

# Greenham and Crookham Commons Access Audit



*Initial baseline findings of the site's physical and intellectual access provisions.*

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# Introduction, aims and constraints of the project

## West Berkshire Council and the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust

### The Vision

‘Our joint vision for these sites is to deliver increased and lasting benefits for people and wildlife through effective and sustainable site management’

West Berkshire Council (WBC) and the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) have been working in partnership for several years to manage and safeguard nature reserves in West Berkshire, most notably Greenham and Crookham Commons, as part of BBOWT’s Living Landscape projects. A much larger partnership has now been agreed and commenced on January 6<sup>th</sup> 2014. This has enabled the transfer of responsibility for managing nine countryside sites and the Nature Discovery Centre at Thatcham. The nine sites and one visitor centre, which are collectively known as the Reserves and Commons, are:

- Snelsmore Common Country Park,
- Bucklebury Common,
- Hosehill Lake Local Nature Reserve,
- Wokefield Common
- Padworth Common Local Nature Reserve
- Paices Wood Country Park,
- Thatcham Reedbeds Local Nature Reserve,
- Greenham and Crookham Commons,
- Audrey’s Meadow,
- The Nature Discovery Centre

BBOWT’s aim is to continue to make these special wildlife places available for everyone in West Berkshire to enjoy. BBOWT believes that these partnerships in West Berkshire will contribute significantly to achieving its overarching aim of “A region rich in wildlife for all to enjoy”.

# Reserves and Commons Access Auditing Project

## BBOWT's Aim:

'To improve physical access to enable the widest range of the population to enjoy the Reserves and Commons, in balance with the countryside nature of the sites'

We want everyone in West Berkshire to have access to wildlife and our activities and that is why we will set targets for increasing the size and breadth of our audiences, which will reflect the variety of the communities who live, work and spend their leisure time in West Berkshire.

This report details a review of the access and interpretation carried out during 2014.

It should be noted at this point that it is possible that some on-site branding and signage work identified in the report has already been completed to inform visitors of the change in managing organisation.

## The main objectives of the review:

1. A condition assessment of all the access paths, tracks and entrances in collaboration with the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) team at WBC.
2. An assessment of all access structures such as gates and mapping of these.
3. An assessment of the interpretation available on site
4. If waymarking is present, an assessment of its condition and fitness for purpose
5. An assessment of the accessibility of any buildings and structures present
6. Initial recommendations as required.

This project also aims to devise and carry out visitor surveys on all the sites, firstly to create a baseline against which we can assess the development of the number and range of visitors. We recognise the need to gain a better understanding of current visitors and their needs and also to understand more about those that do not come and why. Progress on the delivery of visitor surveys and the headline findings of data analysis will be reported by BBOWT to WBC and will inform annual work plans and targets. Building on the knowledge we gain BBOWT will complete a detailed Diversity Action Plan for the Reserves and Commons.

Information for the public is already available on the BBOWT website and the project hopes to grow this area and make information available on partner websites. Dependant on the management responsibilities and agreements with landowners, the Reserves and Commons could be listed in BBOWT's 'Where to Go for Wildlife' handbook at the next reprint, in a common format with existing reserves. This is sent to all new BBOWT members signing up through Direct Debit. This will involve analysis of the current provision of waymarked routes and if required the design of new routes. As a whole, it is the intention that information available on the Reserves and Commons will be much improved.

## Legislation and criteria used in this report.

The Equality Act 2010 (The Act) replaces the previous discrimination legislation and covers discrimination because of; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. These are collectively known as 'protected characteristics' (The Act, Part 2, Chapter 1). BBOWT in undertaking management responsibilities on behalf of WBC must not undertake direct discrimination of any of the above protected characteristics when undertaking its work (The Act, Part 2, Chapter 2).

The 'duty to make reasonable adjustments' implies that, 'where a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage' (first requirement).

The 'second requirement' refers to a physical feature that puts a disabled person in a substantial disadvantage. The ways in which a substantial disadvantage can be avoided is by removing the physical feature, altering it or provide a reasonable means of avoiding it.

The 'third requirement' within The Act simply says that further to making reasonable adjustments, if an 'auxiliary aid' can be added, to say a gate, that would mean that the person with a disability would no longer be at a disadvantage, then this should be done. It is worth noting that auxiliary aid can also mean a service. The requirements also include the provision of information which must be 'provided in an accessible format'. It must be also realised that discrimination may arise indirectly through 'provision, criterion or practice'.

The simplest way to avoid creating or extending periods where discrimination may be in place is to make sure that all new physical structures, information and practices (including those where the public is invited to join in) are well considered and adhere to BBOWT and industry guidance where applicable. Stakeholder consultation should be undertaken at all times where possible conflicts of interest or advice is required.

Current guidance employs the 'least restrictive access' principle and this audit uses the hierarchy as specified in BS5709:2006; starting with gaps, gates, kissing gates and then stiles as the least favoured approach. It is the owner of the land who must maintain the infrastructure such as gates on PRow across his/her land in a safe condition for use by the public (Highways Act 1980 s146). If applicable within the site agreement with WBC, BBOWT will undertake maintenance of existing structures on PRow.

BBOWT will work closely with the WBC PRow team and make use of the detail within the 2010-2020 Rights of way Improvement Plan (ROWIP), to repair and improve current signage and structures, onto, and within - the sites. The ROWIP also encompasses improvements that could accrue to the wider countryside network of definitive paths and permitted routes.

Management of other routes such as permitted paths across private land is discretionary rather than statutory and information on the condition of these more informal routes, such as surface condition, structures and waymarking, was incomplete before the start of this audit. This project starts the process of mapping and recording suitable circular routes that could encourage increased and/or more appropriate use of the sites. The

provision of orientation and interpretation information will provide visitors with a geographical context enabling them to navigate their way around the site easily and identify features. It will also provide essential information on the ecological and cultural value of the reserve.

The reports' findings will be informed by visitor surveys and consultation with stakeholders.

The audit of the sites used the following literature to underpin its findings and recommendations. This is not an exhaustive list;

- BBOWT Policy Access and Accessibility, 2005
- BBOWT Standards and guidelines for Reserve Access, 2002
- BBOWT Activities on Reserves Policy
- Footpaths, A practical handbook, BTCV 2004
- Guidance for accessible woodland, Visitwoodlands.org.uk
- British Standard Specification No. 5709:2006 for gaps, gates and stiles.
- Equality Act 2010
- The West Berkshire Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2010 – 2020
- By all reasonable means: Inclusive access to the outdoors for disabled people
- Accessibility standards, Fieldfare Trust
- The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 6 Section 3 Part 3 TA57/87 (published January 1989, current at September 2012), Chapter 11, Roadside crossings
- Historical Environment Survey and Management Plan (HEMP). Berkshire Archaeological Services 2011
- Greenham Common: An interpretative Strategy and Action Plan, Ian Parkin, November 1997

# Initial signage audit

An initial rapid signage assessment was undertaken at the beginning of 2014 as part of a larger phased signage renewal and installation process. Any installation of signage will be dependant firstly on funds being available and also will include stakeholder consultation where necessary.

**Phase 1** includes signage that,

- lets visitors know where they have arrived at
- gives the visitor knowledge of what facilities are available such as disabled accessible toilets
- notifies visitors of where to go and pertinent information such as what time the car park closes
- lets visitors know who manages the sites and who they can contact for more information

Branding is very important as it has the ability to improve attitudes and values by itself. Many of the sites have deteriorating signage that requires renewal so phase 1 will provide a fresh look.

**Phase 2** includes,

- Orientation boards that include maps and information on wildlife, heritage and facilities available
- Waymarked trails
- Legislative boards such as bylaws

The purpose of phase 2 is to make sure that all visitors have the information in an accessible format so they can decide how they would like to spend their time at the site. For example: choosing a route that they would find enjoyable and one they can access. The orientation boards are also an opportunity to provide snippets of additional interesting information that will engage and educate. Some habitats on the sites are particularly sensitive, especially at different times of the year, and this will be taken into account when designing the waymarked routes.

There are activities BBOWT would rather not want to occur such as those that are restricted under bylaws and legislation, these need to be sympathetically brought to the attention of the visitor.

**Phase 3** includes,

- Information and interpretation throughout the site on the wildlife and heritage

The ability of explaining and interpreting what the visitor is looking at or hearing is very important as this is the engagement and educational aspect that is part of BBOWT's objectives. Having stand alone interpretation is the next best thing to having a guide.

# How to use the report

This initial report is a baseline audit of Greenham and Crookham Commons herby called the Commons and provides BBOWT and the stakeholders with a detailed examination of the physical and intellectual access provisions of the sites. This baseline audit will be made available to all stakeholders, from which appropriate consultations will take place. Following these consultations a final consolidated document will be produced highlighting the feedback.

## **This report is set out in three sections;**

- Section one: background site information
- Section two: audit findings
- Section three: consolidated recommendations

Section 2 should be used in conjunction with the accompanying maps within the appendix which depict the location of the target notes. The target notes may not be concurrent for various reasons as the report progressed. Due to constraints of the document print size the maps may not show clearly, if you require a printed copy of the maps in a larger format then this can be provided.

## **Key to how the recommendations are prioritised and the estimated costs associated with the actions.**

<b>Priorities</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Urgent, immediate response required.</li><li>2. Less urgent, complete within suggested time frame.</li><li>3. As part of on-going regular reserve management.</li><li>4. Recommendation as an ideal which may require approval.</li></ol>
<b>Cost bands</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. £0-500</li><li>2. £501-£2000</li><li>3. £2,001- £10,000</li><li>4. £10,001+</li></ol>

## Note to reader

- A common requirement for access structures and site amenities is for regular service and inspection. This report recommends that all structures and paths are inspected and general maintenance undertaken at agreed intervals. Therefore these comments often have been omitted from the recommendations because of repetition.
- The auditor may not be aware of the varying conditions on the site due to weather and vegetation growth. It is a general recommendation of this report that paths and structures should be kept clear of vegetation as per BBOWT standards as part of the on-going management of the site. This issue has only been addressed in the report where the vegetation is of a woody nature that could prove a hindrance to visitors all year round (e.g. low branches).

## Scope of the report

The site audit was undertaken on specific dates and so is not able to comment on changes or similar thereafter unless the auditor was made aware of these. The report was undertaken using the time and resources available to the auditor. Any comments of particular interest or concern within the report should always be followed up by a more thorough examination of the issue or recommendation by undertaking another on-site visit.

## Report findings

The Commons are loved and used by local residents as an open space where walking, horse and cycle riding can be enjoyed in amongst heathland and woodland habitat.

Visitors can visit the site on foot by using the network of existing public footpaths along highways and beyond or by motor vehicle. There is no boundary fence but there is a large a livestock fence to contain the graziers' livestock and a herd of ponies. There are access structures such as gates through the fence line at key locations. Much of the remaining land relies upon adjacent landowners retaining fences to prevent visitors entering private land. Throughout the presence of an airbase there were still significant areas of common that could be accessed. Now approximately 500 hectares (area of land varies between that managed by BBOWT and that upon the deposited map) of land is open to the public with the plateau area being the most well visited area with its wide interlinking tracks following the routes of the previous concrete runways and taxiways.

The Commons provide an area of acid grassland, heathland, ancient woodland and wet gully habitats that harbour threatened species of plant and animal. A delicate balance has to be struck to ensure that visitor enjoyment is maximised and wildlife is able to prosper. Although it is possible under the Greenham and Crookham Act to temporarily fence areas to protect wildlife, it is much more preferable to find other, less intrusive, solutions before such actions are taken. An example of this is the ground nesting bird zoning on the Commons which uses marker posts and information signs rather than fences.

The opportunity to undertake a review of access on the Commons has meant opportunities to take a look at how the Commons are used, by whom and if there are there restrictions in place that unintentionally prevent the largest possible swathe of society enjoy what the site has to offer. After undertaking the on-site audit it was important to review the literature both current and historical to understand the original ideas and objectives for the site as a whole.

In November 1997 an interpretative strategy and action plan for Greenham and Crookham commons (ISAP) was compiled by a consultant Ian Parkin. It was written in advance of the opening of the Commons and during the major heathland restoration project. The information within makes interesting reading and though some of the suggestions and actions are no longer achievable (due to the loss of certain buildings and the sale of the silos) there are still pertinent thoughts and ideas that should continue to be acted upon so as not to lose the initial aspiration of those leading the return of the land to the public and wildlife. Below the auditor has used the document and the audit's findings to consolidate new recommendations.

### **The primary objective within the original action plan (ISAP);**

'Restoring the site and returning it to acid heathland common over which Commoners have historical rights...local people can enjoy the countryside by walking, cycling and riding... enjoyed in a low-key, informal way.'

This objective is still true today and is the back bone of any management plan.

When seeking to engage the visitors to the site there are five areas of interest that can be used:

1. The Commons: Their historical context and ecological importance.
2. The military use of the site over time

3. The Cold War and the peace movement that attempted to bring an end to nuclear armaments.
4. Interesting and important occurrences: for example Thrust 2 Land Speed Record upon the airbase runway
5. Beyond living memory: environmental heritage, land use and important historical activities that have occurred in and around the site.

There are physical features that can be highlighted/interpreted and also used to enable wider access within the area:

- The Commons including the heath, woodland and wet gullies
- Ecological habitats leading down to the Kennet and Enborne Valleys
- The wider network of footpaths and bridle paths
- Heritage structures: control tower, infrastructure such as the flag pole, fire hydrants and runway

The Commons are placed within BBOWT's Living Landscape area (see appendix) and its current project 'Linking The Landscape' is a five year project that aims to link-up the local landscape for wildlife and connect local people. Within this project BBOWT has taken on some of the original actions within the strategy.

The original strategy used a phased approach which has in some areas been achieved and can still be used today.

- There needs to be a central focus/destination that has good access for all. This is especially important for someone new to the site making their first visit. The redevelopment of the control tower at the main car park is likely to be the primary focus. In the strategy it mentions that Bury's Bank road may not be able to sustain additional traffic on top of regular local traffic demands. Therefore it is recommended to work closely with the Councils' highway department to manage the traffic load. It would not be advisable to drastically increase the traffic coming from the east across the Commons.
- Offer a series of additional low key, less formal car parks around the site with orientation/information panels. This has been undertaken on the east and the west, but the southern access points (namely Brackenhurst Lane and Greenham Business Park) still lacks parking facilities.
- Preservation of key physical features still present. Add environmentally sympathetic interpretation so visitors can learn and engage with the site. Reduce the number of ad-hoc laybys which attract litter, unsociable behaviour, visitor safety concerns and add to management costs.
- The network of paths and tracks should link to the surrounding network of access routes.
- A series of waymarked trails and interpretation at strategic points.

The original plan thought that use would grow over time. There are no estimates based on sound survey methodology to estimate visitor numbers so it is impossible to say for sure if numbers are going up or down. It is very likely that the increase in the building of homes within a 2 mile radius of the site is likely to attract more visitors. It is likely that the car park at Pyle Hill will be the first port of call for these new visitors and any overspill may affect the surrounding roads where parking is permitted (Greenham). Appropriate signage to direct visitors to the larger capacity main car park is therefore very important. As part of a suite of signage including brown tourist signs installed along main arterial routes (A339, A4, A34). The original strategy thought it likely with a visitor centre in place that visitors would be likely to travel up to 45mins to visit the area, this time may increase for special interest visitors. Currently without a visitor centre and with alternative countryside sites in the near vicinity, the likely travel time may be reduced. The impact of the inclusion of a visitor centre

with associated facilities needs to be carefully considered with regards the ecology on site and the infrastructure required to support it (accessible car parking, signage, accessible paths and gates, safety etc.). This concludes the analysis of the original interpretation plan.

## The Vision

An actively maintained area of mixed habitat where the rights and access of Commoners and the public are retained in balance with the conservation status and wildlife protection. The public will be able to view off-site access information upon the BBOWT website and associated websites will assist in providing up to date information and background to the site. Road side signage will direct visitors to the main car park where a range of facilities will be available such as accessible toilets. Orientation and site information will be available at the car parks and key entrances so visitors can plan their visits. A broad selection of well maintained, promoted and waymarked routes will enable visitors to choose dependant on their activity or ability. Key information on the wildlife and heritage will be found upon discrete and sometimes temporary signage upon the site. The aim is for every visitor is to engender support and understanding of the importance of the site for wildlife and the reason behind the management techniques BBOWT undertakes to safeguard the site for future generations.

Out of the bird nesting season, visitors will be able to access all parts of the common which will be free from obstruction and encroachment. Where the common boundaries are currently unclear to visitors, they will be unobtrusively marked.

## The main findings of the audit

The on-site audit was undertaken during July and August 2014 and the compiling of the report including repeated site visits has occurred since. The weather was clear and fine and rainfall during the on-site audit was minimal. Below are the key consolidated recommendations, more detailed information is available throughout the rest of the report.

### Off-site Information:

#### Recommendations

- BBOWT Reserve Web Page: Make corrections to inaccurate information immediately. Insert more access information so the visitor is armed with enough information to be able to make an informed decision whether they are able to visit.
- Other Websites: Undertake a review of websites that feature the Commons and make sure the content is correct and contains information that would be useful to the potential visitor.
- Leaflets: The current leaflets are in need of renewal and should not be distributed. Leaflets are useful to convey information or promote sites or activities in a setting such as Tourist Information Centres (TIC), accommodation providers etc. The way the public sources information using smart phones and associated applications is changing very rapidly and all leaflets should also be available on the BBOWT website. All leaflets should be checked for accuracy yearly. The use of QR technology is a useful tool but care should be taken in areas where connection to mobile networks is not available.

### Finding the site:

#### Recommendations

- Apply for brown tourist signage to the control tower main car park from main arterial roads (A34, A339, A4)
- Sign the entrances to the car parks
- BBOWT reserve signs to be installed at appropriate entrances around the site to reinforce the knowledge who is managing the site and a useful contact number for enquiries
- Corrections sent to Google (maps) with regards errors on their digital labelling

### Car Parks

Four car parks service the Commons, though three are used more often than the Bomb Site car park which is used mostly by those visiting BBOWT's Bowdown Woods reserve. Pyle Hill easily becomes full because of its proximity to Newbury and wooded, sheltered walking whilst there is generally lots of capacity at the main, Control Tower, car park. Crookham car park is less well used and instead there is often a queue of visitors parking in an ad-hoc fashion along the roadside of Old Thornford road.

### The main car park at the control tower:

#### Recommendations

- Continue keeping the height barrier open during opening hours

- Make good and serviceable all gates through the livestock fence. Review if all gates are required and if there are negative impacts on any sensitive habitats
- Improve the surface from the car park to the gates and the surface through the access structures
- Remove scrub and dense patches of trees within the parking area to improve safety and reduce unsociable behaviour
- Work with any development on the control tower to provide additional services within the parking area such as bicycle parking and an accessible picnic area

## **Pyle Hill car park:**

### **Recommendations**

- If the formal car park ever requires re-surfacing, replace the current concrete cells for a smooth type
- Improve the pedestrian flow in and out of the car park and to the access gates
- Any information panel or notice board needs to be accessible to all and in an safe vehicle free area
- Prevent ad-hoc parking in the area alongside the car park and instead create a safe area for visitors to congregate and orientate themselves
- Consider installing a blue badge priority parking space as part of any improvement of the overall area
- Restore and add interpretation to the old airbase access gate (the only remaining gate outside of the GAMA site)
- Remove the large and imposing hybrid black poplar trees which will allow views into the common and create a brighter and more welcoming area
- Install a sign that provides information on the direction, and distance, of the main car park which has a larger capacity when Pyle Hill is full
- Install a welcome sign notifying visitors where they have arrived

## **Crookham Car Park**

### **Recommendations**

- Any information panel or notice board needs to be accessible to all and in an safe vehicle free area
- Create a direct path along the side of Old Thornford road to the access gate in the livestock fence at Crookham Pools and add appropriate signage
- Install welcome sign notifying visitors where they have arrived

## **Bowdown Bombsite Shared Car Park**

### **Recommendations**

- Repair surface
- Install a blue badge priority parking bay close to the gate to the Bombsite entrance.

## **Getting to the site**

### **Public transport**

There are good rail links to Newbury and from the railway station visitors can use buses to get near to the Pyle Hill car park or entrances along the A339. There is no public transport that services the main car park or any of the car parks directly. There is a free bus service to the Greenham Business Park but the lack of information about the Commons within the park means that visitors are likely not to be able to find the correct bus stop or the entrance to the Commons.

### **Recommendations**

- Have hyperlinks on the reserve page that link to the public transport providers
- Add information on access to the Commons on the Greenham Business Park site and related electronic media

### **Pedestrians**

Pedestrians can use road side footpaths and several PRoW to get to the Commons. There is a good level of access structures within the livestock fence and all other areas are unfenced allowing free movement as much as the habitat allows.

### **Recommendations**

- Review the gates and the type of opening mechanisms fitted and undertake a phased approach to replacing latches and catches that are less accessible with sprung easy-latches. Consider the likely user in the review and also the network of paths and tracks within and outside the site. Remove any gate that leads to an unsafe area such as a highway without roadside footpath
- Work with the Greenham business park to improve and promote access from the park into the Commons
- Keep gates and gaps completely clear of vegetation and encroaching shrubs and trees
- Maintain the ground through all access structures so they are free from debris and large stones, level so they do not pool water and are not positioned on at the top/bottom or upon a slope. The requirement of a turning and manoeuvring area around gates is very important for those who are seated or who are horse riding and a specification/guidance for clearance and maintenance should be written

### **Bicycle**

Bicycles are permitted to use the 'defined' tracks and paths on the Commons and given that the majority of access structures are either pedestrian or bridle gates, access is plentiful. The routes are well used by commuters and leisure cyclists alike.

### **Recommendations**

- Define the routes that are suitable for both mountain bikes and all-terrain bicycles. Promote routes on new orientation boards and waymarking

- Create a code of conduct for cycling and mountain biking
- Instigate management of off-road routes suitable for mountain bikes by creating a working group with local cycle clubs and retailers
- Encourage the installation of cycle stands at the main car park as part of the control tower re-development
- Advise visitors of the terrain and suggested bicycle type suitable for the site on any advertising such as the reserve webpages
- Undertake repair to the main plateau tracks to remove the potholes that traverse more than 50% of the width of the track and add material to areas where large stones are now becoming prominent (as set out in the paper on cycling upon the Commons, see appendix)

### **On horseback or by horse and carriage**

Horse riders are welcome to use the Commons network of 'defined' paths and tracks and additional space if granted by the Commission. There are a number of gates fitted with extended levers but the use of these preferred 'Easy-latches' is not consistent. There is no information upon road side or upon printed to inform visitors with horse trailers where they can park.

There are popular routes and crossing points into the Commons and these should be reviewed as to their suitability and modifications made if required.

Horse and carriages are not permitted to freely use the Commons but BBOWT welcomes requests for non-commercial events and donkey and trap events do already occur.

### **Recommendations**

- As part of developing waymarked routes, define routes that will be promoted and suitably managed for all users including horse riders
- Provide information on the reserve page and at the main car park for horse riders wanting to arrive with a trailer
- Improve the bridleway crossing at Crookham Common across Bury's Bank Road

### **Mobility Vehicles – All terrain**

The Commons allow the use of electric mobility scooter to use the defined paths and tracks. Height barriers may prohibit taller adapted vehicles and are in place on all car parks except the main car park where it is being kept open during opening hours. Not all gates are fitted with latches that can be accessed from the seating position and many gates have become encroached by vegetation or have minimal manoeuvring space to allow a seated occupant to drive alongside the gate and operate the latch. Nearly all the gates are fitted with off-set hinges and the speed of return once opened is therefore not adjustable and can be severe at times. There is no information for the visitor either on or off-site which could help in locating a place to park, accessible route or facilities within the area.

## **Recommendations**

- On printed and electronic information qualify that users with mobility scooters are recommended to use all terrain versions. Provide the potential visitor information about which car parks have height restrictions and what the heights are.
- Undertake more vegetation clearance around the high use gates
- Allow for more manoeuvrability around gates rather than a linear width path the same as the accessible gate width. Maintain a level ground in and around gates
- Aim to provide latches on all gates that can be accessed from both sides
- Promote routes that are accessible to those who are seated
- All information provided on the site should be at a readable height from a seated position and accessible from paths and tracks

## **Signage and information on the site**

### **Orientation maps and way marked routes**

There are 3 orientation boards all located in the car parks. The boards have information that is out of date and are therefore due for replacement as part of BBOWT's phased renewal of orientation and guidance available to visitors. The number of signs and locations should also be reviewed. There are 4 waymarked trails with information on routes depicted on the orientation boards. There is also a one mile Walk 4 Life trail. Visitors can no longer follow the waymarked trails due to the deterioration of the marker posts. Any new boards within the fenced area of the commons require approval from the Commission.

### **Recommendations**

- Immediately install location markers on the current orientation boards
- Deliver new orientation boards plus waymarked routes as phase 2 of BBOWT's signage work or equivalent improvement project
- Design, consult and install new waymarked trails along with orientation boards

## **Wildlife and Heritage interpretation**

Three orientation boards on site give a reasonable level of information for visitors on the habitats and species that can be found. There is one further lectern style interpretation sign board at Crookham Common heathland renovation area. There is no other information for visitors to learn and engage with the site. This should be a priority recommendation. Any work upon the site should be done in conjunction with work that is occurring on the Greenham Business Park and Greenham Parish Council (owners of the control tower).

## **The on-site path network**

Because of the sheer length of the paths and tracks upon the Commons it was beyond this audit to undertake a detailed examination of every metre of trail. Importantly for the first time all the well used/defined paths and tracks have been recorded and digitised (see appendix).

The auditor is also recommending that all tracks and paths that have been recorded are given a priority level for maintenance and vegetation clearance. All users whether they are on bicycle, foot or on horseback are

allowed to use the same paths. This has its complications due to potential conflicts and wear and tear. As part of the prioritisation it would be beneficial to consider the use of each track. It is not the recommendation to prohibit use of particular routes; rather the use of waymarking/naming the trails is a better approach.

## **Recommendations**

- Using the newly recorded network, define the paths and tracks as mentioned in The Act
- Due to the number of paths and tracks a priority list is required so management can be focused
- Undertake immediate maintenance to priority tracks and paths. Repair surface through gates to prevent pooling water and to maintain a level surface
- Promote routes for different users to assist with targeted maintenance and reduce conflict
- The installation of new waymarked trails should help to prioritise maintenance on particular paths
- Work upon public rights of way should be done in partnership with the WBC PRoW team

## **Gates and stiles**

The Commons has a good number of access structures in useful locations and connections with surrounding PRoW are maintained.

Access through the livestock fence is by gates, stiles or vehicular cattle grids. Nearly all pedestrian and bridle gates are self-closing by the fact they are fitted with off-set hinges. This can be a potential safety hazard to horse riders and those seated plus can also be a hindrance to those with accompaniments.

Kissing gates can function to reduce access to motorcycles and this is likely why some have been installed. They do however restrict access to horse riders and cyclists. As part of the review of paths and tracks access structures should also be reviewed for suitability as part of the wider network of routes in the area.

## **Recommendations**

- Undertake regular checks and carry out maintenance of the access structures upon the Commons rather than waiting for a complaint or notification of a problem from a member of the public
- Regularly clear access structures of all vegetation both from the side or overhanging branches and provide a level smooth surface through all gaps and structures
- As part of defining promoted routes for different users, ask the question if the gate is suitable for that user or if modifications/replacements are required. Question the use of kissing gates where present.
- Remove any gates that lead to nowhere or onto a road without provision for pedestrians
- Striker/gravity catches should be upgraded to a straight handled version of Centrewire's 'Easy-latch' system (<http://www.centrewire.com/easylatches.htm>) or similar that allow opening from both sides.

More detail on these recommendations and more can be found in the subsequent pages of the report.

## Conclusion

The original plan to reinstate the Commons to the public has been a success. The rights of Commoners are being exercised and the installation of a livestock fence has meant that a large area can be grazed to maintain traditional practices and aiding habitat conservation.

Considerable improvements to allow public access have been put in place by West Berkshire Council with input from the Commission. The assistance of volunteers has been invaluable. It is very important periodically to undertake a detailed look at the situation for public access so an attainable strategy can be devised. So what can be done?

The Commons is at risk from damaging activities due to a lack of byelaws and 'policing'. There is very limited information with regards access information available to visitors before their visit or upon the site itself. The lack of directional signage upon highways hinders visitors actually finding the site. This impacts the site manager's ability to effectively manage access and provisions for visitors. The likely outcome is that visitors' experience will be diminished even before they enter the site. A small number of boards with details of the ecology and heritage are present but these are out of date. The infrastructure dates back to the opening some 15 years ago and though is still functioning as it was originally designed, some high use gates and their fittings are becoming worn and other access gates need to be upgraded.

Thought must be given to access for educational groups as the Commons offer a superb resource for both environment and historical learning. At Snelsmore Common there is an outdoor educational area with seating which can be booked. There is the opportunity within the main car park at the Commons to offer a similar resource which can be booked by self-led groups and for use by BBOWT. Currently the lack of toilet facilities is likely to be a limiting factor but this may be resolved with the re-development of the control tower.

The Commons are currently offering a good level of access to able bodied visitors wanting to enjoy the open space on foot, bicycle or horseback. It is likely that for the large proportion of current users the access is adequate and preliminary feedback via visitor surveys backs this up. Thought must be given to those who are not currently using the site and why this is so. The auditor witnessed visitors using mobility vehicles upon the tracks and it is likely many visitors with varying disabilities still access and enjoy the Commons. However there is no strategy for delivering information on the site or on electronic media, on-the-ground infrastructure and facilities for all visitors. Many access structures in place would prohibit some users. There is also a lack of maintenance in and around all structures. This is likely to be due to a lack of correctly specifying how maintenance should occur. Staff and volunteers undertaking the installation of structures and maintenance of existing structures need to be aware of the different user groups needs. Training for staff and volunteers is recommended as is a new access guidance document.

