

# BASINGBOURNE PARK DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017 - 2022



# Basingbourne Park Development Plan

## 2017 – 2022

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# **Basingbourne Park Development Plan, 2017 - 2022**

## **1 Introduction**

This Development Plan is a document which has been developed by the Friends of Basingbourne Park (FoBP) for adoption by Fleet Town Council (FTC). It sets out the current situation and establishes the ambitions and aspirations for the future of Basingbourne Park, Fleet, Hampshire.

The plan looks at the vision for the future development of the Park, and proposes a programme of works to achieve this vision.

## **2 Vision**

The fundamental purpose of Basingbourne Park is to promote the physical and mental wellbeing of park users, now and in the future.

The vision for the future of Basingbourne Park to support this objective is:-

- 1) To provide a multi-purpose outdoor leisure facility, accessible and open to all, that will provide an attractive, safe and welcoming environment for a broad range of people regardless of age, gender or physical mobility.
- 2) To promote the preservation, maintenance and enhancement of Basingbourne Park in its entirety.
- 3) To enhance and improve the wildlife conservation and biodiversity framework of the park and maintain its status as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

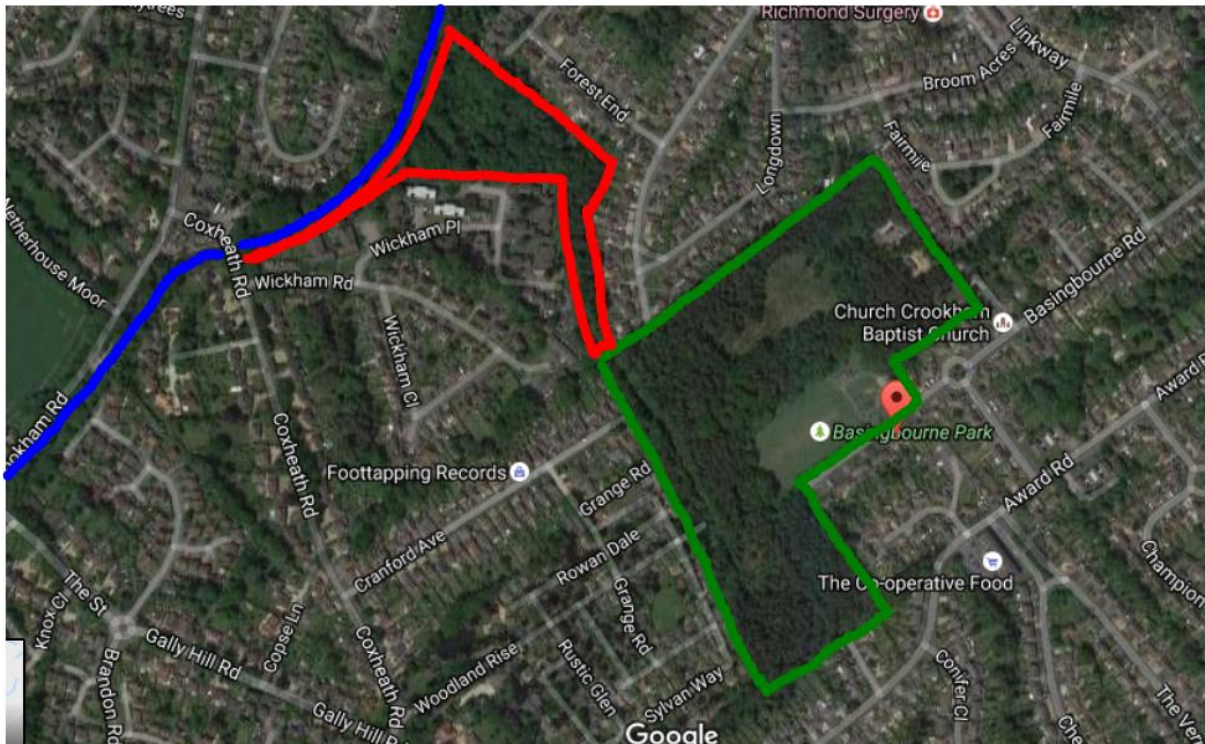
The programmes which will deliver this vision are:

- OBJECTIVE 1: Adoption of Wickham Woods and Chinnock Ponds
- OBJECTIVE 2: Ecological Conservation and Restoration (including maintaining SINC status)
- OBJECTIVE 3: Play Provision Renovation & Expansion
- OBJECTIVE 4: Broaden Appeal and Increase Usage
- OBJECTIVE 5: Improvement or replacement of Pavilion

### 3 Background Information

#### 3.1 Location

Basingbourne Park, Grid Reference SU807525, is situated on the border of Fleet with Church Crookham.



The Park is set in a residential area and is largely surrounded by housing. The main entrance to the Park is in Basingbourne Road, but there are other entrances from Fairmile, Greenways, Wickham Road, Cranford Avenue, Award Road (x2), and Heather Drive. The park is within walking distance of local shopping parades at Linkway and the Verne. It is only a short walk from the Basingstoke Canal. It is also close to Courtmoor School. A map of the area can be found in Appendix A.

Fleet Town Council own undeveloped land adjacent to the Basingstoke Canal, extending between Greenways & Forest end, and the Wickham Estate to adjoin the current Wickham Road Entrance to the Basingbourne Park. A map of the area can be found in Appendix B.

#### 3.2 Land Ownership of Basingbourne Park

The site of Basingbourne Park and Wickham Woods is owned by Fleet Town Council. It was formally transferred to the Town Council from Hart District Council in 2009.

### **3.3 History of the Site**

#### **3.3.1 The Main Park Area**

The main park area is a small remnant of Crookham Common, now surrounded by housing. The common may have been managed by traditional heathland practices. A document dated 1580 records Crookham and Ewshot as containing 1000 acres of moor and 300 acres of heath and gorse. As late as the 1950s a herd of goats was kept in Florence Road and regularly grazed on Basingbourne Heath (Beagley, 2015).

The land was originally purchased by Hart Urban District Council with the intention to develop it. Ownership was transferred to Hart District Council with its formation in 1974. The land was later designated as open space and part as a SINC.

The Pavilion was constructed on site in the early 1970s.

The original play park was replaced in the 1980s and the play equipment is now over 30 years old.

The larger northern heathland glade (nearest to Longdown) has suffered from regular arson and possibly accidental summer fires, the, worst recorded, occurred in spring 2009 when nine fires burnt through 70% of the heath over a period of ten days. The majority of bog pools previously found within both heathland areas have largely disappeared.

Several paths were surfaced with Tarmac, in the 1980s, to improve access. These principal routes have been resurfaced along with a greater network of woodland paths in 2015 with a “soft mulch” surface of bonded rubber chips.

Over the last 15 years occasional scrub and tree clearance has been carried out on the two heathland areas to prevent them from being totally encroached by trees.

In 2009 an interpretation board was kindly donated by local resident Andrew Macallan. The interpretation board includes a notice board and an artwork panel with visual displays and descriptions of the site, highlighting biological interest and local landmarks

#### **3.3.2 The Wickham Woods Area.**

The area of Wickham Woods appears on historical maps as “Peat Moor” and was probably used for cutting peat for fuel. The path traversing from Wickham Place to Forest End and Courtmoor School was originally the back entrance to Dinorban House. This was also the location of a large lily pond (Beagley, 2015) known as “Chinnock Pond” and named after the family who owned Dinorben House, but more recently, during the dredging and renovation of the Basingstoke Canal in the 1970s, the area was used as silt settlement ponds for dredged materials, and the pond area has been drained and become overgrown.



