

# 2024 to 2034 Worcester Woods Country Park Management Plan

Worcester Woods Country Park

Wildwood Drive

Worcester

WR5 2LG

[www.worcestershire.gov.uk](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk)



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## **Purpose of the Management Plan**

To bring together relevant information regarding Worcester Woods Country Park and document it in a single plan.

To guide the recreation and conservation management of Worcester Woods Country Park for the period April 2024-March 2034.

To ensure the ongoing effective site management for the next ten years by developing a comprehensive plan which will guide management.

To provide a supporting document for grant applications and accreditations.

## **Vision statement**

To maintain and enhance Worcester Woods Country Park as a regionally renowned, multipurpose countryside site, highlighting best practice in recreation and conservation.

## **Introduction**

Worcester Woods Country Park is an urban fringe country park situated on the edge of the City of Worcester in the centre of the County of Worcestershire. The Country Park is situated approximately two miles from junction seven of the M5 motorway and three miles from Worcester City Centre, giving excellent local and national access to the site.

The site is very well used with local visitors who come daily and also occasional visitors who come from further afield. The primary user categories who frequent the site are people exercising their dogs and families with children. There are two well used circular trails around the site, The Woodland Trail, and The Meadow Trail. Both are about 0.75 miles long. The Woodland Trail is far more popular as there are gravel paths throughout the woods, making it easier underfoot in wet weather. The Country Park is also connected to Public Footpaths and Public Bridleways which enter onto the site and go further afield, including a new 12-mile circular route called [Wild About Worcester Way](#).

## **Administrative areas**

County: Worcestershire

District: City of Worcester

Parishes: Warndon, Worcester City

## **Designations**

Country Park- Designated 1985.

Local Nature Reserve – Nunnery Wood designated 1987.

Hornhill Meadows designated in 1994.

Special Wildlife Sites – Hornhill Meadows

Nunnery Wood.

## **Ownership**

Freehold: Worcestershire County Council – Hornhill Meadows and the Events Field.

Leasehold: Christchurch College, Worcester City Council

The southern area of the woodland is owned by Christ Church College, Oxford and is currently leased by the County Council; the northern part of the woodland is owned by Worcester City Council and is managed by Worcestershire County Council on their behalf.

## Tenancies

Orchard Café: Nett Ward.

Park Adventures: Dan Cole.

## Byelaws

The standard County Council byelaws apply.

## Access and Facilities

Worcester Woods Country Park is managed in line with Worcestershire Country Council's Site Standards, which sets out the authority's approach to countryside sites management for visitors.

Worcester Woods Country Park has one car park, accessed off Wildwood Drive. There are approximately two hundred spaces, including eight disabled parking bays. There is a separate coach bay, which ideally is booked in advance. This is more commonly used by school groups, stopping off at the Country Park to break up a long journey.

Before 2020 the car park faced significant pressure for spaces due to office workers and hospital visitors abusing the free parking. As a result, a car park attendant was employed Monday to Thursday 8.30am until 10.30am to prevent unauthorised parking. After the Covid Pandemic in March 2020 people significantly changed the way in which they worked with a large shift to working from home. Therefore, the pressure on the car park has reduced although there is still significant abuse by hospital visitors and staff, and this may become more of a problem in the future. There is no longer a Car Park Attendant role. A barrier system exists with 'in' and 'out' barriers which let everyone in during the day and evening but locked the 'in' barrier at 10pm to stop cars coming in at night to prevent anti-social behaviour in the car park. The barrier system was eventually replaced in March 2020 which tied in with a new barrier system across the Country Hall Campus. Unfortunately, this is no longer in working order. Attempts to get the situation rectified have so far been unsuccessful, due to financial pressures within Worcestershire County Council. This is currently causing some issues in the evening with anti-social use of the car park.

The car park has lights which should come on at night, but these currently only work sporadically. Attempts to rectify this situation has so far been unsuccessful, resulting in complaints from visitors. The lights need their operating system replaced with a system that is easier to use, so that the timings of them can be easily adjusted throughout the year.

County Hall car park has been used as an overflow car park when large events are taking place in the Country Park during weekends and evenings. This car park can be booked contacting Facilities Management at County Hall and has been a very useful resource for the Country Park.

Worcester Woods Country Park is situated next to a bus route on Wildwood Drive.

Worcester Woods Country Park is situated on a surfaced cycle route which runs directly through the centre of the site, giving it a good link to Warndon and Spetchley. Bicycle racks are situated outside the Visitor Centre foyer and near the play area on the Events Field. Cycling is allowed throughout the

site and, therefore, the site can be accessed by bicycle from any direction. There are currently plans to upgrade the existing cycle route as part of the wider cycle network. Walking and cycling guides can be found on the [Worcestershire County Council website](#).

The tarmac Public Bridleway runs from the hospital down through the centre of the site and into County Hall Car Park. This links onto a path that runs past St. Richard's Hospice to Spetchley Road. This Bridleway has been incorporated into the Wild About Worcestershire Way, a 20km circular trail incorporating 15 Nature Reserves around Worcester City. This trail is managed and maintained by [WEG](#) (The Worcester Environment Group).

The Eastern edge of Worcester Woods Country Park has a Public Bridleway. This only runs across the tip of the site and then continues adjacent to the site, onto the dual carriage way. There is a permissive horse route that enters the Country Park on the south side from Wildwood Drive and runs between the Orchard and the Lumpy Bumpy Field, then adjacent to the site boundary joining with the eastern Public Bridleway. Horse riders do use the site, but very rarely, possibly due to the busy roads surrounding the site, and dual carriageway making it difficult to access.

Walkers can access Worcester Woods Country Park through a number of entrances around the site, with most of Nunnery Wood being unfenced. Many people use the site as a cut through to access other facilities in the surrounding area or as part of a commuter route, i.e., to school, work etc.

The site has a tarmac path (the Public Bridleway running north south) and some gravel paths running round the woods (the perimeter path and the Woodland Trail). There are lots of unofficial tracks created by walkers throughout the Country Park. The current approach is to proactively manage official paths and restrict unofficial paths where this is becoming damaging.

Worcester Woods Country Park has a yard situated at the back of the offices. This is gravelled and used for storage of timber, materials, vehicles, and tools. A similar yard can be found north of the office buildings adjacent to the Camping Field. This yard is used by the Public Rights of Way Team, who are also based within the offices at the Country Park, to store materials.

A small private garden, The Worcestershire Garden, is situated at the back of the Countryside Service Offices. This contains a wildflower meadow, fruit trees, compost areas, and seating and is used by people who hire the meeting rooms and as an area for staff. The Worcestershire Garden is maintained by site staff and volunteers.



Worcester Woods Country Park has two waymarked trails which are well used and popular with visitors. These are circular walking routes within the site boundaries. The two routes are the Woodland Trail and the Meadow Trail, both of which are about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile long. The Woodland Trail runs a circular route around Nunnery Wood while The Meadow Trail runs round Hornhill Meadows. Both trails start by the Countryside Centre and are marked with waymark disks. They are both checked regularly, with the Woodland Trail receiving daily checks and the Meadows Trail being checked at least weekly as part of the Custodian inspection regime. They are also both given a more in-depth check as part of the quarterly inspection regime. These trails are well maintained due to the large numbers of people using them. The perimeter path of Nunnery Wood is also incredibly well used as a route, and it would be beneficial to sign post this and turn it into a longer circular walk.



There is an orienteering trail consisting of posts dotted throughout the Country Park with letters and numbers on. The orienteering trail was updated in 2019 with guidance from the Regional Orienteering Society. The orienteering map can be found on our [website](#).

There are several Geocaches on site. These are governed by the Greenspace Team Guidance on Placing Geocaches on Countryside Sites

Litterbins are situated around the picnic area. These are emptied at least daily (more frequently in busy periods). In addition to these there are dog waste bins located along busy dog walking routes and these are emptied by site staff. All site waste is disposed of through Worcester City Council's commercial waste service.

Approximately thirty picnic benches are located in the picnic area. In addition, there are metal chairs and tables on the patio outside the café which the café staff move outside daily for café customers' use. There are also several wooden fixed benches near the play areas for people to sit on and supervise their children. Benches on the patio, in the picnic area and in the play areas are inspected daily by site staff and are replaced as they wear out and any faults are fixed by site staff. Benches can also be found dotted around the Woodland and Meadow Trails.



There are two formal play areas on site. One is for children under age 8 and the other is aimed at children aged eight and over. Both areas are situated adjacent to the car park and picnic area. The under eights play area was refurbished in 2021. The over eights play area is still awaiting refurbishment as and when financial resources allow.



The play areas are inspected daily, as well as having a more thorough quarterly inspection by site staff. A specialist then conducts an annual inspection, and a report is produced. Any issues identified are then remedied immediately.

The Visitor Centre incorporates the Orchard Café and Pond Room meeting room. The Café sells homemade hot and cold food, using local and sustainable produce as much as possible, as well as homemade cakes and a good selection of drinks. There is also a doggy menu on offer, which includes pupachinos, pork sausages, and doggy ice cream. The café has both inside dining, as well as an outdoor hatch serving food to be enjoyed in the picnic area or as a takeaway. The hatch came about during the pandemic when the café was unable to have visitors inside, and has been popular with outside diners ever since, so has remained. The café does allow well behaved dogs inside.



The Pond Room can be hired out as a meeting and activity/education room. During the term you can find several parent and baby classes taking place in there, and during school holidays, there are a variety of craft activities on offer in there. The room is also hired out for children's birthday parties.





A toilet block is situated in the Visitor Centre foyer. This has a ladies, gents, and disabled loos, plus baby changing facilities. WCC staff organise the daily cleaning of the public toilets using a cleaning contractor.

**A reception office is located adjacent to the picnic area in a block with the main Countryside Service offices as well as three other meeting rooms.** These are hired out to the public and are sometimes used in conjunction with events that are held on the Events Field. The Countryside Centre Offices are managed by the Premises Management Group which consults closely with site staff about any issues concerning the management of the building.

The Events Field is a large flat mown grass area adjacent to the picnic area and staff offices. This is managed by site staff and is mown as part of a grounds maintenance contract. It is inspected as part of the daily Custodian regime and quarterly inspection. This can be hired out for specific events such as dog shows and fitness classes. The rest of the time it has open public access and is used for informal sports, recreation, and picnicking. A seasonal fenced off 'Park Adventures' area provides a bouncy castle and other activities for a fee. This is run by an external provider who pays an annual rent for use of the area.



