

The Tanyard Field, Henfield Five-Year Management Plan 2026 - 2030

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Executive Summary

Tanyard Field is an attractive, wildlife-rich open space in the centre of Henfield that is highly valued by the local community. There are no public rights of way across the site but an amenity area in the south has open access and there are occasional open days on the rest of the site.

The Tanyard Field is also of historic interest. From Tudor times until the mid-19th century it was a site where cattle hide was processed into leather. William Borrer, the famous Sussex botanist, was born within sight of the tanyard in the late 18th century. In more recent times it has been largely pastoral land maintained by livestock grazing and sometimes cut for hay.

Today the Tanyard has a mixture of ponds, grassland, hedgerow and scrub habitats that support a wide variety of flora and fauna. It is owned and managed by Horsham District Council in consultation with the Henfield Commons Joint Committee.

This management plan was commissioned by Horsham District Council to guide management of the Tanyard over the next five years from 2026 to 2030.

- Part 1 is an ecological assessment of the Tanyard which contains background information, some collated biological data and the results of a habitat survey carried out in 2025.
- Part 2 is the five-year management plan which examines options for management of the site and sets out recommendations to conserve and enhance its biodiversity for the next five years.
- A five-year action plan summarises the work needed with a timetable for implementation. The actual timing of some recommended actions may need to be flexible depending on external factors such as the resources available, weather and varying ground conditions.
- The appendix contains lists of the plants and animals recorded on the site during the 2025 survey and recent bird records supplied by Henfield Birdwatch and the site warden.

In summary the grassland should continue to be mown but the reintroduction of livestock grazing should be considered. Other work such as include hedgerow restoration, rotational scrub management and control of invasive species is recommended.

Future management should focus on keeping the different habitats in good ecological condition and enhancing biodiversity whilst also engaging the local community wherever possible in wildlife surveys and other activities.

Part 1. Ecological Assessment of the Tanyard

1.1 Background

Tanyard Field (“the Tanyard”) is a small site (1.2 ha/3 acres) in the centre of Henfield at grid reference TQ21301600. It is owned by Horsham District Council (HDC or “the council”) and is managed in partnership between the HDC Warden team, Henfield Commons Joint Committee (HCJC), the Henfield Conservation Volunteers (HCV) and Henfield Parish Council.

There is a small electricity sub-station in the south-eastern corner of the site to which UK Power Networks have a rights of access agreement with the council.

Historically, from Tudor times until 1844, it was the location of an old tanyard where cattle hides were turned into leather from Tudor times to 1844. A spring-fed pond in the south of the site would have had an important function during the tanning process.

The renowned Sussex botanist and lichenologist William Borrer (1781-1862) was born at Potwell, the large house in Cagefoot Lane immediately to the south of the site. Borrer lived in the town for most of his life at Barrow Hill. Although his house and its grounds in Barrow Hill have now been lost to development, Borrer cultivated more than 6,000 native and exotic plant species there and at least one of the garden escapes found at the Tanyard Field (Few-flowered Garlic) is believed to have originated in his Barrow Hill garden (SBRS 2018).

The only previous ecological survey of Tanyard Field was carried out by the Sussex Wildlife Trust in 1994 (Whitbread 1994) but since then only ad hoc biological records have been reported and site management has not followed a formal plan.

The purpose of this plan is to update the ecological assessment, identify nature conservation priorities and set out recommendations to guide site management over the next five years.

1.2 Existing Biological Records

The Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC) provided a data report of biological records for the area within a 500m radius of the Tanyard Field (reference SxBRC/24/650 dated 27/11/2024).

None of the records contained in the SxBRC data report are directly attributable to Tanyard Field and many are likely to relate to nearby Henfield Common, a well-known Local Wildlife Site that has been subject to a number of ecological surveys in the recent past.

The report does contain a large number of records of protected and designated moth species in the area between 2019 and 2024, most likely supplied by a local naturalist who runs a moth trap. Adult moths could certainly find an abundance of nectar-rich plants in the gardens that surround the Tanyard as well as in the field itself. There are also a wide variety of the larval foodplants of moths and butterflies present in the site.

Henfield Bird Watch and the HDC Warden responsible for site management generously supplied their records of bird species that have been observed within the Tanyard or flying overhead. These are listed in the appendix and include birds of garden, scrub and wetland habitats.

The results of the SxBRC data report give an indication of the type of protected, designated and declining fauna that may already be present in the Tanyard (but so far unrecorded) or which could potentially occur

there. This information helps to guide the management recommendations which are designed to create high quality habitat for such wildlife. The most relevant SxBRC records of species from within 500m of the Tanyard are:

- Common and Soprano bats (many records, most recently 2023).
- European Hedgehog (2021).
- Butterflies associated with grassland and scrub habitats; Brown Hairstreak (2011), Small Heath (2022) and Wall (2022).
- Breeding amphibians; Common Toad (2024), Palmate Newt (2002), Common Frog (2021) and Smooth Newt (1998).
- Widespread reptiles; Grass Snake (2022), Slow-worm (2018) and Common Lizard (2017).

The 2025 survey updated information on vascular plants but gaps remain in the wildlife data and these should be addressed as soon as possible. Having a baseline of information about the fauna and flora of the Tanyard will make it possible to monitor changes in its biodiversity over time and guide any necessary modifications to the management regime.

1.3 Recent Management

Grassland management is fundamental to the Tanyard Field which would once have been routinely grazed by cattle and sheep, as can be seen in old photographs on the site information board.

The 1994 survey states that it had been grazed in the past but in 1993 was cut for hay. It is possible that at times the field has been grazed with sheep since then, however, in recent years the grassland has simply been managed by late season cut and collect mowing.

A hay crop has sometimes been taken from the drier south and west parts of the field by a local contractor but access is difficult and in some years the wetter central and northern areas have remained uncut due to flooding and soft ground conditions.

Other recent management at the Tanyard includes:

- Clearance of dense Bramble and Blackthorn scrub.
- Pond creation and restoration.
- Hedge planting and laying.
- Grassland creation/enhancement on the eastern bank using wildflower seed including Yellow Rattle plant plugs and bulbs.
- Invasive non-native species control alongside garden boundaries.
- A floating island pre-planted with native wetland species was installed in the southern pond in summer 2025.
- The grassland within the fenced area in the south of the Tanyard is managed by the HDC amenity team by mowing up to 12 times each year, which maintains an extremely short sward.

1.4 Habitat Assessment

1.4.1 Methods & Constraints

The 2025 habitat assessment of the Tanyard was carried out by Kate Ryland of Dolphin Ecological Surveys during site visits on 7th March, 8th April and 11th June. It provides a baseline of data that can be added to and used to monitor changes over time.

During walkover surveys all vascular plants were recorded, habitats and features mapped and representative photographs taken. The results are presented as target notes (1.4.3) and are shown on Figure 1.

The list of vascular plants recorded is given in the appendix but will be subject to seasonal effects and recorder bias so should not be seen as comprehensive. Birds, insects and signs of mammals seen during the walkovers were noted but this does not constitute a systematic survey of fauna. In the report the common names of plants and animals are used, their scientific names can be found in the appendix.

1.4.2 Overview

In 1994 the Tanyard field was almost entirely grassland, apart from the eastern bank around the barn where there had been scrub clearance in the recent past, and was described as “unimproved marshy meadow” and “long-standing pasture” (Whitbread 1994). Some areas in the north had been affected by construction of housing and had re-vegetating disturbed ground.

More than 30 years later the Tanyard has developed more ecological complexity but the condition of some unimproved marshy grassland has deteriorated. Grassland is still the dominant vegetation but scrub is now more widespread and the character of the grassland has changed, largely as a result of livestock grazing being replaced by mowing. Trees and hedges have been planted, wildflower seed sown, an old pond restored and a new pond dug. The southern part of the Tanyard has been fenced off to create an accessible area for public amenity.

Scrub is most prominent in the north and east and while most areas are dominated by Blackthorn and Bramble others contain a wider range of woody species rich in flowers, fruit, seeds and nuts.

Mixed hedgerows along some of the boundaries enclose the Tanyard field and separate it from public footpaths. In the north is a ditch with Ransoms and old Hazel coppice stools on its banks, perhaps the relict of an old hedgebank that bordered the original Tanyard long before the surrounding houses were built. New hedges have been planted to create new habitat for wildlife and strengthen habitat connectivity.

