

Management Plan

Community Land Owned by Haywards Heath Town Council off Land off Hurstwood Lane

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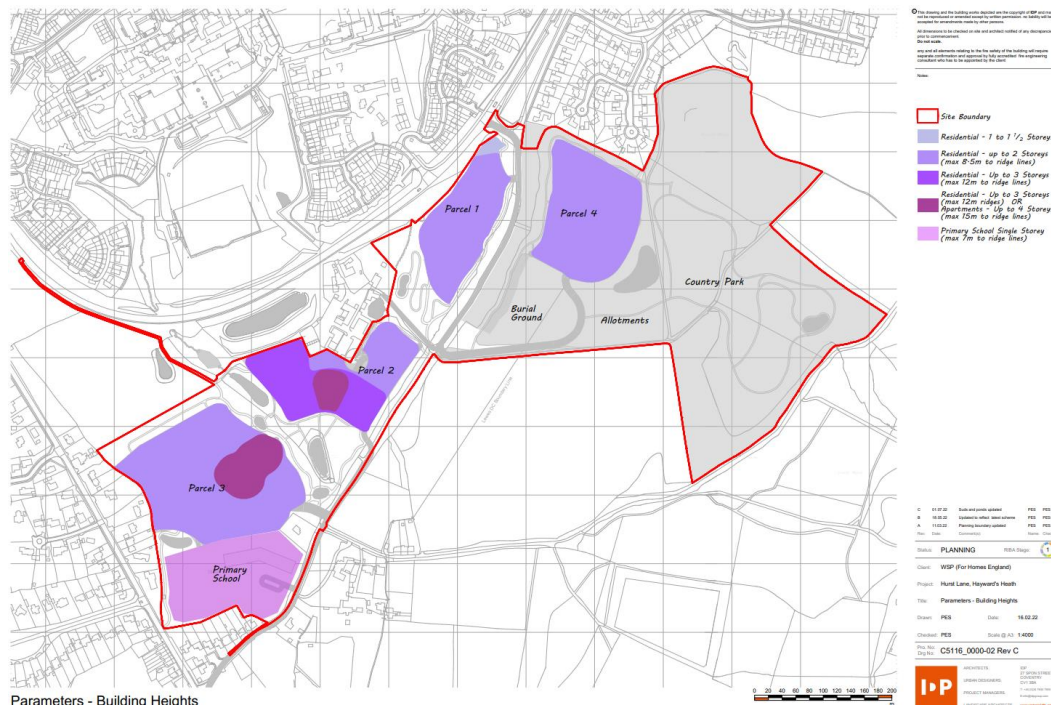
1. Introduction;

This Management Plan sets out the vision, objectives, and actions required to guide the sustainable management of land off Hurstwood Lane owned by Haywards Heath Town Council over the coming years, which will incorporate a Burial Ground, Allotment Site with the rest of the land being designated as a Country Park including Ancient Woodland known as Asylum Wood.

The document seeks to satisfy Para 8.4, 9.4 and 10.4 (Delivery and Management Plans) of Schedule 1 of the Section 106 dated 28th May 2025 relating to land to the East and West of Hurst Farm, Hurstwood Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex.

These community facilities support the development of 375 houses within the development boundary. The allocation of housing and the community facilities as described were allocated in the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan adopted in 2016 under planning policy H1.

Figure 1: Land Allocation at Hurst Farm



2. Land Designation

Burial Ground

Figure 2: Burial Ground Concept Plan, in this case approximate area of 1.25 hectares.

Burial Ground concept design



The designation of land for Burial Ground (cemetery) use represents a long-term and sensitive form of land management. Cemeteries serve an essential social and cultural function by providing a dignified and respectful place for burial, remembrance, and reflection.

When considering land for a cemetery, several key factors must be taken into account:

1. Planning and Legal Framework

- Compliance with local planning policies and burial ground legislation.
- Consideration of long-term land allocation, as cemeteries often require permanence and ongoing management.

2. Environmental Considerations

- Assessment of soil type, drainage, and groundwater protection to ensure no contamination risks.
- Protection of surrounding habitats, trees, and landscapes.
- Opportunities for cemeteries to contribute positively to biodiversity, for example, through green burials, meadow management, or tree planting.

