Kent County Council

Kent Country Parks

Shorne Woods Country Park

Management Plan 2021-2026

Updated: Jan 2022 by Tim Bell-Ranger Services Manager

Contents

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This plan is available to read online or and from the on-site office, and the park leaflet is available to download. Section 1, the Executive summary is a brief overview of the plan, sections 2-13 are the main document which is a working operational management plan for site staff in addition to being available for the public to review.

There is a full hard copy report and collation of biological records for the site available to view upon request from the on-site office.

Management plans from 1999 to 2020 are available to view on request.

1.1 Background Information

Shorne Woods Country Park is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (KDAONB) and part of the London Metropolitan Green Belt. There are a wide variety of natural habitats throughout all seasons of the year and 118 hectares (ha) (292 acres) of park to enjoy, explore and exercise in. As a SSSI all work carried out on site needs consent of Natural England and the Forestry Commission before it is carried out. All major clearance works and archaeological works from 2006 to 2011 were carried out as part of the Heritage Lottery Project (HLF) and there is a 25-year commitment to maintain the work started by the HLF project.

The Park was historically part of the pleasure grounds of the Cobham Hall Estate. From the 1920s to the 1970s, clay extraction for the local cement industry occurred. The old clay pits created the flat, grassy areas that are now home to the picnic and play areas, Visitor Centre, and car park. Prior to this, the whole of the Park would have been covered by ancient woodland.

The Park opened in 1987, having been purchased by Kent County Council (KCC) in 1982. In 2001 Randall and Brewers Woods, two neighboring woodlands, were purchased with an HLF grant. An HLF project has supported access and nature conservation work enabling these areas to open to the public in June 2008. An award-winning Visitor Centre championing sustainable technologies and construction was opened in 2006 funded principally by the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister and grants from organizations such as EDF, AONB and the Forestry Commission. In 2013 a further 2ha of Brewers Wood were purchased with an HLF ‘Your Heritage’ grant.

The park has achieved a Green Flag award for Country parks from 2008-2020 and won the South and South East in bloom gold award for country parks 2010-2020.

1.2 Vision for the Site

Shorne Woods Country Park aims to provide a welcoming, safe environment for all ages and backgrounds whilst protecting and conserving the SSSI. The site aims to raise awareness of sustainable energies, healthy living and recycling through the visitor centre and café. The park is KCC's flagship Country Park.

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.

A 3-year (2017-2021) Kent Country Parks strategy has been produced with clear measurable targets; this can be found at https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/environment-waste-and-planning-policies/kent-country-parks-service-strategy

1.3 Conservation Management

Shorne Wood is occupied by mature broad-leaved high forest with areas, mainly in the south-east and north-east of the site, consisting of broad-leaved coppice. A large section in the south-east of the site is occupied by a disused quarry and is known as the claypit; in areas this has been allowed to naturally regenerate as woodland dominated by Silver Birch, but it now has Oaks, Sweet Chestnut and Hornbeam growing through. This is an area where fungi flourish in the autumn and Orchids can be seen in the early spring. In other areas amenity grasslands have been created and some grass areas, predominantly the fringe areas are rotationally cut to encourage moths, butterflies, and insects.

There are ponds located in the disused quarry area, which support a range of aquatic and emergent plant communities. The ponds and wetland areas support a variety of animals and birds in particular a large population of Great Crested Newt, as well as rare water beetles and dragonflies and damselflies. Daubenton's bat use the pond for feeding, whilst Grass-snake use wetland and ponds. The fishing lakes are stocked with wide variety of freshwater fish. The fishing rights in lakes A and B are leased annually to the Thames Work Angling and Preservation Society.

Between 2003-2009 a major clearance of the invasive Rhododendron took place (funded by HLF). Every year these areas are surveyed, and any regeneration cut, or hand pulled and treated with herbicide. This plant was originally introduced by the Victorians to line carriage rides which crossed the Park. Over the years the Rhododendron spread and by 2003 had completely suffocated one fifth of the woodland (22 ha). These areas will be allowed to naturally return to woodland, bringing with it all the associated species such as bluebells and wood anemones.

From 2009-2013 8ha of Sycamore were cut and removed from the site. This was also part-funded by the HLF. This was vital to stop the reseeding of the newly cleared rhododendron areas with Sycamore and to help the woodland be deemed to be in favorable condition by Natural England. The areas are surveyed annually, and any regrowth of Sycamore or Rhododendron is cut and retreated by site staff and small growth is hand pulled to remove the roots completely. In response to tree disease impact and climate change opportunities to short rotation coppice some regenerating stems for firewood will be investigated. This is under review due to Chalara, and Phytophthora as Sycamore may become a future coppice crop.

Randall Wood and Brewer's Wood mainly consist of Sweet Chestnut coppice, although there are some stands of high forest, especially on the margins and adjacent to streams. These areas are managed by coppicing; where the trees are cut or coppiced every 15-20 years, and from the stumps multiple stems/trunks grow. The coppiced wood is then used to heat the Visitor Centre in the woodchip boiler, sold as firewood from the Visitor Centre, stacked as habitat piles or used to edge paths around the park. This regular cutting maintains the valuable coppice habitat in which small mammals, flowers and insects thrive.

Thirteen woodland rides link the areas of coppice. These are up to 30m wide corridors through dense woodlands that are cut in 3 zones to allow light to reach the forest floor all year round. These greatly increase the diversity of the woodlands as well as providing corridors through the woods that enable birds, butterflies, and insects to flourish. Along the ride network there are five 0.25 ha open glades and a 1ha glade with oak standards that help to capture heat and light within the woodland improving the woodland biodiversity.

The grazed Knoll is an area of open acid grassland. This is the rarest habitat in the park and is known as remnant wood pasture. This area is grazed to encourage flowering-herbs and control the spread of Bracken in conjunction with mechanical clearance by site staff. The final tree clearance work was carried out in here in December 2010 funded by HLF.

Much of the woodland in the park is ancient semi-natural woodland. These are areas that have been wooded for over 400 years. There are 209 notable or veteran trees recorded in the sites veteran tree database stored on site. These areas of woodland are left unmanaged asides from health and safety tree work, veteran tree management or the removal of invasive species. The veteran trees support a wide range of deadwood invertebrates that are the original reason for the park's designation as a SSSI.

A summary of the objectives, individual compartments and monitoring objectives can be found in appendix 15.2.

Shorne Woods is part of the North and West Kent Ranger team based at Shorne Woods Country Park and there is one Ranger Services Manager, two senior rangers, 2 rangers and 2 assistant Rangers responsible for delivering the conservation management objectives and visitor facilities management across 7 sites.
There is a permanent countryside volunteer team on site once a week that ranges between 4-10 people per day from 9am -4pm.

1.4 Heritage Management

The site is known to have been used by people for many thousands of years. A series of worked flint scatters on Randall Heath and the Burnett have been dated to as early as the Mesolithic period (between 12,000 and 6,000 years ago). Additional worked flints have been identified across the park, particularly where the natural gravel beds are present.

The Medieval site of Randall Manor, nestled in a valley, was the home of Sir Henry de Cobham, Sheriff of Kent in 1314. Only the foundations remain, which archaeologists excavated over ten years from 2006 to 2015, with the help of local volunteers. The buildings date from the 13th century and survived up until the late 16th century. The site has now been recorded and reburied to protect the feature. The banks of a very old road can still be seen nearby, known as a hollow-way, which may be even older than the Manor. It was described as "an ancient waie" in 1614. A recent LiDAR survey (2011) covering the Park has shown that many of the banks around the Manor site may have formed part of the medieval field-scape that surrounded the Manor. On Randall Heath, a feature previously identified as a Bronze Age barrow, has through excavation been shown to be a medieval windmill mound and later a prospect mound.

An existing trackway leading to Cobham Hall from Thong Lodge was planted some 200 years ago with newly introduced Rhododendron and Azaleas. It became known as the Rhododendron Avenue and visitors came from miles around to stroll along its length. This has recently been cleared for conservation purposes. At the far end of this track and on the western boundary of the park is the site of Randall Hall, a post medieval mansion. During its heyday in the 18th century the land now known as the Burnett was developed as farmland. There is some evidence for tree planting currently to create avenues for the Randall Hall estate. The windmill mound may have also been converted into a prospect mound at this date.

During WWII, the site was home to a RAF billet camp in the woods close to the main road. The air raid shelters remain today, alongside a wealth of buried archaeology from the camp, including nissen hut bases and latrine blocks. In addition, in the north-east corner of the park there was a temporary World War Two Army camp, the canteen block base of which still survives, along with a fuel bund and myriad of slit trenches.

The clay works operations not only completely changed the landscape of the park, but also left behind several buried structures, a wash pan, and an air raid shelter for the clay workers. Bits of the conveyor belt lines regularly turn up during Park works within the old clay pan. Parts of a pit railway can also be found in the south west corner of the park.

An HLF funded Community Archaeological Officer was based at the park from 2006-2011 and set up the archaeology volunteer team that continues projects on site now the HLF project is finished. The post was extended for a further 3 years by an additional HLF bid. The park now hosts the Cobham Landscape Detectives Project Officer who continues to work with the site and volunteers on archaeology in the surrounding area.

1.5 Visitor Management

In 2006 an award-winning Visitor Centre was opened which is the focal point for visitors to the park. The centre is open 7 days a week and is open every day except Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

In June 2012 a new amenity block was opened to increase visitor facilities. This was in response to feedback from the public that there were not enough existing toilets and they wanted facilities nearer the picnic and play area. Rainwater from the old workshops and new amenity block is collected and used for flushing the loos.

The Country Park supports extensive recreational facilities including a woodland arboretum, trim trail, fixed orienteering course, signed woodland walks (some of which are accessible using pushchairs and wheelchairs *i.e.* the Easy Access Trail, (alternatively there are three Tramper mobility vehicles that are available on loan), a picnic site, adventure play areas, (including a play area for older children installed in May 2008), a toddler specific play area that was installed in 2013 in response to customer feedback, fishing lakes, sensory garden, Geocache locations, a woodland arboretum and a combined horse and bicycle route. A Sports England funded 'Run 1,2,3' project introduced 1/2/3km fixed running routes to the park in 2014 and a weekly 'Park Run' is facilitated by volunteers and hosts up to 350 runners every Saturday. The site provides free access for the public. The visitor centre interpretation was updated in 2009 funded by HLF and new woodland interpretation was installed on site in 2014 as part of an HLF project for Brewers Wood.

There is a pay and display car park for 310 cars with hedgerows enabling an additional 20 cars to park at peak times and a cycle rack adjacent to the visitor centre. Horse boxes can

use part of the car park subject to prior bookings or park at Cyclopark and use the integrated Bridlepath network that links 5 local sites. Coaches can book in advance up to a maximum of 4.

A Visitor Services and Events Manager and assistants take responsibility for managing the visitor centre and associated services including events and conferences. In addition, there is a full-time catering manager, assistant catering supervisor and various other contracted staff who work in the café. There is a team of reception staff who work on the front desk, managing the gift shop and answering phone queries. There is a daily cleaner/caretaker for three hours a day, seven days a week specifically for the building and in the holidays a Visitor Services assistant responsible for emptying bins and cleaning loos during the peak periods.

On the wider site there are a team of Countryside Wardens who work seven days a week, with the main bulk of hours on weekends, paying daily visits to the site to litter pick, remove dog waste, enforce site rules, and generally patrol the site and inform the Rangers of any damage or issues. During peak hours on Sundays and Bank Holidays two wardens patrol the site ensuring complete staffing during peak periods.

1.6 Education

Shorne Woods Country Park offers a broad range of environmental education designed to complement and consolidate classroom activities. With qualified staff and excellent facilities, it is the ideal place to bring schools and groups. Activities are available for all age groups covering subjects including habitats and sustainability. There is a focus on forest school, a series of practical, hands-on activities that help to build confidence and self-esteem through small achievable tasks.

Education staff offer INSET training for teachers and team-building days to corporate groups to help generate income to offset the site's running costs. The parks team are now offering a nationally accredited OCN Forest Schools programme offering level 1,2, and 3 training.

Events are advertised in the Visitor Centre and in the events leaflet. A part-time Education Officer is employed on site to deliver the education remit and assist the Visitor Service Manager, in addition to this there are 2-part time education rangers who support the full-time post and a wider country parks education group that assist with delivery on sites across the county including Shorne.

1.7 Site Maintenance

Site maintenance is undertaken by KCC site staff, if external contractors are used the relevant site staff manage the contract. This includes daily, weekly, and annual site checks.

All staff have allocated areas of responsibility for site maintenance. Specialist inspections are carried out by organisations on the Kent County Council approved contractors list. Annual inspections of buildings, trees, electric equipment across the whole portfolio of parks are managed centrally.

The Countryside wardens are responsible for visual inspections of site furniture, play equipment and other key features. They then report back to the Rangers with any issues that they cannot resolve. They are responsible for disposing of waste and removing graffiti found out on site and remove it daily where possible.

Rangers take responsibility for implementing repairs and for actioning the health and safety inspections that are carried out each year including ROSPA and tree inspections. They also deal with and reactive health and safety issues on a day-to-day basis.

Building maintenance is the responsibility of Kent County Council's Property & Infrastructure Department, via a contractor under the Total Facilities Management contract (Skanska were appointed in October 2014). The Visitor Services Manager and Ranger Services Manager ensure that all reactive maintenance issues are reported to the contractor promptly and liaises with them regularly regarding planned maintenance requirements. Any more major improvements are first assessed by the KCC Property contact before being given the go-ahead.

General waste is removed weekly from the site. Recycled paper, plastic bottles, glass, clothes, are removed under the TFM contract. All compostable waste is composted on site either in the nine bins at the visitor centre or the three large ones in the work compound. The composted waste is then spread on the sensory garden along with the ash from the woodchip boiler.

1.8 Health and Safety

Kent County Council has a central Health and Safety Advisory Team, whose role it is to ensure that all departments follow corporate policies and legislation regarding the safety of both staff in the workplace and visitors to our sites. The advice that the Kent Country Parks team receives includes:

- Creative solutions to health and safety management challenges
- Advice on legislation and policy
- Advice and assistance on risk assessment
- Training and instruction for health and safety management
- Full back up and support following health and safety incidents
- Pressure management and change management staff support tools
- Audit services to check compliance and support developments

The Kent Country Parks team has a designated member of staff to take the lead on liaising with the corporate team, ensuring all park staff are updated on changes in law and that all staff undertake the relevant training to their position. All Kent Country Parks staff therefore undertake core training in health and safety when they begin in a new post, and then will be given further training according to the needs of their role. A suite of e-learning courses is available through Delta E learning with 7 mandatory directorate training courses including GDPR, customer service, equality, and diversity training.

Health and safety areas that are particularly relevant to the parks setting, and for which staff adopt specified practices, include:

- Accident/incident reporting
- COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health)
- Driving at work
- Fire (and fire safety in the workplace)
- First aid
- Food hygiene
- Lone working
- Management of contractors
- Manual handling
- Occupational health
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Risk assessment
- Violent behaviour
- Working at height

In addition, emergency plans have been developed for all sites (last updated March 2020) and are stored in all offices and at head office.

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 Officer 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 KCC approved contractor list. KCC aims to use local contractors and materials in all contracts where possible.

Risk assessments are reviewed annually and updated when necessary.

1.9 Community Involvement

Community involvement at Shorne Woods Country Park is undertaken through two main areas – working with the Community Groups and by working with Educational Groups, this work is predominantly carried out by the Education Rangers and Archaeological officer.

Volunteers help with various aspects of park management:

- The Conservation Volunteer Group and volunteer garden group – meets once a week and is organised by the ranger team. The conservation volunteers contributed 3,730 hours in 2019/2020.

- Archaeology volunteers – regular activities, including excavation, survey and LiDAR work, research: on Wednesdays and Thursdays in the park and across the local area working with local partners as part of the Cobham landscape Detectives project

Regular access forums facilitated by the Countryside Agency 'By all means project' in 2001-2004 undertook workshops, some facilitated by the Sensory Trust, designed to ensure all the new footpaths, interpretation, car park layouts etc worked to the best variety of needs. These workshops directly led to the access strategy implemented as part of the HLF project and to the design of new routes, waymarkers and position of notice boards.

There is a customer feedback policy in place at Shorne Woods Country Park. Comments cards are available in the visitor centre and a visitor comments book is also available. Responses are logged at head office and reviewed regularly. All complaints and comments are also captured, the Country Parks follow Kent County Council guidance and acknowledge all complaints within three 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 regularly (the last one in 2014) to ensure constant feedback is received about the park. In addition, Green Flag judges and South and South East in Bloom judges provide detailed feedback reports, which provide invaluable annual feedback on park management.

A summary of the findings from the visitor surveys is given below the first figure is 2004, the second is 2007.

- The main purpose for visiting the site was for walking, choosing this site because it was tranquil and clean.
- 20%/19.4% of respondents visited the site once a week or more.
- 86%/59%of respondents stayed for between 1 and 2 hours.
- 85%/82% of those questioned were local to the area.
- 17%/34% had first heard about the site through recommendation by someone that they know.
- Visitor satisfaction with the facilities at Shorne Wood Country Park was high *e.g.,* over 90%/89% thought the site was clean and well maintained.

The 2009 survey revealed that Shorne has a very different user demographic to the other KCC parks.

- 6% of those surveyed were from overseas with 0% at other parks
- 42% were from social class C1
- 30% from DE compared with only 12-13% at other parks.
- 96% were satisfied or very satisfied with their visit.
- Over 60% look to the internet to get information about the site before they arrive.
- 93% thought the site was well maintained and clean.
- 43% were visiting with friends compared with 25% at other parks.

From 2010 to 2016 a traffic counter was used to record car numbers and then calculate visitor numbers based on this data. The figures are:

- 336,500 in 2010/2011
- 340,000 in 2011/2012
- 296,325 in 2012/2013
- 353,066 in 2013/2014
- 316,581 in 2014/2015

The ANPR camera system now records vehicle movements but there is no accurate way of using it to project visitor figures yet.

Three ‘Tramper’ mobility vehicles are available, to allow greater, off-road access to the Country Park for disabled visitors. All users are asked to fill in a questionnaire after their first outing. As of January 2019, there were over 700 registered users and survey results indicate that most visitors would use the Trampers again as they provide better access and increase enjoyment of the countryside.

We actively seek professional feedback about the way that the park is managed, and services are delivered, and for this we subscribe to the Green Flag and South and South East in Bloom schemes. As well as providing a “mark”, judges provide detailed feedback reports, which provide invaluable annual feedback on improvements that could be made to our park management.

In 2018 a new Facebook page specific to the park was set up and this is regularly updated by park staff and any comments answered.

1.10 Financial Overview

Kent County Council provide an annual revenue budget to fund the day-to-day operations of the park. Due to pressures in the wider organisation, this is not enough to fund all site services, so staff are focussed on generating income to offset their costs. The park's main income streams are:

- external grants from Forestry Commission (1995-2014), SEEDA (2008), SEWF (2007), HLF (2005-2011), ODPM (2009), HLF (2013-2015).
- Rent income from Forestry Commission and Thameside Works Angling Club
- car parks pay and display income
- Café income
- Income from woodland products (logs and kindling)
- Gift shop income
- Corporate events and functions
- CPD and INSET training
- Birthday parties
- Education groups
- Public events

Opportunities for additional income streams have been investigated by KCC special projects team and private consultants and upon investigation proved to be uneconomic for the site. These include:

- Green Weddings
- Green accommodation
- Camping and caravanning site
- Music festivals
- Disc Golf
- Golf football
- Go Ape
- Mountain bike circuits
- Free running/parkour
- Selling Christmas trees
- Having a temporary ice-skating rink installed
- Private fun fairs using the site

Additional money is available through an annual Capital works budget which is allocated by the head of country parks based on a general works plan and information submitted by site staff.

The Kent Country Parks service costs 28p per person per year to the people of Kent (Apr 2019) and has moved from 46% self-financing in 2009 to 60% in 2011-12 to 81% 2019-2020.

Shorne Woods generates an income that entirely offsets the running costs and helps to subsidise smaller sites managed by KCC.

Car parking plays a major role in offsetting costs. Visitors who wish to park (day rate) pay per vehicle, £2 Monday to Friday and £3 weekends and bank holidays or £5 for minibuses and coaches. Kent Country Parks offers an annual season ticket for £52 which can be used at all Kent County Park's parks. Blue Badge holders must obtain a free annual season ticket by calling the KCC contact centre. The contact centre charges a £3 admin fee for this service. Alternatively, Blue Badge holders can pay the regular charge to park.

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Location and Site Description

Shorne Woods Country Park (OS Grid Reference TQ 684699) is in the civil parish of Shorne, in the district of Gravesham. The site totals 118 hectares, with Shorne Wood covering approx 70 hectares, Randall Wood approx. 32 hectares, and Brewer's Wood 17 hectares.

Shorne Woods Country Park is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (KDAONB) and part of the London Metropolitan Green Belt. There are a wide variety of natural habitats to enjoy throughout all seasons of the year and 118 hectares (ha) (292 acres) of park to explore and exercise in. As a SSSI all work carried out on site must have permission of Natural England and the Forestry Commission before it is carried out any works affecting water courses must have Environment Agency permits. All major clearance works and archaeological works from 2006 to 2011 were carried out as part of the Heritage Lottery Project (HLF) and there is a 25-year commitment to maintain the work started by the HLF project.

The Park was historically part of the pleasure grounds of the Cobham Hall Estate. From the 1920s to the 1970s, clay extraction for the local cement industry occurred. The old clay pits created the flat, grassy areas that are now home to the picnic and play areas, Visitor Centre, and car park. Prior to this, the whole of the park would have been covered by ancient woodland.

The Park opened in 1987, having been purchased by Kent County Council (KCC) in 1982. In 2001 Randall and Brewers Woods, two neighboring woodlands, were also purchased with an HLF grant. An HLF project has supported access and nature conservation work enabling these areas to open to the public in June 2008. A new award-winning Visitor Centre championing sustainable technologies and construction was opened in 2006 funded principally by the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister and grants from organizations such as EDF, AONB and the Forestry Commission. In 2013 a further 2ha of Brewers Wood were purchased with an HLF 'Your Heritage' grant. This area was opened to the public in 2014.

2.1.1 *Contact Details*

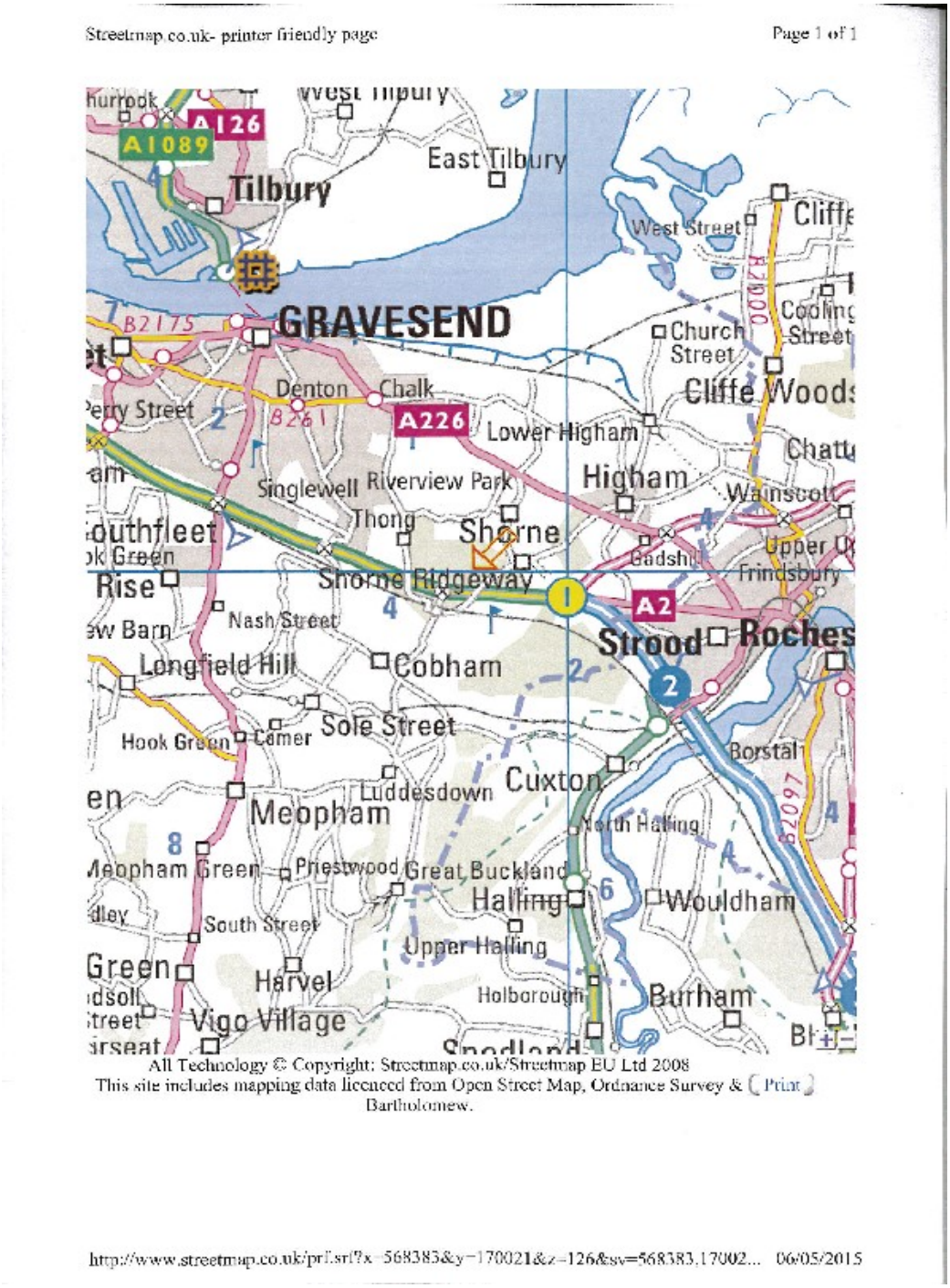
- Address: Shorne Woods Country Park, Brewers Road, Shorne, Kent, DA12 3HX
- Telephone Number: 03000 414747

2.1.2 *Directions to Site*

Shorne Woods is signposted off the A2 road between Gravesend and Rochester at the Cobham/ Shorne/ Higham junction. The nearest train station is at Higham or Sole Street approximately 3 miles. The site is serviced by the 416 bus service run by Red Route. A site

location plan is given in *Figure 1a* below.

Figure 1. Site Location Plan



2.1.3 *Map Coverage*

Shorne Woods Country Park is covered by the following Ordnance Survey maps.

- Landranger sheet No. 178, scale 1: 50,000
- Explorer sheet No. 163, scale 1: 25,000

The site is shown on many historic maps, which are valuable for the interpretation of the ecological context, and land use history. Maps were identified and researched through the Old Maps website.

- Kent - 1869, 1876, 1897, 1909, 1933 at 1: 10,560 scale
- Kent - 1897, 1909, 1946 at 1: 2,500 scale

2.1.4 *Photographic Coverage*

General views within the wood complex are available and held by Kent County Council, who also hold the following past aerial photographs:

- 1945,1961, 1967 and 1985,1990, 1995,1999, 2005, 2013 scale approx. 1: 10,000
- 1972, scale approx. 1: 25,000

All are held by Kent County Council Planning Department

The series of aerial photographs is valuable for the interpretation of the wood's ecological context and recent history of management.

An aerial photo from 1999 is shown in Figure 1b below. Up to date images are available online.

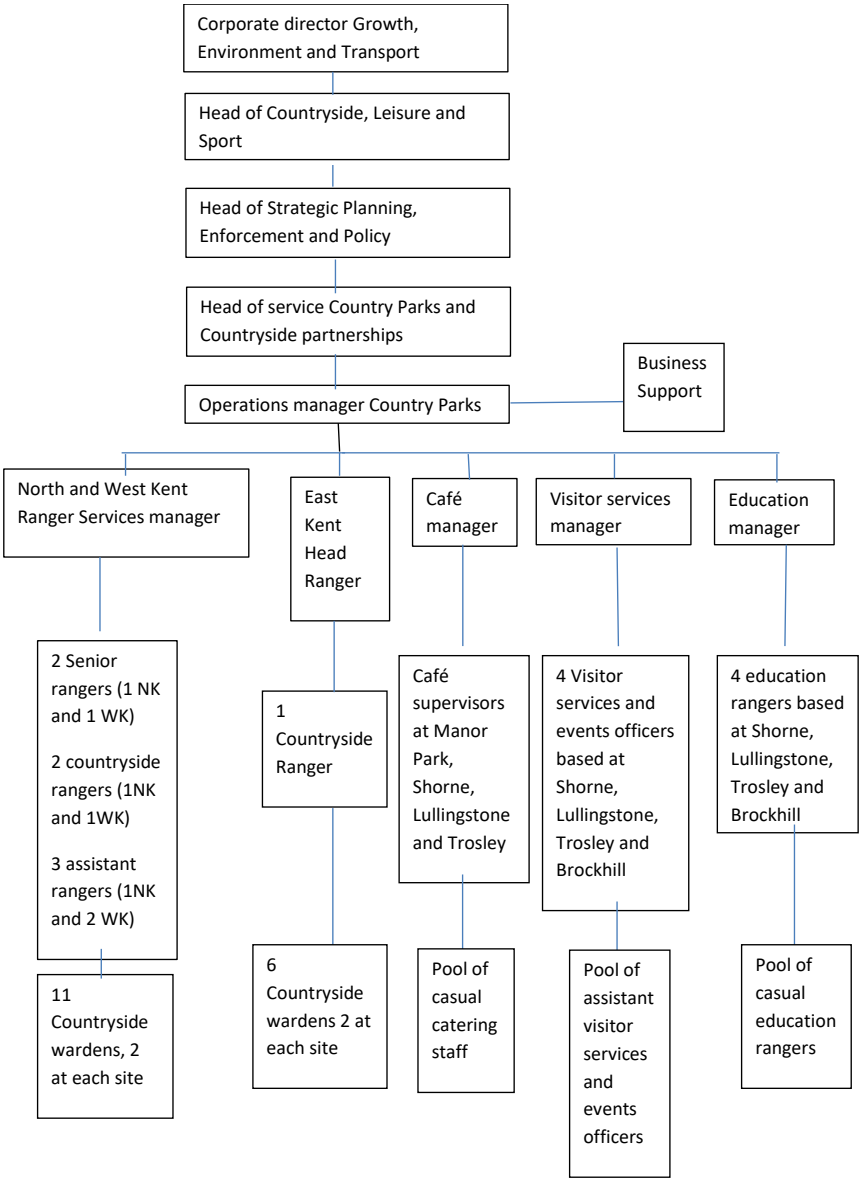
Management of the Site

Shorne Woods Country Park is owned and managed by Kent County Council (KCC).

Shorne Woods Country Park forms part of a network of 9 county council-owned sites, which total 810 hectares. They cover a wide range of habitats including chalk grassland, deciduous and coniferous woodland, and meadow. They are managed to increase interest in, and understanding of, nature conservation.

This management plan will run from January 2021 until January 2026. The management plan is reviewed and updated annually by the Ranger Services Manager as part of the Green Flag process. Most of the management work outlined in this Management Plan will be undertaken by KCC staff and volunteers, who own a range of equipment for general estate maintenance.

A brief outline of the staff structure is given in *Fig 2* below:



Please see Section 15.5 for an accessible alternative of this visual.

2.2 Visitors to the Site

2.2.1 *Site infrastructure*

Shorne Woods Country Park is managed by KCC both as a nature conservation site and a recreational resource; the provision of recreational facilities being a major factor in site management. The area known as Shorne Wood provides the focus of the Country Park and supports extensive recreational facilities. Further details are given in *Section 6.* There is a visitor centre and separate secure works compound adjacent to the main car park.

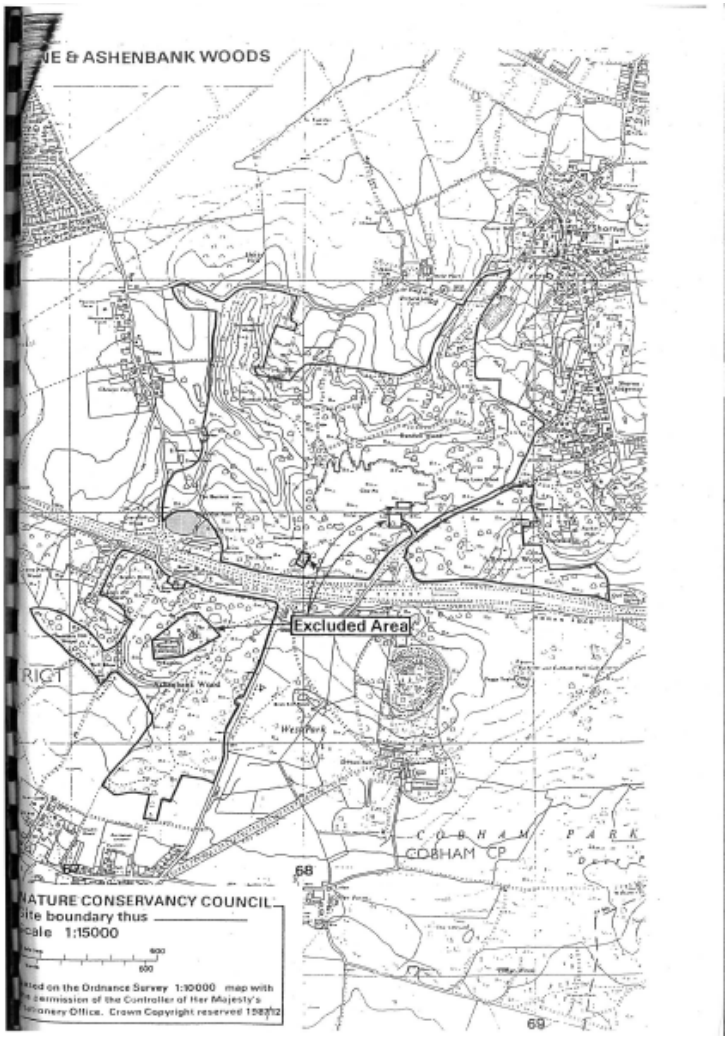
2.3 Wider Policies and Strategies Affecting the Site

2.3.1 *Introduction*

The site is currently influenced by the following designations and is mentioned in policy documents.

2.3.2 *Statutory Designations*

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)



The wood complex is part of the larger Shorne and Ashenbank Woods SSSI (shown in Appendix *section 15.1.1*) which was initially designated in 1968. Accordingly, the site has been notified under *Section 28* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (*as amended*). Local Authorities and other public institutions also have a statutory duty to further the conservation and enhancement of SSSIs both in carrying out their operations, and in exercising their decision-making functions, which includes planning decisions. All areas outside of the car park and visitor centre are protected under the SSSI rules. This management plan is consented by Natural England.

In April 2011 the site was assessed and deemed to be in favourable condition.

The SSSI contains four SSSI units, although only two of these are owned by Kent County Council, Unit 1 covers Brewer's Wood and Unit 2 covers Shorne Wood, Randall Wood and Randall Heath.

Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The park acts as a northern gateway to the KDAONB with boundary of the park acting as the boundary of the AONB.

London Metropolitan Green Belt

The park sits within the London metropolitan green belt area and fulfills the key role of paragraph 145 in the National planning policy framework section 13 on Green belts which states 'local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation'.