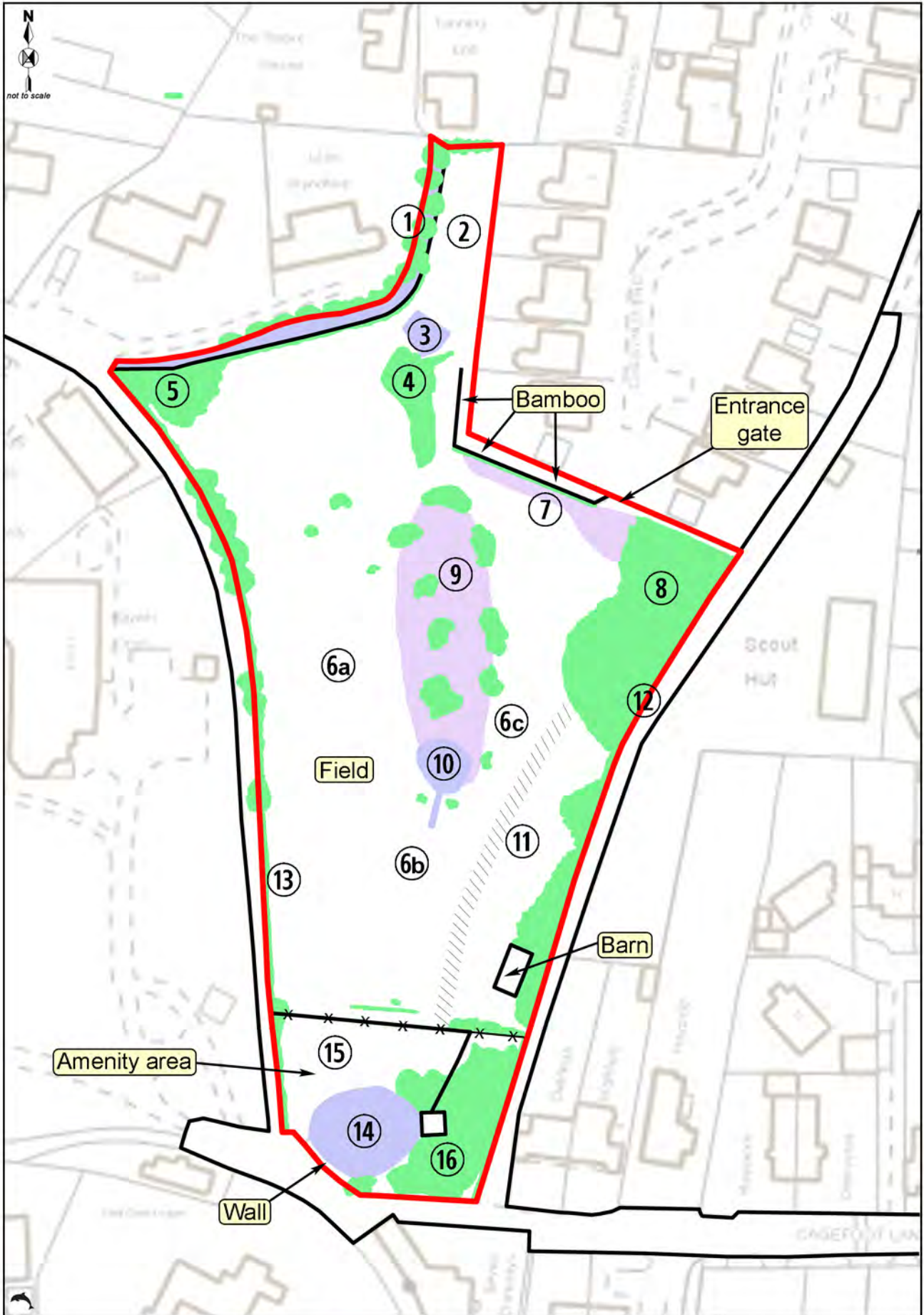
Water from a spring-fed pond in the south of the Tanyard is piped northwards into two further ponds and spills over into wet flushes and marshy grassland in the centre of the site.

Most of the mature trees occur in the south-east around the large southern pond, which was a feature of the old tanyard. A few older trees are present along the boundaries but most trees within the site are relatively young and have been planted in the wet flush north of the middle pond and in the north-eastern corner.

The ecological strengths of the Tanyard lie in its structurally varied and diverse vegetation with rich edge zones where different habitats meet (ecotones), all contained within a small area that is relatively undisturbed despite its urban location.

The Tanyard

Features & Target Note Locations



- Trees, scrub & hedges
- Ponds & ditches
- Flush

1.4.3 Target Notes

TN1. Boundary hedge and ditch.

Much of this mixed hedge is rooted in adjoining gardens and numerous trees overhang the ditch. Woody species include non-native cypress and Bay with Sycamore, Norway Maple, Field Maple, Holly and Hawthorn as well as some notably old, fruiting Hazel. The ditch holds water and has swathes of Ransoms on its banks with a small patch of the invasive non-native Montbretia in the north. Further west on this boundary there is a newly laid hedge on the inside of the ditch where dense stands of Pendulous Sedge occur on waterlogged ground. This edge zone grades into a larger area of scrub (see TN5).



Hedge overhanging the ditch

TN2. Northern arm.

This narrow strip of land between gardens shows signs of former ground disturbance and was cleared of scrub in winter 2024/4 and has a tall but patchy hedge of Holly and Hornbeam alongside a dilapidated fence in the north. A mixture of Bramble and tall herb vegetation includes Great Willowherb, Creeping Thistle, Nettle, Pendulous Sedge, Hedge Bindweed and Common Cleavers as well as damp flushes with Floating Sweet-grass and rush. A potential area for a native orchard (see 2.5.3) with stacks of rotting logs that could support saproxylic invertebrates and small rubble piles that may be utilised by hibernating reptiles.



View of the northern arm

TN3. Northern pond.

A small pond, partially shaded by willows and Hazel that has dense Bramble and Nettle on its eastern banks with abundant Yellow Flag and Pendulous Sedge along its margins. The water appears quite turbid and shallow but is replenished via the springs and shallow ditches to the south.



View of the northern pond

TN4. Scrub.

Parts of this small but species-rich area of scrub and tall herbs to the south of the pond were cleared in winter 2024/5, creating structurally complex and sheltered habitat. Blackthorn dominates but Alder Buckthorn, Hawthorn and Bramble are also present along with tussocky grasses, rushes and tall herbs including Meadowsweet and Creeping Thistle.



Diverse area of scrub and tall herbs

TN5. Scrub.

An area of dense scrub in the north-western corner of the site with well developed edge vegetation of Bramble, grasses and flowering plants. It appears to have developed around planted woody species including Hazel, Ash, Holly, Oak, Dogwood and Rowan with prolific natural regeneration of Bramble and Oak saplings.

Between the scrub and the laid boundary hedge to the west there is a narrow, mown strip with a concentration of garden escapes (Geraniums and Few-flowered Garlic). Some garden waste has been dumped in this edge zone.



Valuable edge habitat (ecotone) between grassland and scrub

Grassland areas (TN6a-6c).

Much of the grassland across the Tanyard field is quite marshy, showing the influence of springs and flushes. Stands of Sharp-flowered Rush, Soft Rush and Floating Sweet-grass with scattered Cuckoo-flower mark the wettest swards, some of which may be inundated for prolonged periods at times of high rainfall.



Rushy grassland near the middle pond

Fifteen different grass species were recorded within the site including fine-leaved species such as Red Fescue, Sweet Vernal-grass and Creeping Bent. However, coarse, tussocky grasses including Tall Fescue and False Oat-grass also occur in some abundance, especially in and around the central flush (see TN9) and along scrub edge zones. The presence of these bulky species often indicates insufficient or sub-optimal grassland management as does Hogweed, which was noted in places on drier soils. This nutrient-demanding plant is a good source of nectar and pollen for insects but usually occurs in grassland where management does not remove enough of the vegetation each year and dead vegetation accumulates into a thatch.

TN6a.

The gentle east-facing slopes in the western part of Tanyard field support quite flowery, damp swards of varied heights that are rich in common herbaceous species for example Meadow Vetchling, Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil, Common Sorrel, Lesser Celandine and Meadow Buttercup along with stands of Hairy Sedge. Smooth Tare is prominent on drier ground near the western boundary hedge. This part of the grassland has been cut for hay in recent years but the sward appears under-managed with signs that coarse grasses are becoming more widespread and Bramble encroaching from the western boundary.



Gentle slopes in the west of the field showing damp flushes in the centre

TN6b.

To the south of the middle pond there are still fragments of the largely unimproved marshy grassland vegetation that was recorded in 1994 but it is clear that these are being supplanted by taller, coarser swards containing Tall Fescue, Cock's-foot and False Oat-grass.



Grassland in the south of the field in early summer showing tussocky grasses

TN6c.

To the east of the middle pond is an area of wet, locally rush-dominated grassland near the pond banks that grades upwards into a drier tussocky sward on the long, west-facing bank alongside the eastern hedgerow (see TN11).



Varied swards between the middle pond and the eastern boundary

TN7. Flush and laid hedge.

There are young, newly laid hedges dominated by Hawthorn and Blackthorn along the northern boundary on either side of the entrance gate. A wet flush in a shallow, overgrown ditch lies parallel to the hedge and contains a mixture of tall, coarse grasses with Sharp-flowered Rush, Hairy Sedge and Floating Sweet-grass. This wetland vegetation extends into damp grassland near the entrance gate.

Within a narrow, mown strip of vegetation between the hedge and the garden boundaries of Chestnut End Bamboo is encroaching from a garden as well as several piles of grass cuttings.



Newly laid hedge with ditch/flush on one side and a mown strip next to housing on the other

TN8. Scrub.