Worcester Woods Country Park has many sculptures. These are mostly wooden sculptures which can be found around the Woodland and Meadows trails. There is also currently a large metal sculpture, Roma, in the east corner of the Events Field and is part of a public art commissioning programme run by Meadow Arts, where pieces of art are situated in public spaces throughout the counties of Worcestershire and Herefordshire. This is a temporary piece of art, but it has been in place since 2010 and there is no end date on its installation. Any minor repairs needed are dealt with by site staff whilst major repairs would be referred to Meadow Arts. The wooden sculptures within the park, were created and are maintained by the site staff. These are inspected as part of the quarterly checks regimes and fixed and replaced as required. These are now getting old and worn and will need to start being replaced soon.

## Meeting Rooms

There are three meeting rooms that can be hired out, the Pond Room mentioned above, and then the Woodland and Meadow Rooms. The largest rooms holds a maximum capacity of 40. They can be hired out for a range of uses, from formal meetings and training to birthday parties. 20<sup>th</sup> Worcester Scouts currently use the rooms as a base for their activities, as well as the wider Country Park. There is also a well establish holiday club, Wildwood Explorers who base themselves in the rooms during some of the school holidays. The Woodland and Meadow Rooms are autism friendly, meaning they have minimal furnishings, dimmed lighting, window tint, and are set in a quiet location, leading out into the Worcestershire Garden. We are lucky enough to have many groups who use these community rooms including various charities, local businesses, local NHS trusts, and by families for a venue for a variety of functions. [The Orchard Cafe](#) supply the rooms with refreshments when needed. Income from meeting room hire goes back into the running of the Country Park.



## Archaeology and the Historic Environment

An archaeological landscape survey was undertaken in 2004 by Worcestershire County Council Archive and Archaeology Service. The aim of survey was to locate and record all historic features within the Country Park and to inform general and targeted future management recommendations for the various features. Four distinctive chronological phases of land use were identified: Prehistoric settlement, Medieval open field cultivation, later enclosed Medieval cultivation with woodland management and a late post-Medieval to modern phase of enclosure in association with a late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century farm.

The site can be divided into three broad periods of distinctive land-use:

Later Prehistoric and Romano-British period: a crop mark in the Slow Worm Field showing a small enclosure.

Medieval (5<sup>th</sup> century – 15<sup>th</sup> century CE): two distinctive patterns of land-use from this period dominate the Country Park. Open-field cultivation, characterised by ridge and furrow earthworks throughout Hornhill Meadows and areas of Nunnery Wood, and enclosed woodland features, such as woodbanks and boundary ditches.

Post-medieval and modern (16<sup>th</sup> century CE – present): During this period the open-fields cultivation system was enclosed by boundary hedges, and the modern field boundary pattern on Hornhill Meadows preserves these features. Hornhill Farm (now demolished) probably originated in the late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Several historical features are still visible when walking around the Country Park, including the remains of the old Hornhill Farmstead and its cobbled pathway, the Medieval ditch and bank system in Nunnery Wood, Medieval ridge, and furrow patterns in Hornhill Meadows (and a small amount in Nunnery Wood) and several Medieval marl pits dotted throughout the site, some of which are now ponds. The historical features are currently in a good state of repair, but it is important that they continue to be conserved.

In 2019 a book was written and published, by Tanya Feasey, called 'The Illustrated History of Worcester Woods Country Park'. This covers historical research up to the modern period including the formulation of the Country Park itself. This was published to coincide with the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Worcester Woods being made a Country Park and there was a 'History Weekend' celebration event with farm machinery, guided walks, and re-enactors. This has now morphed into an annual historical re-enactment weekend. This is organised by the Worcester Re-enactors and is supported by the Country Park. It is a very popular and well attended event.



## Landscape and Landscape Features

Worcester Woods Country Park falls within National Character Area 106 Severn and Avon Vales and the Mid-Worcestershire Forest (MW) Regional Character Area.

The boundary between other more local landscape designations runs between the meadows and the woodland, with the meadows falling within Principle Timbered Farmlands Landscape type and the woodland being within urban landscape type.

The Country Park is atypical for an urban fringe landscape and still retains areas of ancient semi-natural woodland, meadows and hedgerows associated with Medieval farming practices.

Consideration of these landscape features is an integral part of the management of the Country Park. Priorities for landscape management and enhancement on the site have been identified as:

Maintain hedgerow oaks and enhance age structure of oak population.

Maintain and enhance hedgerow fruit trees.

Conserve ancient woodland.

Conserve the pattern and composition of hedgerows.

Maintain traditional orchard.

Maintain meadows.

Protect pond features.

## **Geology and Topography**

The Country Park is situated 60-70 metres above sea level and the underlying geology is Triassic Mudstones with a soil of clays with impeded drainage. There are several drainage ditches, spring-fed ponds, and a balancing pond across the site. The drainage of the site, especially in Nunnery Wood, has been significantly altered by adjacent developments, and the main ditch through the woodland experiences heavy storm flows from runoff from nearby car parks and buildings.

The topography of the Country Park is typically rolling lowland. There is a slight incline to the northeast, with southern and western aspect, but the topography of the Country Park is not a distinguishing feature of the area.

## **Habitats**

Worcester Woods Country Park contains many valuable habitats and is a significant wildlife resource at both a local and wider level; with several of the habitat types, notably the ancient woodland, being of national importance.

## **Grassland**

Grassland makes up approximately a third of the Country Park and there are two broad types of grassland on the site: amenity and species rich grassland.

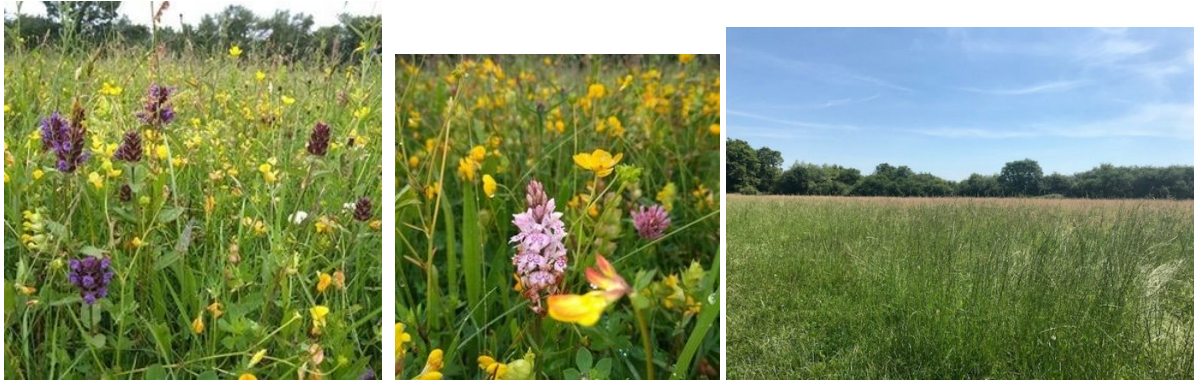
The amenity grassland is characterised by close-mown grassland areas used for public recreation and these are adjacent to the Visitor Centre and car park. These are cut once a month throughout the growing season and managed to provide a durable surface for the high footfall of visitors to the Country Park.

Hornhill Meadows are characterised by more species rich grassland. The landform shows strong Medieval ridge and furrow and this indicates a long history as pasture and/or hay meadow, with an absence of modern cultivation. Hornhill Meadows is a Local Nature Reserve and Special Wildlife Site based upon the floristic interest of the grassland and consists of three fields which extend to 4.5 hectares in total. The site conforms to National Vegetation Classification (NVC) community MG5, with the 'best fit' being the MG5b sub community. The adjacent Dan's Field has been sown with a species rich mix and managed in a similar way for a number of years and is close in composition to the other Hornhill Meadow fields.

These fields are managed by an annual hay cut with winter grazing by three cattle to provide low level aftermath grazing. Recent years has anecdotally shown a decline in the diversity of the meadows which may be due to the use of a cut and collect machine rather than traditional haymaking, an increase in visitor footfall and environmental reasons such as climate change, local developments and increased local pollution levels.

The other fields on the site are characterised by more nutrient rich, ranker grassland and these are managed as rough grassland for the benefit of Slowworms which prefer a ranker, tussocky grassland.

This is so that the fields can be used as translocation sites for Slowworm populations displaced by development sites in the local area. These fields are managed by periodic high-level mowing to prevent scrub encroachment but maintain the tussocky nature of the grassland.



## Woodland

The western half of the Country Park is Nunnery Wood, a 20ha area of ancient, semi-natural woodland. The woodland is the defining feature of the Country Park to visitors and is very heavily used by the public.

Nunnery Wood is primarily oak standards with hazel coppice and associated species, developing into a typical neglected coppice with standards community, classified as W10 by NVC. There are also a number of Wild Service trees in the woodland, surviving as stored coppice, and these are notable as an ancient woodland indicator species. In spring the ground flora is dominated by bluebells, with these being widespread throughout the woodland.

The current management of the woodland is separated into two systems: coppice with standards and high forest. The coppice areas cover approximately ten acres with the remaining forty acres of the woodland as high forest.

The aim of the coppice plots is to maintain areas of active management to aid woodland regeneration, provide valuable wildlife habitat and produce a sustainable supply of coppice products and materials for use by the Countryside Service and the wider community. The differing mosaic and diversity in vegetation levels and structure within the woodland also greatly increases its benefit for wildlife across the whole woodland area.

In the hazel coppice areas the hazel is in generally good condition, with adequate stool density and a good rate of re-growth and vigour. The areas are coppiced every six or seven years, depending upon the rate of regrowth of the Hazel. The ground flora in the coppice areas is also very diverse due to the periodic increased light levels after each coppice cycle.

The remainder of the woodland is managed as high forest. These areas of the woodland are generally in moderate condition but with a lack of young trees and a general decline and senescence in the understorey. This is due to the density of oak standards being too great, leading to a lack of regeneration of understorey species such as hazel, hawthorn and birch, due to the very low light levels.

There are also low numbers of oak saplings to provide the next generation of oak trees and maintain the woodland cover. This high density of oak standards is due to the woodland being clear-felled in 1945 to help with the post-war demand for timber and wood.

The management of these high forest areas is low impact thinning of the dense areas of oak standards to increase light levels and allow natural regeneration of the woodland understorey and oak saplings.

