



# MANAGEMENT PLAN 2009 - 2014



# Canal Fields

Updated January 2011

# January 2009

This management plan was originally written by the Parks and Open Spaces Team at Dacorum Borough Council with the support of the Countryside Management Service.

**Updated Edition January 2011**

# Contents

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Intent	2
1.2	Style	2
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Site Description (where are we now?)</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1	Location	5
2.2	Site Designation and Ownership	5
2.3	History	5
2.4	Site Features and Facilities	6
2.4.1	Grand Union Canal	6
2.4.2	River Bulbourne	6
2.4.3	Trees and Grassland	10
2.4.4	Hedgerow	11
2.4.5	Infrastructure	11
2.4.6	Play Area	11
2.4.7	Millennium Garden	11
2.4.8	Berkhamsted Skate Park	12
2.4.9	Bowling Green	12
2.5	Nature Conservation	13
2.6	Policy Context	13
2.7	Management	14
2.8	Maintenance and Repairs	19
2.9	Community Use	20
2.10	Special Events	20
2.11	Stakeholders	21
2.11.1	DBC Internal Services	21
2.11.2	External Organisations and Groups	21
2.12	Management Achievements Over the Last 12 Months	22
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Assessment and Analysis (Where do we want to get to?)</b>	<b>24</b>
3.1	Vision	24
3.2	Aims	24
3.3	A Welcoming Place	24
3.3.1	Site Access	24
3.3.2	Site Entrances	25
3.3.3	Signage	25
3.3.4	Recommendations	26
3.4	Healthy Safe and Secure	26
3.4.1	Risk Assessments	26
3.4.2	Safe Equipment and Facilities	27
3.4.3	Security	27
3.4.4	Dog Fouling	27
3.4.5	Tree Safety	28

3.4.6	Recommendations	28
3.5	Well Maintained and Clean	28
3.5.1	Grounds Maintenance	28
3.5.2	Grassland Maintenance	28
3.5.3	Tree Management	29
3.5.4	Infrastructure Maintenance	29
3.5.5	Equipment Maintenance	32
3.5.6	Recommendations	32
3.6	Sustainability	33
3.6.1	Sustainable Community Strategy	33
3.6.2	Corporate Sustainability Policy	33
3.6.3	Environmental Management	34
3.6.4	Climate Change	34
3.6.5	Energy Efficiency	34
3.6.6	Pesticides Use	34
3.6.7	Peat Use	35
3.6.8	Recycling of Green Waste	35
3.6.9	Recommendations	35
3.7	Conservation and Heritage	35
3.7.1	The Grand Union Canal and River Bulbourne	35
3.7.2	Grassland	37
3.7.3	Towpath Hedgerow	37
3.7.4	Recommendations	38
3.8	Community Involvement	38
3.8.1	Community Led Projects	39
3.8.2	Stakeholder Involvement	39
3.8.3	Friends Group and Volunteer Events	40
3.8.4	Recommendations	40
3.9	Marketing	41
3.9.1	Marketing Plan	41
3.9.2	Signage	41
3.9.3	Website	41
3.9.4	Media Releases	42
3.9.5	Site Specific Customer Research	42
3.9.6	Recommendations	44
3.10	Management	44
3.10.1	Management Plan	44
3.10.2	Recommendations	44
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Action Plan (How will we get there?)</b>	<b>46</b>
4.1	Financial Plan	55
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Monitoring and Review</b>	

	<b>(How will we know when we have arrived?)</b>	<b>60</b>
5.1	Monitoring and Review of the Action Plan	60
5.2	Review and Revision of the Management Plan	60

### List of Maps

Canal Fields Location	3
Site Description	7
Site Access	8
Bulbourne Restoration	9

### List of Figures

Figure 1	Dacorum Borough Structure	16
Figure 2	Green Space Management Structure	17
Figure 3	Transitional Structure – Clean, Safe and Green	18

### Tables

Table 1	Wildflower Plant Mix	10
Table 2	Infrastructure Improvement Proposals	29
Table 3	Five-year Tree Coppicing and Pollarding Rotation	36
Table 4	Customer Research Results	42
Table 5	Five-year Action Plan for Canal Fields	46
Table 6	Financial Plan	55

### Appendices

Appendix 1	Bowls Club Rules and Rink Booking Procedure	61
Appendix 2	List of Risk Assessments	62
Appendix 3	List of Grounds Maintenance Activities for Canal Fields	64
Appendix 4	Plans Showing the Planned Infrastructure Improvements	65
Appendix 5	Corporate Sustainability Assessment Form	68
Appendix 6	Results of the Botanical Survey (February/March 2004)	69
Appendix 7	Customer Research Results – Final Report	70
Appendix 8	Copy of Survey Form	87
Appendix 9	Marketing Plan	91
Appendix 10	Management Achievements 2004/08	95
Appendix 11	Risk Assessments for Play Area & Skate Park	96
Appendix 12	Ecology Survey for Canal Fields	112
Appendix 13	Response to Green Flag Judges 2009/10	120
Appendix 14	Review of Year 1 (2009/10)	140



## 1.0 Introduction



**View of the Grand Union Canal from the Waitrose footbridge.**

## 1.0 Introduction

Canal Fields occupies a central position in the historical market town of Berkhamsted (see the location map on page 3). The site is a large green open space, approximately 2.5 ha in size and provides much needed recreational space for a town that is generally deficient in public green space. The town has a population of 16,498 people (2001 Census) and is the second largest settlement in the borough of Dacorum (a district on the western tip of Hertfordshire). Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) manages Canal Fields, however Berkhamsted Town Council (BTC) has an active interest, supporting partnership projects along with other stakeholders and community groups to develop and improve site features, facilities and infrastructure. Two examples of successful projects include the restoration of the River Bulbourne through the site, and the installation of Berkhamsted Skate Park.

## 1.1 Intent

This management plan builds on the work carried out on site over the last five-year period by setting out a vision and aims that will guide the management, maintenance and development of Canal Fields for the five-year period 2009/14. It is a working document, containing actions and a timetable to be implemented (appendix 10 lists management achievements from 2004 to 2008).

## 1.2 Style

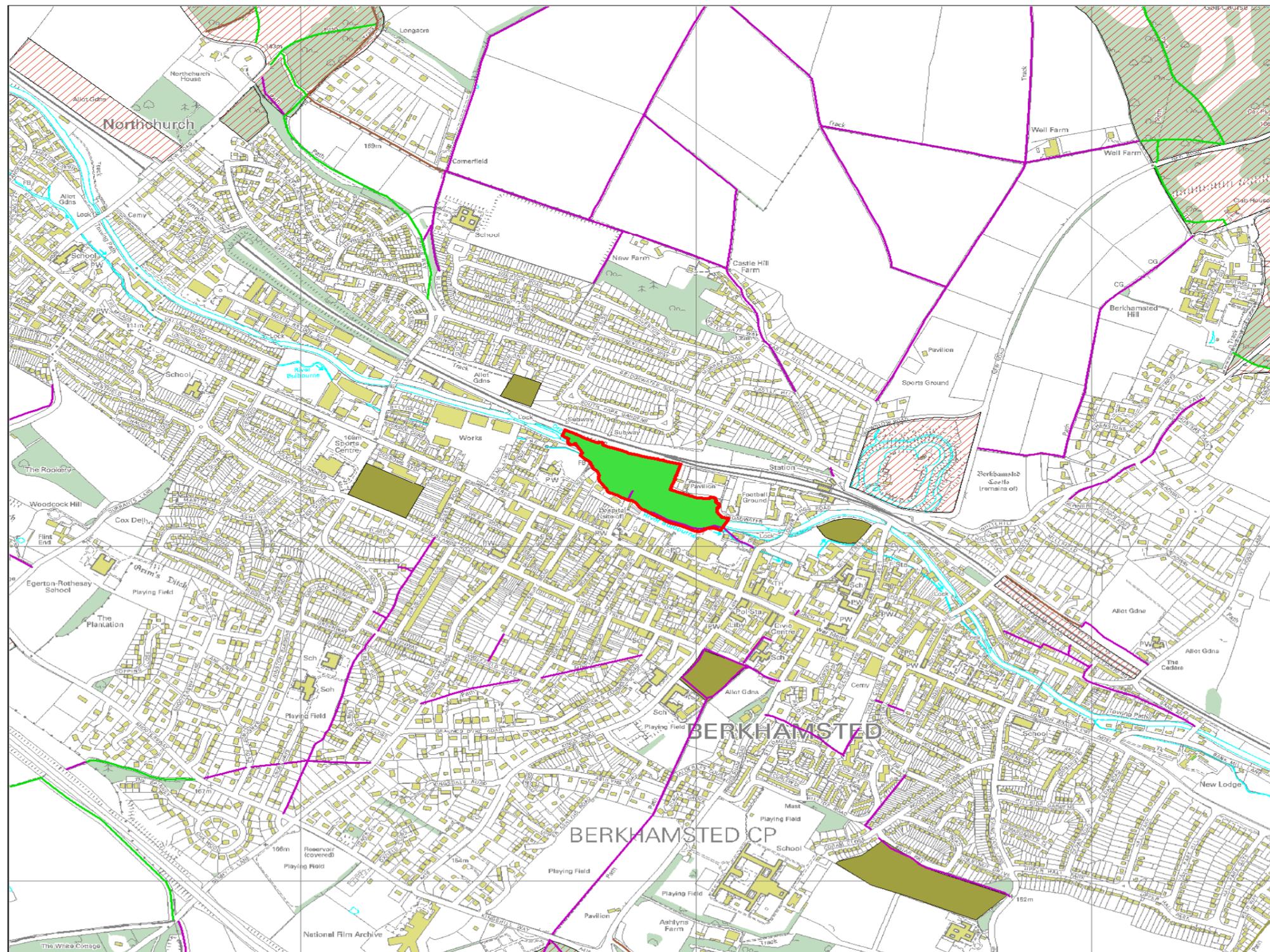
The structure of this plan is based on the guidance produced by CABI Space. The plan is set out under the four chapter headings below:

**Site Description (Where are we now?)** – This chapter describes the current situation; the site's designation, ownership, history; it also describes site features, current policy, and management and maintenance arrangements. It ends with a description of current community use, and a list of stakeholders.

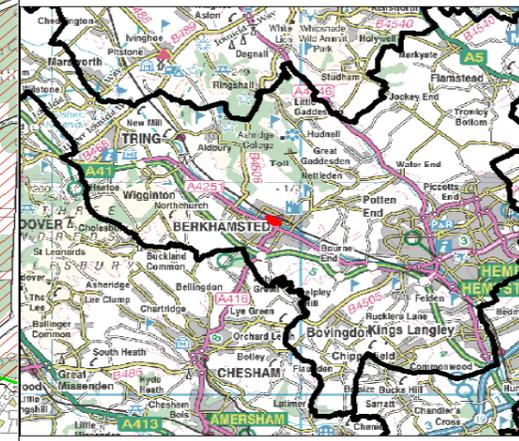
**Assessment and Analysis (Where do we want to get to?)** – This chapter sets out the Vision and Aims for Canal Fields and assesses the site against the Green Flag Award criteria. It makes a number of recommendations for future action under each criterion.

**Action Plan (How will we get there?)** – This chapter starts by reviewing progress made during the first year of the five-year Action Plan. Many of the objectives set have been achieved, while others are carried forward. A revised Action Plan for years 2-5 incorporates the findings of the review, and the chapter concludes with an updated financial plan.

**Monitoring and Review (How will we know when we have arrived?)** – This chapter briefly describes how progress against the stated actions will be monitored and the arrangements for reviewing and revising the management plan.



# Canal Fields Location



● Location within Dacorum

 BR	 Wildlife Site
 FP	 Canal Fields
	 Dacorum BC managed sites



This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Hertfordshire County Council, 1000 19606, 2007



## 2.0 Site Description



**View of Berkhamsted Skate Park.**

## **2.0 Site Description (Where are we now?)**

### **2.1 Location**

The site lies between the mainline railway track and the Waitrose and St. John's Well Lane car park (see location on page 3 and the site description map on page 7). Both the River Bulbourne and the Grand Union Canal pass through the site. The site can be reached on foot from the town centre and the nearby housing estate and by road from Lower Kings Road via Broadwater (see access map on page 8). The mainline station (London Midland line from Euston) is only 10 minutes walk away, and the Arriva 353, and 32/32a bus services stop at Lower Kings Road. Other bus routes pass through the nearby High Street.

