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Part 1

1. Preface

Why are we revising the Plan?

This represents the first major revision of the five year management plan cycle. The first management plan for the Reserve covered the period 2005 – 2010. In that plan we set ourselves a vision, strategic objectives and a series of detailed management targets.

The purpose of this review is to assess whether we have met those objectives and to set new ones for this new plan period.

How will the Plan be structured?

Part 1 of the Plan will review our original overall aims and objectives and whether we met them or not, and outline new objectives for the next five years.

Part 2 of the Plan will outline and review our detailed site/habitat/species management objectives.

It is not intended to transfer all the site details from the 2005-2010 Plan into this new document. Static information that does not change, such as ownership, site status, legal designations and obligations, etc. will be available within the Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve Site Description document.

The story so far

Up until 2000, Hastings Country Park and Fairlight Place Farm were two adjacent areas of council land with very different management objectives. The farmland was tenanted and run as a commercial dairy unit, whilst the Country Park was managed
as a public amenity resource. Both areas of land included parts of the Hastings Cliffs Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Competing land use issues and a recognition of the unique landscape and biodiversity value of the entire area resulted in a radical rethink as to how the council wished to manage this strategic resource. In 2000 the Hastings Country Park Restoration Project was established to bring all the council’s land under one sustainable management for the benefit of people and wildlife.

Whilst this has proved to be the most ambitious land management project the council has undertaken to date, it is worth reminding ourselves how far we have travelled since 2000.

**In 2000;**

- The Country Park had no management plan
- Fairlight Place Farm was tenanted from the council as a commercial dairy farm
- Over intensification of the farm was polluting the SSSI
- Species and habitats of UK importance were in decline
- There was no coherent vision for the area
- The farm, the SSSI and the Country Park were all separate and competing land units
- The farmyard and farm buildings were dilapidated
- There was no investment in the area
- There was little corporate recognition as to how much of an asset to the town the country park area was

This was clearly untenable given that the coastal habitats were designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation; declared one the best wildlife sites in the UK and one of the finest examples in Europe of vegetated coastal cliffs. The adjacent farmland activities were incompatible with and lacked any complimentary management with the surrounding habitats and designated areas.
The aims of the Hastings Country Park Restoration Project were to;

- Terminate the farm tenancy, bringing its management in-house
- Integrate the management of the farmland with the Country Park and SSSI/SAC
- Recognise our statutory obligations to the natural environment
- Bring the management of all the land and designated areas under one Local Nature Reserve Designation
- Created a Nature Reserve Officer post to develop the technical habitat and land management specifications and deliver their implementation
- Put in place a sustainable integrated management plan, published in 2005
- Attract management subsidies
- Renovate the farm buildings to suit our new management objectives
- Reverse the decline in habitats and species
- Enhance the visitor experience, making it a more attractive place to visit
- Install and renew site based visitor information
- Create a new Estate Ranger Service dedicated to tasks around the Reserve
- Create a new and more accessible hub for the Rangers, focused around the farmyard buildings
- Create a community based Friends of Hastings Country Park
- Create an Elected Member Management Forum where elected Members have a direct strategic overview of the Project
- Develop a greater understanding of the archaeological interest and value of the site

Many of these original aims were set out in the 2005-2010 Management Plan and have either been met or are continuing to be met and updated.

The Council and the staff that have been involved in bringing about this management turnaround are extremely proud of the wonderful natural asset that is now Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve. The sustainable management principles established under the Hastings Country Park Restoration Project remain the cornerstone of our management today.
2. Review of the 2005-2010 Management Plan

The Council is committed to reviewing our management plan every five years. This allows us to assess if we are meeting our objectives and set ourselves new and challenging targets for the next five years.

Has our original vision come together?

In 2005 our vision stated;

1. We will ensure residents and visitors to Hastings benefit from this beautiful area by improving the access, interpretation, wildlife and habitat management and the educational potential of the site.

2. We aspire to replace the existing visitor centre with a first class interpretative centre.

3. Information and interpretative provision will be improved by way of both on and off-site information and interpretation. We will endeavour to reach all sectors of the community with regard to leisure and learning events, educational visits, open days and other community involvement activities by developing the Hastings Borough websites, www.visithastings.com and www.wildhastings.org.uk

4. We will continually review the management plan to ensure it is current and fulfils our key aspirations for the site, fulfils our statutory obligations and enhances the landscape and ecological potential of the SSSI and SAC.

