

# COLDEAST

## SUMMARY MANAGEMENT PLAN 2017 - 2027



**FAREHAM**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## **CONTENTS**

<b>Preamble</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction to Coldeast</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievements prior to management plan</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Management Objectives</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1. Conserving Wildlife and Habitats</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2. Informal Recreation</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3. Community Engagement</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>4. Events and Education</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>5. Sustainable Resources</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>6. Monitoring and Review</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Further Information</b>	<b>18</b>



## **PREAMBLE**

Fareham Borough Council is a local authority located in the South of Hampshire. The majority of the Council's business is directed by a number of Committees of elected Members. This includes the Executive, five Review Panels, Licensing Panel, Planning Development Control Committee, Scrutiny Board and Standards Board. There are six departments within the Council providing all its local authority services and additional facilities.

Fareham Borough Council is committed to securing continuous improvement through the policies it pursues the high standard of services it provides and its contribution towards making Fareham a cleaner, safer, more attractive place to live, work and do business. This commitment is emphasised by the Council's vision, which clearly demonstrates its overall ambition.

The Council's Corporate Vision is:

### **Fareham - the prosperous, safe and attractive place to be**

The Council has identified seven corporate aims arising out of its Corporate Vision Statement. These are as follows:-

- Protecting and enhancing our environment
- Maintaining and extending prosperity
- A safe and healthy place to live and work
- Leisure for health and for fun
- A balanced housing market
- Strong and inclusive communities
- A dynamic, prudent, progressive, best practice Council

The Street Scene Team the Countryside Service Team are responsible for the protection and conservation of Fareham's green spaces amounting to approximately 145 hectares, including Holly Hill Woodland Park, Warsash Common, Seafeld Park, Whiteley Woods and Portchester Common.

### **WHY DO WE NEED A MANAGEMENT PLAN?**

In order for land management to achieve a measured set of goals it is standard practice that a plan is put in place to ensure that its objectives are being met. It also enables us to monitor, review and adjust any policies to ensure that management is achieved in a sustainable manner.

All management plans should be reviewed periodically during its lifetime. This is an important aspect as it enables any fine-tuning required or consideration given owing to any changes in the surrounding landscape and its potential impact on the site.

Key aspects of a site management plan include:

- The identification of biological, historical and geological features
- Site objectives - what are we trying to achieve?
- Management prescriptions which assist site objectives being met
- How to effectively manage pressures/conflicts between people and sensitive areas e.g. wildlife habitats
- A Schedule of works during lifetime of plan

The plan also acts as a record of works which can assist future managers and staff in managing the site for the future.





## INTRODUCTION TO COLDEAST

Coldeast conservation area was once part of a self-sustaining mental health facility comprised of buildings, parkland and farmland. Once the hospital closed down, the land was left neglected for some years and as a result the habitats in situ were found by Fareham Borough Council (FBC) to be in poor state. Much of the hospital grounds were given over to housing and leisure facilities, including a new leisure centre, but a small portion were given over for conservation purposes and as a leisure provision for the new residents.



Former Coldeast Hospital Grounds

The site covers an area of approximately 34 hectares. It is bound by urban development on all sides. A stream runs from the north east to the south west, giving a gentle valley central to the area.

Coldeast supports a variety of habitats. The north west of the site includes pine woodland with a native holly, field maple and hazel understory.

However, there is also an extensive cherry laurel and *Rhododendron ponticum* invasion, which has outcompeted and overtaken native species in many areas. A spring-fed natural pond is adjacent to this woodland and is considered to be a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

The stream leading from this pond runs south west, past an orchard on the southern side, which was planted by the hospital. This was completely neglected and heavily scrubbed up with bramble. This is an important habitat for many species and is listed as a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitat. On the northern side, the stream passes a meadow, found to be almost completely scrubbed over with saplings of oak, birch and willow and extensive areas of bramble. A small area of grassland remained with a gorse periphery. The stream then runs under a tarmac path that intersects the north east from the south west of the site.



Coldeast Pond prior to works

The south west of the site has two grassland communities, with slight encroachment of bramble, oak, birch and gorse; and semi-natural wet woodland. The woodland is very boggy and most is inaccessible. It is made up of mature oak, beech, ash and alder. There is some invasion of laurel, but not as extensive as the northern woodlands. However, there is a large amount of fly-tipping and littering throughout, some left by the hospital, some presumably by local children judging by the broken toys. The stream then runs under Barnes Lane and into Holly Hill Woodland Park.

