

Pegwell Bay Country Park management plan 2020 – 2025



Kent Country Parks



Contents	Page
1. Covid-19	4
2. General information	6
3. Management of the site	7
4. The wider National Nature Reserve	7
5. Statutory Designations	8
6. Other policies, plans and reports relating to the Site	8
6.1. Kent Country parks strategy	
6.2. KCC environment policy	
6.3. NNR management plan	
7. Past use a landfill site	9
8. Visitors to the site	10
9. Country Park facilities	11
9.1 Signing and interpretation	
9.2 Paths and access	
9.3 Car Parking	
10. Past works, future works, and threats	15
10.1 Nemo project	
10.2. Anti-social behaviour	
11. Site Description	19
11.1 Field descriptions and other features	
12. Management prescriptions during this plan	23
13. Recreation enjoyment and fitness	29
14.1 Parkrun	
14.2 Marathons	

14. Community involvement	30
a. Country Park volunteering	
b. Wider NNR working groups	
c. Kent Country Parks website	
d. Facebook	
15. Financial overview	31
16. Health and safety management	32
17.1 General	
17.2 Accidents and incidents	
17.3 Staff training	
17.4 Inspections and checks	
17. Appendix	35
Figures	
1. Site ownership	36
2. HLS agreement map	37
3. Site inspection regime	38
4. Play area inspection list	39
5. KCC Risk rating for tree inspection	40
6. Red zone area for inspection	41
7. Staff structure	42
8. Biodiversity scoping report	43

1. Covid-19

2020/21 were very difficult years for the country park. Covid-19 raised many challenges. No staff were furloughed, rangers and wardens kept working throughout to provide a covid secure service, appropriate and in line with national guidance. The need for public open space, especially the Country Parks has never been so vital. Popularity of the parks and a desire to be around nature have increased dramatically. Visitors used our parks for exercise, mental well-being, fun and pleasure.

Our Partnerships during the Covid-19 pandemic were affected.

Working closely with our partners at Pegwell Bay is important to us Kent Wildlife trust (KWT) is essential for the effective conservation management of the site, Park Run provides social and sport activity for over 200 weekly runners, Saxon marathon club provides elite runners the chance for regular marathon events at Pegwell and provides an income to the country park. Kent Wildlife Trust are the graziers for the country park under a higher-level stewardship agreement. Kent wildlife trust not only supply highland cattle and ponies and lookering but also KWT staff working parties and KWT lead volunteer team tasks.

2. General Information

Pegwell Bay Country Park is located about 1.5 miles to the south of Ramsgate, OS grid reference TR 342 634. Pegwell Bay Country Park is a Kent County Council owned site. The site opened as a picnic site in 1983 and from the mid 1990's was managed by Kent Wildlife Trust as a component part of the wider Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve. Kent County Council resumed responsibility for day-to-day management of Pegwell Bay Country Park in 2012. Routine habitat management of the site consists of grazing and/or cutting of the site, with some periodic scrub management. Some areas of the site are managed as amenity areas with regular grass cutting. Grazing is the predominant chosen tool by Kent Country Parks working in partnership with Kent Wildlife Trust who are the site graziers. Fields 2,3,4 and 5 are included in a higher-level stewardship scheme agreement with KWT. This agreement is shadowed by a management agreement between Kent Country Parks and the Kent Wildlife Trust. In 2009 a pond was created at the southern end of the site to add further nature conservation and visitor interest.

Pegwell Bay is part of a wider Country Parks estate across Kent and is one of only a few KCC sites in east Kent. This management plan covers Pegwell Bay Country Park. The Country Park area is owned by Kent County Council (KCC) and forms part of the wider Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve (NNR) other landowners are Dover District Council, Thanet District Council, RSPB, National Trust, Kent Wildlife trust see **Fig.1** for details). The provision of the Country Park is through KCC's Country Parks Service. The management and monitoring of the closed landfill site is through KCC's Waste Management Unit. The portion of the NNR covered by this plan is approximately 29 hectares. There is one public right of way across the site, and a series permissive path's. Sustrans Regional Cycle Route 15 follows the western side of the park.

Local position of Pegwell Bay Country Park



3. Management of the Site

The Country Park provides a recreational resource with way-marked paths, a picnic area, play equipment, food and refreshments provided at the Salty Seal café. The Country park is managed by the East Kent Country Parks Ranger Team who are based at Brockhill Country Park near Hythe **Contact Details:** Louis Grover Head Ranger Brockhill Country Park, Sandling Road, Saltwood, Kent, CT21 4HL, Telephone 03000 420993. Pegwell has two part-time wardens who work week on week off and share the day-to-day management of the park including; opening and closing, toilet facility management, car park income, site H&S inspections, visitor welcome and basic site maintenance such as mowing and refuse collection. Between the Ranger team and the site wardens most aspects of site management are undertaken inhouse.

4. The wider NNR

The Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve of which the Country Park is part is of international importance. The NNR is made up of land under ownership by many other partners; Kent Wildlife trust, National Trust, RSPB, Thanet District Council, Dover District Council, and Kent County Council Kent wildlife Trust manage the NNR on behalf of Natural England. These landowners and partners make up the Sandwich and Pegwell Bay Steering Group. The steering group's responsibilities are.

4.1 Statutory Responsibilities of the S&PB steering group:

(a) To safeguard the ecological interest of this internationally important NNR/LNR, through the development and adoption of sustainable management practices.

(b) To promote public awareness and enjoyment of the NNR/LNR and conservation issues generally, through an educational programme of events and interpretative facilities.

Specific:

(c) To consider and approve management and work plans.

(d) To consider and approve educational and interpretative facilities.

(e) To provide a forum for the exchange of information between the NNR/LNR Wildlife Partners.

(f) To monitor the implementation of management and the impact of human activity on the NNR/LNR.

(g) To ensure adequate funding for the management of the NNR/LNR.

(h) To extend the reserve's area when the opportunity and resources allow.

To that end the management plan would be a good focus and consistent with NE NNR Management Standards to provide a strategic direction for 2019 onwards:

(a) Safeguarding: Look at current management practices against most recent ecological information and discuss and set down recommendations for future management

(b) Promotion: Look at current programme of events and interpretative facilities through the steering group / stakeholder engagement process and discuss and embed

recommendations within the management plan (such as beach cleans and volunteer surveys and monitoring)

(c) Discussion and approval: Consider and approve management and work plans in-line with (future) NNR management plan recommendations

(d) Discussion and approval: Consider and approve events and interpretative facilities in-line with (future) NNR management plan recommendations (in parallel with stakeholder engagement)

To respond to e, f, g, h as part of a strategic direction for both steering group discussion and inclusion within the management plan and its on-going review. In addition, the management plan will provide a framework to guide advice on mitigation and compensation, plus future management activity to benefit and enhance the site with respect to current development issues. This also fits with NE's management standards.

5. Statutory Designations

As said the Country Park is part of the Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve (the country park however is not part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest). The landholding also includes a small area of marsh to the north of the main site, which is part of Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest. It is adjacent to Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA and Ramsar Site, Sandwich Bay to Hacklinge Marshes SSSI and Sandwich Bay SAC.

