BERNARDS HEATH
ACTION PLAN
2019 – 2024

Produced by: 

On behalf of:

Countryside Management Service

St Albans City & District Council
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Issue Date</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Reviewed</th>
<th>Approved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Feb 2019</td>
<td>Initial Issue</td>
<td>GA</td>
<td>AT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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. 10m$^2$) 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amenity Grass Cuts</td>
<td>All year</td>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>SADC Budget</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bin Emptying</td>
<td>All year</td>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>SADC Budget</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Safety Inspections</td>
<td>As per safety inspections schedule</td>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>SADC Budget</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning and Maintenance of Interpretation Boards</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>SADC Budget</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildflower Grass Cuts</td>
<td>August/ September</td>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>SADC Budget</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek funding for play area upgrade</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>SADC/ FoBH</td>
<td>SADC/ FoBH</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## YEAR ONE (2019-2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Replace interpretation boards</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>SADC/FoBH</td>
<td>SADC/FoBH</td>
<td>SADC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of hedgerow planting at north-western side of amenity grass area.</td>
<td>All year</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant half of hedgerow along south-western side of amenity grass area.</td>
<td>Nov/Dec</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>SADC/External grant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishment of wildflower area and planting of fruit trees.</td>
<td>Spring (wildflower), Autumn/ Winter (trees)</td>
<td>SADC/FoBH</td>
<td>SADC/FoBH</td>
<td>SADC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Install logs along grass verges of Heath Farm Lane.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace damaged bench.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>SADC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotational cutting of edge habitat.</td>
<td>Oct – Feb</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant trees within scrub in woodland.</td>
<td>Oct - Dec</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>SADC/External grant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### YEAR TWO (2020-2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintain new tree and hedge planting</td>
<td>All year</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant other half of hedgerow along south-western side of amenity grass area.</td>
<td>Nov/ Dec</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>SADC/ External grant</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotational cutting of edge habitat.</td>
<td>Oct – Feb</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant trees within scrub in woodland.</td>
<td>Oct - Dec</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>SADC/ External grant</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## YEAR THREE (2021-2022)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Replace notice boards</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>SADC/FoBH</td>
<td>SADC/FoBH</td>
<td>SADC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain new tree and hedge planting</td>
<td>All year</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotational cutting of edge habitat.</td>
<td>Oct – Feb</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant trees within scrub in woodland.</td>
<td>Oct - Dec</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>SADC/External grant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulb planting within open areas within woodland</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>SADC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bernards Heath
Action Plan
Year 3

Legend
- Bench
- Dog Bin
- Heritage
- Interpretation
- Litter Bin
- Notice Board
- Existing Trees
- Proposed 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

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)

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

Develop walking routes

Cut edge habitat

Maintain new planting

Maintain planting

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

Action Plan
Year 4

Scale 1:2,500
Date: February 2019

Drawing Number: 04-03-007
Rev: 00
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Install waymarking on walking routes and update site leaflet.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>SADC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain new tree and hedge planting</td>
<td>All year</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotational cutting of edge habitat.</td>
<td>Oct – Feb</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant trees within scrub in woodland.</td>
<td>Oct - Dec</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>FoBH</td>
<td>SADC/External</td>
<td>grant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
- Woodland

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

Site Maintenance
- Grass Cutting
- Wildflower Grass Cutting
- Bin Emptying

Terms and conditions.
Crown copyright and database rights 2019 OS EUL 100019606. Use of this data is subject to You are permitted to use this data solely to enable you to respond to, or interact...