

TOWN HALL Market Square Crewkerne Somerset TA18 7LN

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01460 74001

Councillors are hereby summoned, and members of the public and press are invited, to attend a meeting of the **Amenities Committee** to be held on **Monday 12 May 2025**, following the meeting of the Planning & Highways Committee, and not commencing before 19.00, in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Square, Crewkerne for the purpose of transacting the business outlined on the agenda below.

Notes:

- Members of the public can access the meeting which will be uploaded via the following link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTA9K-7L4Onjcli2Gtz7tCg.
- Members of the public requiring assistance or reasonable adjustments to aid their attendance at council meetings are asked to contact the Council Offices in advance using the above contact details. Documents are available in large print by request.
- Assistive listening devices are available at public meetings please see a member of staff prior to the start of the meeting.
- Recording of meetings is permitted under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014;
 please refer to the Council's Policy on Audio/Visual Recording & Photography at Meetings (Recording-Meetings-policy-Feb-2022.pdf (crewkerne-tc.gov.uk).
- Public participation is welcome during the allocated Public Open Forum session, please refer to Section 3 of the Council's Standing Orders (Standing-Orders-May-2024.pdf (crewkerne-tc.gov.uk).

Katharine Sheehan FSLCC, Town Clerk (signed on original) 6 May 2025

Agenda

048/2425

To receive and approve apologies for absence.

a. To record members present:

Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires:

- a record be kept of the members in attendance.
- this record forms part of the minutes of the meeting.
- Members who are unable attend a meeting should tender apologies in advance to the Town Clerk and the grounds for apologies tendered will also be recorded.

b. To approve any apologies for absence:

Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 requires:

Members present to decide if the reason(s) for a member's absence are acceptable.

049/2425

To receive declarations of pecuniary or personal interests in items on the agenda and any dispensations.

The Localism Act 2011 and the Council's Code of Conduct requires:

- Members to declare any interests not currently recorded in the Member's Register of Interests
 or not notified to the Monitoring Officer of it.
- Requests for Dispensations should be made in writing to the Clerk in advance of the meeting.

050/2425

To approve the draft minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 10 March 2025.

051/2425

Public Open Forum: Questions may be put to the Council in person during this public participation session of up to 15 minutes and a maximum of 3 minutes per person. Issues notified to the Clerk a minimum of 3 working days before the meeting (i.e., by 5pm on the preceding Wednesday) will receive a response during this session. Issues

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raised in this session without prior notice may be referred to the Clerk to respond to within 10 working days or listed on a subsequent agenda. The Chair reserves the right to vary or extend these time limits.

052/2425	Report from the Amenities Chair: to note the updated progress matrix.
053/2425	Land at Easthams Lane: to receive a verbal update from the Town Clerk.
054/2425	Bincombe Beeches Management Plan 2025-30: to receive and adopt an updated Management Plan.
055/2425	Severalls Tennis Courts: to receive a report following a usage review with the LTA.
056/2425	GRC : to consider a free use request for community events from Awe and Wonder.
057/2425	To receive Matters of Report (verbal reports for information only).
058/2425	Next meeting: Monday 14 July 2025, following the Planning and Highways Committee, Council Chamber, Town Hall.



May 2025

Town Hall / Victoria Hall	
Christmas Lighting Up	Condition of crib – needs review, will be assessed at Lodge once down.
	Brace/collar for town tree – needs adjustment to account for angle of slope. Shims will be supplied to level it up.
	Price up new string of lights for Town Hall and tree lights.
Taxan Hall autorian danna voir davos and	Lucombe Oak Lighting: Pre planning submitted end February. Second bat survey will be scheduled.
Town Hall exterior doors, windows and interior window frames and sills.	Tender has been prepared to go out to contractors for phase 1 ground floor.
Drainage at side of Town Hall (water	Drain is not in TH curtilage, reported to Highways again on 7.1.24 as flooding. Consider Perspex to protect building? Longer
accumulating against side of building)	term solution required. For Highways meeting.
Town Hall/Vic Hall fire assembly point	Practice evacuation is due now that signage is installed.
signage	Questions over fire wardens, extinguisher training, wheelchair refuge still need to be resolved.
Town Hall fire risk assessment	Completed 05.09.24. Some follow up actions o/s.
Parking bay lines are faded/gone	Complete, July 24. (Side bay outstanding, to ask contractor when next in the area).
Smashed lights (VH)	Replaced two, final one o/s. New tube isn't working, further investigation is required.
Cracked slabs and steps at Town Hall	Awaiting date from contractor.
Lamps at front of VH/TH	One lamp is brighter than the other – contractor to upgrade bulb.
Plinth	Minor remedial works recommended.
Victoria Hall Hearing Loop	Break identified in loop. Quotes sought for works to be reviewed in conjunction with CUDOS.
Banking Hub	All actions relating to Banking Hub complete bar installation of cash point.
Flagpole	Rope is wearing thin and will need replacement before it snaps.
Temperature controls in VH	Admin Officer to email all groups re use of heating controls.

George Reynolds Centre (GRC)	
Solar Panels	Budget issue. On hold – query if possible to revisit leasing roof space proposal?
Landlord's inspection	Due.
Lighting upgrade to LEDs	As the units fail, to replace with LEDs.



Assembly signage	Sign has been purchased – location TBD. Far side of Henhayes/hardstanding at field gate.		
Heating system 'zoning'	Upstairs rooms underfloor heating to be switched off and heating units used instead. MB will provide details on how to do		
	it/who to contact.		
Hot water availability Sunday evening/night	Potential issue with hot water timings in rugby season – review timer settings in September.		