There is a network of hard-surface gravel paths around the wood, with surfaced routes just inside the boundary of the woodland and a number within the woodland itself. There are also a number of 'official' unsurfaced paths in the woodland and a large number of 'unofficial' unsurfaced paths throughout. The surfaced path network in the woodland helps to prevent visitors from walking generally throughout the woodland, which causes severe damage to the sensitive ground flora, such as bluebells, which are widespread throughout the woodland.

There is a good amount of deadwood present in the woodland, a highly important component of a healthy natural woodland ecosystem. In recent years the number of dying oak standards in parts of the woodland has increased. After investigation it was concluded that this is due to 'oak decline'. The probable factors for this are increased environmental stresses on trees due to climate change, increased pollution levels and the 'middle aged' nature of the oaks, which are losing their youthful vigour. It is likely that a combination of environmental stresses have caused individual trees to decline, rather than being the result of a disease or pathogen being present in the woodland. Dead and dying trees are assessed and dealt with via the tree inspection process. An increase in oak regeneration due to increased light levels resulting from selective felling and the natural death of individual trees should increase the age diversity of the woodland and recruit future standards.



To the west of Nunnery Wood is the amenity grassland area of Newtown Green. This is owned and managed by Worcester City Council and has close links to the woodland and Country Park. There are many official and unofficial paths between the two areas and a long boundary along the woodland edge. Over the years Worcester City Council has left a wide unmown strip along the woodland boundary and this has allowed natural regeneration of Oaks to occur and provide a valuable wildlife resource and buffer zone for the mature woodland of Nunnery Wood. The Country Park and Worcester City have worked together on many projects over the years to the benefit of both areas and further partnership working in the future would be welcomed and hopefully continue to improve the areas for wildlife, visitors, and local residents.

## Scrub

Areas of scrub in the Country Park tend to occur as wide connections to hedgerows or as buffer zones bordering high use amenity areas. The most important of these buffer zones are the scrub belts which border the northern and eastern boundaries of the events field and an area to the east of the Hornhill Farm Orchard.

Scrub is also present on the slope between the play areas and the car park, and carrying on somewhat to the east, and this provides screening for the car park and protects the slope from erosion and manages access to and from the amenity areas.

The scrub present in the Country Park is generally unmanaged, with no specific cutting regime. The exceptions to this are the scrub around the events field and Hornhill meadows, which is predominantly Blackthorn and is managed by periodic cutting of the dense sucker growth encroaching onto the grassland, which is then allowed to regenerate.

Current scrub management is well suited to the site and fulfils the aims of providing food and shelter for a wide variety of wildlife as well as screening and protection between various different areas of the Country Park.

## Ponds and Springs

The Country Park contains three woodland ponds and one field pond. There is also a balancing pond to the east of the car park.

The Woodland Pond is a Medieval clay pit, which is fed from the woodland ditch network. It holds water all year and has a moderately shaded aspect. The surrounding vegetation extends to the water's edge and is predominantly hazel. The east and west banks are cut on an alternating 6-year cycle, with the effect that one bank is cleared every 3 years, periodically allowing increased light levels to reach the pond. There is little pond vegetation around the banks of the pond due to the amount of shading and the most dominant vegetation in the pond is Duckweed, which often covers the entire pond surface in the summer months. There is not a constant flow of water into the pond as water originates from the hard standing areas of the hospital to the north of the woodland. The varied flow into the woodland pond means that in the summer months the water in the pond can become stagnant with little flow or fresh water to refresh the system.

The Nazy Pond and Jane's Pond are also Medieval and are associated with the woodland boundary bank and ditch. The Nazy Pond generally holds water all year round. It is fed from run-off from the hospital to the north and feeds the Woodland Pond via the woodland ditch network. In 2022, it was evidenced that this pond is in fact within the boundary of the Hospital and so not the County Council's responsibility to manage. Jane's Pond is fed only by local run off from rainfall and does dry out in lower rainfall periods. Both ponds are heavily shaded by mature trees and consequently have no emergent or marginal vegetation.

The Meadow Pond is a post-Medieval feature which was used to water stock from the surrounding field network. It is fed by run-off from surrounding grassland and the field ditch to the north. The Meadow Pond holds water during the winter months but usually dries out during the spring. It is fed by run-off from surrounding grassland and the field ditch to the north.



The balancing pond is fed directly from the car park and consequently has very variable inflow. It is not shaded but regularly dries out and has no obvious pond vegetation. It is surrounded by rank grass which is cut and removed as a hay cut every year to prevent blockage of the drainage systems.

## **Hedgerows and Significant trees**

Hedgerows are an important feature of the Country Park as they provide screening from surrounding development, internal partitions between high amenity and other areas within the Country Park and are historic landscape features, particularly in the field complex associated with Hornhill Meadows.

Boundary hedges to Hornhill Meadows and the hedge bordering the events field are maintained as large, wide features to provide screening and buffers to different 'zones' within the Country Park itself. The internal hedges to Hornhill Meadows and the boundary hedge to the north of Dan's Field are managed as large, mature hedgerows to provide food and shelter to wildlife.

The boundary hedgerows to the Country Park are mainly recent hedges planted when the park was established, but those on Hornhill Meadows are much older and the lines they follow identify them as being from Medieval field enclosure in the 18th Century. The hedgerows preserve the alignments of the earlier ridge and furrow cultivation system.

Hedgerow trees are an important feature of a number of the hedgerows, with a significant number of important landscape oaks in the northern boundary hedge of the park and a large number of veteran Black Pear trees in the internal hedgerows of Hornhill Meadows.

Nunnery Wood also has significant trees in the form of boundary oak pollards which mark the historic boundary of the ancient woodland. These trees have not been cut for many decades and are now 'over-stored'. In past years some sensitive re-pollarding was done in an attempt to renew regrowth and vigour, but this had disappointing results.

## **Grants, Resources and Funding**

In 2006 the site was awarded a Higher-Level Stewardship grant, which was replaced more recently by a Countryside Stewardship grant from Defra, which part-funds the conservation management of the key habitats and features of the site. This annual funding has continued, with the grant agreement being extended each year until the new Environmental Land Management (ELMS) funding streams are implemented by Defra. The funding has reduced to around £730 per year, as the woodland no longer qualifies for the grant payments, so only the meadows are included in the grant agreement.

Additional funds come from the Countryside Service budgets and various diverse income streams such as meeting room hire, event field hire, timber and woodland material sales, donations, rents, and contracted services. Significant funding from Public Health Ring Fenced Grant, via the Public Health Directorate at the County Council helps to fund the work of the Greenspace Team, particularly the provision of countryside sites, in recognition of their health and wellbeing benefits. Approximately 75% of the costs of managing the Countryside Greenspace Team, and the twenty country parks, picnic places and nature reserves that it manages, is via income and grants.

The Countryside Sites Team responsible for the management of the Country Park is the South Area Team which also manages two other nature reserves and seven picnic places across south Worcestershire, as well as Worcester Woods Country Park. The South Area Team is made up of 4 members of staff, equivalent to 3.3 full time equivalents, as several are part time. A Business

Support Officer also works across the wider team and manages the meeting rooms at the Country Park, provides a reception function, finance support and is the Premises Manager for the café and office buildings at the Country Park.

## **Natural Capital, Health, and Wellbeing**

The natural environment provides many resources to society which are known as natural capital and ecosystem services. Worcester Woods Country Park provides many such resources including carbon storage, renewable energy through wood fuel, clean air and water and reduced flooding locally.

Its situation on the edge of Worcester City and immediate surroundings of Worcester Royal Hospital, St Richards Hospice and County Hall means it offers immediate access to thousands of people for outdoor space and nature.

A healthy natural environment has huge benefits to quality of life and the economy. The health and wellbeing benefits of a Country Park like Worcester Woods are many. Mental ill health is increasing, and research indicates that taking part in nature-based activities can help reduce depression, anxiety, and stress. Physical activity amongst adults and children is declining and there is an increase in obesity, and related illnesses as a result. Social prescribing by health professionals for both physical and mental wellbeing can involve directing someone to go for a walk, join a volunteer group or fitness class, all of which Worcester Woods provides opportunities for. These are safe and cost-effective forms of medical intervention which can reverse or prevent serious health conditions

## **Awards and Accreditation**

Worcester Woods Country Park has held the Green Flag Award since 2005. This award is the national standard for greenspaces. Worcester Woods is also an Accredited Country Park, which is a national standard given to Country Parks by Natural England. Worcester Woods has held accredited status since 2009 when it was declared the first Accredited Country Park in the UK. Worcestershire County Council has always strived to name and brand its sites in a way that is clear and logical to the public and Country Park Accreditation and Green Flag helps towards this. Country Park Accreditation provides the public with an indication of what to expect when they plan their visit to a country park, that there will be certain facilities such as café, toilets, play area and waymarked trails and the fact that they are Green Flag award winning shows that these will be managed to a certain standard.



## **Sustainability**

Environmental sustainability is an integral part of the Council's approach to managing Worcester Woods Country Park. For example, the lease with the Orchard Café includes specific requirements for local produce, use of fair trade, sustainable products, and minimal plastic.

Many types of timber materials used by the team are also produced on site. Coppicing each winter produces Hazel rods that are used in hedge laying, hurdle making or are sold to the general public. The thinning of the standard trees in Nunnery Wood results in the production of timber which is sold to the public or used on site. A chainsaw mill allows the production of planks to make bench seats and memorial benches which are used across the countryside sites.

The staff offices and community meeting rooms are situated in an eco-building with wood clad walls and a turf roof. A wood fuel boiler powers the hot water and heating for the site.

Electric charge points have been investigated for installation in the car park, but this project has stalled due to prohibitive costs to get the utilities connected to the location. If a way can be found to do proceed without prohibitive costs, then the project will be revisited.

Much recycling is carried out on site, with bins for public and business use. Food waste is also collected from the café at regular intervals and taken away to be composted.

## **Health and Safety**

Worcester Woods Country Park has daily health and safety checks undertaken by staff of the picnic areas, play areas, car park and Woodland Trail. In addition to this, more extensive quarterly checks are undertaken by sites staff four times a year. All items on site are inspected by a set of site standards (See Appendix) and these checks cover the whole of the site.

Tree safety inspections are also carried every 15 months, with work actioned and any issues recorded.

A RoSPA (Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents) accredited inspection of the play areas is conducted annually and actions from the report are followed up.

A full set of Site Risk Assessments and Activity Risk Assessments exist and are updated annually.

Any accident or incident is recorded according to legal requirements and County Council Policy. Where appropriate reviews of procedures and facilities are conducted, and any works identified completed.