5. We will ensure that, where possible and practical, there will be equal access to as much of the site as possible to all sectors of the community. This applies to both the physical access throughout the site and to any buildings open to the public within the site.

During the life of the Plan we have;

• Continued to improve access, interpretation, wildlife management, and educational potential of the site.

• Attracted management subsidies and grants which have allowed us to implement our management objectives, restore declining habitats, attract an increasing diversity of wildlife and establish long term monitoring of habitats and species which continually informs our management.

• Worked with statutory agencies and other partners to ensure our management goes above and beyond our statutory obligations and make Hastings Country
Park Nature Reserve an example of the very best practice in sustainable management for wildlife, habitats and for residents and visitors to enjoy.

- Remained committed to replacing the current visitor centre with a new fit for purpose interpretive centre. This is a longer term aim dependant on attracting substantial funding. In lieu of a new centre we have undertaken a detailed feasibility study and gained Cabinet support to use capital receipts from the sale of council properties at the Reserve as match funding for an external grant aid application.

- Promoted the Reserve as a spectacular natural visitor attraction, a key regeneration asset to the Town and natural open space that provides for visitors’ physical and mental health.

**Have we achieved our original Site Management Objectives as set out in the 2005 Plan?**

**In 2005 we said we would;**

- Ensure the favourable status of the habitats, species communities and geology within land designated as SSSI and SAC.

- Ensure the management of the farm will not negatively affect the favourable status of the SSSI.

- Declare Hastings Country Park and Fairlight Place Farm as a Local Nature Reserve.

- Enhance the nature conservation, educational and amenity value, and access to the nature reserve.

- Ensure there is equal access to the site to all sectors of the community, this includes: Physical access, Access to information & Community inclusion

- Conserve the habitats and species within Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve in accordance with European, national and county guidance on preventing the loss of global, national and local biodiversity.

- Prevent the damage to or loss of the important geological features of the site.

- Prevent the damage to the important archaeological features of the site.

- Maintain the safety of users of the site.

- Maintain and develop access and recreational use where it does not conflict with the above.

- Promote ecological, geological, and archaeological research and biological survey of the site where it does not conflict with the above.

So what have we achieved from the 2005-2010 Plan?

During the life of the 2005-2010 Plan we have worked extensively to fulfil, and where possible exceed, our original aims and objectives. The detailed list below sets out our achievements against strategic, biodiversity, infrastructure and agricultural activities.

Strategic objectives

1. Integrated the management of the Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation, farmland and Country Park in one statutorily consented management plan, reviewable every five years
2. Declared the new integrated land area a Local Nature Reserve in 2007
3. Continued to work with Natural England to ensure that all parts of the SSSI/SAC are in a favourable management condition
4. Completed a feasibility study in 2006 into our aspiration to provide a new fit for purpose Interpretive Centre at the Reserve
5. Received the national accolade of Green Flag award annually since 2006
6. Supported the formation of the Friends of Hastings Country Park since 2007
7. Continued to post events and news updates on the Wild Hastings web site www.wildhastings.org.uk
8. Delivered an annual programme of events, activities
9. Ensured a consistent update of information is available to residents and visitors on our management activities

Biodiversity objectives

1. Embarked on a major long-term lowland heathland restoration project since 2006
2. Reversed the decline in major national priority habitats and species, increasing the biodiversity of the Reserve
3. Embarked on major species and habitat survey and monitoring programmes aimed at informing our management since 2006
4. Seen the return of major species of national concern such as barn owls and ravens and found a new species to the UK, the sickle bearing bush cricket
Visitor Management and Infrastructure objectives

1. Used capital investment to renovate the farmyard area, providing secure storage, cattle handling areas and a new accommodation for the ranger service
2. Improved our site based information through the installation of new mapboards, updated our bollard way-marking system and innovative on-site interpretation of habitats and management in the Reserve
3. Renewed and replaced fencing around fields, installed water and new cattle troughs
4. Completed an archaeology survey of the whole site and worked with English Heritage to produce a detailed report on the archaeology value of the East Hill
5. Refurbished the existing visitor centre to promote new and engaging hands-on displays and information on the site
6. Refurbished the picnic area at Fairlight Road Picnic Site
7. Delivered a programme of events and activities for visitors and schools

