HAYDON HILL
(ATTENBOROUGH FIELDS)

MANAGEMENT PLAN

2025 – 2030

OVERVIEW

This is a map-based management plan which is intended to direct activities on a site over a stated period of time; these activities will help to deliver the agreed aspirations which the site managers and stakeholders have identified for that site.

Engagement with stakeholders is at the centre of effective management planning on any site. An initial engagement period was held for the Attenborough Fields Management Plan in August and September 2023, to establish core aims and objectives for the site; these are reflected in Section 4. A second stage of engagement was held in February 2025 to enable stakeholders to comment on the proposed management actions for the site.

Version Control

Version	Issue Date	Details	Author	Reviewed	Approved
0	17/01/2025	Draft management plan	AT	SA	
1	31/03/2025	Final management plan	AT	SA	

CONTENTS

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 Site summary

Site Name:	Haydon Hill (Attenborough Fields)
Site Address:	Merry Hill Road, Bushey, WD23 1SU
Grid Reference:	TQ 126 950
Size:	23.1ha
Designations:	Metropolitan Green Belt
	Local Wildlife Site (part) – Haydon Hill Pastures and Pond
Owner:	Hertfordshire County Council

1.2 Vision statement

Attenborough Fields will be a beautiful, picturesque and tranquil farmed parkland landscape, sensitively managed to protect and enhance its valuable natural and cultural heritage, maximising landscape character and biodiversity potential.

The site will continue to offer permissive access for the informal use and enjoyment of local communities and visitors, with accessible routes and connections into the wider countryside.

This will be achieved through the following objectives:

- Landscape and heritage: To conserve and strengthen the quality and value of Attenborough Fields' historic parkland landscape and cultural heritage
- Biodiversity: To protect and enhance Attenborough Fields' habitats and species
- Public access: To enhance the experience of visitors to Attenborough Fields, improve accessibility through the site and strengthen connections between the site and surrounding countryside
- Community involvement: To involve key stakeholders and the local community in decision making and the active management of Attenborough Fields
- Maintenance: To ensure the standard of maintenance is upheld and relevant and that the site remains safe and secure
- Management: To ensure sustainability of all management operations on site

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Introduction

Attenborough Fields is the historic parkland of Haydon Hill House, a 19th century house still present on the northern boundary of the site but under different ownership. The name was given to the site after the Attenborough family, former occupants of Haydon Hill House.

The site covers 23ha between Bushey to the east and Oxhey to the west, on the south-eastern edge of Watford. It is situated at the northern extent of a band of open countryside which extends to the southeast into the London Borough of Harrow and is therefore of great value within the local landscape.

Attenborough Fields is owned by Hertfordshire County Council and managed according to the vision of a farmed parkland landscape, grazed by animals and supporting informal permissive access. Visitor infrastructure and facilities have been kept purposefully low key. The majority of the site is classified as a Local Wildlife Site as a result of its neutral grassland, which is moderately diverse although degraded, associated with numerous large old pedunculate oak trees, ponds and remnant hedgerows.

There are a number of pedestrian access points onto the site and it is crossed by several public footpaths. There are no restrictions to permissive access. All paths are either grass or earth, with no provision of hard surfaced routes.

The Friends of Attenborough Fields group was formed in 1994 and assists the County Council with ongoing site management.

Attenborough Fields

Management Plan 2025-30

Location Plan

Legend

Site boundary

Attenborough Fields
Central Grid Ref: TQ126950
Nearest Postcode: WD23 1SU

Scale @ A3
1:10,000

Date
October 2024

Rev
00

Countryside Management Service

N

0 200 400 m

Attenborough Fields

Management Plan 2025-30

Site Description

Environment Agency storm drain

Swallowhole

Wetter areas along heavily shaded watercourse

Weir
Maintains water level in main pond

Main pond

Mature hedgerows
No regular management

Vehicle entrance and cattle handling facilities

Oxhey Green
Watford Borough Council

Haydon Hill House

Mature parkland trees
With veteran features

Small meadow managed for biodiversity

Neutral grassland
Extensively cattle-grazed, relatively low diversity

Newly planted parkland trees
Parkland-style tree guards used

Mature oaks
Planted in two parallel lines

Kissing gate
Older style in estate fencing

Paddock Road Allotments
Watford Borough Council

Fenced area of new tree planting

Lower Brickfield
Grazing recently established, previously managed by hay cut

Merry Hill
Woodland Trust

Smaller ponds
Heavily overgrown

Seasonal pond

Suckering blackthorn adjacent to some hedgerows

Legend

- Grassland
- Hedgerow
- Parkland tree
- Woodland/scrub
- New tree planting
- Formal hedge
- Pond
- Storm drain
- Watercourse
- Main grass path network
- Pedestrian entrance
- Vehicle entrance
- Kissing gate
- Field gate
- Seat
- Litter bin
- Boot scraper
- Cattle trough

