

BERNARDS HEATH

ACTION PLAN

2019 – 2024

Produced by:

On behalf of:



OVERVIEW

Action Plan

The purpose of this action plan is to produce an agreed set of tasks for the site that St Albans City & District Council (SADC) and the Friends of Bernards Heath (FoBH) can collaboratively work towards. The aspiration is for this plan to enhance the natural environment and the enjoyment of the people using it.

Version Control

Version	Issue Date	Details	Author	Reviewed	Approved
01	Feb 2019	Initial Issue	GA	AT	

Bernards Heath

Action Plan

Location Plan

Bernards Heath
Grid Ref: TL 150 083
Easting: 515046
Northing: 208357

ST ALBANS

St Albans

Scale @ A3
1:25,000

Date
February 2019

Drawing Number
04-03-001

Rev
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Bernards Heath

Action Plan

Site Description

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Bench
- Dog Bin
- Heritage
- Interpretation
- Litter Bin
- Notice Board
- Trees
- Woodland Paths
- Grass
- Hedge
- Path
- Play Area
- Scrub
- Track
- Woodland

Scale @ A3
1:2,500

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Historic water tank

Childrens' Play Area

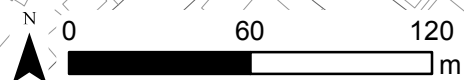
Historic clay pits

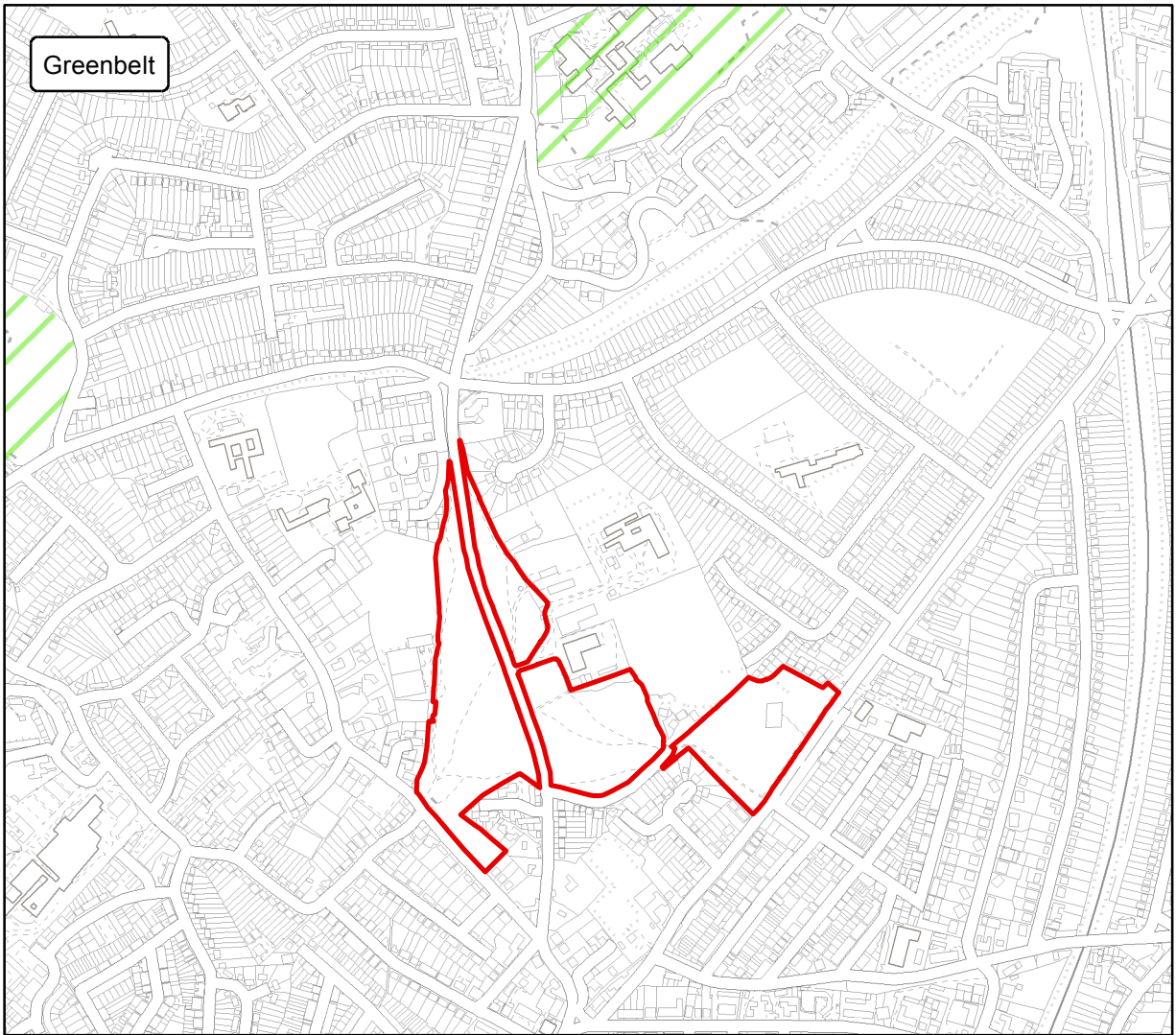
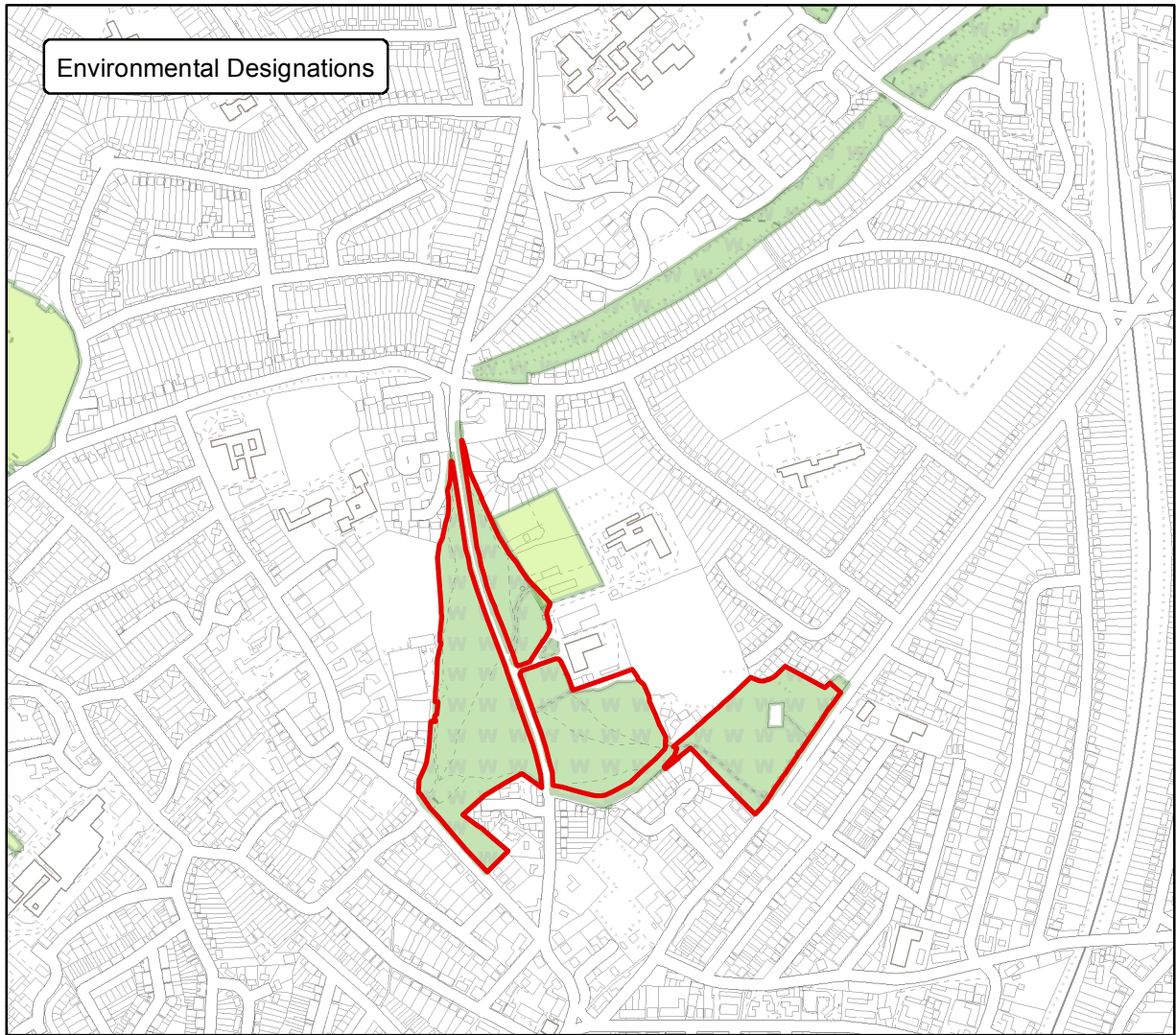
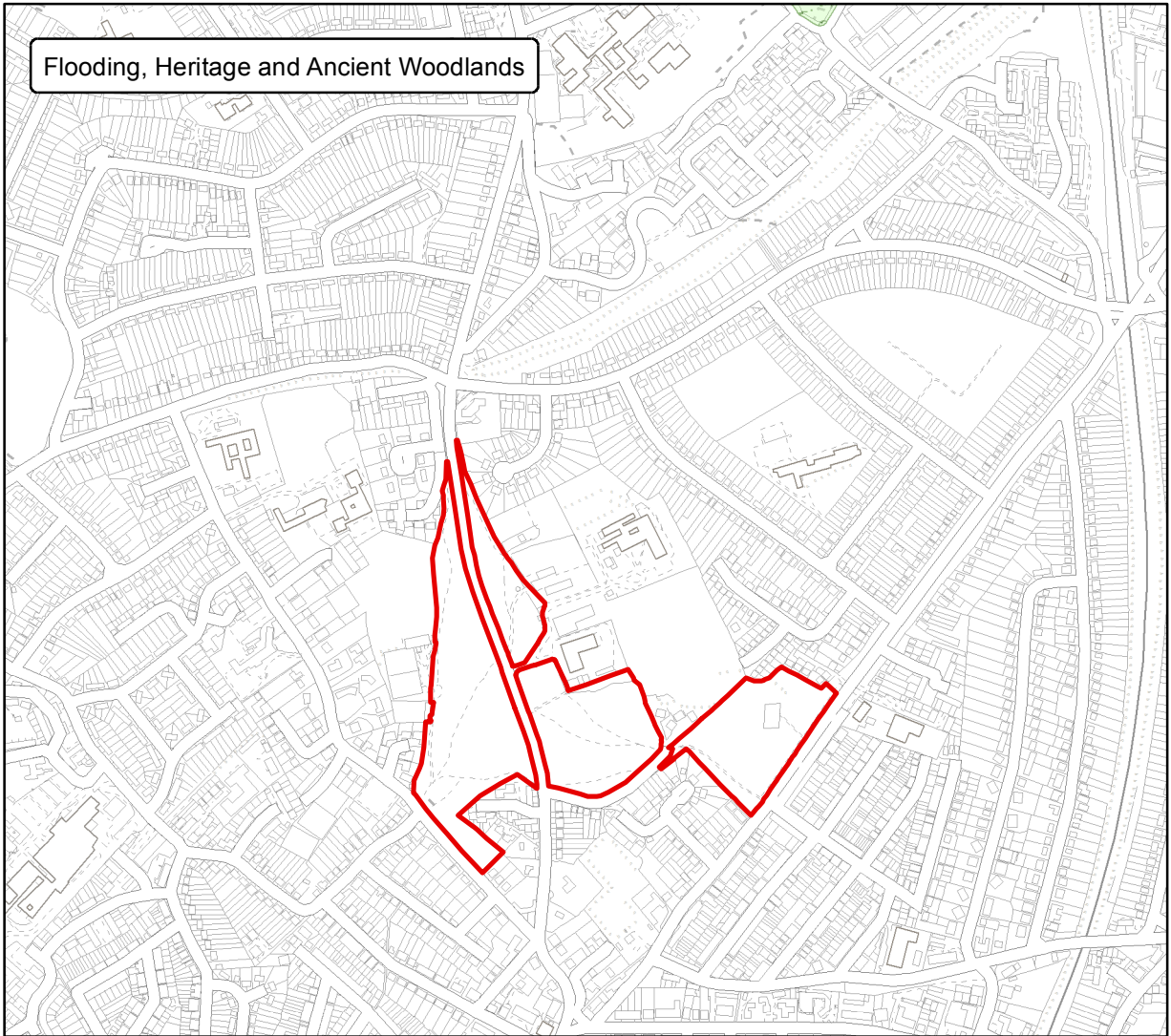
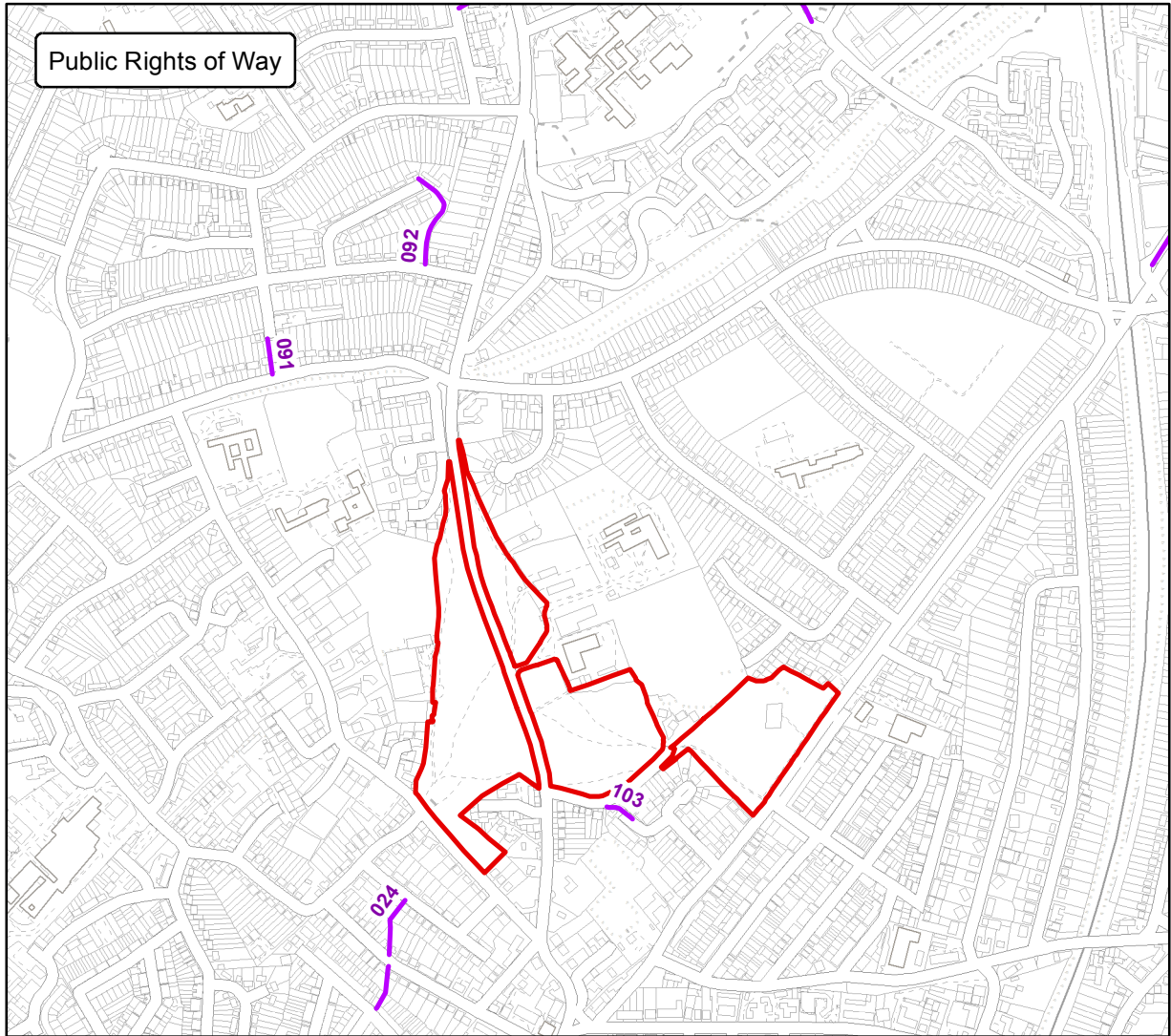
Scrub and
hedge boundary