The north-eastern corner of the field contains dense Blackthorn and Bramble scrub along with scattered Osier, Ash, Hazel and Silver Birch (trees and shrubs that have been planted since 1994). The disturbed ground below has a field layer dominated by Ivy, Nettle and coarse grasses.

Blackthorn has spread into surrounding grassland in the past but recent management has knocked back the scrub edge. One over-stood willow stool has collapsed and others may follow unless any growth on these trees causing instability is either pollarded or coppiced.



Scrub in the north-east corner with collapsed willow stool

TN9 Central flush.

Alongside a shallow outlet ditch from the middle pond, some parts of the the central flush have stands of wetland herbs such as Great Willowherb, Purple Loosestrife and Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil in combination with tussocky, species-poor areas dominated by False Oat-grass.



An open part of the central flush

In 1994 the central flush was recorded as marshy grassland fed by springs and seepage lines with a diverse wetland flora. Since then planted trees and natural regeneration have changed the character of this area. Alder, Oak, Field Maple, Ash, willows and Black Poplar are present in this formerly open area although the Ash and Field Maple in particular are not thriving in the wet conditions. Oak saplings are frequent whilst

young Cherry Laurel and Holly have self-sown below the canopy of an Oak. Deep leaf litter, especially under the Oak, favours patches of shaded, mossy ground with little grass growth. Livestock grazing and selective tree management would help to restore the diverse wetland character of this area.



Trees in the central flush

TN10. Middle pond.

This pond is largely unshaded with only scattered young willows, Alder and Black Poplar on its banks. There is abundant Yellow Water-lily and Common Duckweed in the pond whilst the diverse marginal vegetation includes Bulrush, Purple Loosestrife, Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil, Soft Rush, Great Willowherb, Water Mint, Ragged Robin and occasional Bog Stitchwort. An area of tall vegetation on its northern bank containing Bulrush, Great Willowherb, Nettle and Bramble was cleared in winter 2024/5.



The middle pond

Water is fed into the middle pond from the southern pond (see TN14) via underground pipework, a culvert and a short inlet ditch which supports various wetland plants such as Water-cress, Bulrush, Water Figwort and Soft Rush. The culvert may be at least partially blocked and could benefit from being restored or repaired.



Inlet ditch between the culvert and the middle pond

TN11. Eastern bank.

In 1994 the raised bank that runs along much of the eastern edge of the field was described as being heavily disturbed with a ruderal flora. A stand of Ground-elder noted on the bank is likely to be a relict of that open ground vegetation and since then dense Bramble had developed across much of the upper plateau adjoining the eastern boundary hedge. More recently grassy areas of the bank have been enhanced using wildflower seed and plant plugs. Fritillary bulbs were planted along the edge of the bank and in 2024/5 some of the Bramble scrub was cut back.



Fritillaries and Primrose on the eastern bank in spring

The remaining dense Bramble alongside the eastern hedge (see TN12) has a wavy edge zone alongside open vegetation that comprises coarse, but locally herb-rich, swards with species derived from both natural regeneration and introduced sources. Yellow Rattle is locally frequent along with Ox-eye Daisy, Common Knapweed, Meadow Vetchling, Common Ragwort, Wild Marjoram, Hedge Bedstraw, Bird's-foot-trefoil, Red Clover, Ribwort Plantain and Germander Speedwell.



Flowery sward on the eastern bank

The varied species and structural diversity of this area has created valuable sheltered, sunny habitat for fauna that is rich in sources of food and provides good opportunities to nest, shelter and escape predators. However, on-going and consistent management will be needed to stop the encroaching coarse plants which include Bramble False Oat-grass and Hogweed from over-running the areas of low-growing flowery vegetation that have developed across the bank. Livestock grazing would be particularly beneficial to help maintain the wildflower-rich bank vegetation.



Bramble and coarse grasses on the eastern bank

The old barn at the southern end of the bank is a useful feature for wildlife at the Tanyard. The tiled roof and timber clad walls provide potential roosting sites for bats and the brick walls may be used as nest sites by specialist bees.



The old barn

Near the barn is veteran Red Oak that has excellent exposed heartwood and other deadwood features of potential value to saproxylic insects.



Veteran Red Oak with deadwood

TN12. Eastern hedge.

The eastern boundary of the Tanyard has a dilapidated fence sometimes obscured by scrub and a mixed hedgerow that runs alongside a narrow footpath with a power line overhead. Native trees and shrubs make up much of the hedgerow including Ash, Field Maple, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Holly, Spindle, Dogwood, Guelder-rose and Hazel but there are also non-native Bay, Privet and Cherry Laurel in places. Ivy is very frequent at ground level along with Ground-elder and Geranium in the south.

The footpath is particularly narrow and shaded in the north where the Tanyard boundary is composed of two parallel rows of woody species on either side of a ditch. There is a good opportunity for management to enhance this hedgerow and footpath (see 2.4.5).



A narrow section of the footpath alongside the eastern boundary hedge

TN13. Western hedge.

The western boundary also runs alongside a public footpath and comprises a fence and a slightly sparse mixed hedgerow with several large Ash trees. The hedge has been trimmed and laid in the past but there are some gaps now where Bramble has been cut back.



The northern end of the western hedgerow

This boundary was recorded simply as a fence in the 1994 survey, which suggests the hedge is of recent origin but it may replace an older boundary feature. There are Elm suckers present in the south of the hedge and it contains a variety of native species including Spindle, Hawthorn, Hazel, Field Maple and Bramble along with occasional Bay, Cherry Laurel and Privet. Few-flowered Garlic is present along most of its length along with patches of non-native Geraniums.

TN14. Southern pond.

This large, spring-fed pond has a brick and stone retaining wall alongside Cagefoot Lane vegetated in places with mosses, lichens, Ivy, Hart’s-tongue fern and Ivy-leaved Toadflax. The eastern side of the pond is partly shaded by trees and shrubs with a very old Hazel coppice stool on the north-eastern bank over a dense stand of Ramsons and Bluebell. The small Cherry Laurel shrub that is growing in the shade of this lovely old Hazel should be removed.



Old Hazel on the bank of the southern pond

The pond banks are quite steep and eroded in places and the pond itself is murky with little sign of aquatic vegetation apart from Common Duckweed and rafts of White Water-lily, however, in summer 2025 the warden installed a floating island pre-planted with native wetland plants which brings greater diversity to the pond.

Patches of marginal vegetation on the western bank include Floating Sweet-grass, Water-cress, Marsh Marigold, Yellow Flag, Great Willowherb, Soft Rush, Bittersweet and Pendulous Sedge.



View of the southern pond

The water is likely to be nutrient enriched in this pond as visitors feed the resident Mallard and Moorhen with inappropriate foodstuff, such as the slices of white bread that were seen floating on the water’s surface during site visits.



Slices of bread in the southern pond

TN15. Amenity grassland.

There is open public access to the area around the southern pond and the grassland here is mown frequently to maintain a very short sward which extends right to the edges of the pond. There are a few worn patches characterised by Common Daisy and sparse vegetation whilst some areas have been re-sown with Perennial Rye-grass. Nevertheless there are also fragments of more diverse sward where fine-leaved grasses and wildflowers persist, despite being constantly mown too short to flower or set seed. Marsh Thistle, Common Knapweed, Ox-eye Daisy, clovers, Creeping Buttercup, Common Ragwort, Bluebell, Ramsons and Hairy Sedge were all noted here with the greatest concentrations of wildflowers and fine-leaved grasses on the pond banks, in the east and on the edges of the amenity area.



View of the amenity grassland

TN16. Sub-station area.

The fenced area around an electricity sub-station in the south-east corner contains a tangled mixture of trees and shrubs which helps to discourage public access. Ash, Willow, Holly, Sycamore, Hornbeam and Lime occur over dense Bramble. The ground flora is generally coarse with a mixture of tussocky grasses, Cow Parsley, Nettle, Hogweed and Hedge Woundwort although both native and hybrid Bluebells are also present. A few sizeable Cherry Laurel shrubs present shade out native species and should be removed.

The deadwood in this small, scrubby copse is a valuable resource for wildlife and a heap of grass cuttings may be used by some fauna as well as helping to deter access by people. However, depositing cut grass here is not ideal as it will suppress ground vegetation and adds nutrients to the soil as it rots down.



Cherry Laurel in the sub-station area

Part 2. Tanyard Field Management Plan

2.1 Management Priorities

The Tanyard Field is a small site that is rich in wildlife and much loved by the local community. There is open access to the southern amenity section and it is visible from public rights of way and neighbouring houses but the restricted public access to most of the site means that the wildlife is largely undisturbed. Opportunities for community engagement are presented via occasional open day events and volunteer work with the warden.

The overall aim of site management for wildlife should be to sustain high levels of biodiversity within species-rich and structurally complex vegetation. Success will depend on the site managers having the resources to be able to adapt their actions in response to different conditions and outcomes.

