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DRAFT
OUTLINE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR SOUTHAMPTON
COMMON

1. CONTEXT OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

1.1 Summary

- 1.1.1 Southampton Common is situated approximately 2km north of the Civic Centre. It is an extensive recreational area (146ha) noteworthy for its variety of habitats and proximity to the centre of the City. This variety was given official recognition in 1987 when approximately two thirds of the area (90 ha) was notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (S.S.S.I.).
- 1.1.2 Historical use as common, with rights of pasture, has left a legacy of clumps of woodland edged with bramble and surrounded by grassland. Over half of the total area is now covered in woodland. Oak with a dense understorey of Holly predominates, other areas containing Beech, Scots pine, Silver birch and Ash. Ad-hoc planting of native and exotic species including Maples, Corsican pine, Larch, Hornbeam and Turkey oak has supplemented the natural woodland creating the variety seen today.
- 1.1.3 Photographs taken at the end of the 19th Century show much of the area to be dominated by gorse and heathers, reminiscent of the heaths seen in the New Forest today. The decline in the use of the Common as a grazing area and the gradual change to management as a public recreation area has resulted in a loss of almost all of the heath and even scrub is now a diminishing resource. It has become increasingly apparent that active management is urgently needed to prevent further loss of rare habitats due to the processes of natural succession and to reverse the adverse affects of inappropriate management in the past e.g.planting of ornamental scarlet oaks in heathland/gorse patches. Some small scale work has been carried out in the last few years most of it under the supervision of ecologists based at the Hawthorns Urban Wildlife Centre on The Common. If the objectives of the Southampton City Nature Conservation Strategy i.e. to protect, promote, improve and (re)create areas of nature conservation value within Southampton are to be achieved more action is needed now. This is true City wide, but is particularly important for the Common which is seen by many as the jewel in Southamptons' Open Space crown. There has been little or no structure to the management of The Common for most of this century. This management plan is envisaged to provide a framework for future work in the short, medium and long term as well as allowing flexibility in management in the light of new knowledge. Its adoption will provide a show case for the implementation of the strategy.

- 1.1.4 Three lakes and a system of ditches provide additional interest including fishing, an ornamental wildfowl collection and breeding areas for five species of amphibian. This latter fact, combined with the rich variety of other wildlife, resulted in a large part of the Common west of The Avenue being given S.S.S.I. status at the beginning of 1987. This designation also resulted in the N.C.C. (now English Nature) highlighting the need for a management plan which would need to be agreed by them before implementation.
- 1.1.5 The adjacent Old Cemetery (originally part of The Common) currently has its own management plan but is an important resource for the wildlife of The Common and it is hoped that the management of both areas will be considered together in the future.

1.2 History

- 1.2.1 The first written record of the Common was in 1228. The area was the main source of permanent pasture for the cattle and horses of the (then) town and was managed accordingly. Earthbanks and hedgerows were erected around the boundaries to keep stock in and groves of trees/bushes were encouraged to provide shelter and shade. The historical boundaries are not clear but The Common formerly extended further north and east and probably included the Inner Avenue (the route into the walled town). The area was managed by a team including the town cowherd and the brickmaker. The former collected dairy cows each morning, drove them north onto The Common and returned them to the walled town each night. Signs of the brickmakers activities can still be seen around the old zoo site (now The Hawthorns) in the south and near Burgess Road in the north, where pits formed by the excavation of clay were not filled in.
- 1.2.2 The earthbanks still visible around the north and west sides are probably part of the enclosure of 1577. Work was carried out in 1991 to repair extensive breaches in these old turf banks.
- 1.2.3 Water was taken from The Common from at least the 16th century to supplement the towns piped water supply. The growth of Southampton into a fashionable spa town by the early 1800's resulted in a shortage of water and the building of a small reservoir behind the Cowherds Inn. This was soon filled in but a second was constructed to the north and was rapidly followed by a third. The second reservoir was eventually converted into a paddling pool by 1937, the latter was filled in to its present (1 metre) depth using rubble from the demolition of military buildings which were erected on The Common during the 1st World War. An unsuccessful artesian well was then bored just north-east of the 3rd reservoir and by 1850 water from Mansbridge was pumped to two open reservoirs just west of the present day junction of The Avenue with Burgess Road. Pumping from Mansbridge stopped by 1892 but the reservoir was covered and still used until 1948, then converted into the single, larger covered reservoir now present. Various streams and ponds have formed and disappeared as activities altered the drainage patterns of The Common.

- 1.2.4 As the spa town developed the approaches to the town were improved and the present day tree lined Avenue evolved. A racecourse was built by 1822 forming a north-north-east/south-south-west circuit around the Boating Lake and what is now the north-east corner of the Cemetery. A carriage drive was also constructed around the north and west boundaries of The Common. The last recorded race was in 1881 and riding was gradually restricted thereafter.
- 1.2.5 The increasing population also resulted in a new town cemetery being urgently needed and in 1843 10 acres in the south-west corner of The Common was taken for this purpose. This was followed by another 5 acres in 1863 and a further 12 acres in 1884 resulting in the present day 10.5ha. "Old Cemetery".
- 1.2.6 During the 1500's the Court Leet limited commoners to two animals each. The rights of common gradually fell into disuse during the 18th century as it became impracticable to drive cattle through the rapidly expanding built-up areas. A few dairy cattle were kept on the north of The Common until just before the 2nd World War.
- 1.2.7 The Marsh Act of 1844 declared The Common to be a recreational area for the use of the inhabitants of Southampton. Tree planting was encouraged and by the 1860's furze was removed, the ground levelled and The Common gradually became parkland. Amusements, circuses and agricultural shows were held, these are now limited to the three day Southampton Show and 3 fairs, with occasional other activities such as balloon races. The total of such activities, including setting up and taking down must not by law exceed 60 days. Southampton is one of the few places to still have a Court Leet.
- 1.2.8 The takeover by the military during the 2nd World War caused further areas of gorse and young trees to be destroyed, the foundations of many huts can still be seen in mown areas today.
- 1.2.9 Other activities in the past have been shooting, including pigeon and squirrel shoots to control numbers, band concerts, boating, polo matches, cycle and motorcycle rallies and a small golf course.
- 1.2.10 Flooding of a disused gravel pit created the Cemetery Lake by 1881. The Ornamental Lake was originally constructed (beginning 1888) as a double, crescent shaped lake separated by a weir, but the NE section gradually shrank and had gone by 1933. The addition of an island near the weir in 1910 resulted in the lake as seen today.
- 1.2.11 Until 1945 various buildings stood on the site of the old brickmakers house. The area then became a tree nursery until 1961 when a zoo (Pet's corner) was opened. This was closed in January 1985 and demolished to make way for the new Hawthorns Urban Wildlife Centre which opened in April 1990.

1.3 Natural interest

- 1.3.1 Southampton Common has long been renowned for its wide variety of habitats which are particularly unique due to the proximity of The Common to the City Centre. Habitats include one of the best examples of wet meadow in Hampshire, short grassland, rough grassland, wet woodland, deciduous woodland, coniferous woodland, remnant heath, acid grassland and acid scrub/woodland. This range of habitats result both from the historical management and the underlying geology. The Common lies on a gravel ridge separating the Test and Itchen Valleys. Clays further down the slope result in various springs emerging at the boundaries of the strata. The pH of the soil varies from slightly alkaline/neutral where springs emerge or underlying foundations from past buildings survive, to acid (pH4.5) on the top of the gravel plateau.
- 1.3.2 Changes in the water table result in the springs (and associated flora and fauna) moving position and several of the streams now only run after heavy rain. The range of habitats support a large variety of insects, including over 200 moth species. Butterflies such as Large and Small skippers, Meadow brown, Gatekeeper and Speckled woods are common and Purple hairstreaks can be prolific. Brimstones breed on the large quantities of Alder buckthorn in some areas and Holly blues can be abundant. Occasional White Admirals, Dark green fritillaries and Clouded Yellows have been seen.
- 1.3.3 Areas where mowing is not too regular support meadow plants such as Fleabane, Knapweed, Devilsbit scabious and Tufted vetch. Some wetter areas have Adders' Tongue fern and Common Spotted, Southern Marsh and Twayblade orchids. Short mown turf is favoured by large populations of the Autumn Ladies Tresses orchid, especially near the covered reservoir in the north. Green winged orchids grow here in varying numbers but have not been seen recently on the reservoir top. Until it was enlarged in 1949, the reservoir banks also supported Bee orchids. A few plants of this species have appeared annually since 1984 further south, east of the Boating Lake.
- 1.3.4 Many woodland plants are present but scarce, mainly due to the dense woodland canopy, picking by humans and the history of grazing. The picture is further complicated by planting of mainly garden varieties by visitors. Broad-leaved helleborines appear occasionally in scattered localities, the largest numbers to the east of The Avenue. Oxeye daisies grow in profusion in the Old Cemetery, accompanied by Harebells and occasional Cowslips. Several garden escapes also occur as reminders of past dwellings.
- 1.3.5 Over 100 species of bird have been recorded; Woodland species such as Treecreeper, Nuthatch, Green and Greater spotted woodpeckers are well represented. Lesser spotted woodpeckers are seen more rarely and a few Wood warblers appear most years, although they stay to breed less regularly than in the past. Pied flycatchers, Redstart, Whitethroat and Sedge warblers are annual visitors and Firecrest have occasionally stayed to breed. Many other warblers appear on passage. Blackcap, Chiffchaff and Willow warbler are amongst the few that regularly stay to breed. Sparrowhawk and Tawny owl are both resident. Other sightings include Kestrel, Ring

Ouzel, Woodcock, Cuckoo and wildfowl such as Tufted duck, Pochard and more rarely Dabchick, Goldeneye and Teal. Cirl buntings died out as a breeding species by the 1970's and the last was reported in 1979. Yellowhammer, Reed bunting and Hawfinch are now rare visitors although all three were once more frequent.

