



# Caring for the Commons

The Ten Year Plan  
For Wenhaston's Commons

*Wenhaston Commons Group*





## **Wenhaston Commons Group**

### **10 YEAR PLAN OF WORKS FOR THE WENHASTON COMMONS, 2012-2022**

This plan has been drawn up by the Wenhaston Commons Group and follows public consultation on draft proposals. It is intended that this plan will be implemented by the Commons Group through a Higher Level Stewardship Scheme under the auspices of Natural England in consultation with Suffolk Wildlife Trust and administered by Suffolk Coastal District Council or its successor as owner of Black Heath. Discussions continue with these bodies concerning this strategy. If you have any queries or want further information about this plan please contact one of our committee members to discuss:

Contact details –

Heather Phillips (pres/treas)	01502 478545
Jill Daines (chair)	01502 478016
Jonathan Alder (vice chair)	01502 478855
Ann Follows (jt Secy)	01502 478324
Pat Kemsley (jt secy)	01502 478407
Helen Gairn	01502 478025
Gus Jones	01502 478085
Barry Norrington	01502 478762

Copies of the plan have been sent to Suffolk Coastal District Council, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Natural England, and the Hill Estate.

## **TEN YEAR PLAN OF WORKS FOR THE WENHASTON COMMONS 2012-2022**

### **CONTENTS**

<b>1</b>	<b>Background and history</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Value as wildlife habitat</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>General proposals</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Detailed proposals background</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>Detailed proposals: Black Heath</b>	<b>11</b>
	<b>Detailed proposals: Bickers Heath</b>	<b>21</b>
	<b>Detailed proposals: Mill Heath</b>	<b>22</b>
	<b>Schedule 1 Objectives</b>	<b>24</b>
	<b>Schedule 2 Proposals for Black Heath</b>	<b>25</b>
	<b>Schedule 3 Proposals for Bickers Heath</b>	<b>26</b>
	<b>Schedule 4 Proposals for Mill Heath</b>	<b>26</b>
	<b>Map 1: Black Heath</b>	<b>27</b>
	<b>Map 2: Bickers Heath</b>	<b>28</b>
	<b>Map 3: Mill Heath</b>	<b>29</b>

#### **Further information/references –**

Suffolk Local Biodiversity Action Plan (Suffolk Biodiversity Working Group 1998)

Wenhaston Commons Management Plan (Suffolk Coastal D.C.,

Wenhaston Commons Group, Suffolk Wildlife Trust May 2002)

The Wenhaston Local Biodiversity Action Plan (unpublished)(2006)

Wenhaston Commons Group Five year Plan of works ‘Caring for the Commons’ (2008-2012).

## **1. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY**

1.1 The Wenhaston Commons comprise five areas of common land located around the perimeter of the village of Wenhaston. They have been variously managed in the past by local residents but now have few uses other than for recreation/amenity. With the intensifying exploitation of the surrounding countryside, the commons now are relatively isolated and as a result have considerable wildlife value. They contain a number of animal species that have National Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) and areas of lowland heath, which is a threatened habitat also with a national BAP. Biodiversity Action Plans have been drawn up in response to EC Directives and set out the measures to be taken nationally and locally to protect endangered wildlife and their habitats. They are put into effect by funding from government agencies supporting the local authority, Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) and other land owners.

1.2 The Wenhaston commons form part of the Suffolk Coast, Heaths and River Valleys Target Area, a priority area for Higher Level Stewardship administered by Natural England. They also are close to The Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a Special Landscape Area. Black Heath is a County Wildlife Site. In particular their value to biodiversity related to lowland Heath has promoted past action aimed at restoring this rare habitat.

1.3 Lowland heath is the term used to describe a certain type of vegetation, including gorse, grasses, mosses and heather that naturally grow on poor, uncultivated soils that have been historically cleared by man of their original plant cover. Eventually, the heath will revert naturally to low quality woodland due to the poor soils, but man has in the past found uses for such areas and managed them for his benefit. As a result, heaths support wildlife that is not found elsewhere but which paradoxically is dependent upon continuing management/exploitation. The natural process through which woodland eventually develops from bare ground is called succession, and much past management and current conservation is about controlling this.

1.4 The commons now appear to be areas of little agricultural value, almost wasteland, relics from past land use changes. Local residents formerly used them as sources of firewood and kindling for domestic heating, sand and gravel for buildings, grazing for small numbers of livestock, as areas of furze and litter harvested for farm animal bedding or housing, and for some minor domestic purposes e.g. drying wet clothing. As evidence for this, there are still existing rights of common to pasture horses, cattle and donkeys on Black Heath. It is a frequent misconception though that all commons are owned jointly by all local people, and that everyone has rights of use or access. Two of Wenhaston's commons are in fact still in private ownership (Bicker's Heath and Mill Heath), although overall responsibility for the management of all registered commons still currently lies with Suffolk Coastal District Council.