The Tanyard has great potential to be a site that is botanically diverse and rich in resources for a range of fauna at their different life stages and throughout the year. Key to achieving this are:

- A prolonged flowering season to provide pollen and nectar, diverse larval foodplants and over-wintering habitat for pollinating insects.
- An abundance of invertebrate prey and safe areas to evade predators and for hibernating hedgehogs, amphibians and reptiles.
- Safe nest, roost and perch sites for birds along with plentiful sources of seed and invertebrate prey for adult birds and their young.
- Edge habitat rich in invertebrate prey and safe roosting sites for bats.
- Suitable habitat to support populations of small mammals such as voles that will also benefit their predators including owls and raptors.
- Unpolluted open water in ponds at different successional stages for a diversity of aquatic invertebrates and breeding amphibians.

The priority at the Tanyard is to develop a sustainable management regime that maintains all the different habitats present in optimum condition over the long-term so that they provide abundant resources for wildlife, in particular for any protected or declining species likely to be present.

As a highly visible site within the town it is vital that the Tanyard continues to be valued and supported by local people. The open access amenity area allows visitors to see and enjoy the whole site whilst maintaining a significant amount of undisturbed habitat for wildlife. Continued consultation with the local community over any changes to management is essential.

The council's warden team already follow best practice management principles on their sites, which also apply at the Tanyard. These include no use of chemicals unless essential for control of damaging invasive plant species, minimising bonfires and avoiding the use of barbed wire fencing wherever possible.

Existing data is limited but suggests that the Tanyard has the potential to be a valuable site for a range of wildlife from bats and birds to small mammals, pollinating insects, amphibians and reptiles. Collecting more information about the wildlife that inhabits or visits the site should also be a priority.

2.2 Grassland Management - Mowing vs Livestock Grazing

In recent years a local contractor has taken a hay crop in parts of the Tanyard field but the topography and ground conditions mean that some areas can't be managed in this way. Any grassland that is not mown for hay has to be cut and collected by the warden to prevent scrub encroaching into open ground (this excludes the amenity area which is managed separately). In wet years the ground can be too soft or waterlogged for a tractor to cross the site without causing damage, so occasionally it is not possible to take a hay crop at all.

Cutting hay at the Tanyard removes the year's grass growth and helps to keep scrub at bay, but it is not the only, or necessarily the best grassland management option. Livestock grazing on sites that contain a mixture of grassland and scrub habitats is usually the most successful and sustainable way to maintain a balance of vegetation types, which in turn promotes biodiversity.

Traditionally the damp, locally marshy grassland at Tanyard field would have been managed largely by grazing. When this type of semi-natural pasture is routinely mown rather than grazed it gradually becomes less species-rich and may lose some of its valuable features. Ideally mowing should be supplemented with, or even replaced by, livestock grazing.

One option would be to follow a hay cut with periods of aftermath and spring grazing. This helps to remove late season growth and knock back the bulky grasses that gradually spread and out-compete wildflowers.

Cattle-grazed swards generally have a much less uniform structure than mown grassland and contain a greater variety of microhabitats from grass tussocks to hoof-prints. The different niches created by livestock grazing promote greater diversity of invertebrates and other fauna whilst small areas of bare ground in grazed swards allow the seeds of wildflowers to germinate.

Sheep have grazed the Tanyard in the past and whilst any livestock grazing would be preferable to none, sheep tend to produce a more uniform sward, may not graze well on wet ground well and in an urban setting may be more vulnerable to disturbance from dogs passing by on the footpaths.

Restoring cattle grazing to the Tanyard field would be an excellent way to manage it for biodiversity, either in combination with taking a hay crop or to replace mowing. The council should aspire towards this form of management.

The council have their own livestock and a great deal of experience with conservation grazing on other sites so are well aware of the ecological and sustainability benefits that using livestock can deliver. These include a reduced need to dispose of hay and grass cuttings off-site, less staff time spent on manual vegetation management and less reliance on outside contractors.

Seasonal grazing of the field with a small number of cattle would be particularly effective to manage the wetter grassland areas, such as the central flush and in the east of the site. In these areas ground conditions make mowing difficult and there has been an accumulation of dead thatch and associated spread of coarse, tussocky grasses. The exact details of a suitable grazing regime would depend on the breed and age of available livestock as well as seasonal ground conditions.

Conservation grazing projects are often very popular with visitors but the warden team would need to undertake considerable community engagement and preparation before any livestock could be re-introduced to this urban site. There is a risk that people may want to interact with or feed the livestock and also off-lead dogs can be a problem, particularly with sheep. However, with sufficient local support and

residents who are willing to report any problems to the council, there is no reason why traditional livestock grazing should not be returned to the Tanyard field.

2.3 Management Infrastructure

At present the only vehicle access into the Tanyard field is from Chestnut End via the northern gate, which leads directly into an area of grassland prone to waterlogging. Access here could be improved by laying a small area of Type 1 hardstanding to create a solid base, just large enough for a vehicle and small livestock trailer. However, any hardstanding should not extend further than necessary into the wet grassland area and certainly no more than 6m from the gate.

In wet years cutting hay can be hampered by a lack of vehicle access to drier parts of the Tanyard. In the short term the council would like to create a new access route for vehicles into the south of the field by widening the gate onto Cagefoot Lane. This would require a small loss of shrubs (<2m) from the end of the western hedgerow. Vehicle access from the south would allow mowing for hay on the drier western slopes even in wet years when a tractor crossing the low-lying ground could cause compaction and sward damage. It would also be very useful if livestock grazing is introduced in future.

Whilst hedges and scrub around the site boundaries are under active management, there is a good opportunity to review the state of the boundary fencing and ensure the site can be secured against unauthorised access as well as being made safe for livestock.

If grazing is restored to the Tanyard a zoning approach would be advisable so that livestock can be excluded from certain features or vegetation if necessary. For example, light cattle grazing around the middle and northern ponds would be very effective to create varied bankside and marginal vegetation, provided livestock could be excluded from parts of the banks. Alternatively the ponds could be completely fenced and cattle provided with water from a bowser.

Permanent perimeter fencing could be supplemented with internal temporary electric fencing for zoning or the use of a no-fence collar system could be considered. This is an increasingly popular option which allow very precise control of where livestock graze (once they have been trained with the collars) and has an added benefit of tracking how animals move around the site and spend most of their time.

2.4 Management Recommendations

2.4.1 Grassland

Grassy vegetation dominates the Tanyard and includes fragments of marshy and flower-rich swards. It supports a wide range of plants and provides important habitat for fauna from invertebrates to small mammals, reptiles and amphibians. Grassland management should aim to sustain and enhance these diverse and structurally complex swards whilst restricting the spread of coarse grasses and scrub so that at least two thirds of the site remains as open grassland.

Continuing annual cut and collect mowing in the field will maintain open grassland but the sward condition may gradually deteriorate as coarse species spread at the expense of more diverse vegetation.

Disposing of hay and grass cuttings can be problematic, especially if the hay is unsuitable for livestock. Some cut material has been stacked in habitat piles near the sub-station but this area has limited capacity and off-site disposal should be considered if possible.

Ideally not all areas of grassland should be cut at the same time so that fauna can move into undisturbed areas during management. Creating a tall, grassy ecotone between grassland and scrub by rotational cutting provides valuable refuge areas as well as over-wintering habitat for invertebrates.

Mowing remains the best option for grassland in the amenity area although there is an opportunity to improve the wildlife value of this part of the site through less intensive management.

Restoration of livestock grazing would be the ideal way to manage the Tanyard field in future (see 2.2).

Actions

Amenity area

- Reduce the frequency of cuts and increase the mower cutting height to approximately 4cm. This will maintain a reasonably short but more drought-resilient sward where low-growing wildflowers are able to flourish.
- Further reduce mowing in grassy margins of 1-2m around the southern pond and along the edges of the amenity area. Borders of taller wildflowers and grasses will develop and provide safe corridors for wildlife in this zone. Cut and collect this taller edge vegetation in late autumn.

Tanyard Field

- Continue to take a hay cut across as much as possible of the field each year in the short term.
- Explore the potential for conservation grazing with council-owned livestock as the primary method of grassland management in future.
- Cut areas of grassland which can't be mown for hay (such as the wetter parts of the field) late in the season (from August onwards) using hand scythes, brush cutters or a powered scythe/bar mower. Rake and collect cuttings for off-site disposal if possible or stack as habitat piles if necessary.
- Mow strips of vegetation alongside garden boundaries in the north of the field as needed to keep fences clear and restrict the spread of invasive species.
- Retain grassy margins of 1-2m wide alongside hedges and scrub that are cut and collected in sections on rotation in alternate years.

2.4.2 Scrub & Trees

Scrub is a very important habitat for wildlife that provides an abundant sources of food, shelter and safe nest, roost and perch sites for a range of fauna. Bramble and Blackthorn are widespread but both will rapidly spread into grassland without active management. No more than one third of the Tanyard field should be allowed to support scrub and woody vegetation.

Cutting scallops and bays into the scrub edges increases the length of valuable interface between grassland and scrub. These sheltered, sunny, warm edge zones provide abundant food sources and are hot spots for pollinating insects, reptiles and small mammals. There is a good example of this type of rich edge zone in the north-west corner of the field.

