

# **THE WICK LOCAL NATURE RESERVE**

## **ACTION PLAN 2022 – 2027**

### **ENGAGEMENT DOCUMENT**

Produced by:



On behalf of:



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

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A new five-year action plan is being produced for The Wick Local Nature Reserve. This action plan will be inserted as an additional Appendix to The Wick Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) 2017-22. It will guide management of the site between 2022 and 2027 based on established aims and objectives. This engagement document sets out how stakeholders can contribute to shaping the action plan.

GAPs are essentially map-based management plans that provide focus and direction for the running and improvement of open spaces. They provide a clear, logical process to determine the activities that should take place over a stated period of time to achieve the objectives for the site.

The new action plan is being produced by the Countryside Management Service (CMS), part of Hertfordshire County Council's Countryside and Rights of Way Service, on behalf of and in partnership with St Albans City & District Council. The completed document will inform the management actions to be undertaken over the next five years, commencing in April 2022.

Engaging communities is integral to the production of GAPs, to ensure that stakeholders are fully aware of and able to interact with the plan production process. The engagement period will run from 11<sup>th</sup> October to 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Please use the contact details in Section 6 to comment on the aspirations for the site.

This document has been broken down into easy to read sections:

Section 2 reviews recent management of the site.

Section 3 describes the structure of the new action plan and its relationship with the existing GAP.

Section 4 contains the draft action plan.

Section 5 summarises the public engagement methodology, setting out how and when stakeholders can contribute to the plan.

## 2. REVIEW OF PROGRESS

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There have been some significant achievements over the last five years against the objectives set out in the previous Greenspace Action Plan for The Wick, and many of those objectives also require further actions in the next five years.

The western path was surfaced in 2020, providing an all-weather route around the woodland and preventing damage to ground flora by enabling walkers to keep to the path without risk of mud. This path performed very well during the wet winter of 2020/21. In addition, the path accessing the northern end of the field was surfaced. However, weaknesses remain in the path network – it would be beneficial to resurface the path leading from Sandpit Lane to the play area, which is uneven in places, as well as access from that point to the southern end of the field.

Small scale woodland management work in 2019 established a small glade on the main path, which has since seen considerable regeneration of hazel, sycamore and bramble in particular. This bramble provides some initial protection to regenerating trees and will in time be shaded out by those trees. Whilst sycamore is a valued component of the woodland, native tree species are of greater value, and therefore some sycamore will be removed and native species planted in its place. We also cleared an area of laurel in 2019, reducing the impact of this non-native species. This is now regenerating in places and requires further control and stump treatment to prevent further growth.

We plan to build on the previous work by expanding another small glade, felling a small number of trees to bring additional light into the woodland, encouraging natural regeneration and encouraging other trees to grow into the space. Based on experience of regeneration in the previous glade, we will plant native trees in this area immediately after the woodland management work. In the long term this approach will add age and species diversity to the woodland, making it more resilient to challenges such as climate change and tree pests and diseases.

Management of the field has not changed in the last five years. There is now an opportunity not only to expand the area of conservation grassland, as shown on the year 2 action plan map, but also to re-seed it with wildflowers to increase its value to wildlife. We also plan to stop mowing the grass immediately adjacent to the woodland, to allow scrub to develop here and create a more gradual woodland edge, which will bring further benefits for wildlife.

Other achievements in the last five years include a new extended fence to protect the pond, and a new fence around the play area. An action in the previous plan to install new interpretation panels and notice boards was not achieved due to budgetary constraints. This has been retained in the new plan.

### **3. GREENSPACE ACTION PLAN (GAP) 2022-27**

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The Wick Greenspace Action Plan 2017-22 was agreed in 2017 following engagement with stakeholders and the local community. The document includes a description and evaluation of the site and sets out broad aims and objectives. These objectives have not changed since 2017, and we therefore intend only to produce a new five-year action plan as a new Appendix to the existing GAP.

The Wick Greenspace Action Plan 2017-22 can be downloaded for reference from the following link:

[Commons and Green Spaces | St Albans City and District Council](#)

The new five-year action plan is a simple, easy to read plan for use by officers of St Albans City and District Council and members of the public, and acts as a guide to the work of volunteers. The plan is largely map based, with sequential, annual management maps to show the actions planned for each year. The resulting change is represented on the map for the following year. The document will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and relevant.

