

Pretty Corner Woods Annual Review

2024

Contents

Abstract	2
About	2
North Norfolk District Council's Corporate Objectives	2
Countryside Service Vision and Aims	3
Working with the Woodland Trust	3
Visitors	3
Green Flag Award	4
Staff Resource	5
NNDC Leisure and Locality Services Structure 2025	5
Quality Facilities and Activities	6
Safe Equipment and Facilities	8
Personal Security	9
Control of Dogs	10
Litter, Cleanliness, Waste Management and Vandalism	10
Horticultural Maintenance	11
Arboricultural Maintenance	12
Building and Infrastructure Maintenance	14
Equipment Maintenance	14
Managing Environmental Impact	15
Waste Minimisation	17
Chemical Use	17
Peat Use	17
Climate Change Adaptation Strategies	17
Management of Natural Features, Wild Fauna and Flora	18
Conservation of Landscape Features	19
Conservation of Buildings and Structures	21
Community Involvement in Management and Development	22
Appropriate Provision for the Community	23
Marketing and Promotion	24
Appropriate Information Channels	24
Appropriate Educational and Interpretational Information	28
Conservation management plan. 2025	2

Introduction - Welcome to Pretty Corner Woods

Abstract

This annual review outlines the management work, activities, projects, development and general progress made by North Norfolk District Council's Countryside Service against Pretty Corner Woods Management Plan in 2024 and forms the basis of the authority's application for continued Green Flag Award status. Pretty Corner Woods is one of three Green Flag sites managed by NNDC, alongside Holt Country Park and Sadlers Wood, and these sites are linked and referenced at appropriate times in this review. The annual review is separated into two sections for the ease of the reader – generic & previously provided information is shown within a coloured background, with information & updates relating to the previous year specifically shown with no background.

About

Pretty Corner Woods, which has held Green Flag Status since 2013/14, forms part of a larger woodland complex under differing ownerships. Pretty Corner Woods (30.3Ha) is owned by North Norfolk District Council (NNDC), and The Woodland Trust (WT) own and manage 19.44Ha of woodland to the southeast known as Old Wood. A further 11.37Ha of woodland to the northeast, sold to Sheringham Town Council by Anglian Water in 2006, is leased to the WT and is included within their management operations. The site contains a patchwork of habitats including mature secondary woodland, conifer plantations, regenerating heathland, acid grassland and a small amount of ancient woodland.

The wood is situated within the North Norfolk AONB, along the Holt- Cromer ridge. The site neighbours Norfolk Valley Fens SAC and is a short walk from Sheringham Hall Park and gardens. The historic town of Sheringham is 2 miles away. A popular Edwardian seaside resort, the town still has a thriving tourist industry and attracts visitors to both the sea front and the surrounding countryside. Notable and significant features of the site include:

- 2 free car parks one off Holway Road and one-off Pretty Corner Lane,
- A large picnic/playing field,
- A boardwalk linking the two car parks,
- A viewing point,
- Waymarked routes.

North Norfolk District Council's Corporate Objectives

North Norfolk District Council's Corporate Plan 2023 to 2027 sets out the Council's priorities until 2027. It guides business decisions to ensure that the council is well-run and able to meet its objectives.

The Corporate Plan is a strategic document, listing the priorities for council actions for the period 2023 to 2027, giving a shared vision and values, and listing the priority areas on which the council intends to concentrate its efforts:

- Our greener future
- Developing our communities
- Meeting our local housing need
- Investing in our local economy and infrastructure
- A strong, responsible and accountable Council

NNDC's countryside team is well placed to support the Councils' corporate objectives highlighted above in bold— Our greener future & Developing our communities. A copy of the corporate plan can be found here: corporate-plan-2023-to-2027.pdf (north-norfolk.gov.uk)

Countryside Service Vision and Aims

North Norfolk District Council's Countryside Service manage areas of woodland and open space amenity land for the safe enjoyment of the community of North Norfolk, protecting & promoting the countryside and its wildlife, flora and fauna, whilst encouraging sustainable access. The main objectives of the service can be defined as:

- To provide a high quality and inspiring visitor experience and a rich biodiversity of wildlife in sustainable woodland settings and open spaces
- To enhance the wildlife within our sites by diversifying habitats whilst securing the future of important species and complementing adjacent conservation sites
- To promote regular visits to our parks through increased awareness, and by providing a variety
 of high-quality facilities, events and activities
- To actively encourage community involvement in our parks and open spaces at all times
- To seek service sustainability through appropriate income generating schemes and activities, and the provision of a first-class service which meets the needs of the community
- To support the Councils corporate objectives relating to the current corporate plan 2023-2027

Pretty Corner is a beautiful 165-acre patchwork woodland and heathland, which forms part of a larger network of woods and heaths. Together they stretch along the 10-mile Holt to Cromer ridge within the North Norfolk area of outstanding natural beauty. Located a few miles from the historic market town of Sheringham, Pretty Corner Woods is a great place for families to play, learn, explore and be creative together - Home | Pretty Corner Woods

Working with the Woodland Trust

NNDC and The Woodland Trust work together in partnership to manage Pretty Corner Woods & Old Wood, with the site viewed by many 'as one'. Both are committed to long term partnership working to secure good quality access to the woodland and this commitment to a partnership approach has been strong over a number of years.

In recent years the decision making and approaches to practical management of the site have become increasingly separated, but not to the detriment of the site. Our Rangers have continued to push on where possible with site improvements to Pretty Corner Woods, whilst remaining in close contact with the WT regarding Old Wood. Both organisations seek to manage the site for the common goals of promoting safe public access, enhancing wildlife, diversifying habitats and working positively with partners, however our local presence means that our team spends more time managing the site in person than the WT. We carry out informal site checks on the WT side, reporting issues back, and carry out agreed management works and repairs within Old Wood as part of an annual Estates Management Contract. All of this means that the whole site remains safe and welcoming for visitors.

Visitors

Pretty Corner Woods is open to visitors all year round, only closing its gates in high winds or other examples of extreme weather where the safety of visitors may be compromised. Over the years it has not been possible to provide accurate visitor numbers for the site, however in 2023 the Council, led by the Leisure Team, invested in new data collection software provided by ActiveXchange, a brief summary of which can be found below:

The ActiveXchange footfall software collects estimated footfall data from apps on smart phones, it counts the number of app "pings" from over 45,000 apps such as sat navs and fitness apps. Smart phones send out "pings" from pockets and bags without the phone actually being used at the time and is not dependent on a "good" phone signal as the data is sourced from on-device GPS. The data collected from the apps is smoothed using sophisticated data modelling including footfall data from other sources to prevent double counting and produce a high accuracy rate. The software applies the modelling after the sites have been selected to avoid over or under counting as one person travels within as site or between selected sites.

This means that we are now very pleased to be able to provide the most accurate visitor data available to us for Pretty Corner Woods, which has been very interesting to analyse. Data for the past two years are shown in the table below:

	Pretty Corner Woods Visitor Numbers				
	2023		2024		
Jan	2541	Jan	3176		
Feb	2698	Feb	3148		
Mar	3839	Mar	4479		
Apr	5223	Apr	4570		
May	3625	May	4078		
Jun	3492	Jun	3929		
Jul	5266	Jul	5595		
Aug	4181	Aug	4704		
Sep	4462	Sep	5578		
Oct	3397	Oct	4246		
Nov	2649	Nov	3311		
Dec	4188	Dec	5235		
Total	45561	Total	52049		

The limitations of this data collection are that children who do not own a mobile phone are not accounted for in this calculation. Phone ownership of over 12's in the UK is estimated at 92% but Pretty Corner does attract a number of visitors who are under 12, and therefore we need to include an uplift on these visitor numbers to more accurately reflect total visitors. With this in mind we have decided that an increase of 25% to account for child visitors is fair, and this would take 2024's figure to 65061(compared to 56951 in 2023). In 2024 the most popular hour for visitor density in Pretty Corner Woods was 11:00, followed by 10:00, compared to 11:00 and 12:00 respectively in 2023.

Green Flag Award

The purpose and aims of the Green Flag award are:

- To ensure that everybody has access to quality green and other open spaces, irrespective of where they live
- To ensure that these spaces are appropriately managed and meet the needs of the communities that they serve
- To establish standards of good management, and to promote and share best practice amongst the green space sector
- To recognise and reward the hard work of managers, staff and volunteers

Pretty Corner Woods achieved its first Green Flag in 2013/14 and has now held the prestigious award for 9 consecutive years. This is an achievement which all those who have been involved in managing the site are very proud of, particularly given the requirement for continuous improvement and development. Our Green Flag flies proudly above the picnic area.

Staff Resource

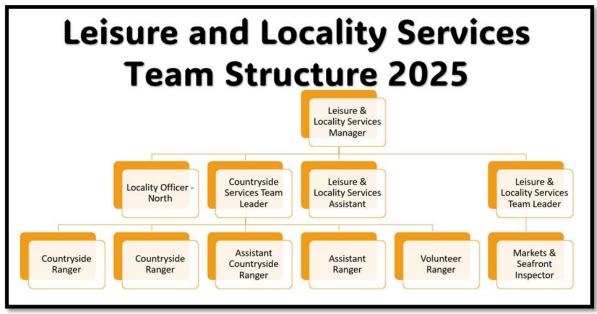
NNDC's Countryside Team manage 15 sites across North Norfolk and staffing levels for this are stable and adequate to deliver the service to a good standard. The team sits within the wider Leisure and Localities Service at NNDC which manages a wide range of services for the authority, including a Pier Pavilion Theatre, foreshores, sports and leisure centres, sports development, beaches, beach huts and markets.