2.3.3 *Tree Preservation Order (TPO)*

Shorne Wood (except for the clay pit) is subject to a TPO [Tree Preservation Order No. 1 1972]. Before any felling or coppicing can be carried out, formal approval must be sought from the appropriate authority, currently Gravesham Borough Council, unless the compartment is covered by the Woodland Grant Scheme or is for essential health and safety work. All trees including regenerating trees are covered by the order.

2.3.4 *Non-statutory Designations or significant details*

Under the provisional Ancient Woodland Inventory (Pritchard *et al.* 1994), three discrete areas of the woodland in Shorne Woods Country Park are designated as ancient semi-natural woodland these are:

- most of the Randall Wood,
- most of the Brewer's Wood, and
- a small pocket in the south west corner of Shorne Wood.

In addition, one small area associated with a disused quarry (although not its entire footprint) is referred to as 'woodland cleared since the production of the 1st series OS maps'.

There is only one public right of way on the site entering at Brummel Hill Wood then following the bottom of the knoll into Randall Wood. All other routes are permissive only.

2.3.5 *English Woodland Grant Scheme*

The site was subject to the Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) which ran from the 05.07.1996 until 31.03.2002. In the 1996-2002 WGS *Compartments 2d, 5c, 6e, 8a* were cleared of storm damage and invasive Rhododendron, and then plantations created after the 1987 storm were gapped up and maintained. The area around the pond and viewpoint in *Compartments 4b* and *5a* was cleared, and the whole scheme area was subject to Rhododendron and Sycamore control. Further WIG grants funded woodland works until 2016.

A woodland management plan has been agreed in Jan 2021 which gives felling permissions for the next 10 years of woodland works. This is agreed with the Forestry Commission and consented by Natural England in addition to this management plan.

2.3.6 *Heritage Lottery Fund*

In 2004, Shorne Woods Country Park was awarded nearly £1 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund. KCC contributed £281,543.96 and other grants contributed £161,619.04 including grants from the Kent Downs AONB, Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust and Natural England. Funding was for improved site access, biodiversity, interpretation and facilities, a Project Officer, an Environmental Education Officer, a Community Archaeologist, and improved parking. This money has been invested in the site over a 5-year period ending in July 2011 and there is a 25-year obligation to maintain all aspects of HLF funded work. All work was agreed with Natural England and the Forestry Commission and is detailed in reports including:

- *An Audience Development Plan*: The Tourism Company (2005)
- *An Integrated Operations Plan*: Clarity Rural Consultants (2005a)
- *A Conservation Management Strategy*: Clarity Rural Consultants (2005b)
- *An Access Strategy:* Kent County Council (2005)
- *An Interpretation, Orientation and Community Participation Plan:* Rutt (2007)

The reports were undertaken with extensive community engagement including public meetings at Shorne Village Hall and site events publicising the proposed changes.

A breakdown of the expenditure areas is shown below:

Biodiversity improvement - £294,728
Access improvement - £196,707
Marketing/ Interpretation/ Education - £305,470

Car Park improvements	- £317,021
Heritage	- £165,340
Professional fees	- £127,474

In 2013 an additional HLF 'Your Heritage' grant of £90,000 was achieved to purchase 2ha of woodland in Brewers Wood and integrate it into the main site.

2.3.7 *Green Flag and South and South-east in Bloom awards*

Shorne Woods Country Park has been awarded the Green Flag award every year since 2008. As part of this process the site has an annual inspection based on a desk-based assessment and field evaluation. This award is awarded every year to parks that show continuous improvement in all areas encompassing all aspects of the park management and organisational infrastructure including conservation, customer focus, Finance, community engagement and health and safety.

The park has won the South and South East in bloom gold award for country parks 2010 to 2021.

Both these schemes are judged by independent judges annually against a set criteria used as a standard nationwide for country parks.

2.3.8 *Biodiversity Action Plans*

Three habitat types on the site are given priority under the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (Kent Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group 1997), these are 'woodland and scrub', 'lowland wood-pasture and historic parkland', and 'heathland and mire'. The site also has suitable habitat for several species listed in Kent Species Action Plan including Dormouse, Serotine bat, and Great Crested Newt, the latter being abundant throughout compartment 10.

2.3.9 *Archaeology*

The principle legislation affecting monuments in England is the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979,* as amended by the *National Heritage Act 1983*. The features at Shorne Woods are of regional importance but are not candidate Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs).

2.3.10 *Kent County Council Internal Policy*

The site adheres to the Kent County Council Environment Policy (2015).

and Kent County Council general statement of policy on health, safety, and welfare at work (October 2021) which can be seen in appendix D, section 15.1.4.

As part of KCC the site also works within the ISO14001 quality standard.

3 VISION FOR THE SITE

Shorne Woods Country Parks aims to provide a welcoming, safe environment for all ages and backgrounds whilst protecting and conserving the Site of Special Scientific Interest. The site aims to raise awareness of sustainable energies, healthy living and recycling through the visitor centre and café. The park is KCC's flagship Country Park.

3.1 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.

To meet the requirements of the Heritage Lottery Project that ran from 2006-2011. There are 25-year commitments to continue and maintain the works carried out over the duration of the project and monitor the success of the project works.

3.2 Conservation Management Objectives

Shorne Woods Country Park will be managed to provide several features including a woodland mosaic comprising a mixed age structure of broad-leaved coppice with standards and high forest which will be left as minimum intervention. The entire site is managed with biodiversity as a major objective; this complies with UK Woodland Assurance Scheme. This states that a minimum of 15% of the woodland forest area should be managed with conservation and enhancement of biodiversity as a major objective. Wherever possible there will be no loss of important / veteran trees, with tree surgery being used wherever possible to extend the life of the tree.

Between 2006 and 2010 a large-scale programme of *Rhododendron ponticum* (Rhododendron) control has taken place to control this non-native species and the main goal for Shorne Woods Country Park will be the control of this invasive species. The site achieved its aim of the SSSI being deemed in favourable condition when assessed by Natural England in April 2011 and the aim of this plan is to sustain that. Areas of wood pasture, acid grassland, ponds and wetland will be maintained and enhanced where possible to further add to the site's overall biodiversity.

Carriage ride during Rhododendron clearance

HLF Obligations for conservation

There are 25-year obligations specifically for conservation following on from the HLF project (ended July 2011) to ensure the terms of the HLF grant are met. These are:

- Monitor and re-treat any regeneration of Rhododendron Ponticum across the site
- Monitor and re-treat any regeneration of Sycamore across the site (subject to change due to threat of tree disease and climate change impact on native tree species)
- Maintain the open glades (A- the old grass triangle, B- the oak glade, C- explorer/shared user junction and D- comp 13a, E- comp 12abc, F-comp 9a)
- Maintain the 4km ride network 3 zone system, centre 5m cut every year to maintain constant open space, adjacent 5m strips every 2nd year to maintain a constant grass and herb layer and the outer strips cut every 8-10 years to maintain a young coppice cycle.
- Record and monitor the restoration of acid grassland on Randall Heath, a Kent priority HAP project
- Carry out surveys to monitor the success of the project works. These include the butterfly transect.

3.3 Visitor Services Objectives

Public enjoyment and recreation are a key feature of the site. The site aims to attract more visitors at all times of year. The site also aims to educate and inform the public on conservation and environmental issues whilst also promoting healthy living and wellbeing.

HLF obligations for visitor works

There is an obligation for the next 25 years to:

- Maintain the easy access extension routes to the Knoll and Randall Manor and easy access paths around the lakes and to the play areas
- Maintain the shared user route in Brewers Wood and Randall Wood
- Maintain the explorer and heritage trails
- Maintain 185 waymarker posts
- Maintain the bridges and culverts on all routes
- Maintain the interpretation within the visitor centre and out on site

4 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

4.1 Physical

The climate in Kent is moderately Continental. In comparison to the rest of the British Isles, it generally has higher summer temperatures, whilst winter temperatures tend to be slightly lower than the rest of Southern England, with the county often being subject to brief cold spells. Rainfall levels tend to be below the UK average.

Shorne Woods Country Park lies on the Eocene deposits of clays, sands, and gravels which overlie chalk on the dip slope of the North Downs. The site was quarried 1930-1967, creating a flat, low-lying area with clay soils. The latter area is now largely colonised by trees, although there are some patches of open grassland, and several shallow ponds of varying size, which were artificially created after quarrying. Around the rim of the former quarry, the soils are deeper, and the vegetation is of mixed, ancient, semi-natural woodland which would formerly have been coppiced. At the western end of the site, the coppice woodland gives way to old heathland and wood pasture which has developed over sands and gravels; this part of the park is cut by some steep-sided valleys, through one of which flows a seasonal stream.

Randall and Brewer's Wood's are representative of semi-natural woodland on Tertiary gravels, clays, and sands. Brewer's Wood lies over predominantly sand and gravel which support *Castanea sativa* (Sweet Chestnut) coppice with both *Castanea sativa* and *Quercus* sp. (Oak) standards. Randall Wood is more diverse with *Castanea sativa* coppice on sand and gravel but also extensive areas of woodland on clay.

4.2 Habitats and Vegetation Communities

4.2.1 *Introduction*

Shorne Woods is mainly occupied by mature broad-leaved high forest with smaller areas, mainly in the south-east of the site, consisting of broad-leaved coppice. A large section in the south-east of the site is occupied by a disused quarry; in areas this has been allowed to establish woodland dominated by Birch and grey willow, while in others amenity grasslands have been created. There are many ponds, mainly located in the disused quarry area, which support a range of aquatic and emergent plant communities. Randall Wood and Brewer's Wood mainly consist of broad-leaved coppice, although some stands of high forest do occur, especially on the margins and adjacent to streams.

Woodland and scrub are a local biodiversity habitat in Kent. All three areas of woodland support stands of alder woodland, albeit limited in extent. Alder Carr is a rare woodland type in Kent, with the Kent Wildlife Habitat Survey (Kent Wildlife Habitat Survey Partnership 1995) holding only 19 records for this habitat type in Kent. The largest area is in Randall Wood in the valley adjacent to glade c.

All reports and species list are either stored electronically or paper copies held in the office at Shorne Woods Country Park.

4.2.2 *Shorne Woods Country Park*

Surveys to identify the vascular plants occurring at the site and to classify the site's vegetation according to the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) system have been carried out by KWT. A vegetation survey of Shorne Woods Country Park was carried out in 1999 (Moyse 1999). The survey did not include Randall or Brewer's Woods. In 2001 a vegetation survey of Randall and Brewers Wood was carried out by the KWT when KCC took ownership of the land.

Twenty-nine different NVC sub-communities were recorded at the site during the 1999 survey. Most of this variety is provided by small areas of aquatic and swamp communities associated with the ponds and wetland areas. The vast majority of Shorne Woods Country Park consists of W10 *Quercus robur-Pteridium aquilinum-Rubus fruticosus* woodland, of which several sub-communities are represented.

A 2010 botanical survey (funded by HLF) carried out over a 9-month period, by the KWT, located fixed point quadrants in key habitats and regenerating areas along with a series of fixed-point photography points to record change. The survey encompassed the whole site and was carried out as the 5-year programme of HLF works has finished, so the survey provides an excellent baseline survey from which to monitor the regeneration of the rides and glades, wood pasture and areas cleared of invasive species should resources allow.

Woodland and scrub

It can be assumed that most of the site was once occupied by W10a *Quercus robur-Pteridium aquilinum-Rubus fruticosus* woodland, typical sub-community, with the wetter soils on the flat plateau probably supporting W10b *Quercus robur-Pteridium aquilinum-Rubus fruticosus* woodland, *Anemone nemorosa* sub-community, while W8 *Fraxinus excelsior-Acer campestre-Mercurialis perennis* woodland probably occurred on more base-rich soils.

Today, the whole site remains heavily wooded with the majority being referable to the NVC community W10 *Quercus robur-Pteridium aquilinum-Rubus fruticosus* woodland, which is the typical climax woodland of moderately acidic soils in lowland Britain. Although in general it is dominated by *Quercus* sp. (Oak species) with *Betula* sp. (Birch species) as an important associate, the precise nature of the community varies widely with past treatment and the nature of the underlying soil. On the rim of the former quarry in the eastern end of the site, the W10 woodland is characterized by *Castanea sativa* (Sweet Chestnut) coppice, and although not positively recorded as such, it is thought likely that this is referable to the *Anemone nemorosa* sub-community, W10b. An area of single-stem *Carpinus betulus* (Hornbeam) woodland in the site's southern boundary is also referable to this sub-community.

Woodland in summer

To the west of the quarry high-forest dominates which is referable to the NVC community W10a *Quercus robur-Pteridium aquilinum-Rubus fruticosus* woodland, typical sub-community. The species composition of the canopy is highly variable including species such as *Carpinus betulus* (Hornbeam), *Castanea sativa (Sweet Chestnut)*, *Fraxinus excelsior* (Ash) and *Taxus baccata* (Yew), with an area in the extreme west corner of the park being dominated by *Castanea sativa* with some *Quercus* sp. (Oak species).

More open areas of former wood pasture occupy the north-western end of the park. This is dominated by very large standard trees of *Castanea sativa* and *Quercus* sp. (Oak species) over a field-layer dominated by *Pteridium aquilinum* (Bracken) and *Rubus fruticosus* agg. (Bramble). This vegetation is broadly referable to the NVC community W10a, but it also has affinities with W16 *Quercus* spp.- *Betula* spp.- *Deschampsia flexuosa* woodland. An extensive area (approximately 3 ha) of *Rhododendron ponticum* (Rhododendron) was cleared in 2007 from this area. Clearance works have heavily disturbed the field-layer.

Oak Pollard in wood pasture area

Large parts of the former quarry area have slowly become re-colonised with open woodland, the majority being dominated by *Betula* sp. (Birch), with smaller areas dominated by *Salix cinerea* (Grey Willow) or *Alnus glutinosa* (Alder). The Birch-dominated woodland supports occasional young trees of *Carpinus betulus* (Hornbeam), *Castanea sativa* (Sweet Chestnut), *Quercus* sp. (Oak) and *Taxus baccata* (Yew) and has a field-layer that is dominated by the grass *Holcus lanatus* (Yorkshire-fog), but which also supports uncommon species such as *Calamagrostis epigejos* (Wood Small-reed), *Epipactis helleborine* (Broad-leaved Helleborine) and *Potentilla anglica* (Trailing Tormentil). This vegetation is broadly referable to the NVC community W10d *Quercus robur-Pteridium aquilinum-Rubus fruticosus* woodland, *Holcus lanatus* sub-community.

The wetter parts of the former quarry and the wetter areas above Randall Bottom Pond support WI *Salix cinerea-Galium palustre* woodland. On the floor of the old quarry this community is dense, shady and species poor. *Salix cinerea* (Grey Willow) is dominant in the canopy, although seedlings of *Betula pendula* (Silver Birch) and *Betula pubescens* (Downy Birch) also occur; the field-layer is very sparse. Above Randall Bottom Pond the community is a more species-rich example of this woodland type; *Salix cinerea* (Grey Willow) remains dominant in the canopy but a species-rich field-layer has developed.

Two small stands of W6d *Alnus glutinosa-Urtica dioica* woodland**,** *Sambucus nigra* sub-community occur in Shorne Woods Country Park, adjacent to the boundary of the site in the south-west corner and forming a narrow strip around *Pond J*.

Finally, the valley bottom below Randall Bottom Pond supports W8 *Fraxinus excelsior-Acer campestre-Mercurialis* woodland**.** Here the canopy is dominated by *Fraxinus excelsior* (Ash), and *Carpinus betulus* (Hornbeam) occurs in places. The shrub layer is sparse with

Sambucus nigra (Elder) occurring where there are gaps in the canopy. The field-layer is variable ranging from dry communities on the valley side to wetter more species-rich communities alongside the stream.

W24 *Rubus fruticosus-Holcus lanatus* underscrub is found scattered around the park, mainly on the margins of woodland. Some of the more species-rich examples of this community are referable to W24a *Rubus fruticosus-Holcus lanatus* underscrub, *Cirsium arvense-Cirsium vulgare* sub-community, while a small area of W24b *Rubus fruticosus-Holcus lanatus* underscrub, *Arrhenatherum elatius-Heracleum sphondylium* sub-community occurs within the W10d woodland.

Randall and Brewer's Woods consist mainly of the NVC Community W10 *Quercus robur-Pteridium aquilinum-Rubus fruticosus* woodland, with W8 *Fraxinus excelsior-Acer campestre-Mercurialis perennis* woodland being limited to the base-rich soils along the northern boundary of Randall Wood. A small amount of W6d *Alnus glutinosa-Urtica dioica* woodland, *Sambucus nigra* sub-community occurs within Randall Wood, limited to the springs and issuing streams on the middle slopes.

The canopy of the W10 woodland stands present are dominated by *Castanea sativa* (Sweet Chestnut), with *Carpinus betulus* (Hornbeam) playing an important role. Within the W10 *Quercus robur-Pteridium aquilinum-Rubus fruticosus* woodland community *Castanea sativa* (Sweet Chestnut), with *Carpinus betulus* (Hornbeam) can be important local dominants in southern Britain. Other species present within the canopy include *Acer pseudoplatanus* (Sycamore), *Betula* sp. (Birch species), *Ilex aquifolium* (Holly), and *Quercus petraea* (Sessile Oak). The shrub-layer is variable, being composed of species such as *Cornus sanguinea* (Dogwood), *Corylus avellana* (Hazel), *Fraxinus excelsior* (Ash), *Lonicera periclymenum* (Honeysuckle) and *Rubus fruticosus* agg. (Bramble). The field-layer is variable with some areas being characterized by woodland herbs such as *Circea lutetiana* (Enchanter's-nightshade) and *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (Bluebell) and others by *Pteridium aquilinum* (Bracken).

Sweet Chestnut coppice

Small stands of W8 *Fraxinus excelsior-Acer campestre-Mercurialis perennis* woodland are present in Randall Wood. This community is generally dominated by Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), with other canopy species including *Acer campestre* (Field Maple), *Carpinus betulus* (Hornbeam), *Castanea sativa* (Sweet Chestnut), *Corylus avellana* (Hazel) and *Quercus* sp (Oak). The shrub-layer is variable, being composed of species such as *Cornus sanguinea* (Dogwood), *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn), *Lonicera periclymenum* (Honeysuckle) and *Ribes nirgum* (Redcurrant). The field-layer is equally variable supporting a broad range of woodland herbs dominated by *Mercurialis perennis* (Dog's-mercury) with mixtures of *Circea lutetiana* (Enchanter's-nightshade), *Dryopteris dilitata* (Broad Buckler-fern), *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (Bluebell) and *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* (Yellow Archangel).

The canopy of the stand of W6d *Alnus glutinosa-Urtica dioica* woodland, *Sambucus nigra* sub-community found within Randall Wood is entirely dominated by *Alnus glutinosa* (Alder). Due to the closed canopy, the shrub-layer is particularly sparse, consisting of scattered *Lonicera periclymenum* (Honeysuckle) and *Sambucus nigra* (Elder). The field-layer is dominated by thick growths of *Rubus fruticosus* agg. (Bramble) with other species including *Cardamine pratensis* (Cuckooflower), *Dryopteris dilitata* (Broad Buckler-fern), *Lysimachia nemorum* (Yellow Pimpernel), and *Mercurialis perennis* (Dog's-mercury).

On the more base-rich areas there is coppice of *Fraxinus excelsior* (Ash) and *Corylus avellana* (Hazel) with extensive *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (Bluebell) and *Anemone*

nemorosa (Wood Anemone). There is a large pond and wet flushes in Randall Wood with Ash/alder stand types.

A network of thirteen woodland rides, five permanent glades and one large glade with Oak standards was created from 2006-2010 as part of the HLF works to link all the woodland areas and open spaces along a 4km network.

The relic plantations from the 1987 storm replanting are thinned but in all other areas an approach of allowing natural regeneration from the surrounding woodland is followed. This reduces the risk of tree diseases and ensures the seed stock is suitable to the specific geology of the site.

Tree diseases- Phytophera and Chalara

Phytophera is evident in compartments 11e, 12c and 12d. Where dead stems are deemed a risk to visitors they are felled and stacked in the same areas as deadwood habitat for invertebrates and cover for small mammals.

Annually the rangers survey the woodland for Phytophera and fell any that are at risk of falling on pathways.

The annual tree inspections from 2018 included an analysis of the spread of Chalara and this is now recognised as being widespread on site. Trees will be monitored and any dieback within proximity to paths or infrastructure will be removed.

Areas affected by disease will be left to regenerate naturally using the seed stock on site.

Grassland

Large areas of amenity grassland occupy the parts of the disused quarry which have not been allowed to establish woodland. These areas had amenity grass-seed added to existing vegetation in the 1980s. NVC types recorded in the 1999 survey were MG6a *Lolium perenne-Cynosurus cristatus* (crested dogs' tail) grassland, typical sub-community, MG1 *Arrhenatherum elatius* (false oat grass) grassland, and MG7a *Lolium perenne (Rye grass)-Trifolium repens ley* (white clover) MG6a is a common pasture/amenity grassland type and characterizes the mostly species-poor mown grassland at the eastern end of the park. Between the fishing lakes, a glade is cut on a 2-year rotation, stands of MG1 *Arrhenatherum elatius* grassland have developed, in areas grading into reed-dominated swamp or fen, dominated by an open canopy of *Phragmites australis* (Common Reed).

Ponds and wetlands

The site contains 15 ponds. These ponds have been named *Pond A* to *Pond O,* along with Randall Bottom Pond and three medieval fishponds. A new pond has formed in compartment 2b since 2011 on the boundary of the park with the Inn on the Lake, since the clearance of the rhododendron, this is called pond O and in 2014/15 held water all year

round and has done ever since.

A large pond is situated in the centre of Randall Wood, much of which supports dense stands of young *Alnus glutinosa* (Alder) and *Salix* sp. (Willow), however a variety of marginal plants also occur including *Carex pseudocyperus* (Cyperus Sedge), *Typha angustifolia* (Lesser Bulrush), *Scutellaria galericulata* (Skullcap) and various rushes. There are also several winter-wet ponds containing vestiges of a similar vegetation type.

The sedge dominated vegetation within the ponds is broadly referable to the NVC type S17 *Carex pseudocyperus* swamp**.** Within this community *Carex pseudocyperus* (Cyperus Sedge) can form dense stands of emergent vegetation but often has associate species including *Juncus effusus* (Soft Rush), *Sparganium erectum* (Branched Bur-reed), *Typha latifolia* (Bulrush) or *Phragmites australis* (Common Reed), swamp and fen herbs such as *Mentha aquatica* (Water Mint), *Lycopus europaeus* (Gypsywort) and *Scutellaria galericulata* (Skullcap).

Pond E with board walk for pond dipping.

The remainder of the ponds support a variety of submerged and emergent aquatic plant communities as well as mire and swamp, most of which are referable to specific NVC communities. The following communities are represented:

- *Aquatic communities:*
  - A5b *Ceratophyllum denersum* community, *Lemna minor* sub-community
  - A9a *Potamogeton natans* community, species-poor sub-community
- *Mire communities:*
  - M23 *Juncus effusus* / *acutiflorus-Galium palustre* rush-pasture
- *Swamp communities:*
  - S4a *Phragmites australis* swamp and reed-beds, *Phragmites australis* sub-community

- S5a *Glyceria maxima community*, *Glyceria maxima* sub-community
- S5b *Glyceria maxima community*, *Alisma plantago-aquatica Sparganium erectum* sub-community
- S6 *Carex riparia* swamp
- S12a *Typha latifolia* swamp, *Typha latifolia* sub-community
- S12b *Typha latifolia* swamp, *Mentha aquatica* sub-community
- S12c *Typha latifolia* swamp, *Alisma plantago-aquatica* sub-community
- S13 *Typha angustifolia* swamp
- S14a *Sparganium erectum* swamp, *Sparganium erectum* sub-community
- S14b *Sparganium erectum* swamp, *Alisma plantago-aquatica* sub-community
- S14c *Sparganium erectum* swamp, *Mentha aquatica* sub-community
- S17 *Carex pseudocyperus* swamp
- S19a *Eleocharis palustris* swamp, *Eleocharis palustris* sub-community
- S21a *Scirpus maritimus* swamp, sub-community dominated by *Scirpus maritimus*
- S22a *Glyceria fluitans* water-margin vegetation, *Glyceria fluitans* sub-community

The table given in *Section 15.2.4, Appendix D, p.119* outlines the NVC communities and notable species found in each pond during the 1999 survey.

Two small areas dominated by the NVC type M23 *Juncus effusus* / *acutiflorus-Galium palustre* rush-pasture occupies two small hollows within the Birch woodland. The vegetation is dominated by dense tussocks of *Juncus effusus* (Soft Rush), with occasional *Juncus conglomeratus* (Compact Rush).

Crassula Helmsii is prevalent on site and is in ponds A, B, D, E, F, G, K, L. N, and H. It is also in the wet woodland areas between ponds L and H and the drainage ditches across the claypit area in compartment 10. Attempts were made during the HLF project to eradicate the invasive species but the EU banning of the key herbicide stopped this project after 3 years. Emergent growth was sprayed in winter, but this had no effect on the submerged growth so merely knocked it back rather than eradicates it. Environment Agency advice in 2014 was there was no means of control other than scarifying the whole pond to remove the Crassula material. This is not possible due to the number of infected ponds and the likely risk of waterfowl, dogs and newts crossing between ponds. The rangers monitor trials of new treatments in case any new ideas prove to be successful.

Randall Heath

Randall Heath, in the north-west of the site is characterized by large areas which have been dominated by Bracken, being referable to the NVC community U20c *Pteridium aquilinum-Galium saxatile* community, species-poor sub-community. Few associate species are present, with *Teucrium scorodonia* (Wood Sage) and *Rumex acetosella* (Sheep's-sorrel)

being the only common ones. Currently regular *Pteridium aquilinum* (Bracken) management is being undertaken which will reduce the vigour and extent of this species. In 2009 and 2010 extensive tree clearance and mulching of 4ha has started to encourage the spread of grass and sub communities in this area. Grazing was introduced in July 2014 using a local grazier, grazing was not carried out in 2015 and in 2016 three cattle grazed the site for 3 months., in 2017 8 cattle grazed the site for 3 months. Following discussions with the rare breeds survival trust the area was heavily grazed with 18 cattle for 3 months to make more of an impact on the bracken.

Randall Heath

4.3 Flora

4.3.1 *Vascular plants*

The following list of vascular plants species are of note, these were identified during the 2010 survey by KWT:

- *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (Bluebell) is partially protected under *Schedule 8* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* against sell only and occurs throughout the site.

- Nationally Scarce status:
  - *Trifolium glomeratum* (Clustered Clover). It is unclear where this species was recorded, or what its current on-site status is. *Trifolium glomeratum* (Clustered Clover) is a winter annual typically occurring in short open communities on light, drought-prone often somewhat acidic sandy or stony soils near the coast. It is a rare casual inland.
  - *Pyrola Rotundifola (*Round Wintergreen) this was found in compartment 1a and 2b in 2010 by Joyce Pitt of the KWT

- County (locally) rare species are those which occur in less than 10 tetrads in Philip's Atlas of the Kent Flora (Philip 1982).

One County (locally) rare plant was discovered:

  - *Alopecurus aequalis* (Orange Foxtail) – a very uncommon species in Britain and very rare in Kent. (Kent Red Data Book (Waite 2000): endangered). Orange Foxtail is an annual species, most frequent on drying mud but found in a variety of habitats associated with freshwater, including the margins of ponds, ditches, reservoirs, and gravel-pits.

- County (locally) scarce species are those which occur in less than 11-50 tetrads in Philip's Atlas of the Kent Flora:

Six county (locally) scarce plants were recorded:

  - *Utricularia* cf. *australis* (Bladderwort) – a rather scarce plant in Kent.
  - *Potentilla anglica* (Trailing Tormentil).
  - *Isolepis setacea* (Bristle Club-rush); and
  - *Carex paniculata* (Greater Tussock-sedge)
  - *Euphorbia lathyrus* (Caper Spurge)

In addition to these species, the 1999 KWT survey includes the following locally scarce species in Shorne Wood:

- *Montia fontana* (Blinks)
- *Luzula sylvatica* (Great Woodrush)
- *Calamagrostis epigejos* (Wood Small reed).
- *Festuca filiformis* (Fine-leaved Sheep's-fescue).

- Four further species recorded at Shorne Wood are not county scarce but are nevertheless uncommon and local in their distribution:
  - *Chara vulgaris* var. *longibracteata* (a charophyte alga).
  - *Samolus valerandi* (Brookweed).
  - *Hypericum androsaemum* (Tutsan); and
  - *Ranunculus lingua* (Greater Spearwort).

- One species recorded in Randall Wood is not of county importance but is uncommon in the UK:
  - *Epipactis purpurata* (Purple Helleborine) – occurs within 61 of the 1044 2km x 2km tetrads in Kent.

A list of ancient woodland indicator species found on site can be found in section 15.2.5, p.120.

4.3.2 *Bryophytes and lichen, mosses, and liverworts*

The 2000 Management Plan states that 40 species of bryophyte have been recorded from Shorne Woods Country Park. The botanical survey of Randall and Brewer's in 2001 Wood recorded 12 species of bryophyte.

In 2011 a mosses and liverworts survey of Shorne Woods was completed and in 2013 a survey of Randall Wood was undertaken. Records are held electronically.

4.3.3 *Fungi*

The 2000 Management Plan states that 123 fungi have been recorded from Shorne Woods Country Park. A further survey was undertaken in October and November 2001 when a full fungal species list was produced for Randall and Brewer's Wood by the Kent Wildlife Trust (Kent Wildlife Trust 2002). During this survey over 100 species were recorded for Brewer's Wood and approximately 200 species for Randall Wood. Species of note included:

Randall Wood

- *Russula integra* var. *purpurea* – 1st British record for this species.
- *Tricholoma acerbum* – provisional Red Data List, Kent Red Data Book (Waite 2000).
- *Cortinarius basililaceus* – Nationally Scarce.
- *Cortinarius bibulus* – Nationally Scarce.
- *Entoloma icterina* – Nationally Scarce.
- *Tyromyces wynnei* – Nationally Scarce.

Brewer's Wood

- *Pseudocraterellus sinuosus* – provisional Red Data List, Kent Red Data Book (Waite 2000).
- *Inocybe petiginosa* – Notable, Kent Red Data Book (Waite 2000).
- *Psathyrella cotonea* – Notable, Kent Red Data Book (Waite 2000).
- *Lepista caespitosa* – status unknown.
- *Rutstroemia americana* – status unknown.

In October and November 2007, the survey was repeated for Randall and Brewer's Wood by Joyce Pitt, David Mitchell, and Jo Weightman. During this survey 82 species were recorded for Randall Wood and 10 species for Brewer's Wood. Species of note included:

Randall Wood

- *Entoloma albotomentosum* - very uncommon in the British Isles – specimen sent to Kew Herbarium.
- *Byssocaorticium efibulatum* - rare with few records in the British Isles.
- *Cortinarius caerulescens* – found in Sweet Chestnut coppice - rare – specimen sent to Kew Herbarium.
- *Russula alnicola* – found with Alder – rare – specimen sent to Kew Herbarium.

Brewer's Wood

Psathyrella rivulosa– found on chippings. This species distribution is increasing since its discovery in Holland in 2001. There are now several records in Kent recorded since 2005.

4.3.4 *Veteran Trees*

In 2008 a Veteran Tree survey was undertaken by Treework Environmental Practice. In total 209 trees were recorded within the Country Park; these were divided into Ancient Veteran trees (35 individuals); Non-ancient Veterans (95 individuals) and Notable (78

individuals). These are GIS recorded and the details stored on a database so monitoring can be carried out and recorded.

A breakdown of tree species and number is given below:

- *Acer pseudoplatanus* (Sycamore) – 2 individuals.
- *Carpinus betulus* (Hornbeam) – 28 individuals.
- *Castanea sativa* (Sweet Chestnut) – 83 individuals.
- *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn) – 1 individual.
- *Fagus sylvatica* (Beech) – 1 individual.
- *Fraxinus excelsior* (Ash) – 14 individuals.
- *Ilex aquifolium* (Holly) – 1 individual.
- *Populus* species. (a Poplar) – 1 individual.
- *Pseudotsuga menziesii* (Douglas Fir) – 4 individuals.
- *Quercus robur* (Pedunculate Oak) – 61 individuals; and
- *Taxus baccata* (Yew) – 12 individuals.

A deadwood survey (Ecosulis 2011) was carried out in 2011. This assessed all areas of the park looking at 20 plots. The average score per plot was 4.23.

4.4 Fauna

4.4.1 *Mammals*

Dormouse (Muscardinus avellanarius)

Nut search surveys for the species were conducted in 2000 (West 2000) but failed to prove presence within Shorne Wood. Dormice were present in Brewer's wood, prior to a translocation forced by the construction of Channel Tunnel Rail Link.

In 2006 an annual Dormouse monitoring programme was established at the site. To facilitate the survey 50 dormouse nest boxes were erected in *Compartments 12a-12f* and *13a-13c.* In 2006 surveys were undertaken between May and October, although all the positive records of Dormouse were recorded during September and October when the population is highest, and Dormouse are preparing for hibernation. In total, 12 Dormouse where found, of which eight were males, two were females and two were unsexed. In addition, six Dormouse nests were recorded. In 2008 the dormouse nest boxes were resurveyed, and 13 Dormouse were recorded. From 2010 no evidence of dormice were found in the nest boxes. The dormouse boxes were repositioned and renewed in partnership with the KWT in July 2013. In October 2018 and 2019 2 dormice were found in a survey carried out as part of the Lower Thames Crossing environmental impact surveys adjacent to the A2.

Bats

The following native bat species were recorded at Shorne Woods Country Park during surveys carried out between June and October in 2006. A Bat Habitat survey was carried out at the same time.

- Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*).
- Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*).
- Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentoni*).
- Natterer's Bat (*Myotis nattereri*).
- Noctule Bat (*Nyctalus noctula*).
- Serotine Bat (*Eptesicus serotinus*); and
- Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*).

All native bats are protected by European law. In addition to their protection by law Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*), Noctule Bat (*Nyctalus noctula*) and Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) are listed on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP 2008) as 'Priority Species'. Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) are also listed on the Kent Biodiversity Action Plan (Kent BAP 2007) along with Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), which highlights their importance in a local context.

It would be expected that numerous bat species forage and use roosts within Shorne Wood. Should a tree containing a potential bat roost be selected for felling, appropriate survey and mitigation should be undertaken under licence by DEFRA.

Every year since 2010 Brown long eared bats have been found nesting in the largest air raid shelter in the RAF camp. As part of the HLF work this was one of the aims of the project so this will now be monitored and recommendations from KWT to enhance the site will be followed. This includes opening up flight paths into the door entrances. The Kent Bat Group surveys these shelters every year.

A search of the National Biodiversity Network for bats was undertaken within a 2 km search area records included:

- six records of Serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*).
- seven records of Noctule (*Nyctalus leisleri*).
- eight records of Natterer's Bat (*Myotis nattereri*); and
- 24 records of Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*); and
- 35 records of Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*).

In addition, there are six unidentified bat records.