Despite the neglect to the site, local residents and dog walkers have kept a number of paths open, particularly to the north east side of the tarmac path that runs from Columbus Drive to Coldest Close. This area includes the orchard and pond. Given this, it has been decided that the management of the site can be divided in two, one area for 'Community' and one for 'Conservation'. The Conservation Woodland (the south west) can be minimally managed, with only scrub encroachment in meadows and invasive species in the woodland to be managed; whereas the Community Woodland can be managed for the public, with improvements to the path network, installation of park infrastructure (benches, way-marking, bins, etc.) and interpretation panels to inform and educate the users of the site.



## **ACHIEVEMENTS PRIOR TO MANAGEMENT PLAN**

As soon as the land was designated to be managed by the Countryside Service Team in summer 2014, work was started immediately. A volunteer group was created in October 2014

### **Woodlands and Pond**

Many of the main footpaths through the north east (Community) woodland were essentially close, dark tunnels of rhododendron and cherry laurel. The path around the pond was narrow and overgrown. In September 2014, tree surgeons cleared the laurel and rhododendron 10m either side of the main path and around the pond to open it up. Contractors installed a gravel path and revetment around the pond to make it more accessible for the public.

In autumn/winter 2015, contractors emptied and dredged the pond, then realigned the edge with Nicospan and backfilled with the dredged silt. These areas were fenced off until the silt had dried and stabilised. The original gravel path was destroyed in the process and so contractors reinstalled and extended the path once the pond work had finished.

In January 2016, a green wire mesh fence was installed around the cricket club perimeter to replace the old, broken fence and lineate the woods from the pitch.

In winter 2016/17, the Cricket Club entrance and further along the path of the woodlands was cleared of rhododendron and laurel by volunteers and replanted with hawthorn whips.



Cleared entrance

### **Pond dredge and re-edging**





## Orchard

As a BAP Habitat, the orchard was one of the first priorities having taken on management of the site. The orchard in Coldeast had been allowed to overgrow and very few parts of it were visible, let alone accessible. An orchard consultant recommended removing the lot (trees included) and starting again. However, as the orchard would not be used for commercial purposes, the trees could be left for habitat and species interest. The newly created volunteer group took three months to clear the orchard of bramble and ivy and the trees had their first prune in January 2015. Over 70 trees were uncovered. However, many had not survived the neglect and it is estimated there were once approximately 170 trees at one time.



August 2014



June 2017

The orchard contains four varieties, which are Laxtons Fortune (early dessert), Howgate Wonder (culinary), Lanes Prince Albert (culinary) and Golden Delicious (late dessert). Pruning has taken place every winter since. A comprehensive herbicide application was used to prevent the regrowth of the bramble and regular mowing in spring and summer now take place to keep weeds in check.

Despite improvement, many of the trees are riddled with canker and have bizarre shapes whilst attempting to grow through the brambles and ivy to find light. The southwestern edge of the orchard was overshadowed by large sycamore, oak and holly trees. In winter/spring 2016, these trees were removed to let in more light. Contractors then installed a post and rail fence with an access gate around the orchard and the pond path was extended alongside the orchard. An 'edible hedge' was planted where the trees were removed during winter/spring 2017, with nectar rich species such as hawthorn, blackthorn and crab apple.



A misshapen apple tree



Volunteers managing orchard



## **Meadows**

The eastern Community meadow was cleared of scrub and saplings by volunteers in the winter 2015. An annual mowing regime has been implemented to encourage the growth of wildflowers and grasses. A small foot bridge over the stream and several sections of gravel and revetment footpaths have been installed on the muddier parts. Japanese knotweed in the north of the meadow has had an herbicide regime since 2016.



Volunteer clearing scrub in Community meadow

After the pond was pumped and dredged, it was recognised that where the stream (which flanks the meadow) disappeared under the tarmac path was not really identifiable and floods quite easily. The built up silt from the dredge and from previous years was removed and the original drain found approximately 2 metres down. A culvert was installed and is now regularly cleared of silt and leaf. The western Conservation meadow has had birch, bramble and oak sapling encroachment removed.

## **Other work**

Street Scene (FBC's ground maintenance team), have also assisted in the management of Coldeast. A number of dual use bins have been installed onsite and are regularly emptied. The tarmac footpaths are kept clear of leaf litter in autumn and a mowing regime is in place for a number of areas across the site.

Street Scene has also assisted in the removal of large amounts of fly-tipping and rubbish left behind from the hospital days. Unfortunately, there is still a large amount of this left in an inaccessible area of the Conservation woodland, and once the area has been attended to the rubbish will be removed.

An entomological and invertebrate study was carried out, the results of which are available for download on the FBC website.

## **MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**



There are 6 management objectives for Coldeast and associated projects summarised on the following pages.

