



FRIENDS OF PLUMSTEAD COMMON (PLUMSTEAD COMMON ENVIRONMENT GROUP)



WORKHOUSE WOOD

PROJECT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Development of an area of long-neglected land into
an accessible woodland trail

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THE SITE



In the 1860s the Woolwich Guardians began negotiations with Queen’s College, Oxford (who then owned the land) to enclose twelve acres of Plumstead Common “that was of no value to the public” in order to build the proposed Woolwich Union Workhouse. Fortunately, this enclosure was opposed under the Metropolitan Commons Act.

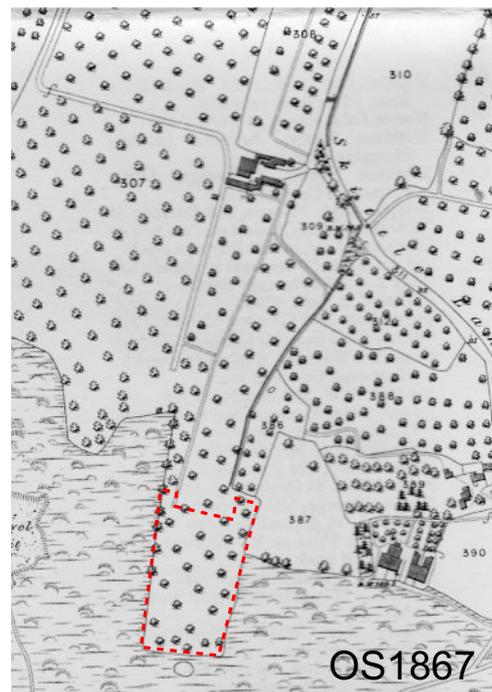
Subsequent enclosures on the common were finally halted following the Plumstead Common Riots in 1876. In order to pursue their plans for the new workhouse, the board of the Woolwich Union purchased farm land immediately north of the common.

A small rectangular portion of this farm land protruded, in a natural hollow, into Winn’s Common (the name given to the eastern part of Plumstead Common). The south, west and east boundaries of this area of woodland has been consistent for some centuries. As part of a large fruit farm, it may have been planted with plum trees (see map below right).

We have named this rectangle of land “Workhouse Wood” because it was at the rear of the extensive Woolwich Union workhouse buildings, and a track led from the workhouse to a piggery and stables there.



The earliest map that we have found, hand drawn in the 18C, showing the area belonging to “Mr Stiles”



In this mid-19C map at the area is shown to be part of a farmed orchard.

The foundation stone for the Woolwich Union Workhouse was laid in 1870. It was inscribed with a quotation from the gospels:

THE POOR YE HAVE ALWAYS WITH YOU

In 1872, a separate infirmary building was erected, to the south of the workhouse, comprising three ward blocks with central staff quarters, kitchens, stores, offices and committee rooms.

In 1928 the Board of Guardians renamed the infirmary The Plumstead & District Hospital, and the workhouse became the Woolwich Institution. Control of the site passed to the LCC in 1930, and it was renamed St. Nicholas Hospital. During World War Two it suffered considerable bomb damage, with substantial portions of the northern block being damaged beyond repair during one air-raid. In 1945 the buildings were further damaged by a V1 flying bomb. In 1951 a six-storey ward block, the building of which had been interrupted by the war, was completed. The block contained the Gooding Ward with twenty three maternity beds.



A late 19C map showing the Woolwich Union Workhouse on former farmland. We have labelled the piggery.

An early 20C map showing new hospital buildings south of the old infirmary, and a stable block next to the workhouse piggery.



A mid 20C map showing the new ward block encroaching the north margins of what is now the wood.

A Google satellite image showing the new housing on the old workhouse/hospital site

The hospital ran a complete general training course for nurses, who were accommodated in a block just north-west of the site of Workhouse Wood. At some stage in the hospital history the perimeter of the woodland within the grounds was protected with a wire fence between sturdy concrete posts. Following a serious attack on two nurses in the nurses' home in the late 1970s, the fencing on the west, east and south boundaries of the woodland was strengthened by replacing it with a substantial corrugated iron fence and razor wire.

After a series of temporary closures, St Nicholas Hospital finally closed in 1986. The buildings were demolished in 1992, and the site redeveloped with modern housing, which was completed in 1994. The wooded area was robustly separated, at its northern margin, from the new housing estate in Tynemouth Road with tall railings. It was to remain inaccessible from Winn's Common behind the reinforced barrier. The corrugated iron fence was eventually breached in a few places and was to become damaged, degraded and heavily vandalised.

After the closure of the hospital, the woodland had become part of the Metropolitan Open Land of Plumstead Common.

The site has had a history of low-level crime. The fence became an ugly eyesore and large quantities of refuse were dumped there.



FRIENDS OF PLUMSTEAD COMMON

The Plumstead Common Environment Group (PCEG) was formed in 1991 by a small number of like-minded people concerned that our environment was suffering from a lack of care. The group has grown in number and influence, working in partnership with Royal Greenwich Council to conserve and maintain Plumstead Common and the surrounding area. At the end of 2016 the group decided to “re-brand” as the Friends of Plumstead Common (FoPC), in order to sound more approachable and less “worthy”.

At the west end of Plumstead Common is a wooded ravine that had long been neglected. Founder members of the group adopted the site and cleared the huge accumulation of rubbish. Regular work is carried out at the reserve and, as Plumstead Common Nature Reserve (PCNR), it has received official designation as a Site of Local Importance.

In a more recent development, using funding from Veolia and Grassroots

Grants, PCEG completed a major programme of improvement of the PCNR which involved the replacement of 170 metres of boundary fencing. Access steps, with post and rail, were created leading into the ravine from the east and west, and a community notice board was installed at the west entrance. We also designed and installed interpretive signs at both access points.

Regular monthly work sessions take place at the site.

Plumstead Common Nature Reserve

CORN MARSHLEY
Arctostaphylos

Can garden to some of the most beautiful plants of the British Isles. It is a member of the Rubiaceae family and is native to the Mediterranean region.

The plant has a number of uses. The leaves are used in the preparation of a tonic wine. The bark is used in the preparation of a tonic wine. The fruit is used in the preparation of a tonic wine.

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FALES ACACIA
Rubia prostrata

The most common tree in the garden. It is a member of the Rubiaceae family and is native to the Mediterranean region.

The plant has a number of uses. The leaves are used in the preparation of a tonic wine. The bark is used in the preparation of a tonic wine. The fruit is used in the preparation of a tonic wine.

ELDER
Sambucus nigra

All green parts of the plant are used in the preparation of a tonic wine. The bark is used in the preparation of a tonic wine. The fruit is used in the preparation of a tonic wine.

PARAKEET
Pseudauchenya

The most common bird in the garden. It is a member of the Psittacidae family and is native to the Mediterranean region.

BLACKBIRD
Turdus merula

The most common bird in the garden. It is a member of the Turdidae family and is native to the Mediterranean region.

HAWTHORNE
Crataegus monogyna

The most common tree in the garden. It is a member of the Rosaceae family and is native to the Mediterranean region.

MAGPIE
Pica pica

The most common bird in the garden. It is a member of the Corvidae family and is native to the Mediterranean region.

BLACKBULL
Bubalus bubalis

The most common animal in the garden. It is a member of the Bovidae family and is native to the Mediterranean region.

PLUMSTEAD COMMON NATURE RESERVE

This nature reserve was created by the people for the people. Please help us all to look after it.

PCEG’s most ambitious project, at the Slade Ponds, gained a Shell “Best of Better Britain” Award. The ponds had been severely polluted for years. Members of the group designed and built a gravel reed bed in a new double weir system to improve water quality and provide a good wildlife habitat.

