

# Tree Management Plan 2020 - 2025

## Askerswell Millennium Green



Management plan completed by Ian Geddes of Toller Tree Care Ltd

On behalf of Askerswell Parish Council – John Mahoney

June 2020



## 1.0 The site

Askerswell Millennium Green, also referred to as Askerswell Washingpool Green is situated to the West of the village. With the River Asker forming its boundary on the South side and established mixed native hedges to the North and West. The site borders one property to the East and comes close to Hembury Road on the Southern corner with agricultural land surrounding the rest of the site. Within the site is a kept playing field and path network. A mix of rough ground, a small pond and established wooded areas make up the rest of the site with a total area of approximately 0.35 hectares.

The site is an open access communal space with a public footpath (W4/7) running through on the East side. There is also a stile providing access to the old Washingpool and joining into footpath (W4/14). The site also has overhead power cables running over the North/East corner. There is parking for 2-3 vehicles on the public highway, opposite the main entrance bridge. The site is with an AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

The site provides a valuable space for people and wildlife alike. With the close proximity to the village, maintained paths, open playing field and well placed benches the site is easy to use and caters to a range of users. The less accessible wooded and rough areas create an excellent habitat for wildlife.



## 1.1 Objective

Within this report produced by Toller Tree Care Ltd (TTC) we look into future tree and hedge management with the objective to balance safety, amenity value and biodiversity. We will also explore the options for improving light and accessibility on the River Asker and surrounding ground flora and fauna. This report is accompanied by “Askerswell Millenium Green – Tree Risk Assessment 2020”. The risk assessment report covers the safety aspect of the trees, touching on management that the TTC report will go into further detail on.

