

**Date: 1st August 2023**

**Title: Herne Hill Nature Reserve Management Plan**

**Purpose of Report**

To inform members of the Herne Hill Management plan and associated projects.

**Recommendation:**

- 1) Members of the committee to note Herne Hill Management.
- 2) Members resolve to approve the purchase of Quote X for a new orientation and notice board for the main entrance of Herne Hill.
- 3) Members resolve to approve the purchase of Quote X for new ladder signage for Herne Hill Entrances.
- 4) Members resolve to the commission of graphic design from supplier A for a new A1 map, A3 double sided leaflet and A4 map.
- 5) Members resolve to approve to carry out a face-to-face survey.

**1.0 Herne Hill Management Plan (Appendix 13A)**

An updated Management Plan for Herne Hill Nature Reserve has been compiled by the countryside manager which has been appended to this report, the new format is consistent with that of the guidance of Green Flag Award Standards.

Herne Hill Users group were consulted and involved in the planning process and are happy that it meets their needs as currently identified.

The document is designed to be a working document for the next 5 years and will be updated and reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant as it progresses, at the end of the 5 years period its success will be reviewed and a further 5 year plan will be drafted. A number of projects have been identified that will help raise the standards of the Nature Reserve in accordance with industry best practice.

Below are a number of these projects are highlighted and members approval to progress the management plan for year 1 is sought. The breakdown of Budgets and Expenditure can be found in Appendix E of the Management Plan.

All current expected funding can be carried out through budgets that have already been allocated in the 2023-24 budget and through earmarked reserves created at the start of the financial year. Additional funding may need to be allocated in future years budgets but this will be brought to budget setting meetings for members to consider further.

**2.0 Purchase of Main Entrance Sign map and board**

**2.1 Herne Hill Users Group Recommendation:**

Herne Hill Users Group believe the wooden sign as seen in quote A would be in keeping with the natural feel of the nature reserve and the size and design would create the welcome feeling that is being sought for the main entrance.

**2.2 Purpose of the board**

After a review of the main entrances with Herne Hill Users group they were asked how a sense of arrival could be created with the idea of a Welcome to Herne Hill board with a map and it was considered that a notice board for seasonal information would welcome people as they enter the hill.

**2.3 Board Location**

This board will be located on the ridge path entrance of Herne Hill which is widely considered the main entrance.

**2.4 Three Quotes**

Three quotes for potential boards were sought from companies to provide an A1 landscape panel and A2 notice case, these quotes do not include design work of panel, this is to ensure continuity between maps on other projects and is covered in a later section.

Image of Product	A	B	C
Cost	£2,364.00	£2,210	£2440
Supplier	Made by Landmark	<a href="#">KBS Depot</a>	<a href="#">Parish notice boards</a>

### 3.0 Purchase of Ladder signage for Herne hill

#### 3.1 Herne Hill Users Group Recommendation

Herne Hill users group feel a three laddered sign such as the ones below, with the Welcome to Herne Hill Nature Reserve and engraved prohibited signs provide a welcome way to inform people they are entering the Nature Reserve and informing them of what activities are prohibited.

#### 3.2 purpose of the ladder signs




After reviewing the entrance signs with Herne Hill users group it was identified that not only were there a lack of signs many that were present were considered unwelcoming due to sizes and tone, by placing this ladder signs at key locations as people enter the reserve it welcomes people whilst also informing them of what activities are prohibited.

#### 3.3 Locations of signs



#### 3.4 Quotes

Three quotes of potential boards were sought from companies to supply 5 ladder signs with 3 rails on each.

	Quote A	Quote B	Quote C
image			
Cost	£455.70	£565.20	£422.97

<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,278.5</b>	<b>£2,781</b>	<b>£2,114.85</b>
supplier	Made by Landmark	<a href="#">Bespoke designs</a>	<a href="#">Hartwoodtimber</a>

## 4.0 Commission of new map and leaflets

### 4.1 Herne Hill Users Group Recommendation

Herne Hill users group believe that the maps below and leaflets will help with the work to help users explore and navigate the nature reserve more effectively.