Cemetery, Lodge and Chapel	
Chapel fly zapper	Wire to be trunked.
Tomographic testing	Follow up report –circulate for JBC to consider in June. One tree needs work.
Outstanding railings (JBC)	Gates complete. JBC to reconsider railings? High cost. Refresh quotes.
Paths (JBC) Remaining paths upgrades almost complete.	
	Trial sections in old section – agreed to go with matting for one path from 1st April and monitor over one cutting season.
Rear internal workshop chapel wall	Break glass to be installed once internal walls works complete.
Memorial inspection due (JBC)	One member of staff has completed training; inspection plan required by end of March at the latest. OUTSTANDING.
Internal workshop chapel walls	Agreed and underway. Second coat drying out, then skim will take place. Obtaining quotes for painting.
Lodge roof	Advised Lodge roof will survive one more winter – budget consideration, asking for quotes.

Playgrounds / Allotments / Open	Spaces etc
Henhayes	Graffiti on some of the play equipment was removed by the Grounds Team—ONGOING AS IT APPEARS. Chemicals have not been successful, will need sanding off. Fence to Henhayes car park keeps getting broken due to people climbing it/cars bumping it — Grounds Team to monitor and repair as needed.
	Bike shelter – sourcing quotes for replacement panels. Woodwork: bollards outstanding, rear Aqua Centre fence outstanding for staining.
Happy Valley	Floodlights: LED quote has gone into budget; second quote will be required as above threshold. Sand pit: agreed to remove sand and replace with play equipment. Choice of play equipment to come to Skate Jam in August for young people/families' input. Central path: HVWG would like to trial mesh surfacing and back fill with topsoil as will be difficult to remove tree roots.
Bincombe Allotments	Wall survey - Report received and needs consideration.
Pithers Court	Initial clearance complete – site visit required.



St. Bart's Churchyard	Rear overhanging trees with planning from 28/2/25 for 6 weeks. ARC to get quote from Fern.
	Paths treated by Grounds Team 7.1.25. Next due?
Falkland Square public toilets	Potential issues with scale in system identified when drains unblocked – preventative work needed?
Bincombe Beeches	Last memorial tree to be properly staked – stakes are in but ties are required.
	Plan received – to go to May Amenities Committee for adoption.
	Ash Die Back works planning consent granted, works scheduled for September 2025.
Barn Street Recreation Ground	Additional trees agreed from Somerset Council's tree fund – COMPLETE. Bench from Town Hall to be relocated?
Tennis Courts - Severalls	Fencing around edge is loose – seeking quotes.
Land off Easthams Road	Transfer paperwork ready but fencing is outstanding.
Allotments	Inspections – concluded for 2024. Due summer 2025.
	Tap removal planned at Severalls.
Market Street bus shelter	Stuck with Highways – MB has chased again, April 2025. Highways have declined request to relocate tree.

Additional Items	
Fingerpost refurbishment	Town Centre heritage fingerposts need realigning and painting.
Aqua Centre	Landlord inspection due.
Playground inspection reports follow up	Seeking quotes for rectification work following annual report. Second quote required.
Gutter Cleaning Clearance	Complete March 2025.
Gritting	Insurance advice on gritting CTC: Essentially it is a question of what is reasonable for an organisation with your responsibilities and resources – if manpower/budget was limitless I'm sure you would grit everything every day during the colder months! Seeing as resources are limited the best course of action would be to risk assess and identify the areas which present the largest risk and grit those as frequently as reasonably possible. This could be the areas with the highest footfall or if you have a set of steep steps where a slip could be more dangerous than a flat footpath then these should be prioritised. If you are being contracted to grit a third-party pathway you'll just need to also risk assess and ensure you have adequate resources to fulfil the requirements.



	High priority areas AGREED by MB: Front of Town Hall (ski slope), LIC steps, path at side of Town Hall, Lucombe Oak and Aquacentre paths, also cemetery where required.
Town benches	Town centre benches need some attention/cleaning and clearance of surroundings in some cases – Ops Manager to discuss with Grounds Team. Falkland Square benches have been done. Next priority benches are those on the Chard Road, Hinton Road, and Mount Pleasant. Query over ownership of the bench at the bottom of Furland Road – Somerset Highways own this.
Town interpretation boards	Very out of date, need updating badly. Second draft received.
PAT Testing	Complete. Due December 2025.
SID poles and additional SID.	Somerset Council approached about getting additional poles on Ashlands Road and Kithill. Additional SID approved for purchase. Consultation underway on SID poles. Responses to be collated.
Legionella Risk Assessments	Town Hall/Band Hall/Toilets – several follow up recommendations including removal of deadlegs. Drain taps may be required.
Martyn's Law implications	Await further government guidance but be aware of implications for events and venues.

Report date: 06.05.2025.

Bincombe Beeches

Landscape
and Ecological
Anagement
Plan 2025-2030



Document control sheet

Client	Crewkerne Town Council
Project	Bincombe Beeches Nature Reserve, Crewkerne, Somerset,
	TA18 7AJ
Title	Landscape and Ecological Management Plan 2025-2030
Reference	AB061
Grid reference	ST 44309 10022
Ecological project manager	Adam Chambers

Version 1	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Author	Adam Chambers	Somerset Wildlife Trust Consultancy Ecologist	THE.	March 2025
Reviewer	Jennifer Lackie	Somerset Wildlife Trust Consultancy Senior Ecologist	LLuchio	March 2025
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Introduction - what is a management plan.

Management plans are now common practice for sites that are managed for conservation and amenity. They identify what management is to take place, how it is going to be implemented and why it is necessary.

A management plan acts as a guide to those with the responsibility for implementing the management, ensuring consistency and continuity of management. A plan will cover a five year period, following which there should be a review. An updated plan can then be produced in the light of changes or new information.

This Landscape and Ecological Management Plan is an update of the original report as detailed below:

Franklin, T. (2001). Bincombe Beeches Management Plan 2001-2006.
 Conservation and Planning Policy Unit, South Somerset District Council.

Additions to the report have been based on an updated site survey carried out by Adam Chambers in November 2024.

The site survey was completed in November, outside of the main botanical survey season (which runs April-September). As such, broad UKHab habitat categories have been used as required and data collected during previous surveys has been utilised when forming the recommendations included within this report.

General Description

Bincombe Beeches is an area of public open space owned and managed by Crewkerne Town Council. The hill towers above and shelters the town, contributes to the character of its conservation area and is easily accessible for informal recreation. The site is important at a county level for its wildlife.

