

SALISBURY
CITY COUNCIL



Harnham Woodland

Distribution

External: Councillors

Introduction

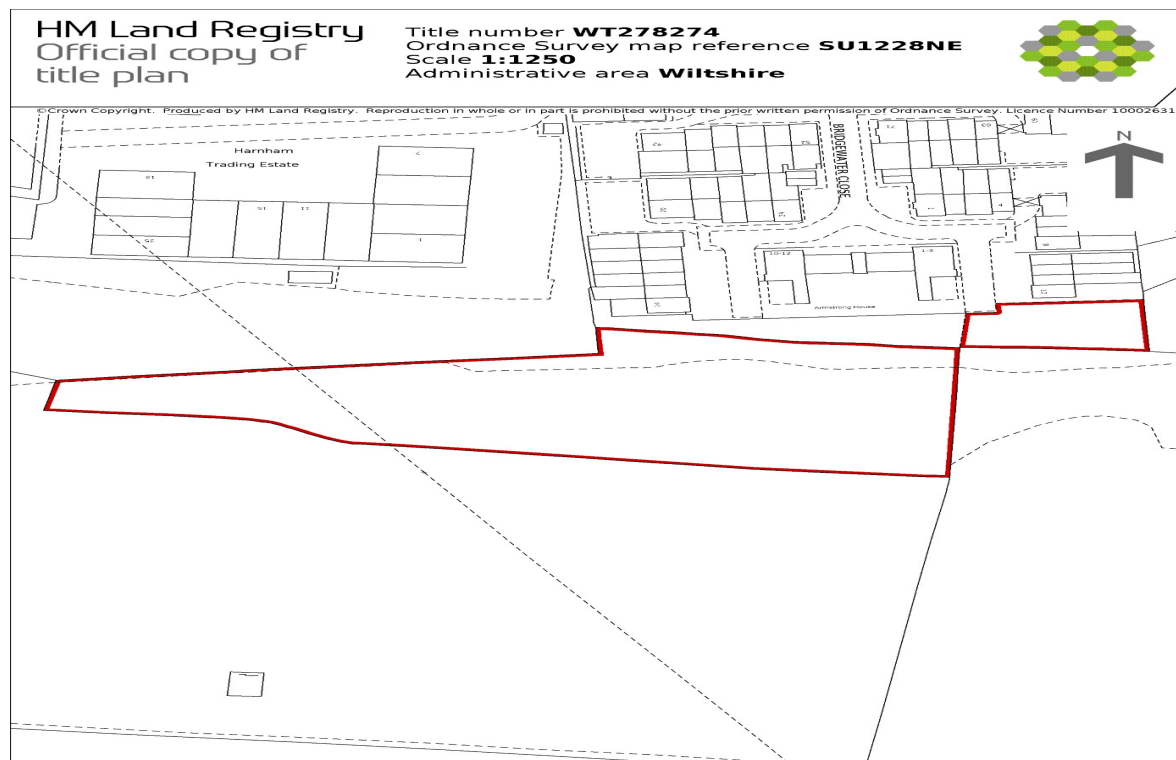
Salisbury City Council was approached by Michele Coulthard of Estates and Management Ltd on the 7th March 2022 with regards to a section of land/woodland in Harnham which is currently owned by one of their clients and who wishes to dispose of their freehold interest.

Report Objectives

This report is aimed to inform the Council of this proposal, give details of the land/woodland, comment on its current condition and offer an idea of expense to bring the area to a safe standard for public use and also identify future maintenance needs.

The site location

The land is positioned on the south side of Bridgewater Close, Salisbury SP2 8PE – 49259810. Harnham Slope sits to the east side and the Chalk pit is situated on the South side. The site is also a neighbour to the Harnham Trading Estate and Montague road. There is only one path which runs through the land and this is a public right of way. There are trees on both sides of the path with the main woodland situated on the slope above. The woodland can be accessed from two different points from Bridgewater close or from the lower path of Harnham Slope, it can also be accessed from a west entrance via the farmer's field which is part of the public right of way.





Boundaries

There is a retaining wall and steps leading from Bridgewater close and a further wall stretching across the neighbouring property. A wooden fence marks the boundary of the garden from a property at Montague road. A post and rail fence which is in poor condition runs across the grassed area in front of the woodland the whole width of Bridgewater close. An earth bank marks the boundary between the woodland and land behind the industrial estate.

Boundaries to residential properties at Bridgewater close and Montague road



Boundary steps leading from Bridgewater close



Boundary post and rail fence dividing the woods and residential land



Cleanliness of site

During the site visit there was evidence that the area is used by dog walkers with some dog foul in bags on the floor near the entrance. It would be advisable to consider a litter bin in this location, there are no bins currently at the woodland. Further into the woods there was some fly tipping, an old car seat and various other litter which looked as though it had been there for some time. Despite some rubbish being on site, generally, the path was free of dog foul and litter.

Fly tipping on the side of the path at the bottom of the slope



Dog bags by entrance from Bridgewater Close



Power cables

There is two sets of power cables which run from the back of the woodland at the top of the slope next to the farmer's field down to the trading estate. The cables currently seem free from trees and branches but could potentially need to be cleared in the future as the trees mature in size.