1.5 The former uses of the commons meant that some areas were for many generations managed on a rotation in which the furze (i.e. gorse, heather and bracken) was cut and then allowed to regenerate before re-harvesting. Such a cyclical pattern was commonplace over much of East Anglia, indeed all of Britain, but ceased in the early/mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. This absence of management has resulted in the establishment of bracken and tall, woody gorse at the expense of heather, as a precursor to oak woodland, albeit poor quality trees. Indeed, those areas that are now established oak wood were probably never managed at all. Oak saplings and seedlings can be found already in many places among the grass, gorse, and heather.

1.6 A further consequence of the extraction of sand and gravel is that a number of disused excavation sites, particularly on Black Heath and Mill Heath, have now become small habitats in themselves with a wildlife value of their own.

1.7 There is some photographic evidence of these longer-term changes locally, particularly on Black Heath, from aerial surveys taken by the Luftwaffe in the early 1940's. These photographs also show that the area of the commons as a whole has declined, although not as significantly as elsewhere in Suffolk. About 80% of the former Suffolk Sandlings heath, which stretches from Ipswich to Benacre and of which the Wenhaston commons are a part, has been lost to other uses in recent decades, mainly to military bases, forestry and building. Statutory agencies, including Forest Enterprises, are now restoring this loss where possible (e.g. currently in parts of Dunwich Forest), and there is a legal duty on all public bodies to take account of the needs of biodiversity when carrying out their functions, which will perhaps safeguard the commons' future.

1.8 In May 2002 Suffolk Coastal District Council, in consultation with the Wenhaston Commons Group and Suffolk Wildlife Trust, published the first Management Plan for the Wenhaston Commons which set out in detail the background, status and general objectives for ensuring "the long-term wellbeing of the commons". The management programme was for an initial five year period.

1.9 This was reviewed and updated in 2007 with a further five year programme. The programmes of works were funded through SCDC by the Countryside Stewardship Scheme administered by Natural England (as it is now). This was possible as the commons fell within the category of Lowland Heath.

1.10 The current funding scheme will expire in autumn 2012 and it is the aim of the Commons Group that it be replaced with a Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Scheme. This will enable management work to continue with enhanced funding over a ten year period. In addition "one off" capital payments may be available for specific tasks.

1.11 Discussions have taken place with officers of the District Council and a representative of Natural England confirming that HLS could be made available for the commons subject to consideration of the views of residents and agreement over administrative issues. The Commons Group has undertaken to draw up and consult on a proposed scheme which is set out in this document.

## **2. VALUE AS WILDLIFE HABITAT**

2.1 The need to manage the Wenhaston commons derives primarily from the wildlife value of lowland heath. The previous Wenhaston BAP lists some of the animals and plants that are recorded from the parish, and most of those of interest occur on and around the commons. Past records are held in the Suffolk Biological Records Centre, but the WCG has set up its own database for wildlife monitoring and is building up a detailed local knowledge. For example butterfly counts are made on Black Heath throughout the summer.

2.2 Recent revisions to the national BAPs since the last management plan was drafted have meant that Wenhaston now has as many as 15 species of birds, 6 species of reptiles and amphibians, 3 species of mammals (not including all bats, which are legally protected), and an undetermined number of insects (including at least 3 butterflies), to say nothing of the plants, that have national BAPs. A large proportion of these are associated with lowland heath and the remainder are farmland species. In addition, there are many locally unusual

plants and animals and others that have popular appeal (eg Nightingale); the Commons Group hope to continue to encourage these as well.

2.3 The proposed Higher Level Stewardship scheme requires a comprehensive 10 year management programme for the commons to enhance and sustain their wildlife. By putting this programme in writing we hope that other bodies and individuals will contribute their views so that management can become a full community activity. The current proposals are more detailed than those in the previous plans but do not differ in principle. Only works affecting Black Heath, Mill Heath and Bicker's Heath are included within this programme.

2.4 The recent years' work parties have seen some successes already, with an extension to the range of the rare Silver Studded Blue butterfly on Black Heath, the recovery of heather where gorse has been cleared, and appearances by rare heathland birds, including Hobby and Woodlark.

### **3. GENERAL PROPOSALS**

3.1 The habitats of the commons can be described as a number of general types, each of which has its own management objectives and requirements for action. The categories are:

**Lowland Heath**

**Oak Woodland**

**Scrub Land**

**Specialist small-scale habitats**

**Public access (a management issue affecting all habitats)**

#### **LOWLAND HEATH**

3.2 "Lowland Heath" may be defined as areas of open ground, usually on nutrient-poor soils, dominated by heathers, certain grasses, and some dwarf shrubs. This currently covers most of Black Heath, the central areas of Bicker's and Mill Heaths, and a fragment of Church Common. Strictly speaking, some of these areas include small plots of acid grassland, which is a further nationally rare habitat but can be managed as heathland.