PCEG later gained funding from Biffaward, together with materials and equipment from B&Q. We designed and installed an interpretive sign and anchored a duck platform in the middle of the pond. The now resident ducks and moorhens breed successfully each year. Group members also repainted the 250 metre run of railings around the pond. Two regular monthly work sessions and litter picks take place in an area of two hectares around the site, under the supervision of a dedicated co-ordinator.

The Slade Ponds

Look out for...

- 1. **ASH** *Fraxinus excelsior*
Ash wood is exceptionally strong and has long been used for tools and boat repair.
- 2. **ASH** *Fraxinus excelsior*
The tree has beautiful silvery bark and is a very hard, especially so, for the wood.
- 3. **BLACKBIRD** *Turdus merula*
The bird is a member of the Turdidae family and is native to the Mediterranean region.
- 4. **ELDER** *Sambucus nigra*
The plant has a number of uses. The leaves are used in the preparation of a tonic wine. The bark is used in the preparation of a tonic wine. The fruit is used in the preparation of a tonic wine.
- 5. **HAWK** *Buteo*
The bird is a member of the Accipitridae family and is native to the Mediterranean region.
- 6. **WILLOWHERB** *Cardamine hirsuta*
- 7. **BURDOCK** *Achillea millefolium*
- 8. **MOORHEN** *Gallinula chloropus*
The bird is a member of the Scolopacidae family and is native to the Mediterranean region.
- 9. **MALLARD** *Anas platyrhynchos*
The duck is a member of the Anatidae family and is native to the Mediterranean region.
- 10. **MOORHEN** *Gallinula chloropus*
The bird is a member of the Scolopacidae family and is native to the Mediterranean region.
- 11. **MALLARD** *Anas platyrhynchos*
The duck is a member of the Anatidae family and is native to the Mediterranean region.

- 12. **POND BIRDS** *Claytonia*
- 13. **YELLOW FLAG** *Claytonia*
- 14. **ENGLISH OAK** *Quercus robur*
- 15. **GOLDEN WILLOW** *Salix aurora*
- 16. **BLACK POPLAR** *Populus nigra*
- 17. **LONG TAILED TIT** *Aegithalos caedens*
- 18. **NORWAY SPRUCE** *Picea abies*
- 19. **CHERRY PLUM** *Prunus cerasifera*
- 20. **GREY SQUIRREL** *Sciurus hibernicus*
- 21. **DRAGONFLY** *Zygoptera*

This green space was restored by the people for the people. Please help us all to look after it.



In 2005, the PCEG had an Action Day to conduct an initial clearance of Workhouse Wood, and set an outline plan to develop it as a valuable amenity for the community.



Since then we have been heavily involved in developing what had been our two Green Flag Community Award winning flagship sites, and we have now turned our attention to the realisation of our plans for this long-neglected, and hitherto unmanaged, piece of woodland.

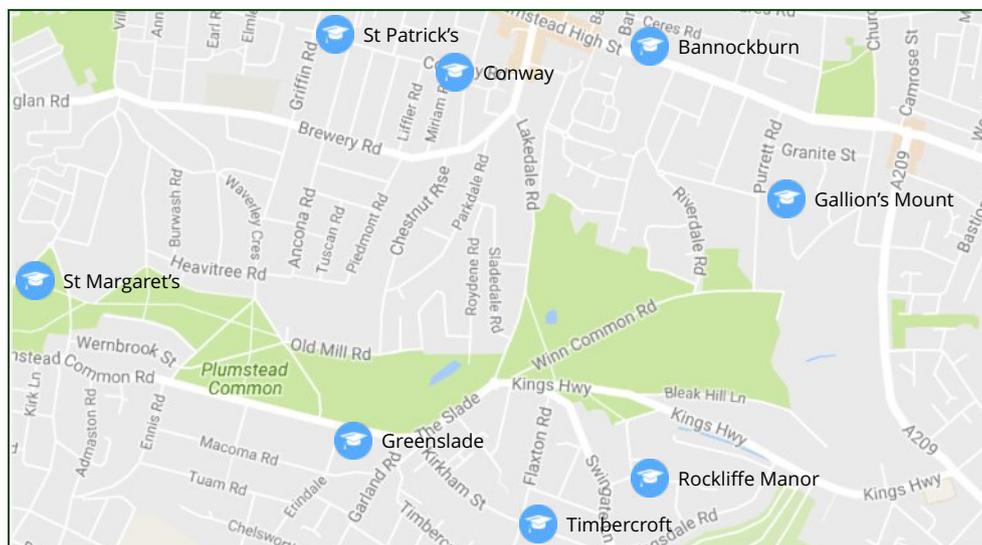
Below are two photographs, taken before any management commenced, giving some idea of the natural beauty of the site.



PROJECT OUTCOMES

Development of this space will make it less vulnerable to crime and open it up for the people.

The site is in a mainly urban environment and is close to areas of high social deprivation. It is also within short walking distance of many local schools offering an excellent educational resource for a variety of studies.



A fully accessible woodland trail could provide a rare opportunity for disabled people, and parents with push-chairs, to safely experience a beautiful natural woodland environment. If we can create access at the northern margin of the wood, we expect disabled people to be able to use the amenity unaided.

FoPC wants to encourage involvement from the wider community and invites volunteers from all backgrounds to work on the project.

We plan installation of benches by the former piggery wall to create a peaceful meeting place, or somewhere to just sit and listen to the birds.

The possibility of creating access to the woodland from the south end of Tynemouth Road, where there is currently a fence, will be subject to public consultation. We have encountered resistance to the idea from some nearby residents on the grounds of safety and security of their homes and vehicles. It is our belief, supported by the local police and ward councillors, that creating a pedestrian through-way at the end of this cul-de sac will have a beneficial effect on crime and safety in the area. We would like people living in the residential estate built on the former workhouse land to be able to access the woodland as a recreational resource (see impression on the next page).

Inclusive Design

When the project is completed, Workhouse Wood will be a relatively inclusive environment, generally freely accessible for all irrespective of age, ability, gender, nationality, income and so on. We are therefore adopting principles of 'Inclusive Design'.

Inclusive Design meets national policy advice promoting 'access for all' to public parks and green-spaces and the requirements of the Equalities Act (2010) which superseded the oft-quoted Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

The 2010 Act established that, when providing goods, services and facilities, it is unlawful to treat disabled people less favourably for reasons related to their disability.

The social and commercial benefits of Inclusive Design are inextricably linked. It is estimated that 20% of the population local to Workhouse Wood has a limiting disability of some kind.

The moral and social case for Inclusive Design is most compelling considering that we are all likely to be affected at some stage in our lives: as families with small children, carers, friends or relatives accompanying people with disabilities, or as older people, we will all at some stage benefit from accessible and inclusive parks.

PROJECT PLAN

The Workhouse Wood project is being implemented in three phases.

PHASE ONE - SITE PREPARATION

i Removal of the boundary fence

Working in partnership with the Ixion Community Work Placement programme, PCEG secured over two thousand hours of labour for this project. The first task was to remove the robust corrugated iron fence. The work was arduous and hazardous, involving a stringent risk assessment and a strict H&S regime.

The fence was dismantled and 6.8 tons of iron removed from the site. All the equipment and PPE clothing for this task were resourced by PCEG from its own funds.



ii Creation of a clear pathway through the site

Clear pathways, mapped below, have been created to improve access to the woods. A circular route is now complete. Fallen trees on the pathway have been cut and cleared.

The pathway has been laid with bark chippings to render it safer underfoot.



