



# **VERULAMIUM PARK**

## **GREENSPACE ACTION PLAN**

**2024-2029**



## OVERVIEW

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### Greenspace Action Plans

Greenspace Actions Plans (GAPs) are map-based management plans which 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.

### Public Engagement

Engagement with stakeholders is at the centre of effective management planning on any site. An initial engagement period established core aims and objectives for the site; these are reflected in Section 3. A second stage of engagement enabled stakeholders to comment on the proposed management actions for the site. An associated engagement response document, published online as an appendix to this plan, summarises comments received and any amendments made to the plan as a result.

### 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: Verulamium Park

Site Address: St Michael's Street, St Albans, AL3 4SW

Grid Reference: TL 139 067

Size: 66.9 ha

Owner: St. Albans City and District Council

Designations:

Level	Designation	Detail
National	Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)	The Roman City of Verulamium, which lies underneath part of the Park and countryside to the west, is a designated Scheduled Ancient Monument which provides legal protection against works that may damage the site.
	English Heritage Guardianship	The Roman ditches and wall are of such significance that they are managed directly by English Heritage on behalf of the UK Government.
	Listed Buildings	There are numerous listed buildings, mostly around the north-western fringes of the site. The constraints imposed by this designation also relate to the setting of the buildings in addition to preservation of their

		structure, and therefore has a bearing on any alterations to the surrounding landscape.
County	Local Wildlife Site	Verulamium Lakes and Abbey Mill Lane Area are both designated as Local Wildlife Sites – areas of at least district importance that are considered to be of ‘critical natural capital’.
District / Borough	Conservation area	The entire park falls within the conservation area for St Albans, a designation which seeks to preserve the character or appearance of a particularly valuable area. This covers all aspects of the landscape, including trees. Therefore, if any tree works are to take place within the Park, a request must be made to the planning authority, who will decide whether the works can commence or whether to issue a tree preservation order.
	Metropolitan Green Belt	The entire Park falls within the Metropolitan Green Belt, designated under PPG2 (Green Belts), which restricts the growth of development in strategic rural areas on the edge of conurbations.

## 1.2 Vision Statement

Verulamium Park is an irreplaceable resource of beauty and opportunity. The Park's many thousands of visitors, from near and far, come to experience the fascinating history, rich wildlife, stunning views, and high-quality recreational facilities. The site is perfectly placed to offer visitors both tranquillity and relaxation, while also enabling discovery and adventure.

Our vision for Verulamium Park is for:

- a centre for the history and discovery of St Albans: We will aim to make the most of this opportunity through the continued investigation and interpretation of archaeological remains, coupled with improved educational resources.
- a beautiful and varied landscape: we will continue to manage and conserve the landscape character of the Park and continue to develop its relationship to the wider landscape.
- a welcoming and accessible Park: Verulamium Park will be a site that all people are able to access and want to access.
- a site rich in biodiversity: we aim to increase the biodiversity through improvement of existing and creation of new habitats.
- a site offering a diversity of recreational opportunity: recreation does not always sit comfortably with other uses and sensitivities of a site; however, we will continue to maintain and improve existing recreational facilities and look to offer new opportunities where a need has been identified.
- a strong identity: we have established a 'brand' for the Park that is instantly recognisable to site visitors, and we will use this to guide partners in a coordinated approach to publicity and promotion.
- bursting with communication: in addition to all our many local site users, there are a large number of groups and organisations that have direct or indirect interest in the Park. We will strive to ensure effective dissemination of information and lines of communication through website updates, newsletters, regular meetings and engagement events.

## **1.3 Policy context**

### **1.3.1 HCC Strategies**

#### *1.3.1.1 Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy*

Hertfordshire County Council 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 take action

#### *1.3.1.2 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.

## **1.3.2 SADC Strategies**

### *1.3.2.1 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 SITE DESCRIPTION**

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### **2.1 Introduction**

Verulamium Park is a 66.9-hectare site located close to St Albans City Centre within the ward of Verulam. Bluehouse Hill and King Harry Lane, both major routes into the City, form two of the boundaries to the park, while numerous footpaths link to the adjoining countryside.

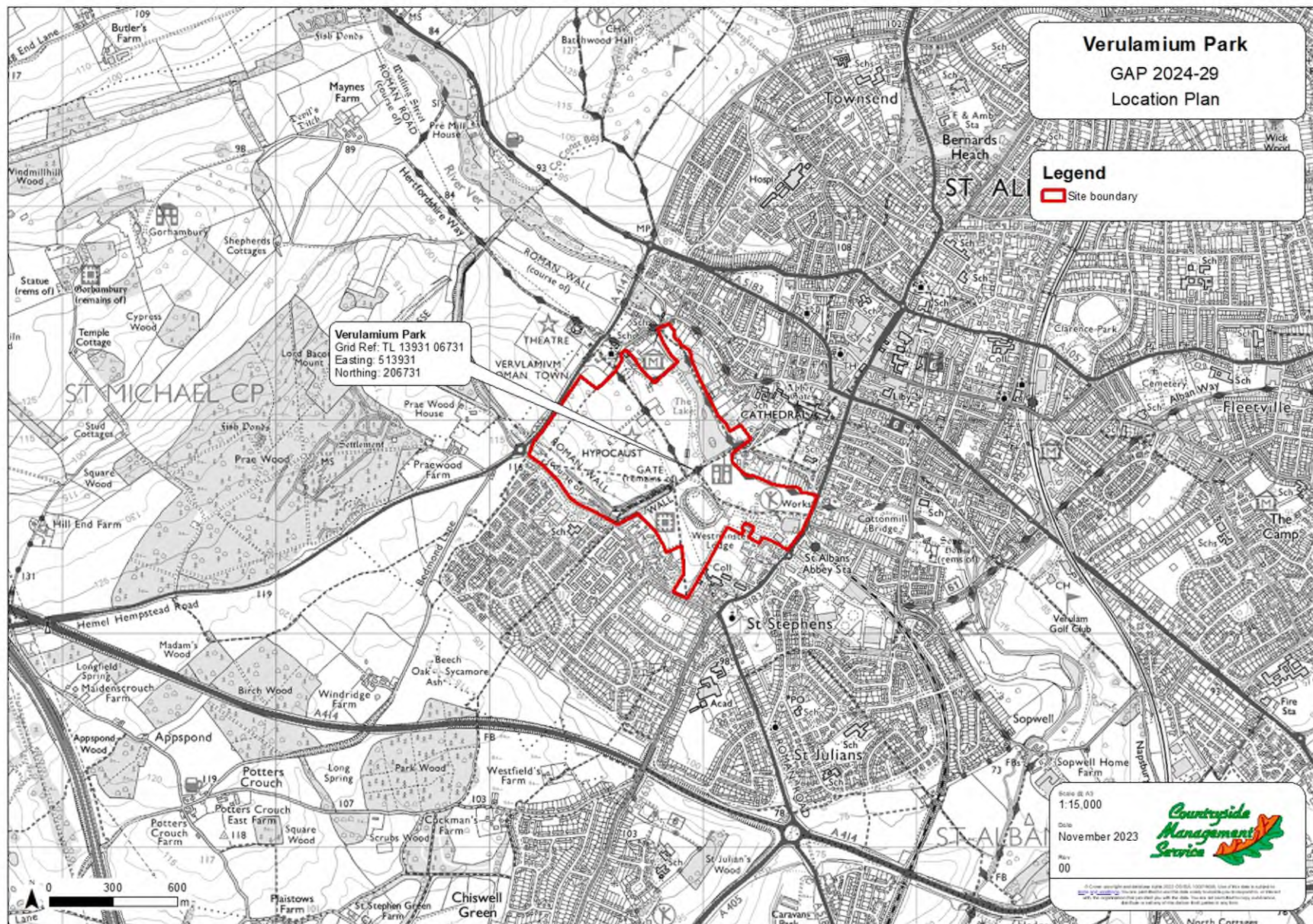
The site is owned by St Albans City and District Council (SADC), who manage the majority of the site through a grounds maintenance contract, the exceptions being the Roman wall which is managed by English Heritage.

The Park is a complex site with a number of significant archaeological, historical, wildlife and landscape features.

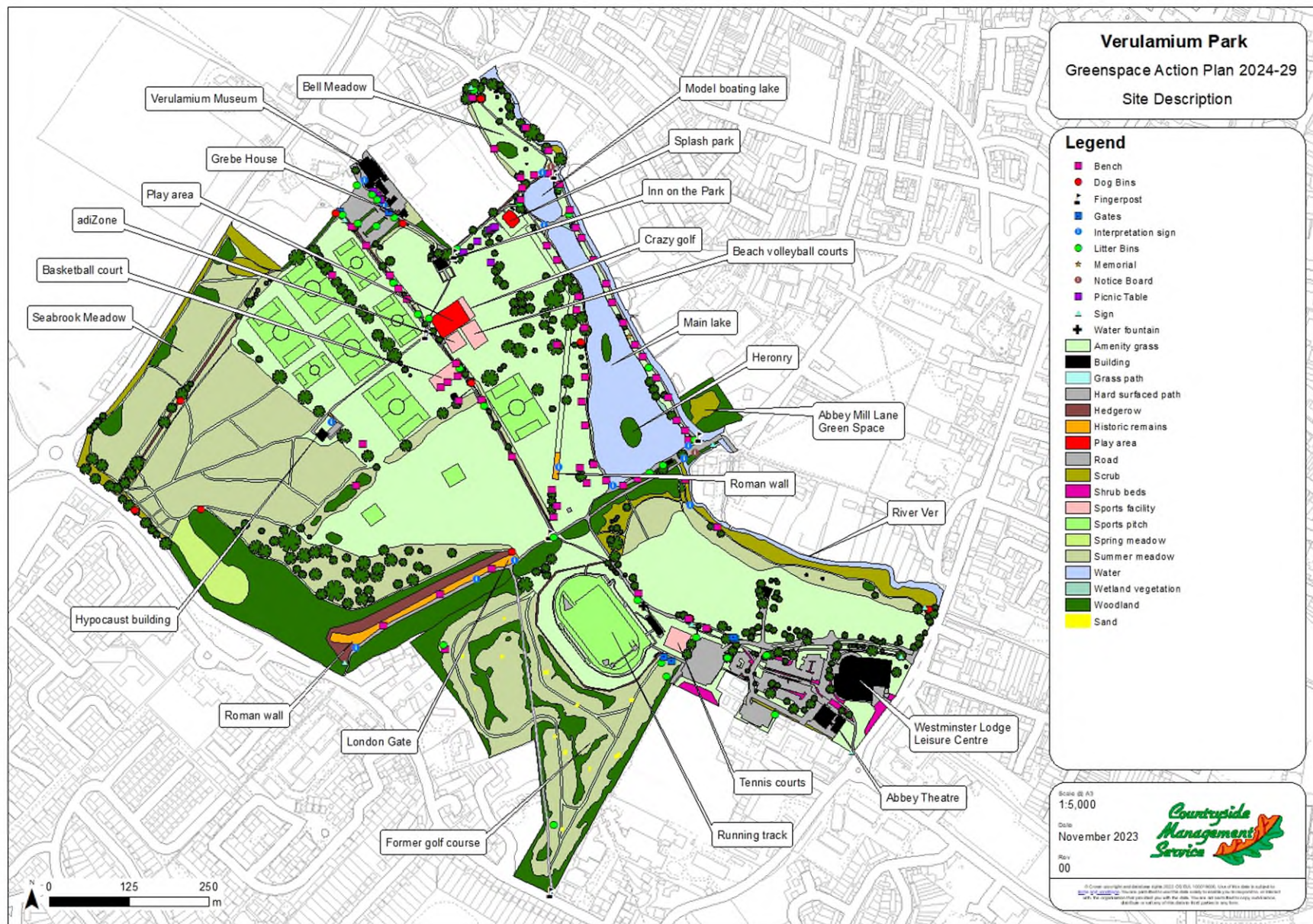
The site is invaluable for amenity and recreation, with a large number of features and facilities.

Footpaths and cycle ways criss-cross the park and large open areas of grassland provide space for amenity and more informal use.

The diverse features and needs of the site require carefully balanced management, ensuring the conservation of the natural and historic environment, management of the wide-ranging recreational facilities, and public enjoyment of the park.











## **2.2 Geography and Landscape**

### **2.2.1 Landscape character**

Verulamium Park sits within the Verulamium Landscape Character Area (LCA). The Park typifies many of the key characteristics of this LCA, including ancient cultural settlement patterns, suburban recreation, wetland vegetation, water features and parkland trees. The general recommended approach to management within the LCA is to 'conserve and restore', with management of Verulamium Park having the potential to contribute to a number of specific recommendations, including:

- Managing parkland trees.
- Creating and enhancing of wetland features.
- Improving meadow management.
- Sensitively managing recreational features.
- Restricting tree planting to protect historic features.

### **2.2.2 Site aspect**

The Park has a country park feel with a number of distinctive areas. The formal area of the Park is centred on the main lake with its two islands and the smaller boating lake. Both lakes are themselves surrounded by paths, allowing visitors to stroll around the lakes admiring the wildlife.

Wide open spaces are broken by mature trees that mark the line of the original field boundaries. Today, some of the meadows are named after the individual landowners from the past. There is a large area of woodland located to the southern side of the Park along the Roman ditch and City Walls.

