



Chill Wood, Iron Acton, South Gloucestershire

Five Year Management Plan containing:

- **Woodland assessment**
- **Management aims**
- **Program of works**



On behalf of
Iron Acton Parish Council

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1.0 Instructions/Scope

- 1.0.1 Silverback Arboricultural Consultancy have been instructed to compile a five year management plan for an area of woodland known as Chill Wood, Iron Acton.
- 1.0.2 The management plan has been informed by an initial woodland survey undertaken by Silverback Arboricultural Consultancy (SAC195) dated October 2014 and consultation with Iron Acton Parish Council, currently responsible for the woodland.
- 1.0.3 This document should be read in conjunction with the Initial Woodland Survey.

1.1 Legal Duty

- 1.1.1 It is the responsibility of the tree owner to ensure that their tree(s) is in a safe and stable condition, including the effects of root activity, through duty of care in the *Occupiers Liability Act (1957 & 1984)*.
- 1.1.2 The Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 makes it an offence to disturb a nesting bird or recklessly endanger a bat or its roost. Professional advice should be sought, where relevant, before undertaking any recommended works.
- 1.1.3 Chill Wood is covered by a Woodland Preservation Order. Woodland Preservation Orders protects young trees, as well as the existing mature specimens. Subsequently the existing Woodland Order will continue to protect all the trees as the woodland naturally regenerates or additional planting is undertaken to enhance the woods.
- 1.1.4 Prior to commencement of any management works written consent will be required from South Gloucestershire Council for the proposed tree works.

2.0 Findings of woodland survey

- 2.1 Chill wood is a mixed species broadleaf wood which would, historically, have been predominantly Oak and Beech with a varied understorey including Hazel, Thorn, Wild Service Trees. The Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre – BRERC lists Chill Wood as being a Beech/Oak wood, containing Wild Service Trees, Bluebells, abundant Wood Melick and Wood Millet, Primrose, Foxglove and Wood Surge.
- 2.2 The woodland is currently dominated by mature Oak and Beech however there are a large number of semi-mature and mature Ash trees around the woodland edges which appear to be taking over. There is a wide mix of tree species contained within the woodland including, Wild Cherry, Common Alder, Sycamore, Horse Chestnut, Field Maple, Goat & Crack Willow and two mature European Larch trees. There was no evidence of Wild Service trees in or on the edges of the woodland.
- 2.3 The understorey is predominately Holly throughout the main body of the woods. Due to its evergreen habit Holly out-competes other shrubs and smaller trees, shading them out and preventing their establishment. Around the woodland edges, where there is less Holly, Hazel, Elder, English & Wych Elm, Hawthorn and Blackthorn can be found.
- 2.4 The Holly and the presence of extensive ground Ivy, aided by the excessive shading of the woodland floor by the Holly, have restricted the ground cover plants to the woodland edges. This has reduced the bio-diversity of the woodland and may have impacted on the varieties of animals and birds living in the woods
- 2.5 Even on the woodland edges the understorey is sparse with a lack of woodland shrubs and smaller tree. Holly is gradually establishing itself in these areas. Areas of Holly should be cleared to allow the planting of suitable native species to increase the bio-diversity and species mix of the woodland.
- 2.6 There are a large number of fallen trees within the woods which have been left in situ. This has some ecological value, however it is considered that the amount of ‘random’ fallen trees on the woodland floor could also have a detrimental impact on some woodland ground species.

3.0 Management Aims

As previously discussed the management aims were agreed with reference to the initial woodland survey and consultation with Iron Acton Parish Councillors during a site meeting within the woodland.

