

# **The Harmony Wood (Sidcup Road Meadow) Management Plan 2008**



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## **PART I: WHERE WE ARE NOW**

### *INTRODUCTION:*

#### **What is a park management plan?**

Management Plans are an important aid to the efficient and effective management of a site. A Plan forms part of a process for evaluating performance against agreed standards, consulting and involving people, strategic planning and providing continuity. Individual plans will be specific to each park and will deliver aims and objectives specific to the needs of the local community who will be directly involved in its formulation.

A Park Management Plan also provides an excellent opportunity to collate a wealth of information relating to the park that the management authority possesses, into a single comprehensive document.

Name of Site: Harmony Wood

Address: Sidcup Road  
Eltham  
London, SE9

If you require any further details about this plan please contact:

Address: Parks & Open Spaces:  
Shooters Hill depot  
Opposite Eaglesfield Rd  
Woolwich  
SE18 4LX

Tel. 020 8856 0100

Email [parks@greenwich.gov.uk](mailto:parks@greenwich.gov.uk)

This park is allocated a technical officer who can be contacted for any further information (using the contact details provided above).

Writing Timescale:

Approved: TBA

Adopted: TBA

Due for Revision: 2012

#### **What is the purpose of this management Plan?**

As well as developing a Green Space Strategy, the production of individual management plans for each park is good practice and was one of the Action Points from the Green Space Strategy.

This Management Plan is intended to provide a vital resource for parks staff in maintaining and developing Harmony Wood as a resource for the community and will be under constant informal review, with an annual review of progress (of the Action Plan) and continuing management prescription and a 5 year comprehensive review in 2012.

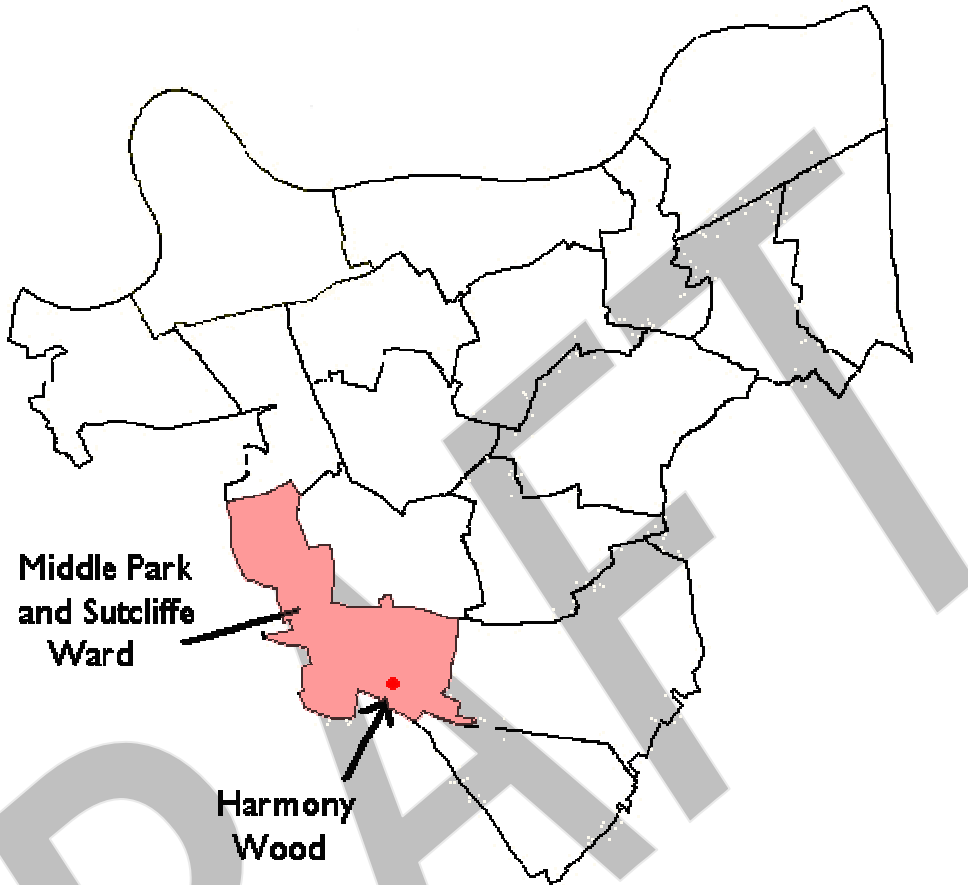
Full details of the public consultation used to create this plan can be found in Appendix x (ONCE UNDERTAKEN) of this plan.

