Bentsley Spinney Greenspace Action Plan

2014 - 2019

Produced by:

Countryside Management Service

On behalf of:

St Albans City & District Council

This page is intentionally blank

Contents Page

Introduction

This document provides details of proposed management of Bentsley Spinney for the next five years, with a long term vision for the management of the woodland.

The GAP has been developed to conserve this small urban woodland through a considered long term approach to the woodland management, which will bring benefits to both people and wildlife. The GAP includes woodland management work and improving access.

All items within this Greenspace Action Plan are subject to funding being sought, allocated and confirmed.

Purpose of the Greenspace Action Plan (GAP)

The GAP comprises of a number of simple maps to be used by CMS, St Albans City and District Council officers, trained volunteers and members of the public. The maps show key actions over a series of years. The actions within the GAP will be reviewed on an annual basis and amendments/additions made as necessary.

Site Description

See Map 3 for full Site Description.

Bentsley Spinney is a small area of old secondary and possibly ancient woodland with an old byway lined by a woodbank along its western boundary. The site covers approximately 1.14ha and is situated in the Marshallwick area of northeast St. Albans, in St. Albans and City District Council (SADC). The woodland is surrounded by residential housing on all sides by The Ridgeway, Sky's Wood Road, Sherwood Avenue and Bentsley Close. See Map 1 for location. The site is owned and managed by St. Albans and City District Council.

Bentsley Spinney is designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and several ecological surveys have been carried out of the Spinney in 2006 and 1992. The site is designated for the old secondary and possibly ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland, although not identified in the Ancient Woodland Inventory as Ancient Woodland, part the site has a semi-natural canopy and features suggesting an ancient origin for example, an old woodbank, old route way and presence of a number of ancient woodland indicator species. For full LWS description see Appendix 1.

A group of old Hornbeams are located on and around the woodbank in northwest corner of the Spinney

The ancient woodland areas of the Spinney are relatively low in species diversity, with an Oak/Ash canopy with occasional Cherry, Elm, frequent Sycamore and rare Field Maple. An understory of Holly, occasional Hazel and ground flora of Bramble, Cow Parsley, Lesser Celedine and Ivy dominant, with occasional patches of Bluebells and other Ancient Woodland Indicator species.

Secondary woodland areas of the Spinney are situated on the banks of an old gravel pit of varying depth, it has less diverse ground flora and poor woodland structure than the ancient woodland parts. The canopy is dominated by Sycamore with areas of densely spaced, even aged younger trees and occasional mature specimens, with occasional Ash and Horse Chestnut. Ground flora is dominated by Cow Parsley, Lesser Celedine, Rough Meadow Grass, occasional Common Nettle and Lords and Ladies, with occasional understory of Elder.

View north in bottom of pit through Sycamores

View Northeast from Byway over pit

The woodland generally has a very sparse understory and the ground flora has quite a high frequency of bramble.

Glade created following felling of large Horse Chestnut

Flytipped Garden Waste

The site suffers from flytipping of garden waste from some of the adjoining properties, with a number of large piles of grass clippings and tree/shrub prunings. In some areas this has introduced non-native, cultivated shrubs and plants to the site, for example Variegated Yellow Archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon subsp. Argentatum*) which threaten the native woodland ground flora and Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) which shade out the understorey and ground flora.

Background and Previous Management

Past management of the woodland has largely involved tree safety works, litter picking, bin emptying and maintaining unobstructed access for users along the Byway. Some tree works have taken place over the last 2 years largely on grounds of safety and storm damage, this has largely been reactive and has not followed a tree/woodland management plan. It has included; thinning Sycamores close to the boundary overhanging adjoining gardens as they grow toward the light, Ash trees reduced to a pollard close to the boundary, and a large Horse Chestnut felled due to disease with main trunk left where felled.

From these tree works and storm damage the woodland has large volumes of large timber, small branches and chipped material in various locations around the wood. The footprint of this material should be reduced so it does not negatively affect the ground flora, whilst ensuring sufficient material is retained for dead wood habitat. This material could be better utilised and managed in the future.

Large Volumes of felled timber

Pollard Ash with brash and timber

Ivy growing up a number of trees has been chopped at the base, this kind of management is not necessary in a woodland setting and is detrimental to the biodiversity of the woodland.

With extensive boundaries to properties, an important factor in the future management of the woodland is to take account of this in a planned and proactive approach. Appropriate future management the Spinney has the potential to provide a rich and useful community resource for those living on its doorstep

St. Albans City and District Council are currently in discussions with Sandridge Parish Council for management of the Spinney to pass to them in the future, this plan seeks to put the management of the woodland on a good footing and bring the Spinney into favourable condition in readiness for this shift.

Constraints

See Map 2 for full Site Constraints.

There are no known Tree Preservation Orders within the site.

A public right of way, Byway (Sandridge No. 3), runs along the western edge of the woodland, with an old bank running along one side, mature trees and a group of veteran Hornbeams at the northern end. This route is surfaced, allowing visitors access through the woodland on foot, cycle, horse and mobility vehicles, the route continues north linking to Jersey Farm Woodland Park, local schools and Sandridge further a field.

