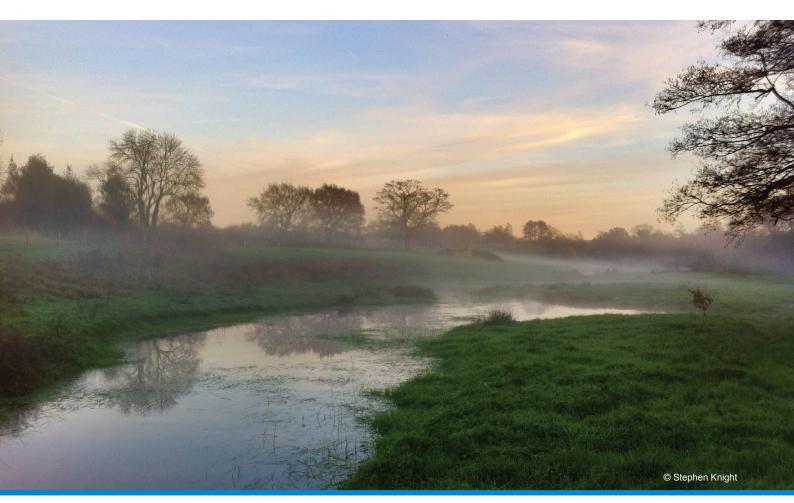


Management Plan Chesworth Farm

2019 to 2026



January 2019

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This plan provides a framework for the day to day management of Chesworth Farm for the period 2019 to 2026.

It identifies nine key objectives which help align the plan within the broader Horsham District Council Green Space Strategy.

This Management Plan replaces the 2007 Management Plan, actions and results from which are reviewed in Appendix 1.

Key objectives

- To manage the site for the benefit of its wildlife through habitat management, restoration and creation.
- To manage the site with full respect to the heritage value and beauty of its natural and agricultural landscape.
- To facilitate greater community use of the site through improvement of access and facilities.
- To ensure that the site is maintained as a safe and tidy environment for visitors.
- To improve public awareness and understanding of the site through interpretation and education.
- To encourage and support ongoing community involvement in the management and care of the site.
- To increase revenue from the site as a means of supporting the wildlife, landscape and community aims listed above.
- To meet the aims of the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme set out by Natural England.
- To balance these objectives in order to achieve the most beneficial outcome for the site as a whole.

2. Background

2.1 Relevant history

There is a long history of human habitation on Chesworth Farm dating back to 200 BC with evidence of an Iron Age farmstead. Evidence also exists of Roman occupation prior to the establishment of a Saxon farm, around 700 AD. Farming activity is believed to have been continuous since that time, hence the heritage significance of the site's agricultural landscape.

Part of William I's Royal estate since 1086, 'Cheseworthe' as a hunting lodge became favoured by royalty, attracting visits from Edwards I and II in the 13th and 14th Centuries. Then, in the Tudor Period, under the ownership of the Dukes of Norfolk, the estate including Chesworth Farm, Chesworth House and parts of Denne Hill, entered its heyday. Henry VIII visited in 1519 and his fifth wife, Katherine Howard, lived there from about the age of 13.

Most of the hedgerows which characterise the Farm today are evident on a map dated 1724, at which time the Farm was part of a large private estate owned by the Eversfield family. In the 20th century, between the wars, Chesworth Farm itself was separated from Chesworth House and sold to the Francis family who farmed it until Horsham District Council purchased 37 hectares of the site in 1992. Since then it has been managed as a countryside site for wildlife conservation and public access.

2.2. Current opportunities and threats

- 2.2.1 Factors that present opportunities to the successful management of the Farm are as follows:
 - The well-established and active community group Friends of Chesworth Farm (FCF) and other community input into the Farm (see 3.3).
 - The strong, shared commitment of the Council and FCF towards effective conservation management of the Farm for community benefit.
 - The agricultural landscape offering opportunities for partnership arrangements with providers of countryside-based training, therapies, cultural and recreational activities.

- The inherent wildlife, heritage, landscape and educational value of the Farm, which justifies its protection for the future and provides a strong rationale for funding opportunities.
- The large scale of the Farm, enabling genuine rural experience for visitors and zoning of access for wildlife protection and enhancement.
- The location of the Farm, facilitating ease of visitor access from both Horsham itself as well as the surrounding district.
- The population expansion of Horsham and district, increasing demand for a large area of well managed publicly accessible natural green space.
- The existing Volunteer Centre (see 3.2.4) and the lease arrangement with Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT) under which its usage is optimised.
- The Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) funding (see 3.5.1) that is available for certain aspects of habitat management until 2023.
- 2.2.2 Factors that present threats or constraints to the successful management of the Farm are as follows:
 - Antisocial and illegal behaviour; mainly littering, dog fouling and dog attacks on livestock, but also incidences of vandalism, motor biking, unauthorised angling, camping, barbecues/camp fires, flying drones and model aircraft.
 - Indiscriminate visitor access causing habitat damage and disturbance to wildlife. Also, occasional straying of horses from bridleways threatening public safety.
 - The clay soil and drainage capacity of the Farm which result in hazardous and unfavourable slippery and muddy conditions in winter, thereby restricting all year round access.
 - Housing development pressure; it is recognised that the Farm is potentially subject to development but there are no current plans or proposals in this regard.
 - Uncertainty regarding the future of the HLS scheme due to Brexit. This could significantly reduce the funding arrangements for the ongoing management of the farm.

3. Site uses, community and consultation

3.1 Use of the Farm

- 3.1.1 Chesworth Farm hosts an estimated 70,000-80,000 individual visits per year; a number that is steadily growing. Enjoying the wildlife, the scenery, physical exercise and dog walking are the most popular uses of the Farm by the public. All of these uses rely on fulfilment of the primary intentions of land management at the farm, ie to conserve and enhance both the ecological and the agricultural heritage of the site.
- 3.1.2 Use is further enhanced through countryside events including guided walks, talks and demonstrations, especially those organised by FCF (see 3.3.1) as well as educational activities for children and adults. Since 2014. the Farm has hosted school visits including those funded by the Arun and Rother Connections Project (ARC) to encourage environment-based learning. ARC funding has now ceased but the use of the Farm for children's education is expected to continue and grow through pre-school activities (eg SWT's 'Nature Tots'), school visits as well as Scout/Guide activities. With the Volunteer Centre (see 3.2.4) an essential base for these activities, the recently started lease arrangement of that facility with SWT provides an opportunity for increasing its use as well as the attraction of the Farm as a whole.

3.2 Infrastructure to support use of the Farm

- 3.2.1 With all the Farm's field boundaries securely fenced, there are seven points of entry for visitors (see Appendix 3) allowing access to numerous footpaths and bridleways throughout the site. Two local leisure routes; the Horsham to Southwater cycle route (Pedlars Way) and the waymarked Horsham Riverside Walk, cross the Farm enhancing connectivity with the local countryside.
- 3.2.2 There is a small area for car parking (consisting of approximately seven spaces) off Queensway and a larger car park at Denne Road, 10 minutes' walk away. Parking is also possible on local streets, and for organised events arrangements are made for parking around the Volunteer Centre, Niron House and the Parks Depot.



This level of parking provision is considered insufficient to meet current demand. The majority (nearly 60%) of respondents to the 2017 Farm User Survey (see 3.4.2) agreed that there should be more car parking; the entrance off Kerves Lane is one site to be considered. Over half of the survey respondents were willing to pay for parking but 25% were very reluctant to do so, meaning that getting the price right will be important.

- 3.2.3 Hard surfaced access routes within the Farm are as follows:
 - Main track from Queensway to the Arun Bridge at the southern end of the site; functions as a footpath, bridleway and vehicle route.
 - Sections of footpath along the Riverside Walk on the south-western site boundary behind Tip Fields and bordering the River Arun; some areas are poorly drained with grass encroachment.
 - Occupation Road: footpath through the middle of the site; resurfaced in 2006.
 - Footpath along the northern edge of the riverside fields with a section of boardwalk, constructed in 2014 as part of the riverside fields restoration.

3. Site uses, community and consultation continued



3.2 Infrastructure to support use of the Farm continued

3.2.4 The Volunteer Centre is a multi-purpose community building, partially restored with Arts Council funding. In April 2017, a lease arrangement was made with SWT whereby they occupy and manage the centre and its immediate surrounds, sharing its use with other organisations to include Friends of Chesworth Farm (see 3.3.1). At the time of publishing this management plan, the lease arrangement is still yet to be formally agreed.

The Volunteer Centre is the one building on the site which is included as part of the public facility, used as it is for volunteer activities (including meetings, training events and storage of equipment), educational visits and countryside events. Well situated on the main 'Pedlars Way' bridleway, the Volunteer Centre is ideally located as a drop-in venue for users of the Farm and other passers-by. 2016 saw its use increase to approximately 50% of available time and it is anticipated that under the new arrangement with SWT, use will continue to increase.

3.2.5 There is one litter bin on the Farm, at the Queensway entrance. It is emptied, as and when necessary, by Council staff.

- 3.2.6 There are seven dog bins; six along the main farm track, Pedlar's Way, and one off Kerves Lane. The bins are currently emptied up to three times a week by the Council's Waste and Recycling Department. Dog fouling is subject to local byelaws and signs are installed to inform dog walkers of their obligations. Despite these measures, there remains a problem with dog fouling and no evidence that further bins accessible for emptying, or public notices, will lead to improvements.
- 3.2.7 There is one bird viewing screen, overlooking the riverside fields, installed in 2014 as part of the restoration project there. There is also an aspiration to build another bird screen (see 6.5.2).
- 3.2.8 Benches are situated at various locations throughout the Farm. Some of these are memorial benches, more of which will be installed as and when requests and donations are forthcoming.
- 3.2.9 There are numerous stretches of fencing throughout the Farm, mostly stock fencing but also some simple barbed wire or post and rail. Access points through fences are largely marked by gates, some of which are for staff access only and locked, and others are unlocked for public access.
- 3.2.10 There is a large interpretation board at the main entrance and another at the riverside fields. A trail along the Horsham Riverside Walk is waymarked. Aspirations for further on-site signage are outlined in 6.5.1.
- 3.2.11 Niron House and the Parks Depot are situated close to the Volunteer Centre. Although not included in the public facility, they are within the curtilage of the Farm and owned by the Council. Niron House is ideally let to HDC Countryside officers who provide a point of contact at the Farm, enhancing security and welfare of livestock etc. Vehicular access to the depot and Niron House is along the main track from Queensway.

3. Site uses, community and consultation continued



3.3 Friends of Chesworth Farm (FCF) and other volunteer involvement

3.3.1 FCF was established in 2011 in response to the increasing pressures placed on the Farm by growing visitor numbers and the threat of development in the immediate area. It is a constituted group with approximately 120 members and a committee which meets every month. Monthly events are also held for members and the public to attend. On other occasions, practical tasks are carried out by FCF.

This practical work, alongside other volunteer input (see 3.3.2), contributes significantly to land and habitat management at the Farm. An essential aspect of this is the wildlife and flora surveys (see 5.1.8) that members carry out providing information that underpins habitat management decisions.

FCF have played crucial roles in securing funding for projects such as the restoration of riverside fields (see 3.2.3, 3.2.7 and 4.2.3) and also in the marketing of the Farm, both online and through local media (see 7.1.3).

3.3.2 The majority of practical conservation and maintenance work on Chesworth Farm is carried out by conservation volunteers. In addition to tasks carried out by FCF, Horsham Green Gym have held regular working events at the Farm since 2005. Tasks have included tree planting, hedge maintenance, gateway surfacing, control of invasive species and litter clearing. Volunteers from the Gatwick Greenspace Project together with SWT Youth Rangers have laid several sections of hedgerow around the Farm.

Volunteer involvement is essential for the ongoing management and improvement of the Farm, hence a strong aspiration to further encourage volunteer input (see 7.1.5).

3. Site uses, community and consultation continued

3.4 Consultations over the Management Plan

- 3.4.1 The Management Plan, and the proposals laid out in Sections 6 and 7, have resulted from extensive consultations between the Council and FCF.
- 3.4.2 Consultation over the Management Plan has been reinforced by an online user survey carried out in October and November 2017 which had over 400 responses. This was followed up, in February 2018, by a workshop meeting at which Council Officers met with representatives of FCF to discuss key findings from the survey. Agreement was reached over appropriate responses to those findings and their incorporation into the Management Plan.
- 3.4.3 The final draft of the Management Plan was brought to the notice of other partnership agencies, ie Natural England (see 3.5.1), SWT, Forest Neighbourhood Council, the Horsham Society, Horsham Town Community Partnership, Horsham Green Gym and Gatwick Green Space Partnership. It will also be made available for public viewing online prior to final amendments and publication.
- 3.4.4 Once the Management Plan is in place it will be subject to an annual review (See Section 8) carried out by representatives of the Council and FCF. This will take the form of a meeting at which all items listed in Appendices 9, 10 and 11, are reviewed and the current state of progress recorded.

3.5 Natural England and the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme

3.5.1 A key consultee in the management of Chesworth Farm is Natural England with whom, in 2013, the Council entered into a Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) funding scheme. This scheme will draw down approximately £300,000 over a 10-year period towards the management of six countryside sites, of which Chesworth Farm has the largest amount of land under the scheme. The Farm will receive the funding on condition that it complies with the management prescriptions agreed in consultation with Natural England. These prescriptions aim solely at improving the wildlife value of the site, focussing particularly at Chesworth Farm on the grassland, hedgerows, ponds and wetland. With Britain's exit from the EU imminent at the stage of publishing this management plan, there remains uncertainty over the future of this funding.

