



Holt Country Park Annual Review

2022

Contents

Introduction - Welcome to Holt Country Park.....	2
Abstract	2
About	2
North Norfolk District Council's Corporate Objectives	3
Countryside Service Vision and Aims	3
Visitors.....	4
Green Flag Award	4
Staff Resource	5
NNDC Leisure and Locality Services Structure 2022.....	6
Health Safety and Security.....	7
Quality Facilities and Activities	7
Safe Equipment and Facilities.....	12
Personal Security.....	12
Control of Dogs	13
Maintenance of Equipment, Buildings and Landscapes	14
Litter, Cleanliness, Waste Management and Vandalism	14
Horticultural Maintenance	15
Arboricultural Maintenance.....	16
Building and Infrastructure Maintenance	18
Equipment Maintenance	19
Environmental Management	20
Managing Environmental Impact	20
Waste Minimisation	20
Chemical Use	21
Peat Use	21
Climate Change Adaption Strategies	21
Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage	22
Management of Natural Features, Wild Fauna and Flora.....	22
Conservation of Landscape Features	26
Conservation of Buildings and Structures.....	26
Community Involvement.....	27
Community Involvement in Management and Development	27
Appropriate Provision for Community.....	30
Marketing and Communication	31
Marketing and Promotion	31
Appropriate Information Channels.....	31

Appropriate Educational and Interpretational Information	35
Action Plan	36
Conservation and Woodland Management Work Plan.....	0
Site Risk Assessment.....	0

Introduction - Welcome to Holt Country Park

Abstract

This annual review outlines the management work, activities, projects, development and general progress made by North Norfolk District Council's Countryside Service against Holt Country Park's Management Plans in 2022, and forms the basis of the authority's application for continued Green Flag Award status. The annual review is separated into two sections for the ease of the reader - generic & previously provided information is shown within a blue background, with information & updates relating to the previous year specifically shown within a green background.

About

Holt Country Park is the main base for NNDC's Countryside Team, who manage a number of sites across a broad geographical area, and is situated approximately one mile south of Holt on the eastern side of the B1149 Holt to Norwich Road. Grid Reference TG 081 375.

The nearest postcode is NR25 6SP.

The Country Park is freehold and owned by NNDC.

Parts of the eastern and southern areas of the park are designated as Common Land under the 1968 Commons Act and are also designated as Access Land under the Countryside Rights of Way Act (CROW Act 2000). There are designated public rights of way to complement the permissive access.

The northern end of the Country Park known as Mackey's Hill is owned by NNDC but the harvestable timber is owned by the Forestry Commission. Access from Mackey's Hill to the main Country Park is by a short footpath link.

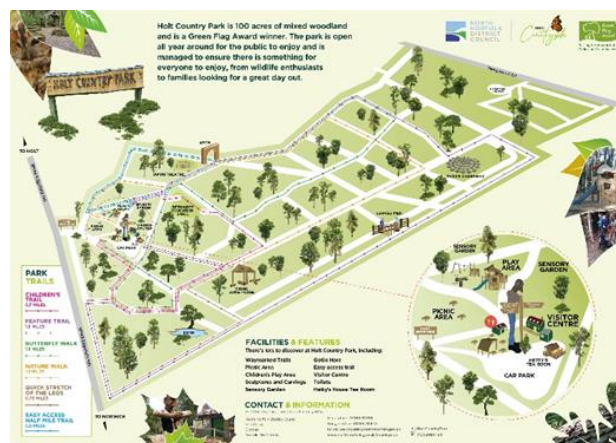
Holt Country Park consists of 100 acres of mixed woodland, divided up by a network of rides.

Notable and significant features of the site include:

- A workshop,
- mess room,
- wood store,
- storage container,
- public toilets,



- visitor centre,
- visitor information hut,
- children's play area,
- small covered picnic area,
- Waymarked routes,
- pay and display car park,
- Tea Room (concession).



North Norfolk District Council's Corporate Objectives

North Norfolk District Council's Corporate Plan 2019 - 23 sets out the Council's priorities until 2023. It guides business decisions to ensure that the council is well-run and able to meet its objectives.

The Corporate Plan is a strategic document, listing the priorities for council actions for the period 2019 to 2023, giving the shared vision and values and listing the priority areas on which the council intends to concentrate its efforts:

- Local Homes for Local Need
- Boosting Business Sustainability and Growth
- Customer Focus
- **Climate, Coast and the Environment**
- Financial Sustainability and Growth
- **Quality of Life**

NNDC's countryside team is well placed to support the Councils' corporate objectives highlighted above - *Climate, Coast and the Environment*, and *Quality of Life*. A copy of the corporate plan can be found here: [Home | Corporate Plan 2019 to 2023 \(north-norfolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/corporate-plan)

Countryside Service Vision and Aims

North Norfolk District Council's Countryside Service manage areas of woodland and open space amenity land for the safe enjoyment of the community of North Norfolk, protecting & promoting the countryside and it's wildlife, flora and fauna, whilst encouraging sustainable access. The main objectives of the service can be defined as:

- *To provide a high quality and inspiring visitor experience and a rich biodiversity of wildlife in sustainable woodland settings and open spaces*
- *To enhance the wildlife within our sites by diversifying habitats whilst securing the future of important species and complementing adjacent conservation sites*
- *To promote regular visits to our parks through increased awareness, and by providing a variety of high quality facilities, events and activities*
- *To actively encourage community involvement in our parks and open spaces at all times*

- To seek service sustainability through appropriate income generating schemes and activities, and the provision of a first class service which meets the needs of the community
- To support the Councils corporate objectives relating to Climate, Coast and the Environment and Quality of Life

Visitors

Holt Country Park is open to visitors all year around, only closing its gates in high winds or other examples of extreme weather where the safety of visitors may be compromised. The most accurate way by which we are able to calculate visitor numbers is by using car park income to estimate the number of people visiting, and add to this the number of attendees to our events throughout the year.

2022 felt like more of a return to normality for Holt Country Park and the rest of our sites with the absence of restrictions and much of the uncertainty which had plagued the previous two years. Unfortunately, due to a change of finance systems centrally, we only have access (at the time of writing) to ten months of car park income data. Therefore we have had to estimate visitor numbers slightly differently this year, please see below:

Based on car park income we estimated the number of visitors to Holt Country Park in 2021 to be:

Car park income 2021: £49508
 Divided by £2: 24754 (number of car park tickets bought)
 Multiplied by 2.5: **61885** visits, based on an average of 2.5 people per car.
 Plus Events: **61885 + 656 = 63541**

Based on car park income we estimated the number of visitors to Holt Country Park in 2022 to be:

Car park income Jan-Oct: £24824
 Divided by 10, x 12: £29788 (Estimated full year income)
 Divided by £2: 14894 (number of car park tickets bought)
 Multiplied by 2.5: 37235 visits, based on an average of 2.5 people per car.
 Plus Events: 37235 + 1160 = 38395

It should be noted that there has been significant lengths of time where the car park pay & display machine was faulty and out of action and therefore this figure does not necessarily offer a direct like for like comparison particularly given the estimation for Nov and December also.

Green Flag Award

The purpose and aims of the Green Flag award are:

- To ensure that everybody has access to quality green and other open spaces, irrespective of where they live



- To ensure that these spaces are appropriately managed and meet the needs of the communities that they serve
- To establish standards of good management, and to promote and share best practice amongst the green space sector
- To recognise and reward the hard work of managers, staff and volunteers

Holt Country Park achieved its first Green Flag in 2005/6 and has now held the prestigious award for 17 consecutive years. This is an achievement which all those who have been involved in managing the park, old and new, are very proud of, particularly given the requirement for continuous improvement and development.

Interestingly we also believe that Holt Country Park was the first to receive a Green Flag in Norfolk.

Staff Resource

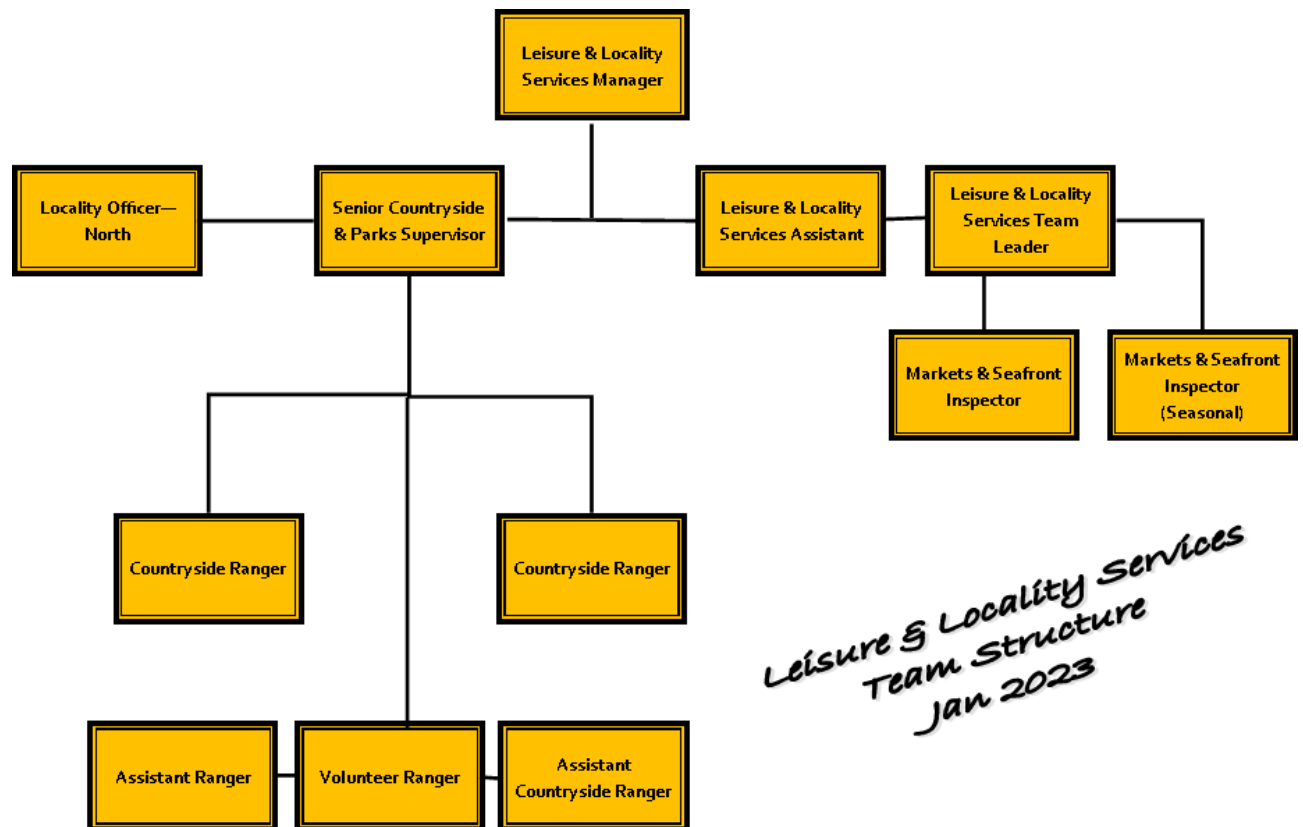
NNDC's Countryside Team manage 15 sites across North Norfolk and staffing levels for this are stable and adequate to deliver the service to a good standard. The team sits within the wider Leisure and Localities Service at NNDC which manages a wide range of services for the authority, including a Pier Pavilion Theatre, foreshores, sports and leisure centres, sports development, beaches, beach huts and markets.

Holt Country Park is the home of the countryside team with the following staff resource attributed to this site:

Position	Resource Attributed to HCP (FTE)
Senior Countryside Supervisor	0.5
Countryside Ranger	0.6
Countryside Ranger	0.6
Assistant Ranger	0.3
Assistant Countryside Ranger*	0.2
Leisure & Locality Services Manager	0.2
Leisure & Locality Services Team Leader	0.2
Volunteer Ranger	0.1

*in 2021 we were able to utilise hours previously assigned to a seasonal visitor centre assistant post to introduce a new part time Assistant Countryside Ranger, partnering with our tea room concession to keep the visitor centre open and operating. This has proven to be of great benefit to the service, enabling the team to work in different ways to help improve the output achieved.

NNDC Leisure and Locality Services Structure 2022



*Leisure & Locality Services
Team Structure
Jan 2023*

Health Safety and Security

Quality Facilities and Activities

Holt Country Park offers visitors a number of different facilities, activities, events and options which encourage them to stay active and healthy, as well as to continue to visit the park regularly.

Facilities

- *Car Park* - the car park is situated at the front of the park off of the main entrance on the Holt/Norwich road. It is regularly maintained by the ranger team and the unpaid work unit volunteers. It was last 'topped up' with stone at the start of 2022 and is in good condition. Some potholes existed on the main driveway and these received some maintenance at the same time as the top up. The team investigated options for marking bays in the car park in 2020, however it was decided that this was too difficult and costly to do. The position of the car park, in the main amenity area, allows visitors to feel safe and comfortable when parking there. An upgraded pay and display machine now allows payment by cash, app or card.



