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**MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR WEST GREEN COMMON,
HARTLEY WINTNEY**

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1.1 Site details

		Notes
Location	West Green Common	
County	Hampshire	
District	Hart	
Local Planning Authority	Hart District Council	
Parish Council	Hartley Wintney Parish Council	
Parliamentary Constituency	North East Hampshire	
National Grid Reference	SU746565	
Total area of site	15.91ha	
Freehold	15.91ha	
Leasehold	-	
Legal rights of access	Details held by Hart DC	
Tree Preservation Order	Blanket over whole site but Hart DC may carry out management of the trees to improve diversity and for historical restoration.	
Other agreements		
Designations etc	Common Land subject to a deed of access under the Law of Property Act 1925; Common Land Unit: CL	See Map
Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)	The area is included and denotes that it is of county importance for its nature conservation interest.
Archaeology		
Cultural features	2 ponds in SE and planted avenues – part of landscaping of West Green House	
Previous plans and reports	Hampshire Wildlife Trust 1992: .	
	Hampshire Wildlife Trust 1995: Hartley Wintney Central Commons and West Green Ecological Survey and Report. (ME Flatt BSc, MSc)	

1.2 Physical Features

Geology London Clay – a fine sandy, silty clay laid down in the lower Eocene 56-49 million years ago.

Geomorphology Part of a plateau at approximately 75 metres (200 feet above sea level) between the Rivers Hart and Whitewater.

Soils Mostly poorly drained but not waterlogged acid clay/sand loams with stones.

Hydrology & Hydrochemistry There are a few minor drains feed into this; during dry periods there is little flow. There are two ponds which still hold water and a third that is silted up and supports sallow carr. It is assumed the water is base-poor with a pH below neutral.

Climate The climate is typical of south-central/south-east England. Nearest available average Met Office records are for London which has an average annual rainfall of 593mm, average minimum January temperature 2°C and average maximum July temperature 22°C.

1.3 Biological Features

Old trees

Like the areas of Common Land closer to the Hartley Wintney village, this Common was historically 'wood pasture', providing grazing for domestic livestock and a harvest of branches from the open-grown trees. Traditional wood pasturing was probably still taking place on the Common at the time of the building of West Green House in the early 17th Century which led to the land becoming part of a landscape managed to enhance the house with the construction of formal ponds in the south east corner and the introduction of trees, most obviously the planting in avenues of English and Turkey Oaks. Many of these persist and are venerable trees sharing much of the valuable features of the original wood pasture Oaks.

The old trees are the most important feature of the site for their historical significance and the biodiversity which they support – invertebrates, bats and birds, many associated with their dead wood and the holes and fissures that the trees have developed. There has been no survey of the invertebrates associated with dead wood at West Green Common.

Woodland

The 1810 Ordnance Survey map shows the Common to be mainly open with a scattering of trees and some lines of plantings but though the woodland has wood-pasture origins, it holds a number of plants which are indicative of ancient woodland with 21 'county indicator species' listed in a report of 1992. With the exception of the rides, once open areas have long ago filled in with secondary woodland growth including species naturally present and some introduced species – Hornbeam, Turkey Oak and Lime (as well as Sycamore).

The character of the woodland is quite varied over the site, reflecting variation in soil characteristics and past management. Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) cites the following NVC communities and sub-communities:

- W1 *Salix cinerea-Galium palustre* woodland
- W8a *Fraxinus excelsior-Acer campestre-Mercurialis perennis* woodland, *Primula vulgaris-Glechoma hederacea* sub-community
- W8a *Fraxinus excelsior-Acer campestre-Mercurialis perennis* woodland, *Hedera helix* sub-community
- W10c *Quercus robur-Pteridium aquilinum-Rubus fruticosus* woodland, *Hedera helix* sub-community

Some of these stands have been managed in the past as coppice with standards; others have high forest character. Following its presumed introduction some centuries ago, Hornbeam is an important feature of this site, either as coppice or as self-sown standards. The dense shade it produces has meant that it has had a large impact on the regeneration of other species.

Grassland

This is present only on the rides and road verges. It is generally species-poor MG1a *Arrhenatherum elatius* grassland, *Festuca rubra* sub-community with Yorkshire Fog, Bents, False Oat-grass, Cocksfoot, Red Fescue, Yarrow, Buttercups, Docks, Nettle and Vetches (HBIC).

Ponds

There are 4 ponds within the area of this plan. The two in the south west were constructed as landscape features for West Green House and, though heavily compromised by tree-growth, the southernmost of these is the richest botanically with Branched Bur-reed, Greater Water-plantain, Bittersweet, Great Willowherb and Yellow Flag forming the marginal vegetation.

