

Ham Hill

Management Plan

2023 – 2027



‘A diverse and accessible countryside site where management will ensure the long-term enjoyment of its significant and inspiring archaeological and ecological assets.’



South Somerset
District Council



HERITAGE
FUND



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1.0 Introduction

Ham Hill Country Park is an area of countryside 173ha (hectares), (approx. 427 acres) in size and is located five miles outside Yeovil in the parishes of Stoke-sub-Hamdon, Norton-sub-Hamdon and Montacute.

Ham Hill is a nationally important site for many reasons:

It is Britain's largest Iron Age hill fort (81ha) and is a designated Scheduled Monument. The SM also comprises a 19-roomed Roman Villa and possible military camp. Later historical occupation is medieval and then sees the site as an important community focus during the trade union movement. Ham Hill is therefore a significant archaeological resource with the hill fort having been in continuous occupation since the Iron Age. Outside of the SM, further Country Park land includes 40 hectares of pasture with a further Deserted Medieval Village (DMV).

It is the only source of Hamstone: a beautiful rich orange limestone much desired by the building trade today, and of interest to geologists for what the rocks tell us about the geological past of South Somerset. The high point of Ham Hill exists because of its limestone (Hamstone) cap. The site is still actively quarried for the stone. But other areas of site are designated as geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to protect the Victorian quarry face exposures.

This Hamstone outcrop can support a rare type of calcareous grassland: a high diversity flora with its associated fauna. Woodlands envelop the entire site on all sides and further increase the biological diversity on site. With calcareous grassland, woodlands, meadows, and a tufa stream the wildlife supported on site is broad. The diversity and ecological value of Ham Hill is reflected in the presence of several UK red and amber data list species and habitats on-site.

As a large open access greenspace, Ham Hill is recognised as an important and strategic site serving a large geographical area. It offers extensive connectivity with the wider countryside and facilitates a diverse range of recreational activities and offers many social as well as environmental benefits. It is a heavily used important greenspace for the local area, but it's wealth of wildlife and history as well as far reaching views across the landscape, also attracts visitors from further afield. As a result, it is important that an evidence base is built that captures this strategic importance to feed into future development contribution mechanisms such as the Somerset Wildlife Trust-led Nature Recovery Network.



1.1 The National Lottery Heritage Fund project: 'Uncovering Ham Hill's past for its future'

Ham Hill's popularity with visitors has put it under significant pressure from footpath erosion, littering and anti-social behaviour. Together with tree & scrub encroachment and animal damage, the Scheduled Monument has now been put on Historic England's 'At Risk' register.

Since its initial development the country park has expanded significantly through land purchases, supported by the Heritage Fund. The existing ranger base and toilets are no longer central within the Country Park. Funding from the National Heritage Memorial Fund in 2019 enabled the purchase of 30 hectares of land that included the 'At Risk' ramparts and existing car parks.

Ham Hill is managed by a small team of Rangers assisted by volunteers; the demands of visitors and management of 173 hectares are beyond their resources. A new approach is needed now to manage the site and the existing users, whilst attracting new target audiences who experience barriers to visiting Ham Hill. The Covid-19 pandemic led to even larger numbers seeking outdoor recreation opportunities locally, with a resultant increase in pressure on Ham Hill.

Since 2018 the Countryside Team have been working towards a project for Ham Hill to tackle these ongoing issues and create a more sustainable management for Ham Hill's future. The team have been working with consultants, partners, and stakeholders to carry out extensive research and consultation during the development of the proposals, which include a new visitor centre, various landscape improvements to conserve & protect the Iron Age monument, habitat management improvements and an activity plan to engage with visitors and tell the story of Ham Hill.

In March 2020 the team achieved a first-round pass from the National Lottery Heritage Fund application programme. This enabled the team to further develop their proposals for the site. The final application for the delivery phase was submitted in August 2022 and in December 2022 the National Lottery Heritage Fund awarded a grant of £1.6 million towards the project.

The four-year project will improve the site for visitors, heritage and wildlife and ensure that it has a sustainable future for its future management.

The project has a broad range of objectives under the headings of:

- Improved site management, habitat creation and Scheduled Monument protection
- Increased awareness, understanding and knowledge
- Provision of more opportunities and support for a wider range of people to become involved
- Achieving future financial sustainability

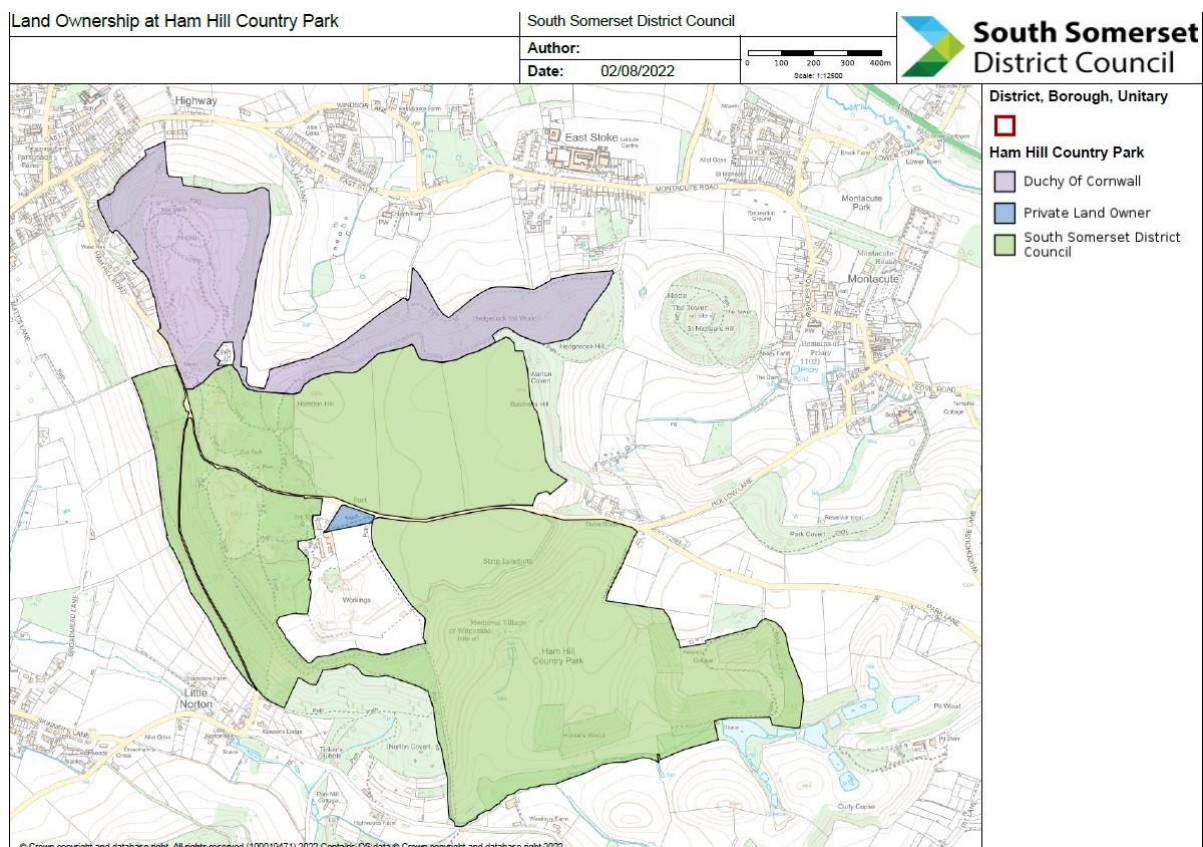
This project aims to establish a range of measures to increase visitor awareness, diversity, engagement and understanding. In parallel, the land management work to conserve the hillfort and increase the quality of the site's wildlife habitats must be increased and then maintained. The future financial sustainability of the Country Park is critical in achieving this objective.

A full project summary can be found in the appendices.

1.2 Ownership & Management

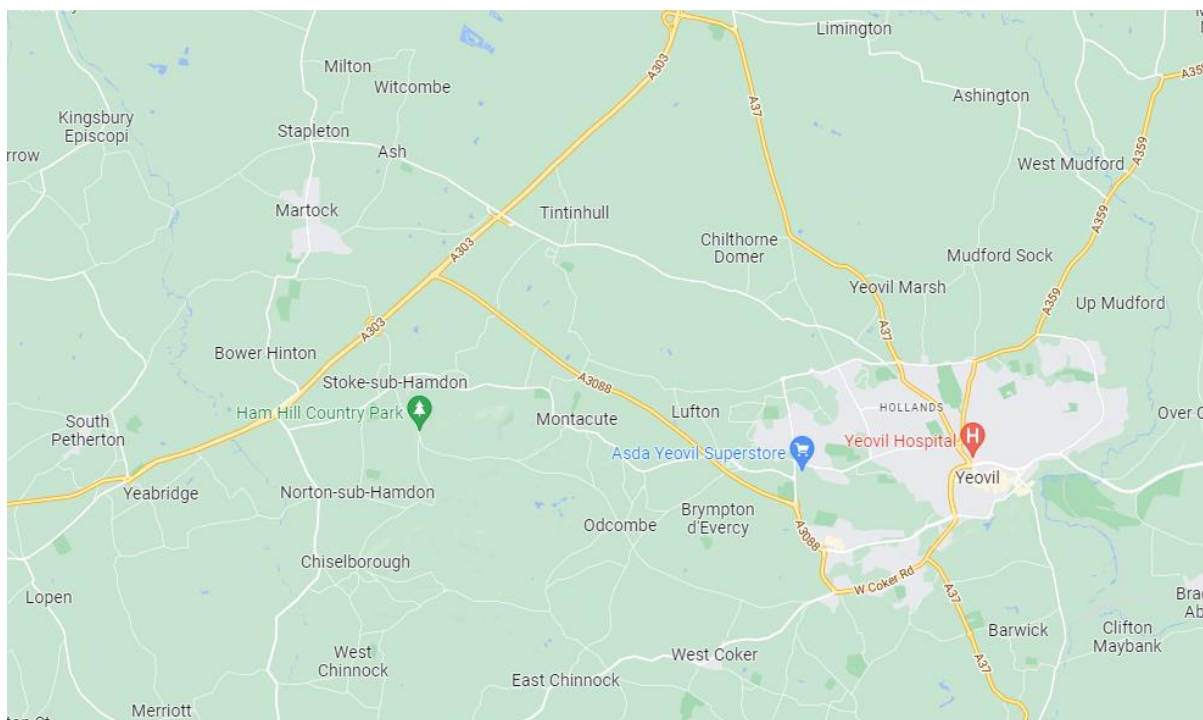
Ham Hill is managed by a small, dedicated ranger team within the wider Countryside Team of Somerset Council. The Countryside Team sits within the Climate, Environment and Sustainability service in the Climate and Place directorate. Somerset Council's Countryside Service own and manage a total of five sites across the district. These include Yeovil Country Park, Ham Hill Country Park and Chard Reservoir, Moldram's Ground and Eastfield Local Nature Reserves. The diverse nature of the sites in both the wildlife they contain, and their various recreational uses means that the team has established a multi-skilled and dynamic approach to site management which is proving highly effective.

The land is owned by two parties: Somerset Council (139 ha:80%) and the Duchy of Cornwall (34 ha:20%).



1.3 Location:

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Site | Ham Hill |
| Parish | Montacute, Stoke sub Hamdon and Norton sub Hamdon |
| County | Somerset |
| District | South Somerset |
| Local Authority | Somerset Council |
| National Grid Reference | ST 482166 |



Map Coverage

- OS sheet number 1:50,000 = 193 (Landranger)
- OS sheet number 1:25,000 = 1279 (Pathfinder)
- Os sheet number 1:25,000 = 129 (Explorer)
- Geological survey sheets, sheet number 312 (Yeovil), 1:50,000. Copy at Somerset Environmental Records Centre, Taunton and Yeovil libraries.
- Soil survey sheets, record number 111, sheet 41/51 (Yeovil). Copy at SERC, Taunton and Yeovil libraries.
- Historical maps, 1838 Tithe map. Copy at the Somerset County Records Office, Taunton.
- Historical maps, 1924 sale of the Montacute Estate. Copy at the Somerset County Records Office, Taunton.

1.4 Statutory Designations

Listed below are the designations placed on Ham Hill that affect management and access within the Country Park.

- Site of Special Scientific Interest (geological): notified in 1981 at ST 482162, 11.1 hectares.
- Local Geological Site. (LSG).

- Country Park: The original 60-hectare area designated in 1975 has now been extended to include all 173 hectares.
- Local Wildlife Site: The woodlands in Pit Wood, Horses Wood, and the Northern Spur.
- English Heritage, Scheduled Ancient Monument (Number 100), only the Iron Age hill fort.
- Area of high archaeological importance (AHAP).

1.5 Size

The entire country park site is approximately 173 hectares in size, around 427 acres.

1.6 Compartments

Due to its size and for ease of description Ham Hill has been divided into eight compartments.

Division is usually based on woodland/grassland ecotones, fences or drystone walls and is aided by the site's definitive landscape zones. See Appendix 3.

| Compartment Name | Habitat description & Size |
|-----------------------|---|
| The Northern Spur | Calcareous grassland and scrub; 21 ha |
| Victorian Quarryscape | Calcareous grassland and scrub; 18ha |
| Hedgecock Hill Woods | Mixed woodland; 12 ha |
| The Plateau Fields | Restored arable land to calcareous grassland; 39 ha |
| Western Ramparts | Mixed woodland with some grassland; 20 ha |
| Witcombe Valley | Old pasture with some wet woodland; 47 ha |
| Horses Wood | Mixed woodland; 3 ha |
| Pit Wood | Mixed deciduous woodland and grassland; 13 ha |

1.7 Map showing compartments at Ham Hill



1.8 Physical Information

1.9 Altitude

This is difficult to describe as the Iron Age hill fort, Hamdon Hill itself is one of the highest points in the area, whereas the eastern end of the park (Pit Wood and Witcombe Valley) falls much lower than this. Some approximate figures for each compartment follow:

| Compartment | Altitude |
|------------------------|------------|
| The Northern Spur | 80 - 125m |
| Victorian Quarrryscape | 120 - 125m |
| Hedgecock Hill Woods | 80 - 130m |
| The Plateau Fields | 124 - 139m |
| Western Ramparts | 44 - 120m |
| Witcombe Valley | 55m - 120m |
| Horses Wood | 70 - 100m |
| Pit Wood | 70 - 120m |

The variations of altitude in each compartment indicate that most compartments include a steep slope, indicative of the hillfort itself.

1.10 Topography

The topography of Ham Hill Country Park is incredibly varied, ranging from gently undulating hills in Witcombe Valley through to the steeply sloping inclines of the Iron Age ramparts. The core of the Country Park is Ham Hill (Hamdon Hill) itself; called Ham Hill Plateau in the South Somerset Landscape assessment of October 1993. The periphery of the fort is composed of 4.5 km of Iron Age ramparts; these multivallate defences are the most valuable interpretative material still in existence from this period, their size and dominance in the surrounding low-lying alluvial plains making them one of the most characteristic features of the Country Park.

The ramparts enclose 88 hectares of land, which can be divided into two very contrasting landscape areas. The western side of the fort, including the Northern Spur, has been subject to industrial quarrying activity since Roman times. Consequently, spoil heaps of around 4m in height are dotted around the area. These features are what Ham Hill is renowned for and they provide great recreational potential; they are known to some visitors as the “lumpy bumpy area.” With quarrying still active at two sites on the fort, there are several exposed Hamstone faces. These range from small crags of about 2m high to large rock faces of about 30m. All these features combine to create a very distinctive interior to the hill fort’s western side.

The eastern side of the fort is quite different; four relatively flat fields, divided by two drystone walls, known collectively as the Plateau fields, create the core area. The ramparts in this area drop steeply away into Witcombe Valley. However, on the northern side the ramparts have become forested and are consequently less striking. Witcombe Valley is a landscape of sweeping valley combs with a three hectare “L” shaped area of mixed woodland at its centre, on the steepest slope. The short pasture grassland highlights the archaeological features of the site, including the remains of a medieval village, strip lynchets and a Roman road up to Butcher’s Hill, with a drop down to the valley bottom where a natural spring emerges leading down to the wet woodland at the most southerly

point of Witcombe Valley. On the eastern side of Witcombe Valley is Pit Wood; both Witcombe and Pit Wood fall into a Special Landscape Area (from the Yeovil Area local Plan) known as “Yeovil sands, escarpments and valleys”. This zone is characterised by steep valley sides and flat topped hills. Pit Wood itself has a central valley of meadowland with mixed pockets of woodland around the perimeter situated mainly on the steeper inclines which in the past were unsuitable for arable practices.

Hedgecock Hill Woods are situated to the north of the hill fort’s plateau, owned by the Duchy of Cornwall and managed by SSDC as part of the country park.. Numerous footpaths pass through the area and it is heavily used by the public. The woodland is of mixed species and covers a large area of rampart. This site provides a valuable contrast to the predominantly grassland habitat of the rest of the fort.

1.11 Water Regime

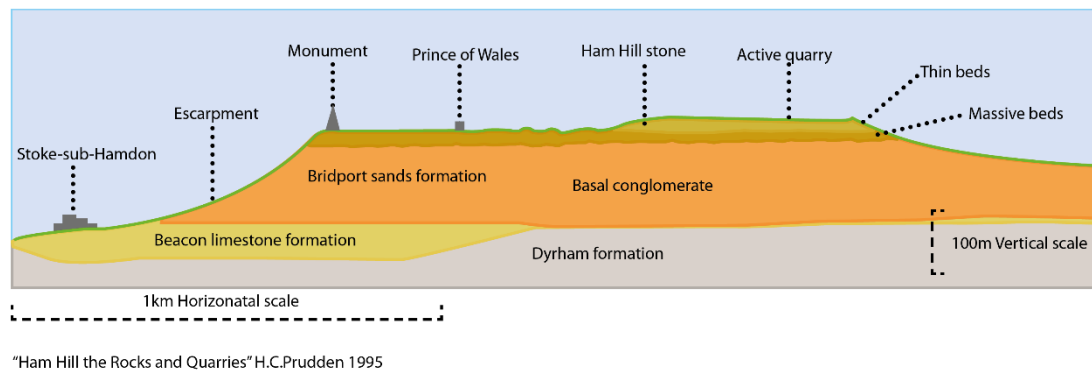
The high ground of Ham Hill is underlain by the Hamstone and Yeovil sands which are permeable and allow rainfall to infiltrate to six lower levels. However, the lower beds tend to have more clay which is impermeable and as a result water emerges as springs in the lower parts of the valleys. A springhead in the bottom of Witcombe valley was once used by the medieval village. It passes along the valley bottom (often saturated in the winter months), heading south, where willow trees have been able to grow along its banks. In 2016 a series of ponds were created here and the channel was opened to flow down the valley into the Pit Wood stream in an area known as Withy Bed, currently a non-intervention area in terms of management. The ponds are currently ephemeral, only holding water in the winter months, and more work needs to be done to improve the retention of water in these ponds. The spring head for Pit Wood’s stream is located on Pit Plain, ST 501157, and flows down to Pit Pond (southwest); a large private lake managed for recreation and planted with many ornamental species. Pit Pond was originally landscaped by the Victorian Phelps for use as a boating lake.

1.12 Geology

The Hill is capped with the Ham Hill Stone (Hamstone) which is a sandy limestone composed of small shell fragments cemented with calcium carbonate. Whole fossils are rare but include ammonites which date the rock to some 170 million years before the present. The quarry faces show mainly uneven crossbedding unlike the Blue Lias which displays beds of even thickness. These features suggest that the Ham Hill Stone was deposited in warm, shallow, agitated seas with strong currents during the Jurassic Period. A basal conglomerate occurs at the contact with the underlying Yeovil Sands and consists of large, rolled sandstone pebbles and a variety of fossils. It probably represents a period of shallowing and erosion of the sea floor. The Ham Hill Stone forms a lens some five miles north to south and one mile wide within the Yeovil Sands rock formation.

In places the stepped layers show crystal faces and striations, providing evidence for horizontal wrenching movements in the Tertiary Period (between 2 and 65 million years ago). A variety of vertical openings (gulls) show that the rocks have foundered at some time during the Ice Age. The rock faces show a variety of tufa deposits where lime-rich water has evaporated. The Hill includes a geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at the southern end and a number of Local Geological Sites (LGS).

The Ham Hill Stone produces a warm, golden building stone full of character and has been quarried since the time of the Romans. It is readily carved and cut and has been extensively used for walls and buildings. Currently two active quarries on the outcrop have planning permission to remove stone for commercial sale. The geology of Ham Hill is best understood by reference to the geological section below:



The geological section shows that the bulk of Ham Hill is composed of the underlying Yeovil Sands which can be viewed in the holloway that leads down to Montacute and in the bridleway on the east side of Norton Covert. These are fine-grained, yellow sands and sandstones and include nodular concretions of varying size. The sands are readily eroded both from unsurfaced tracks and arable fields. The Ham Hill Stone and higher beds of the Yeovil Sands are both relatively resistant rock types and as a result they combine to form an undulating Plateau edged by a steep escarpment. An interesting by-product of the limestone cap is found in a stream running along the southern edge of Pit Wood and Witcombe Valley. This is a tufa stream and there is evidence of the calcification of twigs, hazelnuts and molluscs etc. This debris has been continuously covered by layers of calcium carbonate, precipitated out of the limestone rock higher up the valley.

1.13 Soils

As with the geological description, Ham Hill covers two general soil classifications. The Hamstone cap is listed as supporting a class of soil called the South Petherton series (from the soil survey of Great Britain, 1983, found in "Soils of England and Wales", sheet 5, Southwest England, 1:25,000). Described as a deep, well drained silty soil found upon Jurassic and Cretaceous siltstone and sandstone, this may be true of the western slopes of the hill, however the remaining soils are believed to better represent the Elmton series. This class of soil is shallow, well drained, brashy calcareous, fine loamy soils over Jurassic and sandy limestone. These thin nutrient poor soils provide the correct abiotic conditions for the development of a floristically diverse, close-knit sward, much like those seen on the Sussex downlands. The topographical similarities are few though as regular spoil heaps break up the continuity of depth and age usually found on true downland.

The soils found above the Yeovil Sands bedrock in Pit Wood and Witcombe Valley are very different to those on the limestone cap, reflecting the sandy bedrock type. Depending on the altitude and therefore water saturation levels of the soil, the area can be divided into three main types; Bridport series (Bpt), Conway series (Ch1) and South Petherton series (Spn); all sandy silty loams. The steep sides of Witcombe Valley have created nutrient pools at the base of the slope and particularly poor-

nutrient areas mid slope. Humic levels are understandably higher in the wooded areas, and the entire site has a pH range of 6.5 – 7.0 (neutral to slightly acidic). More details on the soils of this area can be found in the Pit Wood Management Plan and a soil report completed by R.Scaiff and L. Wright, students of Bournemouth University.

1.14 Climate

The topography of Ham Hill Country Park lends itself to the development of many microclimates. South facing slopes on the main hill fort site are well protected, becoming very warm in summer. Woodlands and scrub have grown particularly well in the lea of the fort, protected from the winds that whistle across the lowlands. However, the extra altitude means that the temperature can be a few degrees below that of the surrounding countryside. In winter Ham Hill is often the only local area to experience snow fall that settles for any length of time, and on chilly mornings remains shrouded in mist long after it has cleared elsewhere.

The woodlands of Horses Wood and Pit Wood maintain a stable microclimate by decreasing wind chill factor, and south facing compartments of woodland can be very warm in the summer months.