**Objective 1.** To maintain, preserve and enhance wildlife habitats and their associated species



**Objective 2.** To promote the sustainable use of the site for quiet, informal recreation and enjoyment



**Objective 3.** To engage the community in the management of the site through interaction and participation

**Objective 4.** To engage the community in enjoyment of the site through events and education



**Objective 5.** To encourage the effective and sustainable use of our resources



**Objective 6.** To monitor and review management practices and keep up to date with any advances in best practice guidelines for conservation purposes



## Conserving Wildlife and Habitats

**Objective 1** - To maintain, preserve and enhance wildlife habitats and their associated species

Work in 2017 – 2027 will include:



### Woodlands

- Removal of invasive species and replanting with native species

**Rationale:** Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, FBC are under obligation to remove invasive species, in this case *Rhododendron Ponticum* and Cherry Laurel, due to its ability to outcompete native species. In the more extensively invaded areas, native species, such as field maple, hazel and hawthorn, will be planted to encourage a quicker regeneration of the cleared woodland.

- Thinning of Holly throughout the Community woodland

**Rationale:** Removing large tracts of Holly will allow more light and space for other species to thrive.

- General thinning in Conservation woodland

**Rationale:** Selective removal of all species of trees will create glade communities and allow wildlife to flourish.

- Removal of fly-tipping and rubbish left from previous occupiers

**Rationale:** A large amount of hospital waste was left onsite (including bed pans, mattresses and bed frames) and has now become inaccessible and overgrown. An area will need to be cleared to reach it and remove it.

### Pond

- Maintaining natural pond habitat

**Rationale:** Since the removal of silt and pond fauna in 2015, the pond is in a healthy state. Regular removal of reeds and waterlilies will be carried out to ensure the pond does not become clogged again.

### Orchard

- Maintaining Orchard for wildlife purposes

**Rationale:** The clearance of scrub from the trees carried out in 2014/15 has ensured the survival of the orchard. Annual mowing and pruning will be carried out and new trees will be planted. These will include different fruit



(plum, pear and cherry) as well as different, more disease resistant varieties of apples. The possibility of installing beehives will be investigated.

### Grasslands

- Maintaining grassland communities  
**Rationale:** Having both been cleared of scrub and encroaching birch, the meadows will be subject to an annual mowing regime to encourage grassland communities to thrive and prevent encroachment. The possibility of having the Conservation meadow annually grazed will be investigated.
- Translocation of reptiles  
**Rationale:** Clearing the scrub creates new habitat for reptiles such as grass snakes and slow worms. Rather than just letting the reptiles currently on site eventually migrate into the cleared area, the opportunity to bring reptiles from the increasing number of building developments across the country and provide them with a new home can be used.



Conservation meadow

## **Informal Recreation**

### **Objective 2 - To promote the sustainable use of the site for quiet, informal recreation and enjoyment**

#### **Work in 2017 – 2027 will include:**

- Installing Interpretation Panels across the Community Woodland  
**Rationale:** Six interpretation panels are currently under design. Two will be large welcome boards at opposite ends of the site. This will include an overview of Coldeast and a map with 'you are here', the main habitats and an Access for All route marked out. The other four panels will encompass habitat specific information located in the orchard, meadows, pond and woodland. This will assist users to navigate the site, visit all its finest attributes and educate them on the importance of the habitats. The boards will explain the work that has been done to improve the site for both visitors and wildlife, and the rationale for future work.
- Installing a number of benches across the Community woodland  
**Rationale:** Currently, there are no benches or picnic tables across the site. A number shall be installed in key locations for visitors to use to enjoy each different habitat
- Improving a circular path for Access for All  
**Rationale:** Consultation with mobility groups and other user groups will be carried out to a further extent to ensure an effective circular path around the Community woodland to promote the area to all.
- Installing way-marking  
**Rationale:** Although small, the Community Woodland area has a number of paths which would confuse new visitors. Way-marking the Access For All circular route will also assist all users in navigating the key habitat features of the site in conjunction with the interpretation panels.



Pond path 2014



Pond path 2017

## **Community Engagement**

**Objective 3** - To engage the community in the management of the site through interaction and participation

**Work in 2017 – 2027 will include:**

- Maintain, strengthen and support the Coldeast Conservation Group  
**Rationale:** the group have been an integral aspect of the development of Coldeast so far and have contributed much of the work that has taken place. In the future, fewer large projects conducted by contractors will take place and so it will be down to the volunteers to maintain the site to standard. It is important that this resource is sustainable and this can be done by providing opportunities for the individuals that make up the group and as a group as a whole. Promotion will also be carried out as and when needed.
  
