland habitats. There is also an easily accessible education pond that allows for pond dipping. The Park is also ideally suited to safe investigation of watercourses as the River Darent flows through the site near to the dedicated classroom. The Education Ranger is available to help visiting staff plan and design their visit and work with them to ensure that specific programmes of study are covered.

Through the educational programmes Kent Country Parks aim to provide opportunities that will:

- Spark a life-long passion and respect for the environment
- Promote an understanding of the importance of living sustainably
- Be a boost to learning
- Encourage the development of self-esteem, co-operation and confidence
- Enhance thinking skills and learning through the context of the environment
- Inspire a sense of wonder about the natural world.

All activities are risk assessed and these risk assessments are available on request. All teachers bringing a group to the park are asked to attend a pre-visit and write their own risk assessment.

### ***Facilities for education groups***

At Lullingstone, the Education Ranger has been able to take advantage of the excellent access to the woodland via the car park access at Redman's Lane, and has been able to deliver Forest School sessions to children with mobility issues using this entrance to the park. Forest School is an area of education that continues to increase in its demand. As a result the Education Ranger has delivered Forest School as outreach to schools that have some open space and find the costs associated with travelling limiting. The Education Ranger has delivered three 6-week courses for local schools in this way. The Visitor Centre incorporates a classroom space with room for up to 40 children, with dedicated toilet facilities. Coach parking is available on site throughout the year. Coach parking is free for groups that have booked one of the educational programmes however space can be limited and must be pre-booked.



*Education Rangers take the children out pond dipping*

### ***INSET Training, Team Development and Outreach Opportunities***

Kent Country Parks offer a programme of INSET training throughout the autumn and spring terms. The courses offered support teaching and learning about the environment. They offer a wider understanding of the environment and sustainability and assist the promotion of wildlife, forest school and woodland skills. Many of the INSET programmes offered can be run for whole school staff. These can be organised in conjunction with team development days using the environment of the Country Park.

Kent Country Park's team of Education Rangers are available to offer team development days using woodland skills, including bridge making, pencil making and campfire cooking.

Many of the courses can be adapted so they can be delivered at schools or centres. Programmes can be incorporated into special science or environment weeks.

## ***Site Maintenance***

# 7

Country Park team members carry out the maintenance at the site - where possible and practical. In cases where this is not possible, or for Health and Safety reasons, the Rangers will employ the services of external contractors. The Rangers who issue the contractors with Health and Safety instructions oversee the Contractors work. The majority of the work that is carried out on the site is documented in *Part B - Management Objectives and Actions* of this document. Below are the main day-to-day routine elements that form the general maintenance of the Park.

### ***Maintenance of Equipment and Landscape***

All daily, weekly and monthly checks of site and site infrastructure are covered in the Wardens Checklist (see appendix 7). Other checks are listed below.

### ***Litter & waste management.***

On a day to day basis our site warden's undertake litter sweeps of all the honey pot areas working their way around the site in zones each week.

Once collected, general waste is put into dedicated euro bins for collection by an authorised waste carrier.

Where waste has been segregated into recycled components, it is collected separately in a dedicated recycling euro bin and removed by an authorised waste carrier.

### ***Vandalism/fly tipping.***

Warden's patrol the site and will report any damage or fly tipping back to Rangers.

The Rangers will carry out repairs or replacement of any damage.

Major costly damage will need to be reported to the police and our insurance company.

Quotes then are obtained for repair or replacement of item/s damaged.

The community warden for Eynsford may be contacted if there is a need to resolve a re-occurring problem.

Fly tipping is either collected by Rangers for disposal via an authorised waste carrier or "Clean Kent" may be contacted to remove roadside waste.

### ***Annual Checks***

The following annual checks are undertaken:

- Ranger staff are responsible for the testing or commissioning of testing for all tools and equipment e.g. winches, chainsaws, trailers, electrical tools and appliances, motorised vehicles, safety hats and hand tools;
- COSHH assessments (carried out by Ranger staff);
- Risk Assessments (carried out by Ranger staff);
- Occupational Road Risk Assessments (filled in by individuals);
- Fire extinguishers (externally tested);
- Testing and checks of all buildings for general wear and tear (carried out by Kent Country Parks staff)
- PAT electrical testing (external contractor to test);
- Annual tree inspection (carried out by external contractor); and
- An annual check by RoSPA (The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) of the play area equipment.

### ***Other Checks (seasonally dependent)***

- Spread grit/salt on icy surfaces around the car park
- Inspect trees after strong winds/gales and heavy snow.
- The pay and display machines are maintained by Cale Bri-Parc through a centrally managed contract.
- General waste is removed weekly from the site.

### ***Tools and Equipment Checks***

Chainsaws, winches, vehicles are checked as part of the annual standing instructions to staff issued from head office.

In addition, site staff carry out checks of all power tools every time they are used.

Each chainsaw user in the team has their own chainsaw and it is their responsibility to keep it clean and sharp and in a safe working condition. All staff using chainsaws are trained to do this as part of their NPTC qualification.

Some machines and vehicles require servicing by a qualified mechanic and these are booked in by the operator or Head Ranger according to the service interval.

All ride-on vehicles have a weekly service checklist which is signed by the operator. These are then counter signed by the Country Parks administrator as a witness to the checks being carried out regularly.

### ***Buildings Maintenance***

In April 2012 Kent County Council's Property Group took over the responsibility for the buildings at all Country Parks. The council has adopted a total facilities management (TFM), as their preferred method of managing the portfolio of Council own assets. A contract has been placed with a company called Skanska to manage all the council owned assets in the West Kent area. To this end it is their remit to ensure all the annual maintenance contracts are in place for fire alarms and security systems, and for other building related testing and inspections. The Property Group operates a 'helpdesk' for any building related emergencies that may occur. It is then the responsibility of the Rangers or Visitor Services staff to call the helpdesk and action the remedial works as necessary.

Building inspections are carried by the TFM Skanska on an annual basis. Every member of The inspection records are now held by Skanska and can be obtain by request.

Electrical inspection of all hard wiring is done every five years by a Skanska approved Contractor and the report kept by them to action. All work arising from the report is the responsibility of the Skanska to complete.

Portable appliance (P.A.T) testing of all portable equipment is undertaken every three years by an approved Skanska Electrician. A report is produced and kept at Invicta House. Any equipment that fails the test is immediately disabled and disposed of in the appropriate manner.

