



# **JERSEY FARM OPEN SPACE**

## **SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE NATURAL GREENSPACE (SANG) MANAGEMENT PLAN**

2023



**St Albans**  
City & District Council

## OVERVIEW

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### Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) is the name given to green space that is of a quality and type suitable to be used as avoidance. Its role is to provide alternative green space to divert visitors from visiting the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (CBSAC). SANG are intended to provide avoidance measures for the potential impact of residential development on the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) by preventing an increase in visitor pressure on the SAC. The effectiveness of SANG as mitigation will depend upon the location and design. These must be such that the SANG is more attractive than the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC to users of the kind that currently visit the SAC.

### Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace Plans

This SANG Plan deals solely with the enhancement of Jersey Farm Open Space – an existing area of open space managed by the Council. It provides a detailed assessment of the site pre-enhancement and costed interventions needed for the site to become SANG, based on the requirements set out in the Mitigation Strategy.

### Management Plans

Management plans specify activities that should take place on a site over a stated period of time; these activities will help to deliver the agreed aspirations which the site managers and stakeholders have identified for that site.

### Version Control

Version	Issue Date	Details	Author	Reviewed	Approved

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## 1.0 SUMMARY

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### 1.1 Site Summary

Site Name: Jersey Farm Open Space

Site Address: House Lane, St Albans, AL4 9EL

Grid Reference: TL 17742 09547

Size: 8.33ha

Owner: St. Albans City and District Council (SADC)

Leased By: Sandridge Parish Council

Designations: None

### 1.2 Policy context

#### 1.2.1 Hertfordshire County Council Strategies

##### 1.2.1.1 Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and have since committed to make Hertfordshire cleaner, greener and more sustainable.

HCC want to:

1. Lead in their own operations
2. Enable sustainability with their programmes, policies, and decisions.
3. Inspire businesses and residents to act.

##### 1.2.1.2 Pollinator Strategy

Hertfordshire County Council is committed to helping to conserve the UK's pollinators by ensuring it will consider the needs of pollinators in the delivery of its duties and work.

Vision:

The local environment will be rich in pollinator habitats, helping support sustainable pollinator populations and making places more attractive for people to live and work in.

Aims: The Council will work to:

1. Ensure the needs of pollinators are represented in policy and guidance.

2. Protect, increase, and enhance the amount of pollinator habitat in Hertfordshire to help prevent extinctions; and improve the status of any locally threatened pollinator species.
3. Increase awareness of pollinators and their habitat needs across local residents, businesses, and other landowners.
4. Increase the contribution of land under the ownership of, or managed by, the Council to pollinator conservation.
5. Improve our knowledge and understanding of pollinators in our local area.

## **1.2.2 SADC Strategies**

### *1.2.2.1 Sustainability and Climate Crisis Strategy*

The SADC Sustainability and Climate Crisis Strategy sets out all the actions the council plan to take over the next 3 years, to reduce the environmental impacts, improve the environmental sustainability of operations and services, ensure resilience to changing environmental conditions and act as a strong community leader to ensure action continues to be taken across all parts of the community.

The document sets out how the council plans to begin reducing our emissions to Net Zero by 2030.

The document focuses on the following core themes:

- Governance and Leadership
- Energy Use
- Transport and Air Quality
- Waste
- Nature and Sustainable Food
- Climate Change Adaptation and Water

## **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

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### **2.1 Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation**

The Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (CB SAC) supports the most extensive area of native beech forest in England, set within a mosaic of grassland, scrub and woodland habitats. The CB SAC is internationally recognised and within the top-tier of nature conservation sites nationally. The CBSAC includes Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI which is in Dacorum Borough. The site is designated to protect the beech forest, species rich chalk grasslands and the stag beetle, which is found in decaying tree stumps and fallen timber.

The Council is legally obliged to make sure that no adverse effect on the integrity of the CB SAC will arise from new development within the Zone of Influence (ZOI) which extends 12.6 km from the CB SAC. As part of the District falls in the ZOI, the Council is preparing a Mitigation Strategy that will address the identified impacts. The strategy will include provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to attract people away from the CB SAC and therefore reduce pressure on it.

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) is one of the measures contributing to the Mitigation Strategy. SANG is the term given to greenspaces that are created or enhanced with the specific purpose of absorbing recreation pressure that would otherwise occur at European wildlife sites, such as Ashridge Common and Woods SSSI. New SANGs can be created, or existing greenspaces enhanced to create a SANG, in order to absorb the level of additional recreation pressure associated with new development.

### **2.2 Identification of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace**

The Council undertook an extensive site search, screening, and assessment process to identify areas of open space as suitable alternatives to the CB SAC.

From this, formal open spaces such as sports grounds, playing fields, bike tracks, or some children's play areas (i.e. those not constructed from natural materials, such as wood) were excluded from the SANG assessment as they are unlikely to meet the criteria. Where such features are present on a considered site they are not counted towards the overall area and capacity of SANG.

This plan provides more detailed proposals on how Jersey Farm Open Space could be brought up to a suitable standard to provide an alternative to CB SAC.

### **2.3 Jersey Farm Open Space as an Alternative to Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation**

Jersey Farm Open Space was visited by Natural England and was considered to be a potential candidate for a SANG. It will provide walking route options leading through a range of habitats from its edge of town location. Enhancements including

new waymarking and signage, parking facilities and making paths accessible year-round during wet winter conditions, will attract more visitor use. Enhanced habitats and interpretation information will be provided at various locations to encourage engagement and understanding of the site. The SANGs assessment checklist is used to demonstrate how Jersey Farm Open Space is suitable as an alternative to CB SAC and how enhancements will enable its use as such.