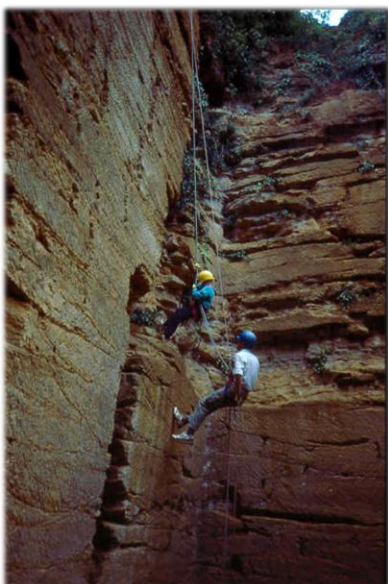
2.0 Health, Safety & Security

2.1 Appropriate facilities and activities



Ham Hill provides a wealth of leisure provision - both formal and informal. The Wildwood Play Zone is located at the bottom of the steps close to the Prince of Wales pub. It was installed by rangers and volunteers in 2019, after consultation with Norton Sub Hamdon Primary school and Castle School in Stoke sub Hamdon. The play zone is created using coppiced sweet chestnut from Ham Hill and provides low risk wooden and rope structures for children to play and climb.

The size and path network of Ham Hill means that it is used regularly by runners and dog walkers. Informally running groups use it as a base to meet for a club run and two organised running races take place annually, starting and finishing from the Ranger's Centre on top of the hill: Ham to Lyme Trail Ultra Marathon and The Full Monty-cute 10-mile trail race.



Due to the site's quarrying history, there is a particular area of exposed rock face called Deep Quarry which is used by the Yeovil Mountaineering Club. This area is used for club sessions but also for solo climbers. Anyone using the rock face must be a member of the YMC to be covered by insurance. If users access the site responsibly then climbing can be a low impact sport. No anchor points are permitted in the top of the face and climbers use trees to tie off their ropes. The state of the rock face is monitored regularly to identify whether the feature is being degraded through recreational use. The District Council accept no liability for climbers using the site and with advice from the British Mountaineering Council signs have not been erected. Climbing will continue on site and will be monitored by the ranger team; the activities of climbers keep the rock faces free of vegetation and maintain the Geological SSSI exposure in a desirable state.

There are various weekly volunteering opportunities at Ham Hill including practical conservation and wildlife surveying. These are discussed in more detail in the Community section on page 32.

Public and community group events are organised annually by the ranger team, and this will be expanded during the Heritage Fund project. This is covered in more depth in the Marketing & Communication section on page....

2.2 Seating

There is a variety of seating across Ham Hill, from the informal wooden 'perching benches' to more formal black metal benches. Many of the benches at Ham Hill are memorial benches and the team receive many requests each year. Due to the landscape value and setting of Ham Hill, it is important that benches are located on the most accessible paths to enable visitors to stop and enjoy the views, but it is important that the wildness of the landscape character is kept and so any requests for new benches need to be considered carefully and locations agreed with the rangers.

2.3 Toilets and other facilities

There are currently three public toilets at Ham Hill, including a disabled access toilet, located at the Rangers Centre near to the Northern Spur. The toilets were refurbished in 2022 to improve their cleanliness and to ensure that the disabled toilet is in line with current size and facility requirement specifications. The toilets are opened at dawn and closed at dusk each day and cleaned once a day by external cleaning contractors, who have a contract with SSDC to service all the public toilets in the district.



The Rangers Centre has always provided a base for the rangers and volunteers to work from. The centre currently provides a workshop, kitchenette, volunteer rest room, small office, storage, and an education room. The Centre was extended to its current size with external funding in 2005, at which point the education room was utilised by a grant-funded education ranger whose fixed term contract ended in 2009. The centre is now not fit for purpose to welcome groups and visitors as it is too small and not centrally located. As the Heritage Fund project progresses and visitor facilities are provided at a

new Visitor Centre, the Rangers centre will be internally reconfigured to provide a more suitable volunteer base with improved office and storage facilities for the ranger team.

The rangers also have access to a locked compound comprising containers for ATV, tractor & tool storage as well as event supplies. The compound is also used to store equipment or materials needed for site works and the waste is temporarily housed here until collected by the Environmental Services team.

There is a free house pub situated on the top of Ham Hill, the Prince of Wales. The pub is owned by the Duchy of Cornwall but is a private business separate from the Country Park. The pub has its own car park, although on busy days, patrons spill out into the wider site car parks.

As part of the Heritage Fund project, a new Visitor Centre will be constructed at the back of the Lime Kiln car park. This will become the focus for visitors to discover more about the country park and

facilitate their visit to site. The visitor centre will encompass a permanent exhibition room, temporary exhibition/learning room, café, public toilets, disabled toilet and changing place toilet. Indoor and outdoor seating will be provided, and the surrounding landscape will be designed to accommodate cyclists, pedestrians, horse riders, families and those with mobility issues. The expected commencement of building is Spring 2024.

2.4 Security

CCTV is currently provided from the Rangers Centre, covering car parks at the Northern Spur, ranger centre, viewpoint car park, and picnic area. The CCTV was funded through the Friends of Ham Hill and the Police Commissioners Community Fund. The new visitor centre, adjacent car park and surrounding landscape will also be covered by CCTV.

The rangers manage personal security in and around the car parks by ensuring there are clear sightlines whenever possible, to reduce areas where people may be able to hide. Rangers are also on site five days per week and this increases to seven days per week cover in the school summer holidays through employment of a casual ranger. The rangers have built up a good working relationship with the Police local beat team, who help to patrol the site in the evening. Most issues are concentrated in the car parks after dark as the site is accessible 24 hours a day. The rangers do carry out late night patrols alongside enforcement officers or PCSO's if issues are highlighted. There is a programme to implement 'Roaming Rangers' to act as visitor guides and eyes and ears to the ranger team, but they would not be patrolling the site after dark and would not be expected to enforce any site bylaws. See appendix for the Roaming Rangers job description and crib sheet.

The rangers are issued with Peoplesafe lone worker devices that they are registered to and instructed to carry when they are working on their own. The rangers are mostly working as part of a team and lone working is uncommon. SSDC also has a lone working Policy for further guidance and information.

2.5 Management of provisions, equipment and risk assessments

The Countryside Ranger is issued with a Government Procurement Card with transactions and weekly spend limits to enable them to purchase the tools, equipment, and materials they need for their jobs. All rangers undergo official accredited training in the use of technical tools and equipment such as tractor driving, chainsaws, brush cutters, wood chippers etc. The rangers carry out the day-to-day basic maintenance of these tools and this is recorded in line with PUWER. Any detailed repairs are carried out by the SSDC in-house fleet mechanics or are sent off to specialists for repair. A full list of fleet, trailers and high-value tools is kept centrally & recorded for insurance purposes.

A full suite of risk assessments for Ham Hill, associated works and activities is held centrally on a new system called B-Safe. The risk assessments are updated as required and a full revision of the risk assessments takes place annually in April to ensure they are all up to date and reflecting best practice.

Incidents, accidents and near-misses are recorded using an electronic form on Sharepoint, which is then directly sent to the reporting manager for a review and any issues arising are discussed personally with the ranger involved & with the wider team at a countryside team meeting and the relevant risk assessment is reviewed. The reports for incidents and accidents are held centrally by

the Health & Safety team and are reviewed by the Health & Safety working party, which includes representatives across all the teams at SSDC.

2.6 Dogs

Dogs are welcome at Ham Hill and indeed dog walkers make up most visitors to the Hillfort. Much of Ham Hill is designated open access land but the maintenance of paths encourages visitors to stick to designated routes. There are dog waste bins across the site, with the majority focused in the Northern Spur, Plateau fields and Victorian Quarryscape compartments. There are some restrictions on dogs with regards to livestock and skylarks on site. Dogs must be kept on a lead when walking in an area where livestock are grazing. Signs are erected on all access gates to the compartment to ensure visitors are aware where the livestock are and the Facebook page is kept updated with this information. Dogs must also be kept on a lead in the Plateau Fields when skylarks are nesting & signs are erected to make visitors aware of these restrictions. There is a Dog Control Order for both of these restrictions at Ham Hill, which means that anyone not obeying the restriction could be subject to a fixed penalty notice, issued by an enforcing officer.



3.0 Maintenance of equipment, buildings, and landscape

3.1 The Rangers

The ranger team are highly skilled, professional conservationists who have a wealth of experience managing habitats and landscapes. The rangers help to set the direction of the management plan and are responsible for ensuring that their work programme encompasses the practical management tasks set out in the prescriptions table.

The ranger team currently consists of two full-time permanent members of staff, but this is set to increase as the Heritage Fund project enables employment of another assistant ranger and an engagement ranger. See staff structure in the appendices.

The rangers are highly trained with a repertoire of technical accredited skills including:

- Chainsaw; crosscut, maintenance, felling small-medium trees
- Brushcutters & clearing saws
- Tractor driving
- Woodchippers
- Polesaw
- Application of herbicide/pesticides
- MEWP training
- Trailer driving
- 4x4 driving
- ATV driving



3.2 Site Inspections

The rangers carry out annual site inspections on all site furniture, which includes items such as gates, benches, fences, signposts, information boards and interpretation. These inspections are recorded on the SSDC GIS system called XMAP.

The rangers also carry out annual tree safety surveys. The rangers are trained to carry out basic tree inspections (LANTRA certified) and they cover all high-risk areas on site, such as benches, paths, roads, play areas and buildings in their inspections. The trees are recorded on XMAP and they are prioritised in terms of risk. The rangers then complete the works required during the autumn/winter season where possible based on the priority of the works.

The Wildwood Play Zone is inspected weekly for any signs of damage or deterioration. Any play equipment deemed to be unsafe will be cordoned off and repaired, removed or replaced as soon as possible. The play zone will be inspected quarterly by a RoSPA trained play inspection officer from the locality team.

4.0 Litter, cleanliness, vandalism

All litter bins were removed from site in 2018, following ongoing issues with littering across site despite providing litter bins. After consultation with colleagues across other country parks & nature reserves, Friends of Ham Hill and the South Somerset Countryside Steering Group, the decision was made to remove the bins. Since their removal littering has significantly decreased on site. You can read the case study on this approach in the appendices.

The dog bins are emptied at least once a week, sometimes more depending on the frequency of their use and the rangers carry out a litter pick of the site twice a week, on a Monday and Friday. Litter & bin patrols are increased during the busy school summer holidays when the rangers are supported by an additional casual ranger at weekends.



In 2020 Ham Hill were given a two-minute litter pick station, funded by CPRE; the countryside charity and this is currently sited outside of the ranger's centre. It will be moved outside of the new visitor centre when it opens as this will be the new focus for visitors to the country park.

Fly tipping usually occurs in the car parks as is a common occurrence at Ham Hill. General waste is disposed of by the ranger team and anything that needs specialist clearance is removed by the appropriate contractors. Fly tipping is reported to our locality team, who can follow up on the enforcement & evidence gathering if possible.

As the rangers are on site five days per week, the response to fly tipping, littering and vandalism is usually dealt with on the day it is reported or the next working day if it is reported at a weekend. If it is something dangerous, SSDC manages an out of hours team who will deal with the immediate hazard. Any broken furniture or other hazards are removed from site and the area cordoned off until it can be repaired, removed or replaced. Priority areas are the Wildwood Play Zone and anywhere there are livestock grazing. The tenant farmer is on hand every day to deal with any emergency fencing repairs if the rangers are not available.

5.0 Environmental management

5.1 Somerset Council's Environment Strategy

In May 2019 South Somerset District Council formally recognised a climate and ecological emergency through Full Council and agreed to 'develop a strategy by the Full Council meeting in the Autumn of 2019, that sets ambitious targets to protect the environment and ecology; to reduce Carbon Emissions; and for a) South Somerset District and b) the Council to become carbon neutral'. In March 2023 this was adopted by the new Somerset Council and integrated into the joint Climate Emergency Strategy.

Yeovil Country Park has long been managed to improve biodiversity, increase carbon sequestration and create sustainable habitats. The work that is carried out at YCP to fulfil these aims, now also contributes to the Environment Strategy & it's targets, including tree planting, habitat management, volunteering and education.

The strategy goes beyond the natural environment and the current rangers centre is being fitted with an air source heat pump. The new Visitor Centre has got sustainability at its heart with consideration of embodied carbon content of materials, insulation, solar gain and natural light, water and energy use.

You can read more about the council's Environment Strategy by visiting the website [Somerset's joint Climate Emergency Strategy](#)



5.2 Chemical use

Chemical use at Ham Hill is very limited. Invasive species, such as wild parsnip are mostly dealt with by hand utilising the volunteers or in some cases by mechanical means such as brushcutters or hand tools.

The only chemicals used on site are:

- photoxin for mole control
- roundup as a general spot treatment (paving areas around building & eco plugs for tree stumps)
- thrust - spot treatment herbicide for broadleaved plants (wild parsnip, hogweed & black mustard)

The rangers only use the chemicals as a last resort when by-hand methods are not effective or in areas that are difficult to access.

5.3 Peat use

Peat is not used at Ham Hill and any trees or plants procured are done so from sustainable suppliers that do not use peat throughout the growth of their products.



5.4 Climate change adaptation

Ham Hill is centred around the Iron Age Hillfort of Hamdon Hill, and this area is designated a Scheduled Monument, therefore tree planting is limited to areas outside of this designated zone. Most tree planting takes place in the Pit Wood compartment of the site. Every year the rangers, volunteers and members of the community help to plant trees to reconnect existing areas of woodland or improve the diversity of existing sycamore-

dominated woodland. It is the aspiration of the site to eventually join Pit Wood with Horses Wood to increase tree canopy cover and connect these otherwise isolated woodland parcels.

Work to improve the Medieval Pond at the bottom of Witcombe Valley ensures that this rare aquatic habitat at Ham Hill is maintained and expanded where possible. In 2016, a Heritage Lottery Fund grant enabled the team to expand the network of ponds connected by a stream to the medieval pond. Unfortunately, the ponds do not hold the water and more improvement works are needed before it becomes a thriving wetland area.

5.5 Waste minimisation

A visitor survey in 2018 highlighted that 90% of visitors to Ham Hill arrive by car. During the summer many of these visitors were bringing picnics and BBQ's and disposing of their waste in litter bins that were taken to landfill. The removal of the bins at Ham Hill, encourages visitors to take their rubbish home, where they can recycle it in their normal household recycling bins. This strategy has worked. Due to the presence of a café in the new Visitor Centre, recycling bins will be provided adjacent to the café.

Ham Hill is managed on a restricted budget and therefore sustainable use of materials is of upmost importance, not only for the environment but also to ensure that waste is minimised, and every bit of material is utilised to avoid over expenditure.



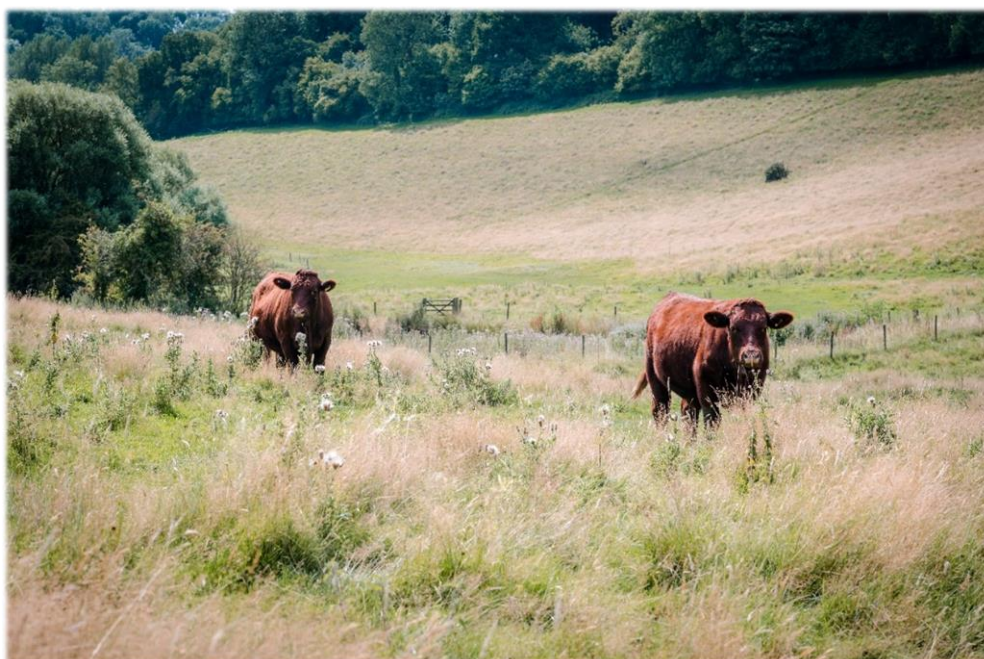
Tree arisings resulting from safety tree works will either be logged up and sold as firewood, left on the woodland floor to decay and provide important dead wood habitat or utilised across the site for infrastructure repairs or projects, such as the Wildwood Play Zone. It is planned that some timber from site will be able to be utilised in the construction of the visitor centre and surrounding landscaping features.

Chippings from tree work are either left in situ to provide habitat for insects and fungi or they are used for path repairs or play zone surfacing.

The use of disposable BBQ's is banned at Ham Hill due to the damage they cause to the sensitive grassland, the littering associated with them, the risk to pets and children and the fire risk they pose to the wider site. Organised groups can arrange permission to have a BBQ or open fire, as long as copies of a risk assessment and public liability insurance are provided. Permissions will not be given during periods of drought.

5.6 Land management schemes

In 2010, Ham Hill entered into an Environmental Stewardship Agreement (Higher Level Stewardship) with Natural England. This scheme ensured that the land at Ham Hill was being managed to improve and conserve environmental features on site through specific land management techniques, such as grazing and invasive species control. This agreement came to an end in 2020, and as a result of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic a new scheme has not yet come to fruition to replace the HLS agreement. As a result, Ham Hill is currently on an annual renewal of the old agreement, but with no additional capital funding. The revenue funding is still provided annually and a new system (Environmental Land Management System (ELMS) or Countryside Stewardship) will be sought for Ham Hill in the next two years.



6.0 Biodiversity, Landscape & Heritage

6.1 Archaeology and heritage

Ham Hill has a rich history that is summarised here with more detail available in the appendices.

Ham Hill - A Timeline of Occupation

Mesolithic: 9000BC – 4000BC

Flint finds indicate Stone Age activity on the hill.

Neolithic: 4000BC – 2000BC

There is thought to have been a major Neolithic settlement on the hilltop and the distribution of material indicates that several settlements existed.



Bronze Age: 2000 BC – 750 BC

Ham Hill was still an important settlement during the Bronze Age, evidence for burials attests to its spiritual significance; other finds include pottery and flint work.

Iron Age: 750 BC – AD 43

During the Iron Age the Celtic Durotrigan tribe centred its power at Ham Hill.

Roman Britain: AD 43 – AD (approx.) 400

The hill fort is thought to have been captured sometime after around AD 43. All-important sites like Ham Hill were garrisoned after conquest; the Northern Spur is thought to have had a wooden

fortress built on it. Having conquered the Durotriges the Roman presence on the hill must have been a great threat to the nearby Dumnonii tribe.

Military equipment (scale armour), harness fittings and other military metal work have been found on the Northern Spur indicating the presence of the army, and the possible location of their garrison.

The new Roman landlord of the hill built a 19-roomed villa on the eastern end of the plateau (in the Warren Field).

Anglo-Saxon & Norman Britain: AD 410 – early 13th century:

During this time settlement on the hilltop is thought to have been limited to quarry workers.

Medieval Britain: From Norman Conquest - 16th century

During this period the last known settlement existed on the hilltop. “South Ameldon” or “Suth Meldon” is thought to have been a quarrying settlement, in existence due to the high demand for Hamstone from around the country. During the Medieval period a small village existed in Witcombe Valley.



Modern Britain: The 16th – 21st centuries

During this time quarrying continued & the hill began to be used as a beauty spot and for recreation.

George Mitchell, a local farmer, and quarry worker from Montacute who went on to make his fortune in London, returned home and campaigned for farmer worker's rights and led a protest on Ham Hill in the area known as the Frying Pan on the Northern Spur. George worked for many years to help farm workers and was an important man in the National Agricultural Labourers Union which tried to help the men throughout England. He became known as 'One from the Plough'.

Today there is no permanent occupation of the hill fort excepting the public house and one private residential property. Two active quarries still exist on Ham Hill, providing stone for repairs to Hamstone buildings and sometimes more major projects.

Recent archaeological works:

A condition as part of the quarrying licence agreement was the undertaking of a series of archaeological digs on land owned by Harvey's Quarry in 2011-2013. These were carried out by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit and Cardiff University. Several significant finds were found including a Bronze Age dagger, Iron Age silver coins and knives and a currency bar along with several Roman ballista bolts. Field systems and artefacts have been excavated reflecting the near continuous use of the site as a settlement and the importance of its prominent location. With some extra funding Cardiff University carried out three rampart digs across the park at the end of 2013. Excavation revealed significant archaeological deposits on the western side of the site and a possible western entrance to the hill fort.



Information on the excavations, the findings and their significance can be found at www.hamhillfort.info.

As a result of the significance and importance of the Country Park's archaeological and historical heritage assets, a specific and detailed management plan has been produced to contribute to the protection of these features. This Archaeological Management Plan (AMP) produced by Wessex Archaeology has assessed the vulnerability of specific features and proposes management and conservation priorities to prevent their degradation. An effort has been made to integrate these priority objectives within this current management plan. Much of the work undertaken by the skilled ranger team to maintain and protect habitat resources and manage recreation also serves to benefit

the conservation of archaeological features contributing to an efficient and effective management operation.

Specific reference to the management priorities within the AMP are outlined in the later management aims and objectives section. However, these refer to the protection and revealing of the Iron Age earthworks comprising the series of ramparts surrounding the fort. The long-term protection of the limekiln is emphasised as it is one of the best surviving examples in South Somerset and is only site readily available to public to appreciate. It also provides the only other link to the site's industrial past other than quarries. A condition survey of the lime kiln was completed in 2012, with a more recent quote for carrying out the restoration works obtained in 2021. These works are included in the NLHF project.

6.2 Cultural Associations

Much of the information relevant to this section can be found in the archaeological description of the site. However, there are other important cultural associations with the hill and its past which are worthy of mention. "In April Witcombe echoes every few minutes to the mocking laughter of the woodpecker, as in lifting flight it casts a glancing volatile shade across the green turf, close cropped by mild eyed sheep from the Abbey Farm. On both sides of the field's slopes the gorse grows in dark masses rendering the air balmy – soft in this windless sanctuary of sheltered peace..." Llewellyn Powys, 1910. A Montacute Field, from "Scenes from a Somerset childhood", 1986. In his book Llewellyn Powys also refers to the naming of Pit Wood itself, when the Phelps family paid host to the prime minister and honoured him by naming their lake and woodland after him. There are also several myths and legends associated with the hill, this includes stories of giants and Celtic princesses. References for these stories can be found in the appendices.

6.3 Management of natural features, wild fauna and flora

Ham Hill has a wealth of biodiversity, due in part to the mosaic of habitats it supports, including limestone grassland, ancient and semi-ancient woodlands, traditional hay meadows, freshwater ponds, scrub and a tufa stream.

The site supports a variety of rare and protected species, which are described in more detail below, with specific habitat management aims and objectives to ensure that each habitat is sustainable and developed to its optimum state for biodiversity.



Several wildlife surveys are carried out each year, to monitor the impacts of habitat management work. The surveys currently carried out include dormice nest box surveys, breeding bird surveys, reptile surveys, butterfly transects, and bee transects. There is an aspiration to carry out bat surveys and more wildflower transects, but these are dependent on time and the knowledge or experience of existing and new staff or volunteers.