3. Location and Accessibility

- Proximity to communities to ensure accessibility for visitors.
- Adequate transport links, parking, and paths that are inclusive for people of all abilities.

4. Cultural and Social Significance

- Sensitivity to religious, cultural, and community traditions relating to burial practices.
- Provision of quiet, reflective spaces that respect mourners while being welcoming to visitors.

5. Design and Landscape Integration

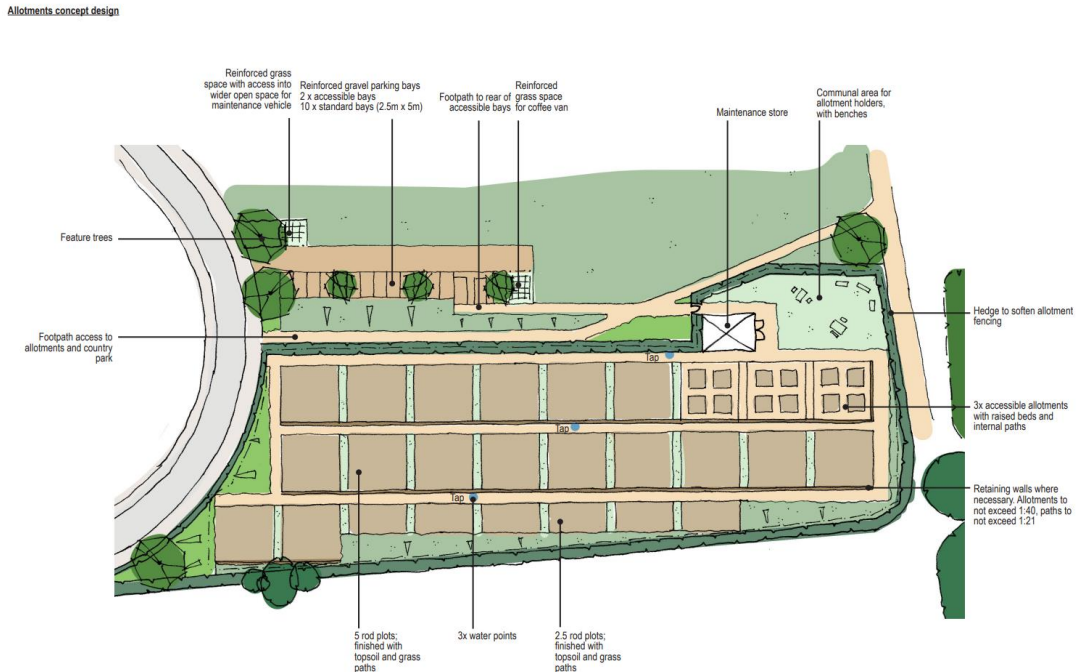
- Careful design to harmonize with the surrounding landscape and character of the area.
- Use of planting, layout, and memorial design to create a respectful, attractive, and tranquil environment.
- Potential for cemeteries to function as green spaces, offering additional benefits such as wildlife habitat, heritage conservation, and community well-being.

6. Management and Sustainability

- Long-term maintenance requirements and funding.
- Adoption of sustainable burial practices (e.g., natural or woodland burials, minimal use of stone or concrete).
- Ensuring the cemetery remains a safe, welcoming, and well-managed place for future generations.

3. Allotment Site

Figure 3 - Concept Plan - In this case approximate area of 0.8 hectares



Allotments are an important use of land, providing opportunities for local communities to grow food, connect with nature, and foster social interaction. They contribute to sustainable land management by supporting local food production, biodiversity, and health and well-being. When considering land for a Allotments several key factors must be taken into account:

1. Planning and Legal Context

- Town/Parish have a statutory duty to provide allotments where there is demand.
- Designation should align with local planning policies, green space strategies, and community development priorities.

2. Environmental Benefits

- Encourages sustainable, small-scale food production and reduces food miles.
- Supports biodiversity through planting diversity, pollinator habitats, and wildlife-friendly practices.
- Provides opportunities to adopt organic or low-impact gardening methods.

3. Community and Social Value

- Promotes healthy lifestyles through physical activity and access to fresh produce.
- Encourages community cohesion, intergenerational learning, and cultural exchange.
- Can include shared spaces, educational gardens, and community projects.

4. Site Selection and Design

- Land should have suitable soil, drainage, sunlight, and access to water supply.