## **4 Description of the Park**

### **4.1 Overview**

Basingbourne Park comprises a formal open park area containing the football pitch, pavilion, and children's play area; the North East of the site is given over to 3 plots of land leased to local community groups. The remaining area is a mix of heath and woodland. The heathland areas are designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The woodlands (and to a lesser extent the heathland) contain various pedestrian pathways, including paths which provide important routes from the Wickham estate to the local shopping parades, and for school children walking or cycling to Courtmoor school.

The Wickham Woods area comprises woodland, scrub and flood plain. A formal path crosses from Wickham Place car park to Forest End & Courtmoor School, whilst informal paths provide access along the stream and beside the Basingstoke Canal to Coxheath Road Bridge.

### **4.2 Football Pitch**

Currently there is one 9-a-side football pitch. The goal posts are stored on fixings on the outside of the Pavilion. There is currently 1 pitch side bench. The pitch is currently used by Fleet Town Girls Football Club and Hart Football Club. It is used most Saturdays and Sundays for regular league matches.

### **4.3 Pavilion**

The Pavilion at Basingbourne Park is a small brick building that is currently used by all the football clubs and the Friends of Basingbourne Park.

The Pavilion has suffered from a lack of investment and maintenance, but in 2015 a new profiled coated aluminium roof was installed. Subsequently there has been renovation work to make the building safe and useable; electrical faults and water damage have been addressed; and some redecoration undertaken but further investment is required to make the building attractive and useable for any significant activities.

FoBP have secured second hand furniture and a small grant to purchase kitchen equipment. Additional power sockets were installed below kitchen work surfaces (for fridge and microwave oven).

Electric hand dryers were recently installed in the toilets.

#### **4.4 Children's Play Park**

The current play area installed in 1980s serves only young children up to the age of 8. It is dilapidated and requires substantial investment to renew or replace it. A condition survey of all equipment is given at Appendix G

#### **4.5 Other Recreation Facilities**

There is a wooden climbing frame for use by older children and a kick wall. Other park assets and their condition are listed in Appendix G

#### **4.6 Woodland**

The majority of the site is covered with secondary woodland of varying types. There are several mature pine stands, with bare ground or bracken coverage. Other areas have a blend of deciduous trees. Where there is more light penetration, there tends to be thick brambles and nettles.

In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of trees which have fallen due to waterlogged root systems and high storm winds. There is a high incidence of vandalism of saplings and young trees, leading to a concern that there is insufficient scope for the woodlands to "heal", and therefore an increasing tendency towards scrub and bramble patches rather than woodland.

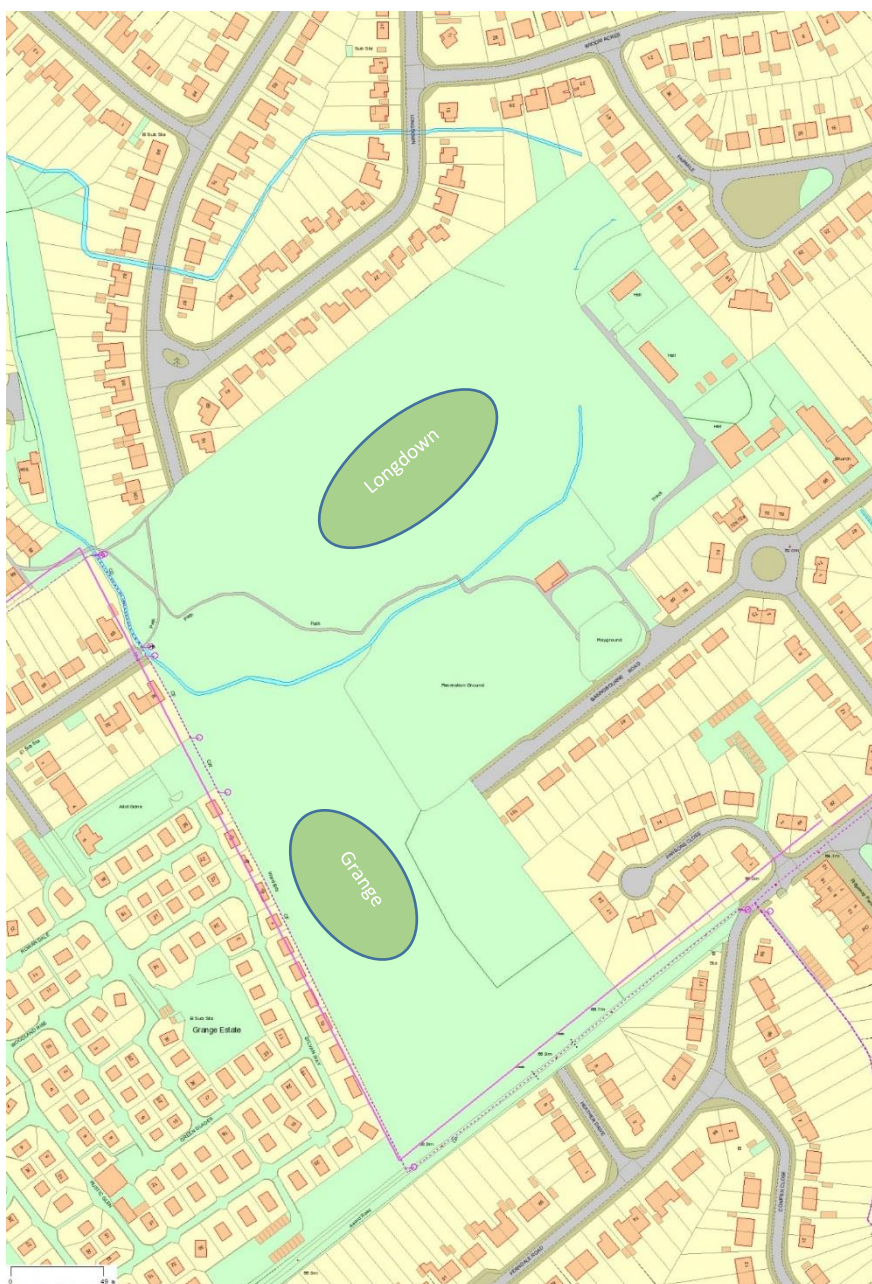
A number of areas are also tending to be dominated by invasive types including rhododendron and holly. FoBP have undertaken a number of Action Days to clear these species and whilst the benefits can be clearly seen, it is clear that the problem is too great to be addressed solely with volunteer resource.

Further detailed technical analysis from the 2009 Basingbourne Heath Management Plan is available in Appendix E.



## 4.7 Heathland Glades

There are two distinct areas of heathland (labelled Longdown and Grange for convenience).



The northern “Longdown” heath has established footpaths (between Greenways/Longdown/Fairmile) and is of greater significance in terms of variety of plants and wildlife but its greater proximity to footpaths and the heavier footfall means it is subject to littering and sporadic bouts of arson. There has been recent work by FoBP to cut back trees growing on the heathland, but there is a substantial margin on the stream side which is overgrown by mature silver birch (although marsh grasses still break through). Much of the diversity recorded previously is still present, although recent bouts of arson have encouraged growth of grasses over the heather varieties, and historically identified sun dews are now very rare (although a few specimens were found during survey in 2016).