Scale @ A3
1:3,000

Date
October 2024

Rev
00

Countryside Management Service

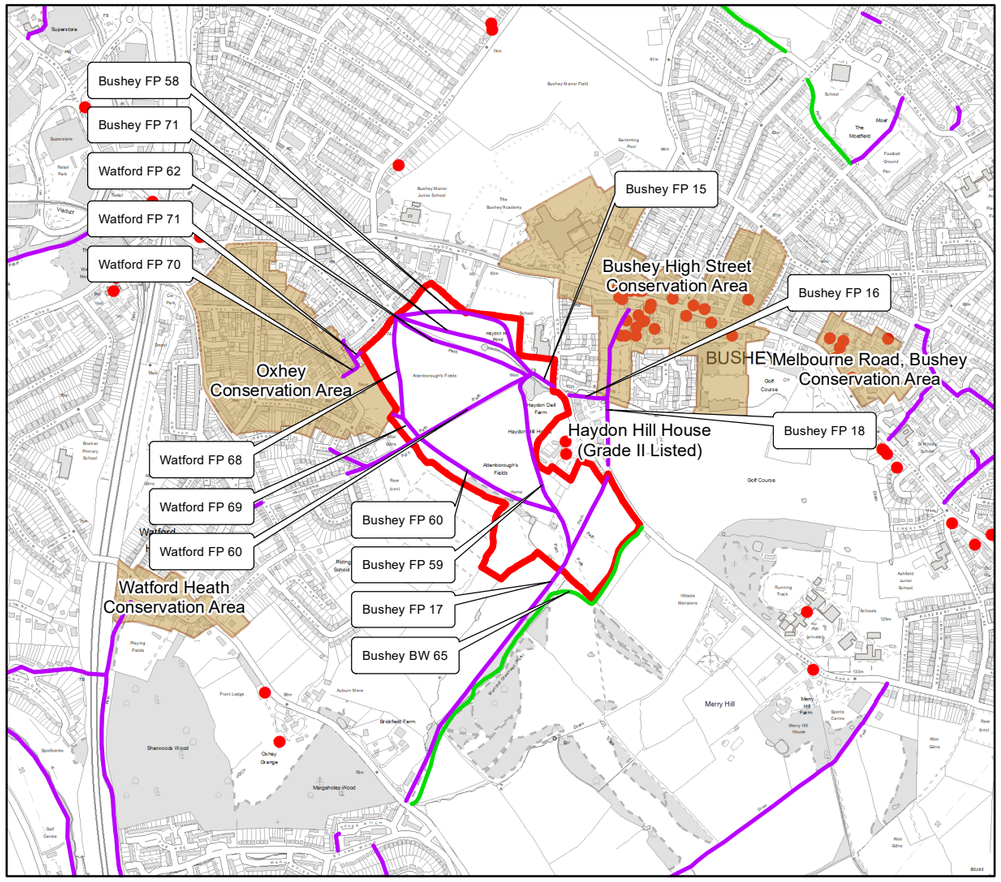
N

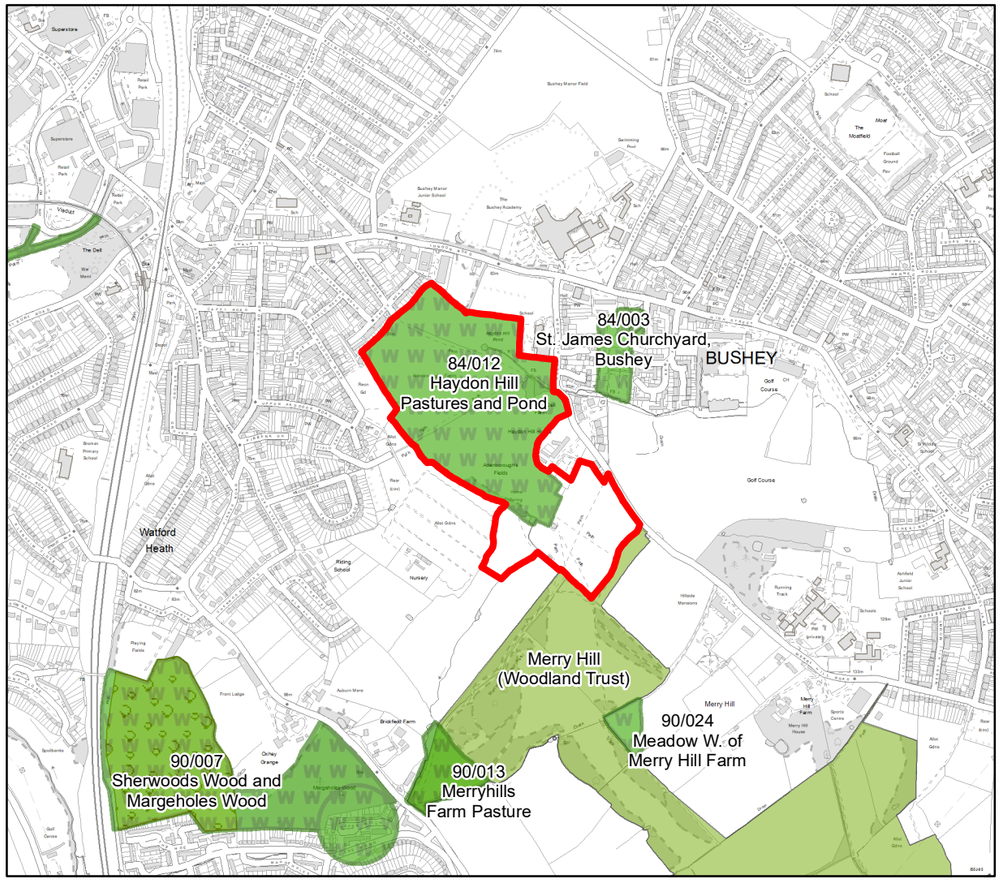
0 75 150 m

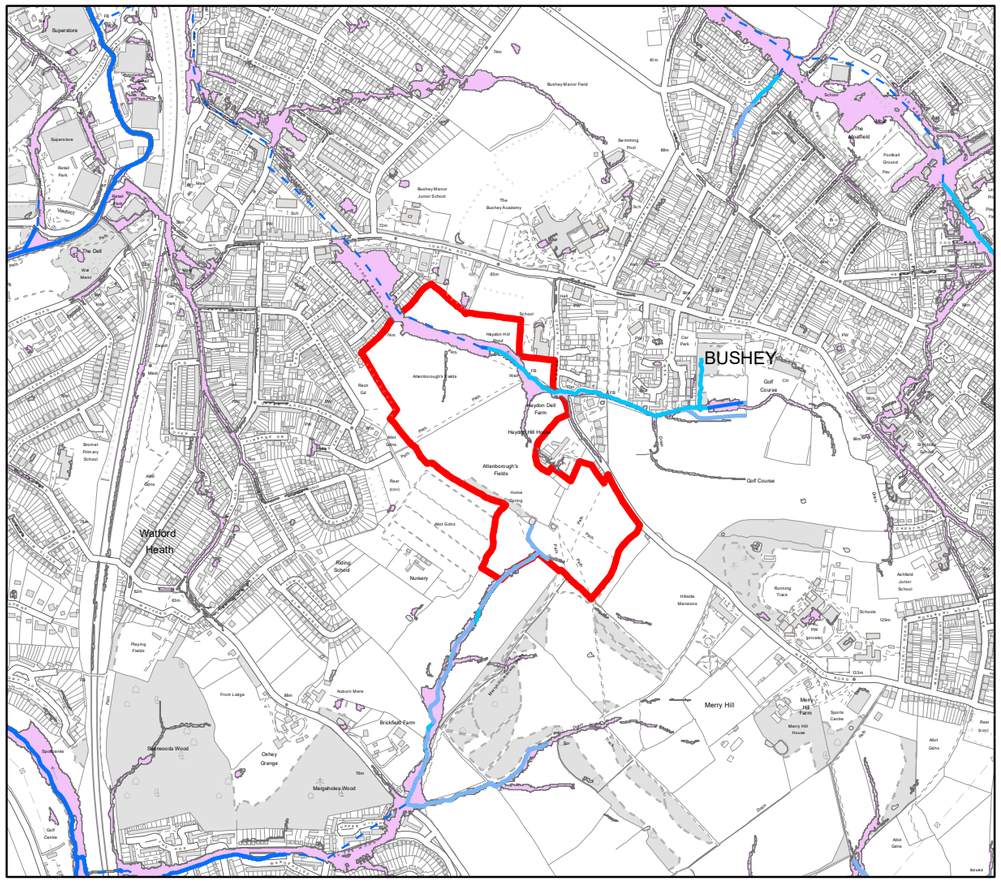
Attenborough Fields

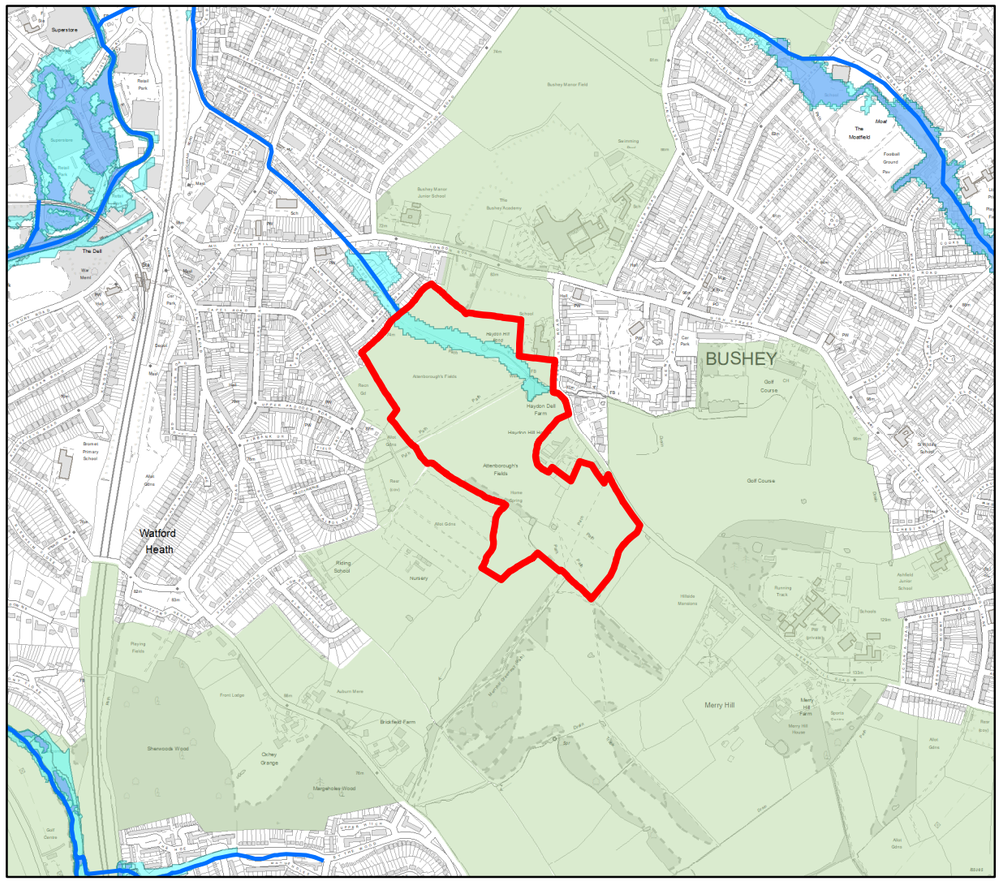
Management Plan 2025-30

Constraints Plan









Legend

- Bridleway
- Footpath
- Site boundary
- Conservation Areas
- Listed Building
- Wildlife Site
- Woodland Trust
- Greenbelt
- Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)

Detailed River Network

- Culvert
- Canal
- Lake / Reservoir
- Primary River
- Secondary River
- Tertiary River
- Risk of flooding from surface water extent (1 in 100 years)
- Flood Zone 3 (river flooding)
- Flood Zone 2 (river flooding)

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Scale @ A3
1:15,000

Date
October 2024

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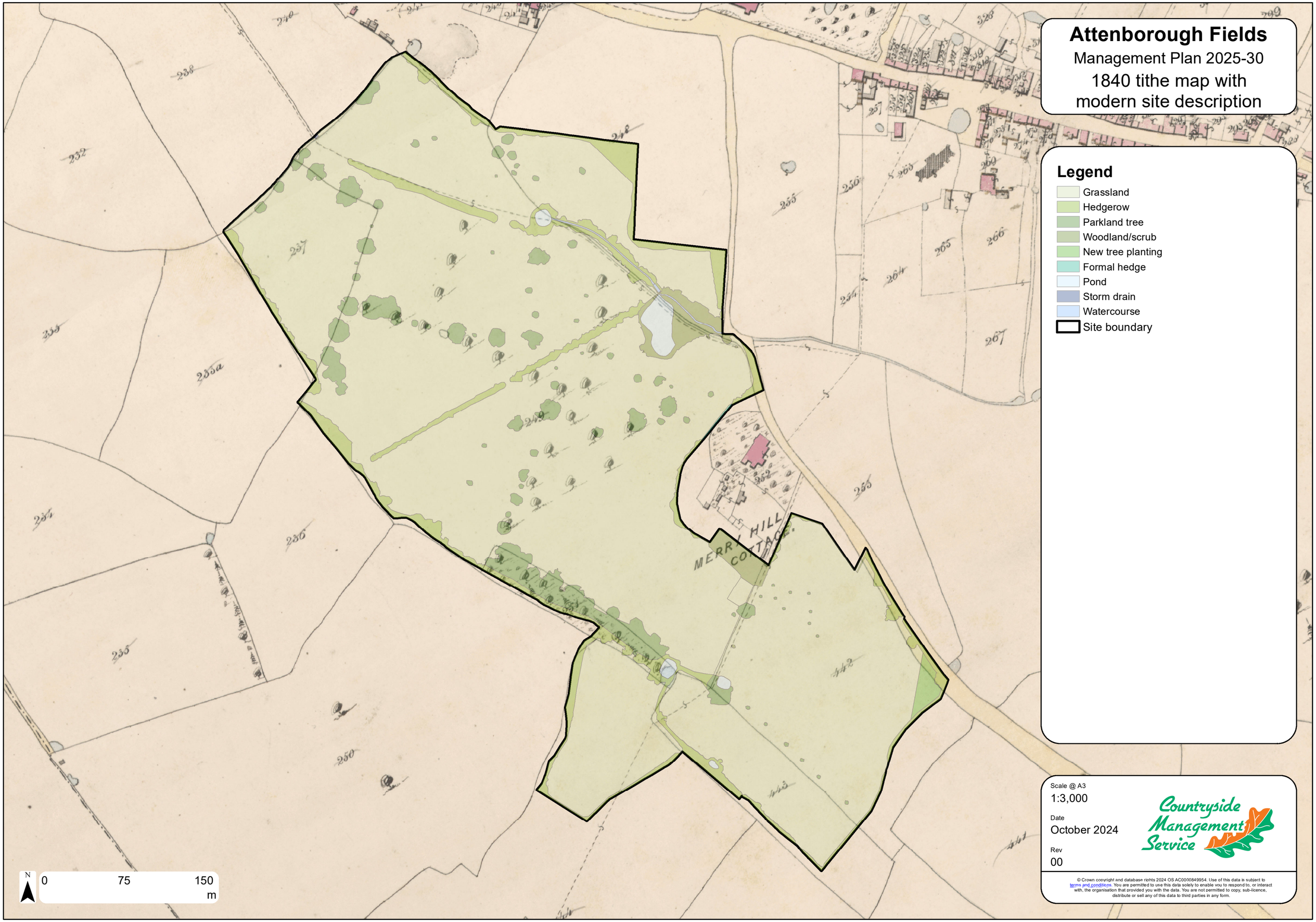
Countryside Management Service

Attenborough Fields

Management Plan 2025-30

1840 tithe map with modern site description



Legend

- Grassland
- Hedgerow
- Parkland tree
- Woodland/scrub
- New tree planting
- Formal hedge
- Pond
- Storm drain
- Watercourse
- Site boundary

