



Oak Avenue Local Nature Reserve Management Plan

2026 – 2030





Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	2
2.0	Terms of Reference	2
3.0	Site Description	4
4.0	Policies.....	8
5.0	Site Vision and Objectives	10
6.0	Maintenance Prescriptions	11
7.0	Management Map	26
8.0	References	27
9.0	Appendices.....	28

Appendix 1: London Borough of Richmond Biodiversity Action Plan
Appendix 2: London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Nature Conservation Policy
Appendix 3: London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Tree Policy
Appendix 4: Oak Avenue, Site of Importance for Nature Conservation designation
Appendix 5: Ecological Method Statement 1 – Woodland and Tree Management
Appendix 6: Ecological Method Statement 2 – Grassland and Scrub Management

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1.0 Introduction

This management plan has been written by Richmond Councils' Ecology Officer as part of the Councils' commitment to the preservation and enhancement of biodiversity. Each site is managed in accordance with the habitat and species action plans of the Richmond Biodiversity Action Plan, the London Local Nature Recovery Strategy, general good habitat management practice and current legislation.

1.1 Caveat

The implementation of prescriptions in this management plan will be subject to available budget.

2.0 Terms of Reference

This management plan is designed to inform the restoration and maintenance of Oak Avenue LNR from nature conservation, landscape and visitor perspectives. It will be delivered by Richmond Council working in conjunction with contractors and community organisations.

Throughout this management plan our goals are to:

1. Restore and enhance the site to make it an attractive leisure and environmental asset for residents and visitors.
2. Protect and enhance the ecology of the mixed habitats with appropriate management and planting.
3. Enhance the visitor experience by creating an attractive natural space which invites exploration and food production.
4. Support the Friends of Hatherop Park and Oak Avenue LNR.



To deliver these goals, this plan considers the sites' history, ecology and visitor use; drawing on existing data, it sets out refined objectives and the prescriptions to deliver and maintain the site over the next five years.

The management plan should not be regarded as fixed; the prescriptions provide a framework and guidance that enable reaction to changing conditions. Reviewing progress and monitoring key features on a regular basis is important in ensuring the site is managed appropriately and in a sustainable way, as such as a management review will be carried out by the Council annually.



3.0 Site Description

3.1 Site details

Location	Oak Avenue, Hampton, TW12 3QD
Grid Reference	TQ 12246 71112
Ownership	London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
Designation	Local Nature Reserve (LNR) Site of Borough Importance for Nature Conservation (#RiBII14)
Area	1.84 Ha
Key habitats	Meadow grassland, scrub, woodland, pond, hedgerow
Key species	Bats, slow worm, song thrush, stag beetle, butterflies and other pollinators

3.2 Site description

Oak Avenue Local Nature Reserve hosts a rich variety of habitats suitable for many different species. The site is predominantly semi-improved neutral grassland which is located on an area of higher ground, interspersed with areas of dense mixed scrub on the gently sloping banksides. There is a belt of broadleaved secondary woodland running along the western boundary, and the southern boundary was formed of a native hedge. There is also a recently created seasonal pond which is dry during the summer season and in an early stage of development. Footpaths run through the centre and around the boundary edges, along with a permissive horse path running from Oak Avenue through the site towards Hatherop Park.

3.3 Designation

Oak Avenue is designated as a Local Nature Reserve and a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, full details can be found in *Appendix 4*.



3.4 Ecological interest and features

3.4.1 Flora

The grassland areas are dominated by false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) and cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) with common couch (*Elymus repens*) also abundant. Abundant herbs included yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) and carrot (*Daucus carota*). Frequent species were field scabious (*Knautia arvensis*), hop trefoil (*Trifolium campestre*) and ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*). Birds foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), common knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), lady's bedstraw (*Galium verum*) and mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*) were also locally frequent. Of particular interest are the London notable species, vervein (*Verbena officinalis*), salad burnet (*Poterium sanguisorba*) and red bartsia (*Odontites vernus*). A number of undesirable floral species are present, including bracken (*Pteridium sp.*), field horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*), hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) and creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*).

The scrub habitats comprise of bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*), plum (*Prunus sp.*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), field maple (*Acer campestre*) and dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*). In the woodland, the canopy is dominated by ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) with frequent English elm (*Ulmus procera*), whilst the shrub layer comprises hawthorn, privet and dogwood, and the ground flora is poor and mainly dominated by ivy (*Hedera helix*).

The hedgerow has a good range of native species present including field maple, hawthorn, species of plum, hazel (*Corylus avellana*), spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*), wayfaring tree (*Viburnum lantana*) and wild privet. A 50m section of the hedgerow at the eastern end was laid by volunteers in early 2025, however the remainder of the hedge would be difficult to coppice without the use of chainsaws.

3.4.2 Fauna

This site is popular with a range of bird species including blackbirds (*Turdus merula*), swallows (*Hirundo rustica*), crows (*Corvus corone*), swifts (*Apus apus*) and magpies (*Pica pica*). Diverse communities of butterflies and other invertebrates are also supported by the mosaic of habitats on site.