The southern “Grange” heath (between the Cranford Avenue, the Grange Estate and Award Road) is more isolated, so is less prone to antisocial behaviour but is also less interesting from a biodiversity

perspective. Significant encroachment on the heathland here is in the form of pine trees (on the East side between the heath and path) with small saplings starting to dominate the Northern end of the heath. (This heathland has also been subject to clearance by FoBP volunteers in 2016). This heath tends to be wetter, and longer term residents recall there being several open pools in this area.

The 2009 Basingbourne Heath Management Plan notes *“The majority of bog pools previously found within both heathland areas have disappeared, this perhaps indicates a drop in the water table within site as a whole.”* However, it is noted that both areas of heathland have had drainage ditches dug into them (possibly in an attempt to improve access allow new paths to be established), but which may have contributed to this drainage

Further detailed technical analysis from the 2009 Basingbourne Heath Management Plan is available in the Appendix E.

## **4.8 Wildlife**

### **4.8.1 Biological Diversity Surveys of the Site**

The park and especially the woodland enjoys a wide variety of flora and fauna. More detail is set out in Appendix E.

Up to date biological information is limited and new surveys should to be carried out.

The 2015 Bioblitz gave an indication of the continued biodiversity of the site but formal surveys would be useful to fully baseline the current state of the site. This can be used to assess changes or degradation of areas which have previously been surveyed (primarily plants and entomology) and should baseline aspects which have not previously been surveyed (e.g. fungi, bats, birds).

FoBP Member and British Botanical Society Hampshire Records Collator, Tony Mundell, has undertaken a survey of plants on the site during 2016, and has noted that the number of most rare species has declined and no samples of the oblong leaved sun dew were found.

### **4.8.2 Invertebrates**

Detail from the 2009 Basingbourne Heath Management Plan (see Appendix E) states:

*“There are a variety of common invertebrate’s onsite and no doubt any enhancement of the heathland areas in particular may encourage more species to colonise the site. Tetrix undulate the Ground Hopper and Dolomedes fimbriatus the Raft Spider\* have been recorded on the heathland areas, as have several common butterfly species such as the Common Blue, Gatekeeper, Large Skipper, Small Skipper, Meadow Brown, Comma, Brimstone, Large White, Small White, Peacock, Red Admiral and Speckled Wood.”*

\*two female Raft Spiders, with egg sacks were encountered during Bioblitz 2015.

Further detailed technical analysis from the 2009 Basingbourne Heath Management Plan is available in Appendix E.

### **4.8.3 Bats**

Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle and Noctules have been identified during FoBP Bat Walks. A number of bat boxes have been deployed in 2015 (at the time of writing these are still new and not

yet occupied). A number of other possible roost sites occur both in the main park and in the Wickham Woods near the Canal.

#### **4.8.4 Other mammals**

Observations and anecdotal evidence show a variety of common mammals use the site, these include: field voles, wood mouse, brown rat, fox, badger and grey squirrels. In addition, there have been a number of sightings of roe deer which are thought to be resident within the woods rather than transient visitors.

Further detailed technical analysis from the 2009 Basingbourne Heath Management Plan is available in Appendix E.

#### **4.8.5 Birds**

There is a wide variety of birds present in the park.

A family of sparrow hawks were using the Southern Heath during the FoBP's RSPB Walk in Summer 2014. 23 different varieties of birds were identified during the Dawn Chorus Walk as part of Bioblitz 2015.

Further detailed technical analysis from the 2009 Basingbourne Heath Management Plan is available in Appendix E.

#### **4.8.6 Reptiles & Amphibians**

Bioblitz 2015 reconfirmed a substantial population of common lizards and also a confirmed sighting of a Slow Worm, both on the Northern Heath. Follow up FoBP surveys have confirmed a substantial Slow Worm population (with 8 individuals identified across 5 reptile tiles on the northern heath).

There is historical and anecdotal evidence of presence of toads, frogs and newts, but none were encountered during the Bioblitz. Following dredging of the ditch in the "Longdown" heath, 5 mature palmate newts were caught in one pond dipping session, and further individuals were encountered in the main stream.

Further detailed technical analysis from the 2009 Basingbourne Heath Management Plan is available in Appendix E.

### **4.9 Streams and Watercourses**

There is one main "stream" (or drainage ditch) through the main park. This dries out during dry periods and so is not of significance for most wildlife, although after recent dredging it did attract interest from a pair of mallard ducks. This discharges water both towards Fairmile (via pipes and onward to the Bourne), and towards the Wickham Woods where it eventually joins Basingbourne Stream. During recent flooding (Sept 2015), both ditch exits were insufficient for the volume of water, and the drainage ditch overflowed at the bridge behind the Pavilion, running across the northern heath and on towards properties in Longdown.

A number of smaller drainage ditches have been dug from the southern heath and drain into the main ditch. These are possibly an attempt to drain the area and make it more accessible to walkers, but work against wildlife and conservation objectives of retaining boggy heathlands. At the time of writing FoBP had raised concerns over this, and note that with the soft-mulch surfacing of paths in 2015 that this area is now passable even in wet weather.

A second drainage ditch extends from the northern heath and behind some residences in Longdown, emptying via a pipe towards the Bourne Stream. This area has been subject of complaints of

flooding by some local residents, and during the Sept 2015 floods gardens and at least one home were flooded.

The smaller drainage ditches on site have been identified as encroaching into the wetland heath areas, and so recent dredging has possibly been detrimental to the biodiversity of the site.

A long term plan needs to be developed that balances the flood control of the site to maintain public accessibility and provide the right conditions to support the ecology.

#### **4.10 “Chinnock Ponds” and Canal side**

The main “stream” (drainage ditch) from Basingbourne Park continues through the Wickham Woods site where it joins with the main stream from Basingbourne. It then flows on towards the Canal where it passes into a culvert to pass under the Canal embankment. With the increased volume of water from both sources, the stream continues flowing all year.

Either side of the stream are flood plains. During the flooding of September 2015, which was primarily caused by blockage of the culvert under the canal, flood waters extended about half way up some adjoining gardens, but is not thought to have reached any buildings. A grill has been deployed on the upstream end of the culvert in 2016, to reduce the probability of a similar blockage in the future.

This area also known as the silt ponds, due to historical use during Canal dredging work in the 1970s, but prior to this (1950s) there was a large lily pond (“Chinnock Pond”) on the Forest End side of the stream. These areas tend to be waterlogged but do dry out in summer months. They are also largely overgrown with Rhododendron, which is not beneficial to native wildlife. The site has been resurveyed by Tony Mundell (FoBP member and records collator for the British Botanical Society for North Hampshire) in 2016. There were no plants of great significance from a wildlife perspective, although they provide additional valuable habitat for roe deer and possibly allow access to the site from the Canal. There was no evidence of previously occurring red listed pond weed.