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## **3.0 SITE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT**

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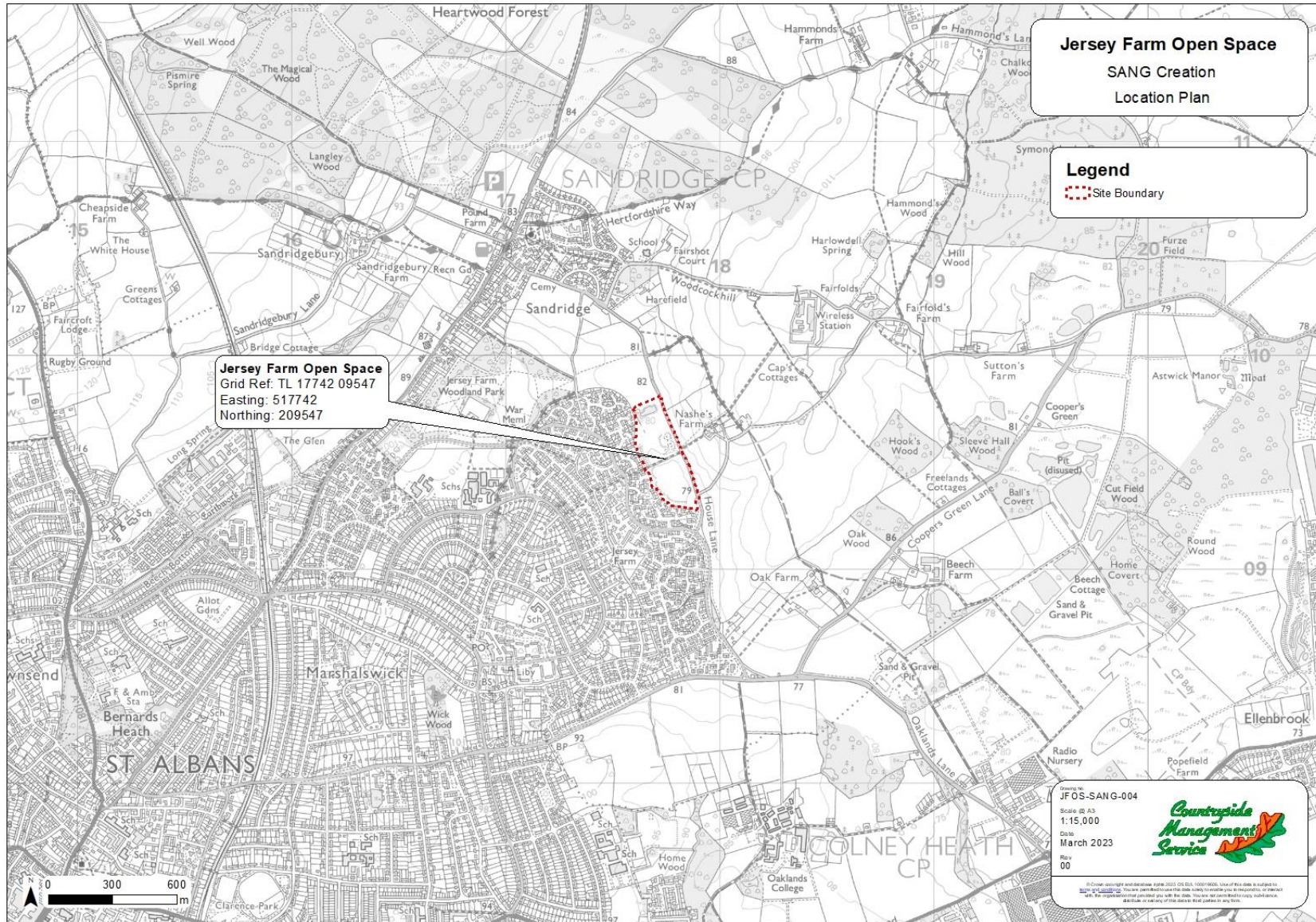
### **3.1 Introduction, Site Description and Location**

Jersey Farm Open Space is a site with 8.33-hectares of potential SANG area located 3.5km north-east of St Albans City Centre within the ward of Sandridge and Wheathampstead. The north of the site immediately bounds agricultural land, the east boundary follows House Lane, the Jersey Farm residential area bounds the site to the south and west and the village of Sandridge is located 1.2km to the north-west of the site. Public Footpath 'Sandridge 026' transects the site east-west linking Sandringham Crescent with House Lane.

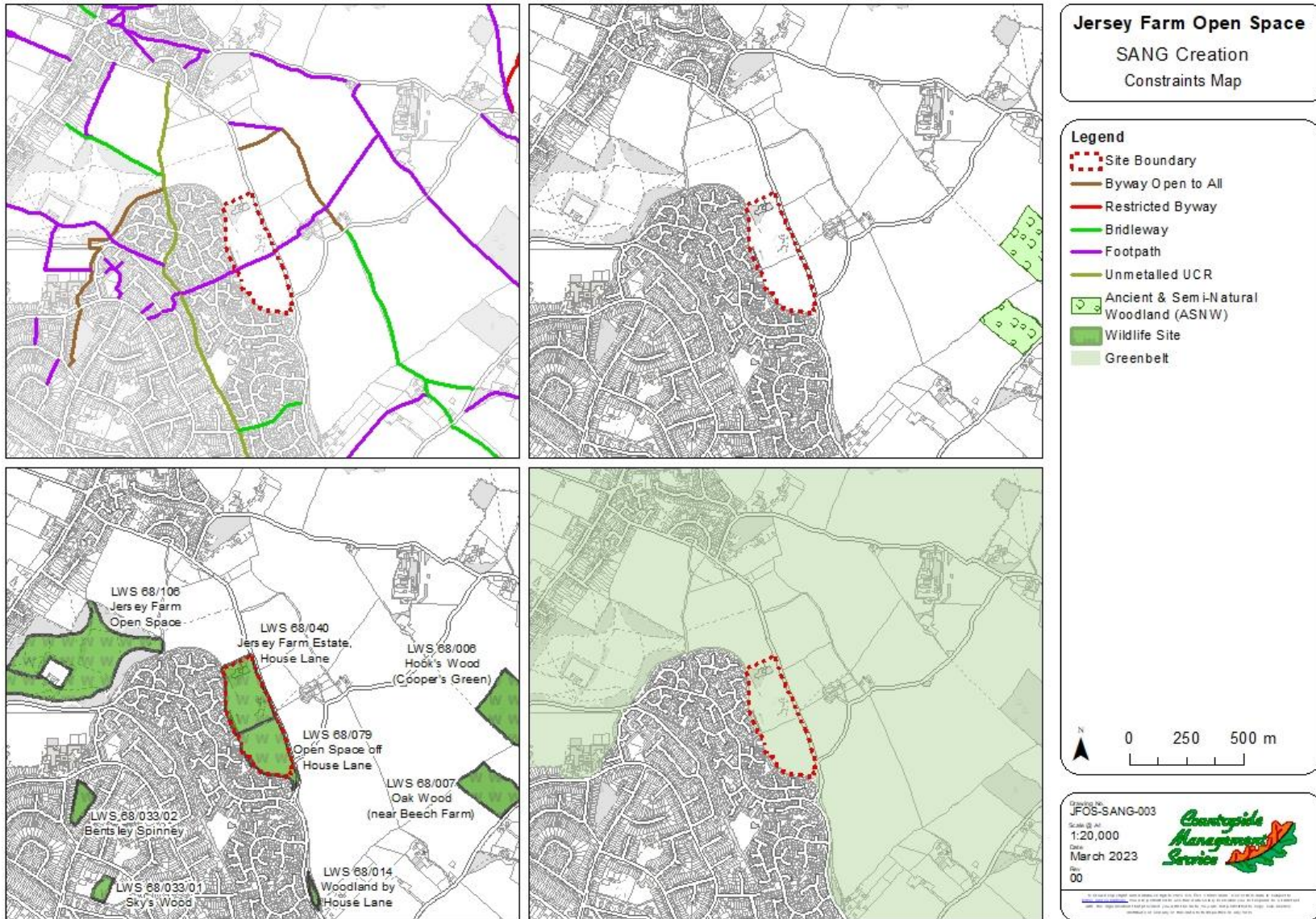
The existing site has a network of desire lines across open amenity and meadow grassland with only a surfaced path linking Richmond Walk with the Play Equipment.

