

Upton Wood Management Plan

April 2018 - March 2028



Dorset
Council

Contents

1 Introduction	3
2 Description of the Site	4
2.1 Management Compartments	5
3 Rights and Responsibilities	9
3.1 Trees	9
3.2 Path Network	9
3.3 Access Points and Fencing	11
3.4 Neighbouring Properties	11
3.5 Public Highways	11
3.6 Electricity Pylons and Cables	11
4 Record of Completed Work	11
5 Evaluation and Proposals	12
5.1 Management required to maintain the site's recreational potential:	12
5.2 Management required to maintain the site's nature conservation interest:	13
5.3 Management relating to individual compartments:	13
6 Future Maintenance: 2013-2018	16
Table 1: Summary of Work Programme April 2013 – March 2018	17
6.1 Long Term Objectives	18
7 Further Study	19
Maps	20
Figure 1: Location map	20
Figure 2: Designations within 2km	21
Figure 3: Upton Wood habitat map	22
Figure 4: Locations of access, fencing, bridges and interpretation	23
Figure 5: Compartment map	24
Figure 6: Planned management map	25
Appendix 1	
Site of Nature Conservation Interest survey carried out 2011 by the Dorset Wildlife Trust	26
Appendix 2	
Completed work 2008-2013	29

1. Introduction

The organisation formerly known as Purbeck District Council purchased Upton Wood in 2004 from The Llewelin Estate. It is now owned by Dorset Council. Previous to this, the Estate leased the wood to the District Council from 1992 up until its purchase.

The wood, situated on the eastern edge of Upton, is surrounded by three housing estates, namely Pony Drive, Upton Heath and Gorse Lane, as well as being enclosed by the Upton By-pass (A35) and Poole Road. A site map showing the land owned by Dorset Council is attached as figure 1.

The wood is included in the Council's Grounds Maintenance Contract which covers clearing back vegetation to keep the main tracks open and litter picking on a regular basis. The current contract will finish at the end of March 2025. The wood is also included within the Dorset Waste Partnership agreement for the collection of fly-tip rubbish and emptying of waste/dog waste bins.

Most of the trees within the wood are covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO). The majority of the site is covered by District of Purbeck (Lytchett Minster No.4) TPO 1979. Adjacent land is covered by District of Purbeck (Lytchett Minster No.6) TPO 1987.

Two electricity pylons are situated within the wood and overhead power lines cross part of the wood. A Wessex Water pumping-station is situated near the wood and associated public water main, foul sewer and rising main are found within the woodland boundary. There is a gas main running alongside Poole Road.

During 2008, improvements were carried out to the bridleway and permissive paths, as well as the creation of the Woodland Trail. The bridges, entrance structures and information boards were replaced, as well as benches and litter/dog waste bins added at the same time. In early 2009 the wildlife hedge was laid and new planting was added. All these improvements were achieved through capital funding from the Interim Planning Framework so that the wood could become a Suitable

Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to mitigate against new development near to internationally important heathland. There is a separate revenue budget available to maintain these improvements.

The habitats within the wood are very varied comprising woodland (mature and plantation), drainage ditches, scrub and, wet and dry heathland. As such, the site provides excellent habitat for a variety of wildlife including invertebrates, birds, reptiles, amphibians and mammals. Although it is located within an urban setting, the woodland does have value, especially considering its close proximity to Upton Heath Nature Reserve. Figure 2 shows designated protection areas within 2km of the wood, highlighting the importance of this site within a wider context. The wood is part of the Holes Bay Nature Park. The Purbeck Local Plan part 1 (Planning Purbeck's Future) identifies the wood as within the greenbelt.

The site is managed for the quiet enjoyment of residents and visitors to Upton, and also to protect and enhance the site's wildlife value.

A specific risk assessment and fire management plan exists for Upton Wood.

This management plan covers the period 2018 to 2028, with suggestions for longer-term management. The Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) Survey which was carried out during 2011 is attached as appendix 1. The habitat map (figure 3) must be considered provisional as a much longer term of study is needed.



2. Description of the Site

The site is situated at the eastern edge of Upton, on the eastern boundary of Dorset Council – grid reference: SY 987 933. The ground is generally level, at an elevation of about 8 metres above sea level. Geologically, the site is underlain by the Bagshot Beds. The soils of the wooded sections are sandy and free draining, but a clay stratum is apparent in the bed of the drainage ditches and the wet heath has probably developed as a result of impeded drainage between the two principal ditches, which run from west to east through the site.

Being on the south coast, the climate is fairly mild and therefore the wood suffers from little frost. However, some areas within the wood naturally flood and with increasingly larger amounts of winter rainfall, these areas are staying flooded for long periods of time, causing some of the trees within these areas to react unpredictably. Careful monitoring of these areas is needed.

The wood is made up of approximately 5.2ha of land with a path network throughout, consisting of a public right of way (bridleway 8) and permissive paths – see figure 4 for details. Technically the bridleway does not form part of the deeds of ownership, but it is managed as part of the wood and has been since the original lease from The Llewelin Estate in 1992.

For the purposes of management, the site can be conveniently divided into four compartments (A - D). There are also three adjoining areas (compartments E - G) and their management should be taken into account as it will have an impact on this management plan. All of these compartments are described below and are marked on the map in figure 5. The names of the compartments used in this report are utilitarian as they do not have agreed vernacular names and as such may change in the future.



2.1 Management Compartments

Pony Drive Wood – Compartment A

This compartment contains a mosaic of different woodland types. There are few trees that suggest they are over 100 years old, although along the edge of the bridleway there are several mature oaks on a boundary bank. South of the bridleway, there are areas of tall pine trees, probably planted and perhaps 50-60 years old, with an understory of bracken, bramble and holly.

Within the eastern area of this compartment, there are two areas of beech wood. There used to be an understory of rhododendron, but this has now been cleared and the dense holly trees and shrubs have been thinned. An oak tree donated by a local Councillor has been planted in one of the glades created by rhododendron removal.

Elsewhere oak, birch, sweet chestnut, beech and sycamore are the most prominent trees. In the shrub layer are saplings of these species with rowan, holly and ash. The ground flora is quite poor; there are few species apart from ivy, bracken and bramble except along the main tracks.

In view of the wood's unknown history, it was decided that introduction of native woodland flowers would add to the attractiveness of the wood without risk to the indigenous flora. English bluebells, snowdrops and primroses have been planted near the Pony Drive entrance and where holly has been thinned. Numerous trees within this compartment have bat roosting potential, including mature oak and scots pine which have cavities and/or dense ivy suitable for roosting. These trees should remain, as long as they do not pose a health and safety risk. Trees and scrub on the embankments and main tracks are also likely to provide foraging and commuting routes for bats. 7 Bat boxes (see figure 4) have been installed and are being monitored by the Dorset Bat Group. Soprano pipistrelles are known to be roosting in the boxes. There were originally 10 boxes, but 3 have been stolen.

There is a 19th century gravel pit close to Poole Road and the vehicle access gate. A track has been made by dog walkers which skirts the northern rim of the pit, but this route is not to be encouraged as the sides of the pit are quite steep and tree roots could cause someone to fall.

There are various entrances into this compartment. At Poole Road there is a pedestrian gate next to the bus stop and a vehicle access gate and adjacent motorbike inhibitor approximately half-way along the boundary with an information board and bench. At the Pony Drive entrance there is a motorbike inhibitor (allowing access for pedestrians, cyclists, pushchairs, wheelchairs and mobility scooters) and horse stile (for access to the bridleway) plus information board, litter bin and dog waste bin. The Council has recently created a combined foot/cycle path from this entrance and then along Pony Drive and Poole Road, so that visitors to Upton Wood can walk or cycle to Upton Country Park safely using the Poole Road traffic island (which has also been recently upgraded to allow enough space for cyclists).

The bridleway running through the wood from the Pony Drive entrance up to the Upton By-pass embankment was re-instated during September 1992 and is a well established track lined with mature trees; it naturally links with the other permissive paths throughout this compartment, of which there are many. The bridleway has wide margins of bramble scrub with ferns including broad buckler fern. There is a shallow, dry ditch on one side, and a dry ditch and old boundary bank on the other. The old bridleway used to run in a straight line up to Upton Heath Nature Reserve, however when the By-pass was opened (in 1980) the path was diverted alongside the slip road.

There is a second boundary bank within this compartment running north to south, in parallel with one of the permissive paths. It is most prominent at the southern end, close to the vehicle access gate, where holly clearance has taken place.