- *Visitor Centre* - in 2020 we were able to reinvent the way in which the visitor centre is used to help to maximise its potential. Previously the visitor centre would be open for 20 hours per week (11am-4pm Thu-Sun) between April and September, staffed by a seasonal visitor centre assistant. It is now looked after by the staff from our tea room concession who open and close the visitor centre in line with their opening hours, meaning that the visitor centre can be used and enjoyed by visitors far more than ever before. The visitor centre includes areas which cover such things as wildlife education, sightings, events, history, and even weekly ranger facts and jokes. The centre benefits from a small retail offer which generates a small amount of income for the park. However this offer is being reviewed and we are currently in discussions to further involve our tea room concession by allowing them to operate the retail offer. Unfortunately these discussions have taken much longer than we had hoped and at present no firm plan is in place. In addition to this we have also explored the option of utilising this space for other events and workshops. In 2022 it was used for wreath making

workshops and Tree Giveaway events, and we are currently finalising an agreement for a Mindful photography group to run their courses out of the visitor centre.



- *Children's Play Area* - late in 2019 the Countryside team were successful in securing capital funding to replace the aged old play area. The new play area was installed in its new position in the park in February 2020, and was met with universal approval. The old play area was removed and the space it occupied made into a picnic area, with extra seating and tables installed in both areas - which are next to each other.



- *Hetty's House Tea Room* - Hetty's House Tea Room opened for business during the Easter Holidays 2019 and has proven to be extremely popular with visitors. We are delighted to have Hetty's at the park and we look forward to a long and successful partnership with Hetty and her team. Following on from a successful first summer of trading the park management and Hetty's struck a deal for the creation of Hetty's Too - an indoor space for tea room customers utilising an underused storage shed adjacent to the tea rooms. This too has proven very popular with visitors and, once again, added value to the overall offer of



the park. 2020 was an 'up & down' year for Hetty's with restrictions limiting their operations, however 2021 was much more 'normal' for the team and customers have now come back in their numbers, seeing trade return to (and increase upon) pre-pandemic levels.

- *Waymarked Routes & Sculptures* - In 2020 the team were able to implement their plans to re-route the park's waymarked trails. Using feedback from stakeholders we planned, measured and re-routed six new coloured trails ranging from 0.5 miles to 1.8 miles, and including themes for the trails - children's, features, butterfly walk, nature walk, quick stretch of the legs and easy access.

Rather like the children's play area many of the sculptures which are situated around the park are beginning to reach the end of their life. With this in mind we have in recent years begun a process of introducing new sculptures across the site, not only to replace those which are no longer able to remain but also to ensure that the park remains interesting and vibrant for our visitors. We have worked closely with local chainsaw artist Matt Darge on many of these sculptures, whilst also teaming up with a couple of other local artists/woodworkers to provide bespoke seating into the revamped sensory garden. Our relationship with Matt is of mutual benefit and one of the real successes of recent years, and we look forward to continuing to collaborate with him going forward. Examples of recent additions can be seen below.



- *Amphitheatre* - as part of the site improvements made by the rangers throughout the first national lockdown we started to re-purpose the old spiral staircase into an amphitheatre type area. This is still a work in progress but in 2022 all of the old wooden steps to the staircase were dug up and removed, and will shortly be filled with wood chip. Later on in 2023 the plan is to have a small stage area installed in the centre.



- *Public Toilets* - Holt Country Park is the only site in our service which benefits from public toilets on site. These toilets are in good condition and available 24/7. These benefited from the probation service painting the outside as planned in 2022.

- *Picnic Areas* - The Park has a large area next to the children's play area identified as a picnic area and has a small 'barn' in the main amenity area providing covered seating for visitors to use. In 2020 we produced some large windbreaks to cover two sides of the barn and make it more usable in cold and windy weather. Both areas remain in good condition and have not required any additional work in the past twelve months.



Activities and Events

Events

Each year our team organise and deliver outdoor events for the local community and visitors to the district to enjoy. These events are provided for a number of reasons, including promoting regular use and general awareness of our parks and open spaces, providing countryside education to the community, and helping to make the service sustainable into the future. They are a very valuable and enjoyable part of the work we do and we have been working hard in recent years to develop and diversify our offer to ensure that as many people as possible can access events which they enjoy.

Post Covid we certainly felt the effects of not being able to organise events as regularly or in the same way as we had previously. This led us to take on a little bit of a re-building job on our events and at the end of 2022 it was felt that we were close to achieving pre-pandemic numbers once again, which is pleasing. The year as a whole was also affected by a restructure in the wider Leisure and Locality service which led to some capacity issues within the team.

Holt Country Park is well placed as a venue for events because of the availability of on-site facilities and as such has traditionally been utilised more than our other sites. In

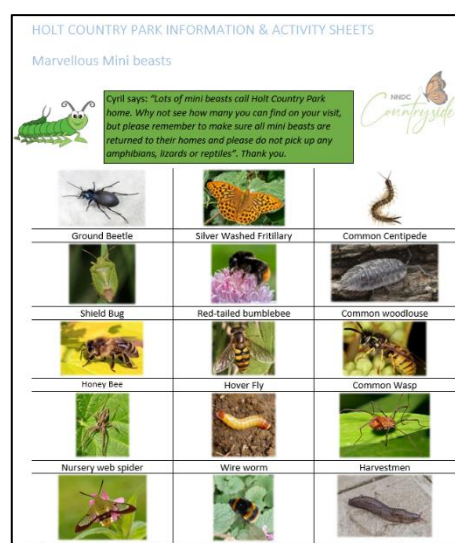
planning our events for 2021 & 2022 we took the lessons learned from the end of 2020 and developed a mixed programme of events which included both ranger and self-led events, enabling us to meet the differing demands of our visitors, and manage the events in a way which had the least impact on general visitors to the park. By offering self-led trails at Holt Country Park visitors are able to come and go as they please to complete the trails, negating the need for us to reserve areas of the car park during peak times and freeing the team up to offer ranger led events and activities at our other sites, as well as providing more practical management time to the rangers. A breakdown of Holt Country Park's events for 2021 are shown below.

Holt Country Park Events 2022				
Event	Date	Provider	Children	Adults
Family Mini Beast Hunt	15 Feb	Ranger Team	20	20
Family Shelter Building	15 Feb	Ranger Team	6	4
Easter Wreath Making	24 Mar	Steph's Flower Barn	-	10
Easter Wreath Making	26 Mar	Steph's Flower Barn	-	10
Easter Egg Hunt	12 Apr	Ranger Team	98	92
Dawn Chorus	29 May	Peter Walton	-	12
Kings and Queens Self-led Trail	30 May - 3 Jun	Ranger Team	140	80
Woodland Activity Day	1 Jun	Ranger Team	4	-
Walk with the Rangers	22 Jul	Ranger Team	0	0
Summer Self-led Trails	Summer Hols	Ranger Team	81	67
Woodland Activity Day	23 Aug	Ranger Team	0	0
Bat & Bird Box Making	30 Aug	Ranger Team	16	20
Rotters of the Wood Halloween Trail	23 Oct	Ranger Team	53	52
Xmas Wreath Making	14 Dec	Steph's Flower Barn	-	10
Xmas Wreath Making	15 Dec	Steph's Flower Barn	-	12
Xmas Wreath Making	17 Dec	Steph's Flower Barn	-	6
Eco Elf Xmas Trail	19 Dec	Ranger Team	97	97
Eco Elf Xmas Trail	20 Dec	Ranger Team	105	82

With capacity in the team slightly improved compared to the vast majority of 2022 we hope to continue to build on our events offer in the next twelve months.

Activities

In addition to the traditional events described above we are always looking to improve our offer by providing ideas and activities for visitors to enjoy whilst at the park. All of these additional activities are simply designed to encourage repeat visits and to make visits more enjoyable, but they do not get in the way of our visitors who are content to simply enjoy a walk with family, friends or their dogs. Examples of these activities include our activity sheets, tic-tac-toe game boards and tin can alley. These are all free activities simply designed to add a little something to the Country Park for our visitors to enjoy.





WILD BY NATURE
Forest School & Outdoor Learning



Forest Schools Initiative

Wild by Nature Forest School has been operating at Holt Country Park since November 2020 and, despite a

disrupted start, is flourishing. The school now hosts 5 classes per week, welcoming around 60 attendees over the course of a normal week. In 2021 & 2022 they also started to increase their offer by providing some one-off events, including an open day and a natural mindfulness session, with plans to further expand in 2023.

The team work closely with the Wild by Nature team throughout the year to ensure that the partnership continues to be mutually beneficial and is working in the most effective way possible for all involved. More can be found out about this initiative here:

[\(7\) Wild by Nature | Facebook](#)

[Home | Inside Holt Country Park's new forest school \(north-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#)

Safe Equipment and Facilities

The site and other features are formally inspected by rangers monthly and an itemised inspection schedule is completed, with additional (more informal) inspections carried out as part of their everyday work within the park. Paths, artwork, bins, benches, structures, interpretation, trails etc. are covered within these inspections. Maintenance works are undertaken by the rangers who follow a monthly work plan based on the management plan and the inspections. All significant activities and operations are covered by risk assessments which are reviewed on an annual basis.

The Play Inspection Company carries out formal inspections of the park's play area and significant structures/sculptures on a quarterly basis, with reports returned to the Council's property services team for review and action.

Personal Security

Although anti-social behaviour is not completely absent from Holt Country Park it is extremely rare that there are occurrences whereby individuals are personally affected by it. Emergency signs are in place on site, mostly around the main amenity area, which detail the information required by visitors in case of emergency, including contact numbers for the ranger team and the main council offices. Rangers are fully first aid

trained with forestry add-on, and carry radios which operate off a multi-network sim system allowing for a much greater coverage than an ordinary mobile phone. All of the team are also have an enhanced DBS check in place which is renewed annually, and the team all have standard issue uniform making them instantly recognisable to the public.

The ranger's safety is supported by the use of the Council's chosen lone working system - skyguard, and their movements can also be tracked via the radio's they use.

A working relationship has been established with the local police Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) in Holt. When instances of anti-social behaviour are experienced within Holt Country Park, which usually involves groups of teenagers meeting up in the evening/night time and occasionally lighting fires, then these are reported to the SNT who will subsequently increase their presence at the park to help to prevent recurrences. This approach seems to be managing this minor problem well. The team also have annual contact with the Norfolk Fire Service to ensure that all access codes to the site held by the fire service are accurate and up to date in case they need to attend the site. We also review access points and all other fire related questions, concerns and queries.

Control of Dogs

The Country Park is used extensively by local people to walk dogs. Dog bins are provided in places of heavy use and where they can be effectively emptied by contractor's staff. Regular checks are made by NNDC Environmental Protection Rangers and interpretation is placed throughout the park to inform visitors to clean up after their dogs. Public land in the district is covered by a Dog Control Order making it an offence for people not to clean up after their dogs. The regulations were introduced under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.



In 2020, during times of reduced footfall in the park, we unfortunately did see an increase in dog walkers not clearing up after their dogs. Park Rangers and NNDC's Environmental Protection Rangers increased their presence at the park to try and deter this type of activity whilst also educating visitors at the same time. Social media channels were also used to back up this message and to encourage visitors to take responsibility. These actions had the desired effect and dog mess did reduce back down the very low levels which we were used to. This continued through 2021 and 2022, and we are still receiving few complaints from the public. We also provide free bags for dog owners to use to clear up their mess.

Dog walkers are very welcome at Holt Country Park and we make this very clear, however we do have signs reminding owners that they are expected to follow the countryside code:

When you take your dog into the outdoors, always ensure it does not disturb wildlife, farm animals, horses or other people by keeping it under effective control. This means that you keep your dog on a lead, or keep it in sight at all times, be aware of what it's doing and be confident that it will return to you promptly on command.

Despite problems with dog walkers being very low on occasions we do have to take further action, as we did in 2021 when we were able to identify and fine a repeat offender at Holt Country Park, demonstrating that the plans and processes we have in place do work -

[Home](#) | [Dog owner fined £60 for failing to clear up dog mess \(north-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#).

Rangers also work hard with local dog walkers to develop relationships with them and to explain the importance of owners controlling their dogs to ensure that the park can be enjoyed by all and to prevent any adverse effects to local wildlife.

Maintenance of Equipment, Buildings and Landscapes

Litter, Cleanliness, Waste Management and Vandalism

The Country Park has not suffered significantly from litter or fly tipping over the years. Traditionally litter bins were not provided throughout the site and information displayed on notice boards encouraged visitors to take their litter home. In recent years litter bins have been installed in the main car park area to cope with litter from the tea room and the general increase in visitors. With the spike in visitors in 2020 and 2021 the likelihood of more litter being generated has risen greatly. New litter bins have been installed around the play area and picnic area, as well as a new double recycling bin in the main amenity area - making recycling on site a lot easier.