- 1.3.6 Heathland species are restricted to a few remnants of a once wide-spread habitat. A few Common lizards may survive, more likely in the Old Cemetery, although an introduced population in The Hawthorns is increasing in numbers. Slowworms are present and Grass snakes are occasionally reported but these are probably just moving through. A large population of Great Crested newt is present, together with Smooth newts and very few Palmate newts. This latter species was much more common in the past when Great crested newts were hard to find. Common frog and toad can be found in the lakes and many of the ditches.
- 1.3.7 Carp, Tench, Perch, Pike, Rudd and Eels are present in the Cemetery and/or Ornamental lakes. Aquatic insects were well represented in the latter lake but dredging in the early 80's setback the populations of many species and wiped out others. Several species of Odonata (dragonflies and damselflies) are still present and a few Water scorpions and Hydra remain. Freshwater shrimp and both species of Water boatmen are still common and clouds of Daphnia are present in the Boating Lake during summer.
- 1.3.8 At least three species of bat occur (Daubentons, Pipistrelle and Noctule) and Long-eared are known to roost nearby. Foxes are very common and Badgers are occasionally seen, although the setts on The Common are inaccessible and so are not checked regularly to avoid opening up a path (and hence disturbance) to them. Wood-mice and Bank voles are common and Short-tailed voles, Common shrews and more rarely Pygmy shrews are recorded. Weasel and Stoat have both been seen and Grey squirrels sometimes approach plague proportions.
- 1.3.9 Over 100 species of fungi have been recorded and fungal forays are a popular autumn activity, although removal of specimens is not encouraged as this contravenes the byelaws.

2. THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This management plan is envisaged to provide a framework for future work in the short, medium and long term as well as allowing flexibility in management in the light of new knowledge gained.

2.1.2 **Aims of management**

To:-

- prevent further degradation of existing habitats
- increase the areas of poorly represented habitats/species (and hence make them less vulnerable to accidental loss)
- re-create habitats which have been lost from The Common
- increase the diversity of flora and fauna
- identify areas of Natural, Archaeological and Historical interest
- raise public awareness of the resources of The Common and how management is needed to maintain them.
- experiment with management and educational techniques to achieve the above and use the findings to maximise the potential and cost effective management of The Common and open space elsewhere in the City

2.1.3 **These aims are achieved by;-**

- a survey of areas to establish the current status of flora and fauna
- identifying areas of priority
- altering the management of areas accordingly (if needed)
- monitoring the effects of management regimes
- changing the management if the aims are still not being achieved
- Production of interpretive material on the above, to include displays in the Hawthorns and on a smaller scale at the site of works whilst they are being carried out by the Common Team
- review of the byelaws relating to The Common to provide a backup to the Common Team when they are performing a ranger (protection and education) function

2.1.4 The following lists the current (CM), Medium term (MT) and Long term (LT) management envisaged for different habitats on The Common.

The first section (A) details the conservation areas, split into different habitat units as identified during an initial survey and following the rational as set out in the Nature Conservation Strategy for Southampton document published in February 1992. The overall strategy for each conservation area is also detailed.

2.1.5 The second section (B) outlines general points for different types of woodland, grassland, lakes/streams and miscellaneous areas of relevance.

Section C) details the areas which are not included in this plan but are still part of The Common.

2.2 A) CONSERVATION AREAS

2.2.1 i)Location:Based on EI070, just north of the Cemetery Lake.

Strategy for area:Protection of the remaining small pocket of heath [EI070] and extension of acid scrub/heath and grassland along the shallow gravel soils which run between the Cemetery lake and the Ornamental lake. In the past many of the areas of gorse (and heather) have been cut down or more frequently shaded out by planting of mainly ornamental trees and/or the processes of natural succession. Some of the trees form an important landscape feature along the edge of the tarmac path [EI059] but several will need to be removed to prevent the loss of the heath /gorse scrub around their bases. Where the screen is left gorse scrub should be planted along the edges. An edging of gorse/bramble clumps and acid grassland (normally uncut) should be formed along the western edge of "The Flats" adjacent to EI081. The north-west corner (east of EI082) is known to have a neutral soil (pH7.25) and has the potential to become a species rich grassland.

2.2.2 EI070

CM:In the last few years leggy gorse, invading trees such as Silver birch and planted Scarlet oak have been removed from the south-west section to expose the remaining patches of heather. Regrowth is cut back annually, usually by a Jacobson ride-on flail. Each year the boundaries of the clearance are pushed back, with care being taken not to open up the southeastern and eastern edges which would leave the area open to "The Flats" (leaving the small areas of heather vulnerable to trampling).

MT/LT:Continued removal of woody scrub and trees as the heather area develops, in association with grading the edge of the adjacent woodland [EI066]. Encouraging the formation of isolated gorse/bramble clumps and occasional hawthorn bushes to the north along the boundary with EI081 and linking with EI082.

2.2.3 EI082

CM:Trimming back of brambles when they over-hang the stream [EI065].

MT/LT:Removal of shading trees and rejuvenation of gorse and bramble clumps by cutting of old woody stems. Grass to be left uncut to create nesting areas for small mammals and birds etc.

2.2.4 EI073, EI076 and EI081

Areas of acid grassland that should be left uncut to provide food and shelter for mammals and invertebrates e.g. butterfly roosting and feeding. The edges along the banks of the adjacent stream and ditches should be cut only when the mats of vegetation significantly prevent water flow (once a year in late summer?). Trees, particularly the Larch plantings, will need to be monitored and some removed to prevent detrimental shading to the scrub/grassland

2.2.5 EI079

An area of old gorse/hawthorn scrub which needs cutting back to rejuvenate the bushes and removal of some of the trees which are taking over the area. The aim to be the creation of scrubby clumps of gorse, hawthorn and bramble, with a grading and thinning of the northern edge of the adjacent EI060 woodland.

2.2.2.1 **ii)Location:**Centred on the remnant heathland [EI186], south of the Ornamental lake.

Strategy for area:The area south of the Ornamental lake was originally heathland with an open vista allowing views down to the Cemetery Lake which remained until the early 1900's. Remnants of heather still survive, particularly along the stream banks immediately down stream of the Ornamental lake, and gorse clumps hang on in small pockets. The gorse area below the bridge [EI175] has lost most of its heather during the last few years due to persistent fire lighting by children but gorse regeneration is still strong. A large area of heath adjacent to the lake was destroyed in 1983 by the dumping of pond dredging [EI414] but natural succession has resulted in a greater loss. Removal of encroaching trees is urgently needed to protect the remaining fragments of heathy scrub. Occasional coppicing of Alder buckthorn and Sallows to form a mosaic of ages is needed to create a varied age structure. This being important to create the conditions needed by breeding birds, particularly Willow warblers which are in danger of being lost as a breeding species on The Common. Isolated Alder buckthorns are used as a food plant by Brimstone caterpillars but the large stands now present need to be removed as the dense shade created is detrimental to other species. The long term aim is to reopen a swathe of heath and sallow scrub between the two lakes forming a corridor for wildlife and a viewing point along the slope of The Common.

2.2.2.2 EI414

CM:None

MT:Coppicing of the young sallow to maintain a low bushy structure, adjacent clumps being coppiced on alternate years to produce a three year cycle. Removal of invading tree species and vigorous herbs and grasses which are threatening the remaining marsh plants.

LT:Possible removal of pond dredging to recreate the historical heath underlying it.

2.2.2.3 EI413

CM:Occasional cutting back of gorse clumps and mowing of paths between the clumps.

MT:No mowing within one metre of gorse clumps, remaining grass cut once a year in August. Also at this time hand pruning of gorse clumps to encourage impenetrable bushy growth around the edge and leggier growth in the centre. A three year cycle to be used to create different stages of regrowth in adjacent gorse clumps, the cutting back to take place in September or March to avoid disturbance to nesting birds and overwintering invertebrates.

LT:Possible recreation of heath area.

2.2.2.4 EI204

CM:Mown several times a year.

MT/LT:Mow top four metres once in June, leaving the base uncut and monitor plants that appear. Grade edges of woodland EI185 and EI182 to remove some of shading from the bank.

2.2.2.5 EI202

CM:None

MT:Thinning and coppicing to grade from scrub into the woodland edge Note care needs to be taken not to open up a desire line along the edge of the stream.

LT:Possible expansion of heather eastwards from the stream bank. This would need to be accompanied by the corresponding movement of the scrub and woodland edge into EI185.

2.2.2.6 EI185

CM:None

MT:Thinning and removal of holly understorey and removal of some silver birch. The aim to produce a sunny silver birch wood with bramble glades and scattered hawthorn/blackthorn within.

LT:Thinning/removal of invading tree species and monitoring of silver birch survival to ensure the continuation of the woods character.

2.2.2.7 EI187

CM:A path is mown along the top of the west bank of the stream and both sides of the stream bank are cut several times a year. Some heather still survives on the banks but it is currently cut.