Dense Blackthorn and Bramble have already been a priority for manual scrub management but rotational cutting will continue to be needed in future to maintain a varied age profile. Grazing with cattle can reduce the need for manual scrub management but there will always some need for periodic cutting to rejuvenate

older scrub. Extensive scrub removal along the eastern boundary and near the barn has opened up the boundary and created an opportunity for a major restoration of the hedgerow along that side of the site.

In some places tree saplings (especially oaks) are becoming established near to areas of scrub. If these are not controlled by either routine cutting or grazing they should be manually removed to prevent further loss of open grassland in the Tanyard field. Several Ash trees on the site boundaries are vulnerable to Ash dieback disease and are routinely monitored by the council's tree officer.

Trees previously planted in parts of the Tanyard would now benefit from management. Willow and Ash within scrub in the north-eastern corner should be pollarded before they collapse. Trees in the central flush should be thinned to encourage the return of open wetland vegetation (see 2.4.4). Black Poplars, Alder and willows are appropriate wetland species for the flush and could be retained as valuable habitat for birds, invertebrates and other fauna. They would also provide good shade for livestock if grazing is reintroduced in future. Some other species less suitable for this area, especially Oak, are not thriving and their slow-rotting leaf litter inhibits field layer vegetation.

The fenced sub-station compound in the south-eastern corner of the site contains a mixture of scrub, tall herbs and mature trees with a pile of old hay bales. This is a largely self-contained area that requires little active management and should be treated as a minimal intervention zone where dense woody growth discourages public access. The only exception is to remove the potentially invasive Cherry Laurel that grows within the compound.

Wherever possible woody debris should either be removed or stacked as habitat piles where it will not damage any areas of diverse ground flora. Bonfires should always be kept to a minimum and any unavoidable burning must be restricted to a designated fire site.

Actions

- Cut up to 25m² of dense Bramble and scrub each year on rotation to create wavy-edged patches of structurally complex, species-rich woody habitat in the corners and along edges of the site.
- Pollard Osier and Ash trees in the north-eastern corner at intervals. Branches should be cut and stacked within the surrounding scrub as habitat piles.
- Pollard the large willows within the central flush over a period of years to create and maintain a balance of light and shade under the trees for the benefit of ground vegetation.
- Remove Oak saplings from the central flush using a tree-popper and re-plant elsewhere in more appropriate places on council-owned land if possible.
- Ring bark or remove non-wetland trees from the central flush to create standing deadwood and open the canopy.
- Continue with minimal intervention in the sub-station area apart from removing Cherry Laurel.

2.4.3 Ponds

The three Tanyard ponds are likely to support a variety of fauna and flora but there are currently few records to support this assumption. Breeding amphibians, invertebrates such as dragonflies, beetles and molluscs along with wetland birds and the terrestrial fauna that visit the ponds to drink will all benefit from good management of these important site features.

Management should focus on maintaining all three ponds and their water supply in good condition with diverse vegetation and areas of both shaded and unshaded water. A degree of judgement is needed to decide if or when aquatic, marginal and bankside vegetation is in need of management.

The recently restored middle pond may only need routine cut and collect management of bank vegetation for the duration of this plan. The northern pond has also been restored but remains partially shaded with quite shallow, turbid water. It may be necessary to open up the southern bank a little further to increase light levels whilst still retaining some shade.

The southern pond within the amenity area is vulnerable to human disturbance and adverse impacts from litter, feeding the ducks and non-native fauna (such as fish and terrapins). There are some patches of semi-aquatic vegetation around this pond but it would benefit both ecologically and aesthetically from a more diverse and continuous fringe of marginal vegetation.

Creating a taller, more wildlife-friendly grassy margin around the banks of the southern pond and extending the fringe of marginal plants would not only benefit wildlife but also discourage people from getting too close to the water's edge.

Actions

- Consider additional coppicing around the northern pond.
- Cut and collect sections of the most dense vegetation around the northern and middle pond margins in autumn to maintain diverse vegetation structure.
- Leave at least 50% of the bankside vegetation of the middle pond uncut over the winter months.
- Maintain a fringe of vegetation around the southern pond that is only cut and collected in autumn.
- Install pre-planted coir rolls around bare edges of the southern pond to create a wider margin of emergent and flowering wetland vegetation. Appropriate species include Purple Loosestrife, Yellow Loosestrife, Reed Canary-grass, Water Mint, Gipsywort and Water Forget-me-not.
- Use signage and community engagement to discourage visitors from feeding the ducks or putting unwanted aquatic pets in the southern pond.
- Monitor all ponds for the presence of invasive non-native aquatic fauna and flora and take action quickly to remove any INNS detected (see 2.4.6).

2.4.4 Flushes & Drains

Water flows northwards through the Tanyard, from the spring-fed southern pond and via drains and culverts into the ditches, ponds and flushes beyond. Small seepages on the western sides of the field also flow into the central flush.

The condition and functioning of culverts and drains on either side of the middle pond are integral to the hydrology of the Tanyard. The ponds and wetland habitats can retain water even during dry summers and act to slow the flow of excess surface run-off when conditions are wet. This ability of the site to hold excess water may have benefits for properties to the north of the Tanyard.

The central flush lies alongside a small outflow ditch from the middle pond. It was formerly an open area of wet grassland but now contains planted and self-sown woody species including native Black Poplar, willows, Oak and Cherry Laurel along with many Oak saplings. As they grow larger these trees will gradually dry out

the flush and shade out much of its remaining wet grassland and tall herb field layer, allowing it to be replaced by more shade-tolerant plants such as Bramble and Nettle.

Actions

- Investigate whether the drains and culverts are clear and working effectively to sustain habitats in the Tanyard. The first step should be to commission a CCTV survey of the drains. The results of this will determine whether any further action is needed, for example clearing any blockages.
- Reduce the cover of woody species in the central flush (see 2.4.2).

2.4.5 Hedgerows & Boundaries

Hedgerows around the Tanyard provide important sources of food, shelter and habitat connectivity for wildlife. New planting, recent hedge laying and scrub clearance have already rejuvenated parts of the boundary hedges but they will need periodic rotational management to maximise their value to wildlife and to function as robust boundary features.

Hedge trimming should always take place in the winter months when the ground is firm or frozen, ideally in January/February when birds and mammals have consumed most of the hedgerow fruit. Incremental cutting is recommended for all the restored hedges to promote dense growth but using this method means that hedges gradually becomes wider and taller so will eventually need to be re-laid.

The northern site boundary is particularly sensitive and requires careful monitoring and management. This is because it adjoins garden fences and because it is the area most affected by incursions of invasive garden species (see 2.4.6).

The eastern field boundary is a complicated mixture of scrub and a gappy hedgerow alongside a footpath. It contains potentially invasive Bay and Cherry Laurel shrubs with a ditch and closely planted, parallel lines of woody species in its northern section. Parts have been opened up by scrub clearance and there is an excellent opportunity to undertake a hedgerow restoration project to enhance the habitat for wildlife and greatly improve the adjoining public footpath which is currently narrow and partially shaded with poor sight-lines.

The project should focus on making the footpath wider, more accessible and safer for pedestrians by increasing light levels and improving sight-lines. The local Scouts own the overgrown hedge on the opposite side of the footpath and should be encouraged to work in partnership with the council to improve the footpath by gapping up and laying their own hedgerow.

Actions

- Assess and renew fencing along all the boundary hedges to keep it dog-proof and make the site safe for any future livestock grazing.
- Gap up and lay the western hedge to create a dense, stock-proof boundary that can subsequently be managed by incremental cutting. There are several Ash trees in this boundary which are regularly monitored by the council for their safety and Ash dieback status.
- Trim the entire outside faces and tops of both the boundary hedges that adjoin public rights of way annually in the winter months to keep paths clear and unshaded.

- In winter trim the inner faces of boundary hedges in sections on a two- or three-year rotation (depending on growth rates) to create good quality edge habitat within the field.
- Newly laid hedges along the northern edge of Tanyard field and the short length of new hedge near the amenity area will not need any management in the short-term but will eventually need incremental cutting to maintain them at an appropriate height and promote dense growth.
- Restore and enhance the eastern boundary. Remove the parallel planting outside the boundary ditch in the north to rationalise the line of this hedgerow. Remove potentially invasive shrubs and gap up the remaining hedge with mixed native shrubs along the boundary of the Tanyard field.
- Lay the resultant eastern boundary hedgerow if it has sufficient growth and renew/replace its stock-proof fencing. Manage by rotational and incremental cutting to maintain a more manageable size and avoid any future problems with the overhead power-line.
- Engage with the local Scouts for partnership working on the footpath/hedgerow restoration project.

2.4.6 Non-native Species

Invasive non-native species (INNS) are a threat to biodiversity because they can displace native plants and animals as well as damaging whole habitats. Practising good biosecurity measures helps to avoid spreading INNS between sites. Machinery and tools should be cleaned thoroughly to remove plant fragments and particular care is needed when livestock that graze near INNS are moved between sites.