2.1 Site management policy

The most important feature of the Common is its old trees. They should be given optimal conditions for growth and there needs to be suitable management in place to ensure continuity of old trees. Dead wood associated with these trees should be conserved on the trees, or failing that, all efforts made to ensure it remains beneath them. It is important to remove the competition of younger trees from old and veteran trees. There is also a need to create open areas to allow the development of replacement veterans (possibly with pollarding) – something that could be integrated into coppice management (see below).

Re-instatement of a coppice cycle is in progress and should continue. This will involve adjusting the density of standards, in places quite considerably, and re-coppicing (where needed with re-establishment of rootstocks) of Hazel and Hornbeam. There should be trials of pollarding and coppicing of Hornbeam in selected locations.

There should be a programme of removal of Rhododendron (not a large problem here), Sycamore and young Turkey Oak (old and veteran trees of this species should be retained because of their value for associated fauna). There should be an effort to control tipping of green waste – a letter drop to all nearby properties and news releases.

There is potential to increase the width of the main ride and vary the cutting regime to increase biodiversity. The currently quite low levels of access should be maintained.

2.2 The Vision

A 10 Year Vision for West Green Common

The Common continues to be a woodland with varied habitats for wildlife and a continuity of the historic features which link it to the past. Local people enjoy it as a peaceful place and contribute to its maintenance as a valued local amenity and resource.

3 Objectives and prescriptions

OBJECTIVE 1 Old trees

Maintain the existing old and veteran open-grown trees and ensure replacements for the future.

Rationale

Long term continuity of old and veteran trees requires that the trees are cared for and that provision is made for others to replace them in the future. There will be a need to remove competing younger growth. Dead wood on the trees should be retained wherever possible - only if there are safety risks in leaving it should it be cut down - and all dead wood should be left on the ground under the tree on which it grew (in as large pieces as possible to deter removal for firewood).

If veteran trees are to remain a feature of the Common, replacements which have similarly grown in open conditions, need to be selected and cared for. This may mean creating open areas for natural regeneration or planting of selected stock or it could mean selecting existing saplings and bringing them on in open conditions, perhaps aided by initial pollarding. It is of historical importance that the avenues of Oaks associated with West Green House are retained, and so if any go over through natural causes they will be replaced with saplings of appropriate stock.

As a basis for management, a thorough knowledge of the old trees on the Common is required and a system developed that allows them to be monitored on a regular basis.

Prescription

1.1 Survey, map and record

Select trees according to size, known or estimated age and amount of dead wood.

Commission a survey of these trees and produce an inventory. All trees need to be uniquely identified and mapped to create a database in order to allow information to be related to individual trees.

1.2 Survey invertebrates associated with old and veteran trees

When resources allow, commission a survey of the invertebrate fauna of the old and veteran trees.

1.3 Develop a programme to 'halo-release' old and veteran trees in dense woodland

To avoid harming old and veteran trees by abruptly changing their environment, progressively thin the surrounding growth of younger trees to achieve after 10 years a large enough area clear of trees to allow unhindered development of the old tree. Thereafter, maintain the area free of re-growth by clearing at least every 2 years.

1.4 Remedy soil compaction when it is adversely affecting old and veteran trees

Remove causes of compaction (e.g. inappropriate vehicle parking or access routes) and look into practical techniques to improve soil conditions around the root system of affected trees. One area has been highlighted as a problem area, with people parking on the Common and causing root compaction, as well as fly tipping. This area will be edged with Dragon's Teeth to prevent parking and new access improvements will be created in an alternative area nearby. (See Map 4)

1.5 Inspect old and veteran trees on a regular basis

Annually monitor all trees, report on health and if necessary make recommendations for work to be carried out on or around them. Carry out a full structural survey every 10 years.

1.6 Bring on trees as long term replacements for veteran trees

If suitable naturally-regenerated English Oaks (locally Hornbeam) can be found, remove competing trees from their vicinity and pollard if necessary. Alternatively grow/transplant suitable locally sourced stock.

1.7 Aim to retain an ample supply of dead wood

Leave all dead wood on the ground under the tree on which it grew, and remove standing dead wood only if there are imperative safety reasons for doing so. Make efforts to inform people of the value of dead wood and discourage its unauthorised removal.

OBJECTIVE 2 Woodland

Achieve a good balance of native woodland species and enhance structural diversity

Rationale

Apart from a small amount of coppicing, the woodland has received little management for many years. Consequently it has developed dense high forest and overgrown coppice. The consequences of this are that the venerable open-grown trees are subject to excessive competition, and stand diversity, shrub and field layers are compromised by heavy shade (particularly from Hornbeam). An increased level of intervention is needed to reverse recent decline.

There is a need to remove invasive species. Whilst there are good historical and ecological reasons to conserve the large old Turkey Oaks which are part of the historic planting, the species is considerably inferior to the native English Oak in the fauna that it supports. It is also the alternate host for the gall wasp that creates knopper gall on English Oak so has serious effects on the fertility of that species and the wildlife that depends on its acorns. Like Turkey Oak, Sycamore is highly competitive and also casts heavy shade. Both species, along with any Rhododendron and plants introduced in garden waste should be targeted for removal.