MT:Leave areas of heather uncut from June to March to allow to flower and seed. If the heather is in a situation in which cutting would result in damage to the soil surface it should not be cut. Monitor spread of heather and its seedlings and alter mowing regimes accordingly. If coarse vegetation such as grasses are smothering the heathers it should be carefully removed by hand (if small area) or the mowing frequency increased temporarily until the threat is diminished. It has been found that keeping the heathers short by mowing (even if they don't flower) is more effective for long term survival than allowing the plants to be gradually out competed by encroaching grasses etc. The bottom 30cm of each bank should be left uncut as the tussocks of vegetation provide shelter for amphibians (which may also be accidentally chopped during cutting activities). These tussocks do not provide a significant threat of flooding as the banks here are over a metre high.

LT:Continue to encourage the spread of heather with the aim of leaving larger clumps uncut for up to fifteen years. Changing the route of the mowing of the path along the edge of the stream may be used to gradually redirect people around clumps of heather on the bank top.

2.2.2.8 EI186

CM:Very occasional cutting back of branches when they overhang the path along the edge of the stream EI187.

MT:Grading back of the scrub/wood edge to form a ride with glades running parallel to the stream. This will involve coppicing some of the alder buckthorns and removal of some of the silver birches to allow more light along the eastern and southern edges of the block. Care is needed not to open up the block to through traffic from the main path EI196 i.e. grading around the edges of the block is needed to form a dense barrier before significant coppicing/thinning is undertaken. Monitor the survival of heathers and remove competing plants and immediate surrounds to encourage their spread.

LT:If the heathers spread, continue to remove shading plants except for a scrub screen along the west and north sides. Non heather areas: set up a coppicing cycle to promote the formation of acid scrub (mainly clumps of gorse and isolated alder buckthorn).

2.2.2.9 EI175

CM:Limited removal of burnt material following fires.

MT:Thinning of adjacent woodland to join up with the open acid woodland EI181 and allow the spread of gorse clumps. Expansion south along the eastern banks of EI173, with the associated grading of the woodland edges. A varied age structure of gorse should be produced by the cutting back of selected clumps on a three to five year cycle. The ditch edge should be cut back annually in August to maintain a screen of low gorse as a barrier to mountain bikers which have a habit of riding along the stream base. Occasional stems left overhanging the stream will help reduce this problem. The production of a varied age structure of gorse will depend on the effective reduction of illegal fire lighting. The formation of clumps (rather than a uniform stand) of gorse will act as a firebreak to reduce damage from such fires.

LT:Possible reintroduction of heathers along stream bank as the scrub area is expanded.

2.2.2.10 EI174

CM:none.

MT:Rejuvenation of scrub and bramble to create a sunny woodland glade and nectaring point. Removal of shading trees grading of woodland edge with EI194. Care is needed not to open up the ground too much as this area has a tendency to be very vulnerable to the formation of foot/bike tracks (which prevent regeneration and damage the ground flora).

LT:Expansion of scrub, westward into eastern half of EI194 with the possible recreation of wet heath.

2.2.2.11 EI172

CM:None.

MT:Setting up a coppicing cycle of five to ten years on the sallows and the removal of species shading the remnant heath/grassland. Care taken not to open up area too much (as EI174 above).

LT:Expansion of scrub west into eastern half of EI194 with the possible recreation of wet heath and creation of boggy reed/grassland.

2.2.3.1 **iii)Location:** Centred on the "heather area"[EI219], north-east of the Ornamental lake.

Strategy for area:Preserving and where possible extending the remaining areas of heath, wet acid grassland and acid scrub. This will involve the removal of invading tree species and coppicing of the remaining scrub. Molinia is invading the few remnants of heath and methods of control are being investigated. Older tussocks of this grass can be seen under the tree canopy and should revive with the removal of the shading species. These tussocks form an important shelter for amphibians and Common frogs were once prolific along the stream banks before heavy shade resulted

in the loss of this habitat. Coppicing of the shading species should result in a return of the purple moor grass and removal of trees should reduce the drying out of the area. This area formally contained species such as Bush Bog Cricket, Lousewort and possibly Heath spotted orchid (a poor specimen of an orchid showing the characteristics of this species was found in the mid eighties).

2.2.3.2 The south-east boundary of the area along the edge of the Ornamental lake is currently heavily eroded and the run off from these clay banks is thought to be a contributory factor to the continued turbidity of the lake. Bank stabilization using willow piling has been started at the eastern end and needs to be continued along the bank west until the beach. This living bank is more durable and more wildlife friendly than the previously tried larch boarding (much of which was burnt and/or kicked off). Temporary fencing is needed to allow the re-establishment of ground vegetation which will stabilise the shore, restrict silt run off and provide a corridor between the lake and the rank vegetation surrounds.

2.2.3.3 Generally after a fire has occurred in any of the heathy areas the resulting burnt stalks of gorse etc should be left standing to act as a barrier to protect the regenerating gorse which will appear from their bases.

2.2.3.4 EI219

CM: This area is the most intact remaining fragment of a once widespread habitat on The Common and is now the only area containing both Ling (*Calluna vulgaris*) and Crossleaved heath (*Erica tetralix*). The area is now so small that it is in imminent danger of being lost. Currently invading tree and scrub species are removed by hand with care taken not to trample the few remaining heather plants. This clearance has prevented further loss of heather but created a cosy hide away for homeless persons to sleep in! A screen of gorse has been left along one boundary parallel to the path EI224 and is trimmed occasionally to keep it dense. A screen of young trees/scrub has also been left around the other boundaries to prevent a path from forming and the possible accidental loss of the heathers due to trampling. However the proximity of this screen appears to be having a detrimental effect and work will be carried out in the next few years to move the belt further back. Options are also being examined for the removal of the Purple Moor grass tussocks which are currently invading the area around the edges and preventing expansion outwards by the heathers.

MT/LT: Continue to prevent encroachment by trees and other species which have a detrimental effect on the heath. Experiment with methods of control of such encroachment and techniques for expansion/recreation of heath. Where possible use these to expand the heath into areas which were heath in the past i.e. most of the rest of the conservation area.

2.2.3.5 EI216

CM: Thinning of scrub along the edge adjacent to EI219 (this area was the same habitat as EI219 until the invasion of scrub/trees in the 1970's).

MT: Selectively thin shading scrub/trees to encourage the regeneration of gorse clumps. Establish a protective screen of scrub along the path as a continuation of EI222.

LT: Encourage the spread of heath from the adjoining EI219.

2.2.3.6 EI220

CM:Hand removal of encroaching scrub/trees to prevent the shading of the small patches of heather recently identified as surviving under the cover. As with EI219 a barrier of scrub is left along the boundary with the path EI224 to prevent a path from forming. The coppiced gorse (and to a lesser extent the Alder buckthorn) is left to regrow unless it is directly shading heather. This is to provide shelter/food for animals which prefer the new dense and vigorous growth.

MT/LT:Monitor the success of heather spread and alter regimes accordingly with the aim of increasing the area of heather and expanding the boundary of gorse scrub outwards to the south (EI218) and west (EI252 and EI253 - both currently unmanaged).

2.2.3.7 EI218

CM:An area of ex-heath which was damaged by the dumping of pond dredging and is currently mown using a Jacobsen ride on flail to form glades. Various areas are left uncut when remnant heathland plants appear eg. heather (Ling) and once a probable Heath spotted orchid.

MT:Removal of shading tree species and re-establishment of heathers where possible. Investigate the possibility of soil stripping to remove the layer of pond dredging. Thinning of scrub along ditch (EI213) to maintain the clumps of Molinia favoured by amphibia as cover.

LT:Creation of acid heath with wet heath along the banks of the ditch.

2.2.3.8 EI211/EI213/EI221/EI254

CM:All of these ditches are currently occasionally cleared. They provide important shelter for amphibians, especially frogs, and **SHOULD NOT BE RAKED CLEAR OF LEAVES.**

MT/LT:Maintain short scrub along banks to channel people along main track through the area, thinning growth where necessary to allow growth of purple moor grass clumps and Cross-leaved heath.

2.2.3.9 EI212

CM:Mown occasionally with the few remaining pockets of heather left uncut. Small fires occur once or twice a year (at least some as a result of the activities of people associated with fishing in the adjacent lake). Burnt areas are cleared of material and mown to discourage invasive species with mowing frequencies gradually decreasing (dependant on the regeneration success of heathers/gorse). An area adjacent to the lake is temporarily fenced off to allow regeneration of the bank side and provide a refuge for wildfowl.

MT:Removal of the planted "park"trees and other invading species which are detrimental the heathy nature of the site and the encouragement of heathy scrub where it does not interfere with heathers. This will include the removal of some of the alder buckthorn clumps which outcompete some of the more typical heath species. Close monitoring and removal/pollarding of trees along the southern edge of the area adjacent to the lake. These are in danger of shading the heath and the roots create a draining effect on the clay lined lake bottom.

LT:Investigate the creation of a no fishing zone along the north bank of the lake to allow the re-establishment of bankside vegetation and safer access to and from the

lake by wildlife. Scrub boundaries to be set up at either end (between picnic area and fishing jetty) to discourage access. Removal of trees in the western half of EI215 to allow the re-establishment of heath. The heathy scrub formed will provide an attractive view from the south bank of the lake where the main access and fishing would be encouraged.

2.2.3.10 EI256

CM: Occasional cutting of the woodland edge grass, but recently avoiding the area under the shade of an isolated bank-side holly/ivy which is one of only three known sites of broad-leaved helleborine within The Common boundaries.

MT: The shading holly is coming towards the end of its life and the creation of woodland floor with the required degree of shade immediately adjacent to the site will encourage the species to spread. This will involve the thinning of the corner of the adjacent woodland edge.

EI270 and the removal of some of the holly. Rejuvenation (coppice/pollarding) of the holly at the edge of the new glade resulting from this thinning to create a barrier to prevent the formation of a new desire line.