#### **4.11 Usage of the Site**

##### **4.11.1 For Recreation**

Basingbourne Park is used mainly by local people for recreational purposes, such as walking dogs, jogging, cycling, playing etc. Children’s football teams, Guides and Scouts make use of the facilities. Friends of Basingbourne Park organise events in the park throughout the year to engage local people and to get them involved in the care and maintenance of the site. These events include park clean-ups, Easter egg hunts, coffee mornings, scrub clearance and guided wildlife and bat walks. However, the site is surrounded by urban development which creates local problems including litter and fly-tipping. Fly-tipping of garden waste is a problem as it may contain non-native species and garden plants which can colonise and spread, shading out native woodland species. Piles of waste will also smother ground vegetation. Litter and fly-tipping also give the appearance of untidiness and neglect. FTC has a policy to leave fallen trees and cut wood to promote biodiversity. This may be misinterpreted that it is acceptable to leave cut materials in the woodlands. There is a problem that cut branches and logs are deposited in the ditches and streams which is both unsightly and jeopardises their primary function to drain excess water from the site and from surrounding residential areas

##### **4.11.2 For Education**

Friends of Basingbourne Park run events using educational activities to get children and adults alike involved in learning about nature.

The park is also occasionally used by Gally Hill School for sports events.

## 5 Community Involvement

Friends of Basingbourne Park group was re-established in 2011 and formally constituted in 2014 and is an important aspect of community involvement. The group, which meet on a regular basis, take a keen interest and active role in the activities, events and horticultural work taking place in the park. The group has its own bank account and has adopted its own constitution which states:

*The objectives of the Organisation (Friends of Basingbourne Park) shall be:*

- 1) To work towards maintaining and improving Basingbourne Park (including the Pavilion, sports field, play park and equipment, surrounding woodlands, and canal side woodlands) for the benefit of the local community in partnership with Fleet Town Council and other interested parties.*
- 2) To promote the preservation and maintenance of Basingbourne Park woodlands and to promote their use as a public amenity and as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)*
- 3) To encourage increased use of Basingbourne Park and to promote improved community relationships between users of Basingbourne Park by promoting Basingbourne Park as a focus for community activities.*

*In furtherance of the said objectives the Organisation may, through its Committee:*

.....

*3) Work with the local Councils to:*

- a) Maintain and enhance the open space area.*
- b) Control invasive non-native species of plants*
- c) Help maintain and enhance the structural diversity of the woodland and wet heath.*
- d) Enhance the amenity and wildlife value.*

*4) Work towards promoting and developing the educational use of the site through activity sessions, signage and liaising with local schools and youth organisations.*

*5) Provide social events for members of the local community.*

*6) Raise money for improvements in the park and for providing community activity events.*

*7) Communicate with its members and the local community via newsletters, flyers, a website and the local press*

*8) Hold meetings, lectures and exhibitions.*

*9) Make or commission surveys of the park and create maps or plans.*

*10) Develop partnerships with organisations with similar objectives to Friends of Basingbourne Park (FoBP)*

*11) Do anything that is lawful which will help to fulfil the aims.*

Approved at Council 4 January 2017

The Friends of Basingbourne Park shall remain an integral part of the running of the park and also as a body that will actively seek to improve facilities, through fund raising and raising awareness of the needs of the community.

The Guides and Scouts are both based in compounds on the perimeter of the site. Both groups make use of the wider park (woodlands, play equipment and sports field) and both groups have participated in Action Days with FoBP, with litter picks and generally to help with the maintenance and upkeep of the park.

Several children's football teams play regularly at the park.

A number of other groups use the park on an occasional basis (including fitness groups, children's nurseries and local schools).

Informally, a large number of youths frequent the park, despite there being very limited resources targeted specifically at them.

## **6 Current Management Practices**

Basingbourne Park is owned and managed by Fleet Town Council and maintained by a Grounds Maintenance Contractor on behalf of FTC. The Council funds and makes any final decisions on any management works that take place on the site. Day to day decisions are taken by the Grounds Maintenance Contractor.

FoBP (along with other Friends of groups) have requested increased utilisation of the Grounds Maintenance staff and Wildlife advisor to help address issues including woodland encroachment into heathlands and management of invasive species in the woodlands.

A maintenance programme covering the whole area of the park was developed by Fleet Town Council via a new Grounds Maintenance contract awarded in 2011. The Contract Document comprising the Conditions of Contract, a Specification, a Preamble and a Bill of Quantities which can be inspected at Fleet Town Council's Offices. This agreement was extended for a further 2 years to September 2017

All contract staff who carry out work at Basingbourne Park, possess relevant horticultural qualifications, and have been trained in areas such as Health & Safety, Handling of Hazardous Substances, and use of equipment/machinery.

Activities by FoBP are discussed thoroughly with FTC and agreed prior to being implemented.

## **7 Objectives**

Objectives are specific aspirations which will need to be achieved if the overall vision is to be achieved.

### **7.1 Adoption of Wickham Woods and Chinnock Ponds**

Approved at Council 4 January 2017

**OBJECTIVE:** Capitalise on an underutilised area to deliver a broad range of benefits to park users; to increase overall park usage; and to ensure the area is protected, maintained and improved in line with the rest of Basingbourne Park

#### **7.1.1 Benefits:**

- Capitalise on an underutilised space
- Improved leisure opportunities including walking and running, in woodlands
- Improved wellbeing from access to water features (Canal bank, reinstated Chinnock “lily” Pond or other pools)
- Connect Basingbourne Park to Basingstoke Canal and onward to other leisure spaces
- Improved access (improved bridges; cleared tracks; longer term board walks)
- Improved access for litter picking, tree management, stream/ditch management
- Reduction in fly tipping due to increased usage (but supported by increased litter picks)
- Increased biodiversity (particularly by reinstating ponds and recovering red pond weed)
- Increase the number of Park Users due to increased awareness driven by a larger number of access points (both local residents and wider community via link to Basingstoke Canal)
- Increased number and duration of visits by existing users (due to increased size and variety)

#### **7.1.2 Expand Park to include Wickham Woods**

Formally adopt “Wickham Woods” as part of Basingbourne Park. Open up access from the path, deploy signage and information boards. Deploy rubbish bins generally as shown on the plan at Appendix B.

Establish Strategy for Wickham Woods (i.e. to balance conservation and nature vs increased recreational use).

#### **7.1.3 Woodland & Canal Side Walk**

Provide a passable route from Basingbourne Park to the Basingstoke Canal bank and on to Coxheath Bridge. This requires clearance of fallen trees, encroaching vegetation on existing tracks and opening access in a few areas; also installation of a number of new foot bridges across ditches. However, there will be no formalisation of the route which will remain as a woodland walk only. Any works will be carried out in consultation with HDC Ecologist and, where possible, holly and thorn bushes will be planted to protect residents’ properties.

#### **7.1.4 Restoration of Chinnock Ponds**

Eye witness accounts of Chinnock Pond in its hey-day recall an idyllic lily pond, frequented by swans and kingfishers and used by children for fishing and swimming. In addition there are relatively recent records (1976) of a rare Red Pondweed (*Potamogeton alpinus*) which survives many decades in mud and could therefore be recoverable.

Restoring Chinnock Pond in this area, supported by a system of weirs to improve water management could provide a wonderful focus for the park’s leisure users, provide a valuable contribution to flood management and a boon for biodiversity on the site. Further work should be undertaken to establish the feasibility of this.



## **7.2 Ecological Conservation, Maintenance and Restoration**

**OBJECTIVE: Maintain & restore SINC and biodiversity and encourage increased public participation**

### **7.2.1 Benefits:**

- Retain biodiversity for future generations
- Mental and physical health benefits for helpers and park users
- Educational benefits (resource for local schools, Guides & Scouts as well as adult talk & events)
- Enable “complimentary” leisure activities

### **7.2.2 Renew & Enforce the Heathland Management Plan**

**A comprehensive update to the Heathland Management Plan is to be developed for 2017-2022**, with a minimum objective of ensuring that Basingbourne Park retains the status as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). Ideally, this should ensure all natural resources in the woods and heathlands are maintained or improved.