6. Other policies, plans and reports relating to the Site.

a. Kent Country parks strategy

The Kent Country Park Strategy 2023 – 2028 has been out for consultation. A link to that process can be found here:

<https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/countryparksstrategy#:~:text=We%20are%20privileged%20to%20own,that%20Kent%20has%20to%20offer.>

This strategy will set out the park's objectives in relation Kent County Council.

b. Kent Environment Strategy

The site adheres to the Kent County Council Environment Policy (2015) which can be found online at:

https://www.kent.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/10669/KCC-Environmental-Policy.pdf

c. NNR management plan

Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve has a Five-Year Management Plan this is delivered by Kent Wildlife trust on behalf of Natural England. This management plan sits alongside the management plan for the NNR. Kent wildlife Trust has a website for the NNR. <https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/sandwich-and-pegwell-bay>

7. Past use as a landfill site.

As a closed landfill site, the site is monitored regularly. Reports relating to the landfill site include **Environmental Management Report Parts 1 and 2** (2008) (Jacobs for KCC). These reports provide information on the landfill site, monitoring regimes, boreholes and other environmental data; **Environmental Monitoring Summaries** are produced annually and can be obtained from KCC's Waste Management Unit.

As the site was a former landfill, operated by Ramsgate District Council between 1960 and 1972 (approximately). It is believed that the site took inert and household waste, although no records are in existence. After closure as a landfill, the site was opened as a picnic area in 1983. Extra topsoil was added to some areas in 1992. These areas included the main amenity areas, as well as areas in the south-eastern corner, centre of the site and along the lines of paths. Further amounts of 'inert spoil' were added in 1998 by KWT and later some chalk originating from Thanet cemeteries. The status of the site as a closed landfill places some limitations on management.

- Grazing animals should not enter the human food chain.
- The action of the cattle has increased the likelihood of waste and contaminated soil being brought to the surface, and if grazing is the chosen form of management, this will need to be accompanied by continued remedial action.
- Being a landfill will restrict building works, limiting works which break the surface, including sewerage and foundations.
- As a KCC waste site which still requires monitoring, KCC must retain liability for the site. In practice this will result in the inability to transfer the freehold of the site, precluding complete disposal of the site to another owner.
- There is an on-going liability and further top soiling may be required.

Investigations commissioned by KCC Waste Management Unit have recommended that excavations for planting, fencing and other maintenance activity must be carried out with extreme caution.

8. Visitors to the site

Overwhelmingly the park serves the local population of Thanet, particularly Ramsgate but also the other Thanet towns. Many people use the site every week or more than once a week and some several times a day. For many visitors this is their main destination for dog walking. The site has a loyal and regular base of visitors who visit the site to walk, mainly with dogs, and to socialise, with the catering outlet a focal point. There is also a smaller, but regular, number of birdwatching visitors, who use the bird hide.

The car park welcomed 65,450 in 2018, with 77,335 in 2020 despite covid and road closures.

Numbers of cars can be accurately read by the Automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) camera at the car park entrance. There are approximately 25,500 people living within a 10-minute drive of Pegwell Bay Country Park and 61,700 people living with a 15-minute drive.

In recent 2016 visitor surveys the main findings of the report were:

- Visitors were mainly over 35 years of age.
- Most people visited from Ramsgate (35%), Cliffs End (10%), Broadstairs (9%) and Margate (7%).
- 60% of visitors had a dog with them.
- 91% of people travelled to the site by car.
- 87% were regular visitors, and most people had visited at least once a fortnight.
- The top reason for visiting was dog walking (58%), second was exercise (46%) and third was enjoying the coast (37%) (respondents could give more than one answer);
- In contrast with respondents at Sandwich Bay, refreshment/social/picnic/meeting friends was given as a reason (14%).
- 67% of respondents said that Pegwell Bay was their regular dog-walking area.



9. Country Park facilities

The country park has the following facilities:

- Car park in two parking areas, accommodating approximately 60 cars. The car park is locked and unlocked daily.
- Toilet block, including baby-changing and disabled toilet, fully refurbished in 2013.
- Sustrans Regional Cycle Route 15.
- Surfaced 'access for all' All England coast path.
- Mown grass paths throughout the site.
- Dog Run
- Three waymarked circular routes.
- Benches.
- Picnic tables.
- Birdhide; The bird hide was installed in 2009 with GrantScape funding. It is of simple but adequate construction utilising a shipping container. The bird hide is well used by bird watchers as well as by general visitors. There is information inside about the birds that you may see across the bay.
- Play area, was refurbished in 2022 using covid recovery funding. This addition and renewal has been a welcome improvement

A catering outlet -The Salty seal operates a concession throughout the year. Between 1st April and 31th October the concession is obliged to be on site 7 days a week. For the remainder of the year the concession must be on site at weekends and bank holidays, at Pegwell Bay the caterer chooses to operate throughout the year.

The salty seal café



Play area.

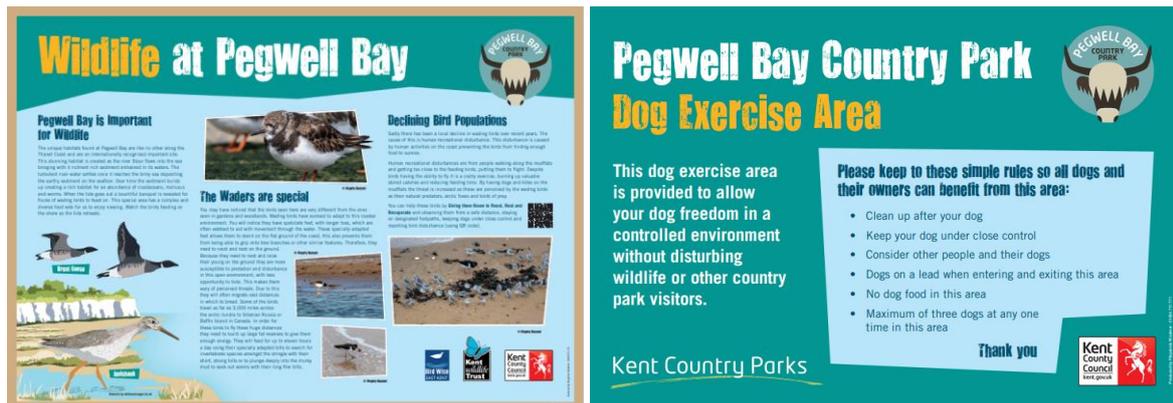


9.1. Signing and Interpretation

Kent Country Parks took over management of the site in 2013 from Kent Wildlife Trust. There is still some historical KWT branding left on site, visible on coat path Bird identification panels. The main branding signage has been replaced with KCC signs for example the site entrance signs and main notice board.



Kent Country Parks are going through a restyling exercise. The two panels below show the new branding style guidelines in practice



A downloadable map is available on the country park website at:

https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/58907/Pegwell-Bay-Country-Park-Map.pdf



9.2. Paths and access

The Sustrans cycle route 15 provides a well-surfaced, wide path along the western side of the site. Maintenance is carried out by KCC Highways. There is also a surfaced path along the coastal edge of the site which provides an easily accessible route with good views over the bay. This is also part of the All-England Coast Path. These two routes together form an accessible and attractive route around the perimeter of the park.

Throughout the remainder of the site is a network of internal grass paths, which are mown in the growing season (March to September/October) by contractors. These paths provide access across the whole site, these paths run between the grazing fields. Path margin vegetation is cut twice yearly.