Agriculture objectives

1. Introduced appropriate grazing by way of Highland Cattle, Sussex Cattle, Kent Sheep and Exmore Ponies to the farm and parts of the SSSI to help restore habitat diversity
2. Integrated the old dairy farming operation of Fairlight Place Farm within the Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve
3. Received ten year annual Countryside Stewardship management subsidy for the Reserve for the period 2004-2014
4. Entered a partnership with Sussex Coast College Hastings to deliver Countryside Management Diplomas at the Reserve
5. Entered a 5-year grazing agreement with a preferred grazing partner for the period 2009- 2014
6. Maintained farmland to encourage farmland birds, rare invertebrates and other species, replanted hedges and converted intensively farmed arable fields to pasture and meadow
7. Provided an attractive, well managed rural landscape

In conclusion
We have worked extremely hard to achieve all our stated objectives as set out in the 2005-2010 Management Plan. In so far as the above list of achievements demonstrates, we have not been content with achieving stated objectives from the 2005 Plan, but have continued to exceed those objectives, taking the site from strength to strength.


Introduction

Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve is one of a number of nature reserves that have been declared around the town since 2006. Ranging in size and diversity, all are situated within easy access for the majority of residents and visitors to the town. Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve, at 345 hectares, is the largest and most ecologically diverse area in the borough.

We have shown that by exerting direct control over our decision making we have been able to maximise our ability to fulfil our management objectives. Having overall control of the Reserve has allowed us the flexibility and confidence to experiment with management techniques to provide the right balance of physical land management and grazing. We have further ensured our management is informed by regular and consistent ecological monitoring.

Partnership working has also allowed us to extend the boundaries of our management and provide for site based activities and learning. By working with local farmers, we have brought a series of important grazing animals to the Reserve. Highland Cattle and Exmoor Ponies have proved invaluable grazers on areas of land inaccessible for mechanical management. Our use of local Sussex Cattle has allowed us to manage our pasture fields in line with our Countryside Stewardship Agreement. These animals have also proved a great success with visitors to the Reserve.
Sussex Coast College Hastings have recognised the educational value of the site and based their Countryside Management Diploma at the Reserve since 2009. We hope to extend this educational partnership into the future.

The renovated farm buildings now provide a new base for our Ranger Service, secure accommodation and flexible covered space for any management and agricultural activities we wish to undertake with partners in the future. Due to the quality of the space, we are now able to centre other council services at the farmyard such as our tree contractors and provide storage for Park’s services.

Since 2004 the majority of our annual funding to implement the Management Plan has come from our 10 year Countryside Stewardship Agreement with DEFRA, the Department of Food and Rural Affairs. The new Management Plan will provide the framework for taking us into the next round of Government funded Environmental Stewardship programmes in 2014, build on our management success and continue to provide a spectacular coastal nature reserve for the residents of Hastings and St Leonards and visitors alike.

As with our previous Plan, we understand we will not be able to achieve continued success without the dedication and hard work of our committed and dedicated staff and volunteers.

**Our Vision for the Reserve 2010-2015**

Quite simply; to ensure we have the best managed and accessible nature reserve in the South East of England, recognising and enhancing its biodiversity importance and its significance within the cultural and historical landscape of the Town.
**Strategic Management Objectives for 2010-2015**

1. Access the most advantageous environmental Government subsidy when our Countryside Stewardship Agreement ends in 2014
2. Retain our Green Flag award year on year
3. Improve the quality of access within the Reserve by focusing resources on footpath improvements
4. Extend our educational potential and interpretation of the Reserve by working with educational partners and enhancing the information available through electronic means such as the Wild Hastings web site
5. Provide or understand how we will replace the current visitor centre by the end of the Plan together with a corresponding Marketing Plan
6. Provide a focus for management and related council activities at the renovated farmyard
7. Provide, where possible, a means of generating sustainable energy to the farm buildings
8. Support the Friends of Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve to assist in the management and funding of the site
9. Ensure a consistent programme of monitoring of habitats and species informs our management
10. Continually monitor and review the detailed site management specifications and techniques to ensure maximum environmental benefit
11. Provide a programme of events and activities to involve the local community in the management and understanding and appreciation of the Reserve
12. Work to enhance access to the Reserve via the East Hill including the potential for a new café and interpretive space
13. Maintain and enhance visitor facilities
14. Work with a range of partners to ensure maximum benefits and outcomes for the Reserve

**Key Facts about the Reserve**

*(For a more detailed comprehensive information about the Reserve please refer to the Site Description.)*
Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve was declared a Local Nature Reserve in 2006.