Pretty Corner Woods is an extremely important and loved site for the Countryside Team, with the following staff resources attributed to its management:

Position	Resource Attributed to PCW (FTE
Countryside Services Team Leader	0.2
Countryside Ranger	0.2
Countryside Ranger	0.2
Assistant Ranger	0.2
Assistant Countryside Ranger*	0.2
Leisure & Locality Services Manager	0.1
Leisure & Locality Services Team Leader	0.1
Volunteer Ranger	0.1

In early 2024 we were able to increase the hours of our Assistant Countryside Ranger to further support the work of the team and to continue to manage our sites to the expected levels. The role itself was also reviewed and changed to increase the skills required to carry it out, additionally bolstering the team's resources. This has proven to be of great benefit to the service, enabling the team to work in different ways to help improve the output achieved.

NNDC Leisure and Locality Services Structure 2025



Health, Safety & Security

Quality Facilities and Activities

Pretty Corner Woods offers visitors a number of different facilities, activities, events and options which encourage them to stay active and healthy, as well as to continue to visit the site regularly.

Facilities

Car Parks – Pretty Corner Woods benefits from two free car parks for visitors to use, a smaller car park off Holway Road heading towards Sheringham town and a larger car park situated on Pretty Corner lane. The condition of the car parks is monitored by the ranger team with repairs taking place as and when necessary. These repairs are carried out by the ranger team themselves or the Council's property services team if required. Both car parks had emergency gates installed in 2021 to allow the rangers to close these off when circumstances dictate it necessary.

Picnic/Playing Field – A large picnic field is situated to the north of the site which can be used by visitors to enjoy their lunch or to play games. This area is maintained as part of the Council's grounds maintenance contract. One edge of the picnic field now provides a home to our new community tree nursery which has been introduced in the past 2 years.

Waymarked Routes and Sculptures – three new colour coded waymarked trails were installed on site in 2020, with a further trail



added in 2022 and a longer fifth trail added in 2023 taking in the site as a whole. The site also plays home to some sculptures, including two very different owl sculptures — a long standing and much-loved large owl head and wings which greets visitors at the start of the blue and red trail, and a new chainsaw carved owl.

In 2024 we also installed a brandnew carved bench, funded by legacy monies from a generous local. This bench is situated at one of the sites popular viewpoints which is accessible via a short walk from Pretty Corner Lane car park and boasts views out over the town and sea to the North.

To guide visitors around our latest waymarked trail we even produced our own way markers which include our cartoon wildlife family, which we hope will add a nice touch for our younger visitors as they navigate the woods.



Tea Rooms – Pretty Corner Tea Room provided a convenient and pleasant place for refreshments over a number of years, situated on Pretty Corner Lane and accessible from the woods or road. The tea rooms are independently managed and were sold to new owners in 2021.

As a service we are keen to support this independent business and as such have avoided introducing concessions to this site on the understanding that the plan was always to re-open. In 2024 a few popup events were held by the tea rooms but regular opening does not yet appear to be on the horizon unfortunately.

Picnic Tables and Benches – Some picnic tables and benches are situated around the site for people to stop and enjoy their lunch, a brief pause in their walk or a rest of their legs. We have also introduced new 'Happy to Chat' benches to help combat social isolation. We have increased the number of benches available around the site following the feedback received as part of our most recent user survey. These are all made and installed by the Ranger team utilising materials taken and recycled from our own sites.

Events and Activities

Each year our team organise and deliver outdoor events for the local community and visitors to the district to enjoy. These events are provided for a number of reasons, including promoting regular use and general awareness of our parks and open spaces, providing countryside education to the community, and helping to make the service sustainable into the future. They are a very valuable and enjoyable part of the work we do and we have been working hard in recent years to develop and diversify our offer to ensure that as many people as possible can access events which they enjoy.

Pretty Corner Woods as a site is well placed to deliver events thanks to its large field which can be used for car parking and an event at the same time. The lack of facilities does lead to greater costs when organising events at this site, which does play a part in our decision around how many and which events and activities to bring to site. As with most areas of our service we are constantly reviewing how we do things and where our priorities should be to ensure that the maximum benefit is achieved. We reported last year that we will be seeking to rationalise the events we provide in line with the current capacity of the team, taking into account the outcomes we wish to achieve and the resources we now have to deliver them. In addition to this we must consider costs and income even more stringently than we previously have. On top of this we identified that our planning and organisation of these events also needs to improve, and whilst we have rationalised & we have improved our planning processes we will continue to do this into 2025. This will see less events delivered, removing many of the smaller & shorter events, and more focus on the larger events — which are usually themed around the different holiday periods. We are confident we will still be able to deliver events which meet the criteria outlined above, whilst also fully considering the resource implications of delivering them.

The plan for Pretty Corner is to deliver two large events during the summer period making use of the space we have here as opposed to other sites. Details of the events which did take place in 2024 are shown below:

Pretty Corner Events 2024				
Event Date Provider Children				
Magnificent Minibeasts	30 Jul	Ranger Team	23	29
Woodland Activity Day	13 Aug	Ranger Team	8	
Teddy Bears Toddle	15 Aug	Ranger Team	25	27
Family Orienteering	22 Aug	Cancelled		
Totals			56	56

These events are important for Pretty Corner as they introduce more people to the site and make events more accessible for those living close by.

In addition to those events organised by our own team we also encourage where possible externally provided activities. For example we are aware of two walking groups who use the site on a regular basis – one for fitness in older life and another as part of a Mindfulness campaign supporting mental health in the community.





Photos from our Woodland Activity Day 2024

Safe Equipment and Facilities

The site and other features are formally inspected by rangers monthly and an itemised inspection schedule is completed, with additional (more informal) inspections carried out as part of their regular visits to site. Paths, artwork, bins, benches, structures, interpretation, trails etc. are covered within these inspections. Maintenance works are undertaken by the rangers who follow a monthly work plan based

on the management plan and the inspections. All significant activities and operations are covered by risk assessments which are reviewed on an annual basis.

The team were fortunate to secure capital funding in 2023 to purchase two new pieces of equipment for the service – a saw mill and Worky Quad (see right). Before use in a public space full training was provided for use of each, as well as appropriate RAMS being produced, and both pieces of equipment were added to the team's inspections. Finally, an appropriate service regime was put in place for both.

Risk assessments are carried out for all activities and events on site, including customer facing events and the Ranger's practical works. To support this the Leisure and Locality Services Manager has recently completed their 3 day IOSH Managing Safely qualification, and the Council's new Corporate Health & Safety Officer has been to site to review the team's health and safety documentation and practices.



Leading on from the additional equipment purchased in the previous year, this has been utilised for several practical management tasks which have supported efforts to keep the site safe and well maintained. One such example is utilisation of the Worky Quad to skim & drill the particularly boggy areas throughout the site. Although these areas were not necessarily dangerous we were aware that they were becoming extra boggy and leading to some visitors trying to avoid them through woodland blocks.





Examples of path works completed in 2024

Personal Security

Although anti-social behaviour is not completely absent from Pretty Corner Woods it is extremely rare that there are occurrences whereby individuals are personally affected by it. Emergency signs are in place on site in the car park areas, which cover the information required by visitors in case of emergency, including contact numbers for the ranger team and the main council offices. Rangers are fully first aid trained with forestry add-on and carry radios which operate off a multi-network sim system allowing for a much greater coverage than an ordinary mobile phone. All of the team are also have an enhanced DBS check in place which is renewed annually, and the team all have standard issue uniform making them instantly recognisable to the public when on site.

The ranger's safety is supported by the use of the Council's chosen lone working system – peoplesafe, and their movements can also be tracked via the radio's they use.

A working relationship has been established with the local police Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) in Sheringham. When instances of anti-social behaviour are experienced within Pretty Corner Woods, which usually involves groups of teenagers meeting up in the evening/night time and occasionally lighting fires, then these are reported to the SNT who will subsequently increase their presence on site to help to prevent recurrences. This approach seems to be managing this minor problem well. The team also have annual contact with the Norfolk Fire Service to ensure that all access codes to the site held by the fire service are accurate and up to date in case they need to attend the site. We also review access points and all other fire related questions, concerns and queries.

Maps are available in flyer form and on entrance boards which, along with clearly waymarked routes, allows visitors the peace of mind that they can always find their way back to a car park or one of the exits. In 2024 we had a instance whereby a large traveller family moved onto the top car park on site. Aware that this often causes concern for locals and visitors our Environmental Protection team was quick to issue a notice to quit and this particular encampment left the site. It should be noted that this is a very rare occurrence at Pretty Corner Woods, and our actions demonstrate our ability to deal effectively which such instances.

Control of Dogs

Pretty Corner Woods is used extensively by local people to walk dogs. Dog bins are provided in places of heavy use and where they can be effectively emptied by contractor's staff. Regular checks are made by NNDC Environmental Protection Rangers and interpretation is placed throughout the park to inform visitors to clean up after their dogs. Public land in the district is covered by a Dog Control Order making it an offence for people not to clean up after their dogs. The regulations were introduced under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

Problems with dog fouling seem to come and go, and in 2023 we did see an increase in dog walkers not clearing up after their dogs. Rangers and NNDC's Environmental Protection Rangers increased their presence at the site to try and deter this type of activity whilst also educating visitors at the same time. This appears to have had the desired effect with 2024 seeing a great deal less such reports.

Social media channels are used to back up this message and to encourage visitors to take

responsibility. These actions seem to have had the desired effect and dog mess has since significantly reduced back down the very low levels we have previously seen. We are pleased to report that we continue to receive very few complaints or reports of problems with dogs or owners at this site.