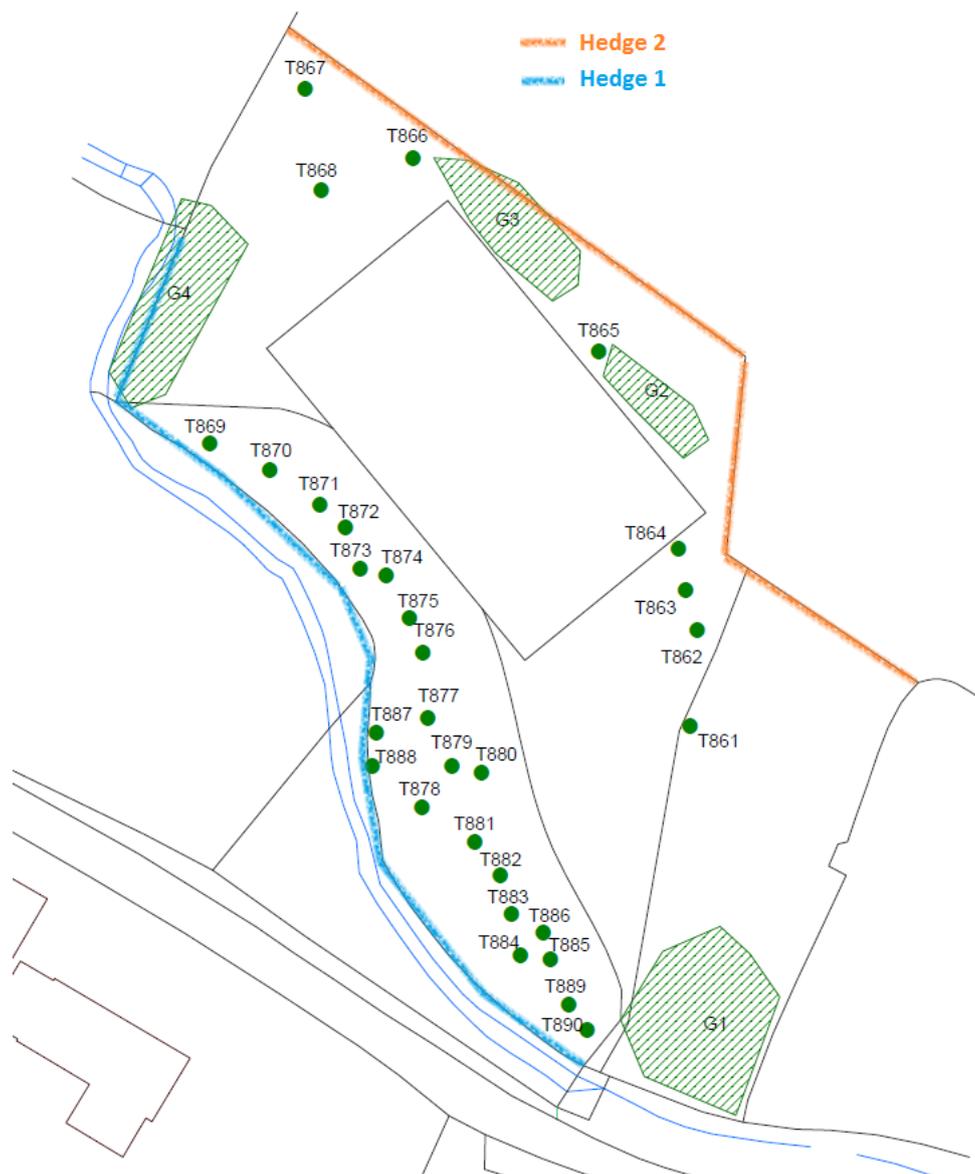
## 1.2 Tree Risk Assessment report

This report itemises trees with a DBH (diameter at breast height) over 15cm and places a risk factor upon each of these. With the map locating and numbering each, corresponding to descriptions ties into this management plan and makes for a valuable library for future management. The report was carried out after TTC completed initial work to remove trees and deadwood that posed an immediate risk to the public. The Tree Risk Assessment found no trees that required work to make safe but did make a number of advisories and notes on individual tree condition. This report will form the structure for the annual basic tree inspections outlined in this management plan.

### 1.3 Five year management plan

The table below outlines 5 years of management to maintain, develop and improve the site to the objectives in 1.1. There are a number of capable volunteer work parties available that could be recruited to carry out some tasks, such as the Dorset Wildlife Trust and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers that could be approached to assist.

Disposal of cut material is going to be a consideration for each task. For the smaller task the timber and brash can be stacked to rot down in habitat piles. For some of the larger recommended work habit piles will not be as viable as it will impact on the aesthetics and accessibility of the site. Fires could be used with consideration to not damage surrounding trees, spoiling flora and fauna and the presence of thatched properties. Some timber habitat piles will be beneficial but also consider making this available for the volunteers' own use, it is a good way to get timber off site and reward those involved. Chipping material into rough areas to rot down is also a viable option for contractors.



<b>Table 1</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Basic description</b>	<b>Volunteers or contractors?</b>
<b>1</b>	A: Oak 865	Formative prune by removal of lowest secondary leader.	Volunteers or contractor
	B: Oak 868	Crown lift by removing two-three lowest limbs with squirrel damage.	Volunteers or contractor
	C: G2	Removal of closest Alder to Oak 865	Volunteers or contractor
	D: G3	Removal of one-two Alders growing closest to Oak 868	Volunteers or contractor
	E: Hedge 1	River clearing and hedge laying. Removal of 887 and 888.	Volunteers or contractor
	F: G1	Coppice Willow closest to entrance	Volunteers or contractor
<b>2</b>	G: Alder coppicing	Coppicing down to stool level of 1-2 Alders	Contractor
	Hedge 1	Hedge trimming as described in 1.6	Volunteers
<b>3</b>	H: G1	Coppicing of remaining Willow	Volunteers or contractor
	Hedge 1	Hedge trimming as described in 1.6	Volunteers
<b>4</b>	I: Hedge 2	Hedge laying and old fence removal.	Volunteers or contractor
<b>5</b>	Hedge 2	Hedge trimming as described in 1.6	Volunteers
	J: Sycamore 867	Consider removal if the tree is competing with Oak 868	Contractor
	K: G1	Coppicing one of the two Hazels	Volunteers or Contractor
	L: Alder coppicing	Coppicing a further 1-2 stools.	Contractor

## Year 1

### A: Oak 865 - Formative prune by removal of lowest secondary leader

Poor union, could present issues as the tree gets bigger. Pruning to the marked point on the image below.



