



Barnes Common Management Plan

2009 - 2014

Foreword

Barnes Common is a vitally important asset for local people, visitors and biodiversity. Therefore the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames aspires to maintain and manage the Common to the highest standards.

The management plan is based on the use of an audit of the Common following central government guidance known as PPG 17. This is explained within this document but the approach is based on common sense. We believe that it is important to get the simple things right. Is the green space clean and tidy? Is the grass cut? Are the trees and shrubs well maintained? Is the graffiti removed effectively and quickly? Do the facilities need improving or changing?

Working with local communities to deliver the highest quality of service is the top priority of the service and it is hoped that this document will provide a framework for continuing and improving dialogue. The site will be maintained appropriately and the local community in the form of the Friends of Barnes Common will be consulted on any proposed changes or improvements to facilities.

We actively encourage suggestions both regarding the management and maintenance of the Common and ideas about changes or possible improvements to elements of the Common's infrastructure or its facilities.

Parks officers regularly monitoring the site will continue to use the audit as laid out in this plan. Members of the local community are also encouraged to use this approach. It is hoped that observations resulting from these continuing audits will result in continually improving management and maintenance practises as well as careful consideration of ideas to improve and maintain the Common.

While the section is open to changing demands from the local community with regards to facilities within any of the borough's parks, the Common is a long established local green space that is generally well maintained. The Common has great ecological value and the central aim of this plan is to maintain and enhance the biodiversity of the site.

The action plan at the end of this document reflects this perspective.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Management Plan for Barnes Common provides guidance for the management and any relevant development of the Common over the next five years. It utilises the methodology outlined in the Government's Planning Policy Guidance note 17 (PPG 17) in order to audit the state of provision of features and facilities on the Common.

The Plan includes an Action Plan, which we aim to achieve within the remit of current budgets. The Plan has been drafted for a broad audience interested in the development of the Common namely:

- The Friends of Barnes Common and borough residents
- The Parks and Open Spaces Service
- Other services and departments within the London Borough of Richmond
- Elected members, ward councilors and portfolio holders
- National agencies
- Local businesses

The Plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Following this Introduction the Management Plan is set out in the following sections:

Section 2: Outlining the National Context.

Section 3: Describes the plan's relationship to the Council's aims and objectives.

Section 4: Site Description

Section 5: Site Audit

Section 6: Vision and objectives for the site

Section 7: Management principles and practices and the Action Plan

2.0 The National context

2.1 Parks are managed areas of the green environment which provide opportunities for a range of formal and informal leisure, passive and active sport, recreation and play.

2.2 The significance of parks, open space and countryside provision is clear:

- In 1988 the Audit Commission estimated that local authorities in England and Wales maintained approximately 120,000 hectares of parks and open spaces - an area approximately the size of Berkshire.
- In 2000, the Heritage Lottery Fund estimated that there were approximately 30,000 urban green spaces in the UK, of which 5,000 are urban parks.

2.3 It is widely recognised that the provision of high quality 'public realm' facilities such as parks can assist in making an area as an attractive place to live and work, and can result in a number of benefits in terms of economic development and regeneration. A local park can also play a part in promoting healthy living as a place for people to exercise.

2.4 The benefits of safe and accessible parks and open spaces can be summarised as follows:

Social

- providing safe outdoor areas that are available to all members of the local population
- providing opportunities for community events, voluntary activities and charitable fund raising
- providing easily accessible recreation as an alternative to other more chargeable leisure pursuits
- providing opportunities to improve health and take part in a range of outdoor sports and activities
- providing an educational resource or outdoor classroom

Economic

- adding value to surrounding property, both commercial and residential, thus increasing local tax revenues for public services
- contributing to attracting visitors, including using parks as venues for events
- encouraging tourism into the area
- helping to create an attractive local image
- helping to reduce social exclusion and its associated costs to society

Environmental

- providing habitats for wildlife as an aid to local biodiversity
- helping to stabilise urban temperatures and humidity
- absorbing pollutants in the air and ground water
- providing opportunities for the recycling of organic materials
- providing opportunities to reduce transport use through the provision of local facilities, and by providing walking and cycling routes through urban areas

3.0 Relationship to Council's Aims and Objectives

The London Borough of Richmond recognises that its parks and open spaces contribute to:

- To the overall Vision and Priorities of the Council
- To the quality of life of local people
- To the physical, social and economic regeneration of the borough
- To the greening, attractiveness and biodiversity of the area

Accordingly this Management Plan and the Parks and Open Spaces Service are guided by and are in agreement with the aims, objectives and principles of the following plans and strategies. These can be found at www.richmond.gov.uk.

3.1 Richmond's Community Plan

All Council's are now required to develop a Community Plan as part of their commitment to delivering more 'sustainable communities'. The Community Plan is a top tier strategy that sets out how the Council will target, manage and monitor its services for the benefit of all local people. The Community Plan has been created in partnership with residents and key local stakeholders and is reviewed on a regular basis. The vision of the plan is:

- Inclusive
- Puts protection of the environment at the core of its services and community life
- Delivers quality public services that truly reflect the needs of all its local people
- Addresses its challenges by harnessing the capacity of all its partners in the public, private, voluntary and community sector.

3.1.2 Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2003

Vision

- 'to provide access to an exciting range of open space experiences for all'

Key Principles

- **Stewardship**
 - Protect visual and physical access to open land
 - Protect, enhance and promote the characteristic features of the Borough particularly the riverside, historic landscapes and features
 - Improve the maintenance infrastructure
- **Management and Use**
 - Plan to provide for the needs of the community and visitors
 - Make the best use of public and private resources and maximise external funding

- Work in partnership with the community and other local landscape agencies
- Promote the use of open land for all
- Reduce the fear of crime by providing healthy, safe environments and promoting activity

- **Environmental Protection**

- Maintain and enhance the Borough's biodiversity
- Provide high quality, sustainably managed open spaces

This strategy is due to be reviewed and updated in 2009/2010.