Litter picking is carried out by site staff three times a week throughout the year with additional litter picks in busier periods and during events. As per their lease Hetty's House Tea Room are responsible for emptying bins and clearing litter associated with the tea room during opening hours and at the end of each day of trading, this agreement has worked well throughout their time with us.

Every effort is made to separate general waste from recycling on site by the rangers and the tea room, with both parties having access to a large collection bin for each. The toilets are cleaned by Serco at least once a day and more in busier times.

Waste	Frequency of clearance	By who
Litter bins emptied	Three times a week or when necessary.	Serco
Dog bins emptied	When 75% full or when necessary.	Serco

Park litter picked	Three times a week or when necessary.	NNDC Rangers
Main amenity area litter picked	Daily	Hetty's House Tea Room staff
Industrial waste	When required	Private approved contractors.

Some vandalism does occur at Holt Country Park, particularly in the summer months, however the extent of this can be described as minimal. Where repairs to equipment, structure, facilities etc. are required these will be dealt with by the ranger team or by the Council's property service team. The Council's internal 'Concerto' system is utilised for the reporting and management of damage and other necessary repairs. Red tape and signage is utilised on-site to inform visitors if an area or a specific item is out of use. Where appropriate the team will report instances of vandalism to their contacts within the SNT for support. Any graffiti, which is very rare, can be removed swiftly by the Council's Environmental Health team.

Horticultural Maintenance

The country park is a registered county wildlife site and is situated next to Holt Lowes which is a SSSI. Horticultural management is carried out in accordance with the five year management plan which outlines conservation and forestry work for each compartment within the park. This can be found on the Holt Country Park webpage - [Home | Holt Country Park \(north-norfolk.gov.uk\)](http://Home | Holt Country Park (north-norfolk.gov.uk)).

Utilising the work plan and ongoing guidance from senior members of the countryside team, appropriate work tasks are set each month/week to manage the country park wildflower rides and grassland areas. Work tasks are adjusted to allow for changing weather, late seasons, wildlife habitats and breeding species. All conservation and grounds maintenance work is carried out by the countryside team, with the help of volunteers one day a week and on an ad hoc basis where required. Our rangers are qualified to use a variety of machinery, brush cutters, tractors, chainsaws and chippers to maintain the country park, and they utilise conservation management techniques to maintain, protect and enhance wildlife biodiversity and habitats.

Areas around amenities and facilities are maintained for visitors using machinery which has a lower impact on wildlife and which is suited for the time of year so it does less damage. No grass cutting is carried out within bird nesting season, when butterflies are feeding, breeding and laying eggs on plants, or in wild flower season. For example, areas around trail posts are cut using a strimmer so the rangers can be more selective, leaving tussocks of grass and wildflowers for insects, butterflies and bees to use.

Over the years selective grass cutting for the consideration of wildlife has proven very important. Grassland rides are brush cut in late September or October depending on the season, making sure that wildlife habitats are not disturbed. The cut grass is then raked and collected by the rangers and volunteers and used for reptile and amphibian habitat within the park. Over time this method of grass management has decreased the density of coarse rough grass allowing more wild flower species to grow for the benefit of all.

The countryside team make sure that wild flowers are left until they have gone to seed so that they can naturally seed or be collected for planting. Leaving the grass cutting later in

the season is important for reptiles and amphibians using particular areas for habitat. Wildlife habitats are always protected, this is a benefit for visitors who enjoy the variety of wildlife species within the park. Tractor grass cutting is carried out using a compact tractor with the grass cutting deck set higher to produce a conservation cut. This does not damage the rides, trees or grassland, and prevents areas being cut down to the ground, leaving important wildflower and invertebrate habitats.

Within the sensory garden the plants and soil beds are maintained using hand tools by the rangers and volunteers. Native growing plants are planted within the garden which have been sourced from local nurseries who grown these from seed. Selective areas of brambles, stinging nettles, and plant species are left for feeding butterflies, birds and mammals for food. If extra soil is needed, then this is obtained from the local green waste recycling centre, CJC Lee who work in conjunction with North Norfolk District Council. They produce high quality peat free soil conditioner from locally sourced natural material. Soil containing peat is not used anywhere on site.

2021's work on the main pond at Holt Country Park was continued in 2022 to remove invasive material including reed mace and excessive pond weed, as well as cutting back vegetation on the banks. This has allowed areas of the pond to be restored to natural open areas of water used by a variety of wildlife. All invasive material was removed by hand and placed high up on the banks to allow any invertebrates to return back to the pond, and this has proven to be a very successful exercise.

The purpose built amphibian ponds on one of the main rides are regularly checked and water levels maintain throughout the summer. This has helped provide additional areas of habitat for amphibians and aquatic wildlife. Volunteers from Aviva helped to create extra amphibian ponds in 2022 as part of a corporate volunteering day.



Arboricultural Maintenance

Monitoring, maintenance and management of tree works is carried out by NNDC's ranger team in conjunction with the Council's approved tree services contractor - MJ Tree Services. The Council's tree management contract was re-procured in early 2022.

Regular informal tree surveys are carried out by the rangers, who have tree surveying qualifications, with the aim to highlight the decline, disease and the development of trees in a public space. Professional tree surveys within the park and on the boundaries are carried out by MJ Tree Services at least every 18 months in order that all trees can be seen in and out of leaf throughout the seasons.

Works which are deemed high risk, require large or specialist machinery, involve climbing, or are situated next to amenities, property and other facilities are carried out by MJ Tree Services as part of their contract with us. All other works are carried out by the ranger team who all hold the relevant qualifications to manage and maintain the trees within the woodland, and all tree work is carried out within the recommendations of the British Standards for Tree Work BS3998 in order to ensure that trees can be maintained and managed for longevity, and to prevent the spread of diseases and pathogens. A high level of Bio security is implemented to prevent the spread of disease and pathogens in all NNDC woodlands including Holt Country Park. Tree species for re stocking are sourced from approved suppliers only, and these have been grown in house or are purchased trees which have been grown in the UK and are proven to be free from disease.

Woodland management follows the standards and requirements set out in the UK Forestry standard documentation, and is managed taking into consideration the protection of wildlife and their habitats, as well as all legal protection regulations such as TPO, SSSI and protected wildlife species. Habitats, wild flower rides and glades are created for wildlife under the permission of a tree felling licence where the felling of trees is agreed by the Forestry Commission under certain regulations. This advises which species of tree can be felled, in what quantity and where, and outlines requirements of which tree species can be planted for restocking and the necessary density per hectare. The felling licence is valid for ten years from issue and detailed plans have to be submitted and approved before any felling of trees over a certain volume within a wood can occur. Holt Country Park's current felling license was issued in June 2020 and will allow for the future creation of more important habitats within the woods for wildlife, as well as creating and increasing wildflower rides, and creating glades which have previously been lost by the encroachment of invasive species and lack of management. This also helps reduce competition and shading of species, allowing light and warmth into the woodland, thus creating space for mature species which produce seed for natural regeneration, and increasing the variety of habitats to produce a greater biodiversity of wildlife species.

An approved felling licence has replanting conditions applied to it, listing species of tree for restocking, percentage and density. Before the 30th June 2026 the land on which any felling takes place must be adequately prepared for planting and planted with 50% common oak, 15% Scots pine, 15% hazel, 10% mixed broadleaves (hornbeam, field maple, goat & crack willow, crab apple), 5% small-leaved lime, and 5% hawthorn species. Planting is to be in robust groups under canopy gaps resulting from regeneration felling, to achieve not less than 1100 broadleaved and 2250 coniferous stems per hectare evenly distributed over the site.



The forestry commission has designed a programme which shows which tree species will be able to survive in the future due to climate change, so tree species within the woodland have been chosen for longevity and that will adapt to climate change to create a resilient and sustainable woodland. A mixture of species will be planted to be resistant towards diseases and pathogens, instead of having single species of tree planting all being lost to disease, for example Ash die back. Trees will be planted as mixed groups and tree species of a variety of ages encouraged to further sustain the woodland. Ancient and veteran trees are protected and have their own individual management to prolong their life.

Tree guards are used in appropriate areas to protect newly planted trees to prevent them from being eaten by deer and rabbits. Our ranger team now uses biodegradable tree guards across all of our sites.

The park has its own nursery where trees and flowers are grown from seed to use within the woods. Seed gathering events with visitors and volunteers have proven very helpful by increasing seed and tree stock. Woodland material produced from tree felling is used to create invertebrate, amphibian and reptile habitats throughout the woodland. Placed around perimeters of the woodland this helps protect important wildlife areas and act as natural wind breaks. Timber is used by the rangers to make benches, way markers, signs, seats, shelters, flower beds and sculptures for use within the woods. Firewood sales help provide an income to support the sustainability of the service.

In the past 12 months park rangers and volunteers have planted 5820 trees within the woodlands at Holt Country Park, with a minimum 5000 more planned for 2023.



Building and Infrastructure Maintenance

The significant buildings and infrastructure at Holt Country Park can be found in the main amenity area, these include the barn (covered seating area), the toilet block, the visitor centre, staff room/office, workshop and wood stores. Rangers monitor these buildings from a cosmetic point of view and carry out basic checks to ensure they remain fit for purpose. The Council's property services team monitor the buildings from a structural point of view, and will organise the necessary repairs which are identified. When necessary volunteer groups are utilised to attend to any buildings which need attention to keep them looking smart and welcoming, for example the probation team will usually paint the toilet block annually.

The main rides on site are monitored and maintained by the ranger team. Occasionally in the winter months some sections can become particularly wet and muddy. The rangers are managing this by opening up the canopies above to allow the sunlight in which will

hopefully help the areas to dry up. This will be monitored for effectiveness and subsequent plans put in place should it be necessary. Additional infrastructure has also been added into the revamped sensory garden area, including gabions around the flower beds to replace the old rotten wooden ones, more seating and new archways leading into this area which will be covered in climbing plants and create a tunnel effect.



Equipment Maintenance

Maintenance of equipment for public use is covered in the *Safe Equipment and Facilities* section found earlier in this report. Equipment used solely by staff and volunteers is monitored and maintained by the ranger team. All equipment is kept on an inventory which details its condition (amongst other things) and this is updated bi-annually. Equipment which is identified as unsafe or past its usable life, and cannot be fixed or maintained, is condemned and replaced (if required). More significant pieces of equipment such as brush cutters and chainsaws are maintained regularly by the rangers who hold the relevant qualifications to carry out this work, and a maintenance log is kept detailing the work carried out. Where necessary local firms such as MJ Tree Services and Halls Power are utilised to support this maintenance work. Maintenance of equipment is covered within the relevant risk assessments.

Environmental Management

Managing Environmental Impact

NNDC's Environmental Charter - [environmental-charter-v8-hyperlinks.pdf \(north-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#) states NNDC's commitment to action in order to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2030, showing how we will use our own resources wisely to set a direction through our own actions, working with partners and influencing others.

As a service we are supporting this work by investing in measures which increase biodiversity at Holt Country Park. This includes significant support for the Council's 110,000 tree project and the development of notable wildflower areas.

NNDC Countryside team have worked in conjunction with the 110,000 project team so far by planting trees on four of its woodland sites. With the plan to;

- Increased species diversity of trees to help protect against the threat of disease and pathogens which has been a greater problem in woodlands of fewer tree species.
- Planting trees of different ages, potential heights, densities and trees which are tolerant of shade and light.
- Planting new trees that are more tolerant to climate change. Also planting trees which provide more blossom, pollen and habitat cover for invertebrate species, birds and mammals. For example, planting trees which are the food plant of certain butterflies.
- To provide woodlands which will help continue sustain future wildlife communities
- Planting trees which will provide beautiful areas of quiet recreation.



Away from the wider environmental charter much work is carried out on site for the positive benefit of the natural environment, including the provision of habitat piles, bird and bat boxes, and dead hedges to shield certain areas off. The team have also created amphibian pond along the parks wet ride to encourage the use of these areas as a nursery for spawning and as a long term habitat. These are monitored and managed by the ranger team to ensure that they remain 'topped up' and remain of full benefit to the wildlife that use it.

Waste Minimisation

Every effort is made to separate general waste from recycling on site by the rangers and the tea room, with both parties having access to a large collection bin for each. New litter bins have been installed around the play area and picnic area, as well as a new double recycling bin in the main amenity area - making recycling on site a lot easier. Hetty's House Tea Rooms also uses biodegradable plates, cups and utensils. Within the woodlands waste plant material is turned into compost for re-use, or chipped to make material for paths or mulch around plants.

Chemical Use

Appropriate handling, use and storage of fuel & oil for machinery is considered at all times. Storage containers and any equipment which uses fuel and oil are regularly and thoroughly maintained as part of the team's maintenance schedules.

We do not use pesticides, insecticides or fertiliser within the park at all. In the past sprays had been used for the removal of invasive plant species such as Rhododendron, however these are now removed by hand. This decision was made because using sprays proved to be ineffective, ecological unsound and expensive, instead the roots are dug up and rhododendron destroyed.