To celebrate completion of the initial pathway a mulled wine event with guided tour was held for the community on Boxing Day 2015. The event was popular and was repeated in 2016.



iii Removal of fly-tipped debris and deep clean litter clearance

There was a huge accumulation of fly-tipped refuse at the north margin of the site. Careful examination of the refuse by volunteers found evidence that it originated from the resident who lived adjacent to the wood in Tynemouth Road. Royal Borough of Greenwich Enforcement Officers took action, and PCEG volunteers cleared the site with the assistance of the Parks Department. The street and pavement around the offender’s property was also cleared of debris following enforcement action and the PCEG got an over-loaded skip removed that had been there for many months.



Some of the rubbish fly-tipped over the fence at Tynemouth Road

iv Levelling the piggery for future development

We excavated the very uneven ground surface, removing tree roots and installed concrete slabs ready for the installation of some seating.

v Installation of welcoming signage

The first two signs installed at the entrance to the site were destroyed by vandals. The second sign was made from a children's bed head that had been abandoned nearby. Fortunately we kept the bed-foot in storage and, after robust reinforcement, have restored the "welcome" sign.



vi Tree species identification and mapping

This is a project for which we enlisted the help of a young man as his volunteering project in a *Duke of Edinburgh Award* scheme. The identification and mapping will be completed as a result of a funded survey.

vii Installation of bird boxes

One of the Ixion CWP workers constructed 30 bird boxes which have been installed all over Plumstead Common - several in Workhouse Wood.

viii Consultation with local schools

A significant element of the Workhouse Wood project is the implementation of a Forest Schools resource. We are creating two glades in the wood at the northern and southern ends. Tree felling in the southern glade will create an arena from felled tree trunks.

In December 2016 a consultation process was begun with local primary schools, seeking their advice and involvement. This process will continue throughout the project.

Phase one was completed by end of year 2016

PHASE TWO - FUNDED WORK

In 2017 the project will benefit from the following grant funding:

Tesco Bags of Help	£12,000
Postcode Lottery	£2,000
Greenwich Parks Friends	£1,000
TOTAL	£15,000

i Creation of access steps

Currently, the natural point of entry to the site is at the south-west corner from Winn's Common, down a steep slope. Creating safer access at this point is a priority. A series of steps has been built into the slope by a contractor.

The contractor has been re-engaged to build further stepped platforms, filled with compacting gravel, from the current lowest step to the ground level of the wood.

A further contractor will be engaged to build a post and rail at those access steps.

ii Topographical survey

Consultation with Royal Greenwich Council has been sustained since the project was first conceived.

It is important for sustainability and future management of the site to obtain a full survey. Evans Langford have been engaged to conduct the survey in January 2017.

iii Arboricultural work

The woodland has had no management for at least forty years. Funding enables us to progress the following arboricultural work, starting in January 2017.

1. Make site safe. Remove deadwood over pathways.

Reduce height of large twin trunked Sycamore, which is dying back, to 7 metres. Safe for humans and good for wildlife, this will retain woodpecker holes in tree.

2. Fell group of sycamores, to west of centre of site, to create a glade. This will encourage diversity of flora & fauna.

Cut timber to size for woodland seating in glade.

3. Large leaning black poplar: Reduce to a trunk at 10 metres and allow to regrow. Large branches have torn out in the past, and this action will rejuvenate the tree.

Cut any useful timber to size for edging etc.

4. Label specimen trees with number tags and create a tree trail.

There is a good variety of trees on the site: several mature oaks, as

well as sycamore, ash, willow, poplar, Norway maple, field maple, horse chestnut, Monterey pine, western red cedar and elm.

Create master sheet & print off copies for schools etc.

iv Removal of concrete posts

The 82 concrete posts from the original fence will be cut off just below ground level. Some posts will then be recycled to form path margins; the remainder used to fill the deep hazardous void of the drain at the southern margin.

v Children's mural in the piggery

We will retain the surviving walls of the old workhouse piggery, and have invited local schools to submit children's designs for a mural. It is our intention to have that mural professionally and sustainably painted on the piggery wall. Below is an impression of how it might look.



vi Installation of benches

Two or three robust and vandal-proof benches will be installed in the old piggery.

vii Creation and installation of interpretive signs

We have successfully designed interpretive signage for the Slade Ponds and the Plumstead Common Nature Reserve. We plan to initially install one sign, with flora and fauna information, at the entrance from Winn's Common, and a further sign at the piggery with information regarding the workhouse and Bodles' Farm.

viii Further consultation with stakeholders

We need to consult with nearby residents regarding access to the site from Tynemouth Road. We have already consulted with the council and the local police SNT team. Both agencies support the idea and suggest that creating a through-way will have a beneficial effect on crime and safety in the area.

We intend to further consult with local schools, mother and toddler groups, the residents of the neighbouring houses, and local associations for the disabled.

We will use social media and conduct consultation by means of Survey Monkey. We have been using email and both FoPC and Plumstead People Facebook groups to keep the local community informed about progress and development at the site.

We want to offer local people a sense of involvement in the project. It's important that they have a feeling of ownership of the scheme and feel

enthusiastic about the sustainability of the site.

In this phase, subject to feasibility and stakeholder support, we will invite tenders for design and construction of more fully accessible paths, and infrastructure that would allow access to, and encourage use of, the site from Tynemouth Road.

PHASE FOUR - MAKING THE WOOD FULLY ACCESSIBLE

Subject to results of the consultation and to sufficient funding.

i Creation of access at the northern boundary

Strictly subject to the cooperation and agreement of nearby residents and the neighbouring freeholders (see above). Below is an impression of how this access might appear.



ii Final construction of accessible pathway through the wood

The pathway will be relaid with material most suitable for the purpose. Ideally, we would like to implement posts and rail along the path to facilitate safe and easy access by people who have difficulty walking. Parents with pushchairs, wheelchairs and mobility scooters should be able to negotiate the site.

iii Further inclusive design

We want people with sight difficulties to be able to enjoy the site, as well. Our long-term plan included information signs, warnings and instructions on the site to be also in braille.

SITE MANAGEMENT PLAN

PART I: THE SITE

The woodlands in this plan are categorised in the Greenwich Green Space Strategy guidelines as having a primary purpose classification of Natural/Semi-natural open space.

The site is an ‘open site’ meaning it is open 24 hours a day, every day.

There are two glades in the site. The northern glade, shaded and damp, has been named “Bees Nest Glade”. The southern glade has been expanded through felling to reduce the canopy and accommodate a Forest Schools arena; we have named this glade “the Forest Schools Glade”.

Management Structure

The primary management of Workhouse Wood is the responsibility of Friends of Plumstead Common (FoPC). The site is leased on an annually renewable basis from the freeholder, Royal Greenwich. The FoPC work in partnership with, and with the support of, the Parks, Estates & Open Spaces Department within Royal Borough of Greenwich.

Biological Data

The woodland canopy is largely comprised of broadleaved deciduous trees. There are some evergreen trees, notably a Monterey pine and two Western red cedar trees.

The ground flora is mostly dominated by bramble and holly.

The wood supports assemblages of fungi: oyster, beefsteak and shaggy parasol.

A range of common woodland birds are present

Buildings and structures

Three boundary walls (east, north and south) of the former Woolwich Union Workhouse piggery survive. There is a piece of a stone pinnacle, believed to be from the workhouse gate in the south-most glade (“Bees Nest Glade”).

Main uses, recreational facilities, visitor attractions and activities

The main use of the wood is by dog walkers, walkers, and for general amenity.

There is no recreational infrastructure in the wood, so use of the site is limited to passive recreation. There is a welcome sign at the entrance from Winn’s Common. The only infrastructure planned for the site is benches and interpretive signage.

The main visitor attraction is the woodland itself.

Volunteering opportunities are available to manage and maintain the woodland and paths.

Users of Workhouse Wood come mostly from the local area. It is not impossible to assess users without doing a thorough survey.