### ***Brand guidelines***

When signage needs to be replaced the Country Parks brand guideline should be adhered to. The Brand Guidelines are held centrally on the IT network. The guidelines include the specifications for ladder board signs, main site notice boards, waymarker posts, benches and finger post signs.

### ***Site equipment and furniture***

An inventory of site equipment is carried out annually and an electronic version is stored at on the team's electronic server and can be accessed from the Lullingstone Country Park computers so that it can be easily updated.

Head Rangers have completed an Asset Register of all their sites. In conjunction with this there is also an Infrastructure Report for medium- and long-term planning of capital works.

## **Health and Safety**

# 8

### **General**

Kent County Council has an Environment health and safety manual which underpins the main Kent County Council framework for health and safety, paper copies of which are held on site. The manual contains guidance on generic health and safety policies including:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974;
- Management of Health and Safety at Work 1992;
- Reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences regulations (RIDDOR, 1995); and
- Fire Safety Regulations, 2007.

In addition to this it summarises guidance on:

- Occupational health;
- Safety in environment work;
- Safe use of hand tools;
- Safe use of powered tools; and
- Vehicle policy.

The Health and Safety Policy for the Country Parks is attached in *Appendix 5*.

A *Health and Safety Business Plan* was developed by the health and safety team. The remit of the plan is to review the Health and Safety documentation and procedures and to instigate any changes necessary. In April 2012 the Health and Safety framework review was carried out and updated online.

All incidents are recorded and, if needed, a Health and Safety Officer will come and investigate and, in conjunction with the Ranger, come up with any plans to minimise risk. First Aid forms are held on site and sent to head office to be recorded and reviewed at monthly meetings. On site, the Rangers take responsibility of the health and safety within the Country Park, including the play area and car park.

### **Standard Practices**

Lullingstone Country Park has its own on site health and safety plans in addition to the central plans. There are daily, monthly, annual and seasonal inspections carried out by the Wardens (see *Appendix 7*). If any issues arise these are reported back to the Rangers who also ensure that the checks are carried out.

Standing instructions for annual inspections including tree inspections, machinery, PPE are issued centrally. Some of these are carried out by authorised staff; others are contracted out to specialist services, including Tree inspections, PAT tests and fire extinguisher tests (see *Appendix 7*).

Site contractors either, complete a Permit to Work and submit a risk assessment for all works carried out on site that is authorised by the Ranger who commissioned the work, or for larger contracts an NEC3 Engineering and Construction short contract is completed. Any contracts over £50,000 go through a competitive tender process. All non specialist contractors must be from the Kent County Council approved contractor list. Kent County Council aims to use local contractors and materials in all contracts where possible. The documentation is reviewed by the central Health and Safety team on an annual basis.

### **Site Safety/Security.**

Lullingstone has a set of CCTV cameras which monitor the main car park and main assets. This system is monitored live by Sevenoaks district council. The camera monitoring unit can be contacted to monitor a situation live if necessary.

All of the buildings have an intruder alarm and the main visitors centre is covered by a fire alarm system.

The alarm systems are maintained by ADT through Skanska. The building and the area outside surrounding the building are covered by an emergency lighting system.

The alarms and emergency lighting is tested weekly by visitor service staff and records kept. Faults are reported to Skanska.

We have a security company which is contracted to respond to callouts and rangers are also on the key holder list.

There are posters around the site showing the KCC call centre number; this is monitored 24hrs per day.

The centre has all staff details in the event of a callout.

Any member of staff working alone has to follow our lone working procedure and text into the call centre as part of a system called lonesafe.

Lullingstone also has two way radios for staff to use, the base station for these is situated on the highest point of the site which is in the golf course green keepers building. In an emergency we can also contact the green keeping staff using these radios as they have two handsets on this system.

### ***Risk Assessments and Staff Training***

Health and Safety on site is paramount. For all tasks and where machinery or tools are used a Risk Assessment is produced and is available to all staff and or volunteers, where necessary training is given on all machinery before it can be used. Explanation such as tool talks and health and safety checks are undertaken and carried out before all activities. Electronic and paper copies of all risk assessments are held on site. These are reviewed annually by the wider Country Parks team the last review took place in the autumn of 2012.

Kent County Council is also an Investor in People and as such all site staff have a personal development plan which lists all training undertaken during their employment with the council. All staff members undertake core training that includes:

- Lone working
- Dealing with difficult customers
- Manual handling
- Risk Assessments
- Basic Fire Awareness
- First Aid appointed persons

Wardens have access to a warden's handbook for the site which summarises all important information that they need to know. The Warden's Handbook for Lullingstone Country Park is reviewed and updated annually. There is also a Volunteer Health & Safety Manual summarising the most relevant risk assessments for the volunteer team.

All members of staff have to complete an occupational road risk assessment before they are allowed to drive any Kent County Council vehicle. No vehicles can be driven off road unless a basic off-road driving course has been undertaken.

Staff members using machinery and power tools are expected to be responsible for their own health awareness. If a member of staff feels they have a particular issue relating to the use of these tools they are to declare this to their Line Manager and to take necessary precautions.

#### ***Emergency plan/Fire Plan***

An emergency plan has been prepared for all Kent County Council Country Parks. The plan for Lullingstone Country Park identifies the rendezvous points; locations of fire hydrants and safety equipment, vehicle access points; available water supplies and other hazards on site. A copy of this is held at the Warden/Ranger office at Lullingstone Country Park and a copy is also held by Chubb Security - the contractor responsible for site alarm callouts. This document also has detail which is intended to deal with a number of site emergencies.

#### ***Tree Safety Inspections***

Tree inspections are completed throughout the site. The park is divided into three zones for inspection (see *Appendix 4*). The annual inspection is carried out by a qualified arboriculturalist from Invicta Arboriculture. The continuous visual inspections are carried out by suitably qualified Rangers - attendance on a Basic Tree Safety Inspection Course warrants a suitable minimum qualification in this instance.

# 9

## **Community Involvement**

Community involvement at Lullingstone Country Park is undertaken through two main areas - working with the Community Groups (The West Kent Team Volunteer Group); and by working with Educational Groups (this work is predominantly carried out by the Education Officer).