Searches for services should be carried out before any works scheduled in the plan take place and a CAT scan equipment used to verify the exact location of services on the ground.

Historical Background

Provided by Simon West 09/12/13

Bentsley Spinney is the last piece of historic woodland in this area; it is the smallest section of three including Sky's Wood and Chandler's Grove. There are no known archaeological findspots on the site or immediately adjacent, although its survival may suggest an historic interest in itself. To the south, Marshalswick Farm (site of; (MHT15776)) and Home Wood are of historic interest, the latter containing ditches and banks possibly

dating from the medieval or Roman periods. A more modern 'Old Gravel Pit' is shown on the first edition OS map; this may have archaeological interest as it may contain Pleistocene, or even earlier, archaeology.

Vision

Bentsley Spinney is a small but locally significant urban woodland with areas of ancient woodland rich in wildlife. This plan seeks to set in place a long term sustainable woodland management approach for the Spinney that will improve and enhance the woodland for both people and wildlife in the future, providing an asset on the doorstep of the local community.

Aims

A. To conserve and enhance the biodiversity that can be found on site

B. To put in place a long term proactive, strategic and sustainable woodland management approach that appropriately tackles tree safety whilst taking account of biodiversity

C. To promote awareness of and interest in Bentsley Spinney as a community asset

D. Engage and promote involvement from the local community in the future site management through volunteering

E. To improve access for all users throughout the woodland, with links to local greenspaces, businesses and schools

F. To install appropriate signage to enhance the visitor experience

G. To secure external funding to ensure the viability of capital works

H. To ensure ongoing maintenance costs are financially sustainable

Management Prescriptions

View following in conjunction with annual maps

A. Biodiversity and Woodland Management

i. Tree Management

The woodland management of the Spinney is to follow policies and guidelines in the St Albans Tree Strategy Review 2010, some of the points that are of particular relevance to Bentsley Spinney are identified in Appendix 2 and the full policy is available at:
http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/Images/St%20Albans%20Tree%20Strategy%20Review%202010_tcm15-14677.pdf

A tree health and safety survey of the site should be carried out by SADC following the current SADC procedures and guidelines. This should inform the future tree management by identifying trees that present an immediate health and safety hazard and those that require monitoring for potential future issues. Emergency tree work operations should be carried out where possible to follow the sprit of this plan e.g. arisings from the operations removed from site or stacked on existing habitat piles.

Those trees identified for monitoring that are close to pathways and property boundaries should be assessed as to whether proactive management e.g. in terms of pollarding would be a beneficial approach to prevent for significant issues in the future e.g. reactive emergency management that may result in the total loss of the tree.

Mature trees, other than those identified in the prescriptions, where they area away from the pathways should be generally be left to under go natural processes which will provide dead wood habitat.

ii. Thinning/Coppicing

Thin Sycamore areas, tree stumps to be left untreated and allowed to regrow to provide future coppice material. See Year 1 map for location, specific area/trees to be thinned should be identified by the supervising officer in consultation with SADC officers prior to the commencement of the work. Within this plan period only a maximum of 30% of this area of the woodland should be thinned/coppiced, in future plan periods further areas of the secondary sycamore woodland should receive the same prescription if the first area is successful. Future maintenance of these areas should be to re-coppice on a 10-15 year cycle dependant on growth in that period, to provide timber appropriate for the firewood/biomass market. Thinnings from these operations should be dealt with as outlined in points below and areas restocked with native species as outlined below.

iii. Non-native Species Management

Occasional non-native shrubs including but not limited to Cherry Laurel, should be removed and stumps treated with appropriate herbicide e.g. Glyphoshate or removed to prevent regrowth. In areas where this makes a significant gap in the understorey where there is also little or suppressed natural regeneration opportunities the area should be restocked with shrubs as outlined below.

iv. Hornbeam Management

To facilitate the continuation of this group of trees into veteran stages one of Hornbeams in the group should be pollarded. Prioritising those on the woodbank which are more vulnerable to storm damage and which in turn could damage the woodbank feature. The individual tree is to be identified by the supervising officer in consultation and agreement with SADC Arboricultural Officer.

v. Ride/Byway Side Management

Alongside the western side of the Byway for much of its length behind the housing is a 4-5 metre wide strip of mixed scrub and bramble margin with the occasional mature tree. Using the principle of habitat management along a woodland ride system the bramble and occasional scrub should be cut, with a 1.5-2 metre strip along the edge of the surfaced route cut regularly every year. Further areas back from this should be cut more infrequently with 3 to 4, 5 metre length blocks cut every other year, whilst retaining some cover to the garden fences for security and screening reasons. All arisings should be removed from site or stacked on existing habitat piles. Some arisings and timber from previous felling work may need to be moved to enable this work, see further points in this section that deal with this specifically.