3.1.3 **Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Richmond**

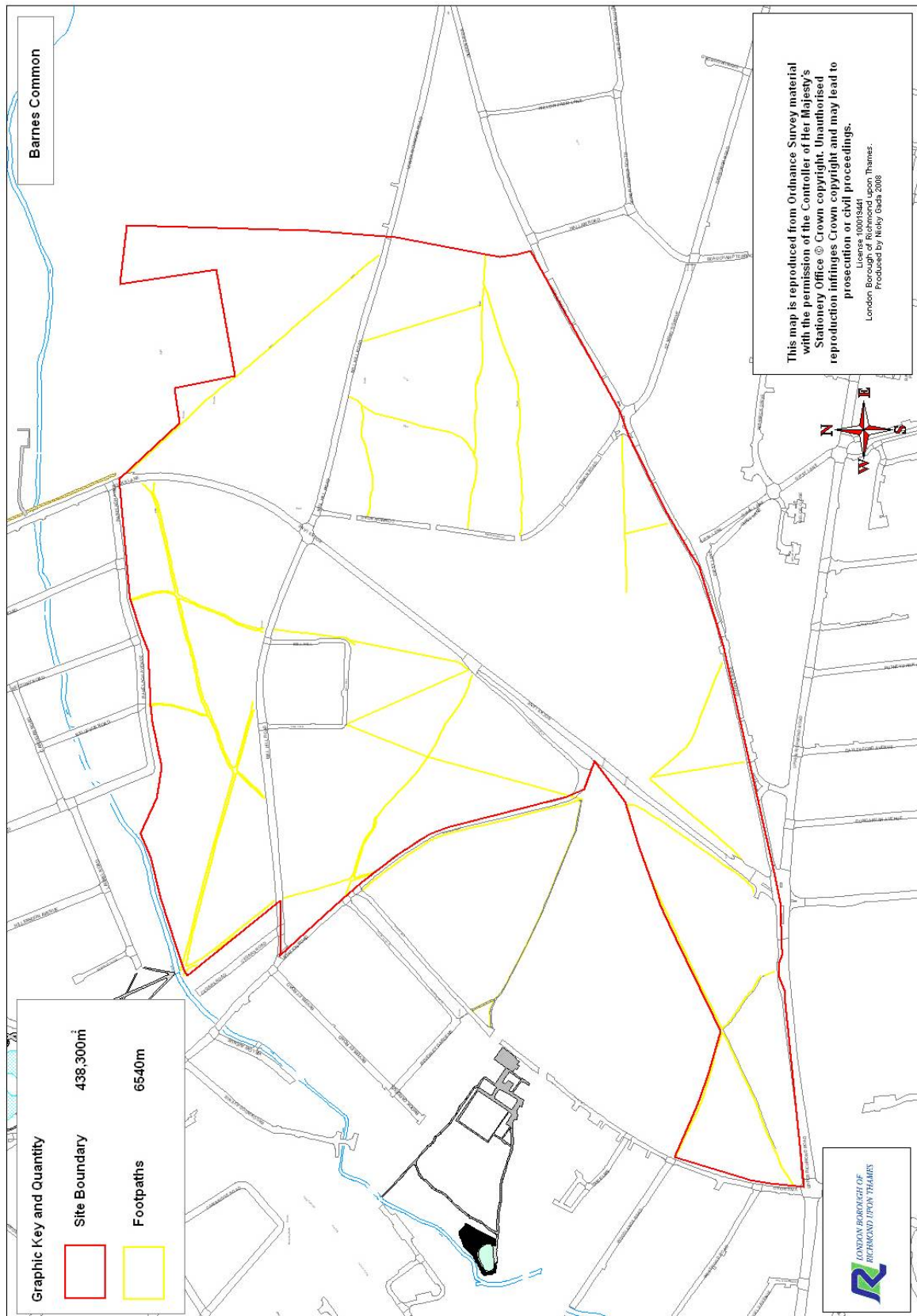
The main aims of the Plan are:

- To conserve and where possible enhance Richmond's variety of habitats and species, in particular those which are of international or national importance, are in decline locally, are characteristic to Richmond or have particular public appeal, which can raise the profile of biodiversity
- To ensure that Richmond residents become aware of, and are given the opportunity to become involved in conserving and enhancing the biodiversity around them
- To raise awareness and increase stakeholder involvement in maintaining and where possible, enhancing species and habitats of importance

