

Wonersh Common Enhancement & Management Plan

June 2010



Wonersh Common Enhancement & Management Plan

This document sets out the long term management objectives and guidelines for Wonersh Common. The plan has been developed with local involvement and it is intended that it should be the first point of reference for all those with an involvement and interest in Wonersh Common.

Background Information

Wonersh Common covers an area of 25.4ha of which 19.5ha is owned by Waverley Borough Council and 5.9ha by Wonersh Parish Council (Appendix I).



Like many of the commons in the area Wonersh Common would have been traditionally managed by grazing. An aerial photograph from 1947 shows the now wooded land to the north, towards Chilworth junction to be predominately open and scrub or trees on what is now the sports ground.

Site Status

The whole area is registered common land (CL 182) covered by the Commons Registration Scheme and bye-laws (Appendix II). The area lies within the Area of Great Landscape Value. The very southern edge of the area, around the Pepperpot is within Wonersh Conservation Area and is also an Area of Archaeological Potential.

The Downs Link (bridleway 301) crosses through the wooded area of common to the north of the site and footpath 304A crosses south of the cricket pitch. In addition footpath 300A joins the common at



Little Tangle Lodge and footpath 304 joins the common at Holmefield (Appendix III).

Landownership/Leases

The land under Waverley's ownership was purchased from the Earl of Onslow in 1957 by Hambledon Rural District Council, under the Commons Act 1899 and Local Government Act 1933, for the purpose of providing for open access and recreation for local people.



There is a 20 year lease between Womersh Parish Council and Womersh Sports Club which expires in February 2020. The sports ground was established in 1952 at a cost of £1,800 and was dedicated as a memorial to villagers who had fallen in the Second World War. A play area was also set

aside at this time. The first cricket match was between Womersh and Bramley.

As it is illegal to park or drive on common land. Both Waverley and the Parish Council have granted easements to named properties to have vehicular rights to cross but not park on the common.

Landscape Character

In order to understand what makes Womersh Common special a landscape assessment was carried out by the Enhancement Project Group using a standard methodology developed by the Countryside Agency. The following three areas were identified (appendix IV):



1. Sports Ground – An irregular shaped area that encompasses the more open aspect of the cricket pitch and tapers down into the heart of the village. The B2128 Guildford to Shamley Green road is situated to the west of the area. Due to the dominant presence of the cricket pitch and play area the overall character is formal. The area shares characteristics with many other local villages in that this open part of the green is surrounded by properties and fringed by roadside trees.



To the east are views to Barnett Hill whilst to the west the wooded slopes of Chinthurst Hill.

2. The Platt – This central section of the common is predominately linear and dominated by the B2128 which runs north to south through the area. The Platt itself is a roughly square area of grassland, dominated by willows, which is cut annually for hay.



To the west of the Platt are views of Chinthurst Hill.

3. Woodland – The wedge shaped area to the north of the common is dominated by a recent secondary woodland. Much of this is quite wet, especially to the east of the area, due to the presence of streams and ponds.

Guiding Principles

These are the policies that have been developed to protect and enhance Wonersh Common. They should be used as the guiding principles for any future management decisions.

1. Protect the common land and its historic common pattern



2. Protect the rural character of Wonersh Common

The area is registered common land which offers a great deal of protection from development and despoilment. However, the integrity of the historic common should be protected against minor infringements such as unauthorised planting, inappropriate surfacing on access tracks or lighting. It is important to protect the rural character of the common from creeping urbanisation, including parking. Permanent loss of common through encroachment should be prevented through annual boundary inspections.



3. Conserve and enhance the distinct landscape character of Wonersh Common

The survey identified three character areas. The distinct features and views of these areas should be respected and enhanced whenever possible.

4. Protect and enhance key views

The survey identified three character areas. The distinct features and views should be protected and taken into account when any works or development are to be considered.



Chinthurst Hill forms the back drop to Wonersh Common but views of the folly are gradually being lost behind trees.