This should allow for a periodic review of planned activities, particularly in or near the SINC areas, to allow any concerns to be discussed before action is undertaken.

### **7.2.3 Comprehensive wildlife survey**

Undertake comprehensive nature surveys of the Basingbourne Park, covering trees, plants, fungi, as well as animals. Extend survey to cover Wickham Woods.

Surveys will allow better stewardship of the area by identifying any species in decline, allowing timely intervention to reverse this and supporting applications for grant funding.

The previous main wildlife survey is now 10 years old. The recent 2015 BioBlitz provided a valuable snapshot, and raised concerns over lack of amphibians and sundews. As a result of this FoBP volunteer Tony Mundell has undertaken a survey of trees and plants in both the main Park and in Wickham Woods. Historical surveys have not covered areas such as fungi, invertebrates and bats. In order to fully understand the current status within the park. If necessary, FoBP will seek grant funding to fulfil these activities.

### **7.2.4 Encourage Volunteer Participation in Management Work**

Volunteer heath and woodland management activities by FoBP or other groups should continue be encouraged.

The work of the volunteer groups should be integrated into the overall maintenance programme for the site.

### **7.2.5 Expansion of FTC Tools pool**

FTC has established a small pool of tools which can be used by volunteer groups (e.g. for play park renovations, heath and woodlands maintenance work). These supplement tools brought by volunteers and allows increased productivity of work groups. Further tools should be added to the stock to support **increased public participation in park management activities** which delivers benefits both to participants and to FTC

### **7.2.6 Streams, pools and drainage:**

The on-site drainage network will be managed to:

- reduce risk of “downstream” flooding.
  - Locally in locations like Longdown and Forest End
  - broader impacts in the Loddon catchment area
- maintain and improve the biodiversity of the site.

These objectives are not necessarily contradictory, and a balance needs to be achieved between the flood control capacity of the site and the environmental objectives. Work needs to be coordinated with HDC’s Flood Control Officer.

Proposed works include:

- 1) Dredging and clearance of drainage ditches
- 2) Dredging existing and historical heathland and woodland pools, to provide both an increased capacity for retaining water on site, and to increase biodiversity
- 3) Creating a levee and path behind the Pavilion (un-made-up section of streamside path), to increase ditch capacity and reduce risk of future flooding.
- 4) Creating additional woodland pools to both heathland areas; woodlands near Longdown), to increase localised capacity and allow increased biodiversity opportunities
- 5) Installing weirs where ditches have been dug near sensitive wetland heath areas, to allow improved management of water, retaining water during dry periods whilst allowing increased drainage during wetter seasons.

(Note: also see proposal for Chinnock Ponds)

## **7.3 Renovation and Expansion of Play Equipment**

**To increase physical activity and social development of children and young people, play facilities should be added for over 8s and teenagers, and the facilities for under 8s improved.**

### **7.3.1 Benefits**

- Exercise; physical, mental and social development of children and young people
- Increase the number of park users
- Increase the frequency and duration of visits
- Increase the capacity (more equipment allows more simultaneous users at peak times)
- Providing facilities for older children and teenagers reduces inappropriate use of under 8’s play park

### **7.3.2 General approach to existing play equipment**

The current provision for play in Basingbourne Park is focused on under 8s. The main priority for the park is therefore to expand provision for over 8s and teens, which in turn will release capacity in the under 8s park.

Much of the existing play equipment is dated and in need of refurbishment or in some cases replacement. To ensure that the playground remains functional any worn out/broken equipment should be replaced with modern play equipment. The state of the safety

surfaces, paths and multiple concrete or brick surfaces are of greatest concern and need urgent attention.

### **7.3.3 Improve Provision for “Over Eights”**

#### **7.3.3.1 Provide “Over Eights” play equipment**

Facilities for “over eights” are very limited. Provision of additional equipment outside of the existing playpark will provide more appropriate challenges for this group, increase overall capacity of the park, reduce friction between this group and parents of younger children, and reduce inappropriate use & damage of under 8s play equipment.

New equipment could include:

- a) Cantilever swing
- b) Rope “witches hat” roundabout/climber.
- c) Basket Swings (including accessible swing)
- d) Web climbing frame

There is also interest in utilising the pine stand (near the Scout Hut) to create a small climbing, rope and tree house/platform facility, but this would potentially require significant investment.

#### **7.3.3.2 Kids cycle track**

There is a longstanding proposal to create a small cycle track with jumps and obstacles. There is evidence within the woodlands that young people are already trying to create their own tracks close to sensitive SINC areas (with holes being dug and ramps built up to tree stumps). A number of possible locations have been considered, but due to the number of paths and areas of wildlife interest, the most appropriate location is the Longdown/Broom Acres/Long Down corner, although this does not have any interesting “geography” to help with the creation of hills, jumps, etc. A second area for consideration could be in Wickham Woods under the electricity lines. Ideally, the design of the course should be in consultation with local children and parents, and there should also be consultation with neighbouring property owners prior to finalising any track design.

#### **7.3.3.3 New Kick walls/climbing wall**

Whilst there is currently a wooden kick wall available in the park, it suffers from low utilisation because:

- 1) Relatively small (compared to alternatives)
- 2) Risk of loss of balls in dense brambles and growth
- 3) Wooden wall doesn’t rebound balls as effectively.

The Pavilion is a defacto kick wall resulting in damage to the facility and muddy ball prints.

To address this, it is proposed to select from:

- 1) Install alternative second purpose build kick-wall close to Pavilion (propose simultaneous planting of shrubs around pavilion to deter continued use of Pavilion)
- 2) build one or two new dedicated brick kick walls (45 degrees to edge of park, so there is no “blind spot” behind the wall, and noise is reflected towards woods (design to be confirmed)
- 3) Install a fence behind the kick wall(s) – similar to Oakley Park – to prevent balls going into woods
- 4) The reverse side of kick wall could be modelled as a climbing wall for younger children (i.e. not to adult level) and could incorporate shelves for sitting on
- 5) Either side of the new kick walls could have basketball hoops installed, to further increase their functionality
- 6) When new facilities have been installed, then bushes should be planted around the Pavilion to prevent further use of the Pavilion as kick wall

### **7.3.4 Replace & improve under 8’s children’s play provision**

#### **7.3.4.1 Under 8’s children’s play area surfacing.**

Safety surfacing around play equipment is degrading and is both visually unattractive and more importantly is increasingly seen as a health and safety hazard.

All paths and fall areas within the play park should be resurfaced, potentially with soft mulch/bonded rubber chips. This could be extended over the edges of the current safety surfaces to address the problem of shrinkage.

A rail track could then be painted in a circuit around the park to further emphasis the popular train based play features.

In a few areas, the grass within the play park has largely been worn away. These areas should be improved and re-turfed to bring them back up to the original ground level.

The current “stump” roundabout should be replaced with a modern, accessible roundabout.

Children’s “trampoline” spring pads

#### **7.3.4.2 Under 8’s children’s play area drainage.**

Drainage in the play area is inadequate and needs repairing and improving to prevent flooding.

Softmulch surface would go some way to alleviating the problems of standing puddles.