Large areas of grass meadow dominate the Park, especially along its boundaries with Bluehouse Hill and King Harry Lane, from where spectacular views of the Park and Cathedral can be seen.

Formal use is concentrated along the central path that runs from east to west linking Holywell Hill and the village of St Michael's. With good access and regular supervision from the Park Ranger and Leisure Management Contract Staff, the Children's Play Area, adiZone and Toddlers Splash Park provide endless fun for

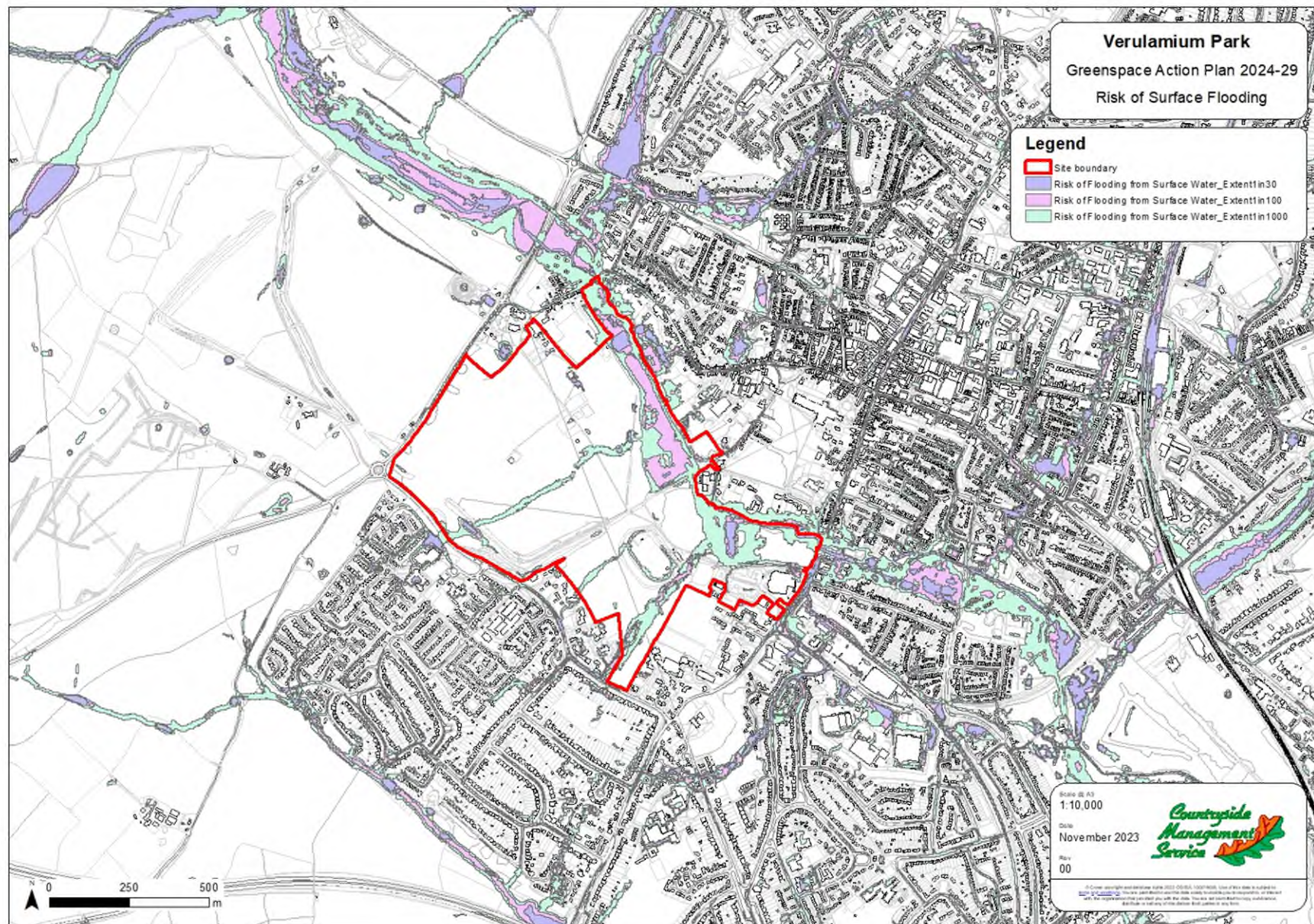
visitors. The Inn on the Park, tennis, netball, beach volleyball and basketball facilities as well as the football pitches and cricket pitches are also found in this area. Located just off Holywell Hill is the Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre and Abbey View Track Facility.

Almost all the Park is laid out on gentle sloping land, with gradients in several directions. This adds to the attractiveness of the landscape and allows for spectacular views of the Abbey and City.

### **2.2.3 Geology and Hydrology**

The geology of the area is characterised by chalk bedrock, overlain with clay-with-flints plateau drift on the upper slopes and sand and gravel on the lower slopes with alluvium in the valley bottom. Hydrology is dominated by the River Ver, which flows along the northern edge of the Park and has been extensively modified by human activity. In addition to the flood risk shown in the constraints map, the following map shows the risk of flooding from surface water (RoFSW) for 1 in 30, 1 in 100, and 1 in 1000-year events. Flooding has been a particular problem around the lake and river in the Park and is known to flood more regularly than mapping suggests. Reducing problems associated with flooding is one of the objectives for the 'Revitalising the River Ver' project.





## 2.3 History and Archaeology

The most important aspect of Verulamium Park is its rich archaeological and historical heritage, documented through substantial excavation and archaeological work. The majority of the Park is a Scheduled Monument, a designation which reflects the national significance of both the buried and above-ground remains.

The most significant remains are from the Roman city of Verulamium. Elements of the Roman city that are still visible today include sections of the city's defensive wall and ditch, a Roman mosaic floor and the Roman theatre. Further buried Roman features – roads and buildings – can be seen as cropmarks in drought conditions, often seen at the end of the summer in the grass.

The area covered by the park comprises around 50% of the Roman city, which extended to some 80ha by the late third century AD: the third largest in Roman Britain, behind London and Cirencester. The precise status of Roman Verulamium has been the subject of much debate. Tacitus, writing at the end of the first century, describes the town as a municipium, while Roman Verulamium was also the civitas, or tribal capital of the Catuvellauni. Under the Roman Empire, the Catuvellauni controlled one of the most extensive and richest tribal territories in the province.

### 2.3.1 Timeline

A brief timeline of the archaeology and history of the Park is provided here as an introduction.

#### 2.3.1.1 *Late Pre-Roman Iron Age*

**BC 50 – AD 43+** Settlement in the surrounding area of the Park during this period becomes more intense, with excavated evidence in the area of Folly Lane and Prae Wood (to the west of the current Park), but the focus is widely thought to have been a royal establishment in the valley bottom (centred around the area of St. Michael's Church). The settlement is known as Verlamion and was the capital of the Catuvellauni tribe. It was established by their leader, Tasciovanus and was one of the first places in Britain to be recorded by name.



### 2.3.1.2 Roman

**AD 50+** the first phase of the Roman town is constructed within the valley bottom and is centred on the Late Iron Age central enclosure. Verulamium was granted the rank of *municipium* meaning that its citizens had a degree of self-government.

**AD 61** According to a Latin text, Verulamium was razed to the ground during the Boudiccan uprising. However, only seven structures within the town show evidence of destruction or burning around this time. It is therefore unclear exactly how much of a setback to the town's development the Boudiccan revolt really was.

**c.AD 70 – 100** Building works following the Boudiccan revolt result in a new Basilica being dedicated in AD 79. The road network, drainage and water supply are all in place by AD 100.

**AD 117 – 138** The London and Chester Gates on Watling Street are constructed.

**AD 150 – 160** A fire devastated Verulamium, and whilst it did not destroy the entire city the Forum and Basilica were razed to the ground along with the Macellum, the public baths and a number of the workshops in the Insulae surrounding the Forum/Basilica complex.

**Third century AD** Alban, a citizen of Verulamium is said to have been executed, becoming the first Christian martyr in Britain.

### 2.3.1.3 Late Roman period

**AD 200 – 400** The circuit of the town walls was constructed. In order to build the north-eastern stretch of wall it was necessary to drain the marshy area and canalise the Ver. The smaller gates including the Silchester gate were constructed.

**410-700** The Roman occupation of Britain formally ends in AD 410. It is claimed that building development continued into the fifth century AD, but this is not universally accepted. The town certainly may have fallen into decline from the middle of the 5th century onwards. At the end of the seventh century King Offa founded the first Abbey, on the supposed location of Albans martyrdom.

#### 2.3.1.4 *Post Roman*

**700 - 1200** Later evidence seems to suggest that a royal Saxon *burh* could have been established around the previous Forum and Basilica. Much of the Roman town was robbed and incorporated into the later Romanesque Abbey, founded after the Norman Conquest (now part of St Albans Abbey and Cathedral).

St. Michael's Church is built on the site of the Roman Forum and a small village grows up around it. St. Mary Magdalen Chapel and St. Germain's Chapel are both constructed. The fishpool is drained and the remains of Verulamium within the current Park boundaries are used as source for building materials, mainly for the Norman Abbey (1070s).

**1200 – 1900** Settlement continues around St. Michael's Church. The majority of the Park served as agricultural land and the river and mill stream were used for a series of mills.

**1847** R. Grove Lowe excavates the Theatre (just outside the current Park boundary). This is the first formal archaeological excavation in the Roman town.

**1929** The area of the Park is bought from the Earl of Verulam by the then City Council and construction of the lakes commences.

**1930's** Intensive archaeological excavations of the Roman town led by Mortimer and Tessa Wheeler.

**1938** Construction of the Verulamium Museum.

**1930s and 40s** Construction of park café, sports courts, changing rooms, cricket pavilion, and paddling pool.

**1950** Verulamium's national and international significance was recognised, and the site was first listed as a Scheduled Ancient Monument by the UK Government.

**1950** The Roman Walls, Ditches and other significant area of the park were placed within the Guardianship of English Heritage.

**1967** Construction of Abbey Theatre.

**1970** Construction of Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre and Track Facilities and opened to the public in 1971.

**1970s** Relocation of Grebe House from Watford to Verulamium Park and use as head offices for Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust.

**1987** Aqua Zooms were installed at Westminster Lodge.

**1988** Redevelopment of Athletics track surface.

**1990** Redevelopment of the Pitch and Putt in to the 9 Hole Abbey View Golf Course.

**1994** Redevelopment of Westminster Lodge and the Track associated changing rooms and clubhouse facilities.

**1998** Extension to Verulamium Museum.

**2004** Construction of new building around the in situ Roman Mosaic.

**2005** Construction of Splash Park on site of former paddling pool.

**2010** Construction of the New Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre.

**2011** Installation of the AdiZone outdoor Gym London as part of 2012 Olympics Legacy project.

**2012** The old Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre closed its doors and was demolished to make way for a new car park.

**2013** Construction of the Sand Courts. The sand was given to the City by the London organising committee as a London 2012 legacy project.

**2014** Interpretation renewed across the site.

**2021** Conversion of large areas of amenity grassland to conservation grassland as part of Greenspace Opportunity Audit and Wilding St. Albans project.

**2022** Re-location of tennis courts to area of land between Westminster Lodge and running track.

**2023** Closure of Abbey View Golf Course and repurposing of the site for the benefit of people and wildlife.

## **2.3.2 Excavations and investigations**

### *2.3.2.1 Wheeler excavations*

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1930, Sir Mortimer Wheeler and his first wife, Tessa, commenced a series of excavations in the Park. The Wheeler excavations mark a highly significant development, both in the understanding of Verulamium and in the evolution of Romano-British studies in the country generally. For the first time a programme of excavations was undertaken with the express aim, not simply of revealing buried structures, but in order to write the history of the Roman town.

### *2.3.2.2 University College London - Sensing the Iron age and Roman past: Geophysics and the landscape of Hertfordshire*

This project is a collaboration between the Institute of Archaeology, UCL and a number of local heritage groups, including the St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society, the Berkhamsted and District Archaeological Society, the West Essex Archaeological Group, St Albans Museum Service and St Albans City & District Council.

The aim of the project is to conduct archaeological surveys on a number of Late Iron Age and Roman sites throughout Hertfordshire, including Verulamium.

The project uses magnetometry, the technique of measuring and mapping patterns of magnetism in the soil. Ancient activity, particularly burning, leaves magnetic traces that show up even today when detected with the right equipment. The team have captured a vast quantity of data and have identified previously unknown structures in the park.

## **2.3.3 Acquisition of the Park by the council**

Much of land that is now Verulamium Park was divided in two and occupied by two farms, St Germain's Farm and Verulam Farm.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> January 1928 the strip of land adjacent to River Ver was conveyed to the Council by WNW Gape and others. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1929 St Germain's Farm & Verulam Woods was conveyed to the Council by The Right Honourable James Walter 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Verulam and others.

The now Bell Meadow was conveyed to the Council by WNW Gape and others on the 29<sup>th</sup> January 1934. On the 17<sup>th</sup> December 1956 the former Abbey Mill Cottage was conveyed to the Council by The Society of the Faith. What is now known as Seabrook Meadow along Bluehouse Hill was conveyed to the Council by The Earl of Verulam and Gorhambury Estates Company on the 25<sup>th</sup> March 1958.