### 4.2 Purpose of the maps and leaflets

#### A1 Map:

This will welcome users as they enter the wooded section of the nature reserve, and give a professional sense of arrival the map will be kept clean and minimalistic to ensure that it is easy to understand and easy to follow, the A1 map will include industry standard information such as:

- Contact numbers for council.
- QR code linking to the Management Plan.
- “What Three Words” location
- Compass to help orientate.

Additional items to help users make the most of their visit:

- Promoted routes (with time taken to walk and distance)
- Bench’s
- Stairs
- Entrances/Exits
- Picnic areas
- Identifiable entrances required to get to Ilminster and Donyatt

#### A3 Double Sided Leaflet:

A new up-to-date leaflet to help people find their way around Herne Hill, with some key features, history and nature highlighted, along with a map on the reverse to help people enjoy their visit responsibly.

#### A4 Map:

The A4 Map will be used in house for events such as Fairy Doors Trails, it will be the same design as the maps above for continuity it can also form the basis of other interpretive and educational events with schools and other interested groups.

### 4.3 Three Quotes

Item	Quote A	Quote B	Quote C
A1 Map for signage board	£500	£650	£1,225
Double sided A3 Leaflet	£200	£300	£750
A4 Map	£50	£200	£375
<b>Total</b>	<b>£750</b>	<b>£1,150</b>	<b>£2,250</b>

## 5.0 Carry out a face to face visitor survey

### 5.1 Background

After meeting with Herne Hill users group and drafting the green flag management plan it became clear that we have little evidence of who is using Herne Hill beyond that of staff observation, to ensure the management plan reflects the needs of those using the site regularly a visitor survey should be carried out

### 5.2 Introduction

It is suggested that a face-to-face visitor survey is undertaken although online surveys offer a cost effective and labour light alternative, face to face surveys provide us with valuable data that could not be collected through an online survey.

### 5.3 When will the survey be Carried Out

The face-to-face survey would be undertaken across four separate days, two Fridays and two Saturdays:

Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> September:	07:00 - 13:00
Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup> September:	13:00 - 19:00
Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> September:	13:00 - 19:00
Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> September:	07:00 - 13:00

The survey will be carried out, outside of local school holidays to ensure an accurate representation of daily use is achieved and results are not skewed. A team of volunteers would man the five entrances to Herne Hill between the hours mentioned above.

### 5.4 What data will be collected

By undertaking a survey as described in for methodology in appendix a. and not only recording the response to the interview but also tallying how many people are walking by throughout the day will give us an understanding of what sort of numbers are using the Nature Reserve

This gives us Data on

- Visitor origin (postcodes)
- Behaviour.
- Reasons for visiting.
- Activities being undertaken
- Other sites visited
- Travel choice etc.
- Footfall at given survey locations.

## 5.6 Why face to face and not online

There are five main reasons why a face to face survey suits this situation better than an online questionnaire;

### I. Personal Interaction and Engagement:

One of the key advantages of face-to-face visitor surveys is the opportunity for personal interaction and engagement with respondents. Through in-person conversations, surveyors can establish rapport, clarify questions, and delve deeper into respondents' answers. This engagement enhances the quality and richness of the data collected, enabling us to gain a more comprehensive understanding of visitor opinions, motivations, and preferences.

### II. Non-Verbal Cues and Contextual Insights:

Online questionnaires primarily rely on textual responses, limiting the ability to capture non-verbal cues and contextual insights. In face-to-face surveys, we can observe body language, facial expressions, and other non-verbal cues that provide valuable additional information. These cues can offer insights into respondents' emotions, level of satisfaction, and other nuanced aspects that may not be adequately conveyed through written responses alone.