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0 75 150 m

Scale @ A3
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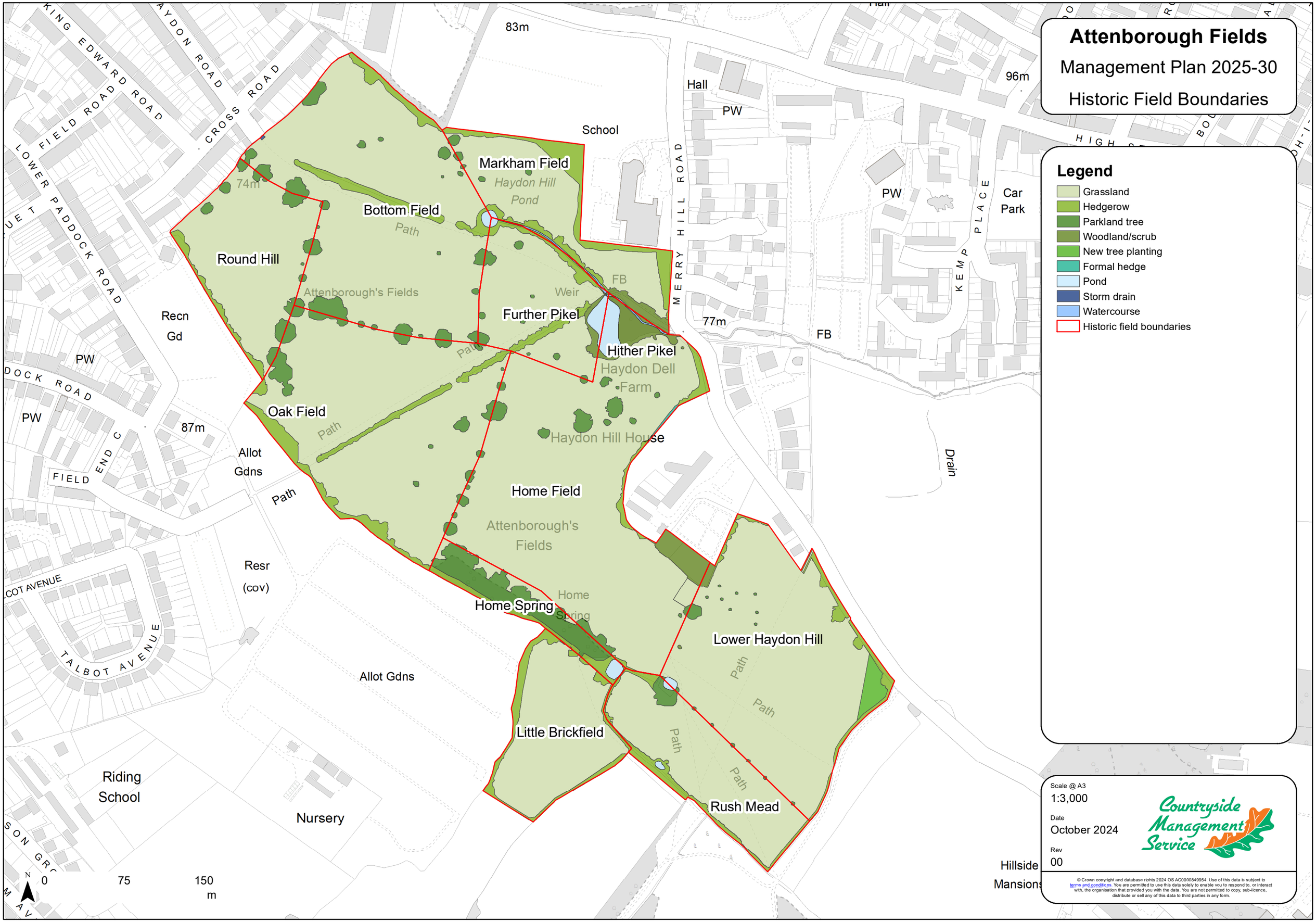
Attenborough Fields

Management Plan 2025-30

Historic Field Boundaries



Legend

- Grassland
- Hedgerow
- Parkland tree
- Woodland/scrub
- New tree planting
- Formal hedge
- Pond
- Storm drain
- Watercourse
- Historic field boundaries

Scale @ A3
1:3,000

Date
October 2024

Rev
00

Countryside Management Service

2.2 Site designations

The site sits within the Metropolitan Green Belt, the statutory green belt around London.

The majority of the site is classified as a Local Wildlife Site under the name Haydon Hill Pastures and Pond due to the presence of neutral grassland indicator species. The wildlife site is described as follows:

> Parkland supporting old semi-improved neutral grassland. The sward is moderately diverse and includes a good range of grasses and herbs such as Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), Burnet-saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*) and Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*). There are numerous large old parkland Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and some younger Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). A small pond with good marginal vegetation is present to the eastern edge which is fed by a small stream. There are remnant hedgerows on the boundary and crossing the site.

The parkland itself is not listed on the register of historic parks and gardens, but Haydon Hill House and an associated garden wall predating the current house are both Grade II listed structures.

2.3 Geology and hydrology

Attenborough Fields is situated on London clay, leading to impeded drainage. This is reflected in the soil types: the Soilscapes map hosted by Cranfield University shows that most of Attenborough Fields is within Soilscape 18, which is described as slowly permeable, seasonally wet base-rich loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage. The northern, lower part of the site towards Haydon Road is within Soilscape 8 which is slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with slightly impeded drainage. The impeded drainage is evident on site with some sections of the path network, particularly those with heavy footfall, becoming muddy and waterlogged during the winter months.

The site contains several waterbodies, the largest of which is the pond located just north of Haydon Hill House. It is known that this pond was a part of the formal estate and was once used by small pleasure boats. The pond is fed by a land drain/stream from the east (passing under Merry Hill Road via a culvert) with an outfall via a concrete sluice into a wet ditch (classified as an Ordinary Watercourse) that leads to a swallow hole. This feature was created to provide attenuation during periods of localised flooding. The land either side of this ditch and associated features, continuing northwest into Haydon Road, are designated Flood Zone 2 by the Environment Agency. The watercourse is classified as Main River north-westwards from Haydon Road.

There is a series of three smaller ponds in the higher southern section of the site. The land in the vicinity of these ponds shows signs of being damper, likely because of higher clay content in the soils reducing permeability. The historic field name for this area was Rush Mead, which suggests that it has a legacy of wetter conditions.

2.4 Landscape character

The distinctive landscape character of Attenborough Fields is of a historic parkland landscape comprising open grazed pasture, lines of mature and veteran native trees defining former field boundaries, scattered ponds, and remnant historic structures including Haydon Hill House itself, which is perched on a reasonably prominent rise within the landscape. The site has a gently undulating topography with a steady rise towards the southeast leading to expansive views to the north and west across the site and on towards Oxhey and Watford. Its landscape character is one of the site's major strengths and as such it is important that future management decisions take this into account.

Image 1: view to the north-west from the south-eastern end of the site.

The site is located within Area 14 of the Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment: Bushey Hill Pastures. This area is described as having a distinctive east-west ridge extending from Merry Hill to Caldecote Hill. The majority of land use is grazing pasture which maintains a rural and tranquil atmosphere despite being enclosed by built development. A key characteristic and feature of the landscape are the parkland areas and associated features, including the railings at Attenborough Fields.

The condition and robustness of the area have been assessed as moderate, resulting in a strategy to improve and conserve. There are several guidelines for managing change identified in the Landscape Character Assessment which relate to Attenborough Fields, including:

- Survey and manage parkland and veteran trees at Haydon Hill for biodiversity value and public safety. Undertake the planting of new parkland trees to

develop a diverse age structure. Trees to have metal railings to match existing estate fencing.

- Promote both the creation of new ponds and the retention/enhancement for wildlife of existing ponds.
- Promote the creation of new orchards with community involvement, using traditional varieties of fruit and minimal use of herbicides and pesticides.
- Ensure that the distinctive long-distance views are framed and not lost by emerging woodland areas.

2.5 History and archaeology

The parkland of Attenborough Fields once formed part of the Haydon Hill Estate. Occupancy of the land dates to at least 1652, as evidenced by the presence of a Grade II listed red brick garden wall about 20 metres to the southeast of the house and containing an ornamental stone plaque with that particular date; the listing suggests that this plaque may have come from a farmhouse that once occupied this site. Prior to construction of the current building, the estate is known to have been under the ownership of Dr Thomas Monro (1759-1833), Principal Physician at Bethlem Hospital and consultant physician to King George III. Dr Monro was also a known patron of the arts, and it is likely that many of the leading contemporary artists visited his home, including J.M.W. Turner. At this time the house was named Merry Hill Cottage, as evidenced on the 1840 tithe map.

The estate was purchased in the early 19th Century by Thomas George Fonnereau (1789-1850), a lawyer, writer and artist. On return from travelling in Italy, he worked with his friend and eminent architect Decimus Burton (1800-1841) to design and build an Italianate villa to replace the previous house on the site. Decimus Burton was one of the most celebrated Victorian architects having designed the Wellington Arch at London Zoo, the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, and much of Hyde Park including the gate and screen at Hyde Park corner. Construction of the house commenced in 1841 and completed in 1843.

Image 2: Haydon Hill, photographed in 1907.

The estate was purchased by the Attenborough family in the 1870s who commissioned extensions and renovations around the 1890s. The family remained in the house through the 1920s and 1930s. The house was commandeered during the Second World War by the RAF and was used as a mapping centre during the Battle of Britain. Post war, the house was converted into a retirement home by Harrow Council, and subsequently sold and converted into private apartments. The parkland was at some point separated from the house and came into the ownership of Hertfordshire County Council.

Today, the house survives in favourable condition because of a recent development project which divided the building into luxury private apartments. Under the council's ownership, the parkland estate has survived development pressures and retains much of its character and features including veteran trees, ponds, field boundaries, and remnant structures such as estate railings.

There are no scheduled monuments associated with the site, although the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record contains a record of ridge & furrow earthworks visible within the grassland to the north-west of Haydon Hill House. There are also several historic field boundaries which remain as tree lines, banks and shallow ditches. Some of these features can be identified on the 1840 tithe map. This map is shown in section 2.1, overlaid with a modern site description.

Image 3: the weir near the pond at Attenborough Fields, 1940s.

Other features of historic interest include a World War II bomb crater located towards the northern boundary, and remnant farm structures adjoining the south-east boundary wall to the garden of Haydon Hill House. This area, which is currently separated from the wider parkland by estate railings, contains a seemingly intact brick-paved floor beneath a layer of grass and vegetation, a brick-lined well, and surrounding low structures hidden by scrub vegetation. It is known by the Friends group as the ‘Piggery’.

2.6 Habitats and wildlife

2.6.1 Grassland

The majority of Attenborough Fields consists of open grassland. The site is designated a Local Wildlife Site due to its semi-improved neutral grassland habitat containing a good range of grasses and herbs, including pignut (*Conopodium majus*), sneezewort (*Achillea ptarmica*), cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*) and lady’s bedstraw (*Galium verum*), as well as those mentioned in the local wildlife site description in section 2.2. The parkland has been grazed by cattle since November 2019, as would historically have been the case, but until 2018 the site was grazed by horses. The combination of over-stocking of horses and the nature of their grazing led to a decline in floristic diversity.

Grazing takes place on a year-round basis and the site is divided into two main compartments. The site also contains a small separate meadow known as Little

Brickfield. This was previously managed by mowing, through a cut and lift regime, which allowed a somewhat more diverse sward to develop in contrast to the horse-grazed area. It has been incorporated in the cattle grazing since 2021.

2.6.2 Waterbodies and wetlands

The site contains several waterbodies, as described in section 2.3. Two of the ponds in the southern section of the site are known to have contained a good assemblage of emergent vegetation and to have historically supported great crested newts. These are now shaded and enclosed by maturing scrub. Both ponds are fenced to discourage access by dogs. Located close to these ponds is a seasonally dry pond which can be accessed by dogs and grazing animals.

The largest pond located close to Haydon Hill House is approximately 0.18ha in size and heavily shaded by large bankside willows resulting in minimal emergent vegetation. There also appear to be high levels of silt within this pond, likely as a result of autumn leaf fall but potentially also due to the quality of water entering the waterbody from the east. A small tree covered island is located within the centre of the pond.

2.6.3 Trees

The individual trees of Attenborough Fields define the parkland landscape character, preserve historic field boundaries, give structure and sense of place at both small and larger scales, and are of significant biodiversity value. Some of the veteran trees on site are hundreds of years old, predating Haydon Hill House itself.

Pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*) is the most commonly found species on site with numerous veteran and mature specimens present. These trees are largely in reasonable condition and show all the signs and features one would expect to see in older trees, such as deadwood, crown dieback, cavities, fungal fruiting bodies, and bark wounding. Some of these features provide ideal habitats for invertebrates, birds, and mammals, including potential roost features for bats. Some trees also contain bird and bat boxes. Retention of standing dead wood where safe to do so provides excellent habitat opportunities.

Other notable specimens found on site include a reasonably large cedar of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*) located close to the main pond, common lime (*Tilia x europaea*) and common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), with crack willow (*Salix fragilis*) and common alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) around the pond, and occasional large mature hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*).


Images 4 and 5: pedunculate oaks and cedar of Lebanon within woodland close to the main pond.

In recent years the Friends Group have carried out some specimen tree planting, focusing on historic boundaries and providing future replacements for older trees. Species have included oak, lime, hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), all surrounded by rough timber guards to protect from grazing animals.

Attenborough Fields falls into the Rural Estates tree safety inspection programme. Tree safety surveys are undertaken every three years, with highway trees and parkland trees on separate inspection schedules, and recommendations implemented. Reactive tree works are undertaken whenever a safety issue is identified.

2.6.4 Hedgerows

Much of the site boundary is formed of native hedgerows containing hawthorn, ash, field maple (*Acer campestre*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*), and dog rose (*Rosa canina*), with occasional large mature hedgerow trees. There are also some notable internal hedgerows following roughly east-west field boundaries.

Hedgerows are important habitats for a variety of species, providing song posts, foraging, shelter and nesting opportunities for woodland and farmland birds. In addition, the nectar and berries provide nourishment for a variety of invertebrates and mammals. Species-rich hedgerows are considered a priority habitat in England.

2.6.5 Woodland

The majority of mature trees on the site are individual parkland trees or trees within boundaries. There is a small area of woodland to the north of the main pond, and a small area of new tree planting in the eastern corner of the site.

Images 6 and 7: examples of recent specimen tree planting and woodland planting in Lower Haydon Hill field.

2.6.6 Species

There is limited information available on the species of fauna present on Attenborough Fields. Of the records held by the Hertfordshire Environmental Record Centre, great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) has been recorded in two of the ponds located close to Lower Brickfield, and grass snake (*Natrix natrix*) has been recorded at nearby Haydon Dell Farm.

The variety of habitats on site and connectivity to the wider countryside would suggest the likely presence of several protected species. Waterbodies, grasslands and areas of longer vegetation alongside hedgerows provide suitable habitat for commonly found amphibian and reptile species. The more common species of bat are very likely to be present on site due to the roosting and foraging opportunities provided by the veteran trees, hedgerows and waterbodies, and brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auratus*) has been recorded close to the site. No badger setts have been recorded on site but they are likely present in the area, and the site has the potential to be used for foraging habitat. In addition to these protected species, it is likely that the site is used by more common mammals and by a range of common breeding birds.

Although there are no recent records, white-letter hairstreak (*Satyrium w-album*) has been recorded close to the site in the past and is associated with elms (*Ulmus* sp.). Brown hairstreak (*Thecla betulae*) was recorded very close to the site at Merry Hill in 2024 and is associated with blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*).

2.6.6.1 Invasive non-native species

Attenborough Fields is now within the Established zone for oak processionary moth (OPM). This means it is the responsibility of landowners to manage OPM on their land, rather than the Forestry Commission. A risk-based approach to managing OPM is recommended for this zone and implemented by Hertfordshire County Council.

There is a small population of giant hogweed close to the large pond. Fifteen plants were removed in 2024. Further plants can be expected to grow from seed in future years.

2.6.7 Ecological connectivity

Attenborough Fields sits at the northern end of a relatively large expanse of open countryside that stretches south towards Harrow Weald, east to Stanmore and west to Northwood. Within this area are numerous golf courses, farmland and public open spaces including Merry Hill Wood (owned and managed by the Woodland Trust) and Bentley Priory Nature Reserve. This network of rural land contains hedgerows, tree lines, woodlands and grasslands, providing important wildlife corridors enabling species to move throughout the landscape.

2.7 Access, facilities and infrastructure

2.7.1 Entrances

There are several pedestrian access routes into and across Attenborough Fields. Pedestrian entrances are in the following locations:

- Two site entrances from Merry Hill Road, one to the north of Haydon Hill House and one next to The Cottage (residential property)
- Four site entrances to the south-eastern end of the site from Merry Hill Wood and the Greenway
- One site entrance from Paddock Road allotments
- Two site entrances from Lower Paddock Road via Oxhey Green open space
- One site entrance from Haydon Road in Oxhey

Cyclists are not permitted to enter the site. All of the site entrances are gated with kissing gates for this reason and due to the presence of grazing animals. There are no other restrictions of permissive access.

There are two vehicular access points to Attenborough Fields via field gates on Merry Hill Road; these entrances are used by maintenance vehicles, including the grazier. The site has no formal provision for car parking, but there is on-street parking available on Merry Hill Road, Lower Paddock Road, and Haydon Road.

2.7.2 Path network

The site has an extensive network of paths, all of which are either grass or beaten earth, with no provision of hard surfaced routes. Included in the path network are numerous public footpaths, which provide connections through the site and to many of the entrances listed above. The constraints plan shows the routes of these footpaths, which are as follows:

- Bushey Footpath 15 – Merry Hill Road to Watford Footpath 62
- Bushey Footpath 17 – Merry Hill Road towards Oxhey Lane

- Bushey Footpath 58 – Haydon Road to Bushey Footpath 15
- Bushey Footpath 59 – Bushey Footpath 15 to Bushey Footpath 17
- Bushey Footpath 60 – Bushey Footpath 59 to Watford Footpath 60
- Bushey Footpath 71 – Haydon Road to Bushey Footpath 58
- Watford Footpath 60 – Bushey Footpath 15 towards Talbot Avenue via Paddock Road Allotments
- Watford Footpath 62 – Haydon Road to Bushey Footpath 15
- Watford Footpath 68 – Haydon Road to Watford Footpath 69
- Watford Footpath 69 – Watford Footpath 60 to Oxhey Green

In addition, Bushey Bridleway 65 runs along the eastern boundary of the site within land owned by the Woodland Trust but does not enter the site. This hard surfaced route connects Merry Hill Road with Oxhey Lane.

The site is well-used by the local population, particularly for dog walking. It does occasionally receive some misuse, including a legacy of fire damage to some of the large parkland trees. Attenborough Fields is not widely promoted as a site of public open space, as it is viewed primarily as grazed farmland with permissive access rather than an amenity site.

2.7.3 Site furniture

The site has minimal site furniture with litter and dog waste bins provided at the site entrances from Merry Hill Road and Haydon Road, and a small number of rustic wooden benches located around the site. Sections of metal estate railings are present around the perimeter and within the site in varying condition. The site also contains structures to facilitate grazing including troughs, fencing and a stock handling area close to the gated vehicular entrance on Merry Hill Road.

2.7.4 Signage and interpretation

The majority of the public rights of way are signposted with fingerposts at the points of entry into the site. Although there are many permissive routes throughout the site, none of these are signed or waymarked. An interpretation board was located near the entrance from Oxhey Green open space displaying information regarding the site’s ownership, history and associated habitats and species, but this became dilapidated and has been removed. There is also an off-site Woodland Trust information board at the entrance to Merry Hill Wood. Most of the other site entrances have small information signs on gates containing the site name, the HCC logo, and contact details.

2.8 Community and events

The Friends of Attenborough Fields group was formed in 1994, following a successful campaign by the local community to resist efforts to develop Attenborough Fields as an extension to Bushey Golf Course. Since this time, the Friends group have assisted the county council with ongoing site management, completing a range of tasks including laying hedges, planting trees and installing bird and bat boxes. The group meets on the first Sunday of every month and regularly attracts around six volunteers from the local community. In addition, the Friends of Attenborough Fields helped raise match funding of £20,000 for the Woodland Trust to purchase the neighbouring “Merry Hill Farm”. The Friends group work closely with the Oxhey Village Environment Group (OVEG). No events are currently held on the site.

2.9 Site management

2.9.1 Management structure

The site is owned by Hertfordshire County Council with management of the site delivered through the Council’s Rural Estates team. The Rural Estates team are responsible for the site’s overall management and security. Advisory support is provided by the Council’s Countryside Management Service, who also support the Friends of Attenborough Fields. The Friends group assist the County Council with ongoing site management and assist the grazier through informal stock checking.

2.9.2 Agricultural tenancy

Until 2018 the site was grazed by horses, dating back to at least 1986. However, the herd expanded beyond the capacity of the site, resulting in the grassland being significantly overgrazed with large expanses of closely-cropped grass and little botanical diversity within the sward. The county council therefore removed the horses from the site and identified a new grazier who would graze the site with cattle. The grazing tenancy agreement started in 2019 and runs until January 2026.

Image 8: redpoll cattle.

3.0 ANALYSIS & EVALUATION

3.1 Landscape and Heritage

Attenborough Fields is currently well-managed in terms of its historic landscape and objectives in this area relate primarily to maintaining the existing landscape. Objectives related to maintaining and restoring historic field boundaries and conserving parkland trees are addressed in section 3.2 below.

The hedgerow adjacent to Haydon Hill House is now actively maintained, which has restored visual connectivity between the house and its former parkland.

Remnant estate fencing can be found in various parts of the site. The railings between Home Field and Lower Haydon Hill support current site management by splitting the site into two grazing compartments and should be maintained in good condition. Estate fencing which is revealed by habitat management works, for example around the main pond, should be maintained or restored where possible, subject to availability of grant funding.

Images 9 and 10: view of Haydon Hill House from Attenborough Fields and estate fencing in the centre of the site.

The remnant historic structures at the Piggery should be cleared of scrub and other accumulated vegetation to reveal and preserve the structures in this area.

3.2 Biodiversity

3.2.1 Grassland

The grassland habitats associated with the site were significantly overgrazed by horses for many years, leading to a sward dominated by rye grass with few herbs and a lack of diversity. Historically, the grassland would have been far richer, as

evidenced by the Local Wildlife Site designation for semi-improved neutral grassland.

The shift from overgrazing by horses to lower intensity cattle grazing should provide some benefit for the diversity of the sward, although stocking density and timings are determined by the tenant grazier not the council. This limits the potential benefit to the grassland in comparison to a targeted conservation grazing approach with stocking density and timings determined by the council, but has the important benefit of securing longer-term grazing for the site, as well as consistency in terms of public expectations of grazing animals. Potential for a longer-term tenancy should be explored to give both the grazier and the council better ability to plan for the future.

The main threat to the condition of the grassland and the long-term viability of grazing is the prevalence of creeping thistle across the site, which has arisen due to overgrazing in the past. An annual programme of thistle control will be implemented by the grazier with the aim of a long-term reduction in the extent of thistles across the site. This will involve a combination of topping and spot spraying with herbicide, as deemed necessary by the grazier. A broader but still targeted application of herbicide will be considered in areas where creeping thistle is particularly dominant.

There is also an increasing population of ragwort in Lower Haydon Hill field. This should be managed by annual pulling by volunteer work parties.

