Leckhampton Hill & Charlton Kings Common

Cherished landscape feature and recreational area for many of the town's residents and visitors. Owned by Cheltenham Borough Council and protected under the CRoW Act 2000. Leckhampton Hill (CL171) 72 acres & Charlton Kings Comm. (CL172) 75.6 acres.

Location: Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common lie to the south and south east of Cheltenham. Parking is available at Daisybank Road off Leckhampton Road and at Hartley Lane near the hill top.

Site: Areas on Leckhampton Hill have been designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest [SSSI] due to the biological interest of the unimproved calcareous grassland and for its geological exposures. Historical features on the hill include an Iron Age hillfort and long barrow. Old tramways criss-cross the hill from the days of limestone quarrying and the remains of kilns and quarries are still very much in evidence.

Wildlife: The hill supports a wealth of wildlife including small mammals, foxes, stoats, badgers, rabbits, reptiles, butterflies (species including the Duke of Burgundy, Dark Green Fritillary, and Pearl Bordered Fritillary) and extensive birdlife – Buzzards and Kestrels are regularly seen and a pair of red kites was reported Summer 2004 by a local paraglider. The hill is also home to a great array of wild flowers including many varieties of orchid – among others, the Early Purple, Common Spotted, Musk, Butterfly, Fly and Bee orchids.

Management plan

The council wishes to maintain the cherished landscapes and the important biological, geophysical and historical interests on Leckhampton Hill, including Charlton Kings Common and the Daisy Bank Fields. To achieve this goal, the Council commissioned a new management plan in 2002 which will guide the future management of the hill.

The Leckhampton Hill management plan is now available for members of the public to view.

Conservation workparties
The Friends of Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common have regular conservation work parties on the second Thursday and fourth Sunday of every month. These are attended by the Council’s Community Rangers, and volunteers carry out varied work on the hill in line with the management plan. Meet at the Daisy Bank Road car park at 9.30am. For more information please contact the Community Rangers on 01242 250019.

Guided Walks
The community rangers run a series of guided walks on Leckhampton Hill, and at other sites around town, throughout the year. Click here for more details.

Rural geology trail
The Gloucestershire Geoconservation Trust have compiled a trail leaflet for Leckhampton Hill guiding you through the geological features in a 3 mile walk. For more information or a copy of the leaflet (priced £1.95) please contact the Gloucestershire Geoconservation Trust on 01452 864438.

Email: info@glosgeotrust.org.uk
Outstanding natural beauty

Situated on the edge of the escarpment, within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty most of these 67 hectares are Registered Common Land. Owing to its nationally important geology and grassland, much of the site is protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. You are welcome to enjoy its ‘wild’ natural environment, history and spectacular views.

The rocks exposed in the quarries are a 70 metre thick section of Jurassic limestone which extends along the Cotswold escarpment. They are important nationally for the fossils they contain and the evidence of the past conditions and processes which formed them. The rocks are formed of compressed sediment laid down at the bottom of a shallow sea some 170 - 175 million years ago.

Cotswold unimproved limestone grassland with its many associated plants and animals has been created over hundreds of years by grazing. After the grazing ceased, scrub and woodland developed, smothering areas of grassland and obscuring views. Restoration with a regime of scrub management, hay cutting and cattle grazing will help to increase the wildflowers, such as Common Rock Rose, Wild Thyme, Autumn Gentian and several species of Orchid. The grassland includes many plants that are scarce at local, county and national level.

Amazing diverse habitats

The site supports a large variety of insects with a total of 33 butterfly species recorded, including Marbled White, Dark Green Fritillary, Chalk-hill Blue and the uncommon Duke of Burgundy. There are many moth species and in most summers the strange green light of Glow-worms can be seen after dark. Large Roman Snails are very noticeable in warm damp weather.

Many mammals and reptiles can be found here and they use different habitats according to the way they feed and the shelter they need. Wood Mice, Field Voles, Grey Squirrels, Rabbits and Roe and Muntjac Deer feed on plants in the area. Whilst Carnivores include Foxes, Shrews, Hedgehogs, Moles, Bats and Badgers. Reptiles such as Slow Worms, Common Lizards and Adders can be found on the open hillsides.

The area provides amazingly diverse habitats that support a wide range of bird species. Summer visitors include Chiffchaffs, Willow Warblers, Grasshopper Warblers and Tree Pipits. Some of the all year round residents are Yellowhammers, Bullfinches, Linnets, Goldcrests and both Green and Great Spotted Woodpeckers. Flocks of Redwings and Fieldfares are present in winter. Birds of prey include Buzzard, Sparrowhawk and Kestrel.
Threats to the Future of Pastoral Commons

The following are threats that mainly apply to our lowland ‘town’ commons.

- Neglected ‘un-owned’ (s9) unmanaged land – abandoned and turning to scrub
- Isolation and separation of land by high-speed (dangerous) highways
- Degenerating responsibility of visiting users not adhering to the ‘Countryside Code’
- Unleashed dogs troubling livestock
- The aging level of commoners who may discontinue management of grazing
- Younger generation does not show interest in the cultural history of local land
- Anti-social behaviour leading to the removal of livestock from the commons.