Management Plan

- Good access for plot holders, including paths and parking where appropriate.
- Security measures (fencing, gates) balanced with a welcoming environment.
- Potential to integrate orchards, communal sheds, composting areas, and accessible plots for people with disabilities.

5. Long-Term Management and Sustainability

- Requires clear governance, often through an allotment association or local authority.
- Maintenance of communal areas, waste management, and promotion of sustainable practices.
- Long-term protection of allotment land from alternative development to ensure community benefit.

4. County Park - In this case approximately area 7.25 hectares on land,

Country Parks play a vital role in providing opportunities for recreation, education, health and well-being, while also protecting and enhancing natural habitats, cultural heritage, and landscape character. The designation of the Country Park allows for protection of the Town's green buffer and ownership will protect from coalescence with neighbouring parishes.

The plan provides a framework for balancing the diverse needs of visitors, local communities, wildlife, and the wider environment. It considers how the park can continue to offer a high-quality visitor experience, support biodiversity, and contribute to regional social and economic benefits.

Key aims of this plan include:

- Protecting and enhancing the park's natural and cultural assets.
- Providing safe, inclusive, and enjoyable opportunities for recreation and learning.
- Managing visitor impacts in a way that maintains the park's special qualities.
- Strengthening community involvement and fostering a sense of stewardship.
- Ensuring that management practices are sustainable, resilient, and adaptable to future challenges such as climate change and resource pressures.

Figure 4. Asylum Wood Specifically.



The Country Park site encompasses the Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW) known as Asylum Wood. The woodland area is approximately three hectares and is bounded to the east and north by housing, to the west by a housing development currently under construction and to the south by grazing land. The site slopes down from south to north and

from north to south to meet a ravine that crosses the site from west to east. Within the ravine is a small stream, with a culvert at the western extent which was likely to have been installed when the housing to the west of the site was constructed. The site is sought to become part of a new country park covering a much broader area.

Figure 5 -Asylum Wood Plan



Key Principles for Ancient Woodland Management

1. Protect the Woodland from Loss and Fragmentation

- Avoid development or land-use changes that lead to the destruction or fragmentation of ancient woodland.
- Maintain or expand buffer zones to protect the woodland from external pressures (pollution, light, noise, runoff).

2. Maintain and Enhance Ecological Integrity

- **Retain native species:** Favor native tree, shrub, and ground flora species. Avoid introducing non-native or invasive species.
- **Deadwood retention:** Leave standing and fallen deadwood where safe to support fungi, invertebrates, and birds.
- **Natural regeneration:** Encourage natural regeneration of trees to preserve genetic diversity and woodland structure.

3. Minimal Intervention Where Appropriate

- Let natural processes (decay, regeneration, species succession) occur without excessive interference.
- Apply a "do no harm" approach unless active management is required to restore health or resilience.

4. Sensitive Active Management

- Where intervention is necessary (e.g., to control invasive species or support biodiversity), it should be:
 - **Gradual:** Avoid sudden large-scale clearance or canopy opening.
 - **Low-impact:** Use minimal machinery, protect soil, and avoid damaging tree roots.
 - **Seasonally appropriate:** Avoid nesting or breeding seasons for wildlife.

5. Control and Prevent Invasive Species

- Monitor and manage invasive plants (e.g., rhododendron, Himalayan balsam) and animals (e.g., grey squirrel, deer) that threaten the native ecosystem.

6. Protect Soil and Hydrology

- Ancient woodland soils are highly sensitive and irreplaceable.
- Avoid compaction, erosion, and contamination by minimizing vehicle access and managing footpaths sensitively.
- Maintain natural water flows and avoid artificial drainage.

7. Maintain Structural and Species Diversity

- Encourage a multi-aged, structurally diverse woodland with canopy, shrub, and ground layers.
- Promote a mixture of native tree species and understorey vegetation to support biodiversity.

8. Preserve Cultural and Historical Features

- Respect ancient boundaries, banks, veteran trees, and historical features such as charcoal platforms or coppice stools.
- Avoid damaging archaeological features during management operations.

9. Long-Term Planning and Monitoring

- Develop and regularly update a **Woodland Management Plan** with long-term goals.
- Monitor woodland health, regeneration success, and the presence of key indicator species.