### III. Reduced Response Bias:

Online questionnaires are susceptible to response bias due to self-selection, with respondents who are more motivated or have stronger opinions more likely to participate. In contrast, face-to-face visitor surveys allow for a more representative sample as surveyors can approach a diverse range of visitors, ensuring a broader cross-section of opinions. This minimizes the risk of bias and provides a more accurate reflection of the overall visitor population.

### IV. Adaptability and Real-Time Feedback:

Face-to-face surveys offer the advantage of adaptability, allowing us to adjust questions or probe further based on immediate feedback from respondents. This flexibility ensures that data collection aligns with the specific context and provides the opportunity to explore unforeseen themes or emerging trends. Real-time feedback also enables us to validate or clarify responses, resulting in more reliable and robust data.

### V. Higher Completion Rates and Quality of Responses:

Online questionnaires often suffer from low completion rates due to distractions, lack of motivation, or respondents rushing through the survey. Face-to-face surveys tend to have higher completion rates as surveyors can provide assistance, clarify instructions, and motivate respondents to participate fully. Additionally, face-to-face surveys tend to yield more thoughtful and detailed responses as surveyors can probe further and encourage respondents to elaborate on their answers.

## **5.7 Cost to the council**

This survey could be done in house using staff knowledge and skills to analyse the data and using our volunteers and willing council members to undertake the actual surveys. Staff time analysing would be approximately 3 days depending on amount of data collected and could be carried on wet and waterlogged days throughout the winter. Staff presence throughout the survey would also be required to oversee the success of the survey.

It is however suggested that as a goodwill gesture volunteers be provided with refreshments throughout the day.

Overall Estimated staff time 50 hrs

Estimated cost of tea and coffee for volunteers £10.00

## **5.8 Conclusion**

The Survey would allow us to get to know who our visitors are and what we can do to protect what makes Herne hill special to them. With the work we are undertaking through the Herne hill management plan it is important to make sure we are making the right decisions and representing those users who access the Nature Reserve.

The results from the survey will undoubtedly be a management tool to benchmark where we are and then direct what resources we have towards what matters on the ground.

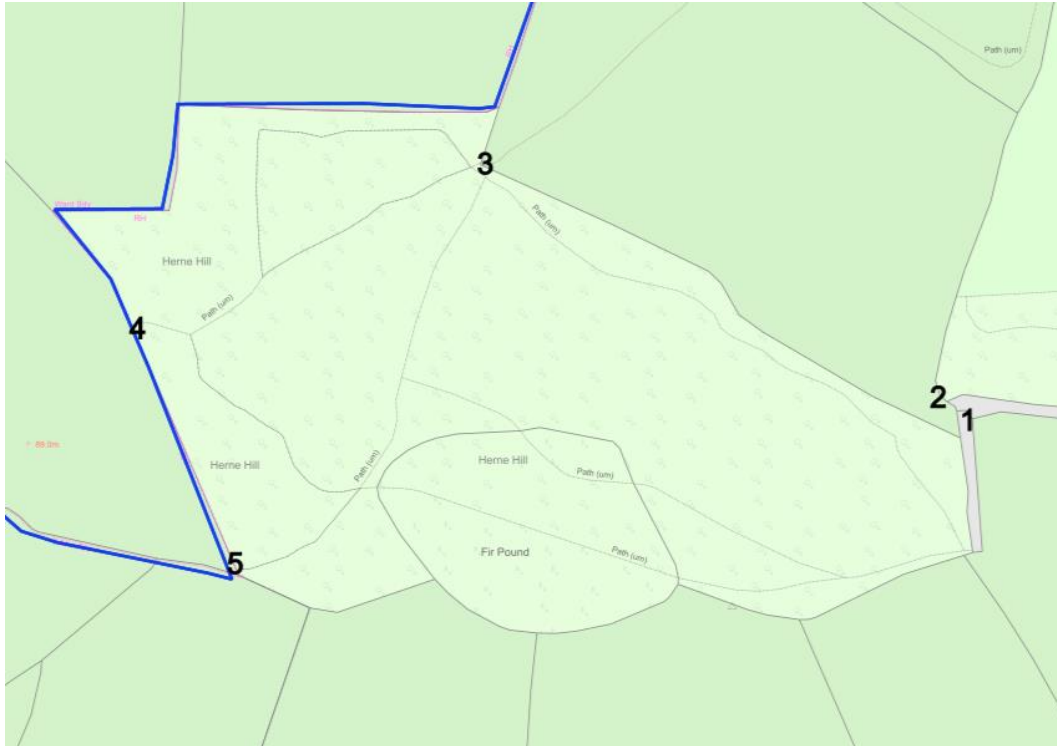
We can also re-do the survey at the end of the management cycle to monitor how successful we have been in carrying out the management plan.