Antisocial Behaviour on Common Lands

Open access resulting from the CRoW Act 2000 appears, in some cases, to have encouraged increases in vandalism. In the main these are the actions of bored irresponsible teenagers with little else to do with their time.

Livestock, swans and wildfowl are deliberately stoned and hit by sticks. Gross examples have recently come to my attention at Sudbury Common Lands in Suffolk, including ‘cattle tipping’ where youths are challenged (by gripping two legs) to throw the animals over while being photographed on mobile phone cameras.

Apart from the excesses of litter generated, including dangerous objects to grazing stock, fires are lit and structures and wildlife habitats are damaged to provide fuel.

At Charlton Kings Common water tanks have been spiked, water flow valves turned off or rigged to overflow. Structures for pounding and fencing-in livestock are regularly damaged.

It may be that in some cases where fence wire has been cut and or posts removed, that these are the actions of misguided protesters who are protesting their assumed right to roam anywhere over open spaces.

With no thought for the livestock these actions endanger the future of grazing animals and may lead to their owners removing them from unguarded commons. These problems are mainly occurring in town commons but in situations out of site to the general wider public.

The behaviour of a mindless few, which also includes the actions of some dogs running off-lead and worrying the animals, is putting our historic common lands in danger. To counter such antisocial activities a scheme has been formed at the Sudbury Common Lands. A grant has been obtained from the Heritage Lottery Fund that will support a project to engage voluntary rangers who, after training, will randomly patrol the commons to act as ‘eyes and ears’ to prevent problems.
Ancient Lost Roads

Old Evesham Road: Unclassified 50445

This ancient highway having been designated ‘a road’ it follows the principle “once a road always a road”. Normally any attempt to officially reduce the ‘road’ status would require application to court of law with an unknown outcome. This would normally involve expensive appeals from disaffected parties such as the equestrian users, the trail riders and possibly the farmers who have encroached or perpetrated onto the old highway. If this ‘lost road’ is to be resurrected, can it not be reclassified as NERC to a restricted highway (as in the case of Sandy Lane/ old London road, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham.

Bearing in mind that Network Rail will resist any attempt to provide a ‘level crossing’.

A pedestrian path could relatively easily be physically created. A bridle path could also be reasonably diverted to the existing road bridge. However, for use by horses, the bridge is unsuitably humped and too narrow, plus the volume of traffic make it unsafe for use.

The issues to be considered

Route A to bring into a carriageway – The costs are prohibitive in relation to demand
At a time of severe budget restriction say £2.5m

Route B with diversion
As a carriage way say £500,000
As a bridle way say £150,000* plus.
As a footpath say £150,000

NB Even though the diverted route may be able to be physically created
*The bridge, as it exists, is unsuitable for use by horses and a secondary bridge (to be attached) is required at an estimated £100,000

Sandy Lane/ Old London Road, Charlton Kings

Documentary evidence clearly indicates that Sandy Lane was an ancient highway, first recorded in 1545, turnpiked as the existing road to London in 1755/6 but subsequently replaced by the present road between Cheltenham and Cirencester. There has been no evidence that carriageway (or any other) rights have been stopped up by legal order, and the way has simply fallen into disuse as a cart way as better and more convenient ways have come into being.

Council Members of the Commons and Rights of Way Committee meeting held on Thursday 6 December 2001 at Shire Hall, Gloucester, considered the evidence and resolved:

1. That an application to reclassify certain public footpaths (part ZCK58, part ZCK60 and ACO6 as byways open to all traffic be refused.
2. That public footpaths ZCK 58 (part) ZCK60 (part) and ACO6 be reclassified as restricted byways and that two additional lengths of restricted byway be added to the Definitive Map of Public Rights Way.

Alan Shelley, 18 June 2010, for next GLAF Meeting.
LECKHAMPTON HILL AND
CHARLTON KINGS COMMON
MANAGEMENT PLAN

SUMMARY

Issue 2  April 2003

CHELTENHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Foreword From Cheltenham Borough Council

"Cheltenham Borough Council originally had the foresight to secure the future of Leckhampton Hill for public benefit through its purchase. With the council’s stewardship responsibilities in mind for this magnificent and unique example of our natural environment, I have great pleasure in contributing a foreword to the new Site Management Plan for Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common.

The plan has been commissioned by Cheltenham Borough Council as a strategic document for the future management of the hill. However the process of public participation and consultation has, in a way, almost been more important than the production of the plan itself. Drawing people together from an immensely diverse range of conservation, recreational and cultural interests to collaborate and work in partnership for a shared vision for the Hill has been both a challenging and richly rewarding experience.

The extent and strength of the partnership working has been exemplified through the active participation of the Friends of Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common (FOLK), English Nature, the Cotswolds AONB Partnership and Gloucestershire County Council’s Archaeology Service, as well as a wide range of individuals and groups with specialist interests and local knowledge.

It is with this focus of interests upon one of the most complex and diverse sites of our natural environment within Gloucestershire that I commend the Site Management Plan to everyone with an interest in Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common”.