There are significant differences between the level of information and detail of biological data available for each compartment. In 2004 the Yeovil and District Natural History Society (now Yeovil Wildlife Recording Group) began surveying the entire Country Park to establish a species list based on presence and absence. In December 2012 the total recorded species stood at 2056. In 2017 this the recorded species had increased by 232 and can be broken down into the following taxonomic groups.

| | 2012 | 2018 | 2020 |
|--------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Mammals | 11 | 12 | 15 |
| Reptiles and Amphibians | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Birds | 82 | 82 | 85 |
| Invertebrates | 973 | 1066 | 1117 |
| Flowering Plants | 356 | 398 | 402 |
| Ferns | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| Horsetails | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Lichens | 87 | 87 | 87 |
| Fungi | 531 | 629 | 629 |
| TOTAL | 2056 | 2288 | 2351 |

Work continues to feed into this report and provides the rangers with valuable information on species presence and absence throughout the Country Park. In addition, increased monitoring and surveying activities over the next five years will contribute to a more detailed baseline of current habitat condition across the Country Park. This will particularly focus on areas currently undergoing habitat enhancement and restoration, enabling the impact of management to be monitored. These areas along with appropriate survey methodologies are outlined later in the management plan.

The habitat assessment as part of the establishment of the HLS agreement in 2010, was useful in providing an initial broad baseline assessment of habitat extent and condition. It has identified where scarce resources should be targeted to achieve the greatest biodiversity gain; something advocated in the South Somerset Environment Strategy.

Each compartment's floral and faunal composition is summarised below, with further detail found in the appendices.

The Northern Spur & Victorian Quarryscape



A patchwork of calcareous grassland and scrub islands and where succession precedes unchecked, deciduous woodland has developed.

The Northern Spur was, and still is, a mosaic of habitats. The main types include broadleaf woodland, scrub, grassland (short sward), bracken, tall herb, bare ground and rock, and artificial surfaces. Most of the scrub has been cleared leaving islands for bird nesting, and the grassland has extended

following the reintroduction of sheep and cattle grazing. The Quarry owners, Ham & Doultong Stone, have also re-established calcareous grassland as part of their reinstatement works.

Species to be discovered on the Northern Spur include bullfinch, green hairstreak butterfly, wild thyme and birdsfoot trefoil.

Self-seeded ash trees dominate the Victorian Quarryscape area, with over 90% showing signs of ash dieback disease.

The Plateau Fields

Although described together, each of the four fields has been subject to different management in the past and are at different stages of grassland development and restoration. Despite this the fields have the same bedrock and soils, and it is hoped that they will continue to increase in floral diversity becoming areas of increasing importance to nature conservation with careful management.





All four fields have populations of orchids but by far the richest in terms of numbers are the Warren and Stroud's Meadow East. Bee, pyramidal, early purple and common spotted orchids are found in vast numbers in these two fields and mapping can only estimate the number of individual flowers.

Barn owls can sometimes be seen hunting in these areas as can kestrels, whilst a plethora of butterflies, including meadow brown and marbled whites are a common sight throughout the summer.

Skylarks nest across all three fields and hay cuts are timed outside of their breeding season.

The dry stone walls provide a habitat of their own hosting species such as slow worm, toad, small mammals and many invertebrate species.

Witcombe Valley



Sheep pasture changing from calcareous, on the ramparts, to culm grassland in the valley bottom.

The grassland is used extensively by birds of prey, for hunting; mainly buzzards. A herd of roe deer wanders throughout Witcombe and Pit Wood, and are regularly seen. Gorse stands on the steeper slopes provide nesting habitat for stonechat, bullfinch and linnets, the latter of which can be seen in large flocks during the autumn and winter.

The eastern slopes towards Tinkers Bubbles are covered in meadow ant nest mounds.

The medieval pond provides a rare habitat on Ham Hill; freshwater. Species such as emperor dragonfly and purple loosestrife thrive in this area.

Horses Wood

An island of mainly native deciduous woodland.



Despite being dominated by native tree species there are some more unusual and exotic species to be found, including a dense stand of laurel (already cleared), and a large stand of Douglas fir. The ground flora comprises characteristic flora such as bluebell, red campion and celandine.

Despite its size, Horses Wood is an important faunal site. It has many large badger setts, mainly in the central area, which are currently in use. Tawny owls are present in the woodland and several pairs of buzzards and ravens are known to nest on site. Horses Wood also receives visits from the family of approximately 10 roe deer that roam Pit Wood and Witcombe Valley. Green woodpeckers and other birds of prey also visit.

The woodland provides excellent invertebrate habitat. The structural diversity, bare earth in sunny patches and log piles are ideal for species with several instars in their life cycle. Recent management intervention of coppicing has proved beneficial to the ground flora, encouraging bluebells and other spring flower growth, a traditional management practice that will be continued.

Pit Wood

Pit Wood is a mixed site with central grassland core and peripheral woodland zones, each with very different characters, including a wet woodland zone to south.



The established peripheral woodland zones are dominated by sycamore with oak, holly, sweet chestnut and hazel interspersed. Tree planting and thinning of the dense sycamore over the last 15 years has introduced a wider variety of native species into the woodland zone, including species such as field maple, silver birch and hawthorn.

Silver-washed fritillaries are often spotted on hemp agrimony along the lower rides of the woodland and dormice are present in the woodland.

The central grassland core is a mosaic of different grassland types, dominated by cocksfoot with bracken also abundant.

The wet woodland and tufa stream to the south of this compartment are unique and represent a nationally important habitat type.

Hedgecock Hill Wood



Running along the north-eastern ramparts, Hedgecock Woods mostly comprises semi-ancient deciduous woodland, dominated by oak, ash, and hazel. A conifer plantation exists halfway along the woods, planted for commercial reasons. The woodland floor is dominated by wild garlic and harts tongue fern in the spring.

Badgers are commonplace throughout the woodland; the steep banks and soft sandy

soil combine to make ideal sett building conditions.

Woodland birds dominate the canopy including great spotted woodpeckers, nuthatches, and tawny owls.

6.4 Landscape

Ham Hill is an Iron Age Hillfort designated as a Scheduled Monument with a Geological SSSI in its interior. It has very special and protected landscape qualities.

The management of the Scheduled Monument (SM) is overseen by Historic England and SM consent (SMC) must be obtained for certain activities on the Hillfort, for example excavation for a gate post or repairs to rampart pathways.

Tree planting is not permitted in the SM and an annual reduction in scrub and management of trees on the historic ramparts is important to retain these archaeological features.

The Geological SSSI is largely unknown by visitors and it is through the Heritage Fund project that this feature of Ham Hill is explained and highlighted to visitors. It is also important that the condition of the exposed rock faces are monitored and managed to prevent degradation of these features.

The views gained from the top of the Hillfort are also important landscape features. It is important that gaps in the tree canopy are allowed to naturally develop or opened up to ensure that visitors can enjoy the views at multiple different angles across the site, and also to feel connected as to why Ham Hill has been so important to people, because of its natural elevation, for so many years.

7.0 Community involvement

7.1 Volunteers

There are several volunteering opportunities at Ham Hill currently. There are two weekly practical conservation task days held on a Monday and Wednesday.

The Monday group are volunteers that focus on projects and have experience so can be self-led in some projects, without the need for constant supervision from the ranger team. The group is small, consisting of around six volunteers who have been working as part of the Wednesday volunteer team for several years. They carry out practical site maintenance works such as step construction, furniture installation (fences, gates etc) and will also work alongside the ranger to assist with habitat management works.

The Wednesday volunteer group accommodates up to 25 volunteers with varying skills, ability, and experience. The Wednesday volunteer group has been established for over 20 years and many volunteers in the group today have dedicated their time for over 10 years. The Wednesday volunteer team are supervised by the rangers and carry out a wide range of tasks from scrub clearance to invasive species control, litter picking to path clearance. The Wednesday group carry out practical habitat management and site maintenance works across Ham Hill throughout the year so enthusiasm, physical fitness and a sense of humour are required! Cambian college in Yeovil bring supported students along to this session. The students from the college have Special Educational Needs and some can be severely autistic.



There are some other limited volunteering opportunities outside of the practical task days including wildlife surveyors, concentrating on mostly bees and butterfly transects across the spring & summer. These wildlife recorders can choose their time to visit, based upon good weather conditions and are self-led, without much input from the ranger team, other than to provide ID guides, recording sheets and butterfly nets.

All volunteers are registered with SSDC, to cover them for insurance purposes and so that the rangers have any important medical details and next of kin contacts, should an accident occur. The recruitment of volunteers is carried out informally, with a telephone discussion or email as the first contact with the rangers. Most people decide after the first session if they want to continue volunteering. If for any reason, the rangers do not feel the person is suitable for the role or that task, that will be discussed personally with the volunteer and if appropriate a different role will be offered. This situation rarely occurs.

7.2 Friends of Ham Hill

The Friends of Ham Hill are a registered charity (1177431) and were originally set up as a constituted group in 2006, following a successful Heritage Lottery Fund grant. In 2018 the group became a registered charity to further strengthen their cause and enable access to a wider range of grants to support the work of the rangers at Ham Hill.

The objective of the Friends is “to support and promote education, conservation, improvement and community activities at Ham Hill Country Park, working in collaboration with South Somerset District Council (SSDC) and local community groups and organisations.”

The Friends work alongside the rangers, community heritage officer and countryside manager to obtain grant funding that enables the delivery of projects at Ham Hill. Examples of past projects funded include the Wildwood Play Zone, tree planting and the Roman Treasure Trail.

The Friends also help to deliver the larger events on sites, such as the fun dog show and Bonfire, assisting with setting up, running activities and take down.

A full list of projects and more information about the Friends can be found on their website; www.friendsofhamhill.org



7.3 South Somerset Countryside Steering Group (SSCSG)

This group was established before any of the Friend's group and consists of stakeholders and members who have an interest in the country parks and local nature reserves in South Somerset. The South Somerset Countryside Steering Group guide the management of the District Council operated countryside sites, supporting the countryside team to manage the land in line with strategic priorities, public need, and wildlife benefits, ensuring sites are sustainable for the future.

The SSCSG meet twice a year to discuss the main site issues, review the service plan and provide feedback & guidance on the management of the country parks and local nature reserves.

All the site Friends Groups are represented, as well as Yeovil Town Council, Somerset Geology Group, Yeovil & District Wildlife recording Group, the National Trust, SSDC portfolio holders and ward members.

7.4 Appropriate provision for the community

Ham Hill is used by a wide variety of visitors including dog walkers, families, runners, mountain bikers, climbers, horse riders, wildlife enthusiasts, photographers, and organised interest groups.

Dog walkers are usually visitors from the surrounding villages and Yeovil and mostly visit the Northern Spur and Plateau Fields. Dog bins are provided and signs on gates let dog walkers know of any restrictions with regards to livestock or ground nesting birds.

Families mostly visit the Northern Spur and Victorian Quarryscape areas of Ham Hill. The lumps and bumps from previous quarry working are very popular with children to run up and down and explore. This area also houses the Wildwood Play Zone and picnic benches, near to the public toilets and Rangers Centre.

Mountain bikers are permitted to use the bridleways that crisscross the site, along with horse riders. This can occasionally cause some conflict between path users, particular as the bridleways are also used by trail runners and dog walkers at times. However, the site is large and encounters between these different user groups is uncommon.

Rock climbing takes place in Deep Quarry, mostly under the supervision of the Yeovil Mountaineering Club. Anyone climbing on their own should be a member of YMC to be covered by the group's insurances.

Wildlife enthusiasts are often drawn to the quieter areas of site including the Plateau Fields, Hedgecock Woods, Witcombe Valley & Pit Wood. The array of wildlife to see varies between seasons, orchids and butterflies in the summer, bullfinches and roe deer in the winter.

Specialist interest groups, such as the Somerset Geology Group or Stoke History Group, arrange their own visits to Ham Hill, but occasionally seek further guidance and information from the ranger team, in the form of a guided walk or slide talk. These interest groups tend to visit features in the landscape that have particular interest for them, for example rock face exposures in the Geological SSSI.



A circular all-ability route is provided around the Northern Spur and is suitable for wheelchairs and buggies. A free to hire tramper (off road mobility vehicle) is also available from the Rangers Centre. However, it is recognised that both the all-ability route and the tramper need an upgrade. External funding will support the Heritage Fund project to improve the surface & access points on the route as well as provide a new tramper, which will be free to hire from the new Visitor Centre.

In addition to adult members, the ranger team accepts a limited number of work experience placements from local schools and college industry placements from Bridgwater College or Kingston Maurward College each year. School placements are short term, usually for one or two weeks, whereas college placements tend to be for a day or two over a year to ensure the required hours are obtained for the students to fulfil their course. Such youth placements can be very valuable to both parties but need careful management and liaison with the student provider.

8.0 Marketing & Communication

8.1 Marketing and promotion

Ham Hill is an important site for both the local community and visitors from further afield. It is currently valued as an informal leisure resource with visitors currently only receiving superficial information about the site from aged interpretation panels and notices on gates.

For some visitors there is a lack of respect for the site, and this is reflected in their behaviour evidenced by dog conflicts with livestock and wildlife, littering, fly tipping and vandalism. This needs to change and is one of the reasons that the team developed the application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The Heritage Fund project will engage with visitors to create a respect for the site, which will be reflected in a change of behaviour and attitude.

The visitor survey in 2018 showed that most visitors to Ham Hill are white British and this does not reflect the wider diversity of culture in our villages and nearby towns, particularly Yeovil. The Heritage Fund project will redress this balance, working with BAME community groups to deliver activities and events that appeal to a more diverse community, as well as providing confidence building visits and information for these groups.

A promotional plan for Ham Hill will be implemented to raise awareness and interest in the range of 'products' on offer such as walks, events, café, visitor centre. Each product will have a particular dedicated plan utilising different parts of the promotional mix, as described below, and as appropriate to the target audience.

The promotional plan will use the following tools:

Promotion

A limited budget of £500 has been allocated for promotion, where paid-for advertising is used it is likely to be through online communications such as Facebook/Instagram advertising to target new audiences.

Public relations

A key opportunity, as evidenced in Spring 2022 with SSDC's promotion of the re-launch of the river Parrett trail, is the development of content for print and online publications. Utilising the skills of the Council's communications and tourism teams can raise awareness through written features about Ham Hill. The writing can be provided by staff, partners, and volunteers, with a quality threshold and editing process in place.

On-line communications

On-line communications are becoming dominant with real-time information and connectivity brought to people's pockets by smartphones. See section below.

Ham Hill and SSDC, through its staff and volunteers, will utilise:

- New web pages for Ham Hill established in 2021 within the Visit South Somerset website <https://www.visitsouthsomerset.com/ham-hill-country-park.htm> This provides opportunities for

event listings in addition to information on the site. As resources are developed through the project e.g., visitor centre, interpretation, café, these can be added to the site.

There is also a role for the Friends of Ham Hill through its website to promote the Country Park, events, getting involved etc www.friendsofhamhill.org

Review sites such as Trip Advisor provide useful information particularly for first time visitors the Ham Hill listing will be improved through providing more information on the site and staff responding to comments.

8.2 Education

From 2006 – 2009 an Education Ranger was in post at Ham Hill, funded by a National Lottery ‘Learning & Discovery for All’ project. Since that post ended, educational visits have been facilitated by the on-site ranger team, however they are limited in their capacity due to the wider range of tasks they are required to undertake in their role.

In 2018, a Community Heritage Officer (CHO) post was formed following a successful Heritage Lottery Fund project at Yeovil Country Park. The CHO works across all the countryside sites and the small Heritage team, facilitating formal curriculum based educational visits and community group engagement across Ham Hill, Yeovil Country Park, and Chard Reservoir.

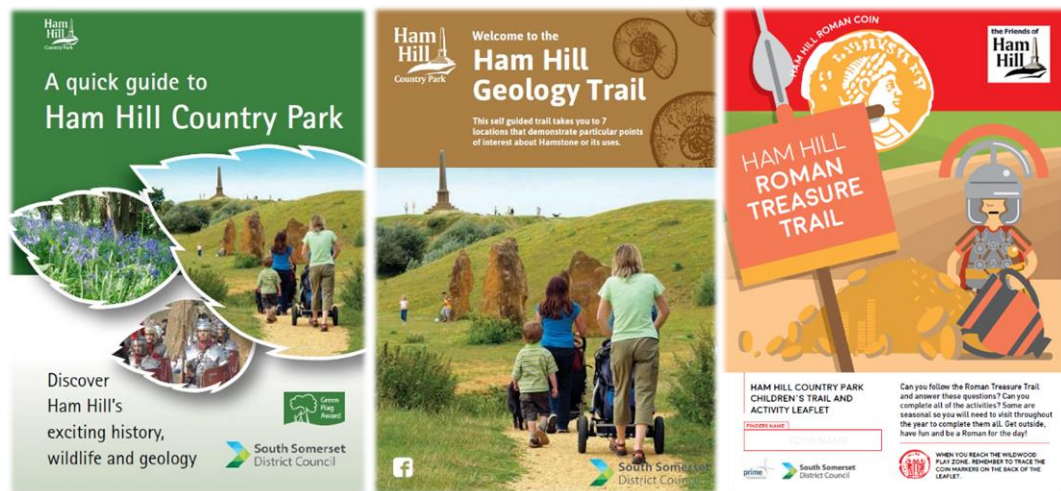
However, the variety of topics at Ham Hill and depth of knowledge required to deliver the curriculum-based sessions is vast and the demand for these sessions at Ham Hill outweighs the resources of the CHO. The Heritage Fund project will enable employment of a Ham Hill specific Engagement Ranger, to work with the CHO and Ham Hill ranger team to deliver the activity plan of the Heritage Fund project for communities and visitors.

8.3 Interpretation

Interpretation at Ham Hill has been limited to on-site information panels across the site, concentrated in the Northern Spur and Plateau Fields with history and archaeology as the focus. There are two Iron Age panels, one showing Iron Age life in Stroud’s Meadow West, and one recreating how the Iron Age ramparts would have looked on the Northern Spur. The Roman panel is in The Warren meadow and uses the villa floor plan to recreate the villa in its heyday. The Medieval panel is in Witcombe Valley and shows how the valley would have looked full of houses over 400 years ago. The final Victorian panel is located on the Northern Spur and shows the busy industrial landscape of quarrymen at work. Additional information panels were installed in Witcombe Valley in 2016, as part of the Witcombe Stream project, to provide more information about the wildlife of this area of Ham Hill. An additional panel was erected on the Northern Spur rampart to show the findings of an archaeological dig that took place in 2013. There are also some interpretation panels in the education room at the existing rangers centre, but as this building is not open to the general public, they are not accessible for visitors.

The existing panels need upgrading and the Heritage Fund project will improve the information available to visitors and create new ways in which this information can be accessed using digital technology and a permanent exhibition within a visitor centre.

There are currently three site leaflets; A quick guide to Ham Hill, Ham Hill Geology Trail and the Roman Treasure Trail. and two more detailed publications; A Geology Guide to Ham Hill and Four Walks on Ham Hill.



A geology guide to Ham Hill written by Hugh Prudden gives detailed information on the formation of Hamstone. In 2016, the 'Ham Hill Geology Trail' was set up in honour of Hugh (1929 - 2015) with funding from the Curry Fund and the Geologists Association. The trail takes in further points of interest about Hamstone and its uses.

The Roman Treasure Trail is a family activity Trail that was funded by the Friends in 2018 through the PRIME foundation. It is very popular with families, and organised youth groups such as scouts and cubs.

The Friends of Ham Hill also devised and self-funded a walks leaflet pack, which describes four walks of differing lengths and ability across Ham Hill. The walks pack is sold through donations to the Friends of Ham Hill.

In 2021, as part of a Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage grant, following the Covid-19 pandemic, a new digital trail was developed through the Ordnance Survey's Secret Stories app. The trail entitled 'Ham Hill's pits of peril and rampaging Romans' takes you on an adventure learning about Ham Hill's fascinating history, from prehistoric archaeology to modern day wildlife. The trail includes quizzes and activities to keep the whole family entertained.

In addition to the natural Hamstone exposures and features of interest there are two distinct sculptures on site. The Timestones, created by Evie Body, are two carved standing stones erected near to the entrance of Stroud's Meadow West. The stones are designed to reflect the spirit and historical past of Ham Hill and are based on the design for a Bronze Age axe and the design of an excavated Iron Age bucket handle. The stones are aligned so that the sun rises on midsummer's morning and falls through the hole on the round stone and lights up the axe head behind. The stone circle on the Northern Spur was erected by quarry operator Richard England. Thirteen standing stones are erected as a memorial to all the men and women who have worked in the quarries of Ham Hill over the years.

8.4 Website and social media

In 2021 a new website for South Somerset was launched; visitsouthsomerset.com. This new platform now hosts pages for the three main strategic countryside sites in South Somerset; Ham Hill, Yeovil Country Park and Chard Reservoir. General visitor information for each site can be found on these pages, as well as information about volunteering, educational or group visits, current news and events. The web pages also host a booking system for the countryside events so that payment can be made and places secured online.

The most effective way in which the ranger team communicates with visitors is through social media. Ham Hill currently has a Facebook and Instagram page, with over 9,500 followers across these two platforms. A weekly rangers blog features with updates about the work of the rangers and volunteers, as well as ad hoc posts about wildlife and forthcoming events. A grazing update is also provided to let visitors know where they can expect to find livestock and so can plan their walking route accordingly.

Site posters support the messages on social media, with livestock present posters erected on the gates as applicable and events advertised through site wide posters. The livestock signs will be upgraded to a more permanent solution under the Heritage Fund project.

8.5 Events and activities

Each year the rangers deliver a programme of public events. The events programme is designed in November each year, with most events starting from February half term. The events can be bookable and payable, or they can be free drop in events. Events that have been delivered in the past include firelighting, Easter Egg-stravaganza, Ham Hill Bonfire and swords and shields.

Most events are focused on the history and wildlife of the site, but under the Heritage Fund project the themes will be widened to include geology and culture. There is an extensive activity plan to be delivered by the ranger team as part of the Heritage Fund project, incorporating public events, specialist activities and inclusivity.

The rangers also facilitate external organisations to hold their events at Ham Hill, ensuring all the correct permits, insurances and risk assessments are in place.

The Dog Show is an annual event at Ham Hill organised by volunteers and Chill on the Hill, first held in 2022, organised by Take Art, looks set to become a regular feature in the events programme. Chill on the Hill is a celebration of local food through performance and art.

The rangers also participate in Montacute Carnival in June each year, often winning first prize in their category with the theme based on Ham Hill.

All rangers undergo a full DBS check when they start.



Ham Hill Bonfire 2021



Ham Hill Dog Show 2021



Montacute Carnival 2022 – ‘Ham Hill Wildlife’

9.0 Aims and Objectives

The following five aims reflect the focus and direction for the management and development of Ham Hill over the next five years under the objectives of the Heritage Fund Project:

Aim 1: Improve site management, habitat creation and Scheduled Monument protection

Aim 2: Provide more opportunities and support for a wider range of people to become involved

Aim 3: Increase awareness, understanding and knowledge

Aim 4: Achieve future financial sustainability

Aim 5: Successfully manage and implement the project

9.1 Aim 1: Improve site management, habitat creation and Scheduled Monument protection

1. Conserve and protect Iron Age ramparts and other earthworks

As part of both the HLS agreement and the Archaeological Management Plan (AMP), recommendations were made for the protection of heritage features contained within the site. Under the Heritage Fund project, and because of Historic England putting Ham Hill on the 'At Risk' register, these recommendations have been taken forward and a Rampart Management Strategy has been designed. See Ham Hill Country Park Landscape Proposals plan.

This strategy includes vegetation management and physical footpath improvements to repair erosional damage and prevent further deterioration of these features in the future.

The method for repairing the rampart paths is set out in the SM consent achieved in 2018 (Ref: S00194636). See Appendix

Vegetation removal will be achieved by hand tools, including powered hand tools such as chainsaw and brush cutters, by the rangers and volunteers. Some specialist machinery, such as remote-controlled flails will be trialled and used where appropriate on the steeper banks.