Stakeholders

Greenwich Council

- Children's Services
 - Youth Services
- Central Services
 - Community Engagement
- Community Services
 - Parks, Estates and Open Spaces
- Health and Adult Services
 - Public Health and Community Wellbeing

Local Schools

- Bannockburn
- Gallions Mount
- Rockliffe
- Greenslade
- Timbercroft

Community

- FoPC
- GWAG (Greenwich Wildlife Advisory Group)
- Dog walkers
- Green Chain Walk users
- Park Users
- Greenwich Parks Friends Forum

Agencies

- Metropolitan Police Safer Neighbourhood Team (Plumstead Ward)
- Natural England
- London Wildlife Trust
- Woodland Trust
- Greenwich Wildlife Advisory Group
- Forestry Commission
- SE London Green Chain

Funders

- Tesco Bags of Help Scheme
- Postcode Lottery

Politicians

- Teresa Pearcel MP
- Plumstead Ward Members:
 - Angela Cornforth
 - Matthew Morrow
 - Rajinder James

PART 2: WHERE DO WE WANT TO GET TO?

Our responsibility: conserve and enhance Workhouse Wood for the benefit of biodiversity and for current and future generations of people.

Management Objectives for Workhouse Wood

- To maintain Workhouse Wood for nature conservation and amenity for the enjoyment of future generations
- To develop diverse habitats in the way we manage the site
- To ensure continuity of diversity of flora and fauna and the communities they form
- To maintain a varied woodland structure and a full age range of trees
- To maintain the mature oaks
- To encourage the accumulation of dead wood, both standing and fallen, as habitat for invertebrates, fungi and cavity-nesting birds
- To provide opportunities for recreational use of the woods, where this does not compromise the objectives listed above
- To encourage the use of, and provide facilities for education at all levels
- To monitor flora and fauna in order to inform future management of the site
- To minimise Anti Social Behaviour
- To work with the local community in identifying priorities for improvements

ANALYSIS & ASSESSMENT

Site Potential

In nature conservation terms, Workhouse Wood is close to its maximum potential, though removal of invasive alien species is necessary to prevent deterioration of the ecological interest.

Some coppicing would increase the habitat diversity and perhaps encourage light-demanding species to increase or colonise the woods.

An assessment of the footpath is necessary, probably resulting in some improvement in access and safety.

Constraints on management of the Woodlands: limited resources in terms of available labour and money are the most significant limiting factors in managing the site.

Ecology

Most users of the woods would probably prefer as few trees as possible to be cut down, even for coppicing, and there is no pressure to coppice. Therefore, apart from the initial removal of some non-native species (see below), it is proposed to manage most of the woods as minimum intervention high forest.

Small areas of coppice may provide a more varied environment for users of the woods, and will be valuable for education.

Tree management

Tree management of the site should be undertaken in two different fashions.

Woodland trees should only be managed on an as necessary basis where problems are reported and assessed as a risk

Trees adjacent to the path and open areas should be more actively managed, in order to mitigate any risk arising from these trees.

Planting

The planting of native species such as bluebells and cowslips could be investigated.

FoPC have already planted (2016) *Alium vineale* (wild garlic) in the Bees Nest Glade.

Wild cherry could be planted/seeded as an under storey beneath the existing trees. This could be done by collecting wild cherry seeds and fruit from elsewhere in the wood and scattering them.

Ecological Studies

There has been no ecological survey of the wood to date

Treatment of alien plant species

Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)

Distribution: scattered. Mature and young trees, re-growth and saplings.

Characteristics: Highly invasive, fast-growing tree casting dense shade, thus out-competing native tree regeneration and suppressing ground flora. Likely to become a serious ecological problem in the wood if not controlled. These trees do support a high biomass of invertebrates, and are therefore valuable to birds in late summer.

Treatment: Some sizeable trees should be felled, and the trunks used to create a forest schools arena.

Seedlings and small saplings can be pulled up.

Priority: URGENT/ONGOING

Other Biological Issues

Mammals

Grey Squirrel

The grey squirrel was introduced into Britain in the late 19th century (from 1876 onwards), and has replaced the native red squirrel in most of its former British range. Grey squirrels strip the bark of many tree species which can seriously damage the trees. No action is currently taken.

Foxes

Foxes are not an ecological problem, but they can excavate inconveniently in the Forest Schools Glade.

Birds

Indian Ring Necked Parakeet

Originally from Africa and southern Asia and kept as caged birds, some ring-necked parakeets escaped and by the 1970s, had started to breed in south-eastern England.

The recent population boom of this species has also been attributed to a series of mild winters and a lack of natural predators. York University has undertaken a study of the spread of these birds and Oxford University also received funding for a similar study.

In woodlands they are a problem because they are extremely noisy, they congregate in large numbers, their calls tend to discourage/scare other birds away from them and they take over woodpecker holes and tit boxes. In addition, they can be aggressive towards other birds in territorial disputes, which can intimidate the other birds away from the area, especially as their larger size gives them an advantage.

As with squirrels, culling would probably not produce a favourable public reaction. Alternate means of controlling this species should be sought.

Crows, Seagulls and Feral Pigeons

Significant numbers of local people are supporting artificially large populations of these birds on Plumstead Common by regularly feeding them inappropriate food. A large population of crows roost in Workhouse Wood. We are seeking ways to assess their impact.

Summary of known ASB at the site

Some Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) has occurred at the site. It is quite a difficult to police with current manning levels. However, the local SNT do patrol the wood and surrounding area.

Two information signs have been destroyed (and replaced). A robust shed built for storage of tools and equipment was repeatedly attacked, and finally

destroyed by arson.

Residents and users should be encouraged to report ASB by dialling 999, 101, calling Greenwich Council Contact Centre, or leaving a message with either the local SNT or the Chair of FoPC – depending on the urgency.

The level of ASB is currently (Winter 2016-2017) at a very low level.

Litter and Tipping

Litter is a minor problem at the site.

Fly tipping is rare, with the exception of the north margin which was severely fly-tipped by the neighbouring resident. Action by the PCEG (now FoPC) cleared the site and resulted in enforcement action. The offender has now moved away.

Any other tipping will be removed immediately.

STRENGTHS

- Workhouse Wood is “a piece of the countryside” within very easy walking distance of hundreds of homes.
- It has a diverse collection of attractive trees, including a veteran oak.
- It is a quiet, secluded place for passive recreation.
- It is ideally situated, within easy distance of several schools.

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CHALLENGES

Constraints on Management

- No ecological or aboricultural assessment had been done before FoPC took over management
- Limited resources in terms of labour and money
- Limited Anti Social Behaviour within the site
- Ring necked parakeet and crows are a possible deterrent to other bird species.
- Concerns about falling trees and branches may be a barrier to members of the public enjoying the woodlands (This is balanced against objectives in retaining dead standing wood to encourage habitat creation).
- Lack of interpretation within the site
- Threat from alien invasive species

RECOMMENDATIONS

See table:

Vers: 1.2

Recommendation	Action	Timescale (Long/Medium/Short Term/Ongoing)	Reviewed
Consult with RBG Parks re Project Plans	Site meeting with Paul Martin, James Hedges and David Willoughby	ST	Done Dec 16
Approach the RBG P,E&OS to comment on the draft plan and feed findings into the plan as appropriate	Send draft plan	ST	Sent Jan 16
Begin consultation with stakeholders to identify priorities for improvement (to include plans for interpretation/education at the site)	Liaise with existing contacts. Identify additional stakeholder contacts	Ongoing	Invitations to Dec 15 & Dec 16 mulled wine event
Specifically consult with local schools (identifying appropriate staff members in the process) to help plan and utilise Forest Schools facility.	Contact and consult	Ongoing	Contacted local schools Dec 16 & Jan 17 - so far zero response.
Undertake a survey of the site.	Identify a provider and cost a survey	ST	Done - Evans Langford ongoing
Extend access steps at entry point	Contact contractor -	ST	Ongoing
Tree work for safety and management	Contracted	ST	Commenced Jan 17
Green Chain Publicity & Marketing	Liaise	ST	