Councillor Lloyd Surgenor
Cabinet Deputy for Public and Environmental Protection
Cheltenham Borough Council
Foreword from the Friends of Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common

"This Site Management Plan has been heavily influenced by a long process of consultation, including a large public meeting, and the submission of statements from many of the groups and individuals with an interest in or specialist knowledge of the site. There have also been a series of Steering Group Meetings involving Cheltenham Borough Council, English Nature, the Cotwolds AONB, the Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service and FOLK.

FOLK's Executive Committee also met with the consultants who produced this Plan and discussed the contents of both an early draft and the final draft in great detail. The Executive Committee is made up of members with a wide spectrum of interests in Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common, from those who are primarily interested in the ecology to those who use the site primarily for recreation, and it represents a broad cross-section of users. Despite this and as a result of some of the changes made to the Site Management Plan during the consultation process, the Committee reached a large measure of consensus over the Plan. Following some revisions to the final draft, FOLK's Executive Committee now feels able to commend the whole Plan to FOLK members and other users of the site."

Julius Marstrand,
Chairman,
Friends of Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common (FOLK)
GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Location and Size (See Map 1)
The site lies on the edge of the Cotswolds escarpment to the south of Cheltenham, partly within the Borough of Cheltenham, with the remainder in Tewkesbury District, in the county of Gloucestershire.

This plan is a rolling management plan which will guide management over five year periods to a cumulative total of 20 years. The plan covers three areas of land, namely Leckhampton Hill, Charlton Kings Common and Daisybank Fields.

The Plan covers an area of approximately 67 hectares (165 acres).

Elevation and Geology
The site rises 195 metres (640 feet) from north to south with the lowest point at the northern end of Daisybank Fields at approximately 100 metres (328 feet) above sea level and the highest point, marked by the Ordnance Survey Datum Point on Leckhampton Hill, at 295.1 metres (968 feet) above sea level.

The Leckhampton quarries provide the thickest single cross-section through the Middle Jurassic, Inferior Oolite strata of the Cotswolds. Strata totalling sixty metres in thickness are exposed, including elements of the Lower, Middle and Upper Inferior Oolite.

Tenure
Cheltenham Borough Council owns the site in its entirety. The map also shows that Cheltenham Borough Council owns land to the south and east of Charlton Kings Common, although this is the subject of agricultural tenancies. Cheltenham Borough Council controls the management of the all the land within the plan boundary, apart from the strip from Brownstone Quarry to the edge of Charlton Kings Common, which is the subject of an agricultural tenancy with Mr Jenner of Hill Farm.

Although outside the scope of this plan, the suite of meadows to the south of Charlton Kings Common is of conservation and landscape value and warrants an appropriate conservation management regime.

Access
The site is accessible to the public via a network of public rights of way (see Map 3), including footpaths, bridleways and a RUPP (Road Used as Public Path). Cheltenham Borough Council allows open access throughout the site, including Daisybank Fields.

The Cotswold Way National Trail crosses the site.

There are numerous public access points:
1. via public rights of way (see Map 4)
2. via undesignated paths

There are also a number of unofficial ‘private’ access points to the woodland from residential properties at the bottom of Leckhampton Hill.

There are car parks at Salterley Quarry (also known as Wagon Quarry), Brownstone Quarry and two on Daisybank Road.

There are three vehicular access points (works accesses), located at the base of the standard gauge incline, off Daisybank Road off the tarmac road from Hill Farm adjacent to the track from Brownstone Quarry, accessed from the tarmac track from Hill Farm.

There are several other access points, suitable for vehicular use, along Daisybank Road.

Site Status/Legal Issues.

Definitive Map/Highway Record/Rights of Way
There are numerous Public Rights of Way cross the site. Public paths are the responsibility of the County Highway Authority (Gloucestershire County Council). Their use and management is regulated by several Acts of Parliament, most notably the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act).

It is not possible to follow the routes of several rights of way as they have become impassable through the development of scrub, although alternative ‘desire’ routes exist.
A former Turnpike Road (Sandy Lane) crosses the site, the legal status of which is indeterminate.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest (See Map 2)**

Much of the site, excluding Daisybank Fields, is designated as Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The SSSI was originally notified under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 in 1954. It was then re-notified in 1986 under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, and finally extended under the 1981 Act on 18 December 1991. The SSSI covers an area of 63.8 hectares (157.7 acres) and is notified for its biological and geological interest.

This management plan excludes an area of 3.7 hectares (9.1 acres) of the SSSI on the adjacent golf course to the east.

**Registered Common Land (See Map 3)**

The site includes three areas of Common Land, registered under the Commons Registration Act 1965.

**Scheduled Ancient Monument / Sites and Monuments Record (See Map 4)**

The whole of the Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common area is of considerable interest as a historic landscape, containing a number of important constituents of the historic environment. These include a round barrow; a hillfort; military remains; quarries; tramroads and other associated industrial remains, including the limekilns.

Leckhampton Camp (hillfort) and the round barrow are considered to be of national importance and are Scheduled Ancient Monuments, county number 46, protected by statute under the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act. Many other historic environment elements are included on the Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record.

**Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

The whole of the Plan area lies within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
Administrative Boundaries

The land is partly within the Borough of Cheltenham, with the remainder of the site in Tewkesbury District, in the county of Gloucestershire. It also lies within the parishes of Charlton Kings and Shurdington and is adjacent to the parishes of Leckhampton and Coberley.
CURRENT MANAGEMENT AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Management of the site is the responsibility of the owners, Cheltenham Borough Council, through the Parks and Recreation Service. There was formerly a Hill Keeper, with responsibility for land and visitor management. However, there are no longer any site-based staff. Site works are undertaken by the Cheltenham Borough Council’s Park Ranger Service, contractors and volunteers.

The principal voluntary group is the Friends of Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common (FOLK), which was formed to represent local interest in the conservation, recreation, history and land management of the Site.

FOLK work in conjunction with Cheltenham Borough Council, the owners of the land, for the benefit of residents and visitors to Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common.

FOLK’s key objectives are
- To promote the conservation and management of the ecology, geology and archaeology of the land.
- To promote the land’s status as an SSSI, within the Cotswolds AONB, and compliance with relevant national and European legislation.
- To support the widest possible recreational use of the land consistent with the above objectives.
- To promote public awareness and education in the above objectives.
- To liaise and consult with the owners and trustees of the land and of adjacent land over matters of mutual interest.

FOLK has an executive committee which meets with representatives of Cheltenham Borough Council on a monthly basis.

A conservation management plan was prepared for the site for the period 1992-1996. This gave priority to the conservation and restoration of the limestone grassland. Some of the proposals in this plan have been implemented, but most have not. Consequently the limestone grassland has continued to deteriorate.
MANAGEMENT ISSUES

A consultation meeting took place in March 2002 to enable local interest groups and individuals to voice the hopes and fears for the management plan and to open the debate on key issues affecting the future management of the Hill and Common.

FOLK also invited interest groups to submit statements, outlining the nature of their interest in the Hill and detailing suggestions for management improvements. The interest group statements have been used to inform this management plan.

MANAGEMENT CONSTRAINTS

Topographical Constraints
The site is located on the edge of the steeply sloping Cotswolds escarpment with a relatively small narrow plateau at the top. The steep slopes make access for recreation difficult, particularly limiting opportunities for access for people with disabilities. The topography also constrains access for vehicles, such as tractors with cutting machinery, required to undertake management work.

Geological Constraints
The soils overlying the oolitic limestone are very thin and suffer badly from erosion caused by walkers and other users. The erosion is exacerbated by rainwater, particularly on the slopes, where many of the tracks and inclines are deeply scarred by rainwater run-off.

Furthermore the limestone exposures are very fragile, the porous, fractured rock suffering from freeze-thaw action, which causes periodic and unpredictable rockfalls. Many of the paths that that traverse the site pass close to the base of the quarries.

Statutory Constraints
Statutory designations - Site of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Ancient Monument, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Rights of Way and Registered Common Land - impose a number of constraints on site management. These designations require that consent must be sought prior to undertaking certain works.

Public Perception
The general perception of the public is that the site has always been wooded, although this is untrue. The majority of the woodland is of recent origin, having either been planted (principally with larch) or having naturally regenerated due to a lack of grassland management.

As the majority of the site is Registered Common Land there is a general perception that there is a legal public right of open access. The Commons Register reveals that there are no common rights, therefore legal access is confined to the public rights of way network over the site. The network, the majority of which comprises public footpaths, principally confers rights on walkers, with limited access opportunities for horse-riders and cyclists. Despite this, Cheltenham Borough Council invites open access.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires that access will be opened up to Registered Common Land by 2005. There is a general perception that this will confer a right of access for all users, however, access rights will only extend to walkers.
HEADLINE OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The headline management objectives for Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common have been determined through

- Identification of the objectives of the owners, Cheltenham Borough Council
- Identification of the objectives of the Site Management Plan Steering Group partners comprising representatives from the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), English Nature and the Friends of Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common (FOLK)
- Consultation with the FOLK Executive Committee
- Identification of the objectives and aspirations of local interest groups
- Gathering and evaluation of existing information on all aspects of the site
- Consideration of national and local designations
- Identification of the local community's "Hopes and Fears" for the future management of the site
- Commissioning new studies
- Reviewing the history of site management and access
- Identification of management constraints

The initial draft objectives were agreed by the Management Plan Steering Group in May 2002. These have undergone further scrutiny and refinement and are outlined in subsequent sections. The headline objectives set the scene for the management of Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common and underpin the decision making process applied to the development of the management recommendations.

HEADLINE OBJECTIVE ONE
HO-1 TO CONSERVE AND ENHANCE AREAS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE (SSSI, SAM) AND FURTHER THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COTSWOLDS AONB MANAGEMENT STRATEGY. PROTECTION OF DESIGNATED NATIONAL ASSETS TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER ALL OTHER MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES.