Activities to receive support are as follows:

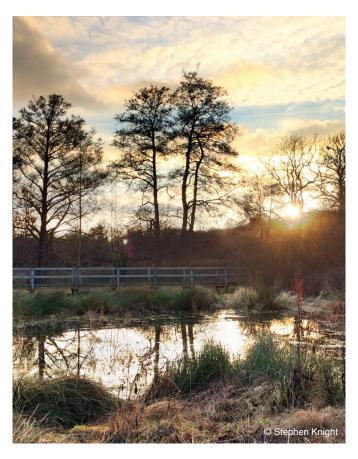
- Establishing optimum grazing and/or haycutting schemes including collection of grass to imitate a traditional haycut on the grasslands.
- Excavating small pond areas to improve biodiversity.
- Monitoring and recording of wildlife.
- Improvements to on-site interpretation where directly connected to HLS funded projects.
- Other wildlife enhancement works that may be agreed eg installation of bird and bat boxes, otter holts, species enrichment of grassland.



4.1 Site summary

4.1.1 The 37ha Farm is situated south-east of Horsham at TQ177298 and comprises eleven fields of varying sizes, separated by a network of hedgerows, and bordered to the south and west by the River Arun. It lies on Weald clay which is slowly permeable, seasonally wet and slightly acidic. The land is relatively level with gentle slopes down to the River Arun at the south of the Farm. There are five main ponds on the Farm; Plat Pond (see Appendix 3) and two at each of Back Field and Parlour Mead. A system of ditches functions importantly in the drainage of the site.

The Farm is valued for its grasslands, hedgerows, ponds and wetlands which provide a mosaic of habitats (see Appendices 4 and 5) and a rich diversity of plant and animal species, many of which are protected.



4.2 Vegetation and habitats

4.2.1 Grassland

The fields at Chesworth are classified, for HLS purposes, as semi-improved natural grassland with significant wildlife value and low nutrient levels. Their relative naturalness and the minimal impact on the Farm from modern agriculture, make them worthy of support by HLS. For this purpose, the fields are classified as either GO2 or GO6, with the latter identified as being more species rich than the G02. In 2013-2015, wildflower seed was introduced into the G02 fields. Appendices 4 and 5 show and describe the field classifications and the areas of new sowings. In addition to grassland in fields, there are grass areas along the main track and around the Volunteer Centre that are maintained through regular mowing (see 5.1.11).

4.2.2 Trees and hedgerows

There are around 5000m of hedgerow on Chesworth Farm, many of them well over 350 years old and clearly marked on the 1842 tithe map (available at Horsham museum). They comprise a range of woody species characteristic of farm hedges and most stretches include hedgerow trees.

There are also four small 'tree islands' on the Farm, two at Tip Fields and two at the Hill Fields as well as a small wooded area (the Warren) to the south of Back Field. A small orchard on the west side of Back Field was planted in 1999, purely as a habitat and food source for wildlife.

4.2.3 Ponds, ditches and river banks

The ponds (see 4.1.1), especially Plat Pond, provide valuable aquatic and reedbed habitat while the riverside fields, former wet pasture land, are also important for wetland species. The value of this pasture was enhanced in 2014 when a series of small scrapes were excavated in the wet flush alongside the riverbank, ensuring better retention of water after flooding. Ecological value of the two ponds in Parlour Mead is limited by the conflicting objectives of a footpath that passes between them, hence an aspiration to re-route that footpath as described in 6.4.7.

5. Habitat management operations

(Also see Appendix 9)

5.1 Grassland and scrub

- 5.1.1 The aims of management will be:
 - To prevent ecological succession throughout the grassland, beyond the stage of open scrub.
 - To reduce competitive dominance of grasses within the grassland to enhance plant species diversity.
 - To prioritise the protection of wildlife in the planning and implementation of all management tasks.
- 5.1.2 To achieve the aims set out in 5.1.1, the following objectives are adopted in line with the HLS Management Prescription (see Appendices 4 and 5):
 - Maintain the grassland as open habitat by preventing scrub cover in excess of 5%.
 - Maintain levels of high value indicator species as specified in the HLS prescription (ie two 'frequent' and two 'occasional' for each grassland type).
 - Maintain cover of wildflowers, including rushes and sedges, as specified in the HLS prescription (ie between 20% and 90%).
 - Limit bare ground in small patches and hoof marks to 5% or less.
 - Use the traditional methods of livestock grazing and hay cutting in achieving the above objectives.
 - Control undesirable native species (ie Curlyleaved Dock, Broadleaved Dock, Creeping Thistle, Spear Thistle, Stinging Nettle and Ragwort) by physical removal and monitor habitat for ingress of alien invasive species.
 - Control visitor disturbance to selected areas through fencing and surfaced walkways.
 - Monitor recently sown areas (see Appendix 4) to assess success in establishing wildflower populations and the wider ecological effects of these sowings on the Farm.
 - Allow development of open scrub at some field margins, then manage this on a rotational basis.
 - Planting of scrub species to establish small 'scrub islands' within fields for farmland bird cover.
 - Control dog fouling in all areas of grassland and associated scrub.



- 5.1.3 The Council is in partnership with the SWT over the management of British White cattle, used to graze the grassland. The Council aims to notify visitors of which fields they will be grazing and when. It is recognised that the effectiveness of grazing is limited by the availability of cattle at the time they are required (see 5.1.5) so opportunities will be sought to address this.
- 5.1.4 The Council has an arrangement with an agricultural contractor for cutting the hay which is left to lie for approximately five days then baled and removed. Some income is generated from this arrangement and the contractor concerned can also provide additional cattle for grazing the aftermath if required.
- 5.1.5 The general prescription for grassland management will be a hay cut when conditions are suitable between the end of July and early September, followed by grazing of the aftermath over late summer/autumn. This regime provides the necessary environmental conditions to achieve the ecological objectives outlined in 5.1.2. With a view to enhancing environmental sustainability of maintenance operations at the Farm, opportunities will be sought to move towards lower/zero net carbon emissions. Five per cent of the grassland will be cut by volunteers using scythes and future contracts will be procured with the use of electric powered machinery in mind.

5. Habitat management operations continued

5.1 Grassland and scrub continued

- 5.1.6 Physical removal by cutting/pulling undesirable species (see 5.1.2) will be carried out by volunteers during the summer period, as will monitoring for ingress of invasive species.
- 5.1.7 It is noted that the grassland at the south of the Farm, adjacent to the River Arun, is specifically valued as floodmeadow. Habitat management of this involves, not only grassland operations as described above, but also work to the aquatic habitat there (see 5.3.3)
- 5.1.8 Grassland surveys are carried out by FCF volunteers and Council Wardens. The main purpose of the surveys is to monitor changes in the population of the various grassland species in order to inform management aimed at increasing richness and diversity. More specifically, the surveys enable monitoring of population sizes of 'high-value indicator species' identified in the HLS management prescriptions (see Appendix 5).

Surveys are carried out four times a year (May, June, July, August) with a different field as the subject on each occasion. A rotation schedule for the surveying covering all the fields on the Farm is shown in Appendix 6 along with details of the DAFOR scale that is used as an estimate of population size for each species. An aspiration of increasing the number of surveys to include April and September, subject to availability of suitably trained surveyors, is described in 7.2.1. Data from grassland surveys is uploaded annually to the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre along with wildlife surveys recorded by FCF, volunteer recorders and the Council.



- 5.1.9 There is a need for regular assessments of plant species diversity in the grassland community and a capability to respond to signs of competitive dominance by grasses, which reduces diversity. One important strategy that could be used to reduce dominance is the introduction by seed of the wildflower species Yellow Rattle (Rhinanthus minor), which is hemi-parasitic on grasses. This has already been done under HLS funding in 2014, into the GO2 fields that had been sown with seed of other wildflower species (see Appendix 4). Further sowings of Yellow Rattle may be considered worthwhile subject to any observed changes in vigour of grasses and consequent species diversity in those fields.
- 5.1.10 There is some concern over the management prescription under the HLS scheme for grassland (see 5.1.2), that its value to farmland birds is compromised by the overriding objective of maximising plant species diversity. Benefit could be gained by introducing variations to the prescription, eg removing certain fields from the cutting schedule for up to three years, sowing a sacrificial crop or grazing in spring instead of autumn (see 5.1.5). Such measures will be introduced subject to discussions with SWT and agreement with Natural England.
- 5.1.11 Areas of grass along the main track and around the Volunteer Centre are mown approximately 15 times per annum under the Council's grounds maintenance contract. In addition, there are some unsurfaced footpaths which are mown four times per annum in order to maintain their clear definition.
- 5.1.12 A note is made here about the need for annual clearing of vegetation on the path south of the river crossing. Due to poor sight lines this is a hazardous location in respect to cyclists and pedestrians. The land in question belongs to West Sussex County Council, to whom requests for work have to be made. This situation is to be monitored and discussed at the annual reviews of the Management Plan (see Section 8).

5. Habitat management operations continued

5.2 Trees and hedgerows

- 5.2.1 The aims of management will be:
 - To maintain and enhance the habitat value and species diversity of trees, hedgerows and their associated ground vegetation.
 - To maintain the stock proofing qualities and characteristic heritage value of hedgerows.
 - To prioritise the protection of wildlife in the planning and implementation of all management tasks.
- 5.2.2 To achieve the aims set out in 5.2.1, the following objectives are adopted in line with the HLS Management Prescription (see Appendices 4 and 5):
 - Maintain a height in the hedgerows of at least 2m (1.2m for west side of Jenny Bare Legs) and a width of at least 1.5m.
 - Protect hedgerow birds by delaying cutting until October.
 - Limit cutting of any hedge top or side to no more than once in three years in order to minimise disturbance to wildlife.
 - Prevent ingress of blackthorn into the adjacent footpaths and field margins.
 - Remove any non-native species from the canopy or understory of the 'tree islands' and wooded area (see 4.2.2).
 - Regularly inspect trees to minimise any risk they pose to people and property.
- 5.2.3 The hedges will be managed by flailing on a three year cycle (see Appendix 7) using a tractor mounted cutter operated by a contractor. This operation should be carried out as late in October as possible, before the ground becomes too wet but ensuring maximum access to berries as winter bird food. Notices should be put up by the Council to forewarn the public of the hedge-cutting operation.
- 5.2.4 Many of the hedgerows at Chesworth are in a prime stage of growth for hedge laying, hence an aspiration to instigate a programme for this (see 6.3.1).
- 5.2.5. Trees will be inspected on a three-year cycle with particular attention to those adjacent to footpaths and properties. The last inspection was in January 2018.

5.2.6 Pruning and thinning of the orchard trees (see 4.2.2) will be carried out annually in winter by volunteers to sustain the orchard as a habitat and food source for wildlife.

5.3 Ponds and ditches

- 5.3.1 The aims of the management will be:
 - To provide a range of successional stages from open water to reed bed, so to maximise the habitat potential of these features.
 - To prevent any invasion of non-native aquatic species.
 - To maintain the functional capability of the ditches in assisting surface drainage after high rainfall.
 - To prioritise the protection of wildlife in the planning and implementation of all management tasks.
- 5.3.2 To achieve the aims set out in 5.3.1, the following objectives are adopted in line with the HLS Management Prescription (see Appendices 4 and 5):
 - Ensure there is no more than 10% of the surface of ditches, and 25% of the southern margins of ponds, under tree cover.
 - Undertake pond management as necessary to maintain a balance between open water and aquatic vegetation to include no more than 75% cover of emergents/marginals in summer.
 - Ensure ditches contain water for at least 10 months of the year and have no more than 10% cover of filamentous algae (subject to consultation with Natural England).
 - Cut emergent and aquatic vegetation in ditches on a rotational basis, maintaining a fringe of emergents on one side.
 - Keep the ditch banks free of scrub species by grazing or by cutting one bank of each ditch every other year.
 - All work should be by mechanical/physical means and should only be done between 1 October and 28 February.
- 5.3.3 It is noted here that the only stretch of ditch included in the HLS scheme is the one that was recently altered in the riverside fields to form a series of scrapes (see 4.2.3). The resulting diverse aquatic habitat to be prioritised in the operations described in 5.3.4 5.3.6. All ditches to be monitored by the Council to ensure adequate water flow and any remedial action

5. Habitat management operations continued

taken as necessary.

- **5.3** Ponds and ditches continued
- 5.3.4 Cutting emergent vegetation in ponds and the ditch in the riverside fields to be carried out by volunteers once each year in autumn.
- 5.3.5 Monitoring the extent of cover from trees, algae and marginal vegetation in ditches and ponds, to be carried out by FCF in consultation with the Council. Voluntary input into the clearing of algae and marginal growth can then be agreed and supervised by the Council. Any necessary work to mature trees can be arranged with contractors.
- 5.3.6 Grazing of the banks of the scrapes in riverside fields (see 4.2.3) for control of scrub growth to be managed and monitored by the Council. If additional cutting is required, this can be done by the hedge cutting contractor when the hedges are cut (see 5.2.3).
- 5.3.7 It is noted here that since the HLS agreement was put in place, at least three fully protected species have been found on the Farm; Hazel or Common Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) and the wetland grass species, Cut-grass (*Leersia oryzoides*). Consultations will be held with Natural England over any changes to management that need to be made in order to protect and encourage these species.
- 5.3.8 FCF and Council staff to check for invasive aquatic species in ponds and ditches.

