

A Plan for the Management of the Trees and Natural Aspects of Rousdon Estate

Adopted by the board of Allhallows Limited in December 2016

Introduction.

The owners and residents of Rousdon Estate recognise that the trees and other natural aspects of The Estate are crucial to the environment. Appropriate management is essential to maintain that environment, which will result in a healthier state for all things natural, including the human population. Property values will also benefit from this approach.

The director currently responsible for woodland management and other environment matters is **Mike Hughes**. Whenever any activity is proposed it must be discussed with him prior to it taking place. In his absence, another board member will give guidance. Except in an emergency there must be no action before consultation.

This overall plan applies to the tree belts, tree clumps and common areas known as Cliff Walk, Ladies Walk, Lovers Walk, Main Drive, the Bridleway, East Drive and the All Hallows fields encompassed within those walks. It excludes that area leased to Natural England and all private areas. Private property owners should be encouraged to consider this document when maintaining their own areas.

This plan has safety as its over-riding priority and risk assessments will be undertaken as part of all management activities. The All Hallows board and its volunteer work force are expected to adhere to all safety procedures.

Overall Objectives.

All actions taken to maintain and improve the nature of The Estate should move toward at least one of the following aims:

1. Create and maintain a safe environment with risks properly assessed.
2. Improve the natural areas in ways that increase the health benefits of flora, fauna and humans.
3. Ensure that actions taken lead toward a sustainable and resilient environment. This will need to take account of the increase in tree diseases, changes to the climate and the control of invasive plant species.
4. Maintain the Estate in ways that have high aesthetic, amenity and recreational values.
5. Ensure any by-products of work done are returned naturally to the environment, or, when sold off, the proceeds are appropriately directed.
6. Consider the value of Rousdon Estate within the wider community and landscape.
7. Establish strategies to ensure there will be a healthy environment for generations of Rousdoners to come. This will include creating a mixture of tree species of different ages.

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Method.

Safety is the over-riding priority. To this end tree areas need to be regularly examined for changes and early remedial action must be taken. This is particularly important following

extreme weather conditions; suspected disease incursion; or when an owner, and/or resident, raises a concern.

For non-urgent maintenance. The Estate is divided up into compartments and each one will be dealt with according to a priority agreed by the board of directors.

Overgrown laurel has taken over large parts of The Estate, so it is necessary to eradicate, or at least control, this dominant plant. So, the plan for each compartment is:

- a) Deal with the laurel by getting it under control, or eradication, depending on the compartment.
- b) Examine the newly cleared area and consider:
 - i. Should the new clearing be planted up with new trees?
 - ii. Does the new clearing need extending to accommodate new planting?
 - iii. Should it be left as an open clearing?

The First Five Years.

This first planning period has been running for the last 2 years and has been mainly focussed on the compartment taking in the large semi-circle when viewed from the Mansion House gates; the Main Drive roundels and grassed areas; and the Main Drive tree belts.

(Experimental work has gone on in other areas, which has proved very useful when learning how to manage tree belts effectively.)

- a) Much new planting has taken place.
- b) Laurel control activities are well under way.
- c) Plans are in place for more planting in cleared areas.
- d) A large clearing has emerged and ideas are under consideration for this area.
- e) It is hoped that we will soon be able to move on to the north side of the Main Drive tree belt.

It might be possible to complete this compartment within 5 years, so consideration is now being given to where to go for the following 5 years.

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Additional work within the 1st. five years.

- a) Coppicing. There are a number of coppiced areas throughout the Estate. These coppices need to be re-worked to ensure they are safe and to improve the

natural health of these areas. This is done by harvesting the wood cyclically, and allowing some tree stems to develop into full trees. In woodland management terms this is known as 'coppicing with standards'. Areas are being explored where this work can be started as soon as practicable.

- b) Hedging. With a view to increasing the network of hedging throughout The Estate we will continue to identify suitable sites and act accordingly.

Summary.

The work so far has been achieved by volunteers. The value of their contribution cannot be overstated and could not have been done without them. It is hoped that they will continue with their efforts, so that we can create a natural environment that will stand up to the rigours of the next 200 years. (At least!)

Notes to accompany the management plan.

Logging/timber management.

- a) **Hardwoods**. Volunteers involved in felling operations may distribute, at the time amongst themselves and with the agreement of the board member present, up to one third of the useable timber. The remainder will go into the wood store for onward sale. All Hallows will decide how the resulting monies will be spent.
- Brash. This can be left in the woodlands to break down; chipped for later use in tree planting; or used to dress paths. Circumstances and the time of year will usually dictate the best method.
- b) **Laurel**. Volunteers involved in laurel removal can take what they want at the time of the work. Thereafter, remaining burnable laurel is stored and sold at £25 per load, including delivery.
- Laurel brash. This should be treated in the same way as other brash. It is worth noting that, as the laurel is already dead when it is cut, it is extremely valuable as a mulch for trees and new hedge lines. So, before laurel chippings are used to dress paths, volunteers are asked to check with the board member responsible that they are not needed for another purpose.

Any chipping activity will be undertaken with due cognisance of the benefits of leaving brash in aesthetically non-critical areas for the benefit of wildlife.

Footpaths. The use of chippings on footpaths can be useful when disposing of excess material and can temporarily ease areas prone to wetness. The material will readily breakdown, though, and woodland paths will always be muddy at certain times of the year. Footpaths should never be diverted, or newly created without board consultation.

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Planting. Protecting the environment is the over-riding factor and no planting will be undertaken without board agreement. Indiscriminate 'woodland gardening' carries with it the risk of introducing disease, or invasive species that can be harmful.

Potentially dangerous or environmentally harmful activities. Unless specific written permission is granted by the board the pursuit of the following activities is expressly forbidden on All Hallows land:

- a) Use of an airgun/rifle, shotgun, crossbow, longbow, or anything capable of launching a projectile.
- b) Metal detection.
- c) Quad bike, motor bike, or any other powered vehicle unless its use is associated with authorised maintenance, or grounds work.
- d) Any pest control activities.