Badgers (Meles meles)

There is an active main badger sett just outside Randall Wood to the north. Badgers (*Meles meles*) are known to use the whole of Shorne Woods Country Park for foraging. Badgers often have several outlying setts of which there are two within the park in compartments 11f and 13a. These setts are rarely in continuous occupation and are most often used either to exploit a seasonal food source or as a refuge when visiting certain parts of the territory. In

2013 the sett in comp 11f and 11g was active when surveyed as part of the HLF purchase of the new woodland. Habitat management works should consider the possibility of there being a badger sett nearby, as works within 30 m of a sett are illegal unless licensed by DEFRA.

A search of the National Biodiversity Network for Badger was undertaken. In total, four Badger records were recorded in a 2-km search area.

Other Mammal Species

Incidental mammal records noted during other specialist surveys of Shorne Wood include:

- Bank Vole (*Clethrionomys glareolus*);
- Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*);
- Grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*);
- Mole (*Talpa europaea*);
- Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*);
- Water shrew (*Neomys fodiens*) -
- Stoat (*Mustela erminea*)
- Weasel (*Mustela nivalis*)

Two of the above species - Rabbit and Grey Squirrel can be damaging to regenerating coppice and newly planted trees, and control of these species may be necessary.

4.4.2 *Herpetofauna*

The network of ponds and woodland glades at Shorne Wood provide suitable habitat for a wide range of herpetofauna. Seven reptile and amphibian species were recorded at Shorne Wood during the survey conducted by Kent County Council in 2000 and are seen each year. Species recorded include:

- Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*);
- Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*);
- Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*);
- Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix*);
- Slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*)
- Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*);
- Palmate Newt (*Lissotriton helveticus*); and
- Smooth Newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*).

Great Crested Newt (Triturus cristatus)

Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) are a European protected species and listed as part of Kent County Council's Biodiversity Action Plan. They are abundant in all areas of the site including the works compound and visitor centre.

In 2006, RSK Carter Ecological undertook a three-year study into the likely effects of herbicide treatment on Great Crested Newt for which a full report was submitted. Herbicide treatment of some of the ponds on site was required to control and in the long-term eliminate the non-native plant species *Crassula helmsii* (New Zealand Pigmyweed). The project involved undertaking population estimate surveys of Great Crested Newt in two glyphosate

treated ponds and an untreated control in 2006 and 2007 before glyphosate application and in 2008 after application using a range of counting and trapping methods. The study found that the Great Crested Newt populations fell between 2006 and 2007 for unidentified reasons but rose between 2007 and 2008 following treatment. Loss of the population in the control pond in 2008 constrains interpretation of results, but it is very clear that glyphosate application in winter (when Great Crested Newts are inactive) has no acute effect on adult Great Crested Newt populations in the year immediately following. Further ad hoc surveys have been carried out by developers and KRAG and data is held on site.

As a European protected species, handling, and habitat disturbance (including terrestrial habitat) are illegal unless licensed by DEFRA. If pond management is required at a future date, then a survey must be carried out to ascertain whether Great Crested Newts (*Triturus cristatus*) are present.

Reptiles

Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix*), Slow Worm (*Anguis fragilis*) and Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) are present at Shorne Woods Country Park. These are dependent on sheltered sunny glades and rides in which they bask and regulate body temperature. Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) prey on small insects typically found in rough grassland, whereas Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix*) are more dependent upon wetlands where they predate Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*).

Adult and juvenile Grass snakes have been sighted across the whole park. Slow worms have been recorded in compartment 12b and 12e in 2014 and 11 e and f in 2018.

4.4.3 *Birds*

The complex of woodlands and ponds at Shorne Woods Country Park provides a range of wildlife habitats for migrant and breeding birds. Eight species have been recorded which are of High Conservation Concern namely Bullfinch, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Marsh Tit, Reed Bunting, Song Thrush, Spotted Flycatcher, Starling and Yellowhammer. In addition, a further eight species are of Medium Conservation Concern Namely Dunnock, Green Woodpecker, Goldcrest, Hawfinch, Nightingale, Reed Warbler, Stock Dove and Tree Pipit. In addition, Bullfinch, Reed Bunting, Song Thrush, Spotted Flycatcher and Turtle Dove are a priority species within the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (2007). A bird survey was carried out by park staff over spring/summer 2010 and 2016, the most notable sighting was juvenile Tawny owls with parents in comp 13c, a kingfisher and the first sighting of ring-necked parakeets. Further surveys are underway in 2018 as part of the Lower Thames Crossing environmental impact assessment.

Within the Local Biodiversity Action Plan for woodland and scrub, the following species of bird are notable: Crossbill, Firecrest, Goshawk, Hawfinch, Hobby, Wood Warbler, Nightjar and Redstart. Only one of these species, Hawfinch, is known from Shorne Woods Country Park, although there may be the potential for the others to utilise the wood in the future.

Since the clearance of the Rhododendron Ponticum and creation of the rides sightings of buzzards and kestrels have increased significantly with buzzards especially regular in 2015. A red kite was also seen on the site in 2014.

4.4.4 *Fish*

Seven species have been recorded in the ponds and most of those present are the result of stocking by the angler's society. Hybrid Bream-Rudd have been recorded in addition to the following species:

- Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*).
- Crucian Carp (*Carassius carassius*).
- Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*).
- Perch (*Perca fluviatilis*).
- Roach (*Rutilus rutilus*).
- Rudd (*Scardinius erythrophthalamus*); and
- Tench (*Tinca tinca*).

In 2014 due to fish health issues related to overstocking, 200 pounds of fish were removed from each lake in liaison with the Environment Agency and Thameside Works Angling club. The fish were relocated to another site managed by the angling club.

4.4.5 *Invertebrates*

The invertebrate interest of Shorne Woods Country Park is high, with 185 species recorded by Kent County Council in 2000. Shorne and Ashenbank Woods SSSI are known to be particularly rich in beetles (*Coleoptera*), true bugs (*Hemiptera*) and dragonflies (*Odonata*). Future management should maintain the habitat diversity so that the microhabitats these insects depend upon remain suitable.

The deadwood survey in 2011 found 14 nationally scarce invertebrates primarily located in the knoll area of the park. Nationally scarce species were found in all areas except the claypit.

Aquatic and Semi-aquatic Invertebrates

In 2006 Kent Wildlife Trust undertook an Aquatic Invertebrate Survey of the ponds within the Country Park. During this survey 11 of the 20 ponds were surveyed (*Ponds A-F, H, I K, L* and *Randall Bottom*), the remainder were not surveyed as they did not hold water and are winter-wet or seasonal ponds (*Ponds G, J, M and N* and the *Medieval Fishponds*).

Notable species recorded included the aquatic water-beetle (*Ochthebius nanus*) and the semi-aquatic species (*Bembidion quadripustulatum*) which both have Notable B[1] status. In addition, the semi-aquatic species, Ornate Brigadier Soldierfly (*Odontomyia ornata*) was also recorded. This species is listed in Bratton (1991) and Shirt (1987) as Vulnerable.

[1] Species estimated to occur within the range 31 to 100 10-kilometre squares of the National Grid System.

Lepidoptera

Of the Lepidoptera species recorded by Kent County Council in 2000, 18 species are butterflies and 63 are moths. These range from specialists that breed in the canopy or clearings in woods, to widespread grassland species that can find suitable conditions in sunny woodland rides. Any management should maintain the habitat diversity and retain these microhabitats.

None of the butterfly species recorded at Shorne Woods Country Park are recorded in the Kent Red Data Book (Waite 2000). Although it notes that Kent has a relatively healthy population of the nationally vulnerable White Admiral butterfly, whose range is current expanding in the county.

Moths species recorded from Shorne Wood include:

- Six-belted Clearwinged moth (*Bembecia scopigera*) recorded in 1993. This is a Nationally Notable species but is not recorded in the Kent Red Data Book (Waite 2000).
- Satin Lutestring moth (*Tetheela fluctuosa*) (KCC 2000). This is a Nationally Scarce species but is not recorded in the Kent Red Data Book (Waite 2000).

In Spring/Summer 2010 a fixed transect pollard walk was established for permanent monitoring of species type and number between April and September. Generally, Gatekeepers, Meadow browns and Ringlets prove most abundant and White Admirals were spotted in most transect areas. In 2014 a Purple Emperor was photographed on the Randall Manor site. Records for butterflies are held on site.

Flies

A dolichopodid fly (*Dolichopus latelimbatus*) was recorded on site in 1993. This is a Nationally Notable species but is not recorded in the Kent Red Data Book (Waite 2000).

Coleoptera

The following two Nationally Scarce beetles are recorded:

- A beetle (*Mordella holomelaena*), of Kent County importance. (KCC 2000)
- A water beetle (*Peltodytes caesus*) Notable B found in less than 100 10 km squares. (KCC 2000)

Odonata

The wetland habitat of Shorne Wood supports 15 species of dragonflies and damselflies (Kent County Council 2000). In addition to the species listed below, there are also reports of the nationally scarce dragonfly, Red-veined darter (*Sympetrum fonscolombei*), although this was not confirmed in recent surveys. A species list can be found in the *Section 13.2, Appendix I.*

Three species of note have been recorded at Shorne Woods Country Park: Downy Emerald (*Cordulia aenea*), Ruddy Darter (*Sympetrum sanguineum*) and Red-veined Darter (*Sympetrum fonscolombei*).

The Downy Emerald (*Cordulia aenea*) is a Nationally Notable B species and is afforded Kent Red Data Book Status 3 (Waite 2000) being confirmed in twenty tetrads in Kent, with breeding confirmed in two tetrads. It is also a Rare Dragonfly Projects (RDP) species. This dragonfly requires nutrient-poor, still waterbodies such as ponds, lakes, and canals in woodland areas for breeding. There are usually trees at least around part of the water margin as the dragonfly larvae live in the coarse leaf litter. The ideal waterbody usually has little or no submerged vegetation. Consequently, Shorne Woods Country Park offers very good habitat for this species.

The Ruddy Darter (*Sympetrum sanguineum*) (KCC 2000) is afforded Nationally Scarce status but is not recorded within the Kent Red Data Book (Waite 2000).

In addition, there are also reports of the nationally scarce dragonfly, Red-veined Darter (*Sympetrum fonscolombei*), although this was not confirmed in recent surveys.

In 2018 the Kent Wildlife Trust will be using the park for their Dragonfly identification course and the park will get an up-to-date species list as a part of this.

Additional information

As part of the survey work being carried out for the Lower Thames Crossing development surveys of bats, birds, dormice, and Great Crested Newts are being carried out from 2019-2021. The results will be supplied to the park upon completion.

4.5 Past Land-use

The 2001 walkover survey of Randall Wood by Oxford Archaeology (Oxford Archaeology 2001) provided evidence that the area of Randall Wood was at one time open and free of trees and was utilised for a radically different pattern of land use in the past. The lynchets throughout the Wood indicate that in prehistoric and later medieval periods, the area was open land used for arable cultivation. Details of the history of the site are recorded in the Historic Environment Assessment 2009 and includes a WW2 camp, medieval manor, Neolithic, and bronze age finds. The 2011 LiDAR survey supports this idea of a changed landscape, with several earthworks respecting the Randall Manor complex, suggesting a series of fields. The 1797 ordnance surveyor's drawings also show the area of the Burnett as fields.

Historically, the area covered by the park was ancient woodland, significant sections of which remain. Coppicing and pollarding of trees occurred over a long period in some areas. The estate was purchased by the Lords Cobham of Cobham Hall in 1208 and remained in their ownership until 1603, subsequently passing through several hands until being purchased by the Earl of Darnley in 1728. Coppicing records from Cobham Hall suggest that Randall Wood was first grown for coppice in the late 1500s, once the manor had been demolished.

Randall Heath was historically kept open by grazing, and later by the Earl of Darnley for use for family picnics and recreation. The area became dominated by Bracken after the cessation of grazing and was managed through mechanical cutting from 1996 to 2013 until grazing was reintroduced in 2014.

Rhododendron was introduced along two driveways through the woodland in Victorian times and has subsequently spread extensively before being eradicated between 2006 and 2011. Clay extraction began on part of the site in the 1920s and continued to the early 1970s.

Kent County Council purchased the site from Lord Darnley in 1982, and it was opened as a Country Park in 1987. Considerable management work has since been carried out and extensive damage occurred in the woodland during the 1987 storm.

Randall and Brewers Wood were purchased in 2001 through a Heritage Lottery grant and works to integrate the existing park with the two woodlands were carried out from 2006-2011 as part of a £1 million HLF grant that included expanding the car park and improving access and site infrastructure.

In 2013 a further 4 acres of land was purchased in Brewers Wood, as part of an HLF project, to bring the whole of the Shorne and Ashenbank SSSI into public ownership or ownership by the Woodland Trust (Ashenbank)

4.6 Landscape

Shorne Wood falls within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the North Kent Plain Natural Area as defined by Natural England. The North Kent Plain Natural Area consists of the strip of land between the North Downs and the Thames estuary. The topography is low-lying or gently undulating land, mostly below 50m altitude, but just exceeding 100 m in one or two places including Shorne. It is characterised by the clays and sands of the Tertiary era.

The North Kent Plain Natural Area includes large areas of semi-natural woodland, especially on heavier clay soils that are not suitable for farming. Although there are areas of high forest, the repeated felling, and re-growth of the coppice cycle has characterized these woodlands for centuries.

4.7 Conservation Management History

Shorne Wood has been managed for nature conservation since it was purchased by Kent County Council in 1982. Early work included the creation of the picnic area, creation of meadows surrounding the ponds, creation of paths, and clearance of marginal and aquatic vegetation in *Ponds I*, *D*, and *Randall Bottom* between 1996 and 1999.

A site management plan for Shorne Wood was developed in 2000 using the Conservation Management System (CMS) framework (Alexander 2000 and CMS Partnership 2000). The 2000 management plan was subsequently updated in 2003 (Carter Ecological 2003) to amalgamate the objectives and prescriptions for the whole site when Kent County Council

acquired Randall Wood and Brewer's Wood. In 2005 a further Woodland Management Plan was prepared as part of a Woodland Planning Grant under the English Woodland Grant Scheme.

The Head Ranger updated the 2005 plan to create the 2009-2014 plan according to Green Flag standards. This current management plan will cover the five-year period from January 2021 until January 2026. *Section 15.2.7, p.123,* provides a summary of all works between 2020 and the present. 2005-20 records are in the preceding management plans. This list is updated bi-annually. The plan is updated annually by the Ranger Services Manager as part of the Green Flag process.

4.8 Management Objectives

The management strategy at Shorne Wood Country Park will be based on four areas:

- the first is the requirement to manage the site regarding its designation as a SSSI,
- the second is regards to the use of the site as a Country Park providing a recreational and education facility
- to meet the 25-year commitment of the HLF project works and ten-year agreements of the Forestry Commission grants
- to ensure the site is managed to be self-sufficient and at no cost to the council

Presently the site is partially zoned to resolve any conflict between these objectives. Most of those activities which potentially could conflict with the wildlife interest of the site are restricted to *Compartment 10* which was formerly the main area of quarrying. Brewer's Wood in *Compartments 11* is at present only used by a relatively small number of visitors. Access improvements between Shorne Wood proper and Randall Wood have been improved with the removal of the main site fence and widening of rides. By improving access here, it is anticipated that numbers will increase which may cause local disturbance to wildlife. To seek to resolve any conflict between these objectives, education of and provision of information for visitors will be a key strategy.

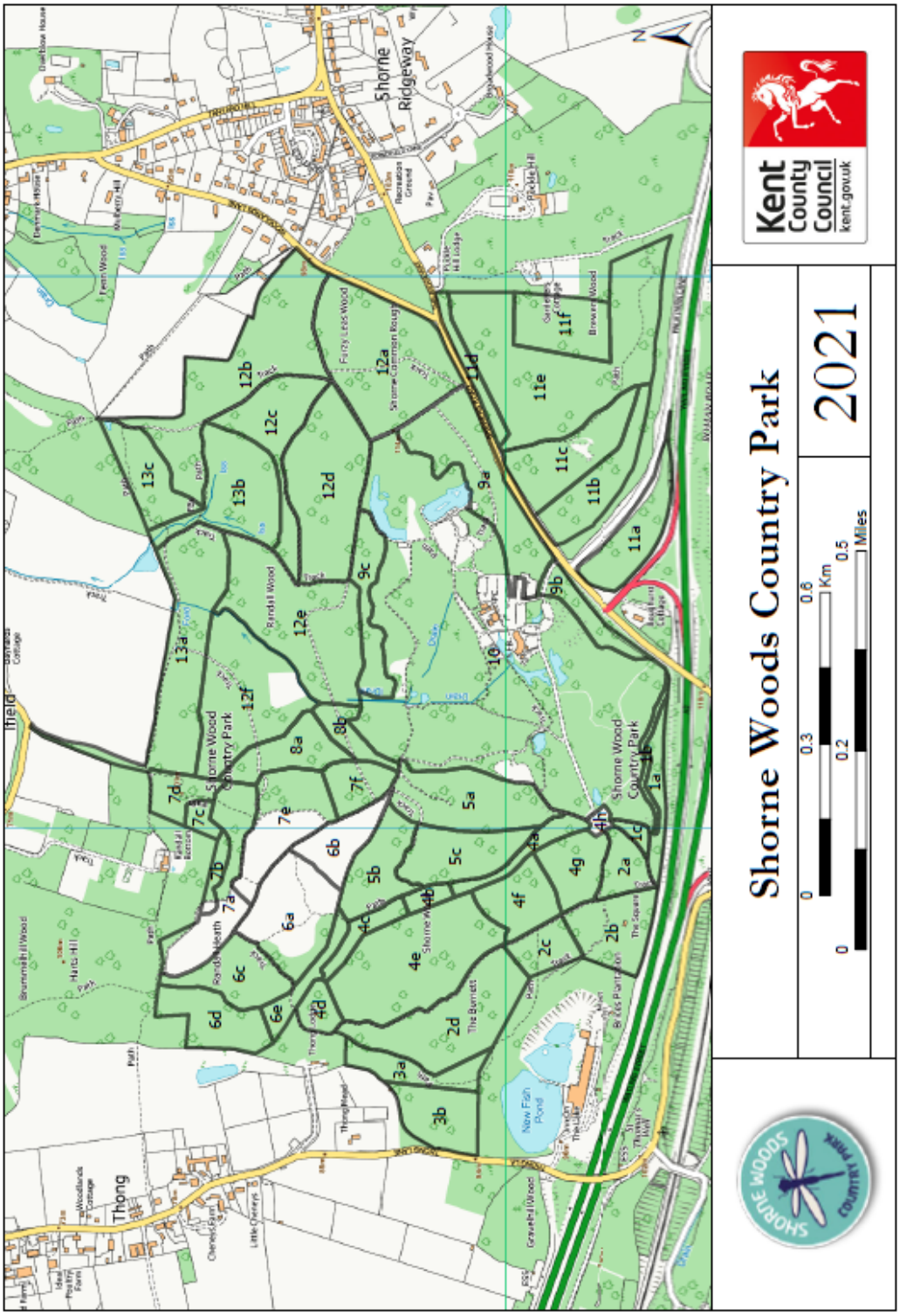
A summary of the objectives for woodland, ponds and wetlands, Randall Heath and other features is provided in *Section 15.2.1, p.106.*

4.9 Conservation Management Prescriptions and Operations

The management plan is based on a system of management compartments devised for the purposes of previous management objectives. Shorne Woods Country Park has 13 main compartments which are divided into several sub compartments; in total 42 management compartments are recognised, these are shown overleaf. The entire site is managed with biodiversity as a major objective; this complies with UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS) 6.3.1. A summary table providing details of the size of compartment, main tree types and additional information regarding tree age and size within the main compartments is

given in Section 15.2.2, along with the long-term management strategy for each compartment. Section 15.2.3, provides a summary the main monitoring and survey tasks required to assess the effectiveness of site management in terms of the management objectives set out in Section 4.9.

Compartment map of Shorne Woods.



4.9.1 HLF summary of works and future management requirements

4.9.2 *Rhododendron*

An extensive research report was undertaken including liaison with the Chief Ecologist from Snowdonia National Park and the Inverewe Estate in Scotland to identify the best methodology and permissions from Natural England. The rhododendron was raked out by large diggers and burnt on site using telehandlers and forwarders to transport the waste. Areas around heritage features or badger setts were cleared by hand by park staff and volunteers. All areas were treated by the contractor the season after clearance and the preceding seasons after that up until April 2011.

Rhododendron in comp 4 before clearance

A summary of the clearance works is shown below:

Rhodi zone	Date cleared	Date first treated	Compartment area
R18-25/R26-34	2007	Aug 2007	11
R1- R4	2008	Aug 2008	5,6
R5	2009	Aug 2009	4
R6 & R9	2010	Aug 2010	2, 3
R17, R7, R8, R10-16	2010	Aug 2010	10

**a map of the rhododendron areas is available on site*

Since April 2011 the areas have been annually sprayed, hand pulled or cut by park staff and volunteers and the regeneration monitored. This will need to continue indefinitely to ensure that eradication is successful. Herbicide records are kept on site.

Rhododendron management action plan

Works to be carried out in April and September to ensure treated rhododendron is only first year growth for maximum uptake.

Compartment	Year to check	Date works completed
5, 6, 7 and 10	**2021**	
2 and 10	**2022**	
4 and 10	**2023**	
11 and 10	**2024**	
12 and 10	**2025**	
5,6,7 and 10	**2026**	

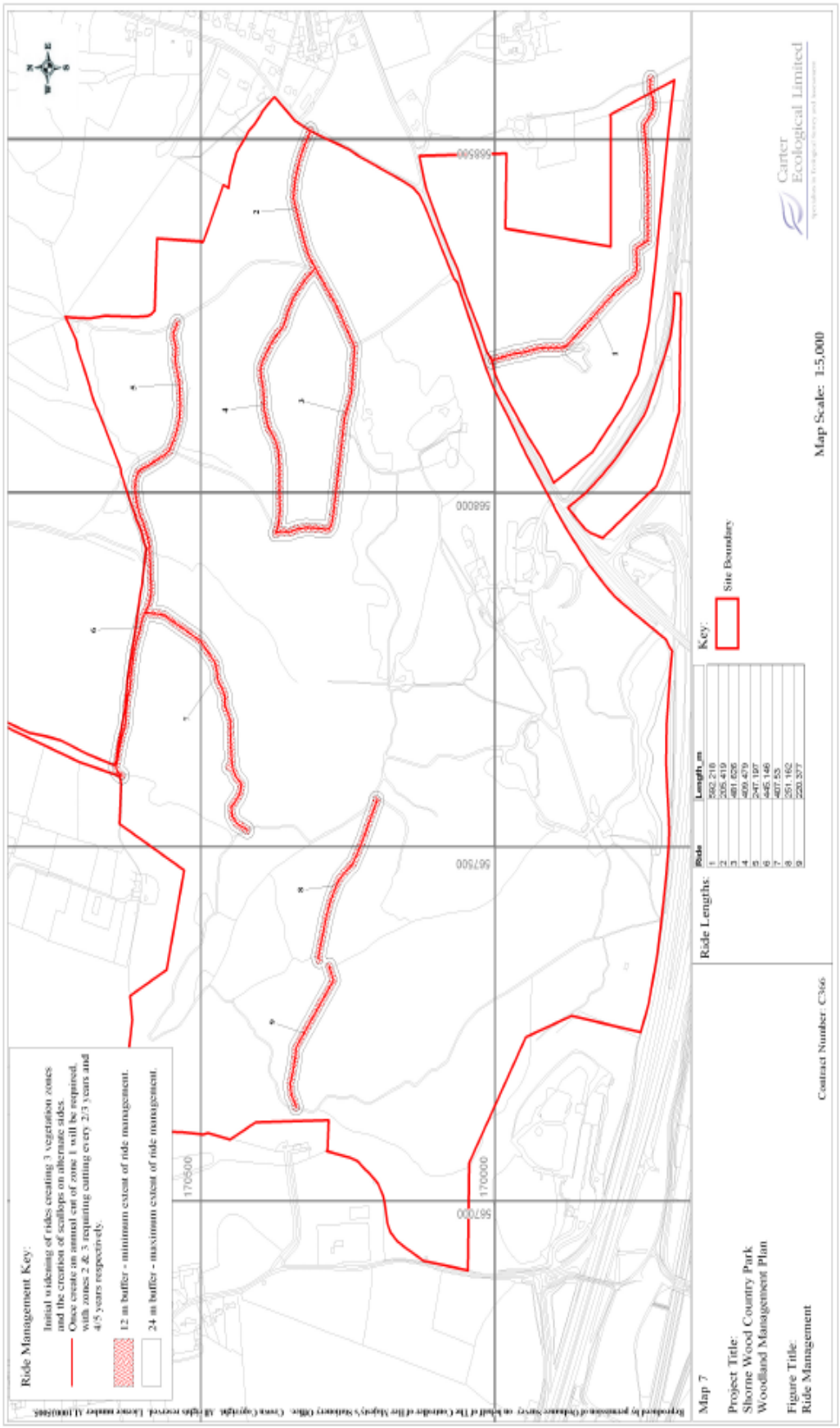
4.9.3 *Woodland Rides*

The woodland rides were cleared by a forest mulcher. Any usable coppice was cut and removed first for timber sales. The mulcher then cleared a 15m corridor leaving pinch points every 100m for dormice corridors. The rides are predominantly East-West in orientation to maximise sunlight and heat. They are up to 25m wide and consist of 3 zones of vegetation growth. A map showing the network is shown overleaf.

The 4.1km of 5m wide zone 1 must be cut annually to maintain either bare earth or low grass to always ensure a hot corridor. Zone 2, 5 m either side of zone 1 should be cut a minimum of every 3 years and should be monitored carefully as some areas may need more regular cutting. Zone 3 should be cut every 8-10 years to ensure corridors of young coppice are maintained throughout the woodlands.

Glades A-F are to be cut twice annually but monitored carefully to ensure the Glades potential for biodiversity are maximised with particular focus on minimising bracken, ragwort, and thistle dominance. All cutting should be carried out in the late summer to ensure maximum conservation benefit. Where possible half the glade should be cut each year, so a mixed height of grasses is achieved.

Ride network



A woodland ride in compartment 10

A summary of the rides and glades is below*:*

Ride number	*Creation date*	*Distance (m) or area (ha)*	*Compartment number*
1	*2006*	*650*	*11b/c/e*
2,3,4	*2007*	*1000*	*12a/b/d/e*
5,6,7	*2008*	*1500*	*12,13*
8,9,11	*2009*	*800*	*5, 9, 12*
10	*2010*	*200*	*12*
12,13	*2014*		*11e*
Glade A	*2010*	*0.5ha*	*12e*
Glade B	*2010*	*01ha*	*12d*
Glade C	*2010*	*0.5ha*	*12b/13b*
Glade D	*2014*	*0.5ha*	*13a*
Glade E	*2014*	*0.25ha*	*12a/b/c*
Glade F	*2014*	*0.25ha*	*9a*
Randall manor glade	*2006*	*0.15ha*	*12f*
Glade between the two	*2004*	*Linear strip*	*10*

fishing lakes			

Woodland ride and glade cutting action plan

Works to be carried out from September to March, 5m wide zone 1 area to be cut two times a year on all rides in Feb and Sep. each ride will be assessed each year before cutting commences to survey any notable changes. *these are subject to change to fit in with coppice coupe areas

Ride number	Year of work	Prescription of work to be carried out	Date work completed
1	2021	Cut zone 2 and 3 along NW edge	
	2022	Cut zone 2 along SE side	
	2023	Cut zone 2 along NW side	
	2024	Cut zone 2 along SE side	
	2025	Cut zone 2 along NW side	
	2026	Cut zone 2 along SE side	
2	2021	Cut zone 2 along SE side	
	2021	Cut zone 3 along SE side	
	2022	Cut zone 2 along NW side	
	2023	Cut zone 3 along NW side	
	2023	Cut zone 2 along SE side	
	2024	Cut zone 2 along NW side	
	2025	Cut zone 2 along SE side	
	2026	Cut zone 2 along NW side	
3	2021	Cut zone 2 along N edge	
	2022	Cut zone 2 along S edge	01/22
	2022	Cut zone 3 along S edge	01/22
	2023	Cut zone 2 along N edge	
	2024	Cut zone 2 along S edge	
	2025	Cut zone 2 along N edge	
	2026	Cut zone 3 along N edge	
	2026	Cut zone 2 along S edge	
4	2021	Cut zone 2 along S edge	12/21
	2022	Cut zone 2 along N edge	12/21
	2023	Cut zone 2 along S edge	
	2024	Cut zone 2 along N edge	
	2025	Cut zone 2 along S edge	
	2026	Cut zone 3 along N edge	12/21

	2026	**Cut zone 2 along N edge**	
5	**2021**	**Cut zone 2 along S edge**	**12/21**
	2022	**Cut zone 2 along N edge**	**01/22**
	2023	**Cut zone 2 along S edge**	
	2024	**Cut zone 2 along N edge**	
	2025	**Cut zone 2 along S edge**	
	2025	**Cut zone 3 along S edge**	
	2026	**Cut zone 2 along N edge**	
	2026	**Cut zone 3 along N edge**	
6	**2021**	**Cut zone 2 along S edge with brushcutters**	**Not needed**
	2022	**Cut zone 2 along N edge with brushcutters**	
	2023	**Cut zone 2 along S edge with brushcutters**	
	2024	**Cut zone 2 along N edge with brushcutters**	
	2025	**Cut zone 2 along S edge with brushcutters**	
	2025	**Cut zone 3 along S edge**	
	2026	**Cut zone 2 along N edge with brushcutters**	
	2026	**Cut zone 3 along S side with brushcutters**	
7	**2021**	**Cut zone 2 along SE edge**	**09/21**
	2022	**Cut zone 2 along NW edge**	
	2023	**Cut zone 2 along SE edge**	
	2024	**Cut zone 2 along NW edge**	
	2025	**Cut zone 2 along SE edge**	
	2025	**Cut zone 3 along SE edge**	
	2026	**Cut zone 2 along SE edge**	
	2026	**Cut zone 3 scallops on NW edge**	
8	**2021**	**Cut zone 2 along S edge**	**Chalara clearance instead 12/21**
	2022	**Cut zone 2 along N edge**	
	2023	**Cut zone 2 along S edge**	
	2024	**Cut zone 2 along N edge**	
	2025	**Cut zone 2 along S edge**	
	2026	**Cut zone 3 along N edge**	
	2026	**Cut zone 3 along S edge**	
9	**2021**	**Cut zone 2 along SE edge**	**Chalara clearance instead**
	2022	**Cut zone 2 along NW edge**	
	2023	**Cut zone 2 along SE edge**	
	2024	**Cut zone 2 along NW edge**	

	2025	**Cut zone 2 along SE edge**	
	2025	**Cut zone 3 along SE edge**	
	2026	**Cut zone 2 along NW edge**	
	2026	**Cut zone 3 along NW edge**	
10	**2021**	**Cut zone 2 along SW edge with brushcutters**	
		Cut zone 3 scallops along NE edge	
	2022	**Cut zone 2 along NE edge**	
	2023	**Cut zone 2 along SW edge with brushcutters**	
	2023	**Cut zone 3 along SW edge**	
	2024	**Cut zone 2 along NE edge**	
	2024	**Cut zone 3 scallops along NE edge**	
11	**2021**	**Cut zone 2 along E edge**	
	2022	**Cut zone 2 along W edge**	
	2023	**Cut zone 2 along E edge**	
	2024	**Cut zone 2 along W edge**	
	2025	**Cut zone 2 along E edge**	
	2025	**Cut zone 3 along E edge**	
	2026	**Cut zone 2 along W edge**	
12	**2021**	**Cut zone 2 along W edge**	
	2022	**Cut zone 2 along E edge**	
	2023	**Cut zone 2 along W edge**	
	2024	**Cut zone 2 along E edge**	
	2025	**Cut zone 2 along W edge**	
	2026	**Cut zone 2 along E edge**	
13	**2021**	**Cut zone 2 along S edge**	
	2022	**Cut zone 2 along N edge**	
	2023	**Cut zone 2 along E edge**	
	2023	**Cut zone 3 along E edge**	
	2024	**Cut zone 2 along W edge**	
	2024	**Cut zone 3 along W edge**	
	2025	**Cut zone 2 along E edge**	
	2026	**Cut zone 2 along W edge**	

4.9.4 *Coppicing as part of SSSI requirements and HLF obligations*

The below works were completed as part of the reinstatement of coppice rotation during last management plan. Coppice coupes are a maximum of 1ha in size and predominantly Sweet Chestnut. 1ha of coppice is dried for 3 years then chipped for the Biomass Boiler the other 1.5 hectares is sold as logs generating an income of £25,000 per year.

2007- 1.2ha of Sweet Chestnut coppice cut along ride 2 & 3 in compartment 12a, 12b, 12d, 12e cut.
0.15ha of mixed hard woods coppice in comp 7b
2009- 1ha of Sweet Chestnut coppice cut in comp 9a
1ha approx of coppice around veteran trees 1034/1181-1185
2010- 1.7ha of Sweet Chestnut coppice cut in comp 12f and along ride 6 adjacent to Randall wood boundary
2012- 1.5ha of Sweet Chestnut and Ash on ride 6 adjacent to the boundary in comp 13a
2013/14- 1ha of Sweet Chestnut from Glade C to ride 6 in comp 12b/12c
1ha Brewers Wood, the new woodland, comp 11f
2014/15-1ha ha Brewers Wood, comp 11f
1ha of Sweet Chestnut adjacent to new woodland in 11e up to ride edge
0.25ha along ride edge in Randall Wood comp 11b
2015/16- 1ha comp 9a adjacent to the areas coppiced in 2003 and 2009 up to the main entrance road.
0.25ha section of ride edge coppice in comp 11b
2016/17-1ha of comp 12f in Randall Wood, adjacent to 2010 coupe
1ha of comp 11e in Brewers Wood
0.5ha of comp 12a in Randall Wood
0.25ha of ride edge coppice in comp 11b
2017/18-1ha in comp 12f of Randall Wood
2018/19-1ha in comp 12b of Randall Wood (heavily affected by Phytophera)
2019/20-0.25 ha in comp 7b of hazel coppice, ride edge coppicing
2020/2021-1ha in comp 12b of Randall Wood

Coppicing action plan

YEAR	Compartment	Area and species	Date completed
2021	**11e**	**1ha Sweet Chestnut**	**Not required, ride edge coppicing done instead**
2022	**12a**	**1ha Sweet Chestnut**	
2023	**11e**	**1ha Sweet Chestnut**	
2024	**9a**	**1ha Sweet Chestnut**	
2025	**11b**	**1ha Sweet Chestnut**	
2026	**12f**	**1ha Sweet Chestnut**	

A coppice coupe in compartment 13a and 12f

4.9.5 *Ponds- Crassula Helmsii control*

A trial project was carried out to eradicate Crassula Helmsii, this began after extensive newt surveys were carried out to ensure no harm to wildlife occurred. Over two years techniques were trialled, but the pellets used were banned by the EU in 2010 so the treatment was not sustainable. When the ponds dried up in the summer of 2011 it was decided to spot spray the emergent Crassula Helmsii and monitor the results.

The spraying had mixed results with good eradication in ponds E and F but not in pond K where it was much more abundant before treatment. In liaison with the EA and Natural England the effect was deemed negligible so as an eradication technique not successful and unsustainable, so this action was not continued.