**The West Kent Team Volunteer Group** - the group is organised by the volunteer co-ordinator (one of the Rangers) and the group come out with the team on a weekly basis on Wednesdays. The Group consists of 6-8 volunteers from all walks of life. The volunteer group that form part of the West Kent Ranger Team have been instrumental in helping with many of the projects that are undertaken at the park. In the past this has included - assisting with path clearance and coppicing; installing the steps to *Snakes and Adders* on the new Discovery trail; control of invasive species; and the creation of new paths.



*The volunteer group are an invaluable resource in helping with conservation tasks*

**School Visits** - see section 6 of this report relating to the Education provision.

**Walking Groups** - there are three regular walking groups that use the park. Every Tuesday in school term-time a group of walkers meet and are led by a Kent County Council volunteer. This group meets to walk for health and well-being. There are also two further groups that meet every Wednesday throughout the year - the Lullingstone Lightning's and the Lullingstone Leisurelies. All these groups use the park as the starting point for their walks and may use the surrounding landscape. All groups finish their time at Lullingstone with a lunch from the cafeteria. These walking groups have been running since the park was handed to Kent County Council.

**Art Group** - a group meets each Friday during outside of school term-time to draw and paint in the classroom. They are often drawing the natural flora and fauna from the park.

**Wildflower Group** - a group of botanical enthusiasts meets weekly in the winter months to study the local flora in the classroom.

***Hadlow Students*** – the West Kent Ranger Team take on students from the local agricultural college to provide training and work experience. The students range in age from 18 through to more mature students looking for a change of life or career. Since 2009 the park has provided work placements for 13 students. There are currently three students working alongside the Rangers. One of the Rangers acts as the representative for Country Parks on the college’s business/industry liaison group, this meets several times a year to discuss course content and placement times and duration.

***Stakeholder Liaison*** – There is a quarterly liaison group where members of the local community from schools, businesses, ramblers, horse riders, parish councils and other interested parties are informed of activities being undertaken in the park and feedback is taken into consideration.

This liaison group acts on behalf of the interests of the local user groups. In the past we have investigated the possibility of having a ‘Friends of Lullingstone’ group, but we have not had any local interest for this. It was felt that it would be best that Kent County Council retained strategic overview for the management of the park and that the liaison group assisted in feeding back from the stakeholders. As mentioned above a regular group of volunteers assist the Rangers with conservation tasks around the park – this work is reported back to the liaison group.

## *Financial Overview*

# 10

Lullingstone Country Park's annual gross budget is £25,700 for the financial year ending April 2014/15. This is supplemented by additional funds sourced through Kent County Council and also by other income stream as listed below. The actual gross budget for this year is forecast to come in at £22,492

Due to pressures in the wider organisation the funding from KCC is not enough to fund all site services so Country Parks' staff members are finding ways of increasing income by becoming more entrepreneurial in their approach to the management of the parks.

### **Country Parks as a whole currently cost each Kent resident .32p.**

There are 17 sites currently run by Kent County Council with a gross budget set at £509,000 for year 2014/15. Our actual gross budget is forecast to come in at £477,508 by year end. Our targets for the future are to become more self-funded, through some new income generation initiatives and looking at how we deliver our service.

Additional money is available through a Modernisation of Assets budget and an annual Capital Works budget which is allocated by the Head of Country Parks based on information submitted by site staff. The park has seven main income streams:

- External grants from Natural England Higher Level Stewardship (HLS)
- Income from the Pay and Display machines in the car park;
- Café income;
- Birthday parties;
- Income from the sale of gifts in the shop;
- Education group visits; and inset days
- Public events - eg. Guided Walks, Christmas meals.
- Sale of wood products- logs, kindling and charcoal etc.

A three year programme of major Capital Works ended in 2012/13. This has funded items such as site improvements, facility improvements and replacement of large equipment. At Lullingstone Country Park this has paid for the remodelling and upgrading of the car park along with a building extension that houses the new toilet facilities.

Part B  
*Management Objectives and Actions*



## Conservation

<b>Woodland – including Veteran trees</b>
<b>Objective</b>
To maintain the woodland as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland
<b>Actions</b>
All areas of woodland formed part of an English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) until 2011 when the current scheme lapsed. From 2014 it is envisaged that the woodland areas of Beechen Wood (Upper and Lower) and Home Wood are put back into the new Countryside stewardship scheme (formerly Woodland Grant Scheme). Within these areas the coppice of Hazel, Ash and Sweet Chestnut will be cut to provide openings and to improve the woodland biodiversity.
<b>Objective</b>
To preserve specimen trees as veterans and future veterans
<b>Actions</b>
All veterans should be preserved throughout the park wherever they are located. Management of these trees should include, at the most basic level, the reduction of the crown to reduce weight and size, and to reduce the wind-sail effect in the event of high winds. In 2009, Tree Works (external specialists) created a database of 200+ trees to catalogue a range of specimen trees. The range of trees across the site and include standing deadwood and lapsed veterans. Over a period of 3 years local contractors have carried out management of these trees according to the recommendations of Tree Works. The following years will be managed by the Ranger team and where possible/necessary using external contractors.
<b>Objective</b>
To continue the management of the coppice
<b>Actions</b>
The coppice rotation is to be applied to the following compartments: <i>1a; 1b; 1c;1d;1e;1f;1g. (Home wood)</i> The coppice compartments are mainly consisting of Ash and Sweet Chestnut, which have similar rotation cycles of cutting and a recommendation of 16 years for both has been suggested. It is envisaged that each year a minimum of 0.5 ha is cut and a maximum of 1 ha. This will benefit the compartment by opening the canopy and allowing the light to the woodland floor.

<b>Objective</b>
To continue the management and recruitment of pollards
<b>Actions</b>
<p>To pollard management to be undertaken in the following compartments: <i>compt 2; compt3; compt 4; compt5 and compt7.</i></p> <p>All existing pollards are to be preserved <b>wherever</b> they are located on site. Basic management should include the removal of single branches to reduce crown size and weight. This should also comply with the Health and Safety inspections that are carried out annually.</p> <p>Where appropriate and possible the re-pollarding of suitable species should be carried out. Any pollards within the woodland compartments should be kept in well lit conditions by clearing the areas immediately surrounding the tree to an extent of 2m beyond the spread of the crown.</p> <p>New generation pollards should be recruited by pollarding maiden specimen trees of Oak, Hornbeam, Beech, Ash and Hawthorn. The cycle of rotation should be applied at 25-30 year intervals. The new pollards should be selected from self-established trees.</p> <p>As with the veteran trees, above, a GIS-based database should be used for storing photographs and records of all new pollards</p>