On the eastern boundary of the Byway some light trimming back maybe required from time to time to keep the Byway clear for all potential users. All arisings from this are to be removed from site or stack appropriately on existing habitat piles.

vi. Restocking

Thinned areas should be restocked between October and end of December with 60-80cm high, 2 year old, local provenance stock of zone 405 (402 or 403 acceptable) of the native species listed below. Planted at a minimum of 2 metre spacings in as natural arrangement as possible, with tree tubes and stakes for protection. Maintenance visits to weed tubes maybe required in the spring/summer.

- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) (**S**)
- Hawthorn (*Crategus monogyna*) (**S**)
- Oak (*Quercus robur*) (**T**)
- Field Maple (*Acer camprestre*) (**T/S**)
- Hornbeam (*Carpinus betula*) (**T**)

(**T**) = Canopy tree species
(**S**) = Shrub/Understorey species

vii. Flytipped Waste Management

Dumped garden waste from the Spinney should be removed to prevent the establishment of other invasive non-native plants on site. Waste should be handled appropriately by licensed operators

viii. General Principles

All arisings from future tree works should be removed from site, contractors should be engaged, particularly with the sycamore thinning/coppicing work who have the facility to utilise the timber e.g. firewood, biomass, rather than the wood being chipped to waste, in order to make the woodland management operations more sustainable in the future.

Clearance of recently felled large timber off site, leaving a proportion on site for habitat piles, for climbing and sitting on by users e.g. children. Clearance of smaller brash off site, leaving a proportion for habitat piles and for play by children e.g. den building. The exact locations and volumes of timber/brash to be left is to be agreed on site with the supervising officer and SADC Officer, with habitat piles sited in areas of low diversity e.g. areas of brambles and nettles.

Tree and woodland work is to be carried out outside the bird breeding season between October and February, with relevant checks for bats carried out.

ix. Install Bird and Bat Boxes

To enhance the current nesting and roosting potential for birds and bats a number of bird and bat boxes should be installed throughout the woodland. This will also help provide habitat during the regeneration of the sycamore dominated areas of the woodland.

B. Community Involvement/Volunteering

Events should be run to raise awareness of and engage the local community in the conservation of the site. This could include, but is not limited to, Walks and More events run by CMS, practical conservation tasks run by CMS.

For example, to tackle the problem of garden waste dumped in the Spinney a community clean up event could be run in the early stages of the plan to remove the current dumped garden waste, to reinforce the conservation message and raise awareness of the correct opportunities for disposal that are available. Working with SADC waste and recycling department on this event may increase the impact.

From the initial public consultation there was positive support and a desire from local residents to be involved in some form of volunteering with practical tasks at the Spinney. One local resident is particular keen, he currently litter picks parts of the wood and has successfully applied for the installation of a bin at the northern tip of the site. He has offered is help and assistance to future volunteering on site, in particular with regard to keeping the Spinney clear of litter, a safety issue that was raised by local schools that potentially would like to use the woodland for classes.

This positive support and community involvement should be encourage, harnessed and directed to achieving the most appropriate tasks outline in the yearly action plans. Whilst ensuring it follows appropriate SADC and CMS guidelines, risk assessments and is covered by appropriate insurance.

Wheatfields Junior School are supportive of the management plan and fed into the consultation process. The Spinney is within walking distance of the school and can be potentially used for short visits to investigate the flora & fauna. One of the main priorities to enable visits would be that the woodland would be safe for the children to visit i.e. safe paths and free from potential risks such as broken glass. They would also be happy to consider taking part in any project to clean up the woodland e.g. a litter picking session or similar.

Community use of the Spinney, e.g. by school groups, should be positively encouraged, actions identified in this plan should facilitate these visits by addressing health and safety risks. Any community use should be agreed prior to the event with the relevant SADC officer, to ensure it follows appropriate SADC and CMS guidelines, risk assessments and is covered by appropriate insurance.

Increased use, awareness and involvement in the Spinney will help foster a sense of ownership amongst the local community and an increase in the value placed on this community asset. This will in time assist in controlling anti-social behaviour and other undesirable activities on site and encourage positive appropriate use of the greenspace.

C. Access

i. Entrance Signage

Remove and dispose of appropriately off site old signs at entrance A, B and C.

Install low impact welcome sign at entrance A, B and C, similar to those used at Nomansland Common with seasoned oak sleeper sunk into to ground to give finished height of 1.15m with an A5 size etched plaque mounted on it with logos, name of site, contact details and QR code to direct to webpage for further info.

Old signage at The Ridgeway Entrance

Example of proposed new signage

The exact location of the signs should be marked and associated excavation for installation agreed by the supervising officer in consultation with the SADC Officers including archaeology prior to the commencement of the works.

Advertising consent may be required for the installation of the welcome signs from SADC Planning Dept. checks should be made and consent applied for prior to the ordering of the work if required.

ii. Interpretation

Design, print and install A2 interpretation panel in lectern style oak frame. Interpretation to focus on wildlife of the Spinney, explaining the management which is being undertaken and why.

iii. Waymarking

Liaise with Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way Dept. to have installed destination waymarking at entrance A and C. Attach new flag to existing pole at entrance A and install pole and flag at entrance C The exact location of the pole is to be agreed with HCC Rights of Way Dept. (currently Julian Thornton) prior to works commencing and in consultation with relevant SADC Officers.

iv. Surfacing

At entrance A there is a step up onto the footway making access for those other than on foot difficult. Build up surfacing to provide a shallow ramp up from the existing path surface to level with the footway. Edging boards maybe required to prevent washout/failing of sides of path. The two small ash stumps at this entrance should be removed as part of this work.