A drainage ditch runs along the north-east boundary of this compartment. On the other side of the ditch, the land and bridleway forms part of the highway verge.

During 2009, the small trees behind the boundary fences of properties in Martingale Close were layed into a hedge. In-fill planting followed, with the aim of having a continuous hedge along this boundary to provide food, refuge and possible nesting habitat for birds and other wildlife. Some of the in-fill planting has died, leaving mostly hawthorn saplings remaining. Further planting is required and the hedge also needs to be re-layed.

Upton Heath South – Compartment B

All heathland in Dorset is valuable as a result of the dramatic reduction of this habitat during the last century. Ultimately, in the absence of management, this heath would be lost under scrub and eventually become woodland through natural succession.

Originally part of Upton Heath Nature Reserve, but now isolated by the Upton By-pass, this area retains much of the same heathland flora but is too small to be viable for some of the fauna. This compartment (as well as compartment C) was designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) by Dorset Wildlife Trust in 1995 and is of particular interest for its purple moor-grass, bog myrtle and heather species. Part of this compartment has been identified by Natural England as lowland heathland, which is a Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat.

The ditch which runs from west to east through this compartment is referred to in this plan as the northern ditch and allows drainage from Upton Heath Nature Reserve through a culvert under the By-pass. Newts and frogs have been found in this ditch. It has a fairly good flow of iron-rich water although is sometimes blocked by rubbish or plant growth – this ditch should not be fully cleared or excavated due to its wildlife value. Sharp flowered rush and bulrush grow where the water is not overshadowed by birch, willow, bramble or bog myrtle.

South of the ditch is a wet heathland with purple moor-grass and bog myrtle. Lizards have been seen here. Between the grass tussocks are several species of sphagnum moss and a variety of wetland plants and ferns; of particular note is the presence of narrow buckler fern and tormentil. Four small wildlife ponds have been dug at the eastern end of the wet heathland and it is hoped they will be used by dragonfly and damselfly as breeding sites.

On the northern side of the ditch, the ground rises up to a bank adjacent to the By-pass. At the western end of the bank is mainly bracken with pine above. In the middle is a small, dry heathland (except where invaded by pine, bracken or gorse) comprising of common heather, bell heather and a small area of cross-leaved heath. The eastern end is predominantly birch. As the heath is adjacent to the By-pass, approximately one third of it is managed as highway verge.

In an attempt to control the spread of bracken on both the dry and wet heaths, the herbicide Asulox has been used over a number of years and has been mostly effective on the wet heath. A large amount of scrub clearance has also taken place and in conjunction with the use of a herbicide on the bramble, has controlled the regrowth.

At the western end of the compartment is a steep bank up to the level of the Gorse Lane Housing Estate. The vegetation consists of



birch, willow and scrub with two mature oaks. The fencing is maintained by the adjacent property owners. This end of the compartment has overhead electricity power lines and approximately half of the birch and willow trees below have been coppiced by Scottish and Southern Energy Power Distribution (SSEPD) as part of their on-going maintenance programme.

Upton Wood – Compartment C

Between compartment A and the Gorse Lane Housing Estate, the woodland is mainly deciduous, however mature pines line the edge of the permissive path; some of which are reaching the end of their life-span. This wood is more homogeneous than compartment A and has probably developed naturally from heathland over the last hundred years or so.

Under the trees are saplings of the mature species (oak, beech, sweet chestnut and birch), with bramble, bracken, holly and ferns. In the wetter portions, purple moor-grass is present, but declining due to low light levels. The presence of young turkey oaks is due to a mature tree in neighbouring compartment G.

This area, as well as compartment B, is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). This compartment was designated specifically for the area being mixed woodland, with hard and broad buckler ferns beneath.



There is a drainage ditch on the southern boundary of this compartment (referred to as the central ditch), and where the water table is close to the surface, silver and downy birch are more common. The ditch turns north-east on reaching the bridleway in compartment A to merge with the northern ditch. Small fish, an eel, frogs and toads have been seen in this ditch.

The main entrance to this compartment is from the Upton Heath Housing Estate in the form of a motorbike inhibitor which is accompanied by an information board, litter bin and dog waste bin.

There is another motorbike inhibitor providing access from the Gorse Lane Housing Estate, accompanied by a litter bin and dog waste bin. Part of the residents' car park boundary fence was replaced at the same time as the motorbike inhibitor was installed (in 2008), although it is not the responsibility of the Council to fence this boundary.

This compartment borders a play area (compartment E). Clearance of bramble and other undergrowth next to the play area, as well maintenance of overhanging trees has taken place.

Upton Wood South – Compartment D

This compartment comprises a block of young/semi-mature oak and birch wood similar to the drier parts of compartment C, although with rather more pine to the east. Aspen, elder, hazel, blackthorn, grey sallow and guelder rose are also found here.

The compartment is enclosed by fences of neighbouring properties, a chainlink fence next to the play area (compartment E) and the central ditch.

This compartment also has overhead electricity power lines and some of the trees below have been recently cut back by SSEPD as part of their on-going maintenance programme.



Play Area – Compartment E

This area and the metal fence on the boundary is owned and managed by Aster Group (formerly Synergy Housing Trust), and forms part of the Upton Heath Housing Estate.

This compartment contains a children's play area and paths leading to other areas of the estate, including a foot/cycle path linking the entrance to Upton Wood with Palmerston Road. It is hoped to signpost a pedestrian/cycling route from Upton Heath Nature Reserve through to Upton Wood using this foot/cycle path.

The litter bin and dog waste bin has been placed by the Council (with permission from Aster Group) on the edge of this play area for use by dog walkers in the wood or on the estate.

Upton By-pass Embankment & Bridleway – Compartment F

This compartment comprises a strip of land running parallel with the By-pass forms part of the adopted highway. This compartment includes approximately one third of the dry heathland and a section of bridleway which links into the Castleman Trailway.

The bridleway is the responsibility of the Council Rights of Way team, with the Highways Team being responsible for the remaining land, including any tree work required.

A dense screen of gorse, pine and birch has been established along the northern boundary of the compartment which is a good visual barrier and boundary for the Upton By-pass.

Balancing Pond – compartment G

This land is currently owned by Persimmon Homes (previously Maunders Homes and Westbury Homes). It is an area of green space containing a balancing pond, rough grass, scrub and a number of trees - some of which were planted when the Pony Drive Housing Estate was first built in the early 1990's.

The compartment is fenced on its southern boundary where it joins private properties (maintained by the house owners) and the northern boundary is provided by the central ditch. The eastern boundary is fenced, however it is very old and needs removing. There is no specific boundary markings between this and compartment D.

There is vehicular access from the Pony Drive Housing Estate (Martingale Close) giving access to the Wessex Water pumping station located in this compartment. This track continues, but narrows to provide an informal pedestrian access as a 'cut-through' to the bridleway in compartment A.

Persimmon Homes are liaising with the Council's Legal Department regarding the adoption of this compartment through a Section 106 agreement.



3. Rights and Responsibilities

3.1 Trees

The trees within Upton Woods will be managed as follows and in accordance with the Council's Management of Council-owned Trees Policy:

- All tree works undertaken to the Council's trees will be in accordance with industry best practice and guidance, including British Standard 3998 2010: Tree work – Recommendations. This ensures that all tree works are carried out to a recognised high standard. Before undertaking tree work, the Council will also ensure that all wildlife protection guidance and regulations are followed, such as regulations relating to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- Retain trees for as long as their condition allows and fell trees only as a last resort where health, structure or condition of the trees presents a risk to the public.
- Unless proving a risk to public health and safety, dead trees are to be left standing to provide habitat for insects etc.
- Heavy ivy growth will be removed from approximately 15% of trees in close proximity to neighbouring properties, roads or paths/bridleways over the next 10 years.
- Ash trees will be identified and monitored regularly for symptoms of Chalara fraxinea (ash dieback disease).
- The Council will carry out tree work required to ensure there is a minimum height clearance of 5.2m over the highway wherever possible.
- The Council will carry out tree work required to ensure a minimum height clearance of 2.2m over pavements wherever possible.
- The Council will carry out tree work required to maintain clear sight lines at road junctions and access roads wherever possible.
- The Council will carry out tree work required to prevent obstruction of street lights.
- The Council will carry out tree work required to prevent obstruction of street signs and traffic signals.
- If a Council owned tree is touching a building, the Council will carry out the necessary tree work to remove the nuisance.
- If a Council owned tree is believed to be associated with anti-social behaviour or criminal activity, the Council will consider tree work measures that may be taken to reduce or eliminate the problem on a case by case basis.
- The Council will not prune or fell a tree to remove or reduce leaf fall. The Council will not remove fallen leaves from private land.
- The Council will not prune or fell a tree to remove or reduce the perceived nuisance of fruit, seed or flower fall from trees. The Council will not remove this type of tree debris from private land.
- The Council will not prune or fell a tree to reduce the amount of honeydew or other sticky residues that falls from the tree.
- The Council will not prune or fell a tree in order to reduce the incidence of droppings produced by birds using the trees. The Council will not remove bird droppings from private land.
- The Council will not generally prune or fell a tree to increase sunlight reaching a garden or property.
- The Council will not prune or fell a tree to improve a view from a property.
- The Council will not prune or fell a tree to prevent or reduce TV aerial or satellite dish interference.
- The Council will not prune or fell a tree when requested to do so because of a personal medical complaint, except in exceptional circumstances.
- The Council will not prune or fell a tree to prevent or reduce the release of pollen.
- The Council will not prune or fell a tree to prevent it from overhanging a neighbouring property or land. N.B. Under Common Law, property owners are entitled to prune overhanging branches back to their boundary, if the tree owner refuses to prune





the tree. Pruning beyond the boundary or crossing the boundary to carry out pruning is considered trespass. The tree work should be carried out carefully to ensure that damage is not caused to the tree or property. If the work you carry out leads to the tree becoming dangerous or causes it to die, you may be held liable. The branches and any fruit that you remove still technically belongs to the tree owner and you have to offer it back to them, although they do not have to accept it. If the tree owner does not want the vegetation, you would be responsible for its disposal. Before any work is undertaken, you should check with the Council whether the tree is protected by a Tree Preservation Order or if it is in a conservation area.

- The Council will normally not prune, fell or cut the roots of a tree to prevent the roots from entering a drain or pipe that is already broken.
- The Council will not prune or fell a tree because of a perceived threat due only to its height or size.
- Trees situated close to property do not normally cause subsidence problems. However, each site is different and the reasons for subsidence damage may be complex. The Council will carefully consider any relevant claims for subsidence damage but does not accept as a matter of course that nearby Council-owned trees are likely to cause or contribute to a subsidence problem.

The trees within the woods will be monitored as follows:

- A full survey every 3 years.
- More frequent monitoring will take place for trees identified as requiring regular observation (every 12-18 months or after extreme weather events).

3.2 Path Network

Any changes to the public right of way or permissive paths need to bear in mind the Equality Act 2010.

Public Right Of Way (Bridleway 8)

The bridleway is for the use of horse-riders, pedestrians and cyclists.

The Council Rights of Way team is responsible for surfacing, cutting back surface vegetation, waymarking, signposting, bridleway bridge maintenance/replacement and keeping the bridleway free from obstructions, i.e. fallen trees.

Permissive Paths

Other than the bridleway, all other paths within the wood are permissive and are for the use of pedestrians and cyclists.

3.3 Access Points and Fencing

There are five formal access points into the wood consisting of a mixture of motorbike inhibitors and pedestrian gates, all of which will be maintained for health and safety standards and kept in a good condition. Any changes to the access points need to bear in mind the Equality Act 2010.



Although the motorbike inhibitors prevent full-sized motorbikes from accessing the wood, smaller bikes could still gain access. There are signs at most of the access points stating 'No Motorcycles'. If motorcycles are found to be illegally using the wood, the police will be informed and action may be taken.

The wooden post and rail fencing bordering Poole Road and Pony Drive is to be maintained by the Council. Fencing adjoining the housing estates is to be maintained by private owners or Aster Group.

3.4 Neighbouring Properties

It is the Council's duty to ensure that trees bordering houses, play areas and car parks on any of the three adjoining housing estates are maintained to health and safety standards and to carry out works to trees which are dead, dying or dangerous. See section 3.1 for further information.

3.5 Public Highways

Upton By-pass

The Upton By-pass is the responsibility of and maintained by the Council's Highways team.

Culvert

The Council has a responsibility to keep culverts free from obstruction.

There is a culvert which runs under the Upton By-pass providing drainage from Upton Heath Nature Reserve. It was last cleared in 2003 at a cost of £2,700. It is expected that it will need clearing again during the lifespan of this management plan and an annual inspection will take place to ascertain when this work will be required.

There are 2 culverts providing drainage from underneath the Upton Heath Estate and Gorse Lane.

Poole Road

It is the Council's responsibility to ensure that the trees on the boundary with Poole Road are maintained for safety and visibility of the road, to a height of 5.2 metres.

Poole Road pavements and lighting is maintained by the Council's Highways team.

3.6 Electricity Pylons and Cables

SSEPD (Scottish and Southern Energy Power Distribution) has a statutory duty to ensure a constant supply of electricity. As such, they maintain the two pylons and overhead power lines located within the wood and manage trees growing underneath or next to pylons or power lines to avoid the risk of those trees falling onto or growing too close to the lines. SSEPD has a wayleave agreement with the Council to enable this work to take place. This statutory duty overrides any Tree Preservation Order (TPO). The statutory distance between power lines and tree growth is a minimum of 3.6 metres. SSEPD's own policy adds 4 years growth for whatever type of tree is present – therefore approximately every 4 years SSEPD should cut back the re-growth, maintaining a 3.6 metre clearance at all times.

4. Record of Completed Work

A record of all works carried out between April 2013 and March 2018 is attached as appendix 2.



5. Evaluation and Proposals

This management plan has regard to:

Appropriate silvicultural management;
Maintenance and enhancement of the site's informal recreational potential; and
Maintenance and enhancement of the site's nature conservation interest.

The management compartments and sub-compartments referred to below are marked on the planned management map (figure 6).

5.1 Management required to maintain the site's recreational potential:

Maintaining Access and Fencing

The outer perimeters to the east, south and west are fenced (the Upton by-pass providing a barrier to the north) with access being gained from the Upton Heath, Pony Drive and Gorse Lane housing estates, as well as Poole Road.

The majority of the fencing alongside Poole Road and Pony Drive was installed in 1993, with further fencing and replacement entrance structures installed during 2008.

Generally, the fencing (wooden with 3 cross-rails) from the corner of Pony Drive alongside Poole Road is still in good condition, but it's likely that it will need replacing with a similar design within the time frame of this management plan. When it is replaced, the sight line for vehicles exiting Pony Drive must be taken into consideration.

The main access points will need maintaining, but they should not need replacing in the next 10 years.

Improvement to the Path Network

The bridleway and main permissive paths were re-surfaced and widened during 2008. A woodchip Woodland Trail with waymark posts was also created and the two bridges replaced at the same time.

The denser, wooded areas along the edges of the bridleway and paths is suitable habitat for hibernating reptiles, therefore if the path is to be upgraded again, a survey would need to be carried out to establish if reptiles are present.

Interpretation

Three information boards were installed during 2008.

An Upton Wood leaflet has been produced and is available from Discover Purbeck Information Centre, Upton Town Council and on www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/uptonwood.

Community Involvement

To encourage community involvement wherever possible, an on-going programme of conservation tasks will be arranged where residents can get involved in the management of their local green space. These tasks will be advertised through posters, the town magazine 'The Clarion', dorsetcouncil.gov.uk and visit-dorset.com websites. If the Dorset Countryside Volunteers (DCV) are supervising the task, it is also advertised on their website and task programme.

The regular tasks may prompt the formation of a 'Friends of Upton Wood' group or 'Green Group' for the whole of Upton.

Since April 2013, 109 volunteer days have been completed on a variety of tasks within the wood.

Education

There are a number of first, middle and secondary schools in the surrounding area which may want to use the wood as an education resource. They could also be involved in carrying out wildlife surveys, art projects or researching the history of the wood.

A local pre-school group uses the wood as a forest school during term-time.

Upton and Lytchett Minster Town Plan

The Plan for Upton and Lytchett Minster (PULM) contains links to the management and maintenance of the wood. The Plan was produced in January 2008.

5.2 Management required to maintain the site's nature conservation interest:

- Concentrating effort to protect the SNCI to ensure that a good mosaic of plant species is maintained.
- Maintaining the wildlife value of the watercourses (compartments A and C).
- If planting takes place, increase the variety of plant species and 'fruit' bearing trees/shrubs where appropriate to provide wildlife with a supply of food all year round.

