

## SPECIFIC SITE WOODLAND ASSESSMENT

**SITE:** PAUPERS WOOD, West Didsbury, Manchester

**ASSESSORS:** Mary Maclachlan to be considered with tree risk assessments carried by a tree consultant

**DATE:** October 2022    **REVIEW DATE:** October 2023

**LOCATION:** Paupers Wood is a small wood in an urban setting located in on the West Didsbury/Chorlton boundary in South Manchester approximately 5 km south of Manchester city centre. To the north of the woods are the grounds of Didsbury High School. There is green 8-foot-high fencing along this boundary. To the east there is a 2 m high brick wall which forms the boundary. On the other side is a complex of flats which are 3 floors high and are partially screened by two mature Norway Maple trees. The southern and western boundary have 8-foot-high concrete fencing. To the south there is a privet hedge that screens the wood from the road (Nell Lane). A further mixed hedge of crab apple, dog rose, holly and hawthorn has been planted on the remaining exposed fence. Nell Lane runs along this boundary and Seimens offices are opposite the wood. To the west there is a heavily planted verge of mixed deciduous trees including beech, birch and coppiced hazel. The Southern Cemetery is opposite the wood across Princess Road and assists in creating a green corridor for wildlife.

	HAZARD	HARM	Person at risk	Existing preventative measures	Probability (p =1-5)	Severity (s=1-5)	Rating (p x s = 1-25)	What Measures need to be taken	By whom/confirmation of understanding/completion
1	Tree Canopy	Hit by falling branches	All visitors	No admittance during high winds.	1	5	5	Recommendations in Tree Risk Assessment.	Tree work carried by tree surgeons.
2	Dead wood and roots in/on ground	Tripping	All visitors	Some dead wood is lying on the ground.	3	2	6	Safe ways of crossing dead wood and roots are demonstrated.	Forest School Leader check everyone can cross safely

3	Branches at body or eye level	Scratches by branches	All visitors	Branches have been cleared from paths and clearing where necessary.	3	1	3	Safety talk to people who visit wood and awareness raised when leaving paths.	Forest School Leader
4	Nettles, Holly and Brambles	Scratches Stings	All visitors	Awareness of risk	4	1	4	Safety talk to children who the visit wood	Forest School Leader
5	Litter and debris	Broken glass	All visitors	Police-line sweep of area to remove sharps	3	2	6	Site checked regularly. Any sharps/litter found and removed by leader using gloves.	Forest School Leader
6	Stinging insects	Stings	All visitors	Awareness of risk and avoidance	2	2	4	First aid kit available on all visits. Avoidance.	Forest School Leader
7	Poisonous plants	Poisoning	All visitors	Awareness of risk. Poisonous plants removed from clearing	1	2	2	Policy of children not eating anything that is not provided by an adult.	Forest School Leader
8	Exposed roots and hazards off path	Uneven terrain/ tree stumps	All visitors	Police-style sweeps have been taken of the area.	3	2	6	Raise awareness and continued assessment is made.	Forest School Leader to warn of potential hazards

**HISTORY:**

The woodland was formally a paupers burial ground attached to the Chorlton Workhouse which was founded in the 1950's when the area was still rural. An early 20<sup>th</sup> century map (1907) shows the site as open ground, which suggests that it was planted with ornamental trees during the early twentieth century. Since that time the trees have matured and now form a closed canopy woodland.

**OWNER:**

Mary Maclachlan. A steering group of 4 people manage the conservation of the wood and any community open days. The wood won a biodiversity award from the Council in 2006.

**ACCESS:**

The wood is completely surrounded by fencing of at least 6 foot high. It has a pedestrian only entry point within the privet hedge off Nell Lane. There is also a double gated, double car parking space (which would accommodate a minibus) to the north. There is no continuous public access.

**DOGS:**

No dogs visit the wood.

**FLORA & FAUNA:**

The site is secondary woodland no more than 100 years old. The canopy is dominated by horse chestnut, turkey oak, Norway maple, common lime, copper beech and sycamore. The management plan is to replace non-native trees and shrubs with locally native trees and shrubs. Bats and bird boxes are distributed throughout the wood. Pipistrelle bats are known to inhabit the neighbouring buildings and it is hoped that they will roost or forage in the wood. There is a fox earth, burrow and mouse holes that have been identified. Grey squirrels are common.

**VEHICLES:**

Only authorised vehicles will be able to access the site for conservation work.

**WATER:**

A small bog area has been created. It is dry during summer months and sometimes beyond (weather dependent).

**TELEPHONE ACCESS:**

There is good signal strength throughout the wood with a telephone mast 500 meters away. The nearest telephone would be from Seimens, who are supporting the conservation and forest school projects.

#### LITTER:

Due to the urban location of the wood litter (including glass) can be thrown or blown from the pavement of Nell Lane.

#### CONCERNS:

The ground in some areas is covered with dense ivy which poses a significant tripping hazard if entered. There are also areas of dense nettles and brambles which should be avoided. In the clearings and paths these has been cleared and should be monitored for any further invasion. Wood chip has been laid over the clearing area to assist in suppression of nettles. The bog area has very shallow water and poses a minor hazard. Children entering the area should be made aware of the bog and the particularly the likelihood of slipping. There are areas where there is new bulb, hedge and sapling planting. These areas will provide points of interest but should be avoided to prevent damaging the plants.

#### POSITIVE FEATURES:

The wood is small and has secure boundaries to allow free movement through the entire wood by visitors without risk of coming across dogs, strangers or vehicles. There is no public access, so vandalism of the project site is minimal. There is many logs, branches and twigs to assist with shelter building, fire making and other activities. Environmental and conservational activities can be incorporated into the programme, thus contributing to the woodland management plan and providing the group with a deeper understanding of the maintenance of the wood and ways to increase its biodiversity.