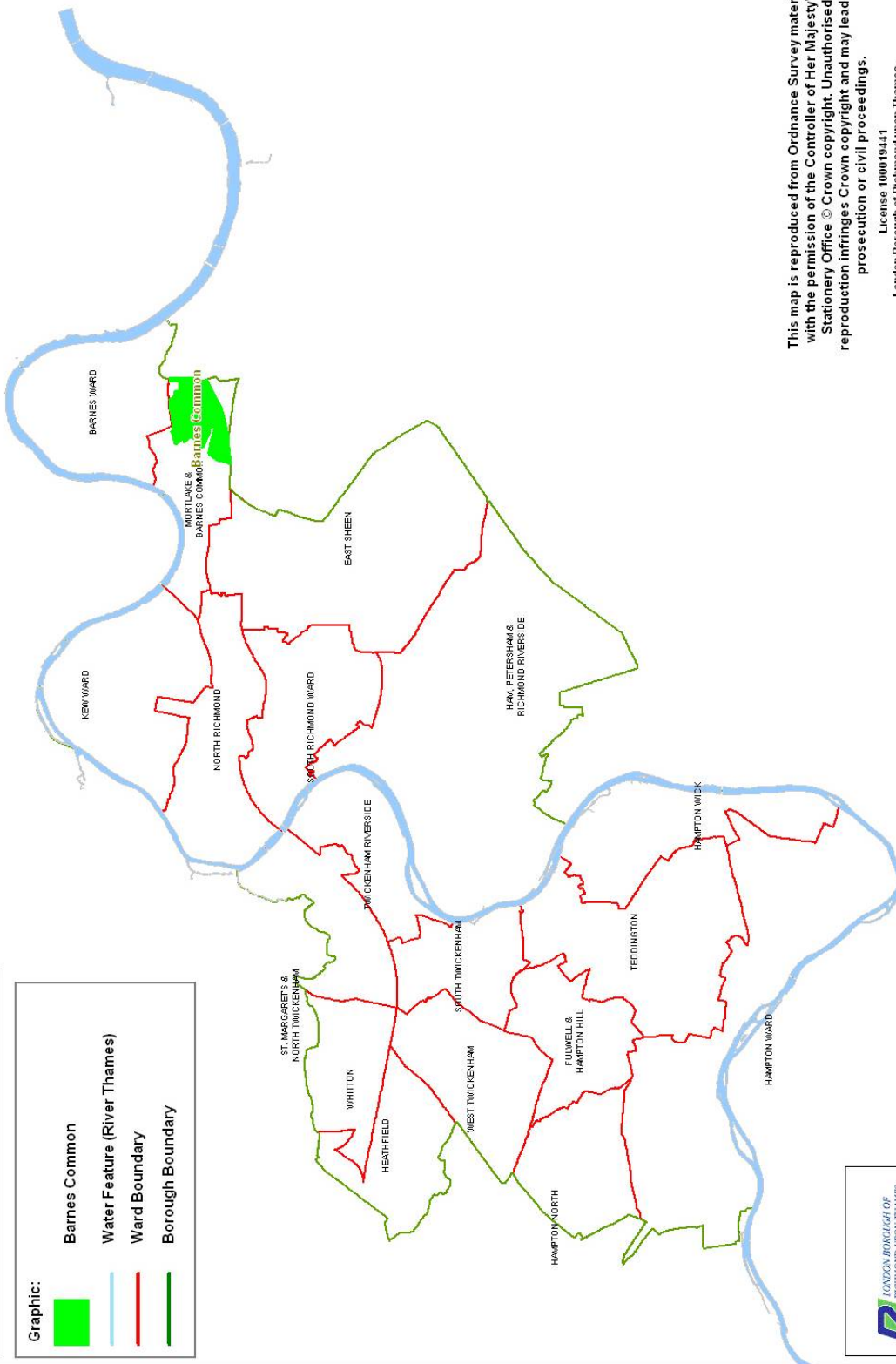
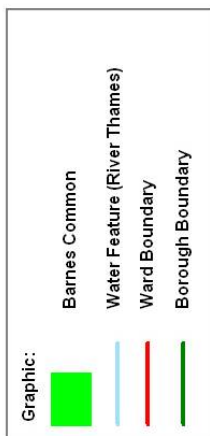
3.1.4 **Other relevant council policies**

The following policies can be found at www.richmond.gov.uk.
Printed versions of these policies are available on request:

- Community Safety Policy
- Equality and Diversity Plan
- Unitary Development Plan
- Local Agenda 21
- Cultural Strategy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Parks Byelaws
- Customer Service Standards
- Dog Control Orders
- Tree Strategy
- Events Policy



London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames



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4.0 Site Description

4.1 Outline History of Barnes Common

The area has been used as common land for hundreds of years. Historically known as 'The Waste', the Common was traditionally used for rough grazing by local residents, and probably by drovers on their way to market. The area is characterised by the underlying Thames Terrace gravels, making the majority of the Common naturally free-draining and acidic. In the Nineteenth century there were several ponds and wet areas, including an additional stream, the Rythe, flowing through it, but with drainage and in-filling much of the wet areas and seasonal ponding has been lost. In some areas gravel has been extracted for local use and for the making of local roadways, providing interesting topology and areas with scant coverage of vegetation and surface gravel exposure, which is of conservation interest.

The building of Castelnau and up-grading of Rock's Lane after the building of Hammersmith bridge in 1828, and the subsequent building of the railway (1860-75 approx) with the compulsory purchase of the track and Goods Yard area, dissected the Common into a number of segments. Well before this, some land was enclosed around the mill at Mill Hill, and, between the wars, the local authority was encouraged to create additional sports facilities – reflected in a football field and two cricket pitches surviving to his day. It is also understood that spoil from the digging of London Underground may have been deposited on part of the field east of Common Road (possibly to level this for sports use as another cricket pitch) and east of the soccer pitch (where the field is clearly built up and has a neutral soil – probably intended as another football pitch). Prior to 1945 there were only a few isolated trees and planted avenues, but since then the wooded areas have self-generated and would, in the absence of management, have taken over the whole site. During the war at least four areas were used for allotments and/or informal vegetable growing, and these areas are also evident from the enriched soil found there today, as well as patches of tell-tale horse radish.

4.2 General Information

4.2.1 Land Tenure

Barnes Common is approximately 53ha and is owned by the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's, acting through the Church Commissioners, with management the responsibility of the local authority, the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, under Act of Parliament. It is a Metropolitan Open Space, and in 1992 was adopted as a Local Nature Reserve. At that time the Friends of Barnes Common ("FOBC") was created as a trust for nature conservation work and for local consultation in connection with Barnes Common.

4.2.2 Location

Barnes Common is situated in the south east of Barnes adjoining Putney lower Common to the east and bounded to the south by the Upper Richmond Road.

4.2.3 Access

As a free and open facility Barnes Common has the potential to provide fully inclusive access to local residents and visitors to the area. Pedestrians and those arriving by train and bus and car can currently access the site.

4.2.4 Local Transport

Train: Barnes Railway Station situated on the edge of Barnes Common providing services to London (Waterloo), Staines, Reading, and Windsor.