Two powerlines running above the woodland



View from the top of the slope



View from the top of the slope



View from the path



The woodland

The woodland comprises of mainly Sycamore *Acer Pseudoplatanus* and Ash *Fraxinus* trees with the occasional Yew *Taxus Baccata* tree further up the slope. There is a dense thicket of Hawthorn and Blackthorn at the top of the slope providing a good habitat for wildlife. Unfortunately, Ash die back has taken hold on the majority of the Ash trees and they are badly affected by the disease. Most of these are close to the entrance from Bridgewater close and next to the path, so from a safety point of view they would need to be removed. The woodland is naturally regenerating young saplings but most of these are Sycamore so some tree planting may be required to introduce other species. There is an abundance of bird life in the area and signs that larger animals are present on the slope as there are lots of small trails leading off the path. Ferns such as *Asplenium Scolopendrium* grow on the woodland floor and Cow parsley *Anthriscus Sylvestris* grow on either side of the path giving a pleasant display of white flowers in early summer. The path consists of chalk and dirt and doesn't show any signs of needing additional attention.

Entering the woodland from Bridewater Close



The woodland path



Exiting the woodland at the western end next to the farmers fields



View from exiting the woodland



Desire path leading around the back of the woodland to the top of the slope

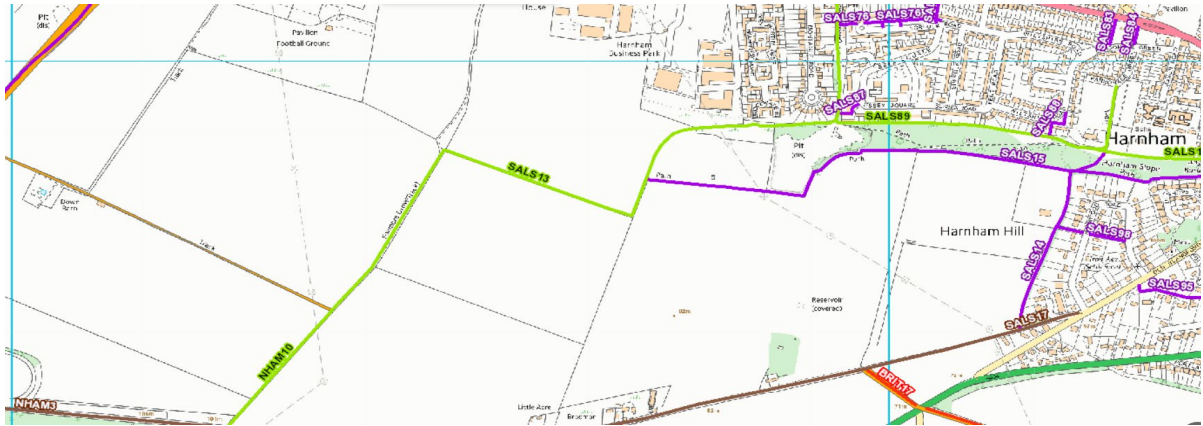


Behind the woodland at the top of the slope



Public right of way

The right of way footpath runs from Old Blandford road near the entrance to the Bunker across the bottom of Harnham Slope, below the Chalk pit, through the proposed piece of land and continues across fields to the Race Course.



Recommended work and a rough cost guide to make the woodland safe for public use

Arboricultural work

By far the largest and most costly work would be to attend to the trees which have Ash die-back. There are 8 large trees and 3 groups of smaller trees which need to be felled due to being in close proximity to the path.

General site tidy

Flytipping needs to be removed and the area would benefit from a litterpick

Post and rail boundary fence

The fence boundary between Bridewater Close and the woodland is in poor condition and has rails missing in places, it has completely collapsed on the western side.

Element	Cost
Arboricultural work	£35,000.00
General site tidy/litterpick	£500
Post and rail boundary fencing and level entrance ground	£4500
Total	£40,000.00

Future maintenance to consider

Tree survey

The Salisbury City Council tree policy recommends that we survey all our trees through a formal inspection undertaken by an external company. An initial survey of the area would be recommended.

Preliminary habitat survey

This is a basic ecological survey which informs the landowner about the wildlife living on the site.

Management plan

Based on the results of the ecological survey the management plan can be formed covering all maintenance operations and the vision for the woodland.

Signage

On the day of the visit there were no motorbikes present however, SCC is aware that this is a popular area for this activity as we already have a problem at Harnham slope. Installing signs stating no motorbikes allowed and reminding people to clear up after their dogs would be recommended.

Mixed waste bin

Currently there are no litter bins installed on the site. It may be desirable to install a bin near the Bridgewater Close entrance where the site is frequently accessed. Knowing what the access rights from the estate will be vital before purchase. The bin would need to be emptied at least twice a week.

Inspections

The site would be added to the parks inspection list and visited by our Parks Officers throughout the year. They check for litter, tree safety, condition of footpaths and accessibility.

Cutting back vegetation from paths and ongoing tree surgery

Either through the management plan or by Officer request, the Grounds team will visit the woodland to keep paths accessible and clear of vegetation. An SCC contractor will provide on-going tree surgery for the woodland.

Tree planting

Sycamore's *Acer Pseudoplatanus* are the main type of saplings growing under the mature trees, so additional tree planting is advised to ensure that other species establish in the woodland such as Beech *Fagus* and Lime *Tilia*.

Task	Services
Tree survey	Bawden (SCC Arboricultural contractor)
Preliminary habitat survey	Wiltshire Wildlife Trust
Management plan	Parks Manager
Signage	No motorbikes, litter and dog waste signs
Mixed waste bin	Materials and labour
Changing bin	Streetscene Operative (on-going)
Inspections	Parks Officer regular site inspections (on-going)
Cutting back vegetation from path	Parks Grounds Operative (on-going)
Tree stock	Landford trees
Tree planting	Grounds team or contractor
Tree surgery	Bawden