<b>Grassland</b>
<b>Objective</b>
To maintain the species-rich, nutrient-poor, calcareous grassland
<b>Actions</b>
<p>Grassland compartments: <i>14; 15; 17; 19; 20; 21; 22</i></p> <p>Where possible chalk grassland is maintained through grazing, however at Lullingstone this is not practical, particularly as some of the most species rich grassland areas are within the golf course. The feasible method of managing the grass at the park is through cutting annually, removing the arisings to preserve the low fertility of the soil. Larger areas of grassland (particularly compartment <i>15</i> and compartment <i>20</i>) can be divided into two halves each and each half cut bi-annually on rotation. The grass should be cut between September and October.</p>
<b>Objective</b>
To prevent the encroachment of scrub and invasive species
<b>Actions</b>
<p>In the areas that are cut less frequently, particularly compartment <i>15</i> and compartment <i>20</i>, the species present in the grassland includes Dogwood (<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>), Rose (<i>Rosa canina</i>) and Hawthorn (<i>Crateagus monogyna</i>), all of which are typical of the area. These species, if left will form patches of scrub on the grassland. Every year the grass cut will remove young growth of these species and keep them in check. If, however, the areas are cut less frequently, or if the weather conditions exist to allow them to grow faster than normal, then the areas they are present will require flailing, or cutting by brushcutter with all cuttings removed and either burned on a designated fire site, or designated deadwood and placed in piles in shaded areas.</p> <p>Compartment <i>22</i> is an exception to this objective as it contains fairly well established plants. It is envisaged that the trees and scrub will be managed to control further spread and the surrounding grassland cut in line with other areas covered by this objective.</p>

<b>Golf Course</b>
<b>Objective</b>
To ensure joint working with Sencio to manage the golf course areas for habitat and biodiversity, whilst maintaining the playing areas for players
<b>Actions</b>
Regular bi-monthly meetings are held between the Golf Club and the Country Park. The Head Ranger and Visitor Services Manager from Country Park Team meet with the Head Green keeper and the Operations Manager from Sencio. At these meetings any collaborative work is planned and timetabled. The meeting also discusses any issues that have occurred or are foreseen. Meetings will also address promotion of both the Country Park and the golf course and management of visitors to the park.



## Visitors

<b>Access and Recreation</b>
<b>Objective</b>
To deliver a safe and welcoming environment for visitors of all ages
<b>Actions</b>
Wardens and Rangers have a visible presence on site. The daily and weekly checks carried out by wardens ensure the safety of the site and all its furniture. Warden's checklists are to be filled out each week to ensure record keeping for any faults that have been rectified or require attention from the Rangers.
<b>Objective</b>
To enable as many visitors as possible to enjoy the natural environment
<b>Actions</b>
Visitor facilities are constantly monitored to ensure all sections of society have access to the Country Parks. Any new facilities or buildings are designed and built with access as a key responsibility. Where possible the activities in the park are designed to be non-discriminating. Investigations are to continue as to the suitability of storing and offering use of a Trampler (a powered off-road mobility scooter) at Lullingstone Country Park. A team within Country Parks are currently researching the suitability of a number of suggestions to encourage more people to visit the park. This work is on-going.
<b>Objective</b>
To offer a wide range of activities to visitors
<b>Actions</b>
The current programme of events within the park offers a wider range of activities than has been available previously. During the winter of 2013/14 we have been working with "Park Run" with the aim of establishing this national 5k running event to occur each week at Lullingstone. We are also looking into the possibility of constructing a new children's play area at Lullingstone, next to the play area.

<b>Education</b>
<b>Objective</b>
To promote a passion and respect for the environment
<b>Actions</b>
Involve local schools in visiting the park to discover their natural environment. The range of activities on offer is being increased all the time.
<b>Objective</b>
To encourage developing self-esteem, co-operation and confidence
<b>Actions</b>
Team building is being offered to encourage team-work and to inspire confidence in the delegates. This is available to all and can be adapted to encompass younger groups.
<b>Objective</b>
To offer training to teachers and educators to enrich their understanding of the environment
<b>Actions</b>
In the autumn of 2012 Kent Country Parks started to offer an INSET package to teachers to enable them to further the work with their schools. These INSET training opportunities enable the candidates to achieve a Level 1 or Level 2 qualification in Leading Forest School sessions.

<b>Interpretation and Promotion</b>
<b>Objective</b>
To ensure wider knowledge and promotion of the parks through the use of other media
<b>Actions</b>
<p>Country Parks are looking to develop their own web-site for which they have full control over, as opposed to the current site which is controlled via Corporate communications within Kent County Council.</p> <p>Our department is looking to employ a dedicated marketing officer for Country parks during 2015; this post will then be responsible for the promoting of Country Parks and their facilities via a range of media.</p> <p>We are currently developing the idea of an e-newsletter which visitors will be able to sign up to and then receive updates on all the latest news from Kent Country Parks.</p>

<b>Community Involvement</b>
<b>Objective</b>
Encourage more community use of the site and its facilities
<b>Actions</b>
<p>Following the success of opening the main meadow to Eynsford Parish for their annual fundraising boot fair the Visitor Services team will investigate more ways to involve the community in the park.</p> <p>In 2012 a Sport Relief mile was held at the park to raise money for the BBC Sport Relief Appeal. The aim is to continue this and to encourage further use of the park and its facilities by charity organisations and fundraising events.</p> <p>Our latest project, "Park Run" involves over 25 volunteers who are all members of the local community (<i>see News for 2014 at the beginning of this plan</i>).</p>