In June 2013 it was apparent that the Crassula had spread back into all ponds and drainage channels as no treatment was possible in 2012 due to the wet summer keeping the ponds filled to capacity. Environment Agency advice is that there is no treatment available for Crassula control currently however rangers will monitor new techniques as they develop.

4.9.6 *Restoration of Randall Heath*

The heath was cleared of Rhododendron in 2006. There was then a phased clearance of the trees on site.

In 2009 compartment 6a was cleared and then forest mulched to get the stumps to ground level.
In 2010 compartments 6c, 7a, and 7ei had the same works.

Any deadwood was stacked into piles in amongst the veteran trees.

An agreement was made with the neighbouring landowner to run a water supply from his house up onto the heath. In 2010 a 200m pipe was laid and trough purchased to enable stock to graze the site in future.

Currently the area is managed through 3 mechanical cuts of the bracken per year by park staff. The cuts are carried out just as the fronds of the bracken open for maximum impact in early-mid June and then again in late July early August. A final cut is done in the Autumn. Regenerating Sycamore and Silver Birch were cut and treated in Jan 2020.

Cattle were introduced for the first time in July 2014 for restoration grazing, using a local grazier and Hereford Cattle. The grazing agreement is that the grazier is responsible for repairing any fence and gate issues and monitoring the stock in exchange they get free grazing land. The site benefits as a Kent HAP habitat gets managed for free. In 2018 18 cattle grazed the knoll from May to July as opposed to the low stocking rate from 2014-17. This was because of consultation with the rare breeds survival trust during some training for staff.

Future potential veterans are identified and fenced to protect them from damage.

Randall Heath (The Knoll)

4.9.7 *Sycamore*

All large Sycamore stands have been removed and stumps treated. This was carried out in two phases under HLF funding. The arisings were burnt or chipped and in compartment 4 a large dead hedge was created as a natural boundary around the external classroom.

Cleared areas must be monitored and treated in April and October each year and stump treating recorded in the herbicide records on site.

Mar 2010-2ha of mature Sycamore cut and stump treated in comp 4g and 4f
1ha of mature Sycamore cut and stump treated in comp 2c, 2d and 4f
Jan 2011-approx 2ha of Sycamore cut and stump treated in comp 2b, 5a, 7f, 8g
Nov 2011- approx 0.5ha Sycamore cut and stump treated from comp 8b
Jan 2012- approx 0.3ha of Sycamore cut and stump treated in comp 3a
May 2012 all previously cleared areas new growth cut and stump treated
Oct-Jan 2013- 0.25ha cleared from comp 4d, 0.25ha from comp 2d and 0.25ha from comp 3b, stumps untreated due to the weather.
2020- Isolated stems cut from comp 10

Sycamore Action Plan

YEAR	COMPARTMENT	Date completed
2021	**11**	
2022	**2b, c and d**	
2023	**3a and b**	
2024	**5a, 5c, 5d**	
2025	**4a, b, c, d, e, f**	
2026	**10**	

4.9.8 *Deadwood*

In all areas many trees have been felled and left in corridors of deadwood stacks as whole trees. Due to all small deadwood piles being turned into base camps and dens this is the only way to create deadwood stacks in the park. In comp 5A there is a continuous corridor of deadwood stacks over approximately 50m to ensure a permanent deadwood habitat in the area. In areas where Phytophthora is killing the Sweet Chestnuts these are felled and left in stacks on site to create deadwood corridors, the main area for this is comp 12b and 12c, deadwood from Ash trees killed by Chalara are also left on site as are fallen limbs from existing veterans. Assuming standing dead trees are not endangering visitors these are left as standing deadwood habitat.

4.9.9 *Survey Information*

A bat survey was carried out by the Kent Bat group in 2006. This counted a total of 152 bats of 7 different species. It also involved a habitat suitability survey. Site staff have been

trained on leading bat walks and carrying out surveys for the future. In 2014 records of Pipistrelle, Brown Long Eared and Daubentons were observed.

An aquatic invertebrate survey was carried out by Kent Wildlife Trust in 2006. Unfortunately, weather conditions that season were not ideal for this survey with most of the ponds being totally dry throughout the summer right up till late October and May being exceptionally cold so delaying the invertebrates appearance. A nationally vulnerable soldier beetle larvae was discovered and ideal future management for invertebrates was recorded to inform future management.

A dormouse survey was carried out in 2007 by Kent Wildlife Trust and confirmed the presence of dormice in Randall Wood. 50 boxes are spread through the wood and the park is now part of the National Dormouse monitoring, so the survey is carried out every year by volunteers. The highest count was 13 in 2007.

The KCC Biodiversity team undertook reptile surveys in 2007 and the presence of common lizard, grass snakes and slow worm was recorded. There are ad hoc sightings of these across the park throughout the year.

A botanical and NVC survey was carried out throughout 2009 by the Kent Wildlife Trust. This recorded species presence and abundance in the park, identifying the most important ones. It provides a baseline for fixed point photography monitoring of the rides and rhododendron cleared areas and locates fixed quadrants for monitoring vegetation change in the park. An undergraduate student project then examined the data and identified the best quadrants to monitor annually and GPS recorded them and marked them with a stake in the NW corner.

A bird survey was carried out by park staff in 2010. This was a walkover survey recording the compartments birds were seen in. Notable observations were a family of Tawny owls, Kingfisher, and Song Thrush. An additional survey was carried out in 2016 by park staff and records are available on site.

Regular Newt surveys have been carried out as part of the project. An initial survey was carried out as a baseline survey in 2006 by Carter Ecological to allow us to monitor the impact of the Crassula Hemsii treatment. This survey was completed in 2009.

A deadwood invertebrate's survey was carried out in 2011 in the 6 key habitat areas of the park. This surveyed a series of transects to record type and number of species. The survey has generated a list of 54 wood-decay invertebrates which includes 46 species of beetles. The beetles include 13 species which have Nationally Scarce status in Britain (Hyman, 1992), which is a notably high proportion and demonstrating high site quality.

All surveys carried out on behalf of the Thames Crossing development will be submitted to the site for our records when they are completed. These began in October 2017.

4.9.10 *Veteran Trees*

A veteran tree survey was completed in 2009. This recorded 208 veteran trees and notable trees in the park. It also recognises that there are vast numbers of mature Sweet Chestnuts that will develop veteran characteristics over the next 20 years that need to be monitored.

The survey used the Natural England SSM3 methodology. 35 ancient/veterans, 95 non-ancient veterans and 78 notable trees were recorded. Particular note was made of the Hornbeam maidens which were unusual as most sites historically manage Hornbeam as pollards so these were of particular importance. All trees were tagged.

A paper report and an electronic database that can be regularly updated were produced along with a GPS map of the trees that connects to the report. This contains the location, a photo and survey results for all trees.

Key management recommendations for trees were provided. 23 were recognised as being excessively shaded so park staff halo cut around these trees in 2010 and 2011. 45 lapsed pollards were identified and 25 of these have had individual invertebrate assessments due to the importance of their locations.

In the Randall Heath area future veterans were identified and fenced off to protect them for the future.

The 23 excessively shaded trees were Halo cut between 2010 and 2012. This needs to be monitored and re-coppiced on a short-term coppice of approximately 8 years to ensure the shading does not re-establish.

Park staff carry out visual surveys on the trees annually to monitor condition. The works will be carried out as and when required.

4.10 General Features

4.10.1 Woodland

FEATURE – WOODLAND
COMPARTMENTS – All Compartments
PHOTO 14 –RANDALL WOOD COMP 12D- THE OAK GLADE

Policy:

- The woodland complex forms part of the larger SSSI known as Shorne and Ashenbank. In April 2011 Natural England assessed the Shorne management units to be in favourable condition.
- The Ancient Woodland Inventory identifies three discrete areas of ancient semi-natural woodland, these being, most of the Randall Wood, most of the Brewer's Wood, and a small pocket in the south west corner of Shorne Wood. Woodland and scrub are a local biodiversity habitat in Kent. Shorne Wood (except for the clay pit) is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

Habitats and Species:

- Five main NVC woodland and scrub communities have been identified, with several sub-communities of these main communities being represented. Full details given in *Section 4.4.*
- The woodland supports 45 Ancient Woodland Indicator species including Bluebell[2]. Other noteworthy species includes Dormouse, bats, Badger, birds, herpetofauna (including foraging habitat for Great Crested Newt), invertebrates and other small mammals. These species are variously designated. Full details are given in *Sections 4.4.*

Management Considerations:

- Historically the woodland to the west of the quarry has been managed as high forest. Other stands have been subject to coppicing.

[2] listed on *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (against sell only)

- The Country Park is managed for public recreation; this will have a direct influence on the management prescriptions undertaken.
- Existing management agreements such as HLF, EWGS will directly influence on the management prescriptions undertaken.
- Economics and market conditions will directly affect woodland management. Currently 0.5 ha of coppice material is used as woodchip for the site wood chip boiler. A further 1 ha of coppice material, a by-product of the conservation work is sold as firewood to visitors to the Country Park.
- A programme of Rhododendron clearance was completed between February 2006 and November 2011, with 22ha being removed. Post-clearance checks and treatment or removal of regrowth will be necessary every year in April and August to ensure it does not become re-established.
- 8ha of Sycamore has been removed and post clearance checks will need to occur, and any regeneration retreated.
- The Country Park ride network extends for over 4 km. In Shorne Wood proper it is restricted to the old carriageway, although most of the site is dissected by narrow footpaths. In Randall Wood, a complex ride system is associated with the past coppice management regime. One main ride is found in Brewer's Wood. These rides have been subject to recent management including felling of secondary woodland and scrub, mowing and strimming. In addition, several glades have been created. A figure showing the ride network and location of glades is on p.52
- Randall Manor and the medieval fishponds will be managed as a woodland glade and wet woodland habitat rotationally cut.

Management Objectives (full version of these objectives are given in *Section 15.2, Appendix A*):

- The ecological integrity of the woodland will be protected, and biodiversity enhancement is a major objective.
- Most of the site will be managed as minimum intervention allowing high forest to develop.
- Species which are recognised as endangered at a local or national level should be protected including dormouse, with habitat management focused on these species.
- the Rhododendron regrowth areas will require regular survey and treatment to prevent re-establishment. SEE ACTION PLAN IN 4.9.2
- Some areas of woodland that were previously managed as coppice with standards will be brought back into a coppicing cycle. Compartments where the wood is of an even age / or species composition will be gradually restructured to diversify ages and habitats by selective thinning.
- Continued maintenance and upkeep of the ride system linking Shorne Wood to Randall and Brewer's Woods will be a priority. SEE ACTION PLAN IN 4.9.3
- 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.

- All veteran and or notable trees will be preserved whenever possible and monitored annually

Prescriptions:

- Woodland in *Compartments 1, 2a, 2c-2d, 3, 4a-4f, 5, 6b, 6d, 6e 7d, 7e, 8a* and *13* will be managed as minimum-intervention. This means the only work to be carried out in these areas should be the control of Sycamore and Rhododendron, the maintenance of planted trees following the 1987 storm, work necessary for health and safety purposes, and work related to the conservation of subsidiary habitats (*e.g.,* wetlands) or notable species such as dormice.
- The ride and glade network will need regular management to maintain this feature. Most of the rides will be at least 12 m and many up to 25 m wide, using a two or three zone system. Pinch points should be located every 100 m to aid Dormouse movement. **SEE ACTION PLAN IN 4.9.3**
- Areas of coppicing will be reinstated (where resources allow) in *Compartments 7b, 7c, 9a, 9b, 11* and *12.* Compartments will be coppiced to create a mosaic of woodland ages to maintain substantial areas of young coppice up to 10 years of age for the benefit of wildlife. **SEE ACTION PLAN IN 4.9.4**
- Monitor the effectiveness of previous felling/treatment of Sycamore in *Compartments 2b, 4d, 4g, 7f* and *8b* **SEE ACTION PLAN IN 4.9.7**
- Post-clearance checks of all Rhododendron cleared areas are to be carried out in April and August. **SEE ACTION PLAN IN 4.9.2**
- Veteran trees will be monitored and 3 phase halo cutting carried out where necessary. Phase 1 cut will be any regenerating trees impacting on the veteran, phase 2 any vegetation impacting on the tree up to 15 times the tree girth and phase 3 any trees heavily shading or threatening the growth of the trees. Other retrenchment techniques will be implemented if resources allow.

Monitoring and Required Surveys:

Health and safety tree work-

Zone 1 = tree inspector Zone 2 and 3 = Ranger team

YEAR	Compartment	Zones to be inspected	Date completed
2021	**All**	**Zone 1, 2 and 3**	**12/21**
2022	**All**	**Zone 1**	
2023	**All**	**Zone 1**	
2024	**All**	**Zone 1 and 2**	
2025	**All**	**Zone 1**	
2026	**all**	**Zone 1,2 and 3**	

- Monitor tree and shrub regeneration throughout the woodland, but with particular focus on those areas where Rhododendron and Sycamore clearance has occurred.
- Undertake botanical monitoring in areas following ride management, glade creation or coppicing to assess success of management. A botanical survey would ideally be carried out two years after management to record plant species in the field-layer.
- Continue to monitor Dormouse populations in Randall Wood. Undertake regular checks of nest boxes between April and November. Ensure that KCC staff who undertake survey work hold a Dormouse Licence.
- Undertake ongoing recording of birds, fungi, herpetofauna, invertebrates, plants, and other small mammals.
- Estimate the amount of dead wood in all woodland compartments.
- Visually inspect veteran trees.

Further details of monitoring and surveys are given in *Section 15.2, Appendix C*

4.10.2 Ponds and wetlands

FEATURE – PONDS AND WETLAND

COMPARTMENTS – *Compartment 4B* (Randall Bottom Pond)*; Compartment 9A* (Pond C); *Compartment 10* (Ponds A-N)*; Compartment 12F* (Medieval Fishponds), comp 2b (Pond o), comp 11e/f (pond p).

Photo 15- The Long Lake in comp 10

Policy:

- The pond and wetland complex forms part of the larger SSSI known as Shorne

and Ashenbank and the habitat will be managed to maintain favourable status.

Habitats and Species:

- The site contains 16 ponds and several areas of wetland. Most of the ponds and areas of wetland are in Shorne Wood and are man-made, formed in hollows and depressions created during clay extraction between the 1920's and 1970's. In Brewer's Wood there is a small marshy area. The ponds and wetland areas on site show a good example of ecological succession with areas of open water through to dense emergent vegetation to wet woodland.
- Botanical surveys have identified 15 NVC communities each occupying relatively small areas. Full details are given in *Section 4.4.* Botanical species of note include Bristle Club-rush, Bladderwort, Brookweed, Orange Foxtail and Wood Small-reed. The ponds and wetland are known to support bats (foraging habitat for Daubenton's bat), birds, fish, herpetofauna (including Great Crested Newt), invertebrates (in particular Dragonflies and Beetles) and other small mammals. These species are variously designated. Full details are given in *Sections 4.4-4.5.*

Management Considerations:

- The Country Park is managed for public recreation, with several facilities provided which relate to the ponds and wetlands, including fishing in *Ponds A* and *B* where fish swims have been established*;* pond-dipping platforms; and a pond of low-ecological value set-aside, with permission from Natural England, for dogs (*Pond K*); this will have a direct influence on the management prescriptions undertaken.
- Ponds found in *Compartments 9* and *10* are subject to vegetation clearance on a rotational basis. Vegetation clearance has occurred since 1996. This will continue with emergent vegetation maintained at between 10% in newly cleared ponds and 80% in ponds to be cleared.
- Historically Randall Bottom Pond has been maintained as a heavily vegetated pond with emergent vegetation between 40% and 70%. Its edges were surrounded by dense Rhododendron which created heavy shade. Following recent Rhododendron clearance most of the woody vegetation has been removed which has resulted in the pond being more open. The future management of vegetation in Randall Bottom Pond may need to be reconsidered once the effect of the Rhododendron clearance has been assessed.
- Other water features throughout the site such as ditches, pipes, and the drainage chute (*Pond* K) will need to be maintained.
- The presence of Crassula Helmsii in *Ponds D, E, F, H, I, K, L* and *N* will need to be constantly monitored.
- Three / four surviving fishponds and several water management features are found in Randall Wood, which are associated with a medieval manor. These have some ecological value as winter-wet ponds, although their main value is

archaeological. Full details are given in *Section 5.*

Management Objectives:

- The ecological integrity of the ponds and wetlands found in Shorne Woods Country Park will be protected and biodiversity enhancement is a major objective.
- Species which are recognised as endangered at a local or national level should be protected, with habitat management focused on these species.
- The spread of non-native aquatic plant species *e.g.* Crassula Helmsii and Parrot's Feather should be in the short-term controlled where possible. The long-term objective is the eradication of these species.
- Randall Bottom Pond will be managed for wildlife. No loss of habitats or typical species should occur; in addition, management should aim to maintain populations of rare and scarce Kent plant species.
- *Ponds C* to *P* will be maintained on a rotational basis so that the cover of emergent vegetation varies between 10% in newly created ponds and 80% in ponds to be cleared.

Prescriptions:

- Every three years (approximately) clear emergent vegetation from Randall Bottom Pond so that only 40% of the pond area remains vegetated. Material should be cleared by hand and arisings should be stacked around the pond. Clearance should ideally be undertaken during late summer or early autumn when the pond level is at its lowest.
- Ponds E, F, L, K, H and N should be hand pulled of reeds on a rotation and a 1-3m margin of reeds left around the banks with 80% open water at the end of the clearance. Pond N was done in 2017, half of pond L in 2018 and Pond E in 2019 and Pond N again as it was very overgrown.
- Tree and gorse regeneration should be cut back to allow marginal plants to grow and reduce leaf litter in the ponds. Pond E and F were done in 2019.
- Maintain drainage system throughout site including ditch network, pipes, and drainage chute.

Pond reed clearance action plan

YEAR	POND	WORKS COMPLETED
2021	**E**	**04/21**
2022	**L- WEST SIDE**	
2023	**E AND N**	
2024	**L-EAST SIDE**	
2025	**E AND N and Randall Bottom Pond**	
2026	**L-WEST SIDE**	

Monitoring and Required Surveys:

- Monitor spread of Crassula Helmsii. Monitor effects on other emergent species such as Bulrush.
- Undertake regular Dragonfly and Damselfly surveys, at Randall Bottom Pond.

Further details of monitoring and surveys are given in *Section 15.2.3*.

4.10.3 *Randall Heath*

FEATURE – RANDALL HEATH

COMPARTMENTS – *Compartments 6a, 6c, 6e* and *7e.*

Photo 16- Randall Heath/The Knoll comp 6a and 7e

Policy:

- Lowland Wood-pasture and Heathland are local biodiversity habitats in Kent. BAP targets include reinstatement of positive management of key areas of wood-pasture and parkland to ensure the survival of old trees and their associated habitat.

Habitats and Species:

- Randall Heath (the knoll) is characterized by large areas which were until recently completely dominated by Bracken. This vegetation is referable to species poor NVC community U20c. Few associate species are present. In addition, there are areas of former wood pasture dominated by large Sweet Chestnut and Oak trees. Full details are given in *Section 4.4.*
- No specific species surveys have been undertaken but it is likely that it is used by bats (for foraging), Badger, birds, herpetofauna (in particular reptiles), invertebrates and other small mammals.

Management Considerations:

- Lack of grazing management in the past has led to the degradation of both the wood pasture and acid grassland. Today this area is characterised by an open landscape dominated by Bracken. It is believed to have been open heathland in the past, although it is unclear whether heather was dominant; it is more likely that the site supported acid grassland. Therefore, restoration of the Knoll focuses on the reinstatement of acid grassland habitat.
- Bracken control in the form of flailing has been used since 1992. In recent years increased effort (with flailing being undertaken between two and three times a year during its active growing season) has considerably reduced its vigour with frond size and density reduced.
- Restoration of the Wood-pasture focuses on the re-creation of a wood-pasture landscape with scattered mature trees and an acid-grassland dominated field-layer. During the winter of 2004, approximately 1 ha of secondary woodland was cleared.
- Three hectares of Rhododendron was cleared from Randall Heath in February 2007. Any regrowth is hand pulled as no herbicide can be used in the grazing area.
- In 2009 1.5 ha of regenerating sycamore and birch was cleared from comp 6b and the area flailed with a forest mulcher as part of the HLF funded works.
- In January 2011 a further 1.5ha of trees was cleared in comp 6 and 7 and the accessible areas mulched to remove the stumps.

Management Objectives:

- To establish an ongoing grazing regime on Randall Heath the long-term aims of grazing will be to reduce the vigour the Bracken and to encourage species diversification of the resulting acid grassland / heath.
- Continue current flailing of Bracken two-three times per year to reduce its dominance and vigour. However, it is believed that the presence of Bracken from Randall Heath will never be eliminated entirely as it is characteristic of this vegetation type. There should be no further spread of Bracken into adjacent areas. The long-term aim is the increase in number of associate species ideally with the community developing to a grassier sward such as U20a *Pteridium aquilinum-Galium saxatile* community, *Anthoxanthum odoratum* sub-community.

Randall Heath annual action plan:

- **Continue with current Bracken control measures *i.e.,* flailing of Bracken 2 to 3 times during its growing season (between May and August) when the fronds are opening.**
- **Undertake summer grazing by Cattle from May to July**
- **Cut and remove regenerating Sycamore and birch, control invasive weeds**
- **Identify future veterans and protect for the future**

Monitoring and Required Surveys:

- Undertake monitoring of Bracken to visually assess its dominance and vigour. Note any areas where it has spread into adjacent areas.

- Record the presence of acid grassland species such as the grasses *Anthoxanthum odoratum* (Sweet Vernal-grass), *Agrostis capillaris* (Common Bent), *Festuca ovina* (Sheep's-fescue) and *Holcus lanatus* (Yorkshire-fog) and the herbs *Galium saxatile* (Heath Bedstraw), *Luzula campestris* (Field Woodrush), *Potentilla erecta* (Tormentil), *Rumex acetosella* (Sheep's Sorrel) and *Teucrium scorodonia* (Wood Sage).

Further details of monitoring and surveys are given in *Section 15.2.3, p.115*

5 HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

5.1 General Introduction

The Community Archaeologist (currently in post as part of the Cobham Landscape Detectives project until 2019) coordinates the management of heritage features.

The site has a wealth of history and archaeology within its boundaries, spanning a period from the Stone Age (Mesolithic flint tools recorded on Randall Heath), through to the remains of the 20th Century clay working industry (which shaped much of the current park landscape). Amongst other features, the site also contains a World War II RAF billet camp which lies hidden in the trees, a World War II Army camp, an ancient hollow way/medieval boundary, a medieval windmill mound and a grand medieval manor house – Randall Manor - with numerous outbuildings which once stood with views down to the Thames.

The significance of Randall Manor was first highlighted during excavations in the 1960's by local teacher George Dockrell. In 2001 Oxford Archaeology undertook a walkover survey of Randall Wood (Oxford Archaeology 2001). This survey recorded 21 previously unrecorded earthwork features.

The 2005-2011 HLF funded project aimed to identify, investigate, conserve, and interpret the many different archaeological sites within the park, working with community groups.

5.2 Archaeological Details

Shorne Woods Country Park contains many sites that are listed on the Kent County Council Heritage Environment Record, including:

- The site of Randall Manor and associated Medieval ponds
- The site of Second World War RAF and Army camps
- The findspot of many Mesolithic worked flints

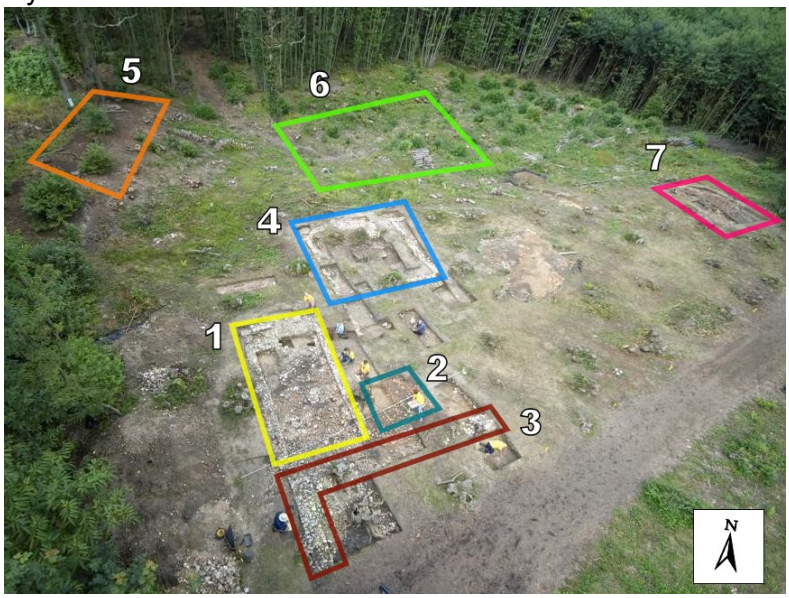


Photo 18. Aerial View of Randall Manor in 2008.

1. Later 14th century addition.
2. Fallen roof tile.
3. Northern end wall of main house.
4. 'Detached' 2-phase kitchen with central hearth.
5. Man-made dam to create the first in a series of ponds.
6. Second pond in the series.
7. Brewhouse

Other sites of interest include a medieval windmill mound, later a prospect mound on the knoll, several lynchets, banks and ditches (some of which are of probable medieval date) and

a sunken hollow way. Two possible plantation ridges of post medieval date were identified during the 2001 survey. There is also evidence of small scale, hand-dug quarrying of probable post-medieval date and industrial archaeology associated with the modern clay extraction pit (open from the 1920's to the early 1970's). The 2001 walkover survey noted evidence of coppicing throughout Randall wood. Historical research suggests that coppicing began in Randall Wood in the early post medieval period (late 16th/early 17th century). The location of a post-medieval hedgerow at a road boundary has also been identified.

Four surviving ponds and several water management features found in Randall Wood are associated with the medieval manor. The fishponds have become heavily silted (particularly the uppermost pond) but have well preserved clay banks, the fourth pond in the series still retains water for much of the year. The water management features are comprised of several dams, feeder channels and breaks (where there may have once been wooden sluices), all of which are in an excellent state of preservation.

Full details of these features are available in the Shorne Woods Historic Environment record stored on site. The latest information can be found online at KCC's Website.

The manor site is now buried to protect the feature and the location managed as part of the glade network.

5.3 Community Archaeology

At Shorne Woods Country Park volunteers are involved with archaeology through involvement in ongoing community archaeology projects. The current HLF funded project is Cobham Landscape Detectives. Volunteers can get involved in various ways: fieldwalking, tree surveys, LiDAR groundtruthing, geophysics, researching historic documents, artefact processing/research and small-scale excavations.

From 2006-2015 a community dig was held at the park, at Randall Manor. During the excavation, the main buildings of the Manor were uncovered and recorded. The vast aisled hall and stone cross wing building, the detached kitchen, Brewhouse, and various other outbuildings were all exposed.

Heritage volunteers have contributed nearly 44,000 hours to the park (measured between 2009 and 2016).

The Community Archaeologist has also been gathering information from locals and their relatives or friends, who either lived or worked in the area where the Country Park now lies. These memories contribute much to story of the wider area.

The continuing support of a band of enthusiastic, passionate, and hardworking volunteers has ensured the success of every community archaeology project undertaken to date. The group based at the park are now part of a wider area Cobham Landscape detective's group.

5.4 Management Actions for Heritage Features

5.4.1 *Randall Manor*

The vegetation will be managed as a woodland glade and rotationally cut to allow taller grasses and herbs to grow.

The felled coppice stools need retreating in some places as regrowth has occurred, in particular on the linear bank to the north of the second pond.

In the longer term, it is envisaged that with regular brushcutting, the manor platform will become an area of grass.

It would be desirable to move and improve the interpretation board to reflect the 10 years of research and excavation taken place. This will be subject to funding.

The extensive system of medieval ponds both to the north of the Manor and continuing north east into the woods need ongoing conservation management to prevent reversion to woodland.

Randall Manor 2015 from above

5.4.2 *The windmill and prospect mound on Randall Heath*

Excavation has demonstrated that this is not a prehistoric mound as once thought. Gravel was heaped up to anchor a medieval windmill. Later a small prehistoric folly was built on top of the mound, to take in the views of the area. This feature may be associated with Randall Hall, the former post medieval mansion in the valley below, on the western edge of the park.

Cattle will be allowed access to the mound within the grazing programme as they should not damage the feature. However, their grazing may mean that the mound and immediate surrounds eventually become purely grass (presently bracken and scrub), in which case action may be needed if rabbits move in.

5.4.3 *The Carriage Drive/Rhododendron Walk*

This has now been cleared of Rhododendron originally planted in the early 19th century. In some places the feature has a shallow bank on its western flank, and a slope to the east. It is necessary, however, to delineate the entire line of this feature to mimic its original look and to ensure that visitors remain on its original route. Replanting with Rhododendron is not allowed due to the site being a SSSI so annual cutting to the line of the oaks will be undertaken to retain the carriage ride width. The carriage drive maintains a historic link between the Cobham Hall grounds and Thong Lodge.

5.4.4 *World War II RAF Billet Camp and Army Camps*

The two air raid shelters have been converted into bat roosts by removing all debris, blocking air vents to increase humidity, putting up bat boxes and installing bat grilles at the entrances. The site needs regular checks. 2 nesting Brown long eared bats were found here in January 2016 by the KWT, and Brown Long eared bats have been found every year.

The foundations of several other buildings have been partly excavated and backfilled. The site remains covered in artefacts relating to both the World War Two use of the area and post war housing of families in the redundant camp buildings. A World War Two camp map does give a general indication of the Camp layout.

In the north east corner of the park the extensive remains of a temporary World War Two army camp survive. Excavations have uncovered the fuel bund base and canteen block base. The surrounding woodland is full of slit trenches.

The camp was used as a squatter camp until the early 1950s.

5.4.5 *Clay Works*

The only immediately visible feature is the wash pan which needs careful monitoring in the future. At present it has young trees growing in the base and sides – these prevent bikers from using the slopes but will eventually cause great damage to the concrete as they mature. One larger tree has cracked the concrete on the northern side edge and needs to be removed. The feature could become dangerous if the concrete is allowed to crack further.

The banks lining either side of the concrete road leading past the wash pan and mill have become much eroded due to cyclists. Their original profile could only be preserved if action was taken to prevent this; however, this would only be achieved through fencing, which is impracticable.

To the east of the wash pan, an air raid shelter presumed to be associated with the clay works has been excavated and backfilled.

Other building bases relating to the clay works survive in the undergrowth around the wash pan.

5.4.6 *The Holloway/Medieval Boundary*

As the oldest visible proven heritage feature within the park, (referred to in a document of 1614 as 'the ancient waie'), the hollow way is an important aspect of the Park's past. The profile of the banks needs to be protected, from walkers, cyclists, contractors, and Park vehicles. Deliberate breaching has already occurred in two places and accidental erosion has occurred in several places over time.

If crossing the banks in large vehicles is inevitable (as at the start of the extraction track near the Yew Trees) then measures should be put in place to protect them. These might include creating a temporary ramp or ensuring that deep ruts are not created in wet weather.

The banks all the way along the route should be regularly monitored. If a particular area is being eroded by cyclists or walkers then measures should be put in place to stop the breach.

the holloway to Shorne Ifield Road in comp 13a

5.4.7 *Mesolithic flint scatters*

The gravel geology of both Randall Heath and the Burnett was favoured by our Mesolithic ancestors. Both sites have produced extensive worked flint assemblages, suggesting repeat visits to the area through the Mesolithic and into the Neolithic and early Bronze Age. Though

these are not in situ knapping scatters (the flints have migrated down into the gravels, by sometimes as much as 1m), the identification of Mesolithic and later worked flint is an important addition to our understanding of Prehistoric Kent. The nearby Mesolithic site on the Plantlife reserve at Ranscombe forms an important comparative site to Shorne.

Path improvement works and/or clearance works on these sites that impact the ground should be monitored and any worked flint recovered.

6 VISITOR MANAGEMENT

6.1 General

Shorne Woods Country Park is managed both as a nature conservation site and a recreational resource; the provision of recreational facilities being a major factor in site management. The area known as Shorne Wood provides the focus of the Country Park and supports extensive recreational facilities. These include an arboretum, signed woodland walks (some of which are accessible using pushchairs and wheelchairs), a picnic site, adventure playgrounds, fishing lakes, volunteer garden and a combined horse and bicycle route. The site provides free access for the public the only charge is for parking.

FEATURE – SITE MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC AMENITY

COMPARTMENTS – All Compartments (concentrated in *Compartment 10*)

Photo 17- The car park and visitor centre from the meadow in comp 10

Policy:

- In 2005, a grant was secured from HLF for the provision of a Community Archaeology Officer and Environmental Education Officer, improved site access, interpretation and improve parking. This post was extended from 2011-2015 and has now extended into the Cobham Landscape Detectives project in the countryside surrounding Shorne Woods.
- From 2008-2020 Shorne Woods Country Park has been awarded the Green Flag award and it will aim to maintain this standard. From 2010-2020 the site gained a gold award in the South and South East in Bloom award.

Management Considerations:

- Shorne Woods Country Park aims to successfully combine landscape and nature

conservation with its role as a major visitor attraction, providing an important recreational and educational resource for Kent and further afield.

- The area known as Shorne Wood provides the focus of the Country Park and supports extensive recreational facilities. These include a woodland arboretum, signed woodland walks, easy access trails, trim trail, a picnic site, adventure playgrounds, fishing lakes, sensory garden.
- The Country Park must meet all legal and other obligations for its Environmental policy, Health and Safety Framework.
- Tree inspections must be completed throughout the site. The Country Park is divided into three zones for tree inspections; red areas are surveyed every year, amber every 3 year and green every 5 years.

Management Objectives:

- To maintain and improve the site as a recreational facility, enabling members of the public to enjoy the countryside both within and outside its boundaries. 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. In addition, the site management objectives will be to provide a resource for environmental education with reference to school groups but also for the public. The site aims to provide facilities for the education and information for visitors, to encourage greater knowledge and appreciation of the countryside.
- To maintain, improve and extend the path network throughout the site via a programme of regular maintenance and upgrade works. The medium-term objective is to provide a readily accessible network of paths that are easily walked and well surfaced throughout the woodland.
- The Country Park must meet all legal and other obligations.

Site management and amenity action plan

- **Liaise with the Thames Work Angling and Preservation Society at least twice a year to discuss site issues such as maintenance of fishing swims and bank-side structures on *Ponds A* and *B* and reed control**
- **Work with Skanska to ensure all buildings and facilities are clean and well maintained**
- **Ensure the café and visitor centre are open 363 days a year**
- **Maintain and plan open space network in *Compartment 10.***
- **Ensure path network is managed to maintain year-round access**
- **Ensure all site staff and contractors are fully conversant with KCC Health and Safety Framework. Undertake training where necessary.**
- **Ensure all volunteers' and local groups comply with KCC Health and Safety Framework, provide suitable training and supervision**
- **Ensure all site staff implement Risk Assessment actions.**
- **Undertake daily, weekly, monthly, and annual site checks as set out in *Section 7***
- **Undertake annual tree inspections, see *Section 15.4.2***
- **Undertake monthly inspections of site furniture.**

- **Undertake regular monitoring of amenity grassland as required during the growing season (along the site entrance, meadow, arboretum, and grass banks).**
- **Undertake rotational cutting of long-grass areas between the fishing ponds (*Ponds F* and *K*) on a two-year rotation cutting a third of the area each year during October and November. This was last cut October 2019.**
- **Maintain hedges on site ensuring that no nesting birds are disturbed during nesting season from March to August**
- **Liaise with neighbouring landowners.**
- **Consult with the KCC Tree Officer at Gravesend Borough Council if tree works are required in areas where Tree Preservation Orders occur.**
- **Consult with Natural England. As the site is part of a SSSI Natural England should be consulted regarding any significant changes in management and or operations of site.**
- **Communicate with the public, to provide information and to educate site users of the site's history, necessity of management works *i.e.,* large-scale clearance of Rhododendron. Ensure contact information for staff is available.**
- **Provide warden service.**
- **Ensure staff surveying for Great Crested Newt or Dormouse hold an appropriate European Protected Species Licence. Ensure appropriate training is available**.