5. Protect and enhance 'treescape' of the area

Trees are an important feature in any landscape. However, they are not a permanent feature and a long term tree management and replacement plan is necessary to ensure continuity of tree cover and to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places.



The planting of new trees will need to take into account the landscape character of each area and be appropriate for the location.

6. Prevent parking and erosion of verges

Parking does not cause the same level of concern in Wonersh as it does for example in Shamley Green. However, vehicles can easily damage the ground leading to unsightly and damaged verges so it is important that vulnerable areas remain protected.

7. Prevent proliferation of access tracks

There are numerous access tracks over the common, allowing residents to gain access to their properties. These tracks have been permitted and in most cases regularised by Waverley Borough Council or Wonersh Parish Council through an easement. An easement does not grant a right to park on the common; it only permits access across the common to allow vehicles to be parked within the property boundary.

The tracks should be surveyed regularly and where necessary householders be informed that remedial works need to be carried out

To retain the rural character of the area and to comply with Waverley's specification for access, these tracks should be single vehicle width and of an unbound surface (Appendix V). The responsibility for maintaining the track and, where present, culverts lies with the owner of the property that enjoys rights of access over the common.

8. Prevent and reduce visual impact of signs and street furniture

The survey revealed that there were a number of rubbish bins on the common but that many of them were in a poor state. In order to improve the visual appearance of the area only one style of bin will be used throughout and careful consideration be given to location of new bins.



Highway signs and unsightly advertising signs, especially clusters of 'For Sale' signs detract from the rural character of Wonersh Common. Unfortunately, SCC is not obliged to consult over the installation of new signs or obliged to remove redundant ones.

Advertising is controlled by the planning regulations and the by-laws. WBC produce a set of guidelines for signs on common land (Appendix VI). All unauthorised signs will be removed.

9. Provide for formal and informal public recreation and community events

Due to its size and varied nature Wonersh Common is used in many different ways. The Downs Link passes through the north of the common taking a larger number of walkers and horse riders through the woodland.

At the other end of the common the pavilion and grounds provide an ideal setting for cricket and stoolball during the summer and football through the winter. The adjacent play ground is popular throughout the year.

The area is also popular with local dog walkers.

10. Provide opportunities for biodiversity

Where possible management should provide opportunities for biodiversity, but this should be balanced against the necessity for parts of the common to be managed more formally.

There are two areas that lend themselves to being the focus for wildlife. The Platt is managed as a hay meadow which it is believed



has never been cultivated. It would be worth while undertaking a botanical survey of the grassland.

The block of woodland has the greatest potential for biodiversity. As recent secondary woodland it currently has limited floristic diversity but does support an interesting range of

communities and when looked at in a wider context can be regarded as part of the Shalford Common complex which is known to be an



important foraging and hibernation habitat for a sizable common toad population.

Management to develop a better woodland structure and prevent further encroachment into the open glade would be of benefit.

Management Issues & Solutions

The Landscape Assessment identified a number of issues. By Applying the Guiding Principles above the following solutions have been identified. These will form the basis of the Wonersh Common Enhancement Plan, for which funding will be sought and will also guide the long term management actions.

1. Sports Ground

Unightly rubbish bins	Replace with same style bin throughout. Ensure sited appropriately
Pepperpot	Slightly shabby. Repair damaged seating and remove staples/ drawing pins. Replace missing reflectors
Ditches	Overgrown and unsightly vegetation along edges. Ditches silted
Trees	Tree guards to be removed throughout. Some tree work required and stump grinding to recently felled trees. Develop long term tree management plan
Unightly Highways signs	Remove signs identified as redundant. Replace tatty wooden memorial sign
Posts	Replace dilapidated posts throughout in same style as new posts to Lawnsmead.
Variable standard of access tracks	Ensure owners of properties benefiting from access tracks are aware of maintenance responsibilities
Poor state of benches	Repairs are needed to a number of benches. All benches would benefit from regular maintenance
Footpath 304A	Widen surface of tarmac path to original width
Telegraph poles	Sheaths over straining wires need replacing
Unauthorised signs	Ensure all signs comply with guidelines