## Legal obligations

<b>Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) obligations</b>
<b>Objective</b>
To ensure that the status of the SSSI components of the park remain in <i>favourable</i> condition as set out by Natural England.
<b>Actions</b>
Continue with the management prescriptions for the areas of woodland that fall within the SSSI designation of the park (see appendix 3).
<b>Health and Safety</b>
<b>Objective</b>
To ensure continuing compliance with the Health and Safety Legislation, in-line with Kent County Council Policies.
<b>Actions</b>
Teams are to continue monitoring Health and Safety as an integral part of daily routine at the Park. All members of staff are trained in Core Health and Safety, including Basic First Aid, Fire Awareness, Working at height, food hygiene and other relevant certificates as required by the role. Warden checklists are kept up to date to ensure any faults or problems in the wider park are notified and rectified as soon as possible. Risk assessments for the Visitor Services team and the Rangers are to be checked annually and updated as required. All risk assessments are due for their five-year reassessment to ensure they are relevant and up-to-date. Records are to be kept up-to-date for all tools (mechanical and hand-tools) and that in checking the tools any that so not meet the required standard are repaired or removed as necessary.
<b>Tree Safety</b>
<b>Objective</b>
Monitor and report tree condition for public safety
<b>Actions</b>
Engage an external consultant to monitor and record the condition of diseased, damaged or dying trees situated along the boundaries and major paths within the park. This is to be carried out annually in the autumn/winter. Each tree recorded will be given a priority based on immediate action required or a timescale in which to carry out the prescribed work. At Lullingstone particular attention is given to the veteran trees and where this may impact on the management of the veterans. Every 2-3 years the Rangers to undertake minor paths survey for trees in a damaged, diseased or dying. <i>See appendix 8 for tree safety inspection policy.</i>

Part C  
*Appendices*



SITE GENERAL MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES.

No.	<b>Objectives (include environmental, economic and social considerations)</b>
1	To manage the woodland within the SSSI boundary with biodiversity being the major objective and maintain its current extent of approximately 62 hectares. The diversity of woodland habitats currently present should be maintained with the majority of the site supporting <b>W14 Fagus sylvatica-Rubus fruticosus woodland, W12 Fagus sylvatica-Mercurialis perennis woodland, W10 Quercus robur-Pteridium aquilinum-Rubus fruticosus woodland and W8 Fraxinus excelsior-Acer campestre-Mercurialis perennis woodland</b> . No loss of typical woodland flora and fauna should occur, especially notable or rare species. The variety of ecological niches should be preserved, by maintaining various forms of woodland subject to different types of management and complex mosaics of habitats comprising woodland, scrub, glades and grassland.
2	To maintain the Favourable status of woodland in SSSI Units 1, 2, 3 and 4. One of the key issues identified by Natural England is the maintenance of habitat diversity within open woodland areas, preventing succession to uniform, fully developed woodland.
3	To maintain coppice management in the majority of Home Wood. Coppicing should be carried out on a rotational basis. Establishment and maintenance of standards should be encouraged in coppice-with-standards woodland.
4	To gradually restructure compartments where the wood is of an even age / or species composition in order to diversify ages and habitats by selective thinning. This may be required in areas that have previously been planted.
5	To manage some woodland areas as high forest and/or minimal intervention.
6	To preserve all veteran and/or pollarded trees and their associated flora and fauna, wherever possible. Tree surgery will be used to extend the life of the trees. A data base has been created together with a management recommendations and this should be kept up to date and all actions implement where appropriate and resources allow. New pollards should be periodically recruited to establish new generations of veteran trees and guarantee future replacement of old specimens.
7	To retain features of mature, natural woodland, including standing and fallen dead wood, veteran trees, mature and senescent standards. Woodland compartments should contain a proportion of standing and fallen deadwood while having due regard to the safety of site visitors, site workers and others.
8	To maintain areas of scrub in woodland and grassland compartments to preserve structural diversity and promote transitional habitats. This will require periodical removal of tree and rejuvenating of scrub.
9	To maintain and create new glades in several woodland compartments preserving structural diversity and promoting transitional habitats. This will require periodical removal of tree and shrub regeneration from glades. Rides will be similarly maintained across the site, especially those associated with paths with the aim of promoting accessibility to the park.
10	To make attempts of replacing areas and/or glades dominated by Bracken with open heathland in Upper Beechen Wood. Different habitat creation techniques may be initially adopted in different areas to identify the most suitable to the local area. Future decisions will take into account initial results.
11	To conserve notable species of plants and animals. In this context notable species are those protected under national or international wildlife legislation, included in a Red Data Book or national or regional Biodiversity Action Plan, or known to be nationally or regionally scarce.
12	The spread of non-native and/or highly competitive species, including Cherry Laurel, Norway Maple, Bracken, Ragwort and Himalayan Balsam, should be controlled and removed from certain target areas or from the whole site, when appropriate.
13	To maintain and improve the path/ride network throughout the site via a programme of regular maintenance and upgrade works. Some rides will be identified for ride side coppice work to allow light into the woodland and provide an uneven age structure to the woodland edge.
14	To maintain and improve Lullingstone Country Park as an amenity which can be used for quiet recreation by people from Kent and elsewhere. To provide a site on which a variety of activities can be enjoyed within a countryside environment without damaging the ecological interest of the site. To provide a resource for environmental education.

No.	<b>Objectives (include environmental, economic and social considerations)</b>
15	<p><i>To manage all HK15 grassland as described in the Higher level stewardship agreement AG00305496. Indicators of success being the following;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Flowering heads of wild flowers should be frequent between April 1<sup>st</sup> - July 31<sup>st</sup>.</i></li> <li>- <i>The population of Lizard Orchid should be maintained in compt 21/22.</i></li> <li>- <i>At Least two positive indicator species: Salad Burnett, wild Marjoram, Wild Basil, Kidney Vetch, Common milkwort, Ladies Bedstraw, Field Scabrous, fairy flax, yellowwort, should be occasional on BAP grassland.</i></li> <li>- <i>Population of Dark Green Fritillary Butterfly should be present.</i></li> <li>- <i>Cover of scrub should be less than 5%</i></li> </ul>