Design and implement 2 interpretive signs. One on flora and fauna, and the other on the workhouse and social history.	Nick Day to design. Source supplier	MT	
Installation of Litter & Recycling bin	P,E&OS?	MT	
Apply for Green Flag Award	Complete and submit docs	ST	
Installation of seating benches in piggery	After tree management work	MT	Priced and funded
Access at N margin	Consultation with neighbours	LT	
Improve path surfaces and definition.	The path will be surfaced with chippings from the tree work in the early part of 2017	ST	
Cut back foliage at the northern end	FoPC to undertake	ST	
Remove concrete posts	To be contracted	MT	
Involve youth organisations	Liaison to be done	MT	
Involve the community	Mulled Wine Meet x 2 / Social Media marketing	ONGOING	

APPENDIX I: Project Drivers

The Green Chain Walk runs right past the entrance to Workhouse Wood.

The South East London Green Chain, also known as the Green Chain Walk is a linked system of open spaces between the River Thames and Crystal Palace Park in London, England. In 1977 four London Boroughs and the Greater London Council created this Green Chain of 300 open spaces to protect them from building activity. The four London boroughs are Bexley, Bromley, Lewisham and Greenwich. More recently it has been extended to include sections in Southwark. (Wikipedia)

The latest data available for Plumstead ward in Greenwich show that:

- One quarter of residents live in flats or shared accommodation.
- 41.6% households with children
- 43% households with no car or van
- 17% of the population are in fair, bad or very bad health
- 7.6% are unemployed
- 18% live in overcrowded households

At 12-12.9% Greenwich Borough has a relatively high proportion of residents with a limiting illness or disability.

It is clear that Plumstead would benefit from an accessible open space in which children could safely play, which parents and children can explore and enjoy together, and which disabled people can access as a piece of countryside within easy reach of their homes.

The factors which provide the impetus and stimulus for creation of an accessible woodland trail are many. Among them are:

- Children benefit physically and developmentally from spending time in green spaces. Well-managed green spaces can provide safe spaces for children and young people to interact and develop.
- Local green spaces foster community interaction and reduce social isolation, particularly amongst older adults. Green space reduces the environmental impacts of deprivation.
- The passive and active recreation opportunities of green spaces can help combat Greenwich's health inequalities and encourage healthier lifestyles. Green spaces have a positive effect on mental health and in the relief of stress.
- Effective urban regeneration depends on the quality and accessibility of urban green spaces.
- Protecting and managing local biological assets for our own and future generations helps make a better place to live, work, learn and take leisure in.

- Environmental education in schools encourages experience of the natural world and the care of our local public realm spaces. Green spaces are outdoor classrooms with unrealised potential, and as a local lifelong learning resource, our green spaces offer almost unlimited opportunities. The GLA has found that wards in London with plenty of recreational green space enjoy better educational performance.
- Green spaces act directly in reducing aggression and violence, including domestic violence, and in effecting a reduction in other crimes.
- Well-used, good quality and welcoming green spaces help to self-police and reduce anti-social behaviour in them.
- Workhouse wood is a truly rural environment within easy walking distance of hundreds of homes.
- Green spaces of this type are often inaccessible to the disabled.
- Local residents, particularly parents with children will be able to use this space together, for recreation and as a route to and from the residential estate up to Winn's Common

FoPC are confident that this project conforms with CABI Space policy and recommendations, by thinking holistically about green space, and what it means for residents' health and well being, routes to school and work, and recreation through play and sport.

Cleaner Safer Greener policy recognises that green spaces “provide one of the best opportunities for experiencing the natural world.” That we “should protect and enhance the biodiversity in built environments”, and that such open spaces “play an important role in protecting and enhancing the biodiversity of an area, its inherent value and distinctiveness.”

The Final Report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce in June 2002, Green Spaces Better Places, stated that “although urban parks and green spaces in England remain enormously popular, too many have suffered decline over the past twenty years. Action is needed by all sectors of society, working together at all levels from the national to the local, to achieve better planning, design, management and maintenance, as well as extra resources.”

The strategic approach to the protection and management of wildlife habitat which is developed in the Greenwich Biodiversity Action Plan has informed this project. That plan states:

Access to the natural environment provides physical, educational and health benefits for the people that utilise it. This is particularly relevant for people living in an urban environment like Greenwich. Maintaining biodiversity is a key component of enhancing the value of the environment for people; species and habitats are conserved because they are beautiful or because they can enrich our lives. Preserving biodiversity and the ecological processes that underlie the character of natural areas will contribute to their stability and play a part in securing their future for the people of Greenwich.

Royal Greenwich Council have much to say about the benefits of green space.

Bridget Imeson, Associate Director of Public Health for the Royal Borough of Greenwich, recently gave a presentation to Greenwich Parks Friends in which she pointed out:

Health studies have shown that contact with nature — with plants, with animals, with pleasing landscapes, and with wilderness — offers a range of benefits: – lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels – enhanced survival after a heart attack, – more rapid recovery from surgery – fewer minor medical complaints – lower self-reported stress.

In children with attention disorders and in teens with behavioral disorders, contact with nature has resulted in significant improvement (Frumkin, 2001).

Research suggests exercise is more beneficial (enhanced tranquility, and more relief of anxiety and depression) — when it occurs in natural settings, like parks, rather than along urban streets (Bodin and Hartig, 2003).

The opportunity for so-called "green exercise" is an important asset that parks in cities offer.

Urban parks also contribute environmental benefits: – A network of parks and open spaces that include protected natural lands, ecological reserves, wetlands, and other green areas is critical to providing healthy habitats for humans, wildlife and plants.

Royal Greenwich Council has committed to:

- Promote and encourage the use of existing green spaces working with a wide range of partners including health agencies and schools
- Work together to improve the provision of high quality, local, accessible and safe green space in line with recommendations by organisations including The Design Council CABI - Improve the aesthetics of green space, alongside appropriate safety and crime prevention initiatives to encourage people to use their local green space.
- Organise programmes and supervision in parks: increase use of parks and playgrounds; increase physical activity, particularly among young people

APPENDIX 2: Reminiscences

“Looking back in this way I can see that growing up in Plumstead, with its open spaces and parks, helped to make me the person that I am today . . . Open spaces are enormously important. They help to civilise us. We all benefit from them. Children who are cooped up in flats with no gardens need the space.”

Frances Hiller

“To help with wartime rationing, we all had ‘pig’ bins at street corners where household scraps were deposited. The piggery* was in the grounds of St Nicholas Hospital, although the poor pigs must have been terrified during our nightlong air raids.

“St Nicholas was originally the old Plumstead Workhouse, where very poor people and those having no families or pensions could find shelter and meals. I remember the inhabitants wore a special uniform, which was, in general, very much disliked.”

Ivy Runacres

* We have uncovered substantial remains of this piggery during our clearance of paths through the site. We will excavate them and leave them as interesting evidence of the history of this wood.

“I remember the Hospital grounds more than the gardens, which were situated further down towards the hospital buildings. The grounds themselves were the wonderfully overgrown area that we kids played amongst and was accessed by crawling under the high wire fence that began at the end of the high brick wall built around the entire perimeter . . . It had lovely big sprawling oak trees at the southern end. There were lots of other large well-established trees and shrubs situated around the perimeter . . . It was a truly wonderful place to play in.”