Surveys undertaken during 2023 discovered a healthy population of slow worms (*Anguis fragilis*) on site. Other reptiles such as grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*) are also known to be present on neighbouring sites, such as Kempton Nature Reserve SSSI and Hatherop Conservation Area, and it is considered likely that this species may occasionally occur on site, in accordance with their highly mobile nature.

3.5 Community involvement

The Friends of Hatherop Park and Oak Avenue LNR represent local interests in the site and carry out various volunteering and social days. They are supported by conservation charity Habitats and Heritage.

3.6 Access and visitor experience

The main entrance to Oak Avenue LNR is located on a minor road, Oak Avenue, and allows pedestrian and vehicle access to the reserve. The main path runs through centre of the site towards the back of the site where it splits into two leading to two other pedestrian entrances, at Forge Lane in the north and Sparrow Close in the south. Horses have a separate entrance on Oak Avenue and follow a permissive horse path along the north side of the site before combining with the pedestrian paths. Since 2014, visitors have been able to walk through the back of Oak Avenue to Hatherop Park along a footpath known as the 'Green Link'.

3.7 Constraints

There is occasional fly tipping, mainly around the boundaries due to close proximity of both the main road and nearby residential housing. Vandalism and anti-social behaviour does also occur and any damage caused to the site will have a higher impact due to the reserve being a small site, compared to that of a larger site. Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) has previously been identified and treated under the LBRuT eradication programme and monitoring since has not seen any further growth.



3.8 Evaluation

The key feature of the site is the good semi-improved neutral grassland which is surrounded by semi-natural broadleaved woodland and scrub. Due to its location and connectivity, the site plays an integral part in contributing to a rich wildlife corridor for many species. The site is hindered by low-level antisocial behaviour and fly tipping.



4.0 Policies

4.1 Strategic Principles for Parks and Open Spaces

The borough has the largest area of public open space per head of population of any London borough. We have a local and national reputation for quality and leadership in the delivery of excellent parks. To ensure the quality of our Parks and Open Spaces remains at a high level, following public consultation, we have developed a series of strategic principles by which parks will be managed.

1. Our parks and open space management will have biodiversity, climate change and sustainability at the forefront.
2. Community participation with our Friends and Community Groups will continue to be encouraged and supported.
3. Our parks will promote active, healthy living and social inclusion for people of all ages and abilities.
4. The management of Parks and Open Spaces will create a sustainable legacy for future generations.
5. The quality of our Parks and open spaces will continue to define LBRuT.
6. Richmond will lead in the delivery of excellent parks and open spaces services.
7. Through innovation, the future development of the parks will be ensured.
8. Richmond's Parks will offer positive experiences to all visitors.

All Council owned and managed parks and open spaces are controlled by Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs). These orders impose various restrictions to dog control and other activities in our parks and open spaces, these can be found here.

https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/parks_and_open_spaces/parks_enforcement_and_legislation#pspo.



4.2 Nature Conservation Policy

During 2019, Richmond Council adopted a Nature Conservation Policy in which the Council recognises the special and diverse wildlife found within its Borough and its' duty to protect and preserve biodiversity. The Policy outlines the ways the Council will achieve this through management of its land, planning obligations and monitoring. The policy can be found in *Appendix 2*.

4.3 Tree Policy

Richmond Council has a tree management policy which recognises the benefits of trees and outlines a responsible management approach towards trees within the Borough. This can be found at *Appendix 3*.



5.0 Site Vision and Objectives

5.1 Site vision

To conserve, maintain and improve the quality of the meadow grassland, wetland, ancient and veteran trees and scrub habitats, whilst improving the visitor experience on site.

5.2 Objectives

From the site goals (*Section 2.0*) and informed by the site description and research into key areas, the following objectives have been developed to cover every aspect of the work to be done:

5.2.1 Objective 1: Nature conservation

Maintain and improve the habitat quality on site to ensure key species are in optimum conditions.

5.2.2 Objective 2: Visitor access

Maintain the pathways, boundaries, infrastructure and cleanliness.

5.2.3 Objective 3: Publicity, communication, and community involvement

With support from the Council and Habitats and Heritage (H&H), raise the profile of Oak Avenue LNR and communicate with the Friends group, residents and interested parties.

Ensure volunteering work parties are available and tasks are wide ranging to cater for different abilities.

5.2.4 Objective 4: Monitoring and Management planning

Monitor the key habitats and species to ensure management action is achieving the site vision.

Review the management regularly and amend work plan as appropriate to ensure site vision is achieved.



6.0 Maintenance Prescriptions

The following detailed prescriptions are designed to manage the site features to deliver the site vision and objectives. The management is not set in stone and must be reviewed and updated based on evidence observed on site, so that management is in response to the observed condition or any environmental change.