2. Conserve and protect other archaeological features

The limekiln in the Northern Spur has been identified as one of the best surviving examples in the district and one of the only other visual links of the site to its industrial past other than the quarries. It is currently in a degraded state. The Heritage Fund project will ensure the limekiln is restored and conserved for the future. In 2021 a quote to repair the Lime Kiln with respect to the previous condition survey carried out in 2011 was prepared with an estimated cost of £9870 +VAT.

3. Conserve rare or endangered species and habitats

The country park is home to many rare or protected species, most notably skylarks, dormice and reptiles. These species require specific conservation management, targeted to their niche ecological requirements. For example, dormice need connected tree canopy cover with a variety of species for food & hibernation sites, reptiles require good quality grassland for foraging and sites for hibernation and skylark require long or tussocky undisturbed grassland for nesting in.

It is important to manage habitats for a wide variety of wildlife and it is important that a programme of ecological monitoring is implemented annually to monitor the effectiveness of habitat management works that take place through the winter.

4. Manage grasslands with grazing in line with DEFRA agri-environment schemes

Ham Hill is currently receiving Higher Level Environmental Stewardship (HLS) and Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) payments for managing permanent grassland across the site, from the Northern Spur to the plateau fields, Witcombe Valley and Pit Wood.

Both of these schemes are being phased out to be replaced with Countryside Stewardship or an Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS). The timescale on this is still somewhat unknown. Payments from BPS decrease until 2024, when it is assumed that this payment will cease altogether. Ham Hill's HLS scheme expired on 31st March 2020 and has been in an annual extension since then.

It is imperative that Ham Hill continues to receive agri-environment funding going forward as this contributes a significant income to the site, as well as ensuring that the site is managed for biodiversity. In order to be eligible for such schemes, requires an ongoing grazing agreement with a tenant farmer.

5. Improve field margins for Shrill Carder Bees

The Shrill Carder Bee is identified as a priority species for conservation in England and Wales and are the focus of the Bumblebee Conservation Trusts S.O.S (Save Our Shrills) project in Somerset. The S.O.S project is a five-year project, based primarily in South Somerset to secure the future of the Shrill carder bee (*Bombus sylvarum*) and other rare bumblebees including the Ruderal bumblebee.

Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BBCT) identified Ham Hill as a potential new habitat for the bees to naturally recolonise in 2018, as they are found on a site just a few miles from Ham Hill. The rangers have been working to recommendations from BCT on timing of meadow cuts to provide foraging habitats for the later emerging shrill carder bees. This management regime will continue with the agreement of the tenant grazier.

The field margins will also be improved to provide later flowering native species for shrill carders and to ensure that there is optimum nesting habitat for the bees. The rangers will work alongside BBCT to manage the Plateau fields to provide optimal conditions for these rare bees, as well as ensuring that other species requirements are considered and managed for. Management recommendations have been provided by BBCT and test plots will be trialled before confirming the method the rangers will adopt to improve the field margins. See appendix for recommendations from BBCT.

6. Management of calcareous grassland

Only 41,000ha of calcareous grassland are left in the UK and NE has identified it as a target priority habitat for landscape character assessment in the Yeovil Scarp lands. This diverse grassland consists of many species of slow growing and specialist wildflowers and is an important habitat for insects (particularly butterflies & other pollinators). Calcareous grassland at Ham Hill is kept at a plagioclimax by sheep and cattle. Regular grazing is key to keeping the sward short, removing tussocky grass and encouraging the growth of specialist calcareous plants (e.g. wild thyme and birds-foot trefoil).

The Northern spur (a botanical SSSI until the early 1980's) has been restored over the last five years and regular grazing has improved the sward considerably, with bee orchids noted in this area for the first time in 2018. This area is a mixture of calcareous grassland, scrub, bare rock slopes and occasional trees. The objective is to improve this habitat mosaic by reducing encroaching scrub, regenerate grassland habitat on the bare rock slopes and maintain/improve the grassland's floristic diversity.

Scrub will be managed by mechanical means and grazing will be encouraged to keep scrub cover to a total not exceeding 25% of the area. Grassland plants will colonise and regenerate bare rock slopes over time but to speed this process, woody weed species will be removed by mechanical and chemical means. Green manuring and seeding may also be used to speed up colonisation. Grazing will be encouraged through the winter months to continue sward improvement but there is also scope for fencing some areas (limiting enrichment through dog faeces and minimising footfall) to further encourage the development of a high quality calcareous sward should financial/time constraints allow.

Grassland on both western and eastern ramparts is currently in a semi-improved condition. Calcareous grassland has occurred here in the past however, so there is potential for restoration and hopefully a seedbank remains to support any future management. The objective is to restore areas of calcareous grassland by removing scrub, some tree cover and restore grazing. A grassland cover will also help to protect the rampart archaeology. Scrub, damaged or diseased trees will be removed by mechanical means and weed dominated areas will be managed chemically. Areas can then be chain-harrowed to further break up woody weed species and allow any seedbank regeneration. Areas will be fenced and then grazed by sheep and cattle to encourage further grassland restoration.

Due to the undulating topography of the site (lumps and bumps) it is not always possible to use grazing as a means management. It is vitally important to maintain a mechanical cutting regime in these areas to ensure that they do not revert back to scrub, to stop scrub encroachment, maintain sightlines and discourage litter accumulation.

7. Maintain Species-rich lowland meadows (Stroud's Meadow East and West)

The importance of managing species-rich grassland is recognised in the UK and both Stroud's meadows fall into this category under Ham Hill's stewardship agreement. The fields are managed as traditional hay meadows and the sward is left untouched until late July when a 'hay cut' is taken and sheep are allowed to aftermath graze.

This management ensures that the sward continues to improve and many indicator species are now present (e.g. lady's bedstraw, thyme-leaved sandwort, wild basil etc.). Our objective is to build upon this by ensuring we continue best management, increase wildflower diversity, restore drystone walls and control invasive species.

8. Maintain areas of rough meadow within Plateau Fields (Butcher's Hill, The Warren).

A mechanical cutting regime of one year in two produces a rougher sward here, which benefits skylarks and other ground-nesting birds. More targeted grazing afforded by any drystone wall restoration may permit improvements in sward diversity (a stronger aftermath grazing pressure and a spring restoration graze could be introduced). Greater management intervention would improve diversity although this would need to be balanced with the maintenance of areas of longer grass for

skylarks (e.g. skylark plots). Chemical and mechanical cutting should be introduced to control young sapling growth.

9. Manage the dry acid pasture and rough grassland of Witcombe

The rough grassland pasture of Witcombe Valley has been identified as culm grassland in the valley floor with dry acid pasture on the valley sides. Part of the HLS agreement requires the ranger team to maintain this sward structure through appropriate grazing and control undesirable species. The extent of bracken on particular slopes needs to be controlled via mechanical cutting. Mechanical control is not appropriate on some slopes due to the presence of meadow anthills. Gorse thickets on the valley slopes can be further reduced in extent in order to protect the underlying strip lynchets and this would also reduce the rabbit population in the area.

10. Restore Pit Wood lowland pasture

The Farm Environment Plan (FEP) as part of the HLS agreement identified the rough grassland within the core of Pit Wood as being in poor condition as an example of the BAP habitat type, lowland pasture. As a result, restoration management is prescribed in the form of more targeted grazing in order to increase the sward diversity and abundance of key indicator species. Cattle and sheep are both used to graze the core and the control of bracken and other undesirable species by machinery is to be continued in order to achieve these restoration goals. Evaluation should be assessed via a monitoring programme.

11. Control of invasive species

Invasive and vigorous species such as wild parsnip and non-native buddleia threaten delicate calcareous grassland species and the range of invertebrate species they support. Invasive species outcompete less productive native species contributing to reduced biodiversity and more degraded natural systems. Intensive control work is usually required along with rigorous monitoring of their presence on-site. The rangers have to date been successful in controlling such species but remain vigilant to their threat.

Undesirable weed species such as black mustard and wild parsnip still require control particularly in the grassland areas of site, this is mostly done by hand with volunteers.

Derogation is also in place in both Stroud's fields for hogweed and whilst spring grazing has been ineffective, spot-spraying, dead-heading of plants and monitoring should continue to keep this under control.

12. Management of Hedgecock Wood

These ramparts have been identified as in poor condition and at risk of severe deterioration in the AMP. The wood is also a popular route for horse riders and increased 'hoof-fall' has exacerbated path erosion, which in some places is of serious concern. Previous private ownership of part of these woods allowed the ramparts to be degraded by mountain bikers who dug into them to create ramps and jumps. These woods are now owned in their entirety by the Duchy of Cornwall with management for them falling within Ham Hill Country Park and with SSDC. Discussions with local cyclists have stopped these mountain bike trails from being developed further and now the rangers will work with Historic England and the Duchy of Cornwall to repair the ramparts.

Traditional woodland management through coppicing and thinning (dead and diseased trees) does satisfy the HLS agreement by retaining some woodland habitat and connectivity. This helps to retain

some cover and discourages rapid scrub growth that would otherwise undermine the rampart earthworks and so satisfies the AMP through proactive rampart protection. It also ensures the development of a diverse ground flora, which requires dappled light conditions conducive to higher levels of biodiversity. Management work over the past five years on the middle rampart has been successful in achieving such conditions and this management should be replicated across both the top and bottom ramparts. The maintenance of open areas in glades and along rides would provide important alternative niches for species associated with such semi-natural habitats as well as helping to increase the quantity of edge habitat and structural variation throughout the compartment.

13. Manage woodlands on Northern Spur (eastern ramparts)

These ramparts have also been identified as in poor condition with the risk of severe deterioration in the AMP and the same conflict of management exists. Is the biodiversity of today or the archaeology of the past more important? More open woodland with less tree cover, managed traditionally via coppicing and pollarding seeks to satisfy both the requirements of HLS and the AMP as outlined in the objective above. In the short to medium term it may be more efficient to focus canopy cover reduction via a series of strips. This will help to protect the ramparts, open them up to view, create sightlines and improve herbaceous ground flora. The creation of glades has increased ecotone habitat and a greater structural heterogeneity within the woodland unit and this work should continue. Scrub management and the creation of more open areas have helped to discourage burrowing animals that threaten the condition of the ramparts but this work is far from complete. Furthermore, the reduction of canopy cover and creation of open areas will help to prepare suitable conditions for wood pasture. The development of neutral/calcareous grassland glades, recognised as an associated semi-natural habitat within the South Somerset Local BAP, would therefore be in keeping within the desired landscape context.

14. Scrub control on southern half of Northern Spur

It is important to retain some scrub as valuable nesting habitat for birds and with many species also helping to support a diverse range of invertebrates. Here the scrub is less of a risk to the archaeological and heritage features on site compared with the ramparts and therefore a more strategic approach to its management can be taken. A ratio of 75% grassland to 25% scrub cover, the aim should be for a mosaic of scrub to coexist with the grasslands of various sward heights and therefore stages of development. The scrub also performs a vital role in maintaining habitat connectivity between the woodland units in the east and west of the site throughout the network of car parks. A lack of fencing in this compartment has led to an increase in management time from the ranger team. It would be beneficial to introduce fencing and then carry out a light graze every autumn to keep the rank grasses in check.

It is anticipated that Ham Doultling & Stone quarry will seek to extend their quarry permit into this area in future years. At which point all scrub will be removed and an agreement of reinstatement will be agreed. This is subject to planning approval and an ecological appraisal.

15. Management of Pit Wood

The aim is to restore Pit Wood back to native semi-natural woodland and much work has already taken place to achieve this aim. The team should continue to remove sycamore trees throughout the compartment and plant up the understory with other native tree species. Only dead, diseased and damaged trees will be removed and some non-native sycamore should be retained for habitat value (reflecting the biodiversity value of sycamore). The creation of dappled light conditions through

Careful woodland management helps to control the growth of bramble and other scrub species which can dominate ground flora. Unfortunately this work has had mixed results so bramble and holly should be mechanically removed on a rotational basis to ensure the growth of newly planted trees. This work also opens (lights) up the woodland floor allowing previously over-shaded ground flora to flourish (e.g. native daffodils, bluebells) and previous work in this compartment has demonstrated this. Ancient woodland indicators are present within the ground flora, field layer and it is hoped that these will continue to increase in abundance as restoration continues, work which forms a key part of the HLS agreement. The overall aim is for woodland with appropriate native species, age, structural diversity and progress towards this has been established with the planting of almost 2,000 native trees over previous years. This will be a long term process however, as natural regeneration needs to occur to produce a canopy of >80% non-planted before it can be classified as semi-natural. Natural regeneration will therefore be encouraged and it is important for the ranger team to monitor new tree seed growth within the compartment and protect it (tree guards, stakes) as necessary.

16. Manage Horses Wood and wet woodland

It was hoped that managing these particular units at a lower intensity would contribute to a greater diversity in woodland character across the landscape. These areas are also important refuges for wildlife and minimal disturbance benefits many species onsite. Monitoring should have identified if more intensive management was needed to deal with invasive species or note changes in the woodland floor layer. Regrettably, scrub has encroached across pockets of wood anemones and dog violets in Horses Wood and an abundance of fool's parsley now exists in the wet woodland. The aim was for these systems to be self-sustaining with minimal intervention and management input. The realisation however, is that management is required throughout the year to keep the areas in the state of succession that they are currently in. Bramble should be mechanically removed in Horses Wood where there is also a need for bracken removal. Paths running through the wood need clearing and several of the older trees need work to repair wind damage. The wet woodland is the most natural habitat but there is now a need to remove the fool's parsley as it is outcompeting slower growing species and is also particularly poisonous. Therefore, the public should be discouraged from entering for their safety and due to the area's sensitivity.

17. Manage deadwood in woodlands where required

Deadwood is an important component of woodland ecosystems and a continual input of both standing and fallen wood is necessary to provide the specialist niche conditions associated with recently formed deadwood. Previously, in many areas, arisings from tree work (brash) would have been burned. The purchase of a wood chipper in 2017 has ensured that brash is now 'chipped', which is far better for the park's woodlands, both environmentally and sustainably. Deadwood supports a range of specialist invertebrate and fungi species thereby contributing to ecological processes vital to the functioning of woodland systems. Log habitat piles or woodchip piles will be produced following woodland management works which will also provide important hibernacula and refugia for many species including reptiles.

18. Conserve veteran trees

Veteran trees provide significant biodiversity benefits through the provision of specialist niches such as woodpecker holes, rot holes and split features. These are often used by roosting species such as bats. A strategic approach to their conservation will contribute to the Somerset woodland pasture, parks and veteran trees HAP which forms part of the Somerset local BAP. At present there are approximately 10 veteran trees on site but more survey work is needed for a complete picture. This

work should be focused around Sandy Lane where examples of trees exhibiting good potential exist. This strategic network of veteran trees across the Country Park would integrate with this BAP habitat which occurs locally in the nearby Montacute Estate thereby providing benefits over a larger scale.

19. Identify and manage new planting areas

There may be opportunities to increase the extent of woodland stock on site, not only to provide greater habitat availability but also to serve as a buffer to woodland units already exhibiting high ecological value and which may contain protected and sensitive species such as dormice. Furthermore, a greater woodland resource contributes to the Environment Strategy and carbon capture on SSDC landholdings. An extension to Pit Wood to link with Horses Wood may help to eventually provide a dense woodland core further from the woodland edge, benefiting birds and invertebrates that utilise woodland interior habitat.

Several attempts to secure funding for the trees and associated fencing and access gates in the last two years have failed.

20. Ensure programme of wildlife nesting box maintenance

There are a number of bird, bat, dormice and other wildlife boxes situated across Ham Hill. Rangers and volunteers will place a further 50 bird boxes across Pit and Horses Wood in February 2023. These boxes should be recorded onto XMAP, noting their use and condition.

Ten new bat boxes were purchased by the Friends of Ham Hill in 2022 and are due to be erected in the Victorian Quarryscape and Hedgecock woods areas of the site.

Dormouse boxes have been erected across site in accordance with the PTES Dormouse Nest Box Monitoring Scheme. However, due to their proximity to the ground & accessibility many have gone missing or have been destroyed. The rangers will erect dormouse tubes to monitor populations during the summer, with some nest boxes erected in the quieter areas of site.

21. Sympathetically manage woodlands for dormice

Dormice, a European Protected Species (EPS) have been identified on site and are subject to annual monitoring efforts. A series of dormice boxes have been erected to aid this as well as provide sheltering opportunities for this rare and vulnerable mammal. It is paramount that dormouse numbers and activity are surveyed and recorded before any large-scale tree removal projects take place, especially on the eastern ramparts. Dormice benefit from coppiced hazel stools to provide foraging material and nesting opportunities. A continuous canopy between these however is required to ensure connectivity to enable the mammals to carry out their arboreal life stages. This should be maintained through appropriate management of hazel coppice areas.

The site rangers are accredited licence holders and so are able to carry out any dormouse box checks in line with the licensing system in place with Natural England.

22. Seek to increase habitat connectivity across site

Opportunities to improve habitat connectivity will help to mitigate issues relating to the small and often isolated habitats within Ham Hill. This will help maintain viable populations of faunal species. Hedgerows are relatively sparse across the site and an increase in this habitat type would also contribute to Local BAP targets that focus on hedgerow habitat. A hedge adjacent to the road running alongside the southern edge of the plateau fields would provide a valuable wildlife corridor connecting Hedgecock Wood in the north to the woods in the southwest of the site. It would provide a useful

southern link for the two drystone walls that divide the Plateau Fields, themselves valuable wildlife corridors. A re-established hedge along the roadside of Butchers Hill would also enable the distribution and expansion of the dormouse population, identified as present in the hedge running west along Butchers Field, adjacent to the quarry. Relaying of the Hedge along Witcombe Track and its extension past the sheep corral would provide an important link for wildlife movements north to south, connecting the more isolated Pit Wood

23. Manage medieval pond and Witcombe stream

The deserted Medieval Village within Witcombe Valley was associated with the pond that is currently fenced and part of the original stream network. The pond has been de-silted and environmental conditions are improving, which is central as the lack of open water features within the Country Park raises the importance of the pond in terms of both habitat value and aesthetic interest. Further work should include wildlife surveys to monitor and children's activities should now be offered to recognise the pond's importance.

Capital funding of £19,000 was secured for the stream project and it was completed in August 2017. The stream (previously piped underground) was once the primary water source for the settlements on Ham Hill and therefore, the restoration project has significantly enhanced this historical heritage asset as well as the traditional landscape. Aquatic and riparian plant species should now be sought and planted to help support a diversity of specialist invertebrates and higher fauna. Advice from Natural England led to fencing off the ponds to prevent livestock from overgrazing, poaching & nutrient enrichment of the ponds. The ponds are currently losing water much more than anticipated through evaporation in the summer and further investigation is required to understand why & seek a solution. The project has provided significant opportunities for volunteer and community participation and will provide a valuable learning resource for environmental education activities in the future.

24. Manage the park as a core element of a wider ecological network

The size of the park and the range of habitats it contains means that the site has the potential to serve as an important core area within an ecological network. With increasing emphasis being placed on the benefits of a landscape scale approach to conservation, Ham Hill is in an ideal position (stepping stone) with which to make connections to other semi-natural habitats and wildlife resources in the area to increase the overall landscape biodiversity value.

Continued representation on the Local Nature Partnership, led by Somerset Wildlife Trust will be key in ensuring that Ham Hill acts as a biodiversity hotspot in a wider Nature Recovery Network.

25. Protect the sites of geological interest

"The Ham Hill Paradox": at grid reference ST 482162, is 11.1 hectares of Hamstone designated as a Geological SSSI because of their important fossil assemblages and the unique nature of the stone.

Two active quarries extract Hamstone from the site, the boundaries of the quarries are predetermined and archaeological watching briefs are regularly carried out. This protected site falls within the boundary of the large and active Ham & Doultong stone quarry. However, annually tonnes of stone are removed from this site to be used for building and landscaping. Other cliff faces and hollow ways around the site are Local Geological Sites (LGS).

The Site Management Brief (SMB) for the SSSI suggests that the geological interests are not particularly vulnerable and states that the conservation principle is “to conserve and preserve the exposures of the Ham Hill stone in the working and disused quarries on the site”. The main threat to the geological faces identified in the SMB is burial or general reduction of access due to neglect e.g. build-up of talus or overgrowth by vegetation. Under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act, Section 28G (as revised in CROW 2000) we have a statutory obligation to further the conservation and enhancement of the SSSI. Mapping and an implemented monitoring programme of these geological features is an important first step in ensuring their conservation.

The Hamstone and its historical significance is a significant part of the story of Ham Hill and through the HF project, it will be a key theme in the interpretation design and activity plan. Geology is a specialist subject and so working with Natural England, the Somerset Geology Group and the Jurassic Coast Trust will be paramount to ensuring the information is correct and engaging.

26. Repair and maintain safe and attractive boundaries

To manage our calcareous grasslands, control sheep movements or restrict public access, a working external and internal boundary system is paramount. Unfortunately, a significant amount of boundary work is required on and around the Country Park, including repairs to the much of the post and wire fencing (which is 20 years old) and the drystone walls. A condition survey of the dry-stone walls was carried out in 2022 by the Dry Stone Walling Association. This survey has provided the basis for prioritisation of works throughout the Heritage Fund project and beyond. The The Dry-Stone Wall survey and Phase One repairs can be found in the Landscape Proposals document.

As well as promoting the use of traditional countryside skills, this work fulfils specific objectives within the AMP. Visitors can enter the park through a variety of access points, and it is important to keep these boundary entrances in good condition. Much work has focused on ensuring visitor safety and fences and signs have been erected around/near steep quarry faces. While most of the boundary infrastructure is in place and in fair condition, fencing will be required around grassland restoration areas on the ramparts for grazing livestock. For most of the fencing erected during HLS capital work (in 2012) it is now a matter of annually checking boundaries for where repairs are required. There are some laid hedges across the site and to maintain them as stock-proof hedgerows with healthy tree and shrub specimens. Hedge laying is required every three to five years .

27. Increase the staff at Ham Hill

Staffing has always been a constraint in the management of Ham Hill, with just two full time members of staff to deliver a five-year management plan for 173 hectares, including a Scheduled Monument and Geological SSSI.

The expertise & professionalism of an on-site ranger team has meant that the vast majority of works can be undertaken in-house, without the need to employ external contractors. This ensures that the work is carried out sensitively and appropriately for wildlife and heritage.

The Heritage Fund project will enable the employment of an additional full time assistant ranger to help with the practical management of the site. This will also enable capacity to increase volunteering opportunities and deliver the activity plan for the Heritage Fund project.

28. Purchase of machinery

The machinery at Ham Hill that the rangers currently use (tractor) is aged and not fit for purpose. It is regularly breaking down on site, causing long delays to the rangers work programme. The small tractor is an old model and therefore modern-day attachments, such as flails, do not fit to it. A new tractor funded through the Heritage Fund project will enable the ranger team to use attachments and deliver their workplan more efficiently. A mini-digger will also mean that rampart repair work will be carried out in-house, in a sensitive approach to the underlying archaeology and as and when weather allows such work to commence.

The rangers will also trial remote controlled mowers to aid scrub control on the steep ramparts, where grazing and other mechanical means are not possible. If the remote-controlled mowers are successful, the rangers will purchase their own as this will be cheaper in the long run than hiring such tools.

Any additional machinery that the rangers require during the project, such as chainsaws, brushcutters etc, will be electrical where appropriate.

29. Improvements to the Highway

The Highway has continued to cause issues for all site users. It is used as a navigational route for visitors, particularly those with buggies or wheelchairs and is also used by other road users including cyclists, horses and of course cars. The Heritage Fund project seeks to address the issues with a Traffic Regulation Order submitted to the Highways Authority for a reduction in the speed limit, from current national speed limit to 40mph, increased visibility splays from car parks and road junctions, designated crossing routes for pedestrians, a new path adjacent to the road for pedestrians and highway entrance markers at each road boundary point at Ham Hill.