- **Improve public access through the woodland by the establishment of recognised footpaths.** Currently the two main footpaths are narrow in places with overhanging branches restricting visibility and access, making the footpaths feel unsafe. These improved footpaths could also then be used to access the woodland to remove arisings from ongoing management works. Footpaths could be covered with a layer of woodchip to create a flatter surface allowing easier access.
- **Increase public awareness and potentially enjoyment of the woodland.** This could be done by erecting interpretation boards at either end of the woodland. These could have a map indicating the position of the main footpaths; a section with a small insight into the history of the woodland and pictures identifying common species of trees, shrubs, wild flowers and animals which can be seen within the woodland.
- **Encourage public involvement with the woodland by creating a Chill Wood Friends Group.** This group would undertake works within the woodland, assist in ongoing management and adopt the woodland as their own. The Friends could then make further suggestions to enhance and improve the woodland to suit their needs. It may be possible to get some assistance from South Gloucestershire Council with this as they oversee a number of 'Friends groups' in the area.
- **Control the invasive species which are taking over the woodland.** Lack of management has allowed the establishment of invasive species, such as Holly and Ash, throughout the woodland. These are preventing natural re-generation of other species, and preventing sunlight reaching the woodland floor, reducing the amount of woodland flowers. This situation has increased over the past ten years to a point where woodland flowers are only blooming in small areas of the woodland, mainly towards the edges.

- **Enhance the existing woodland and ensure its ongoing viability and improved biodiversity**
This would involve planting new trees, shrubs and ground flora of similar species to those currently growing within the woodland whilst also re-introducing other native species trees, shrubs and ground flora which are known to have grown within the woodland in the past. These could include Wild Service Tree, Guelder Rose, Foxgloves. (appendix 4)

4.0 Constraints

4.0.1 It is an offence under The Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 to disturb nesting birds. The bird nesting season varies considerable but officially recognised as February – August. If works are intended during this period a site survey, of the proposed works area, should be undertaken prior to commencement. If nesting birds are located works will need to be postponed.

4.0.2 It is an offence under The Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 to recklessly endanger a bat or its roost. It is considered that the general clearance of invasive species proposed should not impact on any bats within the woodland.

However it is considered that the dangerous trees and branches, proposed for removal adjacent to the footpaths, could potentially contain bat roasts. As previously discussed it is recommended that a qualified Tree Surgery Contractor is employed to undertake these works. They will be able to assess the potential presence of bats and act accordingly.

4.0.3. Public access through the woodland

Prior to any works it is recommended that a site notice is erected informing the general public of proposed dates for the works. During the work the area should be closed to public access and tapped of with hazard tape and clear signage.

5.0 Program of works

The proposed five year program of works is detailed in Appendix 1 of this report. These recommendations are intended as a guide and can be altered at any stage. Works to improve access to the woodland, which should be undertaken prior to the commencement of any other works, are listed in section 5.3 below.

5.1 For management purposes it is proposed to divide the woodland into 4 sections along the main two footpaths, as indicated on the proposed area division plan (appendix 3). This will enable the works to be undertaken on different sections over a number of years. Subsequently, the impact of the works will be reduced since areas of wild woodland will still be available during the works. New planting will be of various ages throughout the woods. Different stages of coppice rotation within various areas of the woods will create a range of habitats.

5.2 Prior to the commencement of any management works it is recommended that the existing two main footpaths are improved for public access and to facilitate management works.

5.3 **Works to improve main footpaths**

Remove dangerous trees and potentially dangerous branches overhanging or adjacent to the main footpaths. All works will be undertaken in accordance with BS3998:2010 Tree Work Recommendations. It is recommended a suitably qualified and experienced Tree Surgery contractor should be employed to undertake this work.

Widening of the two main footpaths to 2 metres (indicated in yellow on Site plan appendix 3) to allow un-hindered public access through the woodland. These two paths will also be used by small vehicles to clear debris from ongoing management works within the woods.

Erect interpretation boards at either end of woodland

6.0 **Work operations. (to be read in conjunction with 5 year work program)**

Recommended works are detailed in the five year management plan schedule (appendix1). These recommendations are intended as a guide and can be altered at any stage.

6.1 Clearance works should involve removal of weak, suppressed and over grown specimens in the first instance. Young and well-structured trees should be retained where possible. Where practical, the roots should be removed at the same time as the trees to prevent re-growth. It is recommended that trees intended for removal should be identified prior to the start of works.