Gates are left open to grazing fields that are not being grazed (*access is restricted to paddocks that are being grazed, this is to eliminate the likelihood of conflict between dogs' humans and highland cattle*) this greatly increase the area for visitors to use for recreation. The access to these fields is low key, the grazing fields will retain scrub and rough vegetation for biodiversity interest. These fields will not be closely mown, but retain biodiversity habitat, while increasing provision for access.

9.3. Car parking

The two main car parks are camera controlled under contract with Euro Carparks this is to encourage payment of pay and display tickets. All money taken for car parking is put directly back into the site budget. Car parking charges are as follows; Monday – Friday £2.00 Saturdays, Sundays and Bank holidays £3.00. If payment is not made a penalty charge notice may be issued. The car park opens at 9am and is locked every day at 8pm or dusk whichever is earlier.

Alternatively, a one-year Kent Country Park Season ticket can be purchased through the park's website for the cost of £62. This gives free car parking at all the KCC Country Park sites.

For registered disabled drivers £15 administration charge is made to register a blue badge with Kent Country Parks, all blue badge season tickets need to be renewed annually by calling 03000 41 72 72 or by visiting the Kent Country Parks website.

10.Past work and future disturbance and threats

10.1. Nemo Project

Planning permission was granted in December 2013 for underground cables between Richborough and Pegwell Bay. This is the onshore part of a subsea interconnector link to Belgium known as Nemo Link. The work was completed during 2016/17. The result is a chalk capped berm running through the site. The berm was created to encapsulate the cables as breaching the landfill was considered unfeasible due to the possible release of contaminants and the undetermined nature of the contents of the landfill. Bedrock chalk was used to create the berm and in turn encourage chalk loving plants to colonise the bare ground. The steering group chose this approach with a vision of adding diversity to the Country Park's floristic biodiversity. Much of the berm is within grazing compartments so will be managed by grazing cattle. However, the berm running adjacent to the car park is clear of vegetation so far, this is due mainly to public access and compaction, this will be monitored. The Nemo link works, and berm has left a scar on the site. This has led to issues and conflict involving access, grazing and aesthetics. The work involved in the project was complex and time consuming for both the site staff and contractors.

10.2. Department for transport funding (DFT)

During March 2021 funding quickly became available to KCC directly from the department for transport (DFT). This funding was to be allocated to Kent County Council for biodiversity improvement in the Thanet area. Pegwell Bay Country Park was chosen as the site for these biodiversity enhancement works to be carried out.

We delivered a Package of works between June 2021 and March 2022

The funding enabled us to do the following.

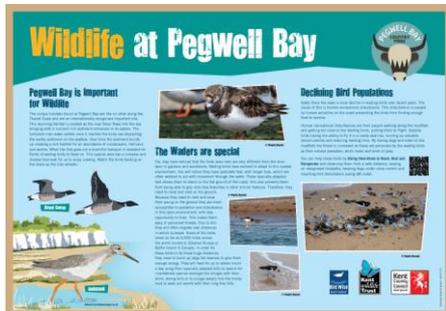
- **REFENCING OF FIELD 3. PURCHASE 4 HIGHLAND CATTLE** – using a contractor we refenced field 3 approximately 800m of stock fence removed and replaced, along with the installation of a new water tough and gates.



- **CREATION OF DOG RUN AREA** – This fenced, safe dog area with dog bin near to the car park has given customers a valuable safe space to exercise their dogs. The feedback from customers has overwhelmingly been positive. We have worked closely with Thanet District Council, East Kent Birdwise and Kent Wildlife Trust by engaging with people through events and activities. People with dogs have been able to use the area for free 1:1 dog training and guidance lessons provided by Thanet District Council. Kent Wildlife Trust have used the area for passing the message on of the complexities of the saltmarsh and mudflats and the negative impact disturbance can have on the wildlife associated with the Bay.



- **INTERPRETATION** – Create interpretation explaining the complexities of Pegwell Bay Country Park and the wider Pegwell and Sandwich Bay. Working with Kent Wildlife Trust and East Kent Birdwise to educate visitors about the impact of disturbance to wildlife on the bay, especially through dogs. Construct new Recent sightings notice board to be positioned near the bird hide.



- **CARRY OUT ECOLOGICAL SCOPING SURVEY WITH BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS** – Kent County Council commissioned Kent wildlife trust’s Consultancy Services (KWT CS) to undertake an ecological scoping survey of land at Pegwell Bay Country Park in Cliffsend, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 5JB. “KCC also asked KWT CS to make recommendations on managing and enhancing the site for biodiversity.

THIS SURVEY WORK INCLUDED

- BOTANICAL SURVEY
- HABITAT CONDITION SURVEY
- ECOLOGICAL WALKOVER SURVEY AUGUST 2021

- **IMPROVE WATER VOLE HABITAT BY IMPROVING DITCH** – Desilting the ditch over a 40 m Stretch. Cut back shading vegetation from the edges of the ditch. Follow best practice guidelines for ditch management.

Ditch work or weed cutting should be carried out in the winter months to minimize disturbance

- *Ensure a fringe of vegetation is left along the water's edge on at least one of the ditch banks*
- *Try to leave sections of ditches or corners uncut in any one year*
- *Create bays at un-managed corners if appropriate.*



Phot 1. Before works

Photo 2. work in progress

photo 3. after works

- **COPPICING** – Carried out coppicing works to provide dense areas of scrub suitable for nesting birds such as nightingale and turtle dove. Nightingale have been picked up during recent surveys and observed in nesting territories at the country park and neighbouring stone lees nature reserve as recently as 2019. The cut material was used for a dead hedge. Some standards were left such as oak and Beech.



Photo 1 coppice area

Photo 2. Coppice stool

photo 3. Dead hedge

10.2. Anti-social behaviour

The country park has been victim to anti-social behaviour for many years. Kent Country Parks since managing the site are taking measures to try and reduce these incidents. By installing CCTV on the toilet block, working closely with KCC Community Wardens team and local PCSO's who regularly visit the site we have succeeded in reducing the levels of these occurrences. During the duration of this plan, we have removed areas of scrub and trees that were used to harbour such activity. The area below is where the Dog Exercise area is now situated.



By making the site more family orientated and with the provision of the Salty Seal café, anti-social behaviour is on the decline. This has been welcomed by most site visitors.

11.Site Description

11.1 Field descriptions

The grasslands comprise of 6 fields (fields 1 and 6 are no longer fenced), they are not particularly botanically diverse, most of the fields are a scrub and grass mosaic with some areas of bramble, however some orchids (*pyramidal, bee, common spotted and lizard orchids*) have been recorded in areas, for example along path edges and within grazing fields. The grazing management has the aim of improving the botanical diversity of the grassland areas, this aim is 30% scrub 70% grass. The fields are grazed at low intensity stocking rate by Highland cattle and Konick ponies. The cattle and ponies can graze all year, fields 2,3, 4 and 5 are routinely grazed. Scrub will be coppiced on an ad hoc basis to add a diverse age and height to the scrub community.

The grassland and fields in the southern section of the Country Park comprising of Fields 2, 3, 4 and 5 are grazed and entered into a Higher-Level Stewardship agreement by KWT (this agreement was in place before KCC took over day to day management from KWT in 2012 and comes to an end in 2027) see **Fig 2.** for the map showing HLS area. The opinion from Natural England is that grazing is the most appropriate form of site management and that a move to mowing alone as a form of management would not be supported.