## **Visitor Feedback**

Historically we had visitor comments cards in the café, and return on these was reasonably good, however would have only been completed by visitors using the café. During the pandemic, whilst the café was closed for inside dining, and to use a more modern and environmentally friendly way of collating this data, visitor feedback surveys were added to the Worcestershire County Council [website](#) for each countryside site. This is promoted via signage on site, however a strong focus on promoting this is further needed going forward. We do get frequent completed surveys come through; however, this is low when compared to the number of visitors we have annually. This may be because the surveys need to be promoted more, or we have many return visitors, or because there are other ways to leave feedback such as TripAdvisor or social media. Such data enables Countryside staff to look at trends, such as how visitors are travelling to the site, how long they are

staying and what their main purpose of the visit is, i.e., dog walking, meeting friends. Visitors can rate the site for aspects like cleanliness and facilities. The data collected is very useful for site management and understanding what visitors want from their greenspaces. This data can also be helpful when applying for grants and funding.

## **Social Media**

Worcester Woods currently has a well-used Facebook page, which is used to communicate with visitors about upcoming events, services, showcase photos, and promote school holiday activities and events run by organisations/individuals who use the park, such as Woodside Holiday Club for example. Facebook is also used to communicate scheduled maintenance works taking place that are potentially disruptive. We also share cafe opening times, menus, and seasonal specials the café chefs have created. We may look into other social media platforms, as there are so many about now, however at the moment we have found that Facebook works well with our user groups.

## **Website**

Worcester Woods is one several greenspaces that Worcestershire County Council manage. All these Greenspaces have many benefits and opportunities for people that visit, live, or work in the county, such as health and wellbeing, recreation, enjoying local wildlife and play in a safe environment. They also offer volunteering and work experience opportunities, as well as business opportunities for those looking for greenspaces to run events and activities on, such as outdoor fitness classes.

To increase awareness of County Council's services, the primary source for information is the County Council website.

Visitors can see the site map of the Country Park and learn about the site and its facilities, as well as find the Use of Site application form (to hold an event/activity/class on site) and find directions and location of each County Council greenspace. As well as site information, the website is where the complaints and compliments procedure, job vacancy and contact information can be found.

## **Worcestershire County Council Communications Team**

Countryside staff work closely with Worcestershire County Council Communications Team to produce press releases for things like Green Flag Awards and assist with promotion of the sites and the work Countryside staff do. As well as working with Countryside Staff directly, the Communications Team deal with all press and media enquiries.

## **Information and Interpretation**

There are information boards around the site, including at the entrance to the car park, in the car park near the cafe, and around the woodland and meadow trails.

The entrance welcome board was replaced in 2023 by countryside staff, however, could be more visible from Wildwood Drive. The writing could be bigger and in a darker colour which may help visitors be able to see the text more clearly as they approach the Country Park.



There is an information board in the car park itself, with a map of the site. And then just in front of the café foyer there are signposts showing where the meeting rooms are, these could be more prominent, as sometimes some attendees coming to the meeting rooms often end up in the café, asking where to go.

And then there are a number of information panels around the walking trails, giving information about the history of the site. These are maintained by sites staff. They are printed on foamex material and positioned in green frames making them easy and cost efficient to replace if damaged. These are inspected as part of the inspection regime and should be maintained for the enjoyment and education of site visitors.

There are a number of wooden sculptures dotted around the site. These are mostly created by Countryside staff and are added on an ad hoc basis. Some sculptures are falling into a state of disrepair and may need removing or replacing in the near future.

## **Community Involvement**

### **Volunteering**

Worcester Woods founded a volunteer group in October 2004, with the aim of maintaining the Country Park for the benefit of wildlife and visitors. The group continue to work in the Country Park, with some of its original members. The group meet every Thursday and carry out work such as orchard restoration, pond creation, bridge building, path creation and maintenance, and on average we have about eight volunteers each week.



We occasionally have community groups come and litter pick in the park. We supply the litter picking equipment and black bin bags, and the group do the hard work.



## Objectives and Actions

<b>Access and Facilities</b>	
Objective: Maintain a fully operational car park with available spaces for visitors.	
Actions.	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor use by Hospital visitors and act if a problem with car park capacity develops.</li> <li>• Investigate the feasibility of getting a working barrier system back up and running within the car park.</li> <li>• Get the car park lights to function properly at night and in the darker mornings so that user groups do not have to arrive in the dark.</li> </ul>	
<b>Access and Facilities</b>	
Objective: Protect the ecology of the woodland by discouraging excessive pedestrian activity off the official paths.	
Actions.	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactively manage and maintain official paths in a good state of repair to encourage regular usage.</li> <li>• Continue to discourage use of unofficial paths in Nunnery wood with fencing and dead hedging.</li> </ul>	

<b>Access and Facilities</b>	
Objective: Have a longer circular trail on site.	
Actions.	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a circular trail around the woodland perimeter path.</li> </ul>	

<b>Access and Facilities</b>	
Objective: Provide safe and engaging children's play facilities.	
Actions.	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep up to date with yearly ROSPA play area inspections and action anything within the report within the recommended time frames.</li> <li>• Seek funding to renew equipment within the older children's play area.</li> </ul>	

<b>Access and Facilities</b>	
Objective: Provide interesting sculptures around the site trails.	
<b>Actions.</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update the existing sculpture trail and replace sculptures that look tired and worn.</li> <li>• Seek out opportunities to add new sculptures to the site.</li> </ul>	

<b>Access and Facilities</b>	
Objective: Keep an up to date and functioning orienteering trail.	
<b>Actions.</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Periodically review maps to make sure they are up to date and meeting orienteering standards. Use the local Harlequins Orienteering Club to review the maps.</li> <li>• Check all posts once a quarter as part of the quarterly inspections and replace any that are missing or broken.</li> <li>• Keep an up-to-date map online on our website and periodically check QR codes around the park leading to the online map.</li> </ul>	

<b>Access and Facilities</b>	
Objective: To ensure meeting rooms are being well used, to generate income for the Country Park	
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of rooms via social media and on site</li> <li>• Review pricing structures to ensure they remain competitive and value for money</li> <li>• Ensure technology available in the rooms remains up to date</li> </ul>	

<b>Archaeology and the Historic Environment</b>	
Objective:	
<b>Actions.</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to conserve historical features on site.</li> <li>• Continue to host the Worcester Re-enactors event.</li> </ul>	

<b>6.5 Landscape and Landscape Features</b>	
Objective: to maintain the parks features that fit in with the rolling lowland landscape character	



Actions.	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain hedgerow oaks and recruit more</li> <li>• Maintain and enhance hedgerow fruit trees</li> <li>• Conserve ancient woodland</li> <li>• Conserve the pattern and composition of hedgerows</li> <li>• Maintain traditional orchard</li> <li>• Maintain meadows</li> <li>• Protect pond features</li> </ul>	This is expanded upon in following sections.

6.6 Geology and Topography	
Objective: maintain ditch network and other notable features	
Actions.	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain ditch network in Nunnery Wood</li> <li>• Maintain historic gullies and landforms across the Country Park</li> </ul>	Also see Ponds section

## 6.7 Habitats and Species

6.7.1 Grassland	
Objective: to maintain/enhance biodiversity of meadow grassland, maintain/enhance quality of rough grassland for Slowworms	
Actions.	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harvest seed from the best meadows and scatter in less diverse meadows.</li> <li>• Take late summer hay cut from as wide an area as possible on meadows</li> <li>• Graze with native breed cattle, aftermath grazing on hay cut areas.</li> <li>• Review grazing regime at regular intervals and adjust according to conditions – growth of wildflowers, sward height, poaching etc.</li> <li>• Maintain field boundaries</li> <li>• Maintain rough grass areas by topping to encourage grass tussocks</li> <li>• Create/maintain Slowworm hibernacula</li> </ul>	Also see Scrub section

Woodland	
Objective: Maintain and enhance Nunnery Wood by active management of high forest and coppice areas	
Actions.	Comments

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out tree inspections every 15 months to coincide with quarterly checks, carry out any safety work arising from these.</li> <li>• Continue coppicing with existing coppice plot areas to promote a cycle of vigour and regrowth of trees, shrubs, and ground flora</li> <li>• Carry out canopy thinning in high forest areas to maintain understorey and allow natural regeneration of Oaks and other tree species</li> <li>• Manage/remove invasive species (e.g., laurel, sycamore) to prevent their spread within the woodland</li> <li>• Retain dead wood where safe to do so</li> <li>• Maintain surfaced path network</li> </ul>	
--	--

Scrub	
Objective: to create/maintain scrub areas of varying age structure	
Actions.	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain areas of rough scrub across the site for the benefit of wildlife</li> <li>• Maintain wide scrub borders between events field and meadows</li> <li>• Continue management of Blackthorn scrub on meadows by periodic clearing of sections to provide a mosaic of differing ages</li> <li>• Manage regrowth by grazing, cutting, or flailing, allowing some areas to grow to maturity and avoid annual trimming or management to allow flower/fruit production</li> </ul>	

Ponds and Springs	
Objective: to maintain ponds with open water and vegetated margins.	
Actions.	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coppice banks round Woodland Pond in rotation, to maintain light levels</li> <li>• Maintain fencing around meadow pond</li> <li>• Monitor for erosion / dog entry points and repair bank edges as necessary.</li> <li>• Maintain woodland ditch network through woodland</li> <li>• Maintain dam below woodland pond outfall to hold water back in periods of low flow</li> <li>• Cut and remove vegetation annually around Meadow and Balancing ponds</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain amounts of deadwood materials for wildlife in and around woodland ponds</li> </ul>	
--	--

<b>Hedgerows and significant trees</b>	
Objective: Maintain hedgerows and hedgerow network across the site and protect significant trees.	
Actions.	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain hedgerows as wide features with dense, broad bases to provide shelter for wildlife</li> <li>• Maintain hedges with rotational programme of gapping up where needed and laying where feasible.</li> <li>• Avoid trimming meadow hedgerows to allow flowers/fruits to develop</li> <li>• Maintain fencing to protect hedgerows where needed.</li> <li>• Monitor significant hedgerow / boundary trees in accordance with the tree inspection policy, carry out safety work and work to prolong their lifespan as necessary.</li> <li>• Identify and protect any future significant hedgerow trees</li> <li>• Identify and protect significant woodland boundary pollards. Do not re-cut or greatly open up canopy around the trees.</li> </ul>	

<b>Natural Capital</b>	
Continue to maintain and enhance the natural capital of Worcester Woods Country Park.	
Actions.	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take advantage of any opportunities to raise grant revenue for projects that enhance the natural capital of the park.</li> <li>• Encourage public events on site that fit in with natural capital and well-being objectives, i.e., supporting Worcester Park Run.</li> </ul>	

<b>Awards and Accreditation</b>	
Continue to have recognisable awards and accreditations for Worcester Woods.	
Actions.	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to apply for and maintain both the Green Flag Award and Countryside Accreditation Award.</li> </ul>	

Sustainability	
Maintain Worcester Woods Country Park sustainably as possible.	
Actions.	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to implement and improve our environmental sustainability policy.</li> </ul>	

Visitor Feedback	
Objective: To promote online visitor surveys and encourage visitors leave feedback and reviews. Monitor feedback on social media platforms and TripAdvisor	
Ensure signage promoting online visitor surveys and QR codes are prominent on site.	