The site is invaluable for amenity and recreation, with significant open space ideal for play and dog walking.

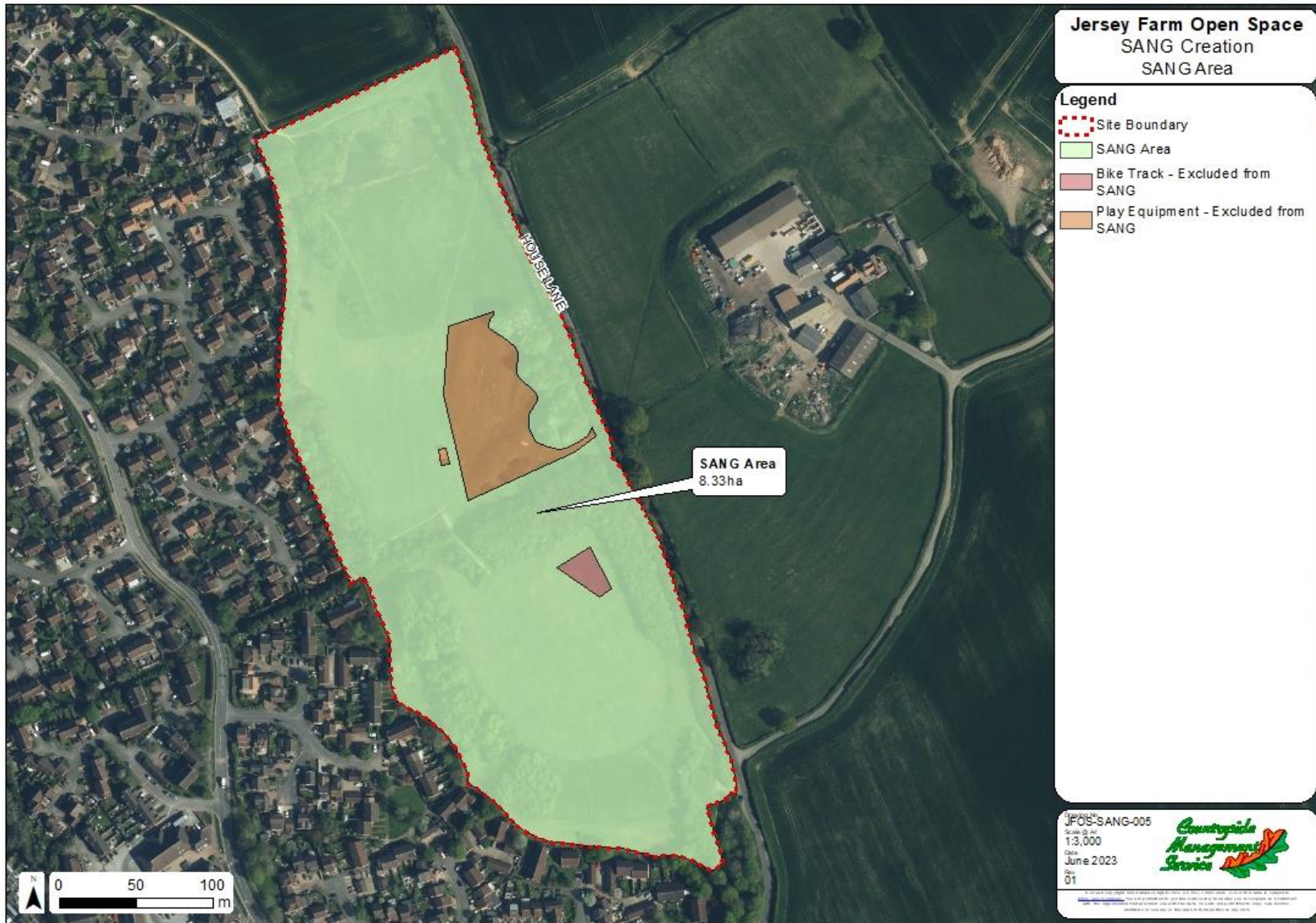
Several patches of woodland across the site and a lake to the north which retains surface run-off water are the predominant extent of existing landscape features. The undulating topography of open grassland in some places however does allow for seasonal surface water to collect.



