PISHIOBURY PARK

GREENSPACE ACTION PLAN (GAP)
2018 – 2023

Produced by the Countryside Management Service
On behalf of East Herts Council

Contents

1.0 Introduction

Working in partnership with the Countryside Management Service (CMS), East Herts Council (EHC) have developed a new Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) for Pishiobury Park, located in Sawbridgeworth. Greenspace Action Plans are simple, map-based management plans. They are designed to be read and understood by a variety of people who might be interested in the management of a particular site. In this way a GAP can allow more people to understand, contribute, and have a say in how a site should be managed. An annual review is built into the plan, which allows the plan to be revised, and progress to be monitored. This GAP covers the management of the site over a five year period, from 2018 to 2023.

The Pishiobury Park GAP follows on from several documents that have guided and sculpted the management requirements of the park over the years. These include a Pishiobury Park Management Plan 2000 – 2005, The Pishiobury Park Restoration Plan (Landscape Agency, 2005), Pishiobury Park GAP 2006 – 2011 and the Pishiobury Park GAP 2012 – 2017. Please refer to Section 1.3 for a summary of the 2012 – 2017 GAP.

1.1 Aims & Objectives

The overall aim of the Pishiobury Park GAP 2018 – 2023 is to maintain a sustainable park that retains and enhances its:

- Historical significance
- Importance for wildlife
- Connection to the surrounding landscape, and
- Enjoyment by visitors

In order to fulfil this overall aim the following objectives need to be met:

Grassland: Maintain grazing as a crucial maintenance tool to improve the ecological quality of the grassland habitat, whilst ensuring the safety of visitors.

Woodland: Secure the historic footprint of the park for the long term by diversifying the age structure and maintaining the enclosure effect of the perimeter woodlands, protecting the health of veteran trees, and continuing to plant replacement parkland trees.

Water: Enhance the habitat quality of the water features by creating a new waterbody and managing encroachment of marginal vegetation. Improve public access to, and understanding of, the water features across the park through improvements to walking routes and installing interpretation.

Access: To ensure the park is welcoming and accessible to the wider community by improving public access to the site, maintaining good access routes between the parks features, and promoting connections to significant destinations outside the park.

People: Encourage participation of the local community in the management of the park and promote understanding, and awareness of the parks biodiversity and heritage value through; improved interpretation, support of the Friends Group, the delivery of guided walks and events, and a programme of regular volunteer activities.

1.2 Ownership and Management

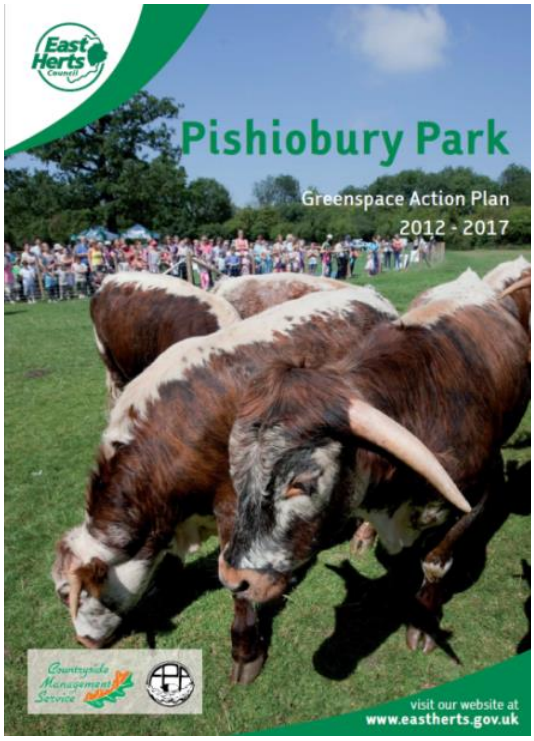
Pishiobury Park is owned and managed by East Herts Council. The site has been owned by the Council since 1981, and is managed in partnership with the Countryside Management Service (CMS) and a dedicated Friends Group (Friends of Pishiobury Park – FoPP). In 2016 the Council acquired management responsibility for the 'Osier Bed' located to the south-east of the site, thus bringing the total area of the park under management by the Council to 39 ha.

This GAP has been developed within the context of the Council's Policy Framework. The Council recognises that its parks and open spaces contribute to:

- The overall vision and priorities of the Council
- The quality of life of local people
- The physical, social and economic regeneration of the District
- The greening, attractiveness and biodiversity of the District

Further information on all East Herts Strategies and Policies can be found on the Council's website www.eastherts.gov.uk.

1.3 Previous Management and Review of Progress



For the last five years the Council and CMS have been working on the management actions identified in the 2012 – 2017 GAP. If you would like to view the 2012 – 2017 GAP, please visit the Pishiobury Park webpage on the Council's website: www.eastherts.gov.uk.

The management actions of the 2012 – 2017 GAP were guided by the recommendations identified in the Pishiobury Park Restoration Plan 2005, an independent assessment produced by The Landscape Agency to investigate the historical, wildlife conservation, and public amenity roles of the park. This plan has provided a vision for the parkland management and restoration for a period of 50 years. If you would like to view the Pishiobury Park Restoration Plan 2005 please visit the Council's website.

Woodland: Actions were taken to restore the footprint of Nursery Wood through re-stocking and planting a hawthorn edge. Towards the end of the 2012 – 2017 management period, the Council acquired management responsibility of the Osier Bed. This has provided an opportunity to increase the diversity of habitats under favourable management, and available for enjoyment by visitors.

Access: Public access improvements were made by re-landscaping the main car park, installing short sections of boardwalk adjacent to Spring Hall Meadow and the spring, and establishing a woodland trail through the perimeter woodland (now known as the Woodland Walk).

Water: Actions were taken to de-silt the pond and natural spring in an attempt to improve water quality.

Grassland: During the 2012-2017 management period, the park was entered into a 10 year Higher Level Stewardship Agreement with Natural England (2014 – 2024) enabling the continuation of grazing, and support of habitat management works.

People: Since the establishment of the Friends of Pishiobury Park (FoPP) in 2010, the Friends have provided a valuable contribution to the maintenance and development of the park through a regular programme of volunteer works, and environmental projects. Activities have included tree planting, scrub clearance, invasive species control and various interactions with the public. In order to enhance visitors' enjoyment of the park, additional wooden benches have been installed in strategic locations providing stunning views across the park. Interactive activities and guided walks have been regularly held, promoting environmental awareness and enjoyment of the park.

Higher Level Stewardship Agreement

Pishiobury Park has been successfully entered into a ten year national agri-environment Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Agreement (2014 – 2024) with Natural England, the government's nature conservation advisors. This agreement continues from the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) agreement for the park (2004 – 2014), which facilitated expanding the grazing area, and increasing the density of local rare breed cattle.

Funding provided by the HLS scheme supports the management of the park through two means:

- Revenue – this has contributed to the costs of the grazing regime and provides financial backing to continue managing the grassland in this way, in addition to supporting the maintenance and enhancement of the perimeter woodland enclosures.
- Capital – this has contributed to the improvements in the fencing, grazing support infrastructures, hedgerow restoration and tree planting.

Moving Forward

An enormous amount has been achieved over the last five years in Pishiobury Park, through successful partnership working by the Council, CMS, the Friends Group and other volunteers. Under previous GAPs, the management focus for Pishiobury Park has been on restoring the historic landscape character and footprint of the site, and several of the objectives from the Landscape Restoration Plan have been achieved. This has been complemented by improved public access to the site, and the establishment of a successful grazing regime.

This GAP aims to continue and build upon this success, and further improvements can still be made. These improvements will be introduced and tackled in this five year GAP. Additional attention will be given to the water features of the park, specifically to improve their habitat quality for wildlife, and improve landscape connectivity for the enjoyment of both people and wildlife. Another focus of the GAP will be to bring the Osier Bed habitat under favourable management in order to improve habitat quality, in addition to enhancing visitor's enjoyment and appreciation of the park.

2.0 Historical Background

Pishiobury Park is a significant greenspace for nature conservation, informal recreation, and cultural heritage. The site has a rich and interesting history dating back to the Neolithic period. The original parkland was once six times its current size and formed the grounds of Pishiobury Park House, which was granted to Ann Boleyn by King Henry VIII in 1534. Although the house is no longer visible from the park, features of the estate grounds remain and provide evidence for 18th Century landscape design, possibly attributable to landscape architect Capability Brown. Indeed the site is registered as a Grade II historic parkland, with the Neolithic Causewayed Enclosure designated as a Scheduled Monument. Please refer to the Pishiobury Park Restoration Plan (2005) for further historical analysis.

The park is nestled between the towns of Sawbridgeworth and Harlow on the Hertfordshire and Essex border. It is bound to the north west by the A1184, and the north east and south west boundaries are backed onto by residential properties. The south east boundary (beyond the Osier Bed) consists of grazed fields, flood meadows and the River Stort Navigation. The original park covered a much larger area, some now retained as open land, but privately owned, and some developed for housing.

Pishiobury Park is extremely popular and highly valued by local residents, as well as visitors from further afield. There are a number of entrance points to the park from the surrounding communities, including an entrance from the residential street, Newton Drive (see Map 1 and Map 2). A car park is situated to the west of the park, which can be accessed via the A1184. There are several mown grass paths criss-crossing the site, allowing enjoyment by dog walkers, walkers, and ramblers. Furthermore, the site is frequented by local wildlife and history groups. There is a picnic area with regularly mown amenity grassland which facilitates informal recreation.

The picnic area of Pishiobury Park

The park is characterised by a diverse array of habitats including neutral grassland, calcareous grassland, damp flood meadows, hedgerows, mature woodland belts, and wet woodland (see Map 2). The majority of the park is grazed by rare breed cattle, which maintain a diverse grassland sward. A number of aquatic habitats are present across the site, including a pond, natural spring, and drainage ditch. The site is dominated by a central raised spine running north to south, Oak Walk, which contributes to the treescape and is lined with a range of tree species. To the south west boundary of the park there is also a planted double avenue of limes. The scattered veteran trees, hawthorn roundels, and two tree lined avenues provide living examples of the heritage value of this historic parkland, in addition to exemplifying the original landscape design. The River Stort (Navigation) borders the park to the east connecting the parkland to the low lying wet areas to the south, outside the park boundary. These wet areas feature a serpentine lake, which was part of the original parkland design.

Although suitable conclusions regarding the post 16th Century history of the park have been inferred from its current footprint and historic maps, further research is required to enhance this understanding. Further archaeological research is also required to fully understand the prehistoric heritage value of the site and identify the distribution of below ground historic features. A structured archaeological project, with clear aims and objectives is required to develop and deliver historical exploration to appropriate standards. Appropriate professional support and advice will be sought from Historic England, Hertfordshire County Council's Historic Environment Advisory Team, and Sawbridgeworth Local History Society, as required.

2.1 Constraints

There are a number of conservation designations across Pishiobury Park which guide appropriate management and restrict certain activities. The special historic interest of Pishiobury Park has been recognised through its designation as a Grade II Historic Parkland by Historic England (see Table 1). Furthermore, the site comprises a Neolithic Causewayed Enclosure, which is located towards the north east of the park and is designated as a Scheduled Monument. The ecological significance of the site has also been recognised with the park comprising three Local Wildlife Site designations (see Table 1; Map 1). Considering the local importance of the site for wildlife, education and enjoyment the Council will seek to declare Pishiobury Park as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). This will provide the park with statutory protection and the Council will accept responsibility to ensure that the special interest of the site is maintained.

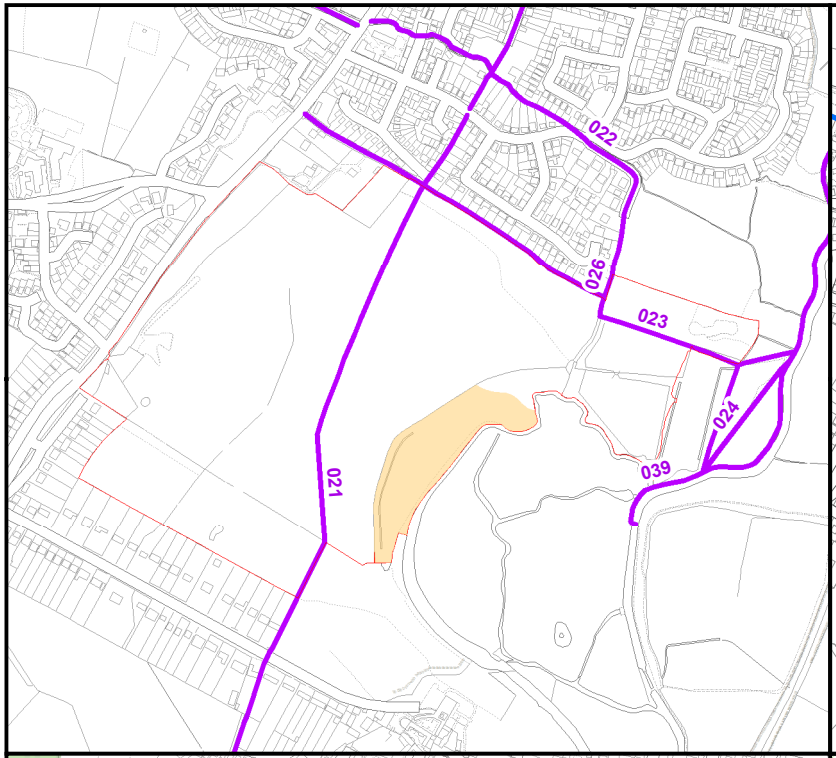
Additionally, there are a number of constraints which require consideration when managing Pishiobury Park (see Map 1), and these are listed below:

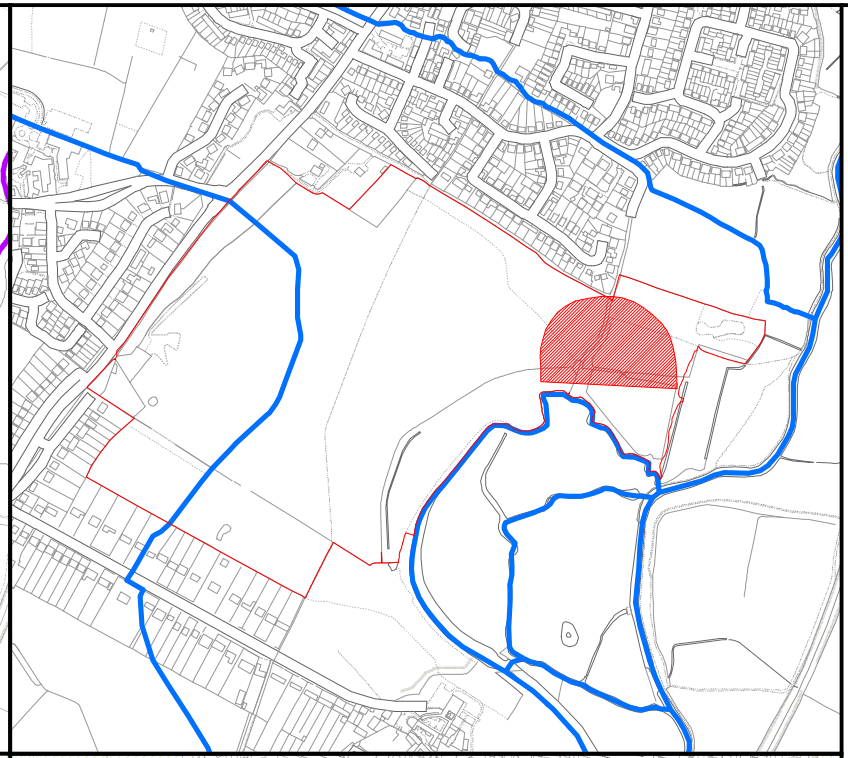
- **Public footpaths** – definitive footpaths need to be kept clear and accessible as per the Highways Act 1980.
- **Drainage ditches** – the ditches in Pishiobury Park are owned and managed by the Council. The drainage ditch which runs through the main grassland compartment is classified as a main river. Permission may be required from the Environment Agency to carry out developmental works within 8 m of the bank.