LT: Thinning of hollies northwards towards the "burn up" (EI258), especially where there is a need for regeneration of oaks to ensure the continuation of the woodland.

2.2.4.1 iv) Location: Centred on the "Orchid area"[EI250], north-east of the Ornamental lake.

Strategy for area: The main orchid area is one of the best wet meadows in terms of species diversity in Hampshire and the management is designed to preserve this diversity. To the north and south are areas containing Autumn ladies tresses and the short turf which is essential to their survival should be preserved. This limits the scope for expansion of the long grass area which is desirable to minimise the risk of accidental loss of species due to trampling/sitting on. Much of EI418 would be the same as EI250 if it was mown to the same regime and the northern most tip of EI250 was kept mown as EI276 until the late eighties but is now undistinguishable from the rest of EI250. The woodland to the east and west forms a boundary which will need occasional management to prevent encroachment into the meadow. Similarly the scrub within the meadow. The importance of this scrub for birds and insects should be remembered. Expansion of the meadow westwards should be investigated by the gradual moving of the tree/scrub boundary during pruning to prevent encroachment. Similarly with the wet area containing the largest population of Common spotted orchids on The Common (EI225). The survival of many of the plants relies on the presence of several springs which rise in/run through the area. The location of these wet areas change through the years and the associated plant species will rely on the management changing with them.

2.2.4.2 EI250

CM: Most of the main orchid area [EI250] is currently cut once a year to a height of 4-10cm and most of the arisings removed. The timing of the cut varies according to the ripening of the orchid seeds and the ground being dry enough to allow the machinery on to cut without rutting up the soil. This is usually sometime in August or September, but may be in early October if adverse conditions have prevented an earlier cut. If it is too wet the area is not cut. Two areas where Twayblade orchids

occur have additional cut or cuts in early spring (prior to their shoots appearing) with the aim of reducing competition around their basal leaves. Devils' bit scabious and Fleabane are not cut during the main cut but are left until as late as possible in the year to allow seed to be set (usually November). Often the conditions are too wet then and these areas are not cut until the spring. N.B. The boundaries of these areas are variable due to the creeping habit of the plants involved and the movement of the wet areas within the meadow. In recent years a narrow (mowers width) path has been mown through the centre of the area to channel users through as narrow a path as possible. Desire lines need to be monitored and the use of such mown paths reviewed annually to ensure as little mowing of paths as possible whilst maintaining channelling away from the most sensitive areas (species).

Selective thinning and limited removal of encroaching scrub/trees, in particular sallow. This involves the identification of limbs which are causing the most shade and removing them as close to the ground as possible N.B. it is essential that a few main trunks are left in any clump to limit regrowth - if the clump is all coppiced the resultant regrowth has been shown to cause more shade and hence meadow loss than the original clump. Some small scale experiments on the effectiveness of digging out root stock where encroachment has become too great to control by cutting/coppicing. MT:Grading of woodland edge to increase scrub around boundaries and facilitate the expansion of the meadow area. Gradual removal of scrub/trees from around the boundary and within the meadow itself including digging out root stock where needed (this being dependant on the successful introduction of shrub into area EI275). Expansion of meadow into EI276 and EI418 where this does not threaten rarer short turf community e.g. Autumn ladies tresses.

LT:Continue expansion of meadow and scrub boundary into presently wooded areas including the possible removal of EI251.

2.2.4.3 EI418

CM:Mostly managed as amenity grassland with the turf being kept short. Autumn ladies tresses (A.L.T's) are known to occur and when areas are identified where these orchids grow they are left unmown from approximately late July to early November. The exact timing is variable depending on the season but is designed to allow flowering and the setting of seed whilst keeping the turf as short as possible.

MT:When areas where no A.L.T's occur have been identified these should be incorporated into EI250. Along the southern boundary with EI223 where the shade inhibits the diverse meadow flora a belt of long grass should be left and the adjacent woodland graded. This long grass will only need cutting when threatened by scrub encroachment i.e. every few years. Desire lines will need to be identified and a thin path mown where appropriate to channel users away from sensitive areas.

LT:Removal of scrub encroachment to long grass areas and possible expansion of meadow southwards into EI223 (by gradual moving of graded woodland edge) and out into EI227.

2.2.4.4 EI276

CM: As EI250 although generally the sward here is shorter and drier. The area contains A.L.T's and so is managed to maintain the short turf needed by this species.

MT:Identify areas where short turf species do not predominate and incorporate these

into EI250. This will mainly involve the creation of longer grass areas around the boundaries with the woodland and grading of the woodland edges. Removal of encroaching scrub.

LT:Limited scope for pushing out the boundaries by gradual moving back of the woodland edge during pruning/thinning activities. Recreation of low scrub to the north by removal of the invading young trees.

2.2.4.5 EI249

CM:Occasional cutting back of overhanging limbs.

MT:Removal of invading saplings and rejuvenation of sallows along north-west and South edges by coppicing with care taken not to increase shade over meadow. This with the aim of the gradual pushing back of boundaries eastwards towards EI248.

LT:Aim is to move this area of wet willow scrub eastwards to the drain currently hidden in the centre of EI248. This will involve the removal of some secondary woodland.

2.2.4.6 EI223

CM: Removal of limbs when they create a hazard to the footpath along the western boundary.

MT:Removal of some of the older trees with the aim of creating sunnier glades, scrub and wet willow woodland, particularly in the southern half where the eastern leg of the ornamental lake used to run through. When thinning involves removal of Silver birch these should be topped at between 2-10 metres with the taller stumps being in the most secluded areas. This will provide nesting and feeding sites for birds and insects (Lesser spotted woodpeckers have bred here in the past but are vulnerable to vandalism due to the loud calls produced by nestlings.) Care should be taken not to open up too many additional footpaths.

LT:Possible creation of boggy area/shallow pond on site of old lake.

2.2.4.7 EI225

CM:The south-east corner of this area has a clump of alders (apparently planted) the suckers of which now threaten to shade out the colony of Common spotted orchids. Cutting back some of these suckers and a few of the parent trees has recently been carried out and the area is being monitored to assess the effectiveness of this. Care is being taken not to open up the area too much as its position on a corner of two paths leaves it very vulnerable to trampling (recent tracks crossing the area were found to be the result of dog activities as dogs cut the corner whilst their owners stayed on the paths).

The wet grass verges either side of the ditch EI226 have recently been invaded by the orchids and are now left uncut during the time the orchids are above ground (approximately April to August).

MT/LT:Continued thinning of woodland to encourage the spread of the orchids and other wetland plants with care taken to prevent trampling by not opening up paths through small patches of the vulnerable species.

2.2.4.8 EI275

CM:Occasional minor thinning/ cutting back of limbs overhanging the meadow along the eastern edge of the wood.

MT:Woodland edge thinning/grading along the south-west and east boundaries and removal of some trees, especially Holly, to maintain the open nature of the wood. Note; some of the older Silver birch, especially those nearer the stream provide important nesting/feeding sites for woodpeckers and should be left undisturbed.

LT:Limited scope for expansion of the wet meadow in the southern half on the top of the ridge. Continued opening up of the wood to create pockets of sallow scrub.

2.2.4.9 EI273

CM:Thinning of selected hollies to open up the wood.

MT/LT:Continued opening up of wood, leaving some Silver birch as nest/feeding sites. Occasional removal of selected areas of bramble/scrub encroachment.

2.2.4.10 EI251

CM:None

MT:Thinning/grading around boundaries to reduce shade on meadow.

LT:Continued reduction in shading with possible removal of large oaks.

2.2.5.1 **y)Location:**Based on areas of acid grassland running east/west along the sides of the carriageway in the top north-west corner of The Common.

Strategy for area:An area of remnant heath/acid grassland in the west, grading through to a more neutral grassland containing Common spotted orchids in the east. Most of the area is now in imminent danger of losing the most interesting plants as bracken and scrubby trees are taking over. Mowing of the areas has been erratic as different regimes are tried and different machinery has been available. The neutral meadow in the east was left uncut a few years ago but this resulted in the Common spotted orchids being out-competed by coarse grasses and knapweed. Urgent clearance and thinning is needed to preserve the remaining fragments of heath and re-create the scrubby grassland which previously existed.

2.2.5.2 EI301

CM:Occasionally cut.

MT:Removal of shading species to prevent the loss of the remaining remnant heath/grassland. Thinning of the encroaching woodland westwards (into EI299) to encourage the heath to re-establish in pockets whilst not creating possible paths through from the path along the southwestern boundary of EI299.

LT:Possible creation of heath and expansion of acid scrub north and west.

2.2.5.3 EI303

CM:No routine management.

MT:Thinning/removal of encroaching trees and shrub to encourage the acid grassland. Some control measures may be needed if bracken threatens to invade the area.

LT:Creation of acid grassland with clumps of acid scrub. This would extend into the adjacent conifer wood (EI294) and beyond into the acid grassland (EI293). Some replacement/natural regeneration of conifer clumps to ensure the long term survival of conifers in the area.

2.2.5.4 EI305

CM:Mowing around edge.

MT/LT:Thinning/removal of trees/scrub to rejuvenate the scrub and regenerate the grassland. The long term aim being the formation of a graded effect from the woodland edge (EI292) in the south, through scrub and into longer and then shorter grassland in the north.

2.2.5.5 EI306

CM:Occasionally mown to produce a fairly short turf. The south-east corner has been left to grow longer in the past and a few Common spotted orchids have been recorded but were probably shaded out.