5.4 Litter clearing and general upkeep

- 5.4.1 The requirement for litter clearing at the Farm is minimal compared to most other Parks and Countryside sites. This is due largely to the caring attitude that most visitors have towards the site. Some litter clearing is required however and is carried out as a scheduled activity twice each year over the whole site; once in February by FCF with support from the Council, then again in July by Horsham Green Gym. Litter is cleared as a routine component of tasks carried out under the grounds maintenence contract (see 5.1.11) and all habitat management tasks carried out by volunteers. The litter bin is emptied when necessary (see 3.2.5) and general ad-hoc litter picks are carried out throughout the year by Council staff and volunteers.
- 5.4.2 Regular monitoring and renovation needs to be carried out in Back Field and around the Volunteer Centre where logs, stepping stones etc. have been placed for use by school groups.

6. Site development proposals

(Also see Appendix 10)

6.1 Types of proposal

A distinction will be drawn between site development proposals that are:

- Approved, ie fully agreed and with funding source confirmed
- (ii) Aspirational, ie agreed in principle but without funding sources identified.

A further distinction will be drawn between small developments/improvements (up to £2,000) and major projects (in excess of £2,000).

It is noted here that FCF have identified a number of projects that could be carried out during the period of this Management Plan, but which have not been agreed by the Council in the process of devising the plan. A list of these projects is shown in Appendix 12.

6.2 Small approved projects

- 6.2.1 Improvements will be made to enhance the landscape experience on the west side of Tip Fields through planting of woody species to soften the impact of a telegraph pole (see Appendix 8). Hazel for coppicing under a managed rotational programme is ideal as this would avoid problems with stems growing close to telegraph wires.
- 6.2.2 There is a need to eradicate Japanese knotweed on the west side of Tip Fields (see Appendix 8). Regular treatments of herbicide are being made each year by the grounds maintenance contractor.
- 6.2.3 Native species hedgerow to be planted along fence line between Chambers Field and Great Horsham Hill (see Appendix 8). This is for landscape enhancement and conservation reasons.
- 6.2.4 Further native hedgerow planting to be carried out along east boundary of White Gate Lag (see Appendix 8). This is to supplement existing planting that shields the approach to the riverside fields viewing screen.
- 6.2.5 Investigate the Common Dormouse population at the Farm and install boxes as required in accordance with findings. Monitoring tubes were installed in April 2018 and, if Dormice are found, a licensed firm will be hired each autumn to survey the population.

6.2.6 Two small pond/scrapes to be created close to Peddlars Way either side of the hedge between Jenny Bare Legs and Little Horsham Hill.

6.3 Small aspirational projects

- 6.3.1 Hedgelaying will be carried out each year on selected sections of hedgerow (see Appendix 7), subject to the availability of suitably trained volunteers (see 7.2.2). Laying these hedgerows will increase stock proofing, encourage nesting birds and, as a traditional rural craft, will enhance the Farm's heritage interest.
- 6.3.2 Over 80% of survey respondents to the user survey (see 3.4.2) wanted more wildlife habitat at the Farm so in order to achieve that, an aspiration is set to create new ponds as habitats. Potential sites for new ponds are shown in Appendix 8. Investigations will be carried out by the Council (in consultation with Natural England, SWT and FCF) in order to assess the costs and benefits of creating a pond at each of those sites. One significant consideration is the damaging effect on conservation value, of access by dogs and the implications of fencing to prevent this effect. Funding has not been identified.
- 6.3.3 Bicycle racks will be installed on the North side of the Volunteer Centre. This has been agreed with SWT who manage the Centre but is subject to availability of the necessary funds.
- 6.3.4 There is concern over safety of pedestrians in relation to cyclists travelling too fast on pedestrian routes. Measures to be taken include maintaining sight lines at critical locations (see 5.1.12) and raising awareness of the problem through signage (see 6.4.1).
- 6.3.5 There is an aspiration to increase the number of nest box cameras and to investigate the possibility of a nest box camera in the Barn Owl box.

6. Site development proposals continued



6.4 Major aspirational projects

6.4.1 On-site interpretation can enhance the user experience and 70% of survey respondents (see 3.4.2) favoured additional interpretation of the wildlife and landscape. Combined with improved direction signage, interpretation could be positioned along selected priority routes, encouraging self-guided movement around the Farm and enriching visitor experience. On-site signage could also be used to highlight the need for mutual respect and understanding amongst different users, helping to minimise conflicts such as those that sometimes occur between cyclists and pedestrians. There is an aspiration therefore to develop an integrated strategy for signage and interpretation that can be implemented in stages over time as funds become available (see 7.3). This strategy will be devised by the Council in consultation with FCF and may include plans to install field name signs with notice boards for temporary information posters and install, or renew, welcome signage at key entrances.

- 6.4.2 Construction of an additional bird viewing screen, with associated bird feeding station is an aspiration for a small open area adjacent to the main track (see Appendix 8). This would be dependent on allocation of a suitable amount of Section 106 funding, the possibility of which will be investigated by the Council.
- 6.4.3 In order to establish a hard-surfaced circular route, accessible by all visitors it is an aspiration to construct a path, from Type 1 aggregate, through Gravel Pit Field (exact route yet to be determined).
- 6.4.4 Improvements to be made to the Queensway entrance in order to enhance the 'visitor welcome' and the general perception of the status of the Farm. The project will also aim to optimise safety and access for pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and vehicles entering the Farm. Proposals for this will be developed by the Council and presented for discussion at the second Management Plan review (see Section 8).
- 6.4.5 Re-surfacing to the footpath north west of Tip Fields (Pedlars Way to Arun River) is an aspiration in order to improve the Riverside Walk in that area (see Appendix 8). This work would need to be carried out in collaboration with Horsham Town Community Partnership.
- 6.4.6 Due to the insufficient levels of parking provision and support from the user survey for additional parking (see 3.2.2), there is an aspiration to provide additional parking. A study will be made by the Council, investigating suitable locations/ sizes for parking sites along with appropriate environmental impact assessments and a business case for any proposals made.
- 6.4.7 Re-routing of the path through Parlour Mead to the Riverside Walk (see Appendix 8) to include installation of a section (approx. 50m) of boardwalk and/or some surfacing to improve accessibility in an area which regularly floods during the winter. A Barn Owl viewing platform could also be included and attention would need to be given, in design of the path, to reduce any damaging impact on the Barn Owl population there.



7.1 Marketing and community

7.1.1 FCF have an aspiration that the Council declare the Farm a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). They have public support for this as identified in a survey carried out by FCF in 2016. This would reinforce the identity of the Farm as a haven for wildlife and as a worthy site for prioritising nature conservation objectives. Results from the 2017 user survey (see Appendix 2) amplify the relevance of this aspiration and it can be anticipated that LNR status would increase the attraction of the Farm as a visitor destination.

The Council recognises the potential value of this, not least because there is currently a deficit of LNR designated land in the District against the national standard of 1ha for every 1000 residents. This deficit of approximately 100 ha would be significantly reduced if the 37 ha of Chesworth Farm were declared an LNR. Furthermore, with the existing LNRs, Warnham and Tottington Wood, providing primarily wetland and woodland respectively, addition of the hedgerows and grassland of the Farm would enhance recognition of the District's biodiversity. An objective is set here therefore that the full

- implications of LNR status are explored by the Council and progress on this reported at the annual Management Plan reviews (see Section 8).
- 7.1.2 Formally organised events and activities are key to expanding the use of the Farm and community engagement in its day-to-day life. With environmental education and training activities well established (see 3.1.2), expansion in use of the Farm can be achieved by further developing these as well as additional events on practical crafts and skills. The new lease arrangement with SWT for the Volunteer Centre is expected to result in an increase in number and variety of events and activities.
- 7.1.3 Availability of information about the Farm increases awareness of the experiences it offers, leading to more public engagement. As well as on-site interpretation (see 6.4.1), full use must be made of local media (newspapers, television and radio) the on-line facilities (eg HDC website, FCF Facebook page and website and the Countryside Twitter account) to promote the site and the events programme. Updating of online information will be carried out regularly and opportunities sought for promotion through local media.

7. Other management considerations continued

7.1 Marketing and community continued

- 7.1.4 A further source of information for visitors to the Farm would be site leaflets that could be collected from the Volunteer Centre, but there are currently no funds for producing these. The feasibility and value of producing leaflets will be reviewed annually under this Management Plan (see Section 8).
- 7.1.5 In addition to expanding visitor numbers, it is also important to increase opportunities for volunteer input. It is anticipated that all the measures outlined in 7.1 above, along with the various projects outlined in Sections 5 and 6, will help promote FCF, maximise contributions from Horsham Green Gym and provide engaging activities for volunteers.
- 7.1.6 Community use of the Volunteer Centre would be enhanced by the installation of internet in the building. Continued enquiries by the management partners will be made into the cost/feasibility of achieving this.
- 7.1.7 There is an aspiration to expand promotion of the Farm as an agricultural heritage site.

 An appropriate historical period will need to be selected and adjustments to land management planned accordingly. This will be subject to development of a business plan if the aspiration is to be pursued.

7.2 Training

- 7.2.1 Training of volunteer staff is required to realise the aspiration of increasing the number of survey visits to grassland habitats (see 5.1.8). This training, of approximately two volunteers, will be delivered by Council staff as soon as possible.
- 7.2.2 Training of volunteer staff is required to realise the aspiration of laying some of the Farm's hedgerows (see 5.2.4). A skilled hedge layer/ trainer will be contracted to deliver one day's training in winter 2018-19 with volunteers invited to attend.

7.2.3 Health and Safety training is essential to ensure that all Council staff and volunteers are fully updated on safe working practices. The Council, being responsible for providing the training, will carry out an annual review of the forthcoming training requirements in January and devise a schedule of training events for each new calendar year.

7.3 Funding, income and procurement

- 7.3.1 Since 2013, HLS (see 3.5.1) has been the major funding source for the Farm outside developer contributions (see 7.3.2) and the Council's revenue budget. Continued availability of the funds over the period of the scheme is subject to inspections from Natural England (to ensure the agreement is being met) and an application by the Council in March of each year to trigger the annual payment. However, uncertainty over the future of the funding due to Brexit means the political situation will need to be closely monitored and alternative arrangements sought as necessary.
- 7.3.2 Developer contributions can be allocated towards Chesworth Farm and there is currently a pool of such funds available for particular projects .
- 7.3.3 Chesworth Farm is used by a number of professional dog walking companies and in line with other commercial uses of Parks and Countryside sites, there is now an intention to charge these companies a contribution towards site management. Furthermore, a Code of Conduct will be drawn up by the Council which prospective professional dog walkers will be required to agree and sign, in order to gain approval for using the Farm. Approved dog walkers who have paid the fee will be offered registration to a list of approved dog walkers which will be posted on the Council's website.
- 7.3.4 It is important to ensure the necessary arrangements are maintained on an annual basis, for hay cutting and associated income (see 5.1.4).
- 7.3.5. Opportunities for income generation will continue to be sought by the Council and any suggestions made will be discussed at the Management Plan reviews.

7. Other management considerations continued

7.4 Health and safety

- 7.4.1 Management of health and safety in relation to users of the Farm will involve regular monitoring of the condition of facilities to include access routes, paths, bridges, gates, benches and the site near the Volunteer Centre used for school groups (see 5.4.2). This will be implemented through a health and safety site inspection, carried out on a monthly basis by Council staff, with any hazards recorded and appropriate remedial actions put in place. Tree inspections (see 5.2.5) are a further essential component of the Farm's health and safety inspection programme. In addition to the regular inspections, any concerns raised by staff, FCF members or visitors will be recorded and then acted upon in a suitable time frame.
- 7.4.2 Health and Safety at Work management for staff and volunteers will involve regular training (7.2.3) and regular reviewing of Risk and COSHH Assessments, carried out by the Council in accordance with the review cycles already set up for those. An annual review will also be made in January each year of any new needs for DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks concerning staff and volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults.

7.5 Monitoring and responding to changes in visitor numbers

- 7.5.1 Visitor numbers are often monitored by means of surveys carried out by FCF. The figure for annual visits in 2017 is estimated as 70,000-80,000 which represents a trend for increasing use of the Farm.
- 7.5.2 With increasing use of the Farm, pedestrian routes can become inaccessible in winter and habitat damage can result when visitors decide to trample off-track. Further paths may therefore be justified in future if visitor numbers continue to increase. Particular attention will be given to the possible future needs for surfacing of paths through Gravel Pit Field (see 6.4.3), between Pedlars Way and the north west of Tip Fields (see 6.4.5) and through Parlour Mead to Riverside Walk (see 6.4.7).

7.5.3 Encouraging use of its open spaces is central to the Council's Green Space Strategy, hence management choices for the Farm are generally made with the aim of sustaining and increasing visitor numbers. It is recognised, however. that under heavy visitor use, conflicts can arise between the wildlife, heritage and landscape aims of the Farm, and that of encouraging public access (see Section 1). Although there is no figure identified as an optimum number of visits per year, the position adopted is that promotion of the site and physical improvements will continue until visitor pressure poses a clear and observable threat to the Farm's ecological and landscape quality. At that point the Council would change its priority of promotion and improvements to one of limiting the ecological and visual impacts of visitors at the site.

Conversely, if a declining trend is identified in visitor numbers, even greater emphasis will be placed on encouraging access, as that is crucial to the continued management and resourcing of the Farm by the Council.