30. Manage recreational pressure

Site management is continually faced with the challenge of balancing recreational use, the requirements of wildlife and the conservation of important ecological or archaeological features. Increasing visitor pressure, due in part to the site's popularity and accessibility has upset this balance. The rangers now spend additional time dealing with recreational management and its disputes (sheep attacks, dog fouling etc.) and it is important that where possible this time/cost can be recovered. That said, the team is skilled in achieving some balance and is in a strong position to react to changing demands (a further increase in visitor pressure or user groups for example). It is hoped that by increasing the awareness of all user groups, potential conflicts can be mitigated and avoided.

The Heritage Fund project will seek to increase the understanding of Ham Hill and improve visitor behaviour so that conflicts between site users are reduced.

31. Ensure the site is managed for the safety of visitors

To ensure the site is safe for visitors, several safety checks must be carried out annually: tree stock & site infrastructure.

To ensure the health and safety of tree stock within the country park, rangers carry out an annual basic tree inspection. Only tree stock that would fall onto an area with public access or buildings is surveyed (five metres from any path). Trees located centrally in woodlands with no paths are not

surveyed. Any tree displaying signs of damage or disease is given a severity of between 1-5 and the rangers carry out most work themselves with occasional arborist employed to carry out aerial tree works. Ash dieback (*Chalara fraxinea*) has been confirmed on-site and is managed through recommendations set out by the Forestry Commission. Appropriate action in accordance with the recommendations and the appropriate guidance from experts will be taken as necessary. The team continues to invite the public to report any issues with the park's tree stock and will respond promptly to these. All tree safety surveys are recorded on XMAP, which is now GPS enabled so allows for more accurate location recording where there is good mobile network coverage.

Site infrastructure, including gates, benches, steps, bridges, fences, signs, and more are inspected annually for signs of damage or decay. The condition of the furniture is recorded on XMAP with a description of the work required. This information can then be downloaded into an excel spreadsheet, which produces a list of work for the rangers to action, based on priorities.

The Wildwood Play Zone is checked weekly by the rangers and recorded on XMAP. It is then checked annually by a ROSPA trained locality officer with any defects reported immediately to the ranger team. Any items that are broken or need replacing are marked off with red & white tape and remove/replaced/made safe at the earliest convenience.

32. Improvements to the ranger's compound

At present the rangers have a large, secured storage area on site, with containers holding site vehicles, tools and event equipment, rubbish storage area, trailers and other materials needed for site works, such as crushed hamstone or fencing materials. Whilst this area is valuable to the rangers, it does not have power or water and the vehicles kept are in the same containers as the tools. This means that access to the tools is difficult if the vehicles are not removed first. There is also nowhere on site that the rangers can use for equipment maintenance – such as checks or simple repairs to the tractor and chipper, or to carry out preparation for site works without having to do it in the field e.g., fixing brackets to gates.

One of the aims of the Heritage Fund project is to improve this compound area so that it is fit for purpose and to enable the rangers to work more efficiently. With the new visitor centre sited some 150m away with new power and water infrastructure, the compound could also be provided with these facilities.

A reconfiguration of the site containers with an adjoining roof, workbench, outdoor power supply & running water, will also enable the area to be used as a workshop. Staff & volunteers can use the space to make birdboxes, dormouse boxes, preparation for events, painting & much more.

New holding bays can be created to hold materials safely and in preparation for when required. For example crushed hamstone for path repairs, wood for sale, and fencing supplies. Allowing the rangers to work in a more proactive approach, as opposed to reactively.

Health and safety for staff and volunteers will be improved and the site will be better managed.

9.2 Aim 2: Provide more opportunities and support for a wider range of people to become involved

33. Build a new Visitor Centre for Ham Hill

The Education Centre at Ham Hill that was opened in 2006 as part of a previous Lottery Project, used to house a full-time education ranger. That post finished in 2009 and the Education Centre has become redundant and is now not fit for purpose.

The Rangers Centre and Education Centre is not staffed. The Rangers and Countryside Team use it as a base to work from, but it is closed on evenings and weekends and most of the time during the day it is closed with no staff presence as the rangers are working out on site. There is a need & desire for a focal point for visitors to Ham Hill, where they can speak to a member of staff, learn about Ham Hill, or get involved with an event or activity. In 2019 the countryside team delivered a pop-up museum for six weeks of the school summer holidays, to trial it as a visitor facility. Daily activities were delivered from the pop-up museum, as well as drop-in activities. Information about the wildlife and history of Ham Hill was on display and the centre was staffed all day every day. The pop-up museum was very popular and this formed the basis of the proposal to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the 'Uncovering Ham Hill's past for its future' project.

The new Visitor Centre will be located more centrally within Ham Hill, as the existing Rangers and Education Centre is in the north of the site, on a small footprint. The Visitor Centre will house a permanent exhibition telling the story of Ham Hill, a temporary exhibition and flexible space room, café, public toilets and a changing place.

More details on the Visitor Centre design can be found in the Ham Hill Design Statement as provided for planning and the Heritage Fund project.

34. Create a volunteering hub at the existing Ranger's Centre

With the construction of a new visitor centre at Ham Hill, the existing Ranger's and Education Centre will no longer be a focal point for visitors. This area will be rebranded as a Volunteering Hub. The internal layout of the building will be reconfigured so that the existing kitchenette and office becomes a storage area. The existing education centre will have a kitchenette installed to become the main volunteer rest area, with additional office space for the rangers. See appendix for floor layout plan.

The volunteers will have ownership over their new rest room, with refreshments provided and a noticeboard to relay messages about forthcoming work, liaison with the rangers etc.

The rangers will continue to also use the space as their base, to carry out office work, tool maintenance and as a rest area for breaks. Use of the ATV's ferrying volunteers and rangers across site will be less intrusive to visitors from this location, as opposed to the new visitor centre.

35. Continue to run weekly practical conservation volunteer groups

The rangers will continue to run weekly volunteer task days every Wednesday. This group is open to all ranges and abilities and the volunteers work alongside the rangers to carry out a wide variety of practical habitat management and site maintenance tasks across the site. The assistance of volunteers enables the small ranger team to carry out labour intensive projects like scrub clearance,

tree planting, wild parsnip removal, woodland management and litter picking. The rangers deliver tool safety talks at the start of each volunteering session and use the more specialist machinery required for the task (power tools, chainsaws etc.).

In 2022 an additional practical volunteering day was created for project tasks, undertaken by a small, higher skilled group of volunteers. These volunteers can be self-led on a project, once given the correct tools, equipment, and instructions. In 2022, much of this group's work has been installing or repairing steps, but they have also been pulled in to work alongside the rangers with reactive work, such as if a tree falls across a path.

The volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds and attend for many different reasons as identified by volunteer surveys carried out during the developments stage of the Heritage Fund project. The rangers are experienced in offering a range of tasks throughout the season to maintain motivation and interest.

In 2022, they donated a total of 1471 volunteer days throughout year. This gives us the equivalent of four extra members of staff to deliver labour intensive projects like scrub clearance and weed pulling.

36. Support and assist the Friends of Ham Hill

The Friends of Ham Hill are a registered charity and provide an important link between the rangers and the local community, which ensures the management of Ham Hill is meeting the expectations of those who use it.

The Friends of Ham Hill are a small group that support the project development and community engagement work at Ham Hill. They are a small group of approximately 6 members, and this limits their capacity to fundraise and deliver projects.

Through the Heritage Fund project, the Friends will be pivotal in enabling further grant funding for some of the activities proposed. The project team will support the Friends in securing these funds and assist in raising their profile to attract new members to support the important work that they do.

37. Develop new volunteering opportunities at Ham Hill

Practical conservation work outside in all weathers is not suited to everyone and has its limitations in its accessibility, due to the physical nature of the practical tasks and the remote or steep locations in which these are carried out.

In 2022, the rangers welcomed wildlife recording volunteers to the team, to carry out bee and butterfly transect surveys across the site. These volunteers are not beholden to a certain day or time; they can carry out the surveys at a time to suit them, when it is optimal conditions for the species they are surveying for. This small team could be expanded further to include surveyors for reptiles, bats, birds, fungi, plants and more. This would enable the site species list to be updated more regularly and ensure that habitat management practices are providing optimal conditions for the species that they support.

The rangers would also like to develop practical tasks for people that are less physically able, or for those that find working in a large and noisy group overwhelming. The task day would generally be only for half a day and the volunteers could carry out lighter tasks around the country park, such as litter picking, weeding around the centres, cleaning the geological exposures etc. The group would be smaller in size, and it is expected that some participants would be accompanied by a support worker. This would particularly suit clients from the local Cambian college,, Fiveways, MIND, Martock Community Services and general public.

The opening of a new visitor centre will also present new volunteering opportunities, as there will be a requirement to provide a face-to-face visitor welcome. This would be another strand of volunteering for those that are not keen on carrying out physical tasks at Ham Hill, but would prefer to talk to visitors, helping them to navigate and explore Ham Hill and provide information on their responsibilities during their visit, for example dog behaviour.

Another strand of volunteering to develop is that of 'Roaming Rangers'. In 2022, the ranger team were approached by several regular visitors to Ham Hill who expressed an interest in acting as volunteer guides out on site during their usual daily or weekly visits to Ham Hill. As a Roaming Ranger, the volunteers would help to assist visitors in their exploration of the country park by talking to them about the wildlife & history of the site, explaining why there are some restrictions – particularly with regards to dogs and offer some ideas of where to further explore. The Roaming Rangers would also act as eyes and ears for the rangers reporting incidents or damage. Ham Hill is a large site and with only two rangers to cover it, the Roaming Rangers will increase the 'staff' presence on site, helping people to feel more secure & confident in exploring Ham Hill further. The Roaming Rangers will not enforce bylaws. They are there to guide only. See appendix for Roaming Rangers job description.

With the addition of an Engagement Ranger to the team through the Heritage Fund project, there the opportunity to offer volunteering opportunities working alongside the Engagement Ranger to deliver activities and events. Due to the nature of this work, volunteers would need to provide two references and have a DBS check.

38. Provide diverse training and development opportunities for volunteers

Whilst volunteers pick up new skills over their time spent volunteering alongside the rangers, it is also important to deliver more formal training opportunities.

Several volunteers have undertaken additional training and qualifications for equipment used during practical tasks. This has included all-terrain vehicle (ATV), first aid, brush cutter and chipper training, which is of great assistance to the rangers as it enables a greater volume of work to be completed during a practical task day.

With the new strands of volunteering that will come as a result of the Heritage Fund project, the diversity in training that can be offered will increase. 'Dealing with difficult customers' would be apt for visitor centre staff, for example. Visitor centre staff would also benefit from training around the interpretation themes of the Heritage Fund project, including geology, wildlife, history, culture and present-day management.

Wildlife identification and surveying techniques would aid wildlife recorders in their species surveys across site, ensuring that the data is collected is more accurate and it may also encourage others to become involved.

Training days for traditional countryside management techniques could be incorporated into a training programme to include coppicing, hedgelaying and dry-stone walling. Traditional felling techniques could be taught in partnership with the community at Tinkers Bubble and dry-stone walling could be taught in partnership with the Dry-stone walling association.

39. Develop new partnerships

Partnership working is key to the sustainable management of Ham Hill and the implementation of the Heritage Fund project. As Ham Hill has got many different facets it is important to work with specialist interest groups to develop the interpretation, both for the visitor centre and for the wider site. The specialist groups will also bring ideas to develop activities and public events to engage them with the theme of their specialism. Volunteers from such groups could be empowered to deliver activities and assist with events to provide an expertise that the ranger team may not possess. Project partners can also provide advice and guidance on land management or asset management and conservation.

Organisations that have already been identified as important project partners include;

South West Heritage Trust (SWHT)

Somerset Geology Group (SGG)

Jurassic Coast Trust (JCT)

Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BBCT)

Somerset Disability Engagement Service (SDES)

Yeovil Wildlife Recording Group (YWRC)

Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT)

Living Options Devon

Heritage Ability and Countryside Mobility

Changing Places

40. Maintain South Somerset Countryside Steering Group (SSCSG)

The SSCSG was founded in 2006 with stakeholders that had an interest in the work at the sites managed by the SSDC Countryside Team. This included Ham Hill, Yeovil Country Park, Chard Reservoir Local Nature Reserve, Moldrams Ground LNR and Eastfield's LNR. The Steering Group is made up of interested stakeholders, representatives from each of the Friend's groups, parish and SSDC councillors. The terms of reference and membership list can be found in the appendix. The Steering Group meet twice a year to review the annual Countryside Service Plan. They receive a presentation from one of the rangers and can discuss & inform the management and progression of all of the countryside sites that the team manage.

41. New Engagement Ranger post

In addition to practical ranger staff, the Heritage Fund grant will enable the employment of a new Engagement Ranger, based at Ham Hill.

The extensive Activity Plan, developed for the Heritage Fund project will need a dedicated member of staff to ensure that it is delivered. The Engagement Ranger will be supported in its delivery by the existing Ham Hill ranger team, the Community Heritage Officer, and volunteers.

The Engagement Ranger will be grant funded for three years, and it is anticipated that the income from the café will support the continued part time employment of this post when the grant funding ends.

42. Apprenticeship & work experience placements

Ham Hill has been an important place for training the next generation of rangers and land managers. From 2005 to 2015 SSDC recruited 2 apprentices annually to be based at Ham Hill. Their training and assessments were undertaken by the qualified Ham Hill rangers, with the formal learning partnership provided by Kingston Maurward College. The apprenticeship scheme was halted in 2015 due to staffing changes and budgetary pressures. It is our intention to offer apprenticeships with Kingston Maurward College again if resources allow.

Ham Hill welcomes students from local secondary schools to undertake their one- or two-week work experience in Year 10. The rangers can currently only accommodate one placement at a time, due to the logistics of supervision and travelling around the site. The rangers also support industry placements from local colleges, whereby students completing a relevant qualification in countryside management or similar need to work a set number of hours to fulfil their course requirements. These students usually attend one day per week over the course of a year.

With additional facilities and staff in the Heritage Fund project, the team may be able to increase their capacity for these types of placements, extending placements to courses that are relevant to the service industry with the opening of a Visitor Centre and café.

43. Support local producers & makers

Ham Hill is situated in a vibrant market town area of South Somerset, on the southern edge of the Somerset Levels. This area is well known for its small craft producers for a wide variety of products including food, drink, jewellery, art, willow and wood crafts and glass making. There are a number of producers that use Ham Hill in their product name such as Ham Hill Cider.

In order to support the local economy, the Visitor Centre houses a temporary exhibition area and it is the purpose of this space to allow local producers and makers to display their products for public enjoyment and for sale.

The Engagement Ranger will facilitate local producers and makers to utilise this space for temporary and seasonal displays.

44. Promote Ham Hill for tourism

Ham Hill is an important site for local people, but it is also an important site for tourism. It boasts one of the largest Iron Age Hillforts in Europe, a wealth of archaeology, fantastic views, stunning

historic landscapes, superb wildlife, and space to explore and discover. This appeals to a wide variety of visitors from all over.

There is no budget for marketing Ham Hill to a wider audience, but a strong web presence and social media pages will enable a wider diversity of visitors to know about Ham Hill, tempting them to visit. This will support a network of wider tourism services to the area including accommodation providers, local retail and food and drink providers.

45. Provide opportunities for local people

Ham Hill means a lot to local people. The village of Stoke sub Hamdon developed with the quarries on Ham Hill, with much of the old housing stock created for the quarry owners and workers. It is important to provide activities, events and opportunities for local people to become involved with Ham Hill as they are the most regular users and if they have ownership of the site, they will encourage others to look after it.

The development of 'Roaming Rangers' is planned to enable local visitors the opportunity to act as guides to Ham Hill, encouraging responsible behaviour, providing information to other visitors and acting as eyes and ears for the rangers. The Roaming Rangers will increase the presence on site and this will make people feel safer during their visit.

46. Provide natural play areas at Ham Hill

The addition of the Wildwood Play Zone in 2017 was welcomed by families and local schools as a safe space for children to climb, balance and explore. Ham Hill is a natural playground for many, particular young people and adults who like to use Ham Hill for a multitude of leisure interest, such as trail running & rock climbing. However, for younger children, the space needs to be safer and slightly more structured. The Wildwood Play Zone offers this and it is now a regular feature in family visits to Ham Hill, as well as providing a space for ranger-led children's activities, such as den building. It is important that this space is inspected weekly by the rangers for any signs of damage or decay and quarterly by ROSPA trained inspectors, from the SSDC locality team.

With the addition of a new visitor centre with a café, visitor focus will naturally be drawn to this area. Experience of Ninesprings Café at Yeovil Country Park has shown us that children need space to play and explore while parents can relax with a coffee whilst their children remain in sight. It is important that the landscape around the visitor centre is designed with this in mind and the addition of natural and appropriate play features, near to café seating.

47. Maintain the network of paths to enable recreation and works access

As an open access site, there is an extensive network of paths, which enables visitors to explore and enjoy the range of habitats and landscapes present within the park. An appropriate level of signage is maintained. All paths are monitored throughout the year to ensure visitors and users of the site are provided safe access. Certain paths however, have become dangerously degraded due to increased visitor and horse riding pressure. Paths are developing 'bomb craters', large holes that fill with water and get bigger in size over time. Many of the problem areas are in remote parts of site where considerable work is required to repair them with natural stone, which also incurs considerable costs. The path network is vital to the operation of the ranger team too and maintenance is therefore necessary to ensure a continuation of habitat management, as well as the ability to respond quickly

to issues across site. During the summer months, other paths are repaired where necessary and mud that has accumulated during winter should be scraped back. Paths are kept open via a strategic cutting regime, and where ATV access is restricted, works are undertaken to widen paths where the AMP allows.

48. Improve easy access provision and promote this

The all-ability trail at Ham Hill has been long established and whilst works have taken place over the years to maintain this route, more work is required. It is also important that access onto this path is not hindered through cars parking in gateways.

The tramper that has been held at Ham Hill for several years needs replacement with a modern version and it needs to be more accessible – visitors currently have to arrange a date and time with the rangers on a weekday in advance of their visit.

One designated disabled car parking space is available outside of the existing Rangers Centre but this is not adequate for the size of the site.

Under the Heritage Fund project, a new tramper will be purchased and available to hire from a new Visitor Centre, paths will be made more accessible for wheelchairs and buggies, the provision of disabled spaces will be increased with 4 additional disabled car parking bays in Lime Kiln car park and an additional disabled bay outside of the existing rangers centre. The provision of a disabled toilet and changing place in the visitor centre will facilitate visits for people with disabilities. A new leaflet will be created to promote these facilities and trails and the information will also be available on the Visit South Somerset website.

49. Ensure the site is safe for the public

Due to the high volume of site users, the ranger team plays an important role in ensuring the safety of those using the site. All trees along the extensive network of paths and within buildings, roads, benches etc are checked as part of an annual tree safety survey and arboricultural work implemented where necessary.

Risk assessment reviews are undertaken annually with the Countryside Manager and ranger teams at a team meeting in March.

The team is experienced in reacting quickly to issues and potential risks identified by members of the public and can manage access across the site to maintain the safety of all users.

CCTV on the existing Rangers Centre has proven effective at reducing car thefts and increases personal safety for staff and visitors.

It is essential that the new Visitor Centre is fitted with CCTV and appropriate security lighting when it is constructed. As the Visitor Centre will be fairly isolated, the car park adjacent to it (Lime Kiln) will be closed at night with a locked metal gate.

9.3 Aim 3: Increase awareness, understanding & knowledge

50. Analysis and interpretation of heritage

The stories at Ham Hill are varied in theme and, when combined they form a distinct timeline from the geological creation of the rocky outcrop we know as Ham Hill today, to the wildlife, use and management of Ham Hill today.

In order to get the most accurate details on the various themes, it will be important to collaborate with key local interest groups, such as South West Heritage Trust, Jurassic Coast Trust, Cambridge Archaeological Unit, Somerset Geology Group, Stoke History Group, Bumble Conservation Trust, Yeovil & District Wildlife Recording Group, Somerset Bat groups and many others. The collaboration will involve face to face discussions, reading and writing of text to analyse the information that is already present, determine what details are missing and agree on the best way of presenting this information to visitors.

The details of Ham Hill's heritage are comprehensive and complex and not all the details will be relevant for the majority of visitors, so it is important that key themes and messages are picked out & told in a way that is engaging and memorable. More information can be found in the Ham Hill Interpretation Plan.

51. Create a permanent exhibition in the Visitor Centre

The Visitor Centre will be the first port of call for new visitors to Ham Hill. With the provision of refreshments and up to date site information regarding location of livestock, wildlife to spot and what's on, the visitor centre will also provide a gateway for existing visitors. Therefore the creation of a permanent exhibition will be pivotal in providing visitors with information on how Ham Hill formed, why Ham Hill is so special and what they can do to protect Ham Hill during their visit.

The key interpretative themes are:

- Geology
- History
- Culture
- Wildlife
- Present day management

The design of the exhibition is important in ensuring visitors understand the different components of the Ham Hill story, but also how they link together. The exhibition must be tactile, allowing visitors to touch and interact; visual with photos or films and accessible, allowing deaf or visually impaired visitors to access the same information.

Wildlife cameras will be an important component of the wildlife interpretation in the visitor centre. Allowing visitors to actually see some of the species that they hear about it will give them an emotional connection to Ham Hill. Wildlife cameras will be situated in boxes in the wider visitor centre landscape.

External interpretation & site information around the visitor centre will allow visitors to keep up to date with the day-to-day management of Ham Hill. Information will be provided on wildlife sightings, locations of grazing livestock, what's on and what the rangers & volunteers are doing that week.

The interpretation design and themes are fully described in the Ham Hill Interpretation Plan.

52. Create a temporary exhibition space in Visitor Centre

Within the visitor centre will be an additional small temporary exhibition space. This can be used for one-off, touring or selling exhibitions. Exhibitions can focus on the themes of Ham Hill and use a range of media including objects, art, craft, photography, written word. In addition, as part of this project a small number c.3 of in-house exhibitions will be produced as part of the project which will fit into the temporary programme and be repeated each year, supplemented by object displays and activities.

The planned in-house exhibitions include:

- Hamstone and quarrying on Ham Hill

(e.g. Modern day quarrying operations could be interpreted, ideally with input from the quarry operators, as well as current examples of where the stone has been used in building conservation.

The conflict between the need for stone, the scheduled monument and the visitors who want to see quarrying stopped is an interesting subject – this could provide greater detail to the permanent exhibition and link to activities such as stone carving workshops and quarry tours)

- Life and death on Ham Hill – how people lived – using images from the South West Heritage Trust photographic archive

- Soldier Stories – see Activity Plan

Other temporary exhibitions will be developed with partner Museums and Collections e.g. with Museum of Somerset, and the South Somerset Heritage Collection. The research into the names on the war memorial could form a community led exhibition.

More information can be found in the Ham Hill Interpretation Plan.

53. Upskill and training of staff and volunteers (heritage protection)

The long-term conservation and scheduled monument protection of Ham Hill will be undertaken by the on-site ranger team, supported by the volunteers. It is important that the staff and volunteers understand what they are protecting, why they are protecting it and how to protect it.

To ensure volunteers and staff are skilled to undertake heritage protection, training will be key. This training could be in the form of specialist machinery certification for practical volunteers to help undertake rampart repair work, or theoretical training from the South West Heritage Trust for visitor centre and roaming ranger volunteers.

54. Create a new brand identity for Ham Hill

A new identity will help cement an instant understanding of the site boundaries and enhance recognition of this historic site locally, regionally, and nationally. The new brand will help to inform, engage, and surprise visitors and be used to encourage activities, encourage learning, satisfy curiosity, and allow for greater promotion of the site.