## **2.4 Habitats and Wildlife**

Verulamium Park has significant ecological value, containing a variety of habitats that support a wide diversity of wildlife. The Park also has green infrastructure value as a large green space on the edge of a dense urban area and adjacent to the wider countryside, with key ecological links such as the River Ver.

### **2.4.1 Grassland**

Grassland covers a large proportion of the Park, with a range of management regimes in place.

#### *2.4.1.1 Amenity grassland*

A significant proportion of the Park is given to amenity grassland, which developed from former arable land in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The closely mown sward is generally species poor and of little wildlife value, but provides a valuable resource for formal and informal recreation, including sports pitches.



*Amenity grassland for recreation*



*Football pitch*

In an attempt to improve the biodiversity of areas of amenity grassland, two areas of 'enhanced amenity grassland' have been created within the park. These areas have

been sown with wildflower seeds and will be cut at a slightly higher height, with the aim of increasing the number of wildflowers within the sward, whilst also maintaining areas of shorter, neater grassland where required.

In addition, paths are mown through some areas of conservation grassland to allow access and encourage exploration.



*Mown path through conservation grassland*

#### *2.4.1.2 Conservation grassland*

A number of areas within the Park have a more relaxed mowing regime, where vegetation is allowed to grow longer, and which is managed through a cut-and-lift regime, with two management prescriptions from the GM contract present on site. The majority of conservation grassland is managed as 'summer meadow', with a smaller area of 'spring meadow' at the top of the slope adjacent to King Harry Lane. These grassland areas are of greater ecological value than areas of amenity grassland, with a wider diversity of plant species, and providing suitable habitat for reptiles, invertebrates and foraging birds.





### *'Spring meadow'*

Seabrook Meadow, the field adjacent to Bluehouse Hill, has a particularly diverse range of flowering plant and grass species and is currently managed through the 'summer meadow' conservation 'cut-and-lift' regime.



### *Seabrook Meadow in summer*

As part of the 2020 SADC Greenspace Opportunity Audit, and Wilding St. Albans project, a number of further areas of conservation grassland were created, including much of the slope up towards King Harry Lane, and strips adjacent to hedgerows to enhance hedgerow habitats. Wildflower species are beginning to spread into these areas, especially where they border established areas of conservation grassland such as Seabrook Meadow. Wild carrot and red bartsia in particular are beginning to establish well, with small patches of other species including common knapweed, field scabious and yellow rattle also present.



*Strip of conservation grassland adjacent to hedgerow*



*Conservation grassland on slope leading from King Harry Lane*

The area known as 'Bell Meadow' is found near the boating lake. It is particularly susceptible to flooding and can sit damp for long periods, allowing a sward to develop with plants favouring wetter conditions.



*Bell Meadow*

#### **2.4.1.3 Abbey View Golf Course**

Until recently, the Abbey View Golf Course was managed with a mixture of regimes to maintain the course with a variety of vegetation heights, including greens, fairways and semi-rough, in addition to areas of Summer Meadow. Following the closure of the golf course in early 2023, management will be brought into the management of the wider park for the benefit of people and wildlife.





*Abbey View Golf Course*

## **2.4.2 Scrub and ruderal vegetation**

The Park contains areas of scrub and tall ruderal vegetation, found mainly at woodland edges, along the River Ver, and around the edges of Seabrook Meadow. These areas are managed in line with the 'ecotone' prescription from the GM contract and are therefore not subject to intensive management, allowing the growth of species such as bramble, nettle, and hogweed, with occasional shrubs. These areas have ecological value by providing transitional habitats between grassland and woodlands, as well as providing important foraging and cover habitats for wildlife such as small mammals and reptiles.



*Scrub habitat as buffer between conservation grassland and woodland*



*Ruderal vegetation along edge of the River Ver*



*Ruderal vegetation along bottom of Seabrook Meadow*



*Scrub and ruderal vegetation along hedgerow*

In addition to these larger areas of scrub and ruderal vegetation, there are a number of under-utilised corners and small patches of land, generally dominated by ruderal vegetation such as nettles. These have the potential to be enhanced as wildlife habitats.



*Patch of ruderal vegetation near Grebe House*

### **2.4.3 Hedgerows**

Hedgerows provide important ecological corridors, habitats and landscape features, however, the hedgerows across the Park are of varying degrees of quality and condition.

There are a number of managed, predominantly single-species hedgerows across the Park, the largest being the ancient hawthorn hedge that follows the main footpath



diagonally across the centre of the Park. These hedgerows are regularly trimmed to maintain a box-like appearance and are of fairly limited ecological value.



*Heavily managed hawthorn hedge*

In comparison, elsewhere in the park, (such as Seabrook Meadow) the hedgerows are less intensively managed and are therefore far more ecologically valuable, offering more foraging opportunities and provide potential nesting sites for small birds. In Seabrook Meadow, planting in recent years has attempted to fill gaps in this hedgerow to provide a continuous hedge line.



*Hedge adjacent to Seabrook Meadow*



*Recent gapping up*

#### **2.4.4 Woodland**

For such a large site, Verulamium Park has limited woodland cover and does not have an historic legacy of woodland. The existing woodlands and trees are largely either remnant field boundary tree lines or areas of the Park that have not been intensively used or managed, allowing for succession in to woodland. Tree stock

across the Park comprises species including hornbeam, oak, lime, horse chestnut, willow, field maple and sycamore.

The main area of woodland is located along the south side of the Park around the Roman Wall, in the guardianship area currently maintained by English Heritage. In addition to the canopy species, the shrub understory consists predominantly of hawthorn, elder, and hazel. Ground flora is limited in places, where the canopy cover is quite dense.



*Shaded area of woodland with limited ground flora*



*More open woodland with more extensive ground flora*

In addition, smaller areas of woodland are found alongside the River Ver, and in Abbey Mill Lane Green Space, a small closed-off area on the hillside at the bottom of Abbey Mill Lane.

#### **2.4.5 Parkland trees**

In the parkland areas of the site, the mature and semi-mature trees are particularly significant to the character and appearance of the landscape, whilst also providing suitable bat roosting and bird nesting habitat. The Park has a good stock of mature trees that are fundamental to its parkland character and include significant features, such as the avenues that are remnants of old field boundaries. At some point in the future these trees will die and/or need to be felled, which will have a significant impact on the Park.



*Avenue of parkland trees*



*Large willow near lakes and River Ver*

#### **2.4.6 Chalk river**

The River Ver is a chalk river, sourced from an aquifer located near Markyate in Hertfordshire. Chalk rivers are rare and ecologically valuable, providing habitat for fish and invertebrates.

The River was originally canalised by the Romans in the 3rd Century AD providing power to the mills right up until the Victorian period. Further works were undertaken in the early half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century when the lakes were created, forming an unnatural channel. This canalised section alongside the lakes has very low flow, resulting in deposition of silt and very poor clarity. This section (and others through the course), are also affected by dense tree canopy, the heavy shade, deposition of leaf litter, and siltation providing poor conditions for wildlife.



*Heavily-shaded, canalised section of River Ver*



In contrast, the northern and southern sections of the river have, in places, typical chalk river qualities with fairly rapid flow and clear water allowing clarity to a relatively un-silted river bottom which is beneficial for aquatic plants and wildlife.



#### *More natural section of River Ver*

Some work has already been undertaken to improve the river through the park. This includes removing selected trees, and crown-reduction of others, to reduce the amount of shading and leaf litter deposition. In addition, flow deflectors have been installed to increase the flow of the water.



#### *Felled tree adjacent to River Ver*

However, more work is needed to achieve the full potential of the river through the Park and beyond. The Environment Agency and Affinity Water are leading a programme of work which aims to help get the Ver to Good Ecological Status. As part of this programme, they are working in partnership with SADC and the CMS to look at options to improve the Ver through St Albans, including through the Park. The project will look at options to restore or rehabilitate the river for ecological benefit

and, where appropriate, provide further benefits such as urban lake improvements, flood risk reduction, amenity benefits, heritage, education and recreation.

Due to the complex nature of the site and the many constraints through the Park, the project is currently at differing stages. The area around the lake is particularly complex, with work still at the design stage.

#### **2.4.7 Lakes**

The lakes comprise two bodies of water; a larger 'main' lake, along with a much smaller lake now used as a model boating lake, separated by an arched bridge. Construction started on both lakes in September 1930 and was completed in February 1932.



*Main lake*



*'Model boating lake'*

The larger of the lakes contains two wooded islands, one of which supports an important heronry. The second island is low-lying, often being almost completely flooded during winter.



*Wooded island supporting heronry*



*Flooded island during winter*

The lakes comprise a concrete base and edges, no more than 1m deep and are largely surrounded by amenity grass and/or surfaced footpath. Marginal or semi-aquatic vegetation is limited mainly to a large area at the northern end of the main lake, though a strip of marginal vegetation is also developing along the eastern edge of the lake where flooding has previously left areas underwater for significant periods.



*Concrete edging to the lake*



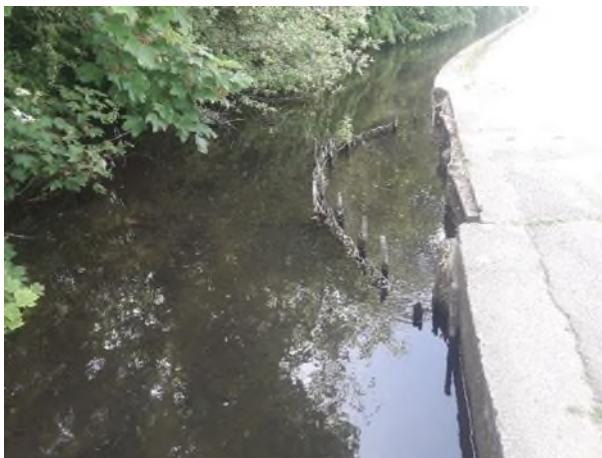
*Marginal vegetation*





*Strip of marginal vegetation along eastern edge of lake*

The lakes are fed by the River Ver through a sluice. This sluice has a restriction plate fitted and does not allow water to pass through during low river levels. In addition, the extraction of water from the River Ver is licensed by the Environment Agency. Water then re-enters the River Ver at the southern end of the main lake, allowing a flow of water through the lakes.



*Sluice from River Ver feeding the lake*



*Outflow from lake back into River Ver*

The condition of both lakes is currently poor, having become heavily silted. The overpopulation of waterfowl and associated problems with fouling has led to the water having its oxygen content depleted by organic nutrients. This has greatly reduced the lakes' ecological value and aesthetic appeal. In addition, significant funds have been spent removing large amounts of accumulated organic material including algae that has grown in the nutrient-rich environment.

A key factor is the large population of birds being fed by the public. Though recognising the community and social value of feeding the birds, the Council has, through consultation, decided to ask the public to not to feed the birds. This is being undertaken through a PR campaign including on-site signage.

In addition to resolving the siltation and nutrient issues, there is considerable scope to enhance the biodiversity of the lake and its various habitats, including the islands and lake margins, and also deal with issues associated with the concrete lining and banks. The lakes are therefore being considered as part of the Environment Agency / Affinity Water plan mentioned above. This work will also aim to address flooding issues associated with the lakes.



*Flooded lakeside*

On a more day-to-day management front, the Grounds Maintenance Contractor is required to ensure that the lakes are maintained in a clean and attractive condition.

The Council has considered installing life preservers but following advice from a Health and Safety Consultant has decided against this option as the practicalities outweigh the level of risk.

#### *2.4.7.1 Abbey Mill Lane Green Space*

This area is separated from the Park by the River Ver and currently has no public access. The space comprises an area of open, rough grassland and young woodland including hazel coppice.



*Hazel coppice*



*Open grassland*

## **2.4.8 Important species**

### *2.4.8.1 Birds*

Verulamium Park is recognised as a valuable site for its bird populations. The lakes and the River Ver both form significant habitats for wetland birds, particularly waterfowl, including mallard, tufted duck, shoveler, coot and moorhen. They are also important foraging habitat for other species of bird, such as swallow and kingfisher. There is also significant value in the expanse of parkland and more wooded areas around the Roman Wall.

The heronry, sited on the southernmost island in the lower lake, is the most significant bird-related feature, and is designated a Local Wildlife Site. Since 2014 little egrets have also been breeding here, with ten pairs recorded in 2022. Aside from their ecological significance, the heronry forms an important part of the Park's visitor experience.

The wider Park is populated by a variety of typical parkland birds. Birds of prey can also often be spotted across the Park, including red kite, sparrowhawk, and common buzzard, as well as peregrine, which have recently begun nesting on the nearby St. Albans Cathedral.

## **2.4.9 Reptiles & amphibians**

Swathes of scrub and ruderal vegetation along the banks of the River Ver provide suitable habitats for reptiles and amphibians. In the past, grass snake has been

recorded in the Park, and slow worm is known to be present in the surrounding area. Great crested newts have not been identified on site, but have been recorded as little as 300m to the south east.

#### **2.4.10 Mammals**

The Park has ecological value for supporting a number of rare and protected bat species, with the water bodies, meadows and wooded margins providing good foraging habitat. The River Ver works as a green corridor for bats (noctules, pipistrelles and Daubenton's), whilst there have also been historic records of brown long-eared and whiskered bat. It is not known exactly where the roosts are, but some are likely to be in trees and buildings within the Park. Daubenton's, for example, generally choose roosts close to water bodies.

Water vole is a protected species within the UK, and in the past has been known to be present along the River Ver, and previous records exist for the species within the vicinity of the Park.