8. Review procedure and signatures

8.1 The procedure

- 8.1.1 The Management Plan for Chesworth Farm will remain in place for seven years (until September 2025) and will be reviewed in January of each year over that period. A minimum of two members of each the Council's Parks and Countryside Dept. and the FCF Committee will be present at the review.
- 8.1.2 At the end of the seven year period, a full revision of the Management Plan will be made following a consultation process as described in 3.4 and 3.5 of this document.
- 8.1.3 At each annual review Appendices 9, 10 and 11 will be updated, then the Management Plan document signed as required in Section 8.2 below to confirm both parties agree the revisions.

8.2 Sign-off section

	3	
2020	Council representative:	FCF representative:
	Signature	Signature
	Date	Date
2021	Council representative:	FCF representative:
	Signature	Signature
	Date	Date
2022	Council representative:	FCF representative:
	Signature	Signature
	Date	Date
2023	Council representative:	FCF representative:
	Signature	Signature
	Date	Date
2024	Council representative:	FCF representative:
	Signature	Signature
	Date	Date
2025	Council representative:	FCF representative:
	Signature	Signature
	Date	Date
2026	Council representative:	FCF representative:
	Signature	Signature
	Date	Date

Appendices

Appendix 12

Aspirational projects identified by FCF

Appendix 1 Linking the previous and current management plans Appendix 2 Findings of the Chesworth Farm survey Appendix 3 Chesworth Farm; general site plan Appendix 4 Habitat plan and HLS codes Appendix 5 **HLS** habitat descriptions Appendix 6 Grassland surveying guidance Appendix 7 Hedge flailing rotation Appendix 8 Locations for projects Appendix 9 Schedule for management operations Appendix 10 Schedule for site development projects Appendix 11 Schedule for organisational objectives

Appendix 1

Linking the previous and current Management Plans

The previous Management Plan for Chesworth Farm (2007-2012), identified ten main issues. These issues are listed below along with details of how they have been addressed.

Issue 1- Management techniques to improve the wildlife values of the grassland and hedgerows throughout the site;

Improved management of grassland and hedgerows for the benefit of wildlife has led to the site being entered into DEFRA/Natural England's HLS (Countryside Stewardship) funding scheme. This has provided funding to further improve management of the site.

Issue 2- Improvement of the grazing and haycutting regimes;

Improvements have been made, with subsequent gains in wildlife value, but the ideal management regime has not been reached. There is still insufficient grazing in late Summer/ Autumn as the Council does not have enough grazing animals. Furthermore, hay cutting is dependent on a contractor who is particularly busy in late Summer and will prioritise other more profitable hay cutting areas before Chesworth.

Issue 3-Restoration of former ponds on Riverside Field, Jenny Bare Legs and other fields; Restoration of wetland habitat on Riverside Field, Plat Pond and the pond at Back Field have been very successful in terms of habitat and wildlife gains. Pond restoration in Parlour Mead has been partially successful.

Issue 4- Restoration of former ancient field boundaries:

Former ancient field boundaries have been re-established in various locations on site, with associated hedge planting.

Issue 5 - Establishing some undisturbed fenced areas within fields to develop free from disturbance for the benefit of wildlife, particularly in the Riverside Field and along the River Arun:

Successfully carried out in Riverside Field. Also, smaller fenced islands have been successful (eg Little Horsham Hill).

Issue 6 - Creation of a clear network of waymarked paths to guide visitors around the best and most interesting routes around the Farm;

A network of paths has been developed and are marked out under a mowing regime and waymarking has been installed around the Horsham Riverside Walk.

Issue 7- Installation of new gates, fencing, benches and surfaced gateways to allow easier access for all;

Significant areas of path and gateway are now surfaced as well as several new benches and significant fencing. Kissing gates and squeeze stiles have been phased out and replaced by pedestrians gates or just open gaps.

Issue 8 Establishment of new horse rides on the Farm to allow riders to safely enjoy the site; Two additional bridleways have been installed through the Farm to link existing routes.

Issue 9 Information about the wildlife history and management of Chesworth Farm; An interpretation board has been installed at the main entrance.

Issue 10 Information and Guidelines on other formal and informal usage of the Farm; Poster campaigns are carried out throughout the year.

Appendix 2

Findings of Chesworth Farm user survey

Key findings

- A survey was carried out of Chesworth Farm visitors. There were 403 responses, of which 75% visit the farm at least weekly. Almost all came in the capacity of visitors, while 8% were volunteers.
- The most common reasons for visiting the farm were related to nature, physical health and walking pets. There was evidence that visiting habits were influenced by the reasons for visiting, particularly in regards of how often people came and the mode of transport used.
- There may also be tensions between different needs, such as accessibility and maintaining a natural setting.
- Half of respondents lived within 1.2 miles of the farm. Those who travelled to the farm by car/van were more likely to live further away, and also to visit the farm to walk pets.
- There was strong support for increasing natural habitats to attract wildlife, and improving information onsite and online. Muddy paths and dog mess were seen as the most significant problems.
- There was a majority (three out of five) in favour of more car parking. Just over half were willing to pay a charge of 50p per hour, while a third were reluctant.
- Overall satisfaction with the farm was high, with 97% saying it was very or fairly well managed.

Introduction

A survey was conducted of Chesworth Farm users, which is intended to inform the management plan. The survey was conducted online, and was promoted through the council's website and via the friends' group. The survey was open between 16th October and 27th November 2017.

Who responded to the survey?

There were 403 responses to the survey. It is difficult to assess how representative these are, as the make-up of Chesworth Farm users (by age, gender etc.) is not known.¹

Age and gender

63% of responses were from females and 36% from males, which suggests that males may be underrepresented.

30% of responses came from people aged 45 to 54, making it the largest group. There were few responses from farm users aged 24 and under, making just 2% of the sample. Although a small number of comments (15) mentioned children, the views of younger visitors may not be fully represented in the survey. As this group often respond differently from other age groups in survey questions, further work to engage with under 25s should be considered, particularly if there are aspects of the forthcoming management plan which would especially impact young people.

¹ For this reason, while surveys often 'weight' data to match the profile of the general population, this was not possible in this circumstance.

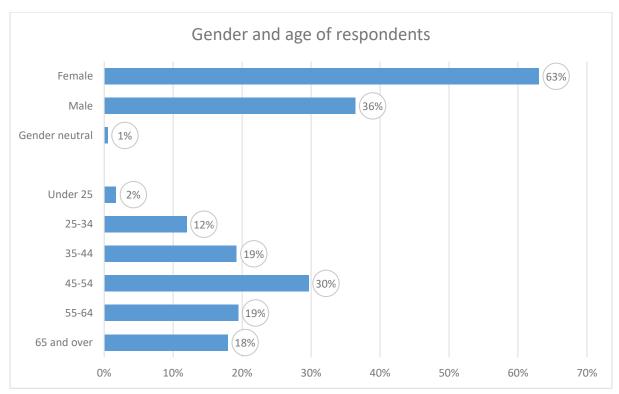


Figure 1

How often do respondents visit?

Most respondents visit the park frequently: in summer, almost half doing so most days (48%) while a further 26% visit about once a week. Attendance is very slightly lower during winter months, with 41% saying they visit most days.

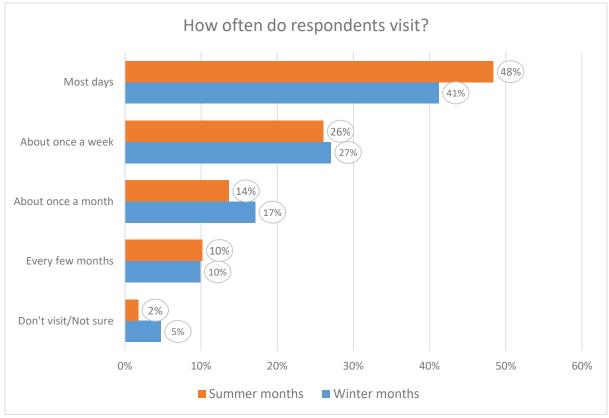


Figure 2

Respondents have been classified into categories as shown in Figure 3 according to how often they visit the farm. 75% visit frequently (most days or once a week) in at least one season. 23% are occasional visitors. This means that survey respondents bring a high degree of familiarity with the farm, which is particularly relevant to views on problems and issues which may occur only infrequently. There is also likely to be a higher degree of 'ownership' of the farm. However, if the management plan has an aim of attracting new visitors to Chesworth, further engagement may be necessary with this target audience.

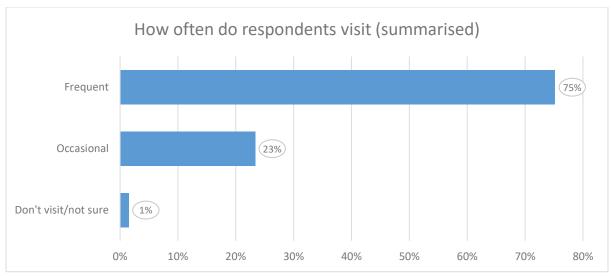


Figure 3

Type of respondent

Respondents were asked about the capacity/role in which they go to the farm (see Figure 4). 97% were visitors. There were relatively few respondents in other categories: 8% were volunteers, with very few professional dog walkers or council employees. Moreover, three quarters of these groups also went to the farm in the capacity of visitors.

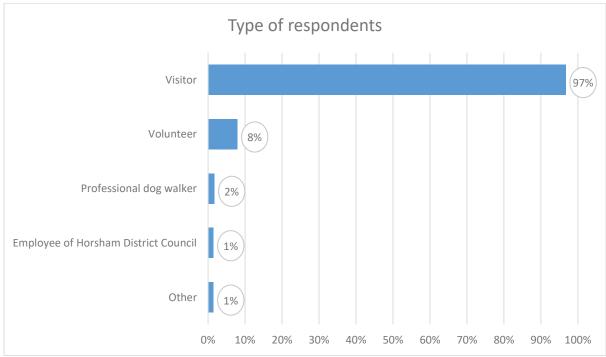


Figure 4

Reasons for visiting Chesworth Farm

Respondents were asked what their main reasons were for visiting the farm, selecting from a list of options. Overall, three quarters of respondents (73%) gave a reason related to nature – either scenery and/or wildlife. The most common single reason was exercise/physical health (71%). Just less than half said they visited for mental or emotional well-being (49%).

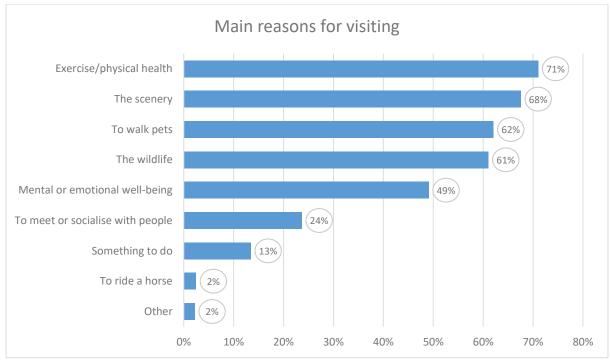


Figure 5

Figure 6 shows the most common age groups, genders and types of visitor for each reason. While this shows slight differences in emphases between certain groups, overall visitors tend to have similar purposes irrespective of age or gender.

Significant differences were evident among frequent and occasional visitors on certain aspects (Figure 6). Frequent visitors were more likely to be walking pets (75% cf. 26%) or meeting/socialising with people (26% cf. 15%), while occasional visitors were more likely to see the farm as something to do (20% cf. 11%).

Most common age group, gender and visitor type for each reason				
The scenery	Aged 55-64			
Exercise/physical health	Aged 55-64, males			
Mental or emotional well-being	Aged 25-34			
To walk pets	Aged under 25, females, frequent visitors			
To meet or socialise with people	Frequent visitors			
Something to do	Aged under 25, occasional visitors			

Figure 6: Groups are not shown unless statistically significant

Overall, the data in this section suggests that there are different 'types' of visitor to the farm, with visiting habits driven by different purposes and motivations. Management plans should consider how the farm meets and balances between different types of needs. For example, there may be tensions between maintaining a tranquil, natural experience and improving access for visitors, or between catering to current frequent visitors (such as pet owners) and attracting new visitors who may come only occasionally.

Travelling to Chesworth Farm

Almost 95% of respondents gave (at least a partial) home postcode. This is an unusually high response rate for this type of question, and indicates a high degree of trust in the council with regards to this survey. These approximate locations are shown in Figure 7. ²

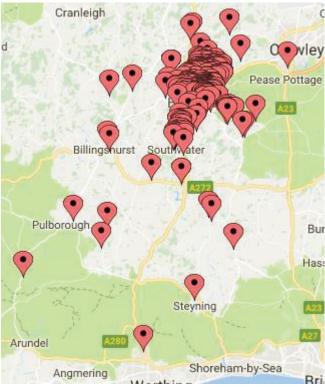


Figure 7: home locations of survey respondents

Using the information, travelling routes were calculated from each respondent's home to the entrance point of the farm (shown in red in Figure 8). ^{3,4} Figure 9 shows the times needed to walk to the farm, and the distance of the walking route.

More than half of respondents live within 1.2 miles, and can walk it in 23 minutes or less. However, 30% of respondents live at least 2 miles away, and almost a quarter would take at least 45 minutes to walk. (It should be borne in mind that respondents may also travel to the farm from other locations.)

² One respondent gave an address in London. This is not shown in Figure 5, but is included in other calculations.

³ The websites used were gridreferencefinder.com; www.freemaptools.com and doogal.co.uk

⁴ Note that respondents will have entered the park boundaries several minutes before reaching this mid-point, particularly those arriving from a northerly direction.