HEADLINE OBJECTIVE TWO
HO-2 TO MAINTAIN THE OPEN, SEMI-NATURAL CHARACTER OF THE SITE.
HEADLINE OBJECTIVE THREE
HO-3 TO ENCOURAGE RECREATIONAL PURSUITS TO TAKE PLACE IN A WAY THAT DOES NOT COMPROMISE THE CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF AREAS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE.

HEADLINE OBJECTIVE FOUR
HO-4 TO DISCOURAGE RECREATIONAL PURSUITS THAT COMPROMISE THE CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF AREAS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE.

HEADLINE OBJECTIVE FIVE
HO-5 TO ENABLE AND IMPROVE ACCESS FOR PEOPLE OF ALL ABILITIES.

HEADLINE OBJECTIVE SIX
HO-6 TO ENCOURAGE RESPECT FOR AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SITE THROUGH THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND INTERPRETATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

HEADLINE OBJECTIVE SEVEN
HO-7 TO ENSURE THAT HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS FOR ALL ASPECTS OF SITE USE AND MANAGEMENT ARE FULLY CONSIDERED.

HEADLINE OBJECTIVE EIGHT
HO-8 TO DEVELOP A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO THE MANAGEMENT OF THE SITE, IN PARTICULAR ENCOURAGING THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF LOCAL PEOPLE AND INTEREST GROUPS IN SITE MANAGEMENT.

HEADLINE OBJECTIVE NINE
HO-9 TO ENSURE THAT CONSULTATION IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.

ORGANISATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS
Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common is a complex site with an inherent range of complex issues and challenges. As a result the implementation of the management plan, a complex document in itself, requires robust and effective management, advisory and consultative structures to be in place. The site is very different from the urban parks and open spaces that are managed by the Borough Council and as such different management mechanisms are required.

**OBJECTIVE OM-1**
TO REVIEW THE MANAGEMENT AND ADVISORY STRUCTURES TO ENSURE THAT THERE ARE DEFINED RESPONSIBILITIES AND EFFECTIVE LINES OF COMMUNICATION.

**OBJECTIVE OM-2**
TO APPOINT A PROJECT OFFICER, SUPPORTED BY APPROPRIATE RANGER SERVICES, TO ENSURE THAT THE PLAN IS IMPLEMENTED AND THE DAY-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT OF THE HILL IS EFFECTIVELY CO-ORDINATED.

**OBJECTIVE OM-3**
TO DEVELOP AND SEEK APPROVAL OF BYLAWS, INCLUDING DOG FOULING BYLAWS, TO ENSURE THAT THE USE OF SITE CAN BE EFFECTIVELY REGULATED AS REQUIRED.

**OBJECTIVE OM-4**
TO ENSURE THAT REASONABLE CARE IS TAKEN FOR THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF VISITORS AND PEOPLE WORKING ON SITE.

**OBJECTIVE OM-5**
TO PROVIDE INFORMATION, INTERPRETATIVE AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL TO IMPROVE APPRECIATION, UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYMENT OF THE SITE.

**OBJECTIVE OM-6**
**TO MAXIMISE THE OPPORTUNITIES TO ATTRACT EXTERNAL FUNDING FOR SITE MANAGEMENT.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ROM-01</td>
<td>Maintain current management co-ordination mechanism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROM-02</td>
<td>Clarify roles of responsibilities (CBC and FOLK).</td>
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<td>ROM-03</td>
<td>Allow sufficient time for the development of work programme.</td>
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<td>ROM-04</td>
<td>Explain annual work programmes to the public.</td>
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<td>ROM-05</td>
<td>Publish agreed annual work plans.</td>
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<td>ROM-06</td>
<td>Appoint project officer to co-ordinate implementation of the plan.</td>
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<td>ROM-07</td>
<td>Involve FOLK in selection and steering of project officer.</td>
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<td>ROM-08</td>
<td>Establish management plan steering group.</td>
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<td>ROM-09</td>
<td>Establish ranger services on site.</td>
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<td>ROM-10</td>
<td>Seek legal opinion on the establishment of local authority bylaws.</td>
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<td>ROM-11</td>
<td>Seek legal opinion on the implementation of the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act.</td>
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<td>ROM-12</td>
<td>Consider a voluntary code of conduct for the use of the site.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROM-13</td>
<td>Identify and assess health and safety risks.</td>
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<td>ROM-14</td>
<td>Implement risk control measures.</td>
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<td>ROM-15</td>
<td>Develop an Interpretative Strategy.</td>
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<td>ROM-16</td>
<td>Target educational work on local schools.</td>
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<td>ROM-17</td>
<td>Produce Education Pack to enable self guided visits.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROM-18</td>
<td>Develop partnerships with specialist organisations.</td>
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<td>ROM-19</td>
<td>Declare the whole site a Local Nature Reserve.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROM-20</td>
<td>FOLK to investigate charitable status.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LANDSCAPE RECOMMENDATIONS

The site lies on the edge of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), one of the finest landscapes in England, and the Plan seeks to ensure that the future management of Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common contributes to the achievement of the Cotswolds AONB Management Strategy. The Cotswolds AONB is a statutory designation with the primary aim of conserving and enhancing the "rich natural heritage, the cultural legacy and the unique sense of physical harmony". Cheltenham Borough Council, as a public body, has a duty under the CROW Act to have regard to the purposes of the designation.