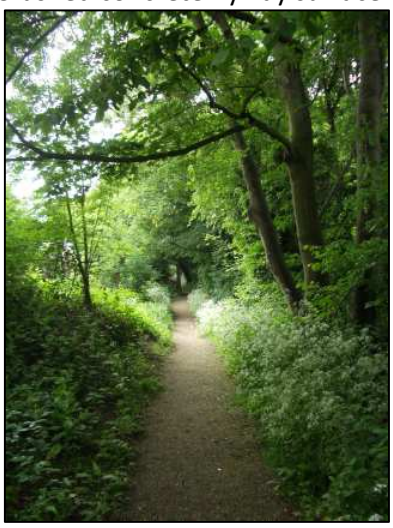
Step down off footway to Byway

Narrow Byway route between fence and hedge

At entrance C the current surfacing Byway should be extended from the woodland edge, across the current broken concrete path surface to meet up with the footway at entrance C. Surfaced with MOT type 1 crushed concrete (50mm to dust, 75% of which 35mm to dust) base to a depth of no less than 100mm, sub base of MOT type 1 virgin granite aggregate (30mm to dust) to a depth no less than 50mm, with a top surfacing of virgin granite fines (13mm to dust) no less than 25mm depth, compacted using a vibrating plate or similar to provide a hard surface. Surfacing should be cambered or have a crossfall to aid water shedding and prevent pooling of water. Width of surfacing should match that through the woodland. Path edges graded into adjoining ground.

Concrete Byway surface at entrance C

Crushed concrete Byway surface in wood



The informal unsurfaced path is a relatively well used desire line, the path surface should be largely left as is however in two places on the steep dell slopes the path could benefit from the installation of steps to improve safety.

Use timber risers (sawn planks 50mm x 200mm x appropriate width) with pointed stobs on front either end of plank (50mm x 50mm x 450mm), 500mm minimum depth of tread, slope tread from back to front and have a slight camber or crossfall to facilitate drainage, top dressing of crushed virgin stone (20mm to dust) compacted to a depth of 50mm, main fill of MOT type 1 recycled aggregate. Exact location to be agreed on the ground with the supervising officer before works commence.

v. Maintenance

At entrance A the Byway is squeezed between houses with privet hedge one side and fencing the other. Ensure yearly maintenance of hedge via cutting/trimming throughout the season (3-4 cuts a year May, July, September as required) to ensure access is maintained and accessible for all potential users.

Ensure a mown grass strip of 1.5metre wide is maintained alongside the byway from Sky's Wood Road to the woodland edge (3-4 cuts a year May, July, September as required). Amenity grassland in front of garage should be cut at least in Spring and late Summer whilst retaining the planted shrubs.

The surface of the byway should be monitored annually for build up of leaf litter and mud on the surface. This build up should be removed as necessary and the arisings put along the edge of the path in areas of low wildlife diversity e.g. areas of nettles, brambles, as identified by the supervising officer. Care should be taken not to damage the path surface during the works.

Keep informal unsurfaced routes clear of overhanging vegetation and other obstructions. Entrance B is to be maintained largely as is with only sufficient vegetation clearance carried out as required.

D. Funding

The majority of the capital items will require the recruitment of external funding, for example through Landfill Communities Fund. Ongoing maintenance items are contained within the SADC ground maintenance contract.

E. Annual management

Allied to this range of site improvements a number of ongoing, annual management actions will need to be carried out including; site risk assessment, tree heath & safety inspection, litter picking / fly tipping removal, maintenance of signage, bins & other infrastructure, maintain permissive access, and hedge/shrub management. See appendix for grounds maintenance details and the SADC Grounds Maintenance Specification.