Key brand values include:

- Historic importance
- Community relationships and engagement
- The fragility of the site and the responsibility of care
- Diversity and wildness of the area
- A calm and mindful location with great health benefits

There may be several sub-brands for other features at the site, including the café, visitor centre and rangers' centre.

As well as a design, the site name is an important part of branding. Ham Hill has always been known by this definition as a shortening of its full title of Ham Hill Country Park. It has been discussed that this name needs to better inform visitors of the broader heritage and importance of the site.

Branding is more fully described in the Ham Hill Interpretation Plan.

55. Develop a network of themed trails

Whilst interpretation of Ham Hill's heritage within a visitor centre is important in providing a high level of detail, encouraging visitors to explore this Heritage for themselves out on site, where it exists in situ is important to encourage a deeper understanding of the site. Most visitors to Ham Hill come to go for a walk and so enabling them to do this whilst learning at the same time, means that they will have a more meaningful experience and feel more emotionally connected to Ham Hill.

A trail network will also provide confidence for new visitors to explore. Many visitors to Ham Hill, including existing visitors are unable to read maps and have a fear of getting lost. This is one of the reasons the Northern Spur has become such a 'honeypot' over the years; it is easy to navigate on well-defined paths. Whilst new themed trails will not be following surfaced paths in their entirety, they should be designed with 'confidence markers' along the route to ensure that visitors can find their location easily and navigate their way back to the start. Confidence markers should be placed on existing furniture (gates, signs) where possible to avoid cluttering of this important landscape.

The trails should be themed around Roman, Iron Age, Medieval, Geology, Wildlife and Quarrying.

The Countryside team are keen to develop a digital app trail & downloads to make interpretation more accessible by a wider variety of site users. The intention is to continue with the Ordnance Survey Secret Stories app and update it as required. Rather than develop a new app the proposal is to develop a Ham Hill AV trail based on map download pdf with QR based hotspots with films/audio files downloaded from the web. AR digital technology could be created merging Ham Hill historical

images, reconstruction filming and historical recreation drawings into the real world – a step back to the past.

Existing trail leaflets will also be updated. More information can be found in the Ham Hill Interpretation Plan.

56. Wider site interpretation

There is currently a series of information panels across Ham Hill, focusing on different themes, including Iron Age, Roman, archaeological investigations, and wildlife. These information boards were written and installed in the 1990's. The use of information boards across the site is a more traditional form of interpretation and visitors expect to find them. The current information panels are outdated in their design, although the information is still correct & relevant. Each panel will be redesigned with current graphics and to have a key focus depending on where that panel is situated, for example Roman bias theme will be on the panel near to the Roman Villa. Some of the existing panels may also need re-siting.

There is currently only one map panel at Ham Hill, situated on the outside wall of the Rangers Centre. As most visitors arrive by car, the addition of an orientation map panel with key facilities and landmarks highlighted on, in each car park would aid visitors in navigating the site. These maps would also highlight the Visitor Centre, which will not be visible from the road and so new visitors may be unaware that such a facility exists.

There is one viewpoint sign on Ham Hill near the war memorial, which points to local landmarks. These landmarks only mean something if you are a local and can understand what 'Burton Pynsent Monument' is. A new viewpoint is proposed to show links to other hillforts in the area.

Waymarking is an important part of the wider site interpretation, allowing visitors to explore on their own or follow guided trails. Fingerposts will be used in the intensive visitor area, from the visitor to the other key areas on site. In the wider site landscape, fingerposts will be too intrusive and so the use of bollards or a numbering system will be used in existing site furniture to allow people to navigate around the site.

Landscaping around the visitor centre will focus on the 'green space' to the south of the visitor centre. This area provides a 'mini' park for play, socialising and a safe space for new visitors. It has good path connections to other parts of the site and will have clear waymarking and signage. Nearby interpretive features such as adjacent deep quarry holes will be highlighted. Parts of the fence overlooking the quarry could be replaced with woven willow or hazel hurdles, providing a connection to the Somerset Levels. Natural play features will be incorporated into the landscape, using local natural materials, such as ham stone and felled timber from the site.

An activity hub in the wider landscape setting of the visitor centre will allow the ranger team and engagement ranger a space for outside learning; to share skills, develop volunteers and deliver community group sessions, with a centralised fire pit for warmth and focus.

More information can be found in the Ham Hill Interpretation Plan.

57. Deliver Heritage Fund Project Activity Plan

The ranger team have always delivered an annual programme of public events at Ham Hill, focusing on two-hour bookable session or free drop-in events. The event programme has featured activities such as fire lighting, Dog Show, Bonfire and Egg Olympics.

As part of the Heritage Fund project there is an extensive four-year activity plan to deliver which includes everything from public events, local community workshops to specialist subject activities and more. The activity plan will help to deliver the Heritage Fund outcomes of the project for people, which are:

1. A wider range of people will be involved in heritage
2. People will have greater wellbeing
3. People will have developed skills
4. People will have learnt about heritage, leading to change in ideas and actions
5. Ham Hill will be an inclusive and accessible destination

The activity plan will be tailored to engage existing visitors, local people, BAME communities, people with disabilities and schools.

More information can be found in the Ham Hill Activity Plan.

58. Encourage responsible behaviour by visitors

Ham Hill is an open and accessible country park, throughout the year. Most people that visit Ham Hill do so with respect, however, there are a minority of visitors that use Ham Hill for their own purpose with a total disregard for wildlife, the archaeology, the present day management or other visitors. For example, the rangers often must deal with dog attacks onto livestock (sheep), dogs running free off of a lead in areas where there are ground nesting birds, littering, fly tipping and other anti-social behaviour.

Through the Heritage Fund project it is hoped that this culture of some visitors can be changed, through education and a more visible presence with an increased ranger and volunteer team on site.

Dog bins are provided across the site in key areas for the convenience of dog walkers to dispose of dog waste.

Information about where livestock are currently grazing is shared on social media so that dog walkers can plan their visit in advance to avoid those areas. This information will also be made available at the Visitor Centre in external interpretation and updated as necessary. The ranger team also work closely with the tenant grazer to help provide a presence in areas where sheep are grazing. The grazer and rangers also work with regular site visitors, who report incidences of sheep worrying and also to gather evidence in the event of a sheep attack so that the dog owner can be prosecuted or fined for the loss of the sheep.

A Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) [2017] covers the whole site and rangers have the capability to work with enforcement teams to gather evidence to bring forward fixed penalty notices (FPN@S). The ranger team are now equipped with body cameras that can be used as a deterrent for aggressive behaviour and to capture evidence should an FPN be required.

59. Apply for Green Flag and Green Heritage awards annually

Ham Hill has been awarded Green flag status continually since 2005 and Green heritage status since 2012. This is an annual assessment carried out by a panel of judges with backgrounds in nature conservation and green space management. It comprises a desk and field-based component and within each component the entire site is judged against eight key criteria:

- A welcoming site
- Healthy, safe and secure
- Well maintained & clean
- Environmental management
- Biodiversity, landscape and heritage
- Community involvement
- Marketing & communication
- Management

Additional criteria are judged against for the Green Heritage Award and this is supported by Historic England:

- Condition of historic features
- Use and enjoyment of historic features
- Maintaining historic character & appearance

The holistic management approach adopted by the Countryside Service is embedded in the aims that direct the work of the team. This ensures that all the above criteria are met which has contributed to the park gaining accreditation. When visiting, judges give valued recommendations to improve both the visitor experience and the site's wildlife and conservation value. These values are reflected in the specific management objectives and prescriptions of the present management plan with the aim of successfully meeting all 8 criteria.

60. Maintain an active online presence

Ham Hill's online presence has increased over the last five years, with it's own social media channels and a page on the Visit South Somerset website (launched November 2021). Facebook still tends to be the most popular social media platform, with 8300 followers. Instagram is still relatively new for the site, having been launched in 2020 and has just 1400 followers at time of writing (December 2022). The Countryside Twitter pages are now redundant as the engagement through this channel was lowest and it was difficult for rangers to maintain the news feed alongside the more popular channels. As is the pattern with social media, videos and reels tend to reach the highest audiences and are a great way of engaging with younger people. It is the aim of the countryside team to set up a Tik Tok account to make reel creation easier and to reach a new generation of visitors.

Ham Hill is now featured on the Visit South Somerset website, created by the SSDC Tourism Team and launched in November 2021. The website allows the site team to communicate important site information with visitors in more detail than social media and is the first point of call for people planning a visit to Ham Hill. The web pages also allow visitors to book onto events and make payments online, reducing cash handling & ensuring that where event numbers are restricted, only a certain number of bookings can be made.

61. Marketing & promotion of events & activities

Ham Hill does not have a marketing budget and relies on word of mouth, site posters, social media, Visit South Somerset website, central council communications and press releases to ensure news stories and events are advertised to the wider community.

The main focus of event promotion is to visitors within a 10 mile radius of Ham Hill. This is mostly achieved through social media (Facebook & Instagram) and on-site posters. Local parish communications are also helpful, such as the Hambook, Parrett Plus and TA13 news, which are delivered directly to residents in the Norton Sub Hamdon, Stoke sub Hamdon, Martock & south Petherton communities quarterly or monthly.

Significant news items are uploaded onto the VSS website and formal press releases are written & sent out via the main council communications team.

Social media is used most regularly to keep visitors and the local community updated on the day to day management by the rangers and volunteers and & any wildlife highlights or problems. This is the most engaging form of advertisement and promotion as people can quickly respond to the posts.

Partnership promotion is also key for spreading the word about Ham Hill. Cartgate TIC is situated on the A303 and often signposts motorists to Ham Hill as a stop off for dogs and children to stretch their legs. Ninesprings Café at Yeovil Country Park will be fundamental in advertising the new Ham Hill visitor centre & café, as both facilities will be under the same management.

9.4 Aim 4: Achieve future financial sustainability

62. Seek new areas of income generation from retail, car parking, donations, sponsorship, functions, and catering

The team at Ham Hill have always been restricted in creating income generation opportunities. Environmental land management schemes, such as Higher Level Stewardship (DEFRA) have always provided the largest and most reliable income source, along with tenant licences for grazing and ice cream van sales. The sale of cut wood from tree safety works has also been significant to a small site budget. Charging of events only covers costs, so the rangers have had to be creative to ensure that they are always seeking best value in everything they do. Having a skilled site-based ranger team has also negated the need to hire contractors and consultants and these are now only used for specialist skills or equipment such as tree climbing works. A donation point was added to the website in 2022 but this hasn't been promoted and so donations have not yet been forthcoming.

Café & retail sales

With a new visitor centre the opportunities for income generation will be increased through sales of refreshments in the cafe and the sale of appropriate & bespoke items in a small retail space, commission through sales in the temporary exhibition space.

Donations

Development of contactless donation points in and around the visitor centre will encourage visitors to support the work of the rangers or specific projects that they are interested in. Online website donations will also be encouraged, particularly at free events.

Car parking donations

Car parking charges have always been a contentious issue, as 90% of site visitors arrive by car as there are limited means of accessing Ham Hill in any other way. There are currently no charges to park at Ham Hill. The reasons why it is difficult to install pay and display parking machines include:

- Potential for visitors to park on the road not in the car parks
- Car park adjacent to the pub, on Duchy land, for where there could be resistance to parking charges from land owner, tenant and customers – combined with the need to ensure consistency across the site
- Security of machines that accept cash with the potential of break-ins

The technology and range of parking options is developing rapidly with significant growth in contactless payments, particularly enhanced during the Covid pandemic, through cards and mobile phones. The proposal is to provide on-site signage and pre-visit information that encourages visitors to make a cashless donation to the Country Park for its upkeep.

Ham Hill Supporter memberships

Ham Hill has a significant number of local and regular users, the majority of whom would drive to the site. For these regular visitors the intention is also to develop a supporters scheme, which would give an email newsletter, discount on events, shop and cafe, advance booking on events, social events and a car park ticket as a visible 'supporter of Ham Hill'.

The intention is to introduce a Ham Hill Supporter membership scheme. For a yearly cost of £20/household the participant holder would:

- receive a parking permit card/sticker to be displayed on the dashboard
- not be expected to make a car park donation
- receive a wallet sized membership card entitling them to a discount at the Ham Hill café and shop
- receive a regular e-newsletter
- be able to advance book for events and activities

This scheme could be rolled out in partnership with the Friends of Ham Hill.

Functions

With the position of the visitor centre there is the potential for social functions in the evening after the centre is closed to the public. Food catering could be provided by outside caterers and the on-site pub has already expressed interest in providing this service and working with the new visitor centre.

Grant funding

The countryside team will continue to develop applications for further grant funding alongside and beyond the life of the Heritage Fund project. Working alongside the Friends of Ham Hill as a registered charity will make more grants accessible.

Grants will be used for project work including activities and interpretation, but also for capital works such as tree planting and biodiversity enhancements.

Sponsorship

A corporate sponsorship package has started being developed for the countryside team and this will be finalised and promoted to local businesses. There will be the opportunity to sponsor machinery, the volunteer team (PPE, refreshments, training etc), projects or areas in return for marketing & promotion of the business through on site signage, press releases and social media. There will be the opportunity for bespoke activity days for sponsoring businesses and other discounts, depending on the value of the sponsorship.

63. Provide on-site facilities for learning, living archaeology, green woodworking, courses and gatherings

The creation of an outdoor activity hub will enable the Ham Hill staff to deliver outdoor focused activity and learning sessions whilst having some facilities and some shelter from the weather. The activity hub will be created in old quarry site approximately 150m of the visitor centre, within easy reach of toilets, but set far enough away so that it has a quiet and peaceful nature. The activity hub will be created using timber from site, it will be open sided but with a weatherproof roof and central fire pit. Benches and some work tables will be created in the space to aid activities and group gatherings.

This will allow the rangers and engagement officer to deliver courses and activities that are not suitable for indoor use, throughout the year, such as green woodworking and campfire cooking.

64. Improve car park, cycling facilities and improve opportunities for sustainable transport

A visitor survey in 2018 revealed that 90% of visitors to Ham Hill arrive by car, mainly due to its inaccessibility up a very steep hill. Regular clashes between motorists and visitors who are exploring the site are common. The car parks are informal and the arrangement of parked cars can lead to the car parks being 'full' despite a higher potential capacity.

To improve accessibility and safety at Ham Hill, the car parks will be reconfigured so that parking is easier and visibility splays at each entrance will be improved to aid access for motorists and safety for other road users.

A new highway path will be created alongside the road, connecting the Lime Kiln car park with designated crossing points, to allow the safer movement of pedestrians across the site.

Designated crossing points will be created along the highway at key points, using signage and a change in surface dressing to alert motorists & guide pedestrians.

A new speed limit will be applied onto Ham Hill road of 40mph instead of the existing 60mph, linking with the 30mph speed limit end from Stoke sub Hamdon to the southern point of the country park at Batemoor Barns and west to the bottom of Norton Lane. A new surface dressing will be applied at these areas and 'Gateway signs' will be created

Cycle racks will be constructed near to the visitor centre including E-bike charging points.

Five EV charging points will be included in Lime Kiln car park with infrastructure built in to extend this to other car parks as and when required.

It is hoped that by improving paths up to Ham Hill from Stoke sub Hamdon & improving E-bike facilities that the number of cars at Ham Hill will be reduced. However, the steep nature of Ham Hill does mean that it is only accessible for many by means of powered transport. The project team will work with Stoke sub Hamdon Parish Council to seek alternative methods of accessing Ham Hill, in an effort to reduce vehicles going onto Ham Hill and through the village of Stoke itself. One idea to be progressed is linking an electric shuttle bus with the 81 bus route that stops at the bottom of Ham Hill road. This will require funding for the transport itself and a network of volunteers to drive the shuttle bus. Other options also need to be considered.

A small parcel of land, near to Harvey's Quarry and adjacent to the highway is privately owned and the current owner has indicated that they may be willing to enter into a rental agreement with SSDC to create a new car park. This needs to be progressed further with the landowner.

Aim 5: Successfully manage and implement the project

65. Create a Ham Hill consultation group

To ensure that the Heritage Fund delivers on its agreed outcomes, a new Ham Hill consultation group will be formed. The group will be formed specifically for people from diverse backgrounds, and young people, recruited from groups taking part in new activities and projects such as Yeovil 4 Family and Fiveways School.

The purpose of the group will be to work alongside the SSDC ranger team, the Countryside Steering Group and the Friends of Ham Hill, to play a role in decision making about Ham Hill, develop and deliver small-scale projects, help with fundraising and support the rangers to deliver activities. The aim is for people already engaged in activities and projects at Ham Hill to wish to be involved at a deeper level and to develop skills linked to fundraising, governance, and event management.

66. Monitor monthly performance via a balance scorecard

To ensure key targets are met, the rangers monitor the level of community involvement and achievements against the critical activities of the corporate plan. At the end of each month figures are gathered from across the ranger team and collated centrally. Numbers of events organised, youth activities, number of participants, number of trees planted, grant funding and number of volunteer days donated are all recorded. See appendix for current balance scorecard recording sheet. These records now cover seven years and are useful as input into funding bids, evidence for inspections and for reporting on progress towards the delivery of grant schemes.

In order to monitor the delivery of the Heritage Fund project, a new monitor sheet will be created, specifically to record all Heritage Fund activities and outcomes. This will include items such as number of participants on events, names of community groups that attend sessions, and match funding secured.

67. Embed environmental sustainability into all aspects of work

The ranger team already operates to reduce environmental impact through its use of materials and creation of efficient working practices. Fuel and resource use efficiency are maximised and materials reused where possible. This will be continued with opportunities for further improvements sought especially in the areas of environmental accreditation (e.g. 'Green Mark', ISO 14001). All timber procurement will be FSC certified in line with the SSDC Tree Policy.

The use of single use plastics will be minimised during event promotion & activities and alternative materials will be used e.g. laminated posters and plastic craft materials.

When petrol- or diesel-powered equipment is in need of replacement, the rangers will source battery operated replacements where appropriate. For example, battery operated chainsaws and electric ATV's. The existing site diesel ATV's are in need of replacement, but there currently isn't a powerful enough electric alternative. The team will continue to work alongside the council's fleet team to seek electric alternatives.

68. Draw upon project partners & experienced staff to assist with the delivery of the Heritage Fund project

The SSDC countryside team have experience in the delivery of Heritage Fund and other grant funded projects, including the 'V3: Involve, Visit, Volunteer' Heritage Fund project at Yeovil Country Park that was completed in 2019. Therefore existing staff that were involved in that project have got experience in gathering evidence for financial claims and completing progress reports for NLHF, as well as reporting to members on project outcomes, that can assist new project staff for the Ham Hill HF project.

The team can also draw upon the expertise of local community, wildlife, history and geology groups to assist with implementation of the HF activity programme including learning resources and site interpretation. This will engage the local community with the project and ensure that local knowledge is passed onto future generations.

As SSDC is a local government organisation, the wider team have experience and skills that could assist the countryside team in delivery of the Heritage Fund project. For example, colleagues in property services can assist with the construction of the visitor centre by helping to procure and manage the right contractors for the role, planners can assist with any changes required to the planning permission and the procurement team can advise on the tendering for works and appointment of contracts.

A project team will be in place at the start of the project with weekly meetings to discuss actions, issues, risks, budget and to make project decisions. The project team will consist of:

Katy Munday, Leisure & Recreation Manager
Rachael Whaites, Countryside Manager
Paul McNeill, Ham Hill Ranger
Dan Bennett, Property & Development Project Manager
Martin Cooke, Heritage & Leisure Management (external consultant)
Engagement Ranger (position currently empty)
Debbie Wilde, Case Officer, administrative support

A central TEAMS channel will enable the project team to access live working documents including budget monitoring, risk register, decision log and other monitoring documents.

Professional skills will be brought in where required and in line with the project budget to assist with specific areas of work, for example design and construction and interpretation.

| TASK | WHO | WHEN? | | | | | Resources required (time & money per annum) | PARTNERS | RELEVANT COMPARTMENTS | COMPLETED | COMMENTS |
|---|-----|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---|--|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| | | 2 3 | 2 4 | 2 5 | 2 6 | 2 7 | | | | | |
| Aim 1. Improve site management, habitat creation and Scheduled Monument protection | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Conserve and protect Iron Age ramparts and other earthworks | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Area A | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Path surface repairs to upper ramparts as described in SM Consent approved 2018 (Ref:S00194636) | R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days £20,000 | Duchy of Cornwall, Volunteers & local quarries | Northern Spur | | HF budget for all rampart repairs |
| Scrub removal on upper ramparts to favour restoration of calcareous grassland. Scrub to be reduced by ca. 70%. October – March. | R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days £3000 | Duchy of Cornwall, Volunteers | Northern Spur | | HF budget for all scrub control |
| Area B | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Path surface repairs to upper ramparts as described in SM Consent approved 2018 (Ref:S00194636) | R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days £20,000 | Volunteers & local quarries | Hedgecock Woods | | HF budget for all rampart repairs |
| Thin dead, damaged and diseased trees to protect SM. October - March | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days £1000 | Duchy of Cornwall and arborist contractors | Hedgecock Woods | | |
| Improve existing path surfaces through drainage works to reduce standing water on lower rampart paths | R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days £20,000 | Duchy of Cornwall | Hedgecock Woods | | HF budget for all rampart repairs |
| Coppice appropriate trees to create a biodiverse & sustainable woodland on a 5-7 year rotation. November - February | R | | ✓ | | | ✓ | 3 days £600 | Duchy of Cornwall, Volunteers | Hedgecock Woods | | |
| Area D | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Maintain culm grassland through grazing regimes under environmental land management schemes. | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 90 days | Tenant grazier | Butcher's Hill | | Income derived from grazier |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Scrub management on upper ramparts to ensure scrub does not exceed 5% of the area. October - March | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days £3000 | Volunteers | Butchers Hill | | HF budget for all scrub control |
| Area E | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Improve existing path surfaces through drainage works to reduce standing water on lower rampart paths | R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days £20,000 | | Western Ramparts | | HF budget for all rampart repairs |
| Path surface repairs to upper ramparts as described in SM Consent approved 2018 (Ref:S00194636) | R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days £20,000 | Volunteers & local quarries | Western Ramparts | | HF budget for all rampart repairs |
| Coppice appropriate trees to create a biodiverse & sustainable woodland on a 5-7 year rotation. November – February. | R | | ✓ | | | | 3 days £600 | Volunteers | Western Ramparts | | |
| Area F | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Thin dead, damaged and diseased trees to protect SM. October - March | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days £1000 | Arborist contractors | Western Ramparts | | |
| Manage woodland through coppicing and selective thinning to enable gaps in canopy to create visas from paths. October – March | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days £1000 | Arborist contractors | Western Ramparts | | |
| 2. Conserve and protect other archaeological features | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Restore & repair the Lime Kiln | C | | ✓ | | | | £12,000 | Specialist stonemason contractors | Victorian Quarryscape | | HF project Match funding to be sought |
| 3. Conserve rare or endangered species and habitats | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Carry out annual surveys of skylark population including distribution of potential nesting sites April - July | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | Volunteers | Plateau Fields | | |
| Create permanent signs on gates at entrances to Plateau Fields with dog restrictions on | R + CM | | ✓ | | | | 1 day £400 | Printer & designer | Plateau Fields | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|---|---|---|----------|--|---|--|-------------------------|
| Continue monitoring programme for dormice in woodlands - 3 surveys per annum from May - October. | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 3 days | Licensed surveyor Volunteers & other site rangers | Horses Wood, Western ramparts, Butchers Hill | | |
| Continue with breeding bird surveys (BBS) - 3 surveys per annum in April - June | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 3 days | Volunteers & other site rangers | Northern Spur, Western Ramparts and Victorian Quarryscape | | |
| Expand BBS to cover wider areas of site – 3 surveys per annum | R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 9 days | Volunteers & other site rangers | Entire site | | Dependent on volunteers |
| Carry out bee and butterfly transects from May - September – min 3 surveys per annum | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days | Volunteers | Entire site | | Dependent on volunteers |
| Carry out reptile surveys across site from April - October - min 5 surveys per annum | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days | Volunteers | Northern Spur, Victorian Quarryscape, Witcombe Valley, Plateau fields | | |
| 4. Manage grasslands with grazing in line with DEFRA agri-environment schemes | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ensure there is a current five-year grazing licence with tenant farmer | CM | | | ✓ | | | 2 days | Tenant Farmer, GTH (agents) | Entire site | | |
| Continue to manage grassland in line with HLS & BPS agreements until a new agri-env scheme is launched | CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 365 days | Tenant Farmer, GTH (agents) | Entire site | | |
| Work with Greenslade Taylor Hunt as agents to seek new agri-environment schemes for Ham Hill | CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days | Tenant Farmer, GTH (agents) | Entire site | | |

