



MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE VILLAGE GREEN

SHERFIELD ON LODDON

General

The long-established Village Green is the responsibility of the Parish Council who fund its maintenance and upkeep on behalf of the Parish. The Green is still privately owned but its designation as a Village Green means that the management falls entirely to the Parish Council and is subject to bye-laws which are available to be seen on the Parish Council website. The Parish Council needs to balance the different expectations of users, residents and visitors. These include recreation and general enjoyment of the different areas. There are play and sports grounds, wooded areas, open grassland and pond areas, all of which must be catered for by the policies and resources of the Parish Council. A Village Green notice board is situated adjacent to the Jubilee Pond viewing platform.

Apart from emergency work, proposed significant work on the Green by volunteers or contractors is discussed and agreed at the VG&LF and Parish Council committees. Notices of Intent for work on trees are applied for by the Parish Council for approval from BDBC.

SINCs

Large areas of the Green have been designated as SINCs (*Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation*) (see attached map) and the Parish Council has regard to the requirements of this designation in its management. Advice is taken on a regular basis from the Tree officers at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council also from Hampshire and Isle of Wight Conservation Trust; Ecologists for work on specific areas, and The Conservation Volunteers.

Ditches

Clearance and cutting of ditches are subject to the regular contractor's maintenance schedule. See attached document.

Protection from Incursions

Much of the Green is now protected from incursion by ditches, bunds or dragon's teeth. These need to be maintained and are covered by the maintenance schedule. Ditches will be cut at least twice a year and bunds and dragon's teeth will be strimmed three times a year. The whole area is covered by the Borough-wide injunction for 5 years.



Specimen Trees

There are a large number of fine specimen trees on the Green eg. Oaks, Holm oaks, Limes, Horse Chestnuts, Hornbeam, Cherries, Black and White Poplars, Ash, Weeping Willows and Hawthorns. Most of the trees are in a good state especially after work to cut back encroaching willows, but need to be monitored by the tree wardens on an annual basis. See Willows and diseased trees below.

Willows

A number of ditches and the pond area (The Glade) are populated by self- sown willows mainly of the Goat and Crack varieties. These variants have a tendency to shed limbs, break apart or collapse completely, especially in high winds or after heavy snow and frost. They need regular maintenance to remove vulnerable thin limbs or to remove broken/cracked limbs. Any stumps sprout quickly, putting on as much as two metres a year. BDBC advice is therefore to coppice these willows on a rotational basis down to a manageable height of 1 metre. The withies (new growth) can also be treated with 'Round Up' to reduce the proliferation of weak limbs. There are two large specimen Weeping Willow, one on the edge of the cricket ground and one on the island in Jubilee pond, which need to be monitored on a regular basis as they can shed large pieces.

Diseased Trees

All trees need to be monitored annually by the tree wardens. The main problems for the moment are with Ash trees and Horse Chestnuts. There are only a small number of Ash trees on the Green., but most are showing some sign of Ash Dieback. They may well last for some years, but will eventually succumb. Once they are seriously affected, they will need to be felled and the stumps ground out. The wood can be used by wood turners or for wood stoves. Young saplings which have been affected should be lifted and burnt.

Bramley Road and Horse Chestnuts

The main area of Horse Chestnuts is the Bramley Road avenue. BDBC recommend that the leaves are collected every autumn and burnt; a task already carried out in this area by contractors. Pheromone traps should be purchased in early spring and one or two traps hung at about 2 metres from the ground. Some 40 traps will be needed to treat all the Chestnuts on the Green. These will help to control the moths which damage the leaves and improve the colour of the leaves and their longevity in the autumn. Currently there is only one tree which ought to be felled on the football ground side and fourth from the Bramley end. The Parish Council has already carried out a consultation about replacement and has agreed that replacement Indian or American Horse Chestnuts, which are highly disease resistant should be purchased. There are at least three other Chestnuts which will need close monitoring in case they become dangerous.



SHERFIELD ON LODDON PARISH COUNCIL

Grassland

The main grass areas are cut three times a year as per the maintenance schedule. Some areas such as at the back of the Glade, round Jubilee and Golden ponds and the designated wild areas are left to protect wild life and encourage wild flowers and insects.

Gorse

There is an area of large Gorse, to the east of Centre Ditch, which has been cleared of brambles and replanted to provide a distinctively different area of habit and to enhance biodiversity. There are also two patches of pygmy gorse on Middle Green which require regular maintenance.