Colin Weightman

APPENDIX 3: Crime & Safety

Crime and vandalism

(FROM THE FORESTRY COMMISSION)

Deprived neighbourhoods experience more severe problems of graffiti, litter and fly-tipping and poorly maintained public and open space. The visual appearance of green space can impact on the surrounding area, and neglected open spaces have been found to cause a negative impact by contributing to the onset of crime and vandalism. However, the management of urban greenspace to ensure it is of a high standard can help to reduce the prevalence of crime and vandalism and improve the aesthetic quality of an area

For urban communities, well maintained green space has been found to:

- Reduce violence and crime
- Help with social interaction
- Increase community integration and support

Consultation of the local community at all stages in the design and provision of greenspace can lead to community cohesion and empowerment. In areas of social deprivation that have been improved through the provision of high quality green space crime and vandalism levels have been seen to reduce and these areas can be used for a variety of activities such as exercise and fitness which will also raise general levels of health and well-being in the community.

Feeling safer

(FROM THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION)

Some community leaders are inhibited from proposing new parks or supporting existing ones out of concern that parks can be settings for crime and illegal activity. However, when properly planned, parks and greenways adjacent to residential areas may help to shield against crime.

Studies found that urban residents who live in green surroundings experience fewer quality-of-life crimes such as littering and graffiti, and fewer incivilities, such as noisy or disruptive neighbors. In other studies, people reported feeling safer in residential areas that contained greenery.

Parks and green spaces in urban areas can reduce crime

(FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CARDIFF)

A study in the UK found being close to nature can have almost as much impact on community spirit as reducing poverty.

It follows a wealth of previous findings showing the long lasting positive impact a nice environment has on people's mental well-being, a study has suggested.

Psychologist Dr Netta Weinstein and colleagues said given the political importance placed on past crime reductions of just two or three percent, their study would justify combating crime by improving contact with nature. Dr Weinstein, of the University of Cardiff, said: "The positive impact of local nature on neighbours' mutual support may discourage crime, even in areas lower in socioeconomic factors."

Her research found human exposure to nature may mean more social cohesion, and less crime, as it is linked to safer communities with better community interactions

Despite strong trends toward greater urbanization and declining green space, little is known about the consequences.

So the study published in *BioScience* used nationally representative data from the UK and stringent model testing to examine the relationships between objective measures and self reported assessments of contact with nature, community cohesion and local crime incidence.

After accounting for socioeconomic deprivation and standing, population density, unemployment rate and weekly wages it found people's experiences of local nature reported via a survey could explain eight percent of the variation in 'community cohesion'.

Dr Weinstein said this was "a striking finding given individual predictors such as income, gender, age and education together accounted for only three percent" of the variance.

The relationship with crime was similarly striking. According to the study results, objective measures of the amount of green space or farmland accessible in people's neighbourhoods accounted for four percent additional variance in crime rates.

This compares favourably with known causes of crime such as socioeconomic deprivation which accounts for five per cent.

In the study the researchers surveyed 2,079 adults aged 22 to 65 across the UK and used land use databases to compare their access to gardens, parks, woods, meadows and farmland with local crime rates.

Dr Weinstein said: "Individuals may be losing touch with nature as their contact with it decreases worldwide. Although the consequences for people's personal well-being outcomes are becoming well documented, there is almost no research examining the social correlates of contact with nature.

"The perceived quality, views, and amount of time spent in nature were linked to more community cohesion, and in turn, the perception of cohesive communities enhanced individual well-being outcomes and contributions back to society through higher workplace productivity and environmentally responsible behaviours.

"Our findings also indicated that local nature was linked to lower crime both directly and indirectly through its effects on community cohesion."

Unlike some easily measured ecosystem services such as the provision of water or food, she said "the apparent benefits of contact with nature on social cohesion are more challenging to tease apart and measure."

But added Dr Weinstein: "This article contributes to raising awareness of their apparent significance and encourages further exploration of how they arise.

"We also hope it stimulates consideration of how best to ensure that nature, at many different levels, can continue to benefit individuals and society into the future."

Previous research has found moving to a green space had a sustained positive effect on well being unlike pay rises or promotions, which only provided a short term boost.

The role of neighborhood parks ...

(FROM A STUDY BY ELIZABETH GROFF AND ERIC S. McCORD)

It is also possible that neighborhood parks serve as places of reduced crime; ones that may actually increase the safety of the surrounding area. Jane Jacobs (1961) identifies parks as being within a set of land uses that draw more conventional users to an area, forming denser informal control networks and adding 'eyes on the street'. It is conceivable then that neighborhood parks may attract mainly families and others only interested in recreation and relaxation pursuits. This increase in people due to the presence of the park may help keep both the park and surrounding neighborhood safer due to added informal control and surveillance. Many legitimate urban park users walk to their neighborhood parks. As they make their journey, they provide increased levels of guardianship along their route.

APPENDIX 4: Survey Briefs

I TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY

A Survey is required for a wooded area of Winn's Common occupying a deep cleft in the land of the former St Nicholas Hospital site.

Survey requirements as follows:

1. (General) A fully detailed survey to be carried out of the site in question, showing all visible features within the confines of the site and within approximately 5m of the site boundaries, together with an indication of any relevant feature that cannot be physically surveyed, but is within 20m of the site boundaries, and which may have a bearing on any future development of the site.
2. All walls, fences, fence sills, boundaries etc. to be clearly defined and annotated, showing height, type and where relevant, condition.
3. All trees above 150mm bole diameter to be shown, with canopies accurately surveyed, type if known and an estimated height. Also, any major shrubs/bushes etc. to be surveyed.
4. All ground surfacing to be surveyed and indicated and any evidence of demolished buildings or structures, or former use of the land.
5. All drainage covers to be surveyed where found and lifted where possible to ascertain likely use/disuse and invert level
6. Levels to be taken at intervals dictated by the make up of the site but on open ground at no more than 10m intervals. All changes in level, gradients, banks, hollows, depressions etc. to be surveyed, and sufficient levels to be taken to enable contours to be plotted at 0.5m vertical intervals.
7. Any other information not mentioned above which may have a bearing on any future development.

2 EXTENDED PHASE I ECOLOGICAL SURVEY

Using the tree survey and topographical survey as a starting point:

1. Map the habitats on site.
2. Identify the main plant species.
3. Undertake a protected species habitat assessment, identify protected species or signs of their presence and other notable features. Identify areas on site with the potential to support protected species. Identify the wildlife value of the site.
4. Report on biodiversity, legal and planning context, appraise nature conservation value.
5. Make recommendations for any necessary compliance or further investigation.

APPENDIX 5: Legislation, Policies & Strategies

The Greenwich Strategy

The Greenwich Strategy sets out the vision for Royal Borough of Greenwich as being the place to live, work, learn and visit. This vision underpins all of the strategies produced by the Borough and directly impacts on all service plans and service delivery.

The Cultural Strategy

Parks & Open Spaces is one of six 'areas' considered by the Cultural Strategy. The Strategy has five over-arching themes: - Equality and Access, Sustainability, the Cultural Economy, Achievement and Excellence and Partnerships. All of these aims are relevant to this management plan.

Green Space Strategy

The Green Spaces Strategy sets out the Council's strategic intentions for its green assets and its vision of the positive contribution that Greenwich's open networks make to our lives.

The thematic objectives (community safety, biodiversity, education and culture, culture & events, tackling inequality, sport, health & well-being) are all relevant to FoPC's management plans.

Parks & Open Spaces Service Plan

The Parks & Open Spaces department, in cooperation with local groups such as FoPC aims to develop, manage, ensure accessibility and maintain the borough's Parks, Open Spaces and Woodlands to a high standard; to meet the needs of the community and deliver the Council's core objectives where applicable, providing a well cared for environment and supporting Health and Quality of Life for the local community.