The Reserve totals 345 hectares and includes a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest, a Special Area of Conservation, a Country Park and 134 hectares of agricultural land.

The majority of the Reserve sits within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The agricultural land and areas of the SSSI/SAC are managed under the Government funded Countryside Stewardship Agreement. Our current Countryside Stewardship agreement started in 2004 and runs until 2014.

It is the largest publicly owned and managed area of land in the Borough.

It is one of the Town’s best loved natural attractions popular with residents and visitors alike.

The landscape and soft sandstone vegetated cliffs host a range of important habitats and species unique in the south East of England.

There are important archaeological features throughout the Reserve, such as the scheduled Ancient Monument at the East Hill.

A Management Forum of Elected Members, officers, and partners such as the Friends provide the strategic management overview for the site.

An Officer Group meet to discuss the detailed management of the Reserve.

The Ranger service and the site based Estate Ranger service are based at the renovated farm buildings at the farmyard.

Wild Hastings web site, www.wildhastings.org.uk provides up to date information on current activities on the site as well as information on all our nature reserves around Town.

The site has been awarded a Green Flag annually in recognition of the exemplary management for people and wildlife since first applying in 2006.

The current Interpretive Centre is staffed by volunteers and undergoes periodic interpretive updates to refresh and update information.

Walking and other informal social activities in the Reserve helps improve physical and mental health.

The Friends of Hastings Country Park were formed in 2007, have the largest membership of any community based Friends group in Town and are a key partner in managing the site.

We recycle all our green waste by composting it at the silage clamps in the farmyard and spreading on the fields when ready.

We use herbicides sparingly and only if there is no alternative.

There is no horse riding allowed in the Reserve.
• There is no official access to the Beach at Fairlight Cove due to dangerous cliff slippage

• There are three designated picnic areas at the Reserve, one having barbecue stands available for free

• We estimate the Reserve has in excess of 1 million visits each year from both residents and visitors

Part 2 Management Objectives

Section 1

Completed Objectives & Targets from 2005-2010 Management Plan (see 2005-2010 for management codes).

The management objectives and targets listed below represent the most significant we have achieved since the production of the 2005-2010 Management Plan. Whilst many of the targets have been met, it was felt expedient to mention only the most significant.

Maritime Soft Rock Cliff & Slope

CLI.01
1. Breeding bird survey of cliff nesting birds undertaken annually
2. Invertebrate survey undertaken of undercliff invertebrates
3. Habitat and path re-alignment undertaken as and when necessary due to cliff erosion

Indicators of success
• Continued presence of national BAP invertebrates and breeding birds confirmed by monitoring.

CLI.02
1. Cliff-top grassland management undertaken including fencing of EG06 so that grassland can be grazed.
2. Cathormiocerus myrmecophilus survey undertaken in 2006/07

Indicators of success

• Presence of Cathormiocerus myrmecophilus and Micaria romana confirmed by invertebrate survey

Maritime Heath & Lowland Acid Grassland

HEA.01/HEA.02/HEA.03/HEA.04

1. Baseline habitat survey completed
2. Plant monitoring undertaken every other year
3. Breeding bird survey undertaken annually
4. Stock-proof fencing installed
5. Grazing by Highland cattle and/or Exmoor ponies undertaken annually
6. Bracken scraping undertaken
7. Gorse cutting undertaken
8. Heathland interpretation installed on gates
9. Invertebrate survey of heathland areas undertaken in 2006/07

Indicators of success

• Acid grassland species have increased
• Bracken and bracken litter reduced
• An increase in green tiger beetles has been recorded

HEA.05

1. Scrub removed to create ringing rides
2. Ringing rides managed to enhance habitat

HEA.06

1. Gorse scrub and vegetation removed from south-facing slope south of the quarry
2. Gorse litter removed to create bare ground on south-facing slope south of the quarry