### **2.2 Site Designation and Ownership**

Canal Fields is designated as open land (Dacorum Borough Council Local Plan 1991-2011) and forms part of the leisure space provision, available to the general public. Before the land that forms Canal Fields today came into Council ownership it was divided up into separate plots belonging to various vendors. Over time the land was conveyed plot by plot to Berkhamsted Urban District Council from 1923 onwards and then by devolution of title to DBC in 1974. Two further plots were conveyed to DBC in 1982. British Waterways (BW) owns the Canal, towpath and associated infrastructure.

The section of the access road through Broadwater is adopted highway up to where it meets the boundary of the football ground. The ownership of the rest of the road is split between DBC, Berkhamsted Sports Ground Charitable Association Ltd (owners of the football ground) and the Lawn Tennis and Squash Rackets Club (LTSRC). Berkhamsted Town Football Club (BTFC), LTSRC, Berkhamsted Bowls Club, and two private residential properties all use the road for access.

### **2.3 History**

The use of the land, known locally as Canal Fields has changed over time. According to historical maps held by DBC the site consisted of open fields in 1892, and was most likely used for agricultural purposes. A map of the site in 1924 still shows open fields, however a large field near Lower Kings Road was being used for cricket and football (the location of BTFC and the private Broadwater residential development today). The map also shows some buildings on site and watercress beds alongside the river. The production of watercress started at this location in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and continued until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A map of the site in 1932 shows some additional buildings, tennis courts (owned today by the LTSRC), and a large field used by the local nursery. A nursery on land in St. John's Well Lane was established in 1777, but no longer exists today. A map of the site in 1962 shows an open-air swimming pool (which has since been removed), and the Park Street footbridge. Today the site is an open green space used entirely for recreational purposes and managed by DBC.

## **2.4 Site Features and Facilities**

The site provides a green oasis in a built environment, consisting of amenity grassland, trees, hedges and some thicket; however the dominant feature of the site is the presence of water in the shape of the River Bulbourne and the Grand Union Canal. The main site features and facilities are described as follows:

### **2.4.1 Grand Union Canal**

The Grand Union Canal, formally the Grand Junction Canal, links London to Birmingham and was completed to Berkhamsted in 1798. It provided the basis for the town's wealth, by attracting local industry, such as grain mills and timber yards and it now provides an artery through the district for recreational boaters.

### **2.4.2 River Bulbourne**

The Bulbourne is one of seven natural chalk stream rivers that flow south east through the Chiltern Hills, and is identified as an important wildlife habitat (see section 3.7.1). DBC is the riparian owner of the section of the river that runs through the site, and since 2004 has worked in partnership with the Town Council on an initiative to restore the section of the river between Park Street and Lower Kings Road (see the Bulbourne Restoration map on page 9). Restoration was required because the river had become overshadowed by large clumps of Willow trees and the riverbed had become covered in thick silt due to poor flow dynamics. The project aimed to reinstate characteristic chalk stream conditions by improving flow dynamics, and opening up the tree canopy to increase light inception and naturalisation of the bank line below. The first three phases of the project have been completed, which included tree work to pollard and coppice clumps of Willow trees along the riverbank and the creation of a narrow channel through the lake area of the river opposite St John's Well Court, using hazel faggots. Before the restoration work the lake area was the widest section of the river on site and is thought to have been deliberately widened for the purpose of watercress production in the past. Phase four, which included further pollarding, coppicing work and some planting, is now nearing completion with two interpretation boards still to be installed, planned for March 2009. The Bulbourne Restoration Project will be completed once this work is done. The project has been partnership funded and/or supported by DBC, Chiltern Chalk Streams Project, Environment Agency, CARP, BTC, Countryside Management Service (CMS), and Berkhamsted Community Partnership (BCP), Berkhamsted Citizens Association, Chiltern Woodlands Project.







### 2.4.3 Trees and Grassland

Much of the green space is covered by grassland, which is mainly close mown amenity grass, cut every two to three weeks, with the grass cuttings left in situ. However the grass on the Waitrose footbridge banks has been left to grow long allowing wildflower species to thrive, particularly on the southern side of the Canal. One of the management objectives from the previous management plan period 2004/09 was to improve the botanical diversity on the northern bank adjacent to the car park. In autumn 2007, wildflower plug plants were planted in a 2m wide strip along the top of the bank. The rationale for only planting the top of the bank is that over time the natural seed fall should populate the lower parts of the slopes. The planting mix is shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 Wildflower Plant Mix**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>
200	Cowslip	<i>Primula veris</i>
200	Meadow Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>
200	Meadow Cranes-bill	<i>Geranium pratense</i>
200	Self-heal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>
200	Common Birds-foot Trefoil	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>
200	Ox-eye Daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>

In addition to the footbridge banks, over the last 12 months a new management regime has been introduced for a buffer strip of rough grass alongside the River Bulbourne and around the field located at the far end of the site, beyond the Park Street footbridge (triangle of land between the canal and the railway embankment). The original intention for the field was to create a meadow by allowing the grass to grow long over the whole area; however it was subsequently decided to restrict the long grass to a strip around the edge so the field can still be used for recreational purposes. The location of these grass strips is indicated on the site description map on page 7. The grass is left long during the growing season to encourage greater biodiversity. Both the footbridge banks and the rough buffer strips are cut and cleared once a year in the autumn. Some areas may be left uncut for a further year thereby providing a refuge for wildlife; however no rough grass area is left uncut for longer than two years.

There is a total of 231 trees spread throughout the site, ranging in size from young recently planted to large mature specimen trees. All the trees have been inspected and their condition recorded on a computer based tree management system, which identifies all work required and when it should be carried out. Work on the grounds of health and safety is given the highest priority (see section 3.4.5 on tree safety and section 3.5.3 on tree management).

#### **2.4.4 Hedgerow**

The hedgerow along the towpath provides a buffer between the towpath and the grass strip alongside the river. A survey of the hedgerow in March 2004 found 27 different wildflower species growing around the base of the hedge. At the time of the survey the hedge was found to be in a poor condition. It was thin with significant gaps, poor growth at the base and was overgrown with Ivy. A programme of restoration work started in 2004 and was completed in 2007. The old hedge species have been coppiced, and the Ivy removed. The large gaps have been planted with a native hedge mix, including Hawthorn, Hazel, Spindle, and Hornbeam. The newly planted hedge plants are still young and to ensure establishment the hedge is closely monitored with remedial action taken as required. A routine maintenance programme is in place (this is described in section 3.7.3).

#### **2.4.5 Infrastructure**

The site benefits from good pedestrian access onto and through it via a number of footpaths and the canal towpath (see site access map on page 8). The road via Broadwater provides vehicular access to a car park with 60 plus parking spaces. The north side of the site is connected to the south side via a concrete footbridge at the western end (Park Street footbridge) and a wooden footbridge at the eastern end (Waitrose footbridge). The later is really two bridges in one. The first spans the canal and connects with a smaller bridge, which spans the river via a ramped footpath. The Park Street footbridge spans both the canal and river, and a smaller wooden bridge immediately adjacent on the southern side crosses back over the river to the canal towpath. A third bridge over the river is located at the bottom of St John's Well Lane. Other features include fences, litter bins, various signage (interpretation, warning, information and 'no...' signs), benches, picnic benches, and lighting.

#### **2.4.6 Play Area**

The play area was developed and enhanced as a result of a partnership project between DBC, BTC and Berkhamsted Round Table. Work began in September 2003 and was completed in December of the same year. The size of the playground increased from 800m<sup>2</sup> to 1680m<sup>2</sup>, and the number of items of play equipment increased from 4 to 11. In addition 4 benches, 2 small table and seat units and 2 waste bins were installed. The play area is enclosed by metal railing fence.

#### **2.4.7 Millennium Garden**

The Millennium Garden was developed in 2000 by BTC, on the field by the Waitrose footbridge and was designed as a quiet area. Planting included a mixture of shrubs and perennials with an all year round colour theme. The Garden now occupies a new location near the play area, after being moved in

early 2006 to make way for the installation of Berkhamsted Skate Park. This involved moving as many of the plants from the original garden as possible and redesigning the garden to fit a smaller space. The design concept behind the garden is to provide sustainable planting by selecting perennial plants that once established have substantial root systems avoiding the need for watering. The design also seeks to promote biodiversity through the selection of a range of herbaceous perennials and shrubs, which attract a variety of insects. Bumble bees and butterflies are often seen in the garden. There are three main beds, which include one alongside the rear fence with moisture-loving plants like Hosta; a raised bed in the middle, to create dryer conditions favoured by Lavenders and Grasses and a small bed to the front of the garden with a collection of small herbaceous plants.

#### **2.4.8 Berkhamsted Skate Park**

Berkhamsted Skate Park opened in December 2006, the result of a joint project by Berkhamsted Youth Town Council, Berkhamsted Community Police Team, BTC and DBC. The partnership successfully applied for a Barclays Spaces for Sports grant, a Community Safety Grant and further funding was given by BTC and DBC to complete the project.

Young people had been campaigning for a skate facility to be provided in the town for many years. This need was confirmed through consultation with young people in 2005. Berkhamsted Youth Town Council was actively involved throughout the project in championing the facility, preparing the design brief and selecting the equipment. The chosen layout comprises of two youth shelters, a large web springer, bespoke quarter pipe/flat bank combo ramp with raised section, fun box ramp, straight girder grind rail, quarter pipe and drop grind box.

In addition to the capital grant, Barclays Spaces for Sport gave the project £20,000 for development funding for the period April 2007 – April 2010. The development programme is managed by the Swan Youth Centre, supported by a project steering group. The programme supports the following activities:

- Support for the Swans Skaters young peoples group to help manage the facility and the programme, with opportunities to participate in training events such as First Aid and Personal Safety courses, and to become volunteer helpers during coaching sessions - ongoing
- Skate-boarding skills coaching – three events per year (five sessions per event)
- Demonstration skills event – one event per year
- Outreach work – 2 hours per week
- Video project of the Youth Town Council's activities including the skate park – 2008/09

#### **2.4.9 Bowling Green**

The bowling green and surrounding area is leased to Berkhamsted Bowls Club for a period of 25 years, from 2005. The Bowls Club is responsible for maintaining the green, pavilion, and all the boundary hedges and fences, except the boundary adjoining the railway line. Although the site is managed by the club the general public have access to use the facility between the 1<sup>st</sup> May until 30<sup>th</sup> September, subject to availability and providing a club member is in attendance. The procedure for booking a rink can be found in appendix 1.

## **2.5 Nature Conservation**

The River Bulbourne is a chalk stream, which is a globally rare habitat, confined to north west Europe and New Zealand. Chalk streams have become threatened by issues such as water abstraction, physical modification, pollution and some fisheries management practices, however the UK Biodiversity Action Plan identifies chalk streams as habitats for some of the UK's rarest species including the white-clawed crayfish and water vole. As a result the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, identifies chalk streams as a priority habitat for protection. The DBC Nature Conservation Strategy: A Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2001) identifies chalk streams and the corridors of land through which they flow as a major wildlife resource of critical importance to wetland habitats. The strategy notes that they should be treated as single ecological units, and that degraded sections should be enhanced to allow the dispersal of species. Both the River and the adjacent Grand Union Canal provide an important green corridor through the town for wildlife. The DBC Urban Conservation Study, 2006 notes that management should seek to enhance the ecological interest of green infrastructure, such as the river/canal corridor. Away from the canal and river the BAP refers to Canal Fields as consisting of amenity grassland and standard trees, with open space value only, though the adjacent railway embankment and western end provides a natural green space element.