In addition to control, good grazing practice which maintains a well-managed sward without gaps will help prevent such problems from recurring. While this is formally the tenant's responsibility, the council should provide assistance in the management of thistles and ragwort, subject to availability of funding and staff capacity.

Image 11: example of thistles in the grassland.

An option to improve botanical diversity within the grassland would be to collect green hay locally and spread within the site. A suitably diverse and appropriately managed local site would need to be identified.

A rapid grassland assessment process should be set up and undertaken on a regular basis to establish a baseline and monitor change in the condition of the grassland over time.

A small, fenced area is managed as a meadow by the Friends of Attenborough Fields through annual cutting and removal of arisings and has somewhat greater diversity than the wider site.

3.2.2 Trees

The mature and veteran parkland trees of Attenborough Fields are of great importance to the landscape character of the site and provide considerable habitat value, including through veteran features such as deadwood and cavities. Where tree safety issues affect these valuable parkland trees, special consideration should be given to appropriate interventions which recognise the value of the trees.

Most opportunities for parkland tree planting to re-establish old boundary features and establish the next generation of parkland trees have now been taken. The success of recent planting should be monitored and replacement trees planted where required, using appropriate native species. Further small-scale planting of individual trees would be appropriate in the more open parts of the site, such as Home Field and the eastern part of Lower Haydon Hill.

Recent tree planting in the eastern corner of the site should also be maintained and replacement trees planted if required.

3.2.3 Hedgerows

3.2.3.1 Boundary hedgerows

The majority of the boundaries of the site have mature hedgerows with hedgerow trees, which in some places have developed into wider bands of mature scrub. These give an enclosed feel to much of the site and lessen the impact on the landscape of surrounding development. There is no routine maintenance of the boundary hedgerows. In some areas bramble is spreading from the hedgerows but this is not significantly impacting the landscape and has a biodiversity benefit of its own. The extent of bramble should be monitored and bramble control undertaken if necessary.

The only exception is the north-western boundary parallel to Cross Road, where there is no hedgerow and gardens and properties are easily visible. This boundary should be planted with a species-rich native hedgerow to provide improved screening and to enhance biodiversity and hedgerow connectivity in this area.

At the north-western corner of the site there is a small, untidy scrubby area. This should be cleared of dumped deadwood and new shrub planting undertaken to fill gaps.

The narrow access path leading to Little Brickfield from Rush Mead has become encroached by scrub developing from hedgerows on either side. This scrub should be cleared to keep the path open and maintain the transitional grassland habitat adjacent to the hedgerows.

3.2.3.2 Internal hedgerows

Two mature internal hedgerows are important landscape features within the site, the first running northwest-southeast from Haydon Road towards the swallow hole and the second running southwest-northeast from Paddock Road Allotments towards the main pond.

These hedgerows have been coppiced in the past to thicken their bases, with the exception of the eastern half of the Paddock Road Allotments hedgerow. Hedgerow shrubs in this section of hedgerow should be coppiced to thicken the base of the hedge and maintain it as hedgerow, retaining specimen trees and planting hedgerow shrub species in any gaps.

In the Haydon Road hedgerow a programme of rotational coppicing should be initiated to maintain this valuable habitat. Where hedgerows are coppiced, fencing will be required to protect regeneration from cattle. Managing hedgerows on a long rotation in this way will support colonisation by brown hairstreak.

Image 12: mature internal hedgerow now suited to coppicing.

3.2.4 Ponds and wetlands

3.2.4.1 Main pond

The main pond at Attenborough Fields is currently surrounded by dense trees and shrubs (predominantly willow and alder) and appears to be very silty, likely as a combination of leaf drop and the quality of water entering the pond from the east. It is known that the pond is an important component of the parkland estate's history, and

it is believed to have once been used for recreation by the owners of the house. It is likely that the pond was previously far more open in character, as evidenced by the image in section 2.5 and the position of remnant ornamental specimen trees such as the cedar of Lebanon.

The pond should be restored back towards its former open character and its potential to support biodiversity should be increased by raising light levels and habitat variety. Management interventions would include limited scrub clearance around the entrance from Merry Hill Road to make this entrance more welcoming, halo thinning around the cedar of Lebanon, clearance of some holly scrub north-west of the cedar of Lebanon to open up views of the pond and felling of trees on the south side of the pond to increase light levels and encourage the development of marginal vegetation. New fencing will be required to exclude cattle from the pond and ensure public safety as the existing fencing is in poor condition.

Although the pond is very silty, it would be expensive and challenging to remove the silt. Recovery of the pond habitat following the works above should be monitored and silt removal considered further if recovery is not satisfactory after three years. Ahead of any intervention, silt testing within the pond would help establish if any external pollution is affecting the pond.

The potential presence of great crested newt should be assumed when planning all pond and wetland work due to historic records from the site.

Giant hogweed control around the pond should continue annually until the plant no longer occurs on the site.


Images 13 and 14: main pond and watercourse leading north-west from main pond.

3.2.4.2 Watercourse from main pond to swallow hole

The watercourse which runs from the main pond to the swallow hole and its banks are largely shaded and enclosed by scrub, with some small areas of vegetation which reflect the wetter character of this area.

The area would benefit from a range of activities to create additional wetland habitat, including scrub clearance along the stream (retaining at least 50% of scrub and the majority of mature trees), regrading banks to encourage out of bank flow, creation of small scrapes and construction of leaky woody dams to slow the flow along the watercourse. The habitat creation area, which will be restricted to the footprint of the existing scrub, will require fencing to prevent access by cattle and ensure public safety.

The watercourse flows into a swallow hole which can overtop in times of high rainfall, leading to a further flow into a storm drain on the north-west boundary of the site and with an associated flood risk if this were overwhelmed. These proposals should by their nature have a positive effect on surface water flood risk in the area. Consultation with the council's Flood Risk Management team at design stage will be essential to ensure that this benefit is maximised and Land Drainage Consent obtained. The Environment Agency will also be engaged as the area is classified as Flood Zone 2, and a Main River starts at the storm drain at the north-western boundary of the site.

3.2.4.3 Other ponds

There is an opportunity to create additional habitat diversity in a perennially wet area of the site known as Rush Mead (in the vicinity of three existing ponds). The wetter nature of this area means that it could support a complex of additional ponds, to add to the existing habitats in this location and provide greater opportunity for reptile and amphibian species. As with other wetland creation works, the areas of new ponds should be fenced off to prevent access by cattle.

The two ponds in this area which are already enclosed by scrub should be left to natural succession rather than restored, thereby adding further habitat variety. Although it has less habitat value and is therefore a lower priority, the pond close to the fence between Home Field and Lower Haydon Hill should be re-scraped when an excavator is on site to carry out other pond works.

3.2.5 Biodiversity net gain

A formal habitat and condition assessment survey has not been undertaken as part of the development of this management plan. However, indicative current and potential habitat types and conditions for the main habitats within Attenborough Fields are provided in the tables below.

Table 1: Area habitats

Main habitat type	Area (ha)	Biodiversity metric habitat type	Current habitat condition	Potential habitat condition	Potential biodiversity net gain (biodiversity units)

Grassland	21.1	Other neutral grassland	Moderate	Good	65.01
Individual trees	1.2	Rural tree	Good	Good	0
Individual trees (new)	0.4	Rural tree	NA	Moderate	1.4
Woodland	0.3	Other woodland; broadleaved	Moderate	Moderate	0
Scrub	0.3	Mixed scrub	Moderate	Moderate	0
Pond	0.2	Pond (non-priority)	Poor	Moderate	0.51

Table 2: Linear habitats

Main habitat type	Length (m)	UKHab current habitat type	Current habitat condition	Potential habitat condition	Potential biodiversity net gain (biodiversity units)
Native hedgerow	2879	Native hedgerow with trees	Good	Good	0
Non-native hedgerow	43	Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	Poor	Poor	0
Native hedgerow (new planting)	200	NA	NA	Good	1.94
Watercourse	200	Other rivers and streams	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

It is clear from the tables that the main opportunity for change in the context of biodiversity net gain within Attenborough Fields is in the grassland. Improving the condition of the grassland would require an increased diversity of plant species per square metre, a reduction in the extent of thistles across the site and greater variety in sward height.

In order for Attenborough Fields to be put forward as an offsetting site for biodiversity net gain, a detailed survey of habitat type and condition would need to be carried out to confirm the habitat baseline, and a biodiversity net gain habitat management plan would need to be produced. This is not proposed within the next five years.

3.3 Public Access

3.3.1 Path surfacing

Attenborough Fields is managed primarily as working farmland with permissive public access rather than public green space. This informs our approach to path surfacing and no surfaced routes are planned.

However, three key points can become particularly difficult to use in winter and do require targeted surfacing:

- Watford Footpath 60 should be resurfaced where it enters the site from Paddock Road Allotments, with short spurs north-east towards the central hedgerow and south-east along the boundary.
- The path from Little Brickfield leading north into Home Field should be surfaced at the gateway, incorporating drainage which allows water in an east-west ditch at this location to pass under the path.
- The surface under and around the gate in the centre of the site between Home Field and Lower Haydon Hill.

3.3.2 Access structures

The kissing gates at entrances to the site are largely fit for purpose. They are a combination of modern metal kissing gates around three of the boundaries and wooden kissing gates at the entrances to Merry Hill Wood; of the latter, two are in poor condition and require repair or replacement. The only exception is the gate in the centre of the site between Home Field and Lower Haydon Hill which is in the style of the original estate fencing.

Image 15: estate fencing gate in centre of site.

3.3.3 Signage and interpretation

The only signage currently provided at Attenborough Fields is very simple signage at each entrance identifying the site. There is a Woodland Trust interpretation panel just off the site at the entrance to their Merry Hill Wood site from Merry Hill Road, but this does not identify the adjoining land as being publicly accessible and managed by Hertfordshire County Council.

A variety of new interpretation and signage should be provided to improve the welcome and information provision to visitors, explain site rules with the aim of reducing anti-social behaviour, highlight connections with Merry Hill Wood and celebrate the history and wildlife of Attenborough Fields. Interpretation should also be mindful of the use of the site, explaining that the site is used for grazing and highlighting things to consider when using agricultural land such as the impact on cattle of litter, dog waste, and dogs approaching or chasing cattle. The interpretation should highlight that dogs should be kept under control at all times, no BBQs or fires, no bikes – motorised or unmotorised allowed, and encourage visitors to close gates behind them.

- Combination orientation panel/noticeboard at entrance from Oxhey Green
- Orientation panel at entrance from Haydon Road
- Orientation panel at eastern entrance from Merry Hill Wood

- Interpretation panel near main pond highlighting the historic and wildlife value of the site
- Small wooden welcome signs at all entrances without interpretation.
- Remove broken public footpath sign at the gate between Home Field and Lower Haydon Hill and install new directional signage in this location.
- Update and reprint the previous ‘Merry Hill Walk’ leaflet which included Attenborough Fields and the Woodland Trust’s Merry Hill Wood site.

Image 16: Merry Hill Walk leaflet.

3.4 Community Involvement

The Friends of Attenborough Fields should continue to be supported in their contribution to the objectives of this management plan, and this valuable contribution should be recognised in publicity where appropriate. Where work is deliverable by volunteers, but additional manpower is required, Countryside Management Service practical conservation volunteer groups can also be engaged.