Access track to properties

Newly planted trees

Basketball Hoop





Bernards Heath

Action Plan

Constraints Plan

- Legend**
- Site Boundary
 - Public Rights of Way:**
 - Footpath
 - Flood Zone Categories:**
 - Main River
 - Flood Zone 2
 - Flood Zone 3
 - Heritage Protection:**
 - Scheduled Monument
 - Environmental Designations:**
 - Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW)
 - Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)
 - Ecosite
 - Local Nature Reserve
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest
 - Wildlife Site
 - Greenbelt



MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

Play Area

Funds are being sought to upgrade and modernise the children's play area. Should this involve an entirely new space, its location and access could be reconsidered. This review should include consideration of the basketball hoop.

Interpretation

Aging interpretation boards are to be replaced. This is being led by FoBH in agreement with SADC.

There are several old noticeboards around the site that are in poor condition and out of character with the site. These should be replaced with new boards that are in keeping with the new interpretation.

Waymarked Routes

Alongside the upgrade to the interpretation, waymarked routes could also be established. This would provide a coherent walk through the woods which can otherwise become disorienting and can connect people with the key heritage features found on site. An update of the existing leaflet could then be used to explain the heritage people will see on the walk.

Heath Farm Lane

Heath Farm Lane is a private road but is sometimes used for parking. Grass verges at the eastern end of the road can be protected with logs cut from any woodland management operations.

Marginal Habitat

The margins around the amenity grass space comprise of a mixture of scrub to more established woody shrubs and trees.

Hedge planting was carried out along the northern boundary. Maintenance should be continued to allow this to fully establish.

A similar approach can be taken to the western side of the field with a hedgerow to screen this boundary. This should be planted as a double staggered hedgerow with at least 6 specimens per metre. Native plants should be used and planted in groups, including species such as hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), field maple (*Acer*

campestre) and small numbers of dog rose (*Rosa canina*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*).

Meadow

The amenity grass area currently provides limited benefit or resource for wildlife or for people. An obscure shape, broken up by the play areas, limits the use of many areas of the grass.

It is proposed therefore that significant areas of the space are managed as meadow, retaining a path through this. This would have a significant benefit for wildlife and make the space more interesting for people to enjoy. Wildflower cuts should be commenced to this area, with a small area (approx. 10m²) scraped back and rotovated before being sown with a wildflower mix for clay or loamy soil (e.g. Emorsgate mix EM4 or EM5). Should this area establish successfully a similar approach can be taken across the proposed meadow area.

Tree planting, particularly blossoming fruit trees, would provide further ecological and amenity interest.

Tree Safety

Tree safety inspections are carried out on a set schedule by SADC, who will arrange mitigation measures as deemed necessary. Useable timber will be retained for use elsewhere on site or habitat piled.