2. The Platt

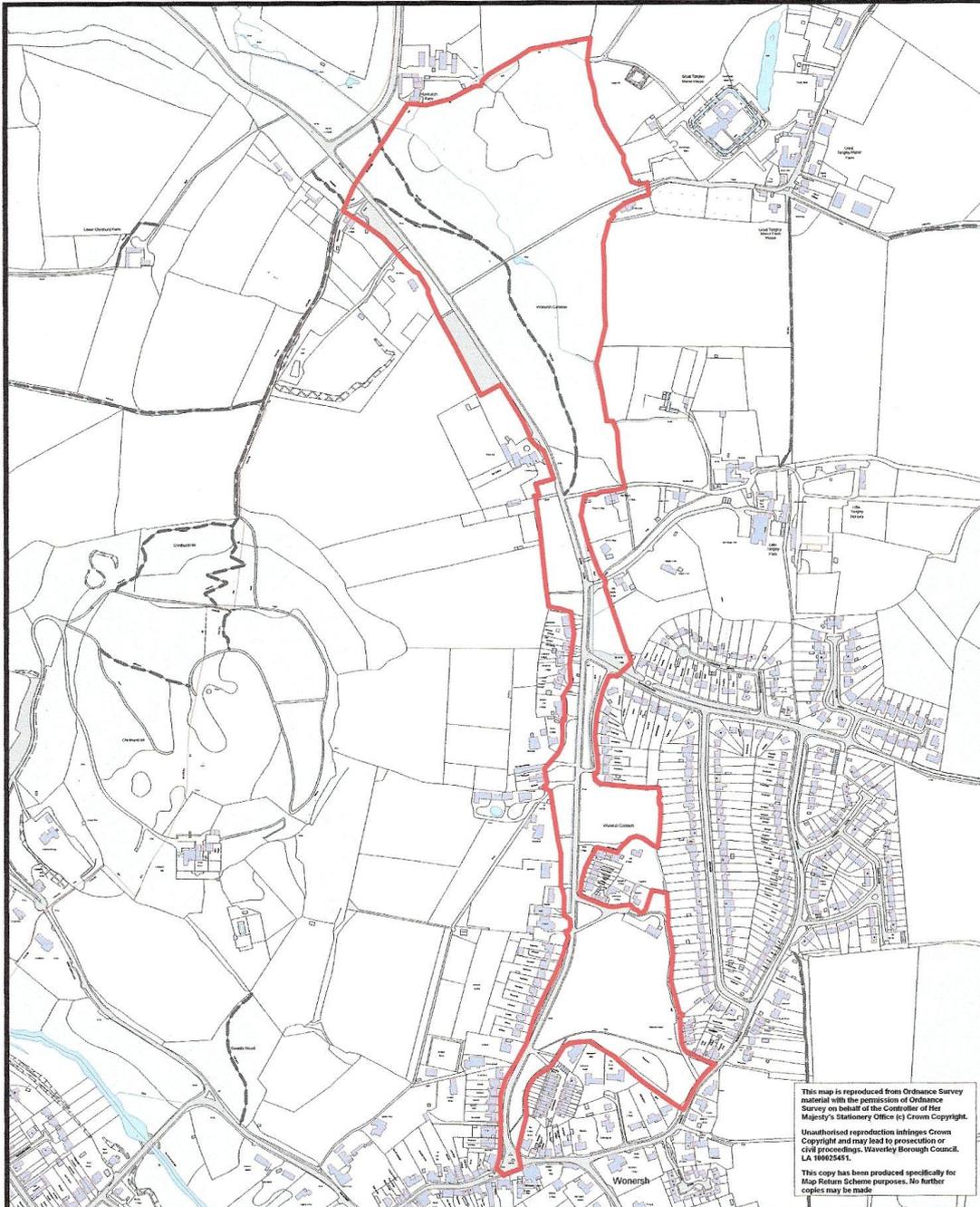
Variable standard of access tracks	Ensure owners of properties from access tracks area aware of maintenance responsibilities
Tree guards	Need removing throughout
Unightly Highways signs	Many identified as being unnecessary. Investigate possibility of replacing metal signs with wooden ones, where appropriate
Posts	Replace dilapidated posts with new style throughout
Benches	Require regular maintenance
Unmanaged ditches	Require regular maintenance and clearance of brambles
Trees	Some tree works required. Develop long term tree management plan
Dumped garden waste	Remove and educate neighbours
Concrete base	Remove base of old bus stop and reinstate to grass
Unauthorised signs	Ensure all signs comply with guidelines