#### **7.3.4.3 Under 8’s children’s play area – Concrete & brick surfaces**

Concern exists among users of the play area that too many hard surfaces exist and hard features, such as raised brick flower beds and concrete cladding around train climbing fame present a hazard and should be removed, replaced or have cladding applied.

#### **7.3.4.4 Wickham Toddler Park – “On hold”**

Toddler play facilities should be located close to the homes of users. To this end there is a proposal to create a small toddler park close to the Wickham estate. Currently, no suitable

location has been identified within or close to Basingbourne Park. This item is therefore “on hold” but retained in case new opportunities become evident.

## **7.4 Broaden Appeal and increase number and range of Park Users**

The provision of multiple “focal points” where groups of people can relax and interact will **increase the number of users and the number and duration of visits.**

### **7.4.1 Benefits**

- Better facilities for more diverse groups of park users (youths, fitness/exercisers, young families and elderly)
- Allow additional leisure focal points to encourage increased use of park whilst reducing friction between different park users or stakeholders; hence overall benefit to community cohesion

### **7.4.2 Youth Shelter**

There is a small youth shelter in the existing wooden multigym climbing frame. By drawing young people away from the car park and play park, this has already contributed to a reduction in confrontations between park users and local residents.

To improve the facilities for teenagers, one or more youth shelters should be deployed in the park. One possible location is in the “far corner” of the open park area, where it is away from residents (minimising the risk of disturbance to residents) but still visible from the road (for Police patrols).

Consideration could also be given to building additional seating and shelter into proposed kick walls – to provide multiple, distinct “hang out” points for multiple groups of youths.

### **7.4.3 Woodland Benches**

FoBP secured a number of metal “vandal proof” benches from Hart District Council (ex-Fleet Pond) with the intention of deploying these at strategic points outside the formal park areas, to allow park users (but primarily benefiting older or infirm users and mothers with young children) locations within the woodlands to take short breaks during walks. Target locations are:

- By northern “Longdown” heath footpath
- Southern “Grange” heath by footpath
- Canal side in Wickham Woods (or half way along Wickham to Pavilion path)

In agreement with FTC a trial site was located on the northern heath. 9 months in, there has not been a significant increase in littering, no incidences of arson, and no complaints from local residents. There has been a minor issue with fixings being pulled out and the bench “migrating”. However, further similar benches would be desirable.]

### **7.4.4 Benches in the sports field**

There are currently 3 benches in the open area. The request for additional benches was raised during Friends of Basingbourne Park user survey. The current pitch side bench was welcomed by all football teams using the field. The request is for at least 3 more benches, 2 more pitch side spectator benches and a “management” bench opposite. These benches are also heavily used by the general public when football matches are not in progress.

[Note: 2 additional benches were provided by FoBP and are currently deployed in the park but FoBP would like to relocate these into woodland locations.]

#### **7.4.5 Picnic Benches.**

Basingbourne Park only has a single picnic bench, which has been funded by FoBP using a grant from Fleet Lions. This is significantly fewer than most other parks in Fleet, and has been cited by some parents as a reason for not using the park. The request for more picnic benches came up in Friends of Basingbourne Park user survey. Ideally, there should be at least 4 more picnic benches (3 around perimeter of play area, 1 near kick wall and one at far end of park).

[Note: In addition, FoBP were offered further ex-Fleet Pond picnic benches, and had planned to deploy these on Canal side, and on the “small hill” overlooking the southern heathland glade. Final locations need to be agreed with FTC prior to progressing this further.

#### **7.4.6 More planted areas.**

To create a more interesting panorama across the field consideration should be given to increasing the number and variety of trees and bushes in the formal area of the park, in and around the play park and pavilion. For example:

- consider planting trees following path across the park to provide additional shade;
- consider planting bushes or shrubs round Pavilion to help it to blend in.

Any plans would need to balance planting with need to retain open space so as not to compromise usability of the limited open space.

Consider whether raised beds should be installed between roadside trees for flower beds or community vegetables.

Consideration should be given to creation of wild meadow margins to the park (e.g. seeding with wildflower seeds and leaving unmown during summer months). Hart Countryside Services have indicated that they could provide support with implementing this. To avoid complaints about poor park maintenance, ensure notices are posted to raise awareness of the project.

#### **7.4.7 Improved Signage**

- To assist new park users additional sign posts could be installed to direct the public to key locations such as the Guide and Scout Huts, the Community Store, and to the Pavilion. The woodlands can also be quite disorientating and signposts to main park entrances would be beneficial, or marked “coloured” routes.

All redundant Hart District Council signs and their fixings should be removed.

- The park currently has a single notice board, which is inadequate for a park of this size. Lockable Notice boards should be added to the Basingbourne Park signs at each entrance, to help keep park users informed of events (A2 size minimum; lock to share key with existing notice board).
- The park currently has a single interpretation poster displayed in the main notice board. A number of additional interpretation boards should be deployed to make park users aware of the natural diversity of the area.

### **7.5 Provide a modern, user friendly Pavilion**



The Pavilion should become a focal point of the park and be a valued community resources utilised throughout the week, not just for a few hours at the weekend.

### **7.5.1 Long term renewal**

Long term, it would be desirable to replace the current 1960s/70s Pavilion with a more modern, multi-use facility.

In the short to medium term, the current programme of internal renovation should be completed so that the facility is pleasant and can be used as the focus for community activities and even for private hire.

### **7.5.2 Refreshments concession.**

A refreshment concession (either commercial or community enterprise) would be a major boost to the park. Ideally this should be located where the existing meter room is (so would require some remodelling). This would also increase the draw of the park as it would allow an opportunity for the toilets to be accessible to the public during opening hours.

### **7.5.3 Toilet facilities.**

There are no public toilet facilities in the park. There are however toilets in the pavilion which are only available on a regular basis when the Footballers or FoBP are using the facilities. Requests are made fairly frequently for increased provision of toilets and ideally these should be provided for the general public. Lack of toilets is cited as a reason why families with young children do not use the park.

The current toilets are poorly maintained and require refurbishment. To allow more general access to public, also need further security considerations (e.g. more locking doors on kitchen and other storage areas).

Toilets are cleaned once per week, which is adequate with current usage levels. If opened as part of concession, or for public hire, then consider whether specific conditions of use include responsibility for maintaining state of toilets, and notifying council if issues.

Consideration should be given to disabled toilet in any redevelopment.

Consideration could also be given to a standalone toilet pod. Management and maintenance of remote toilets is a major issue and a considerable cost. There is a potential social problem unless the facility is supervised. However, they are also a facility valued by the community and should be given due consideration. If a refreshment concession was viable, and the responsibility for management and maintenance was passed to the operator as a condition of a short term lease arrangement.

## **7.6 Recreation and Sport.**

To improve the physical and mental well-being for local community consideration should be given to:

### **7.6.1 Outdoor Gym Equipment**

Many people use Basingbourne Park for exercise (e.g. running, walking, cycling, and outdoor exercise classes). A selection of outdoor gym equipment would allow these users to include some additional variety into their exercise regime, and would attract additional park users, and would should lead to a small improvement in health within the local community.

Equipment could either be located in one location in the sports field, or could be dotted around the woodlands as a “Trim Trail”, to encourage people to move around the park and increase the overall work out (and increasing uptake be non-extroverts!). (In this case equipment and locations would need to be carefully selected to minimise risk of vandalism to isolated equipment in un-supervised areas.)