6.2 As part of clearance, recently fallen trees and branches should be removed. Standing dead trees and deadwood within trees should be managed in accordance with the recommendations contained in the initial tree survey

6.3 Management of arisings from works

Larger wood can be cut and stacked in habitat piles throughout the woodland. Small branches should either be removed from the site or chipped onto the main footpaths.

6.4 New planting

New planting should only be undertaken with native species appropriate to the location. (see species list appendix 4). Planting should occur within the planting season Nov-March using, bare root stock sourced from a local tree nursery with known provenance if possible.

6.4.1 It is recommended that the new trees are planted as whips. This is the most cost effective method which requires less maintenance and has a higher success rate than planting with larger stock.

6.4.2 All new planting will need to be suitably protected from animals. The use of tree tubes is recommended for the first few years after which more substantial tree guards can be employed.

7.0 Contact Details

7.1 Arboricultural Consultant

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7.2 Local Authority Tree Officer

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8.0 Appendices

- Five year work program
- Existing footpaths
- Proposed area division within woodland
- Native species list

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Wright", is positioned above the printed name.

Chris Wright. MArborA, Tech Cert.Arbor.A

Principal Consultant

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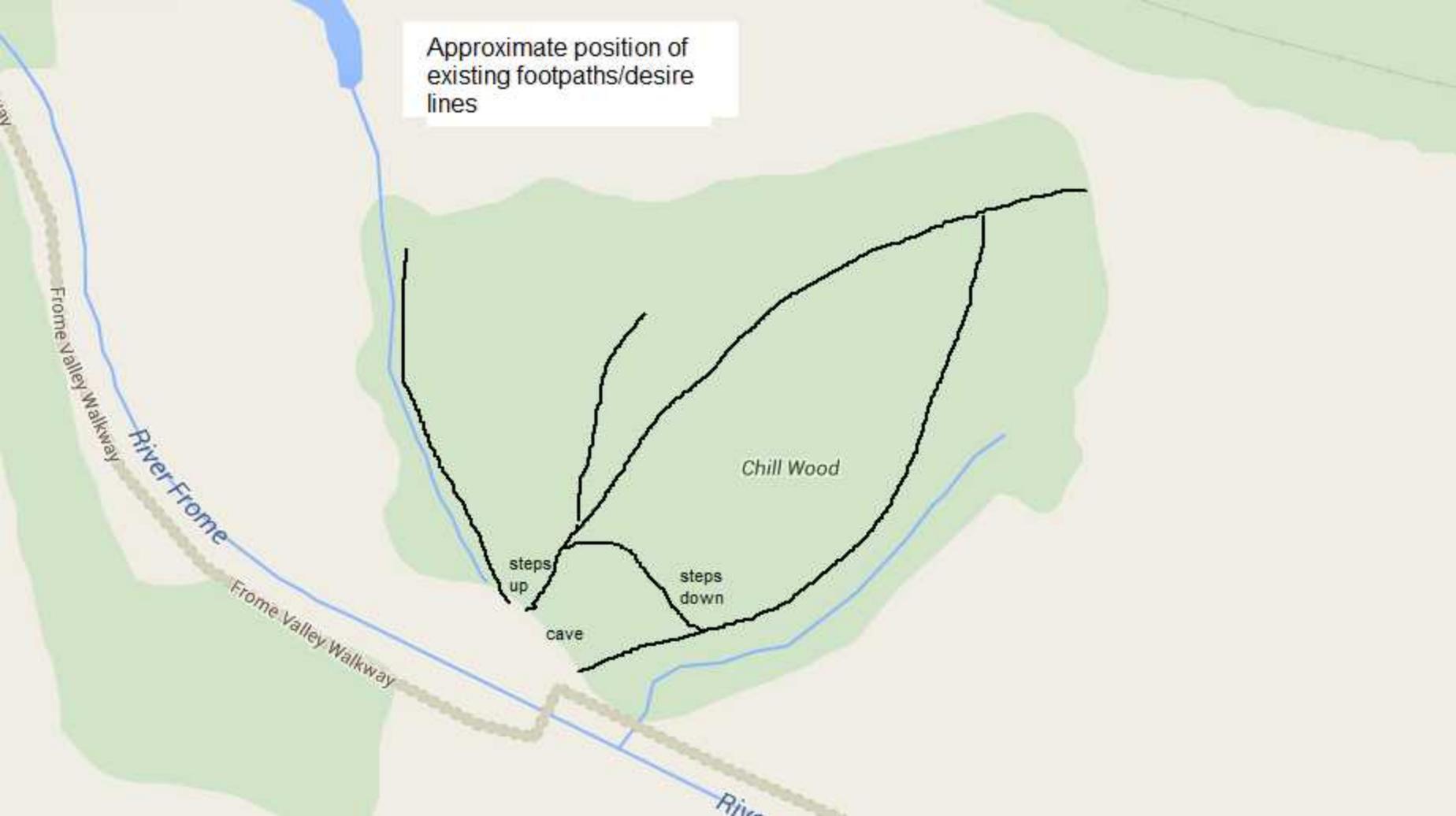
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Five Year Works Program, Chill Wood, Iron Acton