Bus: Barnes Common is served by the following bus route: 33, 485, and 72

4.2.5 Landscape & Topography

Divided into sections by a network of major roads Barnes Common is generally flat although there are areas of undulating ground. It is made up of mixed broadleaf woodland, scrubland and acid grassland.

4.2.6 Listed Historic Buildings

There are no listed buildings within the Common.

4.2.7 Ecology

The Common today offers a relatively diverse range of habitats for such a modest sized site, especially given the roads and railway which dissect it. In particular it has several areas of mixed broadleaf woodland, which in addition to providing habitat for birds and other taxa, also provides screening from traffic and housing, adding to the feel of countryside experienced in many parts of the Common. In addition, there are the amenity sports grounds (close mown), five meadows of MG1 (neutral grasses) which are mown at varying intervals from one to three years, with areas left standing; and six main areas of acid grassland some of which contain ant-hills indicative of being open meadow over many decades. Between the woodland and meadows in some areas there are areas of heathland scrub, mainly gorse, broom and bramble, although in many other areas there is evidence that this has been or is being shaded out by the trees. There is approximately 3ha of bracken, and a few small patches of invasive plants, all of which are subject to control programmes.

4.2.8 Facilities

Barnes Common contains the following facilities within or adjacent to it:

- Cricket square and outfield
- One football pitch

5.0 Site Assessment/Audit of facilities

5.1 The main reasons for undertaking a Local Assessment are:

- to plan positively, creatively and effectively in identifying priority areas for improvement and to ensure, as much as possible, that there are appropriate types of parks and open spaces required
- to work towards ensuring an adequate provision of high quality, accessible green space to meet the needs of community
- to identify the gap between current and desired levels of need and demand, quality and quantity of provision
- to assist in achieving standards such as the Green Flag Award

5.2. Desirable Outcomes of the Local Assessment

A local assessment of green space will enable planning to be effective and achieve key outcomes required by PPG 17.

These are:

- provision of accessible, high quality park space for sport and recreation that meet the needs of residents and visitors;
- provision of a park that is 'fit for purpose' – the right type in the right place;
- to provide an appropriate balance between new provision and enhancement of existing provision;
- setting locally derived provision standards.

5.2.1 It is intended that this management plan helps to achieve these outcomes in terms of providing an analysis of existing provision and a plan to effectively maintain and, where appropriate, develop the facilities and infrastructure of the Common.

5.2.2 In addition, it produces a series of actions which will help to achieve the standards laid down for Green Flag Award parks:

- A welcoming place
- Healthy, safe and secure
- Clean and well-maintained
- Sustainability
- Conservation and heritage
- Community involvement
- Marketing
- Management.
- Educational value.

5.3 Audit of Facilities

An audit of facilities was carried out by parks officers in summer 2008. The methodology used was prescribed in the Government's Planning Policy Guideline note 17 (PPG17) for the provision of public open space. This consisted of a review of the following key areas of provision:

- Main entrance
- Boundaries
- Roads, paths, cycleways and access
- Parking
- Information
- Planted areas
- Grass areas
- Cleanliness
- Provision of litter bins
- Seating
- Children's play space
- Buildings including toilets
- Health and safety
- Nature conservation value
- Access for the disabled

5.3.1 Main Entrance

There is no main entrance on to the Common. There are many ways to access the area as it is unfenced. Entrances on to the various pathways that cross the Common are open and well maintained.

5.3.2 Boundaries

Barnes Common is surrounded by a network of major roads. The strips of Common that border the pavement of the Highway appear well maintained. The Common itself is unfenced but many of the boundaries are marked by trees. (See site plan).

5.3.3 Roads, Paths, Cycleways and Access

Paths and cycleways are in a generally good condition. There has been considerable recent investment in cycleways and footpaths as a result of Transport for London funding. There is a new programme of path improvement works due to start in January 2009 on the Northern Section of the common, which will include better lighting and new benches funded by Transport for London.

5.3.4 Parking

There is one car park on the Common. This is situated off Rocks Lane and is in a poor condition with significant signs of wear and tear. The concrete bollards separating the parking area from the Common are also in a poor condition. This is also due to be overhauled in January/February as part of the path improvement project mentioned in 5.3.3.

5.3.5 Information

Information relating to Barnes Common is available on the parks section website www.richmond.gov.uk. The parks signage is attractive and durable giving appropriate contact details. It uses easily understandable symbols to deter users from inappropriate and anti-social behaviour.

5.3.6 Cleanliness

At the time of the audit the Common was generally clear of litter. The exception to this was the area of Common close to the Barnes railway station. This area is due to be improved from July 2009, works are being led by the Council's Highways Section. There is evidence of dog fouling.

5.3.7 Planted Areas

There are no formally planted areas on the Common.

5.3.8 Scenic Quality

The Common can offer dramatic views, and it is certainly a place where you can really feel as if you are in the country despite being surrounded by a major network of roads.

5.3.9 Grass Areas

There are three types of grassland on the Common. A football pitch and cricket field are on amenity grassland. In addition to scrubland there are also significant areas of acid grassland. All areas of grass are appropriately cut and maintained.

5.3.10 Provision of Litter Bins

Provision of litter bins seems adequate. In line with many conservation areas people are encouraged to take away their own litter. More bins may be installed, depending on necessity.

5.3.11 Seating

There seems to be plenty of seating available on the Common. Some older benches made mainly of concrete are in a poor condition. The benches in the northern section of the Common are due to be replaced as part of the path improvement project mentioned in 5.3.3.

5.3.12 Children's Play Space

There is no formal children's playground on Barnes Common. The nearest playgrounds are situated in Vine Road Recreation Ground and Rocks Lane Playground, both are within approx 5 minutes walk of any section of the Common.

5.3.13 Buildings, including toilet

There are no buildings or toilets on Barnes Common. The nearest toilets are situated at Vine Road Recreation Ground.