| 5. Improve field margins for Shrill Carder Bees | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Continue with rotational hay meadow cuts in Strouds West and East. Cut one in July, the other in September and rotate annually | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 3 days | Tenant grazier | Plateau fields | | |
| Carry out trial plots on margin restoration based on BBCT recommendations | R | ✓ | ✓ | | | | 8 days | BBCT, Volunteers | Plateau fields | | |
| Carry out adopted methodology to improve field margins based on results of test plots | R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days £6000 | BBCT, Volunteers & Friends | | | Banister Trust & Leonardo's funded |
| Recruit volunteers to carry out Shrill Carder surveys – minimum of two volunteers recruited | R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1 day | BCT | Plateau fields | | |
| Carry out shrill carder surveys annually – minimum two per annum, May - September. | R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | BCT | Plateau fields | | |
| 6. Management of calcareous grassland | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ramparts | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mechanically remove trees and scrub October - March | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 3 days £500 | Volunteers | Northern Spur | | Area B in Landscape Proposals |
| Winter graze (Nov-Apr) at 1Lu/ha | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 151 days | Tenant grazier | Northern Spur | | |
| Strim around patches where grassland currently established to encourage expansion | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | 3 days £100 | | Northern Spur | | |
| Strim and remove arising's where sward establishing in southern half of enclosure | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | 1 day £50 | Volunteers | Northern Spur | | |
| Cut nettle and bracken in early summer to encourage grazing | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | £100 / annum | Volunteers | Northern Spur | | |
| Seek additional funding to fence areas for calcareous grassland restoration | R + CM | | ✓ | ✓ | | | 5 days £10,000 | Contractor | Western ramparts | | Dependant on external funding |
| Where grazing is not possible manage by mechanical means | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 3 days £600 | Volunteers | Northern Spur Western Ramparts | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------|----------------|----------------|--|--|-------------------------------|
| Targets: | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cover of wildflowers between 20% and 90% by year 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cover of bare ground ≤ 5% by year 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cover of scrub reduced by 40 - 100% | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Increase in mean sward species richness by year 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Increase in mean abundance of high-value indicator species by year 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Northern Spur | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Grazed for a minimum of 10 weeks in Jan-Apr (strim where grazing not possible) | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 70 days | Tenant grazier | Northern Spur | | | Area A in Landscape Proposals |
| Cut scrub to maintain small islands contributing to habitat matrix. Maintain extent to that in hard to reach areas (approx. 25% cover) | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 3 days £200 | Volunteers | Northern Spur | | | |
| Target scrub clearance to where recently expanding into grassland and on banks above main path up to war memorial | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 3 days £200 | Volunteers | Northern Spur | | | |
| Control regrowth on inner ramparts | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4 days £500 | Volunteers | Northern Spur | | | |
| Consider protecting an area from further nutrient enrichment by fencing out dogs and visitors. | R + CM | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4 days £3000 | contractor | Northern Spur | | | |
| Reduce scrub extent in north east corner around Frying Pan | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | Volunteers | Northern Spur | | | |
| 7. Maintain species-rich lowland meadow (Stroud's Meadow East and West) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Take a hay crop annually from Strouds West and East; cut one in July, the other in September and rotate annually | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4 days | Tenant grazier | Plateau fields | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|--|---------------------|
| Aftermath graze September-November at 2 Lu/ha to achieve October target sward of 2-10cm | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 91 days | Tenant grazier | | | |
| Top thistles in summer prior to flowering | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 3 days | Volunteers | | | |
| Leave 6m outer margin uncut, cut on rotation every 3 years | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | Tenant grazier | | | |
| Mow footpath around and through meadows with varied cut heights and scalloping | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4 days £200 | | | | |
| Carry out mole control to ensure hay cut is not contaminated | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days £100 | | | | Rangers are trained |
| Targets: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| No reduction in mean sward species richness | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cover of bare ground ≤ 5 % by year 5 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Frequent abundance of 2 high-value indicator species for lowland meadow grassland by year 5 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8. Maintain areas of rough meadow within Plateau Fields (Butcher's Hill, The Warren) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Butcher's Hill | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Top field every other year in September on rotation with The Warren | R | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | 3 days | Tenant grazier | Plateau fields | | |
| Aftermath graze in October to achieve a target sward height of 15-25cm | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 31 days | Tenant grazier | | | |
| Control undesirable species by pulling | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 3 days £200 | Volunteers | | | |
| Mow footpath around and through meadows with varied cut heights and scalloping | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4 days £200 | | | | |
| The Warren | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Top field every other year in September on rotation with Butcher's Hill | R | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | Tenant grazier | Plateau fields | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|--|--|--|
| Introduce a spring graze and higher intensity autumn graze for two years and monitor for response in sward diversity | R | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | Tenant grazier | | | |
| Control undesirable species by pulling | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 3 days £200 | Volunteers | | | | |
| Mow footpath around and through meadows with varied cut heights and scalloping | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4 days £200 | | | | | |
| 9. Manage the dry acid pasture and rough grassland of Witcombe | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Graze sward April - November at approx. 0.3 Lu/ha to achieve October target sward of 2-10cm (40cm in difficult areas). Winter graze if required. | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 215 days | Tenant grazier | Witcombe Valley | | | |
| Control undesirable species by pulling and topping | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4 days £200 | Volunteers & Tenant grazier | | | | |
| Mechanically remove large gorse thickets from strip lynchets October - March | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | 2 days £400 | Volunteers | Witcombe Valley | | | |
| Targets: | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cover of wildflowers between 20% and 90% by year 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cover of bare ground ≤ 5% by year 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Frequent abundance of 2 high-value indicator species for each grassland type by year 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cover of scrub reduced by 40 - 100% | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cover of bracken reduced by 40 - 100% | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| No reduction in mean sward species richness | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10. Restore Pit Wood lowland pasture | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Graze sward Apr-Nov at 1 Lu/ha to achieve October target sward of 2-10 cm (40 cm in difficult areas) | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 215 days | Tenant grazier | Pit Wood | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Consider introduction of grazing by native cattle | R + CM | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | Tenant grazier | | | |
| Control undesirable species by pulling and topping in summer | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4 days £200 | | Volunteers | | | |
| Targets: | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cover of wildflowers between 20% and 90% by year 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cover of bare ground ≤ 5% by year 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cover of scrub reduced by 40 - 100% | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cover of bracken reduced by 40 -100% | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Increase in mean sward species richness by year 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Increase in mean abundance of high-value indicator species by year 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11. Control of invasive species. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Annually top nettles and thistles to 4cm. | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | | Grazier | Plateau, Pit, Witcombe | | |
| Pull ragwort by hand | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4 days £100 | | Volunteers | Plateau, Pit, Witcombe | | |
| Monitor and control regrowth of Japanese knotweed on Norton Holloway. | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1 day £200 | | | Northern Spur | | |
| Pull wild parsnip by hand in high visitor traffic areas | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4 days £200 | | Volunteers | Northern Spur, Quarryscape | | |
| 12. Management of Hedgecock Wood | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Extract fallen timber from top rampart | R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 5 days £500 | | | Hedgecock Woods | | |
| Investigate possibility of using horses to extract timber | R | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | Duchy of Cornwall | | | | |
| Control scrub on ramparts (75% removal) | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days £500 | | Volunteers | | | |
| Reduce canopy cover via coppicing and thinning on top and bottom ramparts | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days £800 | | Duchy of Cornwall | | | |

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| Manage existing scallops along main bridleway: annually strim grassland core, 3-year rotational cut of herbaceous margin | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days £500 | | | | |
| Continue laurel clearance on bottom rampart | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | 2 days £200 | Volunteers | | | |
| Strim nettle bank on western edge of wood to improve floral diversity on 3-year rotation | R | ✓ | | | ✓ | | 4 days | | | | |
| Manage clearing at A. To improve sward diversity. Annually strim grassland core and rotationally cut herbaceous margin. | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | £50 / annum | | | | |
| Remove bike trails and jumps and repairs ramparts with agreement from HE & DoC. | R | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days £5000 | Volunteers, Historic England, Duchy of Cornwall | | | |
| 13. Manage woodlands on Northern Spur (Eastern ramparts) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Manage scrub to reduce cover by 75 % | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days £500 | Volunteers | Northern Spur | | |
| Reduce canopy cover via coppicing, pollarding and selective thinning in strips down ramparts | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 3 days £600 | Volunteers | | | |
| Create glades in wider sections: annually strim grass core and cut herbaceous margin on staggered 3-year rotation | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 3 days £600 | Volunteers | | | |
| Investigate the use of horse to extract timber | R | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | Duchy of Cornwall | | | |
| Investigate potential to manage as woodland pasture and seek funding for necessary capital works | R + CM | | | ✓ | ✓ | | 3 days | | | | |
| 14. Scrub control on southern half of Northern Spur | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Scrub to be removed from all but the most inaccessible areas October - March. Target of 75 % removal | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days £1000 | Volunteers | Northern Spur | | |
| Manage regrowth by hand and via treatment | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days £500 | Volunteers | | | |

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| Dispose of cut material via chipping and burning on top of cut areas | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1 day £300 | Volunteers | | | |
| Seek to retain corridors of scrub between car parks to provide woodland connectivity from east to west | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| 15. Management of Pit Wood | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Continue removal of 20-30 sycamore per annum | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days £500 | Rangers from other sites | Pit Wood | | |
| Replant with local native stock to encourage development of shrub layer | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days £1000 | Volunteers, Friends | | | Funded by Friends or other external |
| Cut back scrub along fence line and canopy manage willows | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | 2 days £200 | Volunteers | | | |
| Aid natural regeneration by clearing around selected saplings to encourage growth | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | | | | |
| Keep holly checked should it respond to increased light penetration | R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 1 day | Volunteers | | | |
| Control extent of bramble in woodland | R | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | 2 days £200 | Volunteers | | | |
| Cut gorse on rotation to manage legginess and maintain habitat value | R | | ✓ | | | ✓ | 2 days £100 | Volunteers | | | |
| Target: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Non-native species comprise < 10 % of canopy cover | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16. Manage Horses wood and wet woodland | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rotationally coppice hazel stools (only regeneration intervention) | R | ✓ | | ✓ | | | 2 days £200 | Volunteers | Horses | | |
| Manage canopies of standards to ensure public safety | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days £1000 | Arb team | Horses | | |

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| Remove laurel and other exotics from wet woodland and manage the abundance of sycamore | R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1 day £200 | Volunteers | Witcombe | | |
| Leave areas of old growth and over-mature stands | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | Horses | | |
| Manage bramble along fence line | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | 2 days £100 | Volunteers | Horses | | |
| Prevent public access to wet woodland | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | Witcombe | | |
| 17. Manage deadwood in woodlands where required | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Retain standing deadwood if safe and practical | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | Hedgecock, Pit, Horse, N. Spur | | |
| Habitat pile and leave in-situ all fallen deadwood | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1 day | Volunteers | | | |
| Habitat pile and leave in-situ proportion of brash following cutting | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1 day | Volunteers | | | |
| Habitat pile larger timber where hibernacula provision required | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1 day | Volunteers | | | |
| Target: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Standing and fallen deadwood over 20 cm diameter present throughout woodlands | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18. Conserve veteran trees | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Identify and map locations of trees (DBH > 1.7 m) that will be suitable to retain as managed veteran trees (esp. oak, ash and sweet chestnut) using XMAP | R | | ✓ | ✓ | | | 5 days | GIS team | Hedgecock, Pit, Horse, N. Spur | | |
| Complete annual tree safety survey on XMAP | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days | | Entire site | | Rangers trained |
| Canopy management of veteran sweet chestnut stools. | R | | | ✓ | | ✓ | 2 days £500 | Arb team | Hedgecock, Pit, Horse, N. Spur | | |
| Canopy management of large ash stools. | R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days £2000 | Arb team | Hedgecock, Pit, Horse, N. Spur | | |
| Target: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| No reduction in the number of veteran trees | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19. Identify and manage new planting areas | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Trim vegetation growth twice a year. | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4 days | | | | |
| Remove tree guards when trees large enough. | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | Volunteers | | | |

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| Secure funding to create woodland corridor to link Pit Wood with Horses Wood | R + CM | | ✓ | ✓ | | | £20k | FoHH | | | Dependent on external funding |
| 20. Ensure programme of wildlife nesting box maintenance. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Clean out all bird and bat boxes in autumn. | R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | Volunteers Somerset Bat Group | Horses, Pit, N. Spur | | |
| Re-site boxes in inappropriate places to new locations. | R | | | ✓ | ✓ | | 1 day | Volunteers | Entire site | | |
| Secure funding for additional bat and bird boxes | R + CM | | | ✓ | ✓ | | £700 | FoHH | n/a | | Dependent on external funding |
| Erect dormouse boxes in quieter areas of site, with tubes in busier areas. | R | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days £300 | Volunteers | | | |
| Map locations, use and condition of all boxes on XMAP | R | | | ✓ | ✓ | | 2 days | | Entire site | | |
| 21. Sympathetically manage woodlands for dormice | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Maintain canopy connectivity (pinch points) along paths and rides at least every 100 m | R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | Hedgecock, Pit, Horse, N. Spur | | |
| Maintain hazel shrub layer coppiced on > 7 year rotation especially where scrub removed | R | | ✓ | | ✓ | | 3 days | Volunteers | Hedgecock, Pit, Horse, N. Spur | | |
| Reintroduce hazel coppice into woodland around Sandy Lane | R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 4 days £300 | Volunteers | Northern Spur | | |
| Record dormouse box/tube monitoring results & inform PTES of results | R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 3 days | Licensed surveyor | | | |
| 22. Seek to increase habitat connectivity across site | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Re-lay hedge as part of HLS agreement along Witcombe track | R | | | ✓ | ✓ | | 4 days | | Witcombe | | |
| Extend re-laid Witcombe Lane hedge past sheep corral to connect with north-western corner of Pit Wood | R | | | | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days £400 | | Witcombe | | |
| Further investigate possibility to re-lay hedge alongside quarry | R + CM | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | Harvey's Quarry | N. Spur | | |

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| Consider capital project to create hedge alongside southern boundary of Plateau Fields and roadside boundary of Butchers Hill | R + CM | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | £1000 | | Plateau | | Dependent on external funding |
| 23. Manage Medieval pond and Witcombe stream | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Carry out pond clearance works to de-silt the pond & increase summer water levels November - February | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1 day | Volunteers | Witcombe Valley | | |
| Use ponds for educational resource | R & ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1 day | | | | |
| Monitor ponds and plant macrophytes | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | Volunteers | | | |
| Investigate cause of water loss in ponds & devise a solution | R | ✓ | ✓ | | | | 4 days £500 | Volunteers | | | |
| 24. Manage the park as a core element of a wider ecological network | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Contribute to Nature Recovery Networks thorough the Local Nature Partnership | CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | Relevant SC departments SWT | n/a | | |
| Identify potential connections for wildlife to wider landscape and approach relevant landowners | R + CM | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | Landowners | Entire site | | |
| 25. Protect the sites of geological interest. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Create a Geological layer on XMAP | CM | ✓ | | | | | 1 day | | | | |
| Map & describe geological features on XMAP | R | ✓ | | | | | 2 days | Somerset Geology Group | | | |
| Carry out condition survey of all geological features using XMAP – every two years | R | | ✓ | | ✓ | | 2 days | Somerset Geology Group | | | |
| Carry out work to maintain the rock faces as required & identified from the condition survey | R | | ✓ | | ✓ | | 2 days | Somerset Geology | | | |

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| | | | | | | | | Group, volunteers | | | |
| Liaise with appropriate specialists on geological conservation at Ham Hill | R + CM | ✓ | ✓ | | | | 1 day | Natural England | Entire site | | |
| Liaise with Ham & Doultong Stone Quarry to ensure their operations do not damage existing important geological exposures | CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1 day | Ham & Doultong Stone Quarry | | | |
| Develop interpretation and activities with a geological theme as part of the HF project in line with the Interpretation and Activity plans | PT | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days | Somerset Geology Group, Jurassic Coast Trust | | | Included in HF budget for interpretation |
| Develop ranger training to improve geological knowledge and confidence in delivering activities related to geology | CM | | ✓ | | | ✓ | 2 days | Somerset Geology Group, Jurassic Coast Trust | | | Included in HF activity plan |
| 26. Repair and maintain safe and attractive boundaries | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Check integrity of all fence lines every 2 years using site inspection system on XMAP | R | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | 2 days | | Entire site | | |
| Repair fence line as required | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | 5 days £4000 | Contractors | | | |
| Repair damaged sections of drystone walling as identified in the condition survey using traditional techniques | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 100 days £10,000 | Volunteers, Dry Stone Walling Association | Plateau, Witcombe | | Included in HF landscape proposals & budget |
| Maintain wildlife corridor via rotational laying every five to seven years | R | | | ✓ | | | 2 days | Volunteers | Horses Wood | | |
| Ensure livestock excluded from woodland areas | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | Horses, Pit, Hedgecock | | |
| 27. Increase the staff at Ham Hill | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| Create role description and person specification for the post of Assistant Ranger | CM | ✓ | | | | | 2 days | | | | |
| Advertise post & undergo recruitment process | CM & R | ✓ | | | | | £104,000 over 3 years | | | | Included in HF budget |
| Ensure the new post holder completes a full induction of the site, the management plan & Heritage Fund project | CM & R | ✓ | | | | | 2 days | | | | |
| Develop a training plan for Assistant Ranger | CM & R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1 day | Senior Ranger External training providers | | | |
| Ensure assistant ranger is well integrated into the team and carry out monthly 121's | CM & R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 12 days | Senior Ranger | | | |
| 28. Purchase of machinery | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Trial & order new tractor & attachments | R | ✓ | ✓ | | | | £40k | | | | Included in HF machinery budget |
| Arrange demo & trial of remote controlled mowers | R | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | |
| Purchase new machinery, ensuring it is battery operated where appropriate | R | | | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| 29. Improvements to the Highway | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Deliver Highway improvements as per the Landscape Proposals under the HF project | PT | ✓ | ✓ | | | | £117,000 | Contractors | Entire site | | Included in HF budget |
| 30. Manage recreational pressure | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Carry out annual site inspections surveys on XMAP of all made structures including gates, benches, signs, interpretation panels and play areas | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days | | Entire site | | |
| Replace and repair site furniture as necessary | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4 days £500 | | Entire site | | |
| Design and install gateway entrance signs to Ham Hill as per the Landscape Proposals under the HF project | PT | ✓ | ✓ | | | | £113,000 20 days | Consultant Landscape | Entire site | | Included in HF budget for |

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| | | | | | | | | | Architect, consultant designer, Highways | | | interpretatio n Funding provided by Wolfson |
| Design and install new waymarking signs to Ham Hill as per the Landscape Proposals under the HF project | PT | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | 25 days £113,000 | Consultant Landscape Architect, consultant designer | Entire site | | |
| Design & install new interpretation panels across Ham Hill as per the Landscape Proposals under the HF project | PT | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | 25 days £113,000 | Somerset Geology Group, SWHT, BBCT | | | |
| Design & install new map panels in car parks as per the Landscape Proposals under the HF project | PT | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | 25 days £113,000 | Consultant Landscape Architect, consultant designer | | | |
| Re-grade and repair most severe pot holes in car parks | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 4 days | | Northern Spur | | |
| Work closely with PCSO on car crime and vulnerable vehicle scheme. | R + CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 2 days | PCSO | | | |
| Look to develop anti-vandal measures on structures and explore the use of new materials | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 2 days £500 | | Entire site | | |
| 31. Ensure the site is managed for the safety of visitors | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ensure rangers are trained to LANTRA Basic Tree Inspection Level | CM | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | 1 day | Somerset Rural Training | | | |
| Carry out annual tree safety surveys | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 10 days | | Entire site | | |
| Carry out annual site inspections | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 5 days | | Entire site | | |
| Carry out weekly inspections on all natural play spaces & log record on XMAP | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 52 days | | Entire site | | |

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| 32. Improvements to the ranger's compound | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Seek additional funding for changes to compound area | CM | ✓ | ✓ | | | | 4 days | | | | | |
| Work with visitor centre contractors to install service infrastructure to rangers compound | PT | | ✓ | | | | 5 days | Contractors | | | | Included in HF budget |
| Move site containers to appropriate locations | R | | ✓ | ✓ | | | 5 days | Contractors | | | | Dependent on external funding |
| Install storage bays, roof and workbench | R | | ✓ | ✓ | | | 10 days | Volunteers & contractors | | | | Dependent on external funding |

| TASK | WHO | WHEN? | | | | | | £ COST | PARTNERS | RELEVANT COMPARTMENTS | COMPLETED | COMMENTS |
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| | | 2 3 | 2 4 | 2 5 | 2 6 | 2 7 | | | | | | |
| Aim 2: Provide more opportunities and support for a wider range of people to become involved | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 33. Build a new Visitor Centre for Ham Hill | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Develop building design specifications and tendering | PT | ✓ | | | | | 18 months £1,067,725 | Friends, Volunteers, SWHT, Somerset Geology Group, Yeovil Wildlife Recording Group, Jurassic Coast Trust, Somerset Disability Engagement Service, BBCT, SWT | | | Included in HF budget for visitor centre construction | |
| Off-site manufacture | PT | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | | |
| On-site construction | PT | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | |
| Internal fit out of café, shop, staff and volunteer spaces | PT | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | |
| Recruit staff and volunteers to work in the café & exhibition area | PT | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | |
| Soft opening October 2024 | PT | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | |
| Opening celebration event with partners and stakeholders December 2024 | PT | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | |
| 34. Create a volunteering hub at the existing Ranger’s Centre | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Plan & design minor internal modifications to room lay out | PT | ✓ | | | | | 3 days | Internal property officers & contractors | | | Dependent on external funding | |
| Carry out internal modifications to create volunteer space with kitchenette, office space and more storage capacity | PT | ✓ | ✓ | | | | 3 weeks £15,000 | Internal property officers & contractors | | | | |

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| Allow volunteers greater use of building outside of specified volunteering days | R & CM | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| 35. Continue to run weekly practical conservation volunteer groups | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Deliver a weekly practical volunteering task every Wednesday, open to all | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 52 days £250 | | | | Maximum 25 participants |
| Deliver a weekly project task day every Monday, for experienced or skilled volunteers | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 52 days £150 | | | | Maximum 10 participants |
| 36. Support and assist the Friends of Ham Hill | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Attend Friends meetings as and when they occur | R & CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4 days | FoHH | | | |
| Support the Friends in writing grant applications | R, CM & ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 3 days | External consultant | | | |
| Support the Friends with general fundraising activities | R, CM & ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | | | | |
| Support the Friends to deliver projects at Ham Hill | R, CM & ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days | | | | |
| Increase the profile of the Friends through social media, website and on-site promotion | R, CM & ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4 days | | | | |
| Assist the Friends with recruitment drives | R, CM & ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | | | | |
| 37. Develop new volunteering opportunities at Ham Hill | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Provide opportunities for wildlife recording | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | | | | |
| Develop a new half day volunteering session for people with mental or physical disabilities | ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | Community groups Specialist schools | | | |
| Develop visitor guide volunteering opportunities at the new Visitor Centre | ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | | | | |
| Develop 'Roaming Rangers' volunteer scheme | R & CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1 day | | | | |