MT/LT:Creation of a graded effect from the woodland (EI307) to short turf near the tarmac path to the north. This would be complementary to the adjacent EI305.

2.2.6.1 vi)Location:Centred on the covered reservoir west of The Avenue.

Strategy for area:This area contains Green winged orchids(GWO), Autumn ladies tresses(ALT), Common spotted orchids(CSO), heathers and Common century. Most of these require short turf during at least some of the year and are vulnerable to having their seed heads cut and so need a period of no mowing. Unfortunately the timing of these phases are often contradictory for different species growing in the same area and so different compromises are being investigated. The presence of neutral/alkali loving orchids and acid loving plants make an interesting sight and suggests that much of the site must be on the border of acid/alkali. In the past some of the most dense colonies of ALT's have been lost due to the sward becoming too long when left to allow the heathers to grow. The orchid rosettes were shaded out and the thriving Birds foot trefoil and associated Common blue butterflies were also lost at this time. Green winged and Common spotted orchids grew on the covered reservoir until recently but the current mowing regimes have resulted in a gradual decline and very few (if any) now flower. Representations will be made to the managing authority (Southern water) to see if management agreements can be re-established along the lines of those which have lapsed since the mid-eighties.

2.2.6.2 EI309

CM:The management of this area is complicated by the presence of Autumn ladies tresses and heather which have apparently contradictory requirements. The northern third of the north-eastern corner containing heather is currently left uncut and invading trees/shrubs are carefully removed by hand. Gorse is cut back when it becomes leggy and overshadows the heather. The middle third of the heather clump is cut every few years when it becomes too leggy. The rest of the area is cut regularly to keep the sward short but is not cut during the flowering season of the ALT's (approximately July to October inclusive). The short sward heather also flowers at this time.

MT/LT:Continue to investigate the optimum regime for ensuring the survival of the ALT's but extending the heather clump as far as possible. Some removal of shading trees/shrubs with possible extension of heather area north-east up the slope.

2.2.6.3 EI315

CM:Early cut prior to emergence of GWO spikes if conditions are suitable in order not to compact or rut the soil. One or more cuts between the seed drop of the GWO's and the emergence of the ALT's spikes and again after the seed drop of the ALT's (if not too wet). Coarser vegetation, particularly knapweed, occurs in the dip between the dry bank and tarmac path(EI311) and is currently encroaching further up the slope. Additional cuts are often required to prevent the sward becoming too dense and shading out the orchid rosettes - this may sometimes involve the cutting of a few early/late spikes but is considered preferable to losing the plants altogether (both species are perennials and so will flower in subsequent years). An area of longer grass and knapweed is left along the western side where the short turf species have already been lost due to the putting in of a pipeline.

MT/LT:Investigate methods for control of encroaching coarser plants and extension of the orchid areas.

2.2.6.4 EI310/EI287

CM:Mown occasionally to maintain short turf. Known to contain ALT's and areas where these are identified are left uncut during the relevant flowering period.

MT/LT:Creation of wild flower meadow with longer grass, but first need to identify areas where ALT's are/have the potential to be and keep the sward short here. Removal of shading species where they are detrimental to the survival of ALT's and/or heather.

2.2.7.1 vii)Location:North of the carriage drive in the NE corner of The Common.

Strategy for area:This is an area of woody scrub with remnants of grassland on a slightly alkaline soil (pH7.5). It is rapidly becoming overshadowed by secondary woodland and thinning/clearance is needed to re-create the former open rough grassland with clumps of scrub. The sheltered, south-facing aspect gives great potential for encouraging scrub warblers, butterflies and the formation of a species rich grassland.

CM:None.

MT:Thinning of selected areas to rejuvenate the scrub and allow rough grassland to re-establish. Clear different areas each year to form a varied age structure of scrub and monitor the effects of increasing light levels on the flora and fauna.

LT:Possible regular coppicing cycle to maintain different ages of scrub and the related variety of flora and fauna.

2.2.8.1 viii)Location:Bounded by The Avenue, Highfield lane and Highfield road.

Strategy for area:This side of The Avenue was the last corner of The Common to still be regularly grazed (up to the beginning of the Second World War). As a result it retained a fairly open aspect until the mid seventies. The area still contains a range of habitats including wetland,acid and neutral grasslands and acid scrub. These are now only present as small remnants and are in imminent danger of being lost to invasion by secondary woodland. Thinning and clearance is needed to prevent the loss of the remaining fragments and re-create the former more open nature of the area. An area known to support a colony of Common spotted orchids in the mid seventies was thinned at the end of the eighties. The increased light levels resulted in three spikes appearing in the following spring and several Adders tongue fern

were also discovered. This area is kept clear of regrowth and the orchids have appeared in varying numbers each year. It is hoped that increasing the size of the cleared area will result in more orchids being found. A small colony of Autumn ladies tresses has also been found in the area adjacent to a patch of heather and longer grass left to provide nectar for butterflies. The area will need to be closely monitored to ensure that none of these orchids are accidentally lost by allowing the sward to become too long due to a reduction in mowing frequencies. Broad-leaved helleborines occur east of the Avenue to the south of the underpass. This is the largest of the three known colonies on The Common and one the largest of only eight sites known in Southampton. First found in 1987, when there were at least ten spikes, numbers have rapidly declined following dumping on the site during highway maintenance and mowing by outside workers during preparations for a royal visit. It is hoped that they still survive in subterranean form and liaison will be sought with external authorities to prevent such accidental loss from occurring again.

The stream running through the area dries out most summers and is now effectively a drainage ditch. It was formerly much wetter and grass snakes could still be found until the mid-seventies. The supply of water from the area north of Highfield avenue needs to be investigated, as does the source of the wet area to the south of the junction of Highfield avenue and The Avenue.

2.2.8.2 EI369

CM:Thinning along the stream was carried out at the beginning of the nineties to encourage the growth of the few remaining fragments of heath, reduce the root load on the stream and hopefully thus increase the flow.

MT:Investigate water supply as in the "strategy for area" above. Continue thinning along banks and use low scrub (mainly gorse) where there is a problem with bank erosion (including the blocking of unofficial, damaging access across or along the stream bed).

LT:Where possible re-establish/create heath along the banks to give a more open but vegetated (and attractive) edging to the route of the stream.

2.2.8.3 EI373

CM:Occasional trimming back of overhanging tree branches where they are shading out the marsh plants.

MT:Thinning and removal of some of the encroaching trees/scrub where they are casting significant shade or are drying out the area, with the aim of extending the area to the south-east (wetland plants found under the woodland suggest the area was historically significantly larger). The area has the potential to become a visually significant patch of marsh which would provide colour and structure to this corner on the main route into the City.

LT:Possible small scale digging out to maintain a range of marshy conditions and create standing water at the southern end suitable for amphibians to breed in.

2.2.8.4 EI387/EI375

CM:A small patch in the south-east corner was known historically to have contained Common spotted orchid and was thinned during the winter of 1987/88. Three small flower spikes and several blind spikes appeared in the following summer and the area is now mown once after seed-set and scrub regrowth is occasionally removed by hand. The colony has slightly increased in numbers but is not thriving and further clearance is imminent. No other work is currently carried out in the area.

MT:Creation of more glades within the woodland, starting with areas still showing signs of a recent more open nature, forming a patchwork of grassland, tall herbs and varying ages of scrub/woodland. Selective thinning to maintain a dense screen of trees immediately adjacent to The Avenue to act as a "scrubber" of toxins from the traffic and create a visual barrier between the road and The Common.

LT:Re-creation/expansion of the heath/acid scrub, particularly along the eastern boundary with the stream(EI369) and around the edges of the wet acid grassland between EI371 and EI369.

2.2.8.5 EI385/EI383

CM:Small scale hand clearance along the southeastern boundary to rejuvenate the gorse, the southern-most tip is also mown to encourage the spread of heathers. The recent erection of a seat in this area has resulted in trampling of some of the heathers and an alternative site is being sought for it.

MT:Thinning around existing clumps of gorse to encourage a more bushy growth with care taken not to open up potential paths.

LT:Re-creation of heath with clumps of acid scrub becoming more dense around the boundary of the woodland EI382.

2.2.8.6 EI377

CM:The south-east boundary with EI380 was left uncut during 1992 to allow the knapweed and associated plants to flower and seed. The adjacent bramble flowers also attract butterflies such as Gatekeepers and Small and Large skippers.

MT:Expansion of the uncut area to create a summer meadow, but proposed longer areas will first be surveyed for Autumn ladies tresses which are known to occur in EI380. Where this orchid is found the turf should be kept short and left uncut during the flowering period (approximately July to October). This regime will also allow the short heather patches to flower and has been found to be suitable for the long term survival of the heather and the orchids. Rejuvenation of the gorse clump forming the bulk of the area by removal and thinning of woody material and shading branches.

LT:Possible expansion of the meadow by gradual grading/thinning of the woodland edge of EI318.

2.2.9.1 ix)Location:Centred around the Boating lake.

Strategy for area:The Boating lake is covered in the "lakes" section. The surrounding areas of grassland and drainage ditches, particularly to the east, provide a valuable resource in which the Great crested newt (and other amphibia) can shelter and travel to and from the lake. The small wet meadow areas support the only colony of Bee orchid in Southampton, other plants of interest include Adder's

tongue fern, Bog pimpernel, Marsh pennywort, Twayblade and marsh orchids. All of these plants occur in small numbers and are very vulnerable to accidental trampling. The aim of the management is to increase the numbers and area the plants cover and hence reduce the risk of accidental loss. The management is further complicated by the possible presence of the protected Great crested newt anywhere in the area.