Regular visitors enjoy the open, semi-natural character of the site, describing it as "wild" or "wilderness". The feeling of wilderness is influenced by the rugged terrain, the range of semi-natural habitats, the presence of relatively few signs and fences, the lack of buildings and little or no regulation of how people can use the Hill.

The Plan seeks to maintain the open, semi-natural character of the site, within the constraints of other objectives, in particular the need to conserve nationally significant environmental assets, such as the limestone grassland, the geological exposures and the protected archaeology. It also seeks to improve opportunities to enjoy the site and the opportunity it provides for enjoying the wider landscape.

The maintenance of the open, semi-natural character of the site and the maintenance of views of the surrounding landscape will not, in the main, require specific landscape and visual character related actions. These will be achieved through the sensitive implementation of the biodiversity, geodiversity, historic environment and recreation related management recommendations outlined subsequently in the plan.

**OBJECTIVE LV-1**
TO OPEN UP VIEWS OF KEY FEATURES ON THE SITE.

**OBJECTIVE LV-2**
TO MAINTAIN THE OVERALL APPEARANCE OF THE SITE WHEN VIEWED FROM CHELTENHAM, LECKHAMPTON AND THE WIDER COUNTRYSIDE.
OBJECTIVE LV-3
TO CONSERVE AND ENHANCE FEATURES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHARACTER OF THE SITE.

Summary of Landscape Recommendations

The main recommendations appear in the sections on Biodiversity, Geodiversity and the Historic Environment Recommendations.

RLV-01 Improve the setting of the Devil's Chimney through the replacement of the safety fence.
RLV-02 Ensure that scrub clearance leaves a naturalistic transition between habitats.
BIODIVERSITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common are designated as a Site of Special Scientific principally on account of the unimproved limestone grassland and for the presence of nationally scarce plants and invertebrates.

Daisybank Fields lies outside the SSSI, but provides a valuable habitat for breeding birds.

A considerable amount of biological information exists for the SSSI, but much of the recording has not been systematic. Therefore although a huge variety of species are known to occur (or have previously occurred) on the site, it has been difficult to pinpoint many to specific locations.

As this a 5 year plan, it is recommended that only the most significant, fragile and threatened habitats are tackled. This will enable site managers to concentrate on the immediate priorities.

The priority is the major task of conserving and restoring the unimproved limestone grassland and associated scrub habitats. Blocks of mature woodland (but not the grassland areas within them) are excluded from immediate action due to their robustness.

**OBJECTIVE B-1 LIMESTONE GRASSLAND:**

**B-1.1** TO MAINTAIN THE UNIMPROVED LIMESTONE GRASSLAND CURRENTLY IN FAVOURABLE CONDITION AND PREVENT FURTHER DETERIORATION.

**B-1.2** TO RESTORE AREAS OF LIMESTONE GRASSLAND IN UNFAVOURABLE CONDITION THROUGH APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING SCRUB CLEARANCE.

**OBJECTIVE B-2**

TO MANAGE SCRUB AS A HABITAT IN ITS OWN RIGHT FOR THE BENEFIT OF BREEDING BIRDS AND INVERTEBRATES.

**OBJECTIVE B-3**
TO IMPROVE THE STRUCTURE OF THE WOODLAND INCLUDING THE CREATION OF GLADES AND "RIDES".

OBJECTIVE B-4 MONITORING:
B4.1 TO IDENTIFY INDICATOR SPECIES AND ESTABLISH AN ONGOING RECORDING AND MAPPING PROGRAMME TO MONITOR THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HABITAT MANAGEMENT.
B4.2 TO IDENTIFY NATIONALLY SCARCE SPECIES THAT DO NOT RESPOND TO TYPICAL MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS AND DEVELOP MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR THEIR CONSERVATION.
B4.3 TO ESTABLISH AN ONGOING RECORDING PROGRAMME FOR KEY HABITATS INCLUDING A FIXED POINT PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD AND HABITAT MAPPING.

OBJECTIVE B-5
TO IMPROVE WILDLIFE AND HABITAT INFORMATION AND INTERPRETATION.

Summary of Biodiversity Recommendations
RB-01 Follow a hierarchical approach to grassland management to ensure the effective use of time and effort to maximise the area of grassland in favourable condition.
RB-02 Cattle grazing is the favoured option to achieve long-term sustainable limestone grassland management.
RB-03 Implement a cattle grazing regime on Charlton Kings Common.
RB-04 Undertake public awareness raising campaign prior to implementation of grazing.
RB-05 Continue mowing on the plateau to suppress the re-growth of scrub.
RB-06 Exclude grazing animals from the woodland.
RB-07 Consult DEFRA on the need for fencing consent on the Common Land.
RB-08 Consult Gloucestershire County Council over fencing proposals.
RB-09 Prevent further scrub encroachment.
RB-10 Retain some blocks of scrub and individual trees for birds and invertebrates.
RB-11 Maintain glades in woodland areas.
RB-12 Monitor key species.
RB-13 Undertake periodic grassland condition assessment.
Develop a fixed-point photographic record.
GEOCONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Leckhampton Hill has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, in part because the geology and geomorphology is of national significance.