Year 1&2 2014-16 Actions

Date	Aim Ref.	Spec. Ref.	Action	Lead	Cost Estimate	Funding Stream	Completion Date
2014	G&H	D	**Investigate and recruit external funding to deliver capital items in Year 1&2**	CMS	In house	SADC through CMS Work Programme	
2014/15	B	Ai	**Carry out initial tree safety survey**	SADC	In house	SADC Grounds Maintenance Contract	
February 2015	C&F	Ci	**Apply for advertising consent from SADC Planning Dept. for Entrance Signs**	SADC	-	SADC	
April 2015	C&F	Ci	**Design and print Entrance Signs**	CMS/SADC/ Contractor/	£1000	External Funding	
2014/15	A, C&D	Avii&B	**Hold community clean up day (s)**	CMS/SADC/ Local Community	In house	SADC through CMS Work Programme	
June 2015	C&F	Ci	**Remove old signage entrances**	CMS Volunteers/ Local Community	In house	SADC through CMS Work Programme	
June 2015	C&F	Ci	**Install new entrance welcome signs**	CMS Volunteers/ Friends of	In house	SADC through CMS Work Programme	
June 2015	E&F	Ciii	**Install ROW pole and waymarking flags at The Ridgeway and Sky's Wood Road**	CMS/HCC ROW/Contractor	£300	HCC ROW Dept.	
May 2015	E	Civ	**Install surfaced ramp at The Ridgeway entrance**	CMS/HCC ROW/Contractor	£1700	HCC ROW Dept.	
May 2015	E	Civ	**Surface route from old garage to Sky's Wood Road**	CMS/SADC/ Contractor	£800	External Funding	
May 2015	E	Civ	**Install steps on informal path**	CMS/SADC/ Volunteers/ Contractor	£300 (materials only)	External Funding	
October 2015	F	Cii	**Install interpretation panel**	CMS/SADC/ Volunteers/	In house	SADC through CMS Work Programme	
October - December 2014/15	A&B	Aii	**Thin/coppice sycamore area**	CMS/SADC/ Contractor/	£2000	External Funding	
October - December 2014/15	A	Aviii	**Previously felled timber and brash clearance**	CMS/SADC/ Contractor	£500	External Funding	
December 2014/15	A&B	Avi	**Replant thinned areas with native trees and shrubs**	CMS Volunteers/ Local Community	£500	SADC through CMS Work Programme	
October – February 2014/16	A	Aiii	**Remove non-native shrubs and sycamore saplings**	CMS Volunteers/ Local Community	In House	SADC through CMS Work Programme	

October – February 2014/16	A&B	Aiv	**Selective Hornbeam pollard**	SADC Tree Officer/CMS	£500	External Funding	
October – February 2014/16	A&B	Av	**Ride/Byway side management**	CMS/SADC	In house	SADC through CMS Work Programme	
October – February 2014/16	A	Aix	**Install bird and bat boxes**	CMS/SADC	£500	SADC through CMS Work Programme	

Year 3-5 2016-19 Actions

Date	Aim Ref.	Spec. Ref.	Action	Lead	Cost Estimate	Funding Stream	Completion Date
October – February 2016/17	A&E	Av	**Ride/Byway side management**	CMS/SADC	In house	SADC through CMS Work Programme	
October – February 2018/19	A&E	Av	**Ride/Byway side management**	CMS/SADC	In house	SADC through CMS Work Programme	

Annual Actions

Date	Aim Ref.	Spec. Ref.	Action	Lead	Cost Estimate	Funding Stream	Completion Date
As per contract specification	B	Ai&E	**Site risk assessment and tree safety monitoring**	SADC	In house	SADC Officers	
Annually as identified by tree safety monitoring	B	Ai	**Proactive tree safety management if required as identified by tree safety monitoring**	SADC	In house	SADC Grounds Maintenance Contract	
Annually as per contract specification	A&E	Cv&E	**Vegetation clearance along Byway, paths and around infrastructure**	SADC	In house	SADC Grounds Maintenance Contract	
Annually as per contract specification	A	E	**Remove graffiti as required**	SADC	In house	SADC Grounds Maintenance Contract	
Annually as per contract specification	A	E	**Monitor and maintain signs, bins & other site infrastructure**	SADC	In house	SADC Grounds Maintenance Contract	
Annually as per contract specification	A	E	**Monitor litter/litter pick if required**	SADC	In house	SADC Grounds Maintenance Contract	
June Annually	A&B	E	**Weed and maintain planted trees/shrubs**	CMS Vols./ Local Community	In house	SADC through CMS Work Programme	
May & August Annually	A	Cv	**Mow amenity grassland at Sky's Wood Road entrance**	SADC	In house	SADC Grounds Maintenance Contract	
Nov. & April Annually	E	Cv	**Monitor surfaced paths for debris, scrape as necessary**	SADC	In house	SADC Grounds Maintenance Contract	
Annually	C&D	B	**Liaise with schools and other user groups**	SADC	In house	Officer time	

Annually	C&D	B	**Liaise with local neighbourhood policing patrols**	SADC	In house	Officer time	

Suggested Roles for Implementation

Countryside Management Service

- To provide specialist advice on appropriate management and produce the site's Greenspace Action Plan (GAP)
- To identify suitable sources of grant aid and make applications on behalf of SADC as appropriate
- To project manage the agreed capital works in the GAP
- Support community events

St Albans City and District Council

- To appoint an appropriate officer responsible for giving the final approval of the Greenspace Action Plan (GAP), approve all work on site and monitor the plan's implementation
- Day to day management and grounds maintenance of Bentsley Spinney including responding to specific tree enquires from members of the public.
- To provide Member involvement and reporting
- To take overall responsibility for grants
- To approve any local community involvement with the site

Contacts

St Albans City & District Council
Community Services
Senior Parks and Green Spaces Officer
Council Offices
Civic Centre
St Peters Street
St Albans
AL1 3JE
Tel: 01727 819366
Email: groundsmaintenance@stalbans.gov.uk