It is expected that the plan will provide a framework within which any future decisions concerning this site will be taken and that the rolling reviews will inform future strategic and management planning. In addition, it is hoped that the management plan for Harmony Wood will assist with allocating existing and securing additional resources for developments on this site that this management plan specifies.

Future actions/priorities for this site are identified in the action plan to this document. This management plan therefore provides a benchmark against which future progress can be measured.

## SITE DESCRIPTION AND INFORMATION BASE

### **Brief Description of the Site**



Location of the site within the Greenwich Borough

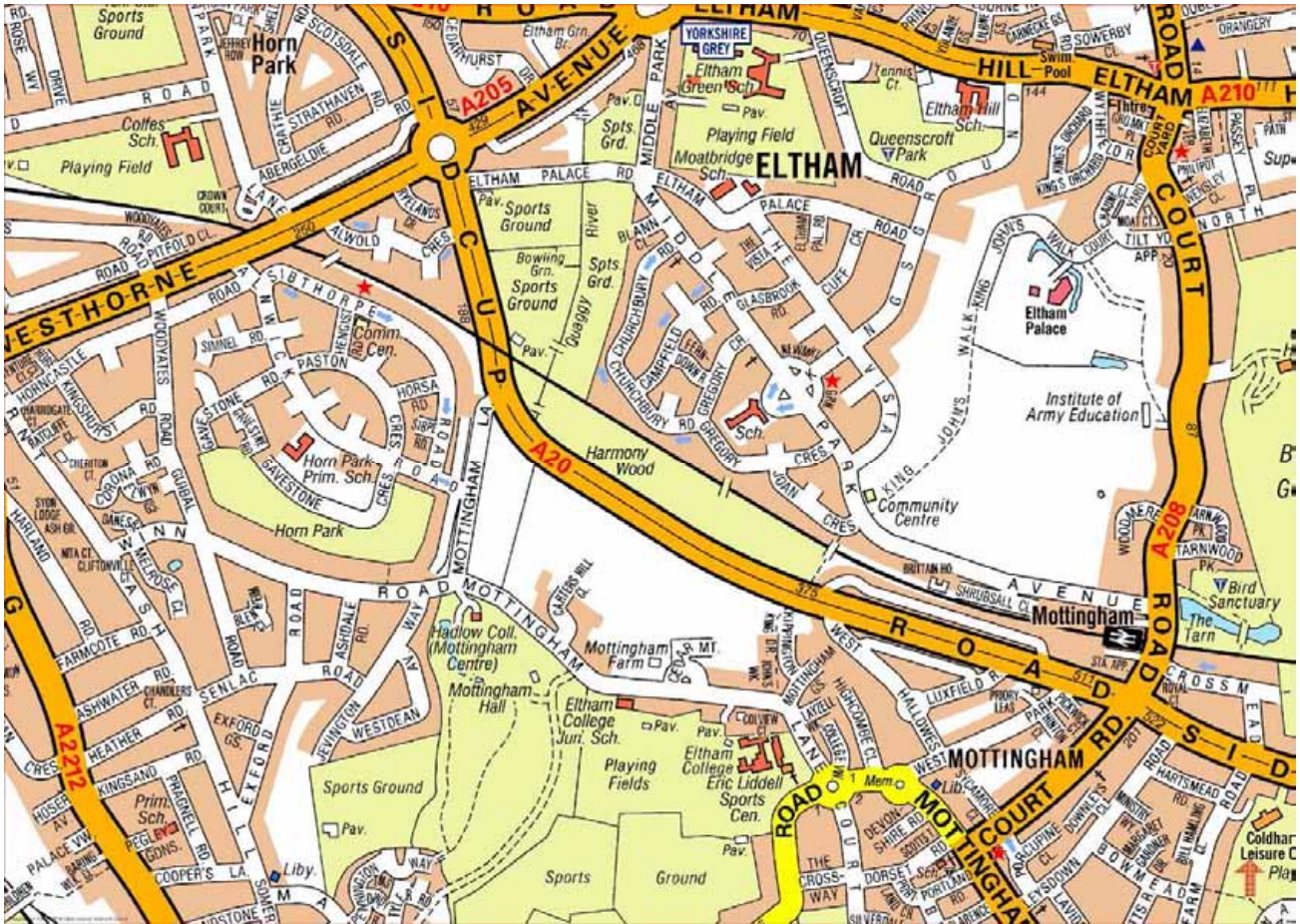
Harmony Wood is a linear open space approximately 800 metres long and 100 metres wide (variable) running West South-West by East North-east in the Middle Park and Sutcliffe Ward of the London Borough of Greenwich. It occupies a total area of approximately 6 hectares at around 30 metres above datum. The site is bordered by the Dartford Loop Railway line on its northern side and the A20 Sidcup Road on its southern side.