Field 1: This field is not within the Higher-Level Stewardship Agreement and is not fenced. The area is on the north east side of the park and mainly consists of rough grassland scrub and bramble. It has not been routinely grazed in the past. Areas have been flailed and mulch cut to create further access. The mown glade has been made larger in size during 2019 to increase access for recreation, whilst retaining some scrub, hibernacula and unmown areas.

Field 2: This field is fenced and is mid-way on the eastern side of the site. It contains scrub and rough grassland, areas of bramble have been removed by mulching, control of bramble regrowth will be completed through grazing and mechanical methods. This field is regularly grazed and has a water supply. This field is within the Higher-Level Stewardship Agreement. When grazing is not taking place, public access is permitted to this field.

Field 3: This L-shaped field is on the south-eastern extent of the park. Using funding from the Department for Transport (**DFT**) this Field was re-fenced in 2022 and new water supply installed enabling grazing to take place one again (*last grazed 2008*). Bramble thickets in the field were mulched, shrubs and trees were retained. Old rubbish that protruded through the land fill capping was removed and disposed of by KCC's Waste Department. Grazing started in May 2022.

This was the management plan description of the field pre 2022 (*It has substantial levels of scrub and bramble, especially in the northern section. This field is fenced but all fencing is in*

bad condition. Waste material from the historic use as a landfill site has been found coming to the surface and penetrating the surface making it difficult and dangerous to either graze or cut mechanically. This field is within the Higher-Level Stewardship Agreement, however not routinely grazed because of the issues mentioned previously. Efforts will be made during the lifetime of this plan by Both Kent Country Parks and KCC waste management department to improve this field so that appropriate management by grazing and/or mechanical can take place. Access will be restricted until the work is complete).

Field 4: This is the largest field on the south western side of the country park. There is little scrub and bramble in this field. This field is within the Higher-Level Stewardship Agreement. Capping was added to this field in the mid 1990's. When grazing is not taking place, access is not permitted into this field minimising dog disturbance and creating an undisturbed area for wildlife and ground nesting birds within the country park. This field holds a large section of the NEMO chalk berm.

Field 5: This field is in the centre of the country park and contains good levels of scrub and bramble. This field is within the Higher-Level Stewardship Agreement. When grazing is not taking place, access is permitted to this field.

Field 6: This field is not within the Higher-Level Stewardship Agreement and is only fenced along the western side where the field runs parallel to the sustrans route. The area is on the north western side of the park and mainly consists of rough grassland scrub and bramble. It has not been routinely grazed in the past. Areas will be cut with BCS and brushcutters and raked/baled to create further access and improve the biodiversity. An area of trees is at the southern tip of this field. This field holds a large section of the NEMO chalk berm.

Pond

As it was not possible to excavate on the landfill site a raised pond was created at the south of the site adjoining to field 4 in 2009. This adds to the nature conservation interest of the site as well as providing additional interest for visitors. The pond is fenced to prohibit public access but there is a seating and interpretation area overlooking the pond.

Highways drainage ditch

Works were carried out to improve this ditch using money allocated to Pegwell Bay from the DFT see section 10.2 **IMPROVE WATER VOLE HABITAT BY IMPROVING DITCH**) above.

This was the management plan description of the ditch pre 2022 (A ditch running parallel with Sandwich Road has become shaded by trees and scrub and/ or choked with emergent vegetation. This ditch supports water vole, we are unsure of the numbers present. The habitat is poor, possible removal of shading scrub clearance of aquatic vegetation could improve the ditch condition and the population. A survey needs to be carried out. (This survey was carried out June 2020, it is very positive to have confirmed the presence of a

breeding colony. Efforts will be made to come up with a management plan specific for this population and habitat, it will be important for us to work with KCC highways department, they are aware of the report and the presence of water vole.) We will be monitoring the Ditch and water vole numbers during summer 22 and 2023. Further sections of the ditch may be improved in future years.



Water Vole Survey
Pegwell Bay.pdf

Path Margins

Throughout the site a series of a mown grass paths run between grazing fields. The path centres are managed and mown by a contractor. The path margins are cut biannually by site staff using tractor and flail or BCS and baler and raked to aid access and improve biodiversity along with maintaining and increasing views over grazing fields and out to sea.

Amenity Grassland and car park area

A series of lawns used for recreation and picnicking are situated around the car park and toilet block these are predominantly mowed by a contractor however smaller areas and the bunds around the car park are managed by site staff by pedestrian mowers and strimmers.

Site map showing Field compartments.



12. Management prescriptions during this plan

We understand at Pegwell Bay that with global, national, and local loss of biodiversity we have a responsibility to act. As part of this plan and going forward, we will be retaining areas of scrub ultimately at 30% as agreed at the NNR steering group partners field visit. This approach will be in place for fields 1, 2, 3 and 5. Along with this work, other areas outside the main fields and public and recreation areas will continue to be managed with a non-intervention approach. Other than some annual / biannual cutting of bramble. To keep scrub patches in check.

This work will go hand in hand with our efforts over the last 4 years to establish meadow in areas parallel with field 6 along the sustrans cycle path edge. These improvements will give a resource of food, shelter and breeding areas for a multitude of wildlife, also linking into KCC's Plan Bee project which reflects the national Pollinator Strategy. In 2020 and subsequent years up to 2022. we cut and baled areas of grassland to help improve the sward in coming years.

In 2023 we will continue working with the Kent Wildlife trust and East Kent Birdwise. We are very keen for KWT to continue grazing at the country park. The four Highland we purchased in 2022 will help maintain a good grazing rotation and regime.

Area	Management Prescription
Footpaths, highway and Cycle track	<p>Tree inspection – Contractor to carry out tree inspection in red zone area. Site staff to Carry out any works prescribed within the given time frame.</p> <p>Site entrance – Ensure the sight lines onto the main road are clear to enable safe exit onto the carriageway.</p> <p>Footpaths – regular inspections of the footpaths, remove any rubbish, obstructions. Remove any overhanging branches or vegetation.</p> <p>Path margins – Cut the path margins twice yearly. First cut in February-April second cut September - November. Further cuts in some areas may be required due to growing conditions. Survey the areas first for orchids and debris. Rake and gather cuttings in some better areas to improve the grass sward. Use cuttings to create hibernacula.</p> <p>Sustrans route 15/Cycle track – Ensure the track is in good condition, clear from obstructions. That path edges are free from over hanging vegetation and branches. Report any concerns to KCC highways department.</p>

Lawns/Grass – Contractor will continue to mow main lawn areas. Site staff to mow and trim areas and lawns where the contractor cannot. Keep the grass short and presentable.

Toilet block – Make sure the toilet rooms are clean and presentable ready for use. Report any maintenance issues to SKANSKA for repair or replacement. Monitor CCTV when necessary. Follow covid-19 risk assessment methods during the pandemic.

Salty seal Café – Work with the café proprietor to ensure great service for the customers. Site staff to help keep the surrounding areas clear of encroaching vegetation.

Litter picks – Carry out daily litter picks of all areas, Regular emptying of litter bins and dog bins – double bag the dog waste before disposing of in the site skip.