The countryside team do not use concrete within conservation areas, if paths need upgrading aggregate is used which is found in the ground below, such as pebbles, flint and sand to stop contamination of the surrounding soil. This then does not change the local pH of the soil which is problematic to the growth of native wild flower species.

Peat Use

Soil containing peat is not used anywhere on site, if extra soil is needed then this is obtained from the local green waste recycling centre, CJC Lee who work in conjunction with North Norfolk District Council. They produce high quality peat free soil conditioner from locally sourced natural material.

Climate Change Adaption Strategies

The forestry commission has designed a programme which shows which tree species will be able to survive in the future due to climate change, so tree species within the woodland have been chosen for longevity and that will adapt to climate change to create a resilient and sustainable woodland. A mixture of species will be planted to be resistant towards diseases and pathogens, instead of having single species of tree planting all being lost to disease, for example Ash die back. Trees will be planted as mixed groups and tree species of a variety of ages encouraged to further sustain the woodland.

The tree species database is also used to research characteristics of tree species identified for suitable proposed planting.

<https://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/tree-species-database/>

The ESC can be used to check species for future climate change scenarios for 2050 and 2080 for a certain location with regards to water holding capacity and different soil types.

<https://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/ecological-site-classification-decision-support-system-esc-dss/> .

Woodland material produced from tree felling is used to create invertebrate, amphibian and reptile habitats throughout the woodland, around perimeters of compartments which helps protect important wildlife areas and act as natural wind breaks. Planned planting of perimeters and boundaries will help protect the internal woodland from gale force winds which are increasing in number and force within the UK.

The use of solar panels has proven effective for powering the car park machine, however the previously used solar panels on top of the visitor centre are now out of use having become ineffective. Relocation of the panels to allow further sunlight to reach the panels did not make the required difference and as no further investigation has taken place to date. As our woodland sites and open spaces are located throughout North Norfolk and have no electricity supply our machinery is run using fuels; diesel, oil and petrol. These

pieces of machinery are used to look after large areas of important conservation land, helping to increase wildlife biodiversity of species throughout. We await the day when chainsaw and garden machinery, tractors and work trucks can be designed to use sustainable fuel resources which are robust, work long hours and powerful enough for the task at hand, and we will continue to monitor advances in alternative energy supplies which we can utilise. Service managers are currently investigating the possibility of introducing electricity to the park but conversations are in the early stages at present.

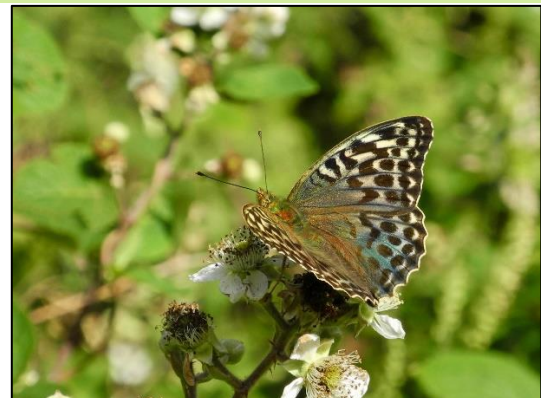
Our ranger team choose to work using methods that have the lowest impact on the surrounding environment, whilst remaining effective. Traditional alternatives such as hand tools are used for some operations, and this limits the use of machinery which emits carbon emissions and helps to keep traditional skills alive.

Timber is sourced from trees that have had to be felled within the woodlands and all losses of trees are accounted for within tree planting plans. The recent introduction of NNDC's 110,000 tree planting project has seen over 90,000 trees planted within north Norfolk in the last three years, including nearly 15000 at Holt Country Park to date.

Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage

Management of Natural Features, Wild Fauna and Flora

Every year from the beginning of April to September the rangers and volunteers carry out a weekly butterfly transect for UK BMS transect recording and support the work of Butterfly Conservation Norfolk. A butterfly transect route is set through the woods so that it goes through a variety of habitats. The results for 2022 can be seen below. White Admiral, Brimstone and Silver washed fritillary butterflies are some of the gems that can be seen and are a huge attraction for visitors to the park. In 2022 we were thrilled to have our first sighting of a Purple Emperor.



Photos taken at Holt Country Park

Table 1 continued		P3											
	Courtyard Farm	Blakeney Friary Hill	Felbrigg Hall	Holt Country Park	Foxley Wood	Redgrave and Lopham Fen	Reffley Wood	Burgh Doles	Quidenham	Lynford Water	Bintree Wood N	Snettisham Coast Park	Blickling Lakeside
Small Skipper		27				11				54		18	2
Essex Skipper						2							
Sm/Es Skipper					28	55			4		1		20
Large Skipper				3	10	2		13		3	8	29	3
Dingy Skipper										3			
Swallowtail								1					
Clouded Yellow									2				
Brimstone	19	6	1	79	9	36	4		26	21	109	21	1
Large White	300	37	401	95	125	106	9	4	111	43	93	52	43
Small White	142	129	71	61	13	134	4	6	157	26	30	20	43
G-v White	16	5	1	32	151	18	65	7	7	9	202	13	2
Orange Tip	16	3	7	5	11	47	22	2	28	24	18	13	3
Gr. Hairstreak	24									5			
Pu. Hairstreak				14	4	5		2					
W-L Hairstreak													
Small Copper	21	4	2	1		1				1		31	
Small Blue													
Brown Argus									6				
Common Blue	56	9	1			3			3	10	2	1	
Holly Blue		7		21	1	3	2	1	3		18		
White Admiral				19	48		1				1		
Purple Emperor				2									
Red Admiral	10	18	10	39	14	25	15	13	36	36	24	5	17
Painted Lady	19	8	16	3	2	7		1	2	2	4	2	1
Sm. Tortoiseshell	32	61	48	2		48	7	17	15	1	18	19	13
Peacock	61	8	2	51	90	90	17	5	87	46	185	18	10
Comma	5	18	12	31	12	11	21	2	25	38	45	11	2
S-w. Fritillary				113	167	1					97		
D. G. Fritillary													
Speckled Wood	36	9	9	52	285	13	39	11	29	9	109	1	33
Wall Brown	108	6				1		1				18	
Grayling										3			
Gatekeeper	40	111	46	12	87	69	4	20	20	178	104	22	38
Meadow Brown	265	127	56	48	143	274	61	10	119	117	220	61	426
Ringlet	9	31	16	77	787	57	39	13	89	119	259	60	223
Small Heath	50			3		1				29		18	
Total (index)	1179	624	699	760	1987	1019	310	129	769	748	1547	415	880
No. of species	19	19	16	21	20	24	15	18	19	21	21	19	16
Weeks done	10	14	20	25	23	25	22	7*	23	22	23	6*	15
Transect started	2015	2015	2015	2015	2016	2016	2016	2016	2017	2017	2020	2018	2018

The park contains many common species of flora and fauna which breed and are resident. Their presence in the park is fully supported by the ranger's practical management works which seek to protect and enhance their habitats. Listed in the table below are a few of the favourites with visitors.

Reptiles	Adders. Grass snakes.
Lizards	Slow worms. Common lizards.

Amphibians	Great crested newts. Palmate and Common newt. Common frog. Common toad.
Butterflies	White admiral. Holly Blue. Silver washed Fritillary. Purple Emperor
Insects/ mini beasts	Dragonflies and damselflies. Common Darter, Southern Hawker. Emperor dragonfly. Keeled Skimmer. Broad bodied chaser. All common mini beasts. Broad bordered bee hawk moth. Humming bird hawk moth.
Mammals	Muntjac deer. Wood mouse. Common vole. Common and pigmy shrew. Grey squirrel. Common and soprano pipistrelle. Natterer's. Long eared brown bat. Noctule bat.
Flowers	Bird nest orchids. Spotted orchids. Primroses. Wood Avens. Red Campion. Field Scabious. Black Knapweed. Cowslips.
Birds	Fire crest. Buzzard. Kestrel. Gold crest. Black cap. Tawny owl. Bullfinch. Tree creeper. Nuthatch. 93 species of bird have been recorded. Green sandpiper.
Fungi	Stinkhorn. Fly agaric. Fungi are extremely well represented at the Country Park, over 500 species have been confirmed by Dr Tony Leach.

Bat and Bird Boxes

West Norfolk Ringing Group inspect and maintain 5 Tawny Owl, 2 Barn Owl and 1 Kestrel box in the park. Bat boxes are inspected every year by a consultant ecologist from Norwich Bat group, numbers and species are recorded throughout the park. Our Muddy Boots group is utilised on very wet volunteer days to build more bat and bird boxes for the park.

Wild flowers

Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*) and Red Campion (*Silene dioica*) dominate in spring, and Field Scabious (*Knautia arvensis*) and Black Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) later in the year. In certain areas Cowslips (*Primula veris*) survive from the old meadowland. The most interesting plants to arise from afforestation are the Creeping Ladies Tresses (*Goodyera repens*) and Birds nest Orchid (*Neottia nidus-avis*). Birds nest Orchids which are saprophytic on the roots of Beech trees have been expanding in numbers but are now restricted to fewer sites due to damage by commercial forestry equipment.

Creation of wildflower rides is an important management practice for the park. Many woodland rides have been widened and glades created to allow wildflowers to flourish and seed to be sown and spread. The wildflower rides are managed by cutting annually in late September, with cuttings removed and used for reptile habitats. Wildflower areas are sown on rotation and not cut all at the same time to make sure there is an abundance of flowering plants for wildlife throughout the woodland.

Pond

The pond lies at the top of a spring fed chain which stretches onto the adjacent Holt Lowes Site of Special Scientific Interest. Water levels fluctuate with seasons but generally

the pond is full by the late spring. It was cleared in the late 1990's and a large pile of spoil removed. Weed clearance of reed mace and pond weed now takes place every winter, removing invasive plant species whilst leaving a large area of reed and rush for dragonfly habitat.

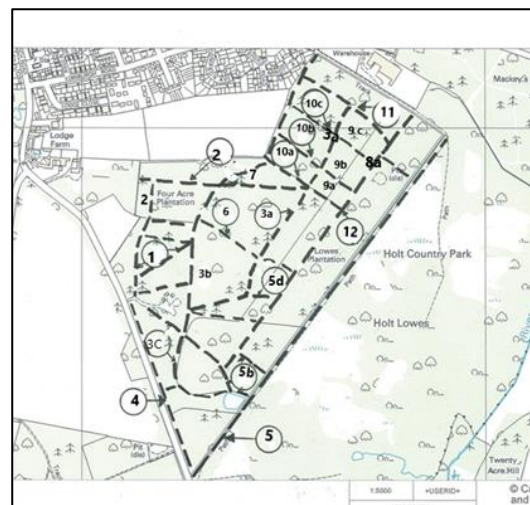
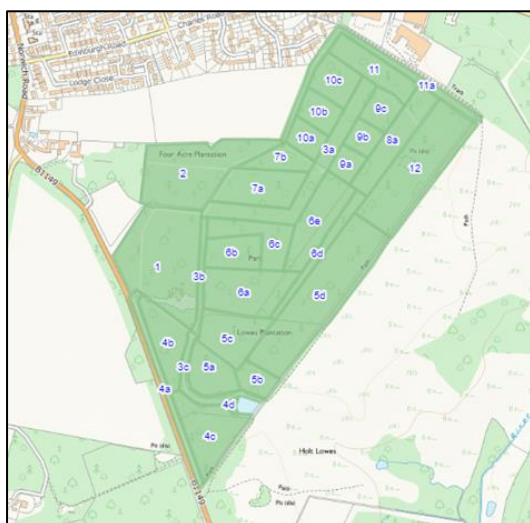
Woodland species

The park was originally set with commercial forestry in mind, Scots and Corsican Pine planted in the late 1950's to the early 60's are the dominant species and age class in the woods. Throughout the plantation are sporadic plantings of Grand fir, Douglas fir, Lawson Cypress, Western Red Cedar, Larch, Norway Spruce and occasional Hemlock. In the majority of these plantation areas a high level of regeneration has occurred of Beech, Sweet Chestnut, Holly, English Oak, Birch, Rowan and some mixed conifers. Since NNDC purchased the land and within the last twenty years a mixture of broad leaved tree species have been planted throughout the woodland.

From June 2020 restocking of tree species on the land on which any felling took place must be adequately prepared for planting, and planted with 50% pedunculate/common oak, 15% Scots pine, 15% hazel, 10% mixed broadleaves (hornbeam, field maple, goat & crack willow, crab apple), 5% small-leaved lime, and 5% hawthorn species. Planting is to be in robust groups under canopy gaps resulting from regeneration felling, to achieve not less than 1100 broadleaved and 2250 coniferous stems per hectare evenly distributed over the site. These tree species will provide more habitats to support a greater wildlife diversity.

Holt Country Park is managed using a five-year conservation and woodland management plan. The plan includes forestry operations and re stocking of tree species which correspond with an approved felling license issued by the Forestry Commission. The management plan is reviewed every five years.