Harmony Wood was originally known as The Great Meadow, later Sidcup Road Meadow, but was renamed in 1985 to commemorate 40 years of world peace, since World War II.

The Quaggy runs under the A20 and through the western end of Harmony Wood.

The site is primarily of natural character and is comprised of large open areas and areas of woodland. The geology underlying the meadow/woodland can be roughly divided up into thirds, with the western third being made up of Harwich Formation, the centre third being made up of Lambeth Group and the eastern third being made up of Thanet Sands.

The site is of varying slope, with a ridge running north-south through the centre of the park.



The site is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation (SNCI/ SINC) [Borough Grade 1](#) and the railway line running adjacent to the north end of the site is a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI/SINC), Borough Grade 2.

There are several habitats at Harmony Wood, such as acid grassland, running water, secondary woodland and unimproved neutral grassland

The site is owned and maintained by the Greenwich Council, and there are no leases affecting the site.

### **Wider Policy Context**

The Management Plan has been written within the context of a wide framework of national, regional and local policy statements and strategies.

A number of strategies have been considered in the production of this document to ensure that the priorities identified in this plan deliver and compliment the appropriate aims and objectives identified in them.

The main documents impacting on the development of this plan are listed in Appendix II.

### **Summary of the site's heritage and history**

Historically, the site may have been meadowland as far back as early Anglo-Saxon times, used as a grazing lea. By the 15<sup>th</sup> century, maps show the area as being used for farming.

The area covered by the park appears to have been outside the area covered by the great hunting parks of the Royal Eltham Estate, but more research would be needed to verify this with any certainty.

Part of the site was ploughed prior to tree planting. This revealed demolition rubble, possibly from World War II.

### **Biology**

In the north western corner of the site there is an uncut section, with saplings of field maple, birch, oak and hawthorn. The woodland is made up of native species. To the west of the woodland is an area of immature sweet chestnut, rowan and oak.

The entire lower end of the site that runs along the A20 is uncut grass with other vegetation growing.

### **Microclimate**

The site has a southerly aspect, with the bottom of the valley being occupied by the Sidcup A20 road. The southern side of the valley is, as to be expected, greener and more lush, as the northerly aspect decreases sun incident angle, and hence evaporation, whereas Harmony Wood is of southerly aspect and receives a more direct sun angle throughout the day. This may be exacerbated by the fact that the site was used for dumping building rubble, which has probably increased the drainage properties of the soil, making the area drier.

The area around the Quaggy rivulet however, is very flat, and remains damp all year round, supporting a range of marshy flora.

### **Habitats and Flora**

A survey was undertaken by GLA in 2002, prior to extensive fly tipping covering parts of the site.

Harmony Wood is a very rich meadow that has supported a sizeable population of the nationally scarce corky-fruited water-dropwort (*Oenanthe pimpinelloides*). Although no longer visible on the site the seeds may remain dormant for many years and the plant could well reappear. The site also contains fairy flax (*Linum catharticum*), wild onion (*Allium vineale*) and rough hawkbit (*Leontodon hispidus*), which are scarce in Greenwich, and numerous commoner wild flowers, including an unusual abundance of common knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*). Small areas of acid grassland contain

sheep's sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) and common cat's-ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*). The grassland supports large populations of grasshoppers and butterflies, including common blue and meadow brown.

An area of mixed native woodland was planted over part of this area in 1986. It has recently been agreed to limit tree planting to belts on the edges of the site, to avoid unwanted changes to this significant grassland site.