Monitoring and Required Surveys:

- Undertake annual inspection of site drainage system for blockages of silt and vegetation.
- Monitor visitor numbers in the park.
- Maintain a record of the numbers of individuals attending events.
- Further details of monitoring and surveys are given in *Section 15.2.3, p.115.*

6.2 Buildings

In 2006 a new visitor centre was opened. KCC brief to Lee Evans Partnership was to design a sustainable, eco-friendly visitor centre which was contemporary, but firmly rooted in Kentish tradition. The centre provides a stimulating environment enabling visitors to interpret the use of wood in its various stages and to interact with the adjacent ancient woodland, meadows, and wetland.

Importantly, it also demonstrates best practice and renewable technologies in the expanding north Kent region to help inspire visitors to make a difference to the environment in their own lives.

Due to the site's location the idea for the building design was to use Sweet Chestnut in the building where possible or at least sustainably sourced timber. It was used throughout the building process, in the centre's structural, curved, glue-laminated frames (this design set a new British standard for structural chestnut), and in the external cladding and internal floor finishes. Due to the large quantities of timber required the Sweet Chestnut came from both

the Country Park and elsewhere in south-east England. In addition, Oak used for the doors, windows frames, skirting and external balcony banisters and stairs was sourced from Kent County Councils Parkwood site. A summary of design features can be seen in appendix 15.3.7.

The building won the SEEDA 2006 South-East Renewable energy awards and the 2007 LABC National Built in Quality awards for Structural Innovation. It was shortlisted for the 2007 David Alsop Sustainability Award in the IStructE Structural awards.

The main visitor centre

The Visitor Centre includes a café, outdoor kitchen with log fired pizza oven (a second was added in 2020 due to demand), toilets, interpretation centre (including information on the building and the unique HLF project to restore the historic, natural landscape in the Shorne area), and meeting venue called the Chestnut Room. This flexible meeting space has a self-contained kitchen and toilet facilities, with access to a balcony for tree-top views.

The Visitor Centre includes many eco-friendly features including the use of solar power, recycled rainwater, and bio-mass heating. The photo-voltaic panels produce a further 2.2 kWh of electricity. Where excess electricity is generated, this is exported to the national grid. Solar panels are also used to produce hot water for hand washing. The building also uses a rainwater harvester to collect rainwater to flush the toilets, along with a Bio-digester which digests sewage and other waste to produce clean water returned to the water table through a bore hole. The building is also fitted with PIR Light Sensors and waterless urinals. Both Klargester's must be serviced twice yearly, and the waste monitored by park staff to monitor water quality to adhere to the site Environmental Management Plan as per Environment Agency regulations.

The visitor centre at Shorne is heated by a biomass boiler. The boiler burns woodchip (produced by the park) which heats the hot water and the under-floor heating in the visitor

centre and office. This can generate up to 60KW of energy at peak output. This work is carried out by park staff and the timber never travels more than 1 mile from where it is cut.

Approx. 1 hectare per annum of Chestnut is cut for the boiler needs (100m3 approximately). Wood that is 100 to 150 mm is cut in to 3 metre lengths and stacked in a fenced compound in the woods. This is stacked with the butt ends facing the direction of the prevailing wind to aid the drying process. The wood is stored for 9 to 15 months, depending on drying conditions. Only Sweet Chestnut is used as it provides the best quality and most efficient chip.

The wood is chipped into a tractor trailer and stored in the work compound. The woodchip has a moisture content of around 30 – 35% at this stage. During the chipping process great care is taken by only processing clean timber in good condition. When the chip has reached the desired moisture content between 20% and 25% it is ready for the biomass boiler. The hopper takes the chip in to the boiler via an auger feed. The chip is burnt at the end of the auger feed and the ash from this process is collected in a tray and emptied daily. This ash is spread on the volunteer garden area the following spring.

In addition, to the Visitor Centre the old visitor centre has been converted into a workshop compound used for storage and equipment. There is loose log store, 3 bay woodchip barn, 3 bay wood products storage unit and a base for the Heritage team volunteers.

The Visitor Centre interpretation was updated in 2009 funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

A new amenity block was opened in 2012 in response to customer feedback that more toilets were needed. This has doubled the toilet provision and enabled there to be a small ice cream parlour nearer the children's play areas.

In 2021 a European funded project called 'Experience' funded the installation of a 'Changing Place' enabling groups that have specific needs to visit the site knowing that there is suitable equipment in place to meet their needs. The project also funded a rain shelter adjacent to the changing place and path improvements to improve access from the car park to the easy access trails and for wider walks into the woodlands on surfaced paths.

6.3 Car Park

There is a surfaced pay-and-display car park (for approximately 304 cars) with associated litter bins, road signage and way-marking. The tarmac area was resurfaced in February 2011 and the overflow car park in 2018. This car park has solar powered pay and display machines. ANPR cameras are used to monitor the car park.

There are two petrol interceptors within the car park to protect the ground water system from contamination, these must be serviced each year to meet waste permit requirements.

Car Park

6.4 Site Furniture and Signage

Type of infrastructure	Number
Small noticeboards	13
Large noticeboards	3
Orientation fingerposts	8
Waymarker posts	150
Orienteering posts	25
Run 123 posts	15
Fishing swims	27
Timber box steps	354
Stock fencing	6180m
Post and rail fence	1730m
Kissing gates	37
Field gates	11
Horse barriers	11

York Gates	5
Bridges	7
Sculptures	9
Ladder information boards	9
Site welcome boards	4

6.5 Footpaths and Internal Path Network

One statutory public footpath (NS 167) which is also a permissive bridleway (in sections) follows the northern boundary of the site. Other paths are permissive and open for use during the opening hours of the park, these include six waymarked trails:

- The Explorer Trail (green arrow) 6 km.
- Permissive Bridlepath / cycle path (blue arrow) 3 km.
- Heritage Trail (brown arrow) 3.5 km.
- Red Trail (red arrow) 3.1 km.
- Purple Trail (purple arrow) 1.4 km.
- Easy access and easy access extension (orange and orange checked arrow) 2.5 km: and
- Many minor unmarked paths.

Most paths are unsurfaced except for the easy access (orange and checked orange arrow) routes which is a granite type 1 base and granite blend (6mm-dust 20/80%). The wettest areas of the permissive horse/cycle path and other footpaths have a layer of granite type 1 upon a geotextile membrane.

In addition, the Country Park is also the starting point for several self-guided walks leading into the countryside surrounding the site; these include the 10 km Darnley Trail (black arrow) and a circular walk to Luddesdown.

There is a voluntary dog code. This code encourages dog owners to use the woodland and heathland areas through signage from the car park area, allowing non-dog owners to use the clay pit and picnic areas without encountering dog mess. In the latter areas, dogs should be on leads, and mess must be cleared up, there is signage at all entrance points. Dogs must be on leads for 30 acres of the site but can be under close control for the other 262 acres.

Run 321 routes were created in 2012. These are part of a nationwide sports England project to encourage beginners to get out running. A waymarked 3, 2 and 1km route has been installed alongside the trim trail and easy access routes in the park. These are promoted through Sports England's website and literature on site.

6.6 Marketing

The site is promoted by roadside brown tourism signing and is marked on the Ordnance

Survey map as a Country Park. In addition, Shorne Woods Country Park is mentioned in the County Council Countryside Sites promotional literature including the Council webpage – Explore Kent and a general sites leaflet.

An event proforma is used by site staff to ensure all events are managed effectively with a marketing schedule part of the form.

KCC currently employs a part time member of staff as part of the wider countryside team to coordinate marketing and publicity and staff from the Explore Kent countryside access team. This member of staff is responsible for press releases and adverts and assists with marketing and web site design. The website was updated in 2020. Nominated site staff manage Facebook pages for each of the main sites and the sites have Instagram accounts also. The archaeology project have their own social media sites.

A Country Parks event list is published on the web each year and posters advertise events on parish notice boards and in local shops as well as on Facebook.

The conference and education facilities at the park have specific brochures and leaflets offering a range of services and activities that can be booked.

6.7 Visitors

Visitor surveys (2004, 2007, 2009 and 2014) are carried out to ensure constant feedback is received about the park, copies of this can be found in section 13.3 appendix B. A visitor customer care survey was also carried out in 2007, a copy of this can found in section 13.3 appendix C. Green Flag judges and South and South East in bloom judges provide detailed feedback reports annually, which provide invaluable annual feedback on park management.

A summary of the findings from the visitor surveys is given below the first figure is from the 2004 survey and the second is from the 2007 survey.

- The main purpose for visiting the site was for walking, choosing this site because it was tranquil and clean.
- 20% / 19% of respondents visited the site once a week or more.
- 92% / 59% of respondents stayed for between 1 and 4 hours.
- 85% / 82% of those questioned were local to the area.
- 17% / 34% had first heard about the site through recommendation by someone that they know.
- Visitor satisfaction with the facilities at Shorne Wood Country Park was high *e.g.* over 90% / 89% thought the site was clean and well maintained.
- Visitors left the site with a good lasting impression.

The 2009 survey revealed that Shorne has a very different user demographic to the other KCC parks (section 13.2.13 appendix B).

- 6% of those surveyed were from overseas with 0% at other parks
- 42% were from social class C1

- 30% from DE compared with only 12-13% at other parks.
- 96% were satisfied or very satisfied with their visit.
- Over 60% look to the internet to get information about the site before they arrive.
- 93% thought the site was well maintained and clean.
- 43% were visiting with friends compared with 25% at other parks.

Three 'Tramper' mobility vehicles are available, free of charge, to allow greater, off-road access to the Country Park for disabled visitors. As of January 2021, the site had over 900 registered users.

The Audience Development Plan for Shorne Woods Country Park (2005) outlines visitor targets for 5- and 10-yearsyears' time. Key objectives to achieve these targets were through promotion and campaigns, to develop the events programme, improving disabled access and improving access to and within the site. A copy of the Audience Development Plan Executive Summary is provided in *Section 13.3, Appendix E*.

A customer feedback policy provides guidance on compliments and complaints handling and in conjunction with regular customer care training Kent County Council achieved a Customer Care charter mark for its customer care in 2008. A copy of this policy can be found in *Appendix F, Section 12.4.5.* KCC 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. Trip advisor feedback and Facebook comments are monitored and responded to where appropriate.

In 2014 new orientation signs were installed on the site boundaries in response to customer feedback. A customer satisfaction survey in July 2014 revealed 100% of people felt satisfied with their visit with 38% stating it had improved since their first visit.

A new customer survey will be carried out in Summer 2021.

7 HEALTH AND SAFETY

7.1 Health, Safety and Security

7.1.1 General

Kent County Council has a central Health and Safety Advisory Team, whose role it is to ensure that all departments follow corporate policies and legislation regarding the safety of both staff in the workplace and visitors to our sites. The advice that the Kent Country Parks team receives includes:

- Creative solutions to health and safety management challenges
- Advice on legislation and policy
- Advice and assistance on risk assessment
- Training and instruction for health and safety management
- Full back up and support following health and safety incidents
- Pressure management and change management staff support tools
- Audit services to check compliance and support developments

The Kent Country Parks team has a designated member of staff to take the lead on liaising with the corporate team, ensuring all park staff are updated on changes in law and that all staff undertake the relevant training to their position. All Kent Country Parks staff therefore undertake core training in health and safety when they begin in a new post, and then will be given further training according to the needs of their role. Health and safety areas that are particularly relevant to the parks setting, and for which staff adopt specified practices, include:

- Accident/incident reporting
- COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health)
- Driving at work
- Fire (and fire safety in the workplace)
- First aid
- Food hygiene
- Lone working
- Management of contractors
- Manual handling

- Occupational health
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Risk assessment
- Violent behaviour
- Working at height
- Safeguarding for children and young people
- CDM regs 2015

In addition, emergency plans have been developed for all sites (last updated October 2021) and are stored in all offices and at head office.

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 Officer 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 KCC approved contractor list. KCC aims to use local contractors and materials in all contracts where possible.

Risk assessments are reviewed annually and updated, when necessary, these are stored electronically.

All archaeology projects undertaken are individually risk assessed.

7.1.2 *Standard practices*

Shorne Woods 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 Countryside Wardens, see section 8.1. If any issues arise these are reported back to the Head Ranger who also ensures that the checks are carried out. They sign a weekly inspection sheet to advise the ranger team that all checks have been carried out

Standard instructions (see *Section 15.4, Appendix D*) for annual inspections including tree inspections, first aid kits, trailers, machinery, PPE are issued centrally. Some of these are carried out by authorised staff, others are contracted out to specialist services, and these include Tree inspections, PAT tests and fire extinguisher tests.

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 Officer who commissioned the work or for larger contracts an NEC3 Engineering and Construction short contract is completed. Any contracts over £10,000 go through a competitive tender process. . KCC 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.

7.1.3 *Risk Assessments and Staff Training*

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 carried out before all activities. An electronic version of all risk assessments is available, an example can be found in *Section 13.4, Appendix G*. These are reviewed annually by the wider Country Parks team with the last review occurring in October 2018.

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 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. This was reviewed in July 2018. There is also a volunteer Health & Safety manual summarising the most relevant risk assessments for the volunteer team. A risk assessment and policies folder is held at each site for staff who do not have access to the electronic versions.

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

7.1.4 *Fire Plan*

A fire plan has been undertaken for the site which identifies rendezvous points, locations of fire hydrants and safety equipment, vehicle access points, available water supplies and other hazards on site. The plan is for the building and the wider site. A copy is held in the site office and at the head office in Maidstone. The TFM provider, Skanska, also carry out a building fire risk assessment.

7.1.5 *Tree Inspections*

Tree inspections are completed throughout the site. The Country Park is divided into three zones for tree inspections. The annual inspection of zone 1 is carried out by qualified arboroculturalists, continuous visual inspections of zones 2 and 3 are carried out by park staff who have basic training in identifying tree health. This is summarised in *Section 15.4, Appendix E*. This policy was audited by insurers in Aug 2021 to ensure it was fit for purpose.

8 SITE MAINTENANCE

8.1 Maintenance of Equipment and Landscape

8.1.1 *The Daily Checks*

A daily site patrol and litter pick is undertaken by site wardens on rotation through the week, the wardens work 7 days on and 7 days off shifts. Consideration is given specifically to the car park area, picnic area, adventure playgrounds, Dog Pond, Easy Access route, Trim Trail and Pooh Lane. In addition, the five pay and display parking machines are emptied, buildings are checked to ensure they are alarmed and secure and the bins and dog bins are emptied if required.

8.1.2 *Weekly Checks*

Weekly checks are undertaken by the Site Wardens on a Friday and over the weekend when they are on site for a longer period. These include:

- check rubbish bins.
- check play areas (routine inspection)
- check Trim Trail (full inspection).
- check ponds and lakes.
- check life belts & ropes (full inspection).
- check mown areas (broken glass *etc*).
- charge all six 2-way radios on Saturday evening.
- check dog bins.
- check notice boards for posters; and
- patrol and litter pick following areas.
    - Purple Route.
    - Red Route.
    - Horse / Cycle Route.
    - Explorer Trail.
    - Heritage Trail.
    - extended Easy Access Trail.
    - check bridges & fish swims; and
    - Arboretum and volunteer gardens.

8.1.3 *Monthly Checks*

Monthly site checks by Site Wardens include:

- check stability of banks adjacent to paths.
- check Extinguishers and buckets are all in correct locations.
- check gates and kissing gates.
- check path conditions.
- check boundary fence.
- check internal fences in grazing area and on Purple Trail viewpoint.

- check orienteering posts are all in place; and
- check all picnic benches are still in place.

8.1.4 *Annual Checks*

The following annual checks are undertaken:

- testing of all tools and equipment *i.e.,* winches, chainsaws, trailers, electrical tools and appliances, motorised vehicles, safety hats and tools and hand tools.
- COSHH assessments.
- Risk Assessments and Occupation Road Risk Assessments.
- fire extinguishers.
- testing and checks of all buildings for general wear and tear, asbestos, and PAT electrical testing.
- annual tree inspection by an external contractor for all trees in Zone 1 areas *i.e.,* those where the public have day-to-day access.
- annual tree inspections by site staff for all trees in Zone 1 and 2 areas; and
- An annual check by RoSPA (The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) of the children's play area.
- The two car park petrol interceptors

8.1.5 *Other Checks (Depending on Season)*

- Winter ice checks around ponds to prevent access and ensure water-edge is safe.
- spread grit / salt on icy surfaces around the car park and around the visitor centre.
- check trees after gales; and
- check for flooding and subsidence on paths after heavy rain.

A record of inspection is kept for when weekly, monthly, and annual safety checks are made and by whom. The site inspection form is held at the park. A copy of the site inspection checklist is given in *Section 13.4, Appendix C*

8.1.6 *Other Checks including litter and vandalism*

The pay and display machines are maintained by Metric through a centrally managed contract with a contractual obligation to attend with 24 hours of fault reporting.

General waste is removed weekly from the site. Paper, plastic bottles, glass, and clothes. All compostable waste is composted on site either in the 9 bins at the visitor centre or the three large ones in the work compound.

8.2 Buildings Maintenance

Skanska have been awarded a 5-year contract to manage all Kent County Council buildings in North and West Kent as part of a total facilities services agreement. This includes all

works to the interior and exterior of the buildings. Issues are reported to a helpdesk then actioned. An SLA exists to monitor performance and financial penalties are issued if they do not meet their agreed targets. Site staff raise a task and then Skanska investigate and resolve the issue according to their priority protocol. KCC have a team called GEN 2 who monitor and manage the Total Facilities Management contracts for performance

The daily cleaner empties all the visitor centre bins and cleans the toilets, café and visitor centre on a daily basis and is on site for 3 hours a day, 7 days a week.

8.3 Brand guidelines

When signage needs to be replaced a brand guideline exists which includes ladder boards, main site noticeboards, waymarker posts, benches, and finger posts. All parks when replacing old furniture use these guidelines to ensure a corporate style is maintained throughout the parks service.

8.4 Site equipment and furniture

An inventory of site equipment is carried out annually and an electronic version is stored on site so that it can be easily updated. A map showing the location of site furniture including benches, bridges and waymarkers is also stored centrally and is available on request.

9 EDUCATION

9.1 General

Environmental Education sessions are available all year round. Students can experience the park's biodiversity, see the renewable energy technologies in action and explore the park's heritage. There is an experienced part time Education Ranger at the park to help teachers plan and design a visit to their specific needs, in addition to this education rangers from other sites and a group of casual staff are employed to assist with delivery.

The numbers of pupils led by the Education Ranger are as follows:

2014/2015	4338
2015/2016	4313
2016/2017	4403
2017/2018	4738
2018/2019	3700

The visitor centre provides the base for Environmental Education sessions and has classroom facilities. The classroom can accommodate up to 70 children or two classes. The room is available throughout the day for the exclusive use of the school. As well as the classroom, the visitor centre offers a shop, café, and toilet facilities. All activities are risk assessed and these assessments are available upon request.

Activities led by the Education Rangers include:

- Pond Dipping.
- Mini beast Hunting.
- Woodland Studies.
- Centre Tours and Sustainability.
- Natural Arts and Crafts.
- Sensory Activities.

The Forest School programme offers regular opportunities to all ages and abilities to gain confidence and raise self-worth through a series of hands-on tasks. Students learn basic forest skills including the use of hand tools to build a shelter, make whistles and pencils or other woodland products such as stakes or mallets. All students can benefit from Forest School including Early Years, students with behavioural and emotional difficulties and students with learning disabilities. All staff are trained to level 3.

A site-specific education pack is available to all schools to provide activities based on the national curriculum objectives. Other education information is available through the park's website.

10 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

10.1 Community Involvement

Community involvement at Shorne Woods Country Park is undertaken through working and liaising with Community Groups and by working with Educational Groups. These are summarised below.

- Conservation Volunteer Group – meets every Tuesday and is organised by the ranger team. Existing volunteers have won the Kent Environment award for their commitment to the park over a long period of time. The conservation volunteers contributed 2460 volunteer hours in 2018/2019
- Archaeology volunteers – regular activities, including excavation, survey and LiDAR work, research: on Wednesdays and Thursdays in the park and across the local area working with local partners as part of the Cobham landscape Detectives project
- Visitor centre volunteers contributed 1956.50 hours in 2018/2019
- The access improvements, for example, extensions of the easy access trail, site signage and waymarker style, were all designed in consultation with a disabled access forum as part of the Countryside Agencies 'By all means project'. A multitude of groups with differing disabilities took part in a series of activities over a 3-year period, encouraging them to come up with ideas to improve the site.
- An annual open day event enables members of the public direct access to site staff to ask questions and have an input into how the site is managed as opposed to just ringing up or writing letters.
- Currently comment cards are available from the visitor centre and a comments book is always available in the visitor centre.
- A Ranger attends the annual parish meeting in Shorne village and presents to the meeting a summary of the activities at Shorne over the year. An article based on that presentation goes in the annual parish report that goes out to all households in the parish.

10.2 Events

The site staff organise several events throughout the year to promote the site and to increase public awareness of countryside issues and the environment through fun activities. Events are advertised locally in the press and through the Explore Kent leaflets which are available at Kent County Council owned sites as well as on the Explore Kent webpage.

Events are planned on a pro forma that analyses cost, staffing, numbers etc that allows a good understanding of the success of all events that helps with future planning. All events are planned on a site-by-site basis then discussed in a group meeting with all visitor services staff, education rangers, marketing staff and managers.

A weekly Park Run occurs every Saturday between 9 and 10am. This is a worldwide 5k event organised by volunteers and the site hosts one of their events that any registered park runner can attend. On average 100 runners a week attend and on New Year's Day 2018 a Kent record 400 runners attended the event.

11 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The park's main income streams are:

- Rent income from Thameside Angling club
- car park pay and display income.
- café income from the KCC managed Cafe.
- income from certified ready to burn woodland products (logs and kindling)
- shop income.
- corporate events and functions,
- CPD training, INSET training
- Birthday parties,
- education groups,
- public events.

An annual revenue budget is provided by Kent County Council to fund the day-to-day operations of the park. Due to pressures in the wider organisation this is not enough to fund all site services, so staff are focussed on generating income to offset the sites running costs.

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 country parks service costs 28p per person per year to the people of Kent (April 2019) and has moved from 46% self-financing to 81% from 2009-2020.

Shorne Woods makes a profit each year so costs zero money to the council to run due to alternative income streams. Any profit made is ring fenced within the parks team so helps offset the running costs of some smaller sites.

The Countryside budgets are managed by the Ranger Services Manager and the visitor centre and café budgets by the Visitor Services and Events manager and Café manager. The Operations manager oversees all budgets. KCC have a policy of paying all invoices within 28 days of receipt.

Skanska manage the budget for the building's maintenance under KCC's Total Facilities Management contracts set up in October 2014. This is being reviewed in 2022.

Opportunities for additional income streams have been investigated by KCC special projects team and private consultants and upon investigation proved to be uneconomic for the site or the site has proved not suitable to the providers. These include:

- Green Weddings
- Green accommodation
- Becoming a camping and caravan site
- Music festivals
- Disc Golf
- Golf football
- Go Ape
- Mountain bike circuits
- Free running/parkour
- Selling Christmas trees
- Having a temporary ice-skating rink installed
- Private fun fairs using the site
- Having private retail units on site
- Renting land to private events
- Hosting fun fairs
- Launching hot air balloons
- Hosting farmers markets
- Hosting car boot fair

12 POTENTIAL THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Most threats are also opportunities, so this section is combined.

Lower Thames crossing

In 2017 the proposed second Thames Crossing route known as option C was selected as the favoured route. As of Nov 2018, the latest red development line shows a small area of the park will be affected by the widening of the existing A2, but no other areas of the park will be lost to the development. Further impact assessments are to be carried out to analyse the effects of the project on the local area. The road will be immediately adjacent to the west side of the park so will have noise and air quality implications for the rest of the park. Environmental consultants are carrying out surveys on site and the park is part of a preliminary Environmental Impact report.

In November 2018 Kent County Council held a consultation meeting with representatives from the Lower Thames Crossing to discuss potential impacts and opportunities with specific reference to Shorne Woods. These included the Stakeholder Engagement Advisor, Deputy Environmental and Ecology Lead, Environmental Stakeholder Coordinator, Highways Lead (South), Principal Consultant – Landscape Architecture for Highways England. This led to some constructive discussions about issues during and after construction and possible mitigation options and options for access and biodiversity enhancement.

The parks team submitted a formal consultation response as part of Kent County Council's response. The Ranger Services manager is on a legacy consultancy group regarding this and the KCC AONB team are coordinating a strategic response.

There is potential for mitigation woodland areas to be integrated into the park, improving the woodland habitat, and providing opportunity to improve access to neighbouring villages and Gravesend.

In April 2020 proposals for LTC suggest a 60m stretch along the A2 boundary of the park will be lost to the installation of utilities. Once these are installed the land will have to be kept open and free of trees. LTC propose planting an area of mitigation woodland linking the existing park to two privately owned woods called Puckle Hull and Lower Crabbles Wood. This will link 3 fragments of woodland so is a habitat enhancement for the area.

These discussions are still ongoing and projects will start in 2022 if the discussions are successful.

Organisational change

The transformation process of KCC into a primarily commissioning authority may result in a complete change in the approach to management of the site. The parks service has been advertised nationally for expressions of interest from companies who can add value to the delivery of the service and ten companies submitted proposals. These have been discussed at an operational level and the feedback discussed at directorate head level before being discussed at the transformation group and being presented to members. In 2016 the decision was to continue as per the existing model working towards becoming cost neutral. Continuing budget cuts and service reviews may impact on the delivery of the service.

Matthew Balfour, KCC councillor for Environment and Transport at the time, was invited to speak at the Select Committee for public parks in 2017 as the KCC approach to raise awareness of the approach to financial sustainability whilst maintaining high quality parks was deemed to be a successful model of approach for others to consider.

Climate change

Monitoring and observing change over time is an integral part of the park management with regards to tree diseases and the change in weather patterns. All aspects of management are affected by increasingly wet and warm, winters and prolonged hot spells in the spring and summer leading to almost arid conditions. The policy of letting natural regeneration take place as opposed to planting trees is key to this as the park evolves to the new climate, tree species that used to thrive will be replaced by new species that are more drought tolerant or survive the various tree diseases currently affecting our native species. Many paths that historically were unsurfaced are now topped to allow year-round access and timber extraction as they were impassable due to standing water caused by the increase in rainfall in some months, like October and November 2019.

COVID 19

The social distancing and isolation process in the control of this disease led to a complete loss of income from Mar 20 until July 20 as the parks visitors centres, car parks, cafes, toilets and play areas were closed and the parks were only available for local people to exercise. With the continued threat of lock down if the disease respikes budgets may be restricted through the loss of income so site investment will be reduced accordingly.

Due to the popularity of the parks during the lockdown the park was able to access some funding for path resurfacing so the existing easy access paths were resurfaced and the muddiest of the paths in the wider woods were surfaced to allow year-round access.

13 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The park will look to plan for the Lower Thames Crossing work by developing ideas for any funding that may become available over the next 5 years. A list of possible projects has been submitted to the relevant KCC team who are managing the council's response to the Lower Thames Crossing. The park rangers are involved in direct discussions with LTC ecologists regarding biodiversity enhancement works for dormice and for veteran tree management.

Park staff have attended forums hosted by LTC to start to plan legacy projects relating to the development and the park has hosted the LTC consultancy roadshow during the various consultations.

The park is involved in an Interreg project called the Experience project which is funded the construction of a Changing Place at the park. This project has also funded the surfacing of two old extraction tracks to link the main easy access paths to existing surfaced paths enabling year-round access to the woodland. As part of this project one off events will take place to create the 'experience' visit on top of the normal day to day visits. These will begin in 2022.

Service reviews will look at increasing the efficiency of the team and investigating any opportunities for reducing costs.

A new events and education booking system called Booking Bug was launched in Jan 2018 to streamline the customer experience and ensure customers can book events easily online. This is being annually reviewed and this year will enable customers to book their season tickets online and register their cars with Euro carparks for the first time.

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15 APPENDICES

*There is a separate biological records appendix available in paper copy and electronic version on site

15.1 Background Information

15.1.1 *Appendix A – SSSI Citation for Shorne and Ashenbank Woods*

COUNTY: KENT SITE NAME: SHORNE AND ASHENBANK WOODS

BOROUGH: GRAVESHAM

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Local Planning Authority: GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: TQ 682700 Area: 184.6 (ha.) 456.1 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 178 1:10,000: TQ 66 NE, 67 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1968 Date of Last Revision: 1981

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1988 Date of Last Revision: Ð

Other Information:
Part of the site is owned and managed by the County Council as Shorne Woods Country Park. Part is owned by the Woodland Trust. There are extensions and deletions to this site.

Reasons for Notification:

Shorne and Ashenbank Woods form a complex of ancient and plantation woodland and include a variety of stand-types associated with Tertiary gravels, clays, and sands. The site supports an important and diverse invertebrate fauna, especially its Coleoptera (beetles), Hemiptera (true bugs), and Odonata (dragonflies).

The woodland varies from pure sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa* coppice, in places heavily invaded by sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, to a more mixed broadleaved community, consisting of mature oak *Quercus* spp., sweet chestnut, and hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*. Although holly *Ilex aquifolium*, and yew *Taxus baccata* are frequent in the understorey, dense aggregations of rhododendron *ponticum* sometimes suppress the development of a shrub and field layer. Elsewhere bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, bluebell *Hyacinthoides nonscriptus*, dogs mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, and bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* dominate the ground flora, together with typical indicator species of

ancient woodland such as wood spurge *Euphorbia amygdaloides*, wood sedge *Carex sylvatica*, and wood anemone *nemorosa*. The locally scarce caper spurge *Euphorbia lathyrus* also occurs, often in abundance in recently cut compartments.

At Randall Heath an open area of former heathland is now dominated by bracken with occasional ancient oak and sweet chestnut pollards. Within Shorne Country Park an old series of clay-workings has been landscaped to provide wildlife habitats including a network of shallow ponds, which are developing an increasingly interesting flora and fauna. These include the plants blinks *Montia fontana* and wood small-reed *Calamagrostis epigejos*, both rare in Kent, and several nationally scarce insects including the ruddy darter dragonfly *Sympetrum sanguineum*, and the satin lutestring moth *Tetheela fluctuosa*.

The site has been well-recorded for its insect fauna in the past, with both Coleoptera (beetles) and Hemiptera (true bugs) being well-represented. Rare species include the beetles *Mordella holomelaena* and *Peltodytes caesus*.

The woodland breeding bird community includes hawfinch, marsh tit and all three British woodpeckers.

15.1.2 *Appendix B - Natural England's Views of Site Management*

A statement of English Nature's views about the management of Shorne and Ashenbank Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

This statement represents English Nature's views about the management of the SSSI for nature conservation. This statement sets out, in principle, our views on how the site's special conservation interest can be conserved and enhanced. English Nature has a duty to notify the owners and occupiers of SSSI of its views about the management of the land.

Not all the management principles will be equally appropriate to all parts of the SSSI. Also, there may be other management activities, additional to our current views, which can be beneficial to the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest.

The management views set out below do not constitute consent for any operation. English Nature's written consent is still required before carrying out any operation likely to damage the features of special interest (see your SSSI notification papers for a list of these operations). English Nature welcomes consultation with owners, occupiers, and users of the SSSI to ensure that the management of this site conserves and enhances the features of interest, and to ensure that all necessary prior consents are obtained.

Management Principles

There may be several different ways in which the wood can be managed to best conserve its value for wildlife - by promoting an appropriate woodland structure, by ensuring regeneration and by looking after the things that make

this wood special. The attached notes give broad views on a range of regimes that may be appropriate on your site.

A diverse woodland structure with some open space, some areas of dense understorey, and an overstorey of more mature trees (which may be the standard trees under a coppice-with-standards regime) is important. A range of ages and species within and between stands is desirable.

Some dead and decaying wood such as fallen logs, old hollow trees or old coppice stools is essential for providing habitats for fungi and dead wood invertebrates. Work may, however, be needed to make safe dangerous trees where they occur in areas of high public access.

Open spaces, either temporary gaps created by felling or coppicing or more permanent areas such as rides and glades, benefit other groups of invertebrates such as butterflies. They should be of sufficient size to ensure that sunny conditions prevail for most of the day. Rides and glades may require cutting to keep them open.

Felling, thinning, or coppicing may be used to create or maintain variations in the structure of the wood, and non-native trees and shrubs can be removed at this time. To avoid disturbance to breeding birds the work is normally best done between the beginning of August and the end of February. Work should be avoided when the ground is soft, to prevent disturbing the soil and ground flora. Wet woodland by streams and other waterbodies is often best left undisturbed.

Normally, successive felling, thinning or coppicing operations should be spread through the wood to avoid too much disturbance in one area. However, where there is open space interest (e.g., rich butterfly populations) adjacent plots may be worked to encourage the spread of species that are only weakly mobile.

Natural regeneration from seed or stump regrowth (as in coppice) is preferred to planting because it helps maintain the local patterns of species and the inherent genetic character of the site.

Deer management and protection from rabbits or livestock are often necessary. Whilst light or intermittent grazing may increase woodland diversity, heavy browsing can damage the ground flora and prevent successful regeneration.

Parts of the wood should be left unmanaged to benefit species that do best under low disturbance. In addition, lack of management allows for the operation of natural processes such as wind blow. Within these areas some trees will eventually die naturally, and dead wood accumulate.

Where they are a threat to the interest of the wood, invasive introductions such as *Rhododendron ponticum* or Himalayan balsam should, where practical, be controlled.

15.1.3 *Appendix C – Environmental Policy and strategy*

Kent County Councils Environmental Policy.

The Kent Environment Strategy, 2016

15.1.4 *Appendix D- Health and safety policy*internal document so no weblink*

H&S/SBS/Reviewed 18/10/2021/Next review 10.23

Kent County Council's General Statement of Policy

Health, Safety and Welfare at Work

October 2021

Foreword by David Cockburn Head of Paid Service

The Corporate Management Team (CMT) take very seriously their responsibility for ensuring that the people who work for, and other organisations who work with, Kent County Council (KCC) can do so in a safe and healthy environment. The people we serve and those with whom we work in partnership must be confident that we provide the council's services in such a way that risks are managed and minimised.

We do not just accept the minimum legal standards set by national legislation: we strive to promote a culture which makes KCC an exemplar, producing a high standard of health and safety practice in the things we do. Achieving these standards actively contributes to the overall quality of the services provided by KCC and we will make available sufficient resources to facilitate a positive working culture.