To provide consistent high quality and accessible provisions requires regular checks and immediate repair so a visitor's experience is not affected. Any future repairs, improvements or installed infrastructure or amenities must meet BBOWT guidelines and BS5709. This will mean that BBOWT is adhering to DDA and Equality Act requirements in considering access for all. This approach will facilitate the installation of improvements that may become achievable when funding allows. It is important to prioritise how barriers to visitors with disabilities will be dealt with and a realistic and reasonable goal should be set in the site management plan. Accessibility for those wanting to enjoy green spaces should not be thought of as just those requiring the use of wheelchairs; the breadth of disabilities and the requirements therein is much greater than this. Therefore

contacting stakeholder groups that have experience in taking disability groups out into the countryside is a must and this can occur ad-hoc when work is being planned and on a regular yearly basis. Stakeholder groups are often more than willing to host information on access relevant to their members.

## Section 1: Background to the Site

The Commons are located just 1.4 miles from Newbury town centre. The residential area of south Newbury forms some of the western boundary. The Commons are encircled by a number of roads, most notably the A339, Burys Bank and Thornford roads.

Today the site is used by an estimated 100,000 visitors each year and this number is likely to increase due to the increased level of housing developments within the 2 miles of the site over the next few years. Many visitors come to the Commons daily throughout the year to walk dogs and ride bicycles or horses. The site is popular for those interested in wildlife as it attracts ground nesting birds such as nightjar and seasonal migratory birds. The heathland boasts reptiles such as adders, grass snakes and lizards. Botanists can enjoy the range of ferns, mosses and threatened heathland and grassland plants.

The site is divided north/south by a parish boundary which is why the area is given two titles Greenham and Crookham, but is mostly often referred to as Greenham Common. Historically the Commons have been affected quite strongly by military presence. World War II saw the first major infrastructure installation upon the Commons with an unfenced airstrip and associated buildings. From 1941 until 1993 there has always been some presence from the military. This has meant changes in public access across the upper areas of the site because of fenced boundaries or safety. The site gained huge publicity during the long protest against the siting of 96 nuclear missiles that started arriving in 1983. The GAMA (ground launched cruise missile alert and maintenance area) site where the missiles were stored in huge bunkers is privately owned and public access is not permitted.

In 1997 a deal with the Greenham Common Trust and the MOD to purchase the land was formalised. The then Newbury District Council bought back the common land minus the GAMA site from the Greenham Common Trust for £1. The first section of fence came down in 1997 but it was not until 2000 when the Commons officially opened to the public. The livestock fence was erected around 380ha of land, which includes a section of the public highway named Burys Bank road, in 2001. In 2002 The Greenham and Crookham Act (The Act) was passed which conferred power of management to the Commission and West Berkshire Council. The Act applies to the entire area shown within the deposited map and sets out the legal framework which unites both Greenham and Crookham Commons into one manageable entity. The purpose of the establishment and consolidation of both Commons;

*'An Act to restore land at and in the vicinity of the Greenham and Crookham Commons as common land open to the public; to make provision for the conservation of the natural beauty of that land; to grant public access over that land in perpetuity and to make provision with that public access; to restore and extend commoners rights over that land; to constitute the Greenham and Crookham Common Commission for the management of that land; to confer powers on the West Berkshire District Council and on that Commission with respect to that land; and for connected and other purposes.'* (The Act).

The Act specifies that Greenham and Crookham Commons be treated by section 15 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW), 2000 (rights of access under other enactments) as being accessible to the public apart from the CRoW Act. Regulations imposed by CRoW do, therefore not apply to the Commons.

The total land area is approximately 450ha or 5km<sup>2</sup> and at its widest is approximately 5.5km east to west. The site has a large plateau area which is mainly heathland and acid to neutral grassland plus some permanent and temporary ponds. Much of this area has been shaped to some extent by previous land uses and is therefore unusually flat. This area is popular with visitors as it offers a safe and scenic area on which to walk, cycle and ride horses with views over to the North Wessex Downs. Well delineated paths, often free from mud due to the very thin layer of topsoil, provide logical and easy to follow routes. These paths and tracks often follow previous airbase infrastructural routes or were purposefully installed during the reversion of the airbase to open access land.

Around the central flat plateau are wooded gullies that are often less accessible because they can become very muddy and wet. There are some waymarked paths through this area and some of these have had some infrastructure such as board walks installed to aid access.

There are four car parks provided for visitors arriving in motor vehicles; the main car park located at the control tower with capacity for 150 cars, Pyle Hill with the capacity for 12 cars, Crookham with the capacity for 12 cars and the Bombsite car park with a capacity of 12 cars. There are also many unofficial laybys along the northern and eastern areas that are used daily and can accommodate more than 20 vehicles. Parking is tolerated within the Greenham Business Park grounds but this can be confusing as there is no signage directing visitors where to park or the entrance points into the Commons.

## **The Greenham and Crookham Common Commission**

The Commission seeks to undertake the functions as assigned by The Act. Namely,

- to conserve any area of the Commons which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI),
- promote and improve grazing, promote educational activities thus improving public awareness and knowledge of cultural, ecological and historical areas and items on the Commons,
- manage the open space for recreation and facilitate the exercise of commoners rights

## **Rights of access**

The Act allows the public the right of access on foot across all of the land as shown in the deposited map. In addition, there is a right of access to those on horseback and bicycle on certain defined paths and tracks and additional open space as determined by the Commission. As far as can be determined, these defined paths are not explicitly laid out in print and therefore where a path or track is defined physically on the ground by the process of attrition, then a bicycle or horse and rider can currently use the route. This has its complications as if paths emerge without the knowledge of those on the Commission or site managers then it is very difficult to prove it is a new path or just an old path that has been reinstated through reuse.

Those with rights of common have the right to exercise their rights and therefore are permitted to enter the site. The use of vehicles within the boundary as part of exercising their rights must be granted permission in advance by the land owner or manager. A code of practice has been written that all users of motor vehicles on

the Commons must adhere to (see reference documents in the appendix). The use of motorised vehicles by the public not in connection with the management of land or livestock or that have been given permission by the Commission are not allowed upon the common land

Access through the livestock fence is facilitated by; stiles, kissing gates, pedestrian gates, bridle gates and field gates numbering around 70 structures in total. There are 8 cattle grids allowing un-gated vehicle access. Three are upon adopted highways, 5 are across tracks upon the common land. Height barriers are in place at the car parks and 2 elsewhere to dissuade unauthorised access to those wishing to encamp or large tipper trucks for example fly-tipping materials.

There are three sections of public right of way (PRoW); public footpath GREE/10/1, public footpath GREE/6/5 and public bridleway THAT/18/1, as shown on the due diligence map in the appendix.

Restrictions on access can be exercised by WBC and the Commission for the restoration, conservation or protection of flora and fauna or prevention of the risk of fire.

BBOWT has been working in partnership with WBC as part of its Living Landscape project which includes all of the Commons. As part of the partnership an initiative to raise awareness of ground nesting birds that utilise areas on the Commons was created. The public are requested not to enter the red zones during the bird nesting season 1<sup>st</sup> March to the 31<sup>st</sup> July. There are also green zones which allow for the exercise of dogs off leads in a controlled manner. The zones are marked with two-foot high, coloured topped stakes and taller posts with information notices. The public are made aware of the zoning through informative notices on all access gates.

## **Byelaws**

Military byelaws have been removed from the Commons. Using the Commons Act 1899, Newbury District Council had byelaws applicable to Crookham, Greenham and Stroud Green Commons, though strangely Crookham Common was omitted from the map. There are still two signs displaying a map and byelaws standing north of Burys Bank Road within the grazed area. It is the assumption that these byelaws are no longer applicable to the area shown upon the map due to the creation of the The Act and therefore the signs should be removed.

The Act allows for the making of byelaws that would be applicable for the entire area as on the deposited map. These would assist in,

- the conservation of the natural beauty of the Commons and any additional open space as included thereafter
- the preservation of order and the prevention of nuisances
- the management of the land
- the enforcement of good behaviour so others enjoyment is not affected unduly
- public safety

Byelaws may,

- regulate or prohibit the lighting of fires
- regulate the use of the Commons for any purpose
- make provisions that will assist in the control of dogs and other animals

- make provision that if a person is found guilty and convicted of contravening the byelaws can be issued with a fine

Byelaws can relate to the whole or part of the Commons and can also relate to any other additional land that is added to the deposited map. WBC can appoint persons such as rangers to enforce byelaws made.

Regulations (not byelaws) have been agreed by the Commission which have been largely cut and pasted in part from the CRoW Act (<http://www.greenhamccc.org.uk/byelaws.htm>). As explained above, the CRoW Act does not apply to the site and therefore the regulations therein do not apply. The Act specifies that sections 236 and 238 of the Local Government Act 1972 need to be followed when applying byelaws to the Commons. The confirming authority is the Secretary of State. It is recommended that byelaws are created specifically relating to the Commons as currently a great many activities that could both impact the public's enjoyment of the Commons and also the wildlife and habitats.

## **Rights of Common**

Those with rights registered under the 1965 Commons Registration Act, the Land Registration Acts 1925 and 1936 and not extinguished since are entitled to exercise their rights over the Commons. In 1991 the Ministry of Defence abolished Greenham rights of common within the fenced boundary. Those commoners who agreed accepted compensation payments. The rights of common within Crookham Common were never abolished. When WBC took possession of the Commons they offered those who had their rights extinguished the opportunity to re-purchase them, but not all did so. Those surplus rights associated with grazing may be put up for annual rental if agreed by the Commission. There is also the possibility that some extinguished rights could still be restored through application to WBC. The grazing of livestock is confined to the fenced area which covers the main land area west of the Old Thornford Road, this is for practical reasons but the rights are for the entire land area. At present cattle and ponies are grazed. WBC and the Commission are responsible for keeping a register of all those who have right of common. It is not the purpose of this report to talk further about rights of common, only to say that any individual or group should consider the public and their right of quiet enjoyment and free, safe access to roam (on foot) when undertaking their rights.

## **Facilities**

WBC has the power to provide informal facilities for the use of visitors to the site. These include,

- the provision of tracks and paths for the use by disabled persons, those on horseback and bicycles. No tracks have been specifically installed that allow the unobstructed access to hand propelled wheelchairs though electric mobility vehicles designed to be used off-road can navigate the gravel tracks currently in situ.
- the provision of waste bins, public conveniences and picnic sites not within the common area. These should only be placed within the 3 car parks. Currently only dog waste bins are provided with some installed within the Commons boundary close to entrance gates. Waste bins are not favoured.

Though it is said within the management planning document that there is to be no 'formal' furniture within the commons boundary there are several solid wood benches present. These include benches that commemorate the 1978 Greenham Common Campaign against the KC135 refuelling tankers. Furniture should be considered if fully accessible routes are installed and therefore are required for the rest and contemplation of its users.

## **Special Events**

Special events can be permitted on the Commons at the discretion of the Commission. This includes events such as organised running groups, orienteering, cycling and the British Driving Society (horse drawn carriages, limited to 2 in total at one time). Commercial events where payment is requested from its attendees are not allowed. This includes for example undertaking commercial activities such as dog walking companies.

## **Areas of conservation**

There are 5 areas designated as SSSI covering around 279ha of land within the deposited map. Areas under a Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreement are also present and the contract agreement between WBC and Natural England runs from 2008 until 2018.

## **Historical areas and artefacts**

The Berkshire Archaeological Services and WBC produced a Historical Environmental Management Plan (HEMP) in 2011 to assist with the implementation of the HLS scheme. The plan also aids the preservation and understanding of the historical features present within Greenham and Crookham Commons. This information is very relevant when undertaking management of the site and facilitating access. Heritage can be an attraction to some and certainly of interest to most and if carefully managed and preserved along with suitable interpretation, can be used as added value and attract a broader spectrum of society. Once visitors have undertaken the process of deciding to come to the site and have arrived, the next stage is to engage visitors with the importance of wildlife and heritage conservation.

## Section 2: Audit Findings

### No Recommendations required

Target Note
G31
G33
G41
G49
G52
G59
G64
G69
G98
G100

### 1: Urgent, immediate response required

Target Note	Cost Band
G110	1
G112	1
G126	1
G180	1

### 2: Less urgent, complete within suggested time frame

Target Note	Cost Band
G10	1
G11	1
G12	1
G13	1
G14	2
G15	1
G16	1
G21	1
G23	1
G25	1
G26	1
G30	1
G34	1
G37	1
G39	1
G40	1
G45	2
G47	1
G55	1
G66	1
G71	1
G77	1

G81	1
G83	1
G87	1
G96a	1
G101	None
G104	2
G108	2
G109	1
G110	1
G114a	1
G114b	3
G121	1
G129	1
G136	Unknown
G146	1
G147	1
G149	1
G150	1
G151	1
G156	1
G169	1
G171	1
G172	1
G177	1
G178	2

**3: As part of on-going regular reserve management**

Target Note	Cost Band
G3	1
G7	1
G8	1
G16	1+
G20	1
G22	1
G24	1
G27	1
G28	1
G29	1
G32	1
G35	1
G42	1
G46	1
G51	1
G54	1
G56	1
G57	1
G61	1
G62	1

G63	1
G67	1
G68	1
G70	1
G75	1
G76	1
G78	1
G82	1
G83	1
G84	1
G85	1
G86	1
G89	1
G96b	1
G102	1
G105	1
G111	1
G113	1
G118	1
G120	1
G122	1
G123	1
G124	None
G125	1
G127	1
G128	1
G131	1
G132	1
G138	1
G139	1
G140	1
G142	1
G143	1
G144	1
G145	1
G148	1
G154	2
G155	1
G157	1
G158	1
G160	1
G161	1
G164	1
G168	1
G170	1
G173	1
G174	1
G176	1

**4: Recommendation as an ideal which may require approval**

Target Note	Cost Band
G1	1
G2	1
G4	2
G5	2
G6	1
G7	2
G9	2
G17	1
G18	None
G19	1
G28	1
G36	1
G38	1
G40	3
G43	1
G44	1
G48	1
G50	1
G53	1
G58	1
G60	1
G65	2
G72	Unknown
G73	1
G74	2
G78	1
G79	1
G80	None
G86	1
G88	1
G89	None
G90	None
G91	None
G92	None
G93	None
G94	None
G95	None
G99	None
G102	1
G103	None
G106	None
G107	None
G108	1
G115	1

G116	None
G117	1
G119	1
G130	2
G132	2
G133	2
G134	2
G135	1
G137	1
G141	1
G152	1
G153	None
G159	None
G162	1
G163	1
G165	None
G166	1
G167	3
G168	None
G171	1
G175	1
G179	None

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	10/02 2014	G1	SU 49874 65039	Unpainted wooden display/notice board. One side has a Perspex hinge door with a padlock (code = 209). The backing for the notices is cork. Size: 112cmx75cm and 190cm tall. Condition is very good. Suggestions: The location of the board is not appropriate for those in wheel chairs or during the wet winter months and also may be a little bit high.	Ideally re-locate the display board close to main path to the common and make sure there is hard standing to and around the display. This is a good place to display events and notices.	4	1	No.
	10/02 2014	G2	SU 49875 65036	New vinyl on Foamex sign fixed to a wooden post in a lectern style. Size: 21cmx30cm and approx 54cm off the ground  Located next to the donation post (G3).	There are 4 exits onto the common from the car park and a forthcoming visitor centre, therefore there may need to be thought into having more than one donation post and suitable locations for these.	4	1	No.
	10/02 2014	G3	SU 49876 65035	Metal donation post. Sign fitted to base.	The metal post is sited amongst a grass area so it some distance from the path. So the post can be accessed more easily move next to the path. See comment for G2.	3	1	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	10/02 2014	G4	SU 49908 65072	<p>Commons interpretation sign within the control tower car park, one of 3 located in the three car parks. The sign is made of GRP and gives the visitor a lot of information with regards the history and wildlife present on the Commons. Some of the information is out of date and the branding no longer reflects</p> <p>On the back side of the sign is a hastily fixed 'Don't leave your valuables in the car' warning sign.</p> <p>Size: Display board; 147.5cmx73cm. Frame; 172cmx80cm and 163cm tall.</p> <p>Condition: The wooden frame is tired looking and some of the wooden trim around the board is coming away and broken. Overall appearance is dirty and in poor condition. The contact details are now incorrect.</p>	<p>Suggestions: The sign is due for replacement as the text is out of date, the waymarked routes will likely be changed and the contact details are now obsolete. The sign needs to be redesigned the same time as any waymarking occurs. The wooden frame has also badly deteriorated and needs renovation. The location is not appropriate as vehicles can park in front of the sign and make it unapproachable to those wanting to view, especially those in wheelchairs or who have walking aids. The sign itself may become redundant in this location due to the plans to renovate the control tower, depends if there will be information on the outside of the building viewable outside opening hours. The sign is included within Phase 2 of the signage replacement project. The waymarking has become defunct and needs replacing as part of a new board.</p>	4	2	No.
								

Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
10/02 2014	G5	SU 52333 64570	This sign is the same as that in G4. The condition is a little worse as the GRP has hazed and is bowing out of the frame. The location is also not suitable as cars can park in front of the sign and block access for those wishing to view it.	The same as for G4	4	2	No.



10/02 2014	G6	SU 52332 64567	<p>This Parish notice board was installed in 2011. The board is shared between BBOWT and Crookham Parish Council. The board is wooden and has a hinged Perspex cover, a triangular key is required to open the door and the back board is white and magnetic.</p> <p>Size: Display space 119cmx83cm, Frame size; 134cmx120cm and 210cm tall.</p> <p>Very good condition. The door was broken for a while from July, but has been subsequently repaired in November by the auditor.</p>	It is beneficial if signage that requires visitors to access and spend time reading the information has safe approach and an adequate surrounding area. A hard standing area accessible to those in wheelchairs and those with buggies, which is also separated from the car park, should be a priority when installing new signage in the future.	4	1	No.
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Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	10/02 2014	G7	SU 48379 65275	This is the same sign as in target note G4 and G5 and is placed here at Pyle Hill car park. The same suggestions apply here including the accessibility. In addition the location of this sign is inappropriate to those wishing to read the information due to vehicles parking and manoeuvring in front of the sign. It is also very dirty and requires regular cleaning.	The recommendations are the same as in G4 and G5. The sign should be moved to the other side of the hard standing so it can be viewed by visitors entering the eastern gate. Any new sign is likely to be part of a larger re-modelling of the location and should be given ample safe access.	3 4	1 2	The sign was cleaned in June 2014.
	10/02 2014	G8	SU 48380 65286	This notice board is the same as in target note G1. The location again is an issue here as it is positioned in an area that is uneven and requires the visitor to stand upon grass that is wet and muddy during the winter. The area has logs laid on the ground marking out paths for visitors to follow. The logs have become very slippery and are generally ignored.	As with all information that informs and engages with the visitor, it must be accessible and within a safe area. The height is important so it can be viewed by those who use wheelchairs or are of a low stature. The notice board ideally needs moving to a better location.	3	1	Some of the logs have been removed.
	10/02 2014	G9	SU 49874 65190	This wooden routed reserve sign is situated at the entrance to the control tower car park. The sign also holds the removable closing time wooden tablets that screw to the front.  Size: 154cmx80cm and 144cm tall.  Condition: The sign looks tired and is rotting on the top.	Recommended as part of the control tower renovation new signage could be developed in partnership that will include details on the facilities available, parking layout, opening times etc. In the short term, a replacement sign is required.	4	2	A new sign has been designed and ordered and is awaiting delivery as part of Phase 1 signage replacement.

Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
11/02 2014	G10	SU 5114 6491	Sign notifying drivers that the next section of road is unfenced and to be careful of livestock roaming onto the road. The sign is broken away from the lower channel and the post tops are very rusty. The sign shows the WBC Streetcare contact number.	The 30mph roundel within the sign is not permitted by the Highways Authority. Initially clean and repair the sign. Ultimately replace the sign with correct branding and contact information. Remove the 30mph roundel from any new design.	2	1	A new sign has been installed, please see photo opposite. A 30mph roundel below the sign was not required by the Highways Authority.
			Fitted November 2014.	Review the condition of the posts and replace as necessary. Bi-annual cleaning required.			
11/02 2014	G11	SU 5027 6533	Please see comments for target note G10. The posts are rusty and the sign dirty.	Please see comments for G10.	2	1	A new sign has been installed, please see photo opposite. A 30mph roundel below the sign was not required by the Highways Authority.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
				Fitted November 2014.	Review the condition of the posts and replace as necessary. Bi-annual cleaning required.			
	20/05 2014	G12	SU 4985 6523	Highway Sign. Measures 2m+ from the ground. The sign is viewable in advance if travelling from the easterly direction (Thatcham) along Burys Bank road. This is the only sign notifying visitors of the location of the car park.	An additional sign of the same design is required on the opposite side of the entrance road so those travelling from the westerly direction (Newbury) are notified of the car parks location. Review signage when the visitor centre is opened so any new signage can be combined thus reducing the number and of signs present at this location.	2	1	No.
	20/05 2014	G13	SU 4986 6522	Galvanised metal vehicle barrier which is locked during the night (Opened by 8am and closed 6pm/8pm). Latched open during the day. Has an integral lock barrel opened using an estate key. Displays a security notice. The initial entrance section is professionally paved with kerbs and line painted. The area is lit by street lights during the night.	Out of hours contact information required in the form of a fixed sign for visitors and emergency services.  Since initial visit the barrier has been damaged possible by a turning vehicle. Install high visibility tape/sign along the length of the barrier.	2	1	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	20/05 2014	G14	SU 4987 6520	Full road width green painted metal height barrier. Locked with an estate padlock. Damaged possibly by large vehicle. Max height is 2.3m.	Repair. Fit new max vehicle height sign so it is clearer to visitors. This is the main car park for the Commons and is likely to get used by visitors in a range of vehicles such as camper vans, vehicles with bicycles on the roof, tall adapted vehicles etc. Also because the control tower is being developed and PRow and BBOWT have their maintenance building within the area, a height barrier is likely to be restrictive to delivery vehicles for example. Recommend keeping the height barrier open during opening hours. Monitor the situation to make sure the car park is not being used by large lorries wanting somewhere to hold up.	2	2	Height barrier has been repaired and a new max height warning sign fitted. The barrier was left open for approx 6 months with no problems.
	20/05 2014	G15	SU 4984 6520	Sewage digester plant. Locked with an estate padlock. Holes and gaps within the fence. Could pose a safety issue to those gaining easy access.	Secure fence and periodically check the perimeter to make sure access is not possible.	2	1	Repairs have been undertaken.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	20/05 2014	G16	SU 4985 6510	<p>45 litre green painted metal dog waste bin with rubberized lid fitted to an 'Earth Anchor' stand. Advertising poster fitted to front side. Rusting slightly at the base, otherwise good condition.</p> <p>There are 10 dog waste bins in total on the Commons at key entrances and car parks. Condition is variable with the most used bins at Pyle Hill car park needing replacing.</p> <p>The bins are emptied by a contractor.</p>	<p>Consider larger 66 litre bins where the bins overflow from heavy use. Using designs such as Earth Anchors 'Easy chute' reduces the occurrence of general waste being deposited and prematurely filling up the bins.</p> <p>Bins should be easily accessible on foot and by wheelchairs. Many bins were obstructed by vegetation. The height of the bins in some cases were also too high.</p> <p>It is recommended that a BBOWT branded vinyl poster is adhered to the side of the bins giving information on the benefits of wildlife and visitors alike of picking up after your dog.</p>	<p>Poster 2</p> <p>Bin renewal 3</p>	1 1+	No.
	20/05 2014	G17	<p>SU 4985 6510</p> <p>Also located at:</p> <p>SU 4987 65011 / 4995 6505 and 4998 6513</p>	<p>Car park closure sign. There are a further 3 signs (one missing from its post) on exits from the car park to the Commons. the signs are important as reminders to visitors that the car parks are not open 24hours. The tablets can be replaced for the summer and winter closure times. The signs look tired and need refurbishing.</p>	<p>Either refurbish or order new BBOWT branded boards and install at the four most used exits of the car park.</p>	4	1	No.

Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
20/05 2014	G18	SU 4985 6510	Ply board fitted to short wooden legs. Space to affix short term notices such as cattle round up warnings. There are a number of these boards in varying degrees of condition at entrances across the Commons. As they are low to the ground they can get obscured by vegetation and can also be missed by the visitor. The boards can be prone to unauthorised advertising.	It is more beneficial to have short term notice boards directly next to the gates and at heights that are more obvious. To reduce clutter and additional infrastructure, temporary signs could be just attached to the current fence alongside the gates. Defunct boards need removing.	4	None	No.
20/05 2014	G19	SU 4985 65103	Wooden bridle gate fitted with auto latch. 145cm accessible. Unimproved ground through the gate with vegetation encroaching. Displays: stock grazing, no motorcycles, no motor vehicles signs. Picture shows ground nesting bird signage. This gate is locked during the ground nesting bird period 1 <sup>st</sup> March – 31 <sup>st</sup> July as the area beyond the gate is a 'red' sensitive zone.	To facilitate access by those seated in (motorised) wheelchairs or of short stature or on horseback an 'easy latch' extended handle would be preferable if the gate or latches were ever to be replaced. Other gates from the car park do have easy latch mechanisms fitted.	4	1	No.
20/05 2014	G20	SU 4988 6507	Wooden bench with back rest. Seat measures: 213 wide x 40 deep x 42cm high. Condition is good. Bench is set within a plinth of compacted gravels and wood revetment which has now become proud of the ground and is becoming covered by vegetation. The bench is a memorial to Lew Lewis 1919-2009. No records of the memorial donation have been seen to ascertain maintenance agreement.	Re-set the wooden plinth flush with the ground and reinstate the gravels. Remove the encroaching vegetation. The bench has no connecting path and so the grass should be kept short to allow access.	3	1	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	20/05 2014	G21	SU 4987 6500	Wooden bridle gate fitted with an 'easy latch' extended handle. The ground through the gate is compacted naturally present gravels, wear has meant that the ground has hollowed and water pools. The gate is fitted with off-set hinges and no post preventing opening too far. 145cm accessible gap. This gate is the most used access point from the car park and thus the fixtures are worn but are in working condition.	A wooden gate is more aesthetically pleasing than a metal gate that would sustain heavy use. Therefore regular maintenance checks and oiling as part of the general condition checking of the car park is required. The ground through the gate needs to be raised to prevent water pooling.	2	1	No.
	20/05 2014	G22	SU 4988 6500	Wooden 5 bar field gate providing vehicle access onto the Commons. Triangular latch and estate padlock. 350cm accessible. Gate has sustained some damage but is functioning.	The combined vehicle and pedestrian track means that more regular maintenance is required so a smooth surface is retained.  This access could be used by emergency vehicles and therefore a sign with BBOWT contact details is required.	3	1	No.
	20/05 2014	G23	SU 4995 6506	Wooden bridle gate. 'Easy latch' extended sprung handle fitted incorrectly and is very worn making operation difficult. Displays: no motor vehicle, no motor cycle and stock grazing discs/signs. Ground through the gate is naturally occurring gravels. 146cm accessible.	Re-fit the latch system so it functions correctly.	2	1	No.

Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
20/05 2014	G24	SU 4995 6506	Wooden 5 bar field gate as fitted in G22.	Same recommendations as in G22.	3	1	No.



20/05 2014	G25	SU 4998 6513	Wooden bridle gate fitted with a return spring. Simple triangular latch. Latch post is loose in the ground (possibly rotten). Gate does not automatically return. No vehicle sign missing. Natural ground through the gate which is becoming vegetated.	Repairs/modifications required so the gate returns to closed position. An 'easy latch' extended handle would be beneficial to those in wheelchairs or on horseback for example. Clear vegetation so the gates full accessible width can be used without interference.	2	1	No.
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20/05 2014	G26	SU 4998 6513	Wooden 5 bar field gate. Needs adjusting as it sits on the ground. The catch has been badly bent and can be pushed opened past the padlock. Displays: stock grazing and no motor cycle discs.	Replace catch and adjust gate so it closes freely.	2	1	The catch has been replaced.
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Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
20/05 2014	G27	SU 5004 6519	1x 5 bar wooden field gate and 1 x green painted metal vehicle access gate, swing type, locked with an estate padlock. Wooden gate needs adjusting. Both in good condition. Access to the maintenance building (Estovers) and the livestock pens.	Adjust wooden gate.	3	1	No.
20/05 2014	G28	SU 5004 6528	Wooden bridle gate fitted with gravity catch. This type of latch requires the user to lean over to open the gate and so is not useable by those seated, on horse back or who are of short stature or physically disabled. Displays: stock grazing, old and incorrect nesting bird season discs. Ground nesting bird zoning sign to the right of the gate. Gate has split.	Remove the old nesting bird disc. Recommend removal of gravity catch and fit an extended handle easy latch system.  Clear vegetation through the full accessible width of the gate.  Repair wooden structure.	3 4	1 1	Old disc has been removed.
20/05 2014	G29	SU 4995 6522	Green painted metal vehicle access gate, locked with an estate padlock. Prevents unauthorised access to the PRoW maintenance and BBOWT reserves building. Damage to the lock shroud at last break in. A secondary wooden field gate is also at this location but is not used. It requires adjusting so it can be used as it currently sits on the ground.	Repair required to the shroud which will also remove sharp metal.	3	1	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	20/05 2014	G30	SU 5015 6539	<p>Wooden bridle gate. Accessible width 148cm. Triangular gravity catch fitted. Displays 2 x stock grazing discs (faded). Vegetation is encroaching and preventing access. The gate allows access along a small path to the north meeting Bury's Bank road on the inside edge of a corner. It is a dangerous crossing and an alternative route is in place with signage.</p> <p>There is no sign to show the safer PRoW permitted route.</p>	<p>It is unlikely that those on horseback or using wheelchair or similar would even try and use this route so upgrading the latch is not necessary.</p> <p>Ultimately the route is dangerous and visitors should not be encouraged to use this access point, therefore removal of the gate and positioning of a closed sign at the road side may be an option. The permitted route should be displayed on the grazed side of the fence.</p>	2	1	No.
					Left photo shows steep path leading to Bury's Bank Road from the access point at G30. Visibility at the bottom of the slope is very short because of the curvature of the road and vegetation density and height.	2	1	No.
					Right picture shows the signs position at 3 locations along the alternative route. One of these signs was found smashed and has been removed. A new sign is now required and also an additional sign at G30 would be prudent. The signs were produced by the PRoW team.			
	20/05 2014	G31	SU 5014 6542	<p>PRoW finger sign. Displays 1 x public footpath and 1 x permitted footpath sign. The public footpath (GREE/6/3) sign directs the public along a vehicle access track to the north past the entrance to BBOWT Bowdown Woods and Bowdown Farm House. The permitted route is the safer alternative as mentioned above.</p>	Keep clean.	n/a	n/a	

3

Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
20/05 2014	G32	SU 5014 6542	Wooden pedestrian gate on the boundary of the Commons. Fitted with an extended easy latch sprung handle and triangular gravity catch. Off-set hinges allow for self closing. Good condition.	Fit 2 x stock grazing discs and no motor cycle discs.	3	1	No.
20/05 2014	G33	SU 5020 6541	Wooden way marker post (WMP). Displays 2 x permitted footpath discs. Good condition.	None.	n/a	n/a	
20/05 2014	G34	SU 5021 6540	Wooden bridle gate fitted striker and catch. Due to a dislodged fence strut the latching post has been pulled over so the gate no longer latches shut. Displays 2 x stock grazing and 1 old ground nesting bird sign. The gate is redundant in its current position and should not be used by the public as it allows access directly onto a dangerous section of Bury's Bank road. The only purpose would be to allow horse riders inadvertently finding themselves approaching the cattle an option off the road.	Repair fence and make sure gate latches correctly. Consider removing as it is offering access to visitors onto a dangerous road section.	2	1	Work has been undertaken to repair the fence and gate.