The following is an extract from the wildweb London website, <http://wildweb.london.gov.uk>  
"Site Type: [Borough Grade I](#)

Habitats: Acid grassland; Running water; Secondary woodland; unimproved neutral grassland

The woodland area is made up of mixed native species and comes down to the road edge. These were originally planted in blocks, but the woodland has diversified over time. There are still distinct areas of predominantly one species, with others forming an understorey or canopy layer. Examples of the blocks are hazel (*Corylus avellana*), birch (*Betula spp.*), poplar (*Populus spp.*) and hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*). Other species present include cherry (*Prunus spp.*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), rowan (*Sorbus spp.*), oak (*Quercus spp.*), field maple (*Acer campestre*), *Cotoneaster spp.*, holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and *Rosa rugosa*. Towards the western end of the woodland area, the trees are smaller and more compact. Some of the hazel was coppiced in 2004 and 2005.

A spread out line of large specimen trees, mainly poplar and ash, bound the roadside edge of the site. Other species along this line consisted of elder (*Sambucus nigra*), hawthorn, field maple, broom (*Genista spp.*) and apple (*Malus spp.*). The bottom area of grassland has been left uncut. Several small trees were in the grassland area immediately to the west of the woodland, which include sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), oak, and rowan. Apart from a few field maple saplings, the hedgerow planted in 2004 is no longer evident in the tall vegetation. It may recover over the next few years."

#### **Access to the site**

King John's Walk which forms part of the Green Chain Walk runs along the eastern edge of the site, in the form of a well maintained paved path. A series of four lampposts line the edge of this path.

There is free access to the site, in that it has no fence at the road edge. Although there is a bank along most of the roadside boundary, this does not hinder access to able bodied pedestrians. At the western end there is a locked metal gate, for maintenance access, in between two sections of bank with a desire line path either side of the gate. A bridge over the Quaggy stream gives access through the western boundary. There are three locked gates along the north-eastern fence; one at the western end, one in the middle and one at the eastern end. In the eastern corner is access to the footbridge that crosses the railway track and forms part of the Green Chain and King John walks. At the eastern corner by the road is a chicane.

The park is not particularly accessible for the mobility impaired. The only access point would be through the chicane at the eastern end, which might prove problematic, and would only allow the user a short journey along the tarmac path to the bottom of the footbridge. The rest of the site is

fairly rough terrain and would not be accessible to wheelchair users or those with mobility problems.

Car parking is a short walk away from both the northeast and southwest access points to the site. Joan Crescent has ample parking, from which a short footpath leads to the footbridge over the railway line and into the site at the northeast corner. Driving westwards along the A20, cars can park on the pavement of a section just past the railway bridge. Parking is also available in Mottingham Lane and at The Dutch House public house for those who wish to avail of their services.

### **Public Transport**

Train: Mottingham Station

Underground: North Greenwich, then 161 bus

Buses: 124, 126, 160, 161

### **Fences, furniture and signage**

The western edge of the site is entirely bounded by the Quaggy stream that runs through a culvert. A hedge of mature hawthorn and a chain link fence run on both sides of the Quaggy. The fence is broken near to the road end and also by the footbridge that gives access over the Quaggy onto the site, from the neighbouring field. This bridge is situated approximately two thirds of the way towards the north-eastern boundary. There is a chicane on the bridge.

The entire length of the northern boundary has a tall metal mesh fence separating the site from the railway line, except for the left-hand corner, which has a tall metal bar fence. Behind this left-hand corner section of fence is a steep stony bank, with metal steps leading up to the railway track that runs between the site and local housing. There is a locked gate in the fence giving access to these steps to authorised users. Moving eastwards the bank remains steep but is covered in mature oak, some of which overhang the fence. There is a gradual decrease in the height of the bank until at the highest point of the site, the railway track is level with the site and clear of trees. Another locked gate is situated here. From that point on the land behind the fence starts to drop down to the railway track and become tree covered again. This drop increases in depth until at the eastern end there is a third locked gate and steps leading down to the track, which is several metres below the level of the site.

The eastern edge is bounded by a wooden closeboard fence, which separates the site from local housing.

Along the road edge there is no fence. Mature tree specimens grow along this boundary, but only serve as a demarcation in that they are spaced at some distance from each other. There is a bank along much of the boundary, which reaches approximately 1.5metres in height in places. Near to the western end of this boundary is a locked gate with banks on either side, but enough space for pedestrian access around the gate. The western end of this boundary has a line of wooden posts/bollards. The pavement at this point is protected from the road by a crash barrier. In the corner there is a bridge under which the Quaggy stream runs.