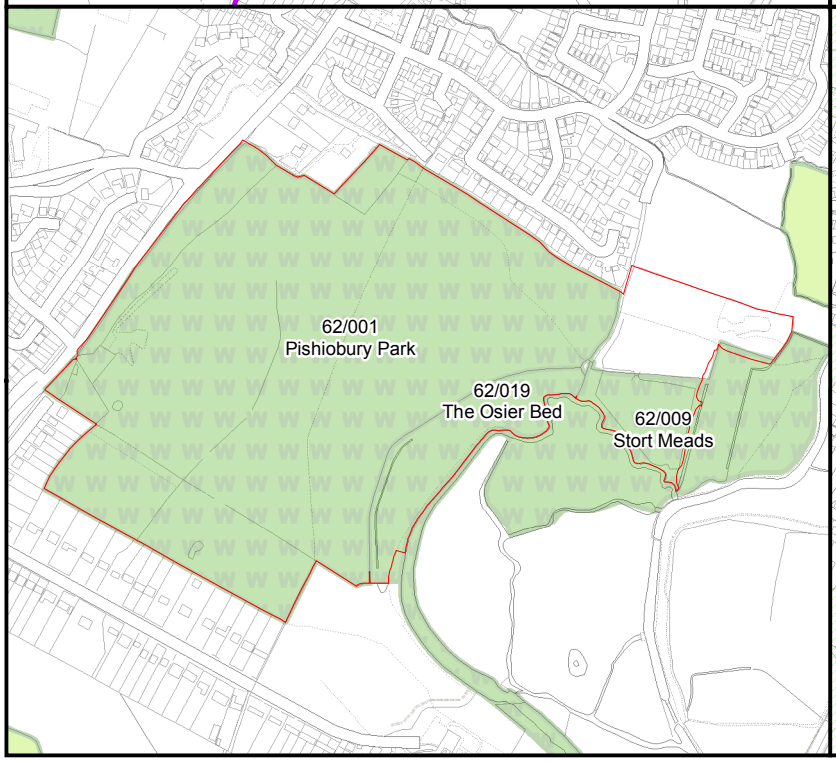
- **River Stort** – Classified as a Main River, permission will be required from the Environment Agency to carry out developmental works with 8 m of the river bank, for example boardwalk installation.
- **Services** – Pishiobury Park has two water supply points in the main park and a bore hole in Plovers Mead. These require consideration when carrying out extensive ground works.
- **Historical design features** – features such as the treescape, grassland and woodlands provide a well-researched historical basis for current management.
- **The original park boundary** – we need to retain an understanding of the wider areas of the original park that have been lost to development in previous years.
- **Protected species** – under the Habitats Directive, the known presence of protected species (e.g. bats and reptiles) legally requires their consideration when undertaking management operations, most notably tree works.
- **Nesting birds** – protected by law under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. All tree and hedgerow related works should, wherever possible, be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season.

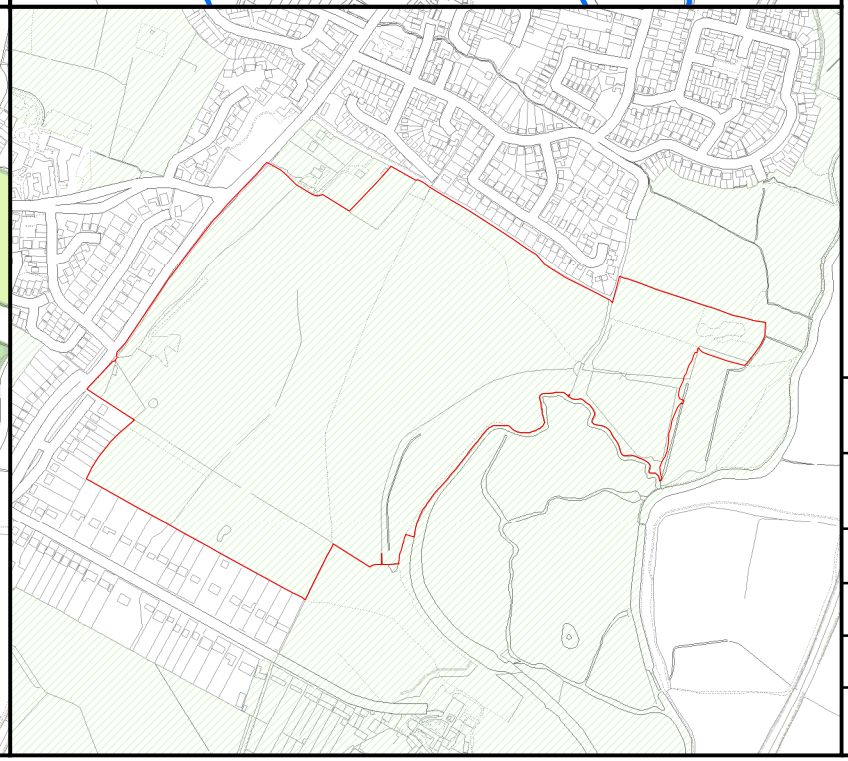
Table 1. Statutory and non-statutory designations associated with Pishiobury Park

Level	Designation	Detail
Non-Statutory	Local Wildlife Site	Local Wildlife Sites are considered to be of "critical natural capital", and guides work to maintain the ecological health of the park. The site comprises three Local Wildlife Site designations; Pishiobury Park (62/001), the Osier Bed (62/019) and Stort Meads (62/009).
Statutory	Grade II Historic Parkland	Registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens for its special historic interest. The registration defines the direction of appropriate protection.
Statutory	Scheduled Monument	Scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) due to national archaeological importance. The designation restricts excavation at this location. Management operations may require consent from Historic England.









Legend

- Site Boundary
- Footpath (Public Right of Way)
- Main Rivers
- Scheduled Monument
- Ecosite
- Wildlife Site
- Greenbelt
- Area of non-intervention management

N

Site Name
Pishiobury Park

Title
Map 1 - Constraints Plan

Scale @ A4
1:12,000

Date
March 2018

Rev
00

East Herts Council
Countryside Management Service

Legend

Access:

- Pedestrian entrance
- Vehicle access

Trees:

- Mature parkland tree
- Young parkland tree - guarded

Habitats:

- Amenity grassland
- Boardwalk
- Car park
- Cattle exclusion
- Desire line
- Grazed pasture
- Oak walk
- Roundel
- Scrub
- Wetland
- Wet woodland
- Woodland
- Woodland walk

N

Site Name
Pishiobury Park

Title
Map 2 - Site Description

Scale @ A4
1:5,500

Date
March 2018

Rev
00

East Herts Council
Countryside Management Service

3.0 General Maintenance

Pishiobury Park is regularly visited and inspected by the Council, the Countryside Management Service (CMS) and our grounds contractor staff. The day to day operations such as litter picking, the emptying of litter and dog bins, the maintenance of entrances and access points, the repairs to fencing and park structures all contribute to the overall impression of the park. It is imperative that this maintenance is kept on top of as it demonstrates to park visitors that the park is well cared for and contributes to the overall visitor experience.

Therefore, it is crucial that the general management continues to be monitored and that any required adjustments are implemented in an informed and responsible manner so that the impact on the park as a whole is a positive one. The core maintenance items such as cleansing, grass cutting and emptying bins are scheduled as part of the Council's main Grounds Contract which is checked and audited on a regular basis. Open Space Risk Inspections are carried out periodically by the Council to ensure that the park remains a safe and enjoyable place to visit.

The Friends Group and grazier help to keep an eye on the safe maintenance of the park. The Council has worked in partnership with the Countryside Management Service (CMS) to produce this Greenspace Action Plan for the park and to carry out work on a range of our open spaces. CMS is supported financially by the Council as part of a county-wide local authority partnership. CMS delivers a range of work within our parks and open spaces and works with local communities to deliver a programme of volunteer activities.

Some changes to the general management of the park will be reactive to specific circumstances that cannot be accurately programmed or predicted, for example vandalism events, increased visitor usage and weather conditions. However, where specific projects are planned for in the park it is important to be aware of the impact these will have on the general maintenance operations both visually and financially. Through continued well planned maintenance regimes and projects, we aim to achieve this not just for the next five years but well into the future for Pishiobury Park. Additions to the general maintenance contract, as a result of proposed or recent actions are listed below.

Boardwalk: a new boardwalk has been installed which extends through the northern section of the Osier bed, connecting the parkland to the wet meadow to the north. This has involved the installation of a new kissing gate, and access to the boardwalk will have to be maintained, kept free from litter and vegetation, and the gate itself kept in good working order. The boardwalk will be inspected four times a year by the Council and the decking will be jet washed with clean water to prevent the build-up of material. The overgrowth of nettles surrounding the viewing platform will be strimmed twice a year, and the route of the boardwalk will be kept clear from overgrowing or overhanging vegetation.

Tree planting: where trees are planted and weather conditions do not provide enough water, there may be the need to organise watering through the grounds maintenance contract. Planted trees will be regularly checked and maintained for a period of three years post planting to ensure success. This will involve weeding, mulching and watering when required.

Interpretation signs: introducing new structures into the park can lead to increased maintenance operations. The new signs will be kept free from graffiti and in good condition. See Specification 1 for further details on signage and design.

Events: when events are held in the park additional inspections are made prior to the event to ensure that the park is clean, gates and access points are clear, any protrusion or trip hazards are rectified, any event related structures are safe, and that measures for additional parking such as temporary fencing are in place and secure.

Access restrictions: many projects involve the use of heavy machinery and significant ground works. This can lead to a requirement for an area of the park to have restricted access to the public and also our grounds maintenance contractor.

Park furniture: there is an aesthetic requirement for consistent and appropriate design of park structures and furniture within our parks and open spaces. Bespoke oak benches and picnic tables have been designed specifically for Pishiobury Park by a local specialist. Any future replacement of furniture in Pishiobury Park should follow this principal. See Specification 3 for the details of the oak park furniture.

4.0 Grassland

Objective: Maintain grazing as a crucial maintenance tool to improve the ecological quality of the grassland habitat, whilst ensuring the safety of visitors.

The provision of a grassland environment is a typical feature in many parks and open spaces and provides the setting for a variety of activities. For a historic park such as Pishiobury the grassland reflects a pastoral landscape traditionally used for genteel leisurely pursuits. This use remains today, with the park providing an ideal setting for dog walking, rambling and the enjoyment of space and nature. The park is comprised largely of semi-improved extensive neutral grassland. The addition of damp flood meadows adjacent to the River Stort, a transition from neutral to calcareous (chalk) grassland along the north-east facing slope, and a wet flush to the south, add considerable diversity. In particular, the east facing slope extending from Oak Walk down to the boundary of the Osier bed comprises a diverse grassland sward.

The quality of the grassland habitat is important to the County's biodiversity and to meeting the requirements of the Natural England Higher Level Stewardship Scheme. The ecological quality of the grassland sward has continued to improve since grazing density was increased. Therefore, the objective for the next five years is to continue with the existing grassland management regime, and to promote grazing as a crucial maintenance tool. Furthermore, ensuring the safety of visitors is integral to any successful grazing regime.

The north-east slope from Oak Walk awash with springtime flowers

4.1 Conservation Grazing

Pishiobury Park has historically been grazed in some form for hundreds of years and the Council has continued this tradition. Grasslands managed in this way have long been recognised as having high nature conservation value, typically comprising a great variety of plant species native to the UK. Grazing enhances the diversity of wildflowers and results in a variety of grass heights, which in turn supports a vast array of insects providing a healthy food supply for many mammals and birds.

We have for some time used traditional rare breed cattle of English Longhorns at Pishiobury Park. This is a specialist, hardy breed, which are particularly docile and relaxed with people. Since the re-introduction of cattle, improvements in overall floral diversity have been seen. In particular, under previous management plans the stocking density of cattle was increased in order to create the right conditions for improving the ecological quality of the grassland. The park is currently under a 10 year Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Agreement with Natural England (2014 – 2024), which supports and enables the continuation of grazing and sets targets for grassland management. A monitoring programme will be established to assess the ecological value of the grassland on an annual basis. The results from this will be used to review the livestock density, ensuring that stock levels continue to create the desired ecological conditions to achieve the targets set within the HLS agreement.