## Threats to the site

### Climate change, tree pests and diseases

Increased carbon in the atmosphere will mean that climate change will affect the natural environment. In summary this is likely to mean that temperatures will continue to rise and weather patterns will change over time. There are likely to be more extreme weather events such as heavy rainfall, which can cause flooding and erosion, storms with high winds which can cause trees to blow over or be damaged. Warmer winters may mean that plant species cannot germinate or fruit, as they require a spell of colder weather. Drier conditions could also cause drought, which may mean that species do not have enough water to thrive.

The site has a high value for ecosystem services including mitigating the impacts of climate change through functions such as carbon sequestration and cooling from vegetation such as trees, woodlands, and grasslands. There has been some small-scale tree planting taking place in small areas across the Country Park over the past 2 years where it does not compromise existing valuable habitats such as species rich grassland.

Pests and diseases are likely to increase in their effect on wildlife, and invasive species may also become more prominent, causing detriment to native species that may already be under stress.

There has been a dramatic increase in the threat of damaging pests and diseases that affect trees, most of which have come from abroad. Examples include Acute Oak Decline (AOD), Phytophthora and Ash Dieback (Chalara). Once infected, after a few years, these diseases are usually fatal to the tree.

The management of the Country Park will need to be adaptive to change to ensure that the park is resilient to the effects of climate change and pests and diseases. For example, if trees become affected by disease or drought and become unsafe, they may need to be pruned or even felled if they are in an area of the park with a level of public access.

## **Increasing visitor numbers**

The numbers of visitors to the Country Park has steadily increased over time and this has put pressure on the facilities and infrastructure of the Country Park. Over the years many changes have been made to prevent damage to the park, such as surfacing of paths, protective fencing around sensitive areas or habitats and increases to the range of facilities and services provided, such as increasing the play area provision.

The increase in visitor numbers sped up during and immediately after the Covid 19 lockdowns as people sought recreational opportunities due to travel restrictions or other facilities not being accessible. This led to a large number of people discovering the site and what it has to offer and a proportion of them continue to visit the site.

Coupled with a general increase in visitor numbers has been a widening of the times of year when visitors come to the park. In the past the main visitor period was in the dryer months of the year but this has now extended into the wetter winter months. During these times the ground is more vulnerable to damage and the grass and vegetation is not actively growing so is damaged more easily.

In order to combat the negative impacts of higher visitor numbers there will need to be further improvements to infrastructure such as paths and the more sensitive areas and wildlife habitats found within the park will need careful management to prevent excessive damage from occurring.

## **Development and impacts from the man-made environment**

The area around the Country Park is progressively being developed for housing and commercial developments. This has both direct and indirect impacts upon the Country Park; from adjacent developments changing surface water drainage or building works affecting tree roots and increased footfall from new commuter routes through the park, to indirect impacts such as cutting wildlife travel corridors and increased air and noise pollution from nearby roads and developments.

These changes will all have an impact on the country park, and these will have to be acknowledged and monitored going forward to manage and minimise any potential harm caused.