Within these areas, the target wildlife species are;-  
(\* = national BAP species already recorded locally)

**Plants** - Bell heather (Erica sp.) Ling (Calluna sp.) Heath grasses (Dalhonia decumbens etc.) Gorse blocks.

**Birds** - Wood Lark\*, Hobby, Nightjar, Dartford Warbler, Yellowhammer\*, Linnet\*, Nightingale

**Reptiles** - Slow Worm\*, Common Lizard\*, Adder\*, Grass Snake\*

**Insects** - Silver Studded Blue\*, Small Heath\*, Grayling\*, & Green Hairstreak butterflies and Heath Tiger Beetle\*.

3.3 The majority of these species benefit primarily from a patchwork of open heath interspersed by stands of gorse, small areas of bare ground, and some undisturbed cover or shelter.

## **LOWLAND HEATH OBJECTIVES**

**LH1 CREATE AREAS OF GROUND DOMINATED BY HEATHER OR APPROPRIATE GRASSES**

**LH2 PROVIDE PATCHES OF EXPOSED BARE GROUND**

**LH3 RETAIN STANDS/STRIPS OF MANAGED GORSE, HAWTHORN AND/OR BRAMBLE, CONSISTENT WITH THE LOCATION/S**

**LH4 RETAIN INDIVIDUAL TREES WHERE ALREADY ESTABLISHED AND NOT POSING A THREAT TO THE ABOVE**

**LH5 RETAIN SMALL AREAS OF BRACKEN (FOR ADDERS AND OTHER INVERTEBRATES)**

## **ACTION**

3.4 In general these objectives will be met initially by coppicing, or creating corridors in existing areas of old gorse and/or bracken on exposed slopes. If appropriate cleared areas will have the litter layer which has built up over the years removed. Usually, these areas will then be re-seeded by spreading heather brash/cuttings from the immediate area if possible. Established parts of the heath will be managed in small areas by using harvesting equipment at planned regular intervals; heather plants have a finite life as they collapse from the centre, and regenerate best if cut periodically, as they were when harvested as bedding. Cut or cleared non-woody vegetation will be raked and stacked to provide shelter/breeding sites for reptiles and to prevent general soil enrichment from decomposing material. The use of exclosures to protect young heather will continue where necessary. As the programme of works anticipates a significant increase in funding via the Higher Level Stewardship scheme, works to be carried out over a 10 year period will include the use of contractors on a smaller scale year on year.

## **OAK WOODLAND**

3.5 Oak woodland” refers to established areas of the commons that are now dominated by mature oak trees. This covers much of Church Common, approx. one third of Bicker’s Heath, and the west end and other smaller areas of Black Heath. Many of the oaks are stunted due to the poor soil conditions.

Target species are:-

**Birds** - Spotted Flycatcher\*, Marsh Tit\*, Cuckoo\*, other tit families, migrant warblers.

**Insects** - Stag Beetle, woodland butterflies, purple hairstreak.

Bat roosts are nationally protected.

3.6 The birds benefit primarily from the open structure of a mature wood, whilst the stag beetle is dependent upon rotting hardwood stumps where its larvae live and feed.

## **OAK WOODLAND OBJECTIVES**

**OW1 MAINTAIN THE EXISTING AREAS OF WOODLAND COVER**

**OW2 ENHANCE BIRD NESTING USING NEST BOXES AND PROTECTIVE MANAGEMENT**

**OW3 ENSURE THE PROTECTION OF BAT ROOSTS WHERE IDENTIFIED**

## **ACTION**

3.7 No management of these areas is proposed other than providing nestboxes for the smaller bird species and some log piles for the insects. Exceptionally a few individual maturing trees on the heath may be removed or trimmed subject to prior examination for their wildlife value.

### **SCRUB LAND**

3.8 “Scrub” includes all areas of low-growing woody and semi-woody plants with the exception of gorse. Such areas occupy the perimeters and several patches of all the commons. Scrub is a successional stage towards oak woodland. It is important as an area for butterflies and other insects, reptiles needing cover for refuge/hibernation and some birds.

Target species are: –

**Animals** - Harvest Mouse\*, Slow Worm\*

**Birds** - Turtle Dove\*, Nightingale, Bullfinch\*, Dunnock\*.

**Insects** - Many butterflies.

3.9 The birds and small mammals require this habitat for breeding and feeding.

### **SCRUB LAND OBJECTIVE**

**S1 MAINTAIN AREAS OF SCRUB OUTSIDE THE PRINCIPAL HEATH RESTORATION AREAS.**

#### **ACTION**

3.10 No management of these areas is proposed other than discouragement of trees and some sapling removal so that the structural diversity of the habitat is maintained. Bramble should be rotationally managed where it is dense or becoming established in areas of open ground.

### **SPECIALIST SMALL-SCALE HABITATS.**

3.11 This includes the small areas of interest, for example the disused sand pits and Black Deek pond, which require individual attention.