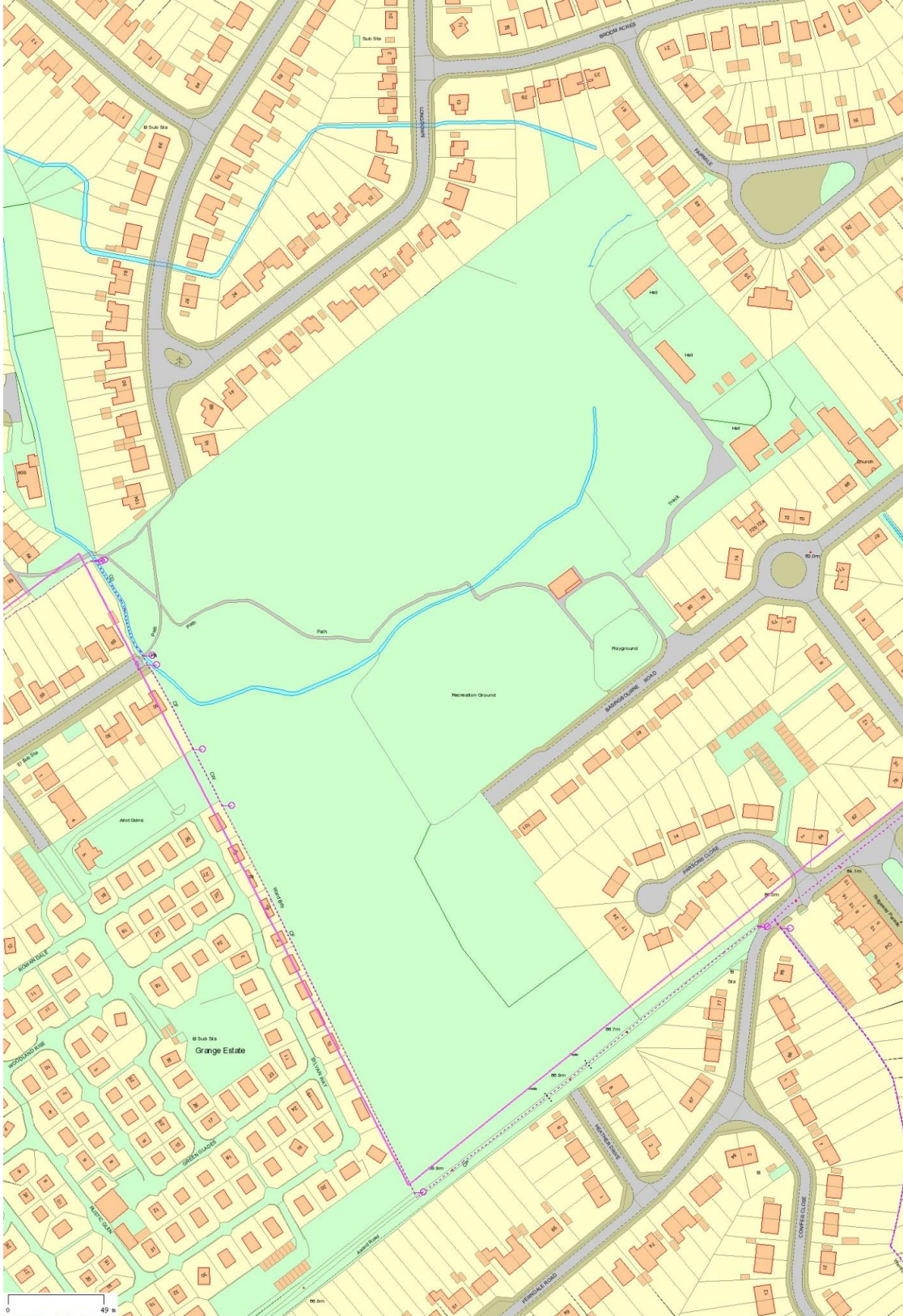
### **7.6.2 Table Tennis tables**

If funding can be secured, then an outdoor table tennis table should be installed near the pavilion

An indoor table tennis table could be purchased for the Pavilion, and which could possibly be promoted as an additional benefit to encourage external hire of the Pavilion.