Location: National Grid Reference ST 44309 10022

Status / designations: County Wildlife Site.

Size: Approximately 5 hectares.

County Wildlife Site

The site is designated as a County Wildlife Site. These are sites that have been recognised by the Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC) as being especially important for wildlife, including plants, insects, birds, mammals and all 'biodiversity'. Unlike Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's), status as a County Wildlife Site does not confer any legal or statutory implications, and sites rely for their conservation entirely upon sympathetic management by their owners.

General Objectives

The first stage of any management plan is to decide and clearly define what the overall priorities for the use and management of the site are. These are likely to be based on current use and management, important features and elements, potential for enhancement, and resources available.

These overall priorities, stated here as 'General Objectives', should then guide the longer term management of the site. General objectives are not considered to have changed from the 2001 Management Plan.

General Objective 1: Maintain and enhance where appropriate the wildlife habitats and associated nature conservation value of the site.

This is in response to the site's known importance for wildlife (and designation as a County Wildlife Site).

General Objective 2: Maintain and enhance as appropriate the natural beauty of the site and safeguard the distinctive landscape character of the hill.

This is important for the amenity value and links also with maintaining the wildlife habitats.

General Objective 3: Provide and maintain a community resource for informal recreation, study and education.

The site is a valuable community resource for the people of Crewkerne and should thus be maintained for this purpose.

General Objective 4: To meet all legal and safety requirements and obligations.

With such established public access it is important to take all reasonable steps to identify hazards and minimise the risk of harm to all visitors.

How to use this plan

The purpose of this plan is to identify the habitats on site that could benefit from a change in management regime while considering options for enhancing the site where it is deemed supportive of the general objectives.

Habitats have been classified following a combination of the methodology set out in the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UKHab), and the methodology detailed in The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide and Technical Annex 1. Habitat naming protocol is in accordance with The Statutory Biodiversity Metric habitat types as listed within Technical Annex 1, following definitions set out within UKHab and Annex I Habitats for Natura 2000. The Habitat Plan for the site is shown in Figure 1. Within the Habitat Plan each habitat parcel has been given a reference from A-M which are used throughout the recommended management actions.

Management actions are outlined on pages 12-18 of this report. For each habitat, there are two columns:

- **Description:** This column simply gives a description, and sometimes further explanation, of the habitat.
- **Specific objectives and actions:** This gives the *Specific Objective* for the habitat type, and *Action(s)* necessary to achieve these objectives. It is this section that may be most useful to those responsible for organising management. Where *Additional Action(s)* have been included, provisions for delivering these actions could be explored to achieve additional benefit to recreational users and wildlife.

Legislation and biodiversity incentives

It is understood from the Management Plan 2001-2006 (Franklin, T. 2001) that the site has previously been the subject of a Countryside Stewardship agreement for managing the site in accordance with standard conservation principles. This agreement expired in 2007. From discussions with Crewkerne Town Council, it is understood that there are currently no active grant agreements in place.

Due to significant changes in legislation and biodiversity policy since 2001, a summary of relevant legislation, biodiversity incentives and finance schemes has been provided below to provide information and context.

Legislation and government policy

The Environment Act 2021 provides the UK with a new framework for environmental protection. The Environment Act 2021 is the legal vehicle to ensure successful delivery of the government's 25 Year Environment Plan.

The 25 Year Environment Plan sets out the government's actions to help to retain and protect the environment; and calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first. Some relevant key areas of the plan include creating and restoring 500,000ha of wildlife-rich habitats outside the protected sites network; taking

action to recover threatened species of animals, plants and fungi; making sure there are high quality, accessible, natural spaces close to where people live and work to benefit health and wellbeing; and increasing action to improve the environment from all sectors of society.

Biodiversity Net Gain is included within the Environment Act 2021 and is a mandatory condition for obtaining planning permission. This stipulates that new developments (unless exempt) must achieve at least a 10% biodiversity net gain, evidenced by a completed version of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.

The Agriculture Act 2020 supports "public money for public goods" schemes, including biodiversity, soil quality, and water resource improvements. It underpins the Environmental Land Management schemes (ELMs) as detailed below.

Environmental Land Management schemes are part of the wider agricultural transition taking place following the UK's departure from the EU and the move away from the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The schemes support 'The 25 Year Environment Plan'. ELMs are designed by the government to pay farmers and land managers to provide environmental goods and services, and to provide one-off grants to support farm and land management research, innovation and development. The Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI), CS (Countryside Stewardship) and Landscape Recovery payments are part of the current ELM offer. Further details on these schemes are provided below.

The Nature Recovery Network is part of the 25 Year Environment Plan and will be a national network of wildlife-rich places which help to deal with biodiversity loss, climate change and wellbeing. The government's aim is to expand, improve and connect these places across our cities, towns, countryside and coast.

<u>Finance schemes for landowners</u>

Sustainable Farming Incentives (SFI) are a group of defined actions which farmers or land managers can take on their land in return for pre-determined payment rates. SFI are public payments. Actions come from eight themes all focused on improving environmental sustainability, including: soil health, moorlands, hedgerows, integrated pest management, nutrient management, farmland wildlife, buffer strips and low input grassland. At the time of writing there are 102 actions which will be expanded as the SFI scheme improves.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) offsetting provides opportunities for landowners to improve the biodiversity unit value of their land, and to sell these units to developers who can't provide the mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain on-site. Off-site BNG is a private market and agreements, secured via either S106 agreement with a local planning authority or a conservation covenant with a responsible body last a minimum of 30 years. At the time of writing, BNG units and nutrient credits (see below) can be sold from the same action on the same piece of land.

Nutrient mitigation combats deterioration of water quality in internationally important protected sites. Many local planning authorities within key catchments require new development to demonstrate 'nutrient neutrality'. This can be demonstrated by buying nutrient credits from landowners within the catchment, who in return agree to implement actions on their own land to either reduce their nutrient output, or to absorb nutrients and prevent these from entering watercourse. Nutrient credit trading is a private market and agreements last a minimum of 80-125 years. At the time of writing, nutrient credits and

BNG units can be sold from the same action on the same piece of land. Bincombe Beeches Nature Reserve is located within the Parrett catchment.