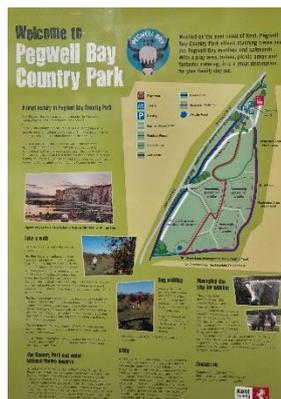
Safety inspections – carry out site inspections in accordance with the inspection checklist regime. See **Fig 3**

Play area – Carry out daily/weekly inspections of equipment and area in general. Facilitate annual ROSPA inspection and carry out any prescribed maintenance/replacement works see **Fig. 4.**

Amenity
areas

Interpretation and signage – To leave the existing onsite KWT interpretation signage in place in a clean and presentable condition. These lecturn panels give good information for all visitors.

We have created a new Kent Country Park focal point information point with map and notice board. This will replace the old map and notice board. This was completed in 2021.



The creation of the new map gave us a chance to evaluate the current waymarking. We have created a new waymarked route. The country park now will have 3 internal routes, Blue (long), Red (Medium), Green (short), new waymarking disks have been created to give clear way marking.



Car parks and pay and display – make sure the car parks are clear of debris, rubbish, and obstacles. Empty pay and display machines daily. Store money in office safe ready for collection by the rangers for banking.

Birdhide – Keep birdhide clean, tidy for use by customers. Make sure the room is locked each evening and opened each morning.

Grazing fields

To agree with KWT annually/seasonally the grazing of fields 2 ,4 and 5 in advance and approximate timing of the grazing activity.

Field 1 – This old field is un-fenced and not grazed; efforts are being made to reduce the amount of bramble in this area and improve it for access and recreation. By using a mulcher or flail we have and will continue during the months of Nov – Feb in the lifetime of this plan, clear areas of thick bramble with follow up cuts to suppress regrowth and encourage grass and other plants. The aim as with other areas is to create an open mosaic of scrub at 30% and grassland at 70% with some areas of bramble. This area will be managed mechanically with either flails, BSC machine with follow up raking to improve grassland diversity.

Field 2 – To graze this field using Kent Wildlife Trust highland cattle and ponies, in line with the HLS agreement. Grazing can take place all year round. KWT wardens will agree with KCC Rangers when and which field to rotate the grazing animals to next, depending on the sward height. An open mosaic of scrub at 30% and grassland 70% with some areas of bramble is the optimum condition, as agreed by the steering group on a management plan site visit in October 2019. Scrub will be coppiced on an ad hoc basis to provide a mixed scrub community. When field is

being grazed access will be restricted to the public.

Field 3 – To graze this field using Kent Wildlife Trust highland cattle and ponies, in line with the HLS agreement. Grazing can take place all year round. KWT wardens will agree with KCC Rangers when and which field to rotate the grazing animals to next, depending on the sward height. An open mosaic of scrub at 30% and grassland 70% with some areas of bramble is the optimum condition, as agreed by the steering group on a management plan site visit in October 2019. Scrub will be coppiced on an ad hoc basis to provide a mixed scrub community. This field is restricted to the public.

Field 4 - To graze this field using Kent Wildlife Trust highland cattle and ponies, in line with the HLS agreement. Grazing can take place all year round. KWT wardens will agree with KCC Rangers when and which field to rotate the grazing animals to next, depending on the sward height. An open mosaic of scrub at 30% and grassland 70% with some areas of bramble is the optimum condition, as agreed by the steering group on a management plan site visit in October 2019. Scrub will be coppiced on an ad hoc basis to provide a mixed scrub community. This field is restricted to the public.

Field 5 - To graze this field using Kent Wildlife Trust highland cattle and ponies, in line with the HLS agreement. Grazing can take place all year round. KWT wardens will agree with KCC Rangers when and which field to rotate the grazing animals to next, depending on the sward height. An open mosaic of scrub at 30% and grassland 70% with some areas of bramble is the optimum condition, as agreed by the steering group on a management plan site visit in October 2019. Scrub will be coppiced on an ad hoc basis to provide a mixed scrub community. When field is being grazed access will be restricted to the public.

Field 6 - This field is mostly un-fenced and not grazed. It has one fence line running on the western side parallel with Sutrans route 15. Efforts are being made to reduce the amount of bramble in this area and improve it for access and recreation. By using a mulcher or flail we have and will continue during the months of Nov – Feb in the lifetime of this plan, clear areas of thick bramble with follow up cuts to suppress regrowth and encourage grass and other plants. The aim as with other areas is to create an open mosaic of scrub at 30% and grassland 70% with some areas of bramble. This area will be managed mechanically with either flail, BSC machine with follow up raking to improve grassland diversity.

Pond and Highways ditch	The existing pond in the southern part of Pegwell Bay Country Park is currently overgrown with emergent species such as reedmace (<i>Typha latifolia</i>). Management of emergent vegetation, with the primary aim of creating a larger area
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of open water, would therefore be beneficial for a range of aquatic species. The pond is lined and therefore management of emergent vegetation would need to take place by hand to avoid damaging the artificial liner.

Within Pegwell Bay Country Park the ditch running parallel with Sandwich Road has become shaded by trees and scrub and/ or choked with emergent vegetation and some fly tipping. This ditch does support water vole. A survey will be carried out in spring 2020 to ascertain the numbers and give prescriptions on how to improve habitat. As seen in section 9 the survey was carried out June 2020, it confirms the presence of a small breeding colony. The recommendations says;

“Recommendations - This vole population is small, potentially just one breeding pair. There is habitat further along the ditch, heading into the KWT reserve which is likely to support more vole. There is also likely to be a population in the reeded ditches across the road from this survey site. The vole is unlikely to cross the road either under or over and is therefore isolated from the latter population. Any works that occur on the same ditch are likely to have an impact on the water vole. The ditch should therefore be managed sensitively to maintain the present populations.

Best Practice for Managing Ditches:

- *Ditch work or weed cutting should be carried out in the autumn to minimize disturbance*
- *Ensure a fringe of vegetation is left along the water's edge on at least one of the ditch banks*
- *Try to leave sections of ditches or corners uncut in any one year*
- *Create bays at un-managed corners if appropriate*

Water vole prefer soft, undisturbed earth banks which they can burrow into with wide margins which have tall grasses, stands of rosebay willow herb, purple loosestrife, meadowsweet, or nettles, often fringed with emergent rushes, sedges or reeds, to give them food and cover. They will gnaw on the roots and bark of willow and sallow, as well as the rhizomes, bulbs and roots of herbaceous plants during winter. Water voles also inhabit extensive reed-beds where they weave rugby ball sized nests made of reeds. They will avoid sites that are heavily grazed, trampled or over-shaded by dense scrub or trees, but will happily live underneath the light shade of brambles and like to eat the leaves and the berries.

These were carried out to improve this ditch using money allocated to Pegwell Bay from the DFT see section 10.2 **IMPROVE WATER VOLE HABITAT BY IMPROVING DITCH**).

<p>Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve Steering Group</p>	<p>Continue to be an active member of the steering group committee and represent Kent Country Parks and KCC.</p>
<p>Community involvement and marketing</p>	<p>Facebook – continue to post regular information on the Pegwell face book page.</p> <p>Park run and marathon events – Support these activities where possible.</p> <p>Volunteering – continue to provide, with a view to increasing, volunteering opportunities on the Country Park. Work with Kent Wildlife Trust volunteer team and the Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve Steering Group partners in delivering practical tasks on the Country Park and the wider NNR site.</p>

13.Recreation, enjoyment and fitness

The Country Park has become not only a site for leisurely family recreation, but a site relished by runners at all levels.

a. Parkrun.