Countryside Management Service
Environment Department, CHG001
Countryside Management Service Office (Car park H),
County Hall,
Hertford,
SG13 8DN
Tel: 01992 588433
Email: northeast.cms@hertfordshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Local Wildlife Site Description

Ecological description (taken from the Wildlife Site Inventory 2011);
"Two small encapsulated fragments of ancient semi-natural woodland. The north wood supports a large old gravel pit and is mainly old secondary woodland of Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) plus remnant Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Wych Elm (*Ulmus glabra*) and some Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*). To the west there is an old wood bank feature within the woodland boundary which rare old laid Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*). The best remnant of ancient woodland occurs to the southern end and along the old boundary bank. The south wood supports a central area of Hornbeam with some Pedunculate Oak surrounded by old secondary woodland dominated by Sycamore and Ash with frequent Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) coppice. The ground flora is dominated by Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg.*) but supports several indicator species including Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Yellow Archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon*) and Common Dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*) and Brambles. The north wood has the most diverse ground flora with additional species present such as Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*) and Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*). There are many garden escapes. Paths through the woods are frequent. Wildlife Site criteria: Ancient Woodland Inventory site; woodland indicators."

Appendix 2: SADC Woodland Management and Tree Policy

For resident queries the following identifies and explains some of the common questions that are asked about trees and woodlands.
http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/environmentandwaste/trees-and-woodlands/treemanagementandprotectionfaqs.aspx

Extracts from St Albans Tree Strategy Review 2010:
Policy 5: The removal of trees or heavy lopping will be resisted unless there are sound arboricultural or other reasons e.g. disease or structural damage, or a clearly identified threat to an ancient monument. The Council will not carry out felling or potentially disfiguring forms of tree work in order to improve the reception of television signals, or for CCTV operation.

Policy 6: When dealing with complaints about daylight obstruction by trees, the Council will limit its agreement to requests for tree works only in cases where tree canopies are coming into physical contact with buildings. Overhanging growth will only be removed if it is obstructing access.

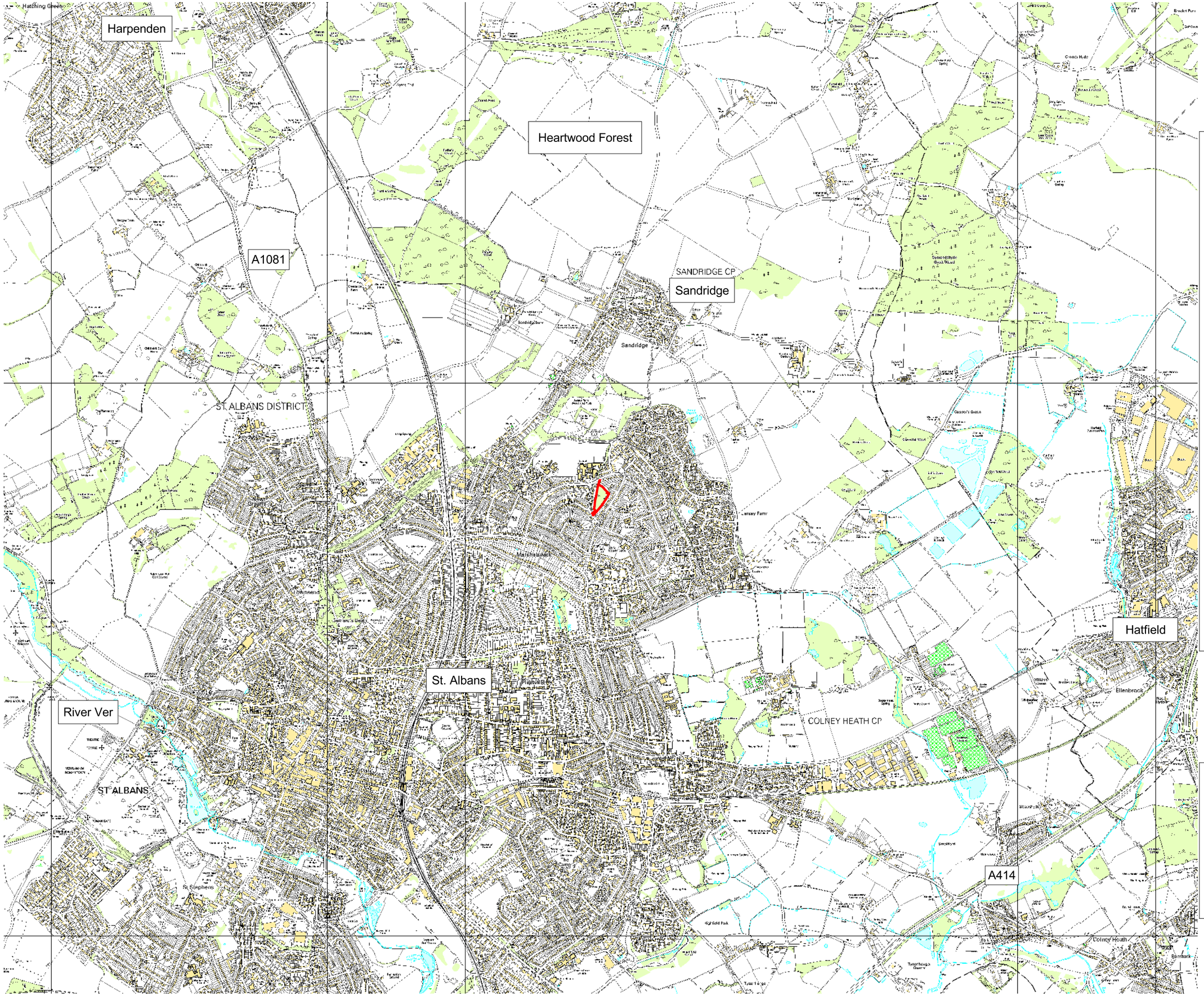
As a general policy, the Council will not undertake the topping, thinning or felling of trees simply to allow more light to a property, where the trees in question would not otherwise require any surgery.