Dog walkers are very welcome at all of our sites, including Pretty Corner, but are reminded that they are expected to follow the countryside code:

Fergus enjoying his regular walk at Pretty Corner

When you take your dog into the outdoors, always ensure it does not disturb wildlife, farm animals, horses or other people by keeping it under effective control. This means that you keep your dog on a lead, or keep it in sight at all times, be aware of what it's doing and be



confident that it will return to you promptly on command.

Maintenance of Equipment, Buildings and Landscapes

Litter, Cleanliness, Waste Management and Vandalism

The site is litter picked every two weeks in winter and once a week in the summer, and this frequency helps to keep the site litter free for the vast majority of the time. Two litter bins are situated in each of the car parks for visitors use, and these are emptied twice a week, or upon request, by the Council's waste services contractor Serco. In addition to this we have installed a new double recycling bin in the main car park (Pretty Corner Lane) to allow for recyclable waste to be collected.

Waste	Frequency of clearance	Removed by contractor.
Litter bins emptied	Twice a week or when necessary.	Serco
Dog bins emptied	When 75% full or when necessary.	Serco

Site litter picked	Once a week in summer or when necessary. Every two weeks in winter.	NNDC Rangers

Pretty Corner Woods has experienced some vandalism, ordinarily in the summer months and in the form of camps and fires, however these are few and far between. All instances of this type of site vandalism and damage are reported to the local SNT who have subsequently increased patrols and their presence on site. This has taken three forms — on foot, in a vehicle and by utilising a drone. We have also utilised our social media channels to encourage local people to report any instances such as this through the correct channels. Our ranger team and our police contacts use the app What Three Words to identify where problems have arisen and where they may arise within the woods. We are pleased to report that once again instances of vandalism and alike were negligible in 2024.

Horticultural Maintenance

Pretty corner woods is a registered county wildlife site and is situated adjacent to Old Wood which is managed by the Woodland Trust. Horticultural management is carried out using a five year management plan which outlines conservation and forestry work for each compartment within the woods.

Utilising the work plan and ongoing guidance from senior members of the countryside team, appropriate work tasks are set each month/week to manage the woodland wildflower rides and grassland areas. Work tasks are adjusted to allow for changing weather, late seasons, wildlife habitats and breeding species. All conservation and grounds maintenance work is carried out by the countryside team, with the help of volunteers on an ad hoc basis where required. Our rangers are qualified to use a variety of machinery, brush cutters, tractors, chainsaws and chippers to maintain the country park, and they utilise conservation management techniques to maintain, protect and enhance wildlife biodiversity and habitats.

Areas around amenities and facilities are maintained for visitors using machinery in a sensitive manner, which has a lower impact on wildlife and which is suited for the time of year so it does less damage. For example we would use brush cutters selectively to cut overgrown grass without cutting the wildflower which are growing within – this can be seen around trail posts where the rangers will use strimmers and be more selective, leaving tussocks of grass and wildflowers for insects, butterflies and bees to use. No grass cutting is carried out within bird nesting season, when butterflies are feeding, breeding and laying eggs on plants, or in wild flower season.

Over the years selective grass cutting for the consideration of wildlife has proven very important. Grassland rides are brush cut in October depending on the season, making sure that wildlife habitats are not disturbed. The cut grass is then raked and collected by the rangers and volunteers and used for reptile and amphibian habitat within the woodlands. Over time this method of grass management has decreased the density of coarse rough grass allowing more wild flower species to grow for the benefit of all.

The countryside team make sure that wild flowers are left until they have gone to seed so that they can naturally seed or be collected for planting. Leaving the grass cutting later in the season is important for reptiles and amphibians using particular areas for habitat. Wildlife habitats are always protected, this is a benefit for visitors who enjoy the variety of wildlife species within the park. Tractor grass cutting is carried out using a compact tractor with the grass cutting deck set higher to produce a conservation cut. This does not damage the rides, trees or grassland, and prevents areas being cut down to the ground, leaving important wildflower and invertebrate habitats. Selective areas of brambles, stinging nettles, and plant species are left for feeding butterflies, birds and mammals for food. If extra soil is needed, then this is obtained from the local green waste recycling centre, CJC Lee

who work in conjunction with North Norfolk District Council. They produce high quality peat free soil conditioner from locally sourced natural material. Soil containing peat is not used anywhere on site.

The creation of butterfly and wildflower rides is ongoing within the woodland. These areas have increased in wildflower species since being established. New butterfly and wildflower rides were created in 2024, with areas of windblown trees from the 2020 gale force storms being thinned and wildflower rides created in their place. The countryside team and volunteers also control large areas of invasive species such as bracken and rhododendrons to encourage establishment of wildflowers. Selective areas of brambles, stinging nettles, and plant species are left for feeding butterflies, birds and mammals for food.

On the blue trail the countryside rangers and muddy boots volunteers have created a woodland glade area for peaceful reflection. Visitors will be able to sit surrounded by wildflowers and watch birds feeding in the woods

Arboricultural Maintenance

Monitoring, maintenance and management of tree works is carried out by NNDC's ranger team in conjunction with the Council's approved tree services contractor – MJ Tree Services. The Council's tree management contract was re-procured in early 2022.

Regular informal tree surveys are carried out by the rangers, who have tree surveying qualifications, with the aim to highlight the decline, disease and the development of trees in a public space.

Professional tree surveys within the woods and on the boundaries are carried out by MJ Tree Services at least every 18 months in order that all trees can be seen in and out of leaf throughout the seasons.

Works which are deemed high risk, require large or specialist machinery, involve climbing, or are situated next to amenities, property and other facilities are carried out by MJ Tree Services as part of their contract with us. All other works are carried out by the ranger team who all hold the relevant qualifications to manage and maintain the trees within the woodland, and all tree work is carried out within the recommendations of the British Standards for Tree Work BS3998 in order to ensure that trees can be maintained and managed for longevity, and to prevent the spread of diseases and pathogens. A high level of Biosecurity is implemented to prevent the spread of disease and pathogens in all NNDC woodlands including Pretty Corner Woods. Tree species for re stocking are sourced from approved suppliers only, and these have been grown in house or are purchased trees which have been grown in the UK and are proven to be free from disease – we do not use non-native species. To further our biosecurity measures we also always ensure that no cross contamination occurs between the sites which we manage through thorough cleaning of equipment and machinery, and no dumping of plant material from one site to another. Grass cuttings and brash are always left on site and we monitor our sites carefully to ensure that the public do not dispose of their cuttings and alike on our sites.

Woodland management follows the standards and requirements set out in the UK Forestry standard documentation, and is managed taking into consideration the protection of wildlife and their habitats, as well as all legal protection regulations such as TPO, SSSI and protected wildlife species.

Habitats, wild flower rides and glades are created for wildlife under the permission of a tree felling licence where the felling of trees is agreed by the Forestry Commission under certain regulations. This advises which species of tree can be felled, in what quantity and where, and outlines requirements of which tree species can be planted for restocking and the necessary density per hectare. The felling licence is valid for ten years from issue and detailed plans have to be submitted and approved before any felling of trees over a certain volume within a wood can occur. Pretty Corner Wood's new felling license was issued in June 2020 and will allow for the future creation of more important habitats within the woods for wildlife, as well as creating and increasing wildflower rides, and creating glades which have previously been lost by the encroachment of invasive species and lack of management. This also helps reduce competition and shading of species, allowing light and warmth into the woodland, thus

creating space for mature species which produce seed for natural regeneration, and increasing the variety of habitats to produce a greater biodiversity of wildlife species.

Pretty corner woods was heavily impacted by a severe storm in September 2020, with many trees of various ages and species wind-blown and damaged, and some others having to be felled due to health and safety concerns. The storm naturally thinned the woods and opened up areas of woodland, however many mature trees were lost which has made a significant impact on the woodland and its future management. The felling licences for Pretty Corner Woods takes into considerations tree species to be selectively thinned and how to create and maintain important wildlife conservation areas within the woodland. As a result of this storm a dense shelter belt of native smaller species of tree is being planted around the perimeter of the woodland, and a thick shelter belt of trees will be planted to protect the woodland above the picnic field to give more protection and future proof this area against similar storms. Areas of Pretty Corner which were damaged by the strong winds in 2020, and areas where diseased trees have had to be removed, have been managed to create new wildflower rides and glades. The rangers have opened up areas along rides for wildflowers to flourish and insects to find a plentiful supply of nectar. A greater biodiversity of tree species have been planted next to the wildflower rides that will provide wildlife with a supply of berries, nectar and nuts, creating a ride of a mixture of grasses, wildflowers, shrubs and trees. The greater diversity of tree species and mix of tree planting within an area will help fight against the spread of disease and pathogens between the same species.

The forestry commission has designed a programme which shows which tree species will be able to survive in the future due to climate change, so tree species within the woodland have been chosen for longevity and that will adapt to climate change to create a resilient and sustainable woodland. A mixture of species will be planted to be resistant towards diseases and pathogens, instead of having single species of tree planting all being lost to disease, for example Ash die back. Trees will be planted as mixed groups and tree species of a variety of ages encouraged to further sustain the woodland. Ancient and veteran trees are protected and have their own individual management to prolong their life.

Tree guards are used in appropriate areas to protect newly planted trees to prevent them from being eaten by deer and rabbits. Our ranger team now uses biodegradable tree guards across all of our sites. Timber is used by the rangers to make benches, way markers, signs, seats, shelters, flower beds and sculptures for use within the woods.

Extreme drought, prolonged downpours and more frequent high winds has affected trees of a variety of ages within pretty corner woods, we continue to see trees decline in

health as the trees struggle to cope with the weather and fend off disease. The rangers have been extremely busy felling high risk trees throughout pretty corner woods and our other sites.