10. Community Involvement and Access

- Engage local communities, volunteers, and educational groups to build awareness and support.
- Balance access and recreation with conservation goals—use signage and trail planning to reduce damage.

5. Conclusion

By setting out clear priorities and actions, the management plan serves as a practical tool for decision-making, funding, and partnership working. It also reflects the importance of the park as a shared resource that should be cared for and enjoyed by current and future generations.

Appendix 1

Cemetery Maintenance Plan

The Town Council will assume full management of the site with the exception of grave digging and funerals. However, it will oversee grave digging and funerals as provided by trusted contractors and funeral directors who will need to provide the relevant legal and health and safety paperwork when working on Town Council land.

1. Daily Tasks – to be undertaken when opening the Cemetery each morning.

- Check and clear litter from paths, car parks, and gravesites.
 - Check bins and ensure waste disposal points are clean.
 - In summer months check water butts are working and full.
 - Inspect entrances, and noticeboards for damage.
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2. Bi Weekly Tasks (April to September) Monthly (October to March)

- Mow grass in open areas and around graves (where appropriate).
 - Trim low-hanging branches and overgrown shrubs.
 - Sweep pathways and steps, removing debris and moss.
 - Check fences, gates, and handrails for safety issues.
 - Inspect headstones and memorials for obvious damage or instability.
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3. Monthly Tasks (subject to more frequency if required during /spring summer month)

- Inspect all memorials for structural integrity; report any unstable stones.
 - Clear weeds from graves, borders, and pathways.
 - Check drainage systems and remove blockages.
 - Maintain flowerbeds, shrubs, and hedges.
 - Conduct minor repairs to benches, signs, and fences.
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4. Seasonal Tasks

Spring

- Prune shrubs and hedges after winter.
- Plant seasonal flowers or replace dying plants.
- Repair winter damage to paths and fences.
- Treat moss and algae on paved areas.

Summer

- Increase mowing frequency in high-growth areas.
- Water plants, trees, and shrubs during dry periods.
- Control weeds in flowerbeds and paved areas.

Autumn

- Clear fallen leaves from paths, graves, and car parks.
- Prune trees and shrubs as needed.

- Prepare planting areas for winter.
- Inspect drainage systems and clear debris before winter rains.
- Clear invasive weeds.

Winter

- Remove storm-damaged branches or fallen trees.
 - Inspect paths, steps, and graves for trip hazards.
 - Carry out minor repairs on fences and gates.
 - Plan for spring planting and restoration projects.
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6. Annual / Periodic Tasks

- Full safety audit of all paths, memorials, fences, and facilities.
 - Major repairs or restoration fences, or gates.
 - Tree surveys and management of over-mature or hazardous trees.
 - Review internal road network and car park conditions.
 - Review cemetery management plan and update schedules as required.
 - Review grave digging contract and request updated information from funeral directors.
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7. Health & Safety Considerations

- Staff and volunteers must wear PPE when handling tools, chemicals, or debris.
 - Hazardous areas must be cordoned off until made safe.
 - Training for safe handling of headstones and heavy objects.
 - Record all inspections, incidents, and maintenance for compliance purposes.
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8. Record Keeping

- Maintain logs of daily, weekly, monthly, and seasonal tasks.
 - Record inspections of memorials and structures.
 - Track tree management, plantings, and conservation work.
 - Review records annually to prioritise maintenance and safety needs.
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Appendix 2

Allotment Maintenance Plan

In this case the upkeep and maintenance of each plot is the responsibility of the Plot Holder under the terms of their tenancy agreement. The plot(s) they tend are reviewed by the Town Council by inspections on a monthly basis during April – August and bi monthly September to March. The Town Council warns non-compliant tenants in the first instance and then serves notice to quit if the warning is not actioned upon. The Town Council will strive to pass the management of the allotment site to a management committee under licence. If this not possible the Town Council will manage the communal areas of the allotment site.

Daily Tasks

- Ensure site is open, operational and hazard free.
 - Ensure proposed store is in good order.
 - Ensure communal area is clean and in good order.
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Weekly Tasks

- Check for rubbish and dumped materials.
 - Check for rubbish and ensure all communal reciprocal collection points are in good order.
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Monthly Tasks

- Site inspection of plots.
 - Inspection of plot holder structures.
 - Cutting of communal areas.
 - Review internal path network.
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Seasonal Tasks

Spring

- Ensure site is in good order for the growing season.
- Check water supply and piping has not been compromised during the winter months.