Policy 21: The Council will manage woodland to fulfil its obligation as owners to ensure safety of people and property whilst remembering that woodlands are natural places and the level of acceptable risk must reflect this.

There is no requirement in law to prevent trees spreading over a boundary. However, whilst there is no obligation to prune trees, if branches or roots encroach on to neighbouring land they are legally regarded as a nuisance. There is no legal obligation for a landowner to cut back branches overhanging their neighbour's garden unless the nuisance is actionable, i.e. causing obstruction to access or physical contact with a structure. The owner of the adjacent land has the Common Law right to 'abate the nuisance' by cutting the branches or roots encroaching on other property.

On the above point the neighbour is not generally allowed to enter the SADC property to carry out this work, permission will need to be sought in writing from SADC. Where this work is carried out SADC will upon request will arrange for the collection of the cut material by grounds maintenance contractors for appropriate disposal off site.

Site Location



Key

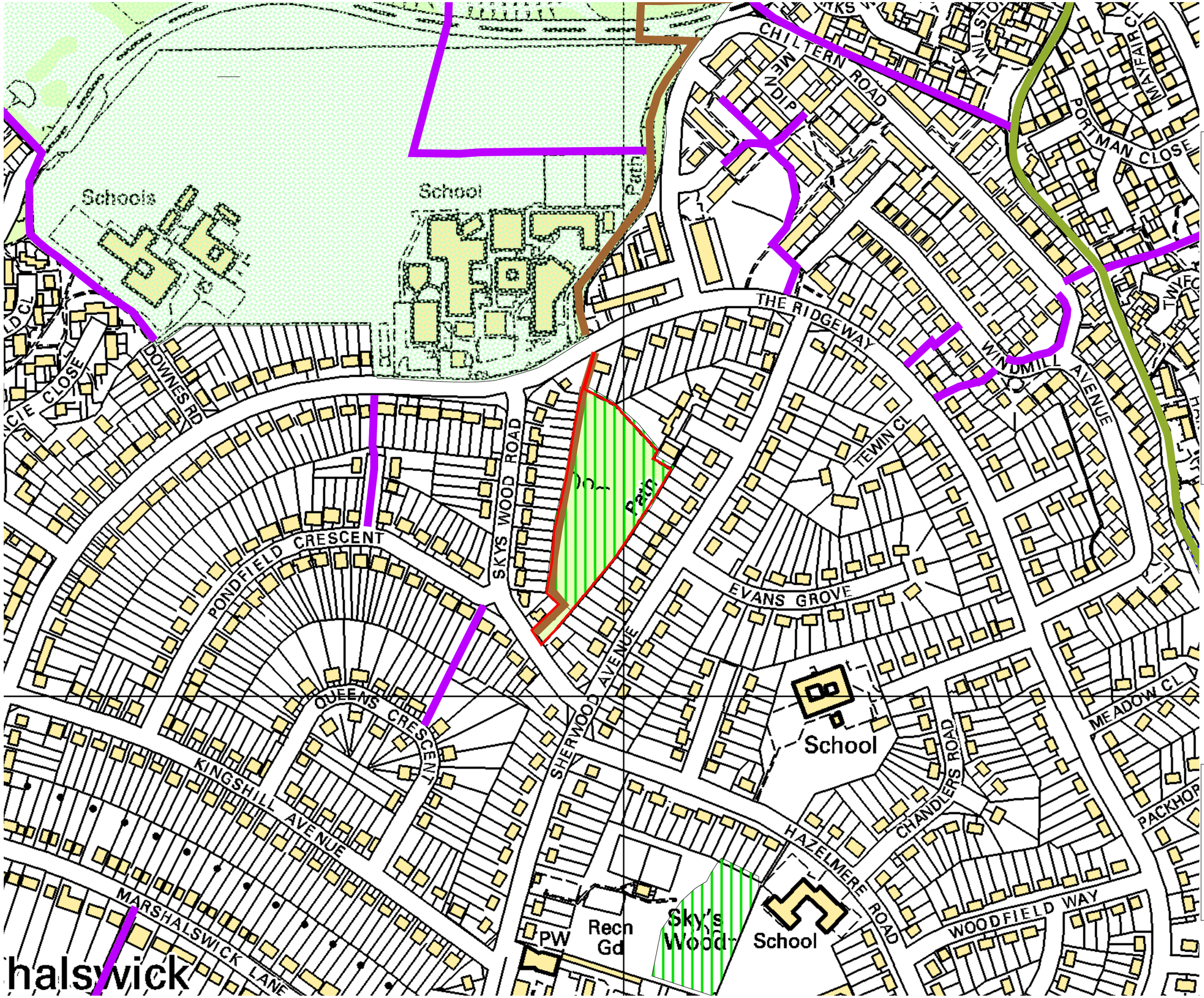
Site Boundary

Countryside Management Service

N

1:25000

Site Constraints



Key

- Site Boundary
- Byway Open to All Traffic
- Restricted Byway
- Bridleway
- Footpath
- Temp Closed Footpath
- Temp Footpath
- Unmetalled UCR
- Schedule Ancient Monument
- Local Wildlife Site
- Tree Preservation Order
- EcoSite
- Greenbelt

Countryside Management Service

N

1:3000

Site Description

Bentley Spinney/Sky's Wood (North)
Grid Reference: TL 1697 0917
Area: 1.14ha (2.817 acres)
Local Wildlife Site: 68/033

A

Entrance with step down off footway to path surface with old signage & two well pruned young ash trees in poor condition

Byway narrowed where it runs between fence and privit hedge

Litter Bin

Hornbeam group

Core of site and along western boundary low quality ancient woodland with Oak/Ash dominated canopy with occasional Cherry, Elm Sycamore and Hornbeam. Patchy understorey of Holly and Hazel with Bluebells and other ancient woodland indicators in the ground flora. Bramble and Ivy dominating in places.

Overgrown pathway to site entrance forcing users onto property drive before entering site on little used path between two fences (1m wide) with old signs.

B

Byway with crushed concrete surface approximately 2m wide

Sycamores thinned with large volumes of felled timber and brash/chipping piles

Old woodbank with trees and shrubs along much of Byways eastern boundary Hornbeams on bank to the north

Species poor secondary woodland with Sycamore dominated canopy on the slopes of an old gravel pit

Several large piles/areas of dumped garden waste along eastern boundary

Mature Field Maple

Old Garage used by Horticultural Society