Compartment areas and woodland ride maps for woodland and conservation management can be seen below, with a copy of the conservation and woodland management plan for 2023 shown at the end of this document.



Conservation of Landscape Features

The land that now forms Holt Country Park has had a varied last 300 years. Sitting as it does on the Holt-Cromer Ridge, an area of sandy and gravely glacial deposit, the soil is of poor quality for agriculture and for much of its life it was common land set aside as grazing. Such grazing led to the formation of heathland, which stretched as a broad band from the south of Holt all the way up to Kelling Common known as Holt Heath and similar in character to the present day adjacent Lowes.

Banks

Throughout the park are remains of earth banks. Some of these mark the edges of the old copses, others old field boundaries, these are not disturbed by management techniques.

Trafalgar Avenue

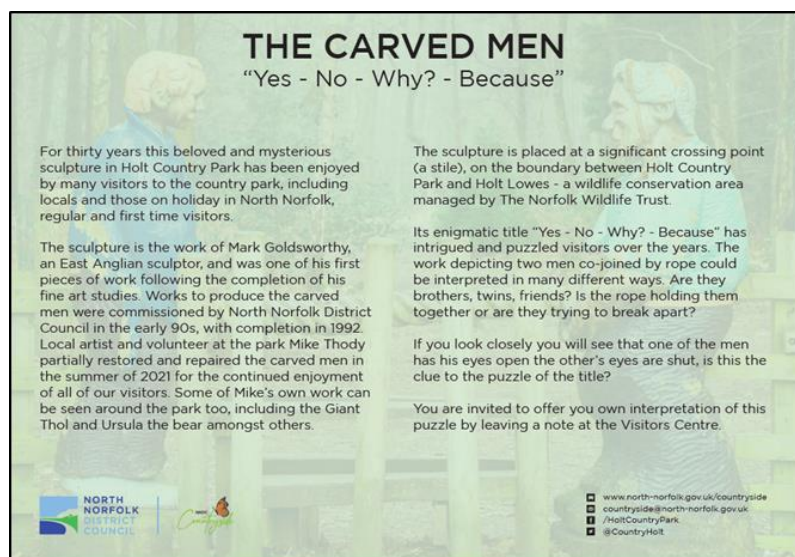
In October 2005 the local community and visitors to Holt Country Park joined with Holt Town Council and North Norfolk District Council to plant this avenue of 27 English Oaks (*Quercus robur*) in celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar and the Norfolk Hero Horatio Nelson. Each tree is named after a Ship of the Line that fought at the battle, and the two rows of the avenue signifies the two lines of attack of the British Fleet. Permanent interpretation for this was added in 2021.



Conservation of Buildings and Structures

Carved Stile

Carved on site in 1992 by local artist Mark Goldsworthy the two pieces have been long term features in the park. The Carved Stile, known locally as the carved men, has been refreshed and repaired to the best of our ability over a number of years, however it has been noted by the team that this much loved sculpture is reaching the end of its life now. Friend of the park Mike Thody



spent some time in summer 2021 repairing and re-painting the carved men, with the results far better than anticipated. To support Mike's sterling work we installed some new interpretation for the carved men explaining the story behind them.

Giant

Our resident giant 'Thol' was carved by Mike Thody out of a piece of Sweet Chestnut which was collected from sister site Pretty Corner Woods. Standing at 11 feet tall he is an imposing but friendly character who looks after the woods from his position in the centre of the main amenity area. He was named Thol (an anagram of Holt) following a public competition, and he is installed next to a large finger post used to help direct visitors. The colours on the timber are achieved using wood stain rather than paint.

Arch

In the early 1700s Holt Country Park was known as Holt Lodge Estate and used as a racecourse. This ran from Norwich Road to Hempstead Road and within the park are features which date from this former estate. The path from the back gate through the archway was once the main drive to the lodge and was flanked by an avenue of beech trees. The arch was restored and the crenulated capping stones replaced with copies. The original stones were Gritstone and replacements are precast concrete. To the south of the arch is an old fish pond which now makes up the amphitheatre. Interpretation for the arch, explaining its existence, is on the work plan to be completed.



Plinths

There are two brick plinths in the woods which once were the bases for statues. One is in poor repair and the other has fallen in half. Remains of statues have been found in the gardens of Holt Lodge and they are described as nymphs.

Community Involvement

Community Involvement in Management and Development

Holt Country Park has a good record of community involvement over the years, and this has only increased in more recent years. We have always recognised the importance of good supervision for volunteer work and have provided the necessary staff resource to enable volunteer sessions to achieve meaningful results, and we have been working hard to increase our volunteer opportunities in the post pandemic period as we recognise the importance this type of activity can play in the community's recovery from covid. It is clear that the volunteers have derived great satisfaction from their work given their enthusiasm for the various activities they have undertaken. Groups and individuals which have been both long standing and recently established are discussed below.

Long standing community involvement

Holt Community Hub - This group is the mainstay of our Wednesday morning volunteer group, a session which is open to anybody but always attended by the community hub. The type of work undertaken by this group usually includes regular scrub removal, creating mini beast and newt habitats, rhododendron and brambles clearance, maintaining the sensory garden, ride management by grass removal to increase the diversity of wild flowers, car park maintenance, helping to create an outdoor classroom area, tree planting and wildlife surveys.



Probation Service - Previously known as The Community Payback programme, the Probation Service is utilised by the team for many different tasks, these range from scrub clearance and other practical management works to car park repairs, painting of buildings and tree planting, amongst other things. We have successfully worked with this scheme for a number of years now and in 2022 this groups completed projects including re-painting the toilet block, removing large rotten stumps from the amenity area, spreading stone on the car park and the re-purposing of the amphitheatre.

Volunteer Ranger - In 2019 NNDC Countryside introduced a new volunteer ranger post to work with the countryside team two days a week. This provides the post holder with valuable work experience and training and the team with an extra person to help with the extensive range of practical work that it has to carry out at Holt Country Park and across our other sites. The post is currently vacant, with recruitment set to begin before Easter.

Sheringham Ringing Group - This group are the local representatives of the Hawk and Owl Trust and are licensed to handle birds of prey. Owl and Kestrel nest boxes are monitored throughout the site and some birds are ringed in the interests of research.

Norfolk Bat Group - The Bat Group undertake an annual survey in the country park and examine the bat boxes notifying us of their observations. An increase in numbers of bats in the park has occurred since regular maintaining and monitoring species. In 2022 it was identified that Long Eared Brown Bats are now breeding in Holt Country Park, which is obviously very pleasing to hear.

School Groups - School groups, as well as community groups such as scouts and guides, regularly visit to use the ranger led teaching service for a day of activities, charged at £7 per child (reviewed annually). A range of activities are provided to suit the national curriculum key stage requirements, and groups usually access this offer between April and July. Schools also have the option of self-guided activities, orienteering and wayfaring. School and group visits are carefully planned into the ranger team's schedule to ensure that they do not conflict with our ability to achieve other service objectives.

The school visits are evaluated by teacher's feedback, indicating number of participants and their views on quality of service provided by rangers. In the future we will be seeking to capture this more successfully by offering evaluation forms for the whole group to complete. The environmental education package is currently under redevelopment with a view to ensure we are offering more activities consistent with council priorities and aims such as recycling and climate change, as well as topical and current areas of learning.

Social Media - community involvement is encouraged through Holt Country Park's social media channels, which continue to be utilised well. More detailed information regarding these can be found in the Marketing and Communication section later in this report.

Matt Darge - Following a call for local sculptors and artists to get in touch to discuss possible collaborations Matt got in touch and we have struck up a very successful working relationship. Matt has now provided several carvings for Holt Country Park including recent additions *The Lady of the Wood*, *The Bee & Honeycomb* and the *Tree Themed Totem Pole* which is a memorial to a local man who sadly passed away recently.

Wild by Nature - Local residents and regular Holt Country Park visitors Diana and Davina opened their forest school to the community in November 2020. Initially offering a pre-school stay and play session the group has expanded to 5 sessions with an aim to continue to grow. The rangers and the management team will continue to work with Diana and Davina to help them to continue to deliver this important local resource, which we are delighted to have at Holt Country Park

Corporate/Volunteer Tree Planting - Holt Country Park, and the countryside service in general, is supporting the Council's Tree Planting scheme ([Home | 110,000 Trees \(north-norfolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk)). As part of this project a number of trees have been and will be planted at Hot Country Park. To support this significant planting we have been able to utilise Council staff to help plant as part of their volunteer day allocation, and we have invited other organisations and individuals to join us on set tree planting days at the park. Just short of 15,000 trees have been planted at Holt Country Park in 2021 & 2022 thanks to the contribution of these groups, our Muddy Boots volunteers and, of course, our ranger team. The project finishes in May 2023 with a ceremony set for Holt Country Park where the 110,000th tree will be planted.



Muddy Boots Volunteer Group - Our longstanding volunteer group *Muddy Boots* was re-launched in June 2021 having not taken place for well over a year. The principles remain the same but we have made a concerted effort to raise the profile, and subsequently the attendance, for this session. We are delighted to say that the sessions have been very well received and attended, with regular repeat attendance and a real social atmosphere created. Friendships have been created, skills have been learned and lots of very good work has been completed.

In 2022 a total of 48 sessions took place at Holt Country Park, helping the rangers with tasks such as ride management, bracken control, infrastructure repairs & installation, habitat creation and much more. The sessions attracted 396 volunteer visits and provided our service with 918 hours of additional resource. It should be noted that these volunteer hours carry an economic value of over £10k at national living wage level, further supporting the great benefit these sessions bring to the service and the park as a whole. We are extremely grateful for the help, support and enthusiasm of this group, and we know that they are enjoying seeing their efforts make so much difference to our Country Park.



Here is a selection of photographs from 2022's Muddy Boots efforts.



Find out more here about our volunteer work - [Home | Meet the community volunteers helping with Country Park conservation \(north-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#)

Appropriate Provision for Community

As we have previously alluded to in this report Holt Country Park is managed in a way which attracts as many different user groups as possible. This can be a difficult balancing act but we believe that we are managing this approach well. However we are also realistic and understand the need to consistently monitor and improve. With this in mind, and taking into account the changing perceptions and values of parks, woodlands and open spaces post covid, we decided in 2021 to carry out user surveys once again. The headline results from those who completed the surveys were as follows:

- The vast majority have been visiting the park for over 3 years
- The primary reasons for visiting Holt CP are enjoying scenery/landscape, leisure walk and tranquillity
- Most people visit with family members and/or a dog
- People visit the park all year around, with no particular season being more popular than another
- Walking and by car are the only methods utilised by people to get to the park - 2/3 by car and 1/3 on foot
- 85% of visitors live within 30 minutes of the park
- The majority of visits last between 1 & 2 hours
- The most important site qualities for visitors were identified as wildlife & biodiversity, a welcoming & safe environment and tranquillity
- The highest rated site qualities were wildlife and biodiversity, tranquillity and ease of access
- Provision of interpretation & information, ease of orientation and ease of access (again) were areas where some respondents thought attention was needed.
- More seating, more sculptures and an improved sensory area were all identified as the improvements which most would like to see
- The park attracts twice as many females as males (or at least the survey did)

The headline results from the survey were released via this article - [Home | What do residents like about our Country Parks? \(north-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#) - and the team will be utilising these when considering what improvements to make in the coming years. It was particularly pleasing to note that the site qualities which people really value also scored highly in terms of how they were rated by our visitors. We are also aware that a sample size of 43 respondents does not necessarily represent all of our visitors and we will be mindful of this when making our management decisions. The final question on our survey allowed respondents to give their own comments about the country park, here are a few:

- *Love it, whenever we take friends they think the park is brilliant.*
- *Overall a lovely venue.*
- *Car parking does need to be increased in size but in a very careful way. At the moment you are missing out on vital revenue as people give up if car park full and go somewhere else*
- *Park is well cared for and ideal to visit in all weather. It would destroy it's natural environment by adding more buildings or facilities*
- *Love the place- try and get here often with children and the dog. Would love to see a little spruce up to the toilets but completely understand that they're quite old now and it would cost a lot of time and money to make improvements. We love the addition of Hettys and the visitor Centre is always welcoming and informative. I live wandering around the woods and seeing the changes made by the rangers- the little wildlife areas and habitats that are made safe especially. I love seeing the horses and walking through that area. Maybe some art trails or sculpture trails would be a consideration? This year has been horrendous with covid but we are looking forward to coming to more events that you may put on. My son is now 12, will you be focusing on the higher age bracket as well as the youngsters too? Do hope so. 😊*

Marketing and Communication

Marketing and Promotion

The vision for Holt Country Park is to provide a high quality and inspiring visitor experience and a rich biodiversity of wildlife in a sustainable woodland setting, and the park is currently managed in a way which seeks to ensure that it appeals to as many different user groups as possible, including local residents and holidaying visitors. The park does not exist to make a profit (although making the service as sustainable as possible is critical) and therefore creating opportunities and a setting which appeals to visitors is the most important thing. Much work has been carried out in recent years to raise awareness of the park to help create a 'visitor base' from which it is hoped that visitor numbers would organically grow, and this certainly seems to be the case.