The 2007 ecological survey of the Park did not identify the presence of badger. However, it did mention the recorded presence of badger in the area and the suitability of the Park as foraging habitat. The Verulamium Hills and the woodland walk could potentially be suitable locations for setts.

Common mammals are also found within the Park, such as fox, rat and rabbit.

#### **2.4.11 Insects**

The Park contains a range of habitats suitable for supporting a variety of insect populations. For example, scrub and grassland support large numbers of grasshoppers and crickets and are particularly important for pollinators such as bees and butterflies. Of particular note, elm on site is known to support white-letter hairstreak butterflies.

### **2.5 Access, facilities and infrastructure**

The Park can be accessed by road, foot and by public transport. It is well connected to a network of roads and footpaths that pass around the Park including Bluehouse

Hill, Fishpool Street, King Harry Lane, Holywell Hill, St Michael's Street. In addition, it has good links to both the M1 and M25.

There are two railway stations in St Albans; St Albans City Station in the City Centre is on the mainline into London St Pancras International, and the Abbey Station is just outside the Park entrance on Holywell Hill and links to Watford Junction Railway Station and then on to London Euston.

### **2.5.1 Public Rights of Way and promoted routes**

Many of the paths that run through the Park are designated as Public Rights of Way.

The Alban Way Cycle Path which links St Albans and Hatfield begins a short distance from the Park on Cottonmill Lane, and the Ver Valley Walk follows the River Ver which runs through the Park.

### **2.5.2 Site entrances**

The main entrances to the Park are:

- Off Holywell Hill
- Off King Harry Lane to join the Causeway
- Off King Harry Lane where FP037 enters the Park
- Abbey Mill Lane
- St Michael's Street at the River Ver
- St Michael's Street at St Michael's School

In addition to these main entrances, there is an informal entrance located on King Harry Lane next to the lay-by for parking and pedestrian crossing.

The Park is not locked overnight, though gates and bollards have been installed at the main entrances to prevent unauthorised vehicle access.

The entrance to the Park near Verulamium Museum has previously been re-landscaped to create raised flower-beds and a paved area with picnic benches. There is an opportunity to further enhance these to make more of a feature of these beds, SADC plan to work with Verulamium Museum to allow them to contribute to these works and work in the garden.





*Planters outside Verulamium Museum*

There is a paved area with seating at the entrance from Abbey Mill Lane, which has the potential to be enhanced by re-landscaping. There is also a length of dilapidated fencing at this entrance, surrounding Abbey Mill Lane Green Space.



*Area around entrance at Abbey Mill Lane*



*Dilapidated fencing at entrance from Abbey Mill Lane*

The entrance to the cycle route off King Harry Lane has been identified as being in need of improvement to make it more suited to shared pedestrian and cycle use. Replacement of the current bridge has previously been planned, although there is currently insufficient budget to deliver this work.



*Bridge from King Harry Lane*

### **2.5.3 Paths**

#### *2.5.3.1 Cycle routes*

Permissive cycle routes cross the Park from North to South, linking key green transport links within the City, and from East to West, between Westminster Lodge Sports Centre and St Michael's.

In 2012 Hertfordshire County Council and St Albans District Council constructed shared-use walking and cycling routes within the Park running from Westminster Lodge to the Roman Museum and from King Harry Lane along the Causeway to the Fighting Cocks Public House.



*Shared-use path*



*Shared-use path signage*

### 2.5.3.2 *Surfaced paths*

In addition to the shared-use paths, the site is well served by surfaced paths, particularly around the northern section of the park around the lakes and main recreational facilities.

The majority of these are in good condition, although some areas of path would benefit from repair/renovation. Of particular note is the path leading out from the western end of the Westminster Lodge car park adjacent to the running track, which suffers from an uneven surface and can get very wet.



#### *Uneven, wet path surface*

The Grounds Maintenance Contractor is required to regularly sweep all paths and report any defects to the Council.

### 2.5.3.3 *Unsurfaced paths*

In the southern section of the park, where the emphasis is more on natural habitats, paths are generally unsurfaced. Some of these can get muddy in wet weather, for example the path through the woodland adjacent to King Harry Lane and Public Footpath 037 which runs through the former golf course. Footpath 037 provides a link to the nearby school, feedback from the Briefing Document engagement advocated for the surfacing of this route.





*Public Footpath 037*

#### **2.5.4 Car parks**

There are two pay and display car parks located within the Park boundary, sited next to Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre at Holywell Hill and at Verulamium Museum off St Michael's Street. In addition, there are also a number of other car parks located within walking distance in the City Centre.

#### **2.5.5 Features & recreational facilities**

##### *2.5.5.1 Roman Mosaic & Hypocaust*

A Roman Mosaic and Hypocaust can be found within the Park. Housed within a purpose-built viewing building, the 1800-year-old hypocaust (a Roman under-floor heating system) and its covering mosaic floor were uncovered during the Wheeler excavations. They stand in their original Roman location where they formed part of the reception and meeting rooms of a large town house. Entry is free.

<http://www.stalbansmuseums.org.uk/hypocaust/>



*The hypocaust building*

#### 2.5.5.2 Verulamium Museum

Verulamium Museum was established during the 1930s, following the archaeological excavations by Mortimer and Tessa Wheeler. It holds most of the excavated material discovered in the City and District of St Albans.



*Verulamium Museum*

The museum's collections consist of approximately 80,000 objects and specimens which range from fossils and archaeological remains to archives such as maps, prints, drawings, photographs and ephemera associated with St Albans and its people. The Museum depicts everyday life in Roman Britain and inside visitors will find:

- Recreated Roman rooms and hands-on Discovery Areas
- A video presentation about the excavations

- The Sandridge Hoard - a collection of roman gold coins
- Some of the finest Roman mosaics and wall plasters outside the Mediterranean

<http://www.stalbansmuseums.org.uk/verulamium/>

#### *2.5.5.3 Toddlers Splash Park*

The former Paddling Pool was re-developed into the new Toddlers Splash Park and installed over the original pool to protect the buried archaeological remains. It is made up of approximately 12 high and low water features inserted into the surface and is open from the 1<sup>st</sup> bank holiday in May through to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in September each year.



#### *Splash Park*

#### *2.5.5.4 Play Area*

Located at the centre of the Park, this is one of the District's largest play areas and contains a wide range of play equipment.

The play area is enclosed by a fence, part of which consists of planters, and the site maintenance is included within the grounds maintenance contract. The contract specification requires the contractor to carry out daily recorded inspections, and to carry out minor repairs. More major repairs and improvements are carried out by the Council, and the whole site is inspected annually by an independent company. The company's detailed annual report is used by the Council to guide its annual



playground repairs and improvements programme, with the work carried out during the following year.



*Play area*



*Planters around playground*

#### *2.5.5.5 Crazy Golf*

A crazy golf course is located adjacent to the play area.



*Crazy golf course*

#### *2.5.5.6 Inn on the Park*

The Inn on the Park Café is open year-round, seven days a week serving freshly made food to eat in or take away.



*Inn on the Park*

#### *2.5.5.7 Abbey Theatre*

The Company of Ten was formed in 1934 by 10 young people who had the enthusiasm to set up a drama group, and the determination to stage performances of a professional standard. The number of people involved grew quickly after that, and the current theatre is located within the park.



*Abbey Theatre*

### **2.5.6 Sports facilities**

#### *2.5.6.1 AdiZone*

The AdiZone is a large outdoor gym located within the Park and was officially opened by Team GB Gymnast Daniel Keatings in 2010. It was co-funded by St Albans City and District Council along with Adidas and The Great Outdoor Gym

Company. The AdiZone is designed to enable and inspire local people to take part in more physical activities and encourage them to play a variety of sports. There is a wide range of equipment which includes football and basketball on the multi-games area, easy-to-use resistance gym equipment and a climbing wall. SADC currently have a tender process running to update this area, with work due to be completed in 2024.



*AdiZone outdoor gym*

#### *2.5.6.2 Beach volleyball court*

Verulamium Park is one of six venues to gain a new beach volleyball court after the London 2012 Olympic Games. The sand was taken directly from Horse Guards Parade and the training courts in St James' Park.



*Beach volleyball courts*

Over 700 tonnes of sand was donated by The London 2012 Organising Committee as part of a Sport England funded project. The investment forms part of Volleyball England's grassroots Go Spike campaign which is aimed at increasing participation in volleyball by creating more volleyball and beach volleyball facilities and running free 'come and try' taster sessions across the country.

#### *2.5.6.3 Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre*

The new Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre opened to the Public on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 2012. This state-of-the-art facility offers a wide range of activities including swimming, gym facilities, fitness classes, Verulamium Spa, sports hall, and a climbing wall.



#### *Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre*

#### *2.5.6.4 Sports courts*

A hard-surfaced basketball/netball sports court is located adjacent to the play area. There are plans to update this area and convert into a MUGA.





*Basketball/netball court*

#### *2.5.6.5 Tennis courts*

The tennis courts have recently been relocated to the eastern end of the site, on an area between Westminster Lodge and the running track.



*New tennis courts*

#### *2.5.6.6 Athletics track*

The track complex includes a 400m running track and associated athletics facilities, changing rooms, pro shop, club room, football pitch, putting green and a golf practice net.

#### *2.5.6.7 Football pitches*

There are both senior and junior football pitches in the Park, all of which are available for hire during the football season.





*Football pitch*

#### 2.5.6.8 *Cricket Pitches*

There are 2 cricket pitches and a cricket pavilion in the Park, both of which are available for hire during the cricket season. The cricket pavilion is located adjacent to the children's play area and offers a small kitchen, toilet and changing rooms as well as a main hall. The hall is used on weekdays during school term times by school groups to have their lunch during visits the Museum, Park and Abbey. Two cricket training wickets are in need of significant works, SADC are currently investigating options for this.



*Cricket pitch*



*Cricket pavilion*

#### *2.5.6.9 Sports Pavilions*

In addition to the cricket pavilion, St Michael's Changing Room, located in the car park next to the Museum offers a number of rooms for teams to change in, as well as showering facilities.

#### *2.5.6.10 Public conveniences*

There are two public toilets within the Park; one located next to the museum and one located next to the running track, although the running track building is planned to be demolished.

A third set of toilets found on The Causeway has been prone to flooding in recent years and are now permanently closed. Options are being investigated to look at how best to re-utilise this building following improvements delivered through the 'Revitalising the River Ver' project.

There are no current plans to increase toilet public toilet provision within the park.



*Closed Causeway toilets*



*Running track toilets*

#### *2.5.6.11 Orienteering Course*

Working in conjunction with the Hertfordshire Orienteering Club, an orienteering course has been laid out across the Park, and a leaflet produced to assist users of the course.



*Orienteering marker*

## **2.5.7 Park furniture**

### *2.5.7.1 Benches*

There are approximately 80 benches in the Park, most of which are located around the lake and along the central path running east to west. Large proportions of them are Memorial Benches. The Council, over a period of time, is standardising the styles of Park furniture used within the Park and has chosen a bench style called Stanford for the formal areas and a rustic style for the less formal areas. The Council will be working with English Heritage to agree new positions in the less formal areas of the Park, and reposition a number of benches currently located within the guardianship areas where erosion is damaging buried archaeological remains.



*Bench*



*Picnic bench*



### 2.5.7.2 Litter Bins

There are over 50 litter bins and more than 10 dog waste bins located at various points within the Park, some of which are mixed waste/recycling bins. Each of them is checked regularly throughout the day and emptied as and when needed as specified in the grounds maintenance specification.



*Mixed waste/recycling bin*



*Dog waste bin*

### 2.5.7.3 Signage and interpretation

In 2014 the first phase of the signage and interpretation project was completed and saw the installation of 10 brand new welcome boards and 8 new directional finger posts. The signage is aimed at providing visitors with clear directional information about the Park and the surrounding area. Whilst the structures are largely in good condition, the maps will soon require updating to reflect changes in the park.



*Interpretation welcome panel*



*Directional finger post*



Phase two of the project was completed in 2015, with new interpretation boards which make the cultural and natural heritage of Verulamium Park more accessible and engaging to the many thousands of visitors that visit the Park each year.



*Interpretation panels*

#### *2.5.7.4 Drinking fountain*

A drinking fountain is provided close to the running track toilets.