Though perhaps not going as far back as wood pasture, there is clearly a history of coppice here – in the SE of the site there are Hornbeam coppice stools that have been estimated to be over 150 years old. Expanding coppicing of Hazel and Hornbeam into suitable areas, along with thinning of the canopy should promote structural diversity as well as giving opportunities to bring on replacement open-grown trees. Whilst recent revival of coppicing here has shown Hazel responding well (given protection from deer), it is uncertain whether Hornbeam can easily be brought into a coppice cycle. A small area of Hornbeam will be coppiced as a trial to see how well

it responds. Pollarding similarly – of Oak or Hornbeam – is untried here but opportunities to try this out should be taken.

There is potential to improve the rides, especially the main ride, for wildlife. Widening, where it can be done without removal of important trees, perhaps creating scallops, would be beneficial as would varying the cutting regime to encourage variety in sward character as well as some young scrub on the edges.

Prescriptions

2.1 Remove Rhododendron, Sycamore and young/medium aged Turkey Oak

Cut and treat stumps with a suitable herbicide to prevent them re-growing.

2.2 Remove all introduced garden and other alien species

Identify introduced plants; dig up and remove from site. Check regularly that the Commons are free of such plants.

2.3 Coppice selected areas

Adjust density of standards to about 10 mature standards per hectare (with up to 30 younger trees). Standards should be Oak – which could be allowed to develop into veterans (possibly pollarded), with one or two Hornbeam. Coppice Hazel on a 10-year cycle and Hornbeam on a 15-year cycle. Trial cutting of Hornbeam on a limited area first - cut high – above 30cm. Protect from deer using methods currently used.

2.4 Create pollards

If suitable sapling English Oaks are found in coppice coups, trial pollarding of a sample. Trial pollarding of Hornbeam (e.g. around ponds on SW).

2.5 Widen main ride and adjust ride management

Create scallops and widen lengths of the main ride where the distribution of old and veteran trees allows. Develop structural diversity in the rides by mowing half the central strip in June and all of it in October; the following year, switch the areas which receive one or two cuts. Give an October cut to the area between the central cut and wood edge once every two years – i.e. cut one strip one year and the other strip the next. (See Figure 1).

2.6 Create scallops on appropriate path edges

Where appropriate on smaller paths across the Common, create scallops off the path edge to provide sunny areas to increase diversity.

OBJECTIVE 3 Ponds

Maintain and improve the ponds

Rationale

Of the four ponds the two more formal ones in the SW are the priority for restoration. The two others are best allowed to continue development into carr/damp woodland for the present, to be looked at again in the future. At present both the south-western ponds are heavily shaded by surrounding trees, Hornbeam in particular. Priority should be given to removal of the shade by selective felling or pollarding.

Both ponds appear to be heavily silted so careful removal of accumulated silt and leaf debris should follow shade removal. In order to lessen the impact on wildlife, de-silting should be carried out on the ponds over two consecutive years.

Prescriptions

3.1 Restore ponds

Clear/pollard surrounding trees to increase light. De-silt the northern pond in the first year and the southern pond a year later. Leave some areas untreated to help recolonisation.

3.2 Maintain ponds

Clear ponds of vegetation and silt on a periodic basis at the end of the summer, leaving some areas untreated to help recolonisation.

OBJECTIVE 4 Access

Maintain an adequate network of paths

Rationale

Within the Common there are four statutory public footpaths which follow part of the ride network but are not heavily used for recreation. Those who visit the site appear to appreciate its quietness and the lack of formal provision for visitors – a seat at the meeting point of rides is the furthest specific provision for the visitor that goes here. There is limited car parking close to the site and it is likely most visitors live close to it. The current mowing regime on the rides enables people to use the site and proposed modifications to this will not have any negative effect. Statutory footpaths will continue to be maintained by the County Rights of Way team.

Prescriptions

4.1 Maintain paths

Check all paths at least annually for wet areas and overhanging vegetation. Remedy as required or, for the statutory footpaths inform County Rights of Way team of any problems if they arise.

OBJECTIVE 5 Community participation

Involve local people in caring for the Common

Rationale

This Common is largely visited by the people who live close to it. Though this is a small community, there could be individuals who would be interested in getting involved with its management.

Prescriptions

5.1 Encourage local people to get involved in management

Promote involvement of local people in the care and maintenance of the Common, through work parties for habitat management, litter picking etc to support the Ranger Service.

5.2 Encourage Information gathering by local people

Interested and enthusiastic local people can contribute much in areas such as recording of wildlife, monitoring visitor activity and the collection of other information about the Commons.