5.3 Management relating to individual compartments:

Pony Drive Wood – Compartment A

Natural regeneration of beech and sycamore is taking place and some birch, oak and rowan have been relocated from compartment B. Oak and sweet chestnut do not appear to be regenerating well, and some planting may be needed to maintain the variety of species.

The rhododendron and laurel has all been removed and sprayed with a herbicide. If any re-grow, they should be sprayed again (A1).

Coppicing and thinning of holly has taken place to allow light to reach the woodland floor and also to provide space for saplings to grow. It was hoped that a more varied ground flora would develop once the holly was removed, but this has not happened yet as thick bramble has now established – this will require cutting back or digging up (A2). The holly re-growth should be monitored and if required, be coppiced again.

The wildlife-friendly hedge will require maintaining and re-laying (A3). In-fill planting of suitable, fruit-bearing trees is required where gaps appear in the hedge.

The bridleway and main permissive path (A4) will be maintained for all season, all-access use.

The Woodland Trail (A5) waymarking will be maintained.

The drainage ditch (A6) will be kept clear of debris.



Upton Heath South – Compartment B

Active management of the SNCI involves manually cutting back scrub and then removing trees/saplings. If the tree has been felled, then the stump will be treated with a herbicide or eco-plug to prevent regeneration. Where possible, saplings will be dug up and relocated to a more suitable location within the wood.

Grazing has been suggested as a way to control the scrub in this compartment, however the cost of stock proof fencing is prohibitive and there is only a very small area to be grazed, meaning there would be little interest from graziers. The logistics of moving stock to areas adjacent to a road and housing estates mean this option is not practical.

The dry heath has had some clearance of young birch, gorse and holly to provide more space for heather to grow. The scot's pine, maritime pine and birch found along the boundary with the By-pass provide a fairly good visual screen and should be maintained as such, but when other trees on the dry heath require felling, they will not be replaced, or regeneration allowed to take place.

Bracken is the main cause of loss of the dry heath and it has been sprayed numerous times with a herbicide and repeatedly trampled during the growing stage (B1). Trampling should continue to eradicate most if not all

bracken on the dry heath. This raised bank could be good habitat for reptiles, therefore surveys are required before any major clearance work is carried out.

The culvert under the By-pass (B2) will be inspected annually and when necessary will be manually cleared.

During 2012, some of the bramble on the wet heath was sprayed with a herbicide to control its spread, however some of the bramble remains. This should continue to be removed (B3) to enable other heathland plants to establish themselves and be able to compete with quick growing bramble.

At the western boundary against the Gorse Lane Housing Estate, there is an 8 metre strip of land between the household fences and the edge of the SNCI (B4), comprising mostly of birch and willow, plus 2 mature oaks, with bramble beneath. Trees which are coppiced in this area will be allowed to regenerate naturally to create a visual screen against the houses and also improve the amenity for woodland users. As this strip is beneath the overhead electricity power lines, once these trees reach a certain height they will be managed by SSEPD to ensure they are not a risk to the power lines. Replacement tree planting is not appropriate here. Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue have advised that this vegetation provides a fuel break between the heath and the adjoining properties in Gorse Lane, should a major fire break out in Upton Wood.





The drainage ditch (C3) will be kept clear of debris.

English bluebells will be planted near the Upton Heath/Gorse Lane housing estates entrance (C4) to improve the aesthetics of this entrance which will hopefully discourage fly-tipping, as well as providing more flowering plants for wildlife.

There is a tendency for garden and household rubbish to be dumped at the entrance to the wood or at the back of adjoining properties. This should be cleared on a regular basis by Dorset Waste Partnership and if necessary, enforcement action taken against the offender.

Upton Wood South – Compartment D

This area is relatively unexplored due to its position and lack of paths. The main area of work required within this compartment is to trees on the boundary with neighbouring properties. When other tree work is undertaken, holm oak should be removed and stump treated with a herbicide or eco-plug to prevent regeneration.

The boundary with the play area (compartment E), should continue to have the brambles and undergrowth cut back by 2-3 metres, plus overhanging trees are to be monitored (D1).

There is a tendency for garden and household rubbish to be dumped at the back of adjoining properties. This should be cleared on a regular basis by Dorset Waste Partnership and if necessary, enforcement action taken against the offender.

Upton Wood – Compartment C

Major changes should not be made here. Tree planting will not be needed, nor is it appropriate, as natural regeneration will be sufficient. The boundary with the play area (compartment E), should continue to have the brambles and undergrowth cut back by 2-3 metres, plus overhanging trees are to be monitored (C1).

The permissive path (C2) will be maintained for all season, all-access use.



6. Future Maintenance: 2018-2028

Proposed work is illustrated in figure 6. and the full schedule of work is summarised with a time scale in table 1. Sub-compartments are identified by a number after the letter.

Pony Drive Wood – Compartment A

General

- Remove any dead, dying or dangerous trees which would have an affect on paths, roads or neighbouring properties and replant as advised.
- Replace boundary fencing.
- Maintain wooden bridge, benches, information boards, waste bins and entrances.
- Coppice Holly re-growth as required.

Site specific

- A1 - Spray rhododendron re-growth with herbicide if necessary.
- A2 - Cutting back or removal of bramble where holly thinning has taken place.
- A3 - Maintain wildlife hedge with infill planting where necessary.
- A4 - Maintain bridleway and permissive path for all season, all-access use.
- A5 - Maintain Woodland Trail waymarking.
- A6 - Clear ditch of any debris which has accumulated.

Upton Heath South – Compartment B

General

- Remove any dead, dying or dangerous trees which would have an affect on roads or neighbouring properties as advised.
- Continue clearance of trees/saplings and scrub encroaching on the SNCI.
- Remove or cut back bramble where it is encroaching onto the heath (retaining 8 metre strip adjacent to Gorse Lane houses).

- Clear ditch of vegetation if obstructing flow of water.

Site specific

- B1 - Trample new bracken growth 4 times per year.
- B2 - Annual inspection of culvert under the Upton By-pass and clear when needed.
- B3 - work with SSEPD to maintain the minimum height clearance for trees underneath the powerlines while retaining an 8 metre strip adjacent to Gorse Lane houses.

Upton Wood – Compartment C

General

- Remove any dead, dying or dangerous trees which would have an affect on paths or neighbouring properties as advised.
- Maintain information board, waste bins and entrance structures.
- Coppice Holly as required.

Site specific

- C1 - Cut back scrub on boundary with play area to 2-3 metres. Annual inspection of culverts underneath Upton Heath Estate and clear when needed.
- C2 - Maintain permissive path for all season, all-access use.
- C3 - Clear ditch of any debris which has accumulated.
- C4 - Planting of English bluebells near entrance.

Upton Wood South – Compartment D

General

- Remove any dead, dying or dangerous trees which would have an affect on neighbouring properties as advised.

Site specific

- D1 - Cut back scrub on western boundary with play area to 2-3 metres.

Table 1: Summary of Work Programme April 2018 – March 2028

	18/ 19	19/ 20	20/ 21	21/ 22	22/ 23	23/ 24	24/ 25	25/ 26	26/ 27	27/ 28
GENERAL WORK										
Fell/cut back hazardous trees (R)	All	All	All	All	All	All	All	All	All	All
Plant new trees if necessary (R)	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Clear fly-tip rubbish/litter picking (R)	All	All	All	All	All	All	All	All	All	All
Replace boundary fencing when needed (C)	A									
Inspect culverts and clear when needed (C)	B2 C1	B2 C1	B2 C1	B2 C1	B2 C1	B2 C1	B2 C1	B2 C1	B2 C1	B2 C1
Maintain 2-3 metre scrub free zone around play area boundary (R)		C1, D1		C1, D1		C1, D1		C1, D1		C1, D1
Maintain infrastructure (bridge, benches, information boards, signs, bins etc) (RS)	A,C	A,C		A,C	A,C	A,C	A,C	A,C	A,C	A,C
ACCESS										
Maintain bridleway and permissive paths and Woodland Trail (RS)	A4, C2, A5	A4, C2, A5		A4, C2, A5	A4, C2, A5	A4, C2, A5	A4, C2, A5	A4, C2, A5	A4, C2, A5	A4, C2, A5
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT										
Coppice holly (R)		C		C		A		A		A
Treat rhododendron re-growth (RS)	A1									
Maintain wildlife-friendly hedge (RS)	A3	A3			A3		A3		A3	
In-fill planting of hedgerow species (RS)		A3								
Clear debris from watercourses (R)	A6, C3				A6, C3		A6, C3		A6, C3	
Scrub clearance, removal of trees/saplings and treat stumps on SNCI (R)	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B	B
Trample new bracken growth (R)	B1	B1	B1							
Cut back/remove bramble (R)	A2, B	A2				B		A2	B	A2
Planting of bluebells at the Upton Heath/Gorse Lane entrance (R)	B	C4								

(R) = Revenue cost

(RS) = Revenue cost from a ring-fenced budget made available through Heathland Mitigation funding. This budget is finite and once the money is used, future costs will have to be met by normal revenue budgets.