There is currently little partnership working with the Woodland Trust despite the close links between Attenborough Fields and their adjacent Merry Hill Wood site. A stronger partnership approach should be developed to ensure the two sites complement each other as much as possible and that opportunities to connect

management approaches are taken. This could include developing joint interpretation and coordinating habitat management works.

Collaboration with the residents of Haydon Hill House should also be pursued where relevant, in particular to ensure the visual connection between the house and its former parkland is maintained.

3.5 Maintenance

Grazing infrastructure is generally in good condition. The fencing around the boundaries of the site has been upgraded recently. Two of the four water troughs (those in Home Spring and Little Brickfield) are not currently in working order. This leads to increased poaching around functional troughs and reduces the flexibility available to the grazier, meaning that Little Brickfield cannot currently be grazed on its own. Further investigation will be required to identify the location of the fault.

Other site infrastructure is limited to benches which are also generally in good condition, but should be replaced when necessary following a consistent style. Most benches on the site are memorial benches so caution should be taken in the event that they require replacement.

Anti-social behaviour can be a problem on the site, including motorbikes, barbecues and fires, and this can be an issue for the grazier. Management decisions should take this into account. Any incidents of anti-social behaviour should be reported to the police by calling the non-emergency number 101 to enable them to build a log of incidents and respond accordingly.

Littering is an ongoing concern especially given the presence of grazing animals. Voluntary litter picking is undertaken by members of the local community including the Friends of Attenborough Fields.

3.6 Site Management

There is no dedicated site budget available to deliver the actions identified in this management plan and therefore both internal and external funding will be sought to enable its delivery. The range of actions identified, spanning biodiversity, heritage and public access, should offer good opportunities to secure grant funding. Delivery of actions will therefore only occur if funding is obtained.

4.0 AIM & OBJECTIVES

Vision Statement

Attenborough Fields will be a beautiful, picturesque and tranquil farmed parkland landscape, sensitively managed to protect and enhance its valuable natural and cultural heritage, maximising landscape character and biodiversity potential.

The site will continue for the duration of this plan to offer permissive access for the informal use and enjoyment of local communities and visitors, with accessible routes and connections into the wider countryside.

Aims and Objectives

A. Landscape and heritage: To conserve and strengthen the quality and value of Attenborough Fields' historic parkland landscape and cultural heritage

- A1 Conserve the historic landscape character of the site
- A2 Maintain important views across the site and retain visual connectivity to Haydon Hill House
- A3 Maintain and restore hedgerows following historic field boundaries
- A4 Maintain parkland character by conserving existing parkland trees and planting new trees where appropriate

B. Biodiversity: To protect and enhance Attenborough Fields' habitats and species

- B1 Work alongside the grazing tenant to improve the condition of the grassland habitat
- B2 Restore existing ponds and wetland habitats and create new ponds
- B3 Ensure that any new wetland features are designed with consideration for reducing surface water runoff from the area
- B4 Maintain and enhance the biodiversity value of hedgerows, parkland trees, boundary scrub and woodland

C. Public access: To enhance the experience of visitors to Attenborough Fields, improve accessibility through the site and strengthen connections between the site and surrounding countryside

- C1 Maintain site entrances to form welcoming, visible and attractive gateways to the site
- C2 Improve path surfaces and drainage at key pinch points to improve accessibility
- C3 Strengthen connections between Attenborough Fields and adjacent green spaces, in particular Merry Hill Wood
- C4 Develop new site interpretation and leaflet to inform and educate visitors

D. Community involvement: To involve key stakeholders and the local community in decision making and the active management of Attenborough Fields

D1 Promote, recognise and support the volunteer contribution to the management of the site through the Friends of Attenborough Fields

D2 Encourage a broad volunteer-led practical conservation and monitoring programme and ensure that all involved work towards the objectives of the green space action plan

D3 Develop a partnership working approach with the Woodland Trust to build links with Merry Hill Wood

E. Maintenance: To ensure the standard of maintenance is upheld and relevant and that the site remains safe and secure

E1 Manage and maintain site infrastructure

E2 Remove graffiti and fly-tipping

E3 Maintain litter bins and carry out regular litter picking

E4 Undertake small-scale vegetation management

E5 Respond proactively to any misuse of the site

E6 Undertake scheduled tree safety surveys, implement recommendations and carry out reactive tree works to address safety issues

F. Management: To ensure sustainability of all management operations on site

F1 Ensure ongoing maintenance costs are financially sustainable

F2 Secure external funding to ensure the viability of capital works

5.0 ACTION PLANS AND MAPS

5.1 ANNUAL AND REGULAR ACTIONS

Ref. no.	Action	Obj. Ref.	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
0.1	Collaborate with residents of Haydon Hill House to maintain connection between the house and its former parkland	A1	Ongoing	HCC RE	HCC RE	Officer time			
0.2	Maintain 'Piggery' area by clearing encroaching vegetation	A1	Sep-Feb	HCC RE	FoAF	Vols			
0.3	Provide aftercare for recent tree planting as required	A4, B4	Ongoing	HCC RE	FoAF	Vols			
0.4	Graze the grassland	B1	Ongoing	HCC RE	Grazing tenant	NA	Small income		
0.5	Thistle control (topping and/or herbicide application as deemed necessary)	B1	Summer	Grazing tenant	Grazing tenant/ HCC RE	Grazing tenant/ HCC RE			
0.6	Ragwort control	B1	Summer	HCC CRoW	Vols	Vols			
0.7	Cut meadow adjacent to Piggery and remove arisings	B1	Jul-Aug	HCC RE	FoAF	Vols			
0.8	Carry out control of giant hogweed at main pond	B2	Apr-Jul	HCC RE	Contractor	HCC RE site budget			
0.9	Monitor bramble growth and cut rotationally if necessary	B4	Ongoing	HCC RE	HCC RE	Officer time			
0.10	Support and promote the activities of the Friends of Attenborough Fields	D1	Ongoing	HCC RE/ CRoW	HCC RE/ CRoW	Officer time			

Ref. no.	Action	Obj. Ref.	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
0.11	Maintain infrastructure as required	E1	Ongoing	HCC RE	HCC RE	HCC RE site budget			
0.12	Remove any graffiti and fly tipping on the site	E2	Ongoing	HCC RE	HCC RE	HCC RE site budget			
0.13	Carry out regular litter picking	E3	Ongoing	HCC RE	FoAF	Vols			
0.14	Empty litter bins	E3	Ongoing	HCC RE	Contractor	HCC RE site budget			
0.15	Carry out a formal tree safety survey and undertake recommended tree works	E6	Every three years	HCC RE	Contractor	HCC RE tree budget			
0.16	Carry out reactive tree safety works as required	E6	Ongoing	HCC RE	Contractor	HCC RE tree budget			
0.17	Consider alternative management approaches where tree safety issues affect valuable parkland trees	E6, A4	Ongoing	HCC RE	Contractor	HCC RE tree budget			
0.18	Review ongoing maintenance costs to ensure they are financially sustainable	F1	Annual	HCC RE	HCC RE	Officer time			
0.19	Seek external funding to ensure viability of capital works	F2	Ongoing	HCC CRoW	HCC CRoW	Officer time			
0.20	Review and update annual action plans		Mar	HCC RE/ CRoW	HCC RE/ CRoW	Officer time			

Abbreviations used: HCC – Hertfordshire County Council; RE – Rural Estates; CRoW – Countryside & Rights of Way; FoAF – Friends of Attenborough Fields; Vols – Volunteers; RoW – Rights of Way

5.2 YEAR 1 2025-26

Ref. no.	Action	Obj. Ref.	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
1.1	Clear area at NW corner of site and plant shrubs to fill gaps	A3, C1	Nov-Feb	HCC RE	HCC RE/ FoAF	HCC RE site budget/vols	£500	6.1	
1.2	Undertake small scale planting of individual parkland trees in Home Field	A4, B4	Nov-Feb	HCC RE	FoAF	HCC RE site budget/vols	£500	6.2	
1.3	Review success of recent tree planting and plant replacement trees if necessary	A4, B4	Nov-Feb	HCC RE	FoAF	HCC RE site budget/vols	£200		
1.4	Establish new grazing tenancy agreement	B1	Jan	HCC RE	HCC RE	Officer time	Small income		
1.5	Explore opportunities to source botanically diverse green hay in the local area	B1	Ongoing	HCC CRoW	HCC CRoW	Officer time	£0		
1.6	Rapid grassland assessment – establish baseline for grassland condition	B1	Jun	HCC CRoW	HCC CRoW	Officer time	£0	6.3	
1.7	Carry out silt testing within main pond	B2	Jun	HCC CRoW	HCC CRoW	External	£200		
1.8	Clear scrub encroaching on path from Rush Mead to Little Brickfield	B4	Sep-Feb	HCC CRoW	Vols	Officer time/vols	£0		
1.9	Coppice half of eastern section of Paddock Road Allotments hedgerow	B4	Sep-Feb	HCC CRoW	Contractor	External	£2000	6.4	
1.10	Plant hedgerow shrubs in any gaps within coppiced hedgerow	B4	Sep-Feb	HCC CRoW	FoAF	External/vols	£200	6.5	
1.11	Install stock fencing around coppiced hedgerow section	B4	Sep-Feb	HCC CRoW	Vols	External/vols	£1000	6.6	
1.12	Plant species-rich native hedgerow along boundary with Cross Road	B4	Nov-Jan	HCC CRoW	Vols	External/vols	£2000	6.5	

Ref. no.	Action	Obj. Ref.	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
1.13	Repair or replace two kissing gates at entrances from Merry Hill Wood	C1	Jul	HCC CRoW	Vols	HCC RE site budget/vols	£500		
1.14	Resurface Watford Footpath 60 at entrance from Paddock Road Allotments	C2	Jul	HCC CRoW	Contractor	External/RoW budget	£2000	6.7	
1.15	Install surfacing and drainage at gateway between Home Field and Little Brickfield	C2	Jul	HCC CRoW	Contractor	External	£3000	6.7	
1.16	Install surfacing under and around gateway between Home Field and Lower Haydon Hill	C2	Jul	HCC CRoW	Contractor	External	£1000	6.7	
1.17	Seek to strengthen partnership working arrangements with Woodland Trust	C3, D3	Apr	HCC RE/ CRoW	HCC RE/ CRoW	Officer time	£0		
1.18	Repair water troughs in Home Spring and Little Brickfield	E1	Apr	HCC RE	HCC RE	Officer time/TBC	TBC		
1.19	Develop grant funding application to support habitat restoration/creation and interpretation/signage project	F2	Apr	HCC CRoW	HCC CRoW	Officer time	£0		