'ParkRun' sets off every Saturday at 9.00am along with hundreds of other runs across the world. There are regularly over 200 runners at Pegwell Bay. The 5km weekly timed runs are free to enter. They are open to everyone, and are safe and easy to take part in. They encourage people of every ability to take part; from those taking their first steps in running to Olympians; from juniors to those with more experience.



b. Marathons

Several marathons are organised and delivered have by Saxons, Vikings and Normans running club usually 2 -3 per year. They have proved to be very popular with the club members and in turn have created a new financial revenue for Pegwell Bay Country Park.



14. Community Involvement and Marketing

a. Country Park volunteering

Pegwell Bay does not have its own volunteering group. We do however give opportunities to organisations to carry out practical volunteering tasks on the site. Groups that have been involved in recent times are South Kent College, adults with special needs groups and individuals. Tasks carried out tend to be vegetation clearance and grassland restoration.



b. Wider NNR working groups

The Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve Steering group are a cohesive collection of landowners' intent on ensuring the future protection of this important public and wildlife site. Representatives from the group work together on practical task days. The current work is to reclaim historic sand dunes along Sandwich Bay by cutting and burning sea buckthorn.



c. Kent Country Parks website

Pegwell bay Country Park has its own feature web page within the Kent Country parks website, at:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/kent-country-parks/find-a-kent-country-park/pegwell-bay-country-park>

d. Facebook

Pegwell bay has its own face book page this is used to promote the country park and keep customers informed of current works issues and general information about the site such as recent sightings or just a beautiful sunset. The KCC policy for Pegwell bay as a smaller site is to post every two weeks.

15. Financial overview

The park's main income streams are:

- car park pay and display income
- café rent income
- marathons
- Events

Kent County Council provides an annual revenue budget to fund the day-to-day operations of the park.

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.

A programme for projecting renewal costs over a twenty-year period has been developed and this records all the site infrastructure and estimates replacement costs and time.

16. Health and Safety management

a. General

Kent Country Parks have a robust health and safety management system in place, risk assessments are carried out for all equipment and tasks, these are reviewed annually by the ranger team. This system adheres to and takes lead from;

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974;
- Management of Health and Safety at Work 1992;
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR, 1995); and
- Fire Safety Regulations, 2007.

Pegwell Bay Country Park has its own on-site emergency health and safety plan. There are daily, monthly, annual and seasonal inspections carried out by the Wardens and Rangers. If any issues arise these are reported back to the Rangers who will ensure that action is taken to solve the problem.

Standard instructions for annual inspections including tree inspections, machinery, PPE are issued centrally. Some of these are carried out by authorised staff; others are contracted out to specialist services, including Tree inspections, PAT tests and fire extinguisher tests and vibration tests on powered machinery such as brushcutters, mowers and hedge cutters.

b. Accidents and incidents

Any accidents/incidents/near misses involving staff or member of the public are recorded and, if needed, a Health and Safety Officer will come and investigate and, in conjunction with the Ranger, come up with any plans to minimise risk. Accident forms (H157) are completed online, reported accidents are reviewed at staff and directorate level meetings. The Ranger team take responsibility for health and safety within the Country Park toilet block and play area. The café operator takes joint responsibility for all health and safety regarding the café areas.

c. Staff Training

Health and Safety on site is paramount. Where necessary training is given on relevant machinery. Explanation such as tool talks and health and safety checks are undertaken and carried out before all activities. Kent County Council is 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 undertakes core training that includes:

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

In addition to this a series of mandatory online training courses must be completed these include.

- Prevent, safeguarding people from extremism and terrorism
- GDPR
- Introduction to information governance

There are many other online courses available to staff through the KCC training gateway.

d. Inspections and checks

The following annual and compliance checks are undertaken at the Country Park:

- A Daily/weekly/Monthly inspection is carried out of the site, see **fig 3**.
- Testing of equipment - winches, trailers electrical tools and appliances, motorised vehicles and tools and hand tools
- Compliance checks and testing of the toilet block are carried out by KIER under the KCC wide Total Facilities Management contract, such tests and checks include;
 - Fire risk assessment
 - Asbestos
 - Electrical testing
 - Water Hygiene
 - Emergency lighting
 - PAT testing
- An annual inspection by ROSPA (The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) of the children's play area. In addition to this Rangers and Wardens have been trained by ROSPA in an '*Operational Playground Inspection Course*' Weekly and monthly inspections are carried out. See **Fig 4**.
- An annual tree inspection is carried out by an external contractor for Red zone tree areas i.e. those where the public have day-to-day access or trees may present a danger to traffic, green and amber zone area tree inspections are undertaken by site rangers. **See Figs 5 & 6**, for KCC's Risk rating and the Pegwell Bay red zone inspection area this area is restricted to the Road side and the southerly most boundary line where some

mature trees are present. Within the centre the site trees are generally small due to its history as a land fill site.

- HAVS's Vibration tests on each piece of petrol driven machinery such as lawn mowers, hedge cutters and strimmer's, this information gives guidance on the length of time a piece of equipment can be used safely and shared with the relevant staff members.