England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) is managed by the Forestry Commission, this grant supports the creation of new woodlands, covering costs for planting, maintenance, and biodiversity improvements. The EWCO also provides additional funding for public access and biodiversity hotspots.

Carbon offsetting allows companies to offset carbon emissions by paying certified schemes which are designed to remove carbon from the atmosphere. Carbon markets are private markets, and the requirements and length of agreements vary. Two established schemes are operated by Forest Carbon and comprise the Woodland Carbon Code which is supported by UK government and International Carbon Reduction and Offset Alliance (ICROA) and the Peatland Code which is supported by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

<u>Pledges</u> and <u>Initiatives</u>

30 by 30 is an international initiative which aims to reverse biodiversity loss by designating 30% of the land and sea around the world for nature by 2030. The 30 by 30 initiative was formally agreed at COP15 in December 2022 by 64 countries including the United Kingdom.

Wilder Somerset is Somerset Wildlife Trust's 10-year plan. The primary goals of Wilder Somerset are:

- To ensure that nature is improving everywhere with restored natural processes, connected to and protected through a Nature recovery Network with at least 30% of land and sea managed positively for nature.
- To ensure everyone has the opportunity to experience nature, with at least 1 in 4 people taking action for nature's recovery across Somerset as part of Team Wilder.
- To tell the story of nature recovery in Somerset through the online State of Nature platform.

Local strategies

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are part of a national requirement under the Environment Act 2021. Each LNRS will be produced for a strategy area, usually a county, with the support of government but with involvement from public, private and voluntary sectors. LNRS will agree priorities for nature recovery and will propose actions in strategic locations. Each LNRS will contain a local habitat map and a written statement of biodiversity priorities. In Somerset, the LNRS is currently under development but is expected to be published in 2025.

Somerset's Climate Emergency Strategy was formally adopted by the five former Somerset Local Authorities in November 2020, prior to the establishment of a single unitary authority in Somerset. The strategy aims to reduce carbon emissions in the county and to make Somerset more resilient to the effects of climate change. The strategy examines different sectors within the county and identifies key issues and solutions before committing to actions for Somerset and suggesting actions for the community. For the environment sector, the key issues identified are:

- Habitat loss
- Soil loss (quantity and quality)
- Water quality
- Insect decline
- Pests and diseases

The key solution identified is to invest in and protect natural resources within agricultural land, wetlands, peatlands, trees and hedgerows in order to build resilience to climate change, create healthy ecosystems, enhance our wellbeing, provide new economic opportunities and to store carbon. To deliver these solutions, Somerset has committed to providing a collaborative approach to nature led by the Local Nature Partnership which includes representatives from agriculture, wildlife, nature, water, tourism, environment organisations, Local Authorities, Somerset Wildlife Trust, AONBs (since renamed National Landscapes), Exmoor National Park and major employers.

Somerset County Council Pollinator Action Plan 2018-2028 aims to reverse insect decline and protect pollinators by:

- Ensuring the needs of pollinators are represented in local plans, policy and guidance.
- Encouraging adoption of the pollinator strategy.
- Protecting, enhancing and increasing the amount of pollinator habitat in Somerset.
- Increasing awareness of pollinators and their habitat needs.
- Increasing the contribution to pollinator conservation of land owned and managed by Somerset Council.
- Improving knowledge and understanding of pollinators within Somerset.

The Somerset Tree Strategy 2023 has been developed by a range of stakeholders. The strategy is split into three sperate documents, with deliverable actions detailed within the Somerset Tree Strategy 2023 to 2033 Objectives and Actions. The strategy aims to achieve the following stated core themes:

- Create a wood culture where everyone understands the importance of trees to the county, its natural environment and its communities.
- Make trees resilient and adaptable to climate change by protecting, expanding, managing and diversifying our existing treescapes.
- Expand the number of trees in Somerset in urban and rural areas by 240ha per year through planting initiatives to create cohesive, connected treescapes that include woodland, parks, roadside, and urban spaces.
- Create a range of services and products that allow treescapes to contribute to society through local supply chains and creating natural capital opportunities.
- Create a sustainable and flexible governance structure that ensures successful implementation of the strategy over the next ten years.

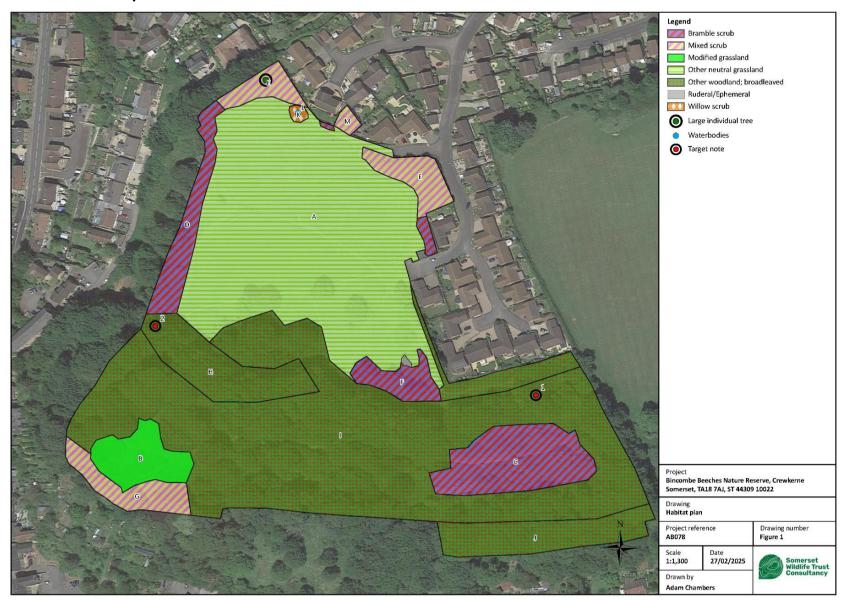
Health and wellbeing

Spending time outdoors and interacting with nature is known to benefit both mental and physical heath. The mental health charity Mind lists some of these benefits as follows:

- Improve your mood.
- Reduce feelings of stress or anger.