5.3.14 Health and Safety

Health and Safety is not a major on the Common. Pathways are in a good condition with no trip hazards.

5.3.15 Nature Conservation Value

Barnes Common has great nature conservation value in particular its acidic grassland. See 7.6.2 Biodiversity.

5.3.16 Access for the Disabled

The pathways across the Common are in a good condition and as such provide good access for people with disabilities.

5.3.17 Educational Value

Barnes Common provides educational potential in relation its varied wildlife and ecology.

6.0 Vision and Objectives for the Common

6.1 Vision:

In line with the wishes of the local community and as a result of the development of this Management Plan, the vision for Barnes Common is to:

“To protect, preserve and enhance Barnes Common, as common land for the enjoyment of the present and future generations.”

The plan recognises that this aim is best served by ensuring the amenity of the Common for local residents and visitors, for organised sports and casual play as well as for walking and relaxing, whilst also seeking to develop its potential for biodiversity and fulfilling local and regional plans to restore and create more heathland, acid grassland and wetland habitat, for all of which the Common is well suited, as one of the most central unfenced areas of historic common land within the Greater London region.

6.2 The key objectives for the Common are to:

- To identify and cherish the special character of Barnes Common
- To ensure that the management of the Common protects and enhances the biodiversity of the site
- To ensure that the management of the landscape maintains the character of Barnes Common as plants grow and mature
- To ensure that all landscape improvement works are supported by a commitment to maintenance of the same
- To ensure that the Common are promoted and managed in order to provide a high quality service for the people using them
- To meet the demands and expectations of the local community primarily as a recreational, diverse and enjoyable place
- To promote the educational value of the site and to encourage local schools to use the Common for a wide variety of educational purposes
- To encourage and promote community involvement in the implementation of the proposals and in the on-going management and development of Barnes Common and Fields. To this end, to continue to consult and work closely with the Friends of Barnes Common.
- Specific objectives designed to enhance the Common's biodiversity are listed in 7.6.2

7.0 Management of the Common.

7.1 Introduction

This section sets out guidelines and general principles to be followed in delivering the vision and objectives outlined above.

The parks section is headed up by the Head of Parks. It is made up of three teams:

- The Operations team is responsible for liaising with contractors and monitoring the parks. The team includes an ecology officer and a GIS mapping officer.
- The Service Development team which is responsible for consultation and the planning and initiation of projects.
- The Arboricultural team is responsible for all street trees and arboricultural work in council maintained parks and open spaces.

We value diversity and are committed to delivering a service that puts equality of opportunity as a priority.

The work on Barnes Common is undertaken by a combination of contractors engaged by the Council, for tree work, control spraying, installing post barriers and some of the mowing, and by volunteer groups, including BTCV, Community Services workers and the Friends of Barnes Common. The last three are especially important in scrub and sapling control, keeping pathways open, maintaining ditch/trench barriers, litter picking (both regularly and the annual 'Clean-Up Day'), monitoring and preserving the rarer plants and, in the case of the Friends, maintaining the eight war graves in the Old Cemetery under subcontract from the Council, funded by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Management needs to deliver high standards of maintenance of all aspects of the soft and hard landscaping of Barnes Common within existing revenue budgets.

The Council works and consults with the Friends of Barnes Common. This assists the Council to work in harmony with users' and residents' views.

The Council works in partnership with Veolia Environmental Services in a contract that began in 2003 and will end in 2013. In broad terms maintenance will be carried out by the contractor's operatives who have the necessary skills to achieve high and consistent standards.

Veolia Environmental Services has a contracts manager in overall control of the service. It is made up of grass cutting teams and mobile maintenance gangs who are managed by supervisors who monitor the work. The Parks Patrol Service is managed by Veolia Environmental Services. They play a community safety role patrolling the parks and also inspecting playgrounds on a daily basis. The patrol will attend incidents involving anti-social behavior and liaise directly with Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

The maintenance works will be monitored effectively and regularly by parks officers who understand the nature and purpose of the works being carried out. Any points and actions arising from monitoring will be communicated to the parks contractors and officers will ensure that any necessary work is completed.

The following management processes and regimes are listed below under the Green Flag standards listed in 5.2.2. Any new initiatives in the following sections will also be included in the action plan that follows.

7.2 A Welcoming Place

The following management regimes all play a part in ensuring that Barnes Common continues to be a welcoming area.

7.2.1 Graffiti removal

As a part of our aim to make the Borough safe, green and clean we are committed to reducing and removing graffiti. The full details of the borough's commitment to the prompt removal of graffiti can be viewed at www.richmond.gov.uk.

In relation to the borough's parks there is a commitment from our contractors to remove all graffiti within five working days. Where the graffiti is racist or offensive it will be removed within one working day of notification.

7.2.2 Signage

The signage will be kept clean and will be regularly inspected. Any repairs will be carried out promptly.

7.2.3 Pathways

All paths will be inspected annually. Any necessary repairs will be carried out as promptly as possible. If Pathways through the Common become overgrown during the summer months, arrangements are made for these to be cut back regularly.

7.3 Healthy, Safe and Secure

The following management regimes all play a part in ensuring that Barnes Common continues to be a healthy, safe and secure place.

7.3.1 Community Safety

All operatives working at Barnes Common undertake an important role in terms of a visible staff presence in the park and structure their maintenance work accordingly. All staff are uniformed and wear highly visible clothing. The Parks Patrol regularly patrols the site.

In addition the local Police Safer Neighbourhood team regularly patrols the Common on foot.

7.3.2 Dog fouling

The Mobile Litter gang, Parks Patrol and the Parks Service make efforts to educate dog owners to be responsible, particularly close to areas where people are liable to be eating or children playing. Signage clearly indicates that dog mess should be picked up and disposed of by those walking their pets.

Dog bins are emptied on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and more if required. Richmond has adopted the new dog control orders; this is being reviewed in 2009.