### B: Oak 868 - Crown lift by removing two-three lowest limbs with squirrel damage

As these limbs get bigger the damage the squirrels have caused could lead to failure. Removal of these limbs before they get larger will allow the tree to recover quicker. If this task is being carried out by volunteers they should be aware of the correct finishing cuts that will promote good wound occlusion.

### C: G2 - Removal of Alder closest to Oak 865

Oak 865 has the potential to be a long term tree on the site. To avoid surrounding trees inhibiting and altering the trees growth competing trees with less longer term value should be removed.

### D: G3 - Removal of one-two Alders growing closest to Oak 868

Oak 868 is in a prominent location and should be a good long term tree. To avoid surrounding trees inhibiting and altering the trees growth competing trees with less longer term value should be removed.

### E: Hedge 1 - River clearing and hedge laying. Removal of 887 and 888.

With one of the objectives of the site being to open up and get more light onto the River Asker there is a lot of work that could be done here. With the presence of the bank and hedgerow species on top, this suggests it has been managed as a native hedgerow in the past and is an archaeological landscape feature that would be worth maintaining and enhancing.

Laying of this hedge in the Dorset style will go a long way to reducing the amount of shade on the river and improving the site's biodiversity. As part of this task the removal of Alder 887 and 888 could also be carried out. The large collapsed Holly that has fallen over the river should be reduced by about 50% to clear the river and retain it, keeping structure to the hedge. There is a lot of collapsed Willow coming from the other side of the river, it would be worth approaching the neighbouring landowner about cutting some or all of this back to the river bank to prevent it shading out the river and newly laid hedge. Once laying is completed consider re-stocking any empty lengths of hedge with native hedgerow species.

### F: G1 - Coppice Willow closest to entrance

The Willow and Hazel in this area will benefit from being coppiced on a rotation. This should be spread over a number of years to limit the habitat loss and create a varied age range of re-growth and structure. The largest willow close to the path is currently outgrowing the location and has a number of split limbs encroaching towards the path, this should be coppiced. Some timber can be removed but it would also be beneficial to leave a pile next to the stump, this may root and re-grow. Cutting back of material growing towards Stone Bridge house would also be worth considering at this stage. Willow coppicing should be carried out on a 7-10 year rotation.

### Year 1 summary and cost estimate.

Year one has the most recommended tasks that will not benefit from delay. Depending on the level of volunteer's ability and equipment a lot of this could be done without the need of contractors. For contractors to carry out the management for this year would be estimated at;

- E: Hedge 1 - £1900 – £2,600
- All other tasks - £400 - £500

### Year 2

#### G: Alder coppicing - Coppicing down to stool level of 1-2 Alders

The Alders make up a large proportion of the trees on the site, these are all a similar age and have most likely been coppiced in the past. The decision of what trees are to be coppiced should be based on their condition at the time and the information on the Tree Risk Assessment. This work will allow some of the larger trees to have wider crowns and to create a varied age range in the future.

It could also be worth creating some standing dead monoliths for habitat if the trees that are selected lend themselves to this. They will need to be in low use areas, not too tall and they can be added to the annual inspection list to assess their stability. These could provide great habitat for bats, birds and invertebrates. Monoliths could be enhanced with the addition of further habitat creation as in the images below. Artificial cracks made in the trunks with a chainsaw make for great potential bat habitat and smaller nest cavities for birds. This work is most likely only able to be carried out by contractors and would cost £450 - £680.



### **Year 3**

#### **H: G1 -Coppicing of remaining Willow**

The remaining 2-3 groups of Willow coppiced in area G1. Timber stacked near stumps as habitat or removed. A small fire may be an option for brash disposal by volunteers if the wind is coming from the East.