(C) = Capital cost

6.1 Long Term Objectives

The site has considerable potential for education, conservation and enjoyment involving the local community. It might also be used as a source of woodfuel.

This Management Plan is for ten years until March 2028 and after this another detailed plan for the following ten years should be written. In this section, suggestions for the longer term are set out.

Pony Drive Wood – Compartment A

These woods will continue to be an attractive area for walking and similar quiet pastimes.

Following the removal of most of the holly, natural regeneration will continue, securing the woods future.

During this period most of the pines are likely to reach the end of their life and will need removing. They will naturally be replaced by broad-leaved trees such as sweet chestnut, oak and beech. If such natural regeneration is not sufficient or undesirable species become established, some tree planting should be undertaken.

It is hoped that the bridleway will continue to be a well used thoroughfare and as such the track will need routine repair and clearance.



Upton Heath South – Compartment B

This is currently a fair example of a Molinia heath with an area of dry heath and because of the decline in these habitats elsewhere, it must be maintained as such. This will entail controlling scrub, bracken and tree saplings. By doing so, will hopefully not only maintain but enhance its status as an SNCI.

With the creation of wildlife ponds, this area could be used as an educational resource showing the importance of heathland, even such small areas as this.

Unless another source of visual screening is identified, trees and gorse adjacent to the Upton By-pass and housing estate is preferred to maintain the visual amenity.



Upton Wood – Compartment C

Some of the pines have already been felled in the interests of safety and any remaining will be coming to the end of their life-span. The area should be left to develop with minimal interference.

The permissive path leading from the housing estates through the compartment should be maintained not only to allow access within the woods, but also to provide a link to Upton Country Park and the Castleman Trailway.

Upton Wood South – Compartment D

This area should remain an undisturbed area for wildlife, as activity and paths are not appropriate here due to the close proximity to neighbouring properties.

7 Further Study

Specific areas of research, some of which would be suitable for local schools projects, are:

- The history of the woods.
- Record all species in each compartment including bats, breeding birds, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, invertebrates and plants.
- Map the wood and prepare a detailed habitat map.
- Plot the position of scarce species or mature trees and monitor their performance.
- Run monitoring projects, e.g. bird surveys, butterfly transects.

Copies of ecological surveys and historical records will be given to Dorset Environmental Record Centre (DERC) and the Council's Historical Environment Records team.