5.3 YEAR 2 2026-27

Ref. no.	Action	Obj. Ref.	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
2.1	Halo thinning around cedar of Lebanon	A1	Sep-Oct	HCC CRoW	Contractor	External	£1000	6.8	
2.2	Clear holly scrub north-west of cedar of Lebanon	A2	Sep-Oct	HCC CRoW	Contractor	External	£1000	6.8	
2.3	Fell trees on south side of main pond	B2	Sep-Oct	HCC CRoW	Contractor	External	£5000	6.8	
2.4	Clear scrub around entrance from Merry Hill Road	C1	Sep-Oct	HCC CRoW	Contractor	External	£1000	6.8	
2.5	Replace stock fencing around main pond	B2	Sep-Oct	HCC CRoW	Contractor	External	£4000	6.6	
2.6	Maintain or restore remnant estate fencing around pond revealed by habitat management works	A1	Sep-Oct	HCC CRoW	Contractor	External	£2000		
2.7	Create a complex of additional ponds along the edge of Rush Mead	B2	Sep-Oct	HCC CRoW	Contractor	External	£2000	6.9	
2.8	Install stock fencing around new pond complex in Rush Mead	B2	Sep-Oct	HCC CRoW	Contractor	External	£3000	6.6	
2.9	Re-scrape pond at boundary between Home Field and Lower Haydon Hill	B2	Sep-Oct	HCC CRoW	Contractor	External	£500	6.9	
2.10	Clear up to 50% of scrub along watercourse between main pond and swallowhole	B2, B3	Sep-Oct	HCC CRoW	Contractor	External	£3000		
2.11	Create new wetland features along watercourse (bank regrading, scrapes, leaky woody dams)	B2, B3	Sep-Oct	HCC CRoW	Contractor/ vols	External/ vols	£5000	Details TBC	
2.12	Install stock fencing around wetland habitat creation area along watercourse	B2, B3	Sep-Oct	HCC CRoW	Contractor	External	£3000	6.6	

Ref. no.	Action	Obj. Ref.	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
2.13	Undertake small scale planting of individual parkland trees in Lower Haydon Hill field	A4, B4	Nov-Feb	HCC RE	FoAF	HCC RE site budget/vols	£500	6.2	
2.14	Replace directional signage at gate between Home Field and Lower Haydon Hill	C1	Apr-Aug	HCC CRoW	Contractor/ vols	HCC RoW budget/ vols	£100		
2.15	Design and install combination orientation panel/noticeboard at entrance from Oxhey Green	C1, C3, C4, D1	Apr-Aug	HCC CRoW	Contractor/ vols	External/ vols	£4000	6.10	
2.16	Design and install orientation panel at entrance from Haydon Road	C1, C3, C4	Apr-Aug	HCC CRoW	Contractor/ vols	External/ vols	£1500	6.10	
2.17	Design and install orientation panel at entrance from Merry Hill Wood	C1, C3, C4	Apr-Aug	HCC CRoW	Contractor/ vols	External/ vols	£1500	6.10	
2.18	Design and install interpretation panel at main pond	C1, C3, C4	Apr-Aug	HCC CRoW	Contractor/ vols	External/ vols	£2500	6.10	
2.19	Design and install small wooden welcome signs at minor entrances (6 no.)	C1, C3, C4	Apr-Aug	HCC CRoW	Contractor/ vols	External/ vols	£1500	6.11	
2.20	Update and reprint ‘Merry Hill Walk’ leaflet	C4	Apr-Aug	HCC CRoW	Contractor	External	£1000		

5.4 YEAR 3-5 2027-30

Ref. no.	Action	Obj. Ref.	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
3.1	Rapid grassland assessment – follow up survey	B1	Years 3 and 5, Jun	HCC CRoW	HCC CRoW	Officer time	£0	6.3	
3.2	Review recovery of habitats around main pond and consider further work	B2	Year 5, Jun	HCC CRoW	HCC CRoW	Officer time	£0		
3.3	Coppice half of eastern section of Paddock Road Allotments hedgerow	B4	Year 3, Sep-Feb	HCC CRoW	Contractor	External	£2000	6.4	
3.4	Plant hedgerow shrubs in any gaps within coppiced hedgerow	B4	Year 3, Sep-Feb	HCC CRoW	FoAF	External/vols	£200	6.5	
3.5	Install stock fencing around coppiced hedgerow section	B4	Year 3, Sep-Feb	HCC CRoW	Vols	External/vols	£1000	6.6	
3.6	Coppice one third of Haydon Road hedgerow	B4	Year 5, Sep-Feb	HCC CRoW	Contractor	External	£2000	6.4	
3.7	Install stock fencing around coppiced hedgerow section	B4	Year 5, Sep-Feb	HCC CRoW	Vols	External/vols	£1000	6.6	
3.8	Write new Attenborough Fields management plan 2030-35		Apr	HCC RE/ CRoW	HCC RE/CRoW	Officer time	£0		

Attenborough Fields

Management Plan 2025-30

Annual and regular actions

Task Responsibility

- Rural Estates led, CRoW led — Officer/Contractor delivered
- Rural Estates led, CRoW led — Volunteer delivered

- Provide aftercare for recent tree planting as required
- Graze the grassland
- Thistle control (topping and/or herbicide application as deemed necessary)
- Monitor bramble growth and cut rotationally if necessary
- Support and promote the activities of the Friends of Attenborough's Fields
- Maintain infrastructure as required
- Remove any graffiti and fly tipping
- Carry out regular litter picking
- Empty litter bins
- Carry out formal tree safety survey and undertake recommended tree works
- Carry out reactive tree safety works as required
- Consider alternative management approaches where tree safety issues affect valuable parkland trees
- Review ongoing maintenance costs to ensure they are financially sustainable
- Seek external funding to ensure viability of capital works
- Review and update annual action plans

Collaborate with residents of Haydon Hill House to maintain connection between the house and its former parkland

Maintain 'Piggery' area by clearing encroaching vegetation

Cut small meadow area and remove arisings

Ragwort control

Legend

- Grassland
- Hedgerow
- Parkland tree
- Woodland/scrub
- New tree planting
- Formal hedge
- Pond
- Storm drain
- Watercourse
- Pedestrian entrance
- Vehicle entrance
- Kissing gate
- Field gate
- Seat
- Litter bin
- Boot scraper
- Cattle trough

Haydon Hill Pond
Path
Attenborough's Fields
Weir
FB
Haydon Dell Farm
Haydon Hill House
Home Spring
Allot Gdns
Resr (cov)
Nursery
Riding School
Hillside
School
Hall
PW
74m
77m
83m
87m
MERRY HILL ROAD
CROSS ROAD
HAYDON ROAD
FIELD ROAD
LOWER PADDOCK ROAD
VILLIERS ROAD
LOWSON GROVE
HIGH STREET

0 100 200 m


83m
School
Hall
PW
Haydon Hill
Pond
74m
Path
Attenborough's Fields
Weir
FB
77m
Haydon Dell
Farm
Haydon Hill House
Recn
Gd
PW
UPPER PADDOCK ROAD
PW
Allot
Gdns
Path
Attenborough's
Fields
Resr
(cov)
Home
Spring
Allot Gdns
Nursery
School
VILLIERS ROAD
AYDON ROAD
CROSS ROAD
PADDOCK ROAD
MERRY HILL ROAD
HIGH STREET
FIELD END C
LOWSON GRO

Attenborough Fields

Management Plan 2025-30

Year 2 Actions

Task Responsibility

- Rural Estates led
- CRoW led

Officer/Contractor delivered

- Rural Estates led
- CRoW led

Volunteer delivered

Design and install orientation panel

Design and install small entrance sign

Design and install orientation panel/noticeboard

Update and reprint 'Merry Hill Walk' leaflet

Clear up to 50% of scrub along watercourse

Create new wetland features

Install stock fencing around wetland habitat creation area

Maintain or restore remnant estate fencing revealed by habitat management works

Clear holly scrub

Halo thinning around cedar of Lebanon

Design and install small entrance sign

Clear scrub around entrance

Fell trees around south of main pond

Replace stock fencing around main pond

Replace directional signage

Design and install small entrance sign

Undertake small scale planting of individual parkland trees in Lower Haydon Hill field

Re-scrape pond

Create complex of additional ponds around field edge

Install stock fencing around new pond complex

Design and install small entrance sign

Design and install orientation panel

Legend

- Grassland
- Hedgerow
- Parkland tree
- Woodland/scrub
- New tree planting
- Formal hedge
- Pond
- Storm drain
- Watercourse
- Pedestrian entrance
- Vehicle entrance
- Kissing gate
- Field gate
- Seat
- Litter bin
- Boot scraper
- Cattle trough

Scale @ A3
1:3,000

Date

00

N

0 100 200 m

Attenborough Fields

Management Plan 2025-30

Year 3-5 Actions

Task Responsibility

- Rural Estates led } Officer/Contractor delivered
- CRoW led } Officer/Contractor delivered
- Rural Estates led } Volunteer delivered
- CRoW led } Volunteer delivered

Coppice western third of hedgerow (Y5)

Install stock fencing around coppiced hedgerow section (Y5)

Coppice half of eastern section of hedgerow (Y3)

Plant hedgerow shrubs in any gaps within coppiced hedgerow (Y3)

Install stock fencing around coppiced hedgerow section (Y3)

Rapid grassland assessment - follow up survey (Y3 & Y5)

Review habitats around pond and consider further work (Y5)

Write new Attenborough's Fields Management Plan 2030-35 (Y5)

Legend

- Grassland
- Hedgerow
- Parkland tree
- Woodland/scrub
- New tree planting
- Formal hedge
- Pond
- Storm drain
- Watercourse
- Pedestrian entrance
- Vehicle entrance
- Kissing gate
- Field gate
- Seat
- Litter bin
- Boot scraper
- Cattle trough

Scale @ A3

0 100 200 m

6.0 SPECIFICATIONS

6.1 Clearance of NW corner of site and shrub planting

1. Coppicing of existing scrub and removal of arisings to take place prior to planting.
2. Plant at 2m spacings avoiding areas with existing coppice stools.
3. Planting stock to be 2-year-old bare root whips 60-80cm in height, UK grown and of local provenance (Seed Zones 402, 405, and 406). The supplying nursery should provide a certificate of local provenance, a 'UK Sourced and Grown' assurance or equivalent, and be registered with the Plant Healthy Certification Scheme. An audit trail must be maintained by the purchaser, allowing planted trees to be traced back to the nursery.
4. Trees to be planted on the day of delivery where possible, and handling time kept to a minimum. Trees may be stored for a day in a cool location protected from damage or drying out; however, for longer periods of storage, trees must be heeled-in to a moist well-drained substrate in a sheltered location.
5. Following planting, a level layer of well-rotted bark chip mulch to be spread around the base of each tree to a radius of 500mm and a depth of 50-100mm, to reduce risk from frost and drought and suppress competitive weed growth. Mulch is not to be placed in direct contact with the tree stem. Each tree to be fitted with a clear plastic spiral and bamboo cane.
6. Species mix:
   Elder (*Sambucus nigra)*
   Hawthorn (*Cretaegus monogyna)*
   Hazel (*Corylus avellana)*
   Field maple (*Acer campestre)*

6.2 Individual parkland tree planting

1. This work should be carried out from October to February.
2. Planting stock to be 2-year-old bare root whips 60-80cm in height, UK grown and of local provenance (Seed Zones 402, 405, and 406). The supplying nursery should provide a certificate of local provenance, a 'UK Sourced and Grown' assurance or equivalent, and be registered with the Plant Healthy Certification Scheme. An audit trail must be maintained by the purchaser, allowing planted trees to be traced back to the nursery.
3. Trees to be planted on the day of delivery where possible, and handling time kept to a minimum. Trees may be stored for a day in a cool location protected from damage or drying out; however, for longer periods of storage, trees must be heeled-in to a moist well-drained substrate in a sheltered

location.