There is a 'No Motor Vehicle' sign at both the south-eastern and south-western corners.

Green Chain Walk sign and King John's Walk, by footbridge and at chicane, at either end of the footpath that runs along the eastern boundary.

**Summary of main uses, recreational facilities, visitor attractions and activities**

The main uses are dog walking, and use of site as a through route for the Green Chain Walk and King John's Walk. There are no visitor attractions or facilities on site.

**Details about any stakeholders associated with the site**

Greenwich Council

- Culture & Community Services
- Strategic Planning (property Services, planning control, green chain)
- Chief Executives (Communications/Community Engagement)
- Neighbourhood Services (Neighbourhood Panels/Representatives)
- Children's Services

Community

- Dog walkers
- Walkers
- Local residents
- Environmental groups (LWT)

Agencies

- Police, Fire & Rescue Service
- Green Chain Walk
- TFL

Politicians

- Ward Members
- MPs

**Management of the site**

**Management Structure**

The management of the site described in this management plan is the responsibility of the Parks & Open Spaces service within Greenwich Council. This is shown in Appendix II

The Parks and Open Spaces Service is located within the Directorate of Culture and Community Services. The Parks and Open Spaces Assistant Managers (Operational & Technical) are accountable for the overall management responsibility of the Service.

Individual management functions are devolved and key functions are identified as follows:

- Horticultural Maintenance
- Park Keepers, Rangers and Parks Security
- Parks Development
- Fixed Equipment Playgrounds
- Ecology & Conservation

- Tree & Woodland Maintenance
- Administration – Sports lettings, complaints monitoring

The Parks and Open Spaces gardening staff carries out regular maintenance but are not based at Harmony Wood. The mobile Park Keeping staff undertake routine litter clearance on a regular basis and the Parks Security (Based at Well Hall Pleasance) carries out periodic monitoring of the site.

### **Budget Information**

The budgets used to maintain parks and open spaces are currently split into two areas, Horticulture Operations and Property Services.

#### Horticulture operations

Currently it is not possible to identify expenditure specifically related to the sites covered in this plan, as finance generally comes from a central fund.

#### Property Services

The corporate budgets for both planned and responsive maintenance of the Council's property infrastructure are held by Greenwich Property Services in the Directorate of Strategic Planning. Planned works are carried out on a strict basis of corporate priorities and, as a consequence, P&OS has to compete against other service departments for a share of the limited funds available. Responsive repairs are carried out for minor items as and when they arise.

### **Marketing information, activities and approach**

Marketing of the Harmony Wood is currently limited and is mainly in the local area. However, there is some information regarding Harmony Wood on the Greenwich Council Website, which requires updating.

### **Summary of the known issues or challenges**

Complaints had been received from local residents regarding extensive fly tipping, traveller encampments (though not for some years), illicit motorcycling and vehicle noise from the A20. To address these problems it was decided to create a native woodland screen to limit the noise and illegal activities. The tree planting was not to include the area of a possible sighting of the locally rare corky-fruited water dropwort.

Much of the tree planting took place on land that had been previously damaged by fly tipping. This project later became the focus of debate regarding the ecological benefits of planting trees on this site. Prior to the fly tipping damage, an ecological survey had identified Harmony Wood as an important conservation meadow, locally rare in type. It is likely that the tree planting could have potentially changed this habitat so that the meadow no longer remained. After several meetings between the Council and various conservation organisations, it was agreed to remove the newly planted trees and instead, plant a hedgerow along the northern and southern boundaries. In this way the meadow would remain, and in the long-term a sound barrier hedge would grow, as requested by the local residents. Any trees that had survived being removed from the meadow were used as part of this planting.

To address the fly tipping problem it was decided to limit vehicle access to the site by further excavating the boundary along the A20 to create a ditch and dyke and to plant a hedge along the boundary, also to put a chicane on the bridge at the western boundary.

The fly tipping has decreased since the installation of the ditch and dyke/ hawthorn hedge, and is no longer a problem. The vehicle noise continues, as the hedgerow has not yet matured. The motorcycle problem has appeared to have been reduced.