Appropriate Information Channels

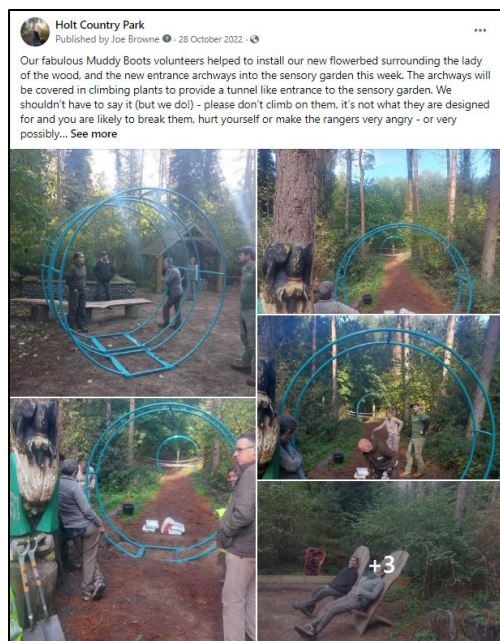
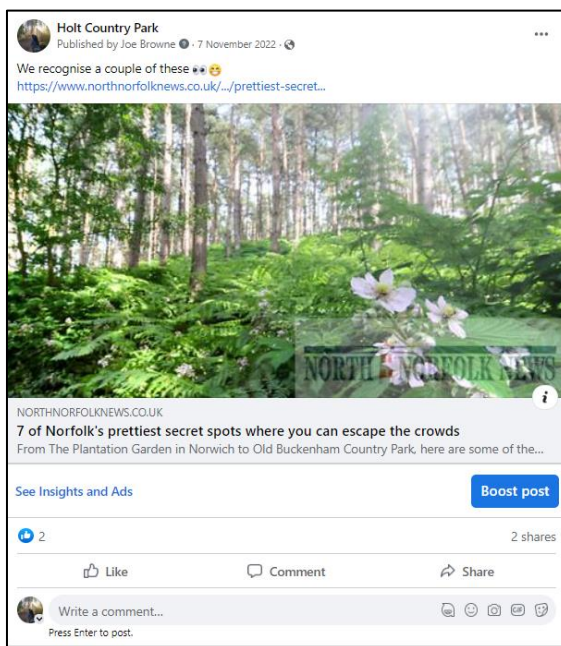
Social Media Accounts

With Holt Country Park providing the main base for the team, social media accounts for the service were set up using this site:

- Facebook /HoltCountryPark
- Twitter @CountryHolt

These social media accounts (particularly Facebook) have proven to be a great asset to the park and the service in general, and they are supported by the Council's corporate social

media accounts. Since its launch four years ago the park's Facebook page has now attracted 5616 followers (+1293 in the last year) and achieves good engagement throughout the year. The focus of updates has continued to be as varied as possible, reflecting the diverse users that the park attracts, with information regarding events, updates about site developments, wildlife news and general park information all included. This Facebook page is now the main channel for information to be shared about the park and is a valuable management tool to the team. Here is a selection of posts from our Facebook page in the past twelve months to further highlight its use:



The park's Twitter page is utilised much in the same way but with slightly less reach and engagement. The audience for Twitter differs from Facebook with the majority of

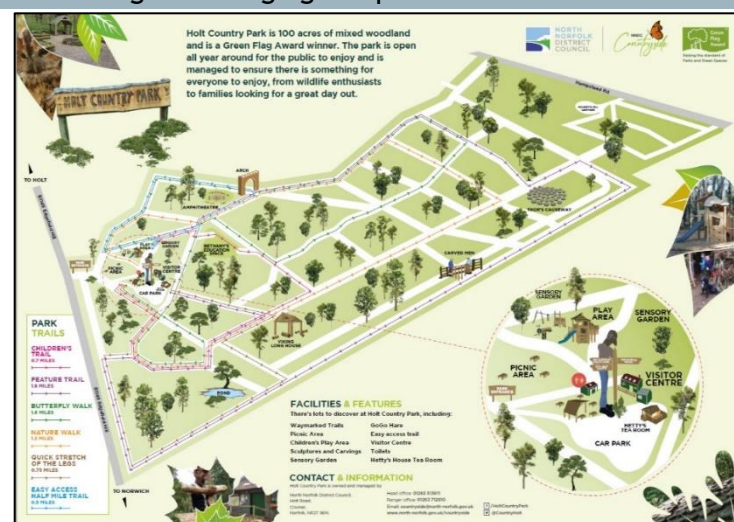
engagement coming from businesses and professionals in the industry. This engagement with other local businesses and organisations has been particularly useful for the organic dissemination of park information and updates.

Overall we are pleased with the effect that both social media channels have had on our work and will continue to use them as much as we can to continue to promote an inform.

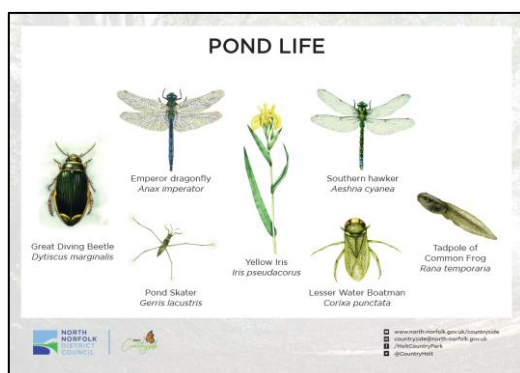
Park maps and interpretation

One of the major improvements completed in recent years was the introduction of a new look park map and flyer. Following the re-routing of the waymarked trails we arranged for a completely new park map and flyer to be produced by local designer Brendan Rallison.

This map and flyer replace the old versions which were introduced in 2013 and reflect the up to date approach that the team are taking to managing the park. As we continue to develop the park in the coming years we are now also able to easily edit both the flyer and the map to reflect these changes, ensuring that information is kept right up to date for our visitors. Indeed we are approaching a time now where an updated version will be required to include some more of the improvements and additional features within the park, we expect this to be completed by the end of 2023. A copy of the current flyer can be found here <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/media/5874/holt-country-park-leaflet.pdf>



More recently we have worked with new in-house designer Rosie to improve and increase the interpretation across the site, some of which has already been demonstrated throughout this review with a few more examples shown below. All of these add value to the park in their own way and add to our marketing and communication offer, and demonstrate that we are listening to our visitors to provide what they have requested.



Promotional Flyers

Promotional flyers are utilised on site and on the parks social media platforms mainly to promote events. We believe that these are still a valuable component of our marketing efforts and will continue to use them as and when appropriate. Pre-covid we had reached a point with our events whereby we could promote our events successfully through a combination of social media and promotional flyers on site, and there was no need to develop this further or distribute wider. Having returned to offering events in 2021 we discovered that this still remains the case, and a change in approach does not appear necessary. If required we will be able to start to distribute flyers to a wider audience once again, through schools and alike, to re-establish the customer base we previously had. Examples of flyers which we had produced this year are shown below.



Each of our Green Flag sites has its own webpage hosted on the Council's website. This provides all the basic information required by visitors and is an important resource to have, particularly for those visitors who do not use social media. In addition to basic park information it also provides links to important resources such as a copy of the park flyer, this annual review, the management plan, information on parking permits, park events and school groups.

Visitor centre

The re-invention of the visitor centre and the way in which it is operated now allows the team to provide even more valuable visitor information and updates, and for longer periods within the year. The provision of information and resources such as park updates, history, sightings, events & activities, wildlife education, activity sheets, other sites, ranger facts and more is now available to our visitors all year around in line with the tea room's opening hours, which will prove to be significantly more beneficial to our visitors. We are delighted to have been able to make these changes.

Green Flag

In 2020 our flag pole and Green Flag were moved to the front of the site next to our new welcome sign so not only visitors but also those passing on the main road can see it.

Booking Page

Full details of events are listed on the Council's in-house booking page - [Outreach Bookings : Availability \(north-norfolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/outreach-bookings)

This booking page receives traffic from people wishing to book onto a specific event and also from people who are simply interested to see what is on offer. All events are listed on this page.



Media

The countryside service works in close collaboration with NNDC's communications department to ensure that all messaging reaches as many people as possible. This has included internet articles and videos, newspaper articles and radio interviews. We are very lucky to have the support of this excellent team and there is no doubt in our minds that they should be considered to have played a large part in our recent success.

Appropriate Educational and Interpretational Information

Holt Country Park caters for the educational needs of its visitors and supporters in many ways, and most of these have already been detailed throughout this report. Below we have summarised the many ways in which we seek to provide educational options for our visitors.

- *Forest Schools offer* - Wild by Nature launched their forest school's offer at the Country Park in 2020 and over the coming years we will work closely with them to develop their offer and further add value to the park.
- *School Groups* -absent in 2020 & 2021 due to Covid restrictions, our school groups offer is still a very important part of the work we do. Several schools returned to the Country Park for our Ranger Led education days, ranging from infant schools right through to secondary.

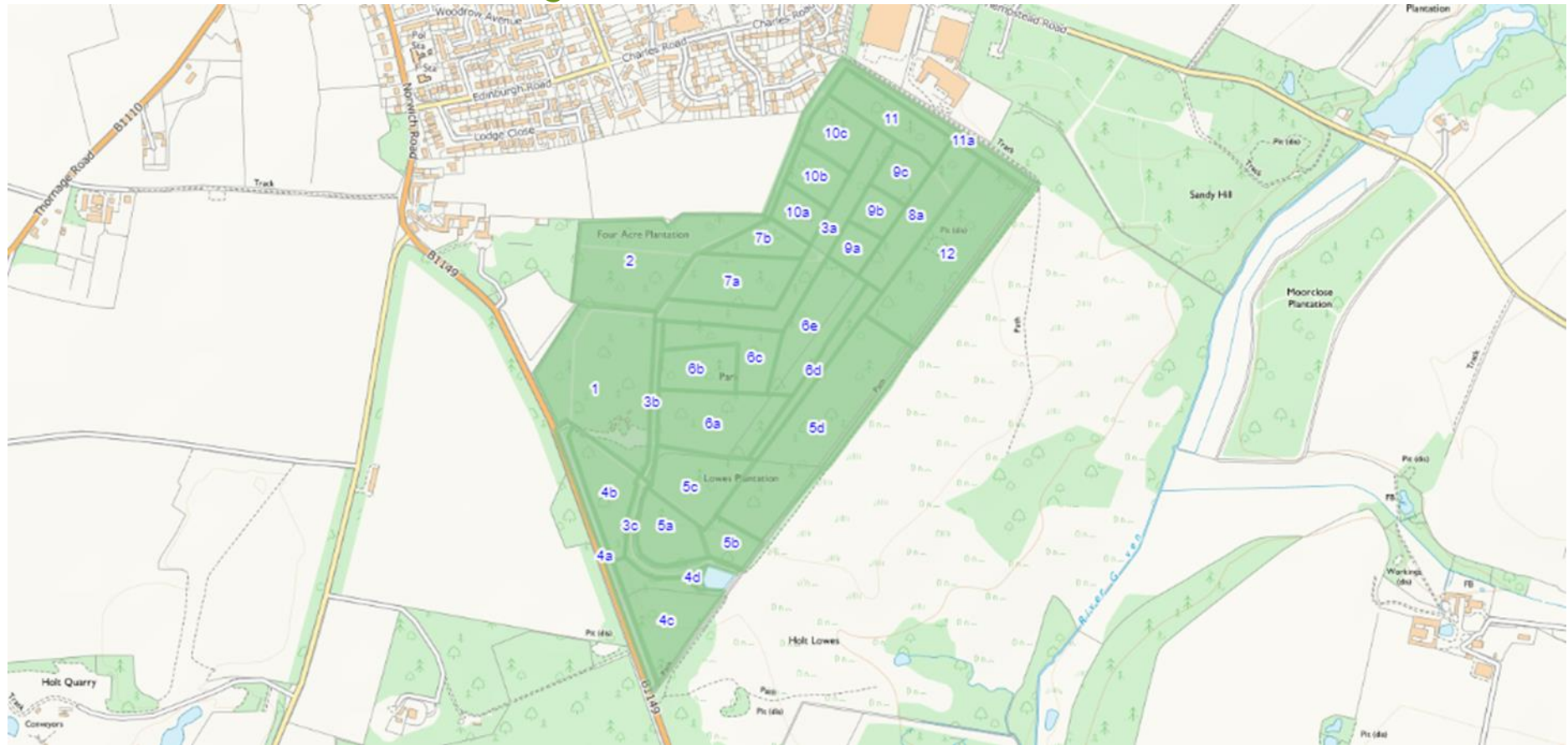
- *Facebook/Twitter* - Social media is often used to provide educational information about the park. For example we have posted information about adders in recent years, as well as updates about the new splash pools which have been installed for our amphibians.
- *Events* - The vast majority of our events for families are provided with both a fun and educational element. Often a trail will include questions to answer from information boards on the way around. Our most recent trail at Christmas taught participants how to make eco-friendly choices in their day to day lives - they even got to tell Santa what he could do better!
- *Interpretation* - found in certain spots around the park our interpretation provides information about flora and fauna, as well as some history and other interesting facts. We also try to include temporary interpretation when carrying out certain management work around the park to help people understand what work is happening and why.