- Develop further opportunities for volunteering  
**Rationale:** As well as the weekly site volunteers, FBC regular make the use of corporate 'community payback' days, where a company would allow staff to volunteer in the local community. Currently, FBC has contacts with ACRO and Lloyds Banking Group for regular volunteer days and promotion for more will be carried out. Local schools are also involved in volunteering, carrying out tasks for schemes such as Duke of Edinburgh.
  
- Develop a Dog Policy  
**Rationale:** the increased dog ownership of recent years has led to the detriment of many sites. Coldeast suffered greatly before FBC took on the management as there were no dog bins. A number have now been installed across the whole site. Responsible ownership will also be monitored, and signs will be erected if dogs are found to be increasingly out of control.



## **Events and Education**

### **Objective 4 - To engage the community in enjoyment of the site through events and education**

#### **Work in 2017 – 2027 will include:**

- Develop events for local people using the site's assets  
**Rationale:** Orchards are often associated with a number of traditional events, such as Wassails, apple days and blossom days. Investigation into the feasibility of these can be conducted and would provide something different and fun in the local area.
- Continue with regular guided walks  
**Rationale:** FBC already carries out a number of guided walks and talks, including butterfly walks, moth evenings and site history/management. Further/events can be developed.
- Investigate the possibility of school visits and outdoor education  
**Rationale:** Currently, the site infrastructure is not suitable for school visits and education such as pond dipping. However, once the site is up to scratch these opportunities can be investigated.



Moth Event held July 2016



Potential Blossom Event

## **Sustainable Resources**

### **Objective 5 - To encourage the effective and sustainable use of our resources**

It is important for future generations that we continue to manage the natural resources of Coldeast in a sustainable manner. This will help to ensure that future generations can continue to enjoy this unique site. We will endeavour to:

- Manage funds to gain best value
- Seek and secure additional income, i.e. grants
- Investigate potential heritage listings and designations (H)
- Continue to provide volunteering opportunities

#### **Work in 2017 – 2027 will include:**

- Building partnerships with external organisations  
**Rationale:** to widen our sphere of influence and encourage sustainability and exchange of knowledge and ideas.
- Consider and apply where possible the principles of sustainability  
**Rationale:** strive to adopt best working practices and implement environmentally friendly management principles.
- Support, implement and influence corporate and departmental policy  
**Rationale:** the Council has identified seven corporate aims arising out of its Corporate Vision Statement. These are as follows:-
  - Protecting and enhancing our environment
  - Maintaining and extending prosperity
  - A safe and healthy place to live and work
  - Leisure for health and for fun
  - A balanced housing market
  - Strong and inclusive communities
  - A dynamic, prudent, progressive, best practice Council

The management of Coldeast adheres to the corporate vision of the Council whom support the management undertaken by Officers and Coldeast Conservation Group

- Identify income generation opportunities to support the management of the site and improve services to visitors  
**Rationale:** where possible we will seek additional funding particularly in relation to mid - large project initiatives.
- Review the effectiveness of sustainability policies and practices
- **Rationale:** it is vital that we continue to monitor our work, ensuring we continue to meet the aims and objectives of the plan and adapt if necessary to any environmental changes and unforeseen challenges of the future.

## **Monitoring and Review**

**Objective 6 - To monitor and review management practices and keep up to date with any advances in best practice guidelines for conservation purposes**

**Work in 2017 – 2027 will include:**

- Undertake periodic surveys of structures, i.e. bridges  
**Rationale:** there will be a number of raised boardwalks/bridges over wet terrain and streams. These have to be checked on occasion for structural integrity and replace or repaired when necessary for the safety of visitors.
- Undertake periodic wildlife surveys, e.g. insects/mammals/pond life  
**Rationale:** A number of surveys have already been carried out on site to establish the wealth of wildlife. Further surveys will establish the impacts that current management may have, both positive and negative.
- Monitor tree and vegetation health  
**Rationale:** Fareham Borough Council's Tree Team will regularly monitor the trees for signs of distress or disease. We do this for a number of reasons e.g. the impact of climate change on a species, species specific diseases (Ash die back, Dutch elm diseases, etc).
- Continue to develop existing quality standards  
**Rationale:** changes in land management and environmental science are frequently updated. Via research our countryside team are kept up to date with the latest practices and science.



## **Further Information**

### **Fareham Borough Council**

[www.fareham.gov.uk/parks](http://www.fareham.gov.uk/parks)

Email: [conservation@fareham.gov.uk](mailto:conservation@fareham.gov.uk)

If you wish to become involved in the management of Coldeast please contact us via letter, phone 01329 2361100 or email: [conservation@fareham.gov.uk](mailto:conservation@fareham.gov.uk)

### General contact details:

Fareham Borough Council  
Leisure and Community  
Civic Offices  
Civic Way  
Fareham Borough Council Hants  
PO16 7AZ