The site hosts a range of bird species associated with the water habitats including swans, mallard, moorhen and coot. Kingfisher and grey wagtail have also been recorded. The wider site also hosts a good range of species including blue tit, great tit, chaffinch, green finch and song thrush. The song thrush is highlighted on the red species list of high conservation concern with a rapid decline of over 50% in the breeding population over the last 25 years (British Trust for Ornithology). There are no other animals known to be associated with the site except rabbits on the embankment, however there is a bat roost very close to the site (Herts Biological Records Centre) and Canal Fields could well be used as a feeding habitat.

## **2.6 Policy Context**

At a national level the Government through their Cleaner, Safer, Greener agenda, 'recognises the need for a diverse network of green spaces that meet a variety of needs and are working across Government, agencies and partners to ensure that such environments are fit-for-purpose, clean, safe, attractive and well-maintained' (Communities and Local Government).

At a local level DBC seek to create a clean, tidy and safe environment, and recognise the benefits of green space. The corporate plan (2007/2008) requires the production of a Green Space Strategy (GSS), which is now complete. The GSS 'highlights the importance of open spaces to the wellbeing of the community and natural environment, identify the role of the community in the management and development of parks and woodlands and seek accreditation through the Green Flag and other awards'. Green Flag is a critical element of the Government's aim to drive up standards in parks and green spaces. The purpose of the award is to encourage the provision of good quality public parks and green spaces that the community can be proud of, and to provide a framework for raising the standard of management and maintenance.

In 2006 the Hertfordshire Local Area Agreement (LAA) set a target within the Safer Stronger Communities block of achieving 15 Green Flag accredited sites in Hertfordshire by 2009. In January 2008 the Dacorum Partnership published its Sustainable Community Strategy 'Towards 2021'. This identifies the achievement of Green Flag accreditation by 2009 as a target under the theme of creating a cleaner and healthier environment (see section 3.6.1). Canal Fields and Chipperfield Common achieved Green Flag Awards in 2008, achieving the later target, and helping towards achieving the LAA target. Both these sites are important green spaces that are valued by the communities they serve. DBC is committed to the continuous development and/or improvement of these locations for the benefit of and with the involvement of local people. Applications for retaining Green Flag accreditation will be made from January 2009.

## **2.7 Management**

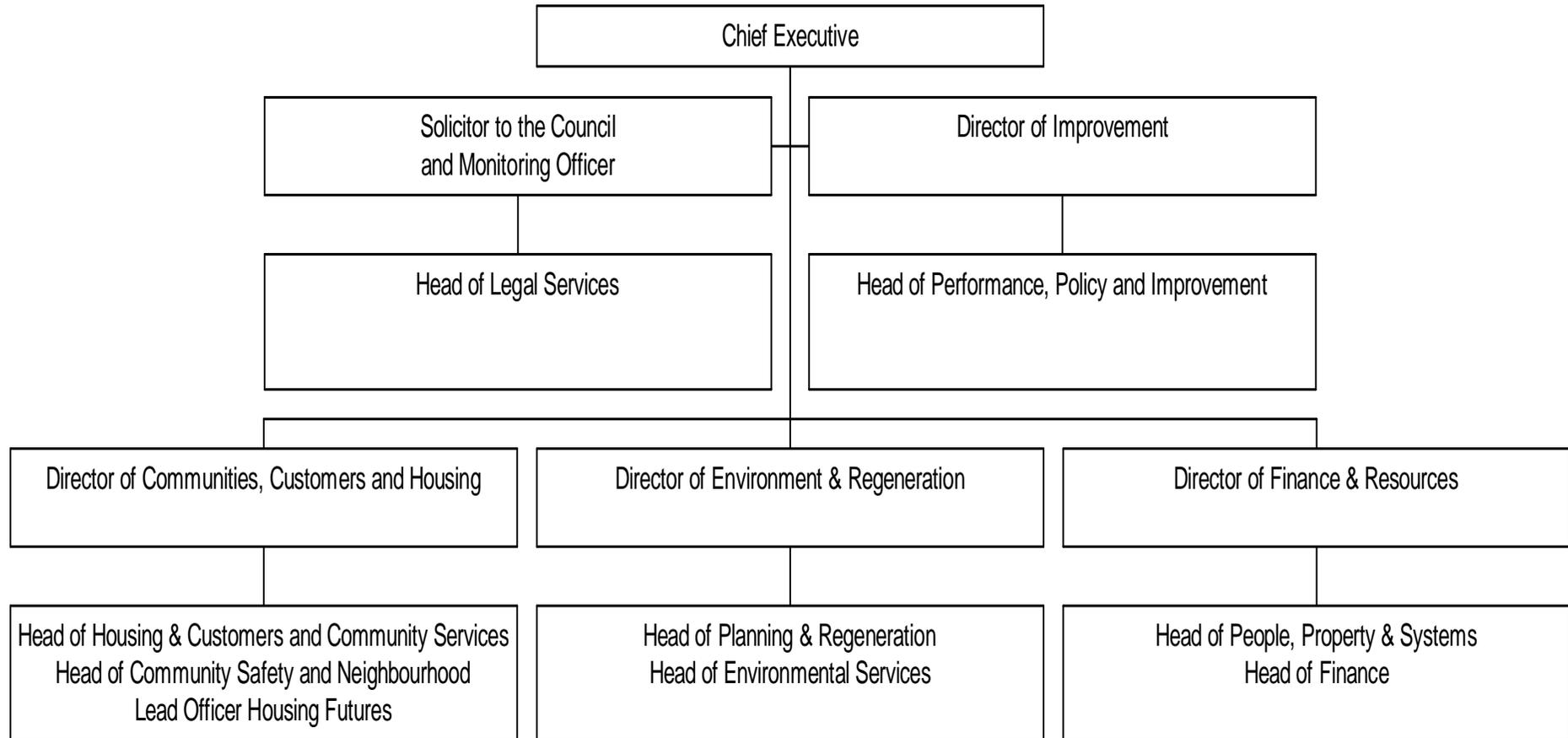
Over the past 12 months there have been some changes to the management structure of this service area. The Green Space Management Service (Formally Landscape and Recreation (LR) is responsible for the overall management of Canal Fields, and is a division of Environmental Services (formally Street Care (see figure 1)), which in turn is a division of the Environment and Regeneration Directorate. The Green Space Management Service (GSM) consists of two main service areas as follows (see figure 2). The Parks and Open Spaces team (POS) is responsible for the management of over 60 parks and open spaces and the management of highway verges on behalf of Hertfordshire Highways. The Trees and Woodlands team (TW) is responsible for the management of over 36,000 trees and 26 major woodlands covering 152 hectares. This team also oversee the management of housing amenity greens and verges on behalf of the Housing Service. The grounds maintenance team (formally part of the old LR service) has been transferred to Waste Services (another division of Environmental Services), to form part of a new integrated team called the Clean, Safe and Green Service (CSG). CSG will continue to deliver grounds maintenance, but will also deliver the street cleansing service. This combined service is designed to ensure the Council achieves its aim of creating a clean, tidy and safe environment and will be formally launched in May 2009 (see figure 3).

The recently completed Green Space Strategy will provide the policy framework for the management and maintenance of all green space within Dacorum Borough Council control, and will act as supplementary planning guidance for the Local Development Framework.

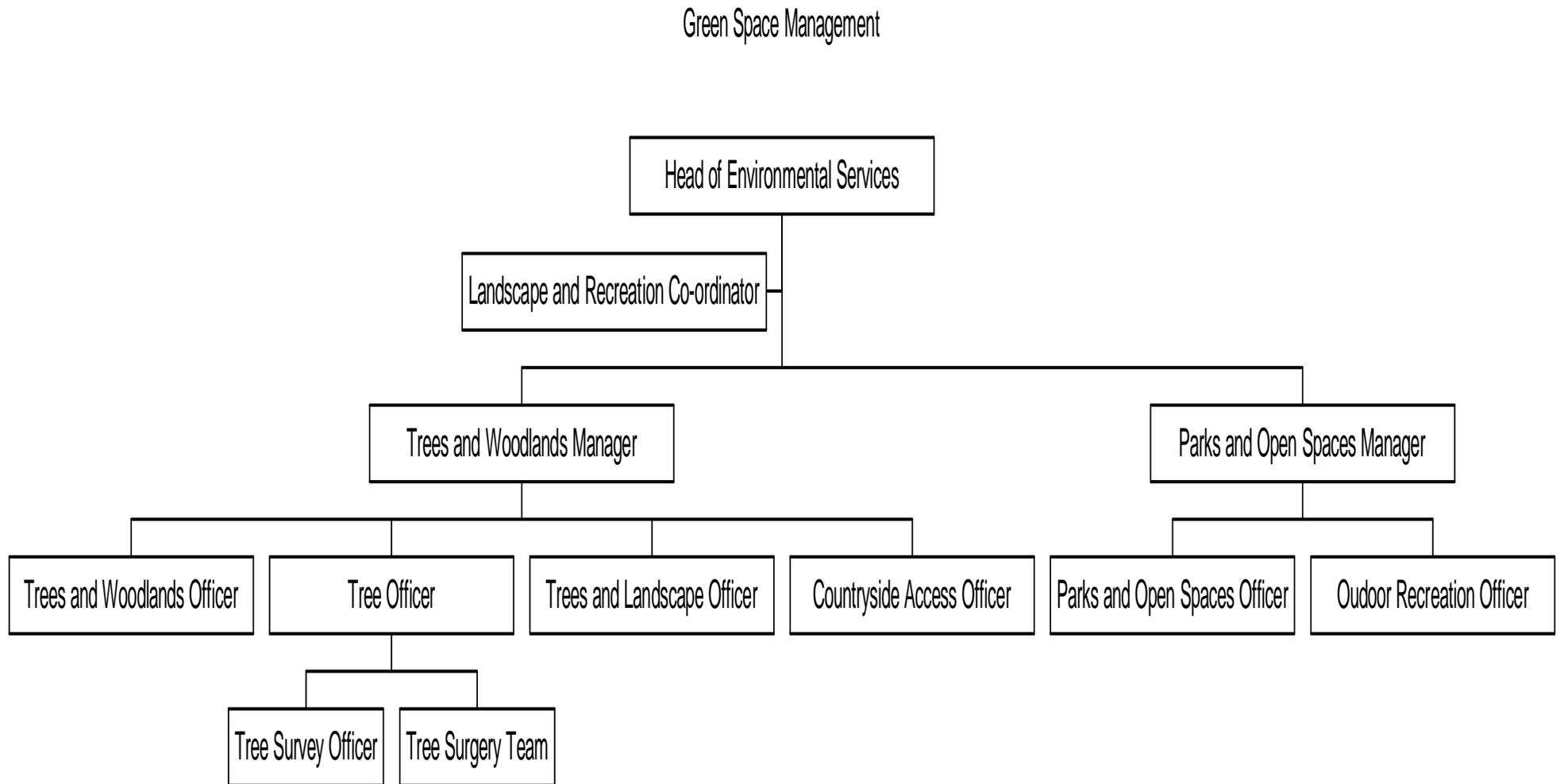
The POS team manage Canal Fields in partnership with other agencies, clubs and stakeholder groups, who have a direct interest in the site (see the maintenance section 2.8 below, which explains this arrangement in more detail). The Site management plan (this document) is a working document, which is actively delivered. The Parks and Open Spaces Officer (POSO) is responsible for co-ordinating the delivery of the Action Plan (see chapter 4), which highlights the management objectives for the site. The POSO sits on the Canal Fields Liaison Group (set up in December 08 in partnership with BTC), which reports to the BTC Environment and Transport Committee. The purpose of the group is to improve communication thereby helping to speedup the process of delivering the plan. The group also enables better co-ordination and communication with stakeholder groups (see section 2.11.1 and 2.11.2 for a list of current external and internal stakeholders). The focus of the group is the improvement of Canal Fields via the implementation of the site Action Plan. Work identified in the Action plan is discussed at bimonthly meetings organised by the POSO, and decisions are reached on a majority basis (details of who sits on the group are given in section 3.10.2).