Removing, or at least controlling the spread, of the most invasive plant species that could threaten on-site biodiversity is a high priority at the Tanyard. At present these are; Broad-leaved Bamboo, Cherry Laurel, Bay and Montbretia. Use of herbicide to control INNS should be avoided wherever possible due to its potential impacts on non-target species, however, it may be necessary as a last resort for some species.

The top priority for INNS control is the Broad-leaved Bamboo which is spreading by rhizomes from a garden in Chestnut End into the north of the Tanyard. Cherry Laurel and Bay shrubs in the eastern hedgerow, sub-station area and elsewhere should also be controlled. A small patch of Montbretia in the northern arm has the potential to spread further so should be removed while it is manageable.

The Tanyard is an urban site and there needs to be a pragmatic approach towards management of the non-native species that are present. For example, Few-flowered Garlic has some local significance and has long been known from this area but doesn't appear to have spread widely beyond it. The veteran Red Oak is a non-native species but its heart-rot and deadwood have potential value for saproxylic invertebrates (specialists of dead and decaying wood). Some plants of garden origin such as geraniums and Stinking Iris are not particularly invasive but attract pollinating insects. If any of the garden escapes show signs of spreading to excess they should be manually removed but if not these plants probably pose little or no threat to overall site biodiversity and are a low priority for action.

There is a fairly large stand of Ground-elder in the east of the field between cleared scrub and the sown, flowery bank. This is most likely a relict of vegetation on ground described in 1994 as "*heavily disturbed... consisting largely of weedy species, the site of extensive scrub control in the past*". Ground-elder flowers are very attractive to insects but it can be invasive and difficult to control on open ground. In the short term the patch of this species should be monitored before any attempt is made to control it because it could naturally decrease if the grassland sward closes under consistent management.

Monitoring the location and extent of non-native species is vital to measure the success of control efforts and detect new, potentially problematic species. The ponds are particularly vulnerable to INNS which can arrive by animal vectors or through human activity/deliberate introductions. If harmful invasive fauna are found in the ponds, for example terrapins or goldfish which prey on native wildlife, then these too should be targeted for removal/eradication.

The key areas to monitor for new invasive plant species are; in the north around garden boundaries, the southern pond, along the western boundary where there is a concentration of garden escapes such as Geraniums, Comfrey and Few-flowered Garlic, the sub-station area and the eastern hedgerow. Engaging with the owners of neighbouring properties is crucial to ensure they do not dump garden plants or other waste in the Tanyard.

Actions

- Monitor non-native species in the Tanyard by recording any new arrivals, mapping the extent of known problem species and taking photographs after control work for later comparison.
- Use combined techniques on the stands of bamboo for the best chance of effective long-term control. Physically remove rhizomes where this is not too destructive of native vegetation, keeping in mind that even tiny fragments can grow into new plants. This will almost certainly need to be combined with herbicide treatment. Above-ground stands of bamboo should be cut back in winter and new growth treated with glyphosate in spring. Repeated treatments will probably be needed to deal with continual re-invasion from the established plants in the neighbouring garden.
- Cherry Laurel shrubs that are still present in the eastern hedgerow and the sub-station area should be cut back and re-growth cut repeatedly. The cut stumps could be treated with glyphosate if this is necessary and possible without affecting other vegetation. Bay shrubs that occur in the hedgerows should be treated in the same way.
- The Montbretia on the stream bank in the northern tip of the Tanyard should be dug out completely and the area monitored for each year for regrowth from any corms left in the soil.

2.4.7 Management Recommendations Summary

HABITAT	ACTIONS
Grassland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce frequency of mowing and raise cutting height in the amenity area to maintain a sward of approximately 4cm. • Leave 1-2m margins uncut around the amenity area until autumn. • In the short-term continue the annual hay cut over most of Tanyard field. • Explore the feasibility of livestock grazing either in combination with a hay cut or as the main method of grassland management. • Cut and collect any other areas of grassland including pond banks. • Create 1-2m wide edge zones on other boundaries and next to scrub that are cut in sections on rotation. • Mow strips alongside garden fences in the north as necessary.
Scrub & Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut no more than 25m² of scrub each year on rotation and create scalloped edge zones. Stack or remove cut material. • Pollard trees in the northeastern scrub at intervals. Stack branches. • Pollard the large willows in the central flush at intervals. • Remove Oak saplings from the central flush. Re-plant on other council sites if possible. • Ring-bark or remove non-wetland trees from the central flush. • Minimal intervention in the sub-station area of scrub but remove Cherry Laurel
Ponds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider more coppicing around the northern pond in future. • Cut and collect up to 50% of dense marginal vegetation around the northern and middle ponds in autumn. • Install coir rolls pre-planted with native marginal plants around the southern pond. • Discourage visitors from feeding ducks or dumping fish/terrapins in the southern pond. • Maintain a 1m wide unmown strip around the banks of the southern pond that is cut and collected in late autumn. • Monitor ponds for new invasive species.
Flushes & Drains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use CCTV to inspect culverts and drains. Take remedial action if necessary.

HABITAT	ACTIONS
Hedgerows & Boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trim the outer faces and tops of hedges alongside footpaths annually. • Trim inner faces of hedges alongside footpaths in sections on a 2-3 year rotation. • Manage newly laid hedges and restored boundary hedges on rotation with incremental cutting. • Restore and enhance the eastern hedge and footpath, in partnership with the Scouts if possible. • Lay intact sections of the eastern hedge if possible. Assess the condition of boundary fences and renew where necessary. • Gap up and lay the western boundary hedge. • Continue to monitor hedgerow Ash trees for disease.
Non-native Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor non-native species (especially key areas in the north, west and the southern pond). Record new species, map extent of existing species and take photographs. • Control invasive bamboo using herbicide and physical removal. • Control Cherry Laurel and Bay shrubs by cutting with follow-up herbicide treatment if necessary. • Physically remove Montbretia.

2.5 Other Recommendations

2.5.1 Survey & Monitoring

Carrying out baseline biological surveys and monitoring the changes in the flora and fauna at the Tanyard are important because the results will help the council to make well-informed management decisions. Some of the recommended survey and monitoring activities have cost implications but others could be carried out by local naturalists, volunteers and community groups.

Fixed point photos

Taking photographs of the Tanyard at regular intervals from the same, fixed point, looking in the same direction will build up a visual record of how the site changes over time. Ideally photos should be repeated on approximately the same date either monthly or at least every season.

Aerial photos

Taking aerial photography or accessing open source satellite imagery can be very useful to help estimate the extent of scrub vs grassland across the site. This information should be used to ensure that the target ratio of approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ scrub to $\frac{2}{3}$ grassland is being met.

Monitoring non-native species

Keeping a working map of the location of non-native plant species that is regularly combined with reference photos of the number of plants/extent of the vegetation is very important to ensure any invasive species are identified and dealt with promptly.

Breeding birds

There are numerous records of birds observed at the Tanyard and members of Henfield Birdwatch could be invited to survey the site more systematically during the breeding season to help inform management decisions.

Hedgehogs

There is suitable habitat for Hedgehogs on the site and they have been recorded in the vicinity. A warden-led survey to find out whether this charismatic mammal is present at the Tanyard could be undertaken using footprint tunnels, perhaps involving members of the community or local school children.

Butterflies and moths

Butterflies and moths are probably the most easily recognised insect pollinators and there may be local naturalists willing to carry out surveys on the Tanyard for them.

A search for Brown Hairstreak eggs on Blackthorn scrub in the winter months is recommended to establish whether this butterfly is breeding on the site.

Reptiles

A reptile survey could be carried out by installing cover objects (1m² of either roofing felt or corrugated tin) in edge habitats and checking under them at intervals during spring and summer. Not only can the widespread reptiles (Slow-worm, Grass Snake and Common Lizard) be found basking or sheltering under or on these objects but other fauna, especially small mammals such as voles and mice, may be observed.

Breeding amphibians

All three ponds are likely to support breeding amphibians and searching for toad and frog spawn in the early spring is recommended.

The legally protected Great Crested Newt is widespread in Sussex and all the ponds should be checked for their presence using commercial eDNA analysis of water samples.

Bats

There is no current information about bats on the Tanyard. The warden or a local wildlife guide could lead a bat activity survey using hand-held detectors as a community event.

2.5.2 Site Designation

The council should consider putting Tanyard Field forward as a candidate Local Wildlife Site (LWS) in recognition of its value for nature conservation within the town along as well as its cultural history and the opportunities it offers the local community to enjoy and encounter wildlife.

Designation as a LWS ensures that a site receives due recognition in the planning and development process. More information about the Sussex LWS initiative can be found at <https://lws-sussex.org.uk/>

2.5.3 Native Orchard

In winter 2024/5 the warden and volunteers cut back dense scrub in the overgrown northern arm of the Tanyard, leaving a secluded and sheltered area, bordered by the gardens of Little Wyndham, Tannery End and Chestnut End and overlooked by some neighbouring properties.