The plan will be costed and potential funding sources identified. Once the final action plan is agreed, external funding will be sought to enable the plan to be delivered.

## 4. ACTION PLANS AND MAPS

### 4.1 Annual and regular actions

Abbreviations: SADC – St Albans City and District Council; CMS – Countryside Management Service; FoTW – Friends of The Wick; Vols – Volunteers; JOC – John O’Conner Grounds Maintenance; GM – Grounds maintenance.

Ref no.	Action	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
0.1	Health & Safety inspection; undertake works as required	B1	When required	SADC	JOC	GM budget			
0.2	Condition survey of The Wick’s boundary and internal fences/gates; undertake repairs as required	B2	Every 6 months	SADC	JOC	GM budget			
0.3	General site inspection	B2	Daily	FoTW/CMS	FoTW				
0.4	Inspect all paths and undertake repairs as required	B2	Every 6 months	SADC	JOC	GM budget			
0.5	Fill holes in field	B2	When required	FoTW/CMS	FoTW				
0.6	Removal of temporary structures	B2	When required	FoTW/CMS	FoTW				
0.7	Litter picking	B2	Weekly	FoTW/CMS	FoTW				
0.8	Remove all graffiti in accordance with the District Council’s graffiti policy	B2	When required	SADC	JOC	GM budget			
0.9	Complete biannual tree safety survey and undertake emergency tree work	B2	Apr & Oct	SADC	SADC	Tree budget			
0.10	Cut back vegetation along paths and pavements	B2	When required	FoTW/CMS	FoTW				
0.11	Play area inspection and undertake any repairs as required	B3	Weekly	SADC	JOC	GM budget			
0.12	Play area service	B3	Every 6 months	SADC	JOC	GM budget			

Ref no.	Action	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
0.13	Commission an independent inspection of play area and carry out identified improvements/repairs	B3	Annually	SADC	SADC	GM budget			
0.14	Top up mulch in play area	B3	Annual	SADC	JOC	GM budget			
0.15	Empty litter bins on a weekly basis	C1	All year	SADC	JOC	GM budget			
0.16	Management of vegetation through the Grounds Maintenance Contract	C1	Apr – Oct	SADC	JOC	GM budget			
0.17	Inspect all benches, and if required, stain and refurbish (some are plastic)	C2	Annual	SADC	JOC	GM budget			
0.18	Block minor paths to protect plants from trampling	E3	When required	FoTW/CMS	FoTW				
0.19	Maintain dead hedging to protect plants from trampling in the wild area	E3	When required	FoTW/CMS	FoTW				
0.20	Maintain path edging with brash to minimise trampling	E3	When required	FoTW/CMS	FoTW				
0.21	In compacted areas which have been protected from trampling, disturb soil to encourage natural regeneration	E3	When required	FoTW/CMS	FoTW				
0.22	Control bramble encroachment in small areas to benefit bluebell and wood anemone	E4	Apr-Oct	FoTW/CMS	FoTW				
0.23	Remove invasive non-native species	E6	When required	FoTW/CMS	FoTW				
0.24	Maintain bird and bat boxes	E	When required	FoTW/CMS	FoTW				
0.25	Friends of The Wick led volunteer/community events and walks at The Wick	F1	Ongoing	FoTW/CMS	FoTW	Staff time			

Ref no.	Action	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
0.26	Contribute to Friends of The Wick Committee Meetings	F3	Twice a year	FoTW	SADC/CMS/FoTW	Staff time			
0.27	Develop and promote Friends of The Wick	F3	Ongoing	CMS/FoTW	SADC/CMS/FoTW	Staff time			
0.28	Update Friends of The Wick website when required	G2	When required	FoTW	FoTW				
0.29	Review and update annual action plans		Spring	CMS	SADC/CMS/FoTW	Staff time			