Target species are: –

**Mammal** – Badger (sandy banks good for digging setts)

**Amphibian** - Great Crested Newt\* (East Anglia is GB stronghold)

**Birds** - Sand Martin, Kingfisher

**Insect** - Ant Lion (natural GB population confined to this part of East Anglia), Hymenoptera.

**Flowers** - Heath Dog Violet, Shepherd’s Needle, Common Spotted Orchid

### **SMALL SCALE HABITATS OBJECTIVE**

**SH1 TO ENHANCE THE INDIVIDUAL SPECIAL HABITATS OF THE COMMONS.**

#### **ACTION**

3.12 Black Deek pond has a particular problem as it is infested with Australian/New Zealand Stonecrop, an escaped aquatic/marsh plant sold by many aquatic centres as a pond

plant. In some years, this covers the whole bottom and extends up the perimeter into the emergent reeds. As nearby water bodies are also infested eradication of this plant is not considered to be an option.

3.13 The sand pit that is proposed be opened up on Black Heath is intended to attract the above birds, and other pits contain some rare plants. There is a small population of Ant Lions, an unusual continental insect sometimes breeding on Black Heath, for which small sheltered areas of loose fine sand are required. Future management will enhance this habitat.

### **PUBLIC ACCESS**

3.14 Although strictly outside the scope of biodiversity management, sensitive areas of the commons will need to be protected from disturbance and/or damage through public access. There are certain rights of access to all commons on foot, and byelaw restrictions on vehicles, horses, and some specified activities, enforced by SCDC. The WCG has traditionally maintained footways by regular work parties which have controlled encroaching vegetation and restored old routes where necessary. The following objectives apply to all of the commons and are not specifically referred to in the action plans for individual areas.

### **ACCESS OBJECTIVES**

**A1 TO MANAGE PEDESTRIAN ACCESS ON THE COMMONS  
CONSISTENT WITH ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OTHER PLAN  
OBJECTIVES.**

**A2 TO ENCOURAGE HORSERIDERS TO USE THEIR PRESCRIBED  
ROUTES.**

**A3 TO USE PHYSICAL BARRIERS TO PREVENT VEHICULAR ACCESS.**

**A4 TO ENHANCE INFORMATION ON THE WILDLIFE VALUE OF THE  
COMMONS FOR THEIR USERS.**

### **ACTION**

3.15 Continue to keep established footpaths open by regular trimming etc. Any problems with horseriders or unauthorised vehicles/other uses are referred to SCDC. From time to time erect natural barriers to discourage access to sensitive areas.

## **4. DETAILED PROPOSALS FOR THE COMMONS**

4.1 For each common, is set out below the suggested management work to be carried out over the next ten years. Most areas are identified by a photograph and area numbers are shown on the relevant map. Management works are summarised in schedules 2-4. Church Common is a special case in that there is no intention here to restore the area to heathland. The common has intrinsic value for wildlife particularly in its peripheral woodland and scrub cover. The WCG will continue to manage this area as in the past, in particular keeping open paths and controlling encroaching scrub.

The management works are based upon the following general techniques:-

1. Cut and rake/collect (manual) – vegetation is cut by hand and raked/collected into heaps for disposal/composting/animal shelter.

2. Cut and collect (mechanical) – vegetation, usually large areas or too dense for manual control, is cut and collected by contractor/s using specialist equipment, the cuttings used as above.
3. Heavy duty cutting (usually with power tools) and/or removal of bushy vegetation e.g. old gorse, some sapling trees, including low level pruning of older trees.
4. Scraping or raking off accumulated litter to encourage re-growth of heath plants; this prevents soil enrichment.
5. Mechanised scraping/removal of enriched topsoil by contractors.
6. Construction of exclosures

4.2 Work areas will be signed whilst works are in progress. Additional information about the chemicals used can be obtained from the WCG, although the contractor/s are legally responsible for any safety measures. Other users of the commons are asked to keep clear of any management works in progress. Details of the work proposed for each work party can be obtained immediately before the date by contacting the WCG.

### **BLACKHEATH (see Schedule 2 and Map 1).**

#### **Works to date:-**

4.3 Old/overgrown gorse has been cleared mechanically and by hand in areas 1, 2, 4, 5, 5a and 6a. In addition, cleared areas have been scraped to remove accumulated litter in areas 5, 9 and 10; heather brash has been spread on those in 1, 2, 5, 9 and 10. An old pit in area 6c has been partially opened up to encourage sand dwelling insects and birds.

Small areas of grass and heather have been trimmed in compartments 2 and 5a.

A horse riders' route has been established across and around the heath.

Small areas of bracken have been sprayed (by SCDC contractor) and the dead stems raked off into piles for grass snakes.

A problem with infestation by *Crassula helmsii* (an invasive New Zealand aquatic plant) has been identified in Black Deek pond.

Some small trees have been trimmed at lower levels or removed.

Exclosures have been erected in areas 5, 9 and 10.

## **Proposals:-**

In addition to some routine tasks in smaller areas, the following are to be carried out.