The park will be grazed with cattle annually between May and October. It is important to maintain public safety whilst grazing, particularly when considering the increased popularity of the park. The location of the kissing gates and fencing to the east of the main grazing compartment has recently been modified. The new location will prevent the collection of cattle around this pedestrian access point, therefore improving accessibility and reducing the potential for conflict between visitors and cattle. In addition to access improvements, visitors to Pishiobury Park need to be provided with guidance on their own safety responsibilities when visiting the countryside. The ecological importance of grazing also needs to be promoted, to increase understanding and acceptance of the presence of livestock. The council has produced a brief guide on 'Grazing Animals in our Parks' which can be found on our website. This guide provides detailed safety guidance for visitors and provides additional information on environmental stewardship, and ecology. This information needs to be readily available to visitors whilst onsite. During this plan period we will install grazing specific interpretation which will provide safety guidelines for dog walkers, as well as information on the benefits of grazing for wildlife. Furthermore, events such as 'meet the cows' will be held annually to spread awareness and understanding. We will also investigate the feasibility of holding livestock awareness training events for dog walkers.

Cattle comprising English Longhorns which graze the grassland compartments

4.2 Invasive Weeds

Certain weeds if left unchecked have the tendency to spread and become dominant in the landscape. Grazing alone is not always effective at keeping these weeds at bay (even with our hardy rare breeds!) especially those that are woody, spiky or unpalatable, properties which a high proportion of invasive weeds have. The Weeds Act 1959 requires the Council to control certain "injurious weeds" including Common Ragwort, Creeping and Spear Thistle. So far we have successfully controlled the cover of these species, and will continue to do so. Where necessary, the weeds have to be controlled by other means to ensure their cover is less than 5% within each grassland compartment (unless stated otherwise). The methods that will be implemented to control the invasive weeds in Pishiobury Park are described below.

Bramble: Although bramble provides a great habitat for wildlife it can encroach very quickly and move into the grassland areas. Management is required to prevent successional change in vegetation from grassland to scrub and eventually woodland. Vegetation succession leads, in the short term, to an increase in nutrient levels in the soil and a decline in species diversity. Managing scrub cover will maintain the area of grassland available for wildflowers, and the conservation value of this habitat. Bramble that has encroached too far will be controlled by sectional rotational cutting predominately through volunteer activities. This will be balanced with the need to retain a network of discrete patches of scrub for invertebrates and small mammals, occupying an area of no more than 10 % of the grassland compartment.

Thistle: Creeping thistles and spear thistles are very hardy plants that spread and seed vigorously. Effective control should always be implemented before the thistles seed. If large areas of thistle become established a contractor will be despatched to top and collect up the thistle before seeding. For small patches of thistle the Friends of Pishiobury Park have been supplied with a tool specifically designed to remove individual thistle plants. This labour intensive method, if timed correctly, can prevent the establishment of large areas and the need for large scale removal operations. CMS may also bring in volunteers from other groups to assist. However, care must be taken to ensure that any areas of scarce dwarf thistle, found mainly on the chalk slope, are effectively identified and avoided during these works.

Ragwort: Whilst an important constituent of the grass sward, providing habitat and food for a number of invertebrates, common ragwort is poisonous if consumed by cattle. Consumption is most likely to occur when ragwort is pulled and left in situ as it becomes more palatable after drying. Ragwort levels are regularly monitored and it is periodically hand pulled by volunteers and the Friends Group, and disposed of appropriately by our grounds maintenance contractor.

4.3 Mechanical Grass Cutting

Mechanical cutting of grass in the park is kept to a minimum and is restricted to entrances, access points, the picnic area and grass walkways, as part of the grounds maintenance contract. Due to improved stock density, the cattle's grazing has been effective in controlling grass levels across the main park. This has reduced the need to mechanically mow the grass to achieve a desirable sward height. There is a small meadow to the east of the site, adjacent to a gravel pit, which is currently encroached by blackthorn and bramble. Management options for this meadow will be reviewed during this plan period, and may involve scrub clearance followed by mechanical grass cutting.

5.0 Woodland

Objective: Secure the historic footprint of the park for the long term by diversifying the age structure and maintaining the enclosure effect of the perimeter woodlands, protecting the health of veteran trees, and continuing to plant replacement parkland trees.

Pishiobury Park comprises a diverse treescape, consisting of mature woodland, tree plantation belts, tree-lined avenues, scattered veteran trees, hedges and hawthorn roundels. These features contribute to the overall character of this historic park and provide a variety of opportunities for wildlife.

The majority of the treescape was originally planted as part of the designed landscape for Pishiobury House. The Pishiobury Park Restoration Plan (2005) assessed the historical context of the site and describes the significance of the 18th Century landscape design that formed the template of the park as we see it today.

Historically the perimeter woodland enclosures were planted to screen the designed parkland from the surrounding area. The perimeter woodlands and the parkland trees dotted and grouped across the park, were an important feature of the designed landscape and were crucial in the designer's aim to recreate the "English Landscape". With this in mind management has focused on re-establishing the footprint of the designed landscape by preserving the remaining features and recreating others that have been lost or depleted over the years. For example, a number of parkland trees have been replanted across the park to replace those which had been lost. This management plan will ensure that previous work to re-establish the footprint of the designed landscape continues to be successful.

5.1 Nursery Wood

The most established mature area of woodland in Pishiobury Park is located to the north of the site and is called Nursery Wood. A zonal management strategy was developed during the last plan period and has been successful in guiding the management of this woodland. The focus of the work has been to restore the historical footprint of this woodland area. It was evident from historic aerial photographs that the footprint of the wood had shrunk over time and the boundary had been degraded. Anecdotal evidence suggests that tree loss, through Dutch elm disease, had been particularly severe, particularly within the north western section of the woodland.

Work to re-establish the footprint has included re-planting the central and north-west portion of the woodland, and planting a new hedgerow edge. Management work will continue to re-enforce the woodland footprint, and ensure that previous efforts remain successful. The woodland has been divided into three discrete zones for continued restoration and management works. The management for each zone is described below.

Zone 1 - Planting Maintenance: The north western section of the woodland has recently been re-stocked with a mix of native and locally appropriate tree and shrub species. The woodland walk and central open glade has been retained. On-going maintenance is required to ensure the planted trees

continue to establish well, and will eventually require thinning, but not during this plan period. The first row of planted trees adjacent to the residential/ woodland border will be coppiced in year three (see Planting Regime below).

Zone 2 - Active Woodland Management: The central section of the woodland has been previously thinned to create space and light for retained trees to grow and mature. Work will continue to increase light levels within the woodland through selective thinning and coppicing. Rotational coppicing and thinning allows pockets of light through the canopy, encouraging the growth of woodland flora and natural tree regeneration, creating an understorey of small shrubs and trees. The result is a diverse woodland structure, where all age classes of tree co-exist, supporting a wide variety of plants, birds and invertebrates. In addition to encouraging natural tree regeneration, tree planting is essential to maintain the woodland footprint in the long term. This is particularly important when considering tree health issues which have resulted in tree loss in the past, and will most likely continue to result in tree loss in the future.

Tree thinning

Thinning will target the removal of unhealthy and crowded trees, ash and oak in particular. Attractive, well-formed oak trees will be selected to grow on to maturity and may receive some formative pruning. Tree thinning will provide the remaining trees with more space, allowing the development of a broad crown. This may be beneficial particularly for ash species, by helping to improve resilience in light of the Chalara ash dieback outbreak.

Rotational coppicing

The areas of hazel coppice have reached maturity and are ready to be re-coppiced on rotation. To encourage good regrowth (tall and straight), the stocking density of the coppice coupe will be increased through planting young hazel trees (see Appendix, Specification 5). In order to protect re-growth from browsing by deer, any coppicing should be protected by sufficient fencing, or through the creation of deer baskets. Consideration will be given to the effective re-use of arisings from these operations on-site, for example, hazel coppice poles for bindings along sections of laid hedge or provision of stakes. Larger round wood will be retained in long lengths and stacked to increase available deadwood habitat within the woodland.

Tree planting

New trees will be planted in two open areas; a small opening located adjacent to the vehicle entrance into Nursery Wood, and another opening located next to the woodland boundary bordering the residential gardens from Kingsmead. The tree planting will follow the previous re-stocking approach described below (see Re-stocking Regime). Tree planting will be planned to coincide with national tree week. This is a recognised week which occurs annually in November and will provide an opportunity for the general public to get involved with planting trees in Pishiobury Park.

Zone 3 - Minimal Intervention: The mature south eastern portion of the woodland with its established high canopy will be left alone. Works to mature trees will be undertaken only where this becomes necessary to maintain the safety of park users or adjacent residents. If and when trees require safety works, all efforts will be made to retain dead wood habitat, both standing and on the

woodland floor. Where trees are removed, appropriate native species will be planted in replacement.

Re-stocking Regime

The historical screening function of the perimeter woodland enclosures is still important today, particularly when considering the close proximity of the surrounding residential properties, which do not provide a historic contribution to the parkland landscape. However, in the past some local residents living adjacent to Nursery Wood raised concerns about tree planting, due to restricted views into the park and reduced light reaching their properties. There is no legal obligation for the Council to prune or remove trees to offer a neighbour light. However, in response to the concerns over tree re-stocking in Nursery Wood, a number of actions were taken by the Council to ensure that the trees planted within 25 m of the houses adjacent to Nursery Wood will never reach more than 3 m in height. This was achieved by implementing the following actions:

- A maintenance strip of 2 m was left between the boundary fence and the newly planted trees.
- Periodic coppicing of the first row of trees.

The proposed re-stocking within Nursery Wood will follow this approach and through these actions the residents are still able to enjoy the park on their doorstep, along with other visitors, and benefit from the attractive backdrop that the woodland provides. In time the canopy will lift as the trees mature providing some vision through to the park. Furthermore, ongoing management operations will provide temporary visual windows into the parkland without losing the internal screening effects of the woodland enclosure.

Woodland Edge

In order to maintain the formal design element of the woodland we will establish an active rotational management regime for the planted woodland edge hedgerow. This hedgerow will be allowed to grow on and mature over the coming years in order to reach a size suitable for laying. Traditional hedge laying will then be implemented on a rotational basis. Sections of the hedgerow will in turn be layed (layered) to create a dense stock proof barrier. This will temporarily lower the height of the hedgerow, encouraging the development of dense regrowth (a valuable nesting habitat for birds) whilst providing visual windows into and from the parkland. Regular and rotational management of these boundary hedges should in time negate the need for unattractive internal fences. The requirement for internal stock proof fencing shall be reviewed following hedge laying. The external boundary fences will still remain in place to make absolutely sure that cattle cannot escape the park.

5.2 The Woodland Walk

The perimeter woodland that runs parallel with Bonks Hill (A1184) consists of a variety of native species including hazel, ash, field maple and elm. The woodland comprises trees of varying ages and stages of management, but also has some of the oldest trees in the park, with an assortment of hornbeams that are predicted to be 250 years old.

A woodland trail has been created leading from the main entrance and car park moving north through the woodland, where it joins up with an existing access point off A1184 and opens out by the Newton Drive Entrance. The woodland walk provides the opportunity for visitors to experience

the perimeter woodlands, enabling people to gain a different perspective on what Pishiobury Park has to offer. However, interpretation is required to advertise the existence of the walk. Please refer to the People section of this plan for further interpretation details.

Management will focus on ensuring the sustainability of the woodland, allowing both enhancement of the woodland structure and conservation of historic features. This will be achieved by retaining and protecting veteran trees, increasing the diversity of the understorey, and enabling the regeneration of future feature trees. The woodland comprises many elm trees which are now at the end of their life. Healthy elm will be retained wherever possible for the benefit of white-letter hairstreak butterflies, which require elm as a larval food plant. Veteran trees will be retained wherever possible and protected following the guidelines outlined in the Veteran tree section.

Over the course of the previous plan, temporary open glade areas have been coppiced along the route of the woodland trail providing lighter habitats for insects, particularly butterflies. Recent management has involved thinning areas of ash, creating more space for healthier specimens. Tree safety work has also been coupled with enlarging the existing glade areas, increasing their suitability for tree regeneration. There is very little natural tree regeneration within the woodland. As such the enlarged glade areas will be re-stocked to ensure a variety of age stands are present within the woodland belt. Tree planting will be particularly important in the areas of tree safety felling, which occurred adjacent to the boundary of the busy A1184 road. Tree planting here will ensure the presence of this road is dampened and visually screened, as the trees grow and mature. All re-stocking requires effective protection from browsing, and tree aftercare to prevent competition from weeds.

The two hazel coppice coupes have experienced differing levels of regrowth. Regrowth within the larger coupe has been heavily grazed due to gaps and openings that have appeared in the deer fencing. This fencing has been repaired and will be regularly monitored to ensure the fencing remains intact. Both coupes would benefit from re-stocking of mixed species to increase the density of trees, whilst increasing the diversity of the understorey. Furthermore, the size of the smaller coupe will be increased through planting.

5.3 Parkland Trees

The success of planting parkland trees has been sporadic at times, particularly along Oak Walk. Tree replacement planting with native broadleaf tree species will continue, with only English oak planted along Oak Walk (see Section 5.4). Additional watering may be needed from our ground maintenance contractor.

Traditional parkland guards in association with rare breed cattle have contributed substantially to the restoration of a designed landscape and parkland visitor experience. The parkland guards have and will continue to be gradually replaced as they come to the end of their life.

5.4 The Tree Avenues

Pishiobury Park has two very distinct tree lined avenues, Oak Walk and Lime Avenue. Oak Walk is a focal point of the park that runs along a raised ridge of land from north to south, with pedestrian access points at either end. This walk has historic significance as it follows the route of a former approach to Pishiobury House, north drive. Maintaining this important feature has been a key objective in the management plans for Pishiobury Park and it will continue to be in this five year plan and further into the future. The avenue is comprised of mixed tree species, any tree losses along the extent of the walk will be replaced with native oak species.

Planted parkland trees in the foreground, with standing deadwood and Oak Walk in the background

Lime Avenue is a planted double row of predominantly lime trees that echoes the existence of a former lime avenue that has since been incorporated within the gardens of the houses on Pishiobury Drive. Despite this, some of the planted limes are old trees, and as with Oak Walk, we will continue to maintain the integrity of these trees and replant losses as required.

5.5 Tree Risk

The trees within the Council's parks and opens spaces are inspected by a specialist Arboricultural Consultant as part of our Tree Risk Management Programme. Potential tree health issues are also identified through these inspections. Those works recommended by the survey for Pishiobury Park are implemented on a rolling programme dependant on the priority of the works specified. A number of tree safety works has taken place within the Woodland Walk and the Osier Bed. Details of tree safety works are distributed to the Friends Group and to CMS, to inform them of what operations are to be carried out, and to provide them with an opportunity to comment.