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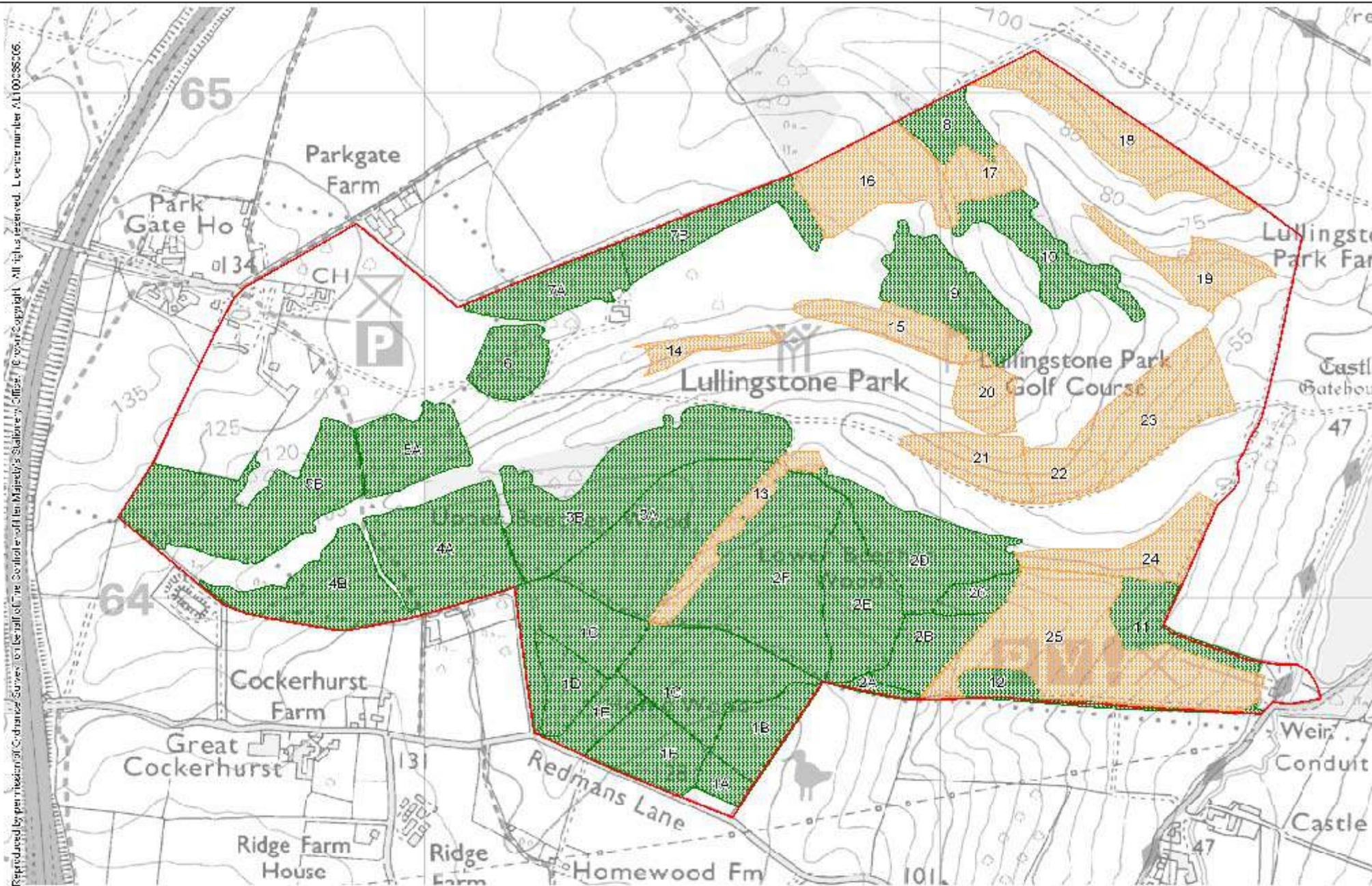


Figure 4

Project Title:  
Lullingstone Country Park

Key:

-  Wetland management area
-  Grassland management area
-  Site boundary

Appendix 3

Compartment Management Prescriptions (Woodland)

Compartment Number	Survey for Dormouse	High Forest Management/ Care of veteran trees	Tree thinning	Coppicing/Pollarding	Control of bracken	Maintenance of Scrub habitat	Diversify age structure of habitat	Glade creation and maintenance	Establish tree nursery	Minimum intervention	Fell for timber	Monitor and remove non- native species	Create open heath
1A				X									
1B				X									
1C		X		X									
1D		X						X					
1E		X						X					
1F				X									
1G				X									
2A							X						
2B	X					X	X			X			
2C	X		X		X	X	X	X					
2D	X		X		X	X	X	X					
2E	X		X		X	X	X	X					
2F		X	X			X	X	X					
3A		X		X	X	X						X	
3B					X	X	X	X				X	
4A				X	X	X		X					X
4B				X	X	X		X					X
5A	X			X			X						
5B	X			X		X	X						
6			X								X	X	
7A			X								X	X	
7B			X	X							X	X	
8				X		X		X	X	X			
9										X			
10				X						X			
11			X					X			X		
12			X								X		

## Appendix 4 - Tree Inspection Policy

Each Country Park is zoned for tree inspections and Countryside Ranger's will be responsible for producing a zoning map.

The inspection zones are to be as follows;

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Inspection frequency</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
ZONE 1	All areas bounded by; roads, car parks, buildings, play areas and paths with a footfall greater than 20 persons per day	Annual inspection	Qualified arboriculturalist: Currently Invicta Arboriculture
ZONE 2	All paths, routes and bridleways with a footfall greater than 5 but less than 15 persons per day	Inspection every two years	Countryside Ranger (see note 3 below)
ZONE 3	All paths and land with a footfall of less than 5 persons per day	No planned inspections. Usually carried out at the same time as ZONE 2	Countryside Ranger (see note 3 below)

### Notes

1. The ZONE 1 inspections will be initiated annually by the Operations Manager with the responsibility for the area which the team who manage it falls into.
2. The ZONE 2 inspections will be 'standing instructions' (see appendix 8), that are initiated by the Country Park Business Support team.
3. In order to undertake inspections the Countryside Rangers will need to have attended a Basic Tree Inspection Training Course. If the Ranger require a second opinion on a tree then they should contact the arboriculturalist responsible for the current annual safety inspection.