OBJECTIVE 6 Monitoring

Set up a monitoring programme to record the wildlife of the Common

Rationale

Knowing more about the plants and animals that can be found on the Common can help its management. It can add to people's enjoyment if they are encouraged to join in the recording effort. In addition to this, specialist survey information, for instance of the invertebrate fauna is currently lacking so experts should be involved, as resources allow.

Prescriptions

6.1 Record the wildlife on the Common

If possible, encourage local people with expertise to give others training. When necessary, use visiting experts to carry out specialist survey of particular groups of wildlife.

6.2 Repeat specialist surveys on a regular basis

Request ecological survey/information collation from Hampshire Biological Information Centre at five year intervals. Use experts to survey invertebrates, amphibians and reptiles, fungi and bats also at 5 year intervals.

Map 1: West Green Common SINC



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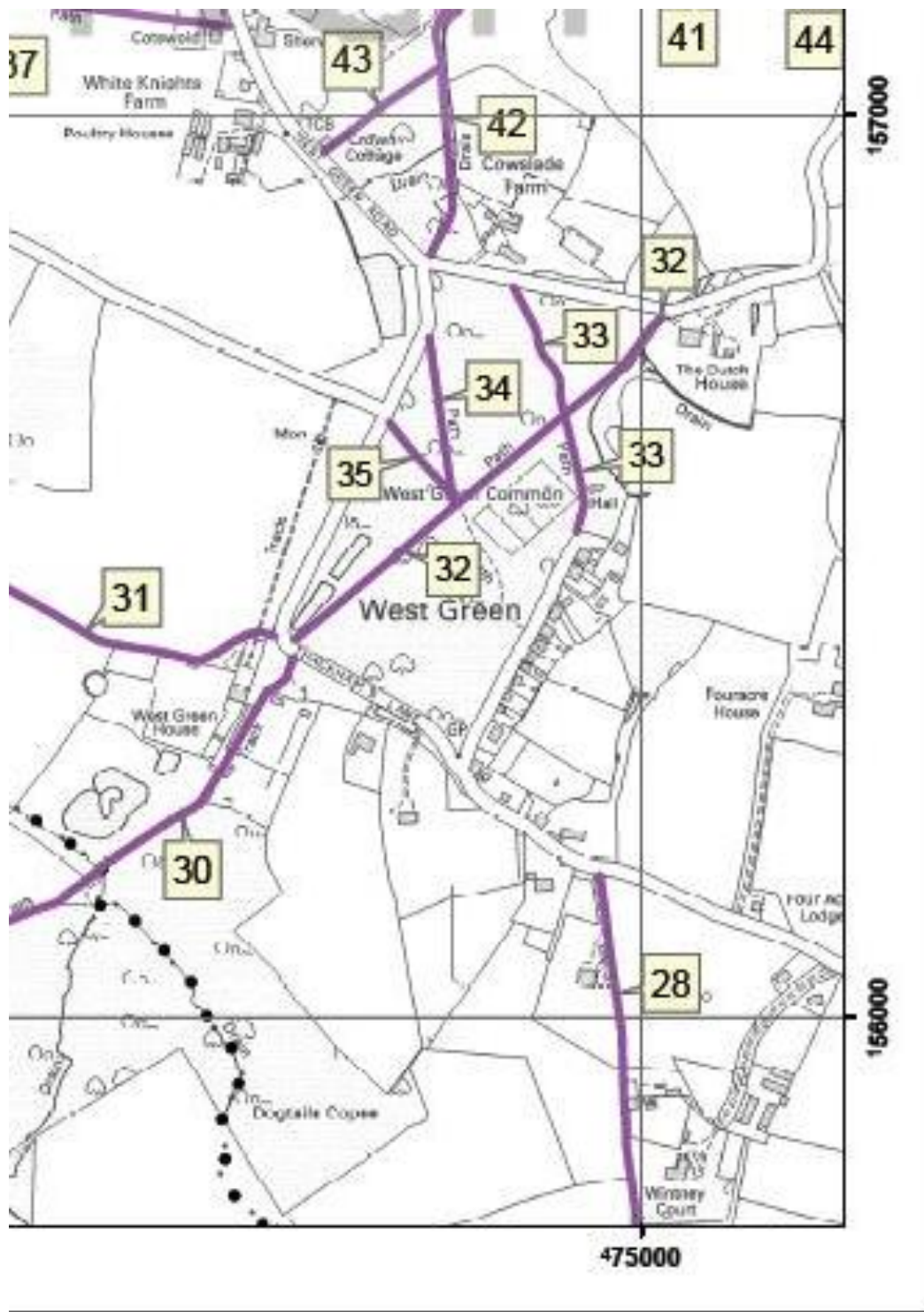
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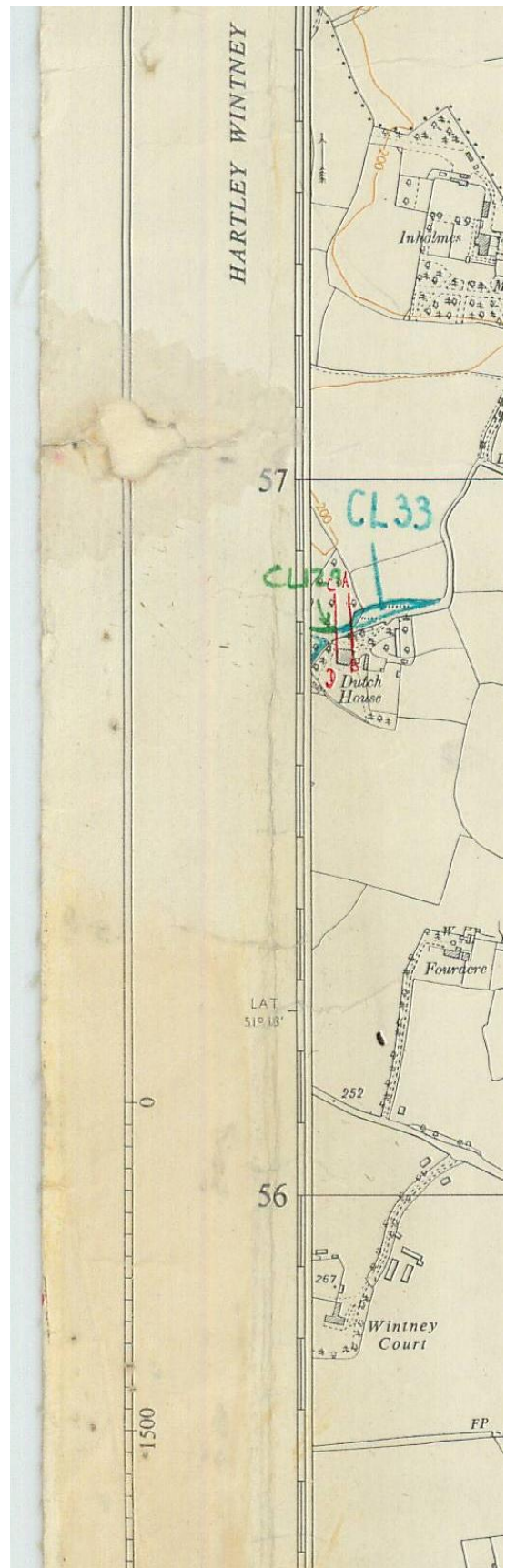
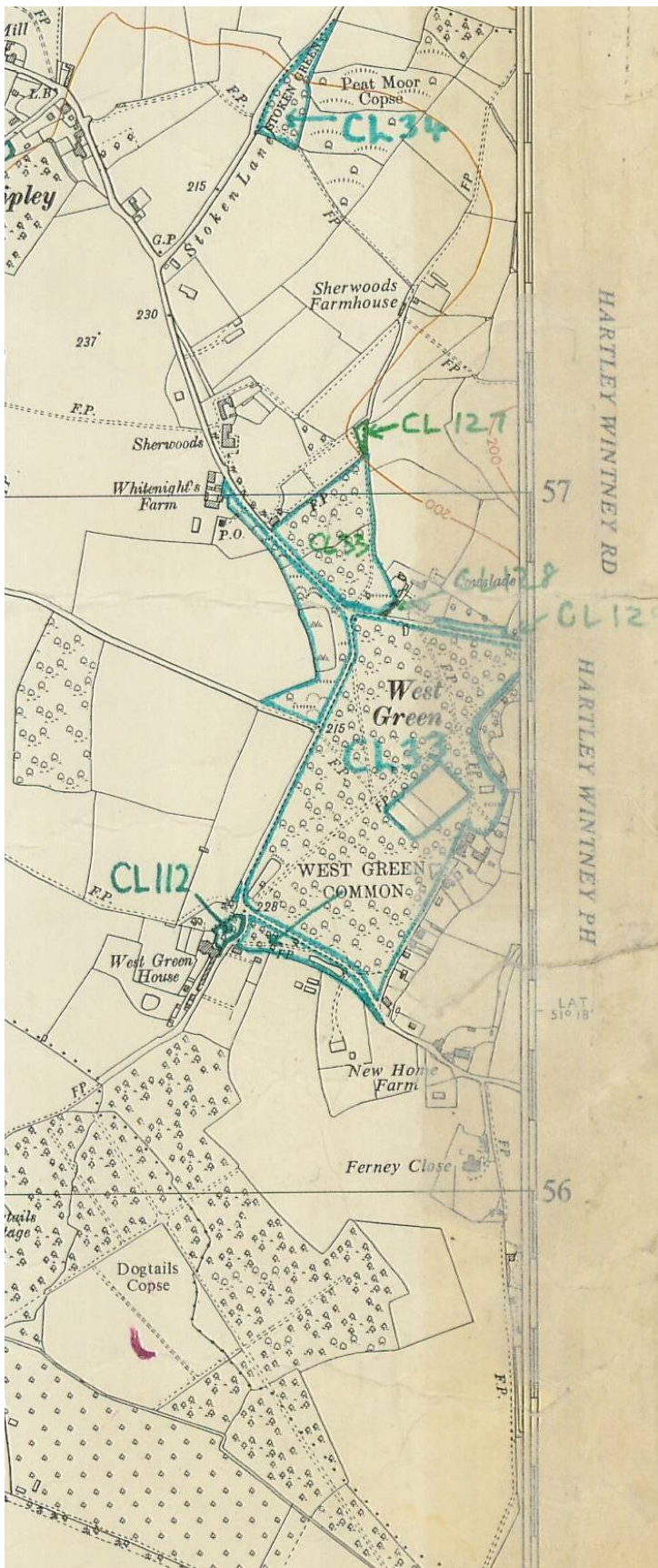
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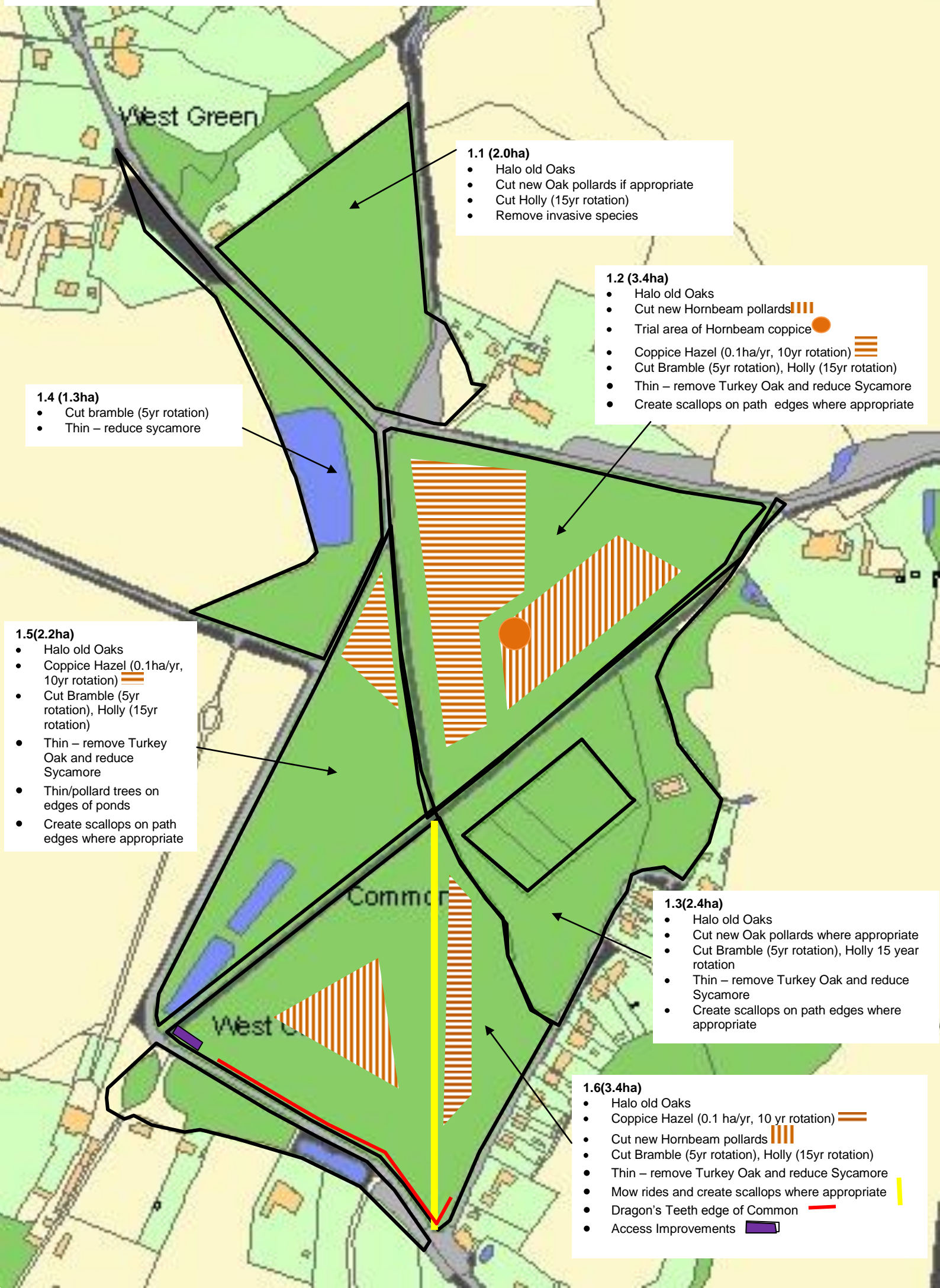
Map 2: Extract from Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way