## 4.2 Year 1 Actions 2022-23

Ref no.	Action	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
1.1	Add sleeper to southern bridge on western path to improve accessibility	A3	Aug	CMS	FoTW/vols	SADC	£100		
1.2	Replace northern bridge on western path	A3	Aug	CMS	FoTW/vols	SADC	£500		
1.3	Replace sleeper on bridge next to playground	A3	Aug	CMS	FoTW/vols	SADC	£100		
1.4	Install weld mesh on all bridges to improve grip	A3	Aug	CMS	FoTW/vols	SADC	£200		
1.5	Add litter bin next to bench on east side of field	C1	Aug	SADC	JOC	GM budget			
1.6	Relocate benches from edge of woodland	C2	Aug	SADC	JOC	GM budget			
1.7	Install new bench on north side of field	C2	Aug	SADC	JOC	GM budget			
1.8	Replace damaged bench on western path	C2	Aug	SADC	JOC	GM budget			
1.9	Cease mowing along boundary to woodland to allow succession to scrub and create woodland edge habitat	E1	Apr	SADC	JOC	GM budget			
1.10	Cease mowing to allow reestablishment of bramble bank	E1	Apr	SADC	JOC	GM budget			
1.11	Clear laurel, including laurel regeneration around remaining laurel on western boundary	E1	Oct-Feb	CMS	FoTW				
1.12	Treat laurel stumps	E1	Oct-Feb	CMS	Contractor	SADC	£500		
1.13	Close approach paths to benches from woodland	E3	Aug	FoTW	FoTW				
1.14	Native tree planting in glade established in 2019	E4	Nov	CMS	FoTW	External	£200		

1.15	Control sycamore regeneration in glade established in 2019	E5	Oct	CMS	FoTW/vols				
1.16	Extend meadow areas	E8	Apr	SADC	JOC	GM budget			
1.17	Re-seed meadow areas with native wildflowers and grasses	E8	Sep	CMS	Contractor	External	£2000		
1.18	Plant spring flowering bulbs to mark meadow areas	E8	Oct	CMS	FoTW/vols	External	£500		
1.19	Plant standard oak trees within meadow areas	E8	Feb	CMS/SADC	FoTW/vols	External	£200		
1.20	Plant native hedgerows to fill gaps in front of boundary fences	E9	Feb	CMS	FoTW/vols	External	£500		

### 4.3 Year 2-5 Actions 2023-27

Ref no.	Action	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
2.1	Carry out improvements to all entrances into The Wick – new signage on gate, paint railings, fix gates	A1	Year 2, summer	CMS	Vols/ contractor	External	£1000		
2.2	Install notice boards	A2	Year 2, summer	CMS	Contractor	External	£7000		
2.3	Design and install new interpretation panels	A2	Year 2, summer	CMS	Contractor	External			
2.4	Surface two paths from main path into grassland at southern end (approx. 50m total)	A3	Year 3, summer	CMS	Contractor	External	£5000		
2.5	Resurface main path to existing width from Sandpit Lane to play area (approx. 100m)	A3	Year 3, summer	CMS	Contractor	External			
2.6	Lift trees around play area to increase light and reduce leaf litter	B3	Year 2, Oct-Feb	CMS	Contractor	External	£5000		
2.7	Limited extension to small glade north-west of play area by felling a small number of trees around it, encouraging regeneration	E1	Year 2, Oct-Feb	CMS	Contractor	External			
2.8	Light thinning close to glade established in 2019 including three non-native red oaks	E1	Year 2, Oct-Feb	CMS	Contractor	External			
2.9	Thin hornbeam by about 30% in the over shaded western corner	E1	Year 2, Oct-Feb	CMS	Contractor	External			
2.10	Native tree planting within small glade north-west of play area	E4	Year 2, Feb	CMS	FoTW/vols	External	£200		
2.11	Aftercare for new planting	E4	Year 2-5, when required	CMS	FoTW				
2.12	Clear flag iris (approximately two thirds) and non-native marigold from pond to maintain area of open water	E10	Year 3	CMS	FoTW				

# Task Responsibility

- District led } Officer/Contractor delivered
- CMS led }
- District led } Volunteer delivered
- CMS led }

- Health & Safety inspection; undertake works as required □
- Condition survey of boundary and internal fences/gates; repairs as required □
- General site inspection □
- Inspect paths; repairs as required □
- Removal of temporary structures □
- Litter picking □
- Removal of graffiti □
- Biannual tree safety survey; emergency tree works □
- Cut back vegetation along paths and pavements □
- Empty litter bins □
- Inspect and maintain benches □
- Block minor paths to protect plants from trampling □
- Maintain dead hedging to protect plants from trampling □
- Maintain path edging with brash to minimise trampling □
- In compacted areas, disturb soil to encourage natural regeneration □
- Control bramble encroachment in small areas to benefit bluebell and wood anemone □
- Remove invasive non-native species □
- Maintain bird and bat boxes □