Key to terms used within the prescriptions and work programme

AC	Arboricultural Contractor
GMC	Greenspace Management Contractor
H&H	Habitats and Heritage
FoOA	Friends of Oak Avenue
LBRuT	London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
NCC	Nature Conservation Contractor
Minor trees	Trunks and limbs with a diameter of 10cm or less at 1.3m height off ground (Diameter at Breast Height)



6.1 Objective 1: Nature conservation

Prescription details	Description
<u>1. Scrub and minor tree maintenance</u> Responsibility: NCC	<p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coppice 10% of woody scrub per year. - Prevent bramble leaders or scrub encroachment onto grassland and pond areas. - Remove any exotic species present and stump treat to prevent regrowth. <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Works should be carried out outside of bird nesting season unless a pre-works bird nesting survey has been conducted by an Ecologist. - All stems must be cut to ground level to avoid creating any trip hazards. - Any cordwood should be stacked for habitat/deadwood value; small brash piles should be created. - Work should be carried out with hand tools to avoid impacts to reptiles. Avoid removal or disturbance of any features which could be potential hibernacula such as brash/log piles. - If machinery is used to cut scrub, an ecological method statement supplied by the Appropriate Council Officer will need to be followed (see Ecological Method Statement 2 in <i>Appendix 6</i> as a guide).



<p><u>2. Management of trees over 10cm DBH (diameter at breast height/1.3m)</u></p> <p>Responsibility: AC</p>	<p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survey and manage tree stock in accordance with LBRuT policy. <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AC to liaise with Appropriate Council Officer and NCC before undertaking any works on site.
<p><u>3. Meadow grassland maintenance</u></p> <p>Responsibility: NCC</p>	<p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grassland to be cut twice a year, during April and September, to a sward height of 10cm. - Remove all cuttings from the site or add to designated composting area on site. - Remove undesirable weeds such as field horsetail and hoary mustard during mid-summer and top off seedheads of other vigorous species such as hogweed prior to grassland cutting. <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10% of meadow habitat should be left uncut each year, alternating between areas. - A litter pick must be undertaken before cutting grass.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Meadow cutting must not be carried out during high winds or extreme wet weather.- Cutting must be carried out following a method which is sensitive to reptile populations. For these reasons, manual scything or horse-drawn cutting is preferable on this site. If machinery is used to cut the meadow, an ecological method statement supplied by the Appropriate Council Officer will need to be followed (see Ecological Method Statement 2 in <i>Appendix 5</i> as a guide). Meadow cutting should always be carried out on mild sunny days when reptiles are active.
4. Woodland management Responsibility: NCC	<u>Tasks</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Carry out phased halo thinning around any potential mature veteran trees, retaining understory species of high biodiversity value such as hazel or hawthorn.- Remove and stump treat any exotic species present.- Maintain a mixed woodland understorey and increase light reaching the field layer by thinning/coppicing dense sections and boundary areas on a 10-year



	<p>rotational cycle. Due to the small size of this woodland, thinning and coppicing work will be undertaken every other year.</p> <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Follow Ecological Method Statement 1 (<i>Appendix 5</i>) as a guide for best ecological practice.- Cordwood should be stacked for habitat / deadwood value and brash piles.- Works should be carried out outside of bird nesting season unless a pre-works bird nesting survey has been conducted by an Ecologist.
5. Hedgerow management Responsibility: NCC	<p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Selectively coppice and/or lay shrubs within the hedgerow as appropriate to stimulate thick, bushy structure. <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Works should be carried out outside of bird nesting season unless a pre-works bird nesting survey has been conducted by an Ecologist.



<p>6. Pond maintenance</p> <p>Responsibility: NCC</p>	<p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove vigorous dominant plants from the pond should cover exceed 50% of the surface area. - Remove litter and excess leaf debris from pond. - Maintain stock fencing around pond, making repairs as necessary. - Monitor water quality in the pond, reporting any signs of pollution or a change in water quality to the appropriate Council Officer. <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor water quality in the pond, reporting any signs of pollution to the Appropriate Council Officer. - Work must be carried out at a time of year when amphibian breeding activity/larval development has finished. (Oct – Jan).
<p>7. Bracken control</p> <p>Responsibility: NCC</p>	<p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manage bracken growth within the meadow, trialling comparative techniques of bruising (T1) and digging (T2) to study which method is more effective for control. <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report any new occurrences of bracken to the Appropriate Council Officer.



- A minimum of two visits per year are recommended, one in late spring and another in mid-summer.

6.2 Objective 2: Visitor Experience

Prescription details	Description
<p><u>8. Amenity grassland and pathside maintenance</u></p> <p>Responsibility: GMC</p>	<p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 0.5m pathside strips to be maintained as per the standard specifications of the Greenspace Management Contract.- Cut back overhanging vegetation along pathways and around the edges of amenity grassland area up to a height of 2.4m, as specified in the Greenspace Management Contract.- Maintain permissive horse path, at a 3m width and 3m height to ensure horses can safely pass. Provide a welcoming and clean horse-riding environment with clear entrances and paths, including free from trip and eye hazards.- Benches and park furniture to be neatly strimmed round.