**Figure 1**

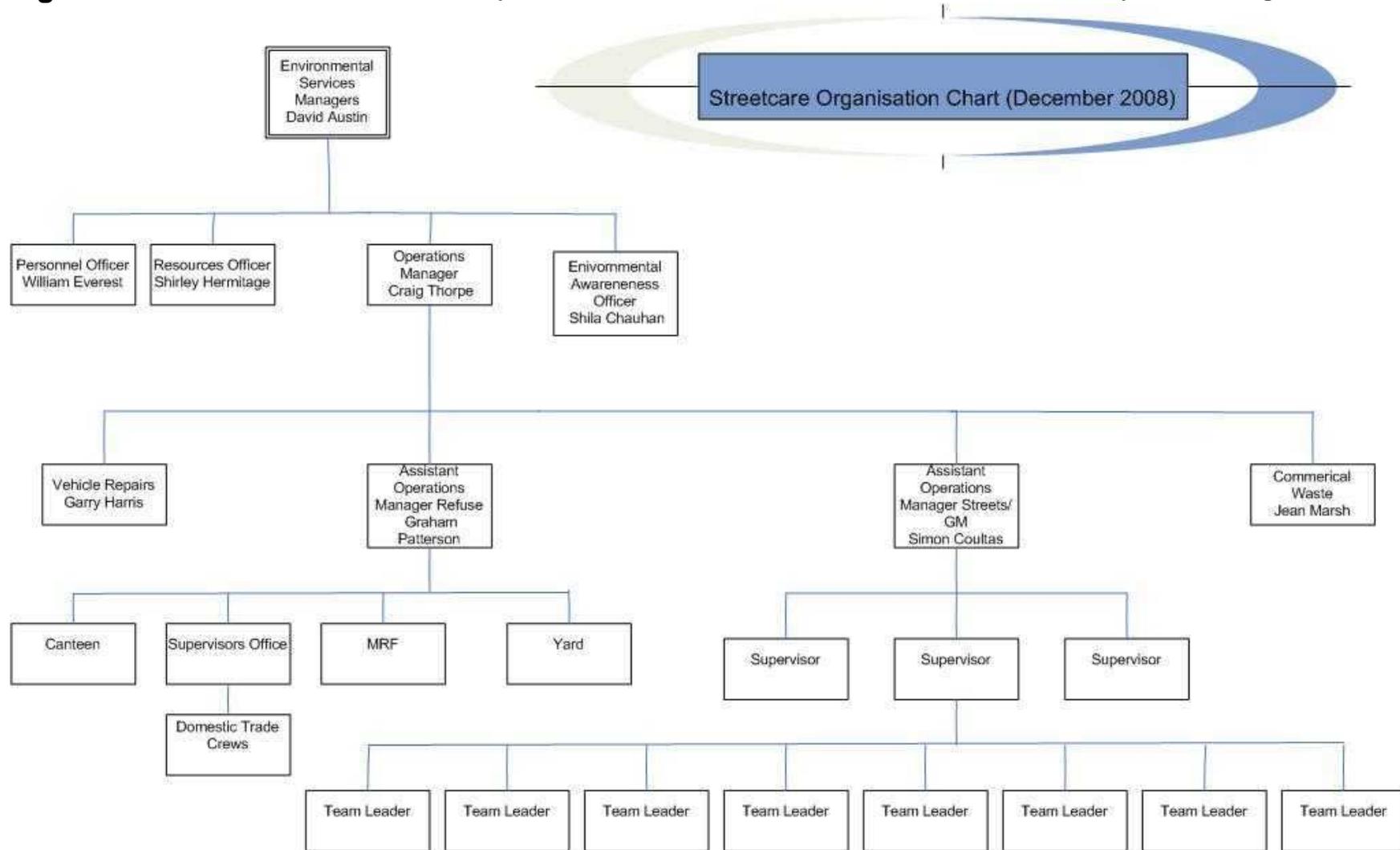
Dacorum Borough Council Structure



**Figure 2**



**Figure 3** Transitional Structure, that will incorporate the new Clean, Safe and Green Service under the Assistant Operations Manager.



## 2.8 Maintenance and Repairs

POS has an overall management role for the site, and co-ordinates essential repairs and replacements to infrastructure, and site furniture (bins, benches, etc.). Any large scale, infrastructural maintenance or development work will normally be organised via the internal Building Services team. TW manages the trees on site, and this work is guided by the Trees and Woodlands Strategy (2004-2009), which provides the framework used by the Council to protect and manage trees and woodlands within its control.

Maintenance of the green space (excluding trees) is the responsibility of the CSG team, and maintenance tasks currently performed include grass cutting, litter collection, hedge cutting, autumn leaf clearance, litter bin emptying (including the weekends), sweeping of hard surfaces (including the car park) and edging along footpaths. The maintenance of the Play Area and Skate Park facilities is also the responsibility of CSG, via the specialist Play Area Maintenance Team.

Some site features are managed and maintained by other agencies, clubs, stakeholder groups, and internal service as follows:

- Berkhamsted Bowls Club manage the Bowling Green facility under a lease agreement.
- British Waterways are responsible for the canal, towpath and associated infrastructure.
- BTC are responsible for ensuring the Millennium Garden is maintained.
- Hertfordshire Highways maintain the Park Street Footbridge structure, and the footpath from Park Street up to South Park Gardens (including all lighting along this path).
- Network Rail are responsible for the subway structure and embankment fence.
- The Parking Management Service at DBC manages the site car park.
- The Environmental Health Service at DBC is responsible for managing the dog bin service.

There is currently no formal arrangement to routinely maintain the access road and adjacent street lighting because the road is jointly owned by a number of stakeholders (see section 2.2), however as part of ongoing improvements on site Building Service organised repairs to street lighting and the road during 2009.

Any graffiti found on site is normally removed by the specialist graffiti team, within two to three weeks of being reported, and where it cannot be removed it is painted out. When a report of vandalism or accidental damage to site equipment, infrastructure, etc is received then the POSO or POSM take steps to assess the damage, reduce risk of injury (make area safe) and order a repair or replacement as quickly as possible.

## **2.9 Community Use**

The site is currently used for informal recreation. Activities range from general relaxation, such as sitting and reading a book or enjoying a picnic to more active pursuits like ball games, walking, jogging, exercising the dog. The site also provides a transport route for pedestrians on their way to the town centre from the nearby housing estate and along the canal towpath. The car park is used by visitors, shoppers visiting the nearby town centre, and members of Berkhamsted Bowls Club, LTSRC and BTFC. The play area and skate park facilities are popular with visitors and well used.

The CMS supports a health walk in Berkhamsted, which meets at Canal Fields once a fortnight. The walk is promoted in the Health Walk Programme, which is available in GP surgeries, council offices, libraries and tourist information offices across Dacorum and Three Rivers districts. The walk is also shown on the CMS and Walking the Way to Health websites.

## **2.10 Special Events**

Dacorum's parks, playing fields and open spaces are used for public special events organised by community and charitable organisations. These are usually hired without a fee. Commercial bookings for which a fee is charged include fun fairs, hot air balloon launches, and filming units. Commercial and private functions must not restrict local residents' enjoyment of the open space nor pose safety issues for the general public. Sports training and tournaments are dealt with through the sports pitch booking system.

Under the terms of the 2003 Licensing Act, activities such as plays, live music and dance performance, are considered regulated entertainment. If under 500 people will be attending the event, the organiser can apply for a Temporary Events Notice from Dacorum Borough Council's Licensing Division. Larger events require a Premises Licence for the location. This is applied for by the landowner, and is a permanent licence for a set number of hours, days and types of activity.

Hirers of Dacorum Borough Council managed land are required to submit an Application Form for the Use of Council Land for Special Events, with a copy of their risk assessment, public liability insurance certificate and any additional operational procedures. Relevant groups such as Town and Parish Council's, Environmental Health and The Dacorum Safety Advisory Group are then notified of the event. The Dacorum Safety Advisory Group is a multi-agency group including the Police, Fire Service, Ambulance Service, Hertfordshire Highways, and chaired by Dacorum Borough Council's, Head of Public Protection. The Group aims to provide advice and guidance to enable those responsible for organising events to run them safely and successfully. A Safety Event Guide has been produced to provide some of the information event organisers need to help them plan a safe event.

Special event bookings at Canal Fields include Kids Bike Fest organised by Berkhamsted Cycle Group, and skate skills coaching by the Swan Youth Centre. Details of special events are listed on Dacorum Borough Council's website on the What's on and Events page.

## **2.11 Stakeholders**

Where possible GSM seeks to work in partnership with other services and organisations that have an interest in the site. Current stakeholder groups include:

### **2.11.1 DBC Internal Services**

Building Services  
Clean, Safe and Clean Service  
Environmental Health Service  
Parking Management Service  
Valuation and Estates Service

### **2.11.2 External Organisations and Groups**

Berkhamsted Bowls Club  
Berkhamsted Citizens Association  
Berkhamsted Community Partnership  
Berkhamsted Community Police  
Berkhamsted Round Table  
Berkhamsted Sports Ground Charitable Association Ltd  
Berkhamsted Town Council  
Berkhamsted Town Football Club  
Berkhamsted Youth Town Council  
British Waterways  
Broadwater Residents Association  
Chiltern Chalk Stream Project  
Countryside Management Service  
Chiltern Woodland Project  
Dacorum Environmental Forum Water Group  
Environment Agency  
Residents of Tennis Cottages  
St. John's Well Court Residents  
Swan Youth Skates  
The Canal and Riverside Partnership  
Lawn Tennis and Squash Rackets Club  
Three Valleys Water  
Waitrose Supermarket

## **2.12 Management Achievements Over the Last 12 Months**

The updated Management Plan (2008) set out a 12 month programme of actions, which have resulted in the following achievements:

- New Canal Fields Liaison Group in place.
- Progress made towards establishing a Friends Group.
- Site user survey conducted.
- Tree work adjacent to the Park Street footbridge completed.
- Phase four of the Bulbourne Restoration Project nearing completion.
- Implementation of new grass management regime along the river and around the edge of the field beyond the Park Street footbridge.
- BTC Warden visits the site every working day and keeps inspection records.
- Infrastructure improvement proposals prepared and planning application submitted.
- Programme of replacing waste bins started.
- DDA audit completed.
- Maintenance requirements agreed with CSG.
- Two volunteer events planned for autumn and winter 2009/10.
- Following consultation a proposal to install outside fitness equipment on site has been agreed.

Achievements from 2004-2008 are listed in appendix 10.

## 3.0 Assessment and Analysis



**View of the lake area of the River Bulbourne. The picture shows the hazel faggots installed to narrow the channel.**

### **3.0 Assessment and Analysis (Where do we want to get to?)**

This chapter firstly sets out the Vision and Aims for the site, and then examines the site against the Green Flag Award criteria to determine management priorities for the five-year period 2009/14.

#### **3.1 Vision**

Our Vision is that Canal Fields will be a high quality open space, a place where local people and visitors can enjoy informal recreational activities in a pleasant environment rich in biological diversity and ecological interest.

#### **3.2 Aims**

- To involve the local community and stakeholders in the management, development and improvement of the site.
- To improve biological diversity and ecological interest within the site.
- To ensure that all site infrastructure, facilities and equipment under the control of Clean, Safe & Green is fit for purpose.
- To ensure the site is well maintained and clean.

#### **3.3 A Welcoming Place**

*The overall impression for someone approaching and entering the site should be positive and inviting.*

##### **3.3.1 Site Access**

Under the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 and 2005 DBC is responsible for ensuring that services and facilities within parks and open spaces are as available to disabled people as to any non-disabled person. In response DBC's vision for parks is that they will be welcoming to all the community, offering everyone the opportunity to be able to enjoy and benefit from green spaces. Whilst there is good vehicular and pedestrian access onto Canal Fields, there are some issues that may present challenges for disabled and elderly users. Potential problems include the steep slopes of the two large footbridges and the surface materials of some of the footpaths. To ensure equal access for all, an accessibility site audit was commissioned in 2008. The report makes 76 recommendations, relating to around 25 different areas/features on site. Many of the actions can be implemented at a small cost; however others will require significant investment and/or the cooperation of other agencies/stakeholders and cannot be achieved in the short term. It is proposed to evaluate the recommendations, and identify elements to be integrated into the site action plan of this plan period. Where recommendations relate to non DBC managed features it will be necessary to engage relevant agencies and/or stakeholders.