# The Wick

## Greenspace Action Plan 2022-27

### Annual and regular actions

## Legend

- Bench
- Drain cover
- ▲ Entrance sign
- Litter bin
- Pedestrian gate
- Vehicle gate
- Woodland path
- Ditch
- Depression within woodland
- Metal fence
- Woodland
- Scrub
- Utilities
- Conservation cut grass
- Play area
- Bridge
- Pond
- Amenity cut grass
- Hedge

Fill holes in field □

Top up mulch in play area □

Play area weekly inspection; repairs as required □

Play area six monthly service □

Play area annual inspection; repairs as required □

Management of vegetation through Grounds Maintenance contract □

- Friends of the Wick led volunteer/ community events and walks □
- Friends of The Wick Committee meetings □
- Develop and promote Friends of the Wick □
- Update Friends of The Wick webpage when required □
- Review and update annual action plans □

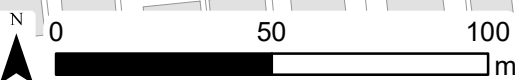
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September 2021

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### Task Responsibility

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|---|--------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District led</li> <li>CMS led</li> </ul> | } Officer/Contractor delivered |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District led</li> <li>CMS led</li> </ul> |                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District led</li> <li>CMS led</li> </ul> | } Volunteer delivered          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District led</li> <li>CMS led</li> </ul> |                                |

Install weld mesh on all bridges to improve grip

Plant native hedgerow plants to fill gaps in front of boundary fences

Clear laurel regeneration

Treat laurel stumps

Replace bridge

Add sleeper to bridge to improve accessibility

Native tree planting

Cease mowing along boundary to woodland to allow succession to scrub and create woodland edge habitat

Replace damaged bench

Replace sleeper on bridge

Cease mowing to allow reestablishment of bramble bank

Install new bench

Move benches away from edge of existing woodland

Close approach paths to benches from woodland

Plant standard oak trees within meadow areas

Add litter bin next to bench

Re-seed meadow areas with native wildflowers and grasses

Extend meadow areas

Plant spring flowering bulbs to mark meadow areas

Clear laurel

Treat laurel stumps

## The Wick

Greenspace Action Plan 2022-27

Year 1 actions 2022-23

### Legend

- Bench
- Drain cover
- Entrance sign
- Litter bin
- Pedestrian gate
- Vehicle gate
- Woodland path
- Ditch
- Depression within woodland
- Metal fence
- Woodland
- Scrub
- Utilities
- Conservation cut grass
- Play area
- Bridge
- Pond
- Amenity cut grass
- Hedge

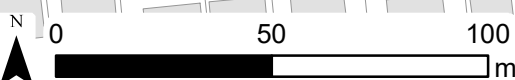
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**Task Responsibility**

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<div style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid red; margin-right: 5px;"></div> CMS led	
<div style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid yellow; margin-right: 5px;"></div> District led	} Volunteer delivered
<div style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid orange; margin-right: 5px;"></div> CMS led	