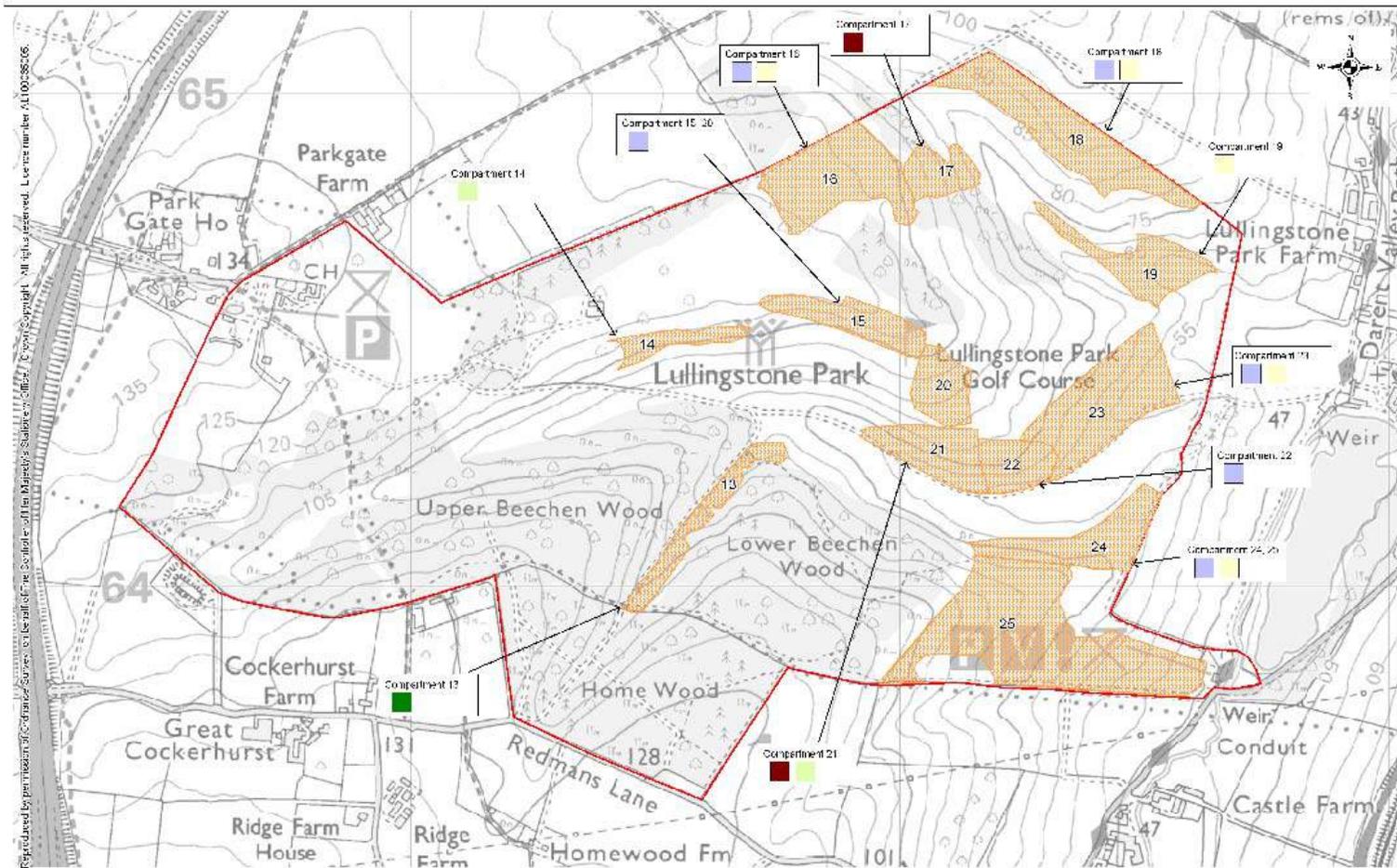


Figure 7

Project Title:  
Lullingstone Country Park

Figure Title:  
Grassland Management Prescriptions

Contract Number: 850858



Scale 1:7,500 @ A3



R. J. WILKINSON, GIS 73/450/858, Lullingstone, CP 117, guesFinal Figures/850858 Grassland Prescriptions (RCP) 21.03.08.v01

## Appendix 5

# Appendix 6 - Health and Safety Policy Statement

## ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION DIRECTORATE

### HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT

As the Managing Director of Environment and Regeneration, I recognise and accept my responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all staff in the Directorate and of those affected by our undertakings. I also recognise the moral responsibility placed upon me in respect of health and safety management.

People are the Directorate's most important asset and my goal is to minimise injury and ill health caused by work, prevent accidental loss or damage and maximise attendance by encouraging a supportive environment for staff as part of my overall management strategy.

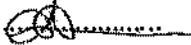
I consider the management of health, safety and wellbeing of the workplace and the people within it to be a primary function and all managers in the Directorate will be held accountable for observing their health and safety responsibilities. I will promote a culture of reasonable and pragmatic risk management within the Directorate to encourage safe and efficient work practices for all individuals. The standards of health and safety to which we aspire will only be achieved by all of us working in co-operation. The participation of Trade Union safety representatives, staff representatives and individuals is both encouraged and supported. Appropriate consultative arrangements will be developed and maintained.

In seeking to achieve our objectives the Directorate will:

- prepare and, as often as necessary revise, the Directorate Health and Safety at Work Policy Statement, policy documents, procedures etc.
- so far as is reasonably practicable, make arrangements to meet the standards set by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and any relevant and related Regulations.
- plan and implement a programme of risk assessment across the Directorate with the aim of identifying and quantifying risks so as to develop control measures by which they may be either eliminated or reduced;
- investigate all accidents, incidents and occurrences of occupational ill health so as to prevent or reduce the likelihood of further episodes;
- consider health and safety when planning new projects, procedures or activities and, in particular, in respect of construction, alteration or maintenance of buildings and the procurement and installation of equipment;
- operate a strategic health and safety board to include a management representative from each service unit;
- operate focus groups to consider specific operational health and safety issues
- provide competent health and safety advice and training to all managers and staff;
- audit and monitor the arrangements and progress in a systematic way.

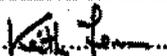
All staff are reminded that, while at work, they have a personal (legal) responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

I expect everyone to regard health and safety, as I do, as an important business issue.

Signed by .....  ..... Date ...11.10.2007.....

Managing Director of Environment and Regeneration

As Cabinet Members for Environment and Regeneration we fully endorse and support the Director's view.

Signed by ..  ..... Date...11.10.2007.....

Signed by.....  ..... Date.....11.10.2007.....