This has led to an increased amount of tree felling work and planting work in winter throughout our sites. Selective thinning work and felling of trees due to health and safety risks, as required in the tree felling licence and management plan, has provided good quality firewood and brash piles for wildlife habitats.

With the help of our muddy boots volunteers the ranger team have created new wildflower rides in areas on the green trail where trees have been damaged by the storms in 2020. This has also helped open up areas for access and create wildflower glades.

The countryside team continue to work towards creating a healthy woodland for wildlife habitats, public enjoyment, and sustainability for the future. The countryside rangers and muddy boots volunteers over the year have been very busy checking the health of the trees that have been planted at Pretty Corner Woods within the last few years. Where we have lost trees, these have been restocked to maintain numbers and mixed species. We have continued to plant native species and species which are said to be able to cope with climate change.

To access this site's felling licence, you can use the Forestry Commission's land information search (LIS) map browser - <u>Use the Forestry Commission map browser and Land Information Search - GOV.UK</u> – and search for Pretty Corner Woods. Our felling licence number for this site is 0171123202.

Building and Infrastructure Maintenance

Pretty Corner does not currently benefit from any buildings on site. The infrastructure that exists is spread across the site and includes notice boards, way markers, paths, car parks, a boardwalk, benches and picnic tables. Rangers monitor all infrastructure as part of their management of our sites, carrying out weekly checks and full monthly site inspections. The ranger team will carry out most of the repairs as necessary. Where appropriate the Council's property services team will deal with larger repairs, and these are usually to the aging boardwalk, which has proven to be a particular problem in recent years, and discussions are ongoing about its future management.

With the financial pressures that Councils find themselves under it is not possible to fully replace the boardwalk, therefore this would have to be funded externally through grants – which are equally difficult to find at present. This situation will continue to be monitored and the boardwalk will continue to be patched up when required.

Pretty Corner Woods is a site which does not have a ranger presence every day and as such we also have the facility on the Council's website for visitors to report damages and defects. In 2022 we installed new welcome signs to replace the very dated old ones, and in 2023 we introduced additional infrastructure with the support of our volunteers including more seating, interpretation boards and the new community tree nursery.

In 2024 a number of benches were replaced across the site due to how they had deteriorated, and two areas were improved – the learning space by the picnic field and the new sensory/quiet area. Both of these spaces are due for further additions in 2025, and initial talks have been held with The Green Light Trust to see if we are able to utilise Pretty Corner as a site for their projects. Funding has been sought for the learning space which, if successful, will enable a significant amount of improvements to take place in addition to current plans.





The current minibeast/learning area which will receive further improvements in 2025.

Equipment Maintenance

Maintenance of equipment for public use is covered in the Safe Equipment and Facilities section found earlier in this report. Equipment used solely by staff and volunteers is monitored and maintained by the ranger team. All equipment is now kept on the Council's central PPM and compliance schedules to

ensure that they are consistently well maintained and fit for purpose. Equipment which is identified as unsafe or past its usable life, and cannot be fixed or maintained, is condemned and replaced (if required). More significant pieces of equipment such as brush cutters and chainsaws are maintained regularly by the rangers who hold the relevant qualifications to carry out this work, and a maintenance log is kept detailing the work carried out. Where necessary local firms such as MJ Tree Services and Halls Power are utilised to support this maintenance work. Maintenance of equipment is covered within the relevant risk assessments. The new workshop, which has been installed at the teams base in Holt Country Park, has been designed internally to further support the team's ability to effectively maintain their equipment and tools.

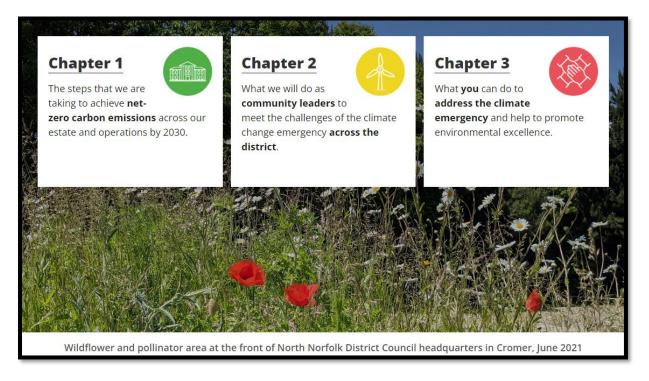
Environmental Management

Managing Environmental Impact

The Council has declared a climate emergency and therefore puts environmental considerations at the heart of its service delivery.

NNDC's Environmental Charter states its commitment to action to achieve **net-zero carbon emissions by 2030.** It shows how we will use our resources wisely to set a direction through our actions, working with partners and influencing others.

The Council's website (<u>Home | Environmental Charter</u>) outlines three 'Chapters' by which it intends to meet this commitment:



Our service, like all services within the Council, is expected to play its part in delivering against this important corporate objective. The identified steps to help deliver this ambitious target are broken down on the webpage by chapter, and our service can (and will) support the following of the identified actions:

Manage staff travel by developing a Council transport scheme which will promote online
meetings and access to environmentally friendly modes of transport such as lift-share schemes,
electric cars, bicycles and public transport.

- Mobilise all Council staff to implement this charter and respond to the climate emergency in the performance of their roles.
- Invest in measures which increase biodiversity within the district, such as planting 110,000 trees by 2023 and delivering biodiversity net gain in a measurable way through the Local Plan
- Support opportunities for Active Travel schemes that enhance walking and cycling infrastructure across the district
- Inspire a new generation of carbon reduction champions young or old we want to help everyone to reduce their carbon footprint

As a service we have been supporting this work by investing in measures which increase biodiversity at Pretty Corner Woods, including significant support for the Council's 110,000 tree planting project which has now been completed. Supporting this project across four of our sites was done so for the following reasons/outcomes:

- Increased species diversity of trees to help protect against the threat of disease and pathogens which has been a greater problem in woodlands of fewer tree species.
- Planting trees of different ages, potential heights, densities and trees which are tolerant of shade and light.
- Planting new trees that are more tolerant to climate change. Also planting trees which provide
 more blossom, pollen and habitat cover for invertebrate species, birds and mammals. For
 example, planting trees which are the food plant of certain butterflies.
- To provide woodlands which will help continue sustain future wildlife communities
- Planting trees which will provide beautiful areas of quiet recreation.

Tree planting will continue at our sites going forward, with volunteer groups, the probation service and organisational away days all utilised to support this.

Early in 2024 all managers at the Council undertook Carbon Literacy Training to provide 'an awareness of the carbon costs and impacts of everyday activities, and the ability and motivation to reduce emissions, on an individual, community and organisational basis.' This training was tailored to services to maximise the outcomes achieved and lead to an externally recognised accreditation.

All projects and significant decision making within the Council must now demonstrate that full Net-Zero considerations have been made.

Away from the wider environmental charter much work has been carried out on site for the positive benefit of the natural environment, including the provision of habitat piles, bird and bat boxes, and dead hedges to shield certain areas off. We have also created a new pond and the mini beast area in recent years. The dead hedging work at Pretty Corner has been met at times with confusion and concern by the public who feel that we are preventing them from using the whole site. We are working hard to get messaging out to support the works and create a local understanding. As part of our plans to increase general interpretation on site we have installed more specific site management information to help foster a greater and wider understanding of the management approaches we are taking.

Finally, the countryside service will be delivering a project for young people in North Norfolk throughout 2025 in partnership with the North Norfolk Youth Advisory Board. This project will see our rangers, and other council officers, deliver a raft of practical sessions, workshops and fun activities

across our estate. Some of the first sessions which will be delivered have been designed to target 'Eco-Anxiety', which has been identified by young people locally as an area they are concerned about.

Waste Minimisation

General waste and recycling is kept separate on site wherever possible thanks to the dual waste/recycling bins which have been installed in recent years. There is a wish to extend this further by introducing further dual bins in the other car park and near to the picnic field.

Chemical Use

Appropriate handling, use and storage of fuel & oil for machinery is considered at all times. Storage containers and any equipment which uses fuel and oil are regularly and thoroughly maintained

as part of the team's maintenance schedules. Nothing is stored on site at Pretty Corner.

GET TO
KNOW

WORKSHOPS

Our Rangers will be delivering six individual sessions designed for you to Get to Know more about these important wildlight and conservation subject areas.

From Minibasts to Trees you can join us at one of our woodlands to walk, talk and explore with the Rangers to boost your knowledge and educate your frends and family.

Workshops will cover the topics of Conservation Reptiles

Birds

Minibasts

Butterfiles

Birds

Minibasts

Butterfiles

Birds

Minibasts

Minibast

We do not use pesticides, insecticides or fertiliser within this site at all. In the past sprays had been used for the removal of invasive plant species such as Rhododendron, however these are now removed by hand. This decision was made because using sprays proved to be ineffective, ecological unsound and expensive, instead the roots are dug up and rhododendron destroyed.

The countryside team do not use concrete within conservation areas, if paths need upgrading aggregate is used which is found in the ground below, such as pebbles, flint and sand to stop contamination of the surrounding soil. This then does not change the local pH of the soil which is problematic to the growth of native wild flower species.

Peat Use

Soil containing peat is not used anywhere on site, if extra soil is needed then this is obtained from the local green waste recycling centre, CJC Lee who work in conjunction with North Norfolk District Council. They produce high quality peat free soil conditioner from locally sourced natural material.

Climate Change Adaptation Strategies

When planting new trees within Pretty Corner we have used the forestry commission ESC database which shows which tree species will be able to survive in the future due to climate change. Tree species within the woodland have been chosen for longevity and because they can adapt to climate change, this will create a resilient and sustainable woodland. A mixture of species have been planted to be resistant towards diseases and pathogens, instead of having single species all being lost to disease, for example Ash die back. Trees have been planted as mixed groups and tree species of a variety of ages encouraged to further sustain the woodland.