## **5.9 Survey Methodology**

### **Survey locations**

There are 5 main entrances to Herne Hill, these tend to fall on public rights of way the map below highlights the five survey locations selected.





ID	Name	Description	Surveyor instruction
1	Ridge Path	Survey point considered main entrance to the hill	Surveyor instructed to wait in vicinity and survey walkers passing the area the area
2	Britten's Field	Top of steps behind Britten's field	Surveyor instructed to wait in vicinity and survey walkers passing the area the area.
3	North field	Pedestrian gate leading to field and path towards the health centre	Surveyor instructed to wait in vicinity and survey walkers passing the area the area.
4	West Gate	Pedestrian gate on west side of Herne hill	Surveyor instructed to wait in vicinity and survey walkers passing the area the area.
5	Donyatt Gate	Field gate at footpath to Donyatt	Surveyor instructed to wait in vicinity and survey walkers passing the area the area.

**Survey timings**

Surveys will be carried out during the summer of 2023 the survey will be undertaken outside of local school holidays and be conducted between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of September

one weekday and one weekend day will be surveyed during this time frame to ensure representative data is collected suggested dates are:

Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> September	07:00 – 13:00
Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup> September	13:00: 19:00
Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> September	13:00 – 19:00
Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> September	07:00 –13:00

### **Surveying**

Our surveyors will be positioned at each of the locations for an agreed period wearing a high visibility vest and council issued identification card.

Also, volunteers will undergo training in survey recording and be made aware of risk assessments from the countryside manager.

For interviews:

Surveys will approach interviewees and ask them to participate in the survey to ensure a random sample is collected the surveyor will ask for next person they see to participate after for current survey is completed.

Tallies:

During this time for surveyor will also tally any other groups that pass taking note of group size, dogs and activity being carried out. An example of the tally form can be found in appendix B.

Routes

Routes will be drawn onto paper maps and trust reference with the interviews.

### **Survey Script**

Good AM/PM.

I'm undertaking a survey on behalf of Ilminster town council to get a better understanding on how people use Herne Hill and why, to help guide future management of the site could you spare me a few minutes please:

**Example draft copy of a survey**

**Q1 Firstly I would like to ask you about your visit today?**

- Are you on a day/short visit and travelled from home today ... if no
- Are you on a short trip and staying with friends and family ... if no
- On holiday in the area staying away from home ... if no
- If none of the above, how would you describe your visit.

**Q2 What is the main activity you're undertaking today? Tick closest answer do not prompt. Single response only, ensure activity rather than reason for undertaking (e.g. health relaxing)**

- Dog walking
- Walking
- Jogging/power walking
- Outing with the family
- Wildlife/bird watching
- Photography
- Meet with friends
- Other please detail

**Q3 How long have you been visiting the site (if first visit skip to question Q9)**

- First visit
- Less than or approximately 6 months
- Less than or approximately 1 year
- Less than or approximately 3 years
- Less than or approximately 5 years
- Less than or approximately 10 years
- More than 10 years
- Don't know/ not sure

**Q4 How long roughly will you spend/ have you spent here today?**

- Less than 30 minutes
- Between 30 minutes and 1 hour
- More than 1 hour to 2 hours
- More than 2 hours to 3 hours
- More than 3 hours
- Don't know/not sure