The level of dog fouling is an issue of particular concern to the council and to the Friends of Barnes Common. An education campaign is planned for 2009. The parks patrol have also increased patrolling of the Common.

7.3.3 Pathways

Referred to above in section 7.2.3

7.4 Clean and Well Maintained

The following regimes are designed to ensure that the Common is clean and well maintained.

7.4.1 Grass Maintenance

Grass areas within the Common are a mixture of amenity, heathland scrub and acid grassland.

Amenity turf is those areas used for general recreation and formal and informal sports and can include wide-open spaces or those areas planted with trees and shrubs. The height of this grass is kept between 15 and 25mm throughout the year.

The level of maintenance will depend on the level of use, with increased repairs, fertilising, and scarifying of those areas subject to heavy wear. Most repair works to turf will be carried out in the autumn or spring, with areas either re-turfed or seeded.

Grass edges, whether they are against paths, fences or walls will be cut at the same time as the rest of the grass using strimmers in most areas.

The mowing regime on the conservation areas depends upon their soil type and the quality of the grassland. For our best acid grassland (areas 9 and 10) where the soil is very poor, very little needs to be done in terms of mowing. Where the soil is not so acidic and has a greater concentration of organic matter, resulting in a poorer quality of acid grassland the area will have a 'cut and collect' management. This involves a cutting regime of either an annual or rotational (1 in three years) 'cut and collect' regime.

Neutral grasslands are cut on a 'cut and collect' basis but than can be more frequently and in area 11 is up to 3 times per year.

Bracken and scrub areas are managed on a section by section basis depending upon their needs, either on an annual or rotational basis.

Each area is assessed on its own qualities and therefore managed accordingly.

7.4.2 Trees

Woodland Management: Limit extent of woodland to the areas north of the Station, opposite Woodlands road and as a screen around the borders and along the main

roads within the Common. Where and when possible remove non-native trees and retain native species such as black poplar, willow and crab apple – along with the oak and birch which dominate. There should be a presumption against tree planting other than direct replacement of rarer native species, and then only from known local sources. Retain standing dead wood so long as it is safe so to do, and provide a range of fallen logs and habitat piles where cutting or felling proves necessary.

The plan for the woodland and trees is intended to provide habitat for birds, moths, butterflies, beetles and invertebrates generally, as well as screening for the Common. Maintenance is intended to be kept at a modest level, with few areas where the undergrowth needs active controlling, although woodland walks based on desire line paths are to be kept open in the areas south-west and north of the station, as well as in the strips of woodland along Ranelagh Avenue, along Queen's ride and to the east and south of the Old Cemetery. Where possible, glades are to be kept open, such as within the Old Cemetery and south of the railway towards Queen's Ride.

Specific concerns affecting the woodland at present include the tar spot which is attacking the sycamore trees, and the micro-moth which has so weakened the chestnuts that they have become susceptible to fungal attack and most of the older trees appear to be in decline.

There is a presumption against tree planting, due to natural regeneration at a more than sufficient rate and the desire to open up more of the Common. The only exception within this plan is replacement of the relatively rare black poplar from known local sources. Five saplings were planted in 2007 in the area south of the railway, and more may be planned for the Former Goods Yard, but other than this, the planned planting is complete.

It is hoped that, during the course of this plan it will be possible to provide a more open vista from the railway onto the Common to the east of the station, both north, through removal of the remnants of old fencing on the north side of the footpath and some clearing of undergrowth, and south, as part of the planning for the Former Goods Yard, since Barnes Common is the first open green space reminiscent of country-side for those leaving London by this railway route.

7.4.3 Cleansing

The collection of litter is extremely important in maintaining the appearance of the Common and in the consequent respect with which people will treat and use it.

Veolia Environmental Services are contracted to do two thorough litter picks per year, when this is requested by the Park Service.

The Friends of Barnes Common perform an invaluable service by voluntarily picking litter from the Common on a weekly basis.

The Mobile Litter gang carries out the emptying of litterbins and litter pick the immediate areas around the bins.

Any flytipping is removed by Veolia Environmental Services within 24 hours of notification.

7.4.4 Park Furniture and Fittings

The Mobile Litter gang and Parks Patrol ensure that all park furniture is clean, and will check benches, notice boards and bins on a regular basis. Items will be cleaned on a monthly basis or more frequently when heavily used. Repairs will be requested by the Mobile Litter gang and Parks Patrol on a Defect Report and repairs will be carried out promptly. Any single replacement or repair will match the existing furniture so that the style of the seat remains consistent.

7.4.5 Dog fouling

Referred to above in section 7.3.2

7.4.6 Pathways

Referred to above in section 7.2.3

7.4.7 Sports Facility Maintenance

All sports surfaces are maintained in accordance with the needs of each sport.

Football Pitch

- The general public books the football pitch from September to April.
- During the playing season it is overmarked weekly and spiked and chain harrowed monthly.
- At the end of the playing season the posts are removed and sockets covered.
- The pitches are over seeded with a rye grass mixture.

Cricket Table

- The general public books the cricket table from April to August.
- Our grounds maintenance contractor Veolia maintains the table.
- The table is cut weekly.
- Wickets are prepared as and when booked.
- It is fertilised in April, July and September.
- At the end of the season the table is scarified in 4 directions, spiked and top dressed with loam soil.

7.5 Sustainability

The following regimes are designed to ensure that the Common is managed in a sustainable way.

7.5.1 Recycling green waste

From a number of points of view, sustainability, environmental considerations and to comply with Local Agenda 21, efforts should be made to recycle green waste. In doing so it is essential to ensure that the recycled waste only includes acceptable material, i.e.