	<p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Tree issues involving larger branches or the necessity to work at height are to be referred to the Appropriate Council Officer for liaison with the Arboriculture Contractor.
<u>9. Maintain pathways, boundaries, check site and structures</u> Responsibility: NCC	<p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Carry out weeding along pathways.- Keep paths clear of overhanging obstructions. <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Infrastructure and signage should be checked regularly, and any defects reported to the Appropriate Council Officer within 7 days unless urgent.
<u>10. Litter collection</u> Responsibility: GMC, NCC	<p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Litter picks to be carried out on a regular basis, any large / hazardous items or fly tip to be reported to Appropriate Council Officer within 24 hours.- Bins will be emptied by the Parks Cleansing Team.



6.3 Objective 3: Publicity, communication, and community Involvement

<i>Prescription details</i>	<i>Description</i>
<u>11. Publicity and communication</u> Responsibility: NCC/FoOA	<u>Tasks</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FoOA to advertise their events through social media and on-site posters. - FoOA and NCC to each submit a twice-yearly work summary/future task list for agreement with the Appropriate Council Officer at review meetings.
<u>12. Community involvement</u> Responsibility: FoOA	<u>Tasks</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FoOA to carry out an annual community day inviting residents to visit the site. - NCC, H&H and LBRuT to support the FoOA to carry out any tasks they wish to do safely and efficiently, with appropriate training and guidance. <u>Considerations</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that risk assessment and method statements are up to date and relevant for all events and tasks.



6.4 Objective 4: Monitoring and Management Planning

Prescription details	Description
<u>13. Habitat and species monitoring</u> Responsibility: <i>LBRuT/FoOA</i>	<p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Every year identify a key ecological community or species group to monitor to inform management success. Expert help should be sought where required. <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report any incidental sightings of species to H&H. - Where a sighting is imminently important to the management of a site (such as bird nesting or badger setts), the NCC must inform the Appropriate Council Officer prior to continuation of work.
<u>14. Review management and work plans</u> Responsibility: <i>LBRuT/NCC/FoOA</i>	<p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Twice yearly site visits will be undertaken with the Appropriate Council Officer and NCC to assess work progress and any issues encountered. - At the end of each calendar year, the Management Plan and Work Programme will be reviewed and updated as necessary.



6.5 Table 1 – Oak Avenue LNR Work programme 2026 – 2030

Prescription	Priority	Year and compartment					Usual Timing	Lead resource	Prescription details	Comments
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030				
P1: Scrub and minor tree maintenance	1	A B	A B	A B	A B	A B	Oct - Feb	NCC	Cut back encroaching bramble and woody scrub from grassland and pond areas. Coppice 10% of woody scrub per year. Remove and stump treat exotic species.	Consider impacts to nesting birds and reptiles
P2: Trees over 10cm DBH	1	All	All	All	All	All	As required	AC	Carry out tree safety works as required, in liaison with Appropriate Council Officer and NCC.	Consider impacts to bats and nesting birds
P3: Meadow grassland maintenance	1	A	A	A	A	A	Apr – Sep	NCC	Undertake bi-annual hay cut in spring and autumn months.	Consider impacts to reptiles



								Remove undesirable weeds during summer months.	Leave 10% of meadow uncut.
P4: Woodland management	1	C	C	C	C	C	Oct – Feb	NCC Remove and stump treat exotic species. Thin woodland by coppicing selected semi mature trees on a 10-year rotational cycle. Phased halo around potential mature veteran trees.	Consider impacts to bats and nesting birds
P5: Hedgerow management	1	A C	A C	A C	A C	A C	Oct - Feb	NCC Selectively coppice and/or lay shrubs within the hedgerow	Consider impacts to nesting birds
P6: Pond management	1	A	A	A	A	A	Oct – Jan	NCC Remove vigorous dominant plants from the pond should surface area cover exceed 50%. Remove litter and excess leaf debris from pond. Maintain stock fencing around pond, making repairs as necessary. Visually monitor pond water quality.	Consider impacts to amphibians



P7: Bracken control	1	A	A	A	A	A	May - Aug	NCC	Control bracken encroachment on meadow using digging and bruising techniques.	Compare success between techniques
P8: Amenity grassland and pathside maintenance.	1	All	All	All	All	All	April - Nov	GMC	0.5m pathside strips and overhanging vegetation along pathways to be cut as per GM contract specification. Maintain permissive horse path. Ensure benches and park furniture are neatly cut round.	
P9: Maintain pathways, boundaries and check structures	1	All	All	All	All	All	All year	NCC	Keep paths clear of overhanging obstructions, keep borders clear of weeds.	
P10: Litter collection	1	All	All	All	All	All	All year	NCC FoOA	Litter pick when on site, any sharps/inappropriate/ large/bulky litter and fly tipping to be reported to Appropriate Council Officer.	Weapons have previously been identified on site
P11: Publicity and communication	2	All	All	All	All	All	All year	FoOA	Raise profile of site through social media and posters.	Work with LBRuT Comms, H&H