Throughout our operational activity and as part of continuous improvement, we realise the importance of integrating health and safety into decision making, project initiation and risk management processes. We remain faithful to the principles of sensible risk management we signed up to in 2008, and we continue to ensure that these principles are embedded across all levels of the council. KCC managers are provided with instruction, information, training, and tools to enable them to be as self-sufficient as possible in order to manage health and safety issues sensibly with support provided by the Health and Safety Team of professionally qualified advisers.

Whilst the final responsibility for implementing KCC's Health & Safety Policy rests with CMT, every employee must take an active role in implementing the policy effectively. I remind all employees of the importance of safeguarding the health and safety of themselves and others by fully supporting the measures KCC takes to meet the standards outlined in this statement.

---------- David Cockburn
Corporate Director, Strategic and Corporate Services
(Head of Paid Service)

KCC's General Statement of Policy on Health, Safety and Welfare at Work

1. Introduction, context and key messages:

i) KCC is required by law to set out its policy for managing health and safety. This gives us an opportunity to be clear about how we achieve the standards we strive for and to review our practices as an employer and provider of services and facilities to others. We recognise that health and safety is an important and integral part of all activities and relates to the efficiency and quality of services delivered to the people of Kent either directly or through partnership or contractual arrangements.

The purpose of this document is to:

a) set out our management commitment to health, safety and welfare;

b) outline the organisational structure and arrangements that are in place to fulfil the responsibilities acknowledged in the statement.

Health and safety is a shared responsibility, although we recognise that there are specific levels of responsibility and accountability. Everyone plays a part and all employees are required, as a condition of their employment, to comply with KCC policies and procedures.

ii) The authority appreciates the value of joint consultation and will establish and maintain suitable arrangements for joint discussion and agreement that will be effective for specific groups or the workforce as a whole.

iii) Devolved management and contracting out does not diminish accountability for ensuring that arrangements are adequate. Statutory responsibility cannot be delegated and must be recognised and agreed alongside the duties of other parties.

iv) It is important that this policy statement is brought to the attention of all staff and related organisations to reflect the fact that KCC performs its duties through its employees and others who provide services on the County Council's behalf. This policy statement is available in different formats if required.

The policy will be reviewed as necessary to take account of new or changed circumstances. This policy has been equality impact assessed to meet the requirements of the public sector equalities duties.

v) In keeping with this overarching, general statement, each directorate will establish and monitor how it satisfies health, safety and welfare obligations in the delivery of its services. These management plans may, in turn, be supported by service and establishment policy statements that set out local arrangements to meet the duties applicable to KCC.

2. General policy statement

i) General responsibility

KCC recognises and accepts its statutory responsibility to provide safe and healthy working conditions for employees, volunteers, clients, and others who use or visit council premises or may be affected by its activities. The council will also take steps to ensure that its contractors and partners in service provision conduct their activities in a manner that is safe and without risk to health.

The policy sets out general principles for protecting the health and safety of employees and others. It explains the management organisation and arrangements for securing the provision and maintenance of:

• plant, equipment and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health for all staff

• arrangements for the safe use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances

• information, instruction, training and supervision that enables all employees to avoid risks and contribute to their own safety and health at work

• a safe place of work, with safe means to enter and leave premises

• a healthy working environment

• adequate welfare facilities including facilities to accommodate pregnancy, maternity, disabilities, sex and gender identity.

The remainder of the statement covers the council's strategic approach to health and safety management in general terms. It is supplemented by directorate arrangements that recognise this policy as a 'parent' statement.

ii) Multi-user establishments/shared accommodation

Clear arrangements for health, safety and welfare (e.g. fire safety, first aid, maintenance and emergency procedures) need to be agreed between occupying parties (e.g. in Gateway buildings, or where KCC staff work on secondment in NHS premises). Suitable arrangements will be agreed in any such circumstances and an officer of one of the parties will be nominated as building manager to oversee the arrangements and liaise with the owner/landlord as necessary.

Business change programmes include early and regular consultation and communication of health and safety issues as a means of encouraging participation by staff affected by changes, including where protected characteristics may be adversely impacted. Programme Managers are expected to coordinate this.

iii) **Procuring goods and services**

Contract and commissioning managers must ensure adequate conditions and standards of health, safety and welfare in connection with goods and services they obtain. This requires consideration and application of health and safety standards throughout all stages of the procurement and commissioning lifecycle.

3. Organisation: accountability and roles

i) **Corporate Management Team**

The authority requires its CMT to implement this policy as an essential part of their management and executive duties. CMT are ultimately responsible for the health and safety performance of the council and will ensure that Members are adequately advised on health and safety matters. This will ensure decisions are made in line with the Council's policies and procedures.

ii) Directors/Heads of Service

The council is made up of four directorates: Strategic and Corporate Services, Growth Environment and Transport, Adult Social Care and Health, and Children Young People and Education, each headed by a Corporate Director. Directors and Heads of Service are accountable to CMT for fulfilling obligations relating to their areas of control and are required to lead and manage directorate health and safety practice through the organisation and arrangements set up within their directorate. Corporate Directors and their management teams will ensure adequate arrangements exist to fulfil corporate, directorate and service specific responsibilities and ensure that:

• safe working practice is based on a sensible and proportionate risk assessment approach
• accident/incident procedures are followed
• fire precautions and first aid provision are adequate and readily available
• emergency procedures are well considered and enacted
• training, instruction, and supervision provided meets the needs of individuals and is sufficient to protect others
• statutory and other necessary examinations of equipment and installations are carried out
• health, safety and welfare conditions and standards are monitored and reviewed.

iii) Elected Member with special interest in health and safety

The Cabinet Member for Communications, Engagement and People is the nominated cabinet member with special interest in promoting and monitoring health and safety. Regular contact with the Head of Health and Safety is established to engage and inform both parties.

iv) Managers

Managers have key responsibilities regarding the standards of health and safety at work in their service.

Managers must secure, monitor and review safe working conditions and practices within their areas of control and in accordance with requirements and guidance from senior management.

Managers must implement the corporate and directorate health and safety policies/ arrangements and ensure the provision of safe systems of work relative to their service. They will achieve this by ensuring that risk assessments relative to their area of work are carried out, and that resulting safe systems of work are recorded, implemented and monitored.

To make these arrangements effective they must provide their staff with the information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to enable them to minimise risks and contribute to the safety and health at work of themselves and others. This will ensure that employees at all levels have a clear understanding of what is expected and required of them.

v) Individuals/all employees

Health and safety information will be provided to all new staff on beginning their employment with the council. Individuals have a responsibility for their own health and safety and for that of others who could be affected by what they do or fail to do at work. They must:

• co-operate with the council in meeting its responsibilities. They must take personal responsibility for their own safety and that of others, including correctly using any protective equipment or work items in accordance with valid experience, instruction and training and in line with expected standards of professional conduct

• bring concerns about conditions or arrangements to the attention of managers/ supervisors so that remedial action may be taken to avert danger to staff or others

• report accidents and significant incidents to their manager or responsible person as soon as possible.

vi) **Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate: People and Communications (PC)**

The Corporate Director, PC, helps senior managers to discharge their responsibilities by developing corporate health, safety and welfare policy and by monitoring compliance and performance through the Head of Health and Safety. Commitment to managing health and safety is spelt out in the Blue Book and embraced in employee relations and in the delivery of staff care services.

vii) Health and Safety Team

A team of competent, professional advisers is managed by the Head of Health and Safety. Advice and guidance on any aspect of health, safety and welfare can be sought from the advisory team. The team also manages statutory reporting and recording systems on behalf of the authority. The team works closely with Risk Management, Insurance, Infrastructure, Equality and Diversity and Staff Care Services to co-ordinate and maximise the effectiveness of safety management across the County Council.

The Head of Health and Safety and the Health and Safety Business Operations Manager ensure pro-active links with the enforcing authority, trade unions, senior management and Members to secure consultation and make sure that key information, including equalities related issues, is exchanged and passed on.

KCC, like any employer, is subject to the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, 1974. The Act requires that a written statement is made available to all staff about how we look after the health,	Amanda Beer Corporate Director People & Communications	Zena Cooke Corporate Director, Finance

safety and welfare of the workforce. This statement is issued to you to make sure you know what KCC's aims and standards are and to remind you of the shared responsibility we all have for securing health and safety at work. Should you have any questions about the contents of this statement please speak to your manager or get in touch with a health and safety adviser. David Cockburn Corporate Director of Strategic & Corporate Services		
Matt Dunkley Corporate Director Children, Young People & Education	Richard Smith Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health	Simon Jones Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport
Allison Duggal Interim Director of Public Health	Ben Watts General Counsel	Bryan Sweetland Cabinet Member for Communications, Engagement, People & Partnership

15.2 Conservation Management

15.2.1 *Appendix A – Site Management Objectives*

Table 1 Site management objectives for woodland, ponds and wetlands, Randall Heath, and other site features.

No	Objective
	1. Woodland
A	The ecological integrity of the woodland will be protected, and biodiversity enhancement is a major objective. The diversity of woodland habitats currently present as identified through the botanical surveys 1999 and 2001 should be maintained with most of the site supporting W10 *Quercus robur-Pteridium aquilinum-Rubus fruticosus* woodland, W8 *Fraxinus excelsior-Acer campestre-Mercurialis perennis* woodland and W6 *Alnus glutinosa-Urtica dioica* woodland. No loss of typical woodland flora and fauna should occur.

	The ecological distinctiveness of woodland features *e.g.,* wood-banks, streams and path sides should be retained.
B	A large-scale programme of *Rhododendron ponticum* (Rhododendron) clearance has been undertaken since 2006. In total 22 ha of *Rhododendron ponticum* (Rhododendron) have been cleared by felling, stump removal and herbicide treatment. The ongoing objective for *Rhododendron ponticum* (Rhododendron) management is to prevent regrowth of any remaining stumps and the germination of new plants. This should be facilitated by regular checks by site staff, with, where necessary ongoing herbicide treatment.
C	Areas of woodland that have previously been managed as coppice with standards should be brought back into a coppicing cycle. Compartments where the wood is of an even age / or species composition will be gradually restructured to diversify ages and habitats by selective thinning.
D	A ride system, with scalloped edges and glades, should be established linking Shorne Wood to Randall and Brewer's Woods. Ride widening and scallop creation along west / east rides will be a priority.
E	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.
F	All veteran and or mature trees will be preserved whenever possible. In 2009 a Veteran Tree Survey (Treeworks, 2009) was undertaken which identified the location of all Ancient Veteran, Non-ancient Veteran and Notable trees. For each tree management prescriptions were included. This document should be used as the basis for planning veteran tree works.
	2. Ponds and wetlands
A	The ecological integrity of the ponds and wetlands found in Shorne Woods Country Park will be protected and biodiversity enhancement is a major objective. They should continue to support a diverse and varied structure of vegetation and a wide range of animal species.
B	The spread of non-native aquatic plant species *e.g. Crassula helmsii* (New Zealand Pigmyweed), and *Myriophyllum aquaticum* (Parrot's Feather) should be controlled where possible
C	Randall Bottom Pond will be managed for wildlife. No loss of habitats or typical species should occur, in addition management should aim to maintain populations of rare and scarce Kent plant species *i.e., Alopecurus aequalis* (Orange Foxtail) and *Isolepis setacea* (Bristle Club-rush). Clearance of *Rhododendron ponticum* (Rhododendron) around the pond margins has resulted in more light reaching the water, observations on any changes in vegetation should be made to monitoring future changes.
D	*Ponds C* to *N* are maintained on a rotational basis is that the cover of emergent vegetation varies between 20% in newly created ponds and 80% in ponds to be cleared.
	3. Randall Heath
A	To establish an ongoing grazing regime on Randall Heath. The long-term aims of grazing will be to reduce the vigour the *Pteridium aquilinum* (Bracken) and to encourage species diversification of the resulting acid grassland / heath.
B	Continue current flailing of *Pteridium aquilinum* (Bracken) two-three times per year to reduce its dominance and vigour

	4. Other
A	To maintain and improve the site as a recreational facility, enabling members of the public to enjoy the countryside both within and outside its boundaries. 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. In addition, the site management objectives will be to provide a resource for environmental education with reference to school groups but also for the public
B	To maintain, improve and extend the path network throughout the site via a programme of regular maintenance and upgrade works. The medium-term objective is to provide a readily accessible network of paths that are easily walked and well surfaced throughout the woodland.
C	In 2006, HLF funding was made available to KCC to undertake a Community Archaeology Project. This project included funding a Community Archaeologist as well as annual excavations at Randall Manor and Medieval Fishponds, candidate Scheduled Ancient Monument. This important heritage feature within the Country Parks grounds has become the focus for regular heritage events and the development of the Heritage Trail. The volunteers will continue to run archaeological projects within the park in liaison with park staff.

15.2.2 *Appendix B – Compartment Summary*

Table 2 Compartment summary providing compartment number, area, main tree species and age and long-term management strategy

Compartment Number	Area (ha)	Main Tree Species, and tree age and size were known	Long-term Management Strategy
Compartment 1a	0.7	Pure Hornbeam on the flat plateau, Sweet Chestnut dominant on the upper slopes with Silver Birch on lower levels. Hornbeam ca 37 years, dbh = 308 mm; Sweet Chestnut and Silver Birch ca 45 years, dbh = 140 mm.(2006)	As this management compartment is adjacent to the A2 road, it should be left as minimum intervention to reduce the edge effect from the road. The trees in the compartment act as a good visual and sound barrier to the rest of the Country Park. Remove any Rhododendron from the compartment. Trees adjacent to the road will require frequent health and safety checks to minimise risks to road users. This compartment is under threat from LTC
Compartment 1b	1.2	Thin belt of regenerating woods, on the sides of the former clay pit. Mixed woods 20% Sweet Chestnut, 20% Oak with Sycamore, Silver Birch and Sweet Chestnut. Trees of mixed ages, 25 years, dbh = 100 mm to 37 years, dbh = 320 mm. Sweet Chestnut ca 45 years, dbh = 240 mm.	This management compartment will be left as minimum intervention to screen the car park areas. Trees adjacent to the car park will require health and safety checks to minimise risks to road users.
Compartment 1c	0.2	Mixed broad-leaved woodland around former clay pit workings	Maintain as broad-leaved high forest under a regime of minimum intervention. Remove any Rhododendron from the compartment .
Compartment 2a	0.8	Mixed broad-leaved high forest, comprising approx 40% Oak species and Ash, 30% Sycamore, 25% Hornbeam. Area of heavy damage following 1987 storm. Subsequent planting of Oak and Hornbeam carried out in 1991-1992. Site staff have undertaken checks on this area to ensure woodland survival.	Maintain as broad-leaved high forest under a regime of minimum intervention. Occasional checks of plantings should be undertaken, although the trees do not now require weeding etc. Remove any Rhododendron from the compartment.
Compartment 2b	1.6	Storm damaged area has been cleared and partially replanted with Oak and Hornbeam.	This management compartment is adjacent to the A2 road, the main management strategy is that it should be left as minimum intervention to reduce the edge effect from the road.
Compartment 2c	0.8	Mixed standard trees mainly Silver Birch, Ash and Hornbeam. Rhododendron was cleared from this compartment during Nov 2008. Some clearance of Sycamore has been undertaken.	Maintain as broad-leaved high forest under a regime of minimum intervention. Remove any Rhododendron and Sycamore regrowth from the compartment.
Compartment 2d	3.0	Rhododendron was cleared from this compartment during Nov 2008. There are occasional Oak species and Sweet Chestnut standards. Some storm damage.	Maintain as broad-leaved high forest under a regime of minimum intervention. Remove any Rhododendron from the compartment.
Compartment 3a	1.1	Severely windblown woodland allowed to naturally regenerate. Rhododendron was cleared from this compartment during Nov 2008.	Maintain as broad-leaved high forest under a regime of minimum intervention. Remove any Rhododendron regrowth from the compartment.
Compartment 3b	1.5	Mature / over mature high forest comprising ca.	Maintain as broad-leaved high forest under a regime

		90% Sweet Chestnut, 10% Oak species. Under-storey of Elder and Bramble.	of minimum intervention.
Compartment 4a – Valley bottom below Randall Bottom Pond	0.86	Uneven aged high forest with open canopy and numerous streamside glades. Ash is the dominant tree, although Sycamore is abundant. Hornbeam, Sweet Chestnut and Oak species is occasional. Under-storey of Silver Birch. Rhododendron was cleared from this compartment during Nov 2007.	Maintain as broad-leaved high forest under a regime of minimum intervention. Remove any Rhododendron regrowth from the compartment.
Compartment 4b – including Randall Bottom Pond	0.40	Area of species-rich wet woodland dominated by Grey Willow. Rhododendron was cleared from this compartment during Nov 2007.	Maintain as broad-leaved high forest under a regime of minimum intervention. Remove any Rhododendron regrowth from the compartment. Management of Randall Bottom Pond will be required to maintain important populations of plants and invertebrates.
Compartment 4c – including Faerie Ring	0.60	Mature Ash comprising of up to 70% with Sycamore, Sweet Chestnut and Oak species. Under-storey of Elder with Ash and Sycamore regeneration. Rhododendron was cleared from this compartment during Nov 2007.	Maintain as broad-leaved high forest under a regime of minimum intervention. Remove any Rhododendron regrowth from the compartment.
Compartment 4d	0.84	Ash ca 50 years, dbh = 900 mm. Scrubby area with Elder and Rhododendron. Canopy of Oak species and Ash. Some storm damage. Rhododendron was cleared from this compartment during Nov 2007.	Maintain as broad-leaved high forest under a regime of minimum intervention. Remove any Rhododendron regrowth from the compartment.
Compartment 4e	4.48	Low density high forest comprising approx 30% Sweet Chestnut, 30% Sycamore, 20% Silver Birch, 10% Ash. Badly storm damaged. Rhododendron was cleared from this compartment during Nov 2007.	Maintain as broad-leaved high forest under a regime of minimum intervention. Remove any Rhododendron regrowth from the compartment.
Compartment 4f	1.31	Isolated mature trees comprising approx 40% Sycamore, 30% Sweet Chestnut, 20% Oak species, 10% Silver Birch. Rhododendron was cleared from this compartment during Nov 2007. Some storm damage.	Maintain as broad-leaved high forest under a regime of minimum intervention. Remove any Rhododendron regrowth from the compartment.
Compartment 4g	1.4	Self-seeded Ash woodland. . Hornbeam present on plateau. Self-seeded woodland difficult to age. Hornbeam ca 35 years, dbh = 320 mm.	Although the main management strategy is that it should be left as minimum intervention to reduce the edge effect from the road all Sycamore was cut and treated in 2010. Monitor and retreat any regrowth of stumps
Compartment 4h	0.13	Former car-park, now used for storage of timber.	This area was formerly a car-park and is currently used for storage of timber.
Compartment 5a	2.6	Regenerating woodland on steep bank left by former clay workings, including Sweet Chestnut and Silver Birch. Sycamore and Rhododendron both present. Rhododendron was removed from this compartment in Nov 2009. Sycamore was removed in 2010	Maintain as broad-leaved high forest under a regime of minimum intervention. Remove any Rhododendron and Sycamore regen from the compartment. Then undertake regular checks / removal of regrowth.

Compartment 5b	1.6	Formerly storm damaged high forest. Sycamore and Rhododendron cleared regrowth present. Replanted with Oak species, Ash and Hornbeam at 3 m centres. Rhododendron was cleared from this compartment during Feb 2007.	Maintain as broad-leaved high forest under a regime of minimum intervention. Remove any Rhododendron regrowth from the compartment.
Compartment 5c	1.8	Area of heavy damage following 1987 storm. Subsequent replanting of mixed woodland, with Oak species, Ash and Hornbeam. Site staff have undertaken checks on this area to ensure woodland survival. Both Sycamore and Rhododendron are present.	Maintain as broad-leaved high forest under a regime of minimum intervention. Remove any Rhododendron regrowth from the compartment.
Compartment 6a	2.7	Randall Heath – area of wood pasture under restoration. Open species-poor acid grassland / bracken with scattered mature / veteran Sweet Chestnut and Oak species. Rhododendron was cleared from this compartment during Feb 2007.	Restoration of the former wood pasture, clearance of all secondary woodland will be a priority, allowing the development of acid grassland or heath. All mature and veteran trees will be preserved. Bracken will be flailed to help reduce its vigour. In addition, the area will be grazed by Cattle to maintain the sward and in the long-term aid diversification. Remove any Rhododendron regrowth from the compartment.
Compartment 6b	1.1	Randall Heath – uneven aged high forest with storm damage, comprising ca. 40% Sweet Chestnut, 20% Silver Birch, 20% Sycamore, Oak species. Steep slopes with Rhododendron, Sycamore and Bracken. Rhododendron was cleared from this compartment during Feb 2007. Regenerating birch and sycamore was removed and the compartment flailed in Nov 09	Maintain as broad-leaved high forest under a regime of minimum intervention. Remove any Rhododendron regrowth from the compartment. The area north-west of the track will be converted to wood pasture.
Compartment 6c	1.5	Randall Heath – Bracken dominated with some Rhododendron and Sycamore present. Scattered individuals and groups of 40% Sweet Chestnut, 15% Silver Birch and 5% Holly. Rhododendron was cleared from this compartment during Feb 2007.	Restoration of the former wood pasture, clearance of all secondary woodland will be a priority, allowing the development of acid grassland or heath. All mature and veteran trees will be preserved. Bracken will be flailed to help reduce its vigour. In addition, the area will be grazed by Cattle to maintain the sward and in the long-term aid diversification. Remove any Rhododendron regrowth from the compartment.
Compartment 6d	1.80	Derelict high forest with storm damage comprising approx 40% Sweet Chestnut, 30% Oak species, 20% Silver Birch 20% Holly, Rhododendron and Sycamore present. Woodland age ca 40 years, dbh = 240 mm.	Maintain as uneven aged broad-leaved high forest under a regime of minimum intervention. Remove any Rhododendron regrowth from the compartment
Compartment 6e	0.65	Natural regeneration on the former wood pasture resulting in areas of open woodland dominated by Birch species with Rhododendron. Rhododendron was cleared from this compartment during Nov 2007.	. Clearance of some of the secondary woodland. Create scalloped edges. Remove any Rhododendron regrowth from the compartment.
Compartment 7a	2.4	Randall Heath – area of open acid grassland / bracken with scattered mature / veteran Sweet Chestnut. Rhododendron was cleared from this	Restoration of the former wood pasture, clearance of all secondary woodland will be a priority, allowing the development of acid grassland or heath. All mature

		compartment during Feb 2007.	and veteran trees will be preserved. Bracken will be flailed to help reduce its vigour. In addition, the area will be grazed by Cattle to maintain the sward and in the long-term aid diversification. Remove any Rhododendron regrowth from the compartment.
Compartment 7b	0.4	Mixed coppice comprising approx 50% Sweet Chestnut, 40% Silver Birch, and 10% Sycamore. Area of Silver Birch and Sweet Chestnut in marshy area in front of large house. Coppice coupe cut in two halves in winter 2001/2 & 2002/3. Silver Birch and Sweet Chestnut ca 25 years old.	Area of coppice which was last cut during the winter of 2002-2003. Undertake coppicing regularly in a cycle with the adjacent management compartment. If Sycamore is cleared introduce additional Hazel stools by layering.
Compartment 7c	0.3	Hazel coppice. Extra Hazel have been planted to increase stools when Sycamore removed.	Introduce a coppice regime in a mosaic with *Compartment 7b*.
Compartment 7d	0.8	Scattered groups of trees, with storm damage comprising 60% Oak species, 20% Holly, 10% Silver Birch, 10% Hornbeam. Elder under-storey. Some Rhododendron and Sycamore.	Maintain as broad-leaved high forest under a regime of minimum intervention. Remove any Rhododendron regrowth from the compartment.
Compartment 7ei and *7eii*	2.2	Randall Heath – area of wood pasture / open acid grassland / bracken with scattered mature / veteran trees.	Restoration of the former wood pasture, clearance of all secondary woodland will be a priority, allowing the development of acid grassland or heath. All mature and veteran trees will be preserved. Bracken will be flailed to help reduce its vigour. In addition, the area will be grazed by Cattle to maintain the sward and in the long-term aid diversification. Remove any Rhododendron regrowth from the compartment.
Compartment 7f	0.83	Sycamore dominated woodland with Sweet Chestnut standards and some Oak species. Woodland ca 20 years, dbh = 200 mm.	Although the main management strategy is that it should be left as minimum intervention to reduce the edge effect from the road, there is a relatively high proportion of Sycamore which should be selectively thinned. Some of the Sycamore can be ring-barked to create standing dead wood. Remove any *Rhododendron ponticum* (Rhododendron) from the compartment.
Compartment 8a	1.45	Area of heavy damage following 1987 storm – subsequent replanting of mixed woodland. Site staff have undertaken checks on this area to ensure woodland survival.	Occasional checks of plantings should be undertaken, although the trees do not now require weeding etc. Thinning may be required in the future. Remove any *Rhododendron ponticum* (Rhododendron) from the compartment. This area will be managed in the long-term as minimum intervention.
Compartment 8b	0.64	Sweet Chestnut standards and some Oak species. Woodland ca 20 years, dbh = 200 mm.	The main management strategy is that it should be left as minimum intervention
Compartment 9a – adjacent to A2	3.4	Large area of Sweet Chestnut coppice with standards adjacent to Brewer's Road.	Undertake coppicing regularly in a cycle with the adjacent management compartments *i.e., Compartments 9b*, 11, *12a, 12c* and *12d*. Glade F

		Sweet Chestnut coppice ca 15 years. Coppicing of 1 ha of material adjacent to main access track was undertaken during the winter of 2003/4. 1ha was cut in Nov 09. 1ha cut in Nov 15	created 2014.
Compartment 9b – adjacent to A2	0.71	Area of coppice Sweet Chestnut adjacent to Brewer's Road, surrounding car park.	Introduce a coppice regime in a mosaic with *Compartment 9a,* 11, *12a, 12c* and *12d*. Manage as minimum intervention.
Compartment 9c – on edge of clay pit area	1.22	Secondary woodland and Sweet Chestnut coppice developed on the edge of the former clay pit. Sweet Chestnut coppice ca 17-19 years, dbh = 140-150 mm.	
Compartment 10 – main amenity and recreational areas	21.7	Areas of amenity turf, rough grassland, and naturally regenerated woodland on the former clay pit. The resulting open woodland is dominated by Birch, with smaller areas dominated by Grey Willow or Alder.	This is the main compartment for public recreational activities at Shorne Woods Country Park such as picnicking, informal games, fishing, exercising the dog *etc*. There is a few patches of Rhododendron, and these should be removed. Maintain open space, manage margins for biodiversity by maintaining 1-5m wide strips
Compartment 11 a – Compartment 11f Brewers Wood	12.3	Brewer's Wood is dominated by Sweet Chestnut coppice with mature / veteran Sweet Chestnut and Sessile Oak. Some clearance of Sweet Chestnut and Rhododendron occurred during winter 2004/5. This was completed in Feb 2006 when Rhododendron was cleared. Majority of the coppice is of an even age and structure. 1ha was coppiced in comp 11f in Jan 14 1ha was coppiced in comp 11 e/f in Dec 14 1ha was coppiced in comp 11c Nov 16	Develop coppicing regime of Sweet Chestnut coppice. Increase structural diversity by cutting and treated with herbicide some Sweet Chestnut to prevent re-growth and/ or thinned to produce single poled stools. It is recommended that other tree species are left standing, to provide variation in canopy height and species diversity. Where safety allows, a couple of the Sweet Chestnut trees can be ring barked to provide standing deadwood for invertebrates and breeding birds. Create and widen some of the existing paths to creating a three zoned structure, introduce scalloped edges and create temporary glades into the woodland compartments from the ride. Remove any Rhododendron regrowth from the woodland compartment.
Compartment 12a	4.7	Randall Wood – Sweet Chestnut coppice with limited Silver Birch, and Hazel.	Large area of Sweet Chestnut coppice adjacent to Brewer's Road. Undertake coppicing regularly in a cycle with the adjacent management compartments *i.e., Compartments 9a*, *9b, 12c* and *12d*. Widened the east / west ride, creating a three zoned structure, introduce scalloped edges and create temporary glades into the woodland compartment from the ride. Remove any *Rhododendron ponticum* (Rhododendron) from this compartment. Glade E created 2014.
Compartment 12b	4.1	Randall Wood – Sweet Chestnut coppice with Sycamore and Hornbeam and Ash. 1ha of coppice cut in Dec 18	Large area of Sweet Chestnut coppice. Maintain standards. The long-term objective for this compartment will be to reinstate the coppice regime. Remove any *Rhododendron ponticum* (Rhododendron) from the compartment. 0.25ha Glade C created Nov 2009.

Compartment 12c – Compartment 12d	6.1	Randall Wood – Sweet Chestnut coppice with standard Sessile Oak, and limited Sycamore and Hornbeam.	Large area of Sweet Chestnut coppice. Maintain standards. Undertake coppicing regularly in a cycle with the adjacent management compartments *i.e., Compartments 9a*, *9b,* and *12a*. Widened the two main east / west rides, creating a three zoned structure, introduce scalloped edges and create temporary glades into the woodland compartment from the ride. 0.25ha Glade B (The oak glade) created Nov 2009.
Compartment 12e	4.6	Randall Wood – Sweet Chestnut coppice with standard Sessile Oak.	Large area of Sweet Chestnut coppice. Maintain standards. The long-term objective for this compartment will be to reinstate the coppice regime. Widened the main east / west rides, creating a three zoned structure, introduce scalloped edges and create temporary glades into the woodland compartment from the ride. 0.25ha Glade A (The grass triangle) created Nov 2009.
Compartment 12f	4	Randall Wood – Sweet Chestnut coppice with standard Sessile Oak. Young Sweet Chestnut of ca 5-8 years old. 1ha of mature coppice cut in Nov 2017	Large area of Sweet Chestnut coppice. Maintain standards. The long-term objective for this compartment will be to reinstate the coppice regime. Undertake hand clearance of secondary woodland growing in and around Randall Manor and Medieval Fishponds.
Compartment 13 a	4	Randall Wood – Ash, Oak species woodland with an under-storey of Field Maple, and Hazel. Local areas of Ash with Sweet Chestnut woodland with Hazel and Elder under-storey.	Manage as broad-leaved high forest with coppice. Glade D created 2014. Ride widened 2014
Compartment 13 b	2.75	Randall Wood –Alder dominated woodland creating area of Alder Carr along water course. Alder ca 45 years, dbh = 300 mm.	Manage as broad-leaved high forest under a regime of minimum intervention.
Compartment 13 c	1.45	Randall Wood – Ash, Oak species woodland with an under-storey of Field Maple, Hornbeam, and Hazel.	Manage as broad-leaved high forest under a regime of minimum intervention.

15.2.3 *Appendix C – Monitoring Requirements*

Table 3 A summary of the main monitoring and survey tasks.

Objective number, issue or UKWAS Requirement	Indicator	Method of assessment	Monitoring period	Responsibility	How will information be used
1A – Assess the population of Dormouse in Randall Wood.	Dormouse population.	Continue survey of Dormouse Population using Dormouse nest boxes.	Annually in April and November.	Site staff to conduct survey or commission external survey. Note a survey licence must be held to survey for Dormouse.	Having full details as to the population size and extent of range of Dormouse in Randall Wood will enable appropriate management strategies to be developed.
1A – Dead wood invertebrates.	Species diversity of dead wood invertebrates.	Undertake dead wood survey.	Once every 10 years subject to budget	Site staff to commission external survey.	Results of dead wood invertebrate survey may inform woodland management.
1B – Monitor establishment of Rhododendron following clearance.	Area of Rhododendron.	Undertake walk over survey annually post Rhododendron clearance. Check for stump regrowth and seedling germination.	Annually in April / May	Site staff or Contractors to conduct a walk over survey.	If Rhododendron regrowth has reappeared following clearance, then further management will be required.
1C – Areas of coppice and coppice with standards are actively managed.	Estimate area of actively managed coppice.	Record areas where coppicing occurs and calculate total area. Use GPS to calculate area.	Annually following coppicing *i.e.,* winter / spring.	Site staff to assess area.	If area of coppicing is not met, consider additional resources or revise management plan.
1D – Ride widening and glade creation	Estimate area of open space *i.e.,* rides and	Record areas where ride widening, ride	Annually following work.	Site staff to assess area.	If area of ride and glades is not met,

	temporary glades.	maintenance and glade creation occurs and calculate total area. Use GPS to calculate area.			consider additional resources or revise management plan.
1E – Dead wood	Estimate the amount of dead wood in all compartments.	Undertake a survey of dead wood in each compartment. Count the number of standing and fallen stems per hectare.	Once during the 5-year plan.	Site staff to assess area. As a minimum – 3 standing and 3 fallen stems per hectare should left.	Some dead wood may need to be created where regular thinning has occurred.
1F – Veteran trees	Veteran tree survey.	Visually inspect trees.	Annually.	Site staff to inspect trees and consult experts if necessary.	The veteran tree survey should be used to inform tree management.
1G- Pollard Walk	Butterfly survey	Follow transect set up in 2010 annually	Weekly from April to Sep	Site staff or volunteers using approved methodology	Used to monitor the success of ride and open space management. Part of HLF monitoring until 2021.
2A and 2D – Pond and wetland biodiversity is maintained.	Species diversity of plants, animals, and invertebrates.	Undertake regular botanical and animal surveys of the ponds and wetlands.	Once during the 5-year plan. Survey period to be determined by species group.	Site staff to commission external survey.	Results of surveys may inform pond and wetland management and vegetation management.
2A and 2B – Monitor Great Crested Newt Population	Population of Great Crested Newt	Undertake Great Crested Newt surveys using a variety of techniques *i.e.,* bottle-trapping, torching, and netting.	April to mid-June. Ideally annual survey,	Site staff to conduct survey or commission external survey. Note a survey licence must be held to survey for Great Crested	Results of surveys may inform pond and wetland management, in particular management of New Zealand

				Newt.	Pigmyweed.
2B – Monitor extent New Zealand.	Area of New Zealand Pigmyweed.	Undertake regular checks of New Zealand Pigmyweed.	During active growing	Site staff to assess area.	Extent of New Zealand Pigmyweed controlled where possible
2C – Maintain Randall Bottom Pond so it is suitable for rare and scarce plant species in Kent.	Monitor populations of Orange Foxtail and Bristle Club-rush.	Record presence or absence of populations of Orange Foxtail and Bristle Club-rush in Randall Bottom Pond. Photograph patches and estimate area.	Once during the 5-year plan.	Site staff to conduct survey or commission external survey.	Ensure management of Randall Bottom Pond is not having a negative effect on populations of Orange Foxtail and Bristle Club-rush.
3A – Monitor plant species diversity to assess effects of cattle grazing.	Number of plant species, in particular those that indicate acid grassland or heath.	NVC botanical survey following Rodwell (1991). The survey should identify main habitats and structure of vegetation.	Once every 5 years in June to August.	Site staff to conduct survey or commission external survey.	Assess changes in typical flora to identify necessary changes to grazing. If necessary, update management plan.
3B – Monitor extent and density Bracken.	Monitor extent and density of Bracken.	Visually assess extent and vigour of Bracken.	Annually during active growing season.	Site staff to assess area and vigour of Bracken.	Extent of Bracken will influence flailing requirement and grazing.
4A and 4B – Visitor survey.	Undertake a visitor survey.	Undertake annual counts of visitors using Country Park, use data from pay-and-display machines and consider using people counters on gates along main trails.	Annually.	Site staff to collect data.	Ensure Country Park meets visitor requirements.
4A and 4C – Record numbers of	Record numbers of visitors,	Keep a record of numbers of people	Annually.	Site staff to collect data.	Ensure Country Park meets visitor

individuals attending events		attending events			requirements.
4D	Record volunteer hours	Keep records of countryside and visitor services volunteers	Monthly	Site staff to collate and submit as KPI's	As part of annual report

15.2.4 *Appendix D – Pond Vegetation Communities*

Table 4 NVC communities and notable species found in each pond during the 1999 survey.