- Grass clippings – these are left in situ in the park (not on the conservation areas)
- Grass edgings – reused to fill hollows and dips in the park (not in the conservation areas)

- Soft herbaceous cuttings (not woody)
- Broken turfs (after lifting and turfing operations)
- Shredded shrub prunings – chipped along with tree waste

Wood chippings from Barnes Common are taken to the compound within Hatherop Park and left there for approx 1.5 years to mulch down. The mulch is then used on the flowerbeds around the borough as both compost and a weed control.

7.6 Conservation and Heritage

7.6.1 Pesticides

The use of pesticides on the Common will be minimised as much as possible in the interests of nature conservation and ecology. The use of pesticides shall be in accordance with the Pesticide Reduction Strategy.

7.6.2 Biodiversity

The most characteristic habitat of Barnes Common is dry acid grassland, dominated by fine grasses such as Red fescue, Sheeps' fescue, Wavy hair-grass and Early hair-grass. The flowering plants found in these areas are Sheep's sorrel, which forms a reddish carpet in spring, Cats-ear and the attractive lemon-yellow Mouse-ear hawkweed. If you are lucky you can also find Creeping willow, Ling, Sand spurrey, a few Harebells and some yellow Ladies' bedstraw. In some areas you can see the male form of the tiny Hair Cap moss *Polytrichum juniperinum* and the minute but very pretty Birdsfoot on some of the sandhills. One of the rarest and most interesting plants, which aren't known from anywhere else in London, is the Burnet rose, which has been known from the Common for over 300 years.

The taxa of Barnes Common has some surprises: foxes are common, hedgehogs are seen occasionally, but deer and rabbits are notable by their absence, so there is no natural grazing. The badger sets are disused, although a badger bristle was found in 2006. There is, however, a good bird population (including, for instance, both green and spotted woodpeckers, song and mistle thrushes, long-tailed tits, nuthatch, summer visits from chiff-chaff, blackcap and willow warbler and visits by raptors), a valuable range of butterflies, moths, beetles (including stag beetles) and dragon/damsel flies, and a remarkable number of aculeate hymenoptera, reflecting the Common's location within an area which also includes Richmond Park, Ham and Hampton, as well as Barn Elms, Wetlands and the Thames corridor.

Recent surveys have found the five species of bat which might have been expected to be feeding if not living within the Common. The population of small mammals has recently been surveyed, and confirmed healthy populations of wood mice and voles were anticipated, although the limited nature of the survey failed to detect any shrews, which are probably also present. Reptiles are only very rarely spotted and amphibians less than might have been expected given the brook, the 'tadpole' seasonal pond and 'swamp' area (subject to occasional winter flooding).

A moth night provided encouragement, as did a spider survey (both in 2006), although neither produced any major surprise. There is ample evidence of stag

beetles on the Common, both in the flying season and at the larval stage. A survey of aculeate hymenoptera conducted a few years ago found several species rare for London which requires patches of bare gravel for their nesting.

Current Management

Current management has sought to preserve the status quo on the acid grassland, by preventing the spread of trees and scrub, controlling bracken and invasive plants, and by mowing and removal of arisings to reduce the weeds and small sapling growth and to prevent soil enrichment.

A 400m² reedbed is planned for area 11 in the Northern section of the common along the Beverley Brook, which will add diversity to the common and also connectivity to other reedbeds in Richmond Park, East Sheen Common, the Thames and The Wetland Centre.

New scrapes to encourage acid grassland and heathland restoration are also proposed for 2009. By creating larger areas of this important habitat, the higher predators are more likely to succeed.

Objectives

1. Reverse the decline and restore an area of one hectare of additional acid grassland relative to the 2006 baseline survey, by 2012 by ensuring an appropriate mowing and maintenance programme as well as by scraping over-enriched soils.
2. Subject to successful trials of heather planting and seeding, restore 1.5 ha of heathland in addition to the acid grassland by 2015, including where necessary by tree felling, scrub clearance and/or scraping topsoil.
3. Create a minimum of 400m² of reed habitat adjacent to the Beverley Brook by end 2009 and, if this is successful and subject to Environment Agency consent, improve the riparian habitat along the 150m of brook-side within the Common by 2015.
4. Restrict areas of woodland to the approximate borders along roadways, other than north of the Station and opposite Woodlands Road – wherever possible removing non-native species. Retain standing dead wood as long as it is safe so to do, and provide log and habitat piles where cutting or felling proves necessary.
5. Retain mown sports /amenity fields as at present, which is two cricket pitches and one soccer pitch, but enhance the amenity of the neutral grass meadow across from the Green through more frequent cutting at its heart, to reduce pressure on the Green and to encourage more use of this area in preference to the acid grass areas of the Ups and Downs, with effect from 2009.
6. Prevent parking and fly-tipping on the Common by providing and maintaining barriers to entry, with particular attention to Vine Road verges and Mill Hill surrounds by 2010.
7. Incorporate relevant Richmond Biodiversity Action Plan Habitat Action Plans and Species Action Plan objectives for which the Common is suitable and agree SMART objectives and actions to be taken within the Plan.

8. Maintain the eight War Graves in the Old Cemetery to the satisfaction of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.
9. Continue restoration of the 'tadpole pond' by end 2010.
10. Improve the sense of security on the Common: improve the lighting and condition of the formal/adopted pathways within the Common by 2015, and provide 2m verges for security to all formal paths by 2010.
11. Reduce eutrophication (unwanted soil enrichment) by installing further dog / litter bins at key points of entry, providing temporary signage/leaflets to encourage removal of waste, and introducing controls over professional dog-walking on the Common, as well as informing local residents not to dump green waste on the Common.

7.7 Community Involvement

This is crucial to the management of the common and fields. Engagement with the local community is carried out by working with the long established Friends of Barnes Common.

7.7.1 Events

In relation to Barnes Common the policy of the council is to encourage the hire of parts of the Common to appropriate organisations. The Friends of Barnes Common and ward councillors will be consulted before permission is granted for any new event. An evaluation process is held after each event.