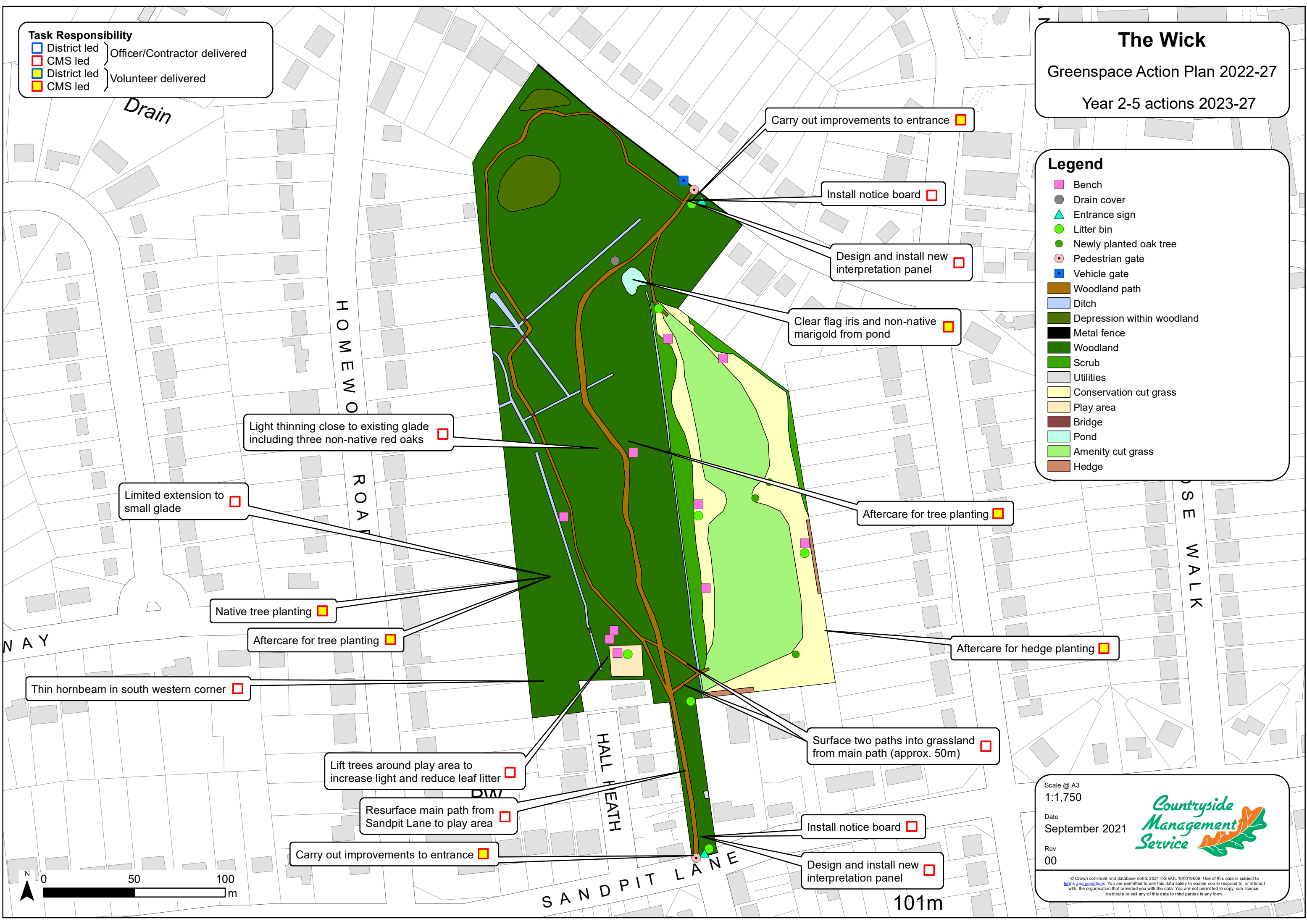
# The Wick

## Greenspace Action Plan 2022-27

### Year 2-5 actions 2023-27

**Legend**

- Bench
- Drain cover
- Entrance sign
- Litter bin
- Newly planted oak tree
- Pedestrian gate
- Vehicle gate
- Woodland path
- Ditch
- Depression within woodland
- Metal fence
- Woodland
- Scrub
- Utilities
- Conservation cut grass
- Play area
- Bridge
- Pond
- Amenity cut grass
- Hedge



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## **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PLAN PRODUCTION PROCESS**

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### **5.1 Action Plan Production Process**

Effective community engagement is at the centre of successful management plans. The value of a GAP is maximised when it incorporates and balances the aspirations of stakeholders and interest groups.

For this new five-year action plan, we are offering one period of community engagement. Stakeholders and site users are invited to read through and make comment on the draft action plan, including detailed proposals and actions. This community engagement will run from 11<sup>th</sup> October to 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

Following this period of engagement, the final document will be produced, published and the actions will commence.

Please be aware that we will not respond individually to comments received through the public engagements; instead, we will produce a summary of comments, noting any amendments made to the plan as a result. This engagement response document will be published online alongside the final action plan. We will retain contact details only for the purpose of keeping respondents informed about the plan development process.

### **5.2 Stakeholders**

- Relevant St Albans City & District Council Councillors
- Relevant St Albans City & District Council Officers
- Relevant Hertfordshire County Council Councillors
- Relevant Hertfordshire County Council Officers
- Friends of The Wick
- Marshalswick South East Residents' Association
- 18<sup>th</sup> St Albans Scout Group
- Mount Carmel Kindergarten
- Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust
- Local community and site users

## 6. STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

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Thank you for taking the time to read this document. We are keen to receive feedback from you on our proposals for The Wick Action Plan 2022-27.

Please return your comments using the contact details below by **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November** at the latest.

**FAO Andrew Taylor**

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