Land was 'rip contoured' before planting trees. This is thought to have reduced the motorcycles as the ground was too ridged.

The grassland remains, but only a detailed survey would demonstrate its diversity.

## **PART II: WHERE DO WE WANT TO GET TO?**

### *VISION*

The vision for Harmony Woods is to continue to provide a quality local meadow/woodland through the ongoing implementation of the action plan formulated by, a partnership of Natural England, London Wildlife Trust and Parks and Open Spaces.

### *ANALYSIS & ASSESSMENT*

#### **Sport & Recreation**

Although the reserve provides some scope for passive recreation, there is no scope for sport or recreation development within the site, as any developments would compromise the integrity of the sites biodiversity.

#### **Landscape**

Few improvements other than those already mentioned would be recommended at this stage. It should be sought to further reduce ASB on the site

#### **Management**

Most of the site is grassland, and managed as a conservation meadow. It is cut once a year in late summer/early autumn and the grass cuttings are removed. Wildflowers thrive in nutrient poor soils and so removal of cuttings is essential or they would break down and add nitrogen to the soil to maintain this habitat.

It may be beneficial to investigate meadow hay making and spreading to increase biodiversity on this site, on a very irregular basis.

#### **Visitor & Community Needs**

##### **Consultation**

The results of the consultation are detailed in **\*\*\*\* to be inserted following meeting/discussions with stakeholders**

There are regular users of the King John's Walk and the Green Chain Walk. A series of canvass opinion notices along these walks may prove useful at the consultation stage, in order to capture feedback from these users that might otherwise be difficult to obtain. It may also be worth posting a proposal for forming a Friends Group along these walks.

### *STRENGTHS*

- Valuable local “green lung” buffer zone between the train line and the A20
- Historically significant ancient meadow
- Action Plan for the site formulated between interested partners

### *CHALLENGES*

- Some illicit motorcycle and quad-bike riding
- Maintaining/improving biodiversity
- Promoting the site as a public site while continuing to improve the park as a valuable ecological resource

### *RECOMMENDATIONS*

- To continue implementing the recommendations of the existing Action Plan agreed for the site
- To ensure that the future management of the site be founded on a working partnership with the English Nature, the London Wildlife Trust, Greenwich Council Parks and Open Spaces officers and Greenwich council elected Members
- Feed the results of public consultation into the Management Plan
- To reduce ASB
- To further develop and maintain a hedge along the northern and southern boundaries

## PART III: HOW WILL WE GET THERE

### ACTION PLAN

Timescales as given in this document are as following;

Short Term – Within one-two years from adoption of this plan

Medium Term – Within three-four years from the adoption of this plan

Long Term – Five years and more from the adoption of this plan

Recommendation	Action	Timescale (Long/Medium/Short Term)	Responsibility	Reviewed
To continue to implement and support outstanding/ongoing points of the existing Action Plan	Maintain the integrity of the meadow as much as possible (treat as conservation meadow, cut and cleared annually during late Summer early Autumn) Continue to maintain the hedgerow	On-going		
That the future management of the site be founded on a working partnership with the English Nature green gateway, the London Wildlife Trust, Greenwich Council Parks and Open Spaces officers and Greenwich council elected Members		On-going		
Undertake public consultation and feed findings into the Management	Seek comments on draft plan Undertake user surveys/questionnaires to	Short Term		

Harmony Wood Management Plan 2008

Plan	identify issues such as priorities for improvement			
To reduce ASB in the site	Continue to maintain hedgerow to prevent illicit motor vehicle access Liaise with police re illicit motorcycle use at site	Ongoing		
To further develop and maintain a hedge along the northern and southern boundaries	Maintain & plant as appropriate	Medium Term		

## **PART IV: HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE'VE ARRIVED**

### *MONITORING AND REVIEW*

The Harmony Wood Management Plan will be fully reviewed and updated in 2012 by Parks Management Staff responsible for the site.

A working document copy of the Management Plan will be kept within the parks office so that issues and changes that arise can be documented. The action plan will be reviewed as appropriate and updated accordingly.

## **APPENDIX I: WIDER POLICY CONTEXT**

As highlighted earlier in the plan, Greenwich Council's Parks & Open Spaces department operates within a wide framework of national, regional and local policy statements and strategies. The main documents impacting on the development of this plan are listed below.