APPENDIX

Fig. 1 Landowner ship of Sandwich and Pegwell National Nature Reserve

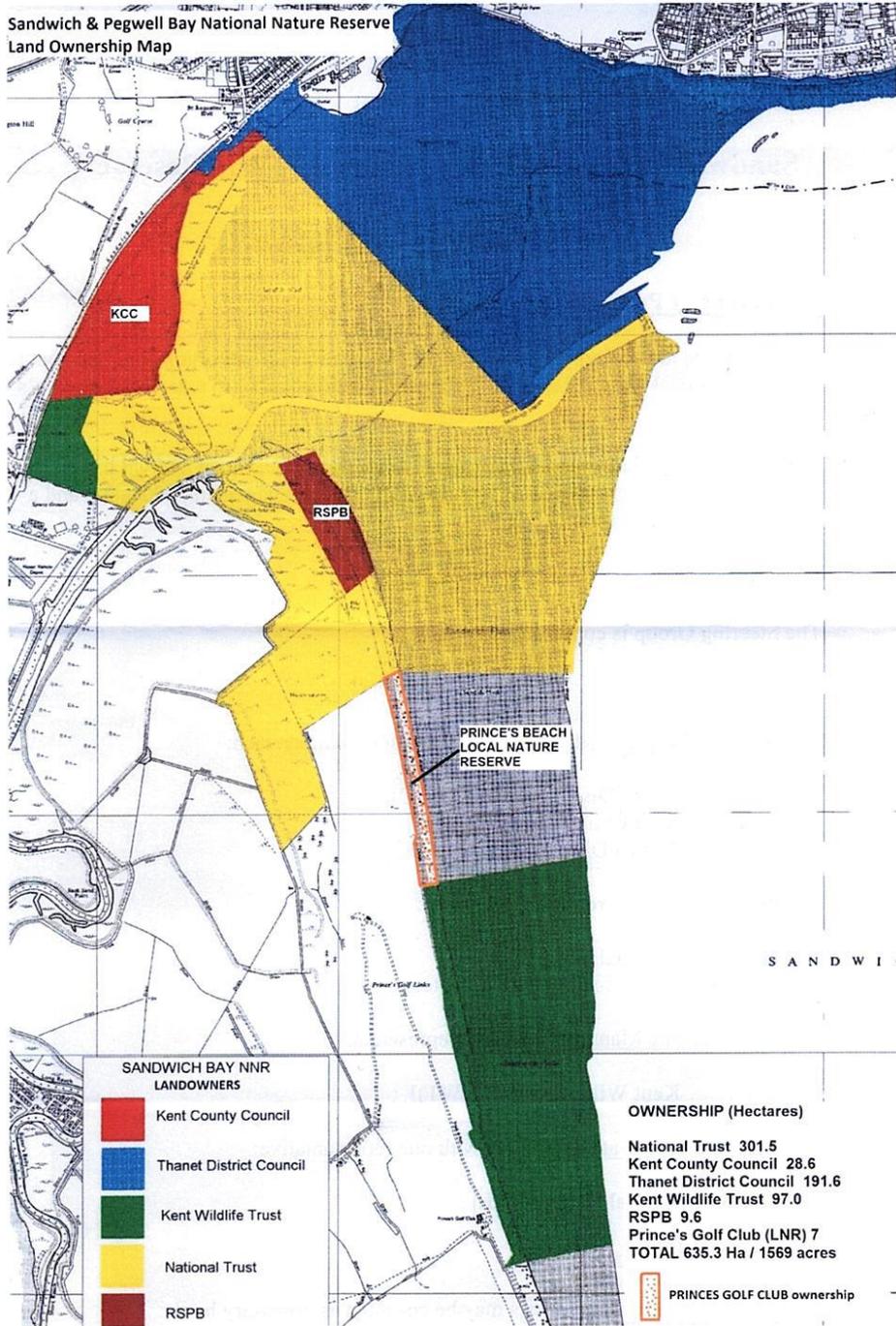


Fig. 2 Area of Pegwell Bay Country Park under High Level Stewardship agreement

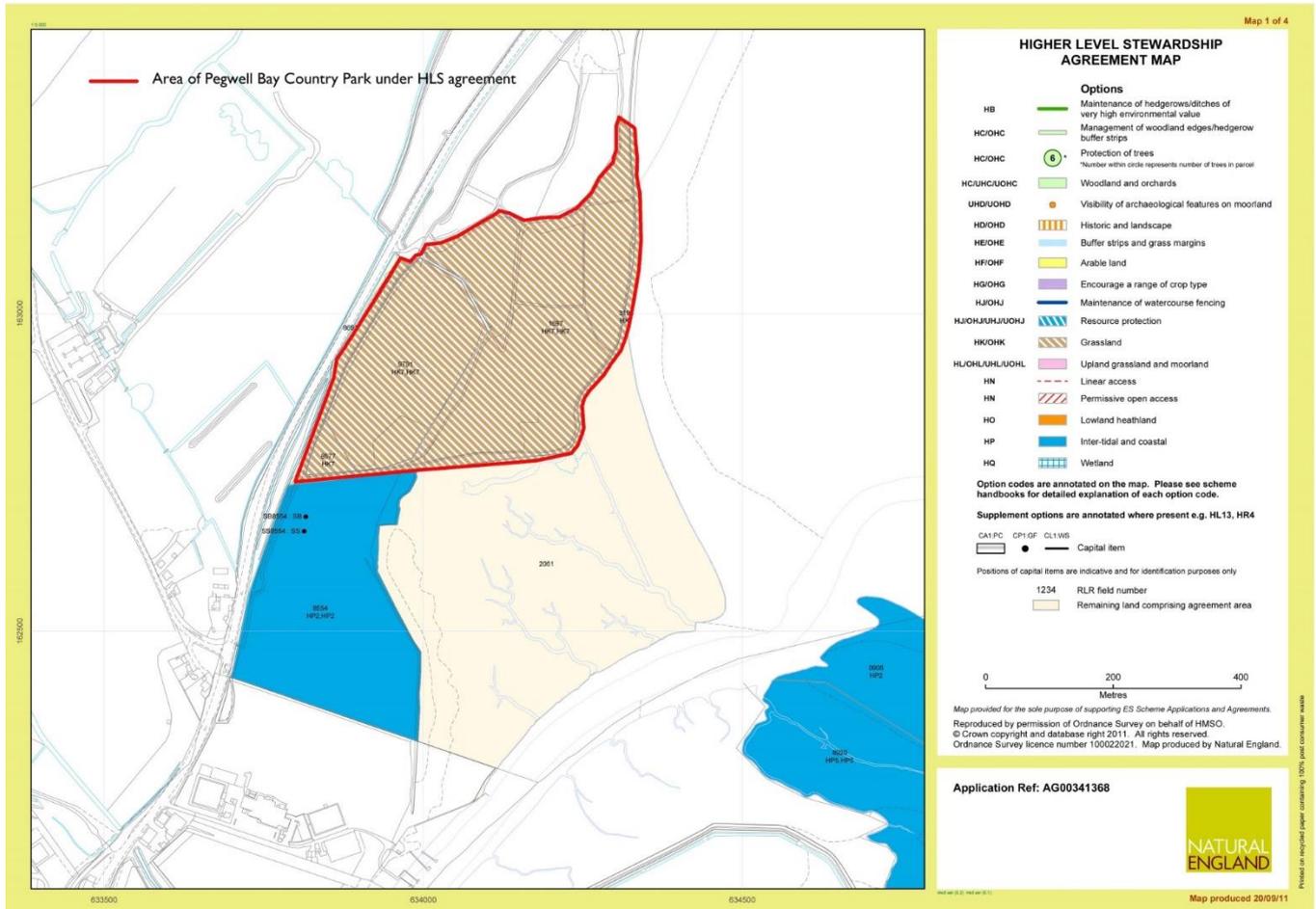


Fig.3 Site Inspection regime

Items to be checked	Frequency	Action required
Gate Entrance/ height barrier	Daily	Make sure operating ok
toilets	Daily	Clean and restock, check for vandalism, fix problem if possible, or contact Ranger. Make a note in diary of any anti-social behaviour seen or suspected
Litter bins	Daily / weekly	Empty when full into site skip.
Car parks	Daily	Check for cars before locking up, check for litter and possible obstructions
Cess Pit	Weekly	When $\frac{3}{4}$ full contact ranger for emptying
Mown Grass areas/over flow car park	Daily	check for glass, rocks etc. whilst on litter pick
Pay and Display machines	Daily	When emptying check its working ok and display is correct. Follow money collection procedure. Bank weekly
Dog Bins	Weekly	Empty once a week into site skip
Manhole covers	weekly	Check they are on and secure.
Picnic tables	Weekly	Check for stability and safety, repair any problems. If totally broken remove from public use. Contact ranger
Toilets/buildings	Monthly	Visual check for broken windows/damage in general. Check secure fixings of all W.C's, gutters, and fire extinguishers.
Trees	After Gales	Check for dangerous hanging branches especially over footpaths. If tree surgery required call the Site Ranger after closing footpath.
Bird hide	Daily	When locking up the site close bird hide. For now this will be opened by KWT volunteers.
Play area	Daily/ Annually (by ROSPA)	See play area inspection sheet

Fig. 4 Play area inspection list

Items to be checked	Frequency	Action required
General look over	Daily	Look for anything that looks unusual or out of place or broken
Wet Pour Safety surface	Daily	Search for foreign objects and litter pick
Swings	Weekly	Visually check seats, moving parts, i.e. shackles, couplings, chains, wear and tear.
Pirate ship	weekly	Visual check for wear and tear, Loose parts. Splinters Bark around feature in good condition.
Small boat		Visual check for wear and tear, Loose parts. Splinters Bark around feature in good condition.
Aerial assault course and frame	weekly	Visual check for wear and tear, Loose parts. Splinters Bark around feature in good condition.
Slide	weekly	Check access steps for stability, check for any foreign objects on slide.
Litter	daily	collect and remove
Spinner	weekly	Check that it is clean and ready for use and is stable
Picnic tables and bench areas	Weekly	Check seats and Tables. Look for foreign objects on floor below seats and tables.
Bins	Daily	Empty regularly, when needed.