Figure 8: Location used when calculating

Travel to Chesworth Farm				
Walking time		Distance		
Less than 15 mins	28%	Less than 0.5 mile	16%	
15-29 mins	29%	0.5 - 0.99 miles	29%	
30-44 mins	18%	1 - 1.49 miles	11%	
45-59 mins	11%	1.5 - 1.99 miles	15%	
More than 60 mins	13%	2 miles+	30%	

Figure 9

Mode of transport

Respondents were asked how they travelled to Chesworth Farm. (It was possible to select as many options as applied). The most common method was walking (62%), followed by car/van (48%), while 12% cycled.

Figure 10 shows the mode of travel, broken down by travel distance. ⁵ As might be expected, respondents who walked were more likely to live within one mile of the farm, while the majority of those travelling by car/van lived over 1.5 miles away.

⁵ The distance used is for a walking route

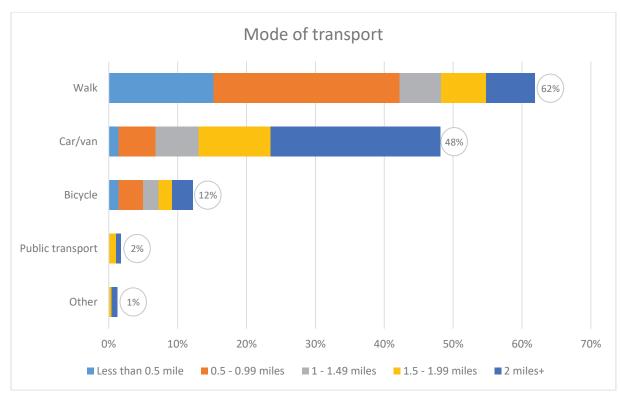


Figure 10

Walking was the most common mode of transport among all age groups between 25 and 65, but was most likely among the 35-44 year olds. Those travelling by car/van were most likely to be aged under 25, while cyclists were most likely to be in the 25-34 age group (see Figure 11).

Most common age-group using each mode of transport			
Walk	35-44		
Car/van	Under 25		
Bicycle	25-34		
Public transport	65 and over		
Other	_		

Figure 11

Figure 12 shows the main reasons for visiting, broken down by the form of transport used. Clear differences are evident. Those who walk or cycle are more likely to come to the farm for nature, health and wellbeing, whereas car/van drivers are more likely to be walking pets.

Taken together, the data suggests that respondents have a clear rationale for the mode of transport used when visiting the farm. Respondents appear to be responsible in their choice of transport, using vehicles primarily because this is necessary to transport pets or due to the distance from their home. This also means that the availability of car parking is likely to impact on these groups, many of whom may be unable to visit without driving. (The provision of car parking is discussed on page 11).

Main reasons for visiting by mode of transport used					
	Walk	Car/van	Bicycle		
The wildlife	70%	54%	78%		
The scenery	76%	59%	82%		
Exercise/physical health	80%	63%	88%		
Mental or emotional well-being	57%	41%	63%		
To walk pets	55%	78%	47%		
To meet or socialise with people	25%	25%	31%		

Figure 12: responses in smaller categories have been omitted

Developing and improving the farm

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that Chesworth Farm would benefit from certain additional features. There was strongest support for additional natural habitats to attract wildlife (80% agreed, including 50% who strongly agreed). Unsurprisingly, agreement was highest among those who visited the farm for the wildlife or the scenery, as well as those visiting for mental or emotional wellbeing.

There was also broad agreement for additional information, both onsite (71%) and on the internet (70%). Just over half (54%) agreed there should be more ponds, although support was lower among pet owners (45%), which may reflect a desire for pet owners to keep their animals out of muddy ponds.

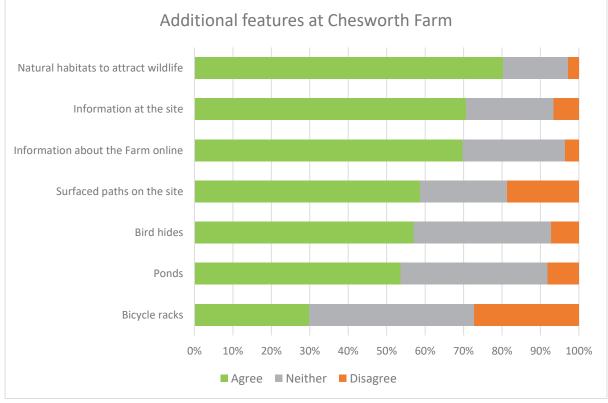


Figure 13

A majority agreed there should be more surfaced paths (59%), although 19% disagreed. This fits in with a high proportion of respondents who said that muddy paths were a problem (see below).

Opinions on cycling

Opinions concerning additional bicycle racks were also mixed (43% gave a neutral opinion, while 30% agreed and 27% disagreed). Here is a selection of free comments made by respondents, which illustrate the viewpoints expressed about bicycles.

Bicycle racks sited around the VC will encourage cycling to the site rather than driving.

Please make it a little easier to enter the site via bicycle, my children often fall off trying to turn and cycle uphill after weaving through the barriers!

The main path across Chesworth Farm (the link to Southwater) is very muddy and hard to negotiate by bike, especially in the winter.

This natural area is a great asset to Horsham as it is and needs very little in the way of improvement. It is an ideal place for dog walkers and for people who need a gentle stroll. It would be a great shame if there were cycle tracks or jogging tracks

Cyclists sometimes travelling at excessive speed and are often not considerate of walkers

Letting cyclists know that pedestrians have right of way. Cyclists can be very aggressive to pedestrians. Some people are deaf and cannot hear cyclists coming up behind them. Cyclists should be made aware they do not have right of way.

Problems experienced by Chesworth Farm visitors

Respondents were asked how often (if at all) they had experienced certain issues/problems when visiting Chesworth Farm. The most frequent problems were muddy paths (75% experienced this usually or sometimes) and dog mess (64%), while 37% experienced littering and 22% reported other problems.

Despite the mixed views on providing more cycle racks (mentioned above), just 16% of respondents said they usually or sometimes experienced difficulties with cyclists. Very few respondents identified problems with anti-social behaviour, grazing animals, motorcyclists/drivers or horse riders.

Problems and issues appeared to be experienced equally, irrespective of age, gender or reasons for visiting the farm.

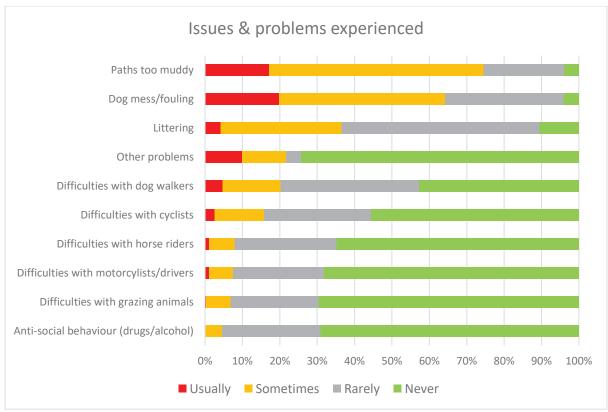


Figure 14

Comments about paths

A large number of comments mentioned pathways. These illustrate mixed feelings, as many people find them helpful for access, but the potential impact on the natural setting of the farm is also evident.

More surfaced paths would make the farm accessible to disabled visitors all year round.

Paths have been a real bonus particularly during periods of bad weather when they could become treacherous before the resurfacing. To provide safe access to all parts of the farm it would be fantastic if another two paths could be resurfaced

Any further surfaced paths would surely interfere with the unique nature of Chesworth as a nature haven.

The recent upgrade of some of the footpaths around the farm has made a significant difference to dog walking in the winter however adding more footpaths needs to be done with care to avoid it looking like Tilgate Park!

My partner is disabled and uses a mobility scooter. She is unable to access the hide or boardwalk as the path is too rough and causes her pain in her arthritic back.

More signs at the junction where Peddlers Way curves back on itself and crosses the River as it is unclear if unfamiliar with the area which is the correct path to take to stay within the farm.

Comments about dogs

More dog waste bins around the pathways.

More habitats would add interest but need to be dog free areas as the significant number of dogs off leads obviously discourage birds and wildlife.

Bagged dog litter discarded around the site.

Dogs on leads for majority of site and then a fenced area for free running dogs, as at some Forestry Commission sites.

Some people need better control of their dogs as it spoils things for others with or without dogs. Unfortunately the rest of us are suffering an anti-dog backlash as a result of this minority failing to control their dogs or picking up after them... I'm personally not keen on professional dog walkers walking too many dogs at once, either on or off lead. Even if all well behaved, a group of dogs is effectively a pack and can be intimidating even to the most sociable of dogs.

Car parking

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that more car parking is required at the Farm. Overall, three out of five (59%) people agreed, while a quarter disagreed (23%).

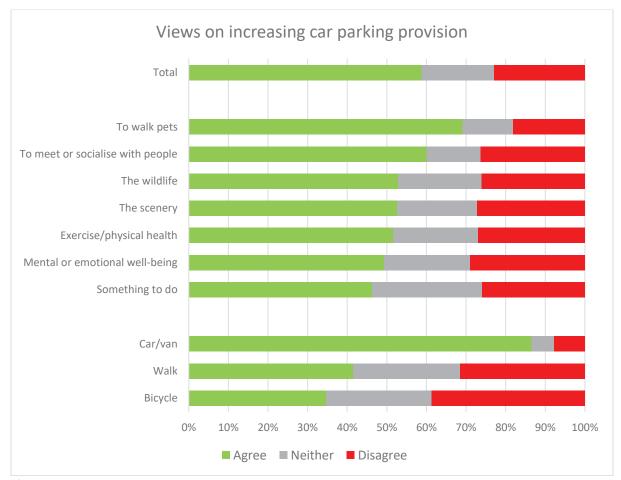


Figure 15

Perhaps unsurprisingly, views differed according to how respondents travelled to the farm. 87% of those who travelled by car or van agreed, whereas agreement was just 35% among those who cycled, and 42% among those who walked.

Similarly, differences were evident according to respondents' main reasons for visiting Chesworth Farm. 69% of those who walked pets agreed that more car parking is required. By contrast, levels of agreement were lower among respondents who came for the wildlife (53%), scenery (53%), exercise/physical health (52%) or mental/emotional well-being (49%).

There were no statistically significant differences by age, gender or frequency of visit.

Parking charges

Respondents were also asked how willing they would be to pay a charge of 50p an hour to raise money towards running the farm. Overall, just over half of respondents (55%) were very or slightly willing to pay, while 35% were very or slightly reluctant. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those who travelled to the farm by car or van showed lower levels of willingness than those who walked or cycled, although 49% of car/van drivers were either very or slightly willing (however, 28% were very reluctant, which indicates that parking charges may put some visitors off).

Willingness to pay parking charge (50p per hour)					
	Total	Walk	Bicycle	Car/van	Public transport
Very willing	34%	47%	46%	26%	20%
Slightly willing	22%	16%	18%	23%	40%
Neither willing or reluctant	9%	11%	11%	9%	20%
Slightly reluctant	11%	7%	7%	14%	0%
Very reluctant	25%	19%	18%	28%	20%

Figure 16

Comments about car parking

Many of the free text comments mentioned parking. These included comments identifying the need for parking improvements, recognising the need of parking to make the farm accessible for certain groups, expressing reluctance to pay, and a preference for annual permits if charges are introduced. A selection of comments is given below:

Parking is a huge issue. I love coming to walk my dog at Chesworth Farm, but do not come as often as I would like to because of the parking.

It's nice just to get out of the car, put on the boots, take the dog for 20 minutes, get back in the car and go home without worrying whether there's the right change - just to be free, in all aspects of the word.

Parking needs to be improved along Kerves Lane before an accident happens.

Adding parking charges like they have at Southwater Country Park will push visitors to the neighbouring residential streets and would feel like another money grabbing opportunity by the council.

On site car parking. Car park at Chesworth Lane entrance is inadequate and often full, so journey there is wasted. For elderly visitors, too far to walk from off-site locations.

If you introduce parking charges, I would like to be able to buy an annual membership.

Overall satisfaction

Respondents were asked how satisfied they were overall with the way Chesworth Farm is run or managed. Of those who expressed an opinion, 57% said the farm was very well run, while 40% said fairly well. Just 4% felt it was run not very well run or very badly.

Satisfaction was highest among 55-64 year olds, but lowest among under 25s. There were no statistically significant differences by gender or main reason for visiting.

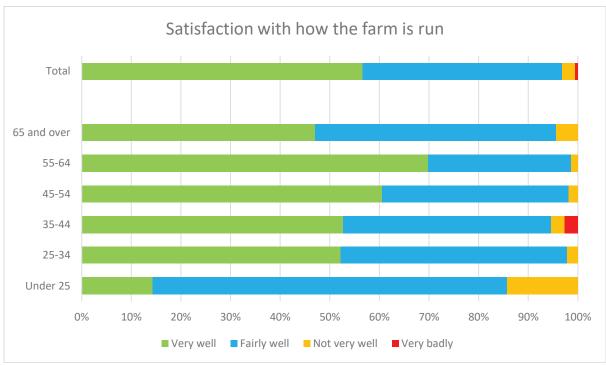


Figure 17

On site car parking. Car park at Chesworth Lane entrance is inadequate and often full, so journey there is wasted. For elderly visitors, too far to walk from off-site locations.

If you introduce parking charges, I would like to be able to buy an annual membership.