Action Plan

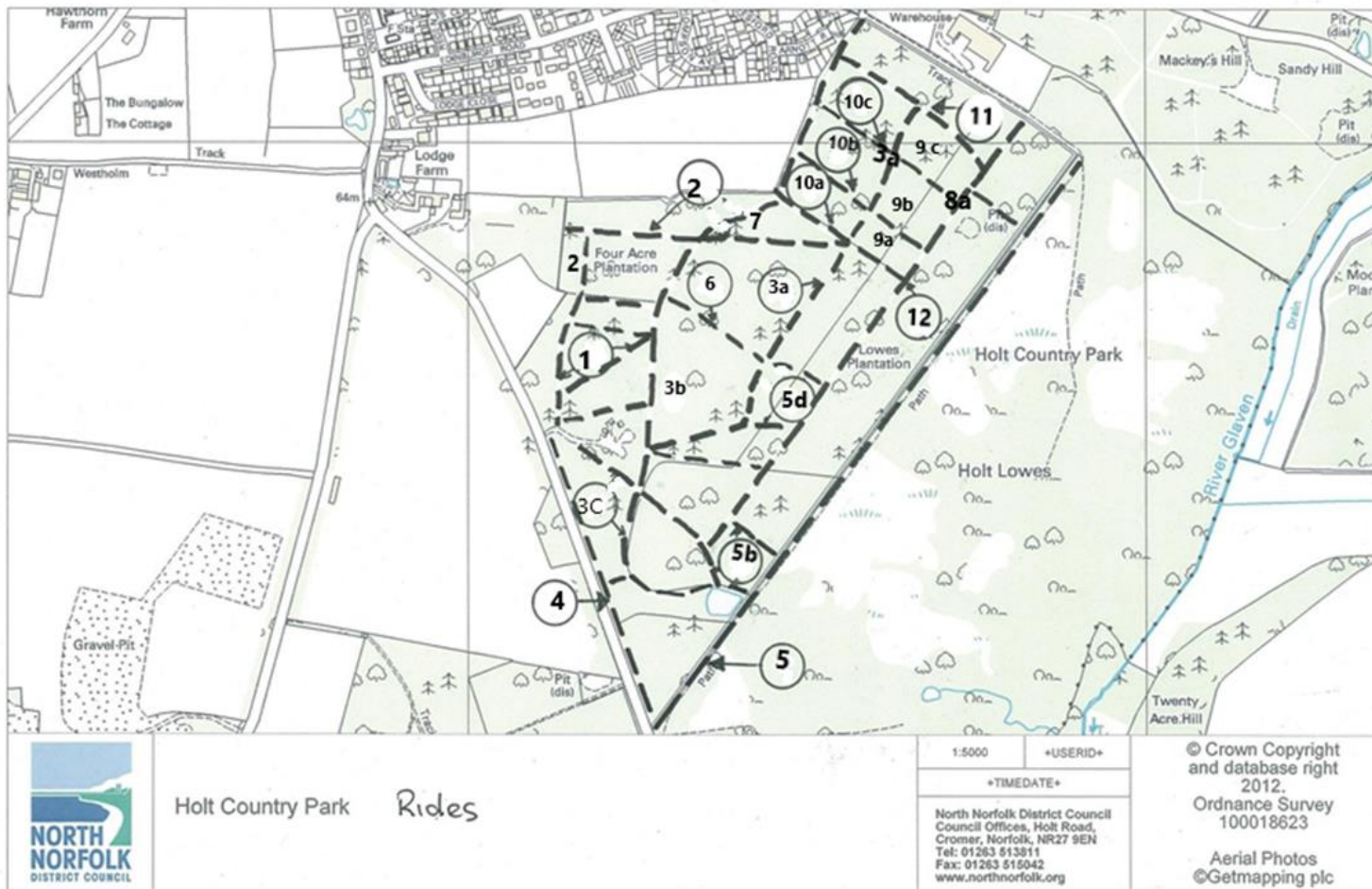
The action plan below outlines the planned works at Holt Country Park in 2023. The plan is based on Green Flag and visitor feedback, corporate aims and objectives, and ranger input. The plan is not exhaustive and remains fluid due to the fast paced and reactive nature of our service and the work we do. Only new or significant works are listed in this plan, with general park management and maintenance being completed by the team as normal alongside this.

Improvement/Addition	Responsible	Proposed completion
Develop children educational area within the park	Rangers	July 23
Create woodland tree and flower nursery area	Rangers/volunteers	April 23
Complete event calendar for year	CB/GM	April 23
Artist and wildlife photography workshops.	CB/AG	April 23
Update map and flyer with new features	CB	June 23
Develop school offer	CB/AG/GM	April 23
Produce and install historic interpretation near archway	CB/Rangers	June 23
Install permanent children's wildlife trail through the woodland	Rangers/AG	July 23
Create new wildflower ride and tree planting of native species.	Rangers	April 23
Install new benches and picnic area.	Rangers	April 23
Complete new amphibian area	Rangers	April 23

Conservation and Woodland Management Work Plan



Holt country park compartment maps 2023. Five-year conservation and forestry plan. Please refer to the Holt country park felling licence documentation for tree felling of tree species, density and re stocking for each compartment.



COMPARTMENT	YEAR	Ride Number	ACTIVITY/OPERATION 2023
1	2023	1	<p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p> <p>Sensory garden, maintain as a garden for wildflowers, plants and wildlife.</p> <p>Brush cutting of wild flower rides from September, collection of cuttings for compost by volunteer and rangers.</p> <p>Manage tree planting and replace if required.</p> <p>Survey flora and fauna species.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Protect and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Coppice Hazel block within compartment. Manage and maintain hazel coppice area.</p> <p>Stack dead wood, branches, timber which cannot be used for firewood, or habitats as a dead hedge within the woodland block which makes up the compartment. Stack so that woodland material is not on to the root plate of trees or restricts access for tree surveys. Allowing wild flower margins to establish and not to be covered by woodland material. So that trees can be surveyed along the woodland margins do not prevent access around each tree. See details in management plan.</p>
2	2023	1 and 2	<p>Winter forestry operations as shown within felling licence.</p> <p>Coppice Hazel block within compartment. Manage and maintain hazel coppice area</p> <p>Manage tree planting and replace if required.</p> <p>Wild about nature area, prevent brambles encroaching the whole area. Leave 30%.</p> <p>Protect bird nest orchid areas from being damaged by forestry work or by being trampled upon on rides.</p> <p>Maintain perimeter hedge.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p> <p>Stack dead wood, branches, timber which cannot be used for firewood, or habitats as a dead hedge within the woodland block which makes up the compartment. Stack so that woodland material is not on to the root plate of trees or restricts access for tree surveys. Allowing wild flower margins to establish and not to be covered by woodland material. So that trees can be surveyed along the woodland margins do not prevent access around each tree. See details in management plan.</p>

3a	2023	3a	<p>Create and maintain wider rides for butterfly habitat, maintain a healthy woodland and increase wild flower biodiversity.</p> <p>Winter forestry operations as shown within felling license on one side of the ride following on from previous years.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Survey flora and fauna species within compartment.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Protect and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Sow or plant native wild flower/plant species appropriate to encourage insects.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required</p>
3b	2023	3b	<p>In autumn cultivate and re sow the wild flower of ride on right hand side with native wildflower seeds. Please refer to management plan wildflower creation rides. Ride number</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Survey flora and fauna species within compartment.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Protect and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Sow or plant native wild flower/plant species appropriate to encourage insects.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p> <p>Brush cutting of wild flower rides from October, collection of cuttings for compost by volunteer and rangers</p>
3c	2023	3c	<p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Survey flora and fauna species within compartment.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Protect and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles</p> <p>Sow or plant native wild flower/plant species appropriate to encourage insects.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p> <p>Brush cutting of wild flower rides from October, collection of cuttings for compost by volunteer and rangers.</p>
4a	2023	4a	Health and safety tree work only. Compartment not in tree felling licence.

			<p>Maintain woodland perimeter.</p> <p>Plant tree species as in restocking tree felling licence.</p> <p>Maintain planted trees. Replace losses.</p> <p>Control invasive plant species.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Survey flora and fauna species.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required</p>
4b	2023	4b	<p>Winter forestry operations and tree planting as shown within felling licence.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Maintain and protected planted trees. Replace losses.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p> <p>Brush cutting of wild flower rides, wild flower block from October, collection of cuttings for compost by volunteer and rangers.</p> <p>Stack dead wood, branches, timber which cannot be used for firewood, or habitats as a dead hedge within the woodland block which makes up the compartment. Stack so that woodland material is not on to the root plate of trees or restricts access for tree surveys. Allowing wild flower margins to establish and not to be covered by woodland material. So that trees can be surveyed along the woodland margins do not prevent access around each tree. See details in management plan.</p>
4c	2023	4c	<p>Health and safety tree work only. Compartment not in tree felling licence.</p> <p>Maintain and protected planted trees. Replace losses.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Survey flora and fauna species.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p>
4d	2023	4d	<p>Grassland area next to pond. Health and safety tree work only. Compartment not in tree felling licence.</p>

			<p>Check reptile/amphibian activity before grass cutting. Early November or when appropriate for surrounding species, time of year, leave a 3m grassland strip around/next to pond.</p> <p>In grassland block leave 20% of the grassland area. On rotation brush cut grassland area, remove cuttings for compost create compost areas in undergrowth away from main paths.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles. Create compost areas.</p> <p>Survey flora and fauna species.</p> <p>Protect and maintain grassland wild flower area and fruit trees.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p>
POND	2023.	Pond	<p>Health and safety tree work only. Compartment not in tree felling licence.</p> <p>Using pond management guidance pdf within the management plan. Maintain and protect the pond and surrounding pond area from invasive species.</p> <p>In winter by hand using correct ppe and equipment clear one third of invasive plant species from the pond over a three-year period from selected areas. Place all clearing on to the bank or near to the pond so that all pond wildlife can return to the pond. Take great care not to disturb or destroy wildlife species and their habitats.</p> <p>Remove clearings when certain species have returned and not using the material which has been removed from the pond. Protect wildlife species and their habitats.</p> <p>Reduce by 20% encroaching scrub and trees around pond if shading out pond and leaf litter entering the pond.</p>
5a	2023	5a	<p>Health and safety tree work only. Compartment not in tree felling licence.</p> <p>Maintain the mini beast conservation area for use for mini beast hunts. Survey species, if there is a decline in species, ground too dry, rest area from use and choose new site for mini beast area within block.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Survey flora and fauna species. Survey for Creeping lady tresses.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>GCN have been surveyed in this area.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p> <p>Brush cutting of wild flower rides from October, collection of cuttings for compost by volunteer and rangers.</p>
5b	2023	5b	<p>Winter forestry operations and tree planting as shown within felling licence.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p>

			<p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Maintain and protected planted trees. Replace losses.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p> <p>Stack dead wood, branches, timber which cannot be used for firewood, or habitats as a dead hedge within the woodland block which makes up the compartment. Stack so that woodland material is not on to the root plate of trees or restricts access for tree surveys. Allowing wild flower margins to establish and not to be covered by woodland material. So that trees can be surveyed along the woodland margins do not prevent access around each tree. See details in management plan.</p>
5c	2023	5c	<p>Health and safety tree work only. Compartment not in tree felling licence.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Survey flora and fauna species.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p> <p>Manage and maintain hazel coppice area</p>
5d	2023	5d	<p>Winter forestry operations as shown in the tree felling licence. Through shelter building block and one side of the wet ride number (ride number 5d). Natural regeneration.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Protect shallow water areas for amphibians and wildlife.</p> <p>Viking longhouse area protected from damage.</p> <p>Survey flora and fauna species.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p> <p>Stack dead wood, branches, timber which cannot be used for firewood, or habitats as a dead hedge within the woodland block which makes up the compartment. Stack so that woodland material is not on to the root plate of trees or restricts access for tree surveys. Allowing wild flower margins to establish and not to be covered by woodland material. So that trees can be surveyed along the woodland margins do not prevent access around each tree. See details in management plan.</p>

6a	2023	6a	<p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Survey flora and fauna species.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Manage and maintain hazel coppice area.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p> <p>Brush cutting of wild flower rides from October, collection of cuttings for compost by volunteer and rangers.</p>
6b	2023	6b	<p>Grassland cut once a year in October or when required.</p> <p>Create and maintain environmental classroom outdoor teaching.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Plant native wild flower species under the woodland canopy, protect these areas</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p> <p>Brush cutting of wild flower rides from October, collection of cuttings for compost by volunteer and rangers</p>
6c	2023	6c	<p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p>
6d	2023	6d	<p>Winter forestry operations and tree planting as shown within felling licence. Widen ride (6d) on left hand side to wild flower margins. Create a s shape ride by introducing wildlife glades and scallops along the ride. Refer to guidance in management plan on how to create these. Take care not to disturb wet areas used by amphibians.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p> <p>Brush cutting of wild flower rides from October, collection of cuttings for compost by volunteer and rangers.</p>
6e	2023	6e	Health and safety tree work only. Compartment not in tree felling licence.