Woodland Glades

The numerous connected woodland glades provide tranquil, isolated spaces amongst the woods. The closely mown amenity grass is significant in defining the unique character of the woodland and should be retained.

Bulb planting could further enhance the character of these spaces in spring, with species such as wood anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), wild daffodil (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus* 'lobularis') and both spring and autumn crocuses. Once established these should require minimal maintenance.

In some locations this amenity grass transitions into the woodland through a woodland edge habitat. This habitat has significant biodiversity value and should be encouraged. These should be cut on a rotation of approximately 3-5 years for herbaceous areas, and around 10-12 years for shrubby habitat.

Woodland Management

The most southerly areas of woodland have a relatively low number of mature trees, with significant areas of scrub. The mature trees that are present also include significant volumes of ash, the future of which is threatened by Chalara Ash Dieback, which is evident in smaller specimens on site.

The plan identifies a number of areas where tree planting can be carried out amongst existing scrub areas. Species should be predominantly oak (*Quercus robur*), with smaller numbers of birch (*Betula pendula* or *Betula pubescens*) and hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*). These should be planted at approximately 2m centres in groups of similar species, to be thinned in future years. In the longer term this will provide a more diverse and resilient age and species range. External grants (e.g. Woodland Trust/ Forestry Commission) can be sought for the provision of plants.

Site Furniture

There are a series of benches and bins on site. These should be replaced as and when these fall into disrepair. These should be of the same style that reflect the character of the site.

ANNUAL ACTIONS

Action	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Status
Amenity Grass Cuts	All year	SADC	SADC	SADC Budget	
Bin Emptying	All year	SADC	SADC	SADC Budget	
Tree Safety Inspections	As per safety inspections schedule	SADC	SADC	SADC Budget	
Cleaning and Maintenance of Interpretation Boards	Annual	SADC	SADC	SADC Budget	
Wildflower Grass Cuts	August/ September	SADC	SADC	SADC Budget	
Seek funding for play area upgrade	-	SADC/ FoBH	SADC/ FoBH	-	

YEAR ONE (2019-2020)

Action	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Status
Replace interpretation boards	-	SADC/ FoBH	SADC/ FoBH	SADC	
Maintenance of hedgerow planting at north-western side of amenity grass area.	All year	FoBH	FoBH	-	
Plant half of hedgerow along south-western side of amenity grass area.	Nov/ Dec	FoBH	FoBH	SADC/ External grant	
Establishment of wildflower area and planting of fruit trees.	Spring (wildflower), Autumn/ Winter (trees)	SADC/ FoBH	SADC/ FoBH	SADC	
Install logs along grass verges of Heath Farm Lane.	-	FoBH	FoBH	-	
Replace damaged bench.	-	FoBH	FoBH	SADC	
Rotational cutting of edge habitat.	Oct – Feb	FoBH	FoBH	-	
Plant trees within scrub in woodland.	Oct - Dec	FoBH	FoBH	SADC/ External grant	

Bernards Heath

Action Plan

Year 1

Legend

- Bench
- Dog Bin
- Heritage
- Interpretation
- Litter Bin
- Notice Board
- Trees
- Woodland Paths
- Edge Habitat
- Grass
- Hedge
- Path
- Planting Location
- Play Area
- Scrub
- Track
- Woodland

Annual Management

Woodland Management
Tree Safety Inspections
Tree Safety Works (retaining usable timber)