3. Woodland

Silted ditches	Clear silt from ditch adjacent to Downs Link.
Unightly road signs	Some in poor condition and redundant. Remove ones no longer necessary
Poor condition of bench	Carry out repairs and include on regular maintenance schedule
Damaged verges	Install posts where verge/common damaged by vehicles
Over grown paths through woodland	Clear vegetation, where necessary, along paths
Overgrown verges	Clear brambles and improve management along roadside. Carry out frequent litter pick
Poor waymarking	Improve signage along this section of the Downs Link
Unmanaged woodland	Manage woodland to improve structure diversity. Revise management plan



Appendix I



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Leisure and Regulation
Waverley Borough Council
The Bursys, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1HR
Telephone: (01483) 523333
Fax No: (01483) 523643 DX No:58303



Appendix I: Map showing area covered by Wonersh Enhancement Plan



NORTH
1:6648
26/04/2010
MAP SHEET: TQ0145

Appendix II

BYE-LAWS made by the RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF HAMBLEDON
 in pursuance of a Scheme made by them and approved by the Minister of
 Agriculture & Fisheries under Section 1 (1) of the Commons Act, 1899 with
 respect to the commons in the
 PARISHES of BRAMLEY, CHIDDINGFOLD, CRANELIGH, DUNSFOLD, EWEHURST,
 and WONERSH
 In the COUNTY of SURREY

1. Throughout these Bye-laws the expression. "the Council" means the Rural District Council of Hambledon in the County of Surrey, the expression "the Commons" means, except where inconsistent with the context, each of the pieces of land with the ponds, streams, paths and roads thereon in the County of Surrey, and referred to as "the Commons" in the Scheme approved under the Commons Act, 1899, on the 22nd day of February, 1951 by order of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries; and the expression "Scheme" means the aforesaid Scheme.
2. An act necessary to the proper execution of his duty on the commons by an officer of the Council, or by any person or servant of any person employed by the Council, shall not be deemed an offence against these bye-laws.
3. A person shall not without lawful authority
 - (a) Dig, cut or take turf, sods, gravel, sand, clay or other substances on or from the Commons; or cut, fell or carelessly or negligently injure any gorse, heather, timber or other tree, shrub, brushwood or other plant growing on the commons.
 - (b) Post or paint bills, placards, advertisements, or notices on trees or fences, or erections on the Commons.
 - (c) Catch birds, set traps or nets, or lay snares for birds or other animals, take birds' eggs or nests, or shoot or chase game or other animals on the commons, provided that this bye-law shall not apply in any case where an offence is committed against any of the provisions of the Wild Birds Protection Acts, 1880 to 1939, or of any Order made thereunder and for the time being in force in the Hambledon Rural District.
 - (d) Draw, drive or place upon the commons, or any part thereof, any carriage, cart, caravan, truck, motor cycle or other vehicle or any aircraft (except in the case of accident or other sufficient cause), provided that this bye-law shall not be deemed to apply to a wheel chair, perambulator or chaise drawn or propelled by hand, and used solely for the conveyance of a child or children or an invalid; or to any vehicle in, or proceeding to or from, any space set apart by the Council as a parking place.'
 - (e) Light any fire on the commons.
 - (f) Erect any tent or camp on the commons.
 - (g) Fire or discharge fire arms or throw missiles on the commons
 - (h) (i) Break in any horse on the commons.
 (ii) Drive or exercise any horse on the commons to the danger of any other person.