The management plan for the sites in the care of FoPC supports these aims by ensuring accessibility and meeting the needs of the local community. It is envisaged that it will also assist with achieving the aim of mainlining the site to a high standard.

Develop Investment Strategy (the findings of this management plan will be used to inform the development of an Inward Investment Strategy).

Commence implementation of recommendations from the Green Space Strategy.

Local Development Plan

The Core Strategy sets out the vision for use of the land in the Borough, and provides the main guidance for making decisions on individual planning proposals.

Metropolitan Open Land

Plumstead Common is designated Metropolitan Open Land (MOL).

Policy sets out what the acceptable land uses and allowable developments are within areas designated as MOL. The policies are broadly meant to control development or alterations to existing land that would be

inappropriate to MOL and has an adverse affect on the character and usage of the open space.

Green Chain

The objectives are as follows:

- To improve and encourage the provision of suitable recreational facilities, with an emphasis on those serving a wide area of South East London and/or requiring open land.
- To safeguard the open land from built development and maintain its positive contribution in providing a visual and physical break in the built-up area of London.
- To conserve and enhance the visual amenity and ecological aspects of the landscape.
- To improve public access to and through the area.
- To promote an overall identity for the area in order to increase public awareness of available recreational facilities.
- To encourage the collaboration and co-operation of the various public and private agencies, owners, organisations, clubs, etc. in the area to achieve the above objectives.

Green Chain Walk

Existing footpaths will be safeguarded and new footpaths created to and through open spaces and places of interest, where they do not adversely affect nature conservation.

The Mayor's Transport strategy has identified the Green Chain Walk as being one of six strategic walks in London.

Community Benefits

The Borough will seek to secure improvement and enhancement of existing parks and public open spaces, where major development places increased demand on existing areas, and, where appropriate, the creation of new parks and public open spaces.

Park Facilities

The Borough will seek to enhance open space by the provision and encouragement of appropriate park facilities within suitable parks and public open spaces. Facilities should be of a high standard of design and quality and respect local nature conservation interests. Such facilities should be safe to use and accessible to all.

The Biodiversity Action Plan

The Greenwich Biodiversity Action Plan will be the first co-ordinated approach to conserving Greenwich's biodiversity. The aim of the plan is:

'To ensure the conservation, enhancement and public appreciation of the biodiversity of the Royal Borough of Greenwich'.

The Biodiversity Action Plan focuses on locally important habitats and species and has actions drafted to ensure that they cover all relevant habitats and species. Initially actions may be focussed on those under the most

pressure or where most advantage can be gained. However, it allows for all important habitats and species to be covered.

The Biodiversity Action Plan has been developed in partnership with local and regional groups and organisations and is currently in a draft stage. Once the final draft is agreed it will be released for wider consultation before a final plan is adopted.

Legislation

The Parks & Open Spaces department operates within the frameworks set out by the following legislation, and therefore, the legislation may impact upon the delivery of service of the Parks and Open Spaces department both financially, through planning and human resources. This is not a comprehensive list but is indicative of key pieces of legislation relating to P&OS.

- Alcohol Consumption in Public Places Order 2003
- Clean Neighbourhoods Act 2004
- Control of Pesticide Protection Act 1986
- Country Code 1981
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and increments
- Countryside & Right of Way Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 1998
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1998
- Litter Act 1983
- Ministry of Housing and Local Government Provisional Order Confirmation (Greater London Parks & Open Spaces Act)1967
- Occupiers Liability Act 1957
- Road Traffic Act 1988 (as amended 1991)
- The 2004 Country Code
- The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 & Dogs Act 1871
- The National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949
- The Weeds Act 1959
- The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981

In addition there are numerous bye-laws that relate to specific parks.

APPENDIX 6: Woolwich Union Workhouse

The Woolwich Poor Law Union was formed in 1868, and was an amalgamation of the unions of Charlton, Kidbrooke, Plumstead and Greenwich.

After an unsuccessful plan, thwarted by the Plumstead Vestry, to build a new workhouse on Plumstead Common itself, a large area of farmland was purchased. The farm was owned and run by the Bodle family. The book “The Inheritor’s Powder” by Sandra Hempel, is a fascinating account of an infamous murder by poisoning with arsenic on Saturday November 2nd 1833. According to the 19C local historian W T Vincent, Bodles’ farmhouse (later Montague House) stood right where the W.U.W. was to be built, and the accused grandson of the victim lived in a cottage at the north west corner of what is now Workhouse Wood, adjacent to the rear gate of the large and valuable Bodle property.

“Mary Higgins [a servant, described] how she had found Young John up and dressed waiting by the fire that Saturday morning, and how he had set off in the direction of George Bodle’s farm as soon as it grew light. The she recounted what had happened that evening when Middle John came back from collecting his wages at Bodles’ farm. ‘He said all the family were very ill and the doctor said they were poisoned. My mistress said - La, who would do such a thing?’ Young John, who had been in his room most of the afternoon, heard the commotion and opened his door, demanding to know what was the matter. She had told him, ‘Master says Mr Bodle and all the family are ill and they supposed they are poisoned.’ ‘He made little answer and shut the door again.’ she told the court.

Some examination of Volumes 1-6 of the Woolwich Board of Guardians minutes, at the London Metropolitan Archives, has produced some interesting material that will be useful for an interpretation board, and will be of some educational use.

The foundation stone for the new Woolwich Union Workhouse (the “memorial stone”) was laid with some ceremony and prayers on the 2nd April 1870. In 1871, tenders were invited for the building of the workhouse Infirmary. The estimated cost was £22,500. Such a project today would probably cost at least £12 million.

The Board of Guardians set the wages for key workers at the new workhouse:

Master of the workhouse: £120 p.a. (46 shillings p.w. Purchasing power of £10,000 p.a. today)

Baker: 25 shillings p.w. (£65 p.a. Purchasing power of £5,600 p.a. today)

In the 1920s the main building of the Woolwich Union Workhouse was renamed The Woolwich Institution, and the workhouse infirmary became Plumstead District Hospital.

Stone Breaking

Early in the life of the W.U.W. there is an entry in the minutes regarding a request from the labor master [sic] for large hammers “on account of the hardness of the stone recently delivered to the stone yard”. Stone breaking was an arduous task carried out by male inmates in order to “earn their keep.”

Bombay blue granite was purchased from Mr Paton, Ballast & Stone Contractor of 373 East India Road, and then sold back, once broken up, as ballast - for which a typical end use was to support the new railways being constructed all over Britain. It needed to be broken by hammering until the pieces were small enough to pass through a grid (see illustration).



In Workhouse Wood we have found several pieces of granite of an exactly similar size to those in the illustration. Granite is not a stone found naturally in this area, and they are almost certainly from the stone yard of the old workhouse.

Oakum Picking

The workhouse board purchased used rope (oakum junk) from Messrs. Sones of Wapping and were seeking a price for selling the oakum pickings back to the merchant. Used rope was cut into short lengths and then the fibres were unpicked by hand to be used as oakum to be mixed with tar for caulking the seams of wooden ships. The work was carried out by female inmates. It was extremely arduous and tough on the hands. Sometimes a nail or spike was used to tease the fibres apart and to separate them from the tar in which ships' cables were often covered.



Some business from the minutes

On 21 May 1871 the father-in-law of one Mrs Isaacson, who had been deserted by her husband, was ordered to pay to the board 3/6d a week to cover the cost of maintaining his granddaughter.