Map 3: Extracts of maps from Commons Register






Map 4: West Green Common – Proposed management



1.1 (2.0ha)

- Halo old Oaks
- Cut new Oak pollards if appropriate
- Cut Holly (15yr rotation)
- Remove invasive species


1.2 (3.4ha)

- Halo old Oaks
- Cut new Hornbeam pollards 
- Trial area of Hornbeam coppice 
- Coppice Hazel (0.1ha/yr, 10yr rotation) 
- Cut Bramble (5yr rotation), Holly (15yr rotation)
- Thin – remove Turkey Oak and reduce Sycamore
- Create scallops on path edges where appropriate

1.4 (1.3ha)

- Cut bramble (5yr rotation)
- Thin – reduce sycamore

1.5 (2.2ha)

- Halo old Oaks
- Coppice Hazel (0.1ha/yr, 10yr rotation) 
- Cut Bramble (5yr rotation), Holly (15yr rotation)
- Thin – remove Turkey Oak and reduce Sycamore
- Thin/pollard trees on edges of ponds
- Create scallops on path edges where appropriate

1.3 (2.4ha)

- Halo old Oaks
- Cut new Oak pollards where appropriate
- Cut Bramble (5yr rotation), Holly 15 year rotation
- Thin – remove Turkey Oak and reduce Sycamore
- Create scallops on path edges where appropriate

1.6 (3.4ha)






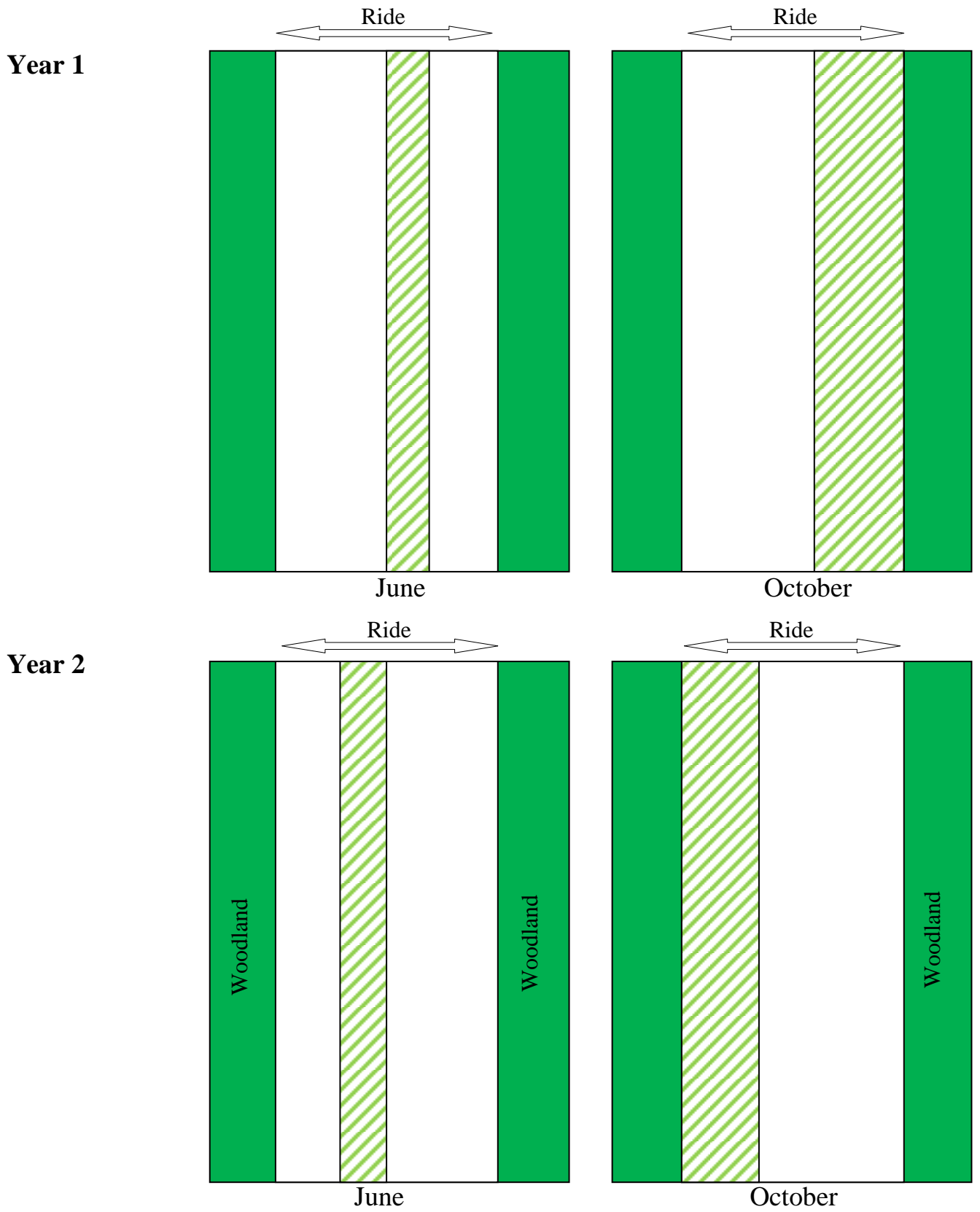
- Halo old Oaks
- Coppice Hazel (0.1 ha/yr, 10 yr rotation) 
- Cut new Hornbeam pollards 
- Cut Bramble (5yr rotation), Holly (15yr rotation)
- Thin – remove Turkey Oak and reduce Sycamore
- Mow rides and create scallops where appropriate 
- Dragon's Teeth edge of Common 
- Access Improvements 