Summer

- Increase mowing frequency in high-growth areas.
- Control composting areas and check for abandonment of
- Water plants, trees, and shrubs during dry periods.
- Control weeds in communal areas.
- Ensure water supply to site is active and not subject to damage.
- Monitor and clear if required invasive weeds

Autumn

- Clear fallen leaves from paths and car parks.
- Prune trees and shrubs as needed.
- Inspect drainage systems and clear debris before winter rains.
- Clear invasive weeds.

Winter

- Remove storm-damaged branches or fallen trees.
 - Carry out minor repairs on fences and gates.
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Annual / Periodic Tasks

- Full safety audit of all paths, fences, and facilities.
 - Major repairs or restoration fences, or gates.
 - Tree surveys and management of over-mature or hazardous trees.
 - Review internal path network.
 - Review allotment management plan and update schedules as required.
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7. Health & Safety Considerations

- Staff and volunteers must wear PPE when handling tools, chemicals, or debris.
 - Hazardous areas must be cordoned off until made safe.
 - Record all inspections, incidents, and maintenance for compliance purposes.
 - Ensure that any rodent or other invasive species are dealt with by professional contractor employed by the Town Council.
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Appendix 3

Country Park Maintenance Plan

The Town Council shall assume sole responsibility for the management of the Country Park and will provide all services using Town Council Groundstaff. Professional consultants will be appointed for such matters as tree surveys and it is hoped that a 'Friends' of Hurst Farm can be formed, which will be a formal working group of the Town Council to drive projects and initiatives forward with the Community.

1. Daily Tasks

- Litter picking in car parks, picnic areas, and trails.
 - Empty bins and ensure recycling stations are clear.
 - Check visitor facilities (toilets, benches, picnic tables) for cleanliness and damage.
 - Inspect playgrounds for hazards or broken equipment (if applicable)
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3. Bi-Weekly Tasks (Spring and Summer) Monthly (Autum and Winter)

- Mow grass in open areas and along paths where appropriate.
 - Prune low-hanging branches or overgrown shrubs along trails.
 - Inspect and clean signage and interpretive boards.
 - Check paths and trails for erosion or hazards (roots, debris, slippery surfaces).
 - Inspect fencing, gates, and access points for safety.
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4. Monthly Tasks

- Conduct detailed inspections of all park infrastructure (bridges, shelters..
 - Remove invasive plant species where necessary.
 - Clean water courses or streams.
 - Inspect and maintain footbridges, steps, and handrails.
 - Review wildlife habitats and identify areas needing attention.
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5. Seasonal Tasks

Spring

- Repair winter damage to paths and facilities.
- Plant native flowers and trees.
- Prepare habitats for breeding wildlife (nest boxes, wetland management).
- Mulch planting areas and flower beds.

Summer

- Mow grass more frequently in high-traffic areas.
- Monitor water levels in waterways and streams.
- Maintain picnic areas, BBQ spots, and visitor amenities.
- Continue invasive species control.

Autumn

- Leaf clearance on paths and car parks.
- Prune trees and shrubs after flowering.
- Prepare winter habitats (pile leaves, brushwood shelters).
- Check drainage systems and clear debris.

Winter

- Inspect for storm damage and fallen trees.
 - Maintain fences, gates, and winter signage.
 - Carry out heavy pruning where safe.
 - Plan and schedule spring planting and conservation projects.
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6. Annual / Periodic Tasks

- Full safety audit of park facilities and trails.
 - Major habitat restoration projects (meadow creation, streams maintenance).
 - Infrastructure upgrades (bridges, toilets, car parks).
 - Volunteer recruitment and training programs.
 - Review and update park management plan and maintenance schedule.
 - Tree surveys and management of over-mature or hazardous trees.
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7. Health & Safety Considerations

- Staff and volunteers should wear appropriate PPE.
 - Hazardous areas should be cordoned off until repairs are complete.
 - Record all inspections, maintenance tasks, and incidents for compliance and review.
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8. Record Keeping

- Maintain logs of daily, weekly, and monthly tasks.
- Document inspections and repairs.
- Track wildlife observations and habitat changes.
- Review records annually to adjust maintenance priorities.