Also in 1871, Nurse Disney was called before the Board to answer seven serious charges brought by Dr Bothwell. She had placed a leech on a patient's eyelid instead of on his temple (she said it had fallen down while she was called to a dying patient). She had failed to administer medicine to a patient one evening (she claimed the woman

was asleep and that, owing to overwork, she forgot to return). She muddled up the administration of medicines to two patients (overwork again, with 80 patients to care for). The Board found that she had reasonable cause for all the mistakes and that there were no charges to answer. Dr Bothwell was sent a letter strategically implying he was too harsh. Nurse Disney later sent a bill to the Board for some health care she had sought for an illness brought on by what we would now call “stress”. The Board declined to pay the bill.

In May 1871 the newly built Vagrant Ward in Hull Place, on south side of Plumstead High Street, was ready to take in casual inmates.

On Saturday 16th August 1873 the new Medical Officer was to take up residence in the new Infirmary Buildings ready for their opening in January of the next year. There was much discussion as to his furnishings and carpets.

The Matron of the Infirmary was to receive a salary of £70 per annum.

Workhouse accounts for November 1873 record that twice as much money was spent on gin as soap!

In the same year it was found that Mr Cook, of Maxey Road - who had claimed he could not contribute towards his mother’s keep in the workhouse - was in “circumstances sufficiently good to enable him” to pay up. Eventually the weekly 5 shilling cost of Mrs Cook’s keep was shared amongst that Mr Cook and his four brothers. That would mean about £5 per week for each brother at today’s value.

Young boys between the ages of 12 and 15 were sent to the Royal Navy Training Ship “Goliath”. The minutes record how 15 year old William Foster, “a lad belonging to this union” has been transferred from the “Goliath” to HMS Duncan. In 1875 the workhouse gave immediate shelter to 26 boys rescued from the “Goliath” when she was destroyed by fire on the Thames near Grays. Twenty three boys under 15 perished in that fire.



Young girls were transferred, at 12 years old, to the Sutton Schools for training in domestic service, into which they were sent at the age of 15. Caroline Cash had been sent to work for a Mrs Butler in Brixton in January 1875 for 2 shillings a week. This would be about £8.50 a week at today’s value. She was treated harshly and by December of that year had been paid no wages at all. She returned to the workhouse.

It’s interesting to note that in one census of inmates at the W.U.W. there were several records of young women listed as “servants” with young babies. One speculates as to the vulnerability of young women in service in the nineteenth century. It was in 1871 that Edmund Pook was acquitted for the murder of 17 year old Jane Clouson, who was alleged to be carrying his child in nearby Blackheath.

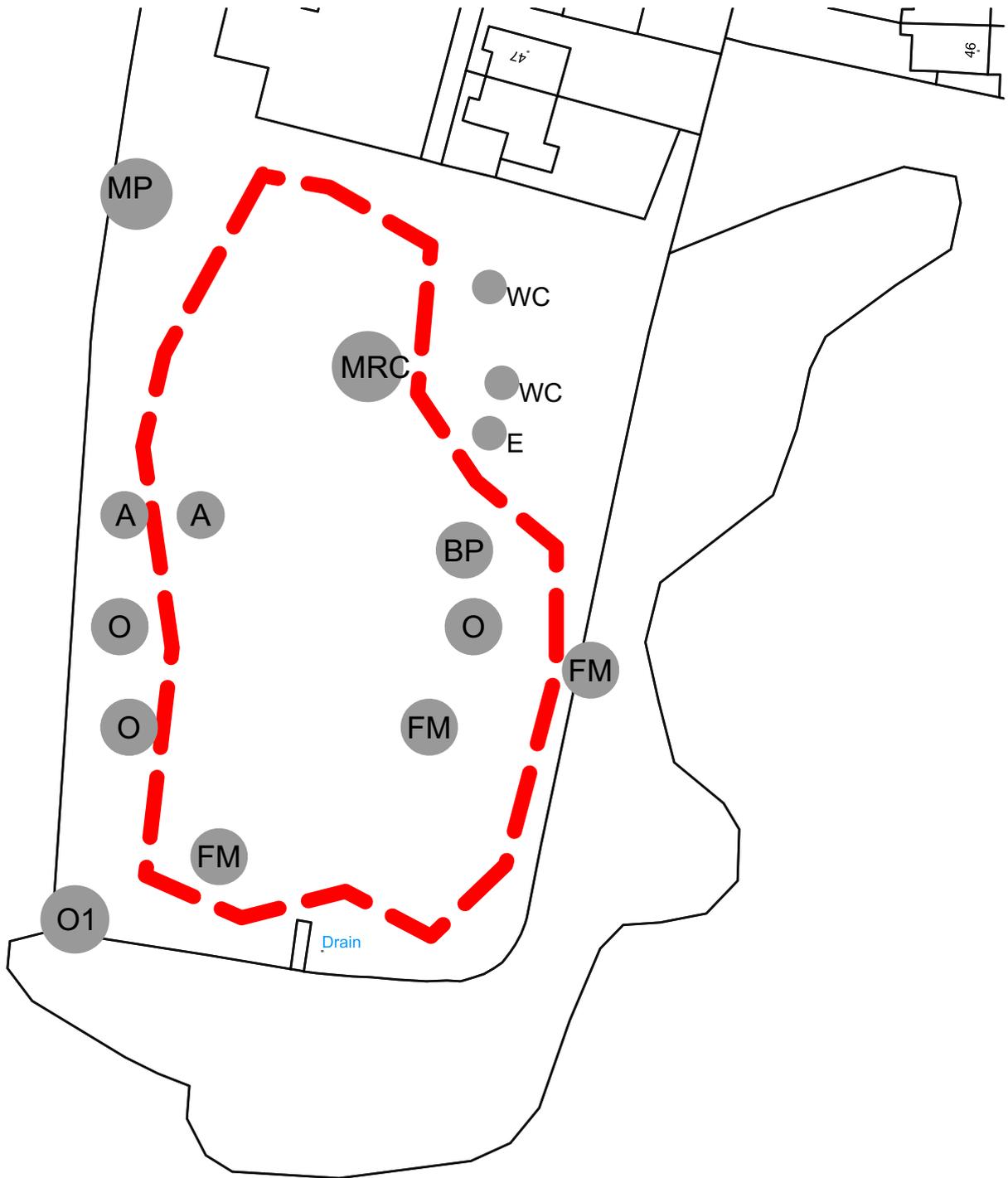
In 1875 two young girls, Mary Ann Lamb and Mary Ann Wilkie were sent to Mr England’s Sea Bathing Establishment in Herne Bay in order to benefit from the sea air. One could also speculate as to their vulnerability to abuse.

Inmates at the workhouse with mental illnesses or learning difficulties were, somewhat roughly, classified as Lunatics, Imbeciles or Idiots. Lunatics behaved dysfunctionally but had periods of lucidity. Imbeciles had moderate learning disability, and Idiots had severe learning disability. Inmates suffering from what we would call dementia were classified as Imbeciles or Lunatics. Inmates could also be classified as “feeble minded”.

In 1877 the W.U.W. workhouse was required to implement an ambulance service. A brougham pattern ambulance was obtained and presumably housed in the stables at the rear of the workhouse apposite the piggery. We have found a horse-drawn vehicle spring which we believe may be from this ambulance.

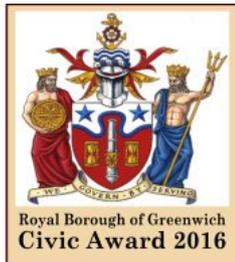
Appendix 7: Tree Map

(note: this is an evolving document)



- MP Monterey pine. *Pinus radiata*
- O Oak (O1 is about 250 years old) *Quercus*
- MRC Mountain Red Cedar. *Juniperus scopulorum*
- BP Black poplar. *Populus nigra*
- FM Field maple. *Acer campestre*
- E Elder *Sambucus nigra*
- WC Wild Cherry *Prunus avium*
- A Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*

APPENDIX 8: Awards Achievement



Funding