Overall satisfaction

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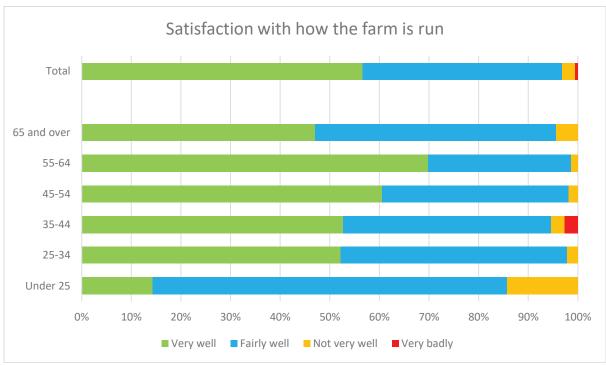
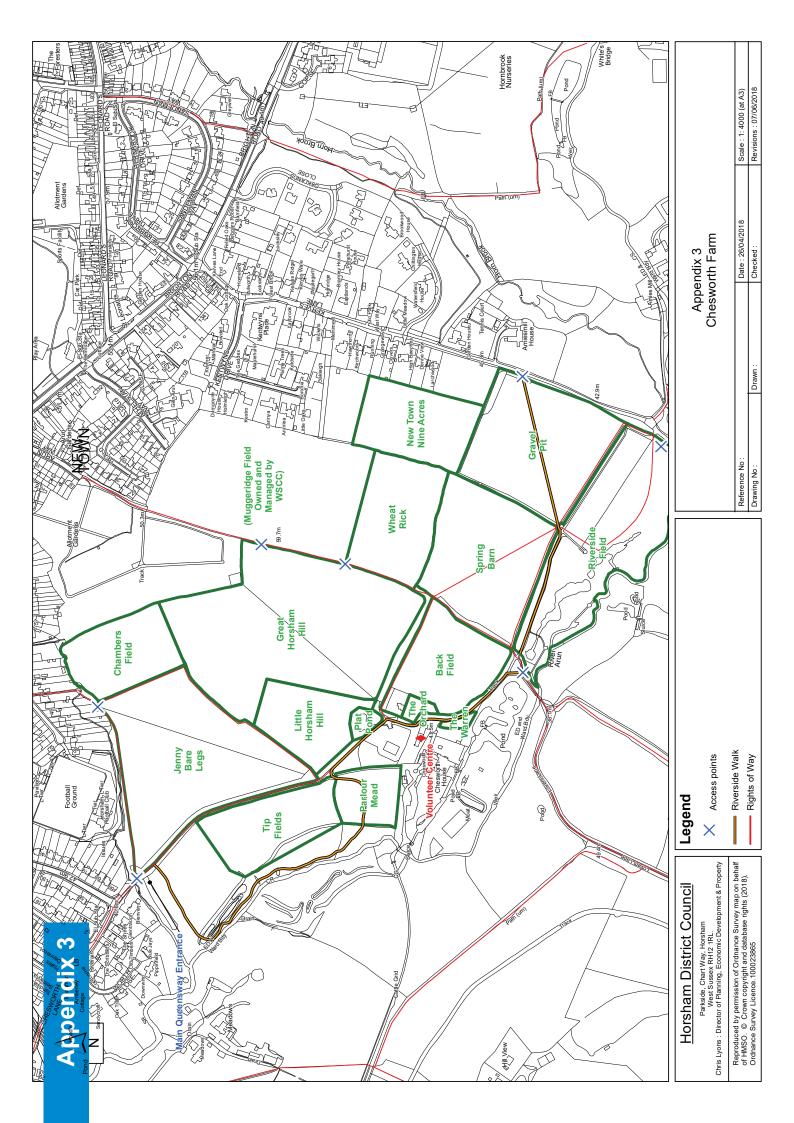
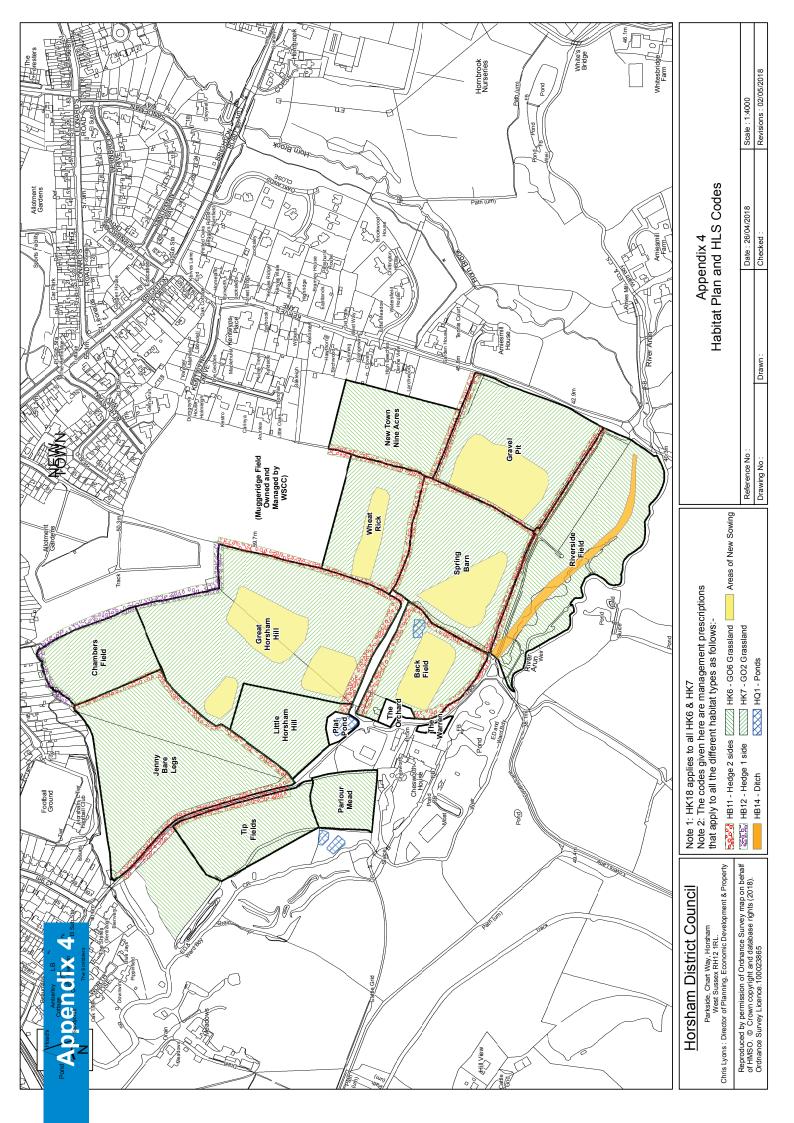


Figure 17





(Please note that this prescription was produced for all HDC sites under the HLS scheme and has been edited to remove statements clearly not relevant to Chesworth)

HLS - Management of environmental features General conditions on all HLS agreement land

On your HLS agreement land you must follow the general management conditions set out below, unless specifically stated otherwise in a subsequent section of this agreement. HLS agreement land is all land on which Higher Level Stewardship management prescriptions apply, including items within a Capital Works Plan

- Do not apply lime.
- On the conventional land that you manage: do not apply pesticides, except for the control
 of Spear Thistle, Creeping Thistle, Curled Dock, Broad-leaved Dock, Common Ragwort,
 Nettles or other undesirable species named in your agreement. Herbicides may only be
 applied to these species by weedwiper or by spot treatment.
- Do not allow your agreement land to be levelled, infilled, used for the storage or dumping
 of materials or used by motor vehicles or machinery (except where necessary for the
 management of the land), if this is likely to cause long-term damage from rutting or
 compaction of the soil, or otherwise damage areas being managed under the scheme.
- Do not light fires (including burning brash or cuttings) where they could cause damage
 to features of archaeological or historic interest, or within ten metres of tree canopies or
 on any areas managed for their wildlife habitat interest. (This does not restrict your ability
 to manage heathland vegetation by controlled burning in compliance with the Heather and
 Grass Burning Regulations 1986 and accompanying Code.)
- Do not allow your agreement land to be used for organised games or sports, rallies, camping
 or caravanning, shows or sales where this is likely to damage areas being managed for
 their wildlife habitat interest or where this is likely to cause excessive and unreasonable
 disturbance to wildlife being encouraged under your agreement; or where this would cause
 unreasonable restriction to Public Rights of Way or "access land" as designated under the
 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

HK6 - Maintenance of species-rich, semi-natural grassland G06 grassland on fields as shown in Appendix 4

General description of the management required:

This option is targeted at the maintenance and protection of areas of species-rich grassland. The importance of species-rich grassland is recognised by the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

Indicators of Success

- The extent of the habitats of interest within the grassland as identified in the Farm Environment Plan should be maintained or increased.
- The Soil Phosphate Index should be 0 or 1.
- By year 2, at least 2 high-value indicator species Bugle, Birds-foot Trefoil, Greater Birds-foot trefoil, Eyebright, Autumn Hawkbit, Knapweed, Ox-eye Daisy, Ragged Robin, Scabious sp, (FEP manual Pg. 75 for botanical list) for BAP grassland habitat Lowland Meadows should be frequent and 2 occasional in the sward.
- By year 2, cover of invasive trees and shrubs should be less than 5%.
- By year 2, localised patches of bare ground around rabbit warrens should be smaller than 5m x 5m.
- By year 2, cover of bare ground should be between 1% and 5%, distributed throughout the field in hoof prints or other small patches.
- By year 2, wet ditches should have aquatic vegetation cover (submerged, floating and emergent) of between 25% and 75% of water area. Filamentous Algae should be less than 5% cover, Duckweed should be less than 75% cover. Water levels should be between 20cm and 45cm below mean field level throughout the year.

Management Prescriptions; the dos and don'ts of management

The following rules apply across the whole area being managed under this option.

From year 1, manage the sward by grazing and/or cutting to achieve a sward height of between 4cm and 10cm in November.

- Manage the grassland to achieve the indicators by grazing with cattle for at least 6 weeks between May and September or cutting and removing field-dried hay after 15 July. In years when hay is taken graze the aftermath in autumn. Where spring grazing takes place exclude livestock at least 7 weeks before cutting for hay.
- Do not install new drainage or modify existing drainage systems unless agreed in writing with your Natural England adviser. This includes subsoiling and mole ploughing. Maintain existing drains in working order.
- Supplementary feeding is confined to the feeding of mineral blocks. Feeders and troughs should not be used. Feeding sites should be moved regularly and never placed on archaeological features. Creep feeding of young stock is permitted.
- Control undesirable species such as Creeping Thistle / Spear Thistle / Curled Dock / Broad-leaved Dock / Common Ragwort / Common Nettle so that by year 2, their cover is less than 5% of the area. Agree all methods of control with your Natural England adviser.
- Ploughing, sub-surface cultivation and reseeding are not permitted except as part of a
 grassland management plan agreed with your Natural England adviser. Chain harrowing
 or rolling are not permitted except between 15 March and 15 July.
- Do not top, roll or harrow more than 30% of the total grassland area in any one year and always leave a minimum of 5% tussocks / longer grass.
- Rabbits must be controlled to achieve the indicators. Where this is impractical due to the
 nature of the land, the numbers of grazing livestock must be adjusted to take account of this
 change to grazing pressure.
- Field operations and stocking must not damage the soil structure or cause heavy poaching.
 Small areas of bare ground on up to 5% of the field are acceptable. Take particular care when the land is waterlogged.
- Well-rotted farmyard manure may be applied at a maximum rate of 12 tonnes/ha every other year to grassland managed as hay meadow, but not within 10 metres of a watercourse.
 There must be no other application of nutrients such as fertilisers, other organic manures or waste materials including sewage sludge.
- To benefit Great Crested Newts the land within a 200m radius of a breeding pond must be managed extensively and no new barriers such as buildings, walls, tracks, or footpaths created. Potential hibernation sites such as rabbit burrows, log piles, rocky areas or woodland should be retained. Consult your Natural England adviser before starting any management operations.

HK7 - Restoration of species-rich, semi-natural grassland G02 grassland on fields as shown in Appendix 4

General description of the management required:

This option is targeted at grasslands that are potentially rich in plant and associated animal life. They are often on difficult ground and may have suffered from management neglect or they may have been selected for agricultural improvement. The botanical diversity of such grassland may be enhanced by simply amending existing management practices. However, on many sites pro-active restoration management will be required involving introduction of seeds and creation of gaps for their establishment. Substantial changes of livestock type, timing of grazing or control of dominant species may also be required. The option can also contribute to protecting valued landscapes and archaeology, and the promotion of good soil conditions.

Indicators of Success

- The extent of the habitats of interest within the grassland as identified in the Farm Environment Plan should be maintained or increased.
- The Soil Phosphate Index should be 0 or 1.
- By year 4, at least 2 high-value indicator species Bitter Vetch, Bugle, Betony, Birds-foot Trefoil, Burnet Saxifrage, Greater Birds-foot trefoil, Eyebright, Autumn Hawkbit, Knapweed, Ox-eye daisy, Ragged Robin, Sneezewort, Greater Birds-foot trefoil, Greater Knapweed, Scabious sp, (see FEP manual Pg. 75 for botanical list) for BAP grassland habitat Lowland Meadows should be frequent and 2 occasional in the sward.
- By year 5, cover of wildflowers in the sward (excluding undesirable species but including rushes and sedges), should be between 20% and 90%. At least 40% of wild flowers should be flowering during May-June.
- By year 2, cover of bare ground should be between 1% and 5%, distributed throughout the field in hoof prints or other small patches.
- By year 2, wet ditches should have aquatic vegetation cover (submerged, floating and emergent) of between 25% and 75% of water area. Filamentous Algae should be less than 5% cover; Duckweed should be less than 75% cover. Water levels should be between 20cm and 45cm below mean field level throughout the year.