**Semi-natural Grassland**

**GRA.01/GRA.02**
1. EG06 fenced and grazing implemented
2. Bramble control of EG06 implemented
3. Invertebrate survey of grassland and meadows undertaken
4. Botanical surveys of grassland and meadows undertaken
5. Breeding bird surveys and winter bird counts undertaken annually

**Indicators of success**
- High diversity of legumes recorded from grassland and meadows areas
- High diversity of invertebrates recorded including many nationally rare and scarce grassland species
- At least one pair of barn owl resident and breeding

**Woodland**

**WOO.02**
1. Natural woodland processes allowed to continue unhindered to maintain woodland environment for dormice, bryophytes and invertebrates.

**WOO.04**
1. Dormice monitoring programme planned and started in 2009
2. 1 volunteer with dormice handling license

**WOO.05**
1. All fallen dead wood left in gill streams to ensure potential for rare diptera habitat.
Standing Freshwater

WAT.01
1. Baseline invertebrate survey of ponds completed
2. All ponds surveyed for great crested newts

WAT.02
1. Restoration of P02 started by coppicing of trees surrounding pond.

Arable Land

ARA.01
1. Arable rotation in operation incorporating spring cereals and autumn/winter crops with skylark plots, oversummer fallow and set-aside.
2. Arable margins seeded with nectar and pollen seed mix
3. Wild bird strips seeded on a two-yearly rotation
4. Cereal crops either topped or left in situ as winter stubbles

Indicators of success
1. Increase in wintering yellowhammers and reed bunting
2. Small numbers of tree sparrow and corn bunting recorded (as well as one record of cirl bunting)

Hedgerows

HEG.01
1. Hedgerows planted within GP02 and GP03

HEG.02
1. Hedgerow survey undertaken
2. Hedgerow maintenance schedule implemented
Amenity Use, Entrances, Visitor Centre & Car Parks

ENT.01
1. Entrances monitored and maintained to high standard.

VIS.01
1. A new interpretation centre feasibility study completed.

CAR.01
1. Helipad car park re-surfaced.

PAT.01
1. Fire access routes maintained for emergency vehicle access at all times.

PAT.02
1. Safe access of Public Rights of Way and Access for All trails maintained at all times.

PAT.03
1. Access of permissive paths maintained.

Educational Use & Interpretation

EDU.01
1. Interpretation and educational use appraisal created.

Species Management, Surveys & Monitoring

REC.01
1. Survey results entered onto online spreadsheets.
2. Data being prepared for uploading onto NBN gateway.
REC.02
1. Wildlife review written and wildflowers of HCPNR produced.
3. Two project newsletters created.

REC.03
1. Biological recording training days organised annually.

REC.04
1. Baseline surveys carried out of vascular plants, invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, bats and small mammals.

Archaeology & History

ARC.04
1. An archaeological survey of the entire site was commissioned and produced and recommendations of the report incorporated into a review of the management plan.

Management Structure

COM.02
Section 2
Management Objectives for 2010-2015

Maritime Soft Rock Cliff & Slope

Objective CLI.01
To allow the free functioning of natural maritime cliff erosion, to implement appropriate cliff-top management and to monitor the presence of national and local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Species and species of conservation concern to meet the obligations of SAC & SSSI designation.

Targets

CLI.01.i
Proactively manage informal access to the beach at Fairlight Cove.

CLI.01.ii
Breeding bird population to be recorded along entire length of cliff and undercliff annually.

CLI.01.iii
Monitor for UK BAP invertebrate species annually.

CLI.01.iv
Cliff-top habitat and path re-alignment managed as and when needed due to cliff-top erosion.

CLI.01.v
Maintain structure and signs that discourage access onto the cliff-top, cliff-face and undercliff.

Indicators of Success
- The continued existence of national BAP species
- Maintenance of populations of cliff-nesting bird population
- Reduction of human disturbance on the cliff-top, cliff-face and undercliff.

Objective CLI.02
To ensure areas of short grassland & heathland are available landward of the cliff edge so there is a continuous supply of short cliff-top grassland & heathland as the cliff recedes. This is essential to prevent the extinction of Cathormiocerus myrmecophilus and other specialised cliff-top invertebrates at the site.