*Drinking fountain*

### **2.5.8 Buildings & structures**

There are a number of buildings situated within the Park. Some of these are managed directly by the Council whilst others are leased to individuals or organisations or are privately owned. The details are shown in the following table:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Occupancy / Use</b>	<b>Who Maintains it?</b>
Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre	Off Mud Lane, near Holywell Hill	Owned by SADC and managed through the Leisure Management Contract	Sports and Leisure Management Ltd (SLM) are responsible for all maintenance requirements.
Inn on the Park cafe	Within the Park near the Toddlers' Splash Park	Owned by SADC and leased to Inn on the Park (St Albans) Ltd	Inn in the Park (St Albans Ltd)
adiZone	Centre of the Park near the Play Area	Owned by SADC and maintained by the Grounds Maintenance Contractor	John O'Conner Ltd
Beach Courts	Centre of the Park near the Play Area	Owned by SADC. Bookings are managed through the Leisure Management Contractor SLM	John O'Conner Ltd (until March 2024) Leisure Management Contractor SLM from April 1 <sup>st</sup> 2024
Toddlers Splash Park	Centre of the Park near the Play Area	Owned by SADC and managed through the Leisure Management Contractor SLM	SLM – Abbey View Track

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Occupancy / Use</b>	<b>Who Maintains it?</b>
Children's Play Area	Centre of the Park near the adiZone	Owned by SADC and maintained by the Grounds Maintenance Contractor	John O'Conner Ltd
Hard Surface Sports courts(soonest to be converted to a MUGA in 2024)	Centre of the Park near the Play Area	Owned by SADC and maintained by the Grounds Maintenance Contractor	John O'Conner Ltd
St Michael's Pavilion and Toilet Facility	Car Park at St Michael's	Owned by SADC and cleaned by the Councils Cleansing Contractor	St Albans City and District Council
Running Track Toilet facility	At the Golf and Track Facility	Owned by SADC and cleaned by the Councils Cleansing Contractor	St Albans City and District Council
Grebe House	Car Park at St Michael's	The land is owned by SADC; a lease arrangement is in place and the building is owned by the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust	Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Occupancy / Use</b>	<b>Who Maintains it?</b>
Verulamium Museum	Car Park at St Michael's	The building is owned and managed by SADC	St Albans City and District Council – Museum Services
Roman Mosaic / Hypocaust Building	Within the Park near the Children's Play Area	The building is owned and managed by SADC	St Albans City and District Council – Museum Services
English Heritage Guardianship SAM Area	Within the Park around the exposed Roman City wall and ditch	The land is owned by SADC but there is a guardianship agreement between the Council and English Heritage	Maintenance and preservation of features and archaeological remains is the responsibility of English Heritage
Air Cadets' Hut	Adjacent to Westminster Lodge	The land is owned by SADC and a ground lease arrangement is in place. The building is owned by the Air Cadets	St Albans Air Cadets
Sea Cadets' Hut	Within the car park at Westminster Lodge	The land is owned by SADC and a ground lease arrangement is in place. The building is owned by the Sea Cadets	St Albans Sea Cadets



<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Occupancy / Use</b>	<b>Who Maintains it?</b>
Abbey Theatre	Within the car park at Westminster Lodge	The land is owned by SADC and a ground lease arrangement is in place. The building is owned by the Theatre Trust	Abbey Theatre Trust
Cricket Pavilion	In the middle of the Park near the Play Area	The building is owned by SADC and managed by the Grounds Maintenance Contractor.	St Albans City and District Council
Pumping Station	In the middle of the meadow in front of Westminster Lodge	Affinity Water owns the freehold of the land and building.	Affinity Water
Television Broadcasting Antenna	Boundary of the Park with Bluehouse Hill and King Harry Lane	Leased to the BBC	BBC have responsibility for the maintenance of the antenna and all associated equipment

See Appendices for further information about facilities that are managed by the Council.

### **2.5.9 Leases & arrangements**

The management and development of the Park needs to take into account a number of contract lease agreements between the Council and various stakeholder groups. These include:

#### *2.5.9.1 Leisure Management Contracts*

The Council's Leisure Management Contracts includes the operation and management of the Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre and the Abbey View Running Track Facility, Toddlers' Splash Park, Crazy Golf Course, Basket Ball Court and the Tennis and Netball courts. This includes all aspects of grounds maintenance within these facilities.

The [Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre](#) is owned by the Council and managed in partnership with Sports and Leisure Management Ltd (SLM), known locally as [Everyone Active at Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre](#). Everyone Active is responsible for the day-to-day operational management of the facility including all bookings. The performance for this contract is monitored by the Council's Leisure Services Officer.

#### *2.5.9.2 Historic England Guardianship Area*

Large areas of the Park around the exposed Roman Walls and Ditch are currently managed directly by English Heritage & Historic England, under a Guardianship Area agreement. This means that, although that land is owned by the Council, Historic England & English Heritage have full responsibility for the maintenance and conservation of the Roman Walls, including grounds maintenance.

Work by English Heritage has included projects to carry out repairs and restoration work to the exposed Roman Walls within the Park, including:

- Clearance of vegetation on the Roman Wall
- Conservation of Roman Wall along the Causeway
- Ground repairs at St Germain's Block
- Conservation of Roman Wall at St Germain's Block
- Removal of fencing around sections of Roman Wall

#### *2.5.9.3 Ice Cream Concession*

The Council has an arrangement in place that enables a street trader to sell ice creams in each of the Council's three Parks. The income it generates goes towards the maintenance of the Park. The concession is due to be retendered in 2024.

#### *2.5.9.4 Parkrun*

A weekly Parkrun event is held every Saturday at the Park.

#### *2.5.9.5 Fitness Groups*

The Council has a permit scheme in place and a number of organisations are allowed to conduct formal fitness sessions in the Park throughout the year. They provide an important service to local residents, and it is important that a clear framework is in place to ensure that their activities do not have a negative impact on the Park and the Park users. This framework is currently being reviewed.

## **2.6 Community and Events**

### **2.6.1 Verulamium Park Consultative Forum**

While the direct management responsibility for the Park rests with the Council, the Council attempts to involve the community and the Park's other stakeholders in its management.

The Consultative Forum was created to encourage stakeholder and community involvement in the management and development of the Park. The terms of reference are to:

- To provide an openly active line of communication for local groups and organizations with an interest in the well-being and future enhancement of the Park.
- To encourage the active support of the local community through the discussion and dissemination of information of mutual concern.
- To meet twice a year to discuss the issues that affect Verulamium Park, inviting relevant District Council officers as and when necessary.

While its decisions are non-binding on the Council, the forum continues to have a significant input into the development of the Park and now has a membership that includes:

- District Councillors
- Local residents
- Green Spaces and Cemeteries Team Leader
- Principal Green Spaces Officer
- Hertfordshire Constabulary
- John O'Conner Ltd (grounds maintenance contractor)
- SLM Ltd (Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre)
- Leisure Connections Ltd (Abbey View Track)
- Hertfordshire Orienteering Club
- Police Community Team
- Civic Society
- Abbey Theatre
- Society of St Michaels and Kingsbury
- St Albans & District Model Engineering Society
- Environment Agency
- Ver Valley Society
- Rockin Romans
- Verulamium Fun Play
- Butterfly Conservation
- St. Albans Sea Cadets
- District archaeologist
- St Albans Cycle Campaign

The Consultative Forum is administered by the Council and chaired by the Green Spaces and Cemeteries Team Leader. The Minutes are action-based and along with the agendas are published on the [Council website](#).



## **2.6.2 Community involvement**

### *2.6.2.1 Volunteer activity*

Verulamium Park is fortunate to have a number of voluntary groups willing to lend their time and support to the management of the site; these include the Ver Valley Society, CMS volunteers, St Albans School, and the Herts Probationary Service. It is important that these and other groups continue to be invited to contribute to tasks and activities within the Park.

Volunteer activity in the Park is undertaken with the support of CMS and various other volunteer groups, including the Ver Valley Society, and through them we continue to gain support and involvement of the local community.

Minor scrub clearance around tree bases has also been carried out by an environmental group from a local School.

### *2.6.2.2 Education*

The historical significance of the Park, combined with its proximity to the Museum, result in the site being a popular and well-used destination for educational visits.

## **2.6.3 Events**

The Park hosts a number of events throughout the year. Events can be organised by the Council and other individuals, charities, community groups and private organisations. Examples of such events include:

- The Cathedral's Firework Display
- Pub in the Park
- Comedy Garden
- St Albans Half Marathon
- Race for Life
- St George's Day Parade

Plans have recently been approved to increase the number of events able to be held annually within the Park.

#### 2.6.4 Health Walks

HCC's Hertfordshire Health Walks run regular walks at Verulamium Park. The latest programme can be viewed on the [HCC website](#).

#### 2.6.5 Marketing and promotion

The previous interpretation project included the development of a logo for the Park which is used on the Park's Facebook page, signage and publications to create a recognisable 'brand'.



*Verulamium logo*

In recent years the Council has invested in its various website, these include:

- [www.stalbans.gov.uk/verulamiumpark](http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/verulamiumpark) is the Verulamium Park page on [www.stalbans.gov.uk](http://www.stalbans.gov.uk), providing detailed information about the park, access to the minutes of the Park Forum meetings, the Management Plan and leaflets.
- [www.enjoystalbans.com](http://www.enjoystalbans.com) is the Council Tourism website and targets visitors to St Albans. Verulamium Park has its own page. <http://www.enjoystalbans.com/verulamium-park>
- <http://www.stalbansmuseums.org.uk/verulamium/> is the website for the Verulamium Museum and provides information and resources for visitors.
- [www.facebook.com/verulamiumpark](https://www.facebook.com/verulamiumpark)

### **2.6.6 Informal recreation**

As well as the many formal opportunities for recreation, the park provides access to a range of informal recreation including walking, running, picnicking, wildlife watching.

## **2.7 Site Management**

The Grounds Maintenance contractor is required to provide a Park Ranger service during daylight hours seven days per week. The Park Rangers are on duty every day 365 days a year, patrolling the park on foot and in the Park Ranger Buggy. It is their role to be a friendly face in the Park, to provide help and information to visitors and to engage with the public. They also perform other important tasks such as emptying of litter bins, picking up of litter and monitoring public safety within the Park. The Park is also patrolled by the Local Community Police Officers and the Council's Green Spaces Officers.

### **2.7.1 Safety & security**

#### *2.7.1.1 CCTV*

The Park is currently serviced by a number of CCTV cameras located in the car parks, on street furniture just outside the park and by a camera located on the Abbey Tower.

#### *2.7.1.2 Park Ranger*

The Park Ranger is clearly identifiable, and available to address customer enquiries and deter anti-social behaviour.

### **2.7.2 Consents**

Due to the designation of the site as a Scheduled Monument, many works in the park require Scheduled Monument Consent prior to works being undertaken. This also affects decisions on approaches to management works, for example placing benches on slabs to prevent the need for digging down into the ground.

### **2.7.3 Agreements and Grant Funding**

The Community Chest fund has been set up to hold funds ring-fenced for the site from money raised from events and other activities in the Park, and will be used to fund improvements for the benefit of site users.

### **2.7.4 Issue reporting**

Members of the public are able to report site issues directly to SADC through an online reporting tool at [www.stalbans.gov.uk/gm](http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/gm).



## **3.0 ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION**

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### **3.1 A welcoming place**

#### **3.1.1 Site entrances**

General maintenance of site entrances will continue to be delivered through Grounds Maintenance activities. A number of entrances could be improved, with potential projects identified including:

- Enhancement of planters outside Verulamium Museum entrance to create a sensory garden.
- Enhancement of landscaping in the area around the entrance at Abbey Mill Lane, including replacing fencing along boundary of Abbey Mill Lane Green Space.
- Enhancement of the entrance from King Harry Lane into the former golf course with new bollards, and welcome and directional signage.
- Enhancement of the entrance into the former golf course from Westminster Lodge car park by removing redundant post and rail fencing and entrance gates.
- Installation of a new welcome sign at the entrance from the layby on King Harry Lane.

#### **3.1.2 Signage**

Map panels will be refreshed, allowing updates to mapping of the site to be made where this has changed.

#### **3.1.3 Paths and transport routes**

Existing paths and surfacing will continue to be monitored and repaired through the Grounds Maintenance contract. In addition, enhancements identified to implement during this plan include:

- Widening and improving the surface of the path leading from Westminster Lodge car park, adjacent to the new tennis courts.

- Improving the cycle connection between the Park and King Harry Lane through surfacing a route through the former golf course with a sealed surface as a permissive cycle route. The route will run north from the eastern entrance to the Park from King Harry Lane to meet the path leading away from Westminster Lodge. Some minor tree works, e.g. crown lifting will be necessary where the route passes near existing trees.
- Improving access between the Causeway and former golf course by undertaking minor tree works and surfacing the linking path with an unsealed surface.

## **3.2 Healthy, safe and secure**

### **3.2.1 Recreational facilities**

Management of the many recreational facilities found within the park will continue to be managed through either grounds maintenance activities or through existing leases. SADC will continue to evaluate facilities within the Park and investigate options to upgrade or enhance facilities where a need is identified. Current planned projects includes upgrades to the AdiZone, conversion of the sports court area to a MUGA, and upgrades to cricket training wickets.

### **3.2.2 Staff presence**

The presence of the Park Ranger service, Grounds Maintenance contractors and council officers on site will maintain a high visibility of staff throughout the year.

### **3.2.3 Surveys and inspections**

Monitoring of site infrastructure will continue to be undertaken, both internally as part of the Grounds Maintenance contract, and externally where required, for example for play equipment.

Tree risk surveys will continue to be undertaken in line with SADC's Tree Strategy. A programme of planned and reactive tree risk management is carried out by specialist contractors and managed by SADC Greenspace Officers.

If discovered on site, management of oak processionary moth will follow the latest Forestry Commission guidance and SADC policies.

### **3.2.4 Anti-social behaviour**

General site misuse will continue to be managed through the Grounds Maintenance contract.

## **3.3 Well-maintained and clean**

### **3.3.1 Maintenance of fixtures, fittings, facilities, and buildings**

Repairs/upgrades to site infrastructure will be undertaken as required, informed by regular site monitoring.

### **3.3.2 Removal and replacement of site furniture**

Where site furniture becomes redundant or unused, these items will be removed.