Pond	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	RB
NVC Community															
A5b	✓	✓													
A9a				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓						
S4a	✓	✓					✓	✓				✓		✓	
S5a		✓			✓			✓							
S5b					✓										
S6					✓										
S12													✓		
S12a	✓	✓	✓									✓			
S12b								✓							
S12c										✓					
S13	✓	✓			✓					✓					
S14a															✓
S14c			✓												
S17															✓
S19a	✓			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
S21a	✓									✓		✓		✓	✓
S22a											✓				
Notable species															
Crassula helmsii		✓		✓	✓	✓						✓		✓	
Utricularia cf ***australis***				✓		✓		✓				✓	✓		
Alopecurus aequalis											✓				
Chara vulgaris var. ***longibracteata***											✓				

15.2.5 *Appendix E – Ancient Woodland Indicators*

Species Name	Shorne Wood	Randall Wood	Brewer's Wood
Acer campestre (Field Maple)		✓	✓
Adoxa moschatellina (Moschatel)		✓	
Alnus glutinosa (Alder)		✓	
Anemone nemorosa (Wood Anemone)		✓	
Betula pubescens (Downy Birch)		✓	
Bramopsis ramosa (Hairy Brome)	✓		
Calamagrostis epigejos (Wood Small reed)	✓		
Campanula trachelium (Nettle-leaved Bellflower)		✓	
Carex pendula (Pendulous sedge)		✓	
Carex remota (Remote Sedge)	✓	✓	
Carex sylvatica (Wood-sedge)	✓	✓	✓
Carpinus betulus (Hornbeam)		✓	✓
Circaea lutetiana (Enchanter's-nightshade)		✓	✓
Conopodium majus (Pignut)		✓	
Crataegus laevigata (Midland Hawthorn)		✓	
Dryopteris affinis (Scaly Male-fern)	✓		
D. carthusiana (Narrow Buckler-fern)		✓	
Epipactis helleborine (Broad-leaved Helleborine)	✓		
Epipactis purpurata (Violet Helleborine)		✓	
Euphorbia amygdaloides (Wood Spurge)	✓	✓	
Festuca gigantea (Giant Fescue)		✓	
Holcus mollis (Creeping Soft grass)		✓	
Hyacinthoides non-scripta (Bluebell)	✓	✓	✓
Hypericum androsaemum (Tutsan)	✓		
Ilex aquifolium (Holly)	✓	✓	✓
Lamiastrum galeobdolon (Yellow Archangel)	✓	✓	✓
Luzula forsteri (Southern Woodrush)	✓	✓	
Luzula pilosa (Hairy Woodrush)		✓	
Lysimachia nemorum (Yellow Pimpernel)	✓	✓	
Moerhingia trinerva (Three-veined sandwort)	✓		
Melica uniflora (Wood Melick)		✓	
Milium effusum (Wood Millet)	✓	✓	
Oxalis acetosella (Wood-sorrel)	✓	✓	
Pimpinella major (Greater Burnet-saxifrage)		✓	
Poa nemoralis (Wood Meadow-grass)		✓	✓
Populus tremula (Aspen)		✓	
Primula vulgaris (Primrose)	✓	✓	
Prunus avium (Wild Cherry)		✓	
Quercus petraea (Sessile Oak)		✓	✓
Ribes rubrum (Redcurrant)	✓		
Rosa arvensis (Field-rose)		✓	
Sorbus aucuparia (Rowan)		✓	
Veronica montana (Wood Speedwell)	✓	✓	
Viburnum opulus (Guelder-rose)		✓	
Viola cf *reichenbachiana* (Early Dog-violet)	✓		
TOTAL	**20**	**37**	**9**

15.2.6

Incidental sighting records from Ranger notes, for pre-2020 data see 2015-2020 management plan

Incidental records 2021

Feb 21- Buzzard in comp 12a

April 21- Slow worm in comp 9a

Grass snake in comp 9a

Grass snake in comp 10 by pond L

Gras snake in comp 10 by pond E

15.2.7 *Appendix Ja – Past Management Post 2020*

For records from 2005-2020 see the Shorne Woods management plans 2005-2010, 2010-15 and 2015-20, daily records are kept in a workbook kept on site

YEAR	WHO	Comp	Works carried out
Jan 2021	Rangers	12a	Cut zones 2 and 3 of ride 11
	Rangers	12a	Cut dead Phytophthora stems, stacked up as habitat piles
Feb 2021	Rangers	12b,12c	Cut dead Phytophthora stems, stacked up as habitat piles
	Rangers	12a	Cut zones 2 and 3 of ride 2 from glade E to concrete Road
	Rangers	10	Cut vegetation from around pond E and F
		10	Installed overflow sluice on pond L
		10	Carried out fence repairs in car park
Mar 2021	Rangers	8a	Cut phytophthora dead stems
April 2021	Rangers	10	Repaired slide base
	Rangers and volunteers	10	Path edging from the sword pond to the red trail steps
	Contractor	10	Car park sleeper edges replaced
	Rangers		Processed 100m3 of woodchip for the boiler
May 21	Rangers	13	Resurfaced shared user route along Randall Wood boundary
	Contractor	10	Replaced all footbridges on easy access trail
	Rangers and volunteers	10	Fence repairs all over claypit area
	Rangers and volunteers	1	Rhodi hand pulled adjacent to A2 gate entrance
	Rangers	12	Repaired bridge and culvert at the foot of the scammels
	Rangers	10	Replaced fishermans gate out of car park
	Rangers	12d	Resurfaced extraction track from back of fishing lake to shared user route
	Rangers and volunteers	9	Repaired boundary fence from horse crossing to first kissing gate
June 21	Rangers	10	All amenity grass areas flailed
	Rangers	10	Replaced damaged trim trail bases

	Rangers	all	Replaced rotting waymarker posts
	Rangers	10	Unblocked culverts from claypit to Randall Wood boundary
	Rangers	12f	Cleared vegetation off of Randall Manor site
	Rangers and volunteers	all	Strimmed path network, front entrance and visitor areas
	Rangers and volunteers	10	Weeded car park edge and area
	Rangers and volunteers	10	Replaced post and rail fence along car park edge and attached netting to stop rubbish
	Contractors		Entire easy access and easy access extension path network resurfaced as part of covid relief works Tarmac entrance into overflow car park resurfaced Paths from car park into Country Park tarmacked Changing place installed as part of experience project
July 21	Rangers and volunteers		Strimmed all path network, front entrance and visitor areas
	Rangers	6 and 7	6.5ha of acid grassland on The Knoll flailed
	Rangers		Extracted felled timber from coppice areas and ride network
Aug 21	Rangers	10	ROSPA repairs carried out in play areas
	Rangers and volunteers		Strimmed all path network, front entrance and visitor areas
	Rangers		Started to process logs for winter selling
			Achieved ready to burn certification
		11f	Installed gate in Brewers Wood onto Mr Peters land by lime tree as per legal agreement.
			Finished woodchip processing for boiler
	Rangers and volunteers	10	Prepared base for suds surfacing under rope climb, type 1 and edging.
Sep 21	Contractor	10	SUDS surfacing installed
	rangers	10	New bridge and gate installed in play area
	Rangers and volunteers	10	Replaced steps next to embankment slde
	Rangers and volunteers	10	Cut all hedges on site
	Rangers		Cut ride network zone 1 areas
		6 and 7	Cut 6.5ha of acid grassland on the knoll
		Pond L	Education pond reeds pulled
Oct 21	Rangers and volunteers	9	Replaced boundary fence sections along Brewers Rd
	Rangers		Replaced oak ladder sign posts
			Knoll and ride zone 1 and glades flailed
			H and S tree work started
			8 benches installed
			Cardiac Hill path strimmed
Nov 21			Boiler lit
			14 benches installed on easy access network
	Rangers and volunteers		Prepared dragin swing and saturn orbiter for wetpour, dug out bark and layed type 1
	Rangers and volunteers	13	Brushcut sunken lane

Dec 21	Rangers and volunteers		Rides 3,4,5 zones 2 and 3 cut
2022			
Jan 2022	Rangers		Ride widening work completed on 3,4,5
			Ride widening in oak glade commenced
			Sleeper edges in overflow car park replaced and white corner marker posts replaced

15.3 Visitor Management

15.3.1 *Appendix A – Marketing Checklist*

KCC COUNTRY PARKS	
PROFORMA FOR EVENT EVALUATION	
Park:	Shorne Woods
Lead Officer:	
Event Name:	
Event Objectives	
Event Date:	
Number of Attendees:	
Was this event suitable for disabled people? If not, why?	
Secondary Spend:	
Third Party Involvement:	

Event Revenue			**£**
	Price	**Quantity**	**Total**
Room Hire:			**0.00**
Food:			**0.00**
Drink:			**0.00**
Event (Ticket Sales):			**0.00**
Parking Income:			**0.00**
Other Revenue:			**0.00**
Total Revenue:			**0.00**

Event Costs			**£**
Staff Costs:			
Equipment Hire Costs:			
Events Materials Costs:			
Entertainment Costs:			
Catering/Drink Costs:			
Other Costs:			
Total Costs of Event:			**0.00**
Profit/(Loss) on Event:			**0.00**

Were the objectives met?	
If not, what was different to expected?	
What would you have done differently?	
Were there any external factors affecting the event?	
Any other comments?	
Date:	

15.3.2 *Appendix B – Visitor Survey*

APPENDIX V: Shorne Wood Country Park - Visitor Survey April 2004

	Results	Percentage of Total
Have you visited Shorne Wood Country Park before?		
Yes	84	84%
No	16	16%
If yes, how often do you visit?		
Almost every day	11	11%
At least once a week	20	20%
At least once a month	22	22%
Within the last 6 months	23	23%
Between 6 months and a year	6	6%
Longer than 1 year ago	2	2%
What day do you usually visit?		
Weekday	11	11%
Saturday	19	19%
Sunday	31	31%
No specific day	39	39%
How do you know about the Country Park?		
Live locally	61	61%
Road signs	12	12%
Friends and family	17	17%
Local information centre/library	5	5%
Press	3	3%
Which paper:		
Kent Magazine	1	1%
Local Canal Leaflet	1	1%
Kent County Council Press	1	1%
TV/Radio	0	0%
Which channel/radio station:		
Internet	1	1%
Other	1	1%
How long has your visit lasted?		
½ hour	4	4%
¾ hour	4	4%
1 hour	35	35%
1 ½ hour	20	20%
2 hours	23	23%
2 ½ hours	2	2%
3 hours	8	8%
more than 3 hours	4	4%
What did you do during your visit?		
Walking	54	54%
Dog walking	43	43%
Wildlife watching	16	16%
Fishing	0	0%

Visited the café	41	41%
Playing with the kids	39	39%
Picnic	17	17%
Travel rest stop	0	0%
Attending an event	0	0%
Other (specify)		
Cycling	2	2%
Jogging	2	2%
Meeting a friend	1	1%

Did you use any walking trails?

Yes	79	79%
No	21	21%

If yes, which ones?

Orange (easy access)	17	17%
Purple (extended easy access)	20	20%
Red (Knoll route)	49	49%
Horse/cycle (longest route)	13	13%
Yellow Circular (wider countryside)	8	8%

Did you visit the Park specifically for the easy access?

Yes	27	27%
No	73	73%

Do you consider yourself to have a disability that limits your daily activities?

Yes	9	9%
No	91	91%

If yes: how would you describe your disability?

Ambulant		
i) Difficulty walking up and down stairs	6	6%
ii) Difficulty walking for 100 meters on the level	1	1%
iii) Unable to walk	1	1%
Ambulant Total	8	8%
Visual	0	0%
Hearing	2	2%
Mental Health Difficulties	1	1%
Learning Difficulties	0	0%

Did you visit the Sensory Garden?

Yes	29	29%
No	71	71%

Have you read the site's leaflet?

Yes	33	33%
No	67	67%
If yes, was it:		% of Yes
Interesting?	24	73%
Informative?	29	88%
Easy to read?	21	64%

Have you visited the Discovery Centre?		
Yes	36	36%
No	64	64%
If yes, were the displays:		% of Yes
Interesting?	22	61%
Informative?	16	44%
Easy to read?	19	53%
Enjoyable?	16	44%

Would you like to learn more about Shorne Wood and the local area?		
Yes	59	59%
No	41	41%
If yes, what are you interested in?		% of Yes
General/Anything	14	24%
History	16	27%
Different walks	12	20%
Locality	3	5%
Conservation	1	2%
Outdoor activities for children	3	5%
Nature/Wildlife	9	15%
Countryside	1	2%
Management schemes	1	2%
Soil/Geology	1	2%
Bat night	1	2%

What do you like most about the site?		
Easy access & trail choice	21	21%
Freedom/Terrain	10	10%
Nice walks for dogs	7	7%
Varied woodland	15	15%
Local	1	1%
Waymarked routes	5	5%
Tranquil/Clean	25	25%
Lots for children/families	9	9%
Activities	2	2%
Wildlife	3	3%
Safe	1	1%
Café	1	1%
Friendly staff	2	2%
Non commercial	1	1%

What would you like us to do to improve your visit?		
Nothing	40	40%
Free car parking	2	2%
Longer/Shorter routes	3	3%
More dog/litter bins	10	10%
Better signage/site information	7	7%
Café open more often	6	6%
Open/fix visitor centre interactives	2	2%
Open earlier/later	4	4%
No dogs/under control	3	3%
Animals	1	1%

Seating	3	3%
Boot cleaning area	1	1%
Bar/beer tent	2	2%
Pond maintained/clear up	4	4%
Rubber safety mats around swings	1	1%
BBQ	1	1%
Cyclists/horses off footpaths	2	2%

Would you like to explore the countryside surrounding Shorne Wood Country Park?

Yes	75	75%
Where?		% of Yes
Anywhere/Everywhere	44	59%
Locally	4	5%
Cobham	6	8%
Ifield Shorne	1	1%
Randell Wood	3	4%
Shorne Mead	2	3%
Chalk	1	1%
Marshes	1	1%
Village walks	1	1%
Ashenbank	2	3%
The ponds	1	1%
No	25	25%
Why?		% of Yes
Not practical with children	1	4%
The park is enough	3	12%

Do you use the foot, cycle and/or bridle paths surrounding the Country Park?

Yes	35	35%
No	65	65%

Do you know where the foot, cycle and bridle paths are?

Yes	42	42%
No	58	58%

Have you visited other KCC Country Park's in Kent?

Yes	72	72%
If yes, which ones?		
Riverside	21	29%
Camer	34	47%
Beacon Wood	13	18%
Trosley	27	38%
Manor Park	1	1%
Darenth	1	1%
Ashenbank	7	10%
Franks Park	1	1%
Cobham Woods	2	3%
Perry Woods	1	1%
Capstone	8	11%
Blue Bell Hill	1	1%

Moat Park	3	4%
Knoll Park	2	3%
Lulingstone	1	1%
Haysden	1	1%
No	18	18%
Don't know	10	10%

To which age and gender group do you belong?

Male:		
Under 10	0	0%
10-18	0	0%
18-24	3	3%
25-34	11	11%
35-44	19	19%
45-54	16	16%
55-64	5	5%
65+	3	3%
Male total:	57	57%
Female:		
Under 10	0	0%
10-18	0	0%
18-24	0	0%
25-34	12	12%
35-44	11	11%
45-54	10	10%
55-64	8	8%
65+	2	2%
Female total:	43	43%

Are you in a group of more than two people?

Yes	51	51%
No	49	49%

Number of groups containing:		% of Groups:
Under 10		0%
10-18		0%
18-24		0%
25-34		0%
35-44		0%
45-54		0%
55-64		0%
65+		0%

To which ethnic group do you belong?

White Total:	97	97%
British	87	87%
Irish	3	3%
Other White	7	7%
Mixed Total:	0	0%
White & Black Caribbean	0	0%
White & Black African	0	0%
White & Asian	0	0%
Other Mixed	0	0%

Asian/Asian British Total:	2	2%
Indian	2	2%
Pakistani	0	0%
Bangladeshi	0	0%
Other Asian	0	0%
Black/Black British Total:	1	1%
Caribbean	1	1%
African	0	0%
Black other	0	0%
Chinese	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Refused	0	0%

Which of these activities best describes what you are doing at present?

Employed in full time job (30 hours + per week)	49	49%
Employed in part time job (under 30 hours per week)	14	14%
Self-employed (full or part time)	8	8%
On a Government supported training programme	0	0%
Full time education at school, college or university	2	2%
Unemployed and available for work	4	4%
Permanently sick/disabled	4	4%
Retired from work	9	9%
Looking after the home	9	9%
Doing something else (specify):		
Voluntry work	1	1%

Where have you travelled from?

Gravesham Borough/Dartford Borough/Medway	85	85%
Nearest Town:		
Erith	1	1%
Wrotham	1	1%
Thurrock Essex	1	1%
London	5	5%
Bexley	3	3%
Sevenoaks	1	1%
Hampshire	1	1%
Bromley	1	1%
Norfolk	1	1%
Overseas (specify)		

Do you live in a town or in the countryside?

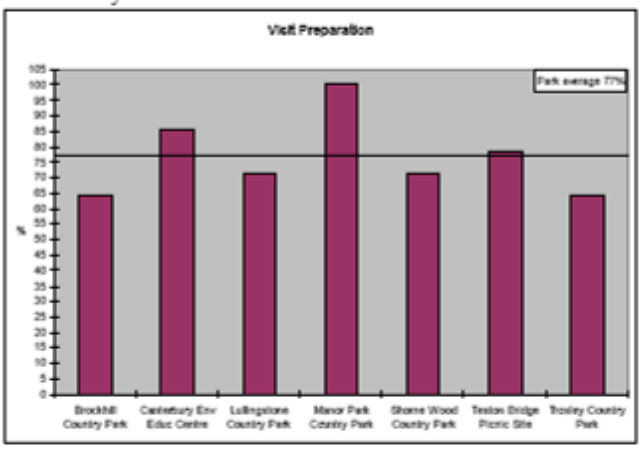
Town	70	70%
Countryside	26	26%
Don't know	4	4%

15.3.3 *Appendix C – Customer Care Standard Survey*

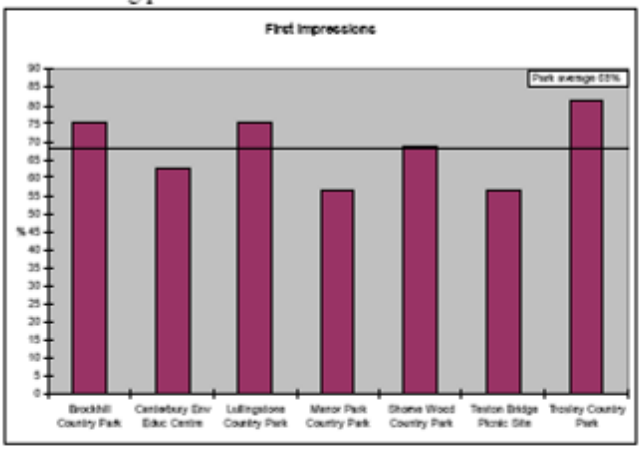
Summary of Customer care standards survey 2007

This survey was carried out as part of a wider Kent County Council mystery shopper visit and will be repeated to provide comparative information on standards. The survey was carried out by Kent County Council staff from outside of the Country Parks team and involved random visits to a given site.

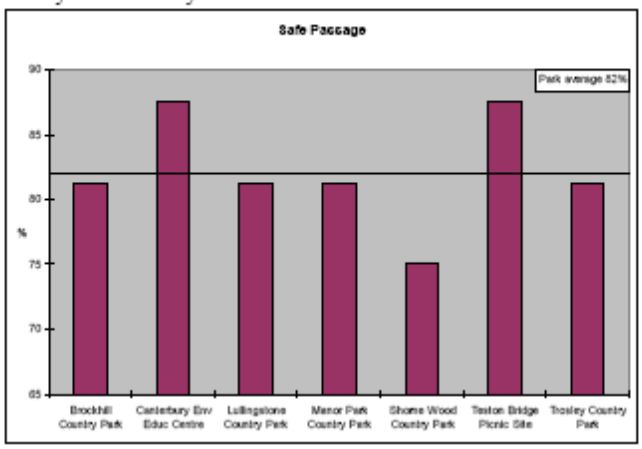
Availability of information



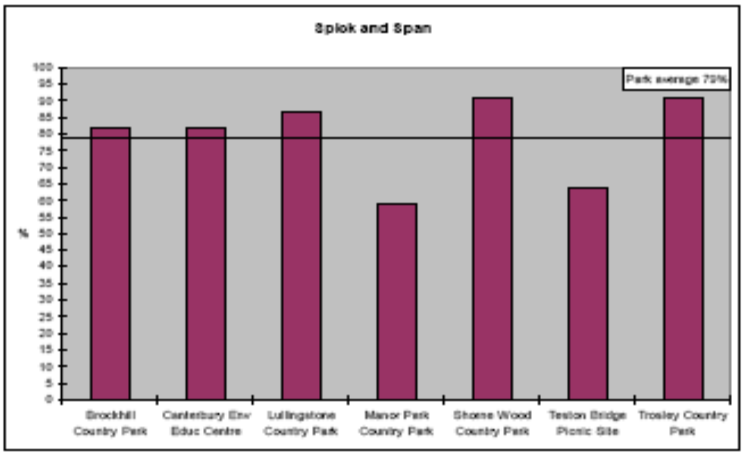
A welcoming place



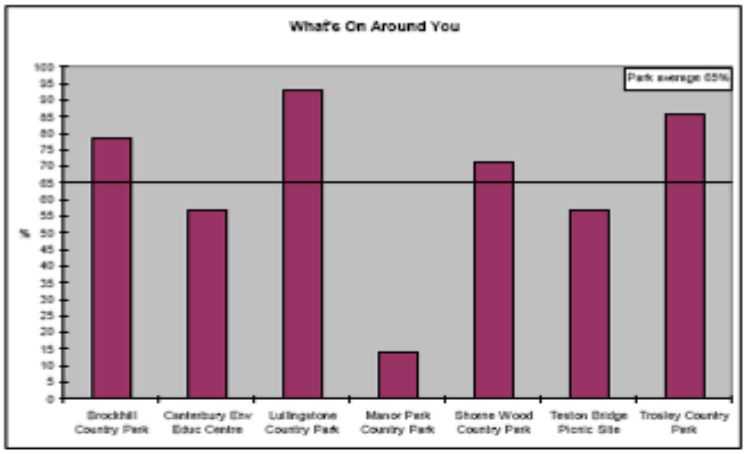
Safety and security on site



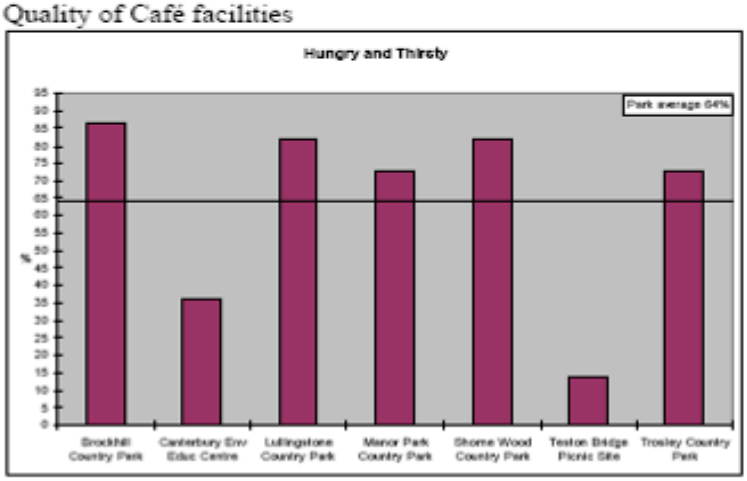
Clean and well maintained



Events and activities



Quality of Café facilities



Staff interaction (result affected by some surveyors not meeting staff)

15.3.4 *Appendix D Exit Survey 2009*

Summary

234 interviews were carried out at Brockhill, Teston and Shorne Woods Country Parks during August and early September.

Profile of Visitors

Most of the visitors to the Parks are female and that a large proportion is aged 60+.
Most visitors are in full-time employment and are accompanied by a partner and/or children.
Most visitors describe themselves as 'White' with 4% belonging to an ethnic minority.
10% of visitors have a disability that limits their daily activities and facilities for those that are disabled are generally described as good.
Most visitors the Parks (84%) are from Kent and approximately one in six are from other parts of the country. Consequently, three quarters of visitors live within 30 minutes distance from the park. However, virtually all visitors use a car to travel to the Parks.

Characteristics of Visit

Four out of five visitors have been to the park on a previous occasion and around one in six visit the Parks at least once a week.
The highest proportion of visitors spends between one and two hours at the Parks. Around one in six spend more than four hours at the Parks and in contrast, only one in ten stays for less than an hour.
The most popular activities for visitors are walking, relaxing, taking the children and/or family on an outing and getting some fresh air.

Visitor Satisfaction

98% of visitors are satisfied with their visit and the majority state that nothing would improve their visit. It is therefore not surprising that 94% would recommend the Parks to a friend.
The Parks are rated very highly for being easy to find and for cleanliness. Of those visitors who expressed an opinion, all agreed that the friendliness of staff, management of the Parks for nature and wildlife and the play areas were fair or good. Most people thought that catering facilities, where applicable, were fair or good, 15% of visitors to Shorne Woods described these as being poor.

Kent Country Parks

Four out of five people had been to a Kent Country Park within the previous 12 months only 15 % had never visited a Country Park at some point in the past. Excluding the Parks within the study, the most popular alternative Country Parks are Trosley, Lullingstone and Manor Park.

Events

Over half of all visitors are aware of an events and activities programme, although only one in three of these have participated in one of these. However, of those that have participated, virtually all agreed that they were satisfied with the experience.
When asked what activities might be of interest, there was most interest in organised children's craft or activity days, children's holiday clubs and evening events. Interestingly, there was more interest in these activities being charged for than if they were free of charge.

The highest proportion of visitors would use the internet to find out more information about Kent Country Parks with newspapers and posters also being important sources of information. The websites that people would use to find out more would be Google as well as the Kent Country Parks and Kent County Council sites.

Gender of Respondents

70% of respondents to the Kent Country Parks survey were female. This rose to 75% at Brockhill.

	Total		Teston Country Park		Shorne Woods Country Park		Brockhill Country Park	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	70	30	29	35	24	29	17	25
Female	161	70	53	65	58	71	50	75
Base	231	100	82	100	82	100	67	100

Age of Respondents

More than one in four respondents was aged 60+
11% were under 30 years

	Total		Teston Country Park		Shorne Woods Country Park		Brockhill Country Park	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
17-19	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
20-29	24	10	4	5	13	16	7	10
30-39	58	25	18	22	16	19	24	35
40-49	56	24	18	22	22	27	16	24
50-59	35	15	15	18	15	18	5	7
60-74	46	20	21	25	10	12	15	22
75+	13	6	7	8	6	7	0	0
Base	234	100	83	100	83	100	68	100

NB: numbers may not sum due to rounding

Work Status

48% are employed full time
41% are employed part-time
1% permanent disabled
20% retired
13% looking after home

Group/Party Profile

Half of all respondents overall were accompanied by their partner. 44 % of respondents were visiting the Parks with children (54 % at Brockhill) and almost a third stated that they were with 'other family members. Male respondents were more likely to be accompanied by their partner (71 %) compared with only 42 % of females. Females were more likely to be accompanied by children, other family, or friends.
Overall, 29% of visitors were visiting the Parks with friends, although at Shorne Woods this rose to 43%.
Few visitors were unaccompanied - only 6% overall.
74% of those aged under 40 were with children. 56% of those aged 60+ were accompanied by their partners.

Ethnicity

3% of the population of Kent are from non-white groups (2001 census)
The figure for the parks is 2%, whilst at Shorne Woods, it is 5%
100% of visitors to Brockhill are White British

Residence

The main source of visitors is from Kent (84%) with a further 14% coming from other parts of the UK, particularly London, Surrey, and West Sussex. Overseas visitors accounted for only 2 % of the total.
Only Shorne Woods had overseas visitors, 6% of total
Only 5% of visitors to Brockhill came from outside Kent.

Disability

Almost 10% of visitors overall stated that they have a disability that limits their daily activities. This is fewer than the 16% of Kent residents that consider themselves to have a limiting long-term illness.
Of those respondents who stated that they did have a disability, almost 70% stated that they consider the facilities at Kent Country Parks to be good or very good.

How would you rate provision of facilities (those with disabilities)?

	Total		Teston Country Park		Shorne Woods Country Park		Brockhill Country Park	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very good	**7**	*30.4*	**-**	-	**4**	*66.7*	**3**	*42.9*
Good	**9**	*39.1*	**5**	*50.0*	**2**	*33.3*	**2**	*28.6*
Fair	**6**	*26.1*	**4**	*40.0*	**-**	-	**2**	*28.6*
Poor	**1**	*4.3*	**1**	*10.0*	**-**	-	**-**	-
Base	**23**	*100*	**10**	*100*	**6**	*100*	**7**	*100*

Only one respondent described the facilities as being poor (at Teston Country Park) and the reason given for this was that there was not enough seating for people to rest.
No-one described facilities as being “very poor”.

Social Class

The highest proportion of visitors to Kent Country Parks belongs to the C1 social classification (53.8%). There is an equal share of 18.8 % each among the C2 and DE groups.

Social Class by Park (%)

	Teston Country Park	Shorne Woods Country Park	Brockhill Country Park
AB	*3.6*	*12.0*	*10.3*
C1	*66.3*	*42.2*	*52.9*
C2	*18.1*	*15.7*	*23.5*
DE	*12.0*	*30.1*	*13.2*
Base: all	**83**	**83**	**68**

62.4% of visitors to Kent Country Parks were from the ABC1 social classification with almost 70% of visitors to Teston Country Park belonging to this group.
Shorne Woods had the highest percentage of DE category visitors

Method of Transport

The highest proportion of visitors to the Parks had arrived by car (94%) and a further 3% had arrived by bus/minibus. Only 2% were visiting the Parks on foot (a total of four respondents, two at Teston Country Park and two at Brockhill Country Park.
Two respondents had arrived at Shorne Woods Country Park by bicycle.

Time taken for journey to Parks (%)

	Total	Teston Country Park	Shorne Woods Country Park	Brockhill Country Park
Less than 5 minutes	*2*	*1*	*2*	*3*
5 - 15 minutes	*32*	*34*	*18*	*49*
16 - 30 minutes	*41*	*31*	*57*	*34*
31 - 45 minutes	*15*	*12*	*18*	*13*
46 - 60 minutes	*4*	*6*	*4*	*1*

More than 60 minutes	*6*	*16*	*1*	*0*
Base: all	**234**	**83**	**83**	**68**

The average time taken to travel to Parks overall is 26 minutes. For Teston the average journey time is 32 minutes, Shorne Woods is 25 minutes and Brockhill is 18 minutes.

Characteristics of Visit

- One in five people are first-time visitors
- 15% visit the Parks at least once a week
- One in four of those aged 60+ visit at least weekly
- 41% spend 1-2 hours at the Parks
- Walking, relaxing, taking the children and/or family on an outing and getting some fresh air are the main reasons people visit
- Most people would prefer to find out more information about the park from a site map

Frequency of Visit

For more than one in five visitors (21%), this was their first visit to that particular park. A further 11% visited less than once a year and 14% visited once a year. However, 54% are more frequent visitors with 15% visiting at least once a week.

The mean number of visits overall was 18 per year; this was highest at Shorne Woods (28) and lowest at Teston Country Park (11). 5% of respondents at Shorne Woods visited daily in comparison to Teston (1%) and none at Brockhill.

Only 13% of respondents at Brockhill claimed that this was their first visit compared with approximately one in four at both Teston and Shorne Woods.

Activities undertaken during visit (%)

	Total	Teston Country Park	Shorne Woods Country Park	Brockhill Country Park
Go for a walk	*50.0*	*56.6*	*42.2*	*51.5*
Relax or think	*33.8*	*38.6*	*26.5*	*36.8*
Children / family outing	*31.2*	*27.7*	*32.5*	*33.8*
Get some fresh air	*30.8*	*36.1*	*32.5*	*22.1*
To eat / drink	*27.4*	*8.4*	*36.1*	*39.7*
Meet friends	*23.5*	*21.7*	*36.1*	*10.3*
Picnic/ barbecue	*20.9*	*36.1*	*19.3*	*4.4*
Enjoy peace and quiet	*20.5*	*14.5*	*31.3*	*14.7*
Visit the play area	*18.4*	*20.5*	*20.5*	*13.2*
Walk the dog	*17.5*	*12.0*	*31.3*	*7.4*
Enjoy the beauty of the surroundings	*17.1*	*13.3*	*26.5*	*10.3*
Enjoy flowers / trees	*12.8*	-	*24.1*	*14.7*
Use toilets	*11.5*	*4.8*	*27.7*	-
See birds and wildlife	*10.3*	*8.4*	*14.5*	*7.4*
Attend events	*10.3*	*27.7*	*1.2*	-
To keep fit	*8.5*	*2.4*	*16.9*	*5.9*
Ride a bike	*5.6*	*4.8*	*10.8*	-
Feed the birds / ducks	*4.7*	*6.0*	*3.6*	*4.4*
To improve my health	*4.3*	*1.2*	*7.2*	*4.4*
Play sports / games	*3.8*	*8.4*	*1.2*	*1.5*
Watch sports / games	*1.7*	*4.8*	-	-
Take a shortcut	*1.3*	*1.2*	*2.4*	-
Go fishing	*1.3*	*3.6*	-	-
Look at the river/be by the river	*0.9*	*2.4*	-	-
Base: multiple response allowed	234	83	83	68

Information about Park

For most visitors (54%), the preferred method of finding out more information about the park whilst visiting was from a site map. Almost a third (32%) would use a site leaflet, whilst notice boards (22%) and information panels throughout the site (17%) were also popular options.

Visitor Satisfaction

- 98%of visitors are satisfied with their visit
- More than half say that nothing would have improved their visit
- 94% of visitors would recommend the Parks
- 93% of visitors say that it is easy to find the Parks
- 93% rate cleanliness as good
- 4 in 5 visitors find that signage is good
- All visitors who expressed an opinion say that the friendliness of staff, management of the Parks and play areas are either fair or good
- 94% of visitors to Brockhill and 75% of visitors to Shorne Woods describe the catering facilities as fair or good

Satisfaction with Visits by Park (%)

	Teston Country Park	Shorne Woods Country Park	Brockhill Country Park	Overall Country Parks
Very satisfied	*71.1*	*65.9*	*77.6*	*71.1*
Satisfied	*26.5*	*30.5*	*22.4*	*26.7*
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	*2.4*	*3.7*	-	*2.2*
Dissatisfied	-	-	-	-
Very dissatisfied	-	-	-	-
Don't know	-	-	-	-
Base	**83**	**82**	**67**	**232**

Of those who were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, comments for improvements included the following:

Shorne Woods

- a cleaner dog pond; and
- it's becoming too commercialised

Areas for Improvement

Respondents were asked what would have improved their experience. 51% said don't know/nothing and a further 9.8% were happy with the parks as they are. The responses below are from the remaining 39%.