Targets
CLI.02.i
At least 700m of short cliff-top grassland to be maintained landward of the cliff edge by scrub removal and bracken control. [Volunteer Task]

CLI.02.ii
Short cliff-top grassland to be surveyed for Cathormiocerus myrmecophilus and Micaria romana at least once between 2010 - 2015.

Indicators of Success CLI.02
- The continued presence of the weevil Cathormiocerus myrmecophilus and the spider Micaria romana.
Lowland Heathland & Lowland Acid Grassland

Objective HEA.01

To continue development of an acid grassland/heathland mosaic by controlling bracken and scrub encroachment through the maintenance of grazing and limited mechanical management within WG02.

Targets

HEA.01.i
Carry out botanical monitoring of established survey areas at least twice between 2010 and 2015. [Volunteer Task]

HEA.01.ii
Monitor bracken and gorse re-growth density and distribution within WG02a & b via fixed point photography at least six times a year. [Volunteer Task]

HEA.01.iii
WG02a & b to be joined together as one grazing unit by extending stock proof fencing across dividing path by the end of 2010. Self-closing pedestrian gates to be installed either side of dividing path.

HEA.01.iv
Grazing to be undertaken within WG02 annually to control bracken and gorse growth and enable conditions for acid grassland/dwarf scrub communities to develop.
**HEA.01.v**

Update gate interpretation posters at least once a year.

**HEA.01.vi**

Young gorse re-growth in WG02a to be cut and ground scraped by the end of 2010.

**HEA.01.vii**

Area of young gorse scraped to be seeded with heather seeds cut from heather patches in Warren Glen and/or Firehills at least twice between 2010 and 2012.

*[Volunteer Task]*

**HEA.01.viii**

Breeding bird survey of WG02 to be undertaken at least 4 times between 2010 and 2015.

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**Indicators of Success HEA.01**

- An increase in the frequency of acid grassland indicators within the compartment. (This will indicate the success of acid grassland/heathland restoration.)

- A decrease in the frequency of bracken and bracken litter within the compartment. (This will indicate the success of bracken control.)

- An increase in glow-worms, green tiger beetles and nesting Dartford warblers over the next five years. (Glow-worm larvae need areas of short turf and the adult females need tall vegetation to attract males. Green tiger beetles need bare ground to nest and therefore benefit from a little disturbance from grazing but suffer from too much trampling from grazing animals. Dartford warblers need a continuous supply of gorse at the correct age and structure to nest, shelter and feed in and also require areas of acid grassland and heath to feed. These species therefore would indicate the correct mosaic of acid grassland/heath/bracken and gorse scrub structure and the correct grazing regime needed to ensure the survival of the areas biodiversity.)
Objective HEA.02

To maintain and enlarge small areas of fragmented heathland/acid grassland by bracken, bramble and scrub control.

Targets

HEA.02.i
Continue removal of gorse, bracken and litter along south facing bank of Quarry (WG01) to create sandy bare ground. [Volunteer Task]

HEA.02.ii
Remove gorse and bracken that is encroaching into heather patches in WG02/WG07/FH02/FH04/NS02 and NS04 annually. [Volunteer Task]

HEA.02.iii
Create area of acid grassland/dwarf scrub cut into block of scrub for bird monitoring purposes in western end of FH04. [Volunteer Task] Monitor annually via bird ringing and breeding bird survey.

HEA.02.iv
Gorse and bracken around existing patches of heather within FH02 and FH04 to be cut and litter scraped to soil surface by the end of 2011. Cut material moved to silage clamps for composting.

HEA.02.v
Gorse and bracken around existing patches of heather within NS01, NS04 and NS03 to be cut and litter scraped to soil surface by the end of 2015. Cut material moved to silage clamps for composting.

HEA.02.vi
Gorse blocks within FH04 to be cut on fifteen year rotation. Identify three blocks, cut block 1 winter 2010/11, cut block 2 2015/16, cut block 3 2020/21.
HEA.02.vii
Gorse blocks within NS01 to be cut on fifteen year rotation. Identify three blocks, cut block 1 winter 2012/13, cut block 2 2017/18, cut block 3 2022/23.

Objective HEA.03
Maintain area as bird ringing station in WG01 by managing scrub and bracken and by discouraging access through fencing and signage. The bird monitoring will provide information on the importance of the site for migrant and breeding birds.