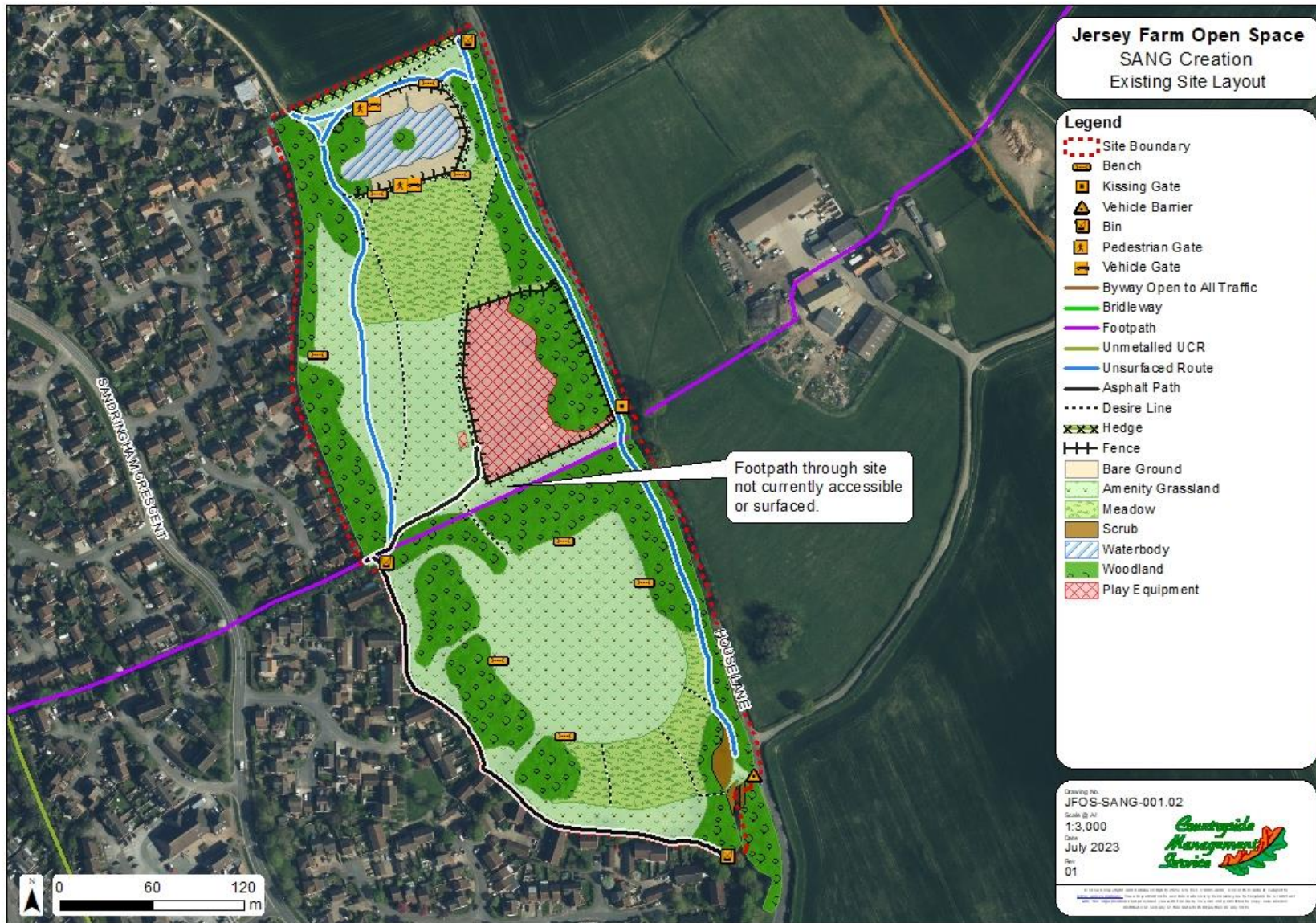












### **3.2 Adjacent Land**

Jersey Lane ('Sandridge UCR1'), which links Sandridge with the town of St Albans via Jersey Farm to the west of site. To the east of site, beyond House Lane, open farmland exists which can be accessed via Footpath 'Sandridge 026'. Jersey Farm, the residential area, is predominantly used for housing but also includes a local hub with a convenience shop, medical centre, pharmacy and food and beauty outlets.

### **3.3 Access / Recreational Routes**

Jersey Farm Open Space is currently only accessible on foot or bicycle. The site can be accessed from Jersey Lane unofficially to the north through farmland, or to the west via Footpath 'Sandridge 026'. Footpath 'Sandridge 026' also provides access to the site from the east where it crossed House Lane. The site can be accessed to the south from Richmond Walk which links from Sandringham Crescent and Beverley Gardens. Footpath 'Sandridge 026' also links Sandringham Crescent, Holborn Close and Richmond Walk to provide an access point into the site from the west.

### **3.4 Topography**

Jersey Farm Open Space overall is predominantly a level gradient, ranging between 81 and 87m above sea level. Grassland areas within the centre of the site undulate. The only steep gradient is the small section of high ground to west of site at the access point off Footpath 'Sandridge 026' / Richmond Walk.

### **3.5 Designation Status**

There are no Statutory or Non-statutory designations within the site boundary.

### **3.6 Drainage and Flooding**

The lake to the north of the site retains surface water run-off. There is a drainage ditch along the west boundary, to the immediate rear of Langham Close and Cromwell Close property gardens. The undulating nature within open grassland means water naturally collects in small pools seasonally.

### **3.7 Landscape and Views**

From the high point to the west of site off 'Sandridge 026' / Richmond Walk there are extensive views over the north of the site towards the lake. Elsewhere the openness of the site provides the feeling of being in a large-scale landscape. Boundary trees prevent much view beyond the site from within, however the exception to this is views of some Beverley Gardens residential properties to the south of the site.

### **3.8 Wildlife / Biodiversity**

Habitats within the site comprise of grassland, woodland and a lake. Significant areas of amenity grassland are present throughout the site.

Habitats within the site could be suitable for nesting birds, bats and a number of butterfly species.

### **3.9 Land Ownership**

The site is owned by St Albans District Council and leased by Sandridge Parish Council.

### **3.10 Furniture, Interpretation and Signage**

The site contains benches in a variety of designs as well as bins.

There is no signage, directional or otherwise, or interpretation within the site.

### **3.11 Visitor Capacity**

Footprint Ecology conducted visitor interviews and visitor count surveys at the site on 23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> March 2023. These surveys have been commissioned by St Albans City & District Council to check whether there is capacity for additional visitors. Surveys took place at the proposed survey points on the site.

The survey report can be found at Appendix 1. This report considers the implications of the survey results in terms of potential additional visitor capacity at Jersey Farm. It is a small site and the results indicate that Jersey Farm is well used by local residents.

The survey found that there are approximately 14.25 persons visiting per hour. This figure was input into an agreed methodology and has been applied to determine SANG capacity. It indicates a residual capacity of 3.95ha, see Appendix 2 for more information about the capacity calculation.