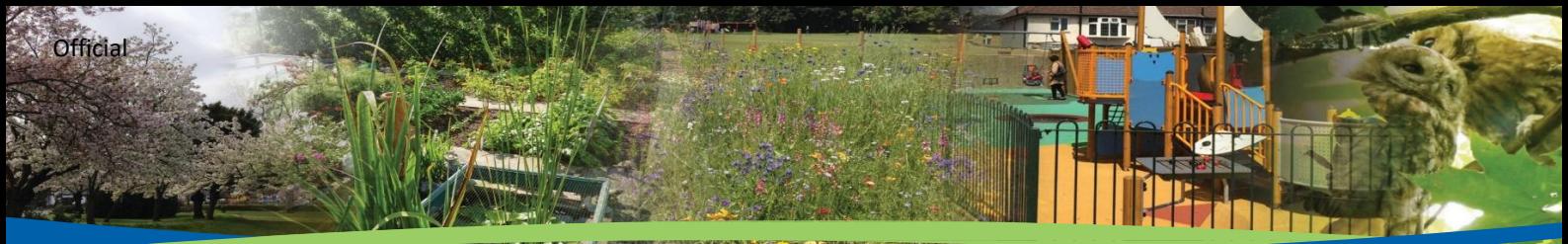


P12: Community involvement	1	All	All	All	All	All	All year	FoOA	Encourage community participation through social media and events.	H&H to provide support where necessary
P13: Habitat and species monitoring	2	All	All	All	All	All	As appropriate	LBRuT FoOA	Monitor key ecological communities and species groups to inform management.	H&H to provide support where necessary
P14: Review management plan and work programme	1	All	All	All	All	All	Nov	LBRuT NCC FoOA	Biannual site meeting to discuss progress. Annual review of management plan prescriptions.	