Implementation of a programme of geoconservation work commenced in March 2002, with works taking place in the lower Limekilns Quarry and in Deadman's Quarry. Despite the valuable nature of the works, the operations rapidly became the subject of local opposition and debate, most notably in a series of features and letters in the local press. Although the impact on botanical and ornithological interests were first checked by English Nature and protected species by Cheltenham Borough Council, lessons need to be learned from the first phase of implementation, particularly in respect of methods of working and consultation with local people and other interest groups.

**OBJECTIVE GC-1**

TO MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE GEOLOGICAL CONSERVATION REVIEW FEATURES IN FAVOURABLE CONDITION AND RESTORE OTHER GEOLOGICAL FEATURES WHERE THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH OTHER CONSTRAINTS, IN ORDER TO:-

A. OBTAIN A CLEAR SET OF EXPOSURES THROUGHOUT THE SEQUENCE OF ROCKS.
B. RESTORE VIEWS OF KEY OUTCROPS AND QUARRIES.

**OBJECTIVE GC-2**

TO PROVIDE ACCESS FOR GEOLOGIST AND PALAEONTOLOGISTS FOR THE CLOSE EXAMINATION OF EXPOSURES AND TO MAINTAIN SCREE FOR SPECIMEN COLLECTION IN LINE WITH JOINT NATURE CONSERVANCY COUNCIL GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE.
OBJECTIVE GC-3
TO SEEK TO ACHIEVE CONSENSUS ON THE EXTENT, NATURE AND TIMING OF GEOCONSERVATION WORK AND TO ENSURE THAT THE REASONS FOR UNDERTAKING WORK ARE WIDELY UNDERSTOOD PRIOR TO WORK TAKING PLACE.

OBJECTIVE GC-4
TO MONITOR THE CONDITION OF THE GEOLOGICAL EXPOSURES TO ENSURE THAT GEOCONSERVATION OBJECTIVES CONTINUE TO BE MET.

Summary of Geoconservation Recommendations
RGC-01 The proposals in Geode’s ‘Geoconservation Programme’ should be revised.
RGC-02 Remedial work following the initial phase of work on priority one sites should be undertaken immediately to resolve health and safety issues and conflicts with historic environment features.
RGC-03 Apply a 2 year moratorium on the use of heavy plant for geoconservation work.
RGC-04 Further work on priority one sites should involve additional consultation.
RGC-05 Work proposed for priority two should be subject to further consultation.
RGC-06 No work should be undertaken on priority three sites, unless it meets other management objectives or the quality of the exposure has undergone significant deterioration.
RGC-07 Casual visitors should be warned of the dangers of close approach to the quarries.
RGC-08 An awareness raising campaign to highlight the importance of the quarries should be undertaken.
RGC-09 A code of practice, specific to the site, should be developed for the collection of geological specimens and fossils.
RGC-10 The condition of the exposures should be monitored through fixed-point photography.
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common has been influenced by humans for thousands of years and, as such, has been shaped and altered to suit particular needs. It was a burial place and settlement site in pre-history, a sheep run in the medieval period, quarried for the natural resources in the 18th and 19th centuries and, in the middle of the 20th century, a site for the defence of Britain.

The hillfort (Leckhampton Camp) and round barrow is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and receive statutory protection.

**OBJECTIVE HE-1**
TO ESTABLISH AN ONGOING PROGRAMME FOR THE RECORDING AND MONITORING OF HISTORIC FEATURES, INCLUDING A FIXED POINT PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD.

**OBJECTIVE HE-2**
TO PROVIDE INFORMATION AND INTERPRETATION ON THE HISTORIC ASPECTS OF THE SITE.

**OBJECTIVE HE-3**
TO ENSURE THAT THOROUGH CONSULTATION WITH ALL RELEVANT AGENCIES AND INTEREST GROUPS IS UNDERTAKEN TO AGREE THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF WORK WHICH MAY IMPACT UPON STANDING OR BURIED ARCHAEOLOGY PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION.

**OBJECTIVE HE-4**
TO MAINTAIN CONTINUOUS GRASS COVER OVER THE ROUND BARROW.

**OBJECTIVE HE-5**
TO RESTORE THE HILLFORT RAMPARTS, PAYING PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE AREA AROUND THE ORDNANCE SURVEY DATUM POINT AND THE ENCROACHMENT OF SCRUB.

**OBJECTIVE HE-6**
TO MAINTAIN THE LIMEKILNS AND THE FORMER ELECTRICAL PLANT HOUSE IN THEIR CURRENT STATE AND PREVENT FURTHER DETERIORATION.

OBJECTIVE HE-7
TO OPEN UP SELECTED TRAMROADS AND INCLINES TO AID THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE FORMER COMPLEX RAILWAY NETWORK AND ENSURE THAT THE SURFACES ARE REPAIRED AND MAINTAINED.