## **Appendix**

### Maps

Site Map

Site Context Map

Tenure Map

Area Habitats and Names

Historic Environment Map

### **1. Standards at Countryside Sites**

### **2. Daily inspections Sheet**

### **3. Quarterly inspections sheet**

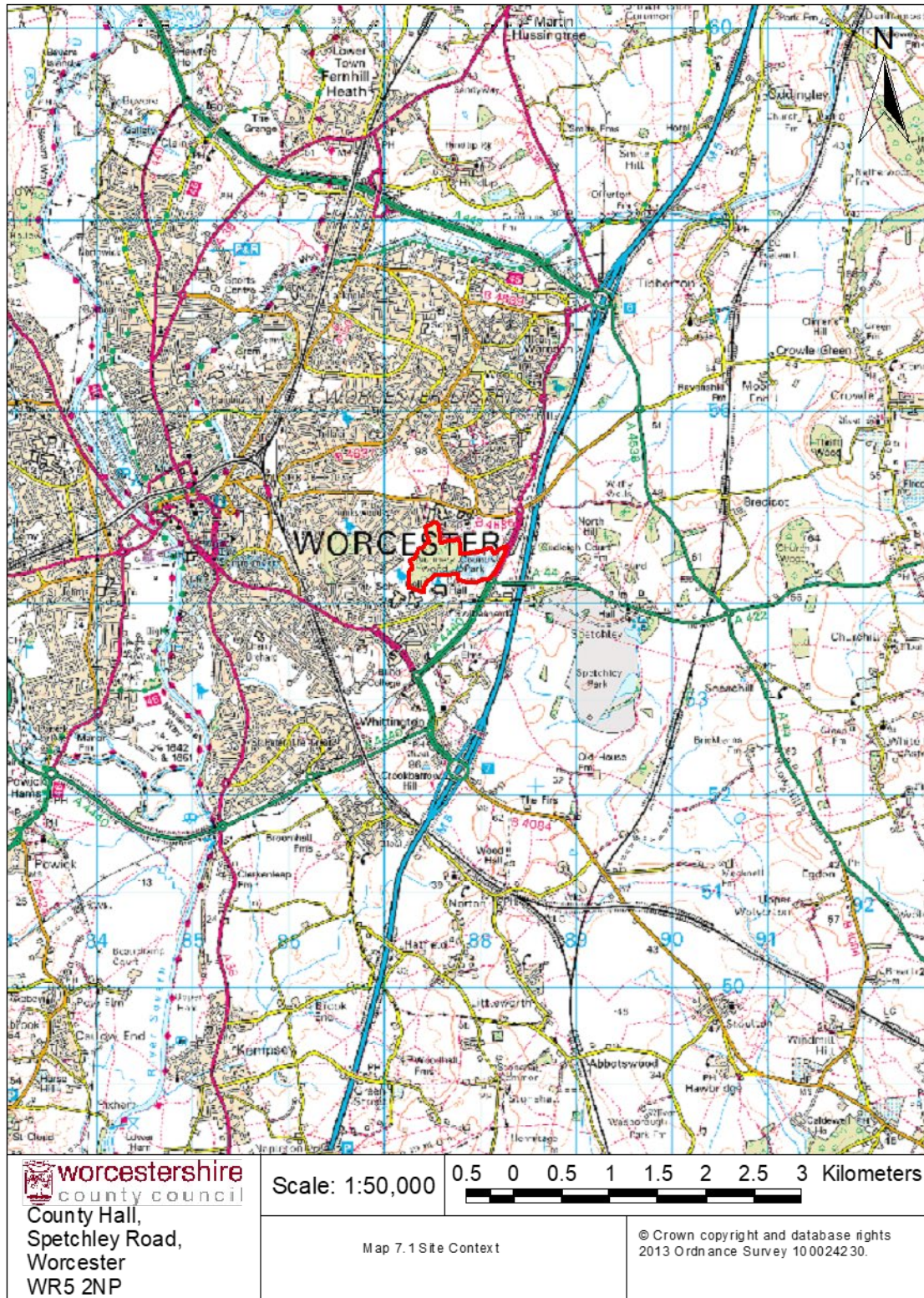
# Appendix 1

## Maps

### Site Map

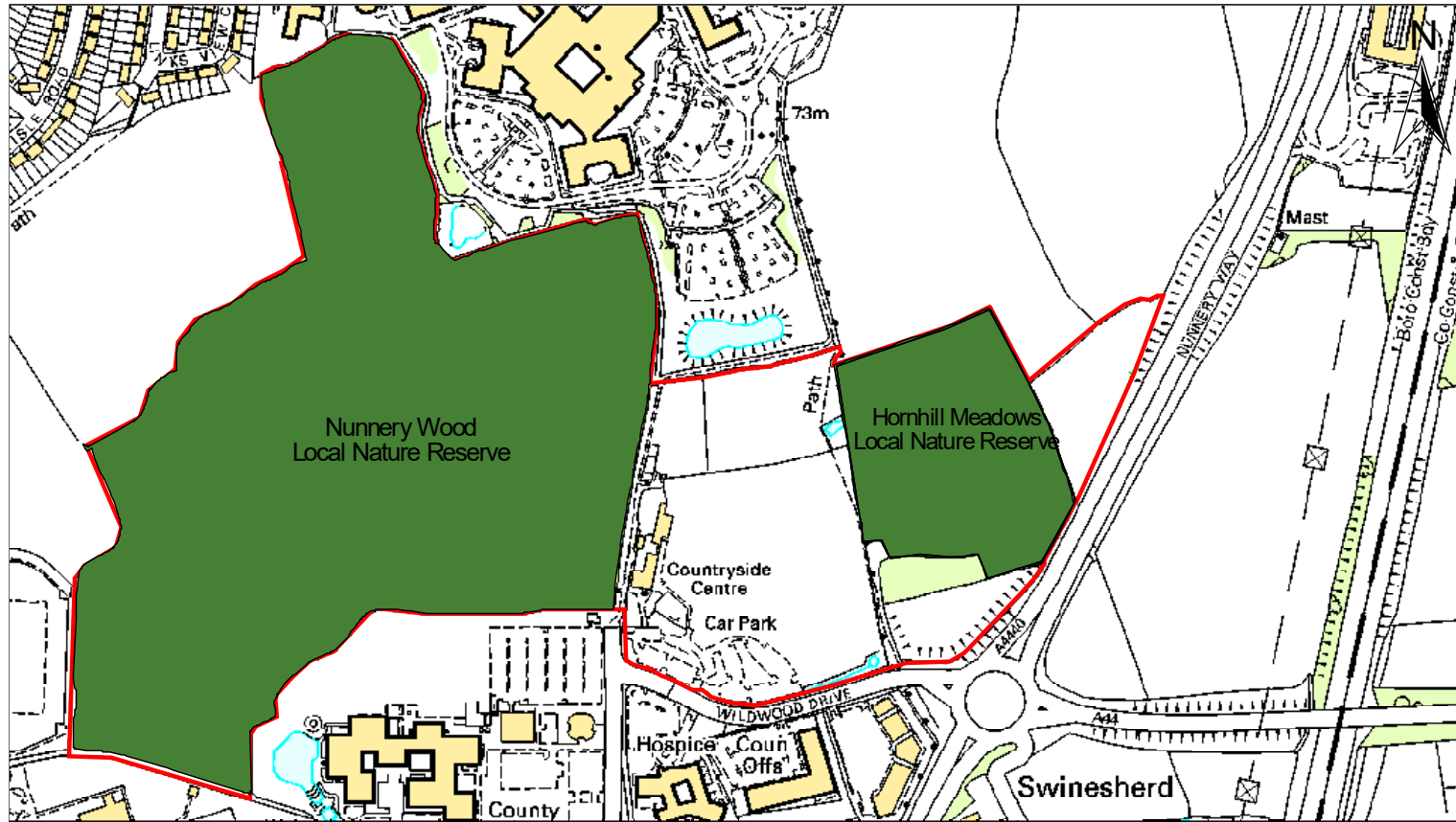


# Site Context Map





# Site Designations Map



**worcestershire**  
county council  
County Hall,  
Spetchley Road,  
Worcester  
WR5 2NP

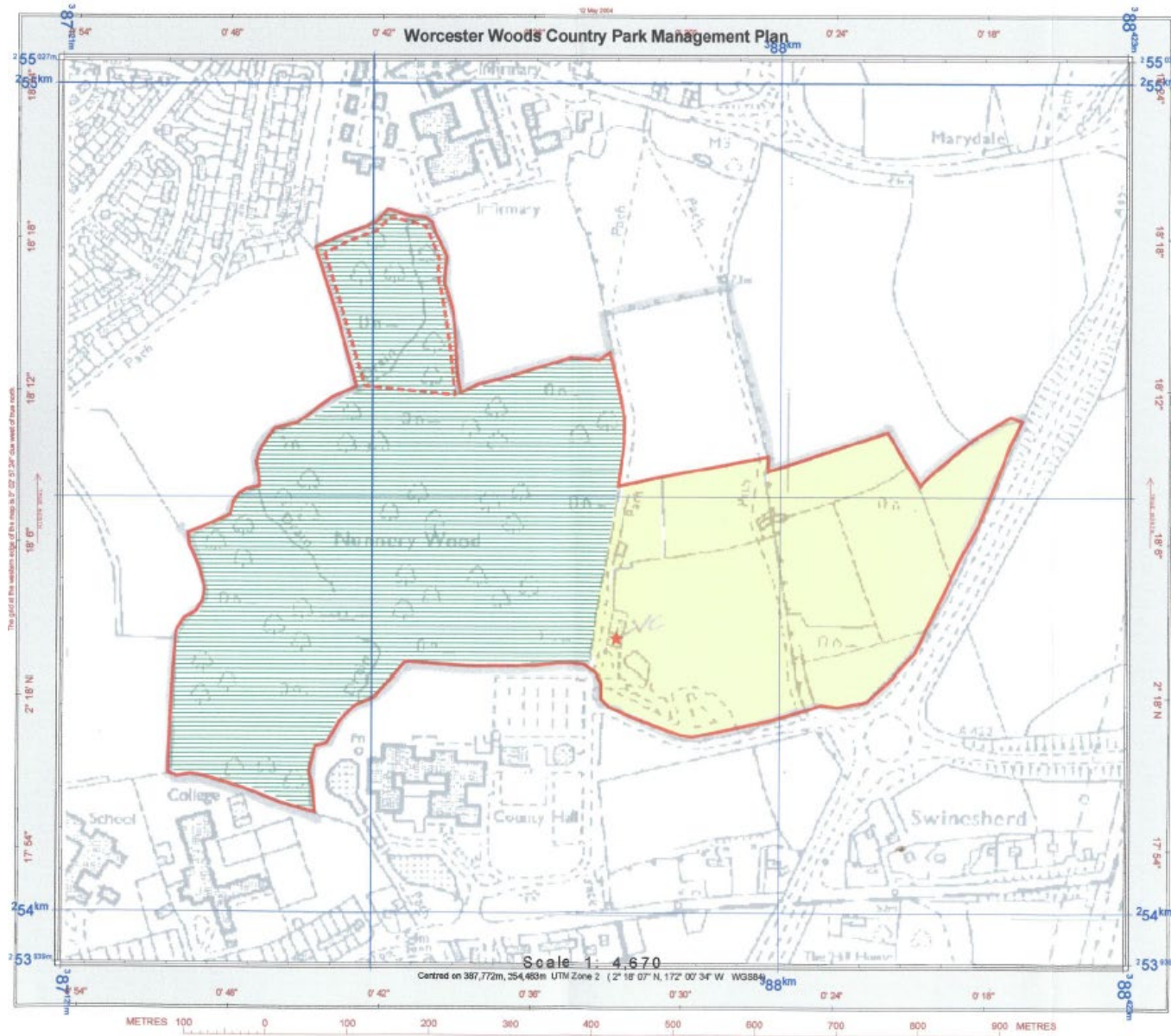
Scale: 1:5,000      50 0 50 100 150 200 250 Meters

Worcester Woods Country Park  
Local Nature Reserves and Special Wildlife Sites

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2013 Ordnance Survey 100024230.

■ Worcs\_sws\_09\_region.shp  
▲ Wwoods site boundary.shp

# Tenure Map



Worcester Woods Country Park Management Plan

Appendix 1: Map # 5

**Tenure**

Date: 12/05/04

**LEGEND**

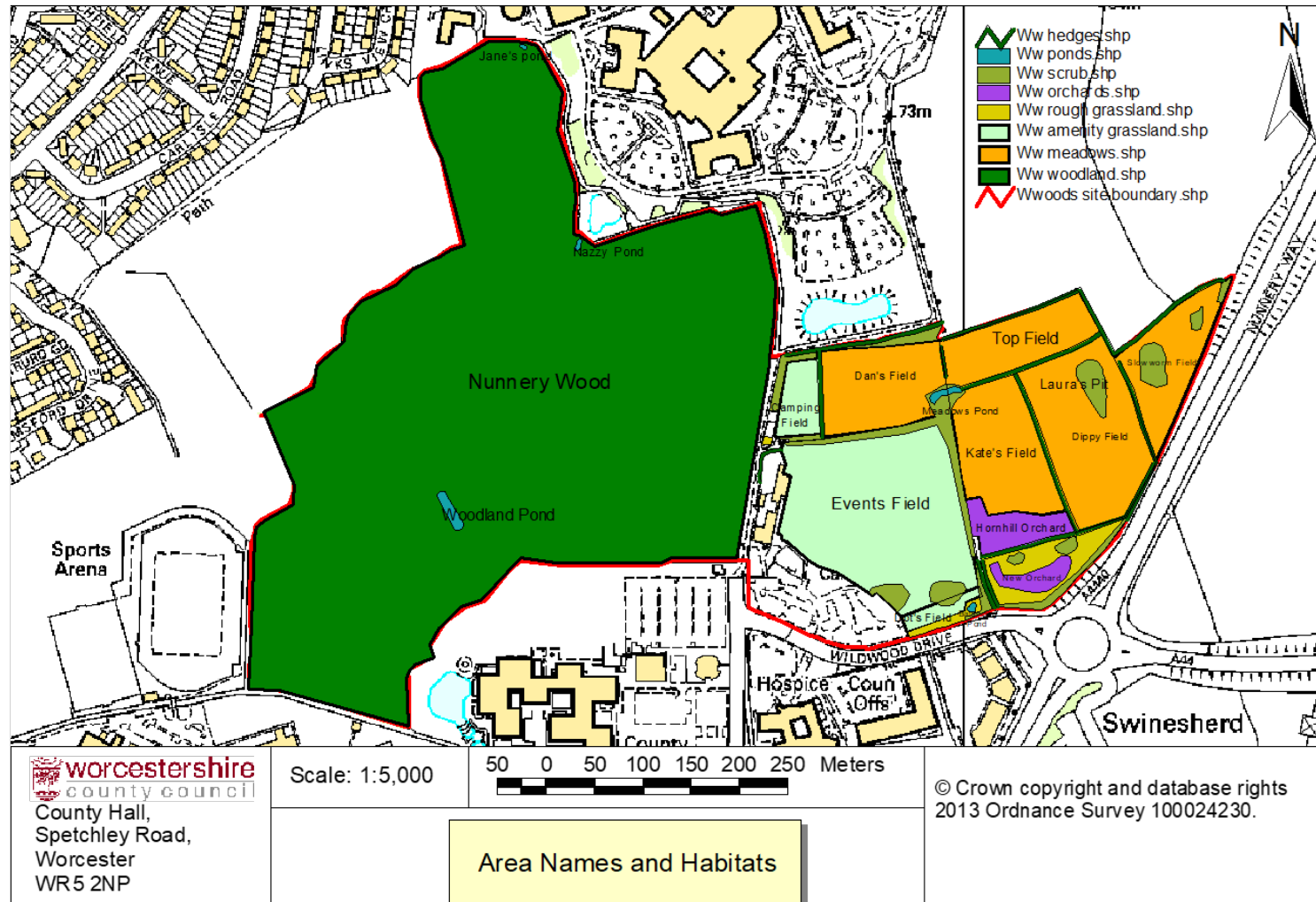
-  boundary
-  Worcestershire County Council
-  Christchurch College (lease)
-  Cafe licence
-  Worcester City Council (lease)