- (i) Turn out, or permit to remain on the commons any cattle, sheep or other animals.
4. A person who in the exercise of any right of common or other right over the commons, shall dig or take turfs, sods, gravel, sand, clay, or other substance or shall cut, fell or take trees or underwood shall not:
- (a) Commit any unnecessary damage to the commons or the turf, trees, shrubs, brushwood, gorse, heather, ferns or other natural products thereon;
- (b) Do so on any part of any of these commons which is enclosed temporarily for the revival of turf, trees, shrubs or plants or set aside for games, or the parking of motor or other vehicles, if similar substances as aforesaid can conveniently be dug or taken, or cut, felled, or taken from some other part of the commons.
5. A person shall not carelessly or negligently injure or deface, or willfully, carelessly or negligently, remove any seat, shelter, pavilion, drinking fountain, fence, rubbish receptacle, or any works erected or maintained by the Council on the commons.
6. (a) A person shall not without lawful authority, place on the commons any show, exhibition, swing, roundabout, or other like thing.
- (b) Where the Council set apart any space on the Commons for the holding of a lawfully held fair, a person shall not place any show, exhibition, swing, roundabout or other like thing on any other part of the commons.
7. Where the Council temporarily enclose, or set apart any space on any of the commons for the purpose of games, or as a parking place for vehicles, a person shall not interfere with the proper use of that space for the purpose for which it is intended.
8. The charge made for the use of a parking place on the commons shall not exceed the appropriate charge set out in the following schedule :-
- | | |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Motor Bus or Motor Coach | 2s. 6d. |
| Motor Car | 1s. 0d. |
| Motor Cycle | 6d. |
9. A person shall not on the commons willfully obstruct, disturb, interrupt or annoy, any other person in the proper use of the commons, or hinder or obstruct any officer of the Council in the exercise of his powers or duties under the Scheme or under any of the foregoing bye-laws.
10. Every person who shall offend against any of the foregoing bye-laws, shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding two pounds.
11. It shall be lawful for any officer of the Council, after due warning, to remove from the commons any vehicle or animal drawn, driven or placed thereon in contravention of the Scheme, or any of the foregoing bye-laws, or to exclude from the commons any person who within his view commits, or whom he reasonably suspects of committing an offence against any such bye-laws, or against the Vagrancy Acts.

THE SEAL of the. RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL of HAMBLE DON was hereunto affixed at a Meeting of the Council held on the twenty-sixth day of February, 1953.



(Signed) J. W. DIXON, Chairman

(Signed) ROBIN J. GARLAND, Clerk.