Shared boundaries make this part of the Tanyard especially vulnerable to incursions of garden plants, (invasive Bamboo and Montbretia already occur here). Conversely some vigorous and competitive native plants such as Bramble, Creeping Thistle, Nettle and Hedge Bindweed have probably spread from the site into the gardens. A strip of ground alongside garden fences is mown periodically in an attempt to minimise this two way encroachment.

Expectations of what can be achieved on the disturbed and enriched soils that currently support scrub and coarse vegetation must be realistic, but this area could support more diverse habitat with much richer sources of food and shelter to attract a range of insects and birds. Some valuable features for wildlife are already present, particularly the ditch and hedgerow to the west and old log piles. Additional logs could be dug into the soil vertically as a “Stag Beetle stumpery”.

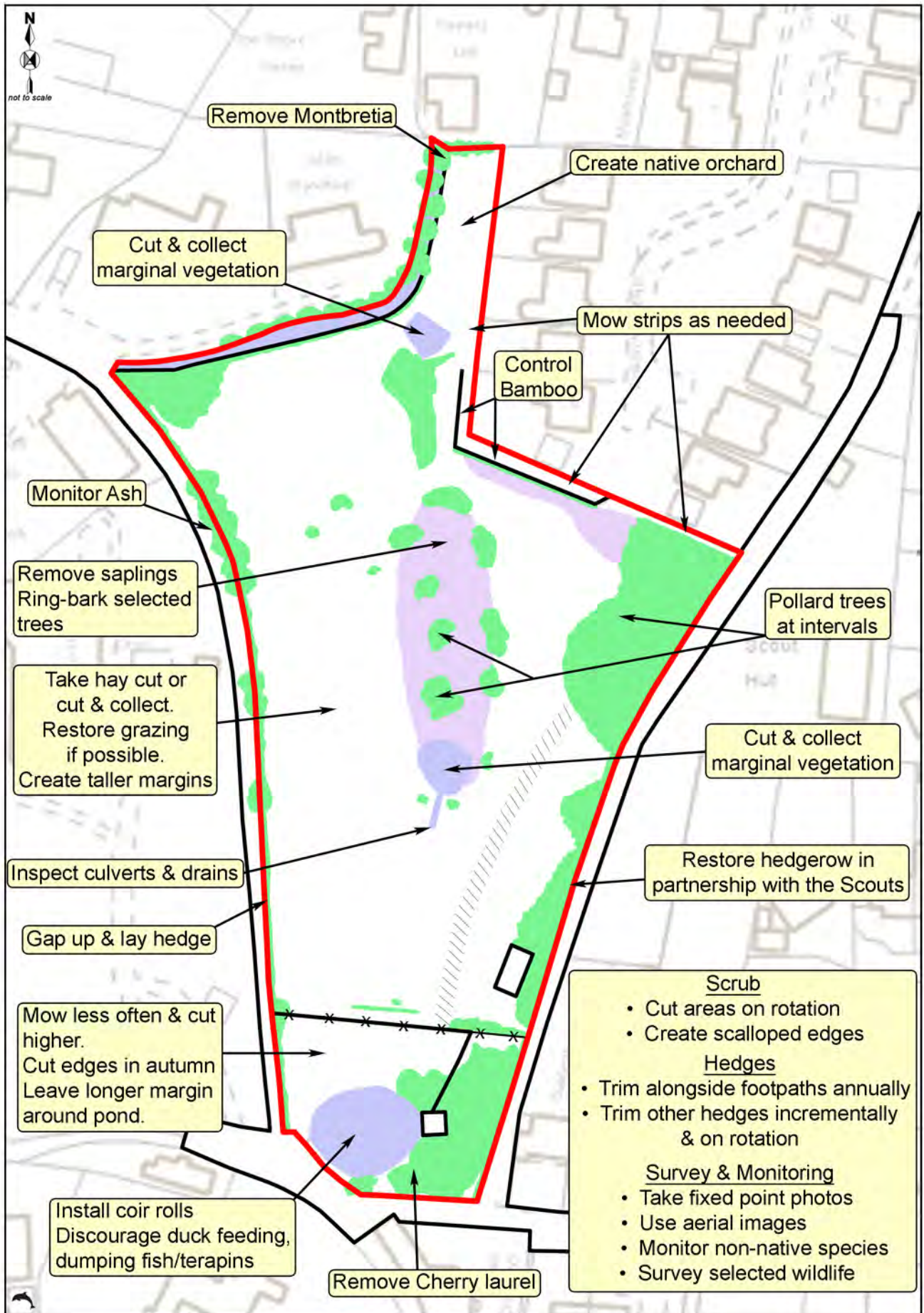
The warden team is considering a project to enhance the northern arm by creating a “native orchard” of scattered native trees and shrubs over a wildflower-rich field layer. Regular management to maintain this type of attractive and wildlife-rich habitat would also enable efficient monitoring of potentially invasive species. Liaison with the immediate neighbours will be important to keep those most directly affected informed, and ideally engaged, with the process.

Thorough ground preparation would be needed in selected areas before planting the “orchard” and it may be necessary to scrape away a layer of topsoil where there are dense Bramble and Bindweed roots. Green hay taken from the southern part of the Tanyard could be spread on the prepared ground to boost grass and wildflower seeds to the field layer.

A selection of native trees and shrubs that are rich in blossom and fruit, for example Hawthorn, Rowan, Guelder-rose, Crab Apple, Spindle, Bullace, Honeysuckle and Dog Rose could be planted. There are several mature Hazel stools present already along the western boundary which produce an abundance of nuts but at present these valuable old shrubs are heavily shaded by an overgrown cypress hedge. Cutting back overhanging branches to the property boundary would be greatly increase light reaching the native trees and shrubs along the ditch edge.

The area would need to be managed by regular cutting (with brush-cutters or scythes) and raking to suppress and weaken the inevitable re-growth of Bramble whilst helping a grassy field layer to establish. For the first few years cutting at least 2-3 times per year will be needed but the ultimate aim should be annual cut and collect management. A new habitat of this kind would take time and regular management to develop and mature so a commitment to consistent management in the long-term is essential.

The Tanyard Recommendations



FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN 2026 to 2030

The actual timing of management may depend on external factors and the resources available. This plan gives a guide to optimum timing.

MANAGEMENT TASK	AREA	TIMING	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Grassland							
Reduce frequency & height of mowing in open areas	Amenity area	All year	√	√	√	√	√
Cut 1-2m tall sward margins & pond banks	Amenity area	Autumn	√	√	√	√	√
Take a hay cut	Tanyard field	June-July	√	√	√	√	√
Consider restoring livestock grazing	Tanyard field	ASAP	√				
Cut & collect grassland areas not included in hay cut	Tanyard field	September - October	√	√	√	√	√
Cut 1-2m margins on boundaries & scrub in sections	Tanyard field	September-October	√	√	√	√	√
Mow strips alongside garden fences	North of Tanyard field	As needed	√	√	√	√	√
Scrub & Trees							
Cut up to 25m ² scrub & create scalloped edge zones	Tanyard field	January-February	√	√	√	√	√
Pollard trees at intervals	North-eastern corner	November - February	√		√		√
Pollard large willows at intervals	Central flush	November - February		√		√	
Remove Oak saplings	Central flush	November - February	√				
Ring-bark or remove non-wetland trees	Central flush	November - February		√	√		
Remove Cherry Laurel	Sub-station area	November - February	√	√			
Ponds							
Coppice shrubs on southern bank if needed	Northern pond	November - February			√		√
Cut & collect up to 50% of bankside vegetation	Northern & middle ponds	October - November	√	√	√	√	√
Install pre-planted coir rolls	Southern pond	Spring	√				
Discourage duck feeding & dumping unwanted fish	Southern pond		√	√	√	√	√

MANAGEMENT TASK	AREA	TIMING	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Flushes & Drains							
Inspect culverts & drains. Repair if needed	North & south of middle pond	ASAP	√				
Hedgerows & Boundaries							
Assess & renew boundary fences	All	ASAP	√				
Gap up and lay hedge	Western boundary	November - February	√		√		
Monitor Ash for disease	All	Ongoing	√	√	√	√	√
Trim outer faces & tops of hedges along footpaths	Eastern & western boundaries	January - February	√	√	√	√	√
Trim inner faces of hedges in sections on rotation	Eastern & western boundaries	January - February	√	√	√	√	√
Incremental cutting on rotation	New & recently laid hedges	January - February		√		√	
Hedgerow restoration & footpath enhancement	Eastern boundary	November - February	√	√			
Non-native Species							
Record, monitor, map & photograph non-native species	All		√	√	√	√	√
Control Bamboo	North of Tanyard field	Winter & spring	√	√	√	√	√
Control Cherry Laurel & Bay	Sub-station, amenity area & eastern boundary	Winter	√		√		√
Control Montbretia	Northern arm	Summer	√	√	√		
Other Actions							
Set up and repeat fixed point photo monitoring	All	Ideally monthly	√	√	√	√	√
Use aerial images to monitor habitat extent	All	Annually	√	√	√	√	√
Baseline surveys with volunteers or contractors	All	As appropriate	√	√	√	√	√
Put forward as candidate LWS	All			√			
Community engagement & design for a native orchard	Northern arm	Spring	√				
Review management & prepare new five-year plan	All						√