The tree species database is also used to research characteristics of tree species identified for suitable proposed planting.

https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/tree-species-database/

The ESC can be used to check species for future climate change scenarios for 2050 and 2080 for a certain location with regards to water holding capacity and different soil types.

 $\frac{https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/ecological-site-classification decision-support-system-esc-dss/$

Woodland material produced from tree felling is used to create invertebrate, amphibian and reptile habitats throughout the woodland, around perimeters of compartments which helps protect important

wildlife areas and act as natural wind breaks. Further planting of perimeters and boundaries will help protect the internal woodland from gale force winds which are increasing in number and force within the UK.

As our woodland sites and open spaces are located throughout north Norfolk and have no electricity supply our machinery is run using fuels; diesel, oil and petrol. These pieces of machinery are used to look after large areas of important conservation land, helping to



increase wildlife biodiversity of species throughout. We await the day when chainsaw and garden machinery, tractors and work trucks can be designed to use sustainable fuel resources which are robust, work long hours and powerful enough for the task at hand, and we will continue to monitor advances in alternative energy supplies which we can utilise.

Our ranger team choose to work using methods that have the lowest impact on the surrounding environment, whilst remaining effective. Traditional alternatives such as hand tools are used for some operations, and this limits the use of machinery which emits carbon emissions and helps to keep traditional skills alive.

Timber is sourced from trees that have had to be felled within the woodlands and all losses of trees are accounted for within tree planting plans. The recent conclusion of NNDC's tree planting project has seen over 110,000 trees planted within north Norfolk in the last four years, with a significant contribution into Pretty Corner Woods.

Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage

Management of Natural Features, Wild Fauna and Flora

Pretty Corner contains many common species of flora and fauna which breed and are resident. Their presence on site is fully supported by the ranger's practical management works which seek to protect and enhance their habitats. Wildlife known to reside at Pretty Corner are outlined in the table below.

Reptiles	Adders. Grass snakes.
Lizards	Slow worms. Common lizards.
Amphibians	Common newt. Common frog. Common toad.
Butterflies	Large White, Meadow Brown, Ringlet, White Admiral, Red Admiral, Speckled Wood, Silver Washed Fritillary, Silver Washed Fritillary Valezina, Peacock, Purple Hairstreak, Brimstone.
Insects/ mini beasts	Violet Ground Beetle, White Tailed Bumble Bee, Red Tailed Bumble Bee, Biscuit Beetle, Red Soldier Beetle, Stripe-Backed Dasysrphus, Thick Legged Flower Beetle, Money Spider, Nursery Spider, Garden Spider, Woodlouse, Centipede, Tiger Hoverfly, Green Bottle, Scorpion Fly, Southern Hawker, Common Darter
Mammals	Muntjac deer. Wood mouse. Common vole. Common and pigmy shrew. Grey squirrel. Foxes. Common and soprano pipistrelle.
Plants	Pyramidal orchid, Ribwort plantain, Ox eye daisy, Tansy, Yarrow, Ragwort,

	St John's wort, Clevers, Birds foot trefoil, Cats ear, Oregano, Lesser trefoil, White clover, Doves foot cranes bill, Greater plantain, Cocks foot grass, Common couch grass, Common bent grass, Perennial rye grass, Timothy, Yorkshire fog, Tufted vetch, broadleaf dock, Creeping butter cup, Bindweed, Common nettle, Purple toad flax, Sorrel, Burdock, Hog weed, Red campion, Rough chervil, Rosebay willow herb, Dandelion, Herbrobert, Nipple wort, Wood avens, May weed, Wall barley, Ground ivy, Knot weed, Climbing corydalis, Fiddle dock, Honeysuckle, Wood dock, Enchanters night shade, Broadleaf willow herb, Bluebell, Fox glove, Rough meadow grass, Poppy, White campion, Mallow, Bracken
Birds	Wood pigeon, Buzzard, Red Kite, Tawny Owl, Swift, Herring Gull, Black Cap, Chiff chaff, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Long Tailed Tit, Robin, Wren, Blackbird, Chaffinch, Heron, Kingfisher, Nuthatch, Tree Creeper, Woodcock, Song Thrush, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Magpie, Carrion Crow, Rook, Jay, Gold Crest
Fungi	Stinkhorn. Fly agaric.

The predominantly semi-natural woodland and open glades provide a good habitat for a variety of flora and fauna. There are areas of remnant heathland, particularly on the Woodland Trust land, which provide basking areas for reptiles such as slow worms and common lizards. With our grassland and woodland management, we continue to improve our ride edges to increase biodiversity.

Each year our ranger team carries out agreed works on behalf of The Woodland Trust in Old Wood which is formalised through an Estate Management Contract (EMC). This year these works have included path cutting, heathland management and invasive plant control using various techniques, amongst other things.

Pretty Corner Woods is managed using a five-year conservation and woodland management plan. The plan includes forestry operations and re-stocking of tree species which correspond with an approved felling licence issued by the Forestry Commission. This management plan is reviewed every five years.

Compartment areas and woodland ride maps can be seen below, with a copy of the conservation and woodland management plan for 2025 shown at the end of this document.





Conservation of Landscape Features

The practical conservation and woodland management plan is designed to protect valuable historical raised woodland earth banks and ditches which can be seen throughout the woods. These once marked boundaries and acted to protect valuable areas of planting. The banks and areas of soil and leaf

litter are left undisturbed. Historic paths and rights of ways are conserved throughout the woods and not disturbed by grounds management.

A roman quern (wheat grinding stone) was found on top of the hill within the woods. Also pot boiler stones and spigot mortars have been found promoting the importance of conservation in these areas. In 2021 a local metal detector, with permission from NNDC, started to survey some of the site, finding roman coins and a medieval buckle.

Historical areas of planted woodland which contain ancient and veteran trees are protected and managed for longevity. Many of these giants are recognisable landmarks and known to many visitors. Such as the five fingered Oak tree on the boundary of the picnic field. We are allowing these ancient trees to decline with age naturally by hedging around them if they are growing away from main paths, to prevent people passing by too closely and negating the need for the tree to be felled.

One member of our Pretty Corner Woods Volunteer group has taken a great interest in this site and is researching its history. Significant findings from this will be considered for interpretation, and management of areas of the woodland would be reviewed if required. In 2023 some interesting old maps were discovered as part of this research, as well as some possible information around heritage buildings (both shown below). These require further investigation, but we are very thankful to our volunteer for showing such an interest and providing us with this look into the past.



Top - PCW 40's / Bottom PCW 1988

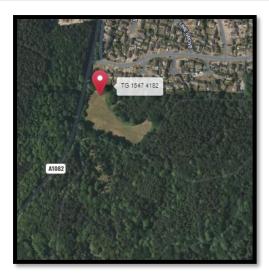
The site is split down the middle by an obvious gully which has been identified as a Medieval Hollow Way – 'Sunken lane (also hollow way or Holloway) is a road or track that is significantly lower than the land on either side, not formed by the (recent) engineering of a road cutting but possibly of much greater age'. This would make sense when considered against it's close proximity to Holway Road which leads from the main A148 down past Pretty Corner Woods and into Sheringham Town. Our management works do not affect this gully.

Conservation of Buildings and Structures

There are no buildings or structures within Pretty Corner Woods or Old Wood which are of any conservation significance. More recent man-made structures which have been introduced to the woods, such as the Owl carving and legacy bench, are maintained regularly to ensure their longevity on site. As with our other sites the rangers will spray each wooden Carving or structure with advanced wood preserver twice a year to help ensure that their condition is maintained for as long as possible.

As mentioned above our volunteer's research identified some records regarding old WW2 buildings and tracks. We can see from the information on the left and the grid reference on the right that these appear to be on the northern section of Pretty Corner's playing field. We have no further details regarding these at the moment, however if you see back to the 1940's aerial image you can see a building and tracks as identified. The military's presence on this site has been assumed for a while within the team and volunteers due to all the pits and holes which would have been used for training and observation. One volunteer noted that "the pits on the bare hill near the perimeter path behind the bungalows are still there up the hill covered by bracken, and often used for extra shelter by the deer".





Community Involvement

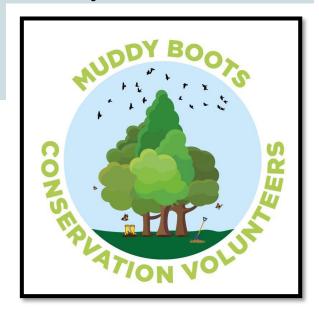
Community Involvement in Management and Development

Since the introduction of Muddy Boots sessions at Pretty Corner Woods community involvement has thrived. Originally planned as a fortnightly session we have now grown such numbers and interest that

we run weekly, with a large group of volunteers attending. In addition to this we have teamed up with Sidestrand Hall – a local SEN school – to welcome their students onto the session each week.

We now have a pool of 24 regular volunteers, and this number is growing all the time. These regulars with the addition of our school group make for a very successful session, with all involved benefitting greatly. We are seeing new skills learnt, friendships created, isolation combatted and lots of work being carried out!

In 2024 a total of 46 sessions took place, with only two cancelled due to the weather. These sessions were varied and tasks undertaken by the group included such things as works to the tree nursery, bracken control, infrastructure works,



habitat creation, rhododendron control, pathway works, ride management and works on a new sensory/quiet area within the woods.

The sessions attracted 589 volunteer visits, which was an increase of 172 on 2023, and this provided our service with 1174 hours of additional resource. We are extremely grateful for the help, support and enthusiasm of this group, and we know that they are enjoying seeing their efforts make so much difference. Everyone involved is excited to see the improvements continue in Pretty Corner in 2025.