Management Prescriptions; the dos and don'ts of management

The following rules apply across the whole area being managed under this option.

- From year 1, manage the sward by grazing and/or cutting to achieve a sward height of between 2cm and 10cm in November.
- Manage the grassland to achieve the indicators by grazing with cattle for at least 6 weeks between May and September or cutting and removing field-dried hay after 15 July. In years when hay is taken graze the aftermath in autumn. Where spring grazing takes place exclude livestock at least 7 weeks before cutting for hay.
- There must be no application of nutrients such as fertilisers, organic manures or waste materials including sewage sludge. .
- Supplementary feeding is confined to the feeding of mineral blocks. Feeders and troughs should not be used. Feeding sites should be moved regularly and never placed on archaeological features. Creep feeding of young stock is permitted.
- Control undesirable species such as Creeping Thistle / Spear Thistle / Curled Dock / Broad-leaved Dock / Common Ragwort / Common Nettle so that by year 3, their cover is less than 5% of the area. Agree all methods of control with your Natural England adviser.
- Do not install new drainage or modify existing drainage systems unless agreed in writing with your Natural England adviser. This includes subsoiling and mole ploughing. Maintain existing drains in working order.
- Ploughing, sub-surface cultivation and reseeding are not permitted except as part of a grassland management plan agreed with your Natural England adviser. Chain harrowing or rolling are not permitted except between 15 March and 15 July.
- Field operations and stocking must not damage the soil structure or cause heavy poaching.
 Small areas of bare ground on up to 5% of the field are acceptable. Take particular care when the land is waterlogged.
- Retain all standing and fallen dead wood unless it presents a genuine safety hazard.

HK18 - Supplement for haymaking On G02 and G06 fields as show in Appendix 4

General description of the management required:

This option aims to ensure the continuation or re-introduction of hay-making on sites where the ready availability of livestock and/or the climatic difficulty of haymaking means they would otherwise be grazed and not cut. These fields will have high existing or potential value as meadow land. This option can also help to reduce diffuse pollution, benefit the integrity of the historic landscape as well as reinforcing the landscape character of the area. It will also help ensure hay-making techniques and traditions are not lost to future generations.

Indicators of Success

See relevant grassland option indicators of success

Management Prescriptions; the dos and don'ts of management

The following rules apply across the whole area being managed under this option.

- Cut and remove field-dried hay every other year. Do not cut or top before 31 July, and not before 15 August one year in 5. If you make silage you must turn the swath and wilt for at least 48 hours.
- Graze the aftermath in autumn until weather conditions will not allow to achieve sward height indicators.
- Where spring grazing is a traditional practice in meadows, exclude livestock for at least 7 weeks before cutting for hay, or 15 May at the latest.
- Field operations and stocking must not damage the soil structure or cause heavy poaching.
 Small areas of bare ground on up to 5% of the field are acceptable. Take particular care when the land is waterlogged.

HB11 - Maintenance of hedges of very high environmental value (2 sides) On hedgerows as shown in Appendix 4

General description of the management required:

This option manages hedgerows that support target species of farmland birds, insects or mammals such as the Tree Sparrow, Brown Hairstreak and Dormouse. It also maintains hedgerows which make a significant contribution to the local landscape character and/or are historically important boundaries.

Indicators of Success

 Each year, there should be some uncut hedgerows on the holding. By year 2, hedges under this option should be at least 2m in height and 0.75m in width (measured from the centre of the hedge).

Management Prescriptions; the dos and don'ts of management

The following rules apply across the whole area being managed under this option.

- Allow hedges under this option to reach and then maintain a minimum height of 2 metres and minimum width of 0.75 metres (measured from the centre of the hedge) by year 2.
- Trim hedges between October and 28 February only.
- Trim hedges no more than one year in three. Trimming of hedges should be rotated to avoid cutting all hedges in the same year.
- For those hedges containing fast-growing species or where the hedge has been left untrimmed for more than three years, trim using a circular saw / cutter bar machine.
- Remove cuttings from the edge of the hedge after trimming.
- Retain all mature growth of ivy on trees.
- Retain all standing deadwood unless it presents a genuine safety hazard.

HB12 - Maintenance of hedges of very high environmental value (1 side) On hedgerows as shown in Appendix 4

General description of the management required:

This option manages hedgerows that support target species of farmland birds, insects or mammals such as the Tree Sparrow, Brown Hairstreak and Dormouse. It also maintains hedgerows which make a significant contribution to the local landscape character and/or are historically important boundaries.

Indicators of Success

- Each year, there should be some uncut hedgerows on the holding.
- By year 2, hedges under this option should be at least 2m in height and 0.75m in width (measured from the centre of the hedge).

Management Prescriptions; the dos and don'ts of management

The following rules apply across the whole area being managed under this option.

- Allow hedges under this option to reach and then maintain a minimum height of 2 metres and minimum width of 0.75 metres (measured from the centre of the hedge) by year 2.
- Trim hedges between October and 28 February only.
- Trim hedges no more than one year in three. Trimming of hedges should be rotated to avoid cutting all hedges in the same year.
- For those hedges containing fast-growing species or where the hedge has been left untrimmed for more than three years, trim using a circular saw / cutter bar machine.
- Remove cuttings from the edge of the hedge after trimming.
- Retain all mature growth of Ivy on trees.
- Retain all standing deadwood unless it presents a genuine safety hazard.

HB14 - Management of ditches of very high environmental value Land parcels and associated features managed under this option:

RLR Field Number: TQ17299425

Features: G06 Lowland meadows and pastures- BAP habitat, G15 Coastal & Floodplain

grazing marsh - BAP habitat

General description of the management required:

This option is aimed at the management of ditches of very high environmental value. These can occur in grassland, wetland and arable landscapes. The aim is to provide a variety of speciesrich stages of natural succession, from open water, to ditches full of emergent species, and to maintain local historic landscape character. Target farmland birds, insects, plants and mammals will benefit from an improvement in the structure of ditches through sympathetic vegetation cutting regimes.

Indicators of Success

- Ditches must permanently contain water for at least 10 months of the year.
- There should be no more than 10% of the ditch length with heavy shade i.e where vegetation overhangs more than half the width of the channel surface.
- By the end of year 3 there should be no scrub growing on the ditch banks.
- Filamentous algae should be less than 10% cover.
- Non-native species Water Fern/Australian Swamp Stonecrop/Parrot's Feather/Hydrocotyle should be absent

Management Prescriptions; the dos and don'ts of management

The following rules apply across the whole area being managed under this option.

- Cut the emergent and aquatic vegetation every 3 years leaving the roots in the base of the ditch. Place the arisings in the adjacent field. Retain a fringe of emergent vegetation on one side of the ditch.
- Manage ditches and banks between 1 October and 28 February only.
- Do not re-profile the ditch unless agreed with your Natural England adviser.
- De-silt/dredge ditches to their previous profile no more than once during your agreement. Place the arisings in the adjacent field.
- Following de-silting/dredging/re-profiling, bankside vegetation must be reestablished by natural regeneration.
- If the ditch bank is not grazed cut the bank adjacent to the ditch 1 year in 2 after 31 August and remove dense cuttings. Cut at a height of no less than 4cm and do not expose bare soil. Cut only one bank of the ditch in any year, leave the opposite bank
- Remove cuttings from the edge of the ditch after trimming.
- Remove all of scrub growing on the ditch banks using methods approved by your Natural England adviser.
- Do not cultivate or apply fertilisers, manures or pesticides to land within 2m of the centre of the ditch or 1m of the top of ditch banks.
- Only use mechanical means (including hand tools) to clean the ditches or trim the bank.
 Do not use herbicides.

HQ1 - Maintenance of ponds of high wildlife value < 100 sq m On ponds as shown in Appendix 4

General description of the management required:

The aim of this option is to protect and enhance ponds and associated target species. The management of the pond and surrounding vegetation will benefit water quality and enhance the habitat for the associated wildlife. In addition they may, in the right situation, provide an area of flood storage and benefits to flood risk management. Ponds are important as a characteristic local landscape feature.

Indicators of Success

- There should be no obvious signs of pollution, such as a film of fuel oil, total cover with green algae or rubbish.
- By year 3, undesirable species should cover less than 10%.
- The combined cover of both submerged and floating aquatic plants, excluding undesirable species, should be at least 10%% between May to Mid-September.
- Percentage cover of marginal vegetation (marginal and emergent species), should be between 25% and 75% in the period May to mid-September.

Management Prescriptions; the dos and don'ts of management

The following rules apply across the whole area being managed under this option.

- Do not deepen or change the original profile of the pond, unless agreed in writing with your Natural England adviser.
- Do not infill.
- Do not drain the pond or change the drainage of adjoining land, or otherwise alter the water table or inflow to the pond, unless agreed in writing with your Natural England adviser.
- Allow natural drawdown of the water to occur, by not topping up water levels artificially.
- Do not use any pesticides or fertilisers within 6m of the pond, except to control problem weed species and only then with the written agreement of your Natural England adviser.
- Prevent potential pollutants entering the pond, such as spray drift, sheep dip and organic or inorganic fertilisers.
- Retain any existing submerged or partially submerged deadwood.
- Undertake management as necessary to maintain a balance of submerged, floating and emergent vegetation and open water.
- Eliminate any undesirable weed species present, following advice from your Natural England adviser.
- Do not allow nearby trees to shade more than 25% of the southern pond margins. Do not intentionally introduce any plants or animals (including fish) to the pond, except where agreed in writing with your Natural England adviser.
- Do not introduce or feed waterfowl on the pond.
- To benefit Great Crested Newts the land within a 200m radius of a breeding pond must be managed extensively and no new barriers such as buildings, walls, tracks, or footpaths created. Potential hibernation sites such as rabbit burrows, log piles, rocky areas or woodland should be retained. Consult your Natural England adviser before starting any management operations.

Appendix 6 Grassland surveying: Guidance on data collection and scheduling for field surveys

Guidance on recording population sizes of grassland species

Record the relative abundance of each species you find in the field on the DAFOR scale: $\mathbf{D} = \text{Dominant}$; $\mathbf{A} = \text{Abundant}$, $\mathbf{F} = \text{Frequent}$, $\mathbf{O} = \text{Occasional}$, $\mathbf{R} = \text{Rare}$. To do this, tick species off on your list as you find them in the normal way. When you have finished surveying the square, assign a DAFOR letter to each species.

The trick to doing this is to go through the list quickly and for each species write the first score that comes into your head. Try not to think about it too much.

If a species seems intermediate between two categories and you are unsure which to assign to it, choose the lower category, eg if you are unsure if something was occasional or frequent, choose occasional. Please note.

It is essential to stick to the basic 5 scores as applied to each field. Entries like **O/F** (occasional to frequent) or **LF** (locally frequent) must not be used.

D for Dominant

In practice, this will never apply at Chesworth Farm. To score **D**, a species would have to be the most common plant by far, in well over three quarters of the square. It is possible in a field of highly improved grassland where perennial rye-grass might sometimes score **D** but that will not occur at the Farm.

A for Abundant

Only use **A** if the plant was really very common in many parts of the field. For most species this would mean that there were thousands of individual plants present. In most fields, few species will score as highly as **A** and in quite a few squares there will be no species that score that highly.

F for Frequent

Use **F** if you found the plant in several places in the field and there was usually more than just a few individuals in each of these places. You could also use **F** if the plant was only present in one part of the field but was very common in that part, with many individuals and covered a substantial area.

O for Occasional

Use **O** for species that occur in several places in the field, but whose populations are usually not very big. You would also use **O** for species that are very common in one part of the field, occupying just a small area.

R for Rare

Use **R** for any species that occur as a small number of individuals in the field. This small number of individuals may be located in one place in the field or scattered over several different locations. In many squares **R** is likely to be the score that most species get. If you are not sure if something should score **O** or **R**, give it **R**.