©Worcestershire County Council LA09073L

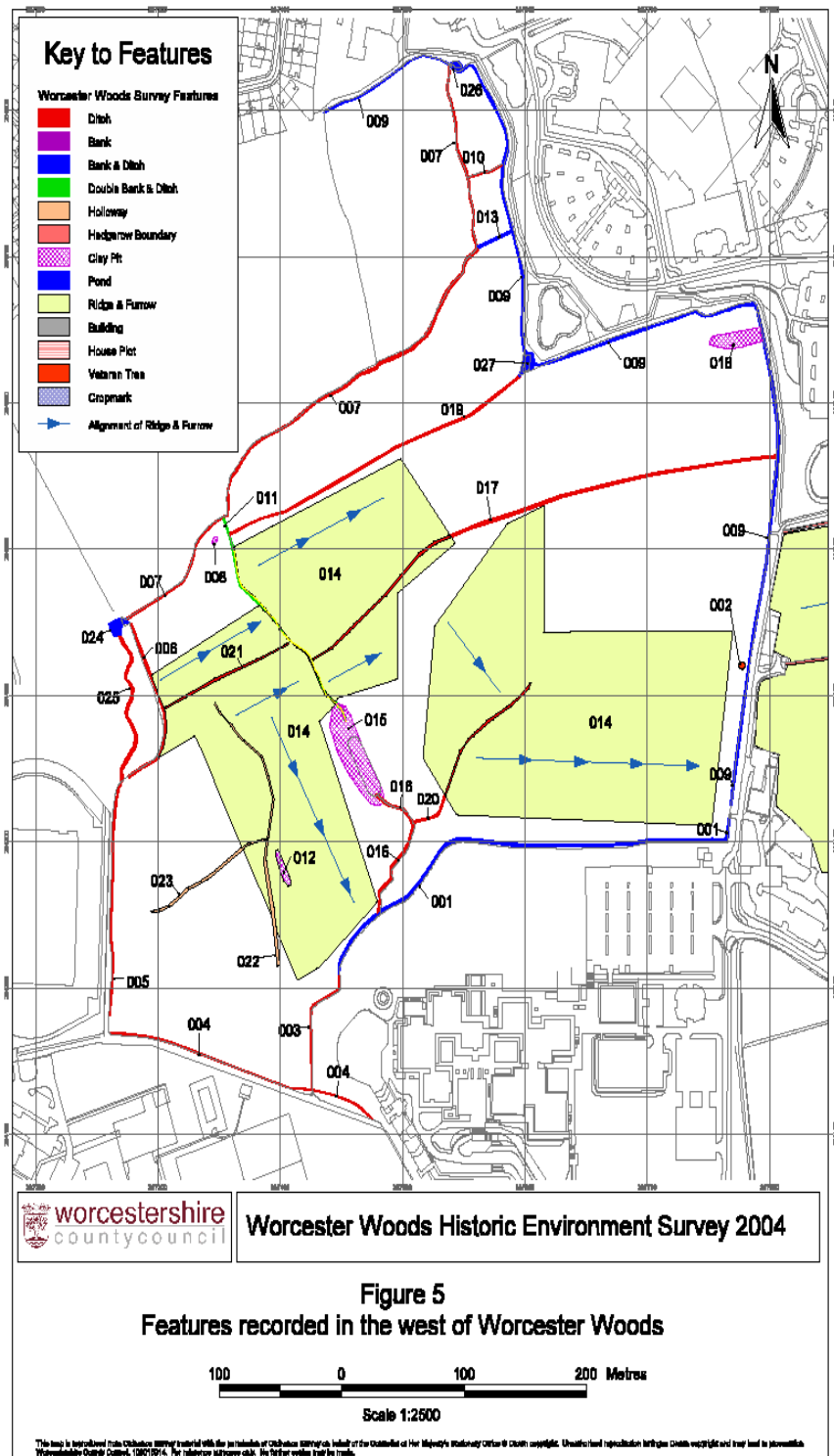
No Further Copies may be made.



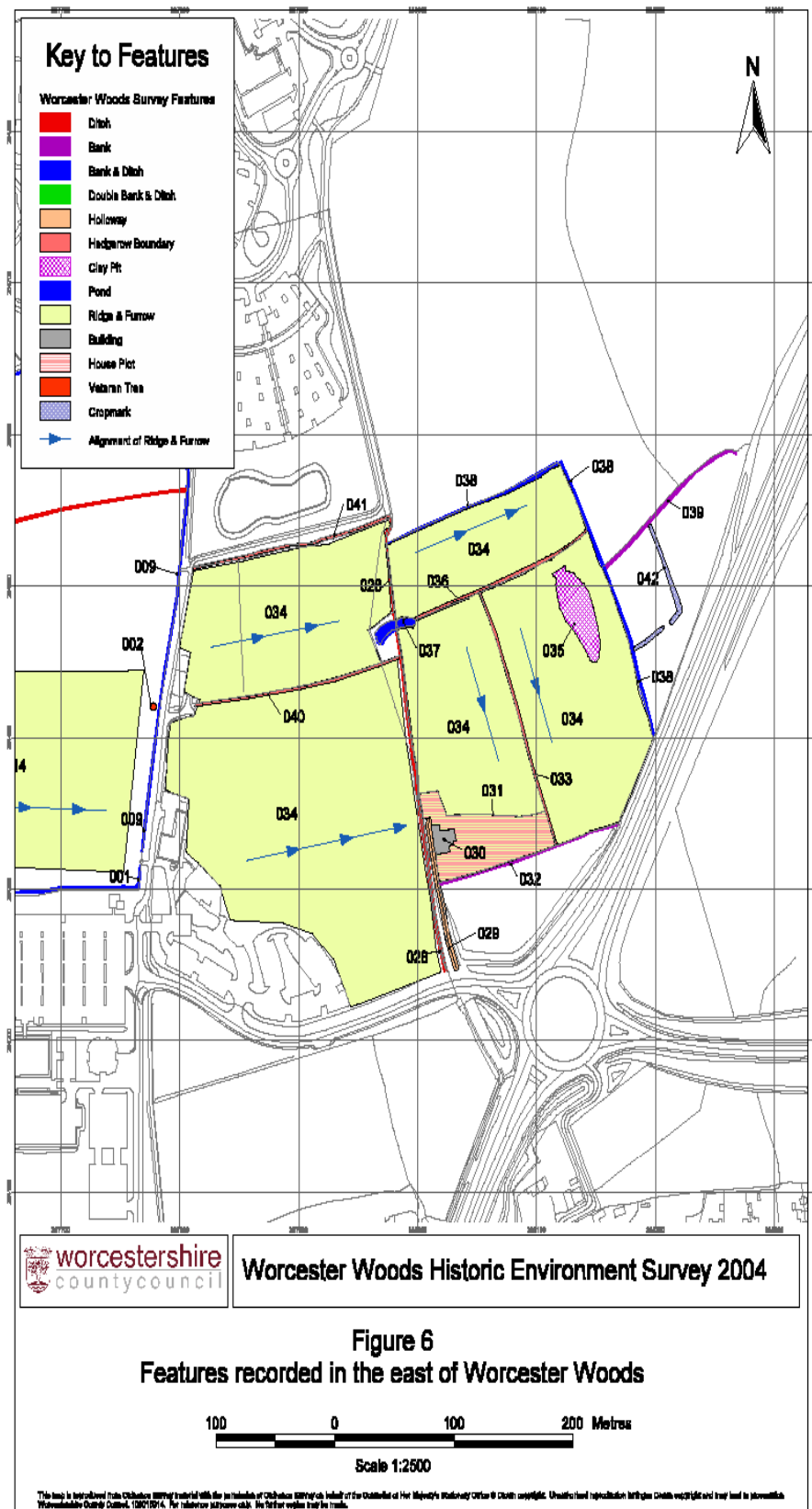
# Area Habitats and Names



# Historic Environment Features recorded in West of Worcester Woods Country Park



Historic Environment Features recorded in East of Worcester Woods Country Park



## Appendix 2

Standards at Countryside Service Sites updated February 2022

<p><b>BUILDINGS/VISITOR CENTRES</b> Clean Furniture in good condition Lights working Bins not full Push/pull signs in place Door closers working Open and closed on time Info/interp clean Leaflet racks full and tidy Bird feeders full All information and interpretation in date and presentable No unauthorised notices Cleaning acceptable Furniture in good condition Lighting working Room temperature appropriate Equipment in good order Windows clean Doors functional</p>
<p><b>TOILET BLOCK</b> Clean – outside and in Odour free Graffiti free Soap present, toilet paper present, bins not full Lights working, door closers working, locks on doors working Decoration good Water heaters working, taps working, hand driers working/paper towels available Baby change facility clean and in good repair Ladies, gentlemen, and disabled signs present</p>
<p><b>PAVING AND PATHS ADJACENT TO VISITOR CENTRES AND TOILETS</b> Even and without trip hazards or potholes Clean and not slippery Not encroached upon by vegetation No litter or dog mess</p>
<p><b>FORMAL PLANTED TREES</b> Redundant guards and stakes removed. Dead trees removed</p>
<p><b>PLAY AREA</b> Equipment well painted or wood treated Rules signs in place Equipment working properly – no pinch points, splinters or protruding nails, screws, or bolts Equipment clean Gates in good order</p>

Bark fully topped up  
Steps in good order  
No litter or dog mess  
Annual inspection by a specialist play area safety inspection company to RoSPA standards complete and report received

**CAR PARKS**  
No potholes  
Good visibility at exit  
No encroachment from vegetation  
All posts and fencing in place, straight and in good repair  
Ladder boards clean  
All signage in good order, including disabled parking bays, pay & display, and directional signs  
White lines clearly visible  
Gates and barriers open and closed on time  
Gates and barriers in good working order  
Pay & display machine working

**RECYCLING POINT**  
Clean  
Not full  
No fly tipping/rubbish  
No broken glass

**BICYCLE RACKS**  
Well maintained  
Upright and firmly secured  
Free of surrounding vegetation

**DOG BINS**  
Clean  
Not full  
Sign in good order  
Straight and firm  
In good order

**PICNIC AREA**  
No litter or dog mess  
Grass short  
Furniture in place and in good order (stable, anchored, properly maintained, memorial signage in place, no splinters, proud nails or screws, no pinch points)  
Litter bins in good order (present, not full, lid present and working, well painted or caprioled)  
BBQ in good order (clean, litter free, enamelled or painted, working properly)  
BBQ plate in place  
"Provided by" disc in place

**MOWING**  
Completed according to mowing contract

**SIGNS & NOTICES**  
In place, sited appropriately.  
Clean  
Not faded or smudged  
Frames in good order  
Out of date signs removed

Signs comply with relevant guidelines

#### VIEWPOINTS AND TOPOSCOPES

Views maintained

Litter and fouling free

Lecterns and toposcopes well maintained and in good order

#### PROMOTED TRAIL

Not unduly muddy

No hidden trip hazards

Not gullied

Gates and stiles in good state of repair

Waymarks and waymark disks in place

Waymark disks clean, undamaged, and not faded

Steps in good order

Vegetation not allowed to encroach on path surface or to overhang to obstruct walkers or riders

No litter or dog mess

No significantly hazardous trees

#### PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Fingerposts in place

Not unduly muddy

No hidden trip hazards

All gates and stiles in good state of repair

All waymarks and waymark disks in place

All waymark disks clean, undamaged, and not faded

Steps in good order

Vegetation not encroaching

No litter or dog mess

No significantly hazardous trees

#### PUBLIC ACCESSIBLE VEHICLE TRACKS

(WCC maintained)

Does not include tracks that are solely to private residences.