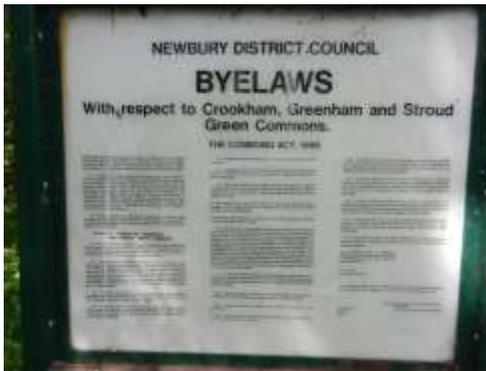
Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
20/05 2014	G35	SU 5023 6542	Wooden WMP. Displays 2 x permitted footpath discs. Good condition.	Clean	3	1	No.



20/05 2014	G36	SU 5035 6525	Green painted sliding metal vehicle barrier. 4m accessible gap. There was once an accessible road past the barrier. A large mound of earth has been deposited behind the barrier so essentially the barrier has become redundant.	If no longer required and for purely aesthetics, remove the barrier.	4	1	No.
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20/05 2014	G37	SU 5032 6523	Byelaw sign, other side shows map of the area the byelaws apply to. The sign is now redundant due to the enactment of the Greenham and Crookham Act 2002 as the byelaws no longer apply at this location.	Remove the sign.	2	1	No.
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Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	20/05 2014	G38	SU 5032 6523	Green painted sliding metal vehicle barrier. 4m accessible gap. There was once an accessible road past the barrier. A large mound of earth has been deposited behind the barrier so essentially the barrier has become redundant.	If no longer required and for purely aesthetics, remove the barrier.	4	1	No.
	20/05 2014	G39	SU 5045 6527	Green painted metal vehicle height restriction barrier. Swing type locked with an estate padlock. 205cm accessible height, 4m access width. No max height information sign fitted. There is no height barrier retaining post when open.	Fit height information sign to the south side of the barrier.  Install a retaining post so the barrier is not capable of swinging back on to a vehicle when open.	2	1	A max height sign has been installed.
	20/05 2014	G40	SU 5054 6527	Informal car park for the Bomb Site area of BBOWT's Bowdown Woods. Also is useful for those wanting to access the area south of the car park. The surface is made up of different ages of sealed surface and also compacted gravels. Condition is poor with large potholes. Joint ownership BBOWT/WBC and now BBOWT manages the entire area. Low branches protruding into informal parking area around the edge.	A new surface throughout the car is required. There is no priority disabled parking space and so this should be considered when installing a new surface. The Bomb Site are has sealed tracks and is therefore suitable to those using wheelchairs or pushchairs. A smooth car park surface would facilitate access to these user groups.	2 4	1 3	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	20/05 2014	G41	SU 5053 6527	Green painted sliding metal vehicle barrier. Welded bar. 4m accessible gap. There was once an accessible road past the barrier. Prevents vehicle access into the cleared area south of the barrier.	None	n/a	n/a	
	20/05 2014	G42	SU 5056 6507	Wooden bridle gate within the stock fence line. Fitted with a striker and triangular gravity latch which is loose. Displays 2 x faded stock grazing discs.	Make repairs to latch and fit new stock grazing discs.	3	1	No.
	20/05 2014	G43	SU 5055 6504	Metal cattle grid providing access to private properties to the north.	Do not allow to become filled with debris. Reflective strips on the end of each of the side barriers would be advantageous when approaching the cattle grid at night.	4	1	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	20/05 2014	G44	SU 5054 6504	Wooden bridle gate to the east of the cattle grid (G43). Useful to those living in the neighbouring private properties if they should want to ride onto the Commons. Displays two dirty stock grazing discs. The gate is fitted with a simple striker and triangular gravity latch.	To assist t horse riders or those with short stature or disability, it would be beneficial to fit an extended easy latch sprung system.	4	1	No.
	20/05 2014	G45	SU 5039 6439	Byelaw sign, other side shows map of the area the byelaws apply to. The sign is now redundant due to the enactment of the Greenham and Crookham Act 2002 as the byelaws no longer apply at this location.	Remove the sign.	2	1	No.
	20/05 2014	G46	SU 5065 6491	5 bar wooden field gate. Provides vehicle width access to un-grazed area around private properties further east. Displays 2 x grazing discs which need cleaning. 3m Accessible width. Gate is difficult to operate, needs adjusting. Has a striker and triangular gravity catch.	Adjust gate.	3	1	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	20/05 2014	G47	SU 5074 6493	Cattle grid. Prevents livestock from approaching private properties to the north. Land north of the grid is still owned by WBC.	Clear grid on a regular basis to prevent livestock encroaching. Attach reflective tape or similar to end of metal side guards to warn motorists of their presence during the night.	2	1	No.
	20/05 2014	G48	SU 5072 6491	Wooden bridle gate fitted with a striker and triangular catch. Displays 2 x stock grazing discs and a ground nesting bird zoning sign (temporary).	The current latch and catch restricts some users such as horse riders wanting to use the gate. An extended easy latch system would improve accessibility.	4	1	No.
	20/05 2014	G49	SU 5076 6484	Royal Mail post box, No. RG1919.	None.	n/a	n/a	

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	20/05 2014	G50	SU 5114 6499	5 bar wooden field gate. Fitted with a simple striker and triangular gravity catch.	As previously mentioned, to facilitate easier access the gate could be fitted with an extended easy latch sprung system, but this may not be need in this location if there is no demand from private residents in the non-grazed area.	4	1	No.
	20/05 2014	G51	SU 5114 6500	Cattle grid. Damage to the western side metal guard fence. Is becoming full of detritus.	Repair/replace guard fence and attach reflective material to the ends so vehicles can see the edge of the entrance at night and avoid collision.	3	1	No.
	20/05 2014	G52	SU 5099 6491	Green painted metal vehicle barrier installed on the entrance to an old access road. Sliding type that has been welded so can not be opened. Prevents unauthorised access but will become redundant in time as vegetation develops.	None.	n/a	n/a	

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	20/05 2014	G53	SU 5099 6487	Green painted metal vehicle barrier. Sliding type fitted with an estate padlock. Has become redundant in its current position.	Consider removal and replace with wooden dragons teeth.	4	1	No.
	20/05 2014	G54	SU 5125 6496	Wooden stile. Measures: top step; 102 x 15 x 62cm off ground, bottom step; 103 x 15 x 38 off the ground. Top rail is 30cm above top step. Facilitates access along the northern road edge of Bury's Bank road. Encroaching vegetation has obscured the access structure and roadside is becoming difficult to navigate. Little used.	Vegetation clearance required. Is likely to get very little use so not a priority for replacement with a gate.	3	1	No.
	02/06 2014	G55	SU 5284 6448	PRoW finger post in grey. Displays: Public bridleway 'Thatcham Station 1 ¼ miles', Public footpath 'River Enbourne ¾ mile'. The post is very rusty and loose in the ground, both finger signs are faded.	Request a new post from PRoW team and clear vegetation that is encroaching (tree).	2	1	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	02/06 2014	G56	SU 5333 6441	Entrance to a path running long the northern side of Crookham Common from the Crookham Park. There are two round posts, one fitted with a 'no motorbike' sign which is rotten and snapped.	There is no need for the low dragon's teeth posts so remove as they a trip hazard when covered with vegetation.  Fit a new motorbike sign with channels to the post in G57 (cut down post to 1.5m and cap).	3	1	No.
	02/06 2014	G57	SU 5333 6441	'No littering' sign. Placed 2m high which is not in keeping with location.	The sign is no longer suitable at this location and should be removed. As in G56, cut post down to 1.5m, cap, and fit a no motorbike sign to the post.  Install a BBOWT reserve sign in this location.	3	1	No.
	02/06 2014	G58	SU 5334 6439	PRoW finger post in grey. Displays: Public footpath 'Thatcham Station 1 1/2 miles'. Top of post is rusty.	Cut top of post and install new cap.	4	1	No.

Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
02/06 2014	G59	SU 5334 6439	Royal Mail post box No. RG1961.	None.	n/a	n/a	
02/06 2014	G60	SU 5337 6437	Old cast footpath sign with stile symbol. This sign is a PRoW sign placed on a non-designated path. The path is a very useful and important path upon common land that links the public footpaths THAT/26/2 and THAT/16/1 and also the defined path along the north of Crookham Common road.	Request PRoW team to install permitted footpath signs at this location and at SU 5363 6435. Remove the current sign. Maintain the path width to a minimum of 1m width.	4	1	No.
02/06 2014	G61	SU 5316 6431	2 x 6 bar galvanised metal field gates. Locked with a padlock. This gate gives access into the network of fields beyond. Access to this gate is across the common from the gate in G62. It is unlikely to be the responsibility of the management team to maintain this structure.	Maintain the access to this gate to the full width of the gate.  Investigate and keep on file the access agreement to the private land.	3	1	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	02/06 2014	G62	SU 5320 6437	2 x 7 bar galvanised field gates locked with a chain and a combination padlock and an Estate padlock. There is a 15m pull in off Crookham Common road could be susceptible to fly-tipping. Visitors squeeze past the hanging post on the eastern side. The gates currently do not hang parallel. The gate allows access to a track that leads to the gate in G61.	Make adjustments to the gates so they hang correctly. Maintain and clear vegetation to the full width of the gates so they can be opened without interference. During 2014 the gate in G63 was found to be off its hinges, possibly to provide access, no contact from landowner was made.  See G61.	3	1	No.
	02/06 2014	G63	SU 5312 6437	Wooden bench. Measures 145cm long. The bench is somewhat hidden and can not be seen from the path. It is also very low to the ground and encroached by vegetation.	From the informal path maintain a path to the bench and the pond over which it looks. Maintain a vegetation clear area around the bench. Re-site the bench so it is useable and safe.	3	1	No.
	02/06 2014	G64	SU 5287 6435	PRoW wooden WMP. Displays 2 x public footpath discs. Looks as though it has been recently installed and so was not on the due diligence map. This is the public footpath THAT/27/1.	None.	n/a	n/a	

Photograph



Date Visited

06/06 2014

Report Ref.

G65

Location  
SU 5246 6456

Findings

Concrete pad with a dropped kerb from Crookham Common road. Historical use but could be at risk from those wishing to fly-tip. Exiting the car parking area can be dangerous as sight-lines are short.

Recommendations

Crookham car park is very close by and so additional parking is not necessarily required. Consider installing vehicle barrier posts or similar if antisocial activity occurs.

Priority Level

4

Cost Band

2

Any Work Completed?

No.



06/06 2014

G66

SU 5242 6452

Green painted metal vehicle swing barrier with a 3m accessible gap. Locked with an estate padlock at night by the owner of the private property at the end of the track. The gaps to the sides of the gate are very narrow so would restrict access to those on horse back for example when the gate is shut.

A metal sign 'no unauthorised vehicles beyond this point' is located next to the gate. Who placed this sign? Legitimate statement but only one of its kind on the site.

Allow for a 1.5m gap to the right of the gate. The sign in the picture is in need of renewing as it is faded and requires correct branding. Allowing members of the public to have a copy of the estate key is questionable. A policy review is required to who has estate keys. Consider attaching a chain with the option of attaching an estate padlock and another that the landowner retains.

2

1

No.



06/06 2014

G67

SU 5240 6444

Interpretation board displaying information on the heathland renovation with the Crookham Common area. Made of recycled plastic with a wood effect. Installed September 2013.

Keep vegetation clear on the approach to the sign.

3

1

On-going maintenance.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	06/06 2014	G68	SU 5244 6437	5 bar wooden field gate locked with an estate padlock. Displays a 'no motor bike' sign with WBC branding. Vegetation encroaching all around the gate with just a 70cm gap to the northern side with tree branches at head height.	Clear an accessible gap of a minimum of 1.5m plus allowing a 3m walking tunnel head room. This access point should be accessible to those on horse back.	3	1	No.
	06/06 2014	G69	SU 5233 6416	5 bar field gate mounted on metal posts. The gate has no latch and is instead tied shut with a rope. There is a sign 'no motorbikes beyond this barrier' without branding. The access gate is not within the management responsibility of BBOWT and allows access to the neighbouring property to exercise their commoners rights if exercised.	There is no agreement to allow management vehicles or persons or the general public along the private drive to Thornford road.	n/a	n/a	
	06/06 2014	G70	SU 5200 6409	6 bar metal field gate with metal hanging post. Locked with an unknown padlock. Surrounded by light scrub.	Remove padlock and replace with an estate padlock. Clear vegetation around the gate and maintain the access. There is no requirement for visitors to use this entrance.	3	1	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	06/06 2014	G71	SU 5204 6447	7 bar galvanized metal field gate. 4m accessible gap. Gaps either side are approx 1m. There is a chain and padlock on the gate which is of unknown origin. The gate allows access along a track to a private property within the site boundary (encroachment recorded).	There should not be a private padlock only. Site management vehicles and emergency vehicles should have access through the gate so add an estate padlock to the chain.	2	1	No.
	06/06 2014	G72	SU 5204 6447	Highways metal sign (40cmx30cm) 'no fly tipping' with WBC logo. Warns that CCTV is in operation. Sign placed on a 2.m grey post.	The sign is placed at such a height it is not instantly noticeable. There is only one of this type of sign and would recommend if warning signs are being placed in this area then it would be beneficial to install a greater number in areas that are being fly-tipped.	4	Un-known	No.
	06/06 2014	G73	SU 5204 6447	2 x 12cm wide, 73cm tall green painted metal bollards. As vegetation develops the purpose of the bollards is getting less necessary. The many laybys along this road need to reviewed and consolidated. More bollards will be necessary.	This area along Old Thornford road is heavily poached by informal laybys and therefore prevention of new laybys being formed is necessary. It is preferential for visitors to be persuaded to use Crookham car park where management can be focused and safety is improved.	4	1	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	06/06 2014	G74	SU 5204 6447	More of the same bollards as described in G73. They prevent further encroachment of the informal layby.	As in G73, the multipole laybys along this road need to be reviewed. Part of the solution is to improve and formalise the path that runs alongside Old Thornford road from Crookham car park. This will encourage the use of the car park and reduce the number of cars literally queuing for space in front of the livestock fence entrance point on the corner of Old Thornford road.	4	2	No.
	06/06 2014	G75	SU 5195 6413	Wooden bridle gate fitted with an 'autolatch' and striker to assist opening from both sides. There is a sign requesting horse riders use the gate further north on the fence line. This may be to reduce damage to the ground through this gate. There is a stock grazing disc fitted. Gate gets stuck on the ground when opened. GNB sign displayed.	The request for horse riders to use certain gates is necessary in certain locations. A suitable gate which can be opened from horseback must be close by. Adjustments to the ground is required so gate opens correctly. An 'easylatch' system is preferable for all as it is easier to open from both sides.	3	1	No.
	06/06 2014	G76	SU 5166 6431	Solid oak bench with arm and back rests. Measures 138 x 40 x 50cm off the ground. It is fitted without a plinth to prevent wear and vegetation growth. Memorial to '1978 Greenham Common Campaign'. Good condition and sound in the ground. It is positioned some 6m from the track which means there is likely to be wear to and from the bench.	It is preferable to site furniture close to tracks and paths so visitors can access the item easily. If the bench is positioned because of a view, then management of the surface and vegetation is required to and from the main track/path.	3	1	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	12/06 2014	G77	SU 5134 6405	Galvanised steel cattle grid, 3m accessible width. The guard fencing is not properly fixed and may fall into the road. Reflective stickers or similar required for the end of each fence so they can be seen at night (one has already been damaged). The grid fills quickly as it is on a slope with a n unsealed track above its location so water carries silt in. Encroaching vegetation hides the edge of the structure and should be cleared well back.	Secure the guard fencing and replace damaged section. Fit reflective strips. Clear vegetation back by 2m.  Routinely clear grid of dirt.	2	1	No.
	12/06 2014	G78	SU 5133 6405	Wooden bridle gate with a 146cm accessible gap. Fitted with an autolatch to aids opening from both sides. Gate needs adjusting at the hinges and striker needs a nut fitting. Vegetation is heavily encroaching. This gate should be accessible by horse riders who are wanting to avoid the cattle grid. It is likely that this entrance will have low use by horse riders so any improvements should be reasoned.	Clear vegetation well back from the gate. Fit an 'easylatch' extended handle sprung latch to the gate so it can be opened more easily. The area around the gate should be large enough to accommodate horses wanting to manoeuvre.	3 4	1 1	No. No.
	12/06 2014	G79	SU 5134 6392	Wooden stile. Measurements: Top step: 108 x 15 x 69cm high. Lower step: 107 x 15 x 30cm high. Top rail 30cm above op step. 98cm gap with stability posts 170cm tall. Stile looks little used but recently installed so is in good condition. Vegetation encroaching and hiding the steps.	A stile is always the least welcome form of access structure. Because of its position and obvious little use it is not a priority to be changed for a more accessible structure such as a gate. As part of managing paths and routes on site access structures and their need and purpose should be reviewed.	4	1	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	12/06 2014	G80	SU 5112 6395	Wooden bridle gate. 150cm accessible width. In report as it was recorded as an access point previously by WBC though is on private boundary with Foxhold House. Is fitted with an autolatch. Has chain around structure but not locked. Historically gives access to a 8 x 4m, 2m tall chicken coup built on common land but now looks disused.	Investigate if this is a publicly accessible gate or private access point only. Investigate the coup as part of the larger encroachment investigations.	4	n/a	No.
	12/06 2014	G81	SU 5114 6410	Defunct hazel paling extended from boundary of private properties. Historically installed by reserve team to give extra protection from livestock. Since private boundary fences have been upgraded and the temporary fencing is no longer required.	It is the responsibility of landowners with shared boundaries with the grazed common to protect their land from livestock. In some cases assistance has been given in the past. So no ambiguity can arise with boundary placement the hazel paling needs removing as soon as possible.	2	1	No.
	12/06 2014	G82	SU 5094 6408	Wooden bridle gate, 150cm accessible width. Slight adjustment on the hinges required to close properly. Beyond site boundary leads to a short path below Heads Hill cottage and then back into the site. No livestock grazing discs.	Fit 2 x livestock grazing discs and adjust hinges.	3	1	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	12/06 2014	G83	SU 5094 6410	Footbridge. Metal girders resting on concrete supports. Galvanised steel handrails, 44cm and 84cm high. Accessible gap is 56cm. 10m in length. Wooden slats nailed to wooden beams within the metal structure. Chicken wire over the wood planks. Showing signs of rust along girders. Vegetation heavily encroaching on structure.	Undertake a condition/safety check. Clear back vegetation. Fit welded wire mesh as this material lasts longer than chicken wire. Is within a steep gully so the narrow accessible width is not a major concern.	2 3	1 1	No. No.
	12/06 2014	G84	SU 5093 6411	Wooden bridle gate, 150cm accessible. Fitted with an autolatch and displays 2 x stock grazing discs (one damaged). A ground nesting bird sign can be seen in the picture.	Fit new stock grazing discs. Consider upgrading lever to an easylatch sprung and extended lever that is easier to use.  The storage of a trailer in front of the gate could cause an obstruction to visitors.	3	1	No.
	12/06 2014	G85	SU 5080 6420	Wooden bridle gate fitted with an autolatch that has a longer lever so it can be more easily reached from both sides of the gate. Displays two stock grazing discs which are faded. Vegetation is encroaching well into the accessible area.	Make sure that vegetation is cleared the entire width of the access gate (150cm) and kept short beyond with no overhanging branches below 3m introducing into the walking tunnel. Replace stock grazing discs. Consider fitting an easylatch extended sprung lever that is more easily used by pedestrians and horse riders alike.	3	1	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	12/06 2014	G86	SU 5093 6422	Flight of 11 steps, 128cm wide and 26cm deep and 16cm drop. No hand rail fitted. A desire line has meant that there is a new walked line and has subsequently become the route for water to erode. Many of the steps have become overgrown. Bicycles use this trail and add to the wear. In places stobs are proud of the step.	Using temporary fencing the desire line route could be prevented. Planting could assist keeping visitors to the original route. Alternatively the steps need to be moved and follow the most straight forward and direct route. Persuading visitors to use the steps would dissuade cyclists.	3 4	1 1	No.
	12/06 2014	G87	SU 5094 6423	25m x 1.2m wide wooden boardwalk. Good condition. There is a step of 22cm at the eastern end. There are no edge/kick boards or non-slip covering. The height in some places is 61cm above the ground which therefore requires there to be handrails present. Vegetation is encroaching in places.	Fit non-slip welded wire mesh to the surface. At points that are above 30cm in height, fit handrails. Fit edge boarding along the entire length. It would be more beneficial to provide a slope rather and step on the eastern end of the structure.	2	1	No.
	17/06 2014	G88	SU 5068 6438	Double 5 bar wooden field gate with a double gate fastener. There is a chain and three padlocks non of which is the Estate padlock so access is not possible for management purposes. Gates in good condition but need adjusting at the hinges.	It would be beneficial to have access to the land beyond as the actual site boundary ends beyond the gate.	4	1	No.

Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
17/06 2014	G89	SU 5068 6439	Wooden bridle gate with 150cm accessible gap. No off-set hinges so a return spring has been fitted which means a very fast close speed. Simple striker and gravity latch fitted. Gives access to an informal and non-advertised route into the business park. The route is to change during 2015 and will instead follow the site boundary fence line incorporating a flight of steps (G91). Currently the route is used by horse riders wanting to access trails on the commons.	The gate requires the removal of the spring and instead an off-set hinge needs to be fitted. An 'easylatch' sprung extended lever would be beneficial so visitors can more easily open the gate from both sides. Fit new stock grazing discs. The ability to access the commons from the business park is important and changes to this access are of concern. This is discussed later in the report.	3 4	1 n/a	No.



17/06 2014	G90	SU 5067 6437	As mentioned in G89, an undesignated track that crosses the undefined boundary of the business park approx. where the tarmac finishes in the picture. The path turns south at a fence and then passes through a gate that is locked during the night across an old airbase pad. A gate on the other side of the pad gives access onto the business park road network.	As mentioned in G89, access from the business park is an important route for those wishing to access the commons from the south. Those living within the Martindale area to the south of the commons use this access when they wish to walk or ride their horses.	4	n/a	
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Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	17/06 2014	G91	SU 5060 6423	Flight of 24 steps newly installed (2014). Installed on the business park land as part of a new eastern route onto the common, replacing that current informal route as already mentioned in G89/90. No handrail fitted or rest spots as it is a long flight of steps. None of the route is currently signed or advertised.	There will almost certainly be opposition to this route being used instead of the relatively flat route currently. Horse riders will not have access nor will visitors with accompaniments such as pushchairs. It would be good for BBOWT to start talks with the business park to determine this is the new route and how it will be managed and signed.	4	n/a	
	17/06 2014	G92	SU 5040 6419	A large 6m double metal gate upon the business park. From initial information this is likely to be the new entrance to the route leading to the entrance gate as shown in G89.	BBOWT would be advised to speak to the business park owners so they can ascertain what levels of access provision there will be on this new route.	4	n/a	
	17/06 2014	G93	SU 5027 6394	This is the Greenham Business Park orientation and business location map next to a layby after passing the information/security office. Currently there is no information on this sign which tells visitors how they can access the commons and where they are able to park. There is also no information on the paper map available from the security/information building.	Visitors are quite likely to arrive at the business park looking for the old air base and the commons. Therefore it would be advantageous if the signs are to be changed, that additional access information is added. BBOWT should make Greenham Business Park aware of this idea.	4	n/a	

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	17/06 2014	G94	SU 5033 6388	This is a track that leads into the Hogscombe/Martindale area of the commons. There is a sign to the left which reads 'private no access' which is incorrect and misleading. There is a layby with space for 4 cars that is for those visiting the peace garden to the east of the track.	Review the wording on the sign. This area is not managed by BBOWT.	4	n/a	
	03/07 2014	G95	SU 4899 6392	Substantial highways spec cattle grid which includes an animal escape slope. Wooden integrated barriers either side with red/white signage, both are damaged. The accessible width is 370cm.	Not known who is responsible for the maintenance of the cattle grid.	4	n/a	
	03/07 2014	G96a	SU 4899 6393	7 bar galvanised metal field gate with off-set hinges to assist self-closing. Has a striker and triangular gravity catch. Allows for the avoidance of the cattle grid by those with horses for example. Accessible width is 3m. Currently does not latch properly. Displays two livestock grazing discs (faded).	Re-position catch so it closes properly. Consider fitting an 'easylatch' extended sprung lever.  This location would be appropriate for a site name sign and relevant branding and contact numbers.  It is best practice that these gates should have the latch/catch on the furthest end of the gate from the cattle grid so preventing possible straying onto the grid and the traffic noise going over the grid spooking the horse.	2	1	Yes. Gate opens and closes freely.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	03/07 2014	G96b	SU 4900 6393	Wooden kissing gate without latch. Vegetation encroaching upon structure. Displays an old ground nesting bird sign (removed during visit). Accessible width 1m. A bus stop is situated very near on the A339 so it is feasible that this would be a suitable entrance for those travelling by public transport and this should be kept in mind.	Routinely clear vegetation. Fit reserve name sign including appropriate contact numbers. Fit stock grazing discs to warn that grazing animals are present.	3	1	No.
	03/07 2014	G97	SU 4919 6514	Royal Mail post box, No. RG1935.	None.			
	03/07 2014	G98	SU 5025 6534	5 bar wooden field gate and 1.2m accessible pedestrian gate held closed with a lift over latch. A drop bolt has been fitted to the field gate. 2 x stock grazing discs (faded). Old ground nesting bird sign (removed). Gates are very stiff to use. Vegetation is heavily encroaching. Pedestrians should be dissuaded from using the gate as there is no verge.	The gate is not up to British Standard for horse and rider. Liaise with horse and carriage riders to see if the current arrangement is suitable or what improvements can be made.  Clear gorse back from the road and the structure.	3	1	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	03/07 2014	G99	SU 5025 6535	2 lane cattle grid. There is damage to the northerly metal barrier fence. Vegetation is encroaching upon the structure.	West Berkshire Highways is responsible for the maintenance. Review if reflective tape/sign is clean and in good order on the end of the metal fence barriers alongside the grid.	4	n/a	Enquiry made.
	03/07 2014	G100	SU 5028 6523	PRoW finger post fitted with a short permitted footpath sign. Also fitted to the post are instructions on how to link up with the public footpath GREE/6/3 as detailed in target note G30/31.	None.	n/a	n/a	
	03/07 2014	G101	SU 5039 6492	Unofficial layby north of Bury's Bank road. A historical pull in area with various surface materials and parts of a concrete slab. Very large potholes at road edge. Is used regularly by those wishing to take a break. Access is possible onto the main common area south across the road.	A review is required to decide upon parking areas which will be maintained but not necessarily promoted. This layby is on a corner so access can be difficult in and out. If maintained the potholes and raised concrete pieced need immediate attention.	2	Un-known	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	03/07 2014	G102	SU 5121 6493	5 bar wooden field gate and 1.2m accessible pedestrian gate held closed with a lift over latch. A drop bolt has been fitted to the field gate. 2 x stock grazing discs (faded). Old ground nesting bird sign (removed). Sight lines are short looking east.	Best practice as detailed by the BHS says that the field gate hinge is best situated next to the cattle grid so that the latch is far from the noise and danger of the passing traffic. Consider reviewing this option. Cut back vegetation and improve sight line.	3 4	1 1	No. No.
	03/07 2014	G103	SU 5121 6493	2 lane cattle grid. There is good approach signage. There is no end reflective signage on the fence barriers so vehicles can gauge the maximum width at night or low light conditions. Vegetation is encroaching upon the structure.	West Berkshire Highways is responsible for the maintenance. Review if reflective tape/sign is clean and in good order on the end of the metal fence barriers alongside the grid.	4	n/a	No.
	03/07 2014 More photos on next page.	G104	SU 5097 6484	Informal pull-in off the north of Bury's Bank Road. Surface is mostly naturally occurring gravel with some large pieces of concrete. Both access points at either end have very large potholes as well as dips and rises within. There is limited visibility when turning west from the eastern exit/entrance. Several tonnes of highways gravel was present at the time of visit, this has since been removed. The responsibility of maintenance falls to BBOWT.	The parking area is useful and well frequented by those wanting to walk in the immediate area or cross the road to the Common. It is not recommended that the parking is advertised as this will require formalisation and increased maintenance of the car park but maintenance of surface should be to a quality where vehicles can gain smooth access without damage.	2	2	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
								
	03/07 2014	G105	SU 5004 6512	24" Perry Buoy life ring in a Glasdon manufactured case and stand. Good condition but a little dirty. There is a dog rose growing in close proximity that needs removing as it is encroaching on access to the safety device.	Vegetation should be removed within 2m of the structure and maintain a wide clear access to the front of the case from the neighbouring water feature.	3	1	Work is occurring to replace all the life rings and clear vegetation.
	03/07 2014	G106	SU 5016 6490	Large tree trunk placed on its side with 3 small 'seats' cut into it. The structure is in sound condition and is in keeping with the natural look of the site. The use of natural materials is a good sensory addition to the site. There are a couple of other items of furniture similar to this on the site. They are beginning to rot which is of interest in itself but will need replacing in the near future.	Ad-hoc furniture to provide a rest stop to visitors is fine as long as it is either meets recommendations on seat height and accessibility or it is used in conjunction with more formal purpose made furniture that is in keeping with the site.	4	n/a	

Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
03/07 2014	G107	SU 5025 6505	Disused substation used during the time of the airfield. A small compound is attached surrounded by chain-link fence and an access gate which was open. The building is known as 309. The interior has been vandalised and therefore the historical interest has been largely lost.	Continue to secure the building to prevent unauthorised access.  Consider future uses for the building such as an interpretation venue with historical pictures and information, bat hibernacula or similar.  For more information, see HEMP document.	4	n/a	



03/07 2014	G108	SU 5022 6494	Very large flag pole. Secured in the upright position. The metal has become corroded as have the securing bolts. The flag pole is a historical structure and therefore has been left in situ.	Preservation of the structure is required so it can be enjoyed into the future. Interpretation in the form of a small plaque would aid visitor understanding and engagement.	2 4	2 1	No.
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03/07 2014	G109	SU 5025 6495	24" Perry Buoy life ring in a Glasdon manufactured case and stand. There is a large amount which is frayed and twisted. The case has a small in it but it does not affect usability.	The life rings, cases and ropes are being renewed where necessary.	2	1	Items are being ordered (Jan 2015).
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Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
03/07 2014	G110	SU 5133 6471	24" Perry Buoy life ring in a Glasdon manufactured case and stand. Good condition but a little dirty. There is no rope. At the time of visiting the pond that the safety device 'serviced' was empty. The life ring is positioned quite some distance from the edge of the pond area.	The life rings, cases and ropes are being renewed where necessary. A rope should be fitted as soon as possible.	1	1	No. Items have been ordered to replace missing, damaged or out of date items relating to the life rings on the commons.
03/07 2014	G111	SU 5134 6477	Cliff edge surrounded by 2m tall chain-link fence and metal posts. The fence is intact. There is no signage to warn of the drop.	Maintain the fence to prevent falls. Install sign to warn of the drop.	3	1	No.
03/07 2014	G112	SU 5140 6496	Glasdon life ring case and stand. Good condition but a little dirty. There is no life ring or rope fitted.	Install a life ring and throw rope.	1	1	No. Items have been ordered to replace missing, damaged or out of date items relating to the life rings on the commons.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	03/07 2014	G113	SU 5127 6494	Wooden bridle gate with off-set hinges to aid self-closure. Fitted with a triangular gravity catch which requires the visitor to lean over the gate to open the catch from the non-grazed side. This can be awkward or impossible for some users. Displays 1 stock grazing disc (faded) and a seasonal ground nesting bird sign.	The gate has low use because of its location. However to assist opening it would be cheap and easy to fit an auto-catch which has an extended lever.  Fit two new stock grazing discs to the latch post.  Clear the path on the Commons side as it was not clear which way to go.	3	1	No.
	15/07 2014	G114a	SU 5168 6508	Wooden bridle gate fitted with a sprung trombone handle and gravity catch. The gate was in a bad state of repair at the time of visiting with the ironware loose and parts missing/on the ground. A post is situated on the grazed side to prevent over opening of the gate. Displays 2 x stock grazing discs and a no motorcycle sign. 150cm accessible width.	Current advice is not to use trombone handles as horse rider reins can become entangled. The gate is well used by cyclists and horse riders using the bridleway THAT/18/1 past Chamber House Farm. Advise immediate repairs and plan for replacing gate and fitting an 'easylatch' sprung extended handle.	2	1	Made good the loose parts during the visit.  New gate or ironware not yet fitted.