It should be noted that these volunteer hours carry an economic value of around £13,000 at national living wage level, further supporting the great benefit these sessions bring to the service and the site as a whole.





Probation Service - Previously known as The Community Payback programme, the Probation Service has been utilised by the team for many different tasks, these range from scrub clearance and other practical management works to car park repairs and the installation of trails. We have successfully worked with this scheme for a number of years now, however in 2024 we were limited to how much support they were able to give. At Pretty Corner the service supported us with litter picking and weeding of the tree nursery. This equated to 90 hours weeding and 30 hours litter picking, however they were unable to offer much more due to their capacity.

Volunteer Ranger – Our volunteer ranger post was introduced in 2019 to work within the countryside team. This provides the post holder with valuable work experience and training and the team with an extra person to help with the extensive range of practical work that it must carry out at Pretty Corner Woods and across our other sites. The team currently benefits from two volunteer rangers, one of whom is utilising the role to support his studies and the other to gain experience as he seeks a permanent paid role in the industry. We are pleased to say that we have been able to support a number of volunteers in this role over recent years, many of whom who have now progressed into industry roles, and we have also noted the increase in requests to join us in this capacity which further the supports the value the role provides to all.

Matt Darge – Following a call for local sculptors and artists to get in touch to discuss possible collaborations Matt got in touch and we have struck up a very successful working relationship. Matt has provided us with several carvings across our portfolio of sites, including an owl and our lovely carved seat at Pretty Corner Woods. Our intention is to continue to add pieces like this when the opportunity arises as we know that they are much loved by visitors and add an extra enjoyment to people's visits.

Social Media – community involvement is encouraged through Holt Country Park's social media channels. More detailed information regarding these can be found in the Marketing and Communication section later in this report.

School Groups – in 2023 we were able to re-establish links with the local primary school in Sheringham who now complete ad-hoc independent visits to Pretty Corner with their children. These visits have been supported by the introduction of our minibeast/learning area and the increased interpretation. It is hoped in 2024 we will be able to build on this further and encourage more visits by local schools. Due to capacity, it is unlikely that we will be able to offer the opportunity of ranger led school groups but instead plan to work with the teachers to be able to provide spaces and resources which they can utilise to support their curriculum focussed sessions.

Community Groups – we have had contact from local scout groups who wish to use the site for informal orienteering and wildlife themed sessions which we are happy to provide in the same way as our approach to school groups.

Overall, we are very happy with the community involvement we are seeing at this site, and although we are aware there is always room for improvement this does have to be carefully balanced with the expectations of the service as a whole.

Appropriate Provision for the Community

Pretty Corner Woods, similarly to our other Green Flag sites, is managed by the Council's countryside team to ensure there is something for everyone to enjoy. We are very aware of the often vastly differing views of the general public and site users as to the approach to management and expectations which exist. It is important that we manage the site in a way which is appropriate for the community, but also for the site and the service. This can be a difficult balancing act, but we believe that we are managing this approach well. However, we are also realistic and understand the need to consistently monitor, review and improve. Comments and suggestions are always welcome via the Council's customer contact channels, via our social accounts and in person to our rangers — and all are listened to and discussed by the team.

In addition, we are aware of the benefits of proactively seeking opinions from our visitors and periodically carry out a visitor survey, with the most recent taking place in 2021. Key results shown here:

- The vast majority have been visiting the park for over 3 years
- The primary reasons for visiting Pretty Corner Woods are leisure walk, dog walking and enjoying the scenery
- Visitors use Pretty Corner alone or with family members

- People visit the site all year around, with no particular season being more popular than another
- Walking and by car are the only methods utilised by people to get to Pretty Corner 52% on foot and 48% by car
- The vast majority of visitors live within 15 minutes of the site
- Most visits last between 1 & 2 hours
- The most important site qualities to visitors are wildlife & biodiversity, tranquillity and cleanliness
- The highest rated site qualities were tranquillity, wildlife and biodiversity and car parking facilities
- Areas of consideration for improvement were identified as ease of orientation, on site facilities, seating and interpretation
- Males and females were equally represented in the survey

Our ranger team has already delivered some of these improvements, including improved way marking, increased provision of information, improved signage and maps (see marketing), dog fouling crack down, installation of more benches and plans for more trails. There are also plans in place to continue to develop the site with more of the same, as well as improvements based around what has been successful at other sites.

We are aware of the need to update these results to ensure that we have a grasp on the current views of our parks and woodlands to enable us to continue to manage them appropriately. We had hoped to carry this out in 2024 but were unfortunately unable to do so, however these surveys have been updated with the aim of being issued around Easter 2025. The results from these will be analysed carefully by the Ranger team and will support our management works going forward.

Marketing and Communication

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

The vision for Pretty Corner Woods (and all other NNDC woodland sites) is to provide a high quality and inspiring visitor experience and a rich biodiversity of wildlife in a sustainable woodland setting, and the site is managed in a way which seeks to ensure that it appeals to as many different user groups as possible, including local residents and holidaying visitors, within the scope of its offer. The Countryside service does not exist to make a profit (although making the service as sustainable as possible is critical) and therefore creating opportunities and a setting which appeals to visitors is the most important thing. We are now able to monitor visitor numbers and can therefore gauge whether our efforts on-site and through marketing & promotion is helping to increase site use. We have also been working on utilising the site for events, activities, projects and programmes in an attempt to introduce the site to potential new users and/or get others more comfortable with it. This can be difficult due to the sites lack of infrastructure but we feel that some progress is being made, and the aim is to continue to build on this. We are aware that many locals appear averse to change and therefore any developments or changes will need to be handled sensitively.

Appropriate Information Channels

Social Media Channels

With Holt Country Park providing the main base for the team, social media accounts for the service were set up using this site:

Facebook /HoltCountryPark

X @CountryHolt

Site specific social media channels have not been created for Pretty Corner Woods due to capacity within the team. It is the team's belief that an underused social media account, which would be difficult to monitor effectively, is of more detriment than support to the site and the service. Therefore, Pretty Corner updates are provided via the Holt Country Park accounts, as well as through local community Facebook pages such as 'Enjoy Sheringham More'.

Since its launch five years ago the park's Facebook page has now attracted 6799 followers (+593 in the last year) and achieves good engagement throughout the year – at the time of writing our Facebook page had received 68,935 views in the 28 days prior.



The focus of updates has continued to be as varied as possible, reflecting the diverse users that the site attracts, with information regarding events, updates about site developments, wildlife news and general park information all included. This Facebook page is now the main channel for information to be shared about the service and is a valuable management tool to the team. The page has unfortunately been utilised a little less than in previous years simply due to capacity within the team, however here is a selection of posts from our Facebook page in the past twelve months to demonstrate its use,





The services X page was utilised much in the same way but with slightly less reach and engagement. In recent times X has not been utilised as much as previous years with the teams focus remaining with service and corporate Facebook and webpages.

Site maps and Interpretation

One of the major improvements completed in recent years was the introduction of a new look site map and flyer. Following the re-introduction of the waymarked trails we arranged for a completely new site map and flyer to be produced by local designer Brendan Rallison (see right).

This map and flyer replaced the old versions which were introduced a number of years ago and reflect the up-to-date approach that the team are taking to managing the site. As we continue to develop the site in the coming years, we are now also able to easily edit both the flyer and the map to

reflect these changes, working with our in-house designer to ensure that information is kept right up to date for our visitors. A copy of the flyer can be found here - <u>pretty-corner-woods-leaflet.pdf (north-norfolk.gov.uk)</u>

The map is due to be updated when capacity allows and when further key infrastructure has been installed and can therefore be added for information.

Pretty Corner has also benefitted recently from the installation of a new notice board in each of the car parks. These notice boards include a large copy of the new site map, and room for 4 A4 information posters in a locked compartment which include such things as emergency details, event posters, management information and alike. Site maps are available to visitors from the ranger made flyer 'houses', and all three main entrances to the site have had new welcome signs installed in 2022.



Newly designed interpretation has been installed as planned and in response to the feedback we have received. This once again supports the consistent management of our three Green Flag sites and has been well received by visitors.





Promotional Flyers

Promotional flyers are utilised on site and on the parks social media platforms mainly to promote events and activities. We believe that these are still a valuable component of our marketing efforts and will continue to use them as and when appropriate. All flyers are designed in house by the Council's dedicated design team. Examples form the past twelve months are shown below.





Green Flag

Our flagpole is positioned on the picnic field in such a way that it is visible to cars passing from north to south up Holway Road, as well as by the many visitors on foot who use the site.

Booking Page

Full details of events are listed on the service's booking page. For 2024 the team utilised the same system as previous years which was an in-house system managed by the corporate IT team. At the end of 2024 this system was made redundant and the service switched to Eventbrite for the foreseeable future - NNDC Countryside Team Events - 31 Upcoming Activities and Tickets | Eventbrite

This booking page receives traffic from people wishing to book onto a specific event and also from people who are simply interested to see what is on offer. All events are listed on this page.

Media

The countryside service works in close collaboration with NNDC's communications department to ensure that all messaging reaches as many people as possible. This has included internet articles and videos, newspaper articles and radio interviews. We are very lucky to have the support of this excellent team and there is no doubt in our minds that they should be considered to have played a large part in our recent success.

Some examples of the wider authority's support of the service can be found here:

Home | Country Parks to fly Green Flags for the 20th consecutive year

Home | Easter Family-friendly fun in Country Parks

Some discussion has taken place regarding the site's apparent draw to predominantly local people, and the possibility to market the site to a wider audience from further afield. Although it is accepted that the site does serve predominantly locals the team believe the absence of facilities on site is probably more of a reason that we do not appear to see people travel long distances to visit – like we would at Holt Country Park. It remains a long-term ambition to introduce facilities on site which will hopefully increase the number of visitors, however this will not be an overnight change and will take time.