Fig 1 West Green Common – suggested cutting regime for main ride.

Hatching denotes cutting



Appendix II: Bylaws relating to the commons

Commons: Public Rights and Limitations Parishes of Hartley Wintney and Odiham

Under section 193 of the Law of Property Act 1925 the public have rights of access to the common for air and exercise.

The following acts are offences punishable on summary conviction by a fine of fifty pounds, unless they are committed by a commoner in exercise of a right of common, or with lawful authority from this council.

1. Drawing or driving any carriage, cart, caravan or other vehicle otherwise than on a public carriageway.
2. Camping.
3. Lighting fires.
4. Failure to observe the following limitations and conditions which have been imposed by order:
 - a) Injuring or removing trees, shrubs, gorse, bracken, heather or plants
 - b) Removing gravel, sand, soil or turf.
 - c) Taking or attempting to take fish from any water: **Fishing is not permitted.**
 - d) Discharging firearms or throwing or discharging missiles.
 - e) Shouting or wilfully disturbing, chasing or taking game or other birds or animals.
 - f) Permitting dogs to chase game or other birds or animals, or otherwise failing to keep dogs under control. Please keep dogs on leads.
 - g) Removing or attempting to remove birds' eggs or nests.
 - h) Setting traps, nets or snares or liming trees for birds or animals.
 - i) Permitting horses, cattle, sheep or other animals (not belonging to a commoner) to graze or stay on the land.
 - j) Posting or painting bills, advertisements, placards or notices.
 - k) Bathing in any pond or stream.
 - l) Injuring notice boards or seats.
 - m) Leaving any bottles, paper, litter soil or rubbish.
 - n) Injuring or disfiguring any ancient monument or earthwork or object of historical, scientific or antiquarian interest.
 - o) Breaking in horses by grooms or others.
 - p) Holding any show, exhibition or fair or placing any swings, roundabouts or other like thing.
 - q) Erecting or placing any building, tent, booth, stall, fence, post, railing or other similar structure for any purpose.
 - r) Creating any nuisance, annoyance or disturbance or using obscene language. Respect the interest of other users of the common and residents living in nearby properties.
 - s) Generally injuring or disfiguring the land or interfering with the use thereof by the public for the purpose of air and exercise.

Chief Executive, Hart District Council, Civic Offices, Harlington Way, Fleet, Hampshire. GU13 8AE. Tel 01252 622122.

Work Programme

		Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Staff time	Notes
1.1	Old trees	Survey, map and record	√											
1.2	Old trees	Survey invertebrates associated with the old trees		√										Contractor
1.3	Old trees	Develop programme to 'halo-release' old and veteran trees in dense woodland		√										
1.3	Old trees	Inspect trees – full structural survey	√											
1.4	Old trees	Remedy soil compaction when it is adversely affecting old and veteran trees	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
1.5	Old trees	Safety-inspect on a regular basis	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
1.6	Old trees	Bring on replacement open-grown trees	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
1.7	Old trees	Aim to retain an abundant supply of dead wood	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
2.1	Woodland	Remove Rhododendron, Sycamore and young/medium aged Turkey Oak	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
2.2	Woodland	Remove all introduced garden and other alien species	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
2.3	Woodland	Coppice selected areas	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
2.4	Woodland	Create pollards	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
2.5	Woodland	Adjust ride management	√											
2.6	Woodland	Scallop path edges where appropriate	√	√										
3.1	Ponds	Restore ponds			√									
3.2	Ponds	Maintain ponds				√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
4.1	Access	Maintain paths	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
5.1	Community participation	Encourage local people to get involved in management	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
5.2	Community participation	Encourage information gathering by local people	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
6.1	Monitoring	Record the wildlife on the Common	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
6.2	Monitoring	Repeat specialist surveys on a regular basis		√					√					