- Help you take time out and feel more relaxed.
- Improve your physical health.
- Improve your confidence and self-esteem.
- Help you be more active.
- Help you meet and get to know new people.
- Connect you to your local community.
- Reduce loneliness.
- Help you feel more connected to nature.
- Provide peer support.

Figure 1. Habitat plan.



Management Actions

Grassland

Description

Two distinct areas. One area of modified grassland noted to be uniform in height (10cm) subject to a regular management regime was situated in the southwestern section of the site and used a recreational area (**B**). An area of other neutral grassland situated in the northern section of the site was noted to have a varied sward height and be under a less intensive management regime that supports a more diverse sward (**A**).

Objectives & Actions

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE: Continue to maintain areas for the benefit of recreational users of the reserve while improving floristic diversity of swards in selected areas by adjustment of the cutting regime.

ACTION:

Continue to employ a contractor to cut the other neutral grassland **A** in late-summer to early-autumn (between August and the end of September). The cuttings should be removed from the meadow (by baling or by raking). They should then be deposited in suitable areas within the site as outlined below or removed totally from the site. Where cuttings are removed it is recommended these are used by a local farmer for hay where possible, or composted in suitable facilities to prevent waste. Suitable areas for depositing arisings are:

- a) around the edges of the broadleaved woodland immediately adjacent to grassland A.
- b) On top of or next to bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) scrub located in the northwestern section of the site, more discrete areas that are less visible to the public could be preferred.

Continue to regularly manage the grassland within modified grassland **B** by organizing monthly grass cuts from April-October.

ADDITIONAL ACTION: If achievable, a staggered/rotational cutting regime could be utilised within area **A**. This would involve dividing the grassland into sections, with only one section cut at any one time. This will ensure there is always a range of sward heights available for wildlife and will encourage higher floristic diversity by allowing a range plants to flower and set seed. At least one area should be left uncut over winter to provide shelter for invertebrates. The management of each section should be rotated each year to ensure no one area is under the same management for more than one-year.

Grassland

Monitor species diversity with the support of local interest groups. If considered necessary species diversity could be increased through overseeding or plug planting, however, it should be noted soil preparation would be required to create sufficient bare ground (approximately 25-50%). The input of ecologist should be sought to ensure the correct seed mixture is selected and appropriate preparation is undertaken.

Pull ragwort (Senecio jacobaea). All landowners have an obligation under the 1959 Weeds Act to control ragwort that could spread (by seeding) to nearby agricultural land. It is also very important to remove it before cutting the meadow if the hay is going to be used for feeding stock. Uprooting it is an appropriate method of removal.

Timing: Annually. Easiest to spot once it has started flowering but should be done before it starts to set seed (June). Uproots most easily after the ground has been softened by rain. Another check should be made a month later for any later flowering plants that may have been missed. This work could be carried out by volunteers.

Bramble and mixed scrub

Description

Areas of bramble scrub, mixed scrub and willow (*Salix* spp.) scrub are present within the reserve (**C-G**).

Natural scrub growth has gone unchecked in areas within the reserve designated for different habitat types.

Objectives & Actions

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE: To provide open areas within the scrub and ecotones at the edges of scrub that provide varying microclimates and resources for invertebrates.

ACTIONS: Partition scrub parcel **C** into two separate habitat parcels and remove approximately 25% from both parcels of scrub to allow natural regeneration of grassland. Monitor the parcels for succession yearly, where bramble re-establishes over time, cut back to allow grassland to establish.

Coppice overgrown trees and reduce scrub height in scrub parcel **G** as appropriate to maintain southwesterly views for the benefit of recreational users of the reserve.

Continue to organise regularly (monthly) volunteer groups to conduct formative pruning to prevent scrub parcels (**D-F**) obscuring established pathways and encroaching further on to the reserve.

ADDITIONAL ACTION: consider cutting wedge sections, or scalloped edges into scrub parcels **D-F** to increase the availability of different microclimates.

Other woodland; broadleaved - ash copse and site wide ash trees

Description

An area of established ash (*Fraxinus* excelsior) woodland located in the western section of the site (**H**). Individual ash trees are present across the site.

The 'woodland edge' on the northern side of the woodland, at its western end is particularly important for insects (Target note 2). Amongst other plants, it holds a quantity of raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*) plants and a quantity of old man's beard (*Clematis vitalba*) which form an important habitat and which should be conserved. Common spotted orchids (*Dactylorhiza fuchsia*) are plentiful along the Northern edge.

Objectives & Actions

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:

Continue to manage the ash copse and ash trees across the site with the prescriptions included within the arboricultural report and ash dieback management strategy prepared for the site (Andrews, B. 2022, 2023). Regularly review arboricultural documents and seek updated versions as required. Consider supplementary understory planting or replacement planting.

ACTIONS: Continue to monitor ash dieback within ash trees on-site (I), and address issues in relation to the ash copse (H) and ash trees in the interest of public health and safety.

Where appropriate, trees identified with advanced ash die-back could be retained as monoliths under the guidance of a suitably qualified arboriculturist. This will retain valuable deadwood habitat which is important for several bird, bat, invertebrate and fungi species.

Where ash trees must be felled to ground level, the felled tree should be processed and retained on-site as deadwood or incorporated into habitat piles.

ADDITIONAL ACTION: Consider supplementary planting of native shrub and saplings to establish understory cover within parcel **I.**

Other woodland: broadleaved

Description

Large area of broadleaved woodland situated in the southern section of the site comprised of mature beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) trees, oak (*Quercus robur*) trees, hazel (*Corylus avellana*), and ash. The trees were planted approximately 40 years ago and are very closely spaced.