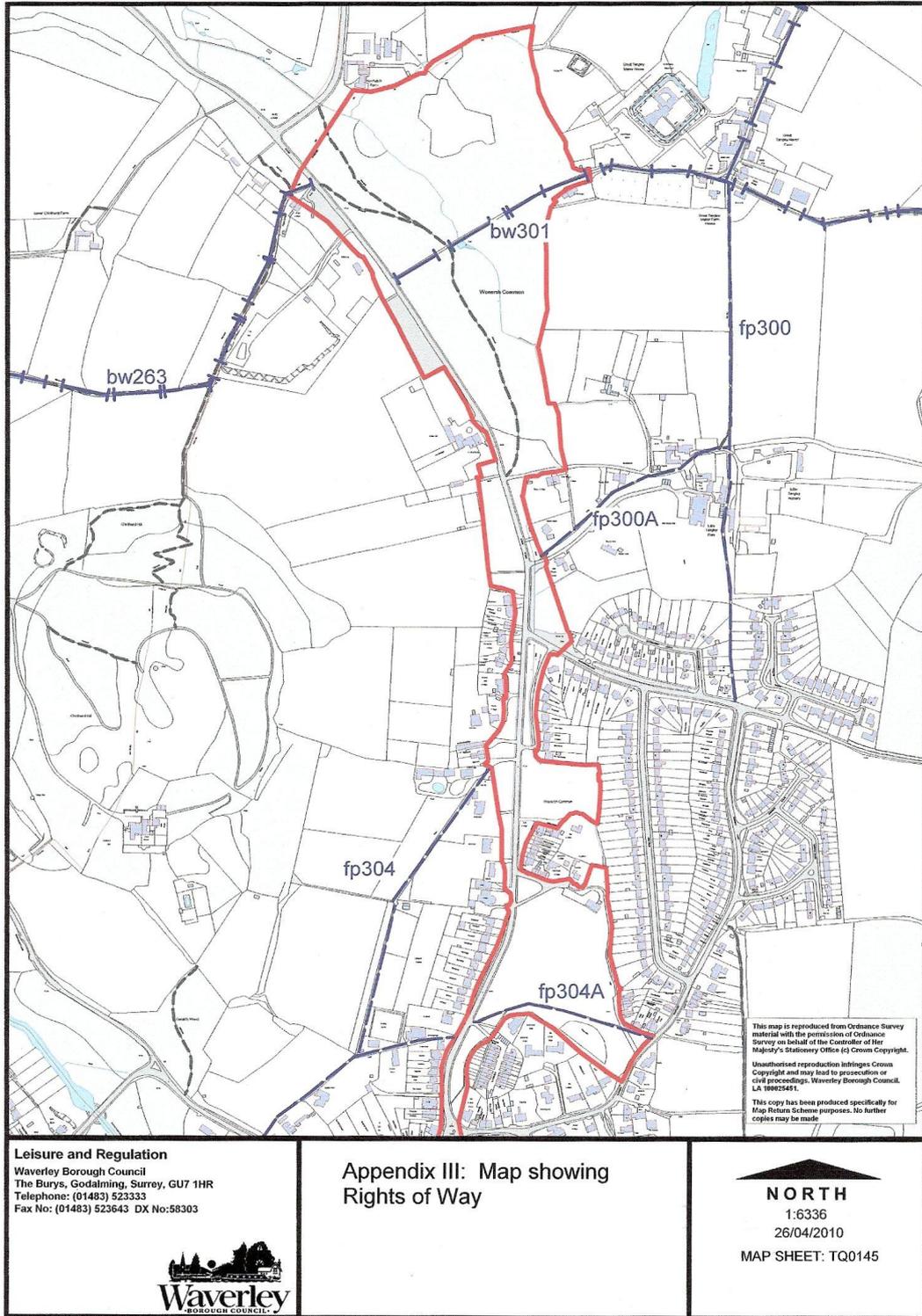
I hereby confirm the foregoing bye-laws and fix the date on which they are to come into operation as 1st July, 1953.

(Signed) DAVID MAXWELL FYFE
One of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State.