Figure 1: Location Map

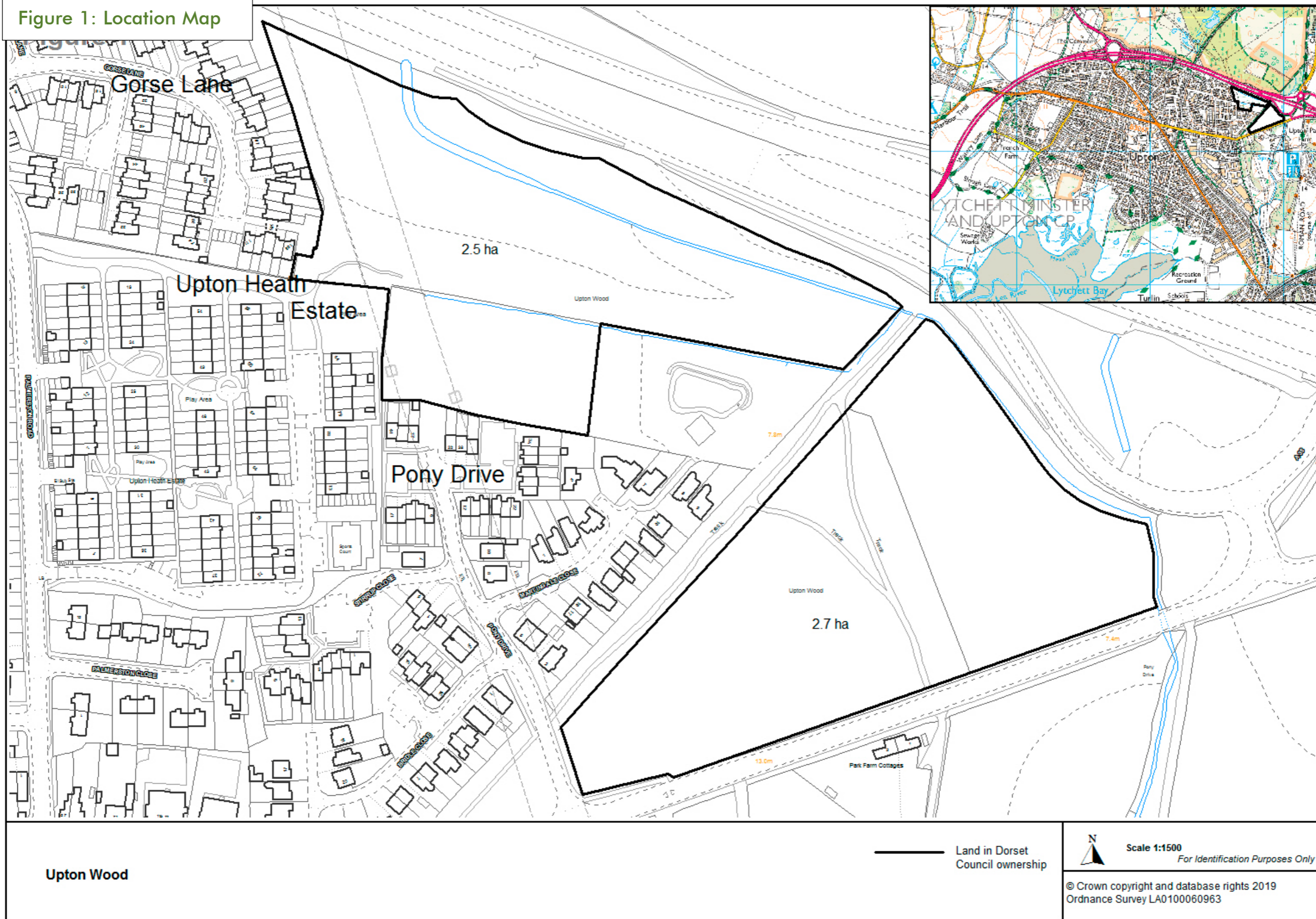


Figure 2: Designations within 2km

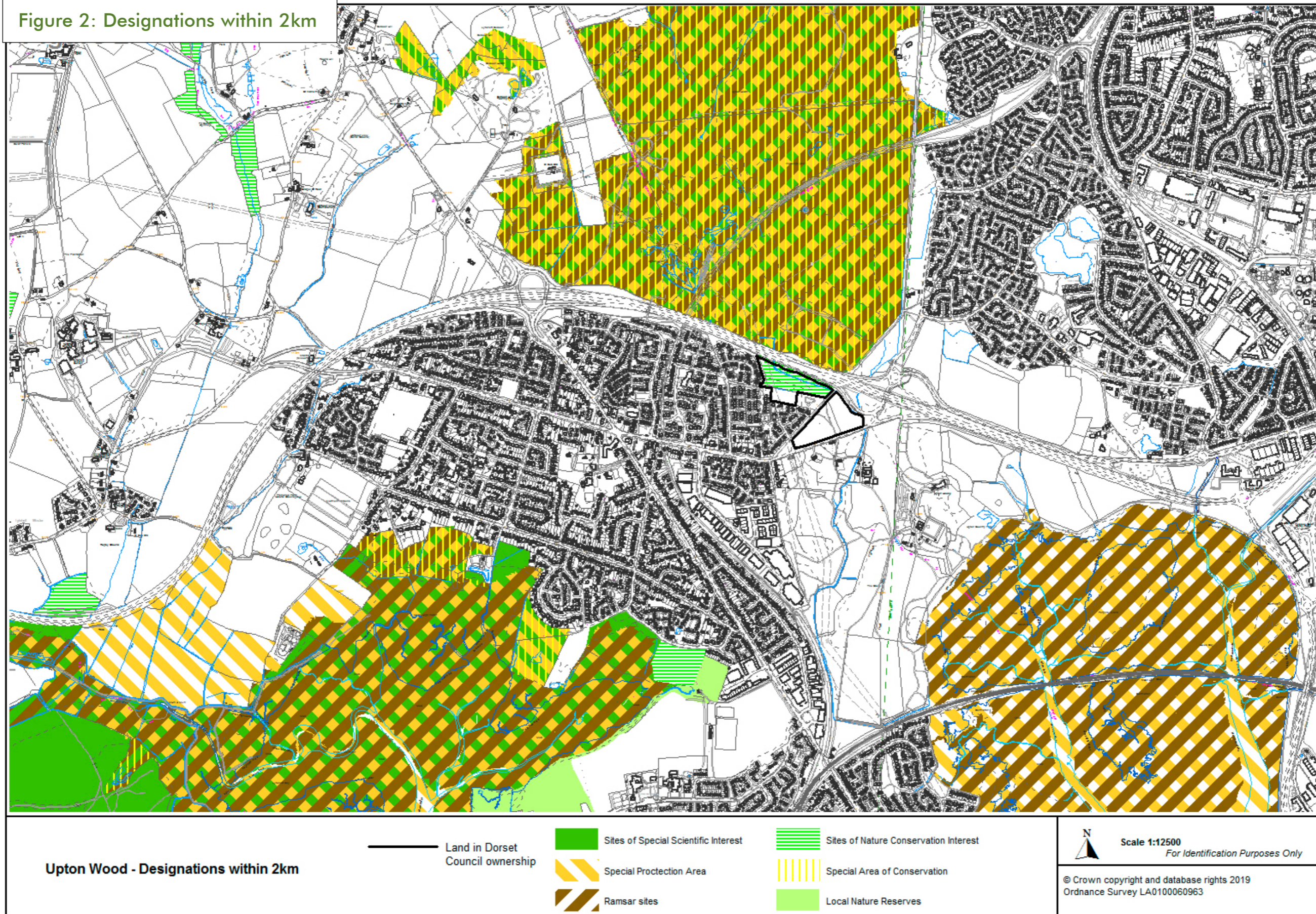
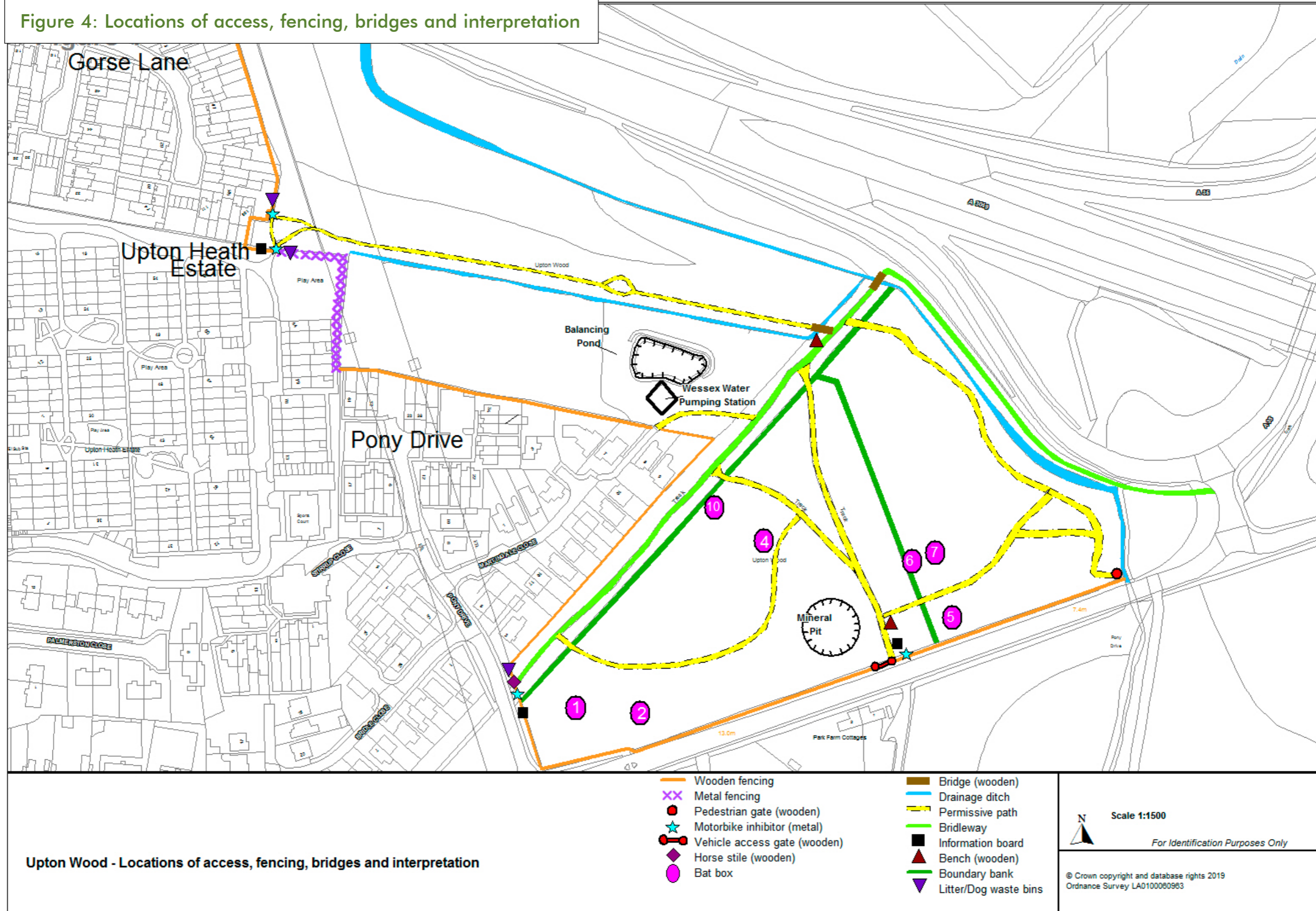
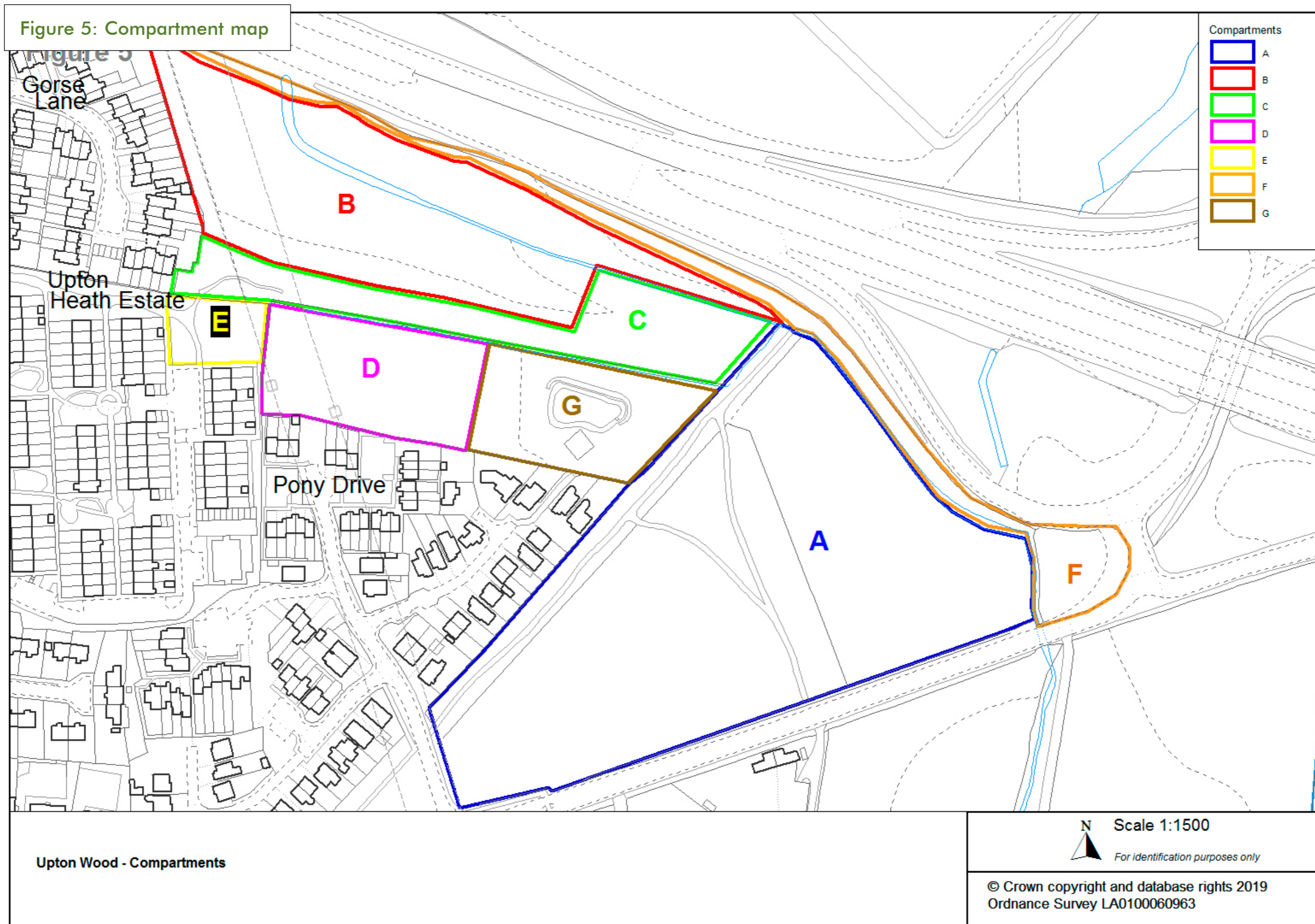