Clearing with large felled Horse Chestnut trunk

Amenity mown grassland with planted young shrubs

No waymarking flag and pole at this entrance

C

Byway surface of broken concrete old surfacing to garage front

Key

- Site Boundary
- Building
- Informal Unsurfaced Path
- Surfaced Path
- Amenity Grassland
- Ancient Woodland
- Secondary Woodland

Countryside Management Service

N

1:1000

Year 1&2
2014-16

Annual Items

- Access routes and infrastructure vegetation clearance
- Remove graffitti
- Monitor & maintain site infrastructure
- Monitor & manage litter
- Site risk assessment
- Tree safety monitoring
- Proactive tree safety management
- Monitor surfaced routes, scrape off surface mud/leaf litter as required
- Liaise with schools and other users groups over visits
- Liaise with local community policing

Actions

- Investigate & recruit external funding
- Hold community clean up day and one walks and more event
- Apply to SADC planning dept. for advertising consent
- Carry out initial tree safety survey
- Design and produce entrance signs and interpretation panel
- Produce and post web based info.
- Previously felled timber and brash clearance
- Install bird and bat boxes

A
B
C

Install ROW pole and waymarking flags

Remove old signage
Install new entrance sign

Install Interpretation Panel

Construct surfaced ramp

Selective Hornbeam pollard

Install steps

Remove old signage
Install new entrance sign

Thin/coppice Sycamores
Replant with native trees

Remove non-native shrubs and sycamore saplings

Ride/Byway side management

Install steps

Surface Byway over current broken concrete

Install ROW pole and waymarking flags

Remove old signage
Install new entrance sign

Mow amenity grassland

Key

- SADC led
- CMS led

Contractor delivered

- SADC led
- CMS led

Volunteer delivered

- Site Boundary
- Building
- Informal Unsurfaced Path
- Surfaced Path
- Amenity Grassland
- Ancient Woodland
- Secondary Woodland
- Thinning/coppicing area

Countryside Management Service

N

1:1000

Year 3-5
2016-20

Annual Items
Access routes and infrastructure vegetation clearance
Remove graffitti
Monitor & maintain site infrastructure
Monitor & manage litter
Site risk assessment
Tree safety monitoring
Proactive tree safety management
Monitor surfaced routes, scrape off surface mud/leaf litter as required
Liaise with schools and other users groups over visits
Liaise with local community policing

Actions
Review management plan

A

B

C

Year 5 2019-20: Ride/Byway side management

Year 3 2016-17: Ride/Byway side management

Weed and maintain planted trees and shrubs

Mow amenity grassland

Key
- SADC led
- CMS led
- Contractor delivered
- SADC led
- CMS led
- Volunteer delivered
- Site Boundary
- Building
- Informal Unsurfaced Path
- Surfaced Path
- Amenity Grassland
- Ancient Woodland
- Secondary Woodland

Countryside Management Service

1:1000

N