

# The Meads Community Woodland Work Plan 2022 - 2026



This plan has been prepared by White Horse Ecology on behalf of Swale Borough Council.

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## Work Plan

This work plan contains two tables. The first is a list of recommendations and enhancements to The Meads Community Woodland that have been suggested by stakeholders and White Horse Ecology. This table contains recommendations for which additional funding will be required. This will have to be raised either by Swale Borough Council or with the assistance of volunteers.

The second table contains a set of management prescriptions for the wood that ideally should be carried out. The management prescriptions in the second table are currently unfunded though there are some activities that can be carried out by volunteers.

A map that will help to pinpoint the exact locations of management prescriptions is found at the back of this work plan.

The rationale and objectives for management can be found in section 4 of the management plan. More detailed information about some of the prescriptions can be found in section 5 of the management plan.

Whilst resources to implement this plan are limited, a number of activities have been identified that can be carried out by volunteers. With good training in power tools, volunteers would ultimately be able to implement that majority of this work plan. Volunteers from Milton Creek Country Park can be asked to assist with running tasks and using power tools with the assistance of the Milton Creek Country Park ranger.

## The Meads Community Woodland Recommendations

The table below contains recommendations for actions that should be taken as and when financial and time resources allow. They have been identified following public consultation. They are outside of the scope of the day to day management prescriptions that need to be carried out to maintain the woods but should be used to inform and prioritise future actions and funding applications. Not all these recommendations will necessarily be achieved within the lifetime of this management plan.

### The Meads Community Woodland Recommendations

What	How	When (season)	3 <sup>rd</sup> party involvement	Where	Volunteer task?
Creation of Friends of The Meads Community Woodland (FOTM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact stakeholders and potential key volunteers to draw up roles of group and set practicalities in place</li> </ul>	Anytime	FOTM, SBC, MKDCP, CC	All	Y
SBC Ranger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bobbing Parish Council have an expressed a desire for a ranger such as the post that covers Milton Creek and Oare Gunpowder Works to be deployed at The Meads to help combat anti-social behaviour, assist with volunteer activities and site management</li> </ul>	Anytime	SBC	All	
Volunteer warden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could be a key role within the FOTM group held by one or more people. This person or people could function as the 'eyes and ears' of the woodland and report damage, anti-social behaviour and/or other simple tasks</li> </ul>	Anytime	FOTM, SBC	All	Y

Picnic benches and tables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally well supported and seen as a high priority. Installation preferred in areas near the surfaced path</li> </ul>	Anytime	SBC, MKDCP	2a	Possibly installing
Increased number of litter and poo bins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although this received some support the issue is whether these bins can be collected and emptied by contractors and if there are resources to fund this</li> </ul>	Anytime	SBC	All	N
Pond creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although the creation of a pond has support of some stakeholders considerable concern was raised regarding safety and vandalism</li> </ul>	Anytime	SBC, MKDCP	2a	To assist
More events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community involvement was a consistent and recurring theme within the consultations. From summer fairs to Halloween events and Forest Schools the support was high.</li> </ul>	Anytime	All	All but particularly 2b	Y
Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The interpretation plan should be reviewed to establish desire and need for additional interpretation (including virtual and high tech.)</li> </ul>	Anytime	SBC, MKDCP	All	To assist
Reduction of speed limit on Staplehurst Rd and lack of crossing from Jenny Wren	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not within the remit of this plan but an issue raised multiple times</li> </ul>		SBC		N
Culvert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction of a culvert to make buggy access easier over the ditch that runs through the site</li> </ul>	Anytime	SBC, FOTM	2b	Y
Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From trim trails to children's wildlife and history trails</li> </ul>	Anytime	All	All	Y

Wildlife friendly features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bat and bird boxes, insect hotels, beetle banks, hibernacula and other features can all be installed and created cheaply</li> </ul>	Anytime	FOTM	All	Y
Fire pit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some support was shown for a fire pit or other features designed for older children and families to enjoy. Has been done successfully in other publicly accessible sites but will be controversial</li> </ul>	Anytime	All stakeholders	2a	N

SBC = Swale Borough Council (or their contractors)	FOTM = Friends of the Meads
MKDCP = Mid Kent Downs Countryside Partnership	HRGS = Historical Research Group of Sittingbourne

## The Meads Community Woodland Management Prescriptions

This table provides a list of activities that will maintain The Meads Community Woodland and implement the ongoing management recommendations of the management plan across the next five years. Clearly there are budgetary restrictions on what can be achieved but volunteer input could achieve many of the prescriptions outlined here.

The volunteer column denotes whether volunteers could be involved in carrying out the task. The locations of activities and their timings are shown in the maps following this table.