Objectives & Actions

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE: Continue to manage the other woodland; broadleaved with the prescriptions included within the arboricultural report and ash die-back management strategy prepared for the reserve to allow recreational users to continue safely enjoying the amenity value of the reserve. Consideration for supplementary understory planting where required and the implementation of techniques to create unique refuge features for bats and birds.

ACTION: Regularly review arboricultural documents and seek updated versions as required.

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS: Consider utilisation of techniques to create features on select individual trees within the woodland (I) to provide potential nesting cavities for birds and roosting opportunities for bats. Tree selection should be informed by an ecologist and arboriculturist.

Identify parcels within the woodland (I) where coppicing of individual tree specimens will benefit the overall structure within the woodland. In addition, ivy cover noted on trees within parcel I has been noted as a significant benefit to biodiversity to the provision of refuge and food and should continue to be regarded as an overall benefit to the reserve.

Where compatible with required ash dieback works, thinning of young trees should be considered to prevent overcrowding within parcel **I**.

Consider supplementary planting of native shrub and saplings to establish an understorey cover within parcel **J**.

Willow scrub / waterbody

Description

A discrete pond (**L**) located in the northern section of the site is dominated by naturally seeded willows (**K**). The waterbody is unlikely to hold water year-round.

Objectives & Actions

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE: Continue to maintain this feature in a functional condition where standing water is present for at least 4 months of the year. To consider additional management of this habitat where agreeable to the overall objectives of the site.

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS: If achievable, the willow scrub (**K**) within the waterbody (**L**) should be reduced to minimise shading and increase water retention throughout the year. It will be necessary to monitor this scrub to ensure that it doesn't encroach into the waterbody itself, which could lead to overcrowding and changes in water levels.

Consider the addition of supplementary planting within the waterbody (**L**) for the benefit of invertebrates and amphibians. As the waterbody is seasonal, recommended species would be marginal/damp loving species such as water mint (*Mentha aquatica*), water forget-menot (*Myosotis scorpioides*), yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) and brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga*).

Monitor the waterbody to determine seasonality and any wildlife associated with the area. Where necessary further actions could be taken to include removal of excess marginal vegetation on a rota or de-silting. Where vegetation is removed this should be kept at the waters edge for 24 hours before being removed for composting – this will allow any wildlife an opportunity to return to the water.

Herbicide and pesticide use must be avoided within proximity to the waterbody.

Mixed scrub (north)

Description

A discrete area that was noted to have been recently cut back in the northern section of the site (**M**). This area was adjacent to the neighboring boundary of resident properties.

Objectives & Actions

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE: No current objective is associated with this parcel. However, despite its close proximity to adjacent residences, the area could be considered as a potential location for the creation of new habitats.

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS: The suggested actions below have considered the proximity of the area (**M**) to adjacent residential properties and are considered to be achievable and appropriate:

- Creation of a wildlife area including a new pond.
- Planting of native dwarf variety fruit bearing trees to provide wildlife and aesthetic interest.

Additional Ecological Considerations

Multiple potential badger (*Meles* meles) setts and mammal burrow entrances were noted in the northeastern section of the site (Figure 1, Target Note 1). Whilst it is considered that none of the proposed management works will result in the disturbance of these potential setts, the scheduling of future works should consider the potential presence of badgers and their setts within the site. It must be noted that badgers and their setts are afforded legal protection under the Protection of Badgers Act 1982.

The completion of habitat management works to scrub habitats and trees should ideally be completed in the months of September-February (inclusive) to avoid disturbing nesting birds. Where this is not achievable then appropriate checks should be completed by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to the work commencing. It must be noted that all wild birds and their nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Opportunities for further data collection on the species present within the reserve should be considered by engaging with local interest groups. The collection of further data records can validate the success of current objectives and monitor the effect of proposed management actions. Data collection indicating the presence of a native floral and faunal species with specific ecological requirements could be used to inform the future management practices at Bincombe Beeches Nature Reserve. Any data collected should be reported to Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC).

Summary table of Actions

Habitat	Area	When	Brief description and notes	Page
Modified grassland	A	Annually – August or September	Annual cut. Consider staggered cuts, leaving areas of grassland to overwinter.	12/13
	В	Monthly – April to October	Cutting of grassland to achieve tidy recreational area.	
Bramble scrub and mixed scrub	С	Annually September to February (where required)	Reduce the divided scrub parcels by 25%.	14
		March to August	Monitor regrowth of scrub within the parcels. Identify where scrub reduction within the parcels is required.	
	D-F	September to February	Conduct formative pruning on scrub parcels encroaching into pathways and further on to the reserve.	
		September to February	Cut wedge sections into the scrub.	
	G	September to February	Reduce scrub height and coppice outgrown trees.	
Broadleaved woodland individual ash trees	Н	Year round	Monitor and establish the health of the ash trees within the copse and across the site.	15
	I	September to February	Use tree feature creating techniques on selected individual trees. Thinning of ash trees and saplings	16
			Coppice individual trees within the woodland.	
	J	November to March	Supplementary planting of native shrubs and saplings.	16
Willow scrub	K	September to November	Cut back or remove willow scrub from the waterbody.	17

Waterbody	L	August to November ideal, but could be done by hand year round with adequate care taken to minimise disturbance to existing vegetation.	Planting of aquatic plants within the pond.	17
Mixed scrub (north)	М	September to February	Creation of a new wildlife pond.	18
		November to March (species dependent)	Planting of native dwarf variety fruit bearing trees.	

Publications

- Andrews, B. (2022). Bincombe Beeches nature Reserve: Assessment & management recommendations. Brynley Andrews Associates, West Coker, Somerset.
- Andrews, B. (2023). Bincombe Beeches nature Reserve: Ash Die-back Management Strategy. Brynley Andrews Associates, West Coker, Somerset.
- Franklin, T. (2001). Bincombe Beeches Management Plan 2001-2006. Conservation and Planning Policy Unit, South Somerset District Council.

Appendices

Appendix A Wildlife legislation

The following information provides a summary of wildlife legislation which affords protection to plants and animals and seeks to conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity.