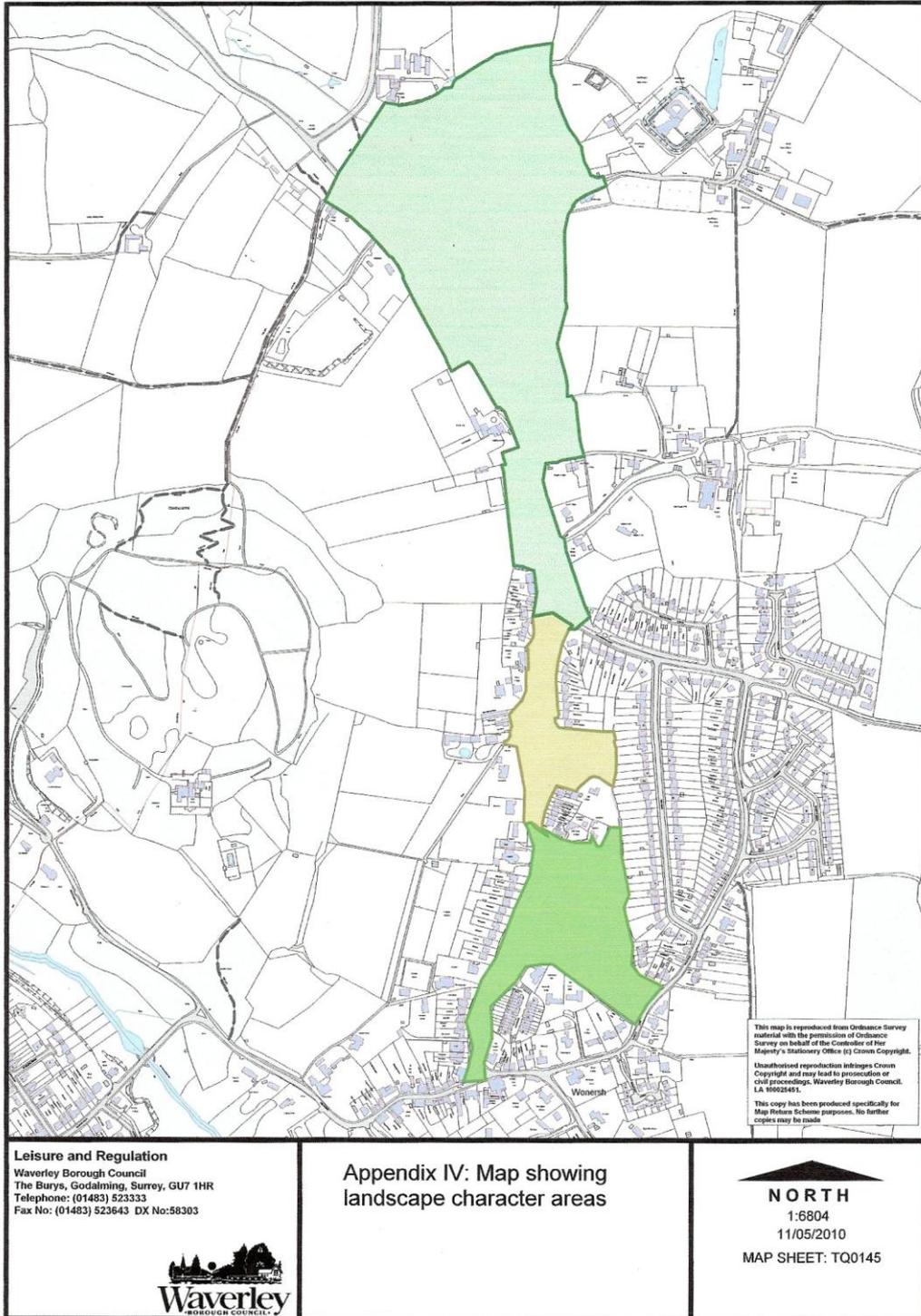
WHITEHALL
21st May, 1953.



Appendix III



Appendix IV



Appendix V

Guidelines on Access Tracks over Common Land

Some of the most scenic villages in Waverley have developed around the common land that was a vital resource for the villagers of the past. Today these commons and village greens are much valued open spaces for everyone.

Common land is steeped in history and legislation. Some of it might seem a bit quirky by modern standards but it has helped protect these areas for hundreds of years. Waverley Borough Council believes it is important to protect its commons for future generations and so actively manages and protects the common land it owns and manages.

Legal Aspects

It is an offence to drive across common land without the lawful authority of the landowner. To avoid breaking the law and in order to secure a legal right of way to a property a householder can apply to Waverley Borough Council or the owner of the common to regularise the access. Not having a legal access agreement or easement frequently holds up property sales. It is important to note that having an easement or license to cross the common does not entitle householders to park on the common or have any ownership claim over the common.