2.2.9.2 EI141

CM: An area of rough grassland/wet meadow which has been left uncut for most of the last decade. This has resulted in perennials such as Fleabane, Marsh mint and willowherbs predominating. In 1991 some of the area was cut once in late summer as the area was being invaded by some of the more vigorous tall herbs and coarser grasses. Any areas containing late flowering species eg. Fleabane were not cut. The top of the bank adjacent to the ditch (EI142) was traditionally cut in spring as part of the ditch maintenance. This was stopped in 1992 as the two spikes of Twayblade (three leaved form) known to occur here were often accidentally cut in the process. A narrow path is mown along the western boundary in an attempt to channel users away from the vulnerable Bee orchids (EI148).

MT: Areas containing Fleabane, Knapweed or Devil's bit scabious will be mown in Spring (this will usually involve hand operated machinery as the ground is often too wet to support a tractor without significant damage to the soil). This will provide a late summer nectar source and winter seed and shelter for wildlife. Parts of the eastern side will be kept shorter to provide the conditions needed by Bee orchid and Twayblade (NB. care will be taken not to create a new desire line and hence the danger of accidental loss due to trampling). The Twayblade patch will be cut early in the spring (prior to emergence of the growing tip) to maximise light levels (maximise growth) and reduce slug attack. All remaining areas will continue to be monitored and cut if more invasive species are seen to be a danger.

LT: Continue to encourage wet meadow species and investigate methods of channelling usage away from the more sensitive areas.

2.2.9.3 EI148

CM: Cut once a year in mid-summer (as soon as the Bee orchids have released their seed) and loose arisings raked off and removed. The areas known to contain Bee orchids are also cut by flymo early in the year (before the flower spikes appear) and possibly late in the year if the sward becomes too dense. Note: Individual Bee orchids only flower once and each year the area is searched for new rosettes and the mowing regimes altered accordingly i.e. to provide a sward short enough to prevent the shading out of rosettes but avoiding the destruction of the rosettes.

MT/LT: Continue to monitor the Bee orchids and alter management accordingly, with the aim of spreading the area where they grow and increasing the numbers of flowering spikes (currently about five a year, with the maximum so far being twelve).

2.2.9.4 EI146

CM:Cut once a year, usually in summer, when conditions are suitable. The longer sward creates a buffer for the adjacent sensitive area EI148. A single Common spotted orchid on the bank adjacent to the ditch (EI144) is thought to have been planted and is not thriving.

MT/LT:Some of the east side of the area appears to be slightly more acid, but the remainder has the potential to support the wet meadow plants from the adjacent areas. The area will continue to be monitored for the spread of these, particularly the orchids, and the management will be altered accordingly. Longer grass will continue to be used as a buffer and the timing of cut will be altered to maximise the use of the area by insects. The edges of the surrounding grasslands/woodlands will also be surveyed for potential as long grassland with the aim of reducing the pressure on the more sensitive grassy areas.

2.2.9.5 EI153

CM:This stream is the main source of water for the Boating lake. The banks are regularly cut and the stream bottom raked clear of obstructions. A marsh orchid appeared in 1992 and was left uncut until after shedding seed. The stream is diverted via the ditch (EI145) during the annual drainage of the Boating lake.

MT:A reduction in mowing frequency and close monitoring for the appearance of wetland plants, in particular orchids. Retain the proximity of the woodland edge to the north as this acts as a screen but remove shading to encourage stream edge flora and adjacent scrub. Remove some of the shading species from the ditch EI152 and to re-establish the scrub on the corner of the woodland EI235. Investigate the extension of the longer grassland northwards into EI150. N.B. raking will be limited to flood prevention and maintenance of flow into the boating lake only. This will involve the clearance of blockages preventing the flow of water into the lake and **MUST BE DONE BY HAND WITH CARE BEING TAKEN TO LOOKOUT FOR AND AVOID DISTURBANCE OF GREAT CRESTED NEWTS SHELTERING THERE IN.** Any newts accidentally disturbed will be gently moved out of danger and placed in the nearest damp cover, out of direct sunlight. This also applies to EI152;EI237;EI238;EI239;EI240 and EI241. Other ditches in this area (EI145;EI146;EI142;EI144 and the two ditches to the west and south of the boating lake) will generally be left untouched except when water is backing up to such a depth that it is threatening to flood a major path. In this case clearance will be kept to the minimum needed to prevent flooding. Occasional work may be needed to maintain banks etc but this will only be carried out at times when the possible disturbance of newts is minimal.

LT:Re-create the historical mosaic of scrub surrounded by grassland which photographs show existed in the area until at least the First World War. This will involve thinning/removal of some of the invading secondary woodland.

2.2.10.1 **x)Location:**Based around The Hawthorns Urban Wildlife Centre.

Strategy for area:The stream running through this area is one of the most reliable on The Common in that it tends to maintain flow even through the hottest summers. Situated at the southern (lower) end of The Common much of this area is prone to flooding and the area to the south of the Hawthorns is damp throughout

the year. Currently a few stunted oaks grow in the "wet woodland" along with the occasional sallow. The area is prone to trampling/vandalism as the understorey forming a protective screen from the car park in Cemetery Road is becoming leggy. Thinning/coppicing is needed to thicken up this screen adjacent to the road and allow more light onto the woodland floor to encourage the growth of vegetation. This area is traditionally used as a roost by Tawny owls and thrushes, including Redwing in the winter. The areas immediately adjacent to the stream south-east of The Hawthorns offer one of the few sites on The Common suitable for the encouragement of wetland. Again thinning is needed with the aim of creating seasonally flooded woodland and possibly a small lake/marsh. Alders and sallow/willows which have been planted just upstream will colonise the area once light levels are increased on the woodland floor.

2.2.10.2 To the west of The Hawthorns is an area of secondary woodland containing remnants of mainly acid scrub which once extended to The Old Cemetery (where fragments of heather remain). Further loss of scrub will be avoided by clearance around the remaining clumps of gorse. The long term aim being to recreate a belt of acid heath/scrub between The Hawthorns and The Old Cemetery.

2.2.10.3 To the north of The Hawthorns is a block of old Oak woodland with a ground flora mainly consisting of brambles, many of which do not flower vigorously due to shading. Hazels were planted along the edges of the main clearings in the mid '80's but further planting was prevented by heavy shade created by invading Sycamores and Holly. It is hoped to create a hazel coppice with oak standards in this area but this will depend on the removal of some of the shading species and funding for the planting of Hazel. Care will be needed not to open up too many paths through the area and to leave a barrier along the eastern edge to prevent encroachment by events such as fairs. The areas immediately abutting The Hawthorns, including the stream, are managed as part of the boundary planting of this site.

2.2.10.4 EI016

CM: The dredging from the occasional clearance of the adjacent stream (EI014) are left piled along the banks parallel to the stream. This area is prone to flooding and the desire line along the northern boundary with EI017 has tendency to creep sideways. A narrow (gravel?) path was planned to provide a slightly raised (drier) route and hence reduce the area damaged by trampling. Limited resources have so far prevented the construction of the path but funding is being sought.

MT: Thinning of canopy to encourage wetland species to spread from The Hawthorns upstream. NB. this will depend on preventing trampling/dumping by the re-establishment of the dense screen of scrub between the stream and the car parking in Cemetery road (EI011).

LT: Creation of wetland/wet-wood by flooding from the adjacent stream (this already happens following heavy rain). Possible creation of a pond. This would form a reservoir of water to help prevent the drying out of the stream EI014.

2.2.10.5 EI039

CM:A major oak fell down during the summer following the October 1987 storm, creating a natural clearing and demonstrating the potential for creating species rich woodland clearings. A few small trees have since been removed from this area and the adjacent EI038 where they were competing with more desirable and/or scarce species.

MT:Continued thinning of the woodland canopy to allow the growth of more scrubby species, priority being given to the areas containing remnants of acid scrub/grassland.

LT:Continue the band of scrub westwards to link up with the present remnants found in EI042 and EI047. The aim to form a belt of scrub/acid grassland/heath between the Old Cemetery and the northern Boundary of The Hawthorns.

2.2.10.6 EI043

CM:Planting of a few hazels along the existing clearings in the eastern half. Gradual reduction in the number of paths through the area to protect the more sensitive sites, mainly achieved by blocking with fallen material to allow the growth of brambles.

MT:Encouragement of selected specimen tree and shrub saplings by the selective thinning of shading species, particularly holly and sycamore. Possible subsequent planting where natural regeneration is not occurring with the aim of creating areas of hazel coppice.

LT:Maintain areas of hazel coppice and encourage woodland flora. This may involve the introduction of some species which would be expected in the area (either from historical records or local knowledge) but are not currently known on The Common. The source of such introductions will be as local as possible to avoid contamination of local gene stocks.

2.3 B) OTHER AREAS

2.3.1 i) WOODLAND

2.3.1.1 Except for the conservation areas detailed previously there has been no routine management of the woodland for many years (if at all). An informal policy has been in operation for several years which states that fallen wood is only removed when it is directly affecting public safety on major paths or gathering areas eg. the play area. This means that the only tree works that are carried out are of an emergency nature associated with trees in a dangerous state adjacent to public paths or private land adjoining The Common. It is envisaged that this work will continue.

Deciduous woodland

2.3.1.2 The woodland on The Common is dominated by oak which can be divided into two main categories; Older, presumed mainly based on the ancient plantings to provide shelter for the cattle; Younger, some planted but most a result of natural regeneration. The older areas are the priority (both because of their long established woodland soils and their historical/archaeological interest). Planting may be necessary in a few cases to maintain historical features but as yet the boundaries

of these have not been established as the picture is confused by subsequent planting and regeneration.