Figure 3: Upton Wood Habitat map



Figure 4: Locations of access, fencing, bridges and interpretation





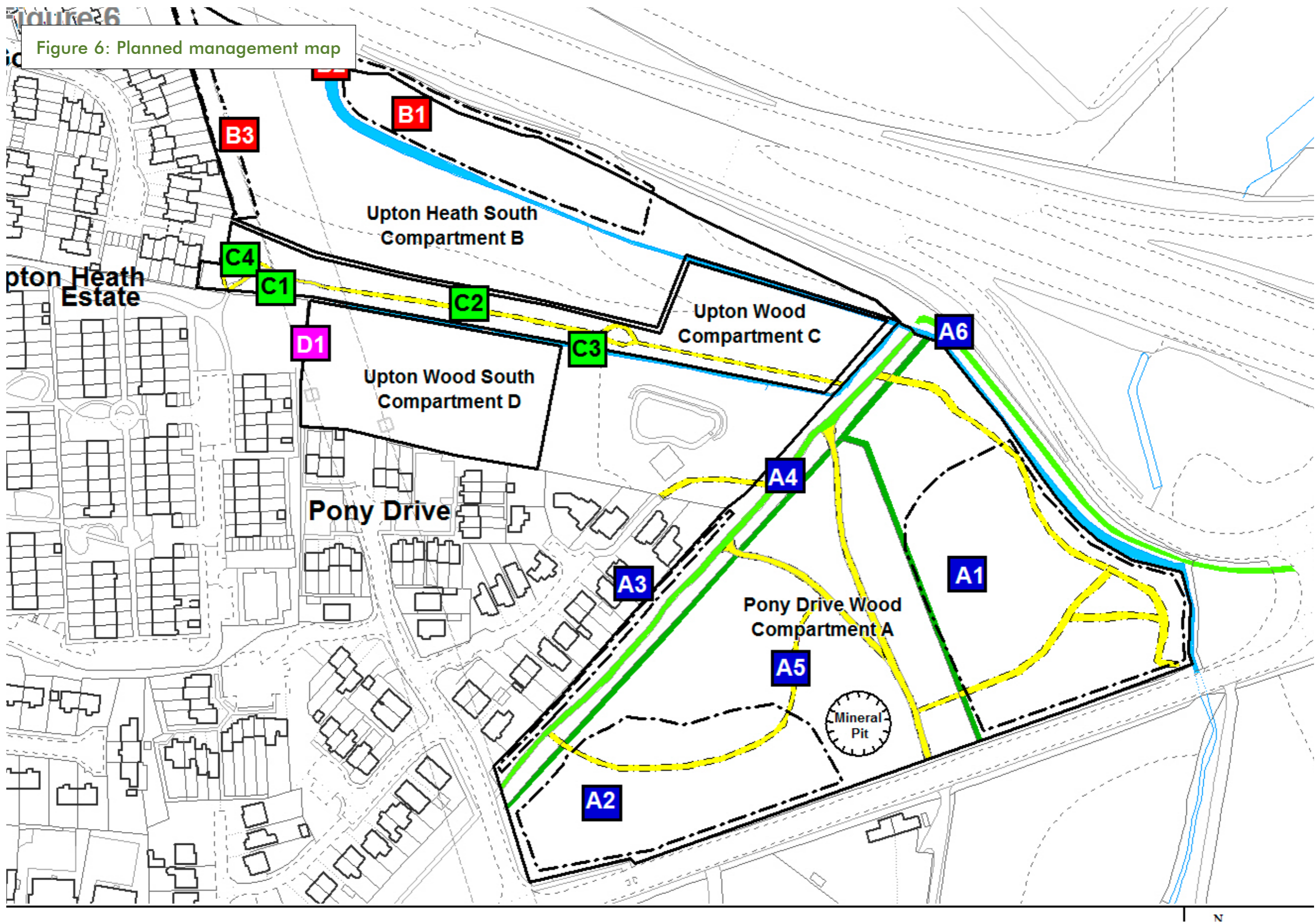


Figure 6: Planned management map





The Nature Conservation value of your site would be best maintained by considering the following practices:

- A dynamic self-sustaining woodland should have a healthy, varied structure and age range of native trees and shrubs together with plentiful amounts of standing and fallen deadwood, the latter left in situ especially where it occurs in damp, partially shaded conditions. Deadwood is an important habitat for many specialized invertebrates and thus insect-eating birds and mammals and provides valuable opportunities for hole-nesting birds and roosting bats.
- Ideally, thin the Holly where this is dense and stifling the woodland flora and natural regeneration, and remove any Rhododendron before flowering, as this can spread quickly and stifle both the woodland flora and the natural regeneration of native trees and shrubs.
- To maintain some floral diversity in the open areas, control the growth of Purple Moor-grass (which out-competes the smaller notables) through cutting once a year, at the end of the summer - although initially it may need cutting more frequently or in mid-summer to reduce its density. The cuttings should be removed as a return of nutrients to the soil will favour the competitive species and lead to a loss in plant diversity.
- Manage bracken by cutting or bruising with a roller in mid-June to mid-July when the reserves of food in the rhizome are at their lowest, or by selective application of an approved chemical. Advice can be provided from the contacts over-leaf.
- Bramble can best be controlled by regular monthly summer cutting, and controlling the re-growth by weed wiping with an appropriate herbicide.
- Whilst the scrub is an important habitat for birds and invertebrates, it is important not to allow it to spread too far into the more species rich areas. Ideally it should be managed to maintain a varied age structure, by cutting some areas each year.