The Dacorum Play Strategy identified a need for an inclusive swing seat. To meet this need a 'basket seat on a frame' is due to be installed at Canal Fields; however this project has been delayed. Originally programmed for July 2008, consultation took place in January 2009 with Bridgewater School, with the chosen equipment to be ordered in early 2009.

### **3.3.2 Site Entrances**

All the main access points are identified on the access map on page 8. The public footpath (ROW 27 - see site description map on page 7) which links the Waitrose footbridge to the town centre, is a narrow path that is prone to becoming overgrown. The CSG team ensure the path is clear.

The access road via Broadwater does not have a pedestrian footpath; therefore pedestrians who use this route either walk in the road or on the verge. As this is regarded as the main entrance and regularly used by pedestrians a connecting footpath from Broadwater to the main site is proposed. This forms part of the infrastructural improvements, (see section 3.5.4) planned for the site. This it is subject to planning permission and an application was submitted in early January 2009. A decision on this matter should be received by the end of February 2009.

The access point via the railway underpass and the approach from South Park Gardens is particularly unattractive with litter, graffiti and general detritus. The DDA report highlighted issues with hazards for people with visual impairment; poor lighting in the subway; and the condition of the footpath surface at this access point. The footpath and lighting is the responsibility of Hertfordshire Highways, and discussion on improving this area is currently ongoing. It is hoped that agreement can be reached in early 2009, with implementation of improvements during the current plan period. With regards to the railway subway structure and the problem of graffiti, discussions have taken place with Network Rail officials. As Network Rail do not have the resources to clear graffiti from their infrastructure, they have agreed to clear the graffiti on a one off basis and will give DBC permission to clear it in future. The detail of this arrangement will be confirmed in writing.

### **3.3.3 Signage**

There are a variety of signs on site of varying design and quality most of which have been installed by DBC (either POS or other services, such as Parking Management or the Antisocial Behaviour Team). Signage associated with the canal infrastructure belongs to BW. CARP have installed two interpretation boards on the site, one adjacent to the towpath and one near the river. Many of the DBC signs are in poor positions, with some small signs high up on posts where they can not be read. Some signs have been damaged, whilst others may not be needed. Signage was to be addressed during 2008, and a draft Canal Fields interpretation board and an interpretation board for the Millennium Garden were prepared. However due to protracted negotiations over the infrastructure proposals this initiative has been delayed. With the establishment of the Canal Fields Liaison Group (see

section 2.7 and 3.10.1) the issue of site signage will be progressed during early 2009, starting with the two drafts described earlier. Subsequent phases will look at improving the quality of the skate park sign, the introduction of directional signage, and will review all information/notice signage on site. A timetable for each phase will be determined by the Canal Fields Liaison Group.

As part of phase four of the Bulbourne Restoration Project, two new interpretation signs are to be placed along the riverbank. The new signs are currently being made, and should be ready for installation by the end of March 2011.

#### **3.3.4 Recommendations:**

- R1 Identify elements of the DDA report to be added to the Action Plan by the end of 2009.
- R2 Engage with other agencies and stakeholders groups with regards to non-DBC managed site features within the DDA report by the end of 2009.
- R3 Order and install an inclusive swing by May 2009.
- R4 CSG team to keep the public footpath (ROW 27) clear of overhanging vegetation.
- R5 Reach agreement with Hertfordshire Highways with regards to maintenance and improvement of the Park Street footbridge, footpath, and subway lighting as outlined in the DDA report by the end of March 2009.
- R6 Reach a resolution with Network Rail on the subway graffiti problem by April 2009.
- R7 Finalise the design of the draft Canal Fields interpretation board and Millennium Garden interpretation boards and install in 2009.
- R8 Agree a timetable for further signage improvements (Skate Park sign, directional signage, and a review of all information/notice signage on site) by May 2009.
- R9 Install the Bulbourne Restoration Project interpretation boards along the riverbank by the end of March 2011.

#### **3.4 Healthy, Safe and Secure**

*The park or green space must be a healthy, safe and secure place for all members of the community to use.*

##### **3.4.1 Risk assessments**

It is Council policy that a systematic assessment is made of all risks to the health and safety of employees and anyone affected by their work activities. Preventive or protective measures should be identified to eliminate or reduce risk. All assessments should be reviewed on an annual basis. All grounds maintenance activities on site have been subject to risk assessments, and the play area and skate park receive an annual risk assessment. In addition there

is a generic risk assessment that covers working in public open space. A list of all risk assessments can be found in appendix 2.

### **3.4.2 Safe Equipment and Facilities**

The Play Area Maintenance Team, part of the CSG operation, inspects the Play Area and Berkhamsted Skate Park equipment on a weekly basis to ensure the equipment is safe to use. In addition an independent inspection and risk assessment is undertaken each year. The last inspection took place in February 2008 by the Play Inspection Company Limited. They have been awarded a three year contract from April 2007 through a joint tender process with authorities from Hertfordshire and the Eastern Region.

All other site facilities and/or infrastructure on site under the control of DBC is inspected by GSM staff on an ad hoc basis when on site throughout the year, and in response to reports from the general public. In addition the BTC Town Warden visits the site every working day and reports any defects to site infrastructure back to the POS team for rectification. If a defect is discovered, steps are taken to reduce the risk of accident or injury and necessary repair work is undertaken as quickly as possible. As an extra measure it is proposed that the POSO and a qualified surveyor from Building Services conduct a condition survey twice a year (excluding the play and skate equipment), to check for issues and/or problems that may require remedial action. This should enable the early detection of any potential problems.

### **3.4.3 Security**

There are currently no major issues around security and the area is regularly patrolled by the Community Police Officer. The site is open, with good natural surveillance, and there is lighting in the car park. Should problems such as vandalism, or antisocial behaviour arise then the CSG team will work with the community police to resolve the issue.

The town of Berkhamsted including Canal Fields has been designated as an alcohol free zone and notices have been placed on site notifying visitors.

### **3.4.4 Dog Fouling**

Dogs are allowed on site, but are excluded from the play area. Dog owners are encouraged to act responsibly by using the dog bins provided. The bins are well spread throughout the site and are emptied twice a week. This service is managed by the Dog Warden within the Environmental Health Service. Any dog fouling incidents are dealt with by the dog warden who will contact offenders if known and has the power to issue a fixed penalty notice of £50. Canal Fields does not currently suffer from major dog fouling problems.

### **3.4.5 Tree Safety**

The Trees and Woodlands Team (TW) inspect all trees on a regular basis (every 18 months to 2 years) and in the event of any concern take the appropriate action to ensure a reasonable level of public safety. In the event that a tree is reported as being in a dangerous condition, it is inspected without delay. Dangerous trees are dealt with as a matter of priority, and normally within 48 hours. See section 3.5.3 on Tree Management.

### **3.4.6 Recommendations:**

- R10 Commission an annual inspection and risk assessment of the play area and skate park and annually thereafter.
- R11 Undertake a site condition survey of the site's infrastructure in April and November each year.

## **3.5 Well Maintained and Clean**

*For aesthetic as well as health and safety reasons issues of cleanliness and maintenance must be addressed.*

### **3.5.1 Grounds Maintenance**

In 2008 a Grounds Maintenance/Street Care integration project was initiated, which aims to combine the role of the two services within one team. The new service will be called Clean, Safe and Green (CSG), and will be launched in May 2009 with a service delivery specification to follow later in the year. In the last plan (updated 2008), Objective 31 identified the need to produce a site specific specification for grounds maintenance operations at Canal Fields. Work towards this goal has taken place, with the production of a list of maintenance activities required on site (see list in appendix 3). This has been drawn up by the POSO in consultation with the Assistant Operations Manager of the new CSG Service. The site specific specification will now be developed following the completion of the integration project. In the meantime the list of activities represents an understanding between CSG and POS as to the required maintenance on site and ensures standards are achieved. Currently the CSG team operate a roving team of gardeners who spend on average a total of 22.5 man hours a month on site; however the actual time spent per month depends on seasonal demands.

### **3.5.2 Grassland Maintenance**

The current mixture of close mown grass on the recreation fields, and long grass in selected areas by the river and canal provides sufficient space for recreation, while at the same time providing biodiversity interest appropriate for this site. It is therefore proposed to continue the maintenance and management regime described in 2.4.3.

When the play area was enlarged in 2003 the ground became compacted during construction, and as a result the newly laid grass became muddy and

waterlogged. Subsequent work to relieve the compaction worked and the grass eventually established. Since then the play area has been well used, causing further erosion. Objective 37 from the previous plan (2008 update), identified the need 'to reinstate the grass sward in the play area where it has worn away'. Reinstatement work was carried out in spring 2008, however due to it's position within the water table and the volume of use, the play are is still prone to becoming muddy during the winter period. It is proposed to install honeycomb matting through the play area to improve access for users.

### **3.5.3 Tree Management**

The Council's approach to tree management is outlined in the Tree and Woodlands Strategy 2004-2009, which provides a framework for the protection and management of trees and woodlands in the Council's control. The trees on the site are highly valued and are an integral part of the sites landscape character. The TW team are committed to high standards of tree care and management, and to this end have inspected all trees on site in order to manage risk and to maintain a healthy and varied tree population (see section 3.4.5 on tree safety for the frequency of inspection). During the last inspection on the 4<sup>th</sup> September 2007 work was recommended to 20 trees ranging from a simple crown lift, or branch removal to re-pollard and coppicing. This work is due to be completed by the end of March 2009. In addition the Willows along the River Bulbourne are being managed on a five-year cycle of pollarding and coppicing, with phase one scheduled for autumn and winter 2009 (see section 3.7.1).

### **3.5.4 Infrastructure Maintenance**

Over the past 12 months plans have been drawn up to address the infrastructural improvements identified in the last plan (plan update 2008). Following consultation with BTC a planning application has been submitted with a decision expected by the end of February 2009. Table 2 below lists the issues with the identified solution and/or action taken. In addition plans illustrating the proposals can be found in appendix 4.

**Table 2 Infrastructure Improvement Proposals**

<b>Objective Number 2008/09</b>	<b>Issue/problem identified in the last management plan update (2008)</b>	<b>Identified Solution and/or Action taken</b>	<b>Further Action Required</b>

21	Large puddles in the car park during wet weather.	French drain soakaways to be reinstated.	
22	Safe pedestrian route through the car park	New path has been designed to follow the desire-line, linking the Waitrose footbridge with the footpath across the recreation field on the other side of the car park. The path will include crossing points.	
23	Proposed new footpath from Broadwater to the main site to improve access for pedestrians	Proposed path will be located on the verge opposite the Football Club, and will connect the highway path at Broadwater with the existing path near the BW bin area.	This is the only part of the scheme that requires planning permission as it will be located on unregistered land. The application submitted includes the whole scheme so the planners can see the path in context.
24	Footpath in poor condition near Berkhamsted Skate Park.	Path will be resurfaced with tarmac.	
25	Three picnic benches on uneven ground adjacent to the path above.	New hard surface areas to be added as extensions to the resurfaced path above.	
33	Maintenance of the Access Road, which is in joint ownership (DBC and Berkhamsted Sports Ground Charitable Association Ltd BSGCA).  Maintenance of	Pot holes and damaged road edges to be made good  DBC to maintain lighting	Contact the BSGCA to discuss maintenance arrangement in future.