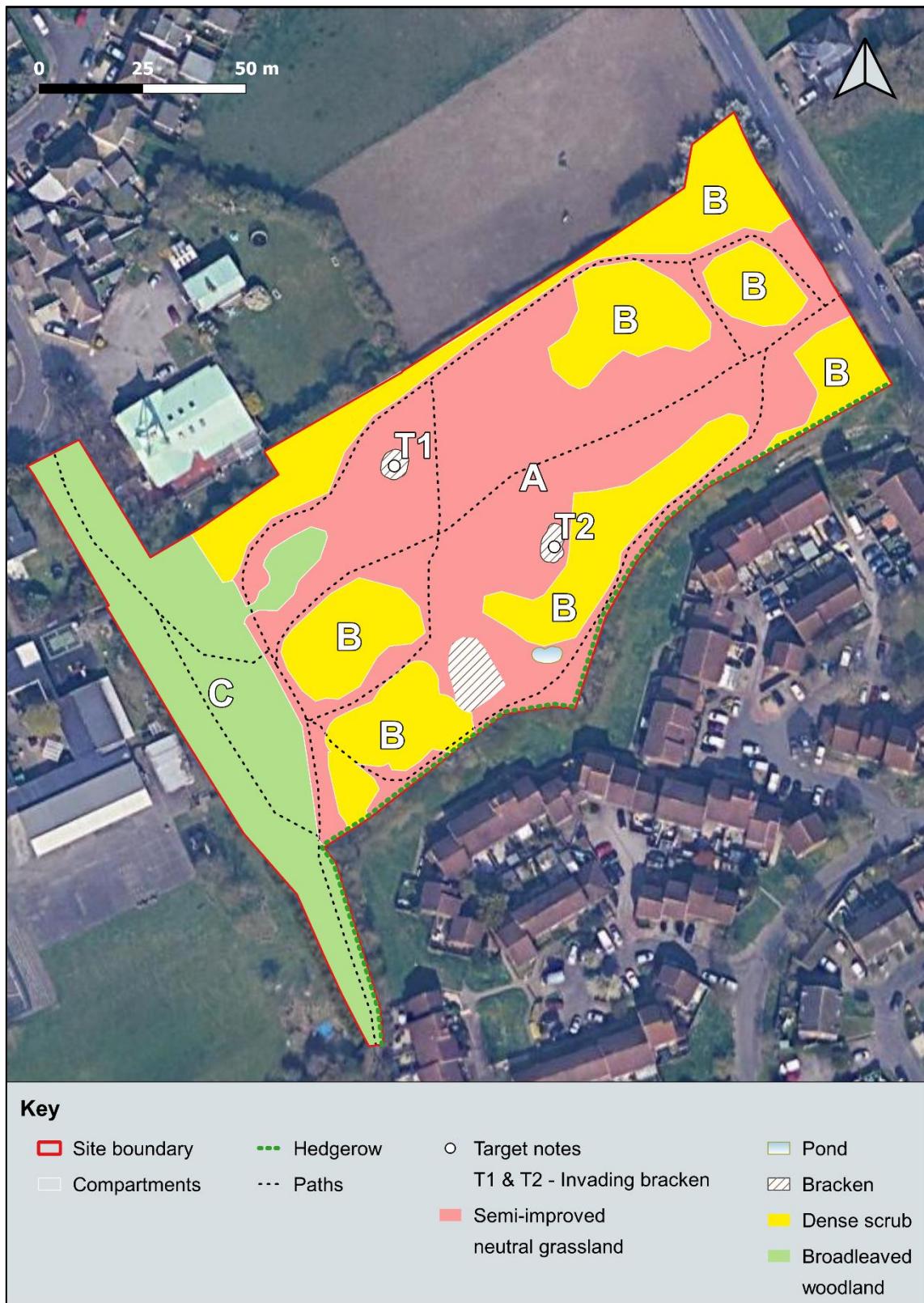


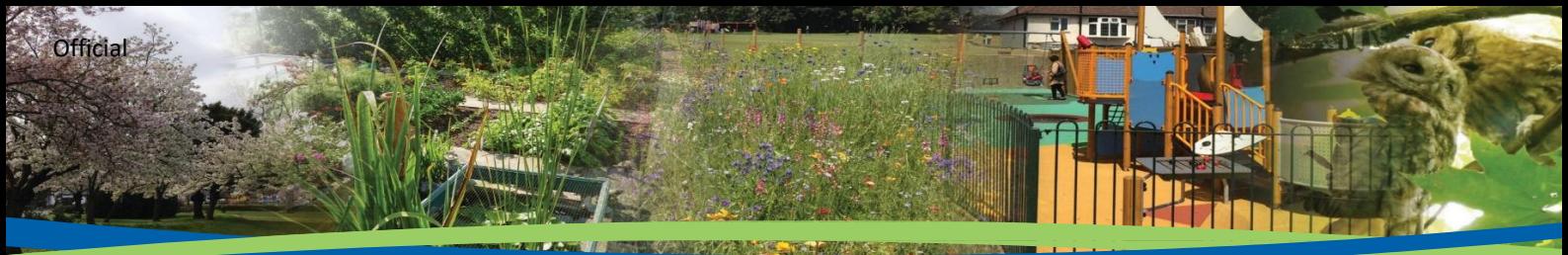
6.6 Priority levels

- 1** – Very important for the maintenance of the key habitats, species or visitor amenity (i.e. annual meadow cut) and should reflect the bare minimum of what should be achieved each year.
- 2** – Of secondary importance to the key tasks, to be done if more time / resources are available (i.e. coppicing / thinning a secondary woodland boundary to a meadow, or additional survey work); priority 2 tasks could become 1s if not completed for a number of years.
- 3** – Luxury, wish list tasks: nice to do but not important if resources are not available; these items might become priority 2s over time if not completed but are unlikely ever to reach priority 1 unless significant change in other factors.



7.0 Management Map





8.0 References

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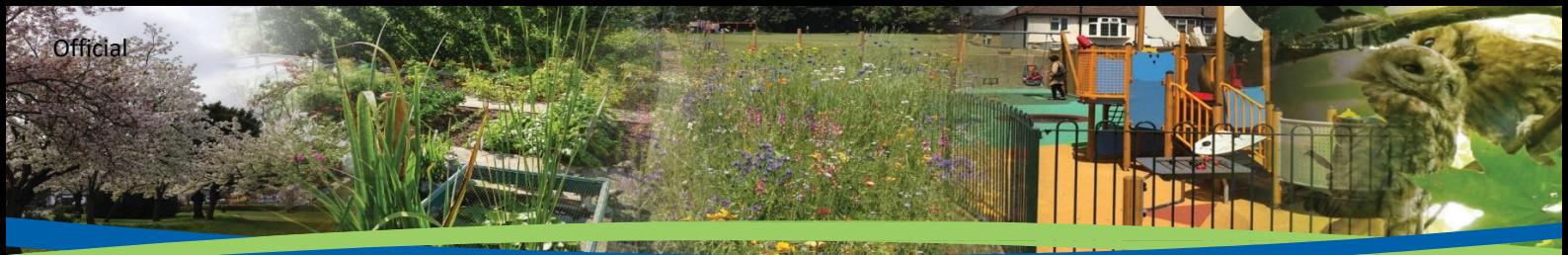
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9.0 Appendices

Appendix 1

Richmond Biodiversity Action Plan, habitats and species relevant to Oak Avenue LNR, [online] available at - FINAL-RBAP-2025-2_compressed-2.pdf

Appendix 2

Richmond Council Nature Conservation Policy [online] available at https://www.richmond.gov.uk/media/16895/lbrut_nature_conservation_policy.pdf

Appendix 3

Richmond Council Tree Policy [online] available at - https://www.richmond.gov.uk/media/6899/tree_policy.pdf

Appendix 4

Oak Avenue SINC designation

Site Reference: RiBII14

Site Name: Oak Avenue Local Nature Reserve

Summary: A narrow strip of grassland with scattered trees, part of which floods regularly.