Targets
HEA.03.i
Maintain ringing rides and measures to prevent public access to ringing rides.

[Volunteer Task]

Lowland Semi-natural Grassland

Objective GRA.01
To maintain and enhance the botanical diversity of fields currently managed as meadow by late summer cutting, and maintain grazing management on suitable fields.
Targets

GRA.01

Maintain annual grazing and topping within semi-natural grassland fields as per grazing plan.

GRA.02

Carry out botanical monitoring in at least three meadows at least twice between 2010 and 2015. [Volunteer Task]

GRA.03

Carry out bumblebee monitoring in at least three meadows at least twice between 2010 and 2015.

GRA.04

Carry out breeding bird surveys and winter bird counts in at least three fields at least three times between 2010 and 2015.

Indicators of Success GRA.01

- An increase in the population of breeding skylark.
- A maintenance or increase in floristic diversity.
- A return of BAP Priority Bombus spp. (most likely Bombus humilis)
Woodland

Objective WOO.01

Allow natural gill woodland processes to continue to maintain the important bryophyte and invertebrate assemblages and dormice population that occurs within the site. The only management to take place within gill woodland is for essential public footpath maintenance and for health and safety reasons.

Targets

WOO.01.i

No woodland management to take place within gill woodlands except for essential public footpath maintenance and for health and safety reasons.

Objective WOO.02

All dead wood is to be left in gill streams and on the woodland floor to ensure the survival of rare gill woodland Diptera except for health and safety reasons or where there are major stream blockages.

Targets

WOO.02.i

Ensure fallen trees are left in situ and not cut into sections, except when blocking footpaths.
**Objective WOO.03**

Ensure continued monitoring of dormice, bryophytes and diptera according to agreed methodologies.

**Targets**

**WOO.03.i**

Continue strategic dormice monitoring programme.

**WOO.03.ii**

Ensure at least three members of staff or volunteer rangers have a dormice handling license at all times to ensure dormice monitoring can be maintained annually by 2012.

**WOO.03.iii**

Monitor distribution of rare and scarce bryophytes every five years starting 2010.

**WOO.03.iv**

Monitor distribution of rare and scarce invertebrates every five years starting 2012.

**Standing Fresh Water**

**Objective WAT.01**

Ensure a continuity of different standing freshwater habitat by allowing natural succession to take place and by creating new ponds to replace early successional freshwater habitat.
Targets

**WAT.01.i**
Create at least one new scrape/pond by 2015.

**WAT.01.ii**
Carry out monitoring of ponds annually for invasive species starting 2006 and remove any invasive species as soon as possible. [Volunteer Task]

**Objective WAT.02**
To conduct appropriate small scale restoration of ponds (i.e. staggered coppicing of dense pond side scrub)

Targets

**WAT.02.i**
Remove up to 50% of scrub surrounding P02 by 2015. [Volunteer Task]

**WAT.02.ii**
Dredge up to 30% of P02 by 2015 only if funds allow (or grant obtained) and area for deposit of silt can be agreed. (it is important there is no leaching of nutrients into grassland or woodland areas through the spreading or disposal of dredged silt).

**WAT.02.iii**
Enlargement of Barn Pond and re-profiling of edge habitat to be undertaken by 2015 only if funds allow or grant can be obtained.
Improved Grassland

Objective IGR.01

To maintain the amenity and recreational use of recreation areas while implementing measures to improve the biodiversity of these areas, where appropriate, by leaving less intensively cut wildlife strips.

Arable Land

Objective ARA.01

To continue and improve environmental improvements throughout the arable fields through the establishment of legume rich margins, rotational spring cropping, over winter stubbles (or uncut crops), and seed rich wild bird strips.

Targets

ARA.01.i

Convert GP11 and M01 into arable management by spring 2011.

ARA.01.ii

Include GP11 and M01 within the spring/autumn cereal crop rotation, leave c.12m wide margins and drill c.12m wide wild bird margins along the southern and eastern boundaries.
ARA.01.iii

Monitor winter bird numbers in arable fields and monitor wild bird strips in detail to ascertain success or otherwise of the wild bird margins mixtures.

ARA.01.iv

Continue spring/autumn cereal crop rotation within arable fields and re-drill wild bird strips annually.

ARA.01.v

Monitor bumblebees using arable margins at least three times between 2010-2015.