Table 1. Summary of wildlife legislation afforded to terrestrial and freshwater animals.

Species	Legislation	
Birds	All species of bird whilst actively nesting are afforded legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and additional penalties are incurred for offences relating to birds listed on Schedule 1.	
Amphibians	The great crested newt is afforded full legal protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is also listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and is therefore a European Protected Species (EPS). Common amphibian species (common frog (<i>Rana temporaria</i>), common toad (<i>Bufo bufo</i>), smooth newt (<i>Lissotriton vulgaris</i>) and palmate newt (<i>Lissotriton helveticus</i>)) are afforded limited legal protection under the act (as amended). Common toad and great crested newt are also listed as species of principal importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).	
Badger	Badgers are afforded legal protection under the Badgers Act 1992 and are afforded limited protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Section 11, Schedule 6 (as amended).	
Bats	All species of bat and their roosts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (Section 9 (4)(b), (1) and (5)), the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 listed in Schedule 2 as European protected species, the Countryside and Rights of Way (CroW) Act 2000 and the Wild Mammals Protection Act 1996.	
Hazel dormouse	The hazel dormouse is afforded full legal protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is also listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and is therefore a European protected species.	
Reptiles	Common reptiles are afforded limited legal protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They are also listed as species of principal importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).	

Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

The Habitats Directive and Birds Directive provide protection for a wide range of habitats and species within the European Community in order to meet their obligations as a signatory to the Bern Convention. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 transposes these directives into European law. On the departure of the UK from the EU in 2020, this legislation was transposed into domestic law via the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (SI No. 2017/1012) update and supersede the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (SI No. 2010/490) and the Conservation Regulations 1994 (as amended). The 2017 Regulations are the principal means by which the European Habitats Directive is transposed in England and Wales.

The Regulations provide for the designation and protection of a network of 'European Sites' termed Natura 2000, the protection of 'European protected species', and the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of European Sites.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 apply in the terrestrial environment and in

territorial waters out to 12 nautical miles. The EU Habitats and Wild Birds Directives are transposed in UK offshore waters by separate regulations - The Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the "2017 Regulations") which consolidate and update the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007 (the "2007 Regulations").

Regulation 43 relates to the protection of European protected species listed under Schedule 2 of the Regulations. Taken together it is an offence to undertake the following acts with regard to European protected species:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European protected species;
- deliberately disturb animals of any such species in such a way as to be likely to:
 - impair their ability to survive, breed, rear or nurture their young, hibernate or migrate, or
 - affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong;
- deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal; or
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

The disturbance offence is generally taken to refer to a discernible effect at population level and biogeographic level, rather than simply to an individual animal. However, in certain circumstances the disturbance of one individual animal may have population level effects.

The Regulations also make it an offence (subject to exceptions) to deliberately pick, collect, cut, uproot, destroy, or trade in the plants listed in Schedule 5.

However, the actions listed above can be made lawful through the granting of licences (European protected species licence) by the appropriate authorities (Natural England in England). Licences may be granted for several purposes (such as science and education, conservation, preserving public health and safety), but only after the appropriate authority has determined that the following regulations are satisfied:

- the works under the licence are being carried out for the purposes of 'preserving public health and
 public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a
 social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment';
- there is 'no satisfactory alternative'; and
- the action 'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at favourable conservation status in their natural range'.

To apply for a licence, the following information is required:

- the species concerned;
- the size of the population at the site (note this may require a survey to be carried out at a particular time of the year);
- the impact(s) (if any) that the development is likely to have upon the populations; and
- what measures can be conducted to mitigate for the impact(s).

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the principal piece of UK legislation relating to the protection of wildlife. It consolidates and amends existing national legislation to implement the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive) in Great Britain.

The Act makes it an offence (with exception to species listed in Schedule 2) to intentionally kill, injure, or take any wild bird or their eggs or nests. Special penalties are available for offences related to birds listed on Schedule 1, for which there are additional offences of disturbing these birds at their nests, or their dependent young. The Secretary of State may also designate SPA (subject to exceptions) to provide further protection to birds. The Act also prohibits certain methods of killing, injuring, or taking birds, restricts the sale and possession of captive bred birds, and sets standards for keeping birds in

captivity.

The Act makes it an offence (subject to exceptions) to intentionally kill, injure, or take, possess, or trade in any wild animal listed in Schedule 5, and prohibits interference with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturbing animals occupying such places. The Act also prohibits certain methods of killing, injuring, or taking wild animals listed in Schedule 6.

The Act makes it an offence (subject to exceptions) to pick, uproot, trade in, or possess (for the purposes of trade) any wild plant listed in Schedule 8, and prohibits the unauthorised intentional uprooting of such plants.

The Act contains measures for preventing the establishment of non-native species which may be detrimental to native wildlife, prohibiting the release of animals and planting of plants listed in Schedule 9. It also provides a mechanism making any of the above offences legal through the granting of licences by the appropriate authorities.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CroW) was passed to provide additional levels of protection for wildlife whilst also strengthening the protection afforded to SSSI.

Schedule 12 of the Act amends the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, strengthening the legal protection for threatened species. The provisions make certain offences 'arrestable', create a new offence of 'reckless' disturbance, confer greater powers to police and wildlife inspectors for entering premises and obtaining wildlife tissue samples for DNA analysis, and enable heavier penalties on conviction of wildlife offences.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC), effective in England, is designed to help achieve a rich and diverse natural environment and thriving rural communities through modernised and simplified arrangements for delivering Government policy.

It was created to make provision in connection with wildlife, SSSI, National Parks and the Broads; to amend the law relating to rights of way; to make provision as to the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council; to provide for flexible administrative arrangements in connection with functions relating to the environment and rural affairs and certain other functions; and for connected purposes. Section 40 of NERC carries an extension of the earlier CroW Act biodiversity duty to public bodies and statutory undertakers to have due regard to the conservation of biodiversity. Section 41 requires the Secretary of State, as respects England, to publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which in the Secretary of State's opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The updated Section 41 list, published in August 2010, identified 56 habitats and 943 species of principal importance.