Appropriate Educational and Interpretational Information

Pretty Corner Woods caters for the educational needs of its visitors effectively within the scope of the site, many of these have been discussed throughout this review and we have summarised many of these below:

School Groups —a mini beast/educational area has been developed on site with the help our volunteer group in 2022 and will be developed further in the coming year. This coupled with the introduction of the Community Tree Nursery in 2023 has meant that links with the local primary school have been improved.

Facebook/X – Social media is often used to provide educational information about our sites. For example, we have posted information about adders in recent years, as well as warnings about the dangers of fires within the woodlands, and explanations of our practical management works.

Events – The vast majority of our events for families are provided with both a fun and educational element. Often a trail will include questions to answer from information boards on the way around.

Interpretation – found in certain spots around the site our interpretation provides information about flora and fauna, as well as some history and other interesting facts. We also try to include temporary interpretation when carrying out certain management work on site to help people understand what work is happening and why. As new trails are introduced we will be seeking to introduce more interpretation to cater for this.

Woodland Trust Website - Old Wood, Sheringham - Visiting Woods - Woodland Trust. Our partners at the Woodland Trust provide site information and education via their own website including trees, plants, fungi, animals and habitats, amongst other more general information. Downloadable activity sheets are also available.

Action Plan

The action plan below outlines the planned works at Pretty Corner Woods in 2024. This plan was based on Green Flag and visitor feedback, corporate aims and objectives, and ranger input. The plan is not exhaustive and remains fluid due to the fast paced and reactive nature of our service and the work we do. Only new or significant works are listed in this plan, with general woodland management and maintenance being completed by the team as normal alongside this. We have updated the table with notes outlining the progress with each. 2025's action plan is provided beneath this.

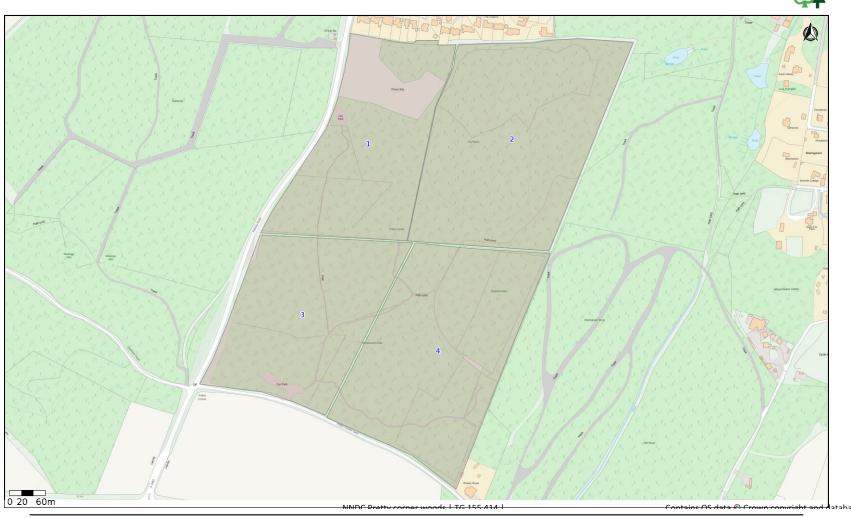
Improvement/Addition:	Responsible	Proposed completion	Notes
Continue wildlife surveys	Rangers/Volunteers	2x in 2024	Complete
Improve school/community involvement	CB/AG	End of year	Not complete
Build on site events	CB/AG	Aug 24	Ongoing
Redevelop viewing points with new seating	Rangers/volunteers	Aug 24	Complete
Monitor & plan for future of boardwalk	CB/AG/Property	Ongoing	Ongoing – no plans for replacement at present
Continue to create wildflower and butterfly ride through the woodland as specified within work plan.	Rangers/Volunteers	Dec 24	Complete (ongoing)
Investigate downloadable activity sheets	СВ	Aug 24	Not complete
Continue with tree planting of native species on perimeter of woodland rides and specified within work plan.	Ranger/Volunteers	Winter 24	Complete (ongoing)

Continue to develop community tree nursery volunteer led. Establish wildflower nursery in same area.	Rangers/Volunteers	Winter 24	Complete (ongoing)
Complete visitor surveys	СВ	Sept 24	Surveys updated but not carried out as yet
Install more permanent interpretation throughout the woodland trail.	Rangers/Volunteers	Winter 24	Complete (ongoing)
Investigate and introduce new and increased revenue generating ideas to the service	CB/Rangers	Summer/Autumn 24	Complete (ongoing)

Improvement/Addition:	Responsible	Proposed completion
Continue wildlife surveys	Rangers/Volunteers	2x in 2025
Improve school/community involvement	CB/AG	End of year
Build on site events - 2 x large events delivered	CB/AG	Aug 25
Develop Learning Area further	Rangers/Volunteers	June 25
Develop Sensory/Quiet Area	Rangers/Volunteers	Aug 25
Install extra dual purpose waste bins on site	Rangers	April 25
Increase number of 'points of interest' within site — including sculptures, interpretation, reflection areas etc.	CB/Rangers	End of year
Continue to develop community tree nursery	Rangers/Volunteers	Ongoing
Continue with tree planting of native species on perimeter of woodland rides and specified within work plan.	Rangers/Volunteers	Winter 25
Increase & maintain number of wildflower rides throughout the site	Rangers/Volunteers	Winter 25
Complete visitor surveys	СВ	April 25
Update map & flyers as appropriate	СВ	June 25
Investigate and introduce new and increased revenue generating ideas to the service	CB/Rangers	Ongoing
Investigate possible introduction of facilities to site	CB/AG	End of 25
Install permanent orienteering course on site	Rangers/Volunteers	October 25

Conservation and Woodland Management Work Plan







Conservation management plan. 2025.

COMPARTMENT	YEAR	Ride Number	ACTIVITY/OPERATION 2024/2025
1	2024/2025	1	Brush cutting of amenity areas when required. In winter cut back bramble, bracken, invasive species and maintain to promote wildflower margins. Ride 1. Protect and maintain wildflower margins and areas. Brush cutting of wildflower rides to reduce brambles and encourage wild flowers. Protect and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and mini beasts. Control invasive species. Survey flora and fauna species. Maintain boundary hedge of native trees using species as in restocking list around site. Maintain tree planting and replace losses Wildflower sowing and planting where required. Install bat and bird boxes throughout compartment on softwood trees only. Bat survey. Maintain bat and bird boxes throughout compartment on softwood trees only. For the outer boundary of NNDC land, compartment 1, plant perimeter with suitable native trees, selective planting of trees so when they are mature they are not within falling distance of houses, paths, roads, facilities or access routes. See map. Maintain and replace losses.
1	2024/2025	Picnic field	Protect and maintain wildflower margins and areas. Maintain boundary hedge of native trees using species as in restocking list around site. Maintain tree planting and replace losses. Control invasive plant species. In winter cut back bramble, bracken, invasive species and maintain to promote wildflower margins Survey flora and fauna species. Install bat and bird boxes throughout compartment on softwood trees only. Bat survey. Maintain bat and bird boxes throughout compartment on softwood trees only. For the outer boundary of NNDC land, compartment 1, plant perimeter with suitable native trees, selective planting of trees so when they are mature they are not within falling distance of houses, paths, roads, facilities or access routes. See map. Maintain and replace losses. Further establish and maintain the community nursery.

2	2024/2025	1	Brush cutting of amenity areas when required. Brush cutting of wildflower rides to reduce brambles and encourage wild flowers to spread such as bluebells. Protect and maintain wildflower margins and areas. Maintain boundary hedge of native trees using species as in restocking list around site. Maintain tree planting and replace losses. Survey flora and fauna species. Protect and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and mini beasts. In autumn cultivate and re sow the wildflower of ride on right hand side with native wildflower seeds. Please refer to management plan wildflower creation rides. Ride number Control invasive species. Bat survey. Maintain bat and bird boxes throughout compartment, reinstall on softwood trees only. Maintain trees and boundary perimeter hedge of native trees using species as in restocking list around site. Replace losses of trees. Wildflower sowing and planting where required. Install bat and bird boxes throughout compartment on softwood trees only. Maintain wildflower margin, glades beside ride 1.
			For the outer boundary of NNDC land, compartment 2, plant perimeter with suitable native trees, selective planting of trees so when they are mature they are not within falling distance of houses, paths, roads, facilities or access routes. See map. Maintain and replace losses.
3	2024/2025	3	Brush cutting of amenity areas when required. Winter forestry operations as shown within felling licence for compartment 3. Widen ride 3 on one side where suitable (from the main car park) create wildflower margin and glades and sensory area. Selective thinning of trees as shown on the felling licence for pretty corner woods. See ride map. Stack dead wood, branches, timber which cannot be used for firewood or habitats as a dead hedge within the woodland block which makes up the compartment. Stack so that woodland material is not on to the root plate of trees or restricts access for tree surveys. Allowing wildflower margins to establish and not to be covered by woodland material. So that trees can be surveyed along the woodland margins do not prevent access around each tree. See details in management plan. On ride 3 between woodland edge of mature trees and edge of wildflower margin plant a thin border of mix species, hawthorn or similar species as stated within felling licence. Protect and maintain trees which have been planted. Replace losses.