5.6 Veteran Trees

A historic park like Pishiobury has its fair share of veteran trees. These fat, old, knobbly, sometimes barely alive specimens are an important part of the English countryside and we have a responsibility

to protect and celebrate those we have in Pishiobury Park. Our veteran trees will be managed sensitively, in line with advice provided by the Woodland Trust and the Ancient Tree Forum.

We will also use the information provided by the Tree Risk Survey described above with the aim to implement a balanced management approach that protects the trees themselves, associated wildlife and the people visiting the park to enjoy them.

Where possible, wood removed from veteran trees will be made safe and remain in situ. Dead and rotting wood not only provides ideal habitat for invertebrates but also creates aesthetic natural tactile elements for the pleasure of our park users, both young and old.

5.7 Roundels

The broadleaved tree groups or 'roundels' are important features in the park, and a long term management strategy is required to conserve and protect these features. Previous work has attempted to establish a curved hawthorn edge around the recently planted roundels in order to achieve a consistent definitive style based on historic precedent. This has had various levels of success, primarily due to shading from the surrounding trees. The stock fencing surrounding the roundels is currently in poor condition and requires replacing to ensure the enclosed trees and planted hedge continue to be protected from grazing.

Some of the trees within the roundels are of substantial age and size, and should be managed in line with the veteran tree management strategy above. In some instances heavy top limbs may need to be removed to prevent wind blow, and forked stems may need to be used to prop up leaning stems.

5.8 Hedgerows

There are a number of hedgerows across the park, the majority of which line the woodland and meadow boundaries. The boundary hedgerows have been planted to reinforce the historic footprint of the park. As they continue to mature they create a graduating woodland edge habitat which supports a variety of wildlife. These boundary hedgerows will be layed on a rotational basis to create a dense stock proof barrier which will seek to maintain the historic footprint whilst maximising their contribution to biodiversity (see Woodland Edge section above). The recently layed hedgerow, located adjacent to the car park, requires active management over the next few years to ensure planting continues to mature and does not become encroached by weeds. Hedgerows have also been planted along the boundary of Springhall Meadow and the adjacent Plovers Mead. Although these have developed well, there are a number of gaps which require planting with hedge trees to improve the quality of this wildlife corridor.

Two hedgerows of mixed broadleaves border the High Wych Ditch (supply ditch) which runs through the park. These internal hedgerows have been left unmanaged to grow wild, as specified within the Landscape Restoration Plan. Whilst now having the appearance of hedgerows it is thought that this was not the original intention of the planting. These hedgerows will be maintained without active restoration, and trees will be removed upon death. This will provide new opportunities to improve the marginal vegetation within the supply ditch (see Section 6).

5.9 The Osier Bed

The Osier Bed is an area of wet woodland habitat, which extends along the south eastern boundary of Pishiobury Park towards the River Stort. It has recently been brought into long term management by the Council following an agreement with a local angling club who own the site.

Historically the Osier Bed was an area of wetland situated adjacent to the low lying wet areas that featured the original serpentine lake and a natural stream. The Osier Bed was planted with osier willow to provide woodland materials, for a range of crafts and uses, through rotational coppicing. Over time these uses became widely obsolete and the woodland has been left over many years to develop and overgrow. The tree species began to diversify and the habitat in time changed to what we now describe as "wet woodland". Wet woodland is a regionally rare habitat that sits at the top of the sequence of vegetative succession, and is known as a 'climax' habitat. If wetlands are unmanaged they succumb to scrub and eventually become woodland. The majority of wetlands are specifically managed to prevent this from happening, as wetlands themselves support a variety of important and rare wildlife. The Osier Bed has developed to a point where it would be very difficult for it to be returned back to wetland. Wet woodlands are regionally rare habitats, and as such the Council aspires to bring this habitat under favourable management, ensuring the safety of park visitors and the sustainability of the woodland.

The Osier Bed now comprises two distinct areas which vary in habitat quality (See Map 1). The management proposed for each area is described below.

Area 1 – Active Management: The northern section is relatively disturbed and comprises native coppice, overtopped by large planted hybrid poplars. These poplars are not characteristic of this historic landscape. Appropriate management could enhance the habitat value of this area, increasing suitability for supporting water vole and otter.

Recent management in this area has aimed to reduce the risk associated with unsafe trees (mainly the large hybrid black poplars), which the Council inherited when acquiring management responsibility of the Osier Bed. This tree safety work has involved a combination of height reduction, removing dead branches, and felling. As part of the Council's Tree Risk Management Programme (see Section 5.5) this area of the Osier Bed will be regularly inspected to ensure the safety of park users. The Osier Bed has the potential to provide valuable habitat for wildlife, such as bats, and this will be carefully planned for when managing the trees.

The tree work has created gaps in the woodland canopy, increasing light levels reaching the woodland floor, which in turn will encourage the growth of woodland flora. These openings will be planted with osier willows to reinstate the Osier Bed as a designed landscape feature and to improve the habitat quality of this area of the wet woodland.

A boardwalk has recently been installed through the northern section of the Osier Bed. This will enable visitors to experience and enjoy this regionally rare wet woodland habitat, which was previously closed from public access. It will offer another interesting visitor attraction to the park which links into the existing circular walks. The route will also provide glimpses of what remains of the serpentine lake, which was a unique feature of the English Landscape, as created by Capability Brown and his contemporaries. Following the installation of the boardwalk, interpretation will be installed to inform visitors about the habitat, and its value for wildlife. The fencing has been realigned along the northern boundary of the Osier Bed to prevent the collection of cattle at this pedestrian access point.

Boardwalk installed in spring 2018 and extends through the northern section of the Osier Bed

Area 2 – Minimum Intervention: The remaining area is characterised as having high habitat quality for supporting otters and water voles. This area will be left undisturbed through non-intervention management, with the exception to tree safety work in proximity to the park boundary and the location of the boardwalk. Works to mature trees will be undertaken only where this becomes necessary to maintain the safety of park users or adjacent residents. If, and when, trees require safety works, all efforts will be made to retain dead wood habitat, both standing and on the woodland floor. Where trees are removed, canopy openings will encourage natural regeneration, and new growth will be initiated from fallen or felled stems. There will be an opportunity for the Friends to create an otter holt in this habitat using some of the material generated from the tree safety work. Consultation with the Environment Agency will be required prior to the installation of an otter holt, if it is to be located within 8 m of the river bank.

6.0 Water

Objective: Enhance the habitat quality of the water features by creating a new waterbody and managing encroachment of marginal vegetation. Improve public access to, and understanding of, the water features across the park through improvements to walking routes and interpretation.

The water features in Pishiobury Park consist of ditches, a pond and a natural spring. The presence of water in the park provides additional interest to park users, an invitation for wildlife, and provides a connection with the surrounding water based habitats including the River Stort and the Osier Bed. Work is required over the next five years of this GAP to improve these areas, and encourage the establishment of a diverse wildlife community.

6.1 Spring

A number of measures have been taken to improve the ecological quality and accessibility around the spring. This has included installing a boardwalk, clearing dense overgrown vegetation, constructing a conservation bund and the installation of stock proof fencing. A 4 m gap for the growth of marginal vegetation was left between the spring and the fence line, and several wood piles were stacked to encourage invertebrates. Work in this plan will continue to enhance the habitat suitability of this spring for supporting aquatic invertebrates and amphibians.

An assessment of the water quality and wildlife of the spring (by a suitably licenced ecologist) would inform further management needs, and determine whether the spring would benefit from de-silting. This would also identify whether the spring supports protected species such as great crested newts, which would have to be carefully planned for when conducting management activities. If sufficient species are found, there is a possibility of providing interpretation describing common species e.g. diving beetles, pond skaters, water boatman, water lice, aquatic larvae, frogs and newts. Specification 1 outlines the designs for interpretation within the park.

The re-encroachment of the spring from dominant marginal species will be monitored and managed when necessary. Marginal vegetation should be removed to prevent the cover across the entire water surface, ensuring that a fringe of marginal and emergent vegetation is retained around at least half of the water's edge. In particular, the growth of reedmace will be controlled, and excess floating and submerged vegetation regularly thinned, to prevent the progressive build-up of nutrients, such as nitrates and phosphates (see Appendix, Specification 8).

6.2 Pond

A number of actions have been attempted over the years to improve the ecological quality of the pond. These actions have included de-silting, and clearing encroaching dominant vegetation. A dipping/ viewing platform was also installed to encourage visitor appreciation of this water feature. However, despite these efforts the pond is characterised by murkey water and a lack of underwater plants. Silt at the bottom of a pond may prevent aquatic vegetation from establishing and lowers the water quality. These features are indicators of poor quality, and as such the pond is unlikely to support valuable wildlife.

The pond is fed from a drainage ditch which runs through a local village before entering the park. As such, the water supply to the pond is affected by rainwater runoff from urban and arable land, in addition to road run off from the A1184. The water quality of the pond is therefore poor, containing high nutrient levels and low level pollutants and sediments. The Environment Agency (EA) has previously investigated options to improve the water quality of the pond. However, the suggested improvements are beyond the scope of the management of the Park. Management to improve the ecological quality of the pond would require regular silt removal, combined with measures to reduce pollution input further upstream. Due to the in line nature of the pond (intermittent water supply), and poor water quality, efforts to improve it as an ecological feature are unfeasible.

Within the context of the park, it would be more cost effective and ecologically sound to create a new well designed pond in a more suitable location, with a source of clean water. The existing pond will be left to build up with silt, raising the pond floor. Over time the pond will eventually turn into marsh, and emergent vegetation will cover the entire pond floor drying out the open water. The succession of the pond should be monitored over future plan periods and management may be required to hasten this natural process. The existing viewing platform adjacent to the pond will be removed and re-used elsewhere onsite.

New pond: To offset the loss of the pond and improve the quality of the park's water features, a new pond will be created. A suitable location would be within Plovers Mead near to the River Stort (Navigation), which is an area of low lying wet meadow. The pond will be situated adjacent to the existing stock proof fencing, so it can be viewed and enjoyed by visitors walking past this field. The pond design will consist of a shallow step graded edge and planted with a diverse array of marginal vegetation (see Appendix, Specification 9). This design will provide food, shelter and nesting opportunities for numerous plant and animal species.

6.3 Ditches

The Council has a riparian responsibility to keep ditch banks clear and to prevent obstruction to the water flow. The wet ditch which extends through Plovers Mead has become overgrown with vegetation, and requires clearance on a rotational basis (see Appendix, Specification 7).

The main supply ditch to the pond is lined with overgrown hawthorn hedgerow. The internal hedgerows bordering the supply ditch should be managed to senescence, and trees removed upon their death, providing new opportunities to improve the marginal vegetation within the supply ditch. A project was undertaken in partnership with the EA to investigate improvements to the water quality of the pond and drainage ditch (see Section 6.2). The results provided by the EA included designing and creating a series of shallow ponds placed upstream from the current pond in the area of formal grassland, with the aim to capture the sediments and filter the pollutants out. This option is not suitable for Pishiobury Park when considering the historic context of the formal parkland, and the ecological value of this area of grassland.

6.4 The River Stort

The River Stort Navigation is a canalised river that starts north of Bishop's Stortford and runs past the eastern side of Pishiobury Park, separated by a series of back waters and the Osier Bed. Now through the acquisition of the Osier Bed, and the newly installed boardwalk, visitors have the opportunity to enjoy views and wildlife of the River Stort whilst walking through the park.

View of the River Stort backwaters from the viewing platform installed in the Osier Bed

The River Stort is popular with local people who use the river and tow path for a variety of pursuits including running, cycling, walking, boating and fishing. Access to and from the river into Pishiobury Park is available via a boardwalk which links to Springhall Meadow and via a muddy footpath that runs through Plovers Mead. This footpath forms an important link between the main park area and the river, and needs to be improved to allow better access for pedestrians. The entrances to the park along this eastern boundary need to be promoted to both park and river users, in order to raise awareness of the connection between the river and the park. Welcome and directional signs are required to identify the presence of Pishiobury Park from the river and vice versa. Our plans to improve access here are discussed in Section 7 of this plan.

7.0 Access

Objective: To ensure the park is welcoming and accessible to the wider community by improving public access to the site, maintaining good access routes between the parks features, and promoting connections to significant destinations outside the park.

Access for all is important in our parks and open spaces. Getting the balance between hard surfaces and natural access routes is vital in terms of visual impact and need. For a park like Pishiobury where maintaining the natural beauty and historic character is leading the management priorities, hard surface pathways criss-crossing the park would detract from this. Sensible solutions are required such as medium mobility access gates and bridges and short mown grass paths, to enable the opportunity for access into and around the main park area.

7.1 Pedestrian

There are a variety of pedestrian access points into the park from the surrounding communities. There are entrances from the main A1184 Road, Springhall Lane, Pishiobury Drive and Newton Drive. Following recommendations from the Pishiobury Park Restoration Plan (2005), the location of the Newton Drive entrance was previously modified in order to maximise the visual impact of Oak Walk as visitors enter the park. As a result of the designed landscape, the tree plantations either side of the entrance way extend at an outwards angle to provide a natural frame that opens up the landscape of Pishiobury Park before your eyes. This attractive view will require reinforcing overtime by maintaining the angle of the linear edge of the tree plantations. Historically, the location of the entrance from Newton Drive (via Oak Walk) would have served as one of the main entrances to Pishiobury House.

There is the potential for work to be carried out at the southern end of Oak Walk to provide a better connection to the access point from Pishiobury Drive. There is also informal pedestrian access into the park from the tow path which extends along the River Stort Navigation. At present this entrance is unwelcoming with a distinct absence of signage. This entrance will be formalised and made more inviting by clearing back over hanging vegetation, and installing a welcome sign. Improvements to public access across the park will be coupled with an interpretation refresh, to show the walking routes available, and provide information on associated wildlife, heritage and management. Please see Section 8.2 for more information.

7.2 Gates

All of the gates in the park conform to BS:5709, and this shall be maintained as and when gates are replaced across the park. As described in the General Maintenance section of this plan (Section 3.0) all gateways and access points are kept clear through regular monitoring and maintenance. The access point from Springhall Lane has recently been improved for both people and the movement of cattle. The realignment of fencing and the kissing gates has removed a pinch point where cattle felt trapped.