### The Meads Community Woodland Management Prescriptions

What	How	When (time of year)	3 <sup>rd</sup> party involvement	Where (compartment)	Volunteer task?	When (if not annual)
Cut herbaceous vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mow paths within the woodland to existing specifications</li> </ul>	Spring/summer/autumn	SBC contractor	All	N	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mow areas and glades for botanical diversity (twice yearly cuts).</li> </ul>	April and Sept	SBC contractor	2a	N	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove arisings from twice yearly glade cuttings</li> </ul>	April and Sept	SBC or FOTM	2a	Y	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mow areas for annual cut (within the zonal ride management areas)</li> </ul>	Nov to Feb	SBC contractor	2a & 2b	N	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove arisings from annual cut areas and create habitat piles</li> </ul>	Nov to Feb	SBC or FOTM	2a & 2b	Y	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cut annual half of reptile receptor area and create habitat piles</li> </ul>	Nov to Feb	SBC contractor	1	N	
Tree management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pull sycamore saplings by hand or any other invasive species.</li> </ul>	Anytime	FOTM	All 1, 2a & 2b	Y	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cut up to 50% of trees to thin woodland except in minimum intervention area.</li> <li>• Create glades and cut trees near surfaced path</li> <li>• Create zone 3 of zonal ride management.</li> <li>• Cut glade on 3 year rotation</li> </ul>	<p>Oct to March</p> <p>Oct to March</p> <p>Oct to March</p> <p>Oct to March</p>	<p>SBC or FOTM</p> <p>SBC or FOTM</p> <p>SBC or FOTM</p> <p>FOTM</p>	<p>1 &amp; 2a</p> <p>2a &amp; 2b</p> <p>2b</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p> <p>Y</p> <p>Y</p>	<p>Any year as resources become available</p>
Health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor potentially hazardous trees near areas with high levels of public access and fell if necessary</li> <li>• Monitor the safety of installed structures such as benches and tables, interpretation and log piles. Remove or repair as necessary</li> </ul>	<p>Anytime</p> <p>Anytime</p>	<p>SBC</p> <p>FOTM/SBC</p>	<p>All cmptmnts</p> <p>All cmptmnts</p>	<p>N</p> <p>Y</p>	
Fallen wood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where fallen wood exists or is felled and can't be left in situ log piles and/or dead hedges to be created where possible and secured in place.</li> </ul>	<p>Anytime</p>	<p>FOTM/SBC</p>	<p>1, 2a &amp; 2b</p>	<p>Y</p>	
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear paths of vegetation so that they can be used safely by public.</li> </ul>	<p>Spring/summer</p>	<p>FOTM/SBC</p>	<p>2a &amp; 2b</p>	<p>Y</p>	
Litter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pick litter from paths and other areas</li> <li>• Remove fly-tipped waste</li> </ul>	<p>Anytime</p> <p>Anytime</p>	<p>All</p> <p>SBC</p>	<p>All</p> <p>All</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p>	
Tree shelters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove tree shelters, easiest to do in the winter</li> </ul>	<p>Oct to Apr</p>	<p>FOTM</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>Y</p>	
Ragwort pulling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pull ragwort up by the roots before it comes into flower</li> </ul>	<p>May to June</p>	<p>FOTM</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>Y</p>	



Wildlife recording (all records to be sent to Kent & Medway Biological Records Centre and relevant recording group)	• Bat surveys using detectors	Summer	FOTM, KBG	All	Y	
	• Roofing felt refugia placed in grassland areas to check for reptiles	Mar to Oct	FOTM, KRAG	All	Y	
	• Wildflower and tree surveys	Spring/summer	FOTM, KFC	All	Y	
	• Small mammal surveys (mice, shrews, voles)	Winter	FOTM, KMG	All	Y	
	• Ad hoc visual surveys (larger mammals)		FOTM			
	• Nest box or nesting tube surveys for dormice	Anytime	FOTM, KMG	All	Y	
	• Invertebrate surveys but particularly moth and butterfly surveys	Summer	KFC	All	Y	
	• Bird surveys		FOTM			
• <b>N.B. Licence required for dormouse and bat surveys if disturbance of animals likely to take place</b>	Anytime		All	Y		
Management Plan review	• Review and update management plan with particular reference to management prescriptions and key species	April	MKDCP /White Horse Ecology/All	All	Y	Annual if possible

FORHW = Friends of The Meads Community Woodland

KBG = Kent Bat Group

KFC = Kent Field Club

KRAG = Kent Reptile &amp; Amphibian Group

KCC = Kent County Council Heritage

SBC = Swale Borough Council (or their contractors)

MKDCP = Mid Kent Downs Countryside Partnership

KMG = Kent Mammal Group

HRGS = Historical Research Group of Sittingbourne

# The Meads Community Woodland - Management



- Compartment
- The Meads Management**
  - Glade (twice yearly cut)
  - Glade (3 year cut)
  - Glade (7 to 10 year cut)
  - Minimum intervention area
  - Zonal ride management
  - Annual cut
  - Thin and coppice

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