Where inspections reveal site furniture does not meet required standards, these will be replaced with standard-design items. Particular attention will be given to the former golf course where benches and litter bins will be replaced/relocated to take advantage of views of the St. Albans Cathedral.

### **3.3.3 Park Rangers**

Park Rangers will continue to provide a presence on site, allowing issues to be identified and dealt with quickly, as well as adding to a sense of security for site users.

### **3.3.4 Management of litter and small-scale vegetation management**

Bin emptying and removal of fly-tipping will continue through the Grounds Maintenance contract and litter picking will form part of Grounds Maintenance and volunteer activities.

The Council will work closely with the Environment Agency and report any obstructions to the river that could result in flooding.

## **3.4 Environmental management and sustainability**

### **3.4.1 Financial sustainability**

Where specific projects are planned, it is important to be aware of the impact these will have on the general maintenance operations both visually and financially.

Through continued well-planned maintenance regimes and projects, we aim to

achieve this not just for the next five years but well into the future of Verulamium Park.

Where possible, external funding will be applied for contribute towards project delivery. The Community Chest Fund will also be used to fund appropriate projects within the Park, administered by SADC in consultation with the Verulamium Park Consultative Forum.

### **3.4.2 Climate change**

Impacts of climate change will be considered in all management decisions and when planning for the future. Examples of where this may be implemented include when choosing tree species for planting or adjusting timing of grassland management due to changes in weather/seasonal patterns.

In addition, the impacts of management operations on climate will also be considered. Examples of this include evaluating methods used (e.g., necessity for using machinery) and evaluating environmental sustainability of contractors and reducing carbon emissions when tendering contracts for site management.

### **3.4.3 Sustainability of resources**

Where possible, material created through management activities will be re-used, either on or offsite. Examples of this could include:

- Material from tree works retained on site as deadwood habitat in woodland, or as in-channel structures to enhance river habitats.
- Material from tree works chipped and used as mulch for tree planting projects.

### **3.4.4 Monitoring**

A programme of monitoring will be implemented to monitor the success of management activities, including:

- Rapid Grassland Assessment (RGA) of grassland habitats
- Fixed-point photography to monitor habitat changes

In addition, volunteers will be encouraged to contribute to citizen science schemes, for example, establishing a butterfly transect across the Park.



## **3.5 Biodiversity, landscape and heritage**

### **3.5.1 Historic features and buried archaeological remains**

All works which have the potential to affect historic features will be subject to Scheduled Monument Consent to ensure these features are protected. Officers will also work closely with the SADC District Archaeologist when developing plans and work programmes to ensure historic features are considered throughout.

Collaboration will be required with English Heritage, who are responsible for managing the Roman Wall and surrounding area. This will ensure the two management plans work towards shared objectives. Development of a joint Conservation Management Plan will help facilitate this joined-up approach. In addition, an annual site meeting between officers of SADC, English Heritage and CMS will be implemented.

### **3.5.2 Landscape character**

Management of the site will conserve the landscape character of the Park in line with the Verulamium Landscape Character Area assessment. This will require collaboration with Historic England to balance the management activities within the Park with protection of historic features.

### **3.5.3 Former golf course**

Plans to bring management of the former golf course into management of the park will initially take the form of:

- Retention of existing sand bunkers as wildlife habitat.
- Removal of a cluster of poor condition trees near the entrance off of King Harry Lane to open up access and improve the view of St Albans Cathedral. Elm will be retained where possible to benefit white-letter hairstreak.
- Planting of 1.73ha of additional woodland, including transitional woodland edge, to extend areas of existing woodland, planned to be funded through the England Woodland Creation Offer grant.
- Establishment of Summer Meadow in remaining grassland areas.
- Establishment of Ecotones in pertinent locations between Summer Meadow and Woodland edge.

- Maintenance of mown grass strips as informal paths. Management of Summer Meadow and Ecotones at the edge of the ride will create a transitional woodland edge, both to benefit wildlife and to retain a sense of openness.
- Removal of redundant golf course infrastructure and installation of park infrastructure including benches and bins.

In addition, a number of further improvements could be implemented:

- Depending on the quality of grassland habitat which develops, spreading of green hay or wildflower seeding to enhance the grassland sward.
- Removal of selected trees to further open up grassland habitats.

#### **3.5.4 Further ecological enhancements within the Park**

To improve the grassland sward within areas recently turned to 'Summer Meadow' management, green hay will be spread over selected areas to introduce wildflower seeds, using the adjacent Seabrook Meadow as a donor site.

To increase the amount of grassland left long overwinter, management of vegetation around mature trees will be reduced to management as 'Ecotones'. This will benefit both overwintering invertebrates and protect mature trees from damage.

Additional opportunities exist for volunteers to develop patches of ruderal vegetation, for example, the area found near Grebe House, to benefit wildlife. Examples of potential works could include creating areas for pollinators or building bug hotels.

#### **3.5.5 'Revitalising the River Ver' project**

SADC will continue to work in partnership with the Environment Agency and other stakeholders to deliver the 'Revitalising the River Ver' project. A period of engagement is planned with stakeholders, including riparian owners, to deliver tree works along the river. Further development of the project will be ongoing.

#### **3.5.6 Woodland, scrub and hedgerow habitats**

The majority of woodland on site falls within the English Heritage conservation area, management of woodland and trees on SADC owned areas will be limited to health and safety works, or any works identified by specific projects, e.g., to riverside trees as part of the 'Revitalising the River Ver' project.

A mosaic of scrub and tall herb habitats will be maintained through rotational management of ecotones and woodland edge. To facilitate this, a meeting will be held annually in late summer between officer of SADC, CMS and JOC to decide on areas to be managed the following autumn/winter, either through grounds maintenance or volunteer activities. This visit will include evaluating the Abbey Mill Lane Green Space with the aim of maintaining a mosaic of rough grassland, scrub, hazel coppice and woodland.

Management of hedgerows on site should aim to primarily provide wildlife habitats. In general, where cutting is required, this should be limited to once every three years unless more regular cutting is required to maintain access. Hedgerows which are currently largely unmanaged, such as the hedgerow along the edge of Seabrook Meadow, should be allowed to develop into mature hedgerows. In addition, whilst still being regularly managed to maintain access and views through the site, the ancient hawthorn hedgerow running through the centre of the site could be allowed to grow taller than currently allowed to enhance this hedge for wildlife. Where gapping up of hedgerows is required in future, or new lengths of hedgerow planted, tree mixes should include disease-resistant elm to provide habitat for white-letter hairstreak.

### **3.6 Community involvement**

#### **3.6.1 Interpretive schemes**

Interpretation panels will be monitored and maintained through grounds maintenance activities.

There is scope to enhance visibility of the reconstructed London Gate to further interpret the site for visitors. This will involve:

- Small-scale vegetation clearance to open up the immediate area.
- Using a mixture of mowing regimes to demarcate the route of Watling Street through the gate and across the wider site.

#### **3.6.2 Opportunities for volunteering**

Officers from SADC and CMS will work together to develop annual programmes of volunteer tasks. This will include identifying projects for a local school group involved

on site to undertake, tasks already identified include managing areas of scrub around the embankment area of the site.

Where possible, management activities outside of general grounds maintenance will look to be delivered by volunteers as a first preference. To support this, SADC and CMS plan to develop a 'Friends of' group for the Park, both to increase volunteer activity and further engage the local community in management of the site.

### **3.7 Marketing and communication**

#### **3.7.1 Maintenance of the 'brand' identity created for Verulamium Park**

The Verulamium Park brand identity will be maintained through continued use of the Verulamium Park logo, and the use of standard designs to ensure all materials produced are easily identified as belonging to the Park.

#### **3.7.2 Heritage Trail**

With the heritage of the Park being of such significance, there remains scope to build on the interpretation of its history, in particular through improved links between Verulamium Museum and the wider Park. An interactive, circular trail will be developed to encourage exploration around the Park, using QR codes to link with online content.

#### **3.7.3 Promotion of Verulamium Park**

SADC will continue to work with others to further promote the Park to a wide audience, including organisations such as Verulamium Museum and 'Enjoy St. Albans'.



## 4.0 AIM & OBJECTIVES

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The aim and objectives of the GAP are as follows:

### **Aim**

To provide a valuable, welcoming, and well-maintained park for the community whilst protecting heritage features, managing its environment sustainably, and enhancing its biodiversity.

### **Objectives**

**A. A welcoming place** – *To make Verulamium Park a welcoming site with inviting entrances and with a high standard of features and facilities that will encourage long stays and repeat visits.*

- A1 Maintain site entrances to form welcoming, appealing gateways to the park
- A2 Maintain signage to enable visitors to successfully navigate to, from, and around the park
- A3 Maintain a suitable network of accessible paths and transport routes throughout the park

**B. Healthy, safe and secure** – *To ensure that visitors to Verulamium Park feel safe and able to explore and enjoy the whole site at all times.*

- B1 Improve and upgrade existing recreational facilities as required; provide new facilities where needed and/or an opportunity has been identified
- B2 Maintain a regular staff presence within Verulamium Park
- B3 Continue to carry out a programme of regular surveys and inspections of the trees and structures within the Park
- B4 Respond promptly to reports of misuse of the site

**C. Well-maintained and clean** – *To maintain Verulamium Park to the highest of standards so that it is in peak condition for every visitor.*

- C1 Carry out a programme of regular monitoring and reactionary maintenance to ensure that all fixtures, fittings, facilities, and buildings are maintained in a serviceable, safe, and attractive condition
- C2 Continue to remove redundant structures and furniture in poor condition, replacing with standard design of furniture
- C3 Continue to make the most of Park Rangers to monitor the grounds maintenance contract and ensure its success
- C4 Remove fly-tipping, undertake regular litter picking, empty litter bins, and carry out small scale vegetation management along access routes

**D. Environmental management** – *To ensure compliance with the council's environmental policies and seek sustainable activities and solutions relevant to the special nature of the site*

- D1 Ensure ongoing maintenance costs are financially sustainable
- D2 Secure external funding to ensure the viability of capital works
- D3 Ensure impacts of climate change are considered in management decisions, both in terms of the effect of climate change on wildlife habitats and of carbon emissions from management operations
- D4 Make the most of opportunities to re-use by-products generated through conservation activities within the park
- D5 Monitor results of delivery to evaluate the success of management activities

**E. Biodiversity, landscape and heritage** – *To conserve and enhance the nationally significant features of cultural and natural heritage which make Verulamium Park such an important site*

- E1 Ensure above ground historic features and buried archaeological remains are appropriately managed to ensure their preservation
- E2 Work in partnership with English Heritage to ensure that management of the Roman wall complements management of the wider park
- E3 Conserve the important landscape character of the park and its relationship with St. Albans and the wider landscape

- E4 Following closure of the golf course, manage the area for the benefit of wildlife and public enjoyment
- E5 Deliver further ecological enhancements within the Park, building on opportunities identified in the SADC Greenspace Opportunity Audit
- E6 Continue to work in partnership with the Environment Agency and others to support delivery of the 'Revitalising the River Ver' project
- E7 Maintain grassland, woodland, scrub and hedgerow habitats to benefit biodiversity

**F. Community involvement** – *To provide opportunities for the local community to engage with Verulamium Park and to get actively involved with management of the site*

- F1 Maintain interpretive schemes that help foster a better understanding of Verulamium Park's historical significance and valuable wildlife
- F2 Develop an annual programme of volunteer tasks with partners and key stakeholders and communicate widely
- F3 Consider all activities within this plan as potential tasks for volunteer groups, including St Albans School, Ver Valley Society, CMS, and the Herts Probationary Service

**G. Marketing and communication** – *To develop new and innovative ways to attract a wider variety of visitors to the Park, and to fully realise its value as a site of open space*

- G1 Maintain the 'brand' identity created for Verulamium Park and ensure this is used for all internal signage and external marketing materials
- G2 Develop a circular Heritage Trail to encourage exploration of the more remote areas of the Park
- G3 Widely promote volunteer and community events at Verulamium Park, using both traditional and electronic media
- G4 Continue to work with external organisations to promote Verulamium Park to a wider audience

## 5.0 ACTION PLANS AND MAPS

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The action plans are colour-coded into ‘ongoing management’ and ‘opportunities, subject to funding’. ‘Ongoing management’ items will generally be funded and delivered through existing Council revenue budgets. ‘Opportunities, subject to funding’ items have no funds currently allocated to them. Delivery would therefore require securing external funding or applying internally through the SADC capital bid process. All costs are estimates and full costs will need to be identified for each item prior to the submission of a capital bid or external funding application.