**Q5 Do you tend to visit at a certain time of day?** Click closest answer Multiple answers ok

- Early morning (before 7am)
- Late morning (between 7am and 10am)
- Midday ((between 10am and 2pm)
- Early Afternoon (between 2pm and 4pm)
- Late afternoon (between 5pm and 6pm)
- Evening (after 6pm)
- Varies/don't know
- First visit

**Q6 Over the past year roughly how many times have you visited this location tick closest single answer only prompt if interviewee struggles.**

- Daily
- Most days (180+ visits)
- 1-3 times a week (40 – 180 visits)
- 2 -3 times a month (15 – 40 visits)
- Less than once a month (2-5 visits)
- Don't know
- First visit
- Other please detail

**Q7 Do you tend to visit the at a particular time of year?**

- Spring (March - May)
- Summer (June - August)
- Autum (September - November)
- Winter (December – February)
- Equally all year around
- Don't know
- First visit

**Q8 If response given to Q7 why is this**

Give details

**Q9 How did you get here today?**

- Car/van
- On foot
- Public transport
- Bicycle
- Other please detail

**Q10 If you drove where did you park?**

**Q11 Now I'd like to ask you about your route today looking at the area on this map could you please show me where you started, where you intend to finish, and the route taken on site**

**Q12 Is/was this similar to your usual route when you visit here for .... (give activity)**

- Yes normal
- Much longer than normal
- Much shorter than normal
- Not sure/no typical visit

**Q13 Did you/do you intend to go off the paths today**

- Yes, went off paths
- No stayed on paths
- Not sure don't know

**Q14 What, if anything, influenced your choice of route here today, click closest answer. Multiple are ok. Do not prompt.**

- Weather
- Daylight
- Time
- Away from other people (not busy)
- Group members (e.g. kids less able)
- Avoiding muddy tracks/paths
- Staying on surface paths
- Followed a marked trail
- Previous knowledge of area/experience
- Activity undertaken e.g. presence of dog
- Other specific site feature ( e.g. view points)
- Birds/wildlife
- Interpretation/leaflets
- Other (please detail)

**Q15 Why did you choose to visit location today rather than somewhere else. Tick all responses from visitor in other column. Do not prompt, then ask, “which single reason would you say had the most influence of your decision to visit here today”.**

Don't know others in party chose:

Don't Know/ Other in party Chose	Other	Main
Close to Home		
No need to use car		
Quick and easy Travel route		
Good/Easy Parking		
Free Parking		
Particular Facilities		
Choice of routes		
Feels safe here		
Quiet, with no traffic noise		
Not many people		
Scenery/variety of views		
Rural Feel/wild landscape		
Habit/Familiarity		
Particular wildlife interest		
Good for dog/ Dog enjoys it		
Ability to let dog of lead		
Closest place to take dog		
Closest place to safely let dog off		
Suitability of area for activity		
Suitability of area given weather		
Wooded area		
Variety of habitats		
For a change variety		
Other please specify		

**Q16 Could you name an alternative location to participate in your main activity if you were unable to visit Herne hill today**

- Not sure
- Nowhere

**Q17 Did any information or recommendations help you plan your visit here today. Do not prompt, multiple answers ok**

- Word of mouth recommendation.
- Internet/website
- Leaflet
- Guidebook
- Social media
- OS map
- App
- Other (further details)

**Q18 What is your full home postcode This is important information to calculate how far people have travelled and won't be used for anything else.**



If visitor won't give postcode closest town

If visitor is on holiday postcode or location of holiday let

**Q19 Finally do you have any suggestions or measure you would like to see in regard to management of access and facilities on Herne Hill.**

Give details

**Q20 Gender of interviewee**

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

**Q21 Total number in survey group**

Male

Female

Number of dogs

Number of dogs off leads

This is the end of the survey thank you so much for your time.

**Q22 Surveyor details**

Survey initials

Survey location code

Map ref for route

**Q23 surveyor comments**