- 2.3.1.3 Generally both types have an understorey of holly of varying density and some removal of this is required to encourage the remnants of woodland flora. Natural regeneration is not a problem in most areas, but some thinning to encourage straight growth as standard trees will be needed in a few places. If the canopy is too dense to allow regeneration some thinning will be needed (some areas within EI270 are an example of this). NOTE Areas EI043, EI198 and EI270 have been identified as being "sensitive" and limited thinning to produce glades and reduce the number of paths crossing the area (by blocking with the felled timber) is needed. Elsewhere a rotation of thinning is needed to produce a patchwork of understorey density and age structure and hence provide the range of habitats needed to sustain the variety of woodland inhabitants.

Coniferous woodland

EI208;EI294

- 2.3.1.4 The dense canopy afforded by the pines on the island in the Ornamental lake (EI208) has resulted in a poor ground cover and associated erosion to the banks of the island. Eventual replacement with more wildlife friendly willows, alder and possibly Silver birch in the centre would provide more protection around the edges of the island (both from wave action and human/dog invasion) and structure to retain the landscape function of the island. The resultant increased light around the edges of the island would also allow marginal vegetation to thrive and hence increased resting and breeding areas for aquatic fauna such as dragonflies and the wildfowl that inhabit the area (see comments under lakes).

The pine plantation (EI294) has apparently not been managed since it was planted. It is in need of selective thinning and removal of some of the holly understorey in order to allow more light onto the floor to encourage regeneration and the few remnants of woodland flora. Some replanting of the pines is also needed to provide a more varied age structure.

Mixed woodland

EI190;EI245;EI312;EI322;EI329;EI356;EI365.

- 2.3.1.5 Generally these areas are a mixture of older, presumably planted, trees and younger naturally regenerating stock. If the mixed species composition is to be maintained some of the less vigorous and non-reproducing species will need to be planted and more vigorous species removed when adversely affecting them. Generally only native species should be encouraged and the ornamentals restricted to a few points on the extremities where they produce maximum visual impact.

Damp woodland

EI016;EI017;EI225;EI249.

- 2.3.1.6 Damp woodland is rare on The Common and all of the above areas are dealt with in the conservation areas earlier.

2.3.2. ii) GRASSLAND

2.3.2.1 Until recently most of the grassland on The Common has been cut on a regular basis and the plant communities surviving have been able to withstand this. Some areas (detailed in conservation areas earlier) are now being managed with specific communities in mind and the mowing has been altered accordingly. However it should be pointed out that constant monitoring is needed and several of the regimes are experimental and are only being carried out after careful survey and evaluation of the likely outcome of the change. The danger is the accidental loss of a species due to a change in the type and/or frequency of cut. In the past several areas of Autumn ladies tresses have been lost due to a reduction in mowing frequency and the subsequent increase in sward height. Over the last few years a survey has been undertaken to try to establish the exact distribution of the Autumn Ladies Tresses. In 1992 all of the grassy areas north of the path from Holly lodge to the Highfield underpass were left uncut during most of July and August to allow the plants to flower (the flower spikes are easier to see). The dry start to the season followed by the wet flowering period resulted in some known plants not flowering but despite this several new clumps were found. The survey will continue and areas identified as having Autumn Ladies Tresses will be mown in such a way to maintain short turf and allow flowering without letting the turf grow too long.

2.3.2.2 As the surveys progress it is envisaged that more areas will be left to grow longer which should produce a change in plant communities and favour small mammals, some butterfly species, other invertebrates and provide nesting cover for ground nesting birds such as Willow warbler which have declined in recent years. The long term aim is to produce a graded edge from the woodland, through scrub into longer grass and then short grass. The creation of sheltered, south facing and hence warmer, glades is of particular importance (especially for insects and in particular butterflies) but many will be needed as human occupation is as likely as a more "wild" resident.

2.3.2.3 Many areas of grassland are used for informal recreation and The Flats are occasionally used by several schools for "games" and sports days. Presently long grass is lacking which puts pressure on the long grass in conservation areas (demonstrating the desire for long grass to sit in). However if too much long grass is left the reverse may become true i.e. pressure may be built up on the short grass conservation areas resulting in a loss of the species therein. A balance between short and long grass will be needed and the situation will be under constant review.

2.3.3 iii) LAKES/WATERWAYS

Cemetery Lake

EI055;EI056;EI057;EI058;EI067;EI068;EI069.

2.3.3.1 Mainly managed for wildfowl and includes a population of assorted ornamental wildfowl which are mainly pinioned i.e they cannot fly. This lake also contains several big Pike, large numbers of Perch and an unknown number of Tench and Stickleback (the latter originating from the draining of the Boating Lake).

- 2.3.3.2 The unnaturally high numbers of birds has resulted in a lack of aquatic vegetation (excluding algae) and the increased levels of nutrient results in several large algal blooms each year. Currently feeding of birds on the shore and the large amounts of food floating around the lakes edges causes problems from dog attack and attracts possible disease carrying pests such as Brown rat and Feral pigeon. Occasional control measures are taken but the proximity of the public limits what can be used. A fence around most of the site has reduced losses to dogs and a complete barrier with access to the feeding area (dog free zone) would be beneficial. Wildfowl identification boards are provided but more public education is needed about the dangers of feeding with the too much (stale) bread and correct feeding techniques. Wildfowl mix similar to that used for the daily feeds is sold at The Hawthorns and carries feeding instructions. Many members of the public still do not realise that some of the wildfowl has been purchased and brought into the site.
- 2.3.3.3 Recent work to enlarge the island (EI067) increased the surface area available for nesting but more bushy plant growth is needed for cover. Sallow/willow should be used with a few Alders to give higher trees in the middle (Heron are increasingly using the lake and nest at the top of trees). More nesting boxes are also needed if the ornamental ducks are to reproduce and hence reduce the expenditure on replacements.
- 2.3.3.4 The scrubby fringes to the lake are all relatively young but a cycle of coppicing will be needed to maintain a thick ground cover suitable for safe roosting/nesting. The larger tree species included in the mixed planting along the south and east banks should not be allowed to grow up and need to be removed or kept cut back. Tall trees along these boundaries would result in the lake being totally enclosed and would create a greater danger to flying wildfowl and reduce the feeding opportunities of birds such as Swifts. Grounded Swifts and Swans have already been found after hitting the already established trees. Several other trees may need to be removed as they mature and encroach over the lake, particularly the recently planted EI069 which as they grow will destroy the open nature of this corner of the lake/flats boundary.
- 2.3.3.5 The unnaturally large number of ducks on this lake has resulted in the loss of much of its wildlife value e.g it is no longer the major Toad spawning area it was up to the end of the seventies. The reduction in duck numbers would only be achieved by the banning of feeding by the public and at present this is considered to be unpopular and unenforceable.
- 2.3.3.6 The lake is mostly less than 1 metre deep and only 2 metres at its deepest point east of the island. This makes it vulnerable to freezing over and in cold weather the island is often joined to the shore by ice. This leaves the wildfowl vulnerable to dog/fox attack and results in damage due to the public reaching (and even picnicking on) the island. Increased policing would reduce the damage but a longer term and more efficient solution would be to dig a deeper trench around the island (deeper water acts as a warm water source and prolongs the time before the lake freezes). Even more effective would be to install a bubble source around the island which would prevent the water from freezing by keeping it moving.

Ornamental lake

EI205;EI207;EI209;EI212;EI214;EI208.

- 2.3.3.7 This lake was drained and dredged in 1983 and still has not recovered from the turbid water which resulted. It is less than 1 metre deep and has a pummelled clay lining which means any activities which may affect the bottom have to be carried out very carefully.
- 2.3.3.8 The lake is very heavily used both by fishermen and for general recreation. Conflicts often occur between dog owners throwing sticks in for their dogs to fetch and fishermen whose lines the dogs run through. The byelaws relating to these activities need to be revised.
- 2.3.3.9 It is suspected that the frequent stirring up of the water by the above activities and the erosion to the clay banks due to trampling keeps the water turbid. This prevents the establishment of aquatic vegetation that is needed to stabilise the pond floor and so the pond is caught in a vicious circle. Run off from the gravel bank along the south-west bank probably caused a lot of clouding when the path was laid but is thought not to be a major contributing factor now.
It is proposed that fishing will be limited to the gravel banks and the north side will have aquatic vegetation introduced (with possible temporary fencing until it is established). The introduction of fishing permits is being investigated as a way of limiting numbers and controlling detrimental behaviour such as fire lighting and removal/trampling of aquatic vegetation.
- 2.3.3.10 Discussion with the river authorities is currently under way as to the number and type of fish stocked to the lake and the maximum number of fishing points that are advisable. Possible ways to improve the water clarity are also under investigation.

Boating lake

EI136

- 2.3.3.11 This lake contains a large population of Great crested newt which is an internationally protected species. It is drained in mid winter (usually 2 weeks in January) to allow the removal of any rubbish which has accumulated during the year. This regime has benefited the newts by removing higher predators such as fish which would compete with/eat the newtpoles.
- 2.3.3.12 During December 1991 to February 1992 the lake was drained to allow the repair of a section of bank and it was hoped that this unusually long time would wipe out the stickleback population that had appeared a few years earlier. The population was reduced but had recovered enough by mid summer to allow a pair of Dabchick to raise two broods of 4 and 3 respectively. This is the first known record of breeding by this species on The Common and observations suggest that they selectively eat sticklebacks and leave the newts alone.