Access tracks can be intrusive and detract from the landscape and recreational value of the common. The following guidelines are applied by Waverley Borough Council to protect the rural nature of its commons. You must consult with the Countryside Section before carrying out any works on common land.

Guidelines for Access Track

- Access tracks should be no wider than 3m. Where the track joins an A or B road a bell mouth of up to 5m is permitted and you will also need to consult Surrey County Council Highways.
- Construction and maintenance of the track is the responsibility of the owner of the property. The surface must be maintained free from potholes and trip hazards.
- The track is for access only. Parking is to be within the property boundary and not on the common.
- The householder is responsible for surface drainage.
- Where access tracks cross ditches, streams or water courses the householders is responsible for the installation and replacement of damaged drainage pipes and ensuring they are of sufficiently diameter (at least 225mm) to allow the free flow of water. A pipe can easily be damaged by the passing of vehicles so it is important that the culvert is constructed to a high enough specification, the amount of water passing through a culvert should also be taken into account. Please contact the Countryside Ranger for advise before undertaking any works.
- Sealed surface materials such as tarmac and concrete are not permitted and where they have been installed without permission a surface dressing of tar and chip should be applied. As the commons are predominately in rural locations or Conservation Areas surfaces such as brick and block paving are not acceptable.
- Aggregate surfaces such as; hoggin-type gravel, graded crushed limestone and proprietary granular materials are permitted.
- Usually edging is not necessary. However, if it is considered to be necessary only timber ending can be used.



- Permission for new access tracks over the common land will not normally be granted. New developments should share existing access tracks.
- House names plates must be located on or within the property boundary.
- Lighting columns, plants and trees must not be put on the common
- Skips and building materials may only be stored on common land if there is no alternative within the property boundary and a license is required, in advance, from the Countryside Ranger

You will also need to apply to the Estates Officer for a way leave to permit the use of land owned by the Council for repairs or the laying any services to your property.

Estates Officer:

Ailsa Woodruff 01483 523231 or ailsa.woodruff@waverley.gov.uk

Any works to the common can only be undertaken with the prior written approval from the Countryside Ranger for your area:

Sarah Henderson - Cranleigh, Ewhurst, Wonersh, Bramley, Godalming. Contact 01483 423081 or sarah.henderson@waverley.gov.uk



Appendix VI

Guidelines for Temporary Signs on Waverley Common Land

If you want to place signs on Waverley common land you need to seek approval in advance. This is because the erection of signs requires landowner permission, is subject to by-laws and planning restrictions and we want to prevent a proliferation of unsightly signs spoiling the countryside.

The Countryside Ranger for your area can give permission for certain types of signs and advise on suitable locations, but only if they comply with the following guidelines:-

- Temporary notices or signs advertising local charitable or fundraising events, but not for commercial purposes
- The advertisement does not exceed 0.6 of a square metre
- Placed on the common not more than 28 days before the event
- Removed the day after the event
- Freestanding – not attached to a tree or structure
- At least 2 metres back from the highway. If a footpath is present this is considered part of the highway.
- Should not obstruct any sight lines

Other types of advertising or size of sign may require planning permission and you will need to check with Waverley Borough Council Planning Department (01483 523336).

Any unauthorised signs will be removed from the common. If you wish to reclaim them you will need collect them from the ranger's office.

Countryside Rangers:-

Sarah Henderson, 01483 423081 (Cranleigh, Ewhurst, Wonersh, Bramley, Godalming)

Ian Baldwin, 01483 423081 (Haslemere, Chiddingfold, Dunsfold, Alfold, Hambledon, Witley, Hascombe)

Fiona Haynes, 01252 792416 (Farnham, Tilford, Elstead, Thursley, Bealswood)

Steve Webster, 01252 792416 (Frensham Common)