# Appendices

## A. APPENDIX Map of Basingbourne Park

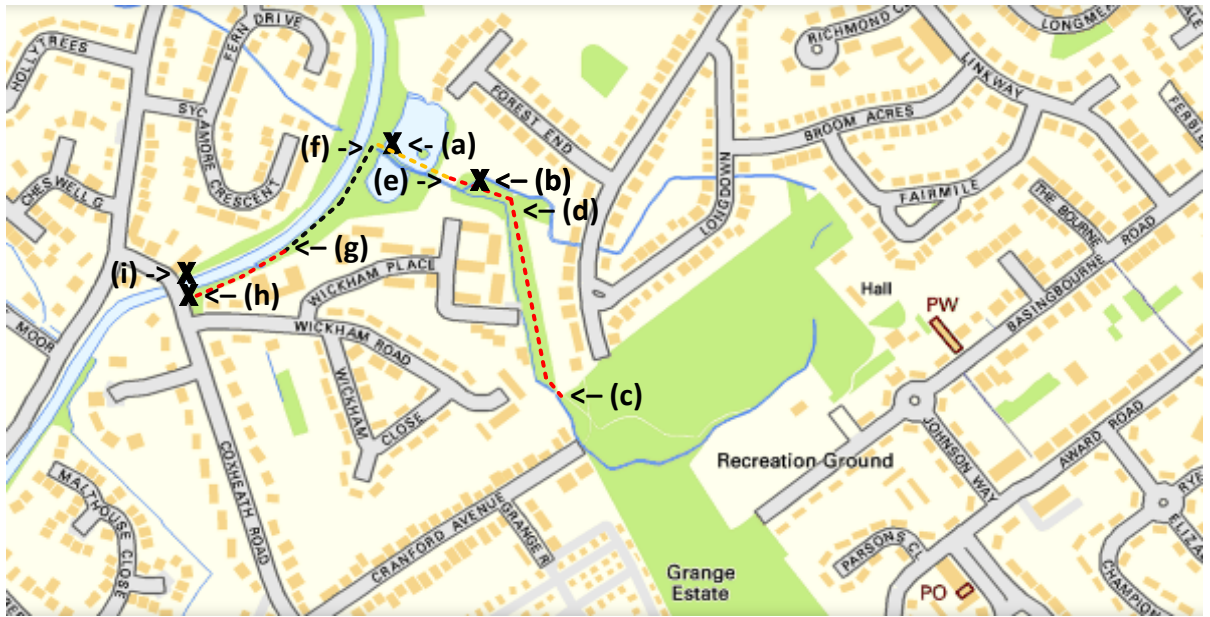




## B. APPENDIX Map Of Wickham Woods



## C. APPENDIX Map Woodland Walk Proposal

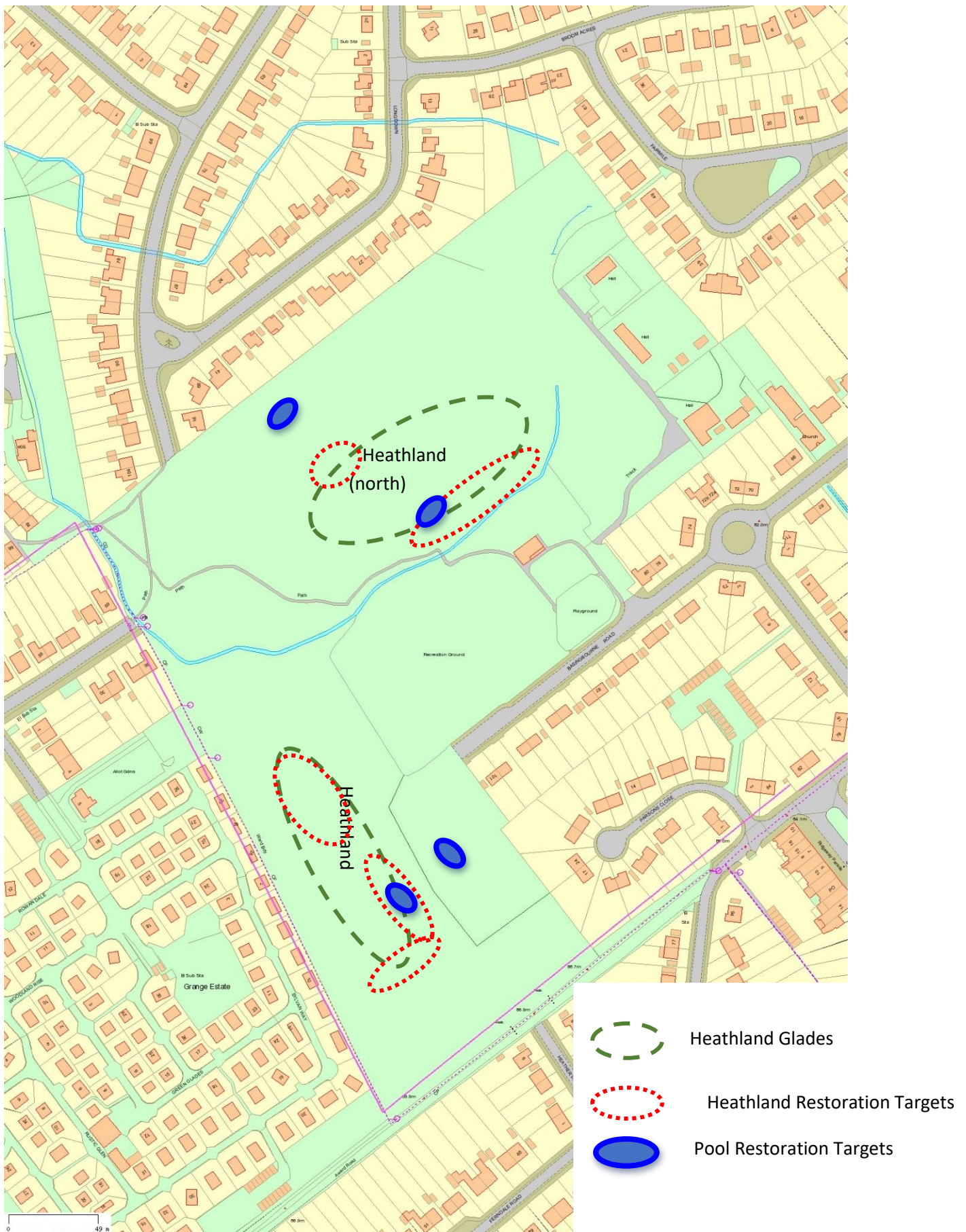


(Please can FTC insert a better map here if available)

- 1) Enable access at base of embankment (clearing fallen trees and overgrowing vegetation) (e) to (f) to (g) – amber & black
- 2) Improve railway sleeper bridge (a) – currently too low and first point to flood and deploy additional bridge to cross main stream at culvert
- 3) Clear access through (c) to (d) to (e) – currently blocked by fallen trees and unusable
- 4) Deploy two sleeper bridges at (b)
- 5) Clear access (g) to (h) – currently informal path is precariously close to canal side in places – establish improved path set back from canal bank
- 6) Improve access at remaining locations (h) to (f) and (c) to (d) – clearing fallen trees and encroaching shrubs and other vegetation; clear access to avoid badger sett
- 7) Longer term, consider raised board walk (f) to (d) to (e) so that streamside path remains useable when pools flood
- 8) Lobby Basingstoke Canal Authority & Hampshire Council to deploy sloping path from Coxheath bridge pavement (east side) down to main canal towpath (north side) to allow safe access



## D. Appendix – Target Heathland Restoration Areas & Pools



## E. Appendix – Bridge designs



designstandards-bridges.pdf

## F. Appendix – Basingbourne Heath Management Plan (2009-2014)



Basingbourne Heath Mgt Plan 2009-2014

## G. APPENDIX Inventory of Play Equipment

Location	Equipment	Condition	Recommendation
Playpark	Train Climbing Frame	Good, repainted by FoBP	Retain, repaint, holes in floor to drain
Playpark	Train "crossing" bars	Good	Retain, repaint
Playpark	Train Signal	Good	Retain, repaint
Playpark	Train Station	Needs improvement	Replace roof panels, fence panels & seat & table
Playpark	Train Buffers	Wooden cladding falling off and leaving exposed nails	Urgently replace
Playpark	Signal Box	Good	Retain, repaint
Playpark	Train Hump backed bridge	Recently renovated	Retain, repaint
Playpark	Concrete Cladding	Risk to falling children	Replace or clad with wood or softmulch
Playpark	Springers	Adequate, but prone to failure due to age	Replace
Playpark	Metal Climbing Frame	Adequate, repainted by FoBP; wooden "arch" creates risk of slipping; safety matting damaged in several locations	Retain, but long term consider replacement options



Playpark	Train "crossing" bars	Good	Retain, repaint
Playpark	Balance bars	Poor condition - grip tap consistently comes loose so slippery when wet	
Playpark	Balance stumps	Inadequate - exposed concrete from old/removed stumps; gap too large	Dig out or cover old concrete; install a couple of additional logs
Playpark	Toddler Swings	Adequate; but seats are worn and cracked; colours tired	Replace seats or full unit
Playpark	Swings	Adequate; but seats are worn and cracked; colours tired; no "accessible" swings	Replace seats or full unit
Playpark	Roundabout	Inadequate - not accessible	Replace or supplement
Playpark	Paths & surfaces	Breaking up; holed; trip hazard around edges; prone to minor flooding	Resurface with softmulch
Playpark	Brick flower beds	Poor; bushes not maintained; hard surface pose risk to children tripping	Wooden cladding to create castle feature; or remove completely
Main park	Wooden "multigym"	Tired; monkey bars have been broken and not replaced (over a year); wooden steps on climb wall are seriously worn.	Replace
Main park	Kick wall	Risk of rotting posts (one panel recently fell); muddy in front so unusable during winter; causes noise disturbance to local residents; not favoured by kids due to risk of losing balls in brambles	Ideally replace, or if not then softmulch surface in front of wall to allow use during autumn & winter months; consider fencing behind
Main park	Pitchside bench	Good	Retain and provide more for spectators
Main park	Metal benches	Good - refurbished by FoBP.	Ideally replace with wooden benches and move metal benches to woodland/heathland locations
Main park	Picnic benches	Poor - bench was moved by residents and youths to a secluded location and has been subject to some burning and vandalism	FTC should provide at least 4 additional picnic benches in the park, which will fulfil demand by families and reduce mobbing by youths