### **Area 1: North-east corner**



4.4 Overgrown gorse in this area currently represents a significant fire risk and will be thinned/rotationally coppiced over the 10 year period of this programme. Areas cleared will be re-seeded to encourage new heather growth, and protected where possible from grazing rabbits by exclosures as currently in use elsewhere on Blackheath. The dense scrub on the northern boundary of this area which attracts nightingales will be left intact. As areas are restored appropriate maintenance works will be carried out. The grassy/bracken area will be cut and raked/collected annually to encourage heath plants. Some areas of regrowing bracken will be cut to prevent it from dominating the ground.

### **Area 1a**

**This mixed habitat of scrub and trees will be left unmanaged.**



### **Area 2: The old track due west of area 1**

4.5 The heavily overgrown gorse which dominates the track which used to run from Blackheath Farm to Church Farm Marshes will be removed/coppiced over the 10 year period, and saplings removed. As the gorse is removed those areas will be restored to

encourage new heather growth, and rabbit exclosures erected where appropriate. Gorse/scrub which still represents valuable habitat will be retained.

### **Area 3: Developing heath**



4.6 This area will be managed by rotational cutting of bramble, and keeping the remainder under observation. It will be necessary to maintain this area by cutting (and raking) regularly. The gorse area nearest to Blackheath Road will be coppiced over the 10 year period, and treated as in the areas above. Again gorse/scrub which represents valuable wildlife habitat will be retained.

### **Area 3a**

4.7 This area of grassland will be retained for its contribution to wildlife.

### **Area 4: Black Deek Pond.**



4.8 This includes Black Deek and its surrounding area. The pond is infested by *Crassula Helmsii* (Australian Stonecrop). Advice has been sought and no proposals are made to eradicate this as other areas in the vicinity are similarly infested. Bracken and brambles on the pond margins will be cut rotationally. Removal of invasive grasses and *Crassula* will be carried out rotationally to protect the water area.

**Area 5: Flat area west of track to chapel.**

4.9 This area will be managed by controlling bramble and bracken by cutting or removal as required to encourage heather/mosses. The area affected by the fire in August 2009 will be restored by removing the remaining gorse stumps and possibly rotavating the ground and seeding with heather brash. The restored area currently with exclosures will be maintained to control bracken, possibly by rolling/trampling. Further exclosures may be erected as necessary; the originals being removed when the heather within has grown to a sufficient height/structure.



**Area 5a: Base of part cleared slope W of horse route.**



4.10 The southern edge abutting Blackheath Road requires regular cutting and possibly spraying to control bramble/bracken. Retain gorse along the road as natural barrier/shelter.

**Area 5b**

4.11 This area of mixed woodland will be retained as a wildlife corridor.

**Area 5c**

4.12 The old pit will be left with scrub and small trees linking with area 5b.

**Area 6: SW top of slope.**



4.13 Heavily overgrown gorse will be coppiced and where appropriate those areas restored to heathland over the 10 year period of this programme, the works being in line with those proposed in the areas above.

**Area 6a**

4.14 Gorse coppicing and restoration of this area over the next 10 years is proposed to further encourage heather and extend the heath created in area 6.

### **Area 6b**

4.15 This old pit with mixed scrub will be retained.

### **Area 6c: Sandpit opposite Blackheath Road**



4.16 The old sand pit is to be restored by removal of the gorse lining the top of this area which is heavily overgrown. The face of the pit will be restored, to encourage sand martins, kingfisher etc to nest here and improve habitat for Ant Lions. The central lower area of scrub will be retained.

### **Area 6d: Bank facing Heathside Farm**



4.17 This area is currently overgrown. Being south-facing it should be a valuable habitat for reptiles and insects. It is proposed that this area is restored over the 10 year period of this programme by coppicing overgrown gorse/scrub, works to link up with those proposed in area 6c above apart from a protected margin on the roadside.

**Area 7: Scrub along west boundary.**



4.18 This area of mixed scrub will be retained. A small area of dense bracken abutting Bramfield Road requires control by spraying/raking. This area otherwise to be unmanaged.

**Area 7a**

4.19 This area of mixed scrub bounded by Bramfield Road will be retained.

**Area 8: South side – Bracken slope between Brant’s Cottage and track.**



4.20 No works are proposed in this area. Existing scrub will be retained.

#### **Area 9: Gorse rear of Brant's Cottage.**



4.21 Part of the heavily overgrown gorse (which continues to represent a significant fire risk) in this area was removed in 2010 and the area restored. Heather brash has been spread and an enclosure erected. This area will be maintained by rotational bracken cutting and coppicing the remaining overgrown gorse over the 10 year period of this programme, restoring the area to heathland. Some of the trees in this area may need to be removed – only the weaker specimens will be affected, and where leaf drop/shade will adversely affect the restored lowland heath/grassland.

#### **Area 10: Restored areas facing south with views over Church Farm Marshes**

4.22 These areas will be maintained to control bracken/scrub encroachment. Heather has



regenerated in the enclosure which will be extended. Some tree surgery (pollarding/pruning/crown reduction) along the southern boundary with Church Farm marshes may be undertaken to enhance views and allow more sunlight onto heath.