Site Maintenance

Grass Cutting
Bin Emptying

Scale @ A3
1:2,500

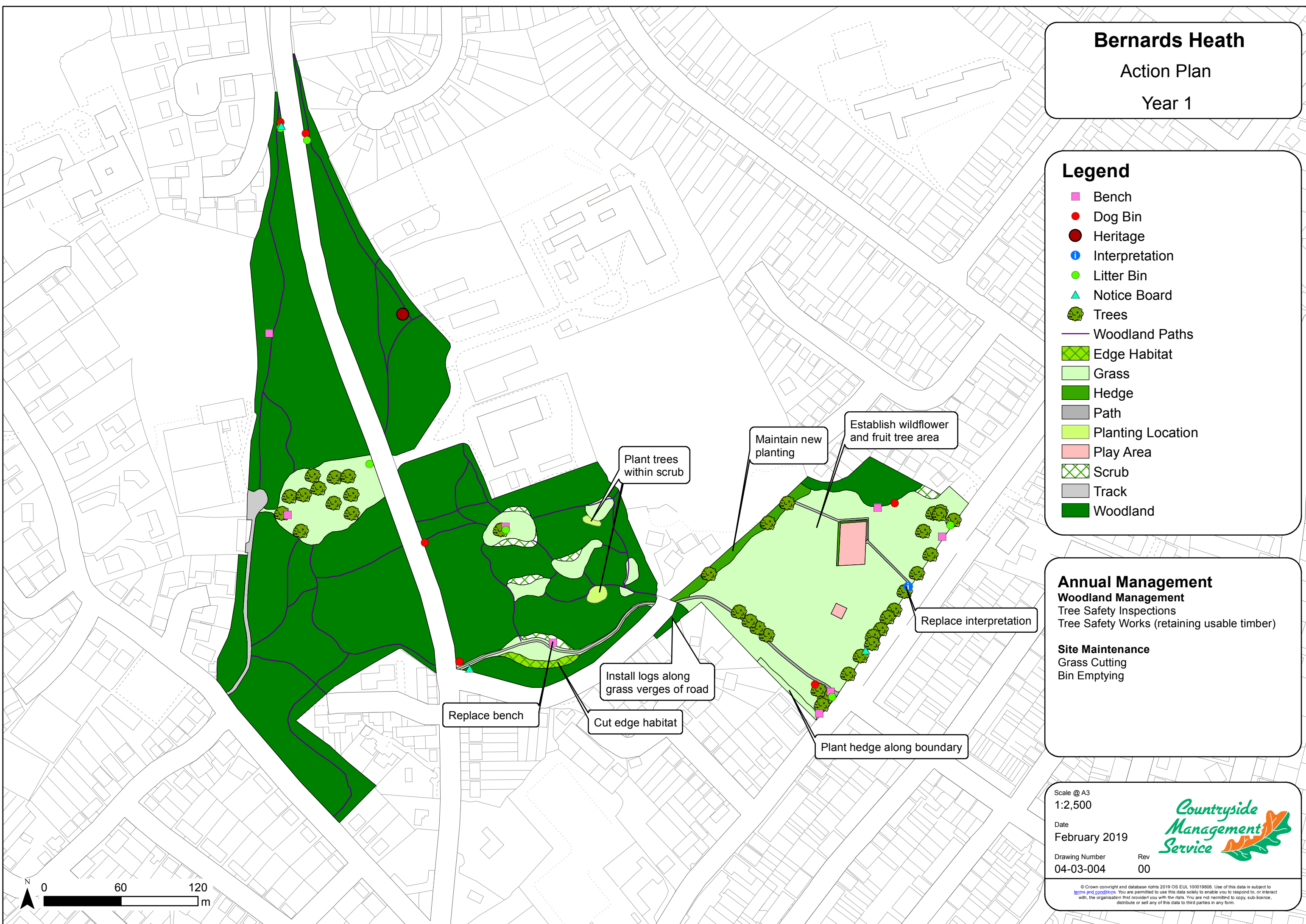
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YEAR TWO (2020-2021)

Action	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Status
Maintain new tree and hedge planting	All year	FoBH	FoBH	-	
Plant other half of hedgerow along south-western side of amenity grass area.	Nov/ Dec	FoBH	FoBH	SADC/ External grant	
Rotational cutting of edge habitat.	Oct – Feb	FoBH	FoBH	-	
Plant trees within scrub in woodland.	Oct - Dec	FoBH	FoBH	SADC/ External grant	

Bernards Heath

Action Plan

Year 2

Legend

- Bench
- Dog Bin
- Heritage
- Interpretation
- Litter Bin
- Notice Board
- Proposed Trees
- Existing Trees
- Woodland Paths
- Edge Habitat
- Grass
- Hedge
- Path
- Planting Location
- Play Area
- Scrub
- Track
- Wildflower
- Woodland

Annual Management

Woodland Management
Tree Safety Inspections
Tree Safety Works (retaining usable timber)