Grid ref: TQ 122 711

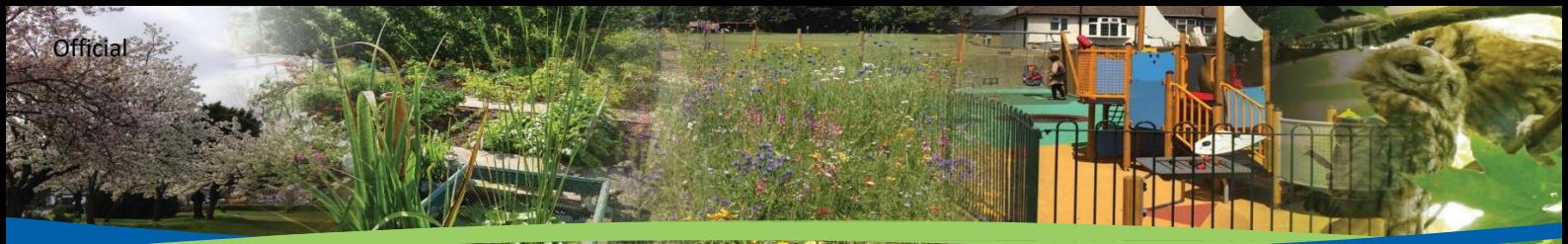
Area (ha): 1.8

Borough(s): Richmond upon Thames

Habitat(s): Pond/lake, Ruderal, Scrub, Semi-improved neutral grassland, Tall herbs

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

**Site Description:**

A wonderful little nature reserve, created on a derelict site by Richmond Council with the assistance of local residents. The diverse and colourful 'wasteland' vegetation, which has established naturally on the site, includes some unusual plants, such as Greek dock (*Rumex cristatus*) and cotton thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*), and supports diverse communities of butterflies and other invertebrates. The self-established vegetation has been supplemented with other habitats, including scrub, meadows and a small pond. These add to the educational value of the site, which is well used by local schools. The site is a statutory Local Nature Reserve.

Site first notified: 01/02/2000

Boundary last changed: 01/02/2000

Citation last edited: 08/05/2006 **Mayor Agreed:**

Defunct: N **Last Updated:** 08/05/2006

ECOLOGICAL METHOD STATEMENT 1

Woodland and Tree Management



Relevant protected species	Bats, nesting birds, badgers
Relevant legislation	Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006, Protection of Badgers Act 1992.
Ecological details	
<p><u><i>Bats and nesting birds</i></u></p> <p>It is a legal offence to kill, injure or disturb a roosting bat, or cause damage or destruction to its roosting place. Furthermore, it is a legal offence to damage or destroy a bird's nest whilst it is in active use. Birds listed on Part 1, Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 are further protected from disturbance whilst actively nesting.</p> <p>Trees are frequently used by roosting bats and nesting birds, particularly where they are located in areas of high-value habitat, such as woodlands and river corridors. The following features will typically be used:</p> <p><i>Nesting birds:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tree cavities - Trunk forks/crown breaks - Between branch forks - Amongst dense ivy <p><i>Roosting bats</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tree cavities - Cracks/crevices in trees - Behind loose, flaky bark - Behind dense ivy stems (minimum 5cm diameter) <p><u><i>Badgers</i></u></p> <p>It is an offence to wilfully kill, injure or take a badger; or intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a badger sett or disturb a badger in its sett.</p> <p>Badgers are frequent in the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames. They typically live in large family groups in a series of underground tunnels and chambers known as a sett. Many setts are present in our woodland habitats.</p>	

Potential impacts from woodland and tree works

Without necessary precautions, the following potential impacts may occur as a result of woodland and tree management works:

Bats

- Killing or injury of roosting bats
- Damage or destruction to a bat roost
- Disturbance of roosting bats

Nesting birds

- Killing or injuring of a nesting bird/destruction of eggs
- Damage or destruction of an active bird nest
- Disturbance of an active bird nest (Schedule 1 listed species)

Badger

- *Damage to a badger sett*
- *Obstruction of access to a badger sett*
- *Disturbance to badgers whilst occupying a sett*

Mitigation measures

The following general management and mitigation measures must be followed during the works:

Bats

Prior to works:

- Ensure that at least one arborist with appropriate training and/or accreditation to conduct aerial bat scoping inspections is present on site.
- Review any site-specific information which has been provided by the Local Authority Ecologist (for example, trees which have been previously identified as suitable for roosting bats).
- Visually inspect all trees from the ground to identify any cavities or other features which could support roosting bats. Any trees with no potential roosting features can be scoped out at this stage.
- Appropriately trained arborist to carry out an inspection of any potential roosting features using an endoscope or high-powered torch as necessary.
- If bat roosting activity cannot be ruled out by the inspection, or it is considered that the tree has potential to support roosts of more than just occasional individual bats, do not proceed with works to the tree and contact the Local Authority Ecologist.
- If, following the aerial inspection, the tree is considered unsuitable for roosting bats, it can be scoped out. Trees considered to be of low roosting suitability (likely

to support no more than occasional individual bats) can also be scoped out provided that it has been confirmed that there is no roosting activity taking place on the day of works.

During works:

- Sometimes, it will not be possible to conduct a thorough aerial inspection on a tree, such as where access is restricted or there is an abundance of ivy cover. If the tree is considered likely to have at most low suitability for roosting bats, soft-felling techniques may be deployed, gently lowering sections of the tree to the ground to be carefully hand searched. If this technique is to be used, the Local Authority Ecologist should be informed prior to starting works.

Further information

- Appendix A provides a flow-chart detailing the process of scoping for bats in trees.