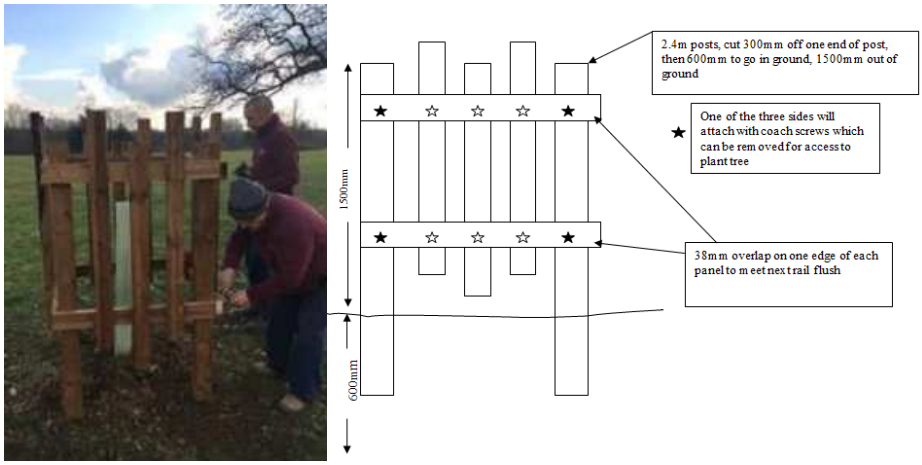
4. Following planting, a level layer of well-rotted bark chip mulch to be spread around the base of each tree to a radius of 500mm and a depth of 50-100mm, to reduce risk from frost and drought and suppress competitive weed growth. Mulch is not to be placed in direct contact with the tree stem.

5. Each tree to be fitted with a recyclable plastic shelter (Tubex Standard or
6. similar) 120cm and cane. Species mix to include: pedunculate oak *(Quercus robur)*, field maple (*Acer campestre)*, hornbeam (*Carpunus betulus)*, small leaved lime (*Tilia cordata)* and wild cherry (*Prunus avium)*.

7. Parkland tree guards should be used to protect the trees from being eaten by cattle.

Method:

- 38mm x 88mm 3.6m length treated rails
- Horizontals for the guards are 900mm – 8 per guard
- Verticals are 1200mm – 12 per guard
- Have to fit this out of the 3.6m lengths
- 100mm x 100mm sawn treated 2.1m posts



6.3 Rapid grassland assessment

1. Carry out a comparable survey of the grassland to assess species diversity and grassland condition.
2. Each field will be surveyed individually using methodology based on the Magnificent Meadows Rapid Habitat Assessment manual. The survey form can be found in the appendices.
3.

Method:

- Begin in one corner of the field to be surveyed. Walk 30 paces along the edge then 30 paces into the field this is your first survey position.
- Place the Quadrat on the ground and fill in the assessment form accordingly.
- From that point continue to walk 50 paces into the field and repeat
- When you reach the other side of the field walk 30 paces along the edge and 30 paces into the field, place quadrat on the ground and fill in column on survey sheet.
- Continue as before taking 50 paces forward from the last location.
- Continue this process until at least 20 sites have been surveyed in the field

6.4 Hedgerow coppicing

1. Work to be carried out outside of nesting season between October and February.
2. Hedging should be cut to ground level and allowed to regrow.
3. Arisings to be chipped and woodchip offered to adjacent allotment site
4. Gapping up and fencing to be completed after coppicing has taken place.

6.5 Hedgerow planting

1. Planting to take place along Cross road boundary and gapping up of coppiced hedge.
2. Planting in staggered rows of approx. 5 per metre.
7. Where planting along Cross Road, avoid gateways and under large trees.
8. Planting stock to be 2-year-old bare root whips 60-80cm in height, UK grown and of local provenance (Seed Zones 402, 405, and 406). The supplying nursery should provide a certificate of local provenance, a 'UK Sourced and Grown' assurance or equivalent, and be registered with the Plant Healthy Certification Scheme. An audit trail must be maintained by the purchaser, allowing planted trees to be traced back to the nursery.
9. Trees to be planted on the day of delivery where possible, and handling time kept to a minimum. Trees may be stored for a few days in a cool location protected from damage or drying out; however, for longer periods of storage, trees must be heeled-in to a moist well-drained substrate in a sheltered location.
10. Following planting, a level layer of well-rotted bark chip mulch to be spread along the base of the hedge to a width of 500mm and a depth of 50-100mm, to reduce risk from frost and drought and suppress competitive weed growth. Mulch is not to be placed in direct contact with the tree stem.

11. Species mix:
    Coppiced hedgerows
    50% Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
    10% Field maple (*Acer campestre*)

    5% Dog rose (*Rosa canina)*
    5% Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus)*
    10% Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa)*
    10% Hazel (*Corylus avelanna)*
    10% Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris)*

    Cross Road
    50% Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
    10% Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*)
    10% Common dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea)*
    10% Hazel (*Corylus avelanna)*
    10% Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris)*
    10% Blackthorn (*Prunus sylvestris)*

12. Each tree to be fitted with a recyclable plastic shelter (Tubex Standard or similar) 60cm

6.6 Stock fencing

1. To install post and wire netting fence suitable for cattle.
2. Straining and turning posts: Top diameter at least 175mm, length at least 2.4m. Spacing not to exceed 50m. Straining posts must be used at the end of all runs. Turning posts must be used for any change in direction or gradient over 15°.
3. Struts used with the above posts must be fitted in line with the run of wire. They must be at least 75mm top diameter and 2.4m - in length. To be morticed into the post at an angle no greater than 40°. To be retained by a suitable thrust plate, hidden completely underground.
4. Intermediate stakes are to be no less than 75mm top diameter, 1.8m in length and 3m spacing. To be knocked in.
5. All timber fencing to be machine rounded, hazard class 4 pressure treated softwood.
6. The stock net should be HT8/80/15 woven wire netting, galvanised meeting BS 4102, suitable for cattle. The bottom of the netting should be flush with the ground and no more than 50mm above the ground with changing gradients.
7. Each wire of the netting is to be double stapled to the straining posts, ended in a neat and consistent fashion. The netting should be attached to intermediate stakes by not completely driven staples on the first, fourth and bottom wires. All staples to be galvanised 40mmx4mm barbed fencing staples.

8. Two strands of galvanised mild steel barbed wire are to be run above the stock net, strained and stapled to every upright.
9. A single strand of high tensile (HT) galvanised plain wire (3.15mm or more) is to be run along the RoW side of the fence, level with the top barbed strand. Also strained appropriately and stapled to allow tensioning.
10. Final finished height no less than 1.05 meters.
11. Fence to be strained appropriately to ensure no sagging along the length and a stock proof finish.

6.7 Surfacing and drainage

1. Resurfacing of 3 No. access points. See map for locations.
2. These areas can become very muddy in winter. Contractors should outline in their method statement how they plan to address drainage to prevent future erosion of the areas.
3. Excavate the marked area to a minimum depth of 150mm and at least 2m width, with all soft spots excavated back to firm ground with the purpose of achieving best surface drainage of the finished area, with hollows filled and compacted with sub-base to ensure an even, firm base layer.
4. Excavated soil is to be spread on site in an allocated area.
5. The safe width of the surfaced area should be 2m. A short path of at least 5m length should be created leading up to and from the access points.
6. Supply and lay a permeable non-woven geotextile membrane, such as Terram 1500 or similar, to completely cover the formation level of the area.
7. Supply, spread, grade and thoroughly compact a dense, tight, even base course of MOT Type 1, 40mm to dust. Compact base course to refusal using a vibrating roller. The finished compacted depth is to be not less than 150mm. Ensure that the geotextile membrane is covered at this stage.
8. Supply, spread, grade and thoroughly compact to a dense, tight, even surface, a layer of granite (6mm to dust) as surface dressing. Compact to refusal using a vibrating roller as above. The finished, compacted depth to be not less than 50mm. Edges to be lost in adjoining ground and base course to be completely covered. Material must be completely free from deleterious materials.

9. Area to have a final minimum camber of 1:50 to allow surface water to drain either side.
10. Any protruding objects to be removed by the contractor.

6.8 Tree works around main pond

1. Primary species around pond is willow and alder.
2. Pollarding of 25% of willow and alder around pond, focusing on the southern side to allow more light in.
3. Coppice willow on island.
4. Coppicing of scrub including hawthorn.
5. Haloing around western cedar on northern side and veteran oak on southern side of pond. Removal of holly near Merry Hill Road entrance.
6. Oak and elm to be retained where possible.
7. Arisings to be chipped, some habitat piles to be created from arisings around edge of pond. Stacked back from pond edge.

6.9 Pond creation

Creation of 3-5 ponds of varying depth and size in the area allocated on the map.

1. Surface area between 10m2 and 100m2. Buffer zone of at least 3 metres between each pond.
2. The ponds should be excavated to 1.5 metres at the deepest point with varying water depths across each pond
3. Ponds to have gentle sloping edges less than 1 in 5 (12 degrees) to create wide shallows margins around the perimeter of the pond.
4. The edge of the ponds are to have a wavy edge, not a straight or symmetrical edge.
5. The base of the ponds are to have a rough finish (not smooth) with bars, lumps and bumps, in order to allow the colonisation by plants. Use of a tooth bucket may help to achieve the rough finish.
6. All excavated material is to spread out in an area to be allocated on site.
7. No planting is required as the ponds will be left to colonise naturally.
8. Contractor is to provide with their quotation a brief method statement outlining the approaches they plan to take to achieve the specification.
9. Appropriate warning signs to be installed during works to alert public of works in progress.

6.10 Interpretation

1. Map based information and orientation panel

- Design, produce and install three A1 map based information and orientation panel and PDF version of the same.
- To include a full colour hand drawn 3D watercolour map of Attenborough Fields and the connected landscape, showing main routes and features.
- Provide proof of black and white illustration before colouring.
- Provide two proof stages of full colour design in hard copy and PDF format.
- Supply an upright frame in green powder coated stainless steel, twin leg, incorporating a GRP panel.

2. One topic-based interpretation panel, located near the main pond at Attenborough Fields

- Design, produce and install one A2 topic-based interpretation panels and PDF version of the same.
- To include historic photos and stock photos, covering wildlife, history, and management of Attenborough fields pond based on notes to be provided.
- Provide proof of black and white illustration before colouring.
- Provide two proof stages of full colour design in hard copy and PDF format.
- Supply a lectern frame in green powder coated stainless steel, twin leg, incorporating a GRP panel.

6.11 Timber welcome signage

1. Design wooden monolith entrance features routed with the site name (Attenborough Fields) and the Hertfordshire County Council logo, in-filled with dark green paint appropriate for external use.
2. The overall dimensions of the feature should be length 2000mm x width 250mm x depth 100mm, with a 45^{o} angled weathered top, sloping towards the back of the post.
3. Provide PDF proof versions of the monolith designs to the client for approval before production
4. Produce 6 monoliths using semi-seasoned English oak, with a smooth-sanded natural Oak finish.