Photograph

Date Visited

Report Ref.

Location

Findings

Recommendations

Priority Level

Cost Band

Any Work Completed?

15/07 2014

G114b

SU 5168 6509

Crossing point from the Commons to the bridleway THAT/18/1. Used extensively by cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders. The road is a 40mph speed limited 2 lane road with dips and bumps. Traffic often exceeds speed limit and overtaking was observed at the crossing even with the reduced visibility. Currently there is one horse crossing warning triangle sign to the east of the crossing. Small trees and scrub reduce visibility for road users and those attempting to cross. The narrow <1m gravel path to the gate upon the common also has a drain running beneath it which could cause horses to fall. The manoeuvring area on the road side of the gate for horses is far too small.

The sight-lines have had improvements in the past but more is required. The trees on the verge side are best removed and the scrub cut short to the ground right up to the gate in a triangular pattern. Enquire with WBC Highways if it is possible to install a horse rider warning triangle on the roadside east of the crossing. Widen the track to the gate from the road and extend the drainage pipe.

Consider moving the crossing point to the higher ground east of its current position. Conduct consultation with WBC highways.

Consult with BHS and relevant Department for Transport guidance.

2

3

No.



Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	15/07 2014	G115	SU 5188 6496	Solid oak wood bench with arm and back rest. Measures: 133 x 33 x 51cm above the ground. Memorial bench presented by the 1978 Greenham Common Campaign. One of three memorial benches upon the commons. The height of the bench seat is at the max height recommended by BBOWT guidance. Attrition of the ground in front of the bench has added to the problem.	The bench height should be checked regularly and when it reaches 53cm it should be re-sited preferable within plinth so the ground height, surface type and vegetation encroachment can be managed.	4	1	No.
	15/07 2014	G116	SU 5193 6496	24" Perry Buoy life ring with orange polypropylene rope in a Glasdon manufactured case and stand. Good condition.	Undertake regular checks.	4	n/a	
	15/07 2014	G117	SU 5197 6499	Wooden bridle gate fitted with striker and triangular gravity catch. Vegetation encroaching around the gate and the road side is heavily vegetated. Displays 2 x stock grazing discs (faded) and 1 x no motorcycle disc (faded). There is no other connecting path on the road side so the gate may actually be redundant. 148cm accessible width.	It is not recommended to have gate that leads only to a busy road without there being a path. Consider removing the gate if agreed by the Commission.  If the gate is to be retained, replace stock grazing discs and no motorcycle sign.	4	1	No.

Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
15/07 2014	G118	SU 5178 6489	24" Perry Buoy life ring with rope in a Glasdon manufactured case and stand. Case is loose on the stand and the post is showing signs of rust. The case is very dirty due to birds using the vantage point.	Clean and paint the metal work. Tighten the casing to the post.	3	1	No.



15/07 2014	G119	SU 5239 6476	Wooden bridle gate, 144cm accessible width. 'Autolatch' which aids opening the triangular catch from the non-grazed side. Displays 2 x stock grazing discs (faded) and 1 x no motorcycle disc (faded). Vegetation is encroaching.	This gate is positioned very close to the entrance to Thornford Park. Access can be gained across mown grass verge. Therefore it could be a consideration to enquire with Thornford Park if the current access gate is adequate. Replace discs.	4	1	No.
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15/07 2014	G120	SU 5235 6457	Wooden bridle gate, 149cm accessible width. Fitted with standard triangular gravity catch. Displays 2 x stock grazing discs (1 faded), 1 x no motorcycle disc (faded).	The gate is directly across Old Thornford road from Crookham car park and is therefore well used. It is recommended that the gate is fitted with an 'Easylatch' system with an extended lever and sprung striker to allow easier access from both sides of the gate and at different heights. Replace faded sign discs.	3	1	No.
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Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	15/07 2014	G121	SU 5235 6457	Narrow 80cm wide gravel path with railway sleepers preventing material falling from the banks alongside. One of the sleepers is falling over. The narrowness of the gap and the hidden sleepers reduce the accessibility of the path.	The path should be widened to 150cm with a manoeuvring area by the gate for horse riders. This would make the access more visible from the car park.	2	1	No.
	15/07 2014	G122	SU 5208 6461	5 bar wooden field gate with a wide accessible width of 3.5m. Locked with an estate padlock. Good condition.	Maintain and prevent encroachment by vegetation.	3	1	n/a
	15/07 2014	G123	SU 5208 6461	Wooden bridle gate with an accessible width of 150cm. Fitted with an 'easylatch' extended lever system that facilitates access from both sides of the gate and by horse riders. Good condition. Displays 2 x stock grazing discs.	Add a no motorcycle disc on the non-grazed side of the latch post. This is a high use gate so regular maintenance checks and services (greasing of hinges and latch/catches) is required.	3	1	The gate was serviced at the time of visiting. A routine gate inspection schedule is required.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	15/07 2014	G124	SU 5209 6461	Green painted metal hinged/swing type vehicle barrier with integral lock that is opened with an estate key. Accessible width is 3.7m. Good condition.	Visitors routinely park in front of the barrier as there is space off the road. Previous signage to request no parking was vandalised. It would be better if the gate was closer to the road so preventing vehicles from parking. As mentioned elsewhere, there needs to be a review of the parking along old Thornford Road.	4	n/a	
	15/07 2014	G125	SU 5209 6460	3 x metal concrete filled posts. 10 x 10cm and 1m tall. Prevents unauthorised access around the vehicle barrier. 1 is at an angle but the tree in the picture also acts as a barrier. The maximum accessible width is 146cm which is for all user groups.	Reflectors may help to prevent collisions by turning vehicles at night.	4	1	No.
	22/07 2014	G126	SU 5199 6466	24" Perry Buoy life ring in a Glasdon manufactured case and stand. Cover does not close with bungee. There is no rope.	Fit rope to life ring ASAP. Repair case and clean. Assess life ring for expiry date/condition.	1	1	No. Work has been started to repair and replace broken or missing equipment.

Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
22/07 2014	G127	SU 5171 6471	24" Perry Buoy life ring in a Glasdon manufactured case and stand. Rope present. Case is dirty and vegetation is encroaching.	Clean case and cut back vegetation so it can be accessed easily and seen.	3	1	No. Work has started to regularly check all life rings and repair and make good any structures.



22/07 2014	G128	SU 5171 6466	Wooden bridle gate fitted with a sprung extended trombone handle lever. Displays 2 x stock grazing discs, 1 x no motor cycle disc. 140cm accessible width. Trombone handles are designed to make it even easy to open the gate from both sides. In reality they become worn and wobbly and do not function smoothly. They can also snag the reins of a horse rider. Overhanging vegetation needs to be cut back for those approaching on horseback. Ditches present by road.	This gate is signed as a horse rider entrance from the gate to the south described in G75. Recommend replacing the trombone handle with an 'easylatch' straight extended lever (it is possible to cut the installed handle and fit a grip as an easier fix). Reinstate material through the gate as there is substantial wear to the surface and thus the gate and levers have become higher for visitors to operate.	3	1	No.
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22/07 2014	G129	SU 5170 6419	9m section of path goes across the top of a concrete bund, steep drop of 3m to the south and chain-link fence to the north. Path width is just 70cm and the concrete can become slippery. There is a serious risk of slips and falls.	The balance pond to the north is almost dry and so the chain-link fence is becoming redundant. Therefore it could be removed allowing for a wider path. A hand rail should be fitted to the south of the path to prevent falls. Encroaching trees will need to be cleared to allow free access.	2	1	No.
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Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
22/07 2014	G130	SU 5167 6420	30m section of stepped boardwalk with a width averaging 92cm. Max height off the ground is 36cm and risers are 15cm. Covered in welded wire mesh. Good condition.	The height of the boardwalk should mean the addition of a handrail and edge/kick boards should also be fitted. The terrain is challenging but visitors may appreciate the extra stabilisation afforded by handrails especially in wet conditions.	4	2	No.



22/07 2014	G131	SU 5110 6423	Green painted metal vehicle access gate, hinged/swing type, fitted with an integral estate lock. Good condition. Access to the east of the gate measures 108cm which would restrict horse riders and some mobility scooters. Raised concrete through the gap and an uneven surface means access is again restrictive.	Removing the wooden post present would mean a gap of 150cm. encroaching vegetation was bad and severely narrowed the gap. This needs to be cleared regularly during the growing season.	3	1	Vegetation was cut whilst at the location. Post remains.
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31/07 2014	G132	SU 4940 6449	Wooden kissing gate with square internal space. The gate is fitted with off-set hinges which need repairing. There is a triangular gravity catch fitted to the Commons side of the structure which is difficult to access from the common. The catch post is heavily split. The catch loop on the gate is not fixed properly as it is missing the retaining nuts. The surface through the structure is concrete and extends beyond.	The gate receives high use from pedestrians and cyclists commuting to and from the business park. The gate is just accessible with a bicycle but a bridle gate would be easier to use by cyclists and those using electric disability vehicles. The potential is for this access point to have associated car parking and an improved connecting path to the road and path network within the business park.	3 4	1 2	No.
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Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	31/07 2014	G133	SU 4942 6448	<p>The path from the gate described in G132 has an improved sealed surface with small diameter loose gravel to improve grip. The surface ends abruptly and to continue means navigating large quarry stone soak away and dodging the wheelie bins and left rubbish. Alternatively veering over the natural grass surface and dropping down the kerb into the car parking area.</p> <p>The natural surface becomes slippery and muddy in the winter.</p>	<p>It seems very strange that the path was not completed and this should be made a priority. Recommend for there to be parking available for visitors at this location so those travelling from south of the Commons would not have to travel all the way around to the northern main car park at the control tower.</p> <p>Consult with Greenham Business Park as to the possibilities of these recommendations and adding this facility to the maps and information the park provides on site and electronically.</p>	4	2	
								
	31/07 2014	G134	SU 4943 6440	<p>5 bar wooden field gate with 3.6m accessible width. It is locked with a chain an estate padlock as the lath is broken. Because of previous theft from the business park and the commons being used as an escape/entry point, a 2 foot ditch has been dug behind the gate which makes the gate redundant. Beyond the ditch the access track is now blocked by huge mounds of green waste.</p>	<p>This access point for management and emergency vehicles is the only access along the southern boundary that a large vehicle such as a fire engine or large machinery could have used. Consider re-opening access if improved security such as metal vehicle barriers is installed.</p>	4	2	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	31/07 2014	G135	SU 4939 6437	Ex-airbase building which is secure but has had historical vandalism to the roof and aperture. There are loose metal objects within the partially fenced compound but access was denied because of vegetation.	Keep structure maintained and prevent access into building. Investigate metal objects within the compound and remove/make safe to prevent theft or harm. Consider alternative uses and add interpretation. This helps to preserve the building.	4	1	No.
	31/07 2014	G136	SU 4925 6428	Ex-airbase metal fire plane. Once used as a training structure. Hazel paling fence has been installed since to prevent access. The structure is of keen interest to visitors but does pose a safety issue due to the small openings and it is easy to climb. The shallow water is also a drowning risk if someone was to fall from the structure and become unconscious.	The fire plane is a focal point due to its size and unusualness. An investigation is required to see if it should be preserved or left to slowly decompose. The safety issues need to be addressed. Adding interpretation would engage and inform visitors to the site. Make sure that any fencing installed does not obscure the view to children or those seated on mobility scooters for example.	2	Un-known	Preliminary enquiries have been made by the auditor to investigate how to preserve the structure. Original design plans are available.
	31/07 2014	G137	SU 4928 6423	Ex-airbase building No. 280. This building has been converted into a bat roost/hibernacula. Secure at time of visit but has had break-ins historically.	Maintain the building to prevent access by the public. Install interpretation as to its history and current function.	4	1	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	31/07 2014	G138	SU 4943 6392	Wooden kissing gate with a maximum manoeuvring space of 66cm. Displays 2 x stock grazing and 1 old incorrect nesting bird season discs. The gate allows access from the 30m layby on the A339 and from the footpath. There is reasonable slope up to the gate. Natural surface through the gate. Old carpet has been laid on the ground within the Commons over a muddy section. Waste collects in this location likely from parked vehicles.	The restrictive kissing gate does also prevent motorcycles accessing the Commons at this location which is somewhat hidden. Also the gate cannot be left open which may lead to cattle walking onto the very busy A339. Unlikely to advertise parking and entering the Commons at this location due to the minimal parking area. Vehicle security is also of concern. Routinely litter pick and remove carpet, instead improve the path using natural materials.	3	1	No.
	31/07 2014	G139	SU 4963 6393	Wooden kissing gate with a maximum accessible gap of 70cm. The gate has been built on a slope so it is somewhat tricky to navigate. Encroaching bracken totally obscured the gate. The location of the gate means it is unlikely to be ever used. There are no paths on either side of the structure.	Leave in situ. No need to improve accessibility. Keep clear of vegetation.	3	1	No.
	31/07 2014	G140	SU 4899 6442	Wooden bridge made using 4 thick wooden beams covered with welded wire mesh stapled to the surface. Measure 260cm x 107cm wide. Evidence shows it is well used by cyclists and therefore the installation of handrails would not be suitable. Good condition and fit for purpose.	Given the short length of the bridge and the range of users handrails are not advised. Maintain structure and keep vegetation from encroaching over the edge of the structure to prevent falls. Keep structure flush with the ground at either end.	3	1	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	31/07 2014	G141	SU 4882 6430	Green painted metal height barrier which has a 2m max height clearance sign. And has a 5m accessible width. It is fitted with a non-state padlock which was fitted by the owners of the GAMA site. The height barrier is primarily for the use of the GAMA site owners as it has little purpose as an access management tool for the Commons.	If the structure is owned by WBC then there should be an estate padlock fitted so access can be gained beyond the gate. A solution would be to have a 'daisy chain' of two padlocks which can independently open the gate.	4	1	No.
	31/07 2014	G142	SU 4883 6429	Green painted metal vehicle barrier, hinged swing type, locked with an estate padlock. Paint is flaking and rust is showing. The access is useful for management vehicles and machinery.	Maintain and re-paint. Keep vegetation tunnel open to prevent encroaching and loss of accessible route.	3	1	
	31/07 2014	G143	SU 4830 6497	Solid oak bench with arm and back rest(s). Measures: 120 x 37 x 44cm above the ground. Good condition. Current view is obscured by gorse.	Clear vegetation regularly around the bench and also the view.	3	1	

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	31/07 2014	G144	SU 4823 6491	Wooden fire beater stand with a single beater installed (new). Fire warning sign is faded/worn away.	It is recommended that 3 beaters are installed at each stand. The sign needs replacing with a new sign. Keep vegetation well back from the stand so it can be seen.	3	1	No.
	31/07 2014	G145	SU 4823 6491	Wooden WMP. Displays: 2 x public footpath, 1 x Walk 4 Life disc(s). No WBC branding on the ROW discs. Post looks tired and is loose in the ground.	Fit new PRoW discs. Reinstate post so it is firm in the ground.	3	1	No.
	31/07 2014	G146	SU 4826 6496	Short (80cm) wooden WMP. Displays Walk 4 Life disc (faded).	Request new discs for the Walk 4 Life route to replace the faded discs on-site. Keep clear of vegetation. A taller post would be better suited to location.	2	1	No.

Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
31/07 2014	G147	SU 4828 6495	Short (80cm) wooden WMP. Displays Walk 4 Life disc (faded).	Request new discs for the Walk 4 Life route to replace the faded discs on-site. Keep clear of vegetation. A taller post would be better suited to location.	2	1	No.



31/07 2014	G148	SU 4817 6460	Wooden fire beater stand with two beaters installed, both new but one has a short handle?. Fire warning sign is also fitted and legible.	It is recommended that 3 beaters are installed at each stand. Replace the short handle beater. Keep vegetation well back from the stand so it can be seen.	3	1	The short beater was removed at the time of the visit. New beaters still required.
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31/07 2014	G149	SU 4814 6448	Wooden PRow WMP with two old type public footpath discs. Post is rotten at the base.	Fit a new post and public footpath discs.	2	1	No.
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Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	31/07 2014	G150	SU 4804 6434	Wooden kissing gate upon the public footpath GREE/10/1. It is installed on the boundary with Bunker Farm. Maximum accessible gap is 67cm. The hanging post is very rotten and the bridle gate to the west that also uses the same hanging post is holding the post upright due to it being latched.	At this location there is both a kissing gate and also a bridle gate. There is no need for both structures to be present and so it is recommended that the kissing gate is removed and a new hanging post fitted. The bridle gate should open into the Commons not into the private property. Request assistance and advice from the PRoW team at WBC.	2	1	Work has been completed to remove the kissing gate.
	31/07 2014	G151	SU 4804 6434	Wooden bridle gate with a 150cm accessible width. Opens out of the Commons. Hanging post is rotten. Displays: 2 x stock grazing discs and 1 no motorcycle disc. Bottom rung of the gate is broken. Fitted with a simple striker and triangular gravity catch.	Replace post as soon as possible. Repair the gate and re hang so it opens into the common. Fit an 'autolatch' which extends the triangular gravity latch with an extended lever so it is easier to operate from both sides. There is no requirement for the motor bike sign as there is a stile at the A339 end of the public footpath to the south.	2	1	Work has been completed to install a new bridle gate and signage.
	31/07 2014	G152	SU 4792 6487 Not within site boundary	Wooden pedestrian gate off Capability Way. 116cm accessible gap. Fitted with an extended lever and sprung latch with triangular gravity catch. Not installed correctly as the striker does not reach the catch and so opens freely. Surface is a type 1 with fines.	This access point onto the Commons is a very useful link for the recent housing development in this area. The managers of the public open space should be responsible for repairing the gate.	4	1	Unknown.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	31/07 2014	G153	SU 4792 6488  Not within site boundary	Dog waste bin with earth anchor. Style prevents the depositing of large amounts of general waste. Unknown who empties bin. The bin is located very close to the gate described in G152. This makes it easier to empty but location would have been better placed near the Commons boundary.	Review the levels of dog waste left on the ground along this route and within a short distance of the boundary gate. Visitors may not realise who is responsible for emptying the bin and cleaning the access route and blame may be directed at BBOWT. Appropriate signage on who manages the access route could be advantageous.	4	n/a	No.
	31/07 2014	G154	SU 4797 6485	Wooden pedestrian gate fitted with an extended stock proof handle (no instructions for use). This style is not needed when there is another gate at the other end of the access route. Stock proof handles are tricky to use even for the most able bodied persons. Good condition. Natural ground through structure with tree roots proud of surface and a slope is restrictive to some user groups. The terrain within the site is sloping and of a natural surface. It has been difficult to ascertain if the gate replaced a previous access structure or was new when the access route from the housing estate was installed and made formal. There is no room to move the gate to a better position and it looks like the gate was installed without any thought to the location.	The gate is only suitable for the able bodied due to its placement amongst mature trees. To prevent trips and slips the path height needs to be raised above the tree roots with a membrane installed over the roots prior to placement of surface material. Stock grazing and no motorcycle discs are required. Auditor has seen illegal moped riders using this gate. Dependent on use, this may be a good location for additional orientational information board. Stock proof handles are difficult to use and should be replaced with a straight 'easylatch' lever with grip.	3	2	The land owner of the access route should be consulted.

Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
01/08 2014	G155	SU 4797 6485	Wooden WMP. 76cm tall. Displays 1 x Walk 4 Life disc which has faded.	Replace disc.	3	1	No.



01/08 2014	G156	SU 4864 6417	Wooden fire beater stand. No fire warning sign or beaters installed. Covered in vegetation so is difficult to spot.	Assess the relevance of its location. If deemed to be suitable, clear vegetation at least 2m around the structure and fit warning sign and 3 beaters.	2	1	No.
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01/08 2014	G157	SU 4817 6507	Wooden WMP. 75cm tall. Displays 1 x Walk 4 Life disc which is dirty.	Clean disc.	3	1	No.
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Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
01/08 2014	G158	SU 4831 6514	Wooden WMP. Displays 1 x Walk 4 Life disc. Post measures 83cm tall.	Clean disc and post.	3	1	No.



01/08 2014	G159	SU 4831 6515	Wooden bridle gate fitted with an 'autolatch'. This is a private access for the disabled landowner of the adjacent land. The latch post is rotten so the gate does not open effectively. The gate is locked.	Though it is the neighbouring private landowners responsibility to fence livestock out of their land, it may be prudent if ever the fence line was to be maintained to liaise with the landowner and offer assistance with repairs.	4	n/a	No.
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01/08 2014	G160	SU 4836 6526	Wooden WMP. Displays 1 x Walk 4 Life disc which is faded. Post measures 80cm.	Replace disc and clean post.	3	1	No.
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Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
01/08 2014	G161	SU 483 65266	No motor cycles sign fitted to ply board on wooden posts. Measures 53 x 35cm. Sign is all scratched and ply board is damaged. Has the WBC logo.	Consolidate signage at the nearby bridle gate and so fit a new no motor bike sign there. Remove the sign pictured.	3	1	These signs are currently being removed.
01/08 2014	G162	SU 4837 6526	Wooden 5 bar field gate with a wide 3.5m accessible gap when open. Triangular gravity catch and striker arrangement locked with an estate padlock. There is a split in the gate that has been repaired.	This access could act as a route for emergency vehicles or management vehicles. It would be recommended to have the emergency contact details for BBOWT on the gate.	4	1	No.
01/08 2014	G163	SU 4837 6526	Bridle gate fitted with a triangular gravity catch and a loop style striker. Accessible gap measure 145cm. Large (1.8 x 5.5 x 3.6 x 2) post and rail that forms a large kissing gate. Reduces the risk of cattle escaping but this arrangement is not used anywhere else on the Commons so could be more restrictive to visitors for no valid reason.	It is recommended that the gate is fitted with an 'easylatch' system with an extended sprung lever accessible more easily from both sides. Remove the post and rail and make sure the gate self-closes. This would allow easier access through the gate and also around on the Commons side to the other gate and tracks.	4	1	No.

Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
01/08 2014	G164	SU 4837 6526	PRoW finger post displaying 1 public footpath pointer sign. Post is rusting badly. Post has a dog fouling fine sticker attached.	Clean and inspect post.	3	1	No.



01/08 2014	G165	SU 4837 6526	Two green painted metal removable vehicle inhibitor posts. Locked with estate padlocks. Measure 78cm tall. Prevents access if the field gate was broken. Vehicles have been forced through this entrance previously and this is why the posts were fitted recently.	The presence of these posts does mean that emergency vehicles are less likely to be able to gain access(unless a keyholder was resent) at this location which also happens to be the nearest to Newbury. Enquire whether the emergency services have copies of the estate keys.	4	n/a	No.
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01/08 2014	G166	SU 4836 6529	Vehicle height barrier. Green painted metal measuring 4m wide and 2m max height. Warning max height sign fitted. Locked with an estate padlock. Metal retaining post present for when the gate is open. Good condition overall.	The height barrier dissuades those with camper vans or similar staying overnight as the car park beyond is open 24hours. The barrier does however restrict taller vehicles such as 4x4 and those carrying bicycles or roof boxes. Some tall adapted vehicles may also not fit beneath. Consider removal.	4	1	The gate is now being left open as part of a trial to see if this lack of restriction is abused.
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Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	01/08 2014	G167	SU 4837 6529	Pyle Hill car park suitable for 12 cars below the height of 2m beyond the height barrier. The surface is a concrete cell arrangement that is in good condition but the design makes for a very uneven surface which would not be easy to navigate with a pushchair or a wheelchair. There are no blue badge holder priority disabled bays. The surrounds are shabby with dragons teeth missing or damaged and unkempt vegetation. The large hybrid black poplar trees are rather imposing and reduce the light levels and welcoming feel. There is no signage relating to the parking facility. Many visitors park on the access road as seen on the right of the picture and thus block access to gates and information boards. This makes for a dangerous place with cars manoeuvring around. The historical airbase gate is looking tired and in need of renovation and interpretation.	This is one of the busiest entrances to the Commons and therefore parking is at a premium with visitors jostling for space or parking on pavements. The car park cannot be extended due lack of space. To make the car park a more functional welcoming entrance: install a welcome sign on the road side, a sign informing visitors of the presence of main car park, prevent parking in front of the gates and orientation boards, remove height barrier, restore the airbase perimeter gate and install interpretation, move notice board to the cordoned off area, remove the hybrid black poplar trees, cut vegetation and install native plant species within the green areas.	4	3	No.
								
	01/08 2014	G168	SU 4838 6527	Wooden bridle gate with a concrete pad beneath the structure. Gate as a stirrup long lever handle to aid access for both sides. Hs run out of adjustment at the hinges (off-sett). 145cm accessible gap and displays 1 x stock grazing and 1 x no motorcycle discs.	This is a very high use gate and so gets a lot of wear. Regular maintenance checks and servicing required. Replace stirrup handle that prematurely wears the gate structure and becomes wobbly. Fit another stock grazing disc.	3 4	1 n/a	No.

Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
01/08 2014	G169	SU 4836 6523	No littering sign (53 x 48cm) fitted to a plastic coated post. Location is questionable and is unlikely to be fulfilling any purpose as is not near the entrance and path network.	Remove the sign and post. Do not re-display.	2	1	No.
01/08 2014	G170	SU 4838 6526	Wooden WMP with a Walk 4 Life disc attached (finish). Disc is faded. Post measures 77cm tall.	Replace disc.	3	1	No.
01/08 2014	G171	SU 4858 6534	Wooden pedestrian gate with 120cm accessible gap. Fitted with an extended sprung lever with a stock proof handle which does not 'lock' because it has not been fitted correctly. There is a spring return on the gate which means a very fast gate closure speed. Road side has a sealed path and a pedestrian island upon Bury's Bank road. Common side is natural uneven surface.	Fit stock grazing and no motorcycle discs to the latch post. Fit an off-set hinge to aid closure and remove spring. Remove stock proof handle and fit a more simple 'easylatch' extended handle with grip. Suggest a dog waste bin at this location.	2 4	1 1	The spring has been removed and hinges in the off-set position.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	01/08 2014	G172	SU 4865 6532	Wooden bridle gate with a 150cm accessible gap. Ground beneath structure is uneven with a hidden step to the north. A section of armoured cable is protruding right beneath the gate. The gate is fitted with a sprung stirrup handle which is very wobbly. Displays two stock grazing discs and 1 x no motor cycle disc, all faded.	Smooth the surface through the gate way and remove the cable. Replace the stirrup handle with a long lever and end grip. And make good worn pieces. The gate is not well used and the suitability of a gate in this location could be reviewed.	2	1	Some work has occurred to make good the gate fittings.
	01/08 2014	G173	SU 4882 6528	Wooden bridle gate with a 150cm accessible gap. Off-set hinges and a striker and triangular gravity catch. Does not latch very well. Public footpath GREE/6/3 ends on the opposite side of the road. Sight lines on the edge of Bury's Bank road are very poor and a windblown willow is leaning towards the structure. Displays 2 x stock grazing and 1 x no motor cycle discs all faded.	Replace discs. Improve sight line and remove leaning tree. Remove more of the vegetation so the gate is easily accessible and visitors cannot get snagged clothing.	3	1	No.
	01/08 2014	G174	SU 4868 6507	Wooden WMP, displays 1 x Walk 4 Life disc which has faded. The post measures 87cm tall. Post is slightly wobbly in the ground.	Firm up post and replace disc.	3	1	No.

Photograph	Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
	01/08 2014	G175	SU 4868 6507	Large wooden tree trunk with a seat cut out. The seat fits in with the natural landscape but caution is needed as it does not fit with guidelines for accessible seating. As long as accessible seating is also provided then a mix of styles can be used. The log is becoming very rotten which adds to the interest but not unfortunately to the function. Benches can become the focus of littering and this structure with its gaps and holes is likely to become filled with litter.	Review the provision of accessible seating. This location with its view of the bunkers and Commons is attractive and may be the furthest point to which those with some disabilities or those with minimum mobility can make. Therefore an accessible bench would be recommended at this location. A blue badge parking space at Pyle Hill car park should be provided to assist.	4	1	No.
	02/08 2014	G176	SU 4860 6502	Wooden fire beater stand. Fitted with a fire warning sign and 2 beaters. Stand is loose in the ground.	If the location is still good then reinstate stand and install a 3 <sup>rd</sup> beater.	3	1	No.
	01/08 2014	G177	SU 4917 6511	Wooden bridle gate with a 150cm accessible gap. Fitted with a striker and triangular gravity catch. The gate is at an angle because of tension from the fence line and therefore the gate does not shut properly. There is wire mesh fitted to the base of the gate to prevent dogs running out into the road, this however hinders the gate returning to the closed position as it gets tuck on the ground.	Repair the gate so it closes efficiently and securely. Both the stock grazing and no motor cycle discs need replacing. Widen the surface through the gate and level. Keep vegetation much further back.	2	1	Work has occurred to sort the latching problem.

Photograph



Date Visited

01/08 2014

Report Ref.

G178

Location  
SU 4918 6511

Findings

Large layby on Bury's Bank Road from which visitors could access the Commons through the gate described in G157. Measures approx. 40m long and thus room for 4-5cars. The surface is very even with potholes and services covers proud of the ground. There was lots of litter present.

Recommendations

Work is required to improve the surface and interface with the sealed road. Vegetation should be cleared back from the edge of the parking and dragons teeth or similar used to demarcate the edge of the parking area. A no littering sign would be useful especially if it came with an enforceable penalty

Priority Level

2

Cost Band

2

Any Work Completed?

No.



01/08 2014

G179

SU 4948 6501

Large tree trunk with two seats roughly cut into it. It is near to the main track.

Comments are the same as similar structures elsewhere on the Commons for example G155. Look to plan replacement seating as the current structures are degrading.

4

n/a



01/08 2014

G180

SU 4949 6505

24" Perry life ring within a Glasdon life ring holder and stand. NO rope is attached. The case does not shut properly. Vegetation encroaching.

Fit rope immediately and make repairs to the case. Clear back vegetation 3m from the structure to maintain visibility when required.

1

1

All life rings are about to be refurbished and new parts fitted where needed.

Photograph



Date Visited	Report Ref.	Location	Findings	Recommendations	Priority Level	Cost Band	Any Work Completed?
01/08 2014	G181	SU 4964 6506	24" Perry life ring within a Glasdon life ring holder and stand. NO rope is attached. The case does not shut properly. Vegetation in front of the structure.	Fit rope immediately and make repairs to the case. Clear back vegetation 3m from the structure to maintain visibility when required. Clean case.	1	1	All life rings are about to be refurbished and new parts fitted where needed.



01/08 2014	G182	SU 4959 6502	Wooden bench with no back or arm rests. Measures: 183 x 26 x 60cm above the ground. The height is above the BBOWT guidance of 52cm maximum. The bench is sound and is showing signs of natural weathering. The location is good and well used.	Reinstate at a lower level and at the same time plane the top so it restores a smooth surface. Treat if necessary.	3	1	No.
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18/09 2014	G183	SU 5136 6482	Wooden bench seat with back rest. Memorial plaque.	Prevent scrub from blocking the view of Crookham pools area.	4	1	Ongoing.
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## Section 3: Initial Recommendations and Actions

### 3.1 Off-site Information

Information for visitors before they even arrive at the site is very important. Knowledge of the accessibility into and on a site is very useful to all visitors but especially those who require certain facilities to be present such as accessible rest-room facilities or gates that can accommodate mobility aids. The type of terrain over which the path and track network pass is another factor that all visitors find useful when deciding to visit a site. This information and more can be provided to the public in both hard formats such as leaflets or via electronic forms such as internet websites. Once in transit to a site the directional signage available on the roadside within a given radius and then the final welcome sign at the entrance is very important and can often make or break the overall visit experience.

#### How easy it is for the public to access information off-site?

##### 3.1.1 Internet

BBOWT features the Commons on the Nature Reserve pages of its website

(<http://www.bbowt.org.uk/reserves/greenham-crookham-commons>).

The embedded map puts the Google pin in the location of the runway cross, the last remaining remnant of the runway that used to run east/west. It is recommended that the pin is situated at the entrance to the main car park.

The location address given is correct but as with all postcodes they are not specific to a single location and therefore those using the postcode as a means of finding the Commons are likely to arrive at Newbury and Crookham Golf Club.

The best time to visit would seem a little restrictive as the Commons are interesting all year round.

The '**Get Directions**' link provides a pin location within the centre of the Common and therefore does not assist the public in finding an entrance or car park. The location of the control tower car park should be used as a location.

The '**Public Transport**' link provides a different pin location within the Newbury and Crookham Golf Course. This is due to the use of the post code as already mentioned. There are no public transport services along Burys Bank Rd and therefore a suitable location for those wishing to arrive using public transport should be the Pyle Hill car park. There are a number of buses that travel from Newbury bus station (located centrally and close to the railway station) that could facilitate visitors to get within a short walking distance of the Commons. Alternatively the eastern area of Crookham Common is well serviced by the Newbury and District bus service, numbers 102/104/105, with bus stops along Crookham Common Road. There is no information on nearby train stations that would facilitate access from further afield. Therefore there could be two public transport maps for the site. It is recommended to provide bus and train information in more detail so the potential visitor does not have to undertake a lengthy search.

**Opening times.** Grid references are given for each of the three car parks. Firstly Crookham and Pyle Hill are not correct while the grid reference for the main car park at the control tower car park is correct. The grid references are 6 digits which gives a 100m square, it would be more beneficial and more accurate to give an 8 digit which gives a 10m square. As the management of the Commons know when the gates close it would be

advantageous for the webpage to disclose this information and not require visitors to 'check notice boards on arrival', which is incorrect in itself as opening times are not displayed upon notice boards (new welcome boards will attempt to display closing times). Closing time reminders are required at all exits from car parks. There is no mention that height barriers are present at all car parks which may restrict some visitors.

**'Walking information'** is somewhat vague and non-descriptive. The information should also be for cyclists and horse riders so this section should have a different title such as; 'Access' or 'Paths and Tracks'. Those with limited walking ability require structures to rest such as perches or benches which are not available in the number required by the guidance specified by the Fieldfare Trust. Therefore the information and wording provided on the webpage should be more descriptive. In addition the tracks could be rated in terms of accessibility and this rating system used throughout the reserves managed and owned by BBOWT.

**'Parking'** section gives exactly the same information as the 'opening times' section and so these could be consolidated. Information regarding; the presence of height barriers, the lack of priority blue badge holder parking, no waste bins ( 'please take your rubbish home with you'), should be included.

Dogs are **'allowed'** but it should be mentioned that dogs should be kept under strict control or on a lead, especially during the bird nesting season. There is no mention of the ground nesting birds zoning that occurs during the bird nesting season. Usefully the Kennel Club and Natural England have produced a 'You and your dog in the countryside' leaflet which should be used when providing information for dog walkers on countryside sites, (<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/30048?category=38017>). The leaflet could be provided as a downloadable resource on the BBOWT website.

**'Grazing animals'** are present as mentioned but there are areas such as large areas to the east that are not grazed. This is a good area to visit if the member of the public is afraid of livestock or who is walking a dog that may not exhibit good behaviour around livestock. Also some people on horseback may wish to ride where there are no grazing ponies (not within the livestock fence).

The contact number displayed is incorrect and should be changed to the BBOWT head office number for all enquiries, 01865 775476.

The **'Downloads'** section is somewhat disappointing for those wanting more information. Firstly the two downloadable leaflets now contain information that is incorrect, see more discussion within section 3.1.3. The third hyperlink does not work and the fourth is of no real value as it lacks much of the detail of the actual 150 page document. The purpose of the download section is to provide 'factsheets and guides for your visit' and yet it does not include the last Greenham and Crookham common leaflet.

To summarise the page is somewhat brief with limited access information and no information for those who may require enhanced facilities. The webpage should be more of a live document so notices and information could be displayed regarding upcoming events, restrictions on access, the Commons in recent news etc. The auditor has recommended that the nature reserve map on the reserve home page has additional information including: site boundary, car parks, paths and tracks, access points, facilities, plus information on any accessible routes.

## Recommendations

- Make corrections to inaccurate information immediately. Insert more access information so the visitor is armed with enough information to be able to make an informed decision whether they are able to visit.

### 3.1.2 Internet search engines

When the words Greenham and Crookham Common are searched using the Google search engine the following pages are displayed.

1. <http://www.bbowt.org.uk/reserves/greenham-crookham-commons>

The BBOWT reserve page as already discussed.

2. <http://www.bbowt.org.uk/what-we-do/living-landscapes/west-berkshire-living-landscape>

The BBOWT West Berkshire Living Landscape page

3. <http://www.gccv.org.uk/>

Greenham and Crookham volunteer page. This page contains some useful and interesting information with regards the Commons and obviously promotes the opportunity to assist with the management of the Commons in a volunteer role. There is a requirement for some minor changes to the information where it talks about WBC and their involvement in providing rangers etc. there is not a information 'hub' for the Commons as yet so this page does go some way to providing this and up to date information on recent work parties.

4. <http://www.visitnewbury.org.uk/thedms.aspx?dms=3&venue=2970121>

The Visit Newbury pages are useful for those searching for things to do in the locality. Unfortunately the page for Greenham and Crookham Common is brief, contains grammatical errors and the contact information is listed as the Nature Discovery Centre which should ideally be changed to the head office contact for BBOWT. The grid reference is close to the Pyle Hill car park but not actually over it and should instead be SU 483 652, an eight digit reference is more accurate SU 4835 6529. The Google location pin is located for the Pyle Hill car park and would be better to have the entrance of the main car park as the pin location. It would be prudent to give details of all three car parks available. The events section is up to date. There is no information regarding access or facilities.

5. <http://www.greenham-common.org.uk/ixbin/hixclient.exe?a=file&p=greenham&f=greenham.htm>

A website about Greenham Common maintained by WBC and compiled by West Berkshire Museum. A website that has the potential to be very interesting and informative. Unfortunately the layout and page size is somewhat confusing and small. There is no reference to BBOWT and the presumption is that it has not been updated in a long time. The recommendation is to work with WBC and develop the page.

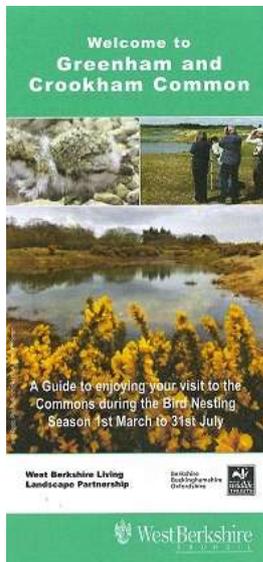
6. <http://www.greenham-common-trust.co.uk/the-common/wildlife>

The Greenham Common Trust website which gives excellent information on the Commons and the work the Trust does. There are quite a few links to the BBOWT website, most notably the West Berkshire Living Landscape, some of the links return with errors and so hyperlinks need checking. Hyperlinks for information on visiting the Commons should go to the reserves page on the BBOWT website. There is no page that gives information on how to visit the Commons or access information.

7. <http://www.westcombe.org.uk/>

This website hosts the Greenham and Crookham management plan 2009-2014. It contains a wealth of information and is kept up to date. Its purpose is not to provide useful information to the potential visitor but it could either include this on its homepage or an obvious link to the BBOWT reserve page.





This leaflet was produced in partnership with WBC and BBOWT to inform visitors to the site about the red and green zoning that applies during the ground nesting bird season. It was a useful tool for the site wardens that were present during the nesting bird season. Due to BBOWT now managing the site on behalf of WBC some of the contact information is now incorrect. The leaflet also mentions the general regulations for access as detailed upon the Commission website. As mentioned in the background information, the CRoW Act does not apply to the whole of the Commons so it is not strictly accurate to put these regulations upon a leaflet that is for the whole of the Commons. The leaflet is not in print and there are no more copies being distributed. Recommend removing leaflets from public circulation if discovered.

3. The Secret Seven – A guide to some of the ground nesting birds on Greenham and Crookham Common.



This leaflet was to aid the identification of ground nesting birds commonly seen on the Commons and to promote the Commons as a special area for wildlife. Again due to BBOWT now managing the Commons the contact details are incorrect.



#### 4. West Berkshire Living Landscape circular walks.

Two walking guides that include the Commons both of which are around 6 miles in length. The guides use routes that are only accessible for able bodied person due to the path surface and gradients. The leaflets are distributed locally.

The leaflets are currently being amended as part of a reprint and the auditor was able to make recommendations with regards improving the access information and directional instructions. The walks are due to be made available on the BBOWT website and will also be viewable on the interactive screen that will be located at the Nature Discovery Centre in the near future.

### Recommendations

- The current leaflets are in need of renewal and should not be reprinted without amendments and those remaining should be removed from circulation. Leaflets are useful to convey information or promote sites or activities in a setting such as Tourist Information Centres (TIC), holiday accommodation providers etc. Not all visitors use modern technologies and so would be disadvantaged if the information was to become electronic only. However this is changing very rapidly. Hard copy information can become outdated or incorrect very quickly requiring a reprint but this is easily rectified with electronic information. Importantly there needs to be clearly defined reason to produce a leaflet and a method of delivery which should be well maintained – e.g. don't let the TIC run out of leaflets. Leaflets still have their place in promoting sites and delivering important information and should be

used in combination with electronic information. Having a leaflet or elements of the leaflet available as a Pdf on webpages is very useful. Any leaflet should be checked for accuracy yearly.

## **3.2 Getting to the site**

### **How easy it for visitors to find the site?**

Potential visitors who are looking for the site can use the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Explorer map 158 which clearly marks the site and also the car parks. Other symbols shown on the Ordnance Survey map 158 are; the bird symbol which signifies a nature reserve, foot prints next to the car park symbols signifying walking trails and a 'V' for visitor centre at the control tower car parking area. The visitor centre symbol may have been submitted as a request to Ordnance Survey as it was the original intention for there to be a visitor centre within the car park when the Commons were reinstated. It is now the intention to open a new visitor centre at the control tower so the symbol has become necessary again. The arrow for the 'V' is on a building that has been removed, as have other buildings in the locality. The building known as Estovers (previously called Building 616) which is the BBOWT reserves office and workshop is not shown.

Google Maps mark Greenham Common with an airport symbol, this should be requested to be changed. There is also a cycle route marked called the Greenham Common Cycleway. The auditor has not been able to find information on this route. The direction of the route also does not look correct if it is meant to be the commuter route between the Greenham Business Park and Newbury as it does not follow the most direct route and instead goes around a ground nesting bird red zone which may not be appropriate. Further investigation is required and corrections sent to Google if needed.

The Commons do have some existing very minor road signage but this is very poor and not at all obvious (see additional photos). There are signs north and south of the roundabout upon the A339 (end of Pinchington Lane/Newtown Road) but the wording is very small and it could almost be read 'Greenham Common Retail Park'. There is a very small and dirty finger post at the junction of Bury's Bank Road and Crookham Hill. In total 4 highway signs.

The Pyle Hill and Crookham car parks have no signage and the main Greenham control tower car park has just one sign readable if you are travelling from the east along Bury's Bank Rd. There are no brown Tourist signs. There is no directional signage on the southern side of the site.

Many visitors are likely to arrive at the Pyle Hill car park which has limited car parking capacity. It is recommended to sign/promote the main control tower from this location so offering option if the car park is full or those wanting additional facilities that may be available once the control tower re-opens.

The Greenham Business Park is likely to get visitors looking for the site of the old airbase and also attempting to gain access onto the Common. Currently the roadside maps (see additional photos) do not show how the two entrances available and neither does the paper map that is given to visitors enquiring at the Park information office.

There are numerous minor tracks that are used by private residents and some of these do have access points onto the Commons but none are signed. It is not a recommendation to sign these access points as often the tracks and infrastructure are not designed to accommodate extra traffic and visitor parking and this could lead to conflict with the local residents. These tracks are upon common land and so vehicles are not allowed unless the person or group has a legal easement.

As part of Phase 1 of BBOWT's signage plans, professional A3 site name boards have been commissioned and are awaiting installation. These are to be fitted at entrances throughout the site so visitors are aware they have arrived at the Commons and also who to contact for more information or to make a comment.

## Recommendations

- Apply for additional brown tourist signage to the main control tower car park
- Sign the entrances to the car parks.
- BBOWT reserve signs to be installed at appropriate entrances around the site.
- Corrections sent to Google (maps).
- Install the site name boards at the entrances.

## 3.3 Accessing the site once arrived

### How easy is it for visitors to enter the site?

#### 3.3.1 Arrival by vehicle and parking

Vehicles are accommodated by 4 car parks.

- **Control Tower car park, capacity 123-150 cars, SU 49866522**

The car park is accessed from a mini roundabout on Burys Bank Rd. There is no roadside footpath along Burys Bank Rd. The initial entrance is double lane and sealed tarmac with kerbing. There is a galvanised vehicle barrier that is opened at 8am and locked at 6pm during the winter and 8pm during the summer. Shortly after there is a height barrier with a maximum clearance of 2.25m. Height barriers are restrictive to those arriving in larger passenger vehicles, some high top specially adapted vehicles, camper vans or those with horse boxes. As Estovers and the control tower are present, delivery vehicles will also be prohibited to enter and there are no contact numbers on the gate. Unauthorised extended use of the car park by those wishing to encamp is a risk if the height barrier is left open for extended periods.

A network of unsealed tracks and unmarked bays are set within two main areas separated by scrub and alder trees. The car park is not within the grazed area and is not included within the area designated as common land. There are no specific parking areas for those with blue badges. The car park area also contains Building 150, a storage facility for Newbury museums, Estovers which is hosts PRow team and BBOWT. The control tower (Building 146) owned by Greenham Parish Council is currently being refurbished and it is hoped that it will contain toilets including disabled accessible facilities, a café, interpretation and information on the Commons plus offices and a viewing level. Currently there are no toilet facilities so the visitor centre is likely to attract more people and who require this facility to be present. There is currently no signage connected with any of these buildings. Update: an A3 arrow sign has been installed in April 2015 as a pointer to the Estovers building.

The directional signage within the car park is no longer functional as it has been either damaged or stolen. A one way system did exist with a single exit along the western edge. It would be beneficial for their to be the facility to close the far eastern parking area except for busy periods, thus reducing the area on which

maintenance must occur. It is recommended that the directional signage is reinstated using signs upon wooden posts. There is no specific parking for coaches or long vehicles but they can be accommodated. There is a wooden routed welcome board (G9) just after the turning to Building 150 and Estovers which also notifies visitors of the car park closing time using replaceable tablets. The board is rotten at the top and looks tired. The branding is also no longer current. A new branded routed board is awaiting installation. There are 5 bridle gates (G17, 22, 27, 32, 35) and 4 padlocked field gates (G23, 28, 33, 34) leading from the car park. All of the bridle gates have long lever latches and are self closing apart from G35 which has a standard triangular gravity catch and the user has to lean over the gate to open it, making it less accessible. Currently the condition and natural surfacing of the paths from the parking areas can be prohibitive to some styles of wheel chair and to those who may not be able to tolerate the uneven surface. The path through G22 has hollowed and holds water. It is the recommendation that the track that runs alongside the control tower is improved to a level that would more easily facilitate those in wheel chairs and link with the disabled accessible toilet facilities within the Control tower and installation of priority parking for blue badge holders directly outside the building.

To improve visitor safety within the car park and dissuade littering, tipping or anti-social activities, scrub and dense plots of trees should be eliminated favouring instead grass, heather and other local naturally occurring low shrubs. To reduce the unsightly intrusion of parked cars being visible from within the site, low vegetation around the boundary can still be retained. This has the advantage of creating shelter for visitors and wildlife alike.

Reducing vehicle speed within the parking area can be accomplished by creating pinch points at the entrance/exit of parking areas and tracks.

## Recommendations

- Consider keeping the height barrier open during opening hours.
- Make good and serviceable all gates through the livestock fence.
- Improve the surface within the car parking areas and through the gates.
- Remove scrub and dense patches of trees within the parking area.

- **Pyle Hill car park, capacity 12 cars, SU 48346529. See photos in appendix.**

The car park is accessed from Pinchington Lane close to a mini roundabout at the southern end of Greenham road. There is no directional or welcome signage associated with the car park. For those travelling from the west the turning right into the access road is almost immediately after the roundabout, thus has the strong potential to hold up traffic. Those travelling from the east along Pinchington Lane and arriving at the roundabout often queue preventing those wanting to enter the access road to the car park. A dual pedestrian and cycle path starts on the northern side of Pinchington Lane. An island is not present to facilitate crossing east of the roundabout and so it can be difficult and unsafe for visitors to cross on foot or with a bicycle.

The advice given by the Highways Agency for the assessment and preparation of road schemes (Volume 5, Advice Note Part 4ta, 91/05, Provision for non-motorised users) based on principles developed in the publication 'Providing for Journeys on Foot' mentions;

- **'Safety and Comfort** – users should feel safe and should not feel intimidated by motorised traffic. The speed of approaching vehicles should be taken into account'. With vehicles coming from multiple directions crossing at this point is certainly not safe or peaceful.
- **'Location** – where safety considerations permit, crossing points should also coincide with desire lines. This is particularly important on identifiable local routes such as school routes or access to country parks.' Though tactile paving and dropped kerbs are present, the number and type of visitors likely to use this crossing is not accommodated for. Given that this is a known bicycle commuter route across the Commons emerging at this location and that the north side of the crossing is a multi use bicycle/pedestrian pavement then this gives weight for the crossing to be situated away from the roundabout and there to be an island with appropriate warning signage. It is also likely that this crossing could be used by those on mobility scooters.

The roundabout is relatively new and it begs the question whether the problems discussed were ever aired at the time of design.

The access road to the south is sealed and has kerbing and also serves to act as access to private property. The car park is to the east of the track and again the immediate section of track is sealed. A height barrier with a maximum clearance height of 2m is situated here. The parking area has permeable ground stabilisation paving that allows grass to grow within the cells. The manufactured paving is of a type that has an extremely uneven surface which is ok for vehicles but terrible for pedestrians, especially those who may use mobility aids or have an accompaniment such as a push chair. There are much smoother designs on the market and these should be considered if the surface was ever changed. The car park has no marked bays so often the capacity of the car park is not met. There should be rounded kerbing to allow access to the immediate first parking bays after passing under the height barrier to prevent vehicles driving on the grass. Upon leaving a vehicle the visitor must negotiate the incoming or exiting traffic as this is the only smooth surface. Alternatively visitors must pass through a line of wooden posts and cross an area of unsealed uneven ground to the two bridleyway gates. As there are no parking restrictions in place such as line painting, visitors often choose to park outside of the formal area and in front of the access gates and also along the access road and sometimes even upon the footpath and grassed areas if the dragon's teeth posts have been removed. This has the function of causing an unsafe area where visitors are attempting to navigate their way to the entrances through the livestock fence including the field gate. The orientation board is also often obscured by parked vehicles. This ad-hoc arrangement makes for an entrance to the Commons that is not a pleasant or safe environment to meet and orientate before entering the site. The last section of the access road leading up to the old airbase boundary 'blue gate' is older and so the surface is uneven. The 'blue gate' is the last gate of its kind in existence within the site not counting those on the GAMA site. It is therefore a heritage structure that deserves maintaining and information about its origins being available to visitors.

To conclude, it is the recommendation that parking outside the formal car park is prevented and instead one priority parking space is provided for those with blue badges. Bollards should prevent further access up to the entrances through the livestock fence. A secondary path should run parallel to the access road into the car parking area to allow those on foot to safely leave the car park. An 'in-keeping' fence that prevents access to the unsealed ground through the wooden posts should be installed and the notice board moved parallel to the

current edge of the paved area within the car free 'mingling zone' as already described above. So that those arriving in taller vehicles are not disadvantaged, the height barrier could be removed.

## Recommendations

- If the car park ever requires re-surfacing, replace the current concrete cells for a smooth type
  - Improve the pedestrian flow in and out of the car park and to the access gates
  - Any information panel or notice board needs to be accessible to all and in a safe, vehicle free area
  - Prevent ad-hoc parking in the area alongside the car park and instead create a safe area for visitors to congregate and orientate themselves
  - Consider installing a blue badge priority parking space as part of the improvement of the overall area
  - Restore and add interpretation to the airbase access gate
- **Crookham car park, capacity approx 30 cars, SU 52356456. See photos in appendix.**

The entrance to the car park is from Old Thornford Road and visitors must negotiate the height barrier with a maximum clearance of 1.9m. There is no directional or welcome signage at this location. The car park opens at 8am and closes 6pm during the winter and 8pm during the summer.

The surface is unsealed and is mostly naturally occurring compacted gravels and Type 1 gravels. The condition of the surface was adequate but there are minor potholes present. The surface would not be suitable for some types of wheelchair or child push chair. The area of the car park is informal with no marked bays and no priority parking for those with blue disabled parking permits. There is immediate access to the unfenced area of Crookham Common and directly across from the car park entrance there is a pedestrian gate through the livestock fence onto the main Commons area. This area is signed as dogs off leads but under control during the bird nesting season. Currently the car park is underutilised by those wanting to visit the main Commons area as there is no line of sight or path directly to the entrance on the corner of Old Thornford Road. There is a path of sorts but it can become overgrown and where it emerges on the most western end there are ditches which were originally to prevent those wishing to camp driving onto the site. These ditches need to be levelled along the route of the path. If possible remove the majority of the vegetation bar the larger trees so visitors can see this access path exists from the road and to improve visitor safety. With more visitors using the car park the overall safety of visitors and their property will hopefully improve.

A notice board (G5) that is shared between Crookham Parish Council and BBOWT plus an orientation board (G6) is present within the car park. Cars are able to park up against the structures which reduces the possibility of the boards being read in safety and comfort.

## Recommendations

- Any information panel or notice board needs to be accessible to all and in an safe vehicle free area
  - Create a direct path along the side of Old Thornford road to the access gate in the livestock fence at Crookham Pools and add appropriate signage.
- **Bombsite Car Park, SU 50556528. See target note G40.**

Because of the informal nature of the car park it is difficult to ascertain a vehicle capacity, but an estimate would be around 12 cars. The entrance is off Bury's Bank Road and along a paved road that is also an access

road to Bowdown House and other residences within the complex. After this joint access road there is a height barrier with a maximum vehicle height allowance of 2m. This height barrier is a necessity in this hidden remote setting to dissuade unwanted fly-tipping and overnight camping. The paved road continues until the parking area which features informal perimeter parking and a vegetated island in the centre. The car park is jointly owned by BBOWT and WBC but is consequently managed by BBOWT in its entirety. A single dog waste bin is provided on the southern side. The majority of use is likely to be for the BBOWT Bombsite part of the reserve as the small amount of common land to the south is unlikely to be major draw. There is a small path opposite the entrance road across Bury's Bank Road that gives access to the main commons.

The surface of the car park contains a variety of materials and consequently is suffering from pot holes that require repairing in the very near future. There are no priority bays for blue badge holders. Currently the Bombsite area has paved tracks that if kept clear of natural debris are ideally suited to those with mobility disabilities and the partially sighted or those just wanting a mud-free route during the winter months. It is therefore recommended that the car park should accommodate 1 blue badge priority parking bay on the paved area close to the metal entrance gate.

## **Recommendations**

- Undertake repairs to the car park and track surface
- Install a minimum of one priority blue badge parking bay close to the metal entrance gate with associated signage and markings.

### ■ **Unofficial Parking**

There are several unsealed laybys along Bury's Bank Road, Old Crookham Road and Brackenhurst Lane (see additional photos). These are not currently actively maintained but some are used extensively such as those on Old Crookham Road. The reason they are used here is that there is no immediate car parking provision at the entrance to the main grazed area. Car parking along this road often blocks the field gate entrance into the Commons and there is negative impact of waste being thrown from parked vehicles. There are associated maintenance costs with this informal parking which is much higher per vehicle compared to that of formal parking. A review of all unsealed laybys should be undertaken. Closure of unauthorised laybys that do not for fill a function should be undertaken after a period of time since the installation of car park directional signage and also the improved path from Crookham car park to the field gate entrance on Old Thornford Rd.