POLICY HE-8
TO RESTORE DRYSTONE WALL BOUNDARY FEATURES.

### Summary of Historic Environment Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RHE-01</th>
<th>Establish a fixed-point photographic record.</th>
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<tr>
<td>RHE-02</td>
<td>Commission a base-line archaeological survey.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RHE-03</td>
<td>The commissioning of geophysical survey of Leckhampton Camp would enhance the archaeological record and provide interpretative opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RHE-04</td>
<td>Provide interpretation of key historic environment features.</td>
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<td>RHE-05</td>
<td>Consult archaeological specialist prior to undertaking major works.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RHE-06</td>
<td>Obtain Scheduled Monument Consent from English Heritage prior to undertaking work in the area of Leckhampton Camp.</td>
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<td>RHE-07</td>
<td>Implement a programme of scrub management on the hillfort.</td>
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<td>RHE-08</td>
<td>Initially retain scrub in the centre of the Camp, but give consideration to its future removal.</td>
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<td>RHE-09</td>
<td>Establish continuous grass cover on the rampart and barrow.</td>
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<td>RHE-10</td>
<td>Restore of the ramparts around the OS datum point.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RHE-11</td>
<td>Commission a structural survey of the Limekilns and the former Electrical Plant House.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RHE-12</td>
<td>Research and consult on GSIA proposals for conservation work on the tramroads and inclines.</td>
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</table>
ACCESS AND RECREATION RECOMMENDATIONS

A wide range of access and recreational activities take place on Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common. Few of the current activities are undesirable. However, with so many activities taking place in a limited area, conflicts can arise between different recreational uses. The following objectives are intended to improve the quality of access opportunities, rationalise access anomalies and to reduce conflicts between activities.

**OBJECTIVE AR-1**
TO ENCOURAGE AND ENABLE THE CURRENT RANGE OF PERMITTED RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES TO TAKE PLACE IN A WAY THAT MINIMISES CONFLICTS BETWEEN DIFFERENT USER GROUPS AND PROTECTS NATIONALLY IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS.

**OBJECTIVE AR-2**
TO PROHIBIT UNDESIRABLE RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES DUE THEIR EFFECT ON NATIONALLY IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS AND HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS.

**OBJECTIVE AR-3**
TO PROVIDE SAFE, WELL-MAINTAINED ACCESS POINTS AND CAR PARKS.

**OBJECTIVE AR-4**
TO IMPROVE ACCESS INFORMATION.

**OBJECTIVE AR-5**
TO MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE VIEWPOINTS FROM THE HILL OVER LECKHAMPTON, CHELTENHAM AND THE WIDER COUNTRYSIDE.
OBJECTIVE AR-6
TO IMPROVE ACCESS FOR ALL, INCLUDING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WHERE PRACTICABLE, THROUGH THE PROVISION OF A NETWORK OF WELL-MAINTAINED PATHS WITH MINIMAL WAYMARKING.

OBJECTIVE AR-7 RIGHTS OF WAY AND ACCESS:

AR-7.1 TO IMPLEMENT LIMITED RIGHTS OF WAY MODIFICATIONS WITHIN THE SITE TO CREATE INTER-CONNECTING ROUTES.

AR-7.2 TO SEEK MODIFICATION OF THE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO THE SITE FOR CYCLISTS AND HORSE-Riders IN APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS.

AR-7.3 TO ALLOW PERMISSIVE ACCESS TO DEFINED PATHS FOR ALL USERS, IN ASSOCIATION WITH A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MOUNTAIN BIKERS AND HORSE-Riders.

OBJECTIVE AR-8
TO DEFINE A SUITABLE MOUNTAIN BIKE SLALOM COURSE WHERE MOUNTAIN BIKES HAVE PRIORITY.

Summary of Access and Recreation Recommendations
RAR-01 Prohibit access by 4x4s and motorcycles.
RAR-02 Provide well maintained car parks and access points.
RAR-03 Provide a site guide.
RAR-04 Provide orientation panels in car parks.
RAR-05 Install finger-posts and limited waymarking to enable easy route-finding.
RAR-06 Resolve erosion around toposcope.
RAR-07 Undertake a comprehensive scheme of seating and viewpoint refurbishment.
RAR-08 Provide wheelchair access from Brownstone Car Park.
RAR-09 Implement a hierarchical prioritisation for path maintenance.

Summary: Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common Management Plan
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<tr>
<th>RAR-10</th>
<th>See a civil engineering solution to repair very badly eroded tracks.</th>
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<tr>
<td>RAR-11</td>
<td>Work in partnership with Cotswold Way Team to provide disabled access in the vicinity of Salterley Car Park.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAR-12</td>
<td>Work in partnership with the National Star Centre to develop access for all solutions.</td>
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<td>RAR-13</td>
<td>Seek modifications to the rights of way network to improve access for horses and cycles.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAR-14</td>
<td>Allow permissive access to the whole network of paths for horses and cycles, but monitor the impact of use.</td>
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<td>RAR-15</td>
<td>Define a mountain bike slalom course in consultation with users.</td>
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