## 4.0 SITE PROPOSALS FOR SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE NATURAL GREENSPACE

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### 4.1 List of Site Proposals

The following habitats, features and furniture will be established or installed to improve the character the space, biodiversity and opportunity for nature engagement to encourage visitors while supporting the additional number of users:

- Habitats
  - 26no. Parkland trees, standards;
  - 0.32ha Woodland edge planting;
  - 105 lin. m Additional hedgerow - creating 220 lin. m of hedge in total;
  - 1.25ha Additional meadows - creating 2.53ha of meadows in total;
  - 1no. New pond; and
  - 0.2ha Wetland marginal vegetation, around the lake and pond.
- Paths
  - 1,544 lin. m Unbound granite surface path, some of which contributing to a circular route;
  - 113 lin. m Macadam surface path;
  - 1,368 lin. m Mown grass strips, some of which contributing to a circular route; and
  - 1no. Steps, at the only location of steep terrain.
- 13no. Benches
- 4no. Bins
- Signs
  - 1no. Combination welcome sign with noticeboard and interpretation/orientation board
  - 1no. Standalone interpretation/orientation board
  - 5no. Directional finger posts
  - 1no. Brown & White site location vehicle sign
  - 2no. Brown & White site location pedestrian signs.
- Parking
  - 1no. Car park
  - 3no. Bicycle racks.





## **5.0 MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS**

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### **5.1 Management Operations**

The following maintenance operations are expected to maintain existing and newly established habitats, features and furniture to retain their function, benefits and aesthetic appearance:

#### **5.1.1 Habitats**

- Parkland trees, standards
  - Maintenance (pruning, re-mulching, watering etc)
  - Replacement of failed trees
- Woodland edge planting
  - Maintenance (thinning, re-mulching etc)
  - Replacement of failed trees
- Woodland – Management (coppicing, thinning etc)
- Hedgerow
  - Maintenance (re-mulching, weed control, trimming etc)
  - Replacement of failed plants
- Meadow
  - Reseeding (e.g. yellow rattle)
  - Mowing
- Amenity grass – Mowing
- Wetland vegetation – Management (hand pulling, cutting, raking etc)
- Pond – Maintenance (aquatic weed clearance, leaf clearance etc)
- Lake – Maintenance (aquatic weed clearance, leaf clearance etc)

#### **5.1.2 Paths**

- Surface paths
  - Weed control
  - Repairs
  - Resurfacing
- Steps – Repairs

### **5.1.3 Furniture**

- Benches
  - Maintenance (cleaning, painting etc)
  - Replacement
- Bins
  - Litter/recycling combination bins - Replacement

### **5.1.4 Signs and Interpretation**

- Combination welcome sign with noticeboard and interpretation/ orientation board
  - Maintenance (cleaning, painting, varnishing etc)
  - Replacement
- Interpretation/orientation board
  - Maintenance (cleaning, painting, varnishing etc)
  - Replacement
- Directional finger post
  - Maintenance (cleaning, painting, varnishing etc)
  - Replacement
- Brown & white highway vehicle sign
  - Maintenance (cleaning etc)
  - Replacement
- Brown & white highway pedestrian sign
  - Maintenance (cleaning etc)
  - Replacement

### **5.1.5 Parking**

- Height Barrier with Lower Gate – Open at all times.
  - Maintenance (cleaning, painting etc)
  - Replacement
- Surfacing
  - Repairs
  - Resurfacing
- Bicycle Racks

- Maintenance (cleaning, painting etc)
- Replacement

## 5.2 Management Operation Timeline

These expected management operations will be required to varied frequencies – some every year and some periodically. The following table indicates which year, in the first 20 years, it is expected these operations will be required. We expect that after 20 years, scheduling of operations will need review based on unplanned circumstances and future needs. Within each year required, some operations may need to be completed numerous times, such as amenity grassland which will need mowing fortnightly or monthly throughout the growing season.

Item	Action	Year Required (Year 1 – 20)
<b>Habitats</b>	Parkland Tree, Standards – Maintenance (Pruning, re-mulching, watering)	4-20
	Parkland Tree, Standards – Replacement of failed trees	2
	Tree inspections	5-20
	Woodland Edge – Maintenance (Thinning, re-mulching etc)	4, 5 & 15
	Woodland Edge – Replacement of failed trees	2
	Woodland – Management (Coppicing, thinning etc)	1-20
	Hedgerow – Maintenance (Re-mulching, weed control, trimming)	4-20
	Hedgerow – Replacement of failed plants	1
	Meadow – Reseeding (e.g. yellow rattle)	1-3
	Meadow – Mowing	1 - 20
	Amenity Grass, including grass strips – Mowing	1 - 20
	Wetland Vegetation – Management (Hand pulling, cutting, raking etc)	4-20
	Pond – Maintenance (Aquatic weed clearance, leaf clearance)	4-20

	Lake – Maintenance (Aquatic weed clearance, leaf clearance)	20
<b>Paths</b>	Paths – Weed control	1-20
	Paths – Repairs/Resurfacing	10, 20
	Steps – Repairs	10, 20
<b>Furniture</b>	Bench – Maintenance (Cleaning, painting etc)	1-20
	Bench - Replacement	20
	Bins - Replacement	10, 20
	Bins – Maintenance/Emptying	1-20
<b>Signs &amp; Interpretation</b>	Combination Welcome Sign with Noticeboard and Interpretation/ Orientation Board – Maintenance (Cleaning, painting, varnishing etc)	1-20
	Interpretation/Orientation Board – Maintenance (Cleaning, painting, varnishing etc)	1-20
	Directional Finger Post – Maintenance (Cleaning, painting, varnishing etc)	1-20
	Brown & White Highway Vehicle Sign – Maintenance (Cleaning etc)	1-20
	Brown & White Highway Pedestrian Sign – Maintenance (Cleaning etc)	1-20
	Combination Welcome Sign with Noticeboard and Interpretation/ Orientation Board – Replacement	15
	Interpretation/Orientation Board – Replacement	15
	Directional Finger Post - Replacement	15
	Brown & White Highway Vehicle Sign – Replacement	20
	Brown & White Highway Pedestrian Sign - Replacement	20

<b>Parking Maintenance</b>	Height Barrier with Lower Gate – Maintenance (Cleaning, painting etc)	5, 10, 15, 20
	Height Barrier with Lower Gate – Replacement	20
	Surfacing – Repairs	10, 20
	Bicycle Racks – Maintenance (Cleaning, painting etc)	1-20
	Bicycle Racks - Replacement	10, 20

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## 6.0 SANG REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

The enhancements identified in section 4 aim to encourage more visitors to Jersey Farm Open Space.

The following table provides an assessment of Jersey Farm Open Space against the SANG criteria checklist after the implementation of the enhancement measures described in section 4.