Scheduling for field surveys

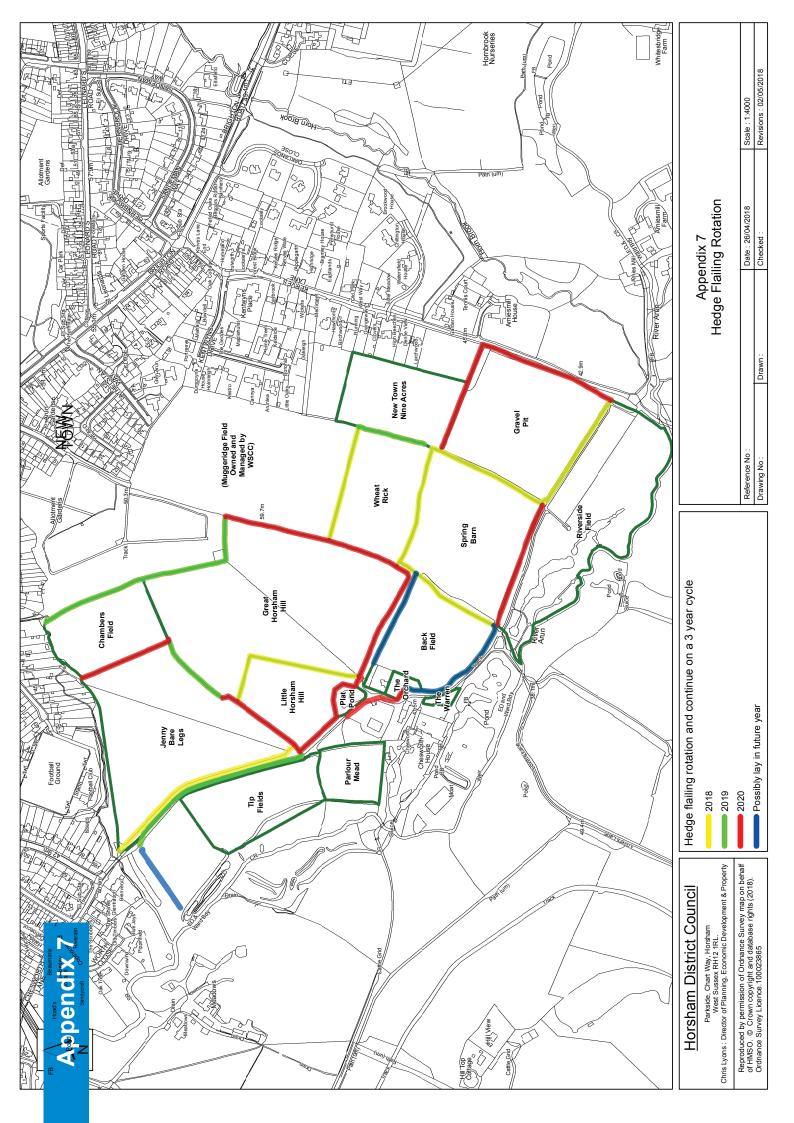
The following three-year rotation to be repeated in subsequent years

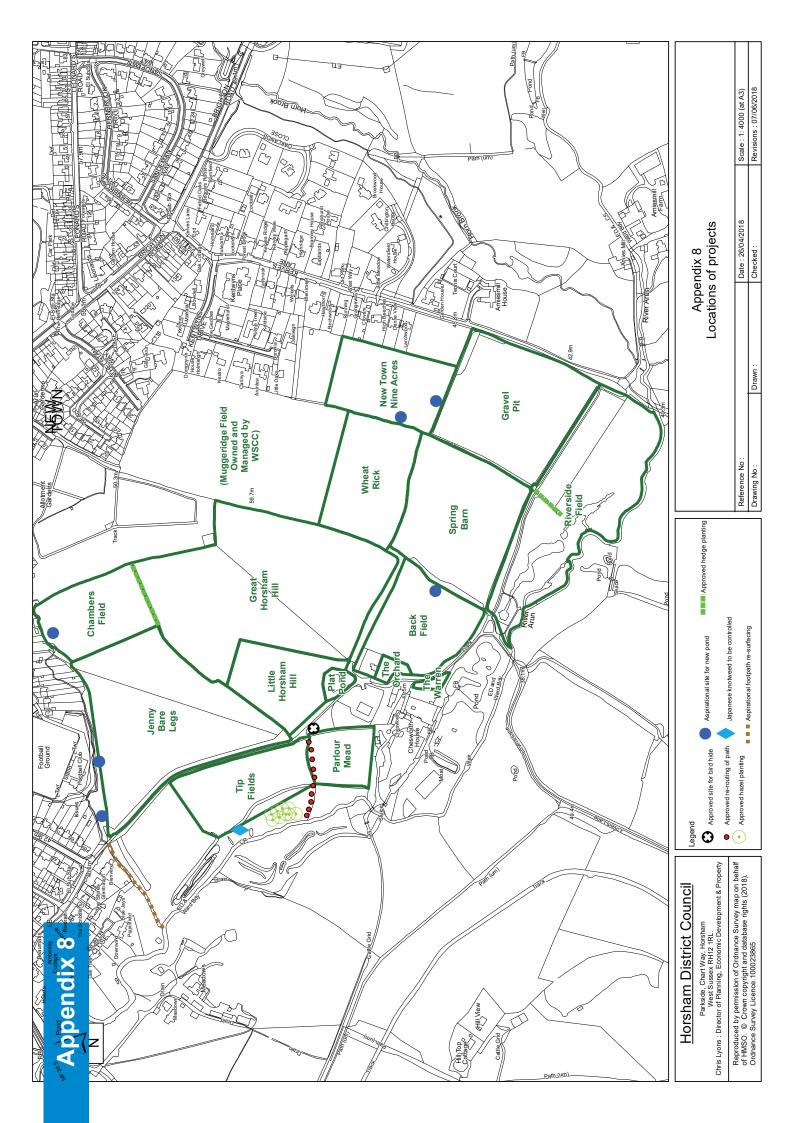
2018 2019 2020

Little Horsham Hill Parlour Mead Field Wheat Rick Field
Gravel Pit Field White Gate Lag New Town Nine Acres Field

Great Horsham Hill Riverside Field Tip Field
The Warren Back Field Chambers Field
Riverside Walk Spring Barn Field Platt Pond

Occupation Road Visitor Centre and Surrounds





Appendix 9

Schedule for management operations and related tasks

Mangmt Plan Ref.no	Description of task	By who	Frequency	Timing	Latest review (date) Comments
5.1.3	Cattle management/notification to visitors	P&C	as and when	ongoing	
5.1.4	Investigate possible alternative contractors	P&C	when possible	until alternative found	
5.1.5	Hay cut on grasslands and graze regrowth	contractor /P & C	annual	July/Aug- Oct	
5.1.6	Cut/pull weeds in grassland	FCF & Green Gym	as and when	April-Oct	
5.1.8	Grassland surveys	FCF and P & C	4 times a year	May, June, July, Aug	
5.1.8	Upload grassland survey information	P&C	annual	Dec/Jan	
5.1.9	Monitor need for sowing yellow rattle	P&C	ongoing	summer	
5.1.10	Explore removing fields from cutting	P&C	when possible	when NE Officer appointed	
5.1.10	Review success with sacrifical crops and continue accordingly	FCF and P & C	when possible	when NE Officer appointed	
5.1.11	Mowing grass on main track and volunteer centre	contractor/ Pand C	15 times a year	March-October	
5.1.11	Mowing paths through fields	contractor/ P and C	4 times a year	March-October	
5.1.12	Request clearance work from WSCC South of river crossing	FCF	annual	March-October	
5.2.3	Hedge flailing/ notification of visitors	contractor/ P & C	annual	October	
5.2.5	Tree inspections	P&C	3 yearly	Winter 2018 and 2021	
5.2.6	Prune/thin orchard trees	P&C, FCF (Green Gym)	annual	Dec-Feb	
5.3.3	Monitor ditch flow	P&C	annual	ongoing	
5.3.4	Cut emergents in ponds and riverside fields	FCF, Green Gym	annual	Sept-Nov	
5.3.5	Monitor tree cover/algae/ aquatics in ponds etc.	FCF and P&C	ongoing	summer	
5.3.6	Grazing banks of ponds and scrapes	P&C	as and when	March-October	
5.3.7	Consult with NE over GCN, Cut-grass and Dormouse	P&C	when possible		
5.3.8	Monitor for alien invasives plant species	FCF and P & C	ongoing	summer	
5.4.1	Maintain logs/stones in place for school groups	FCF and P & C	ongoing		
5.4.2	Litter picking planned activities	FCF and Green Gym	twice yearly	Feb and July	
5.4.2	Litter picking ad hoc	FCF and P & C	as and when	ongoing	
5.4.2	Emptying bins	P&C	as and when	ongoing	

Appendix 10

Schedule for site development

Mangmt Plan Ref.no	Description of task	By who	By when	Conditions/comments	Latest review (date) Comments
6.2.1	Landscape improvements to Tip Field (hazel planting)	FCF and P & C	Apr-19	Need purchase of bare root plants	
6.2.2	Eradicate Japanese knotweed at Tip Field	P & C and contractors	Apr-24	Repeated annual herbicide applications required	
6.2.3	Hedge planting between Chambers Field and Great Horsham Hill	FCF and P & C	Apr-20	Need purchase of bare root plants	
6.2.4	Hedge planting on East boundary of White Gate Lag	FCF and P & C	Apr-21	Need purchase of bare root plants	
6.2.5	Monitor dormouse population	FCF and P & C	as and when	Further action depending on findings	
6.3.1	Hedgelaying	FCF and P & C	as and when in winter	contingent on availabilty of trained volunteers	
6.3.2	Investigate feasibilty of new ponds	P & C in consultation	ongoing	Resources required if projects identified	
6.3.3	Installation of bike racks at Volunteer Centre	P&C	Apr-19	Subject to funding	
6.3.4	Monitor safety of pedestrians in relation to cycling	FCF and P & C	Ongoing	Action as necessary (signage./ clearing sight lines)	
6.3.5	Invistigate feasibilty of nest box camera	FCF and P & C	Apr-20	Subject to funding	
6.4.1	Re-routing path and boardwalk through Parlour Mead to Riverside Walk	P & C and contractors	Apr-22	Subject to funding and consultation with HTCP	
6.5.1	Establish strategy for site interpretation, field names, waymarking	FCF and P & C	Apr-20	Once strategy established, set new plan for implementation	
6.5.2	Construct new bird hide and feeding station by main track	P & C and contractors	Apr-20	Subject to 106 funding	
6.5.3	New path through Gravel Pit Field	P&C	Apr-25	Subject to funding and route to be determined	
6.5.4	Present proposals for improvements to Queensway entrance	P&C	Jan-20	Subject to funding and route to be determined	
6.5.5	Re-surfacing footpath NW of Tip Fields	۳ م ۲	Apr-23	Subject to funding and requires collaboration with HTCP	

Appendix 11

Schedule for organisational objectives

Mangmt Plan Ref.no	Description of task	By who	By when	Conditions/comments	Latest review (date) Comments
7.1.1	Consider LNR declaration	The Council	Apr-20	If decide to decalre LNR then new action will be specified to achieve that	
7.1.2	Increase provision of events and activities	P & C anf FCF	Ongoing	In consultation with SWT and subject to resourcing	
7.1.3	Increase publicity (local media/ online social media)	FCF and P & C	Ongoing	Individual roles/ repsonsibilities to be adopted	
7.1.4	Produce site leaflet (inc. online PDF)	FCF and P & C	Apr-19	As and when required for projects	
7.1.5	Monitor growth in volunteering	FCF and P & C	Ongoing		
7.1.6	Investigate potential for additional car parking	P&C	Apr-20	Need include EIA and business case	
7.1.7	Investigate feasibility of heritage farm aspiration	P&C	Apr-20	Develop business case as required	
7.2.1	Train minimum two volunteers to do grassland surveys	FCF and P & C	Sep-20		
7.2.2	Train volunteers in hedge laying	FCF and P & C	Apr-20		
7.2.3	Review and schedule annual H & S training	P&C	Annually in January	Then need to implement annual schedule	
7.3.1	Application to trigger HLS funding and monitor future of HLS	P&C	Annually in March	Seek alternative funding if necessary	
7.3.3	Intro charges for professional dog walkers and produce code of conduct and registered list	P&C	Dec-20		
7.3.4	Seek improvements in availablity of grazing animals and haycutting contract	P&C	Ongoing	Until improvements found	
7.3.5	Seek opportunities for income generation	FCF and P & C	Ongoing		
7.4.1	H & S site inspections	P&C	Ongoing monthly	Record hazards and any concerns raised by FCF and visitors	
7.4.2	Review Risk and COSSH assessments and need for DBS checks	P&C	Annually in January	Then need to implement amendments/get new checks	
7.5.1	Survey visitor numbers	FCF	Ongoing	Notify P & C of any significant changes re need for additional facilities/ changes to marketing	

Appendix 12 Aspirational Projects identified by FCF but not included in the Management Plan

Access

- Continue "disabled-friendly" surfacing along Pedlars Way from boardwalk to Volunteer Centre
- Add some way-marked routes round the farm ie short and long walks
- Add signage from local roads to the farm
- Replace first gate into Jenny Bare Legs field with single-handed operated latch
- Replace bridleway gates at Spring Barn with high-rise handle/latch for horse riders
- Establish a tree-top viewing platform
- Removal of hedge in front of Volunteer Centre (to allow for increased parking)

Volunteer Centre

- Seasonal "pop-up" café
- Kit out the kitchen area with secure storage and display furniture
- Improve kitchen facilities eg a small cooker
- Upgrade floor downstairs
- Insulate and waterproof roof/walls/entry points
- Re-configure entrance to form a weather-proof information hub
- Improve facilities in picnic area to encourage family visits etc.

Conservation

- Increase the number of cattle for conservation grazing purposes
- Drain cattle trough(s) when not in use but provide self-provisioned drinkers for small animals/ dogs etc.
- Ask West Sussex County Council, Public Rights of Way Dept to again review/repair the riverbank on the south side of the River Arun bridge
- Provide another "dipping pond" in Back Field
- Beetle bank
- Expand and enhance the tree islands in Great Horsham Hill, for example, by adding extra gorse

Other

- Update laminated map/interpretation board at Queensway entrance. Timetable this for regular review and replacement
- Review and update FCF dog-splash
- Negotiate (again) with HDC/WSCC re provision of a dog waste bin at/near Arun Way entrance
- Devise a pet memorial area for Chesworth Farm regulars.
- Wooden sculpture for children half way around a circular route
- Panoramic viewpoint at the top of Great Horsham Hill identifying local landmarks
- Replace red "urban" dog waste bins with "rural" style bins
- Upright vertical logs/stepping stones/performance/story-telling area for schools
- Installation of exercise facilities for older people