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992

In the UK badgers are primarily afforded protection under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. This makes it illegal to wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or to attempt to do so and to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett. Sett interference includes disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, as well as damaging or destroying a sett or obstructing access to it.

Badgers also receive limited protection under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This outlaws certain methods of taking or killing animals.

Under Section 10 (1)(d) of the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, a licence may be granted by Natural England to interfere with a badger sett for the purpose of development, as defined by Section 55(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Section 3 of the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 defines interference as:

- damaging a badger sett;
- destroying a badger sett;
- obstructing access to, or any entrance of, a badger sett;
- causing a dog to enter a sett; or
- disturbing a badger when it is occupying a badger sett.

Natural England guidance has suggested that the following operations may disturb badgers in their setts, and therefore unless these can be avoided a licence may be required for:

- excavation within 20m of any entrance to an active sett;
- excavation or other ground disturbance using heavy machinery within 30m of a sett;
- fire or chemicals within 20m of a sett;
- tree felling in the area of a sett trees should be felled away from setts and cleared away from badger paths; and
- other disturbances such as loud noises or vibrations; some activities such as pile driving and the
 use of explosives that may result in a disturbance over a much greater distance will require
 individual consideration.

The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996

The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 makes it an offence for any person to mutilate, kick, beat, nail or otherwise impale, stab, burn, stone, crush, drown, drag or asphyxiate any wild mammal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering.

The Animal Welfare Act 2006

Prior to the Animal Welfare Act 2006, people only had a duty to ensure that an animal didn't suffer unnecessarily. The new Act keeps this duty but also imposes a broader duty of care on anyone responsible for an animal to take reasonable steps to ensure that the animal's needs are met. This means that a person has to look after the animal's welfare as well as ensure that it does not suffer. The Act says that an animal's welfare needs include:

- a suitable environment (how it is housed);
- a suitable diet (what it eats and drinks);
- the ability to exhibit normal behaviour patterns:
- any need it has to be housed with, or apart from, other animals; and
- protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

With regards to development, this may have implications when translocations of animals are proposed. As such, care must be taken to ensure that any receptor sites are suitable for the species in terms of habitat and carrying capacity.

Appendix B Personnel qualifications, accreditations and memberships

- Adam Chambers, Somerset Wildlife Trust Consultancy, Ecologist, BSc (Hons), qualifying member
 of the CIEEM, Natural England Class Licence CL08 (Great Crested Newt Survey Level 1)
 Registration Number 2022-10402-CL08-GCN. Accredited agent of Hannah Bates under Natural
 Resources Wales Bat Survey Licence number S092610/1 and specific endorsements under
 Natural England Class Licence CL18 (Bat Survey Level 2) Registration Number: 2019-41077CLS-CLS.
- Jennifer Lackie, Somerset Wildlife Trust Consultancy, Senior Ecologist, MSci (Hons), ACIEEM, Natural England Class Licence CL17 (Bat Survey Level 1) Registration Number: 2020-45241-CLS-CLS, Natural England Class Licence CL08 (Great Crested Newt Survey Level 1) Registration Number: 2018-35503-CLS-CLS, Natural England Class Licence CL29 (Barn Owl Survey) Registration Number: CL29/00423, Natural England Class Licence CL51 (Beaver management) Registration Number: 2024-149-BVR-CLASS.



AGENDA ITEM 055/2425

Report subject	Severalls Tennis Courts: to receive a report following a usage review with the LTA.
Committee name	Amenities Committee.
Meeting date	Monday 12 th May 2025.
Report author	K Sheehan FSLCC, Town Clerk.
Report contact details	townclerk@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk.
Consultees	N/a.
Decision required?	N/a.

1. Purpose

1.1 To receive information from a recent progress review conducted by the Lawn Tennis Association regarding usage at Severalls Tennis Courts.

2. Background information

2.1 Following the refurbishment of the tennis courts in 2023, Town Council officers and representatives of the LTA have held a meeting to review usage statistics, pass uptake and financial implications.

3. Detailed Consideration

- 3.1 Court Use / Promotion
- 37% of court bookings have been pay and play which, when combined with passes, the income (minus expenses) is beyond the £3,000 figure for breaking even and being sustainable.
- If courts reach 1000 bookings in a calendar year that would be considered an above average performance of a venues.
- Recommendations are that social media posts broadly target families/younger adults – Easter, May half term, June (tennis on TV), July (Wimbledon) and August (Summer Holidays). If more chances to post, then any time the weather forecast is good for week ahead.
- You can adjust these to be more 'pass sales' in April and May/June (as summer ahead) and then look at more pay and play in later June, July, August to capture the casual market of players who might play 2 / 3 times a year.

3.2 Coaching



Crewkerne Town Council

AGENDA ITEM 055/2425

 Some discussion around coaching provision took place, however, the LTA coach has now said he is unable to run lessons in Crewkerne this summer due to a lack of staff.

3.3 Activators for Free Park Tennis

- If volunteers can be identified, a Free Park Tennis initiative could run at Severalls (similar in concept to parkrun i.e. fun informal, come and try, someone to welcome and facilitate, but not coaching.).
- This page on <u>LTA Website</u> talks about Free Park Tennis and has a link for the
 activator training to get started (all online) for anyone interested.
- Two trained volunteers are needed to deliver for safety reasons. Support is available to anyone wishing to do the training.
- Promotional materials for this programme and recruiting activators can be supplied.
- Once two are trained it can be set up on Clubspark and volunteer hoodies and kit would be supplied FOC.

4. Financial implications

That courts are covering expenses as well as generating sufficient income for a fund ringfenced for future repairs with no impact on the precept.

5. Equalities considerations

N/A.

6. Crime and Disorder considerations

N/A.

7. Council Action Plan objectives supported

- 1.5.3 Publicise courts availability
- 9.5 Community projects: work with partners to deliver more events.

8. Recommendation

8.1. It is recommended that Councillors NOTE the information in this report.