Events are held in accordance with the Parks and Open Spaces Events Policy found at www.richmond.gov.uk .

The Friends of Barnes Common and the Council have run an increasing number of events to inform the public about the Common and provide members and the public with leaflets on relevant conservation issues, directly or through FOBC's thrice-yearly Newsletter, Barnes Community Association's 'Prospect' newsletter and the local press, as well as with stalls at the Barnes Fair and other local events.

In addition to bird walks and botany walks undertaken for several years, recent events have included bat survey evenings, a mothing night and a spider day, all of which were well attended. There is increasing interest from local school and scout groups to find ways of extending interest in the environment and nature conservation, and members of the FOBC Committee seek to encourage such involvement, subject to natural concerns about health and safety. It is hoped that such groups will be able to use the network of contacts available through FOBC and the Richmond Biodiversity Action Group to spread the message, and identify projects for such groups to undertake which will be informative, fun and useful. These might include lectures and information gathering on specific species or habitats, followed, for instance, by creating stag beetle loggeries or making and installing bat or bird nesting boxes, or helping with clean-up days and selectively in conservation work.

7.8 Marketing

Promotion and marketing of Barnes Common is in various ways to ensure that local people and visitors to the borough are aware of the facility.

Parks and Open Spaces in Richmond upon Thames brochure

The full colour brochure features a section on Barnes and shows the facilities available. The brochure is available from the Parks Department or on line at www.richmond.gov.uk.

Entrance Signage

A new corporate style of signage for Richmond's parks and open spaces was launched in 2007.

Internet

Information about Barnes Common is available on the council's website and can be accessed from the Parks and Open Spaces link www.richmond.gov.uk.

General Promotion

In order to create community awareness for all of its facilities the Parks Service regularly and systematically produces articles and press releases about activities and facility development, particularly in 'Arcadia', the Council's magazine.

The Friends of Barnes Common

The long established Friends of Barnes Common are very effective in promoting the Common particularly by organizing several community events.

The group organises volunteer work on the Common, campaigns on issues which affect it and seeks to enhance the biodiversity and amenity value for everyone's benefit. See website <http://barnescommon.org.uk/>

8.0 Action Plan

The following action plan is divided into three sections:

8.1 Development and renewal of the park's infrastructure and facilities

As indicated previously, while the section is open to changing demands from the local community with regards to facilities within any of the borough's parks, major changes to or developments of the Common's facilities are not envisaged. The major challenge is to maintain high standards of maintenance and to plan for effective repair and renewal of the major elements of the Common's hard landscaping or infrastructure e.g. path system.

8.2 Community Engagement and Consultation

The parks section will continue to work with the Friends of Barnes Common. We are committed to being receptive to concerns and suggestions voiced individually or through community groups.

In October 2008 people using Barnes Common along with other park users across the borough are being surveyed about their opinions in relation to a number of parks and open spaces across the borough.

8.3 Operational Commitments

This is presented in tabular form and includes the most important elements of the day to day maintenance of the Common, grass cutting, trees and shrubs, litter collection and maintenance of parks furniture. Monitoring and inspection are included. Biodiversity management and initiatives are also included in this section.

Element	Action	Frequency
Amenity Grass Maintenance	Kept to a maximum height of 75mm.	15 day cycle
Tree maintenance	Inspection Replanting	Annual As necessary
Litter collection	Collection and emptying	Daily
Graffiti	Removal of obscene/offensive Removal of other	Within 24 hours Within 5 working days
Parks furniture	Clean and paint Repair/replace	When necessary When necessary
Monitoring of contract	Monitoring	Every three months
Infrastructure	Inspection	Annual

Barnes Common Biodiversity Action Plan

Area / management task	Litter bins	1m path strips	2m boundary cut	Annual mowing*	Woodland management	Japanese Knotweed treatment	Mistletoe inoculations	Bird box installation	Litter pick	Bracken control	Pond Mgmt	Scrape creation */**	Reedbed installation+	Heathland restoration **	Install a new kick rail to the road around	Install more litter bins	Maintenance of the war graves		
1		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	FoBC		✓				✓			
2	✓	FoBC			FoBC				✓								FoBC		
3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓												
4		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				FoBC		✓		pot		✓			
5	✓	✓	✓	FoBC	✓					FoBC						✓			
6		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			FoBC		pot				✓			
7	✓	✓	✓	FoBC	✓	✓	✓	✓		FoBC	✓								
8	✓	✓	✓		✓					FoBC									
9		✓	✓	FoBC	✓							✓		pot	✓				
10	✓	✓	✓		✓							✓	✓	pot					
11	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓							✓						

The areas have been determined from a combination of the geographical layout of the common and the grass acidity, so that the grass within each area has similar pH level and therefore similar mowing needs.

* The mowing regime has been designed to enhance the areas of grassland dependant on their acidity and the cuts vary from 3 times per year to a rotational cycle 1 in three years. It is also aimed to improve the quality of the acid grassland in particular. Mowing is done in conjunction with selective removal of tree/scrub and scrapes aiming to restore additional areas of acid grassland, contributing towards the Richmond and London Habitat Action Plan targets to restore an area of acid grassland area by 1 hectare by 2012.

** by scraping away nutrient rich soil to expose bare poor soil the aim is to restore an area of heathland through planting and seeding of heather (*Caluna vulgaris*), this contributes towards the London Habitat Acton Plan targets to increase heathland area by 1.5 hectare by 2015

+ This is a direct contribution to the Richmond and London Habitat Acton Plan targets to increase reedbed area by 1 hectare by 2010.

✓ - done/ currently being done

pot – potential project still to be confirmed

8.4 **Conclusion**

This Management Plan is not 'set in stone'. It provides a framework and guidelines that enable the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames to manage the site to a high standard in a sustainable way. The Council is open to the changing needs of local communities and will continue to work closely with the Friends of Barnes Common. This Management Plan will be reviewed annually.