Estimated contractor cost to carry this out would be £200 - £250

### **Year 4**

#### **I: Hedge 2 - Hedge laying and old fence removal**

This hedge has less of a historic value as it is most likely a recent addition. It is a young mixed native hedge and provides a valuable habitat. Along this Northern boundary there are two fences, one of these is growing within this hedge, and it will become more grown in the longer it is left. Allowing this hedge to grow on the top for 2-3 years before laying will provide a good amount of material to lay and make a dense hedge, the old fence removal should happen at the same time as laying.

This is something that could be carried out by volunteers. Contractors estimated cost would be £1300 - £1700

### **Year 5**

#### **J: Sycamore 867 - Consider removal if the tree is competing with Oak 868**

Twin stemmed Sycamore. This tree will grow quicker than the Oak and an assessment should be made at this time on whether or not it is outcompeting the Oak. Contractor cost estimated at £400 - £500

#### **K: G1 - Coppicing one of the two Hazels**

Coppicing is a traditional way to manage Hazel. It grows back vigorously and will extend the life of the tree. Hazel coppicing can be repeated on an 8-15 year cycle, maybe longer if there is an aesthetic value. This could be for either of the two Hazels, potentially the larger of the two.

#### **L: Alder coppicing - Coppicing a further 1-2 stools.**

If the coppiced Alders from year two are successfully growing back the same again could be carried out on 1-2 stools. These should be selected at the time based on condition.

### **1.4 Tree inspections**

The Tree Risk Assessment that accompanies this management plan was completed 13/5/20 and is valid for 12 months. Trees are living structures in a dynamic environment and have no guarantee of safety. As it is likely to be unviable to have professional tree inspections carried out every 12 months, establishing an inspection routine with non-professional volunteers who have basic tree knowledge will go some way to meeting your duty of care to the public for the trees.

Each tree should be inspected, referring to the Tree Risk Assessment for each tree. Any findings that volunteers are unsure of should be referred to a qualified tree inspector. A record should be kept with the dates for each inspection and notes on any changes. Trees should also be inspected after every storm and strong winds to check for damage.

## 1.5 Annual task

There will be a number of annual tasks that need completing on the site with the emphasis on tree and vegetation management. Site managers may already have a broader task list that these can be included with.

The laid hedges would ideally be trimmed for the first two years of re-growth with a small handheld hedge trimmer. This will encourage a thicker hedge to re-generate. This does not need to be repeated but could be continued if you wish to keep the hedges compact or control re-growth on one side. This should be done at the end of the growing season and bird nesting, September – March.

The trees with Ivy cover leaning towards the high use areas were all cut in 2020, it is unlikely this will need to be repeated over the 5 years but an assessment should be made annually. The internal trees with Ivy cover make for good habitat, monitoring this Ivy and making sure it does not grow into the upper canopy of the trees so it does not become detrimental to the individual tree. To cut the Ivy use a combination of a small hand saw and secateurs. Taking care not to cut into the bark create a 30cm gap/band at the base of the tree clear of all Ivy, the Ivy will fall off in time and re-grow from the cut point.

Annual tasks to complete	Check table.				
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Clearance around access points, stiles and footpaths.					
Cut ivy on trees with lean towards high use areas.					
Cut ivy on trees with <b>heavy</b> ivy cover, reaching upper crown					
Basic tree inspections. Also after each storm.					
Hedge trimming - hedge 1					
Hedge trimming - hedge 2					

Filled boxes n/a

## 1.6 Limitations

This management plan was completed in June 2020 and is based on the then current objectives, uses and tree conditions. With there being little need to carry out work at present from a safety aspect there will undoubtedly be a level of flexibility in what tasks are completed and when. This will most likely be governed by the availability of the volunteers to carry out the tasks or the funding to employ contractors.

With the capabilities of the volunteers unknown. There is an element of ambiguity to the section declaring what tasks can be completed with non-professional help, this is a guide and professional help should be sought if volunteers are not equipped to carry out these tasks.

This management plan is for the trees and does not cover the ground floor vegetation, accessibility, and infrastructure.

A review of this plan in year 2-3 could be considered.