What would have improved visit (main responses by Park)?

Teston Country Park	Shorne Woods Country Park	Brockhill Country Park
Better toilet facilities	Quicker service in cafe/Less queuing	Short term parking/Charge for 2 hours rather than all day
Catering facilities/A tea shop or café	Cheaper food/drink	Cheaper parking
Bigger toilets/More space in toilets	Cleaner tables/Clear tables more often	More seating near children's play areas
More play equipment/facilities for small children/toddlers	More facilities for disposing of dog mess	Cleaner toilets
More toilet facilities	More seating in the cafe	More activities for children
Free parking	More tables/picnic tables	More parking/More spaces
Need more seats/more places to rest	Bigger toilets/More space in toilets	Should not charge more for weekend parking
Other comments on general	More toilet facilities	Better toilet facilities

facilities		
Dogs should stay on leads	Less litter	More bins/litter bins

Whilst caution should be exercised in view of the small numbers involved, there are some potential themes arising such as more play equipment and catering facilities at Teston, the cost of parking at Brockhill, and cleanliness and catering issues at Shorne Woods.

What would encourage more frequent or longer visits (main responses by Park)?

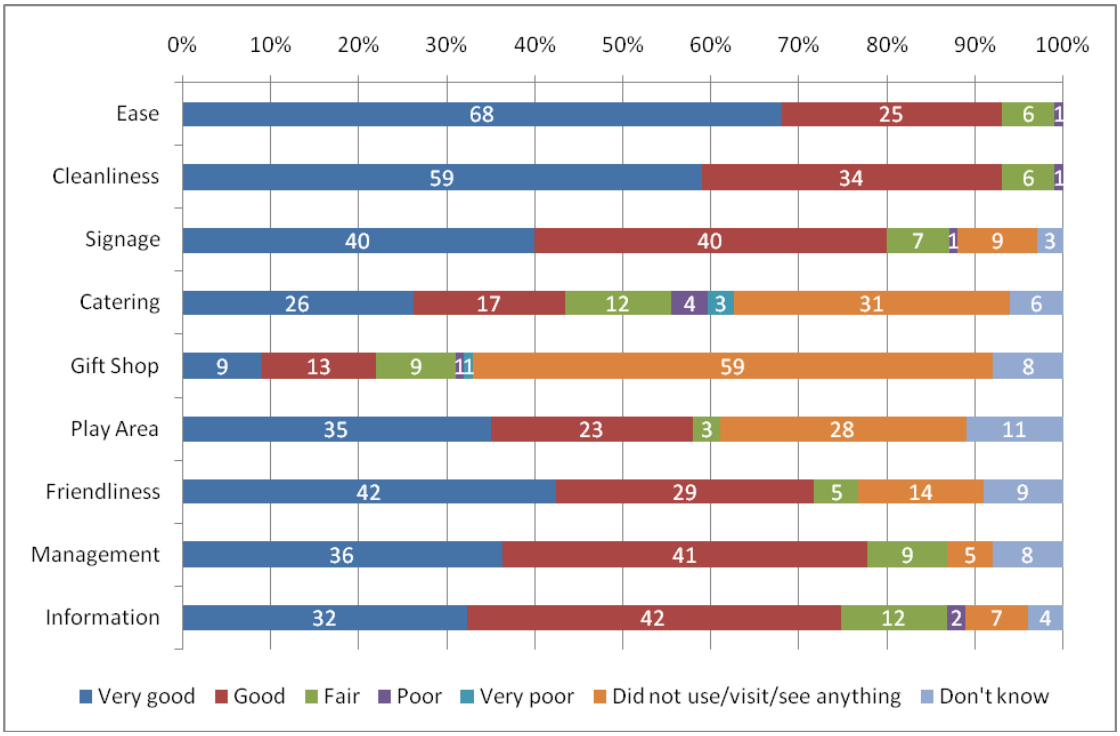
Respondents were also asked what would encourage them to visit more often or to stay longer. The responses are summarised below.
Most respondents (62%) stated that they didn't know what would encourage them to visit more and 7% said that they like the Parks as they are.

Teston Country Park	Shorne Woods Country Park	Brockhill Country Park
Catering facilities/A tea shop or café	Cheaper food/drink	More for younger children (7-9 years)
Free parking	More evening activities/events	Clean the lake/pond/water
Cheaper parking	Longer opening hours for cafe/cafe should be open later	Need more seats/more places to rest
Need more seats/more places to rest	Cheaper parking	More for older children (10-12 years)
More tables/picnic tables		
More events		
More kite festivals		

At Teston Country Park, the issue of seating and picnic facilities was raised by several people as well as more kite festivals and more events in general. However, almost one in ten (8%) said that they would be encouraged to visit by the presence of a teashop or cafe. The issue of free or cheaper parking was also raised several times.
At Shorne Woods, cheaper food and drink and longer opening hours were mentioned in relation to catering, and again parking and more events were also raised.
At Brockhill, a very small number of respondents mentioned facilities for children, seating, and cleanliness of the water.

Views on the facilities

Figure 1: Summary of Respondent Views (%)



In total, 93% of visitors found that the ease of finding the Parks was either good or very good, with only 1% (2 respondents) rating it as poor.

Cleanliness and maintenance of the park also scored equally well with 93% rating this as good or very good. Again, only1% (2 respondents) thought that this was not the case.

31% of visitors did not use catering and 59% did not use a Gift Shop and these features are explored in more detail below by Park as they are not relevant to all of the Parks.

Of those who expressed a view, no-one found the play areas to be poor and there was a similar response to the issues of friendliness and management of the Parks.

76% of visitors found that information provided in the Parks about features of interest was good or very good with only 2% stating that this was poor.

Recommendations

Overall, 94% of visitors would recommend the Parks, and in particular Teston Country Park where 99% would recommend it.

Events and Visits to Kent Country Parks

Key Points

- Four out of five visitors had been to a Kent Country Park within the previous 12 months
- 85% have visited a Kent Country Park at some point in the past
- 68% of those who had never visited a Kent County Park were from within the County.
- Other than the three Parks in the study, Trosley, Lullingstone and Manor Park are the most popular alternative destinations
- 58% are aware that there is an events and activities programme
- Of those that know there is an events and activities programme, 31% have taken part and virtually all were satisfied with the experience
- Of the potential activities that might be arranged, most interest is for children's craft or activity days, children's holiday clubs and evening events
- Most people would use the internet, newspapers, and posters if they needed to find out information about Kent Country Parks
- The most popular websites for obtaining information are Google, Kent Country Parks and Kent County Council.

Events

Of those that had taken part in an event or activity, 98% were either satisfied or very satisfied. At Shorne Woods and Brockhill, the equivalent figure was 100 % although this is based on 7 respondents each. At

Teston, where there were 28 respondents, 98 % were satisfied/very satisfied and only one respondent was neutral

Events that would interest respondents if charged by Park (%)

	Teston Country Park	Shorne Woods Country Park	Brockhill Country Park
Survival skills	*8.4*	*1.2*	*11.8*
Guided walks	*14.5*	*8.4*	*17.6*
Talks	*3.6*	*2.4*	*5.9*
Climbing walls	*2.4*	*9.6*	*19.1*
Carousel	*1.2*	*2.4*	*11.8*
Geocaching	*4.8*	*15.7*	*20.6*
Childrens' holiday clubs	*25.3*	*8.4*	*25.0*
Evening events	*16.9*	*30.1*	*10.3*
Halloween events	*13.3*	*15.7*	*19.1*
Childrens' craft/activity days	*28.9*	*15.7*	*32.4*
Trails	*8.4*	*6.0*	*23.5*
Archaeology	*8.4*	*18.1*	*13.2*
Ice-skating	*7.2*	*18.1*	*13.2*
DK/None of these	*47.0*	*39.8*	*44.1*
Base **Multiple responses allowed**	**83**	**83**	**68**

Interestingly, there is less interest in free children's club and craft/activity days than if there was a charge.

Where Visitors look for Information about Kent Country Parks by Park (%)

	Teston Country Park	Shorne Woods Country Park	Brockhill Country Park	All Kent Country Parks
Internet	*62.7*	*65.1*	*30.9*	*54.3*
Newspapers	*26.5*	*13.3*	*38.2*	*25.2*
Word of mouth	*16.9*	*34.9*	*19.1*	*23.9*
Leaflets	*22.9*	*16.9*	*26.5*	*21.8*
Posters	*12.0*	*9.6*	*20.6*	*13.7*
Tourist Information Centre	*4.8*	*15.7*	-	*7.3*
Library	*3.6*	*9.6*	*5.9*	*6.4*
Don't look/Would not need information	-	*2.4*	*8.8*	*3.4*
Telephone the Council	-	-	*1.5*	*0.4*
Age concern notices	-	*1.2*	-	*0.4*
Base **Multiple responses allowed**	**83**	**83**	**68**	**234**

Conclusion

Teston Bridge, Shorne Woods and Brockhill Country Parks appear to be clean, well-run, well-managed and popular Parks that deliver an extremely satisfying experience to their visitors. The Parks are popular destinations for couples and families although there appear to be fewer visitors aged under 30. Most visitors clearly enjoy the natural surroundings for walking, relaxing, and enjoying outings.

The survey findings show that it is difficult to generalise across the Parks - each has its own unique profile of visitors, assets, and challenges. Consequently, the recommendations below have been separated into overall recommendations and then by Park to ensure that any areas for improvement and adjustments to delivery of services can be targeted.

Recommendations

Overall Recommendations

No.	Recommendation
1.	There are few visitors from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and more efforts should be made to engage with these sections of the community.
2.	Further research should be undertaken amongst residents to investigate the awareness of Kent Country Parks and to understand the reasons why people may not visit the Parks.
3.	Although facilities for people with disabilities appear to be good, research should be undertaken among Kent residents with disabilities and with disability groups to ensure that facilities at the Parks meet their needs.
4.	More work needs to be done to attract visitors on foot or who travel by bike.
5.	Site maps should be used to provide information about the Parks
6.	The desirability of cheaper and/or free parking should be reviewed.
7.	Participation in the events and activities programme needs to be increased, particularly at Shorne Woods and Brockhill.
8.	Consideration needs to be given to the provision of children's craft/activity days, holiday clubs, evening events and Halloween events. The pricing of these and other attractions needs to be considered carefully given that some visitors, particularly at Teston and Brockhill, prefer to pay for specific events.

Recommendations for Shorne Woods Country Park

No.	Recommendation
1.	Site leaflets, notice boards and information panels should be considered for the provision of information.
2.	The pricing of food and speed of service needs to be reviewed to ensure it is meeting customer needs.
3.	Further work needs to be undertaken to understand the reasons why visitors to the park have not visited other Kent Country Parks.
4.	Consideration should be given to the provision of archaeology, ice-skating and geocaching.

Appendix E – Audience Development Plan

Executive summary of Audience Development Plan (p.2-5, The Tourism company, Audience Development Plan for Shorne Wood, 28th Feb 2005)

Background

This ADP covers a diverse but integrated group of sites within Shorne Woods Country Park and Cobham Park of great heritage importance and enormous value in terms of countryside access. There are heritage elements of international, national, regional and local significance. The diversity of the countryside and the range of visitor facilities on offer means that the combination of sites appeals to a wide audience.

Aims and objectives

The combination of attractive landscape, heritage, recreation and natural history across the sites represents a significant resource. Strategic policies recognise there is a special opportunity to add enormous value by providing enhanced access and new, high quality, imaginative interpretation to create a very special countryside product that will sustain existing audiences and attract new ones.

New and unconfident countryside users. These would include:

- Families with pre school children
- Older people
- Younger people (16-24yrs)
- People from minorities
- People from urban areas
- People on low incomes; and
- People with physical, sensory and learning disabilities

Confident countryside users, including many from rural areas;

- Visitors with a specialist interest, including tourists; and
- The anti-social users who should be targeted in order to encourage more responsible behaviour

Barriers to involvement

From the consultations, research and our own knowledge of the sites, the main barriers to audience development include:

Organisational

1. Lack of promotion and therefore awareness; there is no coherent image or co-ordinated offer;
2. Unclear focus for information and access
3. Hours of opening at SWCP
4. Insecurity in certain areas; and
5. Poor public transport access.

Physical

1. Inadequate public access network to and on the sites for riders and cyclists;
2. Some restrictions on access for those with disabilities;
3. Inadequate parking;and
4. Inadequate visitor infrastructure; toilets and other essential facilities

Sensory, intellectual and cultural

1. Lack of information appropriate to different groups
2. Inadequate interpretation;and
3. Inadequate education facilities/services.

Financial

1. Access costs for some groups

Audience development: the way forward

Based on the needs of the identified priority audiences, key objectives have been defined:

- New and unconfident countryside users. Provision of enjoyable activities in a safe environment, as well as the removal of specific barriers to access will be of prime importance to this sector;

encouraging contact, confidence and sense of connection with SWCP in the first instance and, later, the wider area

- Confident countryside users. Clearly defined and well managed access to new routes and countryside areas is likely to be very important to this group. Providing safe, interesting and enjoyable access to both sites and the surrounding countryside will be important along with encouraging recognition of the special historical and ecological aspects of the landscape.
- Visitors with a specialist interest, including tourists. Increasing their experience and understanding of the sites and their natural and physical heritage is important to this group. Delivering high quality information on the history, ecology and other aspects of Cobham Hall and the wider estate.
- Anti-social users. The initial requirement is to engage with this small minority of existing users in order to encourage more discrete/responsible behaviour and an appreciation of their local countrysides.

Action Plan

The action plan comprises of a number of identified projects- based on the recommendations in the previous chapter- with measurable targets and a process for monitoring and evaluation.

Organisational projects

1. Promotional plan and campaign
2. Promote SWCP as the gateway for visitors to the area
3. Enhance web sites
4. Develop events programme
5. Review opening arrangements at SWCP
6. Ongoing engagement with anti social users
7. Green transport strategy
8. Promotion of regional and local trails

Physical projects

1. Development of access routes to the sites
2. Development of access routes within and between the sites
3. Improve disabled access
4. Parking strategy
5. Visitor facilities at SWCP (see 2 above)

Sensory, intellectual and cultural projects

1. Prepare interpretation strategy
2. Programme of engagement with different audiences
3. Prepare education strategy

Financial

1. Review transport opportunities for disadvantaged groups

Fig 8.2 (p.42)
Audience development targets

	Current(2004) (1)	5yr target	10yr target
Overall number of visits	200,000	275000	325000
Families pre-school children (2)	n/a	4%	5%
Older people >65	5%	10%	13%
Younger people 16-24	3%	8%	10%
People from minorities	3%	4%	5%
People from urban areas	70%	75%	80%
People from rural areas	30%	25%	20%
People on low incomes (3)	4%	5%	5%
People with disabilities	9%	10%	12%
Tourists	0%	3%	4%

Notes: 1 based on 2004 survey
2 figures not available from survey
3 based on limited survey only

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation will be integral to the whole process from finding out what people think about a project to the design process itself (being planned e.g. with youth and disabled groups) and on-going after the project is completed to determine to what extent the desired outcomes are achieved.

The post-implementation monitoring will include:

- Measuring visitor numbers through the car parks and people counter on trails;
- On-going consultation with user groups through local fora and direct contacts;
- Feedback forms for general use and after specific events
- Annual visitor surveys (with a sufficient sample) to monitor profiles, attitudes and on going preferences with regard to the different sites; and
- Periodic focus groups made up of members of identified target groups to ascertain progress on meeting their needs.

15.3.5 *Building Centre construction details and sustainable technologies*

Photovoltaic cells

- windows above the cafe hold the PV cells and are a 40 square metre array
- they can produce 5000kWh per year (up to 19,350kg CO_2 being released into the atmosphere.

Woodchip boiler (or biomass boiler)

- provides carbon neutral heating and hot water during the winter months, this is the only heating for the building
- fed by a hopper which can hold six cubic metres of woodchips

- uses sweet chestnut and has an output of 60kW
- 100% self-sufficient heating using a by-product of the Park's forestry work, burning up to 120m3 per year of coppiced timber

Solar panels

- there are three of these on the flat roof - simply heated by sunshine
- small tubes contain water and an anti-freeze agent (glycol)
- they hold 285 litres of water at a maintained temperature ready for use

Rainwater harvesting

- the toilets are flushed with rainwater collected from our cedar shingle roof
- the rainwater is stored in an underground tank and used as needed

Compost & sewage

- all food waste is composted, and sewage is treated on site using a biodigester
- there are traditional compost bins
- the biodigester exposes bacteria to the waste to digest it and clean the water

Other 'green' features

- the large concrete base retains heat in winter and remains cool in the summer
- recycled glass, or cullet, under all the paving slabs
- passive infra-red (PIR) lights in the toilets and first floor kitchen area.
- Vents along the spine of the roof in the main visitor centre can be open and closed to provide a natural air conditioning system.
- The building is orientated to maximise the sunlight on the southern side

Introduction

The centre opened in July 2006 and was designed to improve the visitor facilities at the park whilst fitting into its setting and being sustainable. The principles of sustainable construction were followed and wherever possible, all materials and labour were sourced locally. Designed by Lee Evans architects from Canterbury, the centre was built on an East-West axis to maximise the solar gain for the renewable energy resources. This also attempts to minimise the environmental footprint of the building and encourages visitors to act on these ideas in all aspects of their own lives.

Building materials

The building is constructed with a vast amount of sweet chestnut, it would measure 61km if it was all laid in a straight line. This was used to re-invigorate the North Kent coppicing industry which has long been in decline. Chestnut is not widely used in construction and this building shows that small pieces can be made into larger structural pieces. Take a closer look at one of the main beams to see the joints!

Sweet Chestnut – the building is made of finger-jointed, laminate beams made of small lengths of sweet chestnut. This timber was also used for the flooring. The chestnut is all from the South East of England, some was from the park itself.

English Oak – all the doors, window frames, skirting boards, banisters, stairs, and external balcony rails are made from oak sourced from Kent Country Parks.

Larch – interior roof cladding and structural standing tree trunks are from S.E. England.

Western Red Cedar – chosen for aesthetic reasons as it turns grey (as it weathers) like the silver birch trees surrounding the centre.

15.4 Health and Safety

15.4.1 *Appendix A– KCC Standard Instructions*

Kent County Council

Environment & Economy - Country Parks

Health & Safety - Standing Instructions

ANNUAL CHECKS	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
BUILDING INSPECTIONS	I	X										
COSHH 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

15.4.2 *Appendix B Health and safety policy*

H&S/SBS/Reviewed 18/10/2021/Next review 10.23

Kent County Council's

General Statement of Policy

Health, Safety and Welfare at Work

October 2021

Foreword by David Cockburn Head of Paid Service

The Corporate Management Team (CMT) take very seriously their responsibility for ensuring that the people who work for, and other organisations who work with, Kent County Council (KCC) can do so in a safe and healthy environment. The people we serve and those with whom we work in partnership must be confident that we provide the council's services in such a way that risks are managed and minimised.

We do not just accept the minimum legal standards set by national legislation: we strive to promote a culture which makes KCC an exemplar, producing a high standard of health and safety practice in the things we do. Achieving these standards actively contributes to the overall quality of the services provided by KCC and we will make available sufficient resources to facilitate a positive working culture.

Throughout our operational activity and as part of continuous improvement, we realise the importance of integrating health and safety into decision making, project initiation and risk management processes. We remain faithful to the principles of sensible risk management we signed up to in 2008, and we continue to ensure that these principles are embedded across all levels of the council. KCC managers are provided with instruction, information, training, and tools to enable them to be as self-sufficient as possible in order to manage health and safety issues sensibly with support provided by the Health and Safety Team of professionally qualified advisers.

Whilst the final responsibility for implementing KCC's Health & Safety Policy rests with CMT, every employee must take an active role in implementing the policy effectively. I remind all employees of the importance of safeguarding the health and safety of themselves and others by fully supporting the measures KCC takes to meet the standards outlined in this statement.

---------- David Cockburn
Corporate Director, Strategic and Corporate Services
(Head of Paid Service)

KCC's General Statement of Policy on Health, Safety and Welfare at Work

1. Introduction, context and key messages:

i) KCC is required by law to set out its policy for managing health and safety. This gives us an opportunity to be clear about how we achieve the standards we strive for and to review our practices as an employer and provider of services and facilities to others. We recognise that health and safety is an important and integral part of all activities and relates to the efficiency and quality of services delivered to the people of Kent either directly or through partnership or contractual arrangements.

The purpose of this document is to:

a) set out our management commitment to health, safety and welfare;

b) outline the organisational structure and arrangements that are in place to fulfil the responsibilities acknowledged in the statement.

Health and safety is a shared responsibility, although we recognise that there are specific levels of responsibility and accountability. Everyone plays a part and all employees are required, as a condition of their employment, to comply with KCC policies and procedures.

ii) The authority appreciates the value of joint consultation and will establish and maintain suitable arrangements for joint discussion and agreement that will be effective for specific groups or the workforce as a whole.

iii) Devolved management and contracting out does not diminish accountability for ensuring that arrangements are adequate. Statutory responsibility cannot be delegated and must be recognised and agreed alongside the duties of other parties.

iv) It is important that this policy statement is brought to the attention of all staff and related organisations to reflect the fact that KCC performs its duties through its employees and others who provide services on the County Council's behalf. This policy statement is available in different formats if required.

The policy will be reviewed as necessary to take account of new or changed circumstances. This policy has been equality impact assessed to meet the requirements of the public sector equalities duties.

v) In keeping with this overarching, general statement, each directorate will establish and monitor how it satisfies health, safety and welfare obligations in the delivery of its services. These management plans may, in turn, be supported by service and establishment policy statements that set out local arrangements to meet the duties applicable to KCC.

2. General policy statement

i) General responsibility

KCC recognises and accepts its statutory responsibility to provide safe and healthy working conditions for employees, volunteers, clients, and others who use or visit council premises or may be affected by its activities. The council will also take steps to ensure that its contractors and partners in service provision conduct their activities in a manner that is safe and without risk to health.

The policy sets out general principles for protecting the health and safety of employees and others. It explains the management organisation and arrangements for securing the provision and maintenance of:

• plant, equipment and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health for all staff

• arrangements for the safe use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances

• information, instruction, training and supervision that enables all employees to avoid risks and contribute to their own safety and health at work

• a safe place of work, with safe means to enter and leave premises

• a healthy working environment

• adequate welfare facilities including facilities to accommodate pregnancy, maternity, disabilities, sex and gender identity.

The remainder of the statement covers the council's strategic approach to health and safety management in general terms. It is supplemented by directorate arrangements that recognise this policy as a 'parent' statement.

ii) Multi-user establishments/shared accommodation

Clear arrangements for health, safety and welfare (e.g. fire safety, first aid, maintenance and emergency procedures) need to be agreed between occupying parties (e.g. in Gateway buildings, or where KCC staff work on secondment in NHS premises). Suitable arrangements will be agreed in any such circumstances and an officer of one of the parties will be nominated as building manager to oversee the arrangements and liaise with the owner/landlord as necessary.

Business change programmes include early and regular consultation and communication of health and safety issues as a means of encouraging participation by staff affected by changes, including where protected characteristics may be adversely impacted. Programme Managers are expected to coordinate this.

iii) **Procuring goods and services**

Contract and commissioning managers must ensure adequate conditions and standards of health, safety and welfare in connection with goods and services they obtain. This requires consideration and application of health and safety standards throughout all stages of the procurement and commissioning lifecycle.

3. Organisation: accountability and roles

i) **Corporate Management Team**

The authority requires its CMT to implement this policy as an essential part of their management and executive duties. CMT are ultimately responsible for the health and safety performance of the council and will ensure that Members are adequately advised on health and safety matters. This will ensure decisions are made in line with the Council's policies and procedures.

ii) Directors/Heads of Service

The council is made up of four directorates: Strategic and Corporate Services, Growth Environment and Transport, Adult Social Care and Health, and Children Young People and Education, each headed by a Corporate Director. Directors and Heads of Service are accountable to CMT for fulfilling obligations relating to their areas of control and are required to lead and manage directorate health and safety practice through the organisation and arrangements set up within their directorate. Corporate Directors and their management teams will ensure adequate arrangements exist to fulfil corporate, directorate and service specific responsibilities and ensure that:

• safe working practice is based on a sensible and proportionate risk assessment approach
• accident/incident procedures are followed
• fire precautions and first aid provision are adequate and readily available
• emergency procedures are well considered and enacted
• training, instruction, and supervision provided meets the needs of individuals and is sufficient to protect others
• statutory and other necessary examinations of equipment and installations are carried out
• health, safety and welfare conditions and standards are monitored and reviewed.

iii) Elected Member with special interest in health and safety

The Cabinet Member for Communications, Engagement and People is the nominated cabinet member with special interest in promoting and monitoring health and safety. Regular contact with the Head of Health and Safety is established to engage and inform both parties.

iv) Managers

Managers have key responsibilities regarding the standards of health and safety at work in their service.

Managers must secure, monitor and review safe working conditions and practices within their areas of control and in accordance with requirements and guidance from senior management.

Managers must implement the corporate and directorate health and safety policies/ arrangements and ensure the provision of safe systems of work relative to their service. They will achieve this by ensuring that risk assessments relative to their area of work are carried out, and that resulting safe systems of work are recorded, implemented and monitored.

To make these arrangements effective they must provide their staff with the information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to enable them to minimise risks and contribute to the safety and health at work of themselves and others. This will ensure that employees at all levels have a clear understanding of what is expected and required of them.

v) Individuals/all employees

Health and safety information will be provided to all new staff on beginning their employment with the council. Individuals have a responsibility for their own health and safety and for that of others who could be affected by what they do or fail to do at work. They must:

• co-operate with the council in meeting its responsibilities. They must take personal responsibility for their own safety and that of others, including correctly using any protective equipment or work items in accordance with valid experience, instruction and training and in line with expected standards of professional conduct

• bring concerns about conditions or arrangements to the attention of managers/ supervisors so that remedial action may be taken to avert danger to staff or others

• report accidents and significant incidents to their manager or responsible person as soon as possible.

vi) **Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate: People and Communications (PC)**

The Corporate Director, PC, helps senior managers to discharge their responsibilities by developing corporate health, safety and welfare policy and by monitoring compliance and performance through the Head of Health and Safety. Commitment to managing health and safety is spelt out in the Blue Book and embraced in employee relations and in the delivery of staff care services.

vii) Health and Safety Team

A team of competent, professional advisers is managed by the Head of Health and Safety. Advice and guidance on any aspect of health, safety and welfare can be sought from the advisory team. The team also manages statutory reporting and recording systems on behalf of the authority. The team works closely with Risk Management, Insurance, Infrastructure, Equality and Diversity and Staff Care Services to co-ordinate and maximise the effectiveness of safety management across the County Council.

The Head of Health and Safety and the Health and Safety Business Operations Manager ensure pro-active links with the enforcing authority, trade unions, senior management and Members to secure consultation and make sure that key information, including equalities related issues, is exchanged and passed on.

KCC, like any employer, is subject to the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, 1974. The Act requires that a written statement is made available to all staff about how we look after the health, safety and welfare of the workforce. This statement is issued to you to make sure you know what KCC's aims and	Amanda Beer Corporate Director People & Communications	Zena Cooke Corporate Director, Financ

standards are and to remind you of the shared responsibility we all have for securing health and safety at work. Should you have any questions about the contents of this statement please speak to your manager or get in touch with a health and safety adviser. David Cockburn Corporate Director of Strategic & Corporate Services		
Matt Dunkley Corporate Director Children, Young People & Education	Richard Smith Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health	Simon Jones Corporate Director Growth Environment and Transpo
Allison Duggal Interim Director of Public Health	Ben Watts General Counsel	Bryan Sweetland Cabinet Member for Communications, Engagement, People & Partnership

15.4.3 *Appendix C - Tree Zones*

KCC country parks – Tree inspection policy

Each Country Park will be zoned for tree inspections and the East Kent Head Ranger and North and West Kent Ranger Services Manager will be responsible for producing a zoning map which will be reviewed annually.

The sites that this policy covers are the 9 Country Parks and the 3 Countryside sites that the parks manage on behalf of the KCC estates team. The total land area is approximately 1200 acres.

These sites are:

North Kent area-	Shorne Woods Country Park –	292 acres/116 ha
	Manor Park Country Park-	52 acres/ 21 ha
West Kent area-	Lullingstone Country Park-	494 acres/200 ha
	Trosley Country Park-	170 acres/68 ha
	Teston Bridge Country Park-	32 acres/12 ha
East Kent area-	Brockhill Country Park	
	Pegwell Bay	
	Grove Ferry	
	White Horse Wood	
Countryside sites:	Preston Hill (WK)-	232 acres/94 ha
	Dryhill picnic site (WK)-	22 acres/9 ha
	Parkwood (EK)	

The inspections zones will be as follows;

Zone	Criteria	Inspection frequency	By whom
Zone 1 (red) (High Risk)	All areas bounded by roads, car parks, buildings, play areas and paths with a footfall greater than 15 persons per day	Annual inspection	Country Parks tree inspector
Zone 2 (Amber) Medium risk	All paths/bridle ways/land with a	Ground based Inspection every	By Rangers

	footfall greater than 5 persons but less than 15 persons per day	3 years	
Zone 3 (green) Low risk	All paths/land with a footfall of less than 5 persons per day	Ground based Inspection every 5 years	By Rangers
All zones (no Colour)	All	AFTER SEVERE STORMS	By Rangers

The zone 1 inspections will be initiated annually by Country Parks management and be competitively tendered to arboricultural experts. The inspection will be carried out in early Autumn. Trees will be individually numbered and a full report submitted with work specifications and priority response times. Areas likely to have a footfall of more than 15 people per day. Zone 1 includes:

Well used assembly points,
pedestrian routes,
roads,
footpaths,
buildings,
car parks
woodland boundary abutting properties and the highway

The Zone 2 inspections will be 'standing instructions' that are initiated by the country parks Business support team. The inspections will be carried out by park staff trained to LANTRA basic tree inspection course level or above.

This will be a zoned survey utilising the compartment and sub compartments that the Country Parks have. Each compartment will be inspected and any areas with a likely footfall of between 5 and 15 per day will be checked.

A form will be completed for each tree or group of trees that have works carried out on them. A separate form will be kept for trees requiring ongoing monitoring.

The Zone 3 inspections will be 'standing instructions' that are initiated by the country parks Business support officer. The inspections will be carried out by park staff trained to LANTRA basic tree inspection course level or above.

A form will be completed for each tree or group of trees that have works carried out on them. A separate form will be kept for trees requiring ongoing monitoring.

Priority (time scale to do works)

1 – 24 hours
2 – 3 months
3 – 6 months

Amended by TB 24/08/21

15.4.4 *Appendix D – Example Risk Assessment Form*

Activity / Operation/ Event: Hand cutting tools - bowsaws, loppers, slashers, billhooks, axes, hand cycles, secateurs.	**Assessment Date: 17/01/21**
Establishment: Kent Country Parks.	**Review Date: 17/06/23**

Step 1 **Identify the hazards**	**Step 2** **Who might be harmed & how?**	**Step 3** **What are you already doing?**	**Risk Rating** Trivial/ low / medium / high / stop	**Step 4** **Is anything further needed?**	**Action required**	**Step 5** **Action & Review** **Responsible person**	**Date completed**
Bowsaw The saw blade	User of tool, visitors, other works. Crush, blows to head and limbs, cuts, and lacerations.	Providing training on how to use the tool, safe use of tools, using appropriate PPE (gloves (*when needed and correct*), steel toe cap boots, yellow vest, hard hat while in felling areas)	Medium	Supervision of students/ volunteers Work with another person to help when needed. Give direction and support	Supervision of students, volunteer	Rangers	

loppers	User of tool, visitors, other works. Crush, blows to head and limbs, cuts, and lacerations.	Providing training on how to use the tool, safe use of tools. using appropriate PPE (gloves (*when needed and correct*), steel toe cap boots, yellow vest, hard hat while in felling areas)	Medium	Be aware of anyone under the branch or stem being cut.			
Slashers, bill hooks, hand cycles, axes, shears	User of tool, visitors, other works. Crush, blows to head and limbs, cuts, and lacerations.	Providing training on how to use the tool, safe use of tools. using appropriate PPE (gloves (*when needed and correct*), steel toe cap boots, yellow vest, hard hat while in felling areas)		Stay at least 2 clear tool lengths form others while using the tool. **Use tool correctly do not muck about – Keep tool sharp**			
Secateurs	User of tool, visitors, other works. Crush, cuts & lacerations.	Providing training on how to use the tool, safe use of tools. using appropriate PPE	Low	Be aware of anyone under the branch or stem being cut.			

Assessor Name(s): Kevin Jennings	**Job Title: Ranger**
Signature: KJ	**Review Date:17/06/23**

Step 1 What are the hazards?	Step 2 Who might be harmed and how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Risk rating	Step 4 Is anything further needed?	Step 5 Action & Review
Spot hazards by: ▪ walking around your workplace ▪ asking those doing the task what they think ▪ checking manufacturers' instructions ▪ considering health hazards	Identify groups of people, consider: ▪ employees ▪ temporary / agency staff ▪ contractors ▪ volunteers ▪ members of the public ▪ children (including work experience) ▪ lone workers ▪ pupils ▪ service users	List what is already in place to reduce the likelihood of harm or make any harm less serious, examples include: ▪ guarding ▪ training ▪ procedures, safe systems of work ▪ personal protective equipment (PPE)	Trivial, low, medium, high or stop (please see matrix below)	You need to make sure that you have reduced risks 'so far as is reasonably practicable'. An easy way of doing this is to compare what you are already doing with good practice. If there is a difference, list what needs to be done.	Remember to prioritise. Deal with those hazards that are high-risk and have serious consequences first. List: ▪ actions required ▪ who needs to do them? ▪ by when ▪ Check actions completed

15.5 Plain Text English Format (Accessible Alternative)

This relates to the visual represented in Figure 2.

- Corporate director of Growth, Environment and Transport
    - Head of Countryside, Leisure and Sport
    - Head of Strategic Planning, Enforcement and Policy
    - Head of Service Country Parks and Countryside Partnerships
    - Operations Manager Country Parks
        - Business Support
        - North and West Kent Ranger Services Manager
            - 2 Senior Rangers (1 NK and 1 WK)
            - 2 Countryside Rangers (1 NK and 1 WK)
            - 3 Assistant Rangers (1 NK and 2 WK)
                - 11 Countryside Wardens (2 at each site)
        - East Kent Head Ranger
            - 1 Countryside Ranger
                - 6 Countryside Wardens (2 at each site)
        - Café Manager
            - Café Supervisors at Manor Park, Shorne, Lullingstone and Trosley
            - Pool of Casual Catering Staff
        - Visitor Services Manager
            - 4 Visitor Services and Events Officers based at Shorne, Lullingstone, Trosley and Brockhill
            - Pool of assistant visitor services and event officers
        - Education Manager
            - 4 Education Rangers based at Shorne, Lullingstone, Trosley and Brockhill
            - Pool of casual education rangers