			Native wildflower sowing and planting of plugs if required of wildflower margin. Protect and maintain wildflower margins and areas.
			In winter cut back bramble, bracken, invasive species and maintain to promote wildflower margin on ride 3 Brush cutting of wildflower rides to reduce brambles and encourage wild flowers to spread. Protect and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and mini beasts.
			Control invasive species. Establish and maintain a mini beast conservation area for use for educational mini beast hunts.
			Survey species, if there is a decline in species, or ground too dry, rest area from use and choose new site for mini beast area within block.
			Survey flora and fauna species.
			For the outer boundary of NNDC land, compartment 3, plant perimeter with suitable native trees, selective planting of trees so when they are mature they are not within falling distance of houses, paths, roads, facilities or access routes. See map. Maintain and replace losses.
4	2024/2025	4	Brush cutting of amenity areas when required.
			Winter forestry operations as shown within felling licence for compartment 4. Widen ride 4 on one side where suitable (from the bottom car park) create wildflower margin and glades, sensory area. Selective thinning of trees as shown on the felling licence for pretty corner woods. See ride map.
			Stack dead wood, branches, timber which cannot be used for firewood or habitats as a dead hedge within the woodland block which makes up the compartment. Stack so that woodland material is not on to the root plate of trees or restricts access for tree surveys. Allowing wildflower margins to establish and not to be covered by woodland material. So that trees can be surveyed along the woodland margins do not prevent access around each tree. See details in management plan.
			On 4 between woodland edge of mature trees and edge of wildflower margin plant a thin border of mix species, hawthorn or similar species as stated within felling licence. Protect and maintain trees which have been planted. Replace losses.
			Native wildflower sowing and planting of plugs if required of wildflower margin. Protect and maintain wildflower margins and areas.
			In winter cut back bramble, bracken, invasive species and maintain to promote wildflower margin on ride 4
			Brush cutting of wildflower rides to reduce brambles and encourage wild flowers to spread. Protect and provide habitat areas for/used by amphibians and mini beasts.
			Control invasive species.

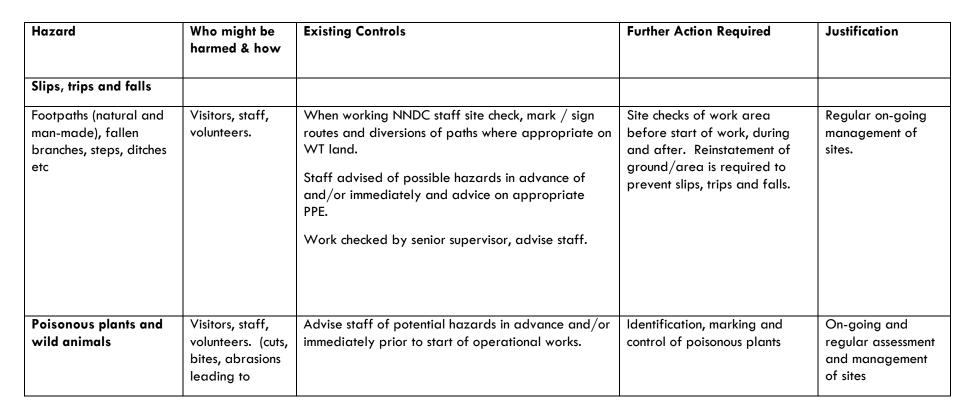
Survey flora and fauna species. For the outer boundary of NNDC land, compartment 4, plant perimeter with suitable native tree planting of trees so when they are mature they are not within falling distance of houses, paths, if facilities or access routes. See map. Maintain and replace losses.	•
---	---

Approved Felling Details:

Thinning will be silvicultural to favour stems of best form and vigour and to 'halo' thin around veteran and/or feature trees. Over the period of the felling licence the thinning intensity is not to exceed 30% of total initial stem number of any compartment (or single species stand) to be thinned, distributed evenly over the work area. Existing rides and footpaths may be widened as part of thinning operations.

Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment	NNDC Woodland operations.	
Service	Countryside & Parks	
Date	January 2025	NODTU
Activity	NNDC woodland operational activities	NORTH A NORFOL
Assessor(s)	Anne-Marie Gedge	DISTRICT COUN



Hazard	Who might be harmed & how	Existing Controls	Further Action Required	Justification
	infections and ill health)	Warning / educational information about specific plants and animals provided in advance and at time of activity. Wildlife with potential to harm, handled only by trained expert or staff with training. First Aid kit carried. Protected wildlife not to be deliberately injured, harmed or killed. Care taken to protect all wildlife, flora and fauna on site and their habitats.	Additional training for staff for identification of fauna and flora species if required.	
Zoonoses Leptospirosis E. coli	Staff, volunteers and visitors	Warning / educational information about specific zoonoses given prior to operational work. Good hygiene practices must be carried out. Particularly at meals. Hand washing facilities or cleansing materials (hand gels) available. Cuts and grazes covered, particularly when working / studying near water. Correct PPE required for pond management works. No long working of staff in ponds/aquatic areas. Staff required to be in charge of their own health and safety.	Permission required from landowner to work on ponds and aquatic areas.	Prevent sickness, including food poisoning

Hazard	Who might be harmed & how	Existing Controls	Further Action Required	Justification
		Mobile phone and first aid kit to hand for emergency. Notify senior staff of working location point.		
Equipment and tools	Staff, volunteers and visitors. Injuries caused by malfunction Injuries caused by misuse Working too close together, make sure there is enough safe working distance Scratches and stings from vegetation Blisters	Instruction provided to staff and training on safe use and operation of equipment by staff that are trained to do so. Inspect tools before use — repair or replace defective equipment. Appropriate tool or equipment used for job in hand Tools kept clean and sharp by staff. Care to be taken of blades and cutting edges, training prior to use of equipment by trained staff. PPE provided and to be worn where appropriate (e.g. gloves, eye protection). Materials from approved stock and in good working order as to not cause injury. Staff required to be in charge of their own health and safety.	Maintain supervision of activity for damage and misuse. Remove and deactivate defective equipment.	Prevent injury and miss use of tools.

Hazard	Who might be harmed & how	Existing Controls	Further Action Required	Justification
		Mobile phone and first aid kit to hand for emergency. Notify senior staff of working location point. Volunteers to be supervised at all times by a competent person(s) Do not work within 5m of other(s) Keep public away from working area where possible using hazard tape or appropriate barrier.		
Environmental Hazards Extreme weather issues	Staff, volunteers and visitors.	Weather conditions monitored in advance of work, activity, event. Operational work activity stopped by staff if weather likely to be or becomes hazardous (e.g. lightning, high winds heavy rain) Remove damaged trees, debris prior to work for safe working areas. Treat / clear ice or snow where necessary. Cancel work/activity if health and safety of participants is at risk under hazards from environmental conditions. Trained staff to decide or ask line managers, health and safety officers.	Work operational activity cancelled or reduced in scale if weather too severe. Inform the landowner of any hazards within the woods, removal of trees etc. Changes in landscape.	Safety of staff, visitors and other participants – site conditions may deteriorate.

Hazard	Who might be harmed & how	Existing Controls	Further Action Required	Justification
Transport Moving vehicles, car parks	Staff, volunteers, visitors.	Ensure parking arrangements free from external hazards. Staff to monitor and manage events, working activities. Staff responsible for own parking, driving on site entering and leaving. Reinstate paths which have been damaged by vehicles which visitors cannot use. Footpaths keep pedestrians away from traffic as best possible. Close off areas to visitors where vehicles are in use for woodland operations. Staff required to be in charge of their own health and safety. Mobile phone and first aid kit to hand for emergency. Notify senior staff of working location point. Do not use vehicles if they are damaged, not operational of the required working safety standard.	Close car park to visitors if woodland operations are deemed to cause hazards within these areas. Staff to monitor and control. Close off working areas to visitors when using vehicles. Re-direct arrows, provide maps if required.	Prevent accidents.
Missing Person(s)	Staff, volunteers, visitors.	Staff aware of each other's location on site at all times. No long working whilst using machinery. Report to senior staff of working location, during of time and when leaving site.	Staff and volunteers aware of location of site, working area. Given maps and pre site check. Maps for visitors.	Prevention of missing/lost people. Lost/missing person found.

Hazard	Who might be harmed & how	Existing Controls	Further Action Required	Justification
		Lone working staff, report to senior staff start of work and leaving site, area where they are working. Type of work they are carrying out. Lost child found on site. Looked after by trained staff with appropriate DBS check. Inform the police of loss child if no carer/parent seen. I Missing adults. Inform the police and ask for guidance. Staff to have mobile phones. First aid kit. Inform the police of missing/lost person.	Inform the police of missing/lost persons.	
General, miscellaneous	Staff, visitors, volunteers.	Staff have mobile phone at all times or access to emergency phone number. Weekly sheet in office of staff locations. Senior staff to be aware of colleague general working locations Children must be supervised by an authorised adult at all times – advance notice to parents / supervisors First Aid kit carried at all times where appropriate by trained staff. First Aid to be carried out under the permission of the said person who requires it or person who is authorised. Call 999 in an emergency.	Changes to working schedule to be reported between managers and staff.	Staff and visitor safety.

Hazard	Who might be harmed & how	Existing Controls	Further Action Required	Justification
Litter picking	Staff, volunteers and visitors	Operatives to be adequately instructed in activity by trained staff. Long working, staff to report of start of work, end of work and leaving site and location of works. Every time on site. Gloves to be worn and required PPE. Litter picking tool to be used to minimise picking up objects by hand Frequent litter picking to avoid dealing with large quantities at a time. Bins to be emptied regularly by contractor Only trained staff to use sharps box for safe containment of sharp objects and handling with correct PPE. Contact NNDC Environmental health and report immediately. Rubbish to be contained in bags properly tied and appropriately disposed of. Do not lift bags that are too heavy not person carrying them.	Litter picking by volunteers ok but any hazards must be dealt with by trained NNDC staff.	Protect all.