Ongoing management

Opportunities, subject to funding

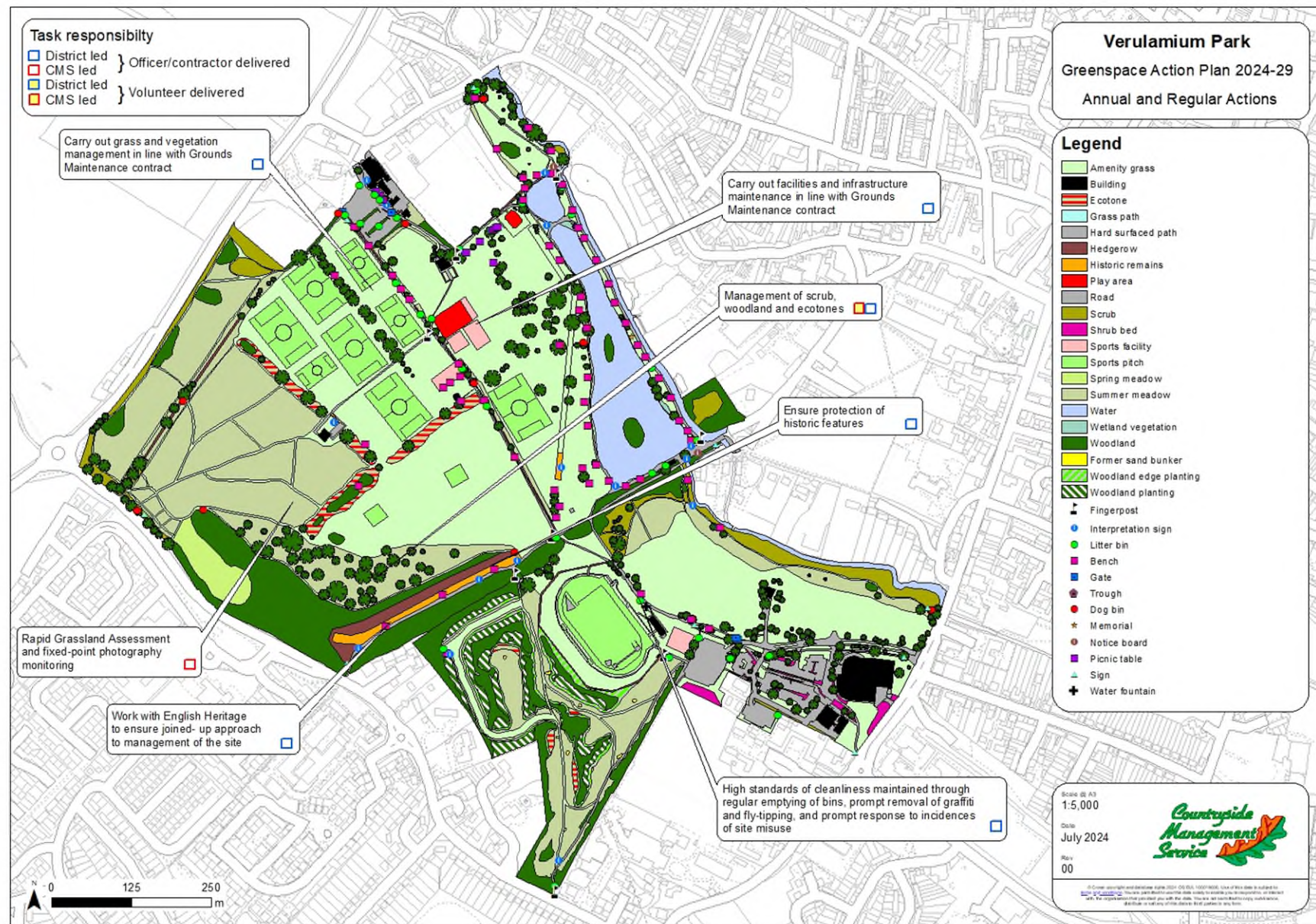
**Abbreviations:** SADC – St Albans City & District Council; CMS – Countryside Management Service; JOC – John O’Connors; GM – Grounds Maintenance; Vols – Volunteers; RoW – Rights of Way; EH – English Heritage; VM – Verulamium Museum



## 5.1 Annual and regular actions

Ref no.	Action	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
0.1	Carry out grass and vegetation cutting under Grounds Maintenance contract	C4, E7	All year	SADC	JOC	General budget			
0.2	Carry out ad hoc vegetation management of scrub, woodland and ecotones as required	E7	Sep – Feb	CMS	JOC/ vols	General budget			
0.3	Carry out maintenance and repair of facilities and infrastructure under Grounds Maintenance contract	A1, A2, A3, B3, C1, C2	All year	SADC	JOC	General budget			
0.4	Maintain a staff presence on site through JOC Ranger service	B2, C3	All year	SADC	JOC	General budget			
0.5	Ensure heritage features are protected and apply for necessary consents to undertake management activities	E1	All year	SADC	SADC	Officer time			

0.6	Work with English Heritage to ensure joined-up management of the site	E1, E2	All year	SADC	SADC	Officer time			
0.7	Tree survey and proportionate risk management	B3	Winter	SADC	JOC	General budget			
0.8	Prompt removal of graffiti and fly-tipping	C4	All Year	SADC	JOC	General budget			
0.9	Prompt response to incidences of site misuse	B4	All Year	SADC	JOC	General budget			
0.10	Regular emptying of bins	C4	All Year	SADC	JOC	General budget			
0.11	Fixed point photography monitoring	D5	Jan/Apr Jul/Oct	CMS	Vols/ CMS	Officer time			
0.12	Rapid grassland assessment monitoring	D5	Jun/Jul	CMS	Vols/ CMS	Officer time			
0.13	Support, promote and co-ordinate volunteer activities within the Park	F2, F3	All year	CMS	SADC/ CMS	Officer time			
0.14	Promote Verulamium Park to a wide audience	G3, G4	All year	SADC	SADC/ CMS	Officer time			



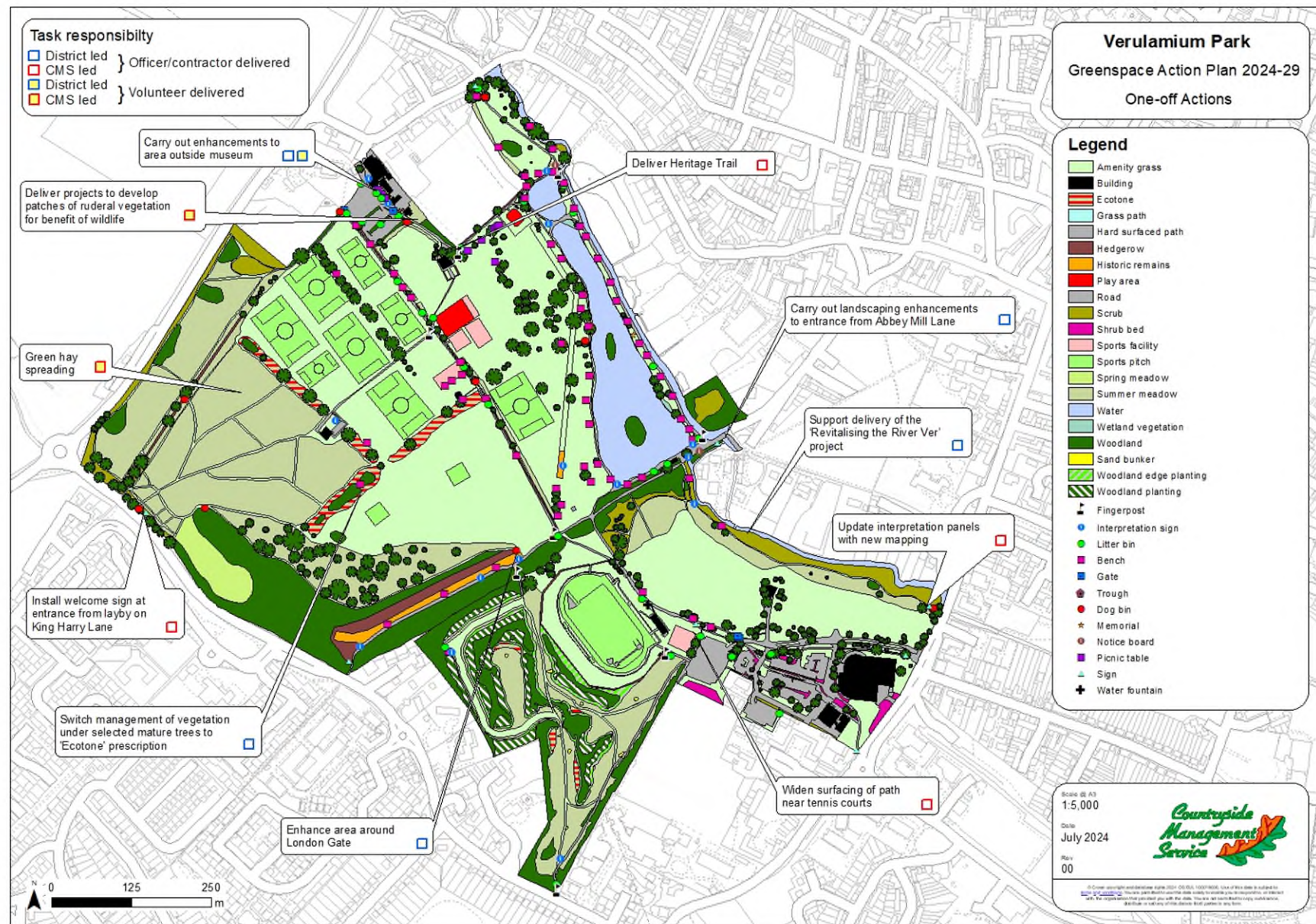
## 5.2 One-off actions

Ref no.	Action	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
1.1	Bring management of the former golf course into management of the Park, including tree planting.	E4	2023	SADC	JOC	General budget/ external funding			
1.2	Carry out entrance improvement to area next to museum by developing planters into sensory garden	A1	2024/25	SADC/ VM	Contractor/ vols	Community Chest Fund	£1k		
1.3	Carry out entrance improvement to Abbey Mill entrance by enhancing landscaping	A1	2024/25	SADC	Contractor	Community Chest Fund	£10k		
1.4	Carry out entrance improvements to former golf course from King Harry Lane and Westminster Lodge car park	A1	2024/25	SADC	Contractor	Community Chest Fund	£5k		
1.5	Install new welcome sign from King Harry Lane layby	A1	2024/25	CMS	Contractor	Community Chest Fund	£500	6.2	

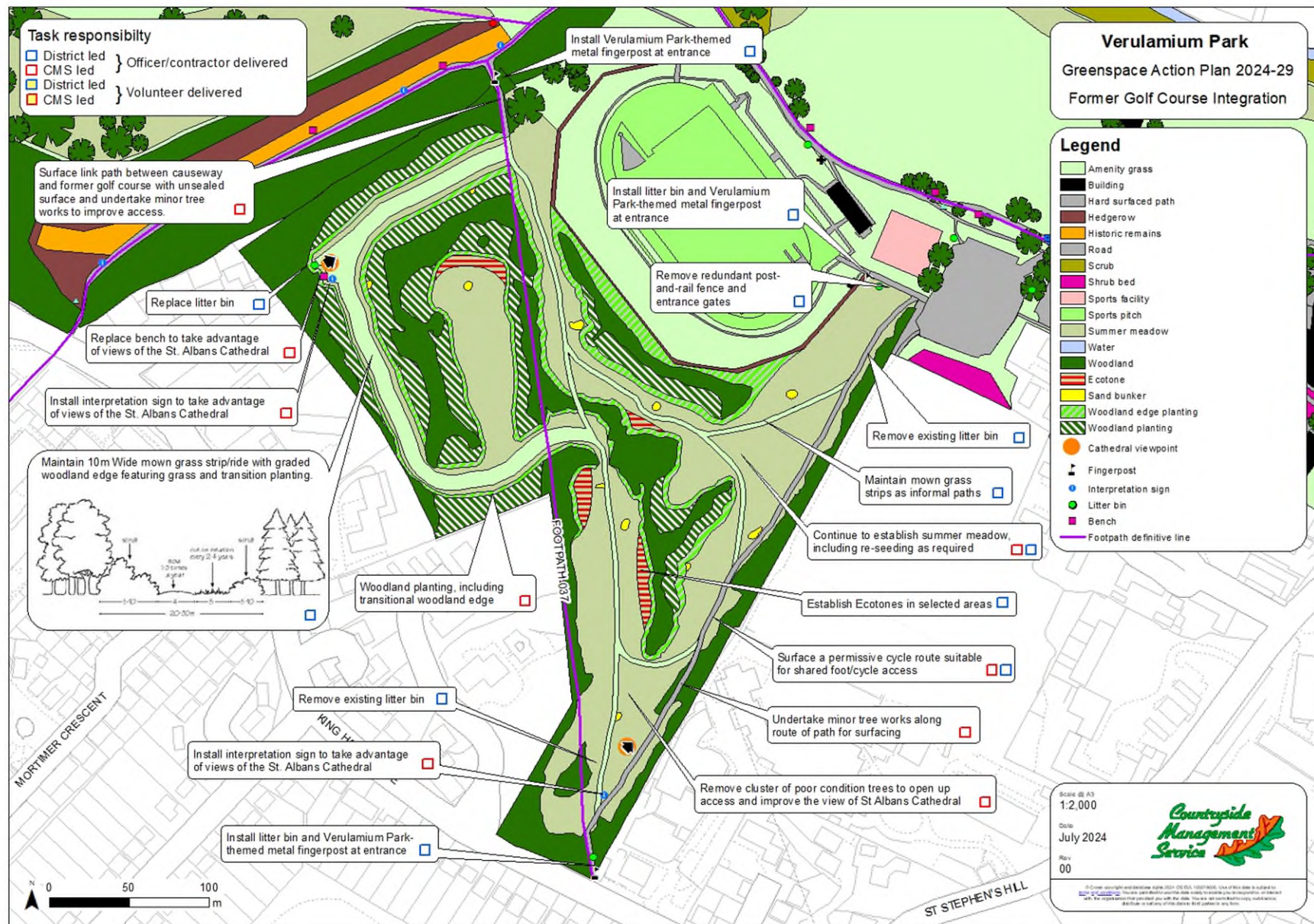


1.6	Replace and relocate visitor infrastructure within former golf course		2024/25	CMS	Contractor	Community Chest Fund			
1.7	Improve interpretation by updating map panels	A2	Following completion of River Ver project	CMS	Contractor	Community Chest Fund	£2k		
1.8	Surfacing of route through former golf course	A3	2024/25	CMS	Contractor	UKSPF	£150k	6.3	
1.9	Widening of path leading from Westminster Lodge car park with new surfacing	A3	2024/25	CMS	Contractor	UKSPF	£25k	6.3	
1.10	Surfacing link path between Causeway and former golf course	A3	2024/25	CMS	Contractor	UKSPF	£2k	6.3	
1.11	Undertake green hay spreading in recently developed conservation grassland	E4	Sep 2024	CMS	Contractor/ vols	General budget		6.1	
1.12	Support development of the 'Revitalising the River Ver' project	E6	Ongoing	SADC	SADC/ CMS	Officer time			
1.13	Work with English Heritage to deliver enhancement of London Gate area to improve interpretation of the site for visitors	F1	2024/25	SADC/ EH	JOC	General budget			