			<p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Survey flora and fauna species.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p>
7a	2023	7a	<p>Health and safety tree work only. Compartment not in tree felling licence.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Survey flora and fauna species.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p>
7b	2023	7b	<p>Health and safety tree work only. Compartment not in tree felling licence.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Survey flora and fauna species.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p>
8a	2023	8a	<p>Health and safety tree work only. Compartment not in tree felling licence.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Survey flora and fauna species.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p>
9a	2023	9a	<p>With the help of volunteers. Winter forestry operations and tree planting as shown within felling licence. Widen ride (9a) on left hand side to create wild flower margins. Create a s shape ride by introducing wildlife glades and scallops along the ride. Refer to guidance in management plan on how to create these.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p>

			<p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Plant native wild flower species if required.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p> <p>Stack dead wood, branches, timber which cannot be used for firewood, or habitats as a dead hedge within the woodland block which makes up the compartment. Stack so that woodland material is not on to the root plate of trees or restricts access for tree surveys. Allowing wild flower margins to establish and not to be covered by woodland material. So that trees can be surveyed along the woodland margins do not prevent access around each tree. See details in management plan.</p>
9b	2023	9b	<p>With the help of volunteers. Winter forestry operations and tree planting as shown within felling licence. Widen ride (9b) on left hand side to create wild flower margins. Create a s shape ride by introducing wildlife glades and scallops along the ride. Refer to guidance in management plan on how to create these.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Plant native wild flower species if required.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p> <p>Stack dead wood, branches, timber which cannot be used for firewood, or habitats as a dead hedge within the woodland block which makes up the compartment. Stack so that woodland material is not on to the root plate of trees or restricts access for tree surveys. Allowing wild flower margins to establish and not to be covered by woodland material. So that trees can be surveyed along the woodland margins do not prevent access around each tree. See details in management plan.</p>
9c	2023	9c	<p>With the help of volunteers. Winter forestry operations and tree planting as shown within felling licence. Widen ride (9c) on left hand side to create wild flower margins. Create a s shape ride by introducing wildlife glades and scallops along the ride. Refer to guidance in management plan on how to create these.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p>

			<p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p> <p>Brush cutting of wild flower rides from October, collection of cuttings for compost by volunteer and rangers</p> <p>Stack dead wood, branches, timber which cannot be used for firewood, or habitats as a dead hedge within the woodland block which makes up the compartment. Stack so that woodland material is not on to the root plate of trees or restricts access for tree surveys. Allowing wild flower margins to establish and not to be covered by woodland material. So that trees can be surveyed along the woodland margins do not prevent access around each tree. See details in management plan.</p>
10a	2023	10a	<p>Health and safety tree work only. Compartment not in tree felling licence.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Survey flora and fauna species.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p>
10b	2023	10b	<p>Health and safety tree work only. Compartment not in tree felling licence.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Survey flora and fauna species.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p>
10c	2023	10c	<p>Health and safety tree work only. Compartment not in tree felling licence.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Survey flora and fauna species.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Control invasive species. Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p>
11	2023	11	<p>Health and safety tree work only. Compartment not in tree felling licence.</p>

			<p>Plant trees as in tree felling restocking list. Maintain and protect these trees.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Survey flora and fauna species.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p>
11a	2023	11a	<p>Health and safety tree work only. Compartment not in tree felling licence.</p> <p>Plant trees as in tree felling restocking list. Maintain and protect these trees.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Survey flora and fauna species.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p>
12	2023	12	<p>Winter forestry operations and tree planting as shown within felling licence. Widen ride (12) on left hand side to create wild flower margins. Create a s shape ride by introducing wildlife glades and scallops along the ride.</p> <p>Refer to guidance in management plan on how to create these.</p> <p>Protect and maintain wild flower margins and areas.</p> <p>Protect, maintain and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and reptiles.</p> <p>Control invasive species.</p> <p>Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.</p> <p>Brush cutting of wild flower rides from October, collection of cuttings for compost by volunteer and rangers.</p> <p>Stack dead wood, branches, timber which cannot be used for firewood, or habitats as a dead hedge within the woodland block which makes up the compartment. Stack so that woodland material is not on to the root plate of trees or restricts access for tree surveys. Allowing wild flower margins to establish and not to be covered by woodland material. So that trees can be surveyed along the woodland margins do not prevent access around each tree. See details in management plan.</p>

Site Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment	NNDC Woodland operations.	
Service	Countryside & Parks	
Date	January 2023	
Activity	NNDC woodland operational activities	
Assessor(s)	Anne-marie Gedge	

Hazard	Who might be harmed & how	Existing Controls	Further Action Required	Justification
Slips, trips and falls				
Footpaths (natural and man-made), fallen branches, steps, ditches etc	Visitors, staff, volunteers.	<p>When working NNDC staff site check, mark / sign routes and diversions of paths where appropriate on WT land.</p> <p>Staff advised of possible hazards in advance of and/or immediately and advice on appropriate PPE.</p> <p>Work checked by senior supervisor, advise staff.</p>	Site checks of work area before start of work, during and after. Reinstatement of ground/area is required to prevent slips, trips and falls.	Regular on-going management of sites.

Hazard	Who might be harmed & how	Existing Controls	Further Action Required	Justification
Poisonous plants and wild animals	Visitors, staff, volunteers. (cuts, bites, abrasions leading to infections and ill health)	<p>Advise staff of potential hazards in advance and/or immediately prior to start of operational works.</p> <p>Warning / educational information about specific plants and animals provided in advance and at time of activity.</p> <p>Wildlife with potential to harm, handled only by trained expert or staff with training.</p> <p>First Aid kit carried.</p> <p>Protected wildlife not to be deliberately injured, harmed or killed. Care taken to protect all wildlife, flora and fauna on site and their habitats.</p>	<p>Identification, marking and control of poisonous plants</p> <p>Additional training for staff for identification of fauna and flora species if required.</p>	On-going and regular assessment and management of sites
Zoonoses Leptospirosis <i>E. coli</i>	Staff, volunteers and visitors	<p>Warning / educational information about specific zoonoses given prior to operational work.</p> <p>Good hygiene practices must be carried out. Particularly at meals.</p> <p>Hand washing facilities or cleansing materials (hand gels) available.</p>	Permission required from land owner to work on ponds and aquatic areas.	Prevent sickness, including food poisoning

Hazard	Who might be harmed & how	Existing Controls	Further Action Required	Justification
		<p>Cuts and grazes covered, particularly when working / studying near water. Correct PPE required for pond management works. No long working of staff in ponds/aquatic areas.</p> <p>Staff required to be in charge of their own health and safety.</p> <p>Mobile phone and first aid kit to hand for emergency. Notify senior staff of working location point.</p>		
Equipment and tools	<p>Staff, volunteers and visitors.</p> <p>Injuries caused by malfunction</p> <p>Injuries caused by misuse</p> <p>Working too close together, make sure there is enough safe</p>	<p>Instruction provided to staff and training on safe use and operation of equipment by staff that are trained to do so.</p> <p>Inspect tools before use - repair or replace defective equipment.</p> <p>Appropriate tool or equipment used for job in hand</p> <p>Tools kept clean and sharp by staff.</p> <p>Care to be taken of blades and cutting edges, training prior to use of equipment by trained staff.</p> <p>PPE provided and to be worn where appropriate (eg gloves, eye protection).</p>	<p>Maintain supervision of activity for damage and misuse.</p> <p>Remove and deactivate defective equipment.</p>	Prevent injury and miss use of tools.

Hazard	Who might be harmed & how	Existing Controls	Further Action Required	Justification
	<p>working distance</p> <p>Scratches and stings from vegetation</p> <p>Blisters</p>	<p>Materials from approved stock and in good working order as to not cause injury.</p> <p>Staff required to be in charge of their own health and safety.</p> <p>Mobile phone and first aid kit to hand for emergency. Notify senior staff of working location point.</p> <p>Volunteers to be supervised at all times by a competent person(s)</p> <p>Do not work within 5m of other(s)</p> <p>Keep public away from working area where possible using hazard tape or appropriate barrier.</p>		
<p>Environmental Hazards</p> <p>Extreme weather issues</p>	<p>Staff, volunteers and visitors.</p>	<p>Weather conditions monitored in advance of work, activity, event.</p> <p>Operational work activity stopped by staff if weather likely to be or becomes hazardous (eg lightning, high winds heavy rain)</p> <p>Remove damaged trees, debris prior to work for safe working areas.</p>	<p>Work operational activity cancelled or reduced in scale if weather too severe. Inform the land owner of any hazards within the woods, removal of trees etc. Changes in landscape.</p>	<p>Safety of staff, visitors and other participants - site conditions may deteriorate.</p>

Hazard	Who might be harmed & how	Existing Controls	Further Action Required	Justification
		<p>Treat / clear ice or snow where necessary.</p> <p>Cancel work/activity if health and safety of participants is at risk under hazards from environmental conditions. Trained staff to decide or ask line managers, health and safety officers.</p>		
Transport Moving vehicles, car parks	Staff, volunteers, visitors.	<p>Ensure parking arrangements free from external hazards. Staff to monitor and manage events, working activities.</p> <p>Staff responsible for own parking, driving on site entering and leaving. Reinstate paths which have been damaged by vehicles which visitors cannot use.</p> <p>Footpaths keep pedestrians away from traffic as best possible. Close off areas to visitors where vehicles are in use for woodland operations.</p> <p>Staff required to be in charge of their own health and safety.</p> <p>Mobile phone and first aid kit to hand for emergency. Notify senior staff of working location point.</p>	<p>Close car park to visitors if woodland operations are deemed to cause hazards within these areas. Staff to monitor and control.</p> <p>Close off working areas to visitors when using vehicles. Re-direct arrows, provide maps if required.</p>	Prevent accidents.

Hazard	Who might be harmed & how	Existing Controls	Further Action Required	Justification
		Do not use vehicles if they are damaged, not operational of the required working safety standard.		
Missing Person(s)	Staff, volunteers, visitors.	<p>Staff aware of each other's location on site at all times. No long working whilst using machinery. Report to senior staff of working location, during of time and when leaving site.</p> <p>Lone working staff, report to senior staff start of work and leaving site, area where they are working. Type of work they are carrying out.</p> <p>Lost child found on site. Looked after by trained staff with appropriate DBS check. Inform the police of loss child if no carer/parent seen. I</p> <p>Missing adults. Inform the police and ask for guidance. Staff to have mobile phones. First aid kit. Inform the police of missing/lost person.</p>	<p>Staff and volunteers aware of location of site, working area. Given maps and pre site check.</p> <p>Maps for visitors.</p> <p>Inform the police of missing/lost persons.</p>	<p>Prevention of missing/lost people.</p> <p>Lost/missing person found.</p>

Hazard	Who might be harmed & how	Existing Controls	Further Action Required	Justification
General, miscellaneous	Staff, visitors, volunteers.	<p>Staff have mobile phone at all times or access to emergency phone number.</p> <p>Weekly sheet in office of staff locations. Senior staff to be aware of colleague general working locations</p> <p>Children must be supervised by an authorised adult at all times - advance notice to parents / supervisors</p> <p>First Aid kit carried at all times where appropriate by trained staff. First Aid to be carried out under the permission of the said person who requires it or person who is authorised. Call 999 in an emergency.</p>	Changes to working schedule to be reported between managers and staff.	Staff and visitor safety.
Litter picking	Staff, volunteers and visitors	<p>Operatives to be adequately instructed in activity by trained staff.</p> <p>Long working, staff to report of start of work, end of work and leaving site and location of works. Every time on site.</p> <p>Gloves to be worn and required PPE.</p> <p>Litter picking tool to be used to minimise picking up objects by hand</p>	Litter picking by volunteers ok but any hazards must be dealt with by trained NNDC staff.	Protect all.

Hazard	Who might be harmed & how	Existing Controls	Further Action Required	Justification
		<p>Frequent litter picking to avoid dealing with large quantities at a time. Bins to be emptied regularly by contractor</p> <p>Only trained staff to use sharps box for safe containment of sharp objects and handling with correct PPE. Contact NNDC Environmental health and report immediately.</p> <p>Rubbish to be contained in bags properly tied and appropriately disposed of. Do not lift bags that are too heavy not person carrying them.</p>		