Item	Criteria	Expected / Desirable	Criteria Met with Proposals (Y / N)	Notes
<b>Paths</b>	A minimum circular walks of 2.3-2.5km to be provided.	Expected	Y	The proposed marked circular route totals 2.31km. This includes the natural option sections that will be unsurfaced, mown 6m wide strips.
	Paths easily used and well maintained but mostly unsurfaced.	Expected	Y	The circular route – the majority of path on site – will have a 3m width of Unbound Granite surface which will offer a semi-natural appearance while being porous and able to be maintained. The circular route, where including Unbound Granite surface, will also include a 3m wide grass margin (unsurfaced).
	Where parking is provided, circular path should start and finish at that location.	Expected	Y	The circular route starts and ends at the proposed car park.
	Paths should be safe, easily identifiable and kept clear of obstructions, such as scrub cover for example.	Expected	Y	Paths will be shown on interpretation/orientation panels and directional finger posts. The management of adjacent vegetation is accounted for in the site proposals.

	Information boards and/or signage at access points outlining the layout of the site and routes available to visitors.	Desirable	Y	A welcome sign feature made up of a combination of a noticeboard and interpretation/orientation panel (with site map) will be located at the car park, while an interpretation/orientation panel (with site map) will be located at the main pedestrian access to the west of site. All access points will have directional finger posts.
<b>Parking</b>	Parking, including for cyclists, to be provided on sites larger than 4ha, unless the site is solely intended for residents within 500m only.	Expected	Y	Site is larger than 4ha (SANG area is 8.33ha). Vehicle parking is provided for vehicles, including a number allocated as Accessible Vehicle Bays. Bicycle Racks are also proposed, to be located within/immediately adjacent to the car park.
	Parking areas are to be easily and safely accessible by car and to be clearly signposted.	Expected	Y	The car park is proposed to be located off of House Lane with a height barrier featuring a lockable vehicle gate marking the entrance. Brown and white directional signs will be located on the nearby House Lane/Sandringham Crescent roundabout, as well as for pedestrians at the Sandringham Crescent/Richmond Walk junction and off of Jersey Lane to the north-west of site.
	Visitor to be able to take dogs from the parking area to the site safely off the lead.	Desirable	Y	Paths from the car park will lead immediately to open space of amenity grassland and meadow. Vegetation/tree management adjacent to the car park is also proposed to improve open sightlines into the site from the car park, improving the sense of safety



				for users allowing dogs off lead directly from the car park.
<b>Access</b>	Access points to be provided based on the intended visitors of the SANG.	Expected	Y	There will be access points suitable for users arriving by vehicle/bicycle who view it as a 'destination' site, most notably via the car park off House Lane. There will also be access points optimal for those arriving without vehicle from the adjacent Jersey Farm residential areas to the west.
	Safe access route on foot from nearest car park and/or footpath.	Expected	Y	The Unbound Granite Path (circular route) and Macadam Path incorporate the car park, PRow (Footpath) and existing Asphalt Path along their routes to lead directly to/from them.
	Access should be unrestricted within the site, with plenty of space for dogs to exercise freely and safely off lead.	Expected	Y	Access within the site will be unrestricted with the ability for all users to circumnavigate the entire site. Where steps are present, which will be constructed to BT Countryside for All Accessibility Standards, an alternative low gradient/flat route along Unbound Granite and Macadam Paths provides additional access options should users prefer this.
<b>Character of Space</b>	Needs to be semi-natural, or perceived as such where close to existing development.	Expected	Y	A variety of short mown grass, woodland edge scrub, woodland, seasonal meadows and wetland margin vegetation will create a semi-natural environment – ideal for the site location between the residential area to the west and the agricultural/rural land to the north and east.

	<p>If the site is larger than 12ha, a range of habitats should be present.</p>	<p>Expected</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Site is not larger than 12ha (SANG area is 8.33ha). Despite this, the site does provide a range of habitats offering floral diversity in meadows and wetland margins, aquatic habitats in the lake and pond, and the benefits of woodland/scrub.</p>
	<p>No unnatural intrusions (e.g. odour from sewage treatment works, noise from busy roads).</p>	<p>Expected</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>There are no main roads bounding the site or industry nearby that could possibly create an unnatural intrusion. Wetland planting will also reduce the visual and possibly odorous implications of road run-off in the soil and water of the lake.</p>
	<p>There should be little intrusion of built structures such as dwellings, buildings, fencing (not constructed using natural materials), etc.</p>	<p>Expected</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>The only possible built structure intrusions are the Beverley Gardens houses that back on to the south of the site and currently have clear views over the open space and can therefore be clearly seen from within. A hedge is proposed to the south of the site which will screen these properties while also offering the benefits of habitat connectivity.</p>
	<p>Naturalistic space with areas of open countryside with dense and scattered trees and shrubs.</p>	<p>Desirable</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Seasonal meadows, woodland edge scrub and mature woodland will provide variety and therefore a naturalistic space. Open vistas in both the southern and northern areas of the site will offer a sense of open countryside. Scattered standard trees will offer additional visual interest, particularly lining parts of the circular route within open areas.</p>

	Gentle undulating topography. Steep slopes are likely to deter visitors.	Desirable	Y	<p>The site is predominantly flat, especially along paths. Steep topography is only in one very localised area to the west, where steps and alternative path options are proposed.</p> <p>Uneven and undulating land is predominantly within the open area within the northern part of the site, mostly where seasonal meadow is located and where there is potential to create a mosaic of ponds/wetland.</p>
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## **7.0 SANG COSTS**

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### **7.1 Establishment Costs**

It is estimated the cost to install and establish all proposals outlined in section 4 including designs, procurement, applications, materials, labour and 3-year aftercare where appropriate will be in the region of £323,300.00. This figure is calculated using similar project costs, benchmarking, and contractor estimates.

### **7.2 Maintenance Costs**

Annual maintenance costs for an 8ha SANG site could be expected to be approximately £10,000 and therefore around £10,400 for an 8.33ha site such as Jersey Farm Open Space. Over an 80-year period this expected value would total approximately £833,000.

Taking into consideration any 3-year aftercare clauses and annual variations of required operations, it is estimated the maintenance costs for Jersey Farm Open Space over the first 80 years following install or establishment will be approximately £600,760. This figure is calculated using current and projected grounds maintenance contract figures and benchmarking. The total value will exclude current grounds maintenance costs incurred by the Council.