Fig. 5 Risk rating for tree inspections

Target Zone	Colour Code	Examples of Target area	Level of Inspection	Frequency of assessment	Level of competence (Appendix 1)
Low risk	Green	Remote or inaccessible areas with no or minimal public use such as unmaintained areas or woodland away from main paths	Ground based visual inspection of individual trees	Occasional - Every 5 years	Rangers
Medium risk	Amber	Playing fields, woodland & paths and grass areas with occasional use. No high value or vulnerable targets.	Ground based visual inspection of individual trees	Infrequent - Every three 3 years,	Rangers
High risk	Red	Well used assembly points, pedestrian routes, roads, footpaths, buildings, car parks and woodland boundary abutting properties and the highway	Ground based visual inspection of individual trees	Frequent - Annual	Qualified Arboriculturalist
All Zones	N/A	All	Initial informal walk through followed by detailed inspections of individual defective trees	AFTER SEVERE SORMS	Site staff (Defective trees reported to qualified Arboriculturalist for further detailed inspection)

Fig. 6 Red zone High risk area for tree inspection.

Pegwell Bay County Park

 Zone 1.

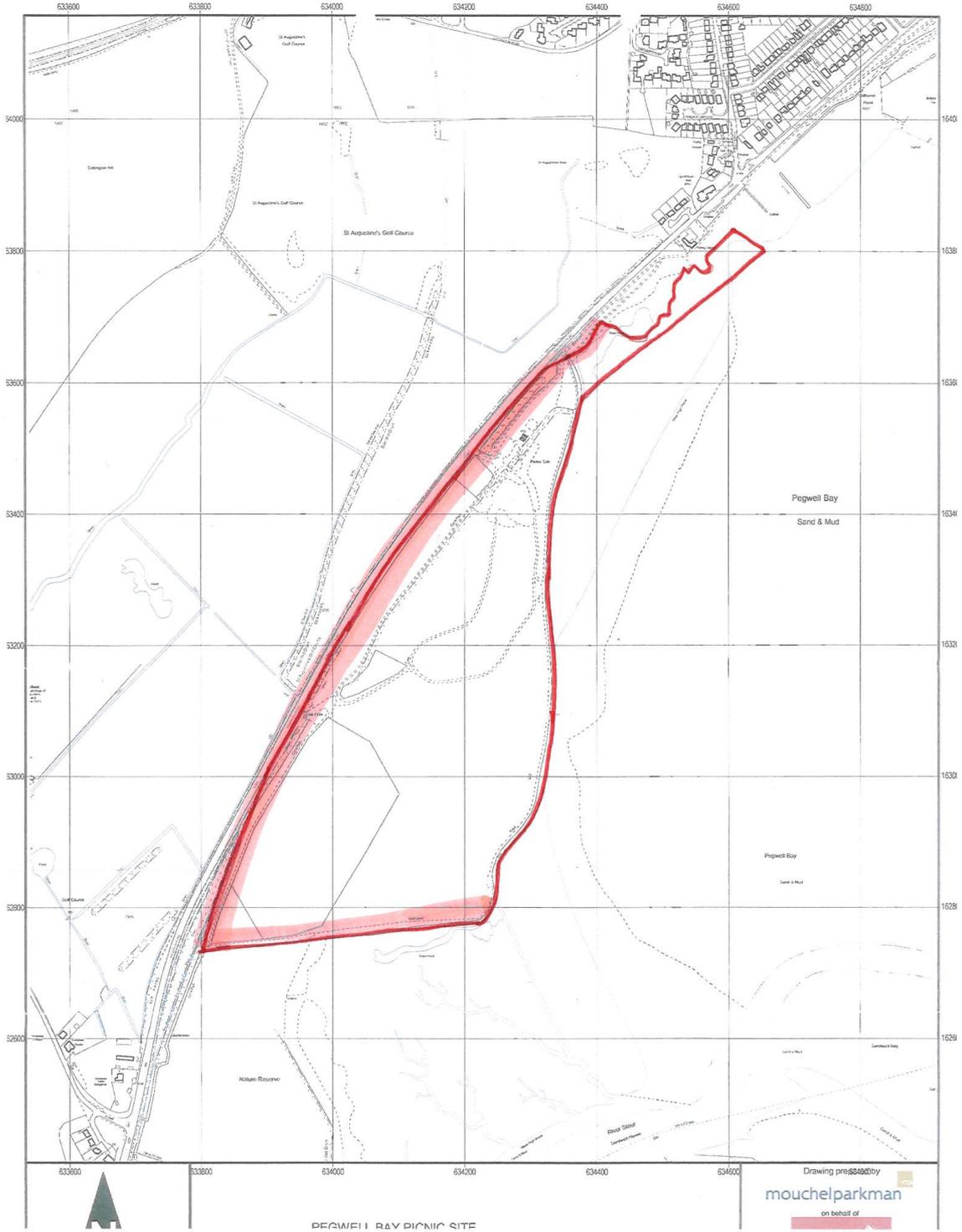


Fig. 7 Kent Country Parks East Kent staff structure

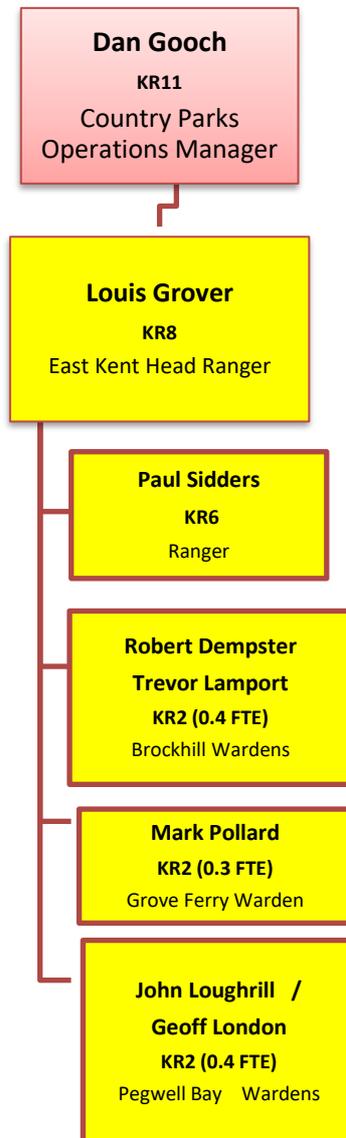


Fig. 8 Kent Wildlife Trust Biodiversity scoping report.



Pegwell Bay
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