Amenity Use, Entrances, Visitor Centre & Car Parks

Objective ENT.01

To maintain entrances in a clean and tidy state to provide the best possible impression of a safe and well cared for environment for visitors.

Targets

ENT.01.i

Ensure all entrances are monitored and maintained to a high standard.

Objective VIS.01

Replace the existing visitor centre with a first class visitor centre with up to date marketing plan.
Targets

VIS.01.i

Investigate opportunities for funding a new visitor centre and providing a marketing plan.

Objective CAR.01

Maintain the car parks to the current standard and investigate opportunities for funding improvements to the current car park provision.

Objective PAT.01

To maintain fire access routes suitable for emergency vehicle access at all times.

Targets

PAT.01.i

Monitor fire access routes to ensure its suitability for emergency vehicle access once a month.

PAT.01.ii

Maintain path surface, drainage and cut path-side vegetation of fire access routes according to an agreed plan.

Objective PAT.02

To maintain safe access of Designated Public Rights of Way and Access for All Paths at all times.

Targets

PAT.02.i

Monitor DPRoWs regularly to ensure that access is not impaired or blocked. (There is an established patrolling, reporting & repair procedure already in place.)
PAT.02.ii
Maintain path surface, drainage and cut path-side vegetation. (There is an established patrolling, reporting & repair procedure already in place.)

PAT.02.iii
Review the re-alignment or possible closure of DPRoWs that cross areas of major erosion and/or are prone to landslides whenever necessary.

Objective PAT.03
To maintain safe access of permissive paths.

Note: the maintenance of the fire access routes and DPRoWs always takes priority over the maintenance of permissive paths.

Targets
PAT.03.i
Monitor permissive paths to ensure that access is not impaired or blocked when possible. (There is an established patrolling, reporting & repair procedure already in place.)

PAT.03.ii
Maintain path surface, drainage and cut path-side vegetation.

PAT.03.iii
Review the re-alignment or possible closure of permissive paths that cross areas of major erosion and/or are prone to landslides whenever necessary.
PAT.03.iv

Review the possible establishment of new permissive paths.

Educational Use & Interpretation

Objective EDU.01

To provide support and resources for appropriate educational projects via partnerships with educational establishments and organisations.

Objective EDU.02

Continue to develop the educational use of the existing visitor centre by creating and updating educational and interpretive information until a new visitor centre can be funded.

Targets

EDU.02.i

Provide support for the visitor centre volunteers to ensure educational and interpretive information can be created and updated regularly.

Objective EDU.03

Continue to support an annual programme of educational and interpretive events throughout the reserve.

Targets

EDU.03.i

Publicise the wildhastings events programme either as a printed booklet and/or via the wildhastings website and site posters.
**Geology**

**Objective GEO.01**

To allow natural geological processes to occur without effort to stabilise or reduce natural erosion.

**Objective GEO.02**

Reduce disturbance to ecologically sensitive areas, these often arising as a direct result of natural processes such as mudslides, landslides and cliff falls. These occurrences often result in the formation of small pools and other ephemeral habitats, which maybe of high conservation value.

**Targets**

**GEO.02.i**

Monitor coastline annually, identify ecologically important areas and note areas vulnerable to public disturbance.

**Objective GEO.03**

Maintain important geological faces and features as long as this does not interfere with natural geomorphological processes.

**Archaeology & History**

**Objective ARC.01**

To ensure English Heritage and the County Archaeologist are consulted on any management within the Scheduled Monument on the East Hill and ensure the Hastings Area Archaeological Research Group is informed of any major ground disturbance, such as ploughing or scrub clearance within the Area of Archaeological Importance.
Objective ARC.02
To conserve and enhance the appearance of the earth works within the Scheduled Ancient Monument by sensitive ground removal and tall vegetation cutting that does not disturb the soil surface.

Objective ARC.03
To provide information on and publicise the importance of the rich history and archaeological importance of the site through the visitor centre, interpretation boards and council websites.

Invasive & Pest Species

Objective INV.01
Keep habitats free of invasive non-native species such as japanese knotweed and Rhododendron ponticum.

Target INV.01
Annual reduction of invasive non-native species. [Volunteer Task]

Objective INV.02
Ensure DEFRAs and Natural England’s guidelines on the control of common ragwort are followed at all times.