Designated Wild Areas

The Parish Council has agreed that some areas should be left as wild but not unmanaged areas, to encourage biodiversity and provide essential refuges for birds, amphibians and other wild life. Map attached.

Brambles/Undergrowth

These will need careful management to prevent excess growth cutting out light and destroying the biodiversity present on the Green. Some areas must be allowed to grow to provide shelter for rabbits, hedgehogs, deer and birds. Cutting back on a rotational basis should be done in the autumn thus ensuring strong growth in the spring but allowing areas of winter cover for wildlife.

Wild Flowers

Recent cutting back has revealed area of snowdrops, daffodils, blue bells and star of bethlehem. There are also areas of primrose and wood violets. Later pink campion and foxgloves emerge in the Glade area whilst expanses of knapweed can be found in the large unmown grass areas in Fletcher's triangle area left after the first mowing in early June. It is proposed that the incidence and diversity of wild flowers on the Green is increased and improved in the future.

Ponds. Horse Pond, Jubilee Pond, Golden Pond

The three main ponds on the Green are the historic Horse Pond once used by Carters to cool their wheels; Jubilee pond created in the 1970s which has an island and is surrounded by a footpath and has a viewing platform and Golden Pond created in the 1990s which is a seasonal pond. A small population of ducks, moorhens and coots circulate between the ponds.

Horse Pond contains fish, whilst Jubilee and Golden ponds host a population of Great Crested, Palmatum and Smooth newts. Frog spawn is regularly observed in Golden Pond in March. The newts and their habitat are protected by law which places stringent requirements on the Parish Council. Vegetation round Jubilee and Golden ponds, which is



essential habitat for newts will be cut back to no less than a couple of feet in the summer months. In the event that Jubilee pond needs to be dredged to remove silt and vegetation accumulated from dry years, a conservation licence is required from DEFRA and the work can only be carried out with the licence and in the presence of our ecologist. The newt population normally leave the pond during August/September to return to surrounding undergrowth.

Golden pond has been sheeted in plastic for two years to try to eradicate an invasion of New Zealand Pygmy weed. The sheeting will be removed in the autumn of 2019 to allow the pond to resume its seasonal activity.

Pond management is guided by advice from the HIWWT, Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (Hbic), ecologists and relevant environment organisations. The Conservation Volunteers promoted Pond Champions in 2017 for which 3 residents in the parish volunteered and had training in amphibians, pond dipping and pond management.

Public Use and Dogs

The Parish Council aims to enable all the potential users of the Village Green to have freedom of access and enjoyment. Dog walkers are asked to keep their animals under control at all times and to use a lead on and near the sports pitches and in the children's play area adjacent to the fenced playground to prevent fouling, which is a danger to health. Dog Litter bins are provided in all areas of the Green. The bye-laws for the Green are posted for public viewing, and users are asked to show consideration to other users at all times.

Horses

Horses should be ridden without causing annoyance or danger to other users. (See the bye-laws). Horse riding is prohibited in designated areas notified by signs.

Tracks/Parking

There are no Public Rights of Way across the Green but there is an accepted right of way across Middle Green. There are many paths and tracks, some of which are used by vehicles. (See attached map)

There is a car park at the north end of the Green which is entered from the Bramley Road and another area behind the Garage which is also available for public parking.

Litter

The Parish Council employs a Litter Warden who collects any litter and empties the bins on a regular basis.

Sports activities

There is provision for football, cricket, BMX and tennis on designated areas, which are maintained by the Parish Council. There is also a fenced children's play area. The Tennis courts are to be re-furbished in the near future.



Pavilions

The newly refurbished Community Pavilion is used by Sherfield Cricket Club under licence. A local school also has been using the ground and Pavilion during the summer season. The Pavilion is also used for hosting community activities such as coffee mornings, a pop-up café, the Reindeer trail, and children’s parties. The Parish Council has provided a new storage building adjacent to the Pavilion for storage of the Cricket Club’s mowers and Parish Council equipment.

Loddon Sports own and run their own pavilion on the west end of the football pitch. They organise junior football training and matches throughout the winter.

Lastly there is the old football pavilion which provides water and power outlets for use by the annual fete and is also used for storage by the Parish Council.

This Management Plan has been drawn up with the advice and approval of BDBC, its Tree Officer, Dave Harris, and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.