## Appendix 7

### Wardens checklist for Lullingstone Country Park

Checks	Frequency	Checked	Notifications and/or Action taken
Check waste bins and dog waste bins around car park area	Daily		
Check car park and picnic areas for broken glass and other dangerous objects	Daily		
Check picnic tables for structural damage/defects	Weekly		
Mow and strim grassed picnic areas (summer only)	Weekly		
Check and lubricate all site locks (WD40)	Weekly		
Check all manhole covers for secure fit	Weekly		
Clean office and kitchen floor	Weekly		
Conduct building safety checks	Weekly		
Check signs and furniture on all routes (strim and clear where necessary)	Weekly		
Check paths, gates, stiles, steps on all routes	Weekly/after bad weather		
Check for fallen trees/branches or dangerous objects	Weekly/after bad weather		
Check boundaries for fly-tipping and damage to boundary fencing	Monthly		
Lubricate all door and gate hinges on buildings and across the site	Monthly		
Apply wood preservative to waste bin units	Annually		
After extreme weather conditions check all buildings/paths/fences for damage and/dangerous trees/branches	As conditions require		
Miscellaneous:	As instructed by Head Ranger/Ranger		
Preston Hill - Check all fence lines (electric fence power units, where used)	Daily		
Preston Hill - Check water tank/trough water levels	Daily		
Preston Hill - Check and count livestock	Daily		
Preston Hill - Check gates for security/effectiveness	Daily		
Preston Hill - Supplementary feed livestock (hay and feed as necessary)	Daily (Winter months)		
Preston Hill - Miscellaneous: e.g. assist with goat round up (annually)	As instructed by Head Ranger/Ranger		

## Appendix 8 - Rare and Notable Species

Species category	Scientific name	Common name
<b>Vascular plants</b>	<i>Aceras anthropopurum</i>	Man Orchid
	<i>Carex caryophyllea</i>	Spring-sedge
	<i>Himantoglossum hircinum</i>	Lizard Orchid
	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Bluebell
	<i>Oenanthe pimpinelloides</i>	Corky-fruited Water-dropwort
	<i>Ophioglossum vulgatum</i>	Adder's-tongue Fern
	<i>Orobanche elatior</i>	Knapweed Broomrape
	<i>Platanthera chlorantha</i>	Greater Butterfly-orchid
	<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	Polypody
	<b>Lichens</b>	*See note 1
<b>Fungi</b>	*See note 2	
	<i>Amanita inoperata</i>	
	<i>Lepiota spp.</i>	
<b>Invertebrates</b>	*See note 3	
	<i>Helix pomatia</i>	Roman Snail
	<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>	White-clawed Crayfish
	<i>Aqathommyia wankowiczi</i>	
<b>Mammals</b>	<i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>	Dormouse
	<i>Myotis daubentoni</i>	Daubenton's Bat
<b>Birds</b>	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Sparrowhawk
	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	Hawfinch
	<i>Dendrocopus minor</i>	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

### \* Notes

1. More than 60 corticolous species are found on veteran pollards. This is considered a high number in relation with the proximity to London and the limited diversity of corticolous species in nearby areas. At least seven indicator species of ancient woodland have been recorded, especially in Upper Beechen Wood, which provides a well-lit, relatively unpolluted environment, ideal for the survival of lichens. The presence of these species, which have weak dispersal abilities and require unusual conditions, suggests the continuity of an ancient forest habitat at Lullingstone Country Park. Corticolous lichens have been recorded in greatest numbers on Oak and Hornbeam pollards, but also on Ash and Beech.
2. A high number of fungi have been recorded, including several rarities and notable species. *Amanita inoperata* was identified for the first time at Lullingstone Country Park. Only the genus *Lepiota* counts more than 20 species, many of which are uncommon or rare in the British Isles. A large proportion of fungi are associated with Beech, especially by mycorrhizae or on dead wood. The areas of calcareous grassland also support large numbers of fungi.
3. There are numerous beetles associated with mature timber habitat, including several rare and endangered species. Lullingstone Country Park, and in particular Upper and Lower Beechen Wood, have been included among the top20 British historic woodlands for the specialist saproxylic beetles. Butterflies and moths occur in large numbers, especially in association with rides and glades.



ANNUAL CHECKS	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
BUILDING INSPECTIONS	I	X										
COSH ASSESSMENTS		I	X									
RISK ASSESSMENTS		I	X									
VEHICLES - paperwork to be brought to monthly meetings			I	X								
OCCUPATIONAL ROAD RISK ASSESSMENT (at appraisal)				IX								
TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT INVENTORIES				I	X							
FIRE EXTINGUISHERS					I	X						
ELECTRICAL SAFETY TESTS - FIXED EQUIPMENT - PORTABLE BUILDINGS					I			X				
ELECTRICAL SAFETY TESTS - FIXED EQUIPMENT - PERMANENT BUILDINGS (Every 5 years- 2001/2005/2009)					I			X				
ELECTRICAL SAFETY TESTS - PORTABLE EQUIPMENT (Every 2 years - 2002/2004/2006/2008)					I			X				
PLAY EQUIPMENT						I			X			
CHAINSAW INSPECTIONS								I		X		
WINCHES INSPECTIONS								I		X		
SAFETY HATS								I		X		
TREE INSPECTIONS - P1 every year										I	X	X
P2 every 2 years (2004 / 2006 / 2008)		X								I		
P3 every 3 years (2004 / 2007 / 2010)		X								I		
TRAILER INSPECTIONS										I	X	

Key: I Instruction to be Given X Confirmation of completion due

## Appendix 10

### **Birthday Party Options at Lullingstone:**

#### 1. Bush craft, fire and hot chocolate

The children will be walked up to ancient woodland where we will find a suitable site. The children will then be shown how to make artefacts such as jewellery and pencils out of wood. They will use basic tools and will be able to take home what they make. The ranger will make a fire and a hot drink for the children before walking the children back down to the visitor centre. No more than 15 children for a fire with one ranger, more than 20 children two rangers will deliver the party. This party can be held all year round

#### 2. Den Building, fire and hot chocolate

The children will be walked up to ancient woodland where we will find a suitable site. The children will have the opportunity to make dens with sticks and poles from the forest floor. The ranger will make a fire and a hot drink for the children before walking the children back down to the visitor centre. No more than 15 children for a fire with one ranger, more than 20 children two rangers will deliver the party. This party can be held all year round

#### 3. Mini beast and scavenger hunt.

This will take place in the meadow. Children will have a list of things to find, as well as hunting for mini beasts to examine through magnifiers. This party is best in late spring, summer and early autumn.

#### 4. Pond dipping

This will take place by the pond. No more than 15 children can dip at one time, if more than 15 the children will be split into small groups and take it in turns. The children will use nets and magnifiers to investigate the pond life. This party is best in late spring, summer and early autumn.

#### 5. Natural art and Craft

This can take place in the meadow or inside. Children will spend some time foraging for natural materials and will then make artefacts out of them. The children will be able to take home what they make. This party can be held all year round.

#### 6. Scavenger hunt and games

This can take place in the meadow. The Children will have a list of things to find. And then we can play a series of nature themed games which involve running around. This party is best during the dryer months