	<p>Street lighting along the access road, mostly on DBC land, however some are on unregistered land.</p> <p>Drain not working on the corner of the access road opposite the tennis club</p>	<p>on unregistered land. All the lighting columns have been inspected and those found not to be working have been repaired.</p> <p>Drain/soakaway to be cleaned out.</p>	
<p>Note: in addition to the above it is proposed that two new soakaways are installed near the bowls club and in front of the 2 Tennis Cottages, to deal with additional drainage problems, and a connecting path be constructed from the new path through the car park to the play area and to the footpath that crosses the main recreation field.</p>			

The total estimated cost of the infrastructure improvement work described above is around £94,000, and has been identified as a capital project. The target date set for the completion of the work is the end March 2009; however there has been some slippage due to the consultation with BTC taking longer than expected. A recent decision by DBC to freeze the capital budget for this project due to the current global economic problems means that work cannot start until a decision is made on the capital programme going forward. A decision on this should be made by the end of February 2009. In the meantime the identified work has been re-scheduled for year one of this new plan period, however it is possible that some or all of the proposed improvement may have to be put back to a later year in the plan.

The Waitrose footbridge was the subject of extensive maintenance work in 2006. This involved replacing rotten floor planks and hand railing, and repainting the entire bridge to protect the wood. In 2008 the paint used showed signs of failure and another coat of paint was applied to areas in the worst condition; unfortunately this is now flaking off as well. This situation is under review. As the footbridge is a wooden structure over 25 years old, it is considered to be coming to the end of its life. In recent years the cost of maintenance has increase due to replacing rotten timbers and the paint problem. It may be time to think about the long-term replacement of the footbridge. It is proposed that this matter is discussed during the plan period in order to agree the best way forward.

A programme of waste bin replacement was started in 2008 with another 8 bins due to be replaced in 2009.

### 3.5.5 Equipment Maintenance

As stated in section 3.4.2 the play area and skate park equipment is regularly inspected and basic maintenance to ensure the equipment is safe to use is undertaken e.g. clearing broken glass. If equipment has been vandalised and cannot be immediately repaired, it is made safe or taken out of use. Equipment is then repaired and/or replaced when budgets allow. The Play Area Maintenance team will normally have a stock of spare parts, allowing equipment to be repaired quickly.

Any graffiti on site is normally removed by the specialist graffiti team, within two to three weeks of being reported. Where it cannot be removed it is painted out.

### 3.5.6 Recommendations

- R12 Develop a formal site specification for grounds maintenance operations at Canal Fields to be completed by the end of 2010.
- R13 Install honeycomb matting through the play area to improve access for users by March 2009.
- R14 Inspect all trees on site within the 18 month to 2 year cycle for safety and condition and record results on the tree management system.
- R15 Carry out work to 20 trees as recommended on the Tree Management System by the end of March 2009.

#### Infrastructure Improvements

- R16 Reinstate French drains in the site car park.
- R17 Install new path or 'safe route' through the car park for pedestrians.
- R18 Install new path to Broadwater from the main site subject to planning permission.
- R19 Resurface path near the Skate Park.
- R20 Create new hard surface extensions to the path near the skate park and move three existing picnic benches from the grass onto the area, and install a fourth picnic bench (with disabled access) so there is two on each area.
- R21 Repair pothole and edges along the access road.
- R22 Reinstate the soakaway on the corner of the access road opposite the tennis club
- R23 Install two new soakaway's opposite 2 Tennis Cottages, and one between the play area and the Bowling Green.
- R24 Install a new connecting path between the new path across the car park and the play area, and nearby footpath across the main recreation field.
- R25 To agree repair, modification/replacement programme for the Waitrose footbridge, to improve DDA access by March 2010.
- R26 Replace another 8 waste bins by the end of 2009.

## **3.6 Sustainability**

*Methods used in maintaining the green space and its facilities should be environmentally sound, relying on best practice according to current knowledge.*

### **3.6.1 Sustainable Community Strategy**

In January 2008 the Dacorum Partnership published its Sustainable Community Strategy “Towards 2021”. The strategy sets out a vision to improve the quality of life and services in Dacorum over the next 13 years, to ‘make Dacorum a happy, healthy, prosperous and safe place to live, work and visit’. Both this document and the Corporate Priorities guide the work of the Council in its efforts to improve Dacorum.

One of the ten themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy is ‘Creating a Cleaner and Healthier Environment’. Within this theme there are a number of aims and objectives that, together with other partners, Dacorum Borough Council has committed to work towards. Progress on achieving the aim is measured through 3 targets; including increase the number of ‘Green Flag’ accredited sites by 1 by 2009. This target was achieved and exceeded ahead of schedule with both Chipperfield Common and Canal Fields achieving Green Flag status in 2008.

### **3.6.2 Corporate Sustainability Policy**

In October 2008 DBC adopted a Corporate Sustainability Policy to highlight its commitment to sustainability and sustainable development. To ensure the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the community DBC will embed the principles of sustainable development into all of its activities.

The Council has identified key priorities for embedding sustainability into the organisation, including developing mechanisms to ensure the sustainability implications of all of its activities and services, using resources efficiently and effectively and sharing and encouraging best practice.

This policy will be delivered through the Council's Service and Financial Planning system and Corporate Sustainability Programme and will be monitored by the Corporate Sustainability Group. A Sustainability Assessment Tool has been developed as a mechanism to identify where the priorities of the policy are being met and where improvements are required. The tool uses a scoring system based on the amount of evidence provided. From the results an improvement programme will be developed. The results of the assessment and the improvement programme will form part of a sustainability report that will be produced annually to demonstrate progress of improvement. It is proposed to use the corporate sustainability assessment tool to evaluate the management and service provision at Canal Fields (see appendix 5 for a copy of the assessment form).

### **3.6.3 Environmental Management**

As a result of the Grounds Maintenance/Street Care Integration Project the new combined CSG service will be subject to the Waste Services environmental management system, which has ISO 14001 accreditation. Within GSM, the environmental impact of the service's activities will be assessed and monitored in accordance with the Sustainability Policy outlined above.

### **3.6.4 Climate Change**

Dacorum Borough Council signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change in February 2007 and is committed to fulfilling its obligations under the terms of this declaration. Following the adoption of the sustainability policy, which includes an objective to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, an action plan will be developed over the course of 09/10 with the support of The Energy Saving Trust. The Council has also joined the Herts Climate Change Partnership to ensure that its response to climate change is in co-ordination with its partners in the rest of the County.

### **3.6.5 Energy Efficiency**

The Council is committed to responsible energy management and will practice energy efficiency throughout all premises, plant and equipment over which it has control, wherever it is cost effective to do so, in order to protect the environment and minimise climate change impacts. DBC is currently working with the Energy Saving Trust to develop a sustainable energy action plan in response to the Sustainable Community Strategy detailed above.

### **3.6.6 Pesticides Use**

The POS Service operates a minimal use policy with regards to pesticides. At Canal Fields herbicide is used to control grass growth around obstacles, to reduce the need for strimming operations, helping to save on labour costs and to mitigate against the health problems caused by vibration when using strimming equipment. Herbicide is also used to control competing vegetation growth around the newly planted hedge species along the towpath. The Bowls Club uses fungicides to help maintain a playable surface on the bowling green.

The last review of pesticide use was undertaken in 1991 by ADAS, but a policy was not written at the time. It was the intention to review pesticide use and produce a pesticide policy during 2008/09, however this has not been done. Due to the uncertainty caused by the European Parliament debate on pesticides and now the recently passed EU Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive, January 2009, it has been decided to keep this matter under review, and take appropriate action during 2009 once the implications of the Directive are known.

### **3.6.7 Peat Use**

It is the policy of the POS team not to use peat at Canal Fields. When plant stock is required it will either be purchased as bare root or supplied by a nursery that uses peat free compost.

The Millennium Garden is maintained by volunteers on behalf of BTC, and they are committed to avoiding peat use. No further planting is planned for the garden at present, however if plants are required it has been agreed that peat free stock will be purchased. Volunteers will consult POS when planting is required. It is proposed that an approved list of suppliers of peat free stock is developed for future use.

### **3.6.8 Recycling of Green Waste and Waste Minimisation**

All green waste from parks and open spaces is collected and taken to the Cupid Green Depot, where it is mixed with green and food waste from domestic household collections. It is then transported to the 'Envar' processing plant in St Ives, Cambridgeshire where it is turned into compost. The compost produced is currently used in the agricultural industry.

Where possible the wood chippings generated from tree work at Canal Fields is reused on site as mulch. Wood chip was used to mulch the base of the hedgerow along the towpath in early 2008 and will be topped up again during February 2009.

### **3.6.9 Recommendations:**

- R27 Continue to enter the site for the annual Green Flag Award.
- R28 Carry out a Sustainability Assessment of Canal Fields by the end of 2011.
- R29 Compile a list of suppliers of peat free plant stock by the end of 2011.
- R30 Review the implications of the Pesticides Directive on the current operation at Canal Fields by the end of October 2009.
- R31 Use the woodchip generated by the work to the Poplar trees on the riverbank to mulch the towpath hedgerow by the end of February 2009.

## **3.7 Conservation and Heritage**

*Particular attention should be paid to the conservation and appropriate management of natural features, wildlife and flora, landscape features, and buildings and structures.*

### **3.7.1 The Grand Union Canal and River Bulbourne**

The Grand Union Canal is an important part of the town's heritage and should be protected and where appropriate enhanced through sensitive management and development. Although the Canal is managed by British Waterways there may be opportunities that arise where the Council can work in partnership to bring about improvements, particularly as it is an integral part of the Canal

Fields site. DBC is a member of the Canal and Riverside Partnership (CARP) which was set up to enhance the amenity value of the canal and riverside through Berkhamsted for both citizens and visitors. Subject to available funding the section of towpath through the site has been identified for upgrading to improve the surface which puddles badly during heavy rain, making it unpleasant to walk on. CARP, BTC and the Canal Fields Liaison Group are aware of this issue and will seek external funding for upgrading when opportunities arise.

Work to restore the River Bulbourne through the site is now nearing the completion of phase four (see the Bulbourne Restoration Project map on page 9 for details of the project). Phase four has comprised of further Willow coppicing and pollarding work and the planting of reeds and wetland plants within the hazel faggots used to restore the river channel. Work still to be done includes the coppicing of a small clump of Poplar trees (with two stems to be pollarded), and the installation of two interpretation boards at different locations on the riverbank. The tree work is due to take place in January 2009, and the signs are scheduled to be installed by the end of March 2009.

Over the next five-year period a maintenance schedule will be required for the river. This will involve continuing the coppicing and pollarding work on rotation, and the appropriate management of the other riverbank vegetation. It is proposed that the tree work is carried out on a five-year rotation. Table 3 below, indicates when each project phase will need to be repeated. It is also proposed that the wetland planting is monitored to ensure plants establish. An inspection is planned for April/May to determine the success of the scheme and to identify whether further planting is required.

The management of the restored river will be kept under review in partnership with the Chilterns Chalk Streams Project, and the CMS. The management of the rough grassland adjacent to the river is discussed under section 2.4.3 below.

**Table 3 Five-year Tree Coppicing and Pollarding Rotation**

<b>Bulbourne Restoration Project Phases</b>	<b>Due to be coppiced and pollarded again in:</b>
Phase one 04/05	2009/10
Phase two 05/06	2010/11
Phase three 06/07	2011/12
Phase four 07/08	2012/13
Late phase four (Poplars) Jan 2009	2013/14
Note: See the Bulbourne Restoration Project Map on page 9 For details of works in each phase.	

In 2002 the Chilterns Chalk Streams Project produced an education pack for schools on the special features, wildlife and history of Chilterns Chalk

Streams. This was aimed at key stage 2 and 3 and distributed to over 200 schools within the Chilterns AONB. The pack is currently being revised from its existing CD-ROM format to be made available on the Chilterns AONB website during 2009.

### **3.7.2 Grassland**

While most of the grassland is amenity close mown, there are rough grass areas that are managed to enhance biodiversity value. As outlined in section 2.4.3 there are three main areas of rough grass; the Waitrose footbridge banks, the buffer strip of grass alongside the river, and the strip around the far field beyond the Park Street footbridge.

The footbridge banks are primarily being managed to encourage wildflowers, by cutting and clearing the grass once a year. To enhance the northern banks (by the car park), plug planting took place in 2007 (see section 2.4.3). In October 2008 only two of the species planted were able to be identified (Meadow Cranes-bill, and Buttercup). To determine the success of the planting monitoring is proposed three times a year in late spring, mid summer and the autumn. Further planting will take place in the autumn of 2009 if necessary.