No potholes

Good visibility at exit

No encroachment from vegetation

All posts and fencing in place, straight and in good repair

All signage in good order

Surface markings clearly visible

Gates and barriers open and closed on time

Gates and barriers in good working order

#### OTHER PATHS

Not unduly muddy

No hidden trip hazards

All gates and stiles in good state of repair

Vegetation not encroaching

Steps in good order

No litter or dog mess

No significantly hazardous trees

#### STEPS

Risers in good order

Treads topped up, but not overfull



No pins or pegs protruding over risers  
Corners of steps not standing proud  
Handrails in good order  
Vegetation not encroaching

#### WOODEN BRIDGES & BOARDWALKS

Well maintained  
No trip hazard at ends  
Not slippery  
Handrails in good order  
Vegetation not encroaching  
Bridge clear underneath to enable flow

#### DITCHES, CULVERTS, PIPED WATER COURSES

Sufficient to take flow during usual circumstances (meeting appropriate standard where known)  
Entrances & exits clear to allow adequate flow during usual circumstances.  
In good repair  
Not blocked (e.g., by dam, pile of logs) to prevent water flow

#### FENCES

Fencing in good order; stock-proof where appropriate; upright and firmly secured

#### GATES, STILES, AND BARRIERS

Gates & barriers easy to open and close  
Gateways not muddy  
Self-closing successfully  
Barriers well maintained  
Height barriers displaying accurate height restriction  
A-frame barriers can be secured open  
Locks in place and in good working order

#### ISOLATED FURNITURE

Present, stable, anchored, well maintained  
BBQ plate in place  
"Provided by" disc in place  
Memorial signage well maintained  
No splinters, proud nails or screws, no pinch points

#### WATER TROUGHS

Stable  
Supply working  
Not overflowing

#### HEDGES

In good order  
Well-trimmed (ornamental)  
Not encroaching on paths

#### ANNUAL TREE INSPECTION

Trees within identified vulnerable locations (near to paths, car parks, buildings etc) maintained to not be significantly hazardous whilst protecting their landscape and wildlife value where possible. See tree safety inspection policy for details.

#### BOUNDARIES

Free from encroachment

#### WATER SAFETY FEATURES

Rescue equipment in place (where agreed)  
Rescue equipment clearly signed

Warning notices advising of presence of water where this would not otherwise be obvious

Warning notices displayed (e.g., no swimming, do not go on ice)

LITTER/FLY TIPPING/DOG MESS in areas not covered above

Minimal level

TIMBER AND FIREWOOD STORAGE IN PUBLIC AREAS

Stacked safely

Reasonably tidy

Height restricted to minimise the risk of injury

'Do not climb on timber stacks' notice displayed

UTILITIES EQUIPMENT

Drain covers in place and in good repair

Meter cupboards locked

Other equipment in good order

OTHER BRIDGES & STRUCTURES

Basic visual check – report any defects or changes to appropriate managing body

GARAGES, WORKSHOPS AND STORAGE AREAS

Routine consumables in good supply and stored appropriately

Shelves, trays, and cupboards clearly labelled

Tools hung or shelved in correct place

Log of loaned equipment

Lighting working

No trip hazards

Work benches clear of clutter

Health and safety signs in place

No slippery substances on floor

All chemicals stored appropriately

Exterior woodwork clean and painted

Serviced fire extinguishers in place

TOOLS, EQUIPMENT AND PPE

Properly maintained

Properly stored

Clean when stored

Tools stored with guards in place

Specialist equipment inspected

PPE in date

All damaged tools, equipment and PPE disposed of or withdrawn from service until repaired

SITE SPECIFIC HAZARDS

Identified in site risk assessment

BROWN & WHITE TOURIST SIGNS

In place

Correct logos / information

Pointing in correct direction

"The over-riding objective of providing tourist signing is to improve road safety by giving clear information to road users, allowing them to clearly identify the route that they need to follow to reach their preferred destination. Tourist signing should not be used purely as a marketing or advertising tool, a clear road safety and or

environmental benefit will need to be demonstrated before signing requests will be approved".

**INFORMATION & INTERPRETATION**

In place in buildings / visitor centre

Ladder boards in place and in good condition

Welcome notices & furniture (monoliths) in place and in good condition

Bylaws displayed at main entrance

Information board & map in place

Routed signs lettering well painted

Info/interp panels undamaged & not faded

Car Park signage in place, including disabled parking bays, pay & display, and directional signs

Viewpoint lecterns / toposcopes present

Promoted trail starting point fingerpost in place

Promoted trail summary notice in place

Any items that are not sites team responsibility and do not meet the standard must be reported / followed up with the appropriate team subsequent to the quarterly inspection.

## Appendix 3

### Daily/Weekly Custodian Inspections at Worcester Woods Country Park

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Person carrying out check: \_\_\_\_\_

Inspect item. Record as OK with a tick or record details of fault. Fix immediately or add item to the job list. Return to form and tick as complete when fault fixed, with date & initials.

<b>Visitor Centre external - Daily</b>	Faults? (complete detail or tick if OK)	Fixed or jobs List?
Vandalism or Graffiti?		
Info/interp panels clean & in good order		
Dog wash not blocked		
<b>Office building - Daily</b>	Faults? (complete detail or tick if OK)	Fixed or jobs List?
Litter pick front of building		
Check Worcestershire garden		
Blow/weed 'foyer' patio		
<b>Picnic Area, Patio, and Car Park - Daily</b>	Faults? (complete detail or tick if OK)	Fixed or jobs List?
No Litter or Sharps		
No dog mess		
Picnic tables/Patio slabs clean, free from excessive spilt food, etc.		
BBQ not damaged		
Blow Patio		
All signs and finger posts present, clean, not faded and in good repair. No unauthorised notices.		
Benches secure, free from nails or splinters & clean		
Litter Bins empty and clean		
No holes or trip hazards		
Recycling Area Clean, Tidy, and not full		
Barriers & posts in good order on car park		
<b>Play Area - Daily</b>	Faults? (complete detail or tick if OK)	Fixed or jobs List?
No Litter or Sharps		

No dog mess		
Bark properly distributed		
Equipment in working order, not vandalised or graffitied		
Fence and gates in good order		
Signs present, clean, not faded and in good repair.		
<b>Lakes - Daily</b>	Faults? (complete detail or tick if OK)	Fixed or jobs List?
Litter		
Benches – no vandalism or graffiti		
Signage – clean and in good order		
Bins empty and clean		
Dog bins not overflowing and clean		
Check lakes for vandalism of built structures		
<b>Woodland Trail – Daily</b>	Faults? (complete detail or tick if OK)	Fixed or jobs List?
Litter		
Waymarkers present, clean, not faded		
No branches or other trip hazards on path		
No major animal holes or erosion on path		
Interp panels clean and not vandalised		
No overhangs or broken branches above path		
Remove any dog mess from path		
<b>Meadow Trail – Daily at peak periods</b>	Faults? (complete detail or tick if OK)	Fixed or jobs List?
Litter		
Waymarkers present, clean, not faded		
No branches or other trip hazards on path		
No major animal holes or erosion on path		
Interp panels/signage clean and not vandalised		
No overhangs or broken branches above path		
Strim path sides if necessary		
Remove any dog mess from path		

<b>Cattle - Daily</b>	Faults? (complete detail or tick if OK)	Fixed or jobs List?
Water troughs functioning		
Check Cattle		

<b>Saturday Mornings</b>	Faults? (complete detail or tick if OK)	
<b>Before 8.30am Check car park gates to make whole car park 'Country Park visitors only' Ensure gates are padlocked open/closed</b>		
<b>After Parkrun- check/unblock dogwash</b>		
<b>Monday mornings before 8.30am</b>	<b>NB except school holidays</b>	
<b>Check car park gates are set to include WCC staff parking area Ensure gates are padlocked open/closed</b>		
<b>Ditches , Culverts, Pipe work as required</b>	Faults? (complete detail or tick if OK)	Fixed or jobs List?
Entrances & exits clear to allow adequate flow during usual circumstances.		
In good repair (headwalls, pipes, etc)		
Not blocked (e.g. by dam, pile of logs) so as to prevent water flow		

<b>Other jobs to do after main custodian duties are complete.</b>	Faults? (complete detail or tick if OK)	Fixed or jobs List?
Litter on general site, particularly events field hedge and including wildwood drive		
Wash and Edge patio if necc.		
No weeds on patio or around buildings		
Sweep up bark by main gate to events field		
All Monolith Signs – clean, not faded and in good repair		
Stock fencing – whole site		
Vehicles – check oil, water and tyres & clean if necc.		

All Benches – clean, no splinters, in good repair		
Weed beds by the yard gates.		
Remove all floating litter from woodland pond and lakes (where safe to do so using long handled net)		
Perimeter paths – no dog mess or litter		
<b>Other comments or faults</b>	Faults? (complete detail or tick if OK)	Fixed or jobs List?

# Appendix 4

Quarterly inspection Worcester Woods Country Park

## Safety & Standards Quarterly Inspection

Name of person doing check ..... Date..... Site Worcester Woods

Tick if OK, cross if fault (detail below): Toilets  Picnic area  BBQ  Play Area  Buildings  Dog wash  Bike racks  Worcestershire Garden  Signs  Meadows Trail  Woodland Trail  Tree safety  Orienteering Trail  Horse route  Barriers  Fencing  Car park  Furniture  Litter/ dog mess/flytipping  Dog bins  Litter bins  Steps  Paths  Boardwalks/bridges  Formal planted trees  Lakes  Ditches/culverts  Cattle notices  Cattle troughs  Stock fencing  Mowing  Firewood stacks  Hospital path  Hedges  Water safety features  Boundaries  Sculpture  Patio  Bird feeding area

Score...../39

INFO/INTERP

BROWN & WHITES  Score = /2

See list of **Standards** in the **Inspection File** for generic notes on what to look for when carrying out inspections. Refer to specific instructions and risk assessments for checking more complex items and site-specific hazards.

### TREE SAFETY INSPECTION

Item	Description of fault	Fault tacked immediately?	Fault added to jobs list?	Fault fixed (date)



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