Consultation with the appropriate department in West Berkshire Highways will be required before any work is undertaken. The dissatisfaction caused to site users by the closure of their regular parking spots should not be underestimated.

There is a sealed highways specification layby on the A339 (SU 4943 6392) which has an access gate (G138) to Ballshill Gulley. Vehicles that park in this layby may not be visiting the Commons and instead drivers may use the access gate to undertake undesirable activities upon the Commons. Vehicle and public safety is a concern as well as the A339 being a very busy road.

Currently there is unofficial parking for the Commons within the Greenham Business Park along some roadsides and where there are no restrictions on parking. It is recommended that due to the lack of parking available to visitors coming from the south that the Greenham Business Park officially permits and promotes parking for visitors to the Commons. It could be in the business park's interest to have more visitors who may

also visit businesses within the site. The preferred location would be within the car parking area close to the gate in target note G132. The path from the gate needs to be completed to allow pedestrians and cyclists to link to the car parking area.

Visitors from the south often use the dead-end road called Brackenhurst Lane which leads to the entrance of the private GAMA site. There are a couple of unsealed laybys and at the end of the road there is potential for vehicles to park on the road edge. However, to prevent blocking the access gates, the security often place cones along the roadside. There are no roadside signs off the A339 to inform potential visitors that access to the Commons can be gained by using the lane.

Owners of property around the boundaries of the site often gain access routes across common land and these tracks in theory should have an easement. The easement often has a defined route upon which the person or body granted with an easement can lawfully use. The tracks are for access only which means that the parking of vehicles anywhere on or in the vicinity of the track is unlawful and is the same as parking upon common land. There is a degree of acceptance that a private vehicle may park alongside the boundary of the private property which does not have adequate space to allow vehicles to enter. Where multiple vehicles, trailers and machinery are parked long term then this could be considered as encroachment. At no time should any material be added to increase the length of the tracks or any additional routes be placed for vehicle use or to provide hard standing for parked vehicles or machinery.

## **Recommendations**

- Undertake a review of all laybys and roadside parking and define what is to be actively managed and what is going to be closed.

### **3.3.2 Walking**

The large proportion of the Commons is surrounded by a stock fence with multiple access points suitable for pedestrians which includes;

- 29 Bridle Gates
- 5 Pedestrian Gates
- 2 Stiles
- 5 Kissing Gates

The access points are in the mainly unrestrictive with access to the main tracks on the Commons being 150cm accessible bridle gates, a large proportion fitted with a long lever style latch. There are many still fitted with a striker and gravity catch that could be upgraded to an 'easy-latch' sprung system to allow easier access from both sides (please see detail within the target notes). The kissing gates are fitted in places where the gate leads to a busy highway where restricting motorcycles is important, or into the business park where security against theft is of paramount importance.

The area between the cattle grids along Bury's Bank Road on the north of the site allows largely unrestricted access for those on foot as does the area east of Old Thornford Road and south of the A339 including Bishops Green. Even between the cattle grids there are again small areas that have livestock fencing and access gates have been fitted but these are rarely used by visitors and instead by residents in the immediate area. Providing access to the entire site is of course a legal requirement so no area should be fully enclosed without access points (areas with encroachment by fencing have been recorded). There are also marginal areas of the

Commons that are difficult to access because of the terrain and/or because of the nature of the habitat. Access to these areas on foot may not be formal because they have conservation value and because historically there has never been any need to gain access. The audit did not find any locations where access through the livestock fence was needed to provide a more functional link, in actual fact there were gates that were rarely used or that led to a road where there was no provision for those on foot. These gates should be reviewed and removed if no longer required or are unsafe for visitors.

The south-eastern corner of the Commons is the most easily accessible area for those living in Newbury. This is also the most likely point that anyone using a mobility scooter from home with the capability of light off road use could access. The immediate access point is at the Pyle Hill entrance with an additional entrance at Capability Way (G154), and another 4 gates along Bury's Bank road (G171, 172, 173, 177). The gate in target note in G173 links up with the public footpath GREE/6/3.

Access for those on foot from the Greenham Business park is minimal, with one kissing gate open 24 hours (G132) and an un-promoted and difficult to find access route on the eastern side locked at night (next to gate in G92). The remaining access points from the south can be difficult to find such as those in the Goldfinch Bottom area as there is no signage from Thornford Road. There are also no footpaths along this road and no official parking within the residential areas.

Pedestrians can also enter the Commons along the public footpath (GREE10/1) on the west of the site. There is a stile not within the site but at the A339 and there are no plans by the PRoW team to improve accessibility here. A public bridleway (THAT/18/1) and a public footpath (GREE/6/3) meets the northern boundary of the main site and are excellent short distance links to the residential areas in Thatcham and the public footpath (THAT/28/5) that follows the Kennet and Avon canal. Though, officially, bicycles are not permitted to use the canal path along this section.

Once on site those on foot are allowed to roam freely. Around the perimeter of the site and along the public highways there is just one footpath that follows the A339 which has become narrow as it is covered by vegetation and leaf material. It is not a pleasant route to walk because of the heavy traffic running alongside. An excellent example of how to convey routes accessibility is the Fieldfare Trusts Phototrails webpage <http://www.phototrails.org/>. On this website potential visitors can assess routes using traditional trail maps and symbols plus a slide show of photos just what will be encountered.

## **Recommendations**

- Review the gates and the type of opening mechanisms fitted and undertake a phased approach to replacing latches and catches that are less accessible with sprung easy-latches. Consider the likely user in the review and also the network of paths and tracks within and outside the site. Remove and block any gate that leads to an unsafe area.
- Work with the Greenham Business Park to improve and promote access from the park into the Commons
- Keep gates and gaps completely clear of vegetation and encroaching shrubs and tree
- Consider uploading routes to the Phototrails website and having similar information, or a link, upon the reserve webpages and upon literature on and off-site.

### 3.3.3 Bicycle

Bicycles are allowed to use the defined paths and tracks upon the Commons and additional space if granted by the Commission. At the time of writing there are no defined paths on paper or electronic form that have been agreed upon by the Commission. Clarification is therefore required.

There are paths that include boardwalks and a flight of steps and these are therefore not suitable and bicycles should be dissuaded from using them.

There are some routes for example along the southern eastern area of the site (Peckmore Copse) that are used extensively by mountain bikers as individuals or in organised groups. There is evidence of trail building such as the installation of jumps. The use of the trails by mountain bikers has the potential for conflict with other users due to the speed and silence with which modern bikes can travel. There are also the negative impacts on the habitats (for example ancient woodland) and historic environment because of trail wear and the emergence of new trails. To counteract this it is recommended to review the current routes enjoyed by mountain bikers and ascertain if these fit with safe guarding of sensitive habitats and wildlife and also other users of the Commons. Consider installing new routes that will be enjoyable and appealing to mountain bikers. Working with local clubs and shops has the potential to firstly help to build the trails and then keep the trails maintained. A working relationship enables the management of the Commons to educate mountain bikers about the importance of the site in terms of its conservation.

There are no facilities where visitors can lock bicycles. It is recommended that when the control tower is opened, cycle parking in the form of Sheffield style stands are provided. The pedestrian and bridle gates fitted along the livestock fence allow visitors with bicycles to pass through. The kissing gates fitted off the A339 do not allow bicycles to pass. The kissing gate on the western edge of the business park allows bicycles but only just. Bicycle use on the Commons is for both leisure and commuting and both are accepted uses. Bicycles suitable for use on the Commons are either hybrid, mountain bike or cyclo-cross bike; those bicycles that have a fatter, knobby tires than that fitted to drop handle bar road racing bicycles. Priority must be given to pedestrians on all trails. The building of new trails or the building of structures are not allowed nor is the organising of commercial events. Permission should be sought before organised unpaid events are held. A paper has been written with regards the current view and strategy of BBOWT with regards bicycle use on the Commons, please see appendix.

### Recommendations

- Define the routes that are suitable for both mountain bikes and all-terrain bicycles. Promote routes on new orientation boards and waymarking
- Create a code of conduct for cycling and mountain biking such as that created by the CTC:  
<http://www.ctc.org.uk/article/cycling-guide/off-road-cycling-code-conduct>
- Instigate management of off-road routes suitable for mountain bikes by creating a working group with local cycle clubs and retailers
- Install cycle stands at the main car park
- Advise visitors of the terrain and suggested bicycle type suitable for the site on any advertising such as the reserve webpages.

### 3.3.4 Horseback or horse and carriage

As for bicycles, horse riders are welcome to use the Commons' network of defined paths and tracks and additional space (beyond the boundary of the Commons) if granted by the Commission. These tracks have not been formally defined on a map. Paths and tracks upon the Commons vary from turf (preferable) to open soils to gravels (not ideal as sharp stones may become lodged between shoe and sole or exert pressure up the sole of the hoof causes bruising) (see BHS guidance on surfaces

<http://www.bhs.org.uk/~media/BHS/Files/PDF%20Documents/Access%20leaflets/BHS%20Advice%20Surfaces.ashx> ). It is therefore recommended to consult with the guidance when promoting and maintaining routes for horses or when using materials to maintain access surfaces through gates. It may be necessary to provide and maintain a clear area parallel to the main tracks upon the plateau area so horse riders do not have to enter the gorse areas where disturbance to wildlife is greater. More research is required as to the preference of route horse riders already or would like to undertake.

As mentioned already in 3.3.1, there are a number of gates that horse riders would find difficult to operate from horseback. The use of stirrup handles is not recommended due to the risk of reins becoming entangled. As mentioned in 3.3.5, there are no gates that have adjustable closure speeds on the Commons. The advice from the BHS is that until a more reliable gate comes to the market, a well maintained bridle gate fitted with an extended lever and suitable manoeuvring room around the structure is the best solution.

The assumption is that horse riders generally ride to the site from their stables. The auditor witnessed one horse rider use the un-promoted route across the eastern side of the business park. This particular rider came from the Martindale Farm area. If changes are made to the route and it instead follows the new fence line which includes a flight of steps (G91) this will negatively affect access for horse riders (and cyclists).

If a rider wished to bring a vehicle and trailer then they would need to make sure they used the main car park or perhaps a layby upon Bury's Bank road. There is currently no information of this option on any website. If visitors are travelling to the site and are therefore not familiar with the where to go, routes could be promoted upon orientation boards and through the use of waymarking.

Using this method, management of the trails upon the Commons can be targeted to the specific user for example horse riding routes are maintained to the standard set out within the BHS guidance. However as already mentioned current users are already familiar with the site and have routes they enjoy. In this instance data needs to be recorded as to which routes they use so associated maintenance can be properly targeted. The auditor has highlighted in target note G114a and b that a popular crossing point into the Commons requires modifications to make it safer for not just horse riders but also pedestrians and cyclists. This should be given a priority as any other crossing that becomes evident through consultation.

### Recommendations

- As part of developing waymarked routes, define routes that will be promoted and suitably managed for all users, including horse riders.
- Provide information on the reserve page and at the main car park for horse riders wanting to arrive with a trailer.
- Improve the bridleway crossing over Burys Bank Road (Chamberhouse Lane) at Crookham Common in terms of safety and space to manoeuvre.

### 3.3.5 Mobility Scooter – All terrain

The body responsible for the management of the Commons allows the use of electric mobility scooter on the defined paths and tracks. Because of the nature of the surface all-terrain scooters with larger, fatter wheels are recommended to give more comfort and control. It is feasible that a scooter could be driven from a nearby residence near to the Pyle Hill entrance. Alternatively a visitor could use one of the car parks as long as the modified vehicle is below 2m, otherwise they could request the gates to be opened or use the main car park which is currently trialling leaving the height barrier open during the day. Most mobility scooters now on the market have a width of less than 1m and therefore can fit through the wooden pedestrian gates found on the Commons. As can be seen in the target note not all gates are fitted with latches that can be accessed from the seated position. Gates have become encroached by vegetation or have minimal manoeuvring space to allow a seated occupant to drive alongside the gate and operate the latch. Prioritising high use gates to receive more regular checks is recommended. Nearly all the gates are fitted with off-set hinges and often a post is installed to prevent over-opening and the gate remaining open. The speed of return once opened is therefore not adjustable and can be severe at times. There are gates on the market that allow for an adjustable return speed and have accessible levers. However these have not been proven to be totally reliable and the cost is considerably more. Newer versions are coming to the market and should be considered when installing a replacement gate or new gate on an access route that is likely to be used by seated persons, such as that next to car parks. It is useful to note that the larger the gate the harder it is to push open and hold open whilst manoeuvring.

As mentioned in 3.3.3 and 3.3.4, routes suitable for mobility scooters should be promoted on any orientation boards and associated waymarking plus advice on visiting with mobility scooters given on the BBOWT reserve pages and associated websites.

### Recommendations

- On printed and electronic information make sure that users with mobility scooters know that all terrain mobility scooters are recommended. Notify the potential visitor which car parks have height restrictions and what height these are set at.
- Undertake more vegetation clearance around the high use gates especially those at the car parks.
- Allow for more manoeuvrability around gates rather than a path the same as the gate width.

### 3.3.3 Public Transport

Please also see section 3.1.1.

Newbury and Thatcham both have railway stations that could be a viable starting point for the able bodied on bicycle or foot, or alternatively any visitor could catch a bus.

Visitors can get within a short distance of Pyle Hill car park by bus and then undertake a short walk. There is no public transport service to the main car park which means there is likely to be a transportation issue for those wanting to visit the control tower but do not own a private motor vehicle. The Crookham and east end of the Commons can be accessed by a bus service which is operated by Weavaway;

<http://www.weavaway.co.uk/pdf/services-101-104-105.pdf>

There is a bus service along the A339 which is called the Link and is operated by Stagecoach;

<http://www.stagecoachbus.com/getTimetable.ashx?code=XPALINK&dir=INBOUND&date=06%2f02%2f2015>

Visitors could use the week day only free bus service operated on behalf of the Greenham Business Park by Weavaway;

<http://greenham-business-park.co.uk/sites/default/files/how-to-find-gbp.pdf>

## **Recommendations**

- Have hyperlinks on the reserve page that link to the public transport providers. Maintain these by undertaking bi-annual checks to make sure content is current and accurate.

### **3.3.4 Emergency vehicles**

It should be noted that access for emergency vehicles should be considered and the chosen points detailed in the site risk assessment. Emergency numbers for BBOWT can be placed on orientation boards and field gate/vehicle barriers leading into the site. In the first instance emergency vehicles can gain good access into the main car park when the height barrier is open. It is likely that locks would be cut rather than waiting for a key holder. Some emergency services have been given an estate key.

## **Recommendations**

- Install BBOWT contact numbers at suitable locations/furniture and information boards.
- Confirm that emergency access points are featured on the site risk assessment and include how these can be opened and the width/height limitations.

## **3.4 Signage and information on the site**

### **How easy is it for visitors to find their way around the site?**

#### **3.4.1 Orientation maps**

There are 3 identical orientation boards, all of which are at the car parks (not including the Bombsite). Please see target notes G4, 5, 7 for more information. The actual design of the boards is similar as that produced on the leaflets but is more informative on the history and habitats with the addition of a 'you are here' marker. The boards are due for replacement as part of BBOWT's phased renewal of orientation and guidance available to visitors. The design, number of signs and locations should also be reviewed at this point.

## **Recommendations**

- Deliver new orientation boards plus waymarked routes as Phase 2 of BBOWT's signage work.
- Boards should be placed in a safe and accessible area to all.

#### **3.4.2 Way marked routes**

There are 4 waymarked trails; Taxiway, Silo, Bombsite and Coppice walks upon the Commons and a Walk 4 Life one mile route starting and finishing at the Pyle hill car park. The Walk 4 Life trail is complete but many of the discs upon the posts have faded and need replacing. Visitors can no longer follow some of the waymarked trails due to the deterioration of the marker posts. The trails should be reviewed at the same time as the orientation boards are replaced.

## Recommendations

- Design, consult and install new waymarked trails
- Promote trails for different users

### 3.4.3 Other instructional signage

Shortly after entering the main car park there is a routed wooden board welcoming visitors to the Commons (G9). The board is of a similar design to that found upon other sites now managed by BBOWT and is to be replaced as part of phase 1 of the signage changes. Currently a new sign has been manufactured and is now in stock and awaits installing.

A public footpath follows the western boundary of the site (GREE10/1). It is adequately waymarked using grey metal post at Pyle Hill car park and wooden waymarking posts within the reserve (see target notes). The entrance gates at the south western corner (G150, G151) need repair and it is recommended that the kissing gate is removed and the bridle gate left in situ (there does not need to be two entrance structures next to each other).

A public bridleway (THAT/25/1) and public footpath (THAT/27/1) passes through Crookham common using existing access tracks/roads.

A permitted footpath is in existence as a way of avoiding a dangerous road crossing on Bury's Bank road (G30). The route has associated signage and waymarking. There needs to be an additional sign and associated map, as found along the route, placed at the gate on the fence line south of Bury's Bank road. In addition, it is recommended that a dangerous crossing warning sign is installed. Ultimately it is advised that the gate is removed so there can be no danger associated with facilitating access at this location.

An old public footpath sign has been placed on the north of Crookham Common Road (G60). The use of a public footpath sign, even if it is an old style sign, is not suitable because visitors will incorrectly presume it is a public right of way. The path is very important as a link between PRoW THAT/26/2 and THAT/16/1. It is recommended that the sign is removed and the path kept well maintained.

A useful addition to waymarked routes are markers to direct visitors back to car parks. Due to the fact the site is largely flat these are less likely to be needed on the plateau in large numbers. The inclusion of waymarking for features of interest such as heritage structures and the control tower should be considered.

On nearly all gates into and out of the grazed area a stock grazing sign is present. Many of these are becoming faded and are in need of replacement. Because motorcycles can fit through the pedestrian and bridle gates, a 'no motorcycle' symbol sign is often displayed. It is recommended that all gates have these discs present and the larger freestanding motorcycle signs removed purely for aesthetic reasons. If someone was to ride a motorcycle on the Commons they are likely to ignore any signage, so it is purely in the instance of a motorcyclist being stopped that the displayed sign can be used in evidence.

There are two 'no littering' signs (G57 and G169) in questionable locations. These do not fit with the surroundings and it is questionable if they could even be enforced by the reserve staff so should be removed. No littering signs are more relevant at the car parks and laybys but they should be seriously considered as part of a consolidated 'message' upon a single sign. This could be; as symbols upon a foot board under the large orientation signs, on the reverse of the orientation signs, or upon a single freestanding sign.

A single 'no fly-tipping' sign (G72) is present on Old Thornford Road. It is widely known that fly-tipping is unlawful and anti-social so it is questionable if the sign is required at all?

Target note G66 shows a 'no unauthorised vehicles beyond this point' sign next to a gate that is locked nightly by the resident at the end of the access track. It is an anomaly to have this type of sign and it is the only one of its kind on the site.

At numerous locations on the site private landowners access their properties by driving across common land, this is called a private right of way, and also individuals and bodies cross the common land as a means of accessing farmland beyond for example. There may be more than one individual that uses the same route in part or full. As it is unlawful to drive further than 15 yards off a highway and driving on common land requires a permit which is known as an easement. WBC can grant an easement across the Commons to individuals or bodies and a register of easements is kept at WBC. Individuals or bodies requesting easement by prescription is much more complicated affair. (refer to Vehicle Access across Common and Other Land (England) Regulations 2002). If the individual or body does not have an easement document then in the strictest sense they are not permitted to take a vehicle onto common land whether it is a paved or unsealed track or open country. It may be necessary to have no entry signage on all vehicle width access tracks.

Two byelaw signs are present north of Bury's Bank road which are no longer relevant due to the Act now being in place and therefore should be removed.

## Recommendations

- Install the new welcome sign at the main car park.
- Remove the kissing gate on the public footpath GREE/10/1 and repair the bridle gate.
- Close the gate in target note G30 and add another information sign.
- Remove the old public footpath sign as shown in target note G60.
- Remove the no littering signs and posts.
- Remove the two byelaw signs.

### 3.4.4 Other Signage





Private property signage is prevalent around the site in a wide range of designs and associated age and quality conditions. There are also signs for commercial enterprises such as that pictured above (Crookham). It is understandable that private properties would like direction/location signs so their visitors can find them. In relation to access, signage has the ability to:

- block access
- pose safety issues because of condition or location (blocking sight lines for example)
- confuse visitors trying to orientate themselves
- provide incorrect information as to the public access rights
- unaesthetically pleasing
- become waste (mainly temporary signage)

The recommendation would be to have a set of guidelines and designs as to what signage is permitted and where it can be located. The placement of commercial signage could also be within the design guidelines. This would have to be approved by the Commission.

### 3.4.5 Reserve signage



During March and April 2015 new A3 size reserve boards have been erected at entrances to the Commons. The boards notify visitors that they are entering Greenham and Crookham commons and also that BBOWT is responsible for the management of the site on behalf of WBC and includes contact details. The purpose is to inform, allow the public to make contact and to find out more by going to the BBOWT website.

### 3.5 What information is there for visitors to learn from and engage with the site?

Notice boards G6 (shared with Thatcham Town Council), G8, G1 are placed at the car parks (not including the Bombsite). These are used extensively to display events, notices and 'what to see this month' wildlife information. Notice boards as with other visitor signage need to be placed at locations which are free from vehicles, accessible (compacted smooth ground) and at a height that those that are either standing or seated can view. Currently none of the boards fit with this guidance.

The orientation boards on site give a good level of information for visitors on the habitats and species that are present and historical facts. There is one further interpretation sign board within the Crookham Common heathland renovation area (G67). This board details the work carried out at the location to revert the secondary woodland back to heathland. There is no other information for visitors.

When new orientation boards are installed as part of phase 2 of BBOWT's signage replacement process, it is advised that pertinent wildlife and historical information is included. Additionally there is the potential to engage and inform visitors within the site by using temporary hard-backed signs when habitat management occurs. A small number of habitat/species interpretation boards could be placed in key areas, such as the heathland, ancient woodland and within the car parks where visitors congregate.

There are numerous heritage structures such as the fire plane (G136), flag pole (G108), buildings (G107, G135 and G137), runway cross and numerous weather station platforms, fire hydrants and locations where buildings once stood. Currently there is no information for visitors to learn and engage with these structures. With any heritage trail upon the Greenham Business Park and along with the interpretation that is likely at the control tower, there is the opportunity for a combined working group that could produce interconnected trails and signage.

It is not the recommendation that the site is 'littered' with signs that detract from the natural appearance and therefore the use of discrete structurally mounted plaques carrying brief information and carefully chosen

locations for any interpretation boards is of paramount importance. It is the recommendation that signs are consolidated wherever possible.

## Recommendations

- Re-locate the notice boards to locations at which visitors are directed to park or which have high levels of footfall.
- Install new orientation boards at priority locations.
- During habitat works, consider the use of temporary interpretation signs to let visitors know about why certain management techniques are undertaken.
- Install interpretation at key physical heritage structures present on the site.
- Work with Greenham Business Park and the Greenham Parish Council when undertaking interpretation and orientation upon the Commons.

## 3.6 The on-site path network

### 3.6.1 Paths and tracks

As part of the access audit project a comprehensive path audit was undertaken using GPS technology to map the routes upon the site. The information on condition and type will be used by the reserves team as part of on-going management and improvements. The routes will be available for the design and production of instructive maps such as those used upon orientation boards and within the BBOWT 'Where To Go For Wildlife' handbook.

Because of the sheer length of the paths and tracks upon the Commons (the main 2-3m wide gravel tracks on the plateau alone make up more than 10kms) it was beyond this audit to undertake a detailed examination in terms of gradient and quality of every route. However, as explained, every path and track has been walked and major deficiencies have been reported to the reserves team.

The auditor is also recommending that all tracks and paths that have been defined as 'well used routes' are given a priority for maintenance and vegetation clearance. There needs to be a specification dependant on the particular route which will give a width and height (known as walking tunnel) to be cut. This requires a hierarchal priority level placed on each section of track. For example, access from car parks, through access gates and to the main tracks are priority level 1. Priority level 2 would include the main wide gravel tracks, waymarked trails, public rights of way, trails to heritage structures, viewpoints, benches and amenities such as dog waste bins. Level 3 would include all other routes that are less well used.

As all users whether they are on bicycle, foot or on horseback are allowed to use the same paths. In reality this has its complications due to potential conflicts and wear and tear. As part of the prioritisation it would be beneficial to consider the use of each track. It is not the recommendation to prohibit use of particular routes; rather the use of waymarking and naming the trails is a better approach. This method along with maintaining the trails specifically for the identified use(s) is a way of improving the experience for all users. Where paths and tracks are not present and to provide an alternative route for different users, then, in exceptional circumstance, it is recommended that an additional path or track is considered. Impacts on conservation of habitat and species would need to be considered to make sure negative impacts would be kept to a minimum. New paths would require approval from the Commission, Natural England (if on the SSSI) and may require permission under Section 38 of the Commons Act, 2006.

As already mentioned elsewhere, there are a great number of sealed and unsealed access tracks to private properties that lead to areas of the Commons on which BBOWT manages the land. It is beyond the audit to assimilate all the easement information, private property locations, tracks required for management of the Commons etc. This project recommends that this information does need collating and a strategy of maintenance of the tracks and responsibilities of such maintenance is devised.

The path network is also used by those travelling from 'A' to 'B' either commuting or for leisure use as a means of avoiding busy roads (cyclists for example). Therefore when maintaining and improving the path and track network it is important to think about what is occurring outside the perimeter of the site and the wider landscape connections. This thinking is in agreement with the WBC PRow improvement plan.

The surface of any permitted paths or tracks (for example waymarked trails) should be kept in a good state of repair.

### **Recommendations**

- Due to the number of paths and tracks a maintenance priority list is required so management can be focused. Waymarked trails should help to prioritise maintenance on particular paths.
- Work upon public rights of way should be done in partnership with the PRow team.

### **3.6.2 Bridges**

There are two bridges, one major elevated bridge (G83) and a lesser bridge over a ditch (G140). All structures that visitors are invited to use should be routinely checked for condition and safety. They should also be checked to see if they remain fit for purpose and are as accessible as possible. As this is unlikely to have occurred recently it is recommended that the bridges are assessed within the next 6 months.

### **Recommendations**

- Add bridges to a schedule of regular checks of all access structures present on the Commons
- Any new bridges should be built to accessible design standards as specified in BBOWT's standards for reserve access and the BTCV practical handbooks

### **3.6.3 Boardwalk**

There are two sections of boardwalk (G87 and G130). The board walk elevates the walking route above the wet habitat which has two functions; keeps visitors feet dry facilitating access and protects the habitat.

Enabling access into the southern woodland is an excellent way of assisting visitors to experience another habitat and its associated range of flora and fauna. The terrain in this area is challenging and therefore access will undoubtedly be more difficult for some. However, there are some simple modifications that can be made or incorporated when installing a route. For example; removing steps at the end of boardwalks and instead building a slope and making it flush with the ground, all platforms to have kick/edge board, platforms above 30cm need a handrail on both sides prevents to preventing accidental falls, passing places are required dependant on length etc. If a board walk requires steps then it will make the route impassable to mobility scooters. Instead an assessment should be made to see if it is possible to install a zigzag path that would eliminate the need for steps. Currently what is found on site follows historical routes and the best solution for access and habitat has been made given this 'restriction'. It is recommended that any adjustments suggested

in the target notes are made to the existing structures and a review of access into the woodland and gullies is undertaken so more visitors can engage with this part of the site.

## Recommendations

- Undertake modifications to boardwalks which will enable safe and accessible use of the structures
- Any new boardwalks should be built to accessible design standards as specified in BBOWT's standards for reserve access and the BTCV practical handbooks

### 3.6.4 Steps

There is just one flight of steps within the boundary of the site (G86). The steps lead down a very steep slope and meet the boardwalk in target note G87. The steps are being somewhat bypassed because of a desire line and water runoff. Mountain bikers are using the route because they often prefer more challenging terrain. Unfortunately damage occurs. Making the route less accessible to mountain bikers means it is consequently less accessible to other users but a balance must be met and providing other well maintained and signed mountain biking routes is part of having an accessible and enjoyable site for all. As mentioned in 3.6.3 if steps can be avoided by using a different route or installing a more gentle zig zag path then this should be done. There is one more flight of steps outside of the site boundary but is likely to provide access in the near future and these can be seen in G91. The steps form part of a new route from the north eastern corner of the business park. Though there is no requirement that the route should be discussed or given approval by the managers or owners of the Commons, it would be useful for the provision of access to the site and its conservation management if it were brought to the attention of BBOWT and WBC. This route currently provides access during daylight hours to pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. The changing of the route including the installation of the steps would restrict certain users. If the steps remain, the design would benefit from additional modifications such as a handrail and resting area due to the length of the flight.

## Recommendations

- Make modifications to the flight of steps in target note G86.
- Any new steps should be built to accessible design standards as specified in BBOWT's standards for reserve access and the BTCV practical handbooks. Always consider if steps are really necessary or if there another option that is both reasonable and does not have a negative impact on the habitat and wildlife in the proposed location.
- Meet with the site managers of the Greenham Business Park to discuss access to and from the park.

### 3.6.5 Gates and stiles

Please refer to comments in 3.3.2. and individual target notes for specific recommendations.

In summary. Access through the livestock fence is by gates, stiles or vehicular cattle grids. Nearly all pedestrian and bridle gates are self-closing by the fact they are fitted with off-set hinges. The BHS recommends that the use of non-self closing gates is preferable to self-closing gates due the fact the gates can strike the horse upon closing and often bang thus frightening the horse. Self-closing gates can also be a hindrance to those with pushchairs, bicycles, wheel chairs or those with restricted mobility or may use sticks or similar. Obviously self-closing gates are fitted so there is likely that a gate is left open resulting in the escape of

livestock. High use entrances may not require self-closing fittings due to the number of visitors who will more likely close a gate that is left open. Gates that are highlighted as used by horse riders, or are upon a route historically used by horse riders, may also benefit from not being self-closing. A difficult judgement in every case will be required to balance safety of user, possibility of livestock escape and consequent safety of the users of a public highway.