The buffer strips of long grass by the river and around the far field are left so that existing wildflower species can naturally populate these areas, and the longer sward provides a habitat for foraging mammals and also invertebrates such as dragonflies and damselflies.

A botanical survey of the banks, hedgerow (along the towpath), and the field beyond the Park Street footbridge was carried out in 2004, identifying 40 different species (see appendix 6 for a list of the species found). In order to assess the success of the grassland management described above and the wider restoration work to the riverbanks and hedgerow it is necessary to baseline the current flora and fauna. Apart from the 2004 survey of wild flora there is no record of site fauna. It is proposed that an up to date survey of flora and fauna is conducted during the first year of the plan period, and again in year five.

### **3.7.3 Towpath Hedgerow**

The restoration work to the hedgerow was completed in 2007. The entire length of the hedgerow has been coppiced, gaps planted up and Ivy removed. A maintenance regime is now in place to ensure establishment. The aim is to allow it to grow and become a thick hedge that will eventually be laid. A thick hedgerow that is properly managed will be more aesthetically pleasing and provide a habitat for invertebrate communities. The growth of the wildflower species will need to be controlled to ensure the hedge species establish. Once the hedge starts to mature wildflower species will be left to naturally colonise around the base of the hedge. An outline of the maintenance regime for the next two years is detailed below:

- Check that guards are properly secured and replaced where they are missing.
- Annual cut of horizontal growth to prevent encroachment of the towpath.
- Monitor the condition of the plants periodically during the growing season and record failures.
- Plant new hedge plants during the autumn to fill gaps left by plant failures where required.
- To control wild flora around the base of the hedging plants during the growing season to aid establishment.
- Leave vertical growth to enable the hedge to be laid in the future (several years growth will be required before this is possible).

The 2004 survey identified 27 wildflower species around the base of the hedgerow. It is proposed to repeat the survey during this plan period, see section 3.7.2 above.

#### **3.7.4 Recommendations:**

- R32 Coppice the clump of Poplar trees on the riverbank, leaving two pollarded stems (outstanding phase four work) by the end of February 2009.
- R33 Install two interpretation boards along the riverbank by the end of March 2009 (carried forward from 3.3.4).
- R34 Inspect the wetland planting within the hazel faggots (used to restore the river channel) in April/May 2009 to determine if plants have established.
- R35 Review the management of the riverbanks in partnership with the Chiltern's Chalk Stream project and the CMS during the autumn 2009.
- R36 Re-coppice/pollard trees on the riverbank in accordance with the rotation identified in the management plan – the next phase is due in autumn/winter 2009/10.
- R37 Monitor the wild flora on the northern banks of the Waitrose footbridge three times a year in spring, mid summer and autumn, with a view to further wildflower plug planting in the autumn of 2009 if considered necessary.
- R38 Conduct a survey of wild flora and fauna (to include the river, footbridge banks, rough grass buffer strips and hedgerow) in year one (2009/10) and five (2013/14) of this plan period.

### **3.8 Community Involvement**

*Park Management authorities should actively pursue the involvement of members of the community, with representation of as many park user groups as possible.*

### **3.8.1 Community Led Projects**

The Council is committed to working with relevant partners and local residents to promote their interests and to involve the community in the planning, development and management of services.

The majority of community involvement at Canal Fields has been project based. Many of the successful and ongoing projects have been achieved through partnerships with organisations, associations and groups representing local people, such as the Bulbourne Restoration Project, CARP and Berkhamsted Round Table.

The involvement of young people through the development of the skate park has been particularly successful. It has helped build understanding of young people within the community to reduce the perceived threat of young people gathered together. The partnership has been very constructive, with young people developing ownership of the site and forming positive relationships with agencies such as the Community Police Team, Druglink, DBC and BTC. This will continue through Berkhamsted Youth Town Council (BYTC) and Swan Skaters, who are involved in managing and maintaining the site, organising events and activities, such as painting the skate equipment. The three year development programme funded by Barclays Spaces for Sport (see section 2.4.8), and managed by the Swan Youth Centre is now approaching its final year (ending in April 2010). This programme helps Swan Skaters to manage the facility and to promote coaching and outreach work. DBC will continue to support Swan Skaters and BYTC to implement year three of the programme. Liaison with BYTC has identified that there is a desire for more youth activities at Canal Fields, and this will be further developed from 2010.

In 2008 Berkhamsted Community Partnership (BCP) secured funding to install outside fitness equipment along the canal corridor from the BIG Lottery through Dacorum Play Strategy. BCP research identified a need for this type of equipment and public consultation held outside Waitrose selected the manufacturer and identified Canal Fields as the preferred location. The proposal was also supported through visitor research undertaken in December 2008. The position of the 5 stations in Canal Fields have been agreed, with the installation scheduled for April 2009. The scheme includes a play trail for the toddler age range.

### **3.8.2 Stakeholder Involvement**

The POS team seeks to work with partner agencies, organisations and site based stakeholders with regards to the management, development and improvement of Canal Fields (a list of stakeholders is given in section 2.11.1 and 2.11.2). POS work in partnership with BTC to manage and develop the site, through the work of the Canal Fields Liaison Group (see section 2.7 and 3.10.1). Specialist advice for conservation management, management plan preparation may be required from time to time.

While initiatives like the Bulbourne Restoration Project have engaged agencies and organisations with an interest in the site, there has been less input from site based stakeholders, like the sports clubs or residents on or immediately adjacent to the site. It is proposed that an event is held for site based stakeholders, where they can learn more about the plans for the site, and have an opportunity to comment and get involved. It is also proposed to produce a newsletter for site based stakeholders twice a year to help maintain communication.

### **3.8.3 Friends Group and Volunteer Events**

DBC is committed to encouraging the community to become more involved in the management of Canal Fields, and empower them to make a positive difference to their environment. The CMS have prepared a Friends Action Pack to guide newly formed groups, and will support the formation of a group at Canal Fields. A recent press release and user survey have been used to promote the idea of a friends group. The later has identified 28 individuals, interested in finding out more, and they will be invited to an event (planned for March 2009) where the purpose of a friends group will be explained. The following list is a summary of what Friends Groups do:

- Work in partnership with the local authority and others to make a difference to your local green space,
- Learn new practical skills and develop ideas,
- Hold practical task, walks and events on site for local people,
- Implement and help the local authority to develop and monitor site plans,
- Access external funding for improvements on the site,
- Meet new people and get involved.

DBC will provide volunteer activities in green spaces. Volunteer events at Canal Fields in 2006 and 2007 focussed on adding deflectors to the river channel and litter picking the river. In February 2008, 10 volunteers coppiced some Willows along the riverbank and undertook a litter pick. Two volunteer events are planned over the coming year with one in the autumn and one in winter. It is likely that they will involve further coppicing work, and maybe some planting. It is anticipated that more events will be planned in future years of this plan period, and that the 'Friends Group' will help organise them.

### **3.8.4 Recommendations:**

- R39 Support the Swan Skaters and BYTC to implement year three of the development programme (coaching and outreach work) up to April 2010.
- R40 Further develop youth activities at Canal Fields in partnership with Berkhamsted Youth Town Council during 2010
- R41 Support the implementation of the outdoor fitness equipment and play trail to be installed in April 2009.
- R42 To develop a regular newsletter (twice a year) for stakeholders that will inform them of what is happening on site and why – the first newsletter to be published during the autumn/winter 2009/10.

- R43 To hold an event for site based stakeholders to seek their support and involvement in the management of Canal Fields in July 2009.
- R44 Hold an event in March 2009 for people interested in finding out about a friends group for Canal Fields.
- R45 Work with the CMS to provide 2 volunteer activities in Canal Fields per year (autumn and winter).

### **3.9 Marketing**

*Is there a marketing strategy in place? Is it in practice and regularly reviewed? Is there good provision of information to users, e.g. about management strategies, activities, features, ways to get involved? Is there effective promotion of the site as a community resource?*

#### **3.9.1 Marketing Plan**

In 2008 a generic marketing plan for the Landscape and Recreation Service was produced to support the production of management plans and the delivery of parks and open spaces for Dacorum that are well used and valued by the community, with facilities to meet their needs.

A copy of the marketing plan can be found in appendix 9, within this framework the actions that apply to Canal Fields are identified below.

#### **3.9.2 Signage**

In 2008 Landscape and Recreation developed a branding and signage style for its parks and woodlands. Using this as a basis, interpretation boards were developed for the entrance at the car park at Canal Fields and by the Millennium Garden. These will be referred to the Canal Fields Liaison Group for approval prior to implementation.

In 2008 BCP secured funding for 2 interpretative signs for the river, through a Quality of Place bid. These will be installed by St Johns Well and opposite Waitrose and are part of a series of signs developed by the Chiltern Chalk Streams Project for the River Bulbourne. The designs are based on artist impressions of the restored river channel and wildlife found in that environment. Completion of the project is scheduled for March 2009.

#### **3.9.3 Website**

Activities at Canal Fields are included within the BTC, DBC and Berkhamsted Youth Town Council websites. There is scope to improve the information available on the DBC website, based on the management plan and the details prepared for the site's interpretation boards.

Due to its features, its close proximity to the railway station and the presence of the Grand Union Canal and River Bulbourne, Canal Fields is shown on several local walking routes available through the Countryside Management Service, Chilterns AONB, Waterscape (BW) and Walking in Herts websites.

### 3.9.4 Media Releases

Media releases are used to inform residents of developments at Canal Fields and to generate interest and involvement in the site. During 2008 there were 2 articles in Dacorum Digest, a DBC publication produced 4 times per year, which is available on-line and distributed to 58,000 households within the borough. In the autumn 2008 edition 'Flying the Green Flags for Dacorum' celebrated Canal Fields success in its first year of entry into the Green Flag scheme. In winter 2008 'Have your say on Canal Fields' promoted the Canal Fields visitor survey. These were also highlighted in press releases over the same period, 'Two Green Flags for Dacorum' issued on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2008 and 'With a little help from our Friends', on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2008.

As many of the projects at Canal Fields are developed with stakeholders, information on Canal Fields is also included within partner publications, for example within the Countryside Management Services regular newsletter. Their 'Walks and More' publication also advertises any walks or volunteer events connected to Canal Fields.

### 3.9.5 Site Specific Customer Research

Customer research for Canal Fields was undertaken through a survey in December 2008 (see appendix 8 for a copy of the survey form). The survey was advertised through Dacorum Digest, made available for on-line responses on the DBC website, and paper copies were displayed at Berkhamsted Civic Centre, Berkhamsted Sports Centre, given out on site and sent to people on request. 98 responses were received. The results are shown in appendix 7, with key findings listed in the table below. The action column explains how the issues identified are addressed through the management plan.

**Table 4 Customer Research Results**

Research Findings	Action
Canal Fields has many regular visitors with over a third of respondents visiting once or twice a week.	
The main reasons for visiting were as a route to or from the High Street or to visit the play area.	
Trees throughout the park and the Millennium Gardens scored highest on the quality (standard and maintenance) evaluation. The	Interpretation signs for the main car park and Millennium Garden to be installed March 2011 (3.3.3). Further bin replacement is planned (3.5.4).

lowest scores were for signage and bins/dog bins.	Need to add in comment re bins
Wildlife, nature and the River Bulbourne are considered particularly important.	Appropriate management of nature conservation areas (3.7) New signs planned as part of phase 4 of the River Bulbourne Restoration Project (3.3.3)
87% of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with Canal Fields.	
People consider Canal Fields to be an attractive, welcoming and safe area.	
The marking and accessibility of the entrances and litter, vandalism and graffiti were identified as issues.	Entrances being addressed through infrastructure improvements and liaison with Network Rail (3.3.2) Site inspected daily by BTC Town Warden. (3.4.2)
Within the additional comments made the most popular request was for more seating, followed by a café or refreshments and more action against litter and vandalism. Improving the play area came fourth.	Basket seat swing to be installed in the play area (3.3.1), access both to (3.5.4) and through (3.5.2) the play area to be improved.
The top 3 requests for developing Canal Fields were a pedestrian route through the car park, outdoor fitness equipment and new waste bins. These were closely followed by tree planting and more youth facilities.	Planning permission being sought for infrastructure improvements (3.5.4), outdoor fitness equipment due to be installed April 2009 (3.8.1), partnership working to take place with Berkhamsted Youth Town Council to extend youth activities (3.8.1) Further bin replacement is planned (3.5.4).