At the Newton Drive entrance one of the pedestrian access gates has been extended to accommodate mobility scooter access. Issues may arise from motorbike access, which violates one

of the by-laws for the park. Occurrences will be reported to the police, and alternative access arrangements may have to be made if motorbike access becomes a regular issue.

7.3 Vehicle

The main vehicle entrance point is situated to the west of the park off the A1184, and comprises a vehicle barrier designed in oak, in addition to a welcome sign, both of which are clearly visible from the road. The entrance infrastructure is in good condition and does not require replacement. This entrance provides access to a free off road parking area, which allows visitors from further afield to access the park. This car park is in need of re-surfacing and opportunities to extend the capacity of the car park should be investigated to increase the available parking space for this popular park.

Vehicle access gates are present through the picnic area, and off Newton Drive for maintenance access. To improve the accessibility of the park to all users, a disabled access car parking bay will be created at the Newton Drive entrance. This will complement recent mobility improvements made to the pedestrian access gate at this entrance.

7.4 Boardwalk

A potential improvement to the park is to install a linking boardwalk or surfaced route along the boundary of Plovers Mead, to reinforce the connection with the River Stort towpath. Such installation would not detract from the ecological value of the park, as this path is situated outside of the grazed grassland compartment. At present this route is unpassable in winter months, and the boardwalk would discourage trampling of surrounding bankside vegetation. Improved access will be crucial when considering the increased level of promotion of this important connecting route as a result of the interpretation refresh.

This project will require further investigation, additional funding, and the support and help from our Friends and volunteers. The boardwalk would connect to the circular walking routes which extend through the diverse habitats associated with the park, in particular, the recently installed boardwalk through the Osier Bed.

7.5 Walking Routes

There are a number of walking routes across the park which provide opportunities for visitors to experience the variety of habitats which the park has to offer. Several mown grass paths criss-cross the site and guide walkers through the grazing compartments. There is a woodland trail which extends through the perimeter woodlands and provides a connection between the main car park, the picnic area, the Newton Drive entrance, Oak Walk and Springhall Meadow. The addition of the boardwalk through the Osier Bed links into this existing circular walk, providing access to a unique habitat for visitors to enjoy.

Oak Walk is a surfaced path which follows the route of Public Footpath 21 which enters the park via the Newton Drive and the Pishiobury Drive entrances, connecting the communities of Sawbridgeworth and Old Harlow with the park. Oak Walk remains dry and firm throughout the year and provides an opportunity for disabled access through the park. Public Footpath 23 crosses through Springhall Meadow providing a connection to the River Stort (navigation).

The available walking routes will be advertised through improvements to the interpretation onsite. Walking routes to and from significant destinations outside the park will be promoted, emphasising the role of the footpath adjacent to the River Stort as an access corridor. Information should also be provided to visitors on the level of accessibility of various routes. A map on site or in a leaflet could show gradients and expected surface condition in summer and winter. Accessibility will be reviewed as part of the plans to upgrade site interpretation. There is also an opportunity to explore ways of engaging visitors with the habitats and history of the site through the development of a self-guided interactive walk. This could take the form of interactive weblinks, downloadable audio guides, informative leaflets, or direction to the Park Herts website.

8.0 People

Objective: Encourage participation of the local community in the management of the park and promote understanding, and awareness of the parks biodiversity and heritage value through; improved interpretation, support of the Friends Group, the delivery of guided walks and events, and a programme of regular volunteer activities.

Pishiobury Park is a well-used and popular site frequented by local residents and visitors from further afield. In particular, the park is regularly used by dog walkers and ramblers. Local wildlife and history groups also use the park for guided walks and activities. There is a picnic area with regularly mown amenity grassland which facilitates informal recreation.

8.1 Friends & Volunteers

Management work within the Park is supported by an enthusiastic and committed Friends Group. The Friends of Pishiobury Park are valued ambassadors for the park contributing greatly to the programme of volunteer works which include tree planting, scrub clearance, invasive weed control, and running guided walks and public events. The Friends Group is supported by the Council and CMS through a structured approach involving annual meetings and health and safety check-ups. Through these meetings annual work programmes are established, and group development needs are established with ongoing training provided. This approach has been independently assessed and accredited to the nationally recognised 'Investing in Volunteers' standard.

The Friends Group have created their own website which advertises task days, events and walks. The website also features a blog post which provides updates on task achievements as well as valuable insights into the history and ecology of the park.

In addition to the valuable contribution from the Friends Group, management is also delivered by CMS working parties, made up of volunteers from across the district. CMS have also supported corporate away days on site. Large tasks and projects have been undertaken by the CMS working parties, and have included stock fencing, pond restoration, woodland management, tree planting and ongoing works within the grassland.

The creation of a new five year GAP for Pishiobury Park provides the ideal structured platform for the Friends Group and other interested parties to work in partnership with the Council. This partnership provides opportunity to discuss, programme and deliver a variety of work and projects that ultimately contribute to the achievement of the overall aims and objectives for the park.

Removal of Common Ragwort (an invasive weed) by the Friends of Pishiobury Park (see Section 4.2)

8.2 Interpretation & Information

Providing information to park users is useful to communicate expected behaviours, regulations and contact information, but it is also an opportunity to provide informal education related to the park. The current interpretation panel at the car park entrance illustrates features of interest and recommended walks. However, this information is outdated, particularly with the acquisition of the Osier Bed and extensions to the circular walks across the site, through the boardwalk installation and woodland trail creation (See Section 6.4). These changes provide the opportunity to review the interpretation and to update the information to reflect the development works we have carried out since they were produced. Furthermore, informed historic investigations are required to improve our understanding of the significance and distribution of historic features across the park. Findings from these investigations will be used to improve the information provided on the heritage value of the site.

A thorough review of information provision will be undertaken and a programme of renewal and upgrading developed. Items for particular consideration include the woodland and wet woodland habitats and associated wildlife. Access to the wider Rights of Way network will also be considered, and in particular links to the river towpath, and the Stort Valley corridor leading to the Lee Valley Regional Park and Olympic Park. Map based interpretation panels will be installed at the main entrances, which include the entrance from the car parking area and the Newton Drive entrance. For further details about interpretation see Appendix, Specification 1. The Council will apply for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to support the delivery of historic investigations, and interpretation and access improvements. The interpretation refresh will be conducted in

collaboration with the Friends to ensure that the location and design of the panels are unobtrusive. Panel mounts are to be constructed from materials sympathetic and in keeping with the historical context of the site, whilst remaining robust for cattle.

8.3 Events & Activities

For the past several years the Council have been running a 'Meet the Animals' event as part of Love Parks Week. This event has proven successful with local people coming to the park for various activities, including a talk by our grazier with a visit from the cattle. CMS continue to arrange regular guided walks on our behalf, publicised through the county-wide "Walks and More" events programme and social media. These events provide us with a unique opportunity to introduce and share our Management Plans with park users and to take forward further suggestions and aspirations that the public would like to have in their local open space.

We aim to continue to run annual events in the park linking local and national events and occasions. In addition, the Friends enjoy celebrating the park and the work they have contributed to its management. The group run events and activities for park users including guided walks, wildlife surveys, activities for local children, and veteran tree surveys. They are heavily involved in our annual Love Park Week event day, and have also held stalls and information stands at local community days in Sawbridgeworth to promote the park and the group.

The Park is regularly used by local people for informal exercise, such as walking, dog walking, bird watching and running, and serves as a local resource for activities that enhance health and well-being. There are also a variety of events and activities available at the Park which promotes healthy living through physical activity and healthy lifestyles. For example, the following activities take place at the Park:

- Guided walks (led by CMS and/ or Council Officer, volunteers and the Friends)
- Volunteer days – Monthly morning working parties organised by the Friends on the 3rd Thursday of the month
- Orienteering
- Dog training
- Boot camp/ fitness training

There is also an opportunity to encourage exploration and enjoyment of the Park by local school children, particularly to promote environmental stewardship and understanding of the historic importance of the site. The feasibility and relevance of developing an activity pack for self-guided activities will be explored as part of the application for Heritage Lottery Funding, and the delivery of the history research project (see Section 2).

8.4 Natural Play Opportunities

Pishiobury Park provides a great setting and landscape with a wealth of opportunities for the young and old alike to 'play'. Structures and features such as logs, trees, slopes and ditches, provide ample natural play opportunities that test skill, agility, strength and coordination. There are also opportunities to capitalise on these features through strategic management practices. For example,

we have arranged logs in the enclosed grass picnic area which contributes to the retention of deadwood within the park, provides further interest, and also can be used as a play element or for natural seating.

8.5 Marketing & Promotion

As with all our parks and open spaces, we market and promote the management of Pishiobury Park through our council magazine 'Link', which is sent to every household in the district. The Council's website has a page dedicated to Pishiobury Park including a location map, Management Plans, related documents and details of the Friends Group. We also advertise our events and activities through posters distributed in the local area.

9.0 Action Plan

The action plan comprises of annual work programmes which includes contracted grounds maintenance operations, in addition to one-off actions which are to be completed over the course of the five year plan, from April 2018 to March 2023 inclusive. In some cases, tasks are ongoing and so appear on more than one action plan. The actions have been established to achieve the objectives set out in Section 1.1.

The action plan briefly describes each action, and provides reference to a more detailed specification for each action (see Appendix). The organisation responsible for leading and delivering each stated action is also provided (see list of abbreviations below).

9.1 Abbreviations

CMS	Countryside Management Service
EHC	East Herts Council
FoPP	Friends of Pishiobury Park
GM	Grounds Maintenance Contractor
Vols	Volunteers (countryside management service)

At the end of each annual period, the action plan will be updated to show the progress of the activities for that year. In theory, all should be marked as complete but if for any reason actions haven't been achieved, details are to be recorded here. If appropriate, remnant activities can then be moved in to one of the future actions plans.

9.2 Action Plan Maps

For each year of the plan there is an annotated map showing the actions to be carried out in that year, with the changes shown on the following year's map (Maps 3- 7).

Annual Management Actions									
Action	**When**	**Delivery by**	**Led by**	**Est Cost**	**Funding**	**Completed for the year:**			
						18/19	**19/20**	**21/22**	**22/23**
Meetings and reviews									
Review of the Greenspace Action Plan – To review and complete the action matrix for the previous year	April	EHC/ CMS/ FoPP	CMS	Internal Resource	n/a				
2 x Friends Group formal meetings	April, Sept	EHC/ CMS/ FoPP	CMS	Internal Resource	n/a				
Annual Risk Assessment & Hazard Review – Parks & Open Spaces Development Programme	Jan	EHC	EHC	Internal Resource	n/a				
Tree Risk Survey	Jan	Contractor	EHC	Internal Resource	n/a				
Submit the claim for the Higher Level Stewardship (HLS)	Sept	EHC	EHC	Set Agreement	n/a				
Events and Surveys									
Love Parks Week Annual Event	July	EHC/ FoPP/ CMS	EHC	Internal Resource	n/a				
Guided walks	n/a	CMS/ FoPP	CMS	Internal Resource	n/a				
Grazing specific events to spread awareness of benefits and safety guidelines for dog walkers	n/a	CMS/ FoPP/ EHC	EHC	Internal Resource	n/a				
Butterfly and wildflower surveys	May -July	FoPP	CMS	n/a	n/a				
Amphibian and reptile survey	July	FoPP	CMS	n/a	n/a				
Site Works									
Emptying of litter/ dog bin across site	All year (weekly)	GM	EHC	Internal Resource	GM budget				
Carry out routine inspections of the park including litter picking requirements	Monthly	EHC	EHC	Internal Resource	n/a				
Mow/ strim amenity grass areas	Contracted	GM	EHC	Internal Resource	GM budget				

Annual Management Actions									
Action	**When**	**Delivery by**	**Led by**	**Est Cost**	**Funding**	**Completed for the year:**			
						18/19	**19/20**	**21/22**	**22/23**
Boardwalk inspection and maintenance	Quarterly	EHC	EHC	Internal Resource	n/a				
Organise & implement works identified in the Annual Risk Assessment & Hazard Review	Jan/ Feb	GM	EHC	Internal Resource	GM budget				
Survey all of the park furniture	April	FoPP	CMS	n/a	n/a				
Repair & replace park furniture as identified by the survey	April – June	CMS Vols EHC	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a				
3 x manual weed control (thistle & ragwort) operations with disposal	April – Sept	CMS Vols EHC	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a				
Graze the park with cattle	May – Oct	Contract Grazier	EHC	Internal Resource	Agreement				
Monitor the grazing regime	June, Aug, Sept	Contract Grazier	EHC	Internal Resource	-				
Survey tree planting failures	July	FoPP	CMS	n/a	n/a				
Cut & rake the area around the spring (if required)	Late Sept	CMS Vols FoPP	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a				
Monitor the marginal vegetation around the pond and strim (if required)	Late Sept	FoPP	CMS	n/a	n/a				
Cut & collect grassland (if required)	Late Sept	Mynott & Son	EHC	Internal Resource	n/a				
Strim nettles adjacent to boardwalk/ viewing platform	Twice a year	GM	EHC	Internal Resource	GM budget				
Tree safety works as identified in the Tree Risk survey (if required)	Nov/ Dec	Tree contractor	EHC	Internal Resource	n/a				
Clear vegetation at entrances & paths	Nov/ Dec	CMS Vol FoPP	CMS	Internal Resource	n/a				
Restock tree planting failures	Dec/ Jan	CMS Vols FoPP	CMS	Internal Resource	n/a				

YEAR 1 ACTION PLAN 2018 – 2019							
Action	**When**	**Delivery by**	**Led by**	**Est Cost**	**Funding**	**Spec**	**Status (complete)**
Prepare and submit declaration to establish Pishiobury Park as a Local Nature Reserve	2018/2019	EHC	EHC	Internal Resource	n/a	-	
Roundels: Replace stock fencing	2018/2019	FoPP CMS Vols	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a	-	
Survey pond & spring for wildlife, conduct e-DNA survey for presence/absence of Great Crested Newts (GCN)	May	CMS	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a	-	
Conduct botanical assessment of grazing compartments	June/ July	FoPP	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a	-	
Osier Bed Area 1: Install temporary interpretation	July	EHC	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a	-	
Osier Bed Area 2: Consult with the Environment Agency regarding otter holt creation	July	CMS	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a	-	
Apply for Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) to support historic investigations, access and interpretation improvements	Aug/ Sept	CMS/ EHC	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a	-	
Install disabled access parking bay at Newton Drive entrance	Sept	Contractor	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a	-	
Plovers Mead: Clear marginal and overhanging vegetation along 1/3rd of the ditch	Sept	CMS Vols	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a	7	
De-silt spring (if required)	Oct/ Nov	Contractor	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a	-	
Woodland Walk: Plant trees in open glade areas and hazel coppice coupes	Nov	CMS Vols FoPP	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a	5,6	
Initiate scrub control in small meadow adjacent to gravel pit	Nov	Contractor	EHC	Internal Resource	n/a	-	
Osier Bed Area 1: Plant osier willow	Nov	FoPP	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a	6	
Osier Bed Area 2: Create otter holt habitat in area of non-intervention	Nov/ Dec	FoPP	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a	-	
Pond: Remove viewing platform structure	Nov/ Dec	EHC	EHC	Internal Resource	n/a	-	