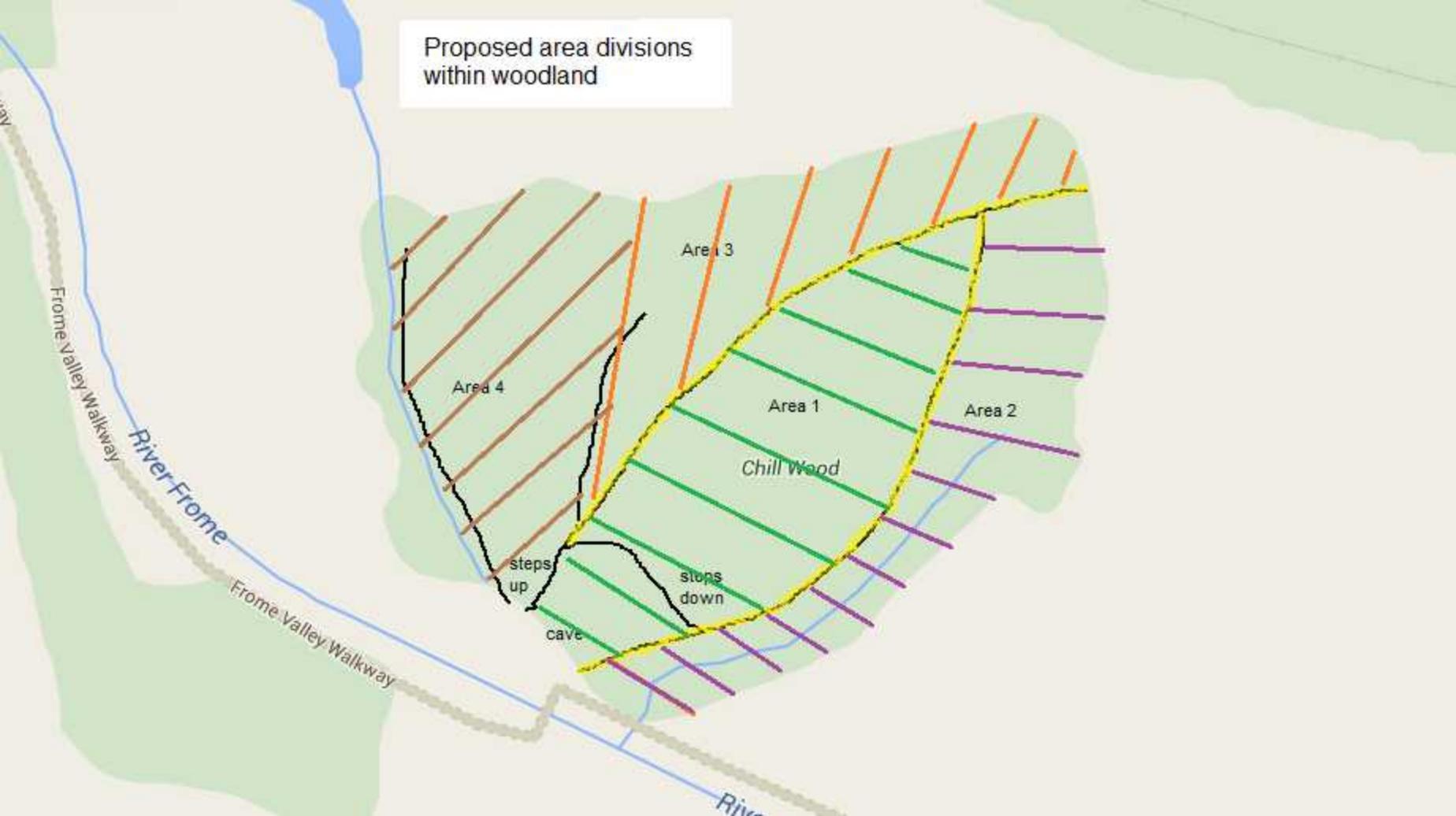


Area	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Footpaths	<p>Remove dangerous trees and potentially dangerous branches overhanging or adjacent to the main footpaths.</p> <p>Widening of the two main footpaths to 2m (indicated in yellow on site plan appendix 3)</p> <p>Erect Interpretation boards</p>	No works	<p>Cut back any overhanging branches from footpath</p> <p>Spread new woodchip to maintain footpaths</p>	No works	<p>Cut back any overhanging branches from footpath</p> <p>Spread new woodchip to maintain footpaths</p>
1 (green)	<p>Clear dead trees and branches from woodland floor</p> <p>Remove 80% of Holly.</p> <p>Re-coppice Hazel stools</p>	Plant new trees, shrubs and wild flowers	<p>Inspect new planting, check guards, replace damaged or dead plants</p>	<p>Cut back any new vegetation encroaching on new planting,</p> <p>Check new trees as previous year</p>	As Year 4
2 (purple)	No works	<p>Clear dead trees and branches from woodland floor</p> <p>Remove 80% of Holly.</p> <p>Selectively fell 50% of young Ash trees.</p> <p>Re-coppice Hazel stools</p>	<p>Plant new trees shrubs and wild flowers</p>	<p>Inspect new planting, check guards, replace damaged or dead plants</p>	<p>Cut back any new vegetation encroaching on new planting,</p> <p>Check new trees as previous year</p>
3 (orange)	No works	No works	<p>Clear dead trees and branches from woodland floor</p> <p>Remove 80% of Holly.</p> <p>Re-coppice Hazel stools</p>	<p>Plant new trees shrubs and wild flowers</p>	<p>Inspect new planting check guards, replace damaged or dead plants</p>
4 (brown)	No works	No works	No works	<p>Clear dead trees and branches from woodland floor</p> <p>Remove 80% of Holly.</p> <p>Re-coppice Hazel stools</p>	<p>Plant new trees shrubs and wild flowers</p>

Approximate position of
existing footpaths/desire
lines



Proposed area divisions
within woodland



Native species for planting.

Trees

Wild service tree (*Sorbus torminalis*).

Mountain ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*)

Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*)

Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)

Yew (*Taxus bacata*) (EG) although poisonous, yew is a common woodland tree.

Strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*) (EG)

Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) (EG)

Shrubs

Guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*)

Wayfaring Tree (*Viburnum lantana*)

Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*)

Box (*Buxus sempervirens*) (EG)

Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*) (EG)

Flowers

Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scriptus*)

Snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*)

Anemones (*Anemone nivalis* / *blanda*)

Foxgloves (*Digitalis purpurea*)

Primroses (*Primula vulgaris*)

Violet (*Viola* spp)

Wild Flower Seed including Orchids, Oxe-eye Daisy, Red Campion, etc.