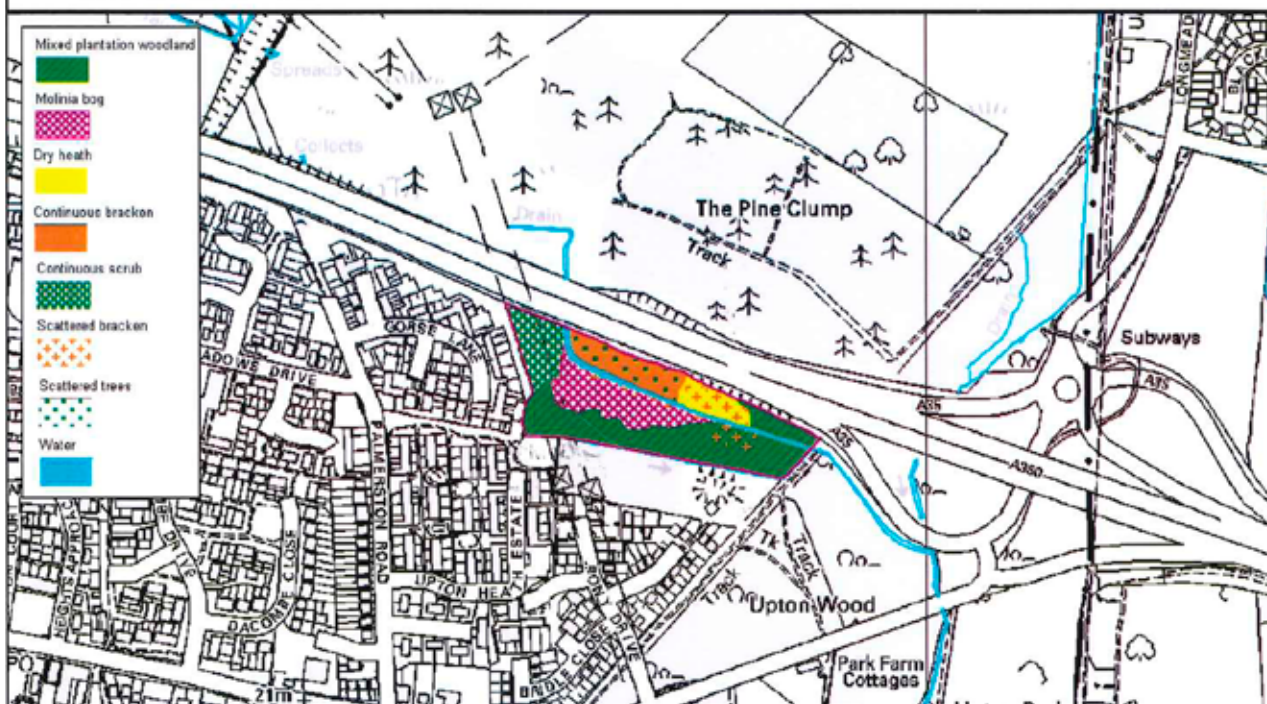


About your Site of Nature Conservation Interest

Upton Wood SNCI is one of 1250 **Sites of Nature Conservation Interest** in Dorset which have been recognised by Dorset Wildlife Trust as being important for wildlife. These include woodlands, downland, heathland, meadows, lakes, coastal sites and others. Some are owned by public bodies, but most are privately owned, and access is by permission of the landowner only. Survey Date: Aug 2011

The Wildlife Importance of Upton Wood SNCI

- **Upton Wood** consists of mixed plantation woodland, with sweet chestnut, beech, oak, ash, downy birch and scots pine, with an area dominated by purple moor-grass, and abundant sharp-flowered rush. A raised bank north of a stream comprises abundant scots pine and bracken, and a small fragment of dry heath with ling, bell heather, bristle bent and western gorse. Low lying bramble is dense in the west alongside an area of willow and birch scrub. The botanical interest is scattered, with small stands of bog myrtle and western gorse, along with rare tormentil. Also present is hemp-agrimony, marsh thistle, common reed, cat's-ear and narrow buckler-fern.
- **Dorset Notable plant** species are important as indicators of agriculturally unimproved or semi-improved grassland, and heathland, both much reduced and fast declining habitats.
- **Dorset notable species** found on the site include: Bog Myrtle, Western Gorse, Bristle Bent, Tormentil and Narrow Buckler-fern.



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For additional information on your Site of Nature Conservation Interest or on the SNCI system please contact Dr. Sharron Abbott on: 01305 264620

For management advice and information about any available grant - aid, please contact one of the following organisations:

Dorset Wildlife Trust: 01305 264620

FWAG South West: 01823 355427

Environmental Stewardship: 0300 060 1118

Woodlink / AONB Officer (Advice on woodfuel, and general woodland management) :01305 228239

Dorset Environmental Records Centre

Species list for SY99/049 Upton Wood SSSI

Surveyed 17/8/11

Species	Common name	Status
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken	
<i>Dryopteris carthusiana</i>	Narrow Buckler-fern	DN
<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	Broad Buckler-fern	
<i>Blechnum spicant</i>	Hard Fern	
<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Scots Pine	
<i>Myrica gale</i>	Bog Myrtle	DN
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech	
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	Sweet Chestnut	
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate Oak	
<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver Birch	
<i>Betula pubescens</i>	Downy Birch	
<i>Persicaria maculosa</i>	Redshank	
<i>Salix cinerea</i>	Grey Willow	
<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>	Rhododendron	
<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	Heather	
<i>Erica tetralix</i>	Cross leaved Heath	
<i>Erica cinerea</i>	Bell Heather	
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Bramble	
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	Tormentil	DN
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Rowan	
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Gorse	
<i>Ulex gallii</i>	Western Gorse	DN
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	Rosebay Willowherb	
<i>Circaea lutetiana</i>	Enchanter's-nightshade	
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy	
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash	
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Honeysuckle	
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear Thistle	
<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	Marsh Thistle	
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle	
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Cal's-ear	
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Common Ragwort	
<i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i>	Hemp agrimony	
<i>Potamogeton polygonifolius</i>	Bog Pondweed	
<i>Juncus acutiflorus</i>	Sharp-flowered Rush	
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft Rush	
<i>Carax pendula</i>	Pendulous Sedge	
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough Meadow-grass	
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog	
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common Bent	
<i>Agrostis curtisii</i>	Bristle Bent	DN
<i>Agrostis vinealis</i>	Brown Bent	
<i>Molinia caerulea</i>	Purple Moor-grass	
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common Reed	
<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	Yellow Iris	

Appendix 2 – Completed work 2008-2013

Compartment	Task	Financial Year
A – Pony Drive Wood	• Spraying of rhododendron with herbicide	2013/14
	• Stile fixed following vandalism	2013/14
	• Planting primroses alongside bridgeway	2013/14
	• Cut brambles out of wildlife hedge and relocation of hawthorn/blackthorn saplings into the hedgeline	2013/14
	• Relocation of saplings from wet heathland to compartment A	2013/14
	• Replacement fencing at Pony Drive entrance	2013/14
	• Chipping of holly following coppicing by volunteers	2013/14
	• Woodland Trail – additional wood chipping at 5 sections	2013/14
	• Herbicide treatment of vegetation alongside bridgeway	2013/14
	• Clearance of debris from drainage ditch	2013/14
	• Spraying of rhododendron with herbicide	2014/15
	• Removal of tree stumps which were trip hazards	2015/16
	• Removal of 80% of holly by cutting and spraying stumps with herbicide	2015/16
	• Fixing of horse stile following vandalism	2015/16
	• Fixing of bridge following vandalism	2015/16
	• Clearance of debris from drainage ditch	2016/17
	• Coppicing holly on boundary bank	2016/17
	• Cut brambles out of wildlife hedge and relocation of saplings into the hedgeline	2016/17
	• Cutting back vegetation next to the bridgeway	2016/17
	• Spraying of rhododendron with herbicide	2017/18
• Fixing of bridge following vandalism	2017/18	
• Removal of graffiti on entrances, information boards, bridges and benches	2017/18	
B – Upton Heath South	• Bracken and bramble herbicide spraying	2013/14
	• Scrub clearance on wet heathland	2013/14
	• Relocation of saplings from wet heathland to compartment A	
	• Holly, gorse, birch and willow clearance, followed by treatment of tree stumps	2014/15
	• Bracken and bramble herbicide spraying	2014/15
	• Scrub clearance on wet heathland	2014/15
	• Clearance of drainage ditch	2015/16
	• Scrub clearance on wet heathland following tree removal by SSE	2015/16
	• Removal of birch and willow on wet heathland	2015/16
	• Clearance of brambles and cutting back mature gorse on dry heathland	2016/17
	• Spraying of bracken with herbicide	2016/17
	• Spraying of bracken with herbicide	2017/18
	• Scrub clearance and fly-tip removal from wet heathland	2017/18
• Sapling removal and stump treatment	2017/18	

Appendix 2 – Completed work 2008-2013

Compartment	Task	Financial Year
C – Upton Wood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair closeboard fence at Gorse Lane entrance • Clear debris from drainage ditch • Fixing of Gorse Lane fence following vandalism • Clear debris from drainage ditch • Spraying of brambles next to play area with herbicide • Fixing of Gorse Lane fence following vandalism • Removal of graffiti on information board 	2013/14 2013/14 2015/16 2016/17 2017/18 2017/18 2017/18
D – Upton Wood South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spraying of brambles next to play area with herbicide 	2017/18
All compartments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 dead, dying or dangerous trees felled. Numerous trees dead wooded. 2 trees crown reduced. 	2013-2018