The highways of Bury's Bank road and Brackenhurst Lane have cattle grids and bypassing gates (field and pedestrian). These structures are maintained by the Highways division of WBC. There are a further 4 cattle grids within the Commons boundary, 3 have a field gate as a means of bypassing and 1 has a nearby bridle gate only. This is upon a private access track and so the provision of a field gate is not required as a matter of course.

The commons in general has a good number of access structures in useful locations and connections with surrounding PRoW have been maintained. Any gate or access structure installed by the land owner (WBC) should be in a good state of repair as the owner, or managing organisation, could be held liable for any injuries.

There are two gates that allow access directly onto Bury's Bank Road where there are no paths along the road (G34, G117). These should be considered for removal or closure because of safety and lack of use.

There are two stiles (G54, G79) fitted within the site. G54 allows access across the livestock fence to a small portion of common land to the east. This access is likely to be only used by the owners of the private residences and so is not a priority for upgrade to a gate structure but should be kept clear of vegetation. The second stile is off a sealed access track and again is likely to be rarely used due to the lack of path network in this location. Again it is not a priority to be upgraded to a gate but should be kept clear. As mentioned in 3.3.2 there is a stile on the public footpath GREE10/1 at the A339. This would benefit being upgraded to a pedestrian gate.

A double metal field gate is located south of Crookham Common road (G62) and this prohibits unauthorised access to private land beyond the common land. There is a locked (unknown lock) metal field gate south on Old Thornford road that has become defunct and was likely an access track in the past. Though now unsightly and not required, there is no recommendation to renew this structure.

The metal field gate described in G71 has had the estate lock removed and a private padlock fitted. This is unlawful as the gate is likely to belong to WBC and therefore the lock should be removed. Recommend to enquire if there is an easement given to the private property enclosed within the site boundary. The private property boundary fence and gates do not match the boundary upon the deposited map and so needs investigating.

The metal vehicle barrier described in G66 is locked (estate padlock) at night by the owner of the property that uses the track. This is a long standing agreement and as long as adequate access around the gate is provided or there is a nearby alternative, then this arrangement does not restrict legitimate users of the Commons.

There are a number of unused vehicle barriers that are no longer required as vegetation or a bund has been applied behind (G36, G38 and G53 for example). Purely for aesthetic reasons, a reduction in hard infrastructure that can be considered to have non-heritage importance would be beneficial. Theft due to metal salvagers is a possibility (vehicle barriers have been stolen at Wokefield Common) and the unwanted damage to the site associated with this.

Kissing gates can function to reduce access to motorcycles and this is why some have been fitted around the livestock fence line. They do however restrict access to horse riders and cyclists (G138 for example). As part of the review of paths and tracks the access structures should also be reviewed for suitability. Motorcycles can cause damage but they can gain access at numerous other locations (the auditor has witnessed a moped using a pedestrian gate). Access to legitimate users of the Commons should not be restricted at any point without good argument.

As part of a review of all access structures gates with a striker and triangular gravity catch should be considered to receive an upgrade to Centrewire's Easylatch system which is more accessible from both sides of the gate and has an extended lever to assist horse riders. The upgrade should be considered by location and the use it gets and whether the access is going to appear upon a promoted route for particular users. Private land owners who share the boundary with the Commons have a right to install pedestrian gates within their fence lines to access the common land. Without permission (and consequently the gaining of an easement) a private landowner cannot install a gate to which a vehicle will access (for example the installation of a garage to which a vehicle crosses common land to access the said garage). Any such arrangements without an easement are considered encroachment.

## **Recommendations**

- Undertake regular checks and carry out maintenance of the access structures upon the Commons rather than waiting for a complaint or notification of a problem from a member of the public.
- Regularly clear access structures of all vegetation both from the side or overhanging branches.
- As part of defining promoted routes for different users, ask the question if the gate is suitable for that user or if modifications/replacements are required.
- Remove any gates that lead to nowhere or onto a road without provision for pedestrians.

### **3.6.6 Height Barriers**

Height barriers are used to restrict unwanted activities such as fly-tipping large amounts of waste in locations hidden from view. They are also used to prevent persons with campervans camping overnight, travellers entering the car parking areas and staying for an extended length of time and lorries from parking up etc. There are no regulations associated with the car parks so WBC and BBOWT must maintain these areas in a way that prevents unwanted and unsociable behaviour. There may be assistance given by the Police if large encampments with associated damage, unsociable behaviour or that have 6 or more vehicles are present (section 61 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994). The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 has further strengthened the powers of the Police when dealing with raves numbering 20 or more individuals.

Height barriers are purposely restrictive and the consequences and restrictions they provide to legitimate users should be weighed up against the possible negative repercussions if a barrier was absent. The height barrier at Pyle hill (G166) is not required as the space beyond is for just 12 cars and is well frequented thus dissuading unsociable activity. The barrier at Crookham car park is in an isolated area and should remain. The height barrier to the Bombsite car park (G39) should also remain for the same reason. The height barrier located at the end of Brackenhurst Lane (G141) is on an adopted public highway. It was installed in the first instance to prevent unauthorised access by large vehicles onto the Commons. In practice this is unlikely due to the vegetation growth in the vicinity. The threat of cabling and other scrap being stolen from the Commons

has reduced substantially since its opening to the public. The height barrier is now locked by the security of the GAMA site and BBOWT or WBC do not have keys even after repeated requests. Essentially it now provides extra security to the GAMA site. Parking around the entrance to the GAMA site is at times unofficially policed using cones and signs. It is recommended that an agreed area in front of the access gates is painted to prevent parking. Vehicles can legitimately park along a highway as long as it does not block access or present a safety issue. If extra clearance is required in front of the gates then the owners of the GAMA site should undertake management of the parking in partnership with WBC/BBOWT and in a sensitive way so as not to negatively affect visitors' experience.

The height barrier at the main car park (G14) should be kept open during opening hours as already mentioned in 3.3.1.

Any new height barriers should be installed to BS8300 and have a vertical clearance of 2.6m or there be a facility for the visitor to make arrangements to pass through the barrier, either in advance or by calling a member of the reserve team (main car park only).

## **Recommendations**

- Consult on the removal of the height barrier at Pyle Hill car park
- Keep the main car park barrier open during the day
- Only fit new height barriers if there are no other options
- Liaise with the GAMA site owners with regards managing access to their entrance gates

## **3.7 Other site furniture and buildings**

### **What amenities are there for visitors on site?**

#### **3.7.1 Buildings**

There are no buildings open to the public on site. There are ex-military buildings associated with periods the site was an airbase and one such building has become a bat roost/hibernacula (G137). All remaining buildings should be secured to prevent unauthorised access for safety reasons. Interpretation would be useful on the buildings so visitors can learn what the purpose of the buildings had been.

## **Recommendations**

- Maintain buildings so entry is prohibited.
- Add interpretation so visitors can engage more with the site.

#### **3.7.2 Furniture**

Furniture installed on the site is intentionally sparse so the natural look of the site is not spoiled. Because of this there are three logs with seats carved into them (G106, G175 and G179). These were installed when the site first re-opened to the public and therefore are showing signs of natural deterioration. The benches do not meet any recommendations for bench accessibility and should be considered as only useful as a perch and not included in any future plans for accessible routes. There is a bench with a back rest situated overlooking the Crookham pools area (G183). There are a further 3 benches (G76, G143 and G115) fitted with back and

arm rests which allow those who require stabilisation and assistance to more easily sit and get up from a seating position. The benches have been installed without a plinth which would help the bench seat maintain an optimum height above the ground as material is retained by wood revetment. Two of the benches are also a little bit of a distance from the track so a smooth and clear path needs to be maintained. Finally, a bench without rests has been installed opposite a popular dog swimming pond (G183). Because it has not been installed within a plinth the ground has worn and the height above the ground has become too great. If additional furniture is considered it would require a well backed up argument for its inclusion. This could include the addition of rest spots on an accessible trail or routes directly leading from car parks. Benches have historically only been added to take advantage of a particular view point and not to aid accessibility to those who require rests. 4 of the 6 purpose built benches have memorial plaques but information on the agreements in terms of responsibility of maintenance have not been found. BBOWT has drafted a new procedure for the installation of memorial benches for a donation.

## Recommendations

- If accessible trails are installed then additional benches/perches should be installed to the specification as set out by the Fieldfare Trust.

### 3.7.3 Additional structures

#### 3.7.3.1 Pipe line termination compound



The compound is owned by the Ministry Of Defence and so responsibility for maintenance and safety does not lie with BBOWT. All fences and structures have since been removed (March 2015). It is recommended to install dragons teeth and plant naturally occurring vegetation (keep low to retain view) to prevent parking upon this area.

Buildings 150 (WBC museum) and 616 (now called Estovers and home to BBOWT's West Berkshire offices and the PRow field team) remain in the main car park. Public access around the Estovers building should not be permitted due to safety and security.

### **3.7.3.2 Environmental heritage**

The most recent occupation by the American Air Force has left its mark on the site. Visible structures include the control tower, fire hydrants, weather station bases, flag pole, part of the original runway, fire plane and the last remaining air base boundary gate at Pyle Hill. There are also a number of fuel tanks that have been decontaminated and left upon the surface at the main car park, one of which has been turned into a pin-hole camera obscura (not publicly accessible).

Currently there is no interpretation of any of the visible structures for visitors to be able to learn and engage with. The heritage management plan (HEMP) gives detail on the importance of each heritage item but little information on how it should be preserved. A list of structures and locations that could be added to a heritage trail and/or interpretation added should be produced so a targeted plan of maintenance can be started and added to the new site management plan.

### **3.7.3.3 Any other items**

There is one water trough that is connected to the mains water supply at the end of the woodland copse at Pyle Hill. It has become enveloped by vegetation and so is not useable and therefore needs clearing. Cycle stands should be installed at the main car park near to the control tower building.

## **3.8 Additional findings and recommendations**

### **3.8.1 Safety**

#### **Occupiers Liability Act 157 and 1984**

The Acts set out a duty of care to people who come onto land by invitation and therefore reasonable steps should be taken to protect visitors from hazards. If the visitor willingly accepts these risks then there is no obligation on an owner or occupier. Additionally an owner or occupier can discharge the duty by clearly warning of the danger and discouraging those entering the site from taking risks. This can be done by providing warning notices that details both the potential danger and also where the liability lies if the risk is taken. Upon CROW access land the 1957 Act does not apply and the owner or occupier has no duty of care arising from natural features of the landscape (including river, stream, ditch, pond or tree) and any person passing over, under or through a field boundary except by using an installed gate or stile. Any risks created deliberately or recklessly by the owner or occupier are not included with these exemptions.

Natural areas have within them certain dangers that often can not be foreseen. Hazards within the countryside do not normally pose a significant threat to those who access it, especially if there is current good practice by the land manager and common sense from visitors. BBOWT is undertaking a tree safety audit which endeavours to firstly identify the hazards from falling wood along high risk areas such as road sides and car parks where people congregate/are invited to use. Work by WBC has commenced to remove these hazards. BBOWT's watercourse/risk assessments based upon RoSPA's guidance are undertaken where the site has water bodies that could be considered as potential risks to visitor's safety. The assessments are usually triggered when the risk notably increases such as when visiting educational establishments undertake investigation such as pond dipping. The ex-military balancing ponds (collection of run-off from the paved areas) are surrounded by fencing because they have concrete sides and still in some cases are quickly filled after heavy rainfall.

There is a site risk assessment which is available to those managing the site and also is given to contractors and groups/individuals that have been given permission to use the site for a specific activity or event.

Personal and property safety within the car parking area can be maintained by keeping vegetation low and allowing lines of sight between different areas. Consolidation of disparate parking also means that there are higher numbers of visitors using a smaller area and so more people are around dissuades crime.

Vacant buildings should be securely sealed so unauthorised entrance cannot be gained.

Sight lines exiting car parks, highway junctions, minor access tracks and paths should be kept clear as possible to allow vehicles and pedestrians good distance visibility of traffic and also giving traffic good visibility of those exiting the Commons.

The un-fenced grazed area to the north along Bury's Bank road has the potential for vehicle/livestock collisions as well as pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. There is a 30 mile an hour speed restriction and a speed sensitive sharp corner sign along this section between the cattle grids. Two large signs (G10/11) near to the entrances of this open area notify users that there are livestock grazing.

### **3.8.2 Control Tower**

The renovation of the ex-airbase control tower could be an excellent addition to visitors' enjoyment of the site as it will offer toilet facilities, refreshments, interpretation/ information and somewhere to rest/shelter. The centre has the likely potential to; attract visitors to already enjoying the site to use the main car park instead of other minor car parks or unofficial locations, attract new visitors that would not normally have visited the site because of the lack of facilities important to them, and to create an attraction to those nearby and much further away that would not normally have made the trip to simply walk.

Recommendations as part of access;

- As part of the planning process, make sure that fauna and flora are not negatively affected by an increase of visitors within the close proximity of the development
- Appropriate, instructional and informative signage is placed at key highways' junctions and the entrance to the main car park so visitors can find their way to the centre. This could be facilitated by the application for brown tourist highway signs
- Appropriate and instructional signage within the car park to direct visitors to appropriate parking for their needs which includes blue badge holders, motorcycles, long vehicles including trailers and multi-passenger vehicles, deliveries etc.
- Create parking for the users as described in the last statement and appropriately signed
- Provide cycle parking close to the centre and clearly visible to deter theft
- Provide areas where visitors can congregate and enjoy picnics or similar in a safe and relaxing location. Make sure the benches are wheelchair accessible and have appropriate accessible paths and access widths. An obvious location would be next to the visitor centre where there are good views of the Commons
- Maintain the surfacing within the car park especially the blue badge holder priority parking, recommend installing a firm and smooth surface within these bays as a minimum and also the connecting paths from these bays
- Review the suitability of the gates and paths leading from the car park so they can be used by those in mobility scooters and those with push chairs

- Review the use of the dog waste bins and the amount of litter regularly so changes can be made before any negative impacts on visitors enjoyment of the site emerge
- Restrict access to buildings 150 and Estovers plus close off areas dead ends and surplus tracks to vehicles

### **3.9 Encroachment**

Encroachment can include many unwanted activities that reduce the amount and quality of access by the public. Section 38 of the Commons Act 2006 provides that ‘restricted works’ on registered common land (or certain other land — see section 38(5)) require the consent of the Secretary of State if they prevent or impede access to the land, or involve the resurfacing of land with a ‘hard’ surface (such as concrete or tarmac) (Common Land Guidance Sheet 12, Government Planning Portal). In addition to this there are unwanted activities which could be deemed as trespass or fly-tipping which could cause damage to the environment or impede the visitor’s enjoyment and access to the land.

During the audit encroachments were recorded including amongst others; installation of new fences (‘land-grabbing’), makeshift buildings, vehicles both taxed and untaxed parked on common land, building waste, open drains, new vehicle access points through boundaries, huge volumes of green waste and extensive planting of shrubs and trees. A sample of these can be seen in the additional photos within the appendix. This information is available for discussion and will be brought to the attention of WBC. The process of dealing with encroachment can be long and expensive if offenders are taken to court. It is advisable that a step by step process of providing private landowners sharing boundaries with the site information on why the site is so valuable to conservation and public access and what is not permitted. The use of practices such as ‘beating the bounds’ usually occurring on Ascension Day or during Rogation week is a method of walking the boundaries of the site and checking to see that boundaries are correct and as a means of talking to residents.

### **3.10 Visitor Surveys**

BBOWT has undertaken visitor surveys on Greenham Common and is currently processing the data recorded.

### **3.11 Beyond this Audit**

This audit is part of a larger management plan that will guide BBOWT and its working partners into the future. The feedback from stakeholders will be assimilated and any necessary amendments made to the access report. Discussions will be held with any stakeholders that request a meeting or if responses warrant further clarification.

BBOWT requests and needs feedback on this report so we can move towards a management plan that will be in the best interests of not just the wildlife and stakeholders, but also the users of the site.

**To comment on this report please contact:**

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Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust

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Office Telephone: 0163535157

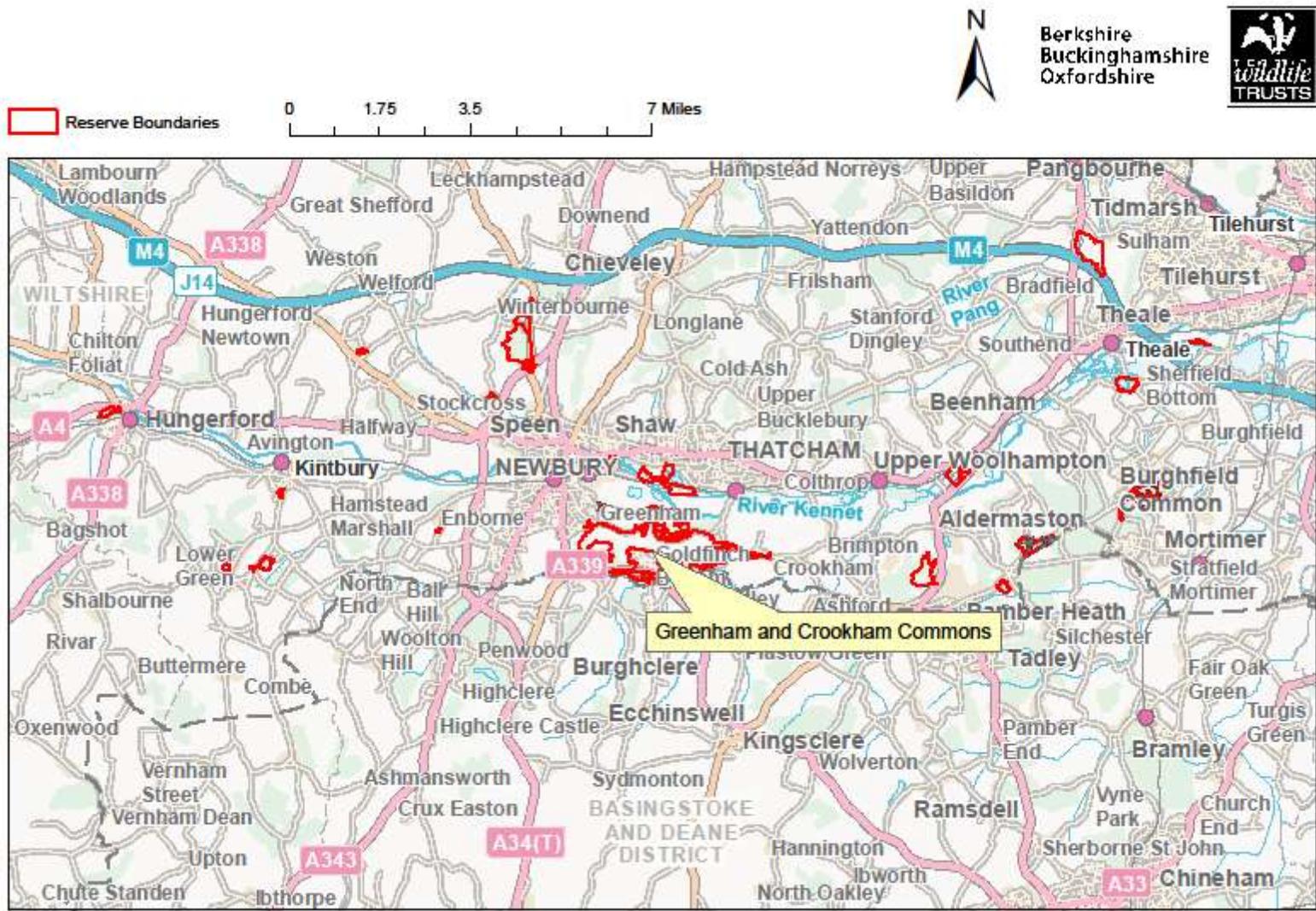
Mobile Telephone: 07889116392

Office Location: BBOWT, Estovers, Bury's Bank Road, Greenham, Thatcham, Berkshire RG19 8BZ

Postal Address: BBOWT, Nature Discovery Centre, Muddy Lane, Lower Way, Thatcham, Berkshire RG19 3FU

# Appendix

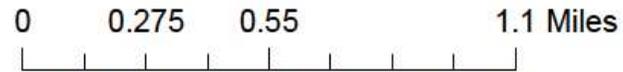
# Greenham and Crookham Location Map



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# Management Area Map

## BBOWT management area (excluding the main car park)

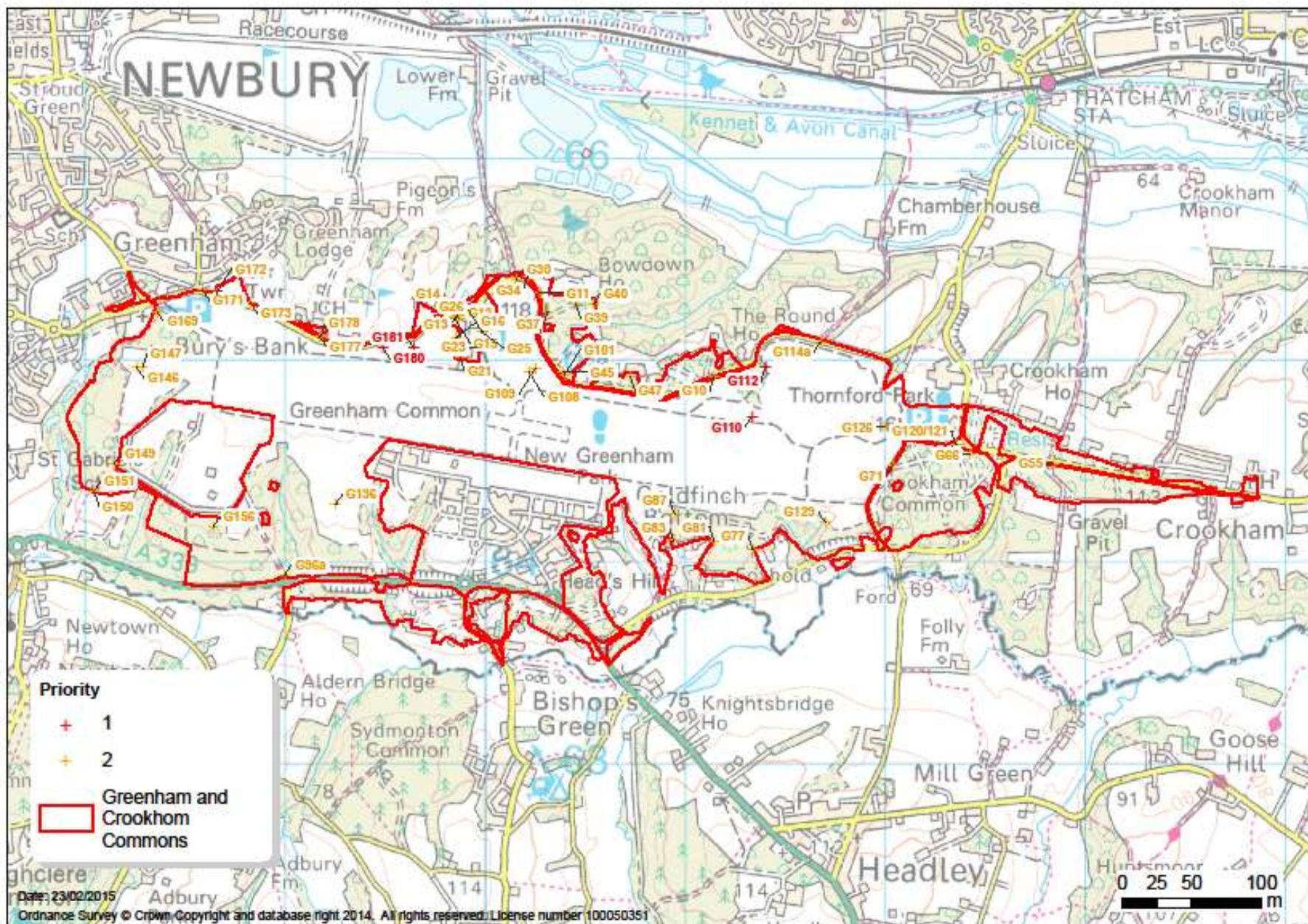


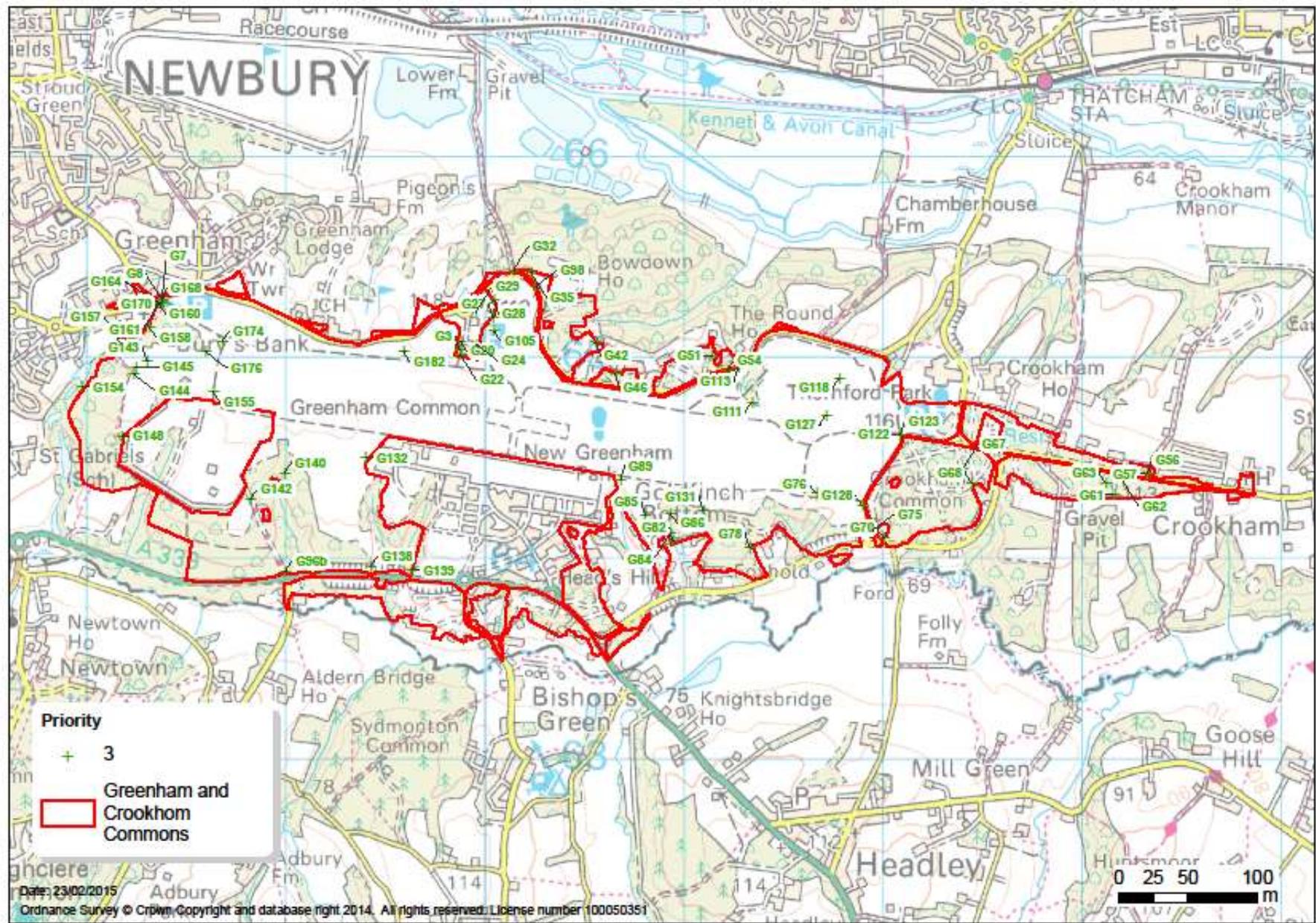
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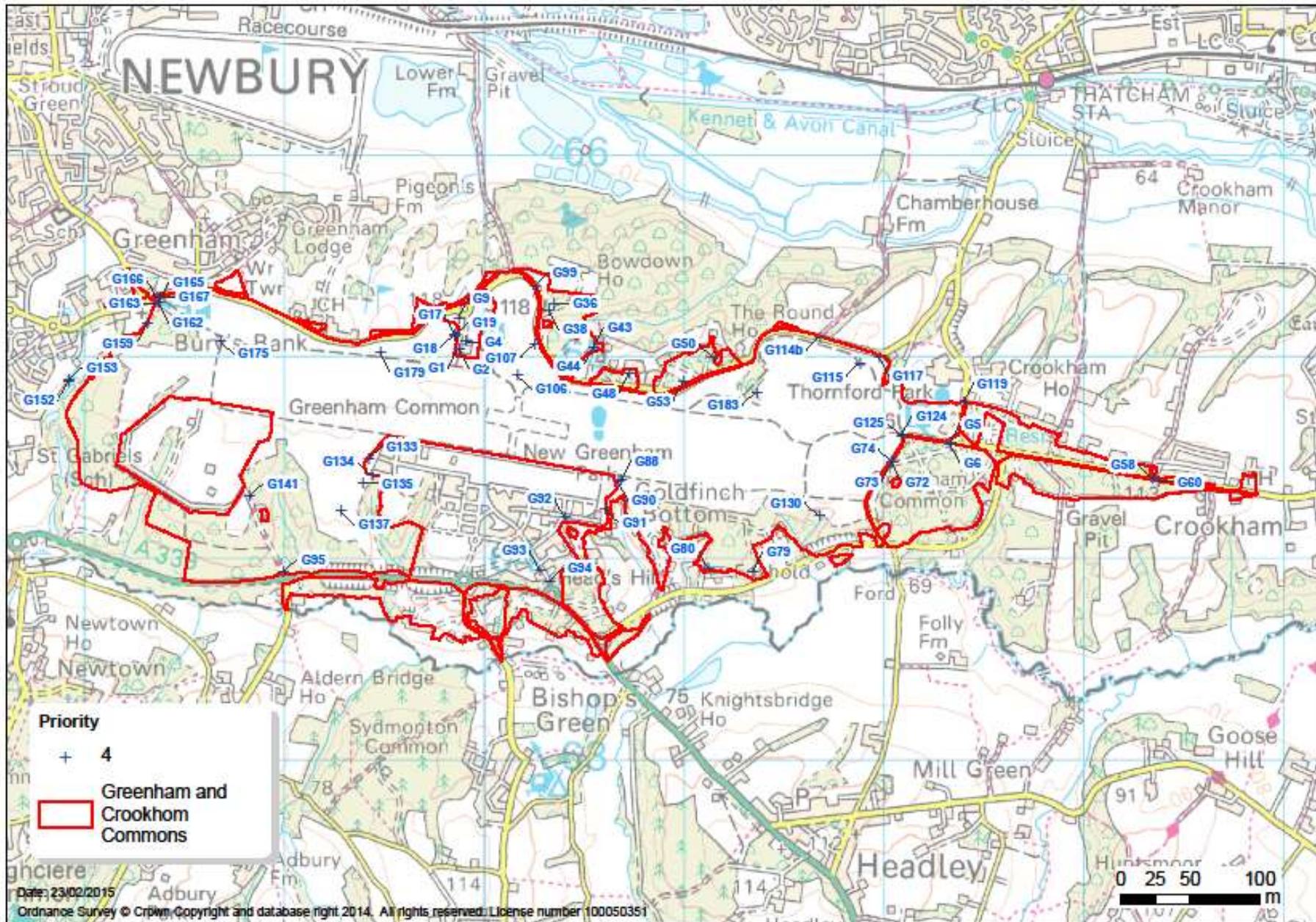