#### **Area 11**

4.23 No work is proposed in this area of mixed woodland.

## **Bicker's Heath (see Schedule 3 and Map 2).**

### **Area 1: North of the track**



4.24 Some trees abutting Low Road have been pruned at lower levels. Gorse has been cleared by hand from two areas, and those restored with heather seed sourced from Walberswick Common. Exclosures have been erected and heather is starting to re-establish. These will be enlarged over time. Bracken, gorse and bramble regrowth will be controlled.

### **Area 2: South of the track**

4.25 Continue to clear gorse and overgrown scrub to link up cleared areas. It is envisaged that this will be completed within the 10 year programme. Much of the gorse in this area is in good condition and will remain; only the heavily overgrown areas will be removed. As those areas are cleared they will be restored using the same techniques referred to above. In particular bracken/bramble will require regular control to prevent the current domination it has in some areas.

### **Area 3**

4.26 The oak woodland provides a valuable buffer around the heath and will receive minimal management. Some trees abutting Low Road have been pruned at lower levels. Further work (pollarding/pruning/crown reduction) may be undertaken to the trees on the boundary of Low Road to restore views from the top of the common.

**Mill Heath (See Schedule 4 and Map 3)**

**Area 1: West of the track**



4.27. Gorse has been cleared by hand from this area.  
The area of overgrown gorse in the triangle at the Holton end of this area will be coppiced.  
Bracken/bramble will need to be controlled to avoid domination.

**Area 2: East of track.**



4.28. Clearance of gorse in this area is largely complete, save for the area at the easternmost edge, which is overgrown and which will be selectively removed/coppiced over the 10 year programme, and those areas then restored. Bracken will again need to be controlled.

**Area 3: Slope down to former refuse tip/pit.**

4.29 The area of scrub nearest to the road is invaded with Oak saplings which will be removed, and the bracken in this area controlled.



**Area 4: the old sand pit**

4.30 This area of mixed woodland and scrub will receive minimal management.

**Area 5: Boundary woodland**

4.31 Two areas of mixed woodland forming boundaries to the heath will receive minimal management.

## **CARING FOR THE COMMONS SCHEDULE 1**

### **OBJECTIVES**

#### **LOWLAND HEATH**

- LH1 Create areas of ground dominated by heather or appropriate grasses.
- LH2 Provide patches of exposed bare ground.
- LH3 Retain managed strips of gorse, hawthorn and bramble.
- LH4 Retain individual trees where established and not posing a threat to the above.
- LH5 Retain small areas of bracken for adders and other invertebrates.

#### **OAK WOODLAND**

- OW1 Maintain the existing extent of woodland cover.
- OW2 Enhance bird nesting using nest boxes and protective management.
- OW3 Ensure the protection of bat roosts where identified.

#### **SCRUBLAND**

- S1 Maintain areas of scrub outside the principal heath restoration areas

#### **SMALL SCALE HABITATS**

- SH1 Enhance the special habitats of the commons.

#### **PUBLIC ACCESS**

- A1 Manage pedestrian access on the commons consistent with achievement of the other plan objectives.
- A2 Encourage horse riders to use the prescribed routes.
- A3 Use physical barriers to prevent vehicular access.
- A4 Enhance information on their value for users of the commons.

## CARING FOR THE COMMONS: SCHEDULE 2 WORKS ON BLACK HEATH 2012-2022

AREA No	OBJECTIVE	ACTION
1	LH1, LH2, LH3, S1	Remove/coppice overgrown gorse. Reseed areas to encourage heather growth. Erect exclosures to prevent grazing. Maintain scrub on north boundary. Cut grass and bracken. Ongoing maintenance.
1a	S1, OW1	Minimal intervention
2	LH1, LH2, LH4, S1	Remove/coppice overgrown gorse and saplings. Reseed areas to encourage growth. Manage regenerated growth gorse and scrub. Erect exclosures to prevent grazing.
3	LH1, LH2, S1	Control invasive bramble. Regularly cut and rake developing heathland. Remove/coppice overgrown gorse nearest to Black Heath road. Retain scrub which provides wildlife habitat.
3a	S1, SH1	Minimal intervention
4	SH1	Cut back bramble and bracken periodically. Following advice, no proposals are made regarding invasion of the pond by <i>Crassula Helmsii</i> as other waterbodies in the area are similarly infected. Consider as a special project.
5	LH1, LH2	Control bracken and bramble invasion. Restore area affected by fire by removal of gorse stumps, rotovation and seeding with heather brash. Erect further exclosures.
5a	LH1, LH3	Cut back invading gorse and bramble. Retain roadside gorse as a natural barrier and shelter.
5b/5c	OW1, S1, SH1	These linked areas will be left as natural wooded corridors
6	LH1,LH2,LH3,LH5	Maintain cleared areas by removal of regenerating gorse, bramble and bracken.
6a	LH1, LH2	Remove/coppice overgrown gorse and restore to heathland.
6b	SH1	This area will be left as mixed habitat
6c	SH1	Restore face of pit. Remove overgrown gorse at head of pit. Retain mixed scrub in the central lower area.
6d	LH1, LH5	Remove/coppice overgrown gorse and scrub
7	S1	This area of mixed scrub will be retained with minimal management.
7a	OW1, OW2	This area of mixed woodland will be retained with minimal management.
8	SI, LH3	This area of scrub will be left with minimal management
9	LH1,LH2,LH3,LH4 LH5,	Remove/coppice overgrown gorse and restore to heathland, remove stumps and seed with brash. Remove selected trees and scrub. Erect exclosures.
10	LH1,LH2,LH3,LH4	Control bracken and scrub encroachment. Erect exclosures.
11	SI SH1	This area of mixed scrub and woodland will be retained with minimal management.

