

Battisford Parish Council
Woodland Management Plan

1 Objectives

The Parish Council's management plan for the woodland has five objectives:

- a) **Amenity:** To manage the woodland in a manner that maintains and enhances its amenity value to the local community as a safe and cared-for environment. In this regard, its principal uses encompass play areas (both open space and play equipment), space for general/dog exercise, and the enjoyment and appreciation of the natural environment.
- b) **Wildlife:** To maintain and develop the woodland's range of wildlife habitats, to encourage species diversity and ecosystem health.
- c) **Resources:** Provision of community resources. Once the trees have reached a size where they need thinning (or where overhanging branches or diseased trees have to be removed), any resulting firewood could be used in the community (e.g. the Punchbowl Inn).
- d) **Inclusivity and ownership:** the prospect of benefitting from the natural space may encourage villagers to volunteer with woodland maintenance.
- e) **Economic;** a regular management plan should represent a saving to the Parish Council (especially if using volunteers), compared to having to engage a contractor to carry out such (non-grass-cutting) work, whilst maintaining a safe environment for those using the amenity

The overall aim is to create a balance, maximising the wildlife potential of the area without compromising use and enjoyment of the amenity.

This plan is intended not to be definitive nor inflexible. Rather, its aim is to guide the management of the environment, while remaining open to modification in the light of experience and changing circumstances.

2 Site size, location and Access

The site is located at the junction of Straight Road and Burnthouse Lane, Battisford.

The overall area is approximately 1.2 hectares, with a perimeter of 470 metres. The wooded area is just over half a hectare (0.55Ha) with the remainder of the site set as a grassed area and a separate area with play equipment.

Vehicular access to a small car park is from Burnthouse Lane (OS grid reference TM 03085 5413, WhatThreeWords bulb.project.comedians). Pedestrian Access is from the car park and two further gates (TM 02949 54082 and TM 03004 54082, WhatThreeWords riskiest.sorters.dips and withdraws.float.brightly) respectively.

The play area and associated woodland was created by the community in 1991 and is managed by Battsford Parish Council. A diverse mix of tree species was planted, with the intention of promoting biodiversity and providing a local amenity.

3 Management

To achieve the Parish Council's stated aim, the wooded area (excluding play equipment) should be surveyed annually to ensure the trees are healthy and provide a safe public environment. The area should also be subject to periodic scrutiny after extreme weather or high-wind events.

Any matters identified will be notified to the Parish Council and resolved by appropriately-qualified persons/volunteers.

Activities carried out will be undertaken at appropriate times of year and in accordance with legislation, paying due cognisance to (e.g.);

- Compliance with the Countryside and Wildlife Act 1981
- Bird nesting season (generally April to August (inclusive))
- Limitations imposed by Forestry Commission Felling Licence (not required)
- Limitations imposed by Tree Preservation Orders (none current)
- Prevailing weather conditions
- Plant dormancy and growth periods

4 Proposed activities

The following actions are proposed:

- a) Selected ongoing felling of smaller trees to give larger specimens more space and light to flourish (by Spring 2027)
- b) Selected ongoing felling of trees to break up rows of planting to achieve a more natural distribution (by Spring 2027)
- c) Creation of two more open spaces- one behind the football goal and a second within the blackthorn thicket (by Spring 2027)
- d) Creation of 3m non-mow margins around the edge of the playing field to promote biodiversity and create environments for wild flowers, insects and small mammals (ongoing)
- e) Consider planting fruit trees by/in the new margins for a Community Orchard (by Spring 2027)

- f) Lateral branches of trees by the roadside to be reduced to enhance safety (ongoing)
- g) Improve the path network through the trees (ongoing)
- h) Ensure general signage is improved (by Autumn 2026)
- i) Maximise any opportunities to promote and enhance biodiversity (ongoing)

Updated and agreed at April Parish Council meeting. Next review April 2027