Nesting birds***Prior to works:***

- Prior to any works taking place during the active nesting season (March to end of August), a nesting bird survey must be completed by a qualified Ecologist. The Ecologist completing the survey will provide further advice to arborists on site.
- Works should proceed with caution outside of this period, particularly in the 'shoulder seasons' of February and September. Some species of bird often breed outside of the typical nesting season, in particular the frequently encountered wood pigeon, which is known to nest throughout the year. Ivy-covered trees often conceal wood pigeon nests through the autumn and winter when deciduous foliage is lost from trees.
- It is necessary to make every possible effort to confirm the absence of active bird nesting in trees prior to carrying out works. This may mean that an aerial inspection is required.

During works:

- To safeguard nesting birds, it may be necessary to employ soft-felling techniques to trees with dense ivy cover, gently lowering the tree to the ground in sections. If this technique is to be used, the Local Authority Ecologist should be informed prior to starting works.

Badgers

Prior to works:

- Review any site-specific information which has been provided by the Local Authority Ecologist (for example, any previously recorded mammal holes or confirmed badger setts).
- Carry out a walkover of the working area. Any previously unidentified mammal burrows should be noted and reported to the Local Authority Ecologist.
- Where mammal burrows including badger setts are present, an appropriate works exclusion zone will be advised by the Ecologist.

During works:

- If the Ecologist has given the instruction that works may proceed, the following factors must be considered:
 1. Where will machinery and equipment (such as chippers and diggers) be sited? This must be away from any badger setts or mammal burrow entrances.
 2. Where and how will the tree fall when it is felled? This must be away from any badger setts or mammal burrow entrances. Soft-felling techniques may be required to gently lower sections of wood to the ground.
 3. Where will logs and woodchip be stacked? This must be away from any badger setts or mammal burrow entrances.

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ECOLOGICAL METHOD STATEMENT 2

Grassland and Scrub Management



Relevant protected species	Reptiles, nesting birds, mammals including badgers and hedgehogs
Relevant legislation	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006, Protection of Badgers Act 1992.
Ecological details	
<p><u><i>Nesting birds</i></u></p> <p>It is a legal offence to damage or destroy a bird's nest whilst it is in active use. Birds listed on Part 1, Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 are further protected from disturbance whilst actively nesting. During the active nesting season (March to end of August), birds nest in scrub habitats and sometimes in rough grassland.</p>	
<p><u><i>Badgers</i></u></p> <p>It is an offence to wilfully kill, injure or take a badger; or intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a badger sett or disturb a badger in its sett.</p> <p>Badgers are frequent in the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames. They typically live in large family groups in a series of underground tunnels and chambers known as a sett.</p>	
<p><u><i>Reptiles</i></u></p> <p>All native reptiles in the UK are legally protected from killing or injury. Native reptiles which are commonly encountered in London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames include slow worms, grass snakes and common lizards. Reptiles are typically active between the months of March and October, where they will often be found on the edge of meadows where rough grassland interfaces with bramble scrub. During the winter months, they are less active and often take shelter underground or within dense piles of logs, stones and debris.</p>	
<p><u><i>Hedgehogs</i></u></p> <p>Despite not being legally protected, hedgehogs are considered to be a species of conservation importance, and the Local Authority has a duty to ensure their protection. Hedgehogs will be found in rough grassland and scrub habitats throughout the year, building hibernation nests in the winter.</p>	

Potential impacts from woodland and tree works

Without necessary precautions, the following potential impacts may occur as a result of grassland and scrub management works:

Nesting birds

- Killing or injuring of a nesting bird/destruction of eggs
- Damage or destruction of an active bird nest
- Disturbance of an active bird nest (Schedule 1 listed species)

Badger

- *Damage to a badger sett*
- *Obstruction of access to a badger sett*
- *Disturbance to badgers whilst occupying a sett*

Reptiles

- *Killing or injury of reptiles*

Hedgehogs

- *Killing or injury of hedgehogs*

Mitigation measures

The following general management and mitigation measures must be followed during the works:

Prior to works:

- Scrub cutting works should take place outside of the active bird nesting season (March to end of August).
- Review any site-specific information which has been provided by the Local Authority Ecologist (for example, location of badger setts, presence of reptiles on site etc.). Where protected species are known to be present, the Ecologist may provide a site specific method statement, request the use of specific equipment or machinery, and/or be present on site to supervise works where necessary.
- Visually inspect scrub and grassland areas prior to cutting, and report any concerns to Local Authority Ecologist prior to commencing work. Dense habitat piles of rocks, rubble, wood and debris within scrub should be treated with caution as this may provide shelter to wildlife.

During works:

- A phased cutting technique should be used for the cutting of bramble scrub, cutting first to a height of approximately 300mm before cutting all the way down to ground level on the second cut. This gives animals a chance to escape.

- Vehicles should avoid tracking over bramble scrub before it has been cut, and care must be taken not to crush any habitat piles beneath the scrub. Side-arm flails are preferable for this task if machinery is required.
- Any habitat piles within scrub and grassland must carefully be dismantled by hand or left in situ. Contact the Local Authority Ecologist before dismantling any sizeable habitat piles.
- Grassland should be mown in a pattern that encourages any wildlife to disperse away towards peripheral habitats, for example, spiralling outwards from the centre of the meadow.

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