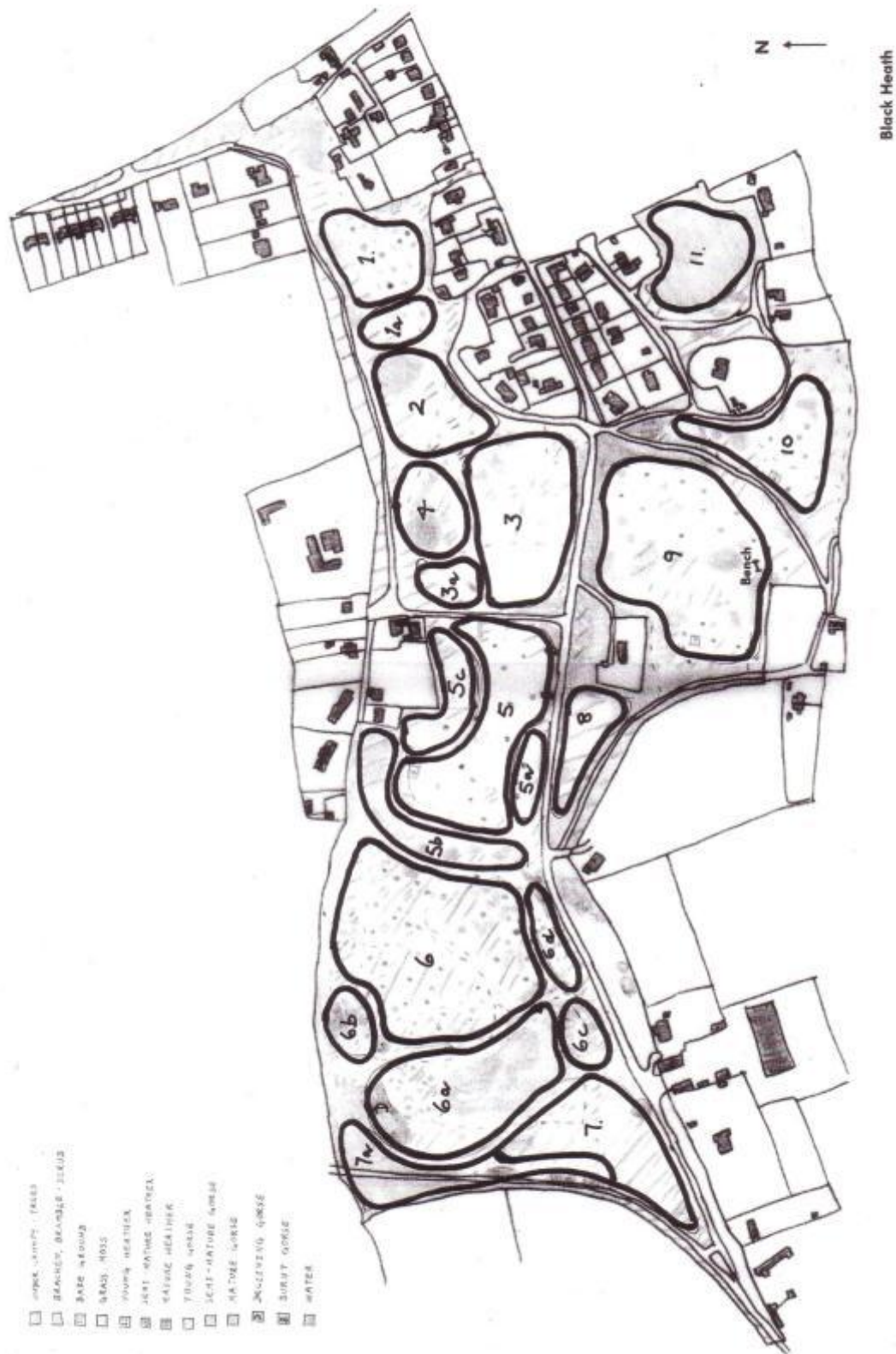
**CARING FOR THE COMMONS: SCHEDULE 3 WORKS ON BICKERS HEATH 2012-2022**

AREA No	OBJECTIVE	ACTION
1	LH1, LH2, LH5	Control bramble, bracken and re-growing gorse. Enlarge exclosures when heather established.
2	LH1, LH2, LH5	Coppice old gorse. Young gorse to be retained. Bracken and bramble will be controlled.
3	OW1, OW2	Minimal management other than selective pollarding.