### **Parks & Open Spaces Service Plan 2006-7**

The Parks & Open Spaces department aims to develop, manage, ensure accessibility and maintain to a high standard the borough's Parks, Open Spaces, Woodlands, Tree Stock, Cemeteries, Playgrounds in parks, Sports Pitches, Allotments and other outdoor facilities. To meet the needs of the community and deliver the Council's core objectives where applicable to the service, and specifically regarding the provision of a clean and well cared for environment and supporting Health and Quality of Life for the local community.

### **Green Space Strategy**

The Green Spaces Strategy sets out the Council's strategic intentions for its green assets and its vision of the positive contribution that Greenwich's open networks make to our lives.

The thematic objectives (community safety, biodiversity, education and culture, culture & events, tackling inequality, sport, health & well being) are all relevant to, and have been considered in the development of this document.

### **The Cultural Strategy**

Parks & Open Spaces is one of six 'areas' considered by the Cultural Strategy. The Strategy has five over-arching themes: - Equality and Access, Sustainability, the Cultural Economy, Achievement and Excellence and Partnerships. All of these aims are relevant to this management plan and have been considered in developing the opportunities and priorities for this site.

### **Draft Biodiversity Action plan**

The Greenwich Biodiversity Action Plan will be the first co-ordinated approach to conserving Greenwich's biodiversity. The aim of the plan is:

'To ensure the conservation, enhancement and public appreciation of the biodiversity of the London Borough of Greenwich'.

The Biodiversity Action Plan focuses on locally important habitats and species and has actions drafted to ensure that they cover all relevant habitats and species. Initially actions may be focussed on those under the most pressure or where most advantage can be gained. However, it allows for all important habitats and species to be covered.

The Biodiversity Action Plan has been developed in partnership with local and regional groups and organisations and is currently in a draft stage. Once the final draft is agreed it will be released for wider consultation before a final plan is adopted.

### **Unitary Development Plan**

Local Councils have a duty to prepare a Development Plan by law. The Greenwich Unitary Development Plan (UDP) sets out the vision for use of the land in the Borough, and provides the main guidance for making decisions on individual planning proposals. The document is intended to

cover the period 2001 – 2011 (or 2016 in some instances) it is a legal document with the following purposes

- To provide a framework of acceptable uses within the Borough, defining areas where development is not desired or where it needs to be carefully directed and;
- To provide a detailed basis for the control of development

The UDP may be viewed at the Directorate of Strategic Planning, Planning Department, Peggy Middleton House, Woolwich, SE18, or alternatively at a local library.

The UDP designates Harmony Wood under the following designations

- Metropolitan Open Land
- Green Chain
- Green Chain Walk
- Site of Nature Conservation Importance (NCI2)
- Area at risk from fluvial flooding (around the Quaggy Rivulet)

For more details on the policies associated with the individual designations, please consult a copy of the UDP at your local library.

### **ISO 9001:2000 – Quality Management System**

Quality Management System ISO 9001: 2000 is used by organisations to manage their activities and resources to guarantee a quality service. This management system is based on eight quality management principles:

- Customer Focus
- Leadership
- Involving People
- Process Approach
- System Approach to management
- Continual Improvement
- Factual Approach to decision making
- Supplier relationship, which benefit both sides.

## Legislation

The Parks & Open Spaces department operates within the frameworks set out by the following legislation, and therefore, the legislation may impact upon the delivery of service of the Parks and Open Spaces department both financially, through planning and human resources. This is not a comprehensive list but is indicative of key pieces of legislation relating to P&OS.

- Alcohol Consumption in Public Places Order 2003
- Clean Neighbourhoods Act 2004
- Control of Pesticide Protection Act 1986
- Country Code 1981
- Country side and Rights of Way Act 2000 and increments
- Countryside & Right of Way Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 1998
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1998
- Litter Act 1983
- Ministry of Housing and Local Government Provisional Order Confirmation (Greater London Parks & Open Spaces Act )1967
- Occupiers Liability Act 1957
- Road Traffic Act 1988 (as amended 1991)
- The 2004 Country Code
- The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 & Dogs Act 1871??
- The National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949
- The Weeds Act 1959
- The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981

In addition there are numerous bye-laws that relate to specific parks.

### APPENDIX III: Management structure

Table showing senior management of Greenwich Council Parks and Open Spaces Service