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| Develop activity volunteers to work alongside the Engagement Ranger | CM & ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | | | | |
| DBS check volunteers that may be working directly with children or vulnerable people | CM & ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | | | | |
| 38. Provide diverse training and development opportunities for volunteers | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Provide technical training for competent volunteers in the use of some machinery | R & CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4 days £1500 | | | | Included in HF budget for Activity programme |
| Provide wildlife identification courses for wildlife recorders | R & CM | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | 2 days | BBCT BCT | | | |
| Provide training on dealing with customers for Visitor Centre volunteers and Roaming Rangers | R & CM | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1 day £500 | External training provider | | | |
| Provide site knowledge training for all volunteers | R & CM | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | 2 days | | | | |
| Provide traditional countryside management training opportunities in partnership with local organisations - coppicing - hedge laying - dry-stone walling - tree felling | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days £500 | SC ranger team Dry stone walling association | | | |
| 39. Develop new partnerships | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Liaise with Somerset Geology Group and Jurassic Coast Trust to develop interpretation and activities themed on the geology of Ham Hill. | PT & ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days | Jurassic Coast Trust Somerset Geology Group | | | |
| Liaise with BBCT on Shrill Carder bee project | PT & R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 3 days | BBCT | | | |
| Liaise with SWHT to develop interpretation and activities themed on the heritage of Ham Hill. | PT | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days | SWHT Arts Council | | | |

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| Liaise with SDES on all aspects of accessibility, both physical accessibility and through engagement in the activity plan. | PT | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 3 days | SDES | | | |
| Liaise with YWRG & SWT to develop interesting and interactive wildlife interpretation for the Visitor Centre & wider landscape. | PT & ER | ✓ | ✓ | | | | 4 days | YDRG SWT | | | |
| Recruit volunteers from partner organisations to assist with land management, ecological monitoring and the activity plan. | PT & ER | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | | | | |
| Liaise with archaeologists regarding interpretation of archaeological finds | PT & ER | ✓ | ✓ | | | | 10 days | National Trust | | | |
| 40. Maintain South Somerset Countryside Steering Group (SSCSG) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Create annual service plan linked to corporate aims and objectives | CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 3 days | Somerset Geology Group National Trust Parish Councillors YTC Ward members Friends groups | | | |
| Ensure membership of SSCSG is updated and reflects the groups & stakeholders involved at all sites | CM | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | 1 day | | | | |
| Create update reports twice annually | CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | | | | |
| Hold two meetings annually | CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | | | | |
| 41. New Engagement Ranger post | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Create role description and person specification for the post of Engagement Ranger | CM | ✓ | | | | | | CJS | | | |
| Advertise post & undergo recruitment process | CM & R | ✓ | | | | | £103,000 over 3 years | | | | Included in HF budget for staffing |
| Ensure the new post holder completes a full induction of the site, the management plan & Heritage Fund project | CM & R | ✓ | | | | | | Community Heritage Officer | | | |
| Develop a training plan for Engagement Ranger | CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |

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| Ensure Engagement Ranger is well integrated into the team and carry out monthly 121's | CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| Develop a list of KPI's to monitor performance & delivery of the Activity Plan | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | |
| 42. Apprenticeship, volunteering & work experience placements | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Support Year 10 work experience placements | ER & R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days | Local schools | | | |
| Support college industry placements – maximum 2 per year | ER & R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 40 days | KMC Bridgwater College Bicton College | | | |
| As budgets allow, reintroduce the apprenticeship scheme at Ham Hill in conjunction with Kingston Maurward College. | CM & R | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days & £10,000 | KMC | | | Dependent on HF project income |
| 43. Support local producers & makers | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Develop a web presence to advertise the temporary exhibition space for display to local producers and makers | ER | | ✓ | ✓ | | | 3 days | VSS website Tourism | | | |
| Develop a booking system for displays and exhibitions | ER | | ✓ | | | | 5 days | Kontrolit SC IT team | | | |
| Enable local communities to use the space | ER | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days | | | | |
| 44. Promote Ham Hill for tourism | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Develop a strong web presence on the Visit South Somerset pages | CM | | ✓ | | | | 5 days | Tourism Kontrolit | | | |
| Maintain social media feeds with regular updates | ER & R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 20 days | | | | |
| Create online links to similar organisations and partners | CM | | ✓ | ✓ | | | 2 days | | | | |
| Support promotion of Ham Hill from the TIC at Cartgate Roundabout on the A303 | CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | Tourism | | | |

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| 45. Provide opportunities for local people | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Develop activities and events with local and regular users in mind | ER | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days | | | | |
| Develop 'Roaming Ranger' role description & crib sheet | ER & R | ✓ | ✓ | | | | 2 days | | | | |
| Advertise & recruit Roaming Ranger positions | ER & R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1 day | | | | |
| Provide informal training on site bylaws, how to approach people & site information. | ER & R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | | | | |
| 46. Provide natural play areas at Ham Hill | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Maintain appropriate play features in the Wildwood Play Zone | R | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | 4 days | | | | |
| Inspect play zones weekly for signs of damage or decay & repair or remove items as required | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 52 days | | | | |
| Develop new natural play features in landscape adjacent to the new visitor centre | CM & R | | ✓ | ✓ | | | 10 days £3000 | Landscape Architect, local schools | | | Included in HF budget for landscape |
| 47. Maintain the network of paths to enable recreation and works access | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Scrape mud from significantly wet paths where mud has accumulated | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4 days | Volunteers | Entire site | | |
| Cut back paths in a two-phased approach based on cutting programme | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days | Volunteers | Entire site | | |
| Where feasible, address where ATV access along paths is currently prevented | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | 4 days £1000 | Historic England | Entire site | | |
| Ensure the public rights of way network is open and signed. | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | SC RoW team | Entire site | | |
| 48. Improve easy access provision and promote this | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Maintain all-ability path & carry out repairs as identified | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4 days £1000 | Volunteers | Northern Spur | | |
| Improve gate access to all ability path | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | 4 days | Volunteers | Northern Spur | | |

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| | | | | | | | £1000 | | | | |
| Purchase new tramper & promote it through Countryside Mobility & local publications | CM | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | £10k | Countryside Mobility | Entire Site | | Grant funded by Clarks Trust |
| Design All Ability Trail accessibility leaflet & promote it | PT | | ✓ | ✓ | | | £4k | Somerset Disability Engagement Service, Consultant designer | Entire Site | | Included in HF budget for interpretation |
| Update Visit South Somerset website to include accessibility information | CM | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | Entire Site | | |
| Improve path network from the Visitor Centre location to the wider country park for use by wheelchairs and buggies | R | | ✓ | ✓ | | | 10 days £20,000 | Volunteers | | | Included in HF budget for landscape |
| Ensure 4 disabled bays are included in the upgrade of the Lime Kiln Car Park as per the Transport Plan under the HF project | PT | | ✓ | ✓ | | | 4 days | Main contractor | | | Included in HF budget for visitor centre |
| Ensure a changing space and disabled access toilet are included in the construction of the new Visitor Centre, as per the Design Statement under the HF project | PT | | ✓ | ✓ | | | 2 days | Somerset Disability Engagement Service Main contractor | | | Included in HF budget for visitor centre |
| 49. Ensure the site is safe for the public – Provision of CCTV | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Carry out annual risk assessment reviews in March | R + CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1 day | Ranger team | Entire site | | |
| Maintain CCTV to Rangers' Centre | CM + R | ✓ | | | | | 1 day | Contractor | N. Spur | | |
| Liaise with David Hinder, Designing out Crime Officer at Avon & Somerset Police, with regards to security & design at new visitor centre | PT | ✓ | ✓ | | | | 2 days | Main contractor A&S Police | | | |
| Ensure CCTV is installed on the new Visitor Centre as per recommendations from Avon & Somerset Constabulary | PT | | ✓ | | | | 2 days | Main contractor | | | |

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| Install gates across Lime Kiln car park as per the Transport Plan under the Heritage Fund project | PT | | ✓ | | | | | Main contractor | | | Included in HF budget for visitor centre |
|---|----|--|---|--|--|--|--|-----------------|--|--|--|

| TASK | WHO | WHEN? | | | | | | £ COST | PARTNERS | RELEVANT COMPART- MENTS | COMP- LETED | COMMENTS |
|--|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| | | 2 3 | 2 4 | 2 5 | 2 6 | 2 7 | | | | | | |
| Aim 3: Increase awareness, understanding & knowledge | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 50. Analysis and interpretation of heritage | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Form a working relationship with local interest groups to discuss key heritage themes for Ham Hill's interpretation | PT & ER | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | 2 days | Local Interest Groups -SWHT BBCT | | | |
| Carry out an analysis of the existing themes & interpretation | PT & ER | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | 5 days | Somerset Geology Group Stoke History Group Jurassic Coast Trust CAU Somerset Bat Group Y&D WRG | | | |
| Agree on the key messages for each theme & how that information will be told through the interpretation | PT & ER | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | 10 days | | | | |
| 51. Create a permanent exhibition in the Visitor Centre | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Create content for the main interpretative themes | PT & ER | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | 30 days £72,100- 97,100 | Local Interest Groups | | | National Lottery Heritage Funded |
| Work with an experienced designer to design the individual elements of interpretation, as described in the Heritage Fund Interpretation Plan | PT & ER | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | Interpretation design consultant | | | |
| Create & install interpretation elements in exhibition | DC & PT | | ✓ | | | | | | Interpretation design consultant | | | |
| Ensure staff and volunteers understand the exhibition to help guide visitors and deal with any queries. | PT & ER | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | Visitor centre volunteers | | | |

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| Creation of sign language films | PT | | ✓ | ✓ | | | 10 days £2500 | Volunteers BSL Heritage Ability | | | | |
| Wildlife cameras and associated display items in Visitor Centre | PT | | ✓ | | | | 5 days £6000 | | | | | |
| External interpretation & site information | CM & R | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 10 days £3,600 | Rangers & volunteers | | | | |
| Soft launch of exhibition space | PT | | ✓ | | | | 1 day | Visitor centre volunteers | | | | |
| 52. Create a temporary exhibition space in Visitor Centre | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Plan layout of room with regards to lighting, electrical sockets and movable display cabinets | | | ✓ | | | | 30 days £3000 | Interpretation Design consultant | | | National Lottery Heritage Funded | |
| Work with local interest groups and design consultant to create three in house exhibitions | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | Local Interest Groups | | | | |
| Work with other museums and collections to create interesting & relevant exhibitions | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | SWHT SSHC | | | |
| Advertise exhibition space to local artists and makers and create a programme of exhibitions. | ER | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | Visit South Somerset | | | |
| 53. Upskill and training of staff and volunteers (heritage protection) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Develop training day for all site volunteers themed around Heritage Protection | ER | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days £9000 | SWHT Somerset Geology Group Natural England | | | National Lottery Heritage Funded |
| Upskill competent practical volunteers with specialist machinery training & certification | R | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | Somerset Rural Training Blake Training | | | |

| 54. Create a new brand identity for Ham Hill | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|--|--|--|---|
| Agree on a brand name of the site | PT | ✓ | | | | | 2 days | Interpretation Design consultant Internal comms team | | | National Lottery Heritage Funded |
| Design a new brand identity of the site, based around its name and heritage significance | PT | ✓ | ✓ | | | | 2 days | Interpretation Design consultant | | | |
| Create sub-brands | PT | ✓ | ✓ | | | | 2days | | | | |
| 55. Develop a network of themed trails | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Develop a series of trails based on various themes of Roman, Iron Age, Medieval, Geology, Wildlife, Quarrying | PT | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 20 days £5,500 | SWHT SGG BBCT Volunteers Local people | | | National Lottery Heritage Funded Will need additional funding as budget is limited – Banister Trust approved funding |
| Produce a trail leaflet for each themed trail that is web and mobile downloadable/viewable | PT | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | Interpretation Design consultant | | | |
| Create QR codes that connect to an audio recording for further information | PT | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | Interpretation Design consultant | | | |
| Update existing site leaflets & trails: Explore Ham Hill, Easy Access Trail, Geology rail, Roman Treasure Trail. | PT | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | Interpretation Design consultant | | | |
| Develop & install trail markers on site | R & ER | | | ✓ | | | | Volunteers | | | |
| Promote trails – website, social media, TIC’s, local community buildings/shops. | ER | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | Tourism Team | | | |
| Creation of a digital trail and AR technology | PT | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 20 days £6000 | Local colleges, Local amateur dramatics | | | Additional funding required |

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| | | | | | | | | | societies – Stoke Performing Arts Group | | | |
| 56. Wider site interpretation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Design, development, and installation of visitor orientation panels at each car park | PT | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | 20 days £20,000 | Landscape Designer, Interpretation Design consultant | | | National Lottery Heritage Funded |
| Design, development, and installation of interpretation panels at key locations across Ham Hill | PT | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 20 days £28,000 | | | | |
| Design, development, and installation of viewpoint signs | PT | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | |
| Design, development, and installation of waymarking & fingerposts across site | PT | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | |
| Installation of natural play features in the visitor centre landscape | R | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | 5 days £3000 | FoHH | | | Additional funding required |
| Design, development, and installation of activity space | PT | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | 10 days £10,000 | FoHH | | | |
| 57. Deliver Heritage Fund Project Activity Plan | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Contact community groups and partners as identified in the plan | ER | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days | | | | National Lottery Heritage Funded |
| Plan & deliver participation activities and informal learning (public events & activities) | ER | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 100 days £22,900 | | | | |
| Formal Learning: Development of downloadable resource and learning packs and practical equipment for schools to hire and resource loan boxes | ER | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 50 days £7000 | | | | |
| Plan & deliver community focused sessions | ER | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 15 days £27,300 | | | | National Lottery Heritage Funded |

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| Plan & deliver curriculum-based sessions to local schools | ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 50 days | | | | |
| Plan & deliver special events such as Historical re-enactments & Ham Hill Party | ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days £13,600 | | | | National Lottery Heritage Funded |
| 58. Encourage responsible behaviour by visitors | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ensure the provision of dog bins is adequate and they are sited in the most appropriate places | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days £1000 | | | | |
| Empty site dog bins twice per week | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 104 days | | | | |
| Staff & volunteers are empowered to approach people to discuss site management and site bylaws, when appropriate. | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days | | | | |
| Ensure body cameras are functional should they be required for wardening or bylaw enforcement. | R & CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | | | | |
| Update livestock grazing notices on social media, website and site gates/information boards as necessary | R & ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days | | | | |
| Work with tenant grazier to ensure livestock are safe on site & any issues to be reported by visitors. | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days | Tenant Grazier | | | |
| 59. Apply for Green Flag and Green Heritage awards annually | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ensure Ham Hill has a current five-year management plan | CM | | | | | ✓ | 10 days | | | | Due 1 st Jan 2028 |
| Apply for Green Flag and Green Heritage Award annually | CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1 day £548 | Keep Britain Tidy | | | Deadline is 31 st Jan annually |
| Ensure the on-site management is in line with the management plan | CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 24 days | | | | Monthly 121 with site rangers |

| 60. Maintain an active online presence | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------|---|---|---|---|---|-------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------|
| Create a minimum of two posts/reels per week & share to all social media platforms. | ALL | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1 day | SSDC comms Team | | | |
| Tag VSS and SSDC communications in social media posts to allow sharing & greater coverage of posts. | ALL | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | Tourism Team SSDC Comms team | | | |
| Ensure information on the Visit South Somerset website is kept up to date with content added or changed at least twice per month | CM & ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days | Tourism team | | | |
| Ensure staff are familiar with the SSDC social media policy | CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | As required | | | | As part of induction process |
| 61. Marketing & promotion of events & activities | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Create on-site posters to advertise events or works happening on site | R & ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 15 days | | | | |
| Issue press releases to keep wider public informed of larger site events, projects, and funding (Min 6 per annum) | CM, R & ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 6 days | SC Comms team | | | |
| Ensure local publications are utilised to deliver important messages and updates to local residents (Min 4 per year) | CM & ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 12 days | Hambook Parrett Plus TA13 news | | | |
| Ensure wider partners (Cartgate TIC, Ninesprings Café) are kept up to date with posters | CM & ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 3 days | Cartgate TIC Ninesprings Cafe | | | |

| TASK | WHO | WHEN? | | | | | £ COST | PARTNERS | RELEVANT COMPART- MENTS | COMP- LETED | COMMENTS |
|--|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------------------|--|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| | | 2 3 | 2 4 | 2 5 | 2 6 | 2 7 | | | | | |
| Aim 4: Achieve future financial sustainability | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 62. Seek new areas of income generation from retail, car parking, donations, sponsorship, functions, and catering | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Continue with existing licences for the site - grazing (5 year licence) - ice cream (2 year licence) | CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | 5 days | Procurement Legal | | | |
| Ensure Ham Hill is in current HLS extension agreement | CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | 5 days | GTH agents RPA NE | | | |
| Work with land agent to develop new agri-environment scheme for Ham Hill (ELMS/Countryside Stewardship) | CM | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days | GTH agents RPA NE | | | |
| Develop appropriate retail offer in visitor centre | ER | | | | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days £10,000 | Cartgate TIC | | | Income dependent |
| Create contactless donations points in and around the visitor centre & promote online donations | PT | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days | Finance Kontrolit Interpretation Design consultant | | | |
| Develop series of temporary exhibitions in Visitor Centre | PT | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days £6500 | Various partners Interpretation Design consultant | | | National Lottery Heritage Funded |
| Develop car park donation scheme | CM & ER | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days £500 | Interpretation Design consultant | | | |
| Create Ham Hill supporters' membership & promote | CM & ER | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days | Friends of Ham Hill | | | |

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| Deliver social functions in visitor centre | ER | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | 5 days | Prince of Wales pub | | | |
| Continue to seek grant funding for projects and capital works | CM & R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 10 days | Friends of Ham Hill | | | |
| Develop corporate sponsorship package | CM & R | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | 5 days | SC comms team | | | |
| Finalise corporate sponsorship package & promote | CM & ER | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | 4 days | SC comms team | | | |
| 63. Provide on-site facilities for learning, living archaeology, green woodworking, courses and gatherings | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Seek external funding for activity hub | CM & ER | ✓ | | | | | | 20 days £10,000 | Friends of Ham Hill | | | Additional external funding required |
| Devise construction method & final plan | R | ✓ | | | | | | | Volunteers | | | |
| Source materials required to build activity hub | R | ✓ | | | | | | | Volunteers Tinkers Bubble | | | |
| Build activity hub to spec & within budget | R | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | Volunteers | | | |
| Seek official sign off on structure safety | CM | | ✓ | | | | | | SSDC Building control | | | |
| 64. Improve car park, cycling facilities and improve opportunities for sustainable transport | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Reconfigure existing car parks to aid parking layout | PT | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | 100 days £121,197.50 | Contractors | | | National Lottery Heritage Funded |
| Improve visibility splays at each car park entrance/exit onto the highway | PT | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | Contractors Somerset Highways | | | |
| Install 5 electric EV charging bays at Lime Kiln Car Park | PT | | ✓ | | | | | | Contractors | | | |
| Install infrastructure for additional EV charging points if required in the future | PT | | ✓ | | | | | | Contractors | | | |
| Create new highway path | PT | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | Contractors | | | |

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| Create designated crossing points on the highway in accordance with the Transport Statement Proposals | PT | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | Contractors Somerset Highways | | | |
| Construct cycle racks and E-bike charging points adjacent to the visitor centre | PT | | ✓ | | | | | | Contractors | | | |
| Change speed limit from existing 60mph limit to a new 40mph limit across Ham Hill. | PT | | ✓ | | | | | | Somerset Highways | | | |
| Work with Stoke Parish Council to develop sustainable transport scheme for access onto Ham Hill | PT | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | Stoke Parish Council | | | |
| Negotiate use of private land near to Harvey's Quarry for use as an additional car park | PT | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | Shuldham land owner | | | |

| TASK | WHO | WHEN? | | | | | | Resources required (time & money per annum) | PARTNERS | RELEVANT COMPARTMENTS | COMPLETED | COMMENTS |
|--|------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---|--|----------|-----------------------|-----------|----------|
| | | 2 3 | 2 4 | 2 5 | 2 6 | 2 7 | | | | | | |
| Aim 5: Successfully manage and implement the project | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 65. Create a Ham Hill consultation group | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Create participation list & invite key individuals, representatives of groups and stakeholders to join group | ER | ✓ | ✓ | | | | 1 day | Yeovil4Family Fiveways School Yeovil Together MIND Martock Community Works | | | | |
| Hold four meetings per annum | ER, R & CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 8 days £3000 for community transport | | | | | |
| Ensure participation list is kept up to date | ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1 day | | | | | |
| 66. Monitor monthly performance via a balance scorecard | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Continue to monitor monthly KPI's | CM & R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 12 days | | | | | |
| Create new monitor sheet for Ham Hill that reflects the outcomes of the Heritage Lottery project | CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1 day | | | | | |
| Obtain monthly records from team members | CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 12 days | | | | | |
| Record all figures in an excel spreadsheet | CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 12 days | Admin support | | | | |
| 67. Embed environmental sustainability into all aspects of work | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Use locally sourced materials wherever possible | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | Tinkers Bubble | | | | |
| Ensure timber is from an FSC certified source | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | |
| Maximise use of materials to avoid wastage | R & ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | |

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| Recycle or re-use materials wherever possible | R & ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| Reduce use of plastics at events and activities | ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | CHO | | | |
| Investigate weather-proof alternatives to laminated posters for site promotion | R & ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| Replace two stroke machinery with battery powered where appropriate | R | | ✓ | | ✓ | | £2000 | Machinery providers | | | |
| Seek electric ATV's as alternatives to diesel as and when replacement vehicles are required. | CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | £40,000 | SC Fleet | | | Requires additional funding |
| 68. Draw upon project partners & experienced staff to assist with the delivery of the Heritage Fund project | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Work with staff in the wider countryside team who have experience of managing Heritage Fund projects and others | CM & ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days | | | | |
| Liaise with the local community, wildlife, history and geology groups to assist with the implementation of the activity plan | ER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 20 days | Stoke History Group Somerset Geology Group Yeovil Wildlife Recording Group SWT Parish councils | | | |
| Creation of project team and weekly meetings | PT | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 52 days | | | | |
| Monthly monitor of budget, risks, actions and issues | PT | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 12 days | | | | |
| Ensure project team has access to project TEAMS channel | CM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2 days | | | | |
| Appoint consultants where required to assist with specialised areas of work | PT | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 days | Procurement | | | |

11. The future of Ham Hill

From 1st April 2023, South Somerset District Council will cease to exist as local authority and will be replaced with one unitary council for Somerset, as part of a local government reorganisation.

Under the new Somerset Council, Ham Hill and its managing ranger team will remain with the Countryside Service sitting within a new Climate and Place Directorate. Somerset Council's commitment to the natural environment, ecological emergency and heritage is clear from the high level structure that places climate and cultural services at its core.

The Ham Hill Heritage Fund project itself, and the authorities capital funding for it, has been subject to close scrutiny through the budget setting process for the new Somerset Council. Elected Members have confirmed that the project should sit within the capital programme and the Executive Member for the Environment Cllr Sarah Dyke is fully engaged with its delivery. With the new Council currently developing a Cultural Strategy and embarking on a Tourism Strategy in future months, we expect to see Ham Hill continuing to play a pivotal role in countryside and cultural services across Somerset.