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# Target Note Maps

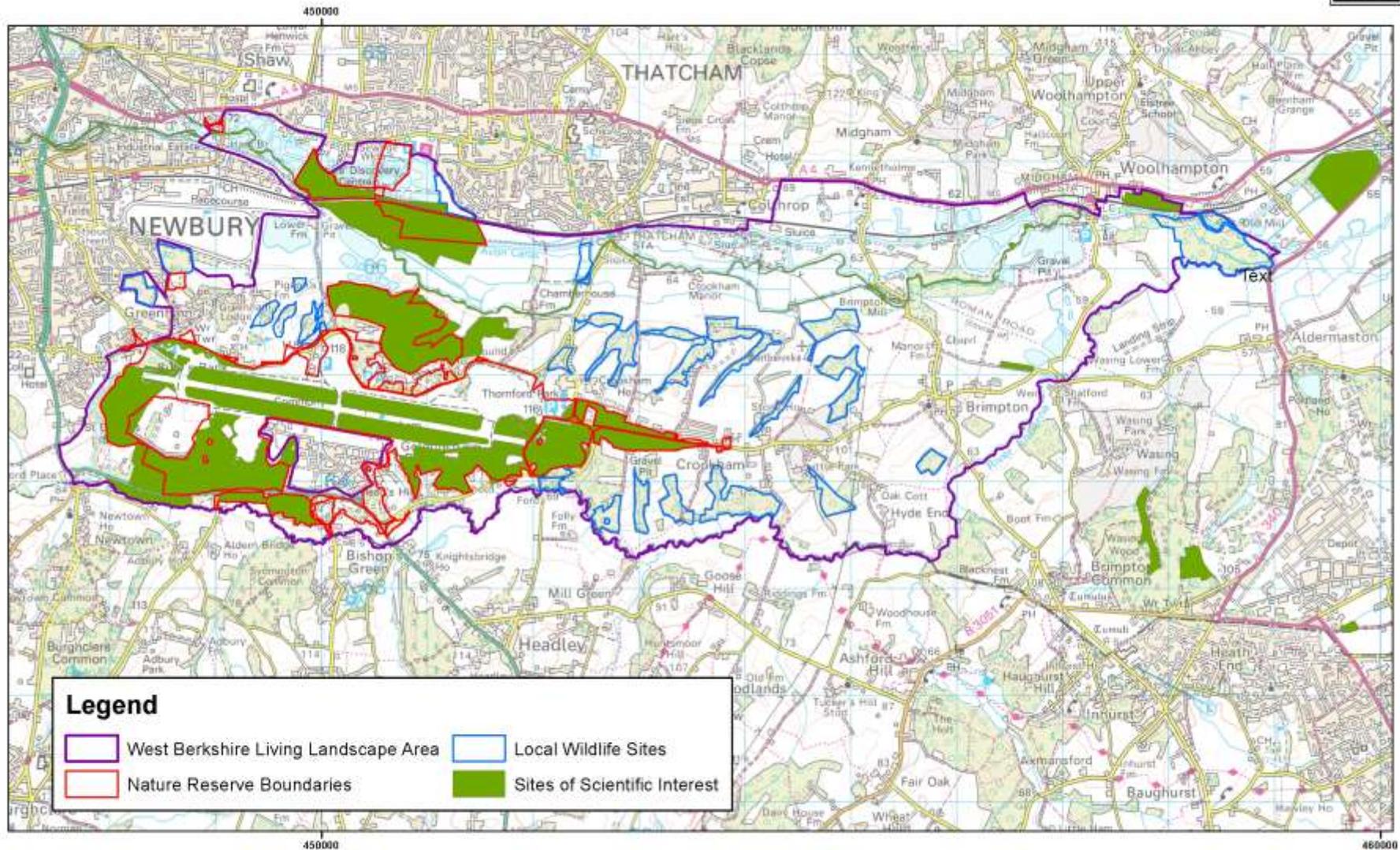






# West Berkshire Living Landscape and Nature Reserves

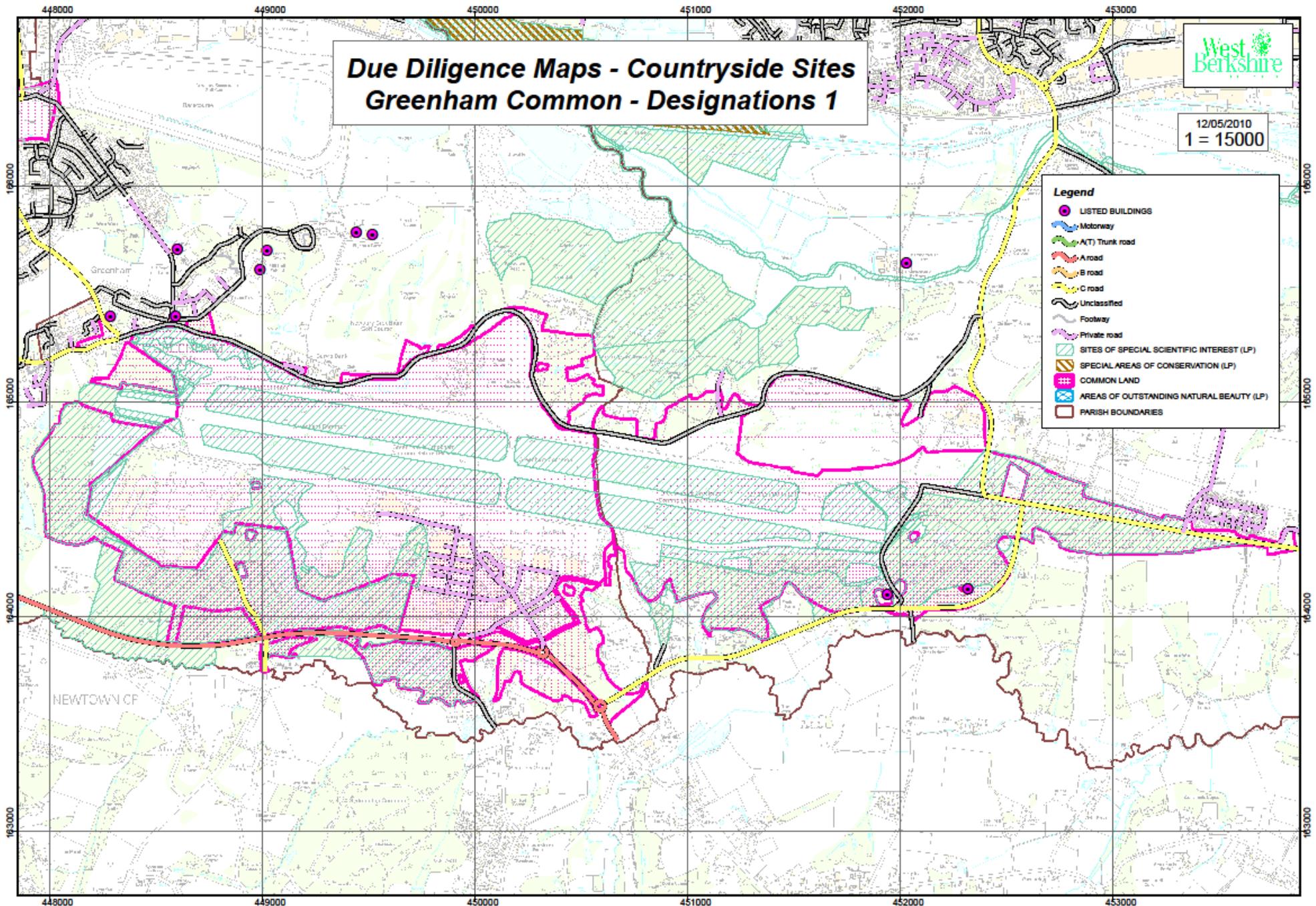
Berkshire  
Buckinghamshire  
Oxfordshire



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09/08/2012



**Due Diligence Maps - Countryside Sites  
Greenham Common - Designations 1**



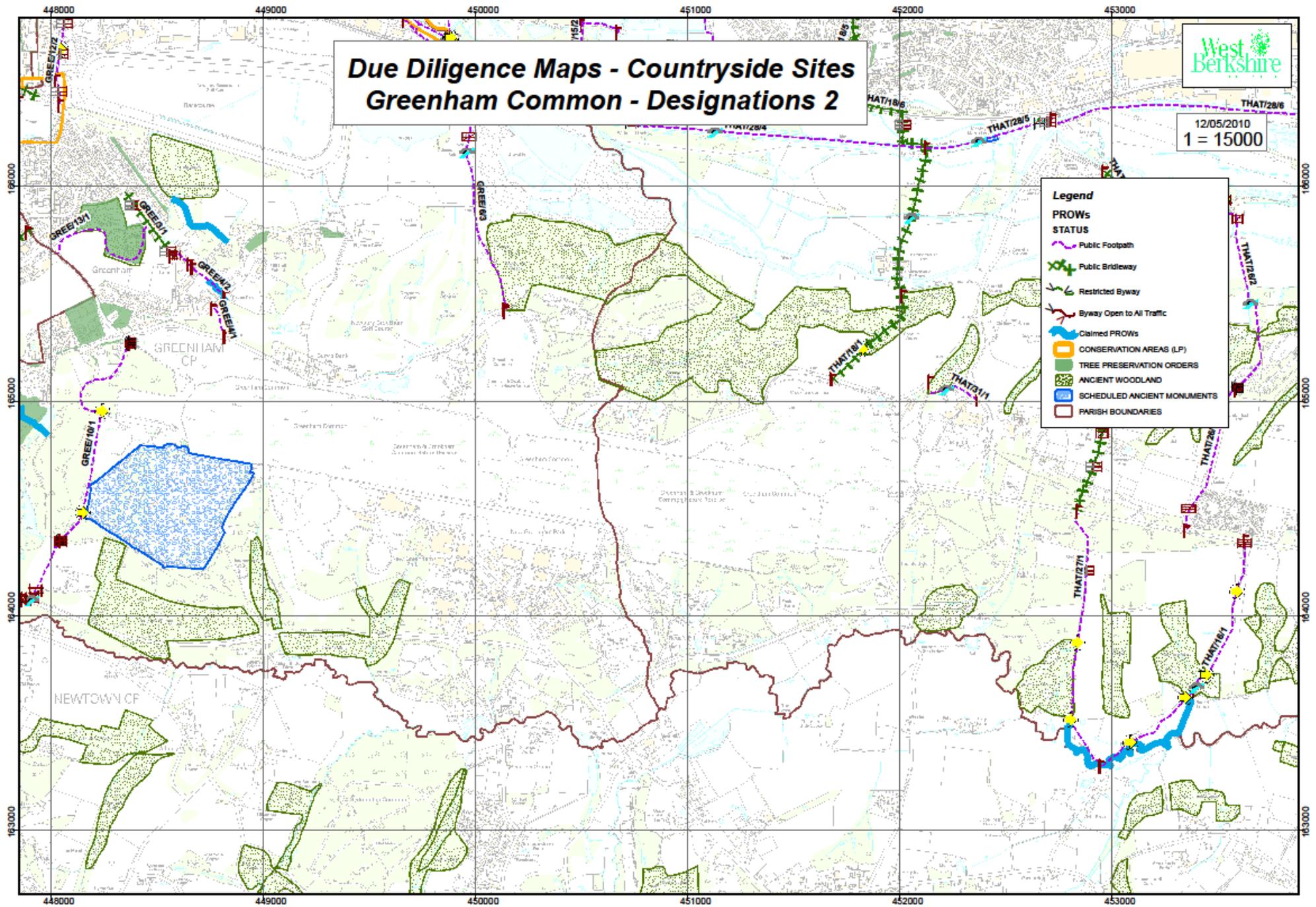
12/05/2010  
1 = 15000

- Legend**
- LISTED BUILDINGS
  - Motorway
  - A(T) Trunk road
  - A road
  - B road
  - C road
  - Unclassified
  - - - Footway
  - Private road
  - SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (LP)
  - SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION (LP)
  - COMMON LAND
  - AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (LP)
  - PARISH BOUNDARIES

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# Due Diligence Maps - Countryside Sites Greenham Common - Designations 2

  
 12/05/2010  
 1 = 15000



# Paths and Tracks

## Legend

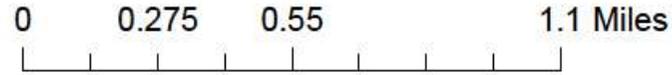
— Public Right of Way

## Tracks and Paths

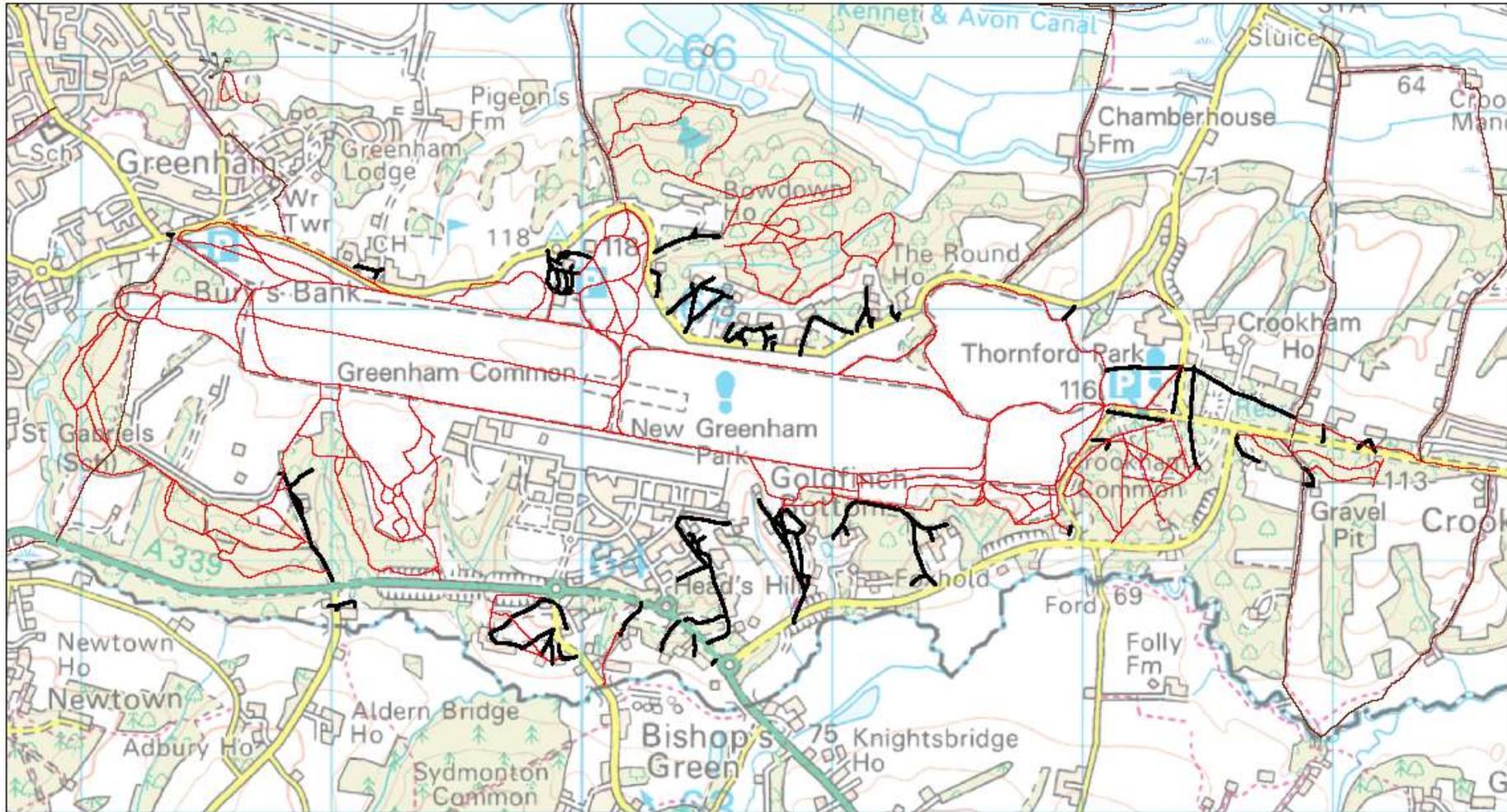
### Type

— Access Track

— Permissive Path



Berkshire  
Buckinghamshire  
Oxfordshire



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## Additional Photos



Greenham Common sign located on Crookham Hill at the junction with Bury's Bank Road. Photo looking north. The word Common has been abbreviated and the sign is very small and covered in green algae. SU52376539



Greenham Common sign located on Crookham Hill at the junction with Bury's Bank Road. Photo looking south. The word Common has been abbreviated and the sign is very small and covered in green algae. SU52376539



Greenham common direction wording upon a sign on the A339 approaching the roundabout from the south, close to the Newbury Retail Park on the A339, SU47366514. The same wording is placed on the sign on the other side of the roundabout coming from the north.



Greenham Common wording upon a sign placed next to the roundabout on the A339 heading east. SU47386526



Greenham and Crookham Common car park sign facing east next to the mini roundabout to the control tower 'main' car park entrance on Bury's Bank Rd. SU49856522



The Greenham Business Park site map. Access onto the Commons is not highlighted.

## Pyle Hill Car Park



Looking east along Pinchington Lane. The path on the left is a combined cycle and pedestrian route. To cross the road to the car park and Greenham entrance gates there are dropped kerbs with a tactile blister paving at the road edge. There is a separation of vehicles and pedestrians until you reach the entrance to the car park. There is no tactile paving to warn those with visual impairments that they are crossing the access under the height barrier.



The car park surface uses a permeable concrete cell surface suitable for heavy vehicles. The type used means there are raised 'buttons' that are very awkward to walk upon and are not suitable for wheel chairs or pushchairs or those who use walking aids.



Access from the car park to the gates is either out of the paved entrance/exit or between dragons teeth wooden posts as pictured. Previously simple paths were formalised using logs but these were removed at the request of the auditor as they became very slippery when wet. Now the area is heavily worn and uneven. The notice board is inaccessible to those seated and difficult to reach if the visitor has an accompaniment.



Cars park in the informal paved area as there are no restrictions. The gates can become blocked by vehicles and pedestrian safety is a concern. Once the 'dragons teeth' along the edge of the grass areas are knocked down vehicles pull on to them. The two vehicles in the picture would not have been able to fit under the height barrier and hence have parked where they are.

## The Main Car Park



Photo looks north from the control tower building at the largest of the parking areas. The orientation and information board is on the right of the photo. The surface is unsealed and patched using Type 1 gravels. The vegetation between the car parking bays is becoming tall and dense so car and personal security is a worry. There are no individual parking bays.



The second of the two parking areas to the east. Highways gravels were stored here and so there is a substantial amount of small gravels on the ground. This makes manoeuvring a push chair or wheel chairs difficult. This area is well used as it is quite enclosed.



This picture shows building 150 which is within the car park area. A small enclosed area behind the building could feature unwanted activity and litter is found here on a regular basis. These areas that have no function as part of the car park should be closed to vehicles.



Signage within the car park has been vandalised and removed so there is no way visitors know which direction they should go. The junction pictured shows the track leading to building 150 and building 616 (now called Estovers). There is a small no entry sign which has little function. For security reasons and so visitors know where to park it would be advisable to have clear and easily readable signage. Deliveries to Estovers would also benefit of a directional sign at this point.



The control tower building is currently being renovated and a change of use application has been submitted. The building will become a visitor centre with interpretation, viewing areas and a café and toilet facilities on the ground floor. The path to the western (left in picture) is the main route onto the Commons. This currently is potholed and requires a smoother surface if those in wheel chairs for example are to have access from their vehicles to the café and onto the Commons to take in the view.



Ad-hoc parking needs to be managed so that access, views and function of the parking area is not adversely affected.



Where roads split, the right fork to the largest bay and left to the 'other bay' and access to gates onto the Commons, there could be vehicle barriers installed to manage the wear and tear on the permeable surfaces. For example, having a vehicle gate on the left fork would mean parking only in the main bay. This would mean a reduction in maintenance and during the off-season vehicles would park in a consolidated area and thus security of vehicles and peoples safety is likely to increase as there would be less lone cars.



A single lane track on the east of the car park complex that performs little function and has no parking bays. Extraneous tracks increase management costs. Hidden areas also increase the risk of fly-tipping and unwanted activity.

## Crookham Car Park



Crookham car park entrance is situated off Old Thornford road, and within eyesight of Crookham Common road. A height barrier and vehicle swing barrier is fitted to dissuade those with large vehicles or trailers wanting to camp or fly-tip. A height barrier will restrict legitimate users who are arriving in larger vehicles such as camper vans or who are towing horse boxes. In this instance because of the remoteness of the location the height barrier is required and the car park should be locked after dusk. It is recommended that should a need arise from those arriving with horse trailers or campervans, then an alternative pull-in could be built, but this is not a high priority given the existence of the main car park.

The surface of the car park is of naturally occurring gravels and added quarry stones such as Type 1. The informal area seems to be sufficient given the low numbers but should be reviewed if the car park becomes busier. Simple marked bays could be installed. The informal nature does mean that path entrances can become blocked which hinders access beyond. This could be rectified by using posts and simple signage to demarcate the entrances. As pictured, vehicles can park in front of the information signage. It would be recommended to have a boxed off section to allow visitors to approach the signage without hindrance and in safety. Just to the left of the vehicle pictured is a path that runs parallel to Old Thornford road to the Crookham pools entrance gate on the sharp corner. It is recommended that this path is opened up and signed accordingly so visitors know they can use the car park to access the main common instead of the laybys along Old Thornford road.



Crookham car park looking east. There are two small exits for visitors within this area, one into the un-grazed area which has had heathland renovation work in the last few years, and the other which runs parallel to Crookham Common road and gives access to the path networks to the East. The surface was in good condition.

## Unofficial Car Parking



Pyle Hill. Parking restrictions are not in place so visitors legitimately park in front of the access gates.



Parking around private properties is widespread with cars (taxed and untaxed), caravans and construction vehicles parked upon common land.



Bury's Bank Road. There are several laybys on this road that on occasion have gates through the livestock fence if present as in the photo.



Old Thornford Road. The road is littered with pull-ins that are probably very old in their use. An interesting idea would be to close the road retaining the car park at Crookham as the access point to the Commons.

## Encroachment



Frequently the auditor found structures built on common land to house outdoor machinery, cut wood, building materials etc. Vehicles were a common occurrence with at least 4 untaxed vehicles stored. This 'extension' of private residence not only looks unsightly and could be an environmental hazard; it also reduces the area that visitors can comfortably enjoy.



The auditor found extensive gardenisation especially to grassed areas and the cuttings were nearly always dumped nearby. In some cases garden plants were planted on the approach to private residences.



The most common occurrence is the dumping of green waste onto Common land. This occurs from private residents gardens and from the cutting of 'lawns' upon the common. There are several negative impacts from this encroachment namely; enrichment of habitats that require impoverished soils, damage to habitat due to smothering it, introduction of invasive species and garden varieties, obstruction of access and unsightly.



An example of a suspected encroachment where a paddock has been developed where in actual fact the common boundary is likely to be along the line of the tree seen in the distance. All boundary issues need to be checked against the definitive map. This encroachment reduces the available land that the public can enjoy.



One of many examples of encroachment discovered along the edge of private land holdings. Even though some areas may appear to be of little wildlife importance, in actual fact dense scrub and woodland edges are very important. There was considerable evidence of waste, placement of sheds and movement of fences on common land in this area of Crookham.



Using available definitive maps available to the auditor this possible encroachment was discovered where multiple buildings and stored machinery upon a very large area of the Commons. Other locations where machinery connected with business and private use stored upon common land were recorded. Hard standings are often installed using building rubble and the addition of access tracks to access the machinery.



Around private residences there were found many occurrences where there was an extension of the land owners garden. Mown areas, clearance of trees and even installation of washing lines was recorded.



In this picture there is a mound of horse manure and bedding which was over 2m tall and covered a very large area which means a long standing arrangement of disposing of stable refuse onto the common. A gate in the fence next to the stables facilitated this activity.

## Reference document

### Bicycle access on Greenham and Crookham Commons.

Date: 13 January 2015 (produced for the cycle forum).

This paper explains Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust's (BBOWT's) aspirations for bicycle access to Greenham and Crookham Commons, which is one of the sites transferred from West Berkshire Council's responsibility to BBOWT in January 2014. BBOWT has undertaken an audit of the access provision at Greenham and Crookham Commons which is currently being written up, the results of which will be consulted upon. This audit and its findings will further steer BBOWT's access policy.

BBOWT welcomes considerate bicycle use on the Commons and there are well over 10km of usable wide gravel routes in existence plus in addition many km's of narrow more challenging trails. As specified within the Greenham and Crookham Act 2002 (The Act), bicycles are permitted only to use defined paths and tracks. We do not support the unauthorised making of tracks that do not currently exist as this has the potential of damage to habitat and disturbance of species that are present all year round or seasonally.

BBOWT realises that the tracks are used by commuters that wish to travel between Newbury/Thatcham and the Greenham Business Park and similarly those wishing to avoid the Bury's Bank road. BBOWT also realises that visitors come to the Commons to undertake leisure cycling whether it be on the wide gravel tracks on the plateau or the twisting tracks around the perimeter used by those on mountain bikes. BBOWT welcomes these informal uses.

The maintenance of the tracks is paramount to the continued enjoyment and accessibility to the users. BBOWT will endeavour to maintain the well-used plateau tracks to a level that can be used by those on mountain bikes or hybrid bikes. BBOWT understands that there are those wanting the tracks upgraded to a surface that would be smooth enough for drop handle bar road bikes. BBOWT understands the uniqueness of the sites placement to allow for a traffic free route from Old Thornford Road to Pyle Hill in the first instance. However after careful investigation, BBOWT is in the opinion that the initial costs and subsequent maintenance of the tracks to this standard would affect the delivery of other key management tasks due to the tight budgets we work within. The tracks are multi-use and therefore maintenance vehicles and those tending the livestock have the potential of damaging and shortening the life of any smooth surface applied. A sealed surface is not allowed as specified in The Act.

BBOWT's aim is to undertake repair work where 50% or more of the width of the main gravel tracks is damaged and unusable. BBOWT is more than happy to work with the West Berkshire Highways department, and other partners in any application for the up keep and improvement of the Pyle Hill to Greenham Business Park route.

In the future BBOWT would like to work with local cycling groups and cycle retail outlets to maintain the off-road single-track routes used by mountain bikes. Collaborations such as this allow for greater understanding of

the wildlife conservation amongst cyclists and maintenance of the routes into the future. Commercial activities are prohibited on the Commons, so organised bike tours and similar events are not allowed.

BBOWT relies on a grant from West Berkshire Council for on-going management of the Commons, beyond this BBOWT relies upon membership and donations for funding of its work.

To conclude, BBOWT welcomes cyclists using the Commons and will maintain the tracks to a standard suitable for hybrid and mountain bikes and will work with partners to improve the network where appropriate. We request the understanding of cyclists that the site will be managed in a way that keeps the 'natural' appearance in place. We also request that cyclists respect the zoning during the ground nesting bird season 1<sup>st</sup> March to the 31<sup>st</sup> July. We welcome the collaborative assistance from individuals or groups to maintain the current defined paths and tracks so they can be sustainably used into the future.

# Reference Document

## Greenham and Crookham Commons

### Code covering the use of vehicles on the Common

- No unauthorised use of vehicles on the Common
- Permission to use a vehicle on the common is granted by the landowner, it is not a right.
- Any breaches of this code can lead to an individual's permission being rescinded.
- In general terms access can be granted to individual members of West Berkshire Council and BBOWT staff, graziers, contractors and wildlife surveyors. There must be a specific requirement relating to the management of the common or the surveillance and monitoring of habitats and species thereon.
- Horse-drawn vehicles may also be granted access for recreational purposes at specific times.
- Where permission is granted, vehicular use should be restricted to the main gravel tracks only (a map showing these will accompany this code).
- Where livestock are being rounded up this should be done on foot (or on occasion on horseback) rather than by using vehicles.
- In wet conditions contractors working on the common should use vehicles with low pressure tyres where practicable to avoid surface damage.
- During the nesting bird season (1<sup>st</sup> March – 31<sup>st</sup> July) a number of additional tracks will remain off-limits for permitted vehicle users (map to accompany code will show these areas).
- Permitted users must display a valid permit in a prominent place in the front window of their vehicle when on the common.
- All users of vehicles should show consideration for recreational visitors by driving slowly. They should give way to pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.
- Those granted permission to use a vehicle on the common will be assigned a key for a specified period relating to their requirements, they will be asked to sign a copy of this code to indicate that they have understood and will abide by the conditions set out here.
- Any breach of these conditions and permission will be deemed to be unauthorised and may lead to criminal proceedings.

End of report.