YEAR 1 ACTION PLAN 2018 – 2019							
Action	**When**	**Delivery by**	**Led by**	**Est Cost**	**Funding**	**Spec**	**Status (complete)**
Nursery Wood Zone 1: Thin ash and oak trees and remove tree guards	Dec/ Jan	CMS Vols	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a	4	
Nursery Wood Zone 2: Initiate coppicing regime – coppice 1/3 of hazel trees, increase density of hazel (if required) and fence the area	Dec/ Jan	CMS Vols FoPP	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a	4, 5	
Nursery Wood Zone 2: Plant trees in openings: by the vehicle access gate and open area located adjacent to the woodland boundary with the residential gardens of Kingsmead Rd.	Jan 2019	CMS Vols FoPP	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a	6	
Hedgerows: Plant hedge trees to fill gaps along the boundary of Springhall Meadow and Plovers Mead	Jan 2019	CMS Vols FoPP	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a	6	

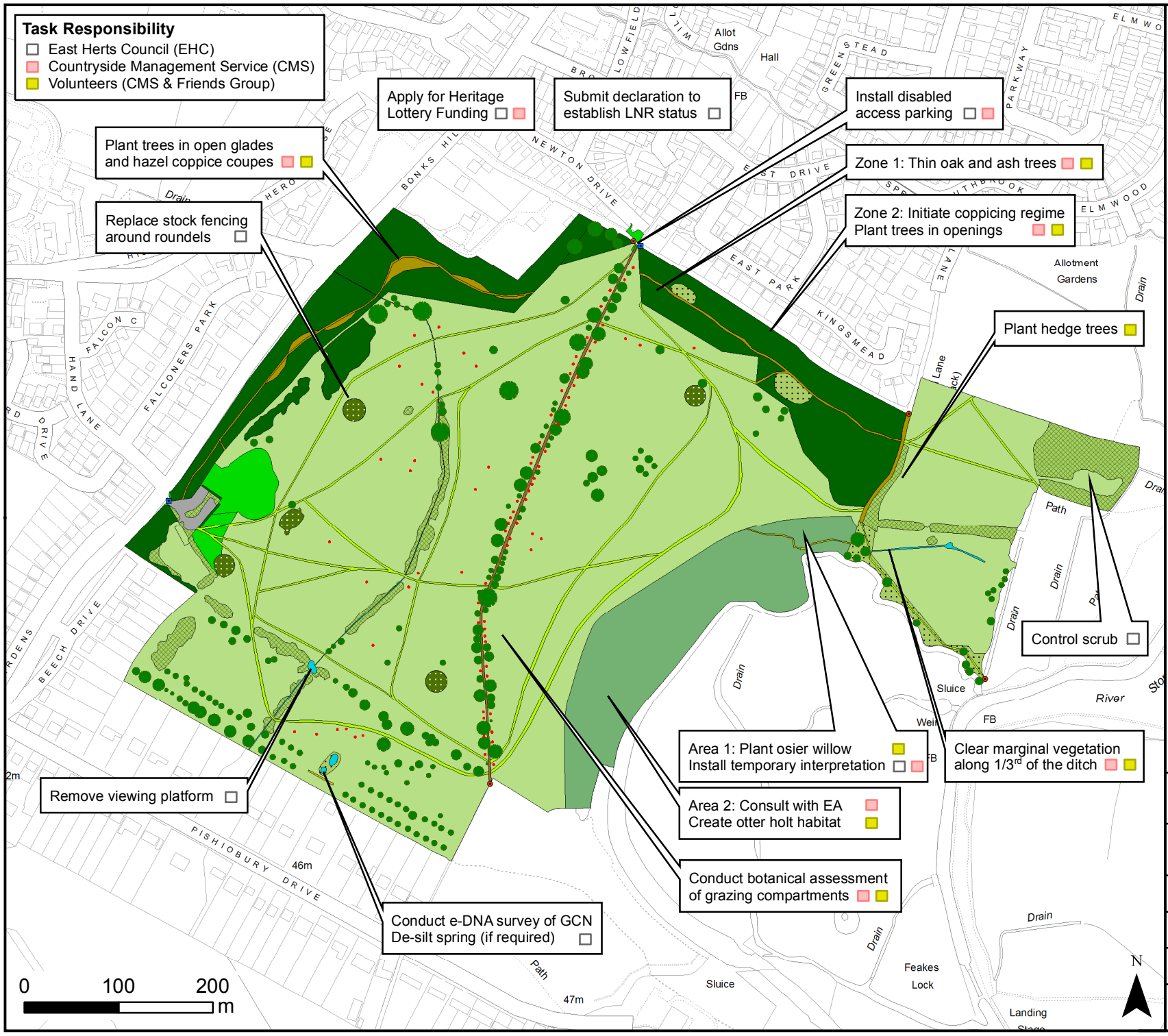
YEAR 2 ACTION PLAN 2019 – 2020							
Action	**When**	**Delivery by**	**Led by**	**Est Cost**	**Funding**	**Spec**	**Status (complete)**
Investigate/ install boardwalk adjacent to Plovers Mead	2019/ 2020	CMS/ EHC	CMS	TBC	External	2	
Review options for managing meadow adjacent to gravel pit	2019/ 2020	CMS/ EHC	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a	-	
Tree planting after care - Woodland Walk, Nursery Wood (Zone 2), Osier Bed (Area 1), and hedge trees	Spring/ Summer	CMS Vols FoPP	CMS	Set Contribution	n/a	6	
Conduct historic investigations of the site	April/ May	Contractor	CMS	TBC	External	-	
Investigate and deliver car park improvements	May – July	Contractor	CMS	TBC	External	-	
Investigate feasibility of developing a school pack for self-guided activities.	June/ July	Contractor	EHC	TBC	External	2	
Develop interactive self-guided walk	June/ July	CMS/ FoPP	CMS	TBC	External	-	

YEAR 2 ACTION PLAN 2019 – 2020							
Action	**When**	**Delivery by**	**Led by**	**Est Cost**	**Funding**	**Spec**	**Status (complete)**
Review and improve interpretation provision across Pishiobury Park & install welcome signs at entrances	July/ August	CMS/ EHC	CMS	TBC	External	1	
Spring: Dig out reedmace and remove ½ of marginal/ emergent vegetation	Sept - Nov	CMS Vols	CMS	Internal Resource	n/a	8	
Create new pond in Plovers Mead	Sept	Contractor	CMS	TBC	External	9	

YEAR 3 ACTION PLAN 2020 – 2021							
Action	**When**	**Delivery by**	**Led by**	**Est Cost**	**Funding**	**Spec**	**Status (complete)**
Tree planting after care - Woodland Walk, Nursery Wood (Zone 2), Osier Bed (Area 1), and hedge trees	Spring/ Summer	CMS Vols FoPP	CMS	Internal Resource	n/a	6	
Plovers Mead: clear marginal and overhanging vegetation along 1/3rd of the ditch	Sept	CMS Vols	CMS	Internal Resource	n/a	8	
Nursery Wood Zone 2: coppice 1/3 of hazel trees, increase density of hazel (if required) and fence the area	Nov	CMS Vols FoPP	CMS	Internal Resource	n/a	4, 5	
Nursery Wood: lay the woodland boundary hedgerows	Dec	CMS Vols	CMS	Internal Resource	n/a	4	

YEAR 4 ACTION PLAN 2021 – 2022							
Action	**When**	**Delivery by**	**Led by**	**Est Cost**	**Funding**	**Spec**	**Status (complete)**
Tree planting after care - Woodland Walk, Nursery Wood (Zone 2), Osier Bed (Area 1), and hedge trees	Spring/ Summer	CMS Vols FoPP	CMS	-	Internal	6	
Plovers Mead: monitor seasonal water levels	Quarterly	FoPP	CMS	-	-	9	

YEAR 5 ACTION PLAN 2022 – 2023							
Action	**When**	**Delivery by**	**Led by**	**Est Cost**	**Funding**	**Spec**	**Status (complete)**
Tree planting after care - Woodland Walk, Nursery Wood (Zone 2), Osier Bed (Area 1), and hedge trees	Spring/ Summer	CMS Vols FoPP	CMS	-	Internal	6	
Plovers Mead: clear marginal and overhanging vegetation along 1/3rd of the ditch	Sept	CMS Vols	CMS	-	Internal	8	
Nursery Wood Zone 2: coppice 1/3 of hazel trees, increase density of hazel (if required) and fence the area	Nov	CMS Vols FoPP	CMS	-	Internal	4, 5	



Legend

Access:

- Pedestrian entrance
- Vehicle access

Trees:

- Mature parkland tree
- Young parkland tree - guarded

Habitats:

- Amenity grassland
- Boardwalk
- Car park
- Cattle exclusion
- Desire line
- Grazed pasture
- Oak walk
- Roundel
- Scrub
- Wetland
- Wet woodland
- Woodland
- Woodland walk

Annual Management

Strim entrances/ amenity grass etc	☐	
Inspect/ maintain access furniture	☐	☐
Litter picking	☐	
Emptying litter/ dog bins across site	☐	
Tree safety survey	☐	
Guided walks/ events	☐	☐
Wildlife surveys	☐	☐
Invasive weed control	☐	☐
Conservation grazing	☐	
Tree planting monitoring	☐	
Friends group review meetings	☐	☐
Review plan progress	☐	☐
HLS grant claim	☐	☐

Site Name

Pishiobury Park

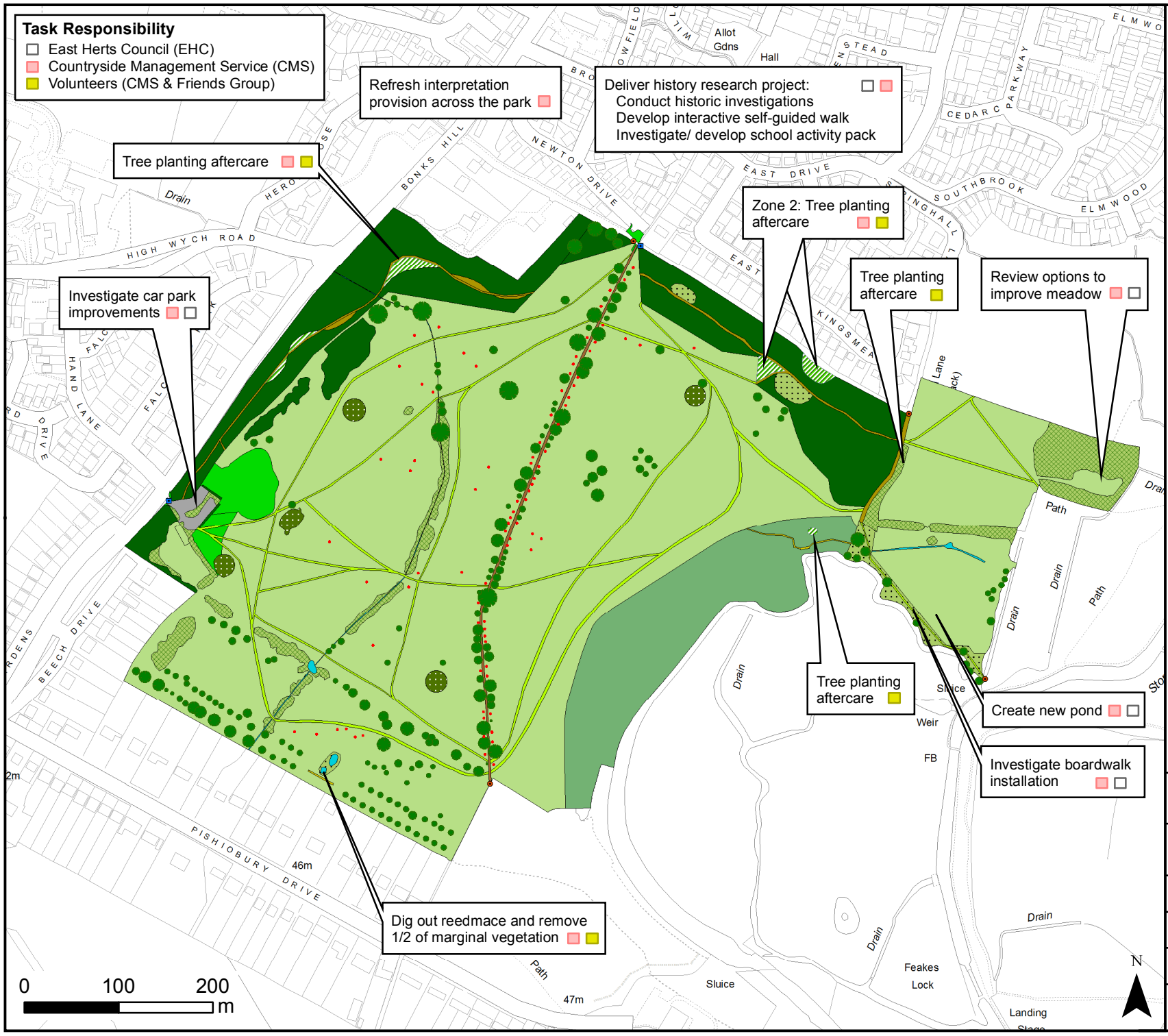
Title

Map 3 - Year 1 Actions

Scale @ A4
1:5,500

Date
March 2018

Rev
00



Legend

Access:

- Pedestrian entrance
- Vehicle access

Trees:

- Mature parkland tree
- Young parkland tree - guarded

Habitats:

- Amenity grassland
- Boardwalk
- Car park
- Cattle exclusion
- Desire line
- Grazed pasture
- Oak walk
- Roundel
- Scrub
- Tree planting
- Wetland
- Wet woodland
- Woodland
- Woodland walk

Annual Management

Strim entrances/ amenity grass etc		
Inspect/ maintain access furniture		
Litter picking		
Emptying litter/ dog bins across site		
Tree safety survey		
Guided walks/ events		
Wildlife surveys		
Invasive weed control		
Conservation grazing		
Tree planting monitoring		
Friends group review meetings		
Review plan progress		
HLS grant claim		

Site Name

Pishiobury Park

Title

Map 4 - Year 2 Actions

Scale @ A4
1:5,500

Date
March 2018

Rev
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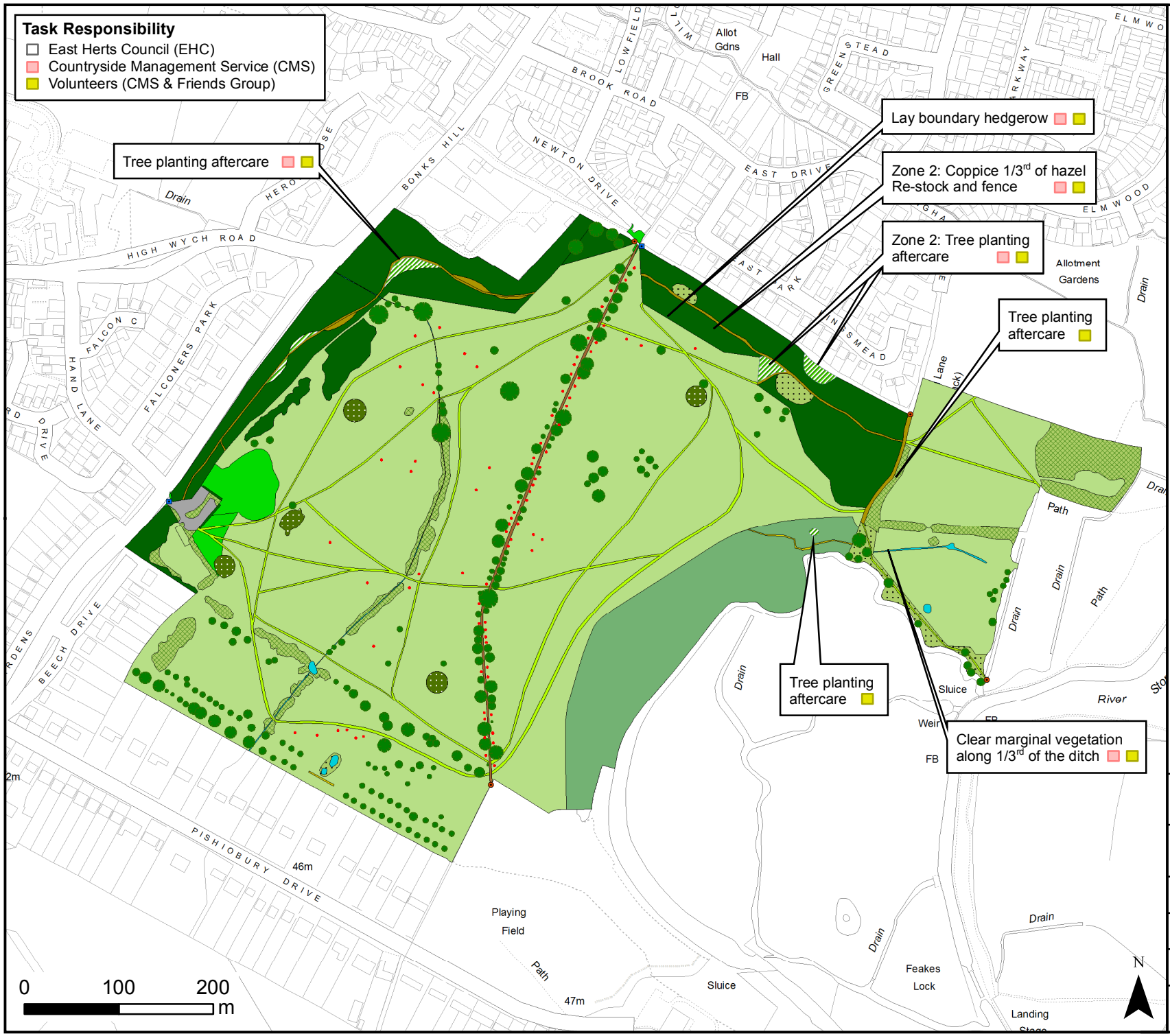
East Herts Council

Countryside Management Service



Legend

Access:

- Pedestrian entrance
- Vehicle access

Trees:

- Mature parkland tree
- Young parkland tree - guarded

Habitats:

- Amenity grassland
- Boardwalk
- Car park
- Cattle exclusion
- Desire line
- Grazed pasture
- Oak walk
- Roundel
- Scrub
- Tree planting
- Wetland
- Wet woodland
- Woodland
- Woodland walk

Annual Management

Strim entrances/ amenity grass etc		
Inspect/ maintain access furniture		
Litter picking		
Emptying litter/ dog bins across site		
Tree safety survey		
Guided walks/ events		
Wildlife surveys		
Invasive weed control		
Conservation grazing		
Tree planting monitoring		
Friends group review meetings		
Review plan progress		
HLS grant claim		

Site Name

Pishiobury Park

Title

Map 5 - Year 3 Actions

Scale @ A4
1:5,500

Date
March 2018

Rev
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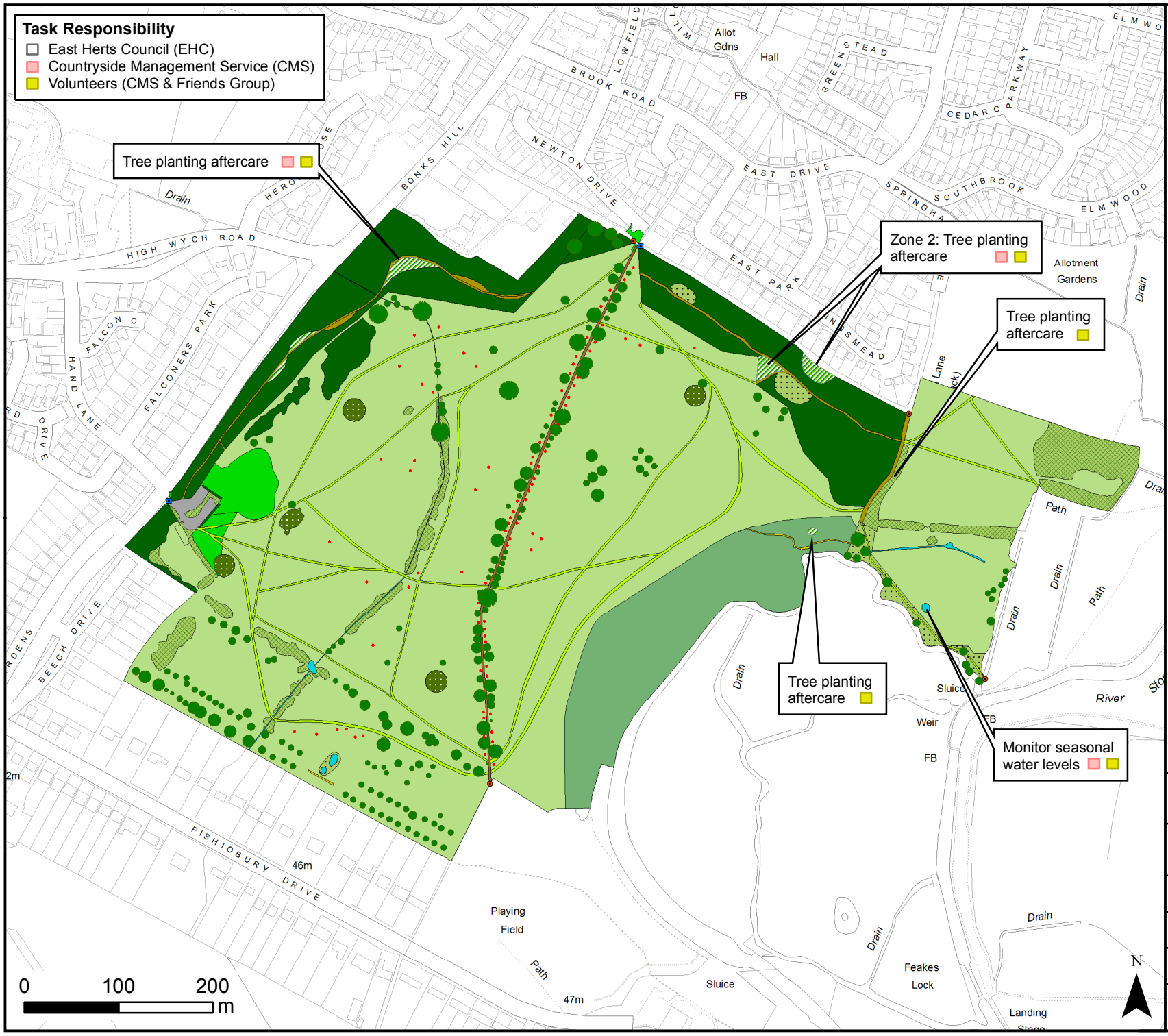
East Herts Council

Countryside Management Service



Legend

Access:

- Pedestrian entrance
- Vehicle access

Trees:

- Mature parkland tree
- Young parkland tree - guarded

Habitats:

- Amenity grassland
- Boardwalk
- Car park
- Cattle exclusion
- Desire line
- Grazed pasture
- Oak walk
- Roundel
- Scrub
- Tree planting
- Wetland
- Wet woodland
- Woodland
- Woodland walk

Annual Management

Strim entrances/ amenity grass etc		
Inspect/ maintain access furniture		
Litter picking		
Emptying litter/ dog bins across site		
Tree safety survey		
Guided walks/ events		
Wildlife surveys		
Invasive weed control		
Conservation grazing		
Tree planting monitoring		
Friends group review meetings		
Review plan progress		
HLS grant claim		

Site Name

Pishiobury Park

Title

Map 6 - Year 4 Actions

Scale @ A4
1:5,500

Date
March 2018

Rev
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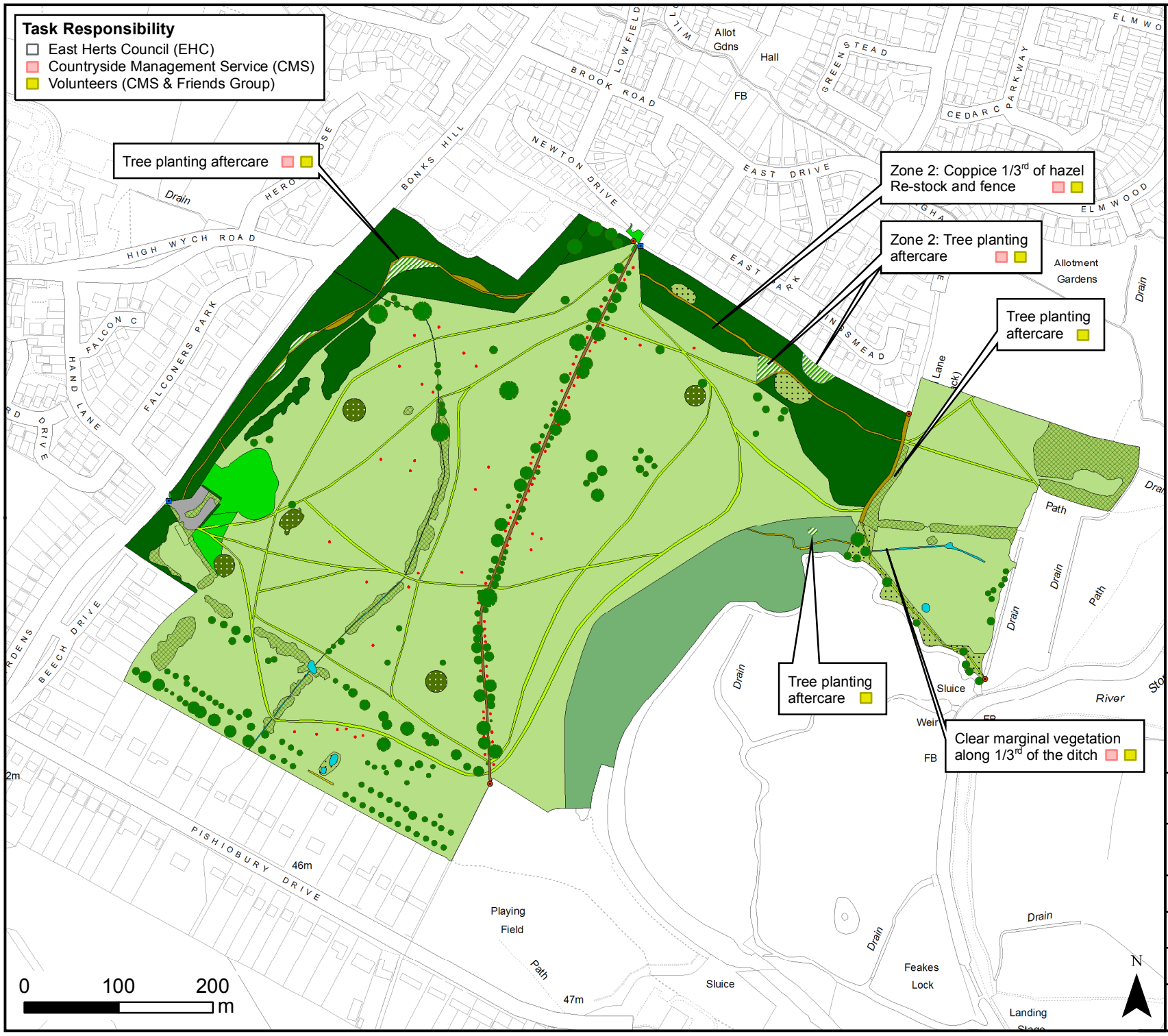
East Herts Council

Countryside Management Service



Legend

Access:

- Pedestrian entrance
- Vehicle access

Trees:

- Mature parkland tree
- Young parkland tree - guarded

Habitats:

- Amenity grassland
- Boardwalk
- Car park
- Cattle exclusion
- Desire line
- Grazed pasture
- Oak walk
- Roundel
- Scrub
- Tree planting
- Wetland
- Wet woodland
- Woodland
- Woodland walk

Annual Management

Strim entrances/ amenity grass etc		
Inspect/ maintain access furniture		
Litter picking		
Emptying litter/ dog bins across site		
Tree safety survey		
Guided walks/ events		
Wildlife surveys		
Invasive weed control		
Conservation grazing		
Tree planting monitoring		
Friends group review meetings		
Review plan progress		
HLS grant claim		

Site Name

Pishiobury Park

Title

Map 7 - Year 5 Actions

Scale @ A4
1:5,500

Date
March 2018

Rev
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East Herts Council

Countryside Management Service

Appendix 1 – Specifications

1 Installing Interpretation and Welcome Signs	
Purpose	Attractive welcome signs will identify the site and provide useful information to visitors. Interpretation panels will outline what opportunities exist for visitors to explore their local environment and highlight what wildlife and habitats they may observe. The heritage value of the site will also be promoted. The mapped based interpretation within Pishiobury Park requires updating to reflect the addition of the Osier Bed and the new walking routes which are available. Mapped/ orientation based interpretation will be installed at the two main pedestrian entrances. Habitat specific interpretation is also required, in particular to promote the ecological benefits of conservation grazing and provide safety guidelines for visitors.
Method	▪ Install welcome signs at the pedestrian entrances along the eastern boundary leading from the River Stort Navigation. Entrance signs to consist of semi-seasoned oak monoliths or signboards to be fitted to existing access gates. Signs to comprise site name and EHC branding. ▪ Cut back over hanging/ overgrown vegetation to enhance the entrances into the site. ▪ Install map/ orientation based interpretation panels at main entrances (Car park and Newton Drive). Panels will show the features of Pishiobury Park on an illustrated map, and the walking routes which are available, including the circular walks, and connecting countryside walks. ▪ Install habitat specific interpretation at strategic points across the park (e.g. Woodland walk, Osier Bed, New Pond). The panels will include sketches/ pictures of the habitat and wildlife that visitors might encounter at Pishiobury Park. Text will outline the site's history, habitats, wildlife, and management.
Who	▪ Contractor for panel/ sign design and production, with installation by CMS Volunteers
Style/ design	▪ Information and interpretation panels to be produced in line with EHC corporate design guidance. ▪ Panels to be designed in collaboration with the Friends of Pishiobury Park. ▪ Content of panels to be consistent with design used for other EHC sites, including Foxgholes, Southern Country Park and Hartham. ▪ Panel mounts are to be constructed in material sympathetic and in keeping with the historical context of the site. Sizing of panels to be content driven but employing standard sizing conventions, A0, A1, A2 etc to ensure cost effectiveness in the production process and enable ease of replacement.

	▪ Combination unit (including a notice board) is to be installed at the main car park. ▪ All printed media to be fully encapsulated in glass reinforced plastic (GRP) to ensure resistance to vandalism and UV bleaching whilst enabling cleaning with standard anti vandal products.
Future management	Cleaning and monitoring to be incorporated within Grounds Maintenance contract.

2 Boardwalk Installation	
Purpose	To improve the connection and accessibility between the main park area and the River Stort (Navigation). Route of boardwalk to follow existing desire line adjacent to Springhall Meadow.
Method	• Environmental Permit to be obtained from the EA. • All measurements and calculations to be done by contractors. • Ensure no slopes exceed 1:15 gradient • Boardwalk useable width to be 1200mm minimum • Timber Boardwalk – exact specification to be agreed. All timber to be planed and sanded. See construction of Osier Bed boardwalk specification for further details. • Recycled Plastic Boardwalk – exact specification to be agreed • Surface finish – surfaces of boardwalk to be non-slip. If using timber lay a non-slip resin and grit surface on decking. • If required Type 1 granite / crushed concrete entrance paths to be laid at either end with timber edging at each entrance to the boardwalk
Who	▪ Contractor or CMS Volunteers
Future management	Annual monitoring by EHC and maintenance to be included within the grounds maintenance contract.

3 Picnic Tables & Benches	
Design Specification	The specification for the picnic table and each picnic bench consist of the following materials and specifications: • Picnic Table - 3m long 1.4m wide (4 no 6x6 legs 2 no 12x3 and 2 no 14x3 tops 4 no 4x3 rails). • Small bench - 1.3m long • Larger bench - 2m long • Note: The timber is of a good grade and locally sourced, each piece personally selected by the craftsman and of English Oak.

	The specification for the park benches consist of the following materials and sizes: • 2 no tapered 6 inch x 4 inch uprights sunk into the ground up to 600mm (2ft) and surrounded in post mix concrete, • Seat supports – 2 no tapered 6 inch x 4 inch seat and back boards • 3 no back boards and 3 no seat boards, both in 3 inch x 6 inch • Note: All the above timber is construction grade air dried oak planed all round finish with sanded corners. 
Who	▪ Installation by CMS volunteers and/ or the Friends Group.
Future management	• Monitoring the condition of site furniture will be conducted by the FoPP. When a bench reaches the end of its life, a decision should be made as to whether it should be replaced or removed.

4 General prescriptions relevant to all woodland management operations	
Habitat Retention	▪ Significant **veteran/ specimen** trees to be retained and managed sensitively, in line with advice provided by the Woodland Trust and the Ancient Tree Forum. ▪ Retain standing and fallen **dead wood**. Review all available options to ensure that retained standing deadwood is safe, prioritising wherever possible options which minimise the requirement for tree surgery, such as excluding public access (via fencing), relocating footpath/ benches etc.
Visitor Safety	▪ Members of the public should be kept a safe distance from active tree works with signs, and/or, banksmen. Access routes may require temporary closure.
Timing	Unless otherwise stated, all habitat management work will be undertaken between 1st November and 28th February.

5 Coppicing Hazel and Re-stocking	
Purpose	The coppicing of hazel trees is a traditional and sustainable woodland management technique which involves the cutting of trees at ground level which generates the growth of several small diameter rods from the cut stool. Traditionally these rods would be harvested for crafts and woodland products. Within Nursery Wood the coppice area will be split into three discrete coupes, with one coupe coppiced at a time. One coupe will be coppiced every other year (year 1, 3 and 5). To ensure good regrowth, stool density should be between 1250 and 2000 stools per ha. Low stool densities reduce yield and quality of the crop, and can also facilitate the dominance of invasive plants like bramble and coarse grasses. Once suitable stocking density is achieved the coppice coupes at Pishiobury Park should be cut on a rotation of 6 – 10 years. Rotational coppicing creates temporary clearings which allow pockets of light to reach the woodland floor. Increased light levels facilitate the development of a diverse ground flora, scrubby margins, and the regeneration of trees. The result is a diverse woodland structure (a variety of aged trees) which supports a wide variety of plants, birds and invertebrates.
Method	▪ Each stem is to be cut at least 10 cm above the existing stool to retain a collar of healthy bark. All cuts shall slope upwards towards the centre of the stool to aid water shedding. No other trees should be cut or damaged. ▪ Coppice coupe is to be re-stocked with hazel trees to achieve recommended stocking density of between 1250 and 2000 stools per ha. New plants are to be protected by tubex guards and stakes. ▪ Plants will be supplied to conform to BS3936 and BS8545. Plants are to be grown in the UK and to be of UK provenance, sourced from Seed Provenance Zone 402 (with Zones 405 and 406 also acceptable), and below Elevation Zone of 300 m.
Who	▪ Volunteers
Arisings	▪ Stakes approx. 1.5 m in length and 2.5 – 5 cm in diameter should be separated from the cut material and stacked to the edge of the coppice coupe, away from the footpath. Brash which is less than 3 cm in diameter, should be stacked at the edge of the coppice coupe, away from the footpath. This material will then be used to create fencing to protect the stools and the newly planted trees from browsing. ▪ Brash greater than 3 cm in diameter is to be scattered under existing trees, avoiding the newly opened areas.
Future management	• Monitor re-growth of stools and planted trees • Planting area to be kept weed free within 1 m of each plant, and stakes and guards to be maintained. • Establish a suitable rotation length.

6 Tree Planting	
Purpose	Tree planting is to be conducted across all three woodland areas within the park; Woodland Walk, Nursery Wood and the Osier Bed. Within Woodland Walk planting is to be located within the scallops, coppice coupes and open glade areas, created through tree safety works. Within Nursery Wood tree planting is to be located within two openings; one located adjacent to the vehicle access gate, and the second is a small open area situated along the northern boundary near to the residential gardens of Kingsmead. Within the Osier Bed tree planting is to be located within sufficiently sized openings created through tree safety works. Locations to be agreed on the ground.
Method	▪ Plants will be supplied to conform to BS3936 and BS8545. Plants are to be grown in the UK and to be of UK provenance, sourced from Seed Provenance Zone 402 (with Zones 405 and 406 also acceptable) and below Elevation Zone of 300 m. ▪ Woodland Walk and Nursery Wood to be planted with the following species; hazel, oak, hawthorn and hornbeam. ▪ Planting within the Osier Bed is to comprise osier willow. ▪ Trees to be planted in diagonal rows at 2 m spacing for access to mow between lines. ▪ New plants are to be protected by 1.2 m tubex guard and stakes. ▪ Spread a layer of bark chip mulch (at least a year old) around each tree.
Who	▪ Volunteers
Future management	• Planting area to be kept weed free within 1 m of each plant, and stakes and guards to be maintained. • Mulch to be reapplied as required.

7 Ditch clearance – Springhall Meadow	
Purpose	Vegetation, such as rushes and reeds which grow from the bottom of the ditch accelerate silting and prevent the growth of aquatic plants such as pondweeds. Rushes and reeds, in addition to surrounding banks side scrub will be cleared back, on a rotational basis to reduce shade and prevent the build-up of organic debris. Cutting and thinning vegetation on a rotational basis will create a varied age structure and diverse range of habitats along the length of the ditch, ranging from recently cleared short open grassland through to more established undisturbed habitat.
Method	▪ Evaluate the suitability of ditch habitat for supporting water voles; seek advice from Natural England if necessary. ▪ Thin and cut back vegetation along 1/3rd of the ditch every other year. ▪ Manage ditch in an upstream direction, to help wildlife return to the disturbed length downstream. ▪ Vegetation should be managed in the autumn to reduce potential impact to wildlife whilst ground conditions are still suitable.
	▪ leave cut material adjacent to the water course over night to allow

	time for wildlife to return to the water. Do not allow cut material/ weeds to decompose on the banks and keep livestock away from plants that may be poisonous (e.g. hemlock or iris).
Who	▪ Volunteers
Future management	• Grazing will prevent the development of scrub and overgrowth of coarse vegetation overgrowth

8 Spring Vegetation clearance	
Purpose	Marginal and emergent vegetation (such as reedmace) is to be removed from around half of the springs edge to prevent cover across the entire water surface. A fringe of marginal and emergent vegetation will be retained around at least half of the edge to provide habitat for aquatic wildlife. Excess floating and submerged vegetation will be regularly thinned and removed to reduce the progressive build-up of nutrients (such as nitrates and phosphates) when the aquatic vegetation rots down over the winter.
Method	▪ Establish presence of GCN through e-DNA survey to inform management and suitable timing. ▪ Clear marginal and emergent vegetation (including reedmace) from half of the spring's edge when required. ▪ Remove excess floating and submerged vegetation.
Arisings	▪ Leave removed plants on the pond edge overnight prior to removal, to allow time for small creatures to crawl back into the water. ▪ Material to be removed from site by a contractor to an appropriate waste site.
Who	▪ Volunteers/ contractor
Future management	• On-going monitoring required, and management to be conducted whenever necessary to prevent re-encroachment from dominant marginal species.

9 Pond Creation	
Purpose	A new pond feature will be created to offset the loss of the existing in-line pond in the main park area. In order to maximise wildlife value a pond complex will be created, consisting of multiple separate small pools, which become connected during times of high water content. The objective of pond creation is as follows: • To create high quality freshwater habitats in the landscape • To increase the diversity of pond habitats in the area The pond complex will be located in the area of wet grassland (springhall meadow), but will be situated so as not to destroy original wetland features within the area, such as damp hollows, seepages, and/ or ditches. These features are likely to have existing biodiversity value.

	Springhall Meadow is grazed, which gives the flexibility to create a variety of ponds which vary in size, shape and depth, including small scale shallow features. Grazing will keep small ponds open, preventing the development of trees and scrub on pond banks. The pond complex is to be located near to the fence line so it can be observed by visitors walking past the wet grassland area, but at a sufficient distance to avoid unloading of unwanted pond plants and animals.
Method	Establish consent procedure, considering the following: ▪ Local planning permission ▪ Location within flood plain – consult with Environment Agency ▪ Protected species (water voles and GCN) – consult with Natural England if required. ▪ Archaeological importance – district archaeologist may need to investigate the site beforehand ▪ Distribution of invasive species in nearby waterbodies. Locate new pond as far as possible away from existing sources. Draw detailed pond designs. Pond design to consist of: • Several small ponds (1 m^2), a larger deeper pond (>30 cm deep) and some shallow ponds (<20 cm deep) • Ponds to comprise an asymmetric profile. Majority of pond slopes are to be shallow, less than 1:5 (12°), and preferably less than 1:20 (3°), in order to create areas which are between 1 and 10 cm deep. Construction to take place in Autumn: • Dig test holes to determine the maximum depth expected for final pond prior to excavation. A depth of 1 m is anticipated for the larger deeper pond to ensure water is contained all year round in at least one of the ponds. • Strip spoil across the whole design area to create wetland areas between the excavated ponds, and allow ponds to connect at times of high water content.
Arisings	Determine the volume of spoil that will be generated from the work. Spoil is to be disposed of according to one of the following approaches: (1) Spoil is to be removed from the flood plain completely with a waste transfer licence. (2) Spoil will be spread thinly/ flat across the area, at least 3 to 4 m downhill from the top of the pond bank, and made stable (avoid creating a rim or bank). Top spoil will be spread furthest away and downhill of the pond. Spoil is not to be piled up more than 30 cm deep or fill in existing hollows or depressions.
Who	▪ Contractor
Future management	• Observe and monitor seasonal water levels for one year • In year 2 or 3 following creation, modify the shape of the pond according to observed water levels and undertake delicate shaping of margins and shallows as required.