Appendix

Vascular Plant List

Records from surveys on 8/4/2025 and 11/6/2025

Abundance estimated on the DAFOR scale: D = Dominant, A = Abundant, F= Frequent, O= Occasional, R= Rare, L = Locally

Scientific Name	Common Name	Abundance	Comments
GRASSES, RUSHES & SEDGES			
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	Creeping Bent	A	
<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	Meadow Foxtail	F	
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet Vernal-grass	FLA	
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False Oat-grass	A	
<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i>	Soft-brome	O	
<i>Carex hirta</i>	Hairy Sedge	F	
<i>Carex pendula</i>	Pendulous Sedge	OLF	
<i>Carex sp.</i>	Sedge	R	
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot	F	
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red Fescue	OLF	
<i>Glyceria fluitans</i>	Floating Sweet-grass	OLF	
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire Fog	A	
<i>Juncus acutiflorus</i>	Sharp-flowered Rush	F	
<i>Juncus articulatus</i>	Jointed Rush	O	
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft Rush	OLF	
<i>Juncus inflexus</i>	Hard Rush	O	
<i>Lolium multiflorum</i>	Italian Rye-grass	O	
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass	F	
<i>Phleum pratense</i>	Timothy	O	
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough Meadow-grass	F	
<i>Pseudosasa japonica</i>	Arrow Bamboo	LA	Garden origin
<i>Schedonorus arundinaceus</i>	Tall Fescue	FLA	
<i>Schedonorus pratensis</i>	Meadow Fescue	R	
FERNS			
<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i>	Hart's-tongue	R	
FORBS & WOODY PLANTS			
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field Maple	R	
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore	R	
<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>	Ground-elder	LA	Garden origin

Scientific Name	Common Name	Abundance	Comments
<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>	Agrimony	R	
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Garlic Mustard	LF	
<i>Allium paradoxum</i>	Few-flowered Garlic	LF	Garden origin
<i>Allium ursinum</i>	Ramsons	LF	
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley	R	
<i>Arum maculatum</i>	Lords-and-ladies	O	
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy	O	
<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver Birch	R	Planted
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	Marsh-marigold	R	Probably planted
<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	Hedge Bindweed	OLA	
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	Cuckoo-flower	O	
<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Hornbeam	LF	Planted
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common Knapweed	LF	Probably planted/from seed
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common Mouse-ear	O	
<i>Chelidonium majus</i>	Greater Celandine	R	
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle	OLF	
<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	Marsh Thistle	LO	
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Dogwood	O	Planted
<i>Corylus avellanus</i>	Hazel	OLF	
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	FLA	Planted?
<i>Crococsmia x crocosmiiflora</i>	Montbretia	R	Garden origin
<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>	Ivy-leaved Toadflax	LO	
<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	Great Willowherb	OLF	
<i>Ervum tetraspermum</i>	Smooth Tare	F	
<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	Spindle	O	Planted
<i>Ficaria verna</i>	Lesser Celandine	LA	
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	Meadowsweet	O	
<i>Frangula alnus</i>	Alder Buckthorn	R	Planted
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash	O	
<i>Fritillaria meleagris</i>	Fritillary	LO	Planted
<i>Galium album</i>	Hedge Bedstraw	LF	
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers	OLF	
<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	Cut-leaved Crane's-bill	O	
<i>Geranium endressi</i>	French Crane's-bill	R	Garden origin
<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dove's-foot Crane's-bill	LF	
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb Robert	LF	
<i>Geranium x oxonianum</i>	Druce's Crane's-bill	LA	Garden origin

Scientific Name	Common Name	Abundance	Comments
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood Avens	OLF	
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground-ivy	OLF	
<i>Hedera helix s.l.</i>	Ivy	LA	
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed	F	
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Bluebell	R	
<i>Hyacinthoides x massartiana</i>	Hybrid Bluebell	O	Garden origin
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	O	
<i>Iris foetidissima</i>	Stinking Iris	R	Garden origin
<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	Yellow Iris	O	Possibly planted
<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>	Common Ragwort	O	
<i>Lamium album</i>	White Dead-nettle	OLF	
<i>Lapsana communis</i>	Nipplewort	O	
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow Vetchling	FLA	
<i>Laurus nobilis</i>	Bay	LF	Non-native
<i>Lemna minor</i>	Common Duckweed	LA	
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	Ox-eye Daisy	LF	
<i>Ligustrum ovalifolium</i>	Garden Privet	O	Planted?
<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	Wild Privet	O	Planted
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Honeysuckle	O	
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Common Bird's-foot-trefoil	O	
<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil	F	
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	Purple-loosestrife	LF	
<i>Malus sp.</i>	Apple	R	Ornamental variety
<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	Water Mint	OLF	
<i>Myosotis sylvatica</i>	Wood Forget-me-not	O	
<i>Narcissus sp.</i>	Daffodil	R	Garden origin/planted
<i>Nuphar lutea</i>	Yellow Water-lily	LA	Possibly planted
<i>Nymphaea alba</i>	White Water-lily	LA	Planted
<i>Origanum vulgare</i>	Wild Marjoram	R	Planted/from seed?
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain	OLF	
<i>Populus nigra ssp. Betulifolia</i>	Black Poplar	R	Planted
<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Primrose	O	
<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	Cherry Laurel	O	INNS
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	FLA	
<i>Prunus sp.</i>	Plum	LO	
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate Oak	O	
<i>Quercus rubra</i>	Red Oak	R	Non-native

Scientific Name	Common Name	Abundance	Comments
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup	OLF	
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup	F	
<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	Yellow Rattle	LA	From seed
<i>Rorippa agg.</i>	Water-cress	LF	Probably planted
<i>Rosa agg.</i>	Rose	R	
<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble	FLA	
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel	OLF	
<i>Rumex conglomeratus</i>	Clustered Dock	O	
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Curled Dock	OLF	
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock	O	
<i>Salix alba</i>	White Willow	R	Planted
<i>Salix viminalis</i>	Osier	LF	Planted
<i>Scrophularia auriculata</i>	Water Figwort	R	
<i>Scrophularia nodosa</i>	Common Figwort	O	
<i>Silene flos-cuculi</i>	Ragged Robin	R	
<i>Sonchus asper</i>	Prickly Sow-thistle	O	
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Rowan	R	Planted
<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	Hedge Woundwort	O	
<i>Stellaria alsine</i>	Bog Stitchwort	R	
<i>Symphytum x hidcotense</i>	Hidcote Comfrey	R	Garden origin
<i>Taraxacum officinale agg.</i>	Dandelion	OLA	
<i>Taxus baccata</i>	Yew	O	
<i>Tilia x europaea</i>	Lime	R	
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover	R	
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover	LF	
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	Bulrush	LA	
<i>Ulmus procera</i>	English Elm	LF	Suckers in hedgerow
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle	OLA	
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Germander Speedwell	O	
<i>Veronica hederifolia</i>	Ivy-leaved Speedwell	OLF	
<i>Veronica serpyllifolia</i>	Thyme-leaved Speedwell	OLF	
<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Guelder-rose	LO	Planted
<i>Vicia sativa</i>	Common Vetch	O	
TOTAL NUMBER OF SPECIES		134	

Fauna List

Sources of data: KR = Kate Ryland, MA = Malin Andersson, HB = supplied by Henfield Birdwatch

Records of recent observations not the results of systematic surveys.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Source
INVERTEBRATES			
Large Red Damselfly	<i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>	08/04/25	KR
Orange-tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>	08/04/25	KR
Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>	07/03/25	KR
Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>	11/06/25	KR
Peacock	<i>Aglais io</i>	08/04/25	KR
Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>	07/03/25	KR
BIRDS			
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	08/04/25	KR
Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	2024/2025	MA
Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	13/07/22	HB
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	2024/2025	MA
Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	03/12/10	HB
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	2024/2025	MA
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	08/04/25	KR
Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	03/02/10	HB
Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	09/05/19	HB
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	2024/2025	MA
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	2024/2025	MA
Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	2024/2025	MA
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	2024/2025	MA
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	2024/2025	MA
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	08/04/25	KR
House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	2024/2025	MA
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	10/01/08	HB
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	08/04/25	KR
Common Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	16/05/13	HB
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	08/04/25	KR
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	08/04/25	KR
Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	28/02/23	HB
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	08/04/25	KR
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	2024/2025	MA
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	08/04/25	KR

Common Name	Scientific Name	Date	Source
Common Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>	25/04/11	HB
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	2024/2025	MA
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	2024/2025	MA
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	11/06/25	KR
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	18/11/22	HB
Green Woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	16/02/21	HB
Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	03/08/12	HB
Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>	28/11/23	HB
MAMMALS			
Mole	<i>Talpa europaea</i>	08/04/25	KR
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	07/03/25	KR

References

Sussex Botanical Recording Society 2018. *The Flora of Sussex*. Pisces Publications

Whitbread, A. 1994. *An ecological survey of Tanyard Field, Henfield*. Sussex Wildlife Trust