### **7.3 Capital Replacement Costs**

In addition to maintenance costs for upkeep of features it is important to value the cost of replacing those features. This is generally on an ad-hoc basis, but as these require supplying and installing new items this is classified as a capital cost.

Taking into consideration variations of the estimated timing of capital expense operations, it is estimated that the capital costs for Jersey Farm Open Space over the first 80 years following install or establishment will be approximately £436,200. This figure is based on current and projected materials and install costs, and benchmarking.

### **7.4 SANG Charge (Indicative)**

On the basis of the establishment costs and maintenance costs, the SANG charge is estimated to be £6,603 per home. This assumes development of 14 homes per year, on average, within the Zone of Influence, which is in line with historic rates of development in this area.

## **8.0 APPENDICES**

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### **8.1 Appendix 1 – Footprint Ecology Survey**



# Capacity estimates and potential use of Jersey Farm as a SANG

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# FOOTPRINT ECOLOGY

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## Summary

This report has been commissioned by St Albans City & District Council and follows on from visitor surveys conducted at Jersey Farm in March 2023 (see separate report). This report uses the visitor survey results to provide the necessary information to inform assessment of additional visitor capacity and potential improvements to Jersey Farm in relation to its potential as a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to provide a viable alternative to the Ashridge Estate, which is part of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC).



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## Acknowledgements

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# 1. Introduction

## Overview

- 1.1 This report has been commissioned by St Albans City & District Council and is informed by the results of a visitor survey conducted by Footprint Ecology (from March 2023, see separate report). This report considers the implications of the survey results in terms of additional visitor capacity at Jersey Farm.

## Current levels of use and capacity

- 1.2 To accurately understand the sites' current level of use and inform decisions on potential capacity, all potential access points were mapped. A total of 10 access points were mapped for Jersey Farm and are listed in Table 1 and Map 1.
- 1.3 For each of these access points we estimated the number of visitors entering the site, drawing on the tally count results and route data from the interviews. Where the access point was not a survey point and there were no tally data, we extrapolated from the route data to give an estimate of visitor numbers.
- 1.4 Our estimates for each access point were then combined to give an overall figure for the number of people entering each site. A simple benchmark commonly used by Footprint Ecology to identify when SANGs might be 'at capacity' assumes a site is at capacity with a visit rate of 1 person per ha per hour (e.g. Liley and Floyd, 2013; Panter and Caals, 2020). This benchmark is derived from Footprint Ecology data from a range of sites and represents an approximate mid-point in the range of visitor densities when comparing busy urban greenspaces (i.e. a city park), to extensive tracts of semi-natural habitat (i.e. the Thames Basin Heaths SPA), and is intended only as a guide to give an approximate point at which a public greenspace might be feeling busy or overcrowded.
- 1.5 At Jersey Farm, the entering tally count gives a summed estimate of 14.25 people entering per hour. However, Jersey Farm is a very small site at approximately 9.3 hectares (8.5 hectares excluding the play park, and 8.3 when also excluding the rugby pitch). As such, based on the two tally counts

alone, an estimate of 1.53 or 1.71 people per hectare per hour is produced (depending on whether the 9.3 ha or 8.3 ha figure is used).

- 1.6 Jersey Farm is a small site and the survey points were selected such that most of the site was visible from them. The tally data therefore should capture virtually all visitors. However, there is some scrub around the perimeter and it is possible that some (albeit probably very low) additional use might have been missed. As with Nomansland Common, we mapped all the entry points onto the site and checked the route data to determine how well the tally data capture people entering the site at each entry point. Comparison of the interviewee routes (and the access points at which they enter the site) alongside the tally counts indicates that 88% of those interviewed would have been tallied as entering the site. Using this approach we can extrapolate estimates for the minor access points that were not clearly visible from the survey locations, as listed in Table 1.
- 1.7 At two access points there were no interviewee routes passing through them and these were each assigned a nominal value. The nominal value was 0.02 people per hour, equivalent to approximately one person entering a week. Finally, as with Nomansland Common, there are adjacent properties, some of which were not visible in the tally count and have direct access onto the site. There are quite a few of these properties and therefore some use could have been missed. An exact estimated for this is difficult, however around 22 houses have immediate access to the site. If we assume one person from these properties visits the site every day, a further 2.75 people per hour would be added. These additions give an estimate of 17.2 people entering per hour across all the access points and therefore a figure of between 1.85 and 2.06 people per hectare per hour (depending on the hectare figure used).
- 1.8 There are some caveats in how these totals have been derived, and some important considerations as to how it is used to determine visitor capacity. There is a limitation in assessing the access from neighbouring housing which might not have been picked up in the tally data. Overall, the site is small, with an area of 9.3 ha and a perimeter of 1.45 km, and the area reduced further when removing other features such as the playpark and half size rugby pitch. The data from the tallies and capacity estimates places the current level of use at Jersey Farm well above a 1 person per hectare per hour threshold. However, this is one of several methods that can be used to estimate capacity and it is understood that St Albans City & District Council