**CARING FOR THE COMMONS: SCHEDULE 4. WORKS ON MILL HEATH 2012-2022**

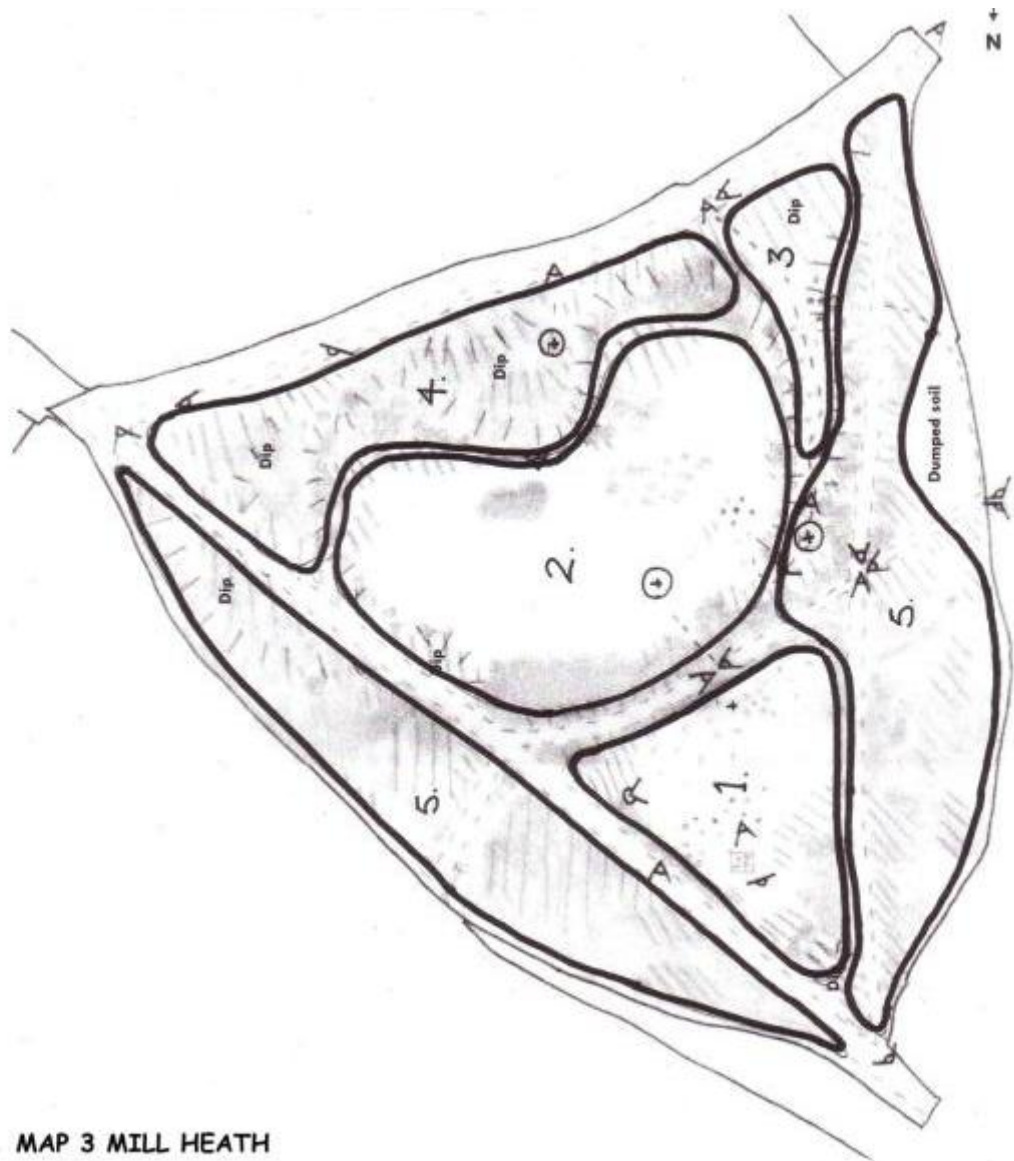
AREA No	OBJECTIVE	ACTION
1	LH1, LH2, LH3, LH4, LH5	Coppice overgrown gorse at Holton end and restore area. Control bramble and bracken
<u>2</u>	LH1, LH2, LH3, LH4, LH5	Hollow out area south of track
<u>3</u>	OW1, S1, LH5	Remove invading scrub and oak saplings. Control invading gorse.
<u>4</u>	OW1	Minimal management
<u>5</u>	OW1	Minimal management

MAP 1 BLACK HEATH



# MAP 2 BICKER'S HEATH





MAP 3 MILL HEATH