Site Maintenance
Grass Cutting
Wildflower Grass Cutting
Bin Emptying

Scale @ A3
1:2,500

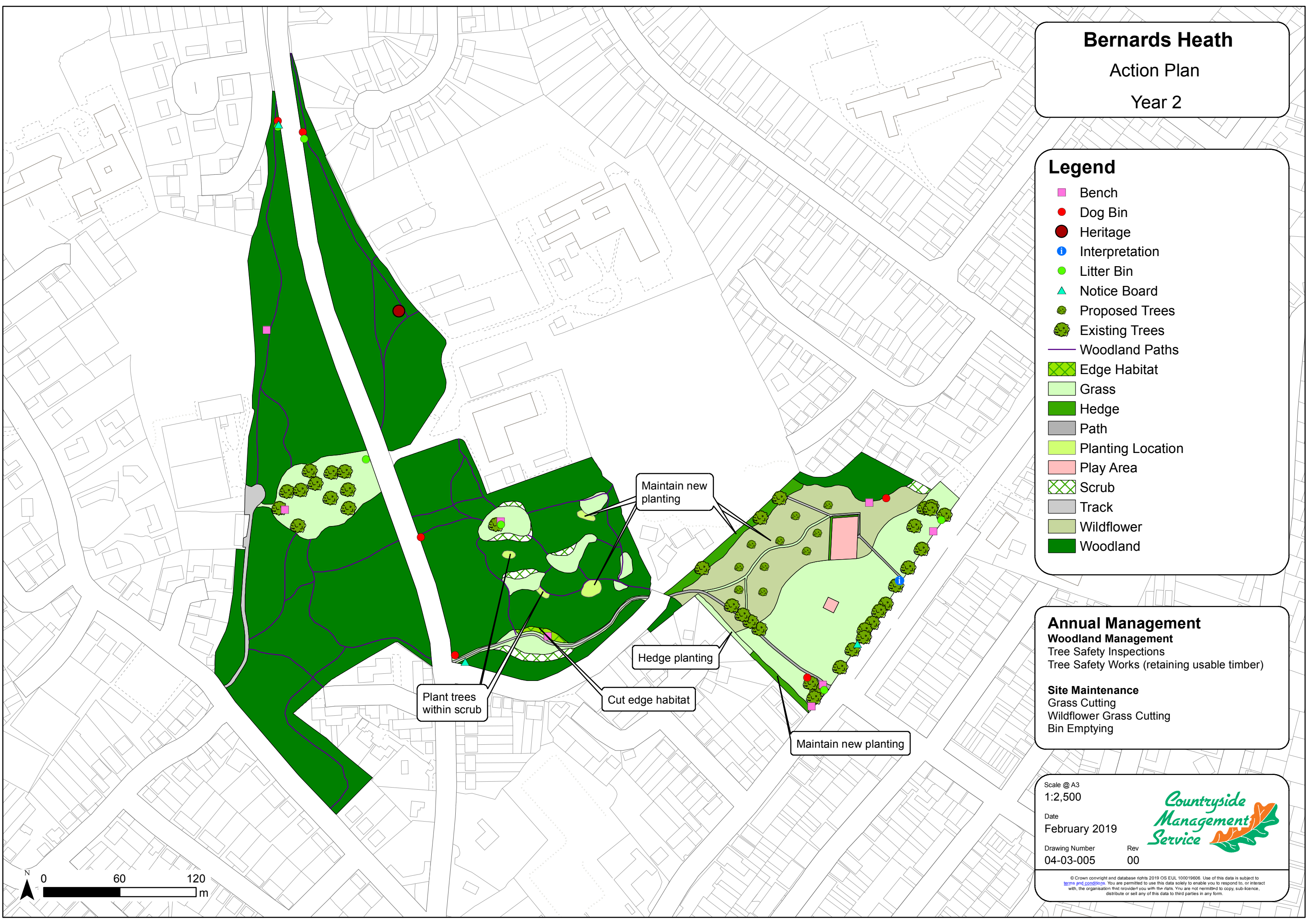
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YEAR THREE (2021-2022)

Action	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Status
Replace notice boards	-	SADC/ FoBH	SADC/ FoBH	SADC	
Maintain new tree and hedge planting	All year	FoBH	FoBH	-	
Rotational cutting of edge habitat.	Oct – Feb	FoBH	FoBH	-	
Plant trees within scrub in woodland.	Oct - Dec	FoBH	FoBH	SADC/ External grant	
Bulb planting within open areas within woodland	-	FoBH	FoBH	SADC	

Bernards Heath

Action Plan

Year 3

Legend

- Bench
- Dog Bin
- Heritage
- Interpretation
- Litter Bin
- Notice Board
- Proposed Trees
- Existing Trees
- Woodland Paths
- Edge Habitat
- Grass
- Hedge
- Path
- Planting Location
- Play Area
- Scrub
- Track
- Wildflower
- Woodland

Annual Management

Woodland Management

Tree Safety Inspections
Tree Safety Works (retaining usable timber)

Site Maintenance

Grass Cutting
Wildflower Grass Cutting
Bin Emptying

Scale @ A3
1:2,500

Date
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Replace notice board

Plant trees within scrub

Bulb planting

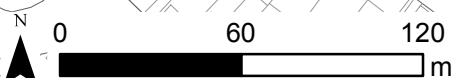
Maintain new planting

Cut edge habitat

Replace notice board

Replace notice board

Maintain planting



YEAR FOUR (2022-2023)

Action	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Status
Develop walking routes	-	FoBH	FoBH	-	
Maintain new tree and hedge planting	All year	FoBH	FoBH	-	
Rotational cutting of edge habitat.	Oct – Feb	FoBH	FoBH	-	
Plant trees within scrub in woodland.	Oct - Dec	FoBH	FoBH	SADC/ External grant	

Bernards Heath

Action Plan

Year 4

Legend

- Bench
- Dog Bin
- Heritage
- Interpretation
- Litter Bin
- ▲ Notice Board
- Proposed Trees
- Existing Trees
- Woodland Paths
- ▨ Edge Habitat
- Grass
- Hedge
- Path
- Planting Location
- Play Area
- ▨ Scrub
- Track
- Wildflower
- Woodland

Annual Management

Woodland Management
Tree Safety Inspections
Tree Safety Works (retaining usable timber)