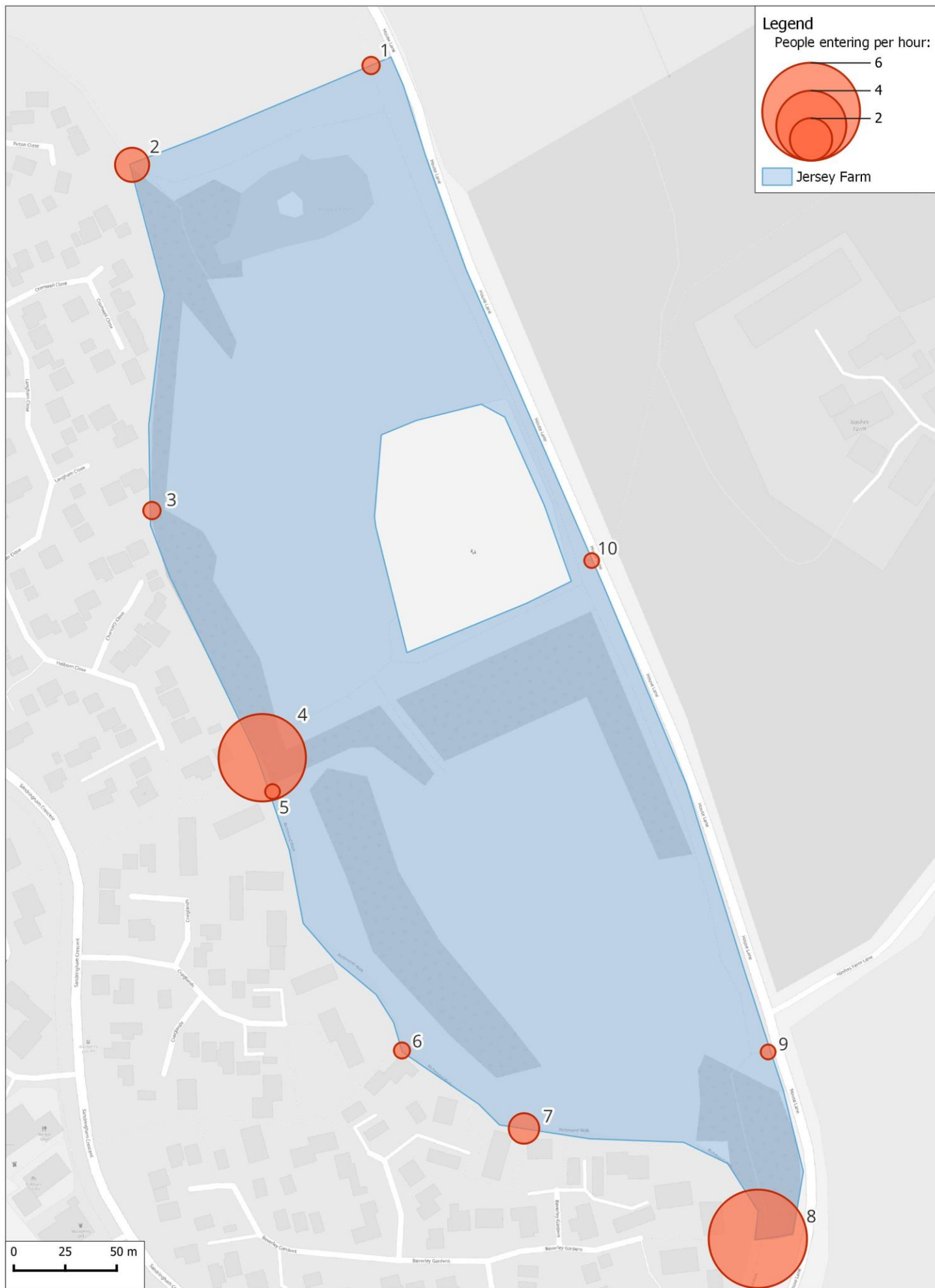
will be applying a different approach to estimate additional visitor capacity at Jersey Farm.

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**Table 1: Summary of Jersey Farm capacity estimates based on tally and interview data. Note that the value calculated for people per hectare per hour is shown for the area of the entire site (9.3ha) and the area minus the rugby pitch and play area (8.3ha).**

ID	Name	Total number of routes passing point (%)	Number of routes entering at point (%)	Method	Simple tally counts	Access point estimate
1	North east corner	3 (4.4%)	1 (1.5%)	Tally for SP 8	0.20	0.20
2	North west corner	21 (30.9%)	7 (10.3%)	Tally for SP 8	1.41	1.41
3	Chancery close	2 (2.9%)	1 (1.5%)	Tally for SP 8	0.20	0.20
4	Richmond Walk 1	41 (60.3%)	26 (38.2%)	Tally for SP 8	5.25	5.25
5	Richmond Walk 2	30 (44.1%)	7 (10.3%)	Route extrapolation		0.02
6	Richmond Walk 3	1 (1.5%)	1 (1.5%)	Route extrapolation		0.11
7	Richmond Walk 4	4 (5.9%)	4 (5.9%)	Tally for SP 7	1.15	1.15
8	Richmond Walk 5	37 (54.4%)	21 (30.9%)	Tally for SP 7	6.04	6.04
9	House Lane 1	0	0	Tally for SP 7	0.00	0.02
10	House Lane 2	5 (7.4%)	0	Route extrapolation		0.02
	Local properties					2.75
Total					14.25	17.17
<b>People per hectare per hour (9.3ha)</b>					<b>1.53</b>	<b>1.85</b>
<b>People per hectare per hour (8.3 ha)</b>					<b>1.71</b>	<b>2.06</b>

Map 1: Numbered access point at Jersey Farm, sized by the estimated number of people entering per hour.



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## 2. Implications for SANG provision & future capacity

- 2.1 The interview results from Jersey Farm show that visitor use is very local, mostly dog walkers, that live in close proximity and access the site on foot. The site is small, meaning it only provides for a short walk.
- 2.2 In terms of the future management of the site, these could be addressed through potentially providing longer routes by linking to other areas of greenspace in the vicinity, such as the Jersey Farm Woodland Park. This may serve to provide a greater draw and mean there is a larger area for people to visit. Such changes could mean the site has a wider draw, and provision of parking could mean that people may then visit by car, extending the potential catchment.
- 2.3 The results indicate that current levels of use exceed the visit rate of 1 person per hectare per hour at which a site might feel busy. This is due to the relatively small size of the site. The 1 person per hectare per hour threshold is a guide and there are other methods that can be used to determine additional visitor capacity.
- 2.4 These results summarise current levels of use and form the basis for discussion with Natural England in terms of any potential that the site might have as a SANG.

### 3. References

Liley, D., Floyd, L., 2013. Visitor surveys at potential SANGs sites in Wealden District.

Footprint Ecology.

Panter, C., Caals, Z., 2020. Dorset Heaths 2019 Visitor Survey (Unpub. Report No. 545).

Urban Heaths Partnership.



## **8.2 Appendix 2 – SANG Capacity Calculation**

<b>Jersey Farm Open Space (people per hour)</b>	<b>A. SANGs (scaled up to 12 hours per day)</b>	<b>B. Total visits per annum to SANGs (scaled up to 365 days per year)</b>	<b>C. Equivalent no. of visitors per annum</b>	<b>D. Estimated Area (ha)</b>	<b>E. Capacity to Mitigate (D/8 x 1000)</b>	<b>F. Residual Mitigation Capacity (E-C)</b>	<b>G. Residual area of SANG capacity available (F/1000 x 8)</b>	<b>H. SANG capacity (equivalent no. of dwellings) (F/2.4)</b>
<b>14.25</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>62415</b>	<b>547.5</b>	<b>8.33</b>	<b>1041.25</b>	<b>493.75</b>	<b>3.95</b>	<b>206</b>