- 2.3.3.13 The above repairs resulted in the lake reaching and maintaining maximum depth throughout the year for the first time in several years. The increased levels exposed several other leaks which were previously above the water line and further repairs will be needed in the future.
- 2.3.3.14 The closure of the paddling pools during 1992 resulted in increased usage of the lake for swimming despite over two thirds of the surface being covered by an algal bloom (which gave the dabchicks something to nest on). A "no swimming" sign will be erected and incorporated with a nesting platform in the centre of the lake during the winter of 92/93. The byelaws relating to this and the wading in the lake to retrieve boats need to be reviewed as does which boats (if any) are appropriate to use in the lake.

Streams/Ditches

- 2.3.3.15 Many of the "streams" on The Common now only have running water after rain and in effect are only drainage ditches. Several are heavily shaded and some need to be opened up in places to allow the growth of marginal plants such as Purple loosestrife, willowherbs and Cuckoo flower. These will help stabilize the banks and reduce silt run off as well as providing an important source of shelter and food for wildlife.

The stream in the NW corner of The Common (EI268 et al) runs south-west through a steep sided gravel gorge and so is only suitable for opening up of the canopy to allow the growth of marginals at its north and west ends. The stream which feeds the Ornamental lake (EI254 et al) tends to be more slow running and would benefit from removal of some of the shading especially along its eastern side [NB.see also conservation areas iii) and iv)]. The outfall of the Ornamental lake flows into the Cemetery lake but tends to dry up during the summer. The banks immediately below the Ornamental lake contain heather and are dealt with in conservation area ii).

2.3.4 iv) OTHER RELEVANT POINTS

Boundaries

- 2.3.4.1 The Common is surrounded on the west and north sides by ancient boundary banks which are of archaeological interest. Historically these banks were maintained with a dense, stock-proof hedge of gorse, hawthorn and holly along the top. Recently erosion to the banks has been repaired with turfs and attempts have been made to re-establish gorse on the top in some areas. However heavy shading prevents the establishment of a hedge in some places and some removal of shading species needs to be carried out in order to achieve the long term aim of recreating the boundary banks. Current close cropping of the turf banks damages them and alternative methods need to be investigated. The banks will be left uncut except for where vegetation significantly overhangs a pathway and then only the minimal clearance will be undertaken. This will have the benefit of creating more shelter for wildlife, creating more of a barrier to deter damage and illegal access and is more in keeping

with the ancient boundary which would not have been mown. Recently successful prosecutions have been made over illegal encroachments onto and over The Commons banks. The situation needs to be closely monitored as encroachment due to development and fence creep is an ever present threat and proof of damage relies on sufficient proof of encroachment/damage occurring. Any further loss of The Common will be resisted vigorously.

2.3.4.2 Elsewhere The Common is vulnerable to illegal parking/invasion both by cricket/football fans and "travellers". Dragonsteeth and kick rails have been used with some success but turf banking is more effective and more in keeping with the look of The Common. Areas of vulnerability need to be identified and banks created as this problem is increasing. It has also been found that an uncut bank is more of a barrier to vehicles and more colourful due to the wildflowers which thrive here and the comments under ancient banks above still apply.

2.3.4.3 The Avenue which runs north-south through The Common forms an important visual feature on one of the main approaches into the City. The turf edges are wet and soft in many areas and often get rutted due to vehicular activity, including mowing. Leaving the grass long would reduce the rutting and discourage vehicles from parking, a narrow band could be cut immediately adjacent to the tarmac to give the appearance of management. The planting of ornamental bulbs along the road verges is incongruous with the natural look of The Common and the leaves after flowering look untidy. The encouragement of natural flowers such as bluebells, wild daffodils and campions are being investigated, although the source of such material should be of local stock to reduce the interference to local gene pools as much as possible.

2.3.4.4 An area between the underpass and Highfield road on the east of The Avenue has recently been found to support one of three colonies of broad-leaved helleborines on The Common. This is by far the largest colony on the Common and the second largest of the eight sites known in Southampton. The current status of the colony is unclear after several consecutive years of various detrimental activities, including; strimming around the base of the trees along The Avenue by outside workers to "tidy them up" for a royal visit, this after the Common Crew had specifically left the orchids to flower. Dumping of drain clearance detritus directly on the largest clump (presumably by highways maintenance) and parking of vehicles and a hut on another group during the replacement of street lights.

Outside agencies/statutory bodies

2.3.4.5 Activities by outside bodies have caused problems elsewhere with the driving over areas by vehicles and the digging of pipelines through the middle of orchid areas. If we had known in advance the main orchid clumps could have been avoided or moved to a nearby location. The situation is gradually improving but communication channels and liaison within Southampton City Council and with outside bodies such as Highways, Southern water, British gas (south-east) and Southern electricity are in urgent need of attention to prevent the recurrence of such problems (also note the comments under "The Covered Reservoir" in part C) Areas not covered in this plan).

Events

- 2.3.4.6 The Common has traditionally been used to host a range of events including fairs and shows. The increased use of motor vehicles in recent years has led to increased damage to the vegetation of The Common. In addition the loss of open space elsewhere in the City now means that the wildlife on The Common is becoming increasingly precious and in need of protection. The use of The Common by events such as fairs, carnivals, shows and sponsored walks will need to be continually reviewed and if it is decided that they are to continue careful monitoring for the duration of the event is essential (including setting up and taking down). A lot of the damage in the past has resulted from a deficiency in this area, especially from events not actually doing what has been previously agreed. Alternative sites for some of the events should be sought.
- 2.3.4.7 The use of Cemetery Road as a starting point for The Carnival (with the fair at the end in another area e.g. Hoglands park) will be less damaging to The Common and the possibilities of this will be examined.

Vehicular access

- 2.3.4.8 Although only officially authorised vehicles are allowed on The Common, damage is often caused to sensitive areas by the taking of short cuts or driving right up to a task when there is a hard standing within reasonable reach eg. the toilets at the southern end of The Common. Generally vehicles should not drive over non hard standings unless there is an imperative reason for doing so. Contractors and employees of statutory bodies will be told this and reminders will be issued whenever necessary. The possibility of financial penalties for breach of this will be investigated.

Buildings

- 2.3.4.9 The dressing rooms and toilet block to the north of "The Flats" are a visual intrusion on the vista of the area and are currently prone to attack by vandals. The dressing rooms are now rarely used, as organised football and similar activities have been phased out/relocated. Relocation of the materials stored in the huts (mainly old Southampton show material) will be required and the moving of the electricity box used by the fair. The options will be investigated and will include the possible increase of storage as part of the rationalisation /reorganisation of the Common Yard adjacent to Holly Lodge.

Pathways

- 2.3.4.10 The Common is criss-crossed by numerous paths and tracks and some of these have been made "official" by the laying of hoggin or tarmac. In addition to this The Avenue creates a major barrier through the eastern half and Highfield avenue, Highfield road, Cemetery road and Winn road all cause further fragmentation of the habitats.

- 2.3.4.11 The driving of wheeled vehicles is generally prohibited on The Common, but the riding of non-motor driven cycles is permitted along designated dual use pedestrian/cycle paths. There has been increasing pressure to increase the number and width of paths to allow more access by cycles. This will generally be resisted as any further fragmentation is considered to be detrimental both to the wildlife and visual aspects of The Common. The major routes allowing access east/west and north/south whilst avoiding the main roads are obviously most suited to use by cycles i.e. from Holly lodge entrance north and east past the reservoir (based on the old carriage drive); west from Holly lodge under the underpass and onto Highfield road (amendments to the byelaws to include the section east of the underpass are proposed); south-east from Holly lodge through "The Flats" and onto Northlands road; west from Cemetery road and out onto Hill lane south of the cemetery; north-north-west from the Cowherds onto Burgess road (based on "Coronation avenue"). The route along the north-east boundary between Burgess road and the junction of Highfield road/avenue is more controversial as conflict between pedestrians and cyclists occurs and widening of the path would result in damage to tree roots and probable loss of trees. There has already been pressure for clearance of bushes/trees along these routes due to them possibly concealing potential attackers.
- 2.3.4.12 Street lighting has been erected along several of the paths on public safety grounds. This is visually intrusive (although camouflage during daylight hours has been attempted by the use of green paint) and there is divided opinion as to whether safety is increased ("ducks on a fair ground"-people being lit up but not being able to see potential attackers lurking in the darkness along side the paths). There is also an apparent conflict with the "no erection of permanent structures" clause in the laws applying to The Common. Liaison will be sought with the relevant authorities to try to resolve these problems and clarify the statistics supporting the public safety arguments.
- 2.3.4.13 The formalisation of desire lines will also generally be resisted and steps taken to identify and where possible remove their origins, or severe fragmentation of habitats due to the proliferative nature of desire lines will result.

2.4 C) AREAS NOT COVERED IN THIS PLAN

The Cowherds - private, leased from S.C.C.

Holly Lodge and yard - owned by S.C.C., the lodge is private accommodation and currently the residence of the foreman of The Common workforce.

The Hawthorns - managed as an information centre with grounds containing created habitats typical of Southampton.

The Old Cemetery - currently has its own management plan, historically part of The Common and it is envisaged that it will be re-integrated at some time in the future.

The Covered Reservoir - managed by Southern Water and used to contain a population of Green winged orchid. A more sympathetic management regime was briefly in place in the mid eighties (1984?). Now the timing and frequency of cuts is erratic and further approaches need to be made in an attempt to establish a more sympathetic regime.

Play area

Paddling pool - future unknown, possible use as a model powered boat lake (this is not desirable and is currently discouraged on the present "boating lake")