Site Maintenance
Grass Cutting
Wildflower Grass Cutting
Bin Emptying

Scale @ A3
1:2,500

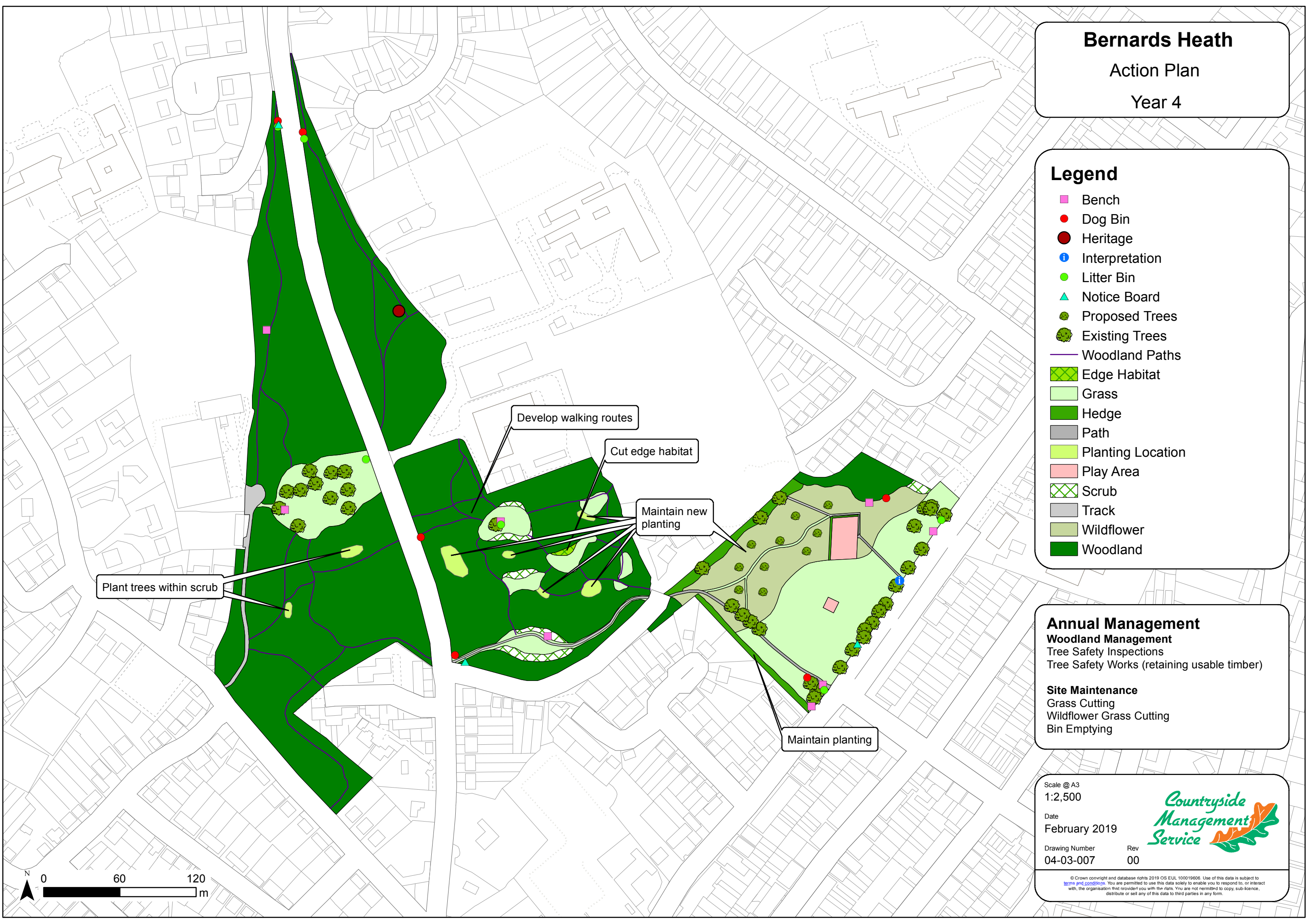
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YEAR FIVE (2023-2024)

Action	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Status
Install waymarking on walking routes and update site leaflet.	-	FoBH	FoBH	SADC	
Maintain new tree and hedge planting	All year	FoBH	FoBH	-	
Rotational cutting of edge habitat.	Oct – Feb	FoBH	FoBH	-	
Plant trees within scrub in woodland.	Oct - Dec	FoBH	FoBH	SADC/ External grant	

Bernards Heath

Action Plan

Year 5

Legend

- Bench
- Dog Bin
- Heritage
- Interpretation
- Litter Bin
- ▲ Notice Board
- Proposed Trees
- Existing Trees
- Woodland Paths
- ▨ Edge Habitat
- Grass
- Hedge
- Path
- Planting Location
- Play Area
- ▨ Scrub
- Track
- Wildflower
- Woodland

Annual Management

Woodland Management
Tree Safety Inspections
Tree Safety Works (retaining usable timber)

Site Maintenance
Grass Cutting
Wildflower Grass Cutting
Bin Emptying

Scale @ A3
1:2,500

Date
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