1.14	Deliver projects to develop patches of ruderal vegetation for benefit of wildlife	E5	2024/25	CMS	Vols	Community Chest Fund	£1k		
1.15	Deliver Heritage Trail	G2	2024/25	CMS	Contractor	Community Chest Fund	£1k	6.2	
1.16	Develop 'Friends of' group for Verulamium Park	F2	Throughout plan	SADC	CMS/SADC	Officer time			
1.17	Develop new GAP 2028-33		2027-28	CMS	CMS	Officer time			







## **6.0 SPECIFICATIONS**

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### **6.1 Green hay spreading**

1. The existing long grass will be cut by the district grounds maintenance team, arisings taken from site and areas amenity mown to keep vegetation short prior to other preparations taking place.
2. Scarify seven areas of approximately 350m<sup>2</sup> using a non-mechanical method (e.g. a chain harrow) and cultivate to a shallow depth (no deeper than 50mm), due to the archaeological features present on site. For this site scarification only needs to produce 40% to 50% bare ground.
3. Translocate cuttings from Seabrook Meadow on the same day they are cut, spreading over scarified areas. Leave arisings for several days to allow seeds to drop and collect and remove arisings to prevent a build-up of thatch.

### **6.2 Interpretation and Heritage Trail**

#### **6.2.1 Interpretation refresh**

1. Design and produce replacement map-based information and orientation GRP panels to fit existing structures.
2. To be adapted from existing interpretation panels (provided by client). Existing map to be used, with minor alterations to show updates to the map.

#### **6.2.2 Heritage Trail**

1. Design and produce ten QR code discs for Heritage Trail, using Verulamium Park branding.
2. Discs to be 80mm x 160mm in portrait format, produced in 3mm polycarbonate suitable for post mounting.

### **6.3 Surfacing**

#### **6.3.1 Path surfacing of link between Causeway and former golf course**

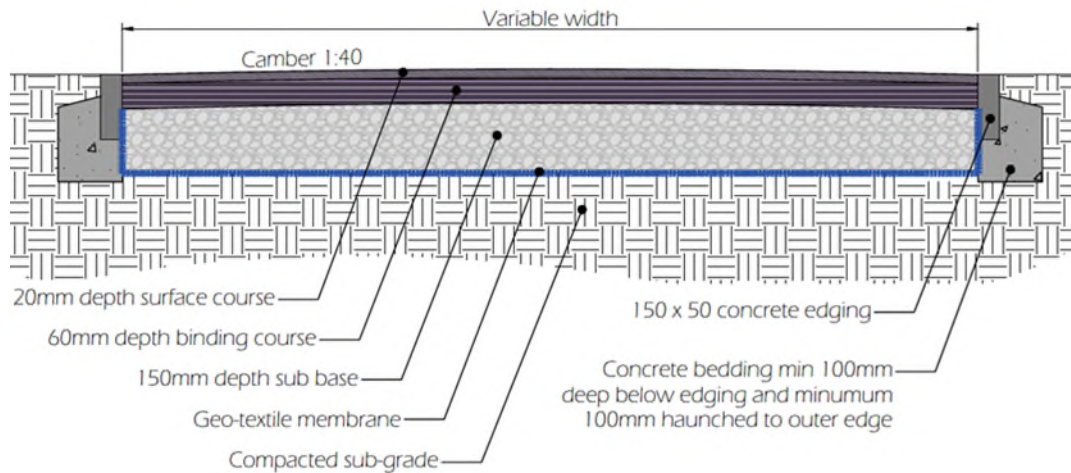
1. Excavate the marked-out path to a minimum depth of 150mm and at least 2m width, with all soft spots excavated back to firm ground with the purpose of



achieving best surface drainage of the finished route, with hollows filled and compacted with sub-base to ensure even, firm base layer.

2. The safe width of the surfaced area should be 2m.
3. Spoil to be removed from site.
4. Supply and lay a non-woven geotextile, such as Terram 1500 or similar, to completely cover the formation level of the path.
5. Supply, spread, grade and thoroughly compact a dense, tight, even base course, recycled aggregate 50mm to dust. Compact base course to refusal using a vibrating roller. The finished compacted depth is to be not less than 100mm. Ensure that the geotextile membrane is covered at this stage.
6. Supply, spread, grade and thoroughly compact to a dense, tight, even surface, a layer of well graded granite, 6mm to dust as surface dressing. Compact to refusal using a vibrating roller. Finished, compacted depth to be not less than 50mm. Edges to be lost in adjoining ground and base course to be completely covered. Material must be completely free from deleterious materials.
7. Path to have a final minimum camber of 1:50 to allow surface water to drain either side.
8. Any protruding objects to be removed by the contractor.

### 6.3.2 New path through former golf course and path widening of route leading from Westminster Lodge



Note: Where heavy vehicle use is expected sub-base 200mm, bituminous binder course 100mm, bituminous surfacing 45mm. Incorporate geo-textile synthetics where ground requires stabilisation.

1. Agreed path footprint excavated to 230mm depth. Minimum final width of 3m.
2. Sub-grade well compacted, soft spots excavated back to firm ground and built up with type 1 granular sub-base to provide level gradient.
3. Lay edging level and aligned, running smoothly when viewed in section and in plan on a bed of compacted concrete 100mm deep. Curves and corners to sweep smoothly without kinks, flat sections or abrupt changes.

Lay 100mm width of haunching concrete on outside edge of stone edging. Compact and smooth to ensure edging is held firm. Smooth off 50mm below top of the stone edging/ground level. Allow concrete to set.

Backfill trenches ensuring again that sub-grade is well compacted.

Face min of 75mm deep. Follow manufacturer's guidance for installation (concreted or driven in and secured with fixings into the sub-base).

4. Lay geotextile membrane to suppress weed growth. Not to be visible above ground.
5. Lay 150mm depth of machine-compacted type 1 granular sub-base. Incorporate a 1:40 camber to allow surface water to drain either side on flat ground, or cross-fall to the downward side.

6. Machine-roll 60mm depth binding course of 20mm Dense Bitumen Macadam. Incorporate a 1:40 camber to allow surface water to drain either side on flat ground, or to the downward side.
7. Immediately lay and machine roll a 20mm depth of 6mm close grade tarmacadam. Incorporate a 1:40 camber to allow surface water to drain either side on flat ground, or cross-fall to the downward side.
8. Junctions with other paths, surfaces and ironwork (for services) to be level. Changes in direction gradual with curved flare.
9. Path edges to be at ground level.

## 7.0 APPENDICES

### 7.1 Engagement response summary

Below is a summary of comments received from the second stage engagement process on the Verulamium Park Greenspace Action Plan 2024-29, carried out in late 2023 and early 2024.

Theme of comments	Engagement response	Outcome
Seabrook Meadow grazing	Area is popular with dog walkers, would be negatively affected by cattle grazing.	Grazing of Seabrook Meadow removed from the plan, primarily due to cost.
	The meadow is an asset to the park, would change of management provide much benefit to outweigh the difficulties?	
	Timing of grazing should avoid April/May to protect cowslips.	
	Questions around the likely expense – would money be better used elsewhere?	
	Animal welfare concerns – post and rail fence will not prevent dogs running in to the area. Ragwort/ hemlock are poisonous to animals, would their presence on site be a risk to the cattle?	

	Concerns around effect of grazing animals on paths which run through the site, troughs should be located away from these paths. Provision for gates should be made for access at all current desire line access points.	
	The route of FP032 should not run within the fenced area, the precise route of the public footpath should be clarified.	
Golf course proposals	Enhancement of the former golf course for wildlife welcomed.	No amendment required.
	Comments around the levels of tree planting proposed, there was a preference towards retaining the area as predominantly grassland habitats.	Tree planting has been reduced. Remaining tree planting will extend existing areas of woodland and lines of trees, while retaining more of the area as grassland.
	Bunkers should be retained to provide diversity of habitats.	Bunkers will be retained.
	Elm trees should be retained where any tree	Elm prioritised for retention.



	clearance is planned, to ensure support for white-letter hairstreak butterfly.	
	Would golf course habitats be better left to develop through natural regeneration?	Natural regeneration was considered, however, in this instance, tree planting and grassland enhancement will allow quicker establishment of habitats.
	Views across the Park to the Cathedral should be maintained.	Views will be maintained.
	Provision of bins/infrastructure should be included within the plans.	New infrastructure planned for former golf course.
Path surfacing	Surfacing of both the new route across the former golf course and the section of path near running track welcomed.	No amendment required.
	Provision of a route suitable for cycling along through the former golf course welcomed, however comments that this shouldn't be an alternative to replacing the bridge from King Harry Lane, which should be prioritised. Particular	Budget is not currently available for replacement of the bridge, therefore a route through the former golf course will be prioritised. SADC will work with Highways to investigate options to extend shared use path to meet the revised entrance

	concerns around suitability of entrance where FP037 meets King Harry Lane, and the lack of connection to a shared path.	where FP037 meets King Harry Lane. Following further investigation, the chosen route has been changed from broadly following FP037 to a route running north towards Westminster Lodge car park.
	Surfacing should be unobtrusive, would rubber underlay be sufficient rather than crushed stone surface?	To provide cycle access a sealed surface is now planned, an underlay would not be sufficient to provide this access.
New proposed FoG	FoG development welcomed.	No amendments required.
Proposed Heritage trail	New Heritage Trail welcomed.	No amendments required.
Revitalising the River Ver project	Why is the timeline for the project so long?	Complexity of project and multiple constraints have meant creating designs to deliver on all ambitions has proved difficult.
	Given length of project, would short term repairs be of benefit, e.g. repairs to entrance/exit sluices?	Not currently planned.
Flooding	Comments that some areas of the site are flooded more regularly than the mapping	Noted, text added to relevant section.

	suggests, e.g. Bell Meadow, lakeside areas, Abbey Mill End.	
	Comments around the responsibilities and effects of the project on riparian owners to the north of the river.	Engagement will soon be undertaken with adjacent landowners as part of the next stage of the project.
Heritage	Ideal habitats for protection of buried archaeology are open grassland/meadow, tree planting should be avoided within the Scheduled Monument.	Noted, no tree planting is planned within the Scheduled Monument.
Habitat enhancements	Water voles have been introduced upstream, habitat provision should be made for their expansion within the park.	To be included as part of the 'Revitalising the River Ver' project.
	Some areas of woodland would benefit from thinning.	Most woodland is within the English Heritage protection area, we will work with them around woodland management.
	Provision should be made to increase areas of long grass overwinter to benefit invertebrates.	Ecotones to be created around mature trees. Additional areas included

	Mowing should be reduced around mature trees, both to protect from damage and provide additional wildlife habitat.	in change in management of former golf course.
	Hedgerow enhancements should go further than suggested – more sensitive management to develop natural hedgerows with trees within.	Where possible, hedgerows will be managed as minimally as possible, except where trimming is required to keep paths and access clear.
	Increased monitoring should be undertaken to measure success and inform future management changes.	Plan includes provision of fixed-point photography and rapid grassland assessments, addition to state we would encourage volunteers to undertake further citizen science monitoring schemes, e.g. UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme.
Facilities	Clarification on future of Abbey track changing rooms.	Changing room building is due to be demolished.
	Comments that further provision should be made for public toilets.	There are no current plans to increase public toilet provision.
	HCC are providing bike repair stands across the County, outside	Noted, comments passed on to HCC colleagues.

	Westminster Lodge would be an ideal location.	
	Provision for cyclists would be improved by designating path which runs beside the Abbey Theatre through to Westminster Lodge as a shared-use cycle and footway.	To be investigated further.
	Could plans for the lake include a large viewing platform in place of the now closed toilets on causeway, for use by visitors and educational visits?	Potential being investigated for part of causeway toilet block to be converted in future as a visitor facility.
Site administration	Entrance from FP037 from King Harry Lane missing in list on page 34.	Added.
	A Conservation Management Plan should be produced, alongside English Heritage, to cover the Scheduled Monument.	Noted, action is included to work in partnership with English Heritage.
	Concerns over the proposed increase in events planned for the park and potential	Plans for increased events have been approved.



	negative impacts on the site.	
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