The results of this survey will be formally considered by the Canal Fields Liaison Group, to identify items not addressed by the management plan. The Survey will be repeated in year 3 and 5 of the plan period to evaluate the effectiveness of the management plan.

### **3.9.6 Recommendations:**

- R46 Complete the installation of new interpretation signs for the car park and Millennium Garden (carried forward as recommendation under 3.3.4).
- R47 Include articles about Canal Fields in 2 editions of Dacorum Digest each year.
- R48 Develop information about Canal Fields on DBC website in year 2.
- R49 Consider items arising from customer research not currently addressed within the management plan through Canal Fields Liaison Group by the end of 2009.
- R50 Undertake further customer research to evaluate the effectiveness of the management plan in year three and five of the plan period.

### **3.10 Management**

*A Green Flag site must have a management plan. It must set out the balance between all the priorities, policies and partners that apply to a particular green space. It should establish a time scale for putting the objectives into practice. It must be actively implemented and regularly reviewed.*

#### **3.10.1 Management Plan**

This updated and revised management plan replaces the first plan, and subsequent updates, which covered the period from 2004-2009. The following Action Plan builds on the work undertaken over the past 12 months, and incorporates the recommendations made in this chapter.

The Parks and Open Spaces Officer (POSO) will co-ordinate the implementation of the action programme, and will work in partnership with BTC via the Canal Fields Liaison Group (see section 2.7). This group meets bimonthly, and members include the POSO, BTC Councillors, a local DBC ward Councillor, and a member of CARP. The group will be responsive to any emerging issues, and consult stakeholders as required on an ongoing basis. New actions identified will be added to the action plan accordingly and included in the annual update of the management plan (see section 5).

#### **3.10.2 Recommendations:**

- R51 The POSO to co-ordinate the implementation of the action programme, working in partnership with BTC via the recently established Canal Fields Liaison Group, meeting on a bimonthly basis throughout the plan period.

## 4.0 Action Plan



**View of the canal towpath from the Park Street footbridge. The picture shows the adjacent hedgerow (before restoration work) and the River Bulbourne in the background.**

#### 4.0 Action Plan (How will we get there?)

The Assessment and Analysis Chapter identifies 51 recommendations (see R1-51 in Table 5 below) for managing and developing Canal Fields, and they form the objectives within the five-year Action Plan. The review records progress made during ‘Year 1’, outlining ongoing and completed work and makes further recommendations for the future. The Action Plan has been revised accordingly and covers years 2-5 (see section 4.2 below).

**Table 5 Revised Action Plan for Year 2-5 (January 2010 until January 2014).**

Following the implementation of ‘Year 1’ the following Action Plan has been revised, taking account of the review in Appendix 14.

<b>Aim 1: To involve the local community and stakeholders in the management, development and improvement of the site.</b>						
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>	<b>Date Completed/Progress</b>
1. Continue to enter the site for the annual Green Flag Award.	R27	AOMEM , POSO	BTC, CFLG	Year 2-5	Revenue (currently £175 per year)	2010 2011

2. Regularly liaise with Berkhamsted Youth Town Council and Swan Skaters throughout 2010 with regards to the proposed extension to the Skate Park facility.	B6 (R40)	POSO	BTC, CFLG, BYTC Swan Skaters	Year 2	Staff time.	No progress due to short term gap in staffing.
3. Include articles about Canal Fields in two editions of the Berkhamsted Town Council Newsletter each year.	R42	POSO	BTC, CFLG	Year 2-5	Staff time	No progress due to short term gap in staffing
4. Hold a re-launch event in April/May 2010 for the Friends of Canal Fields to increase membership.	B7 (R44)	POSO	CMS, BTC, CFLG	Year 2	Staff Time Revenue	No progress due to short term gap in staffing.
5. Work with volunteer organisations and Friends of Canal Fields to organise practical tasks on site at least twice a year.	R45	POSO	BTC, CFLG, Vol. Groups, Friends	Year 2-5	Staff Time	No progress due to short term gap in staffing

6. Include articles about Canal Fields in 2 editions of Dacorum Digest each year.	R47	POSO	BTC, CFLG	Year 2-5	Staff Time	No progress due to short term gap in staffing
7. Develop information about Canal Fields on the DBC website by the end of year 2.	R48	AOMEM POSO	BTC, CFLG	Year 2	Staff Time	No progress due to short term gap in staffing
8. Undertake further customer research to evaluate the effectiveness of the management plan in year three and five of the plan period.	R50	AOMEM POSO	BTC, CFLG	Year 3 and 5	Staff Time and Revenue	
9. The POSO to co-ordinate the implementation of the action programme, working in partnership with BTC via the Canal Fields Liaison Group, meeting on a bimonthly basis throughout the plan period.	R51	POSO	BTC, CFLG	Bimonthly meetings, year 2-5	Staff Time	Progress on some items details within the action plan
<b>Aim 2: To improve biological diversity and ecological interest within the site.</b>						

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>	<b>Date Completed/Progress</b>
10. Install the Bulbourne Restoration Project interpretation boards along the riverbank by the summer 2010.	R9 (R33)	POSM POSO	CCSP, BCP, BTC, CFLG	Year 2	External Funding	Installation - March 2011
11. Carry out a Sustainability Assessment of Canal Fields by the end of 2011.	R28	POSO	BTC, CFLG	Year 3	Staff Time	
12. Compile a list of suppliers of peat free plant stock by the end of 2011.	R29	POSO	CMS, Volunteer s, BTC, CFLG	Year 3	Staff Time	
13. Develop policy and procedures with regards to the use and reduction in use of pesticides in parks and open spaces by the end of 2010.	R30	POSO	CSG, BC, BTC, CFLG, ESO	Year 2	Staff Time  Revenue	DBC revised and updated Pesticide Policy completed in 2010

14. Re-coppice/pollard trees on the riverbank in accordance with the revised rotation identified in the management plan – the next phase is due in autumn/winter 2010/11.	R36	POSO TO	CMS, CCSP, BTC, CFLG	Year 2 and 4	Staff Time	Re-pollard riverside willows, March 2011	3
15. Conduct an ecology survey (wild flora and fauna- to include the river, footbridge banks, rough grass buffer strips and hedgerow) in 'Year 5'.	R38	POSO	CMS, BTC, CFLG	Year 5	Revenue		
16. As suggested in the ecology survey undertaken in July 2009, invite the Herts and Middlesex Bat Group to conduct a bat Survey on site during 2010 and again in 2014.	B5 (R38)	POSO	Herts and Midd. Bat Group	Year 2 and 5	Staff Time Revenue	No progress due to short term gap in staffing	
<b>Aim 3: To ensure that all site infrastructure, facilities and equipment under the control of Landscape and Recreation is fit for purpose.</b>							

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>	<b>Date Completed/Progress</b>
17. Consider the DDA improvements recommended (DDA report 2008) for the Millennium Garden, main recreation field, Car Park, Play Area and the area adjacent to the bowling green by the end of 2011, and implement as many as possible to help improve access on site.	B1 (R1)	POSO	BTC, CFLG	Year 3	Staff Time Revenue	
18. Consider the cost and feasibility of implementing the DDA recommendations as they relate to the wooden footbridge over the river near Park Street and the St. John's Well Lane footbridge in year 4 (2012).	B2 (R1)	POSO	BTC, CFLG	Year 4	Staff Time Potential future capital project	Towpath to both bridges – construct paths to improve access. Replace handrail, at Park street bridge, install new handrail section to St John's Well Lane bridge – March 2011

19. Liaise as required with Hertfordshire Highways with regards to the planned work to upgrade the lighting on the Park Street footbridge and within the railway subway by the Summer 2010.	B3 (R5)	POSO	BTC, CFLG, Herts Highways	Year 2	Staff Time	No progress due to short term gap in staffing
20. Finalise the design of the draft Canal Fields interpretation board and Millennium Garden interpretation boards and install by the Summer 2010.	R7 (R46)	POSM, POSO	BTC, CFLG	Year 2	Revenue	Boards installed March 2011
21. Make further identified changes to site signage, and consider signage recommended in the 2008 DDA report by the end of 2011.	B4 (R8)	POSO	BTC, CFLG	Year 3	Staff Time	
22. Commission an annual inspection and risk assessment of the play area skate park and fitness equipment, and annually thereafter.	R10	POSM	BTC, CFLG	Year 2-5	Staff Time Revenue	Changes to Skate Park perimeter fence to increase safety – March 2011

23. Undertake a site condition survey of the site's infrastructure every April	R11	POSO, Building Services	BTC, CFLG	Year 2-5	Staff Time	.
24. For the Waitrose footbridge, consider the findings of the DDA report (2008) and the Structural Report (2009), and agree a plan of action for carrying out essential repairs in early 2010.	R25	POSO	BTC, CFLG	Year 2	Staff Time (Future Capital Project Est. 25,000)	Essential repairs scheduled for May 2011
<b>Aim 4: To ensure the site is well maintained and clean.</b>						
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>	<b>Date Completed/Progress</b>
25. Develop a formal site specification for grounds maintenance operations at Canal Fields to be completed by the end of 2010.		POS AOM (CSG)	BTC, CFLG	Year 2	Staff Time	No progress due to short term gap in staffing

26. Inspect all trees on site within the 18 month to 2 year cycle for safety and condition and record results on the tree management system.		TSO	BTC, CFLG	Year 3 and 5	Staff Time	All trees inspected January 2011.  Tree stumps removed – April 2011
--	--	-----	-----------	--------------	------------	---

### **Officers**

AOMEM	Simon Coutlas	Asst. Operations Manager, Environment Maintenance
POSO	Robert Cassidy	Parks and Open Spaces Officer
GSSO	Claire Covington	Green Spaces Strategy Officer
BPA	Graham Cox	Berkhamsted Project Officer
TSO	Bill Evans	Tree Survey Officer
TO	Bill Evans	Tree Officer
ESO	Lizzy Staincliffe	Environment and Sustainability Officer

### **Partners/Stakeholders**

BTC	Berkhamsted Town Council
CFLG	Canal Fields Liaison Group
BYTC	Berkhamsted Youth Town Council
BCA	Berkhamsted Citizens Association
BCP	Berkhamsted Community Partnership
CMS	Countryside Management Service
CCSP	Chilterns Chalk Streams Project
BC	Bowls Club
BW	British Waterways

## 4.1 Financial Plan

The purpose of this Financial Plan is to set out the revenue and capital budgets required to deliver the Action Plan (see section 4.2), and for day to day management and maintenance. Dacorum have an ongoing Capital Programme for large cost items, and applications for funding are made annually. The Waitrose footbridge will require capital funds and an application will be submitted accordingly. It is anticipated that there will be increasing pressure on budgets over the next few years, so as part of the funding strategy for the site it will be necessary to maximise the use of external funding at every opportunity. Many of the site improvements at Canal Fields have been made with the help of external funding from partner organisations, and recently the BIG lottery, which paid for the fitness trail equipment.

**Table 6 Financial Plan**

Revenue Budget	Objective	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Expenditure		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
<b>Repairs and Maintenance</b>						
Waitrose Footbridge Maintenance and Repairs		2000	2500	2500	2500	2500
Fencing Repairs		3000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Bulbourne Restoration Project – Ongoing Coppicing and Pollarding work.	14	900	3000	0	3000	0
Tree Root Investigation for Infrastructure Improvement Project		400	0	0	0	0
Tree Survey Works (20 trees in year one)		1860	2000	2000	2000	2000
Stump Grinding		400	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous Maintenance and Repairs		1000	2000	2000	2000	2000

<b>Infrastructure Improvements</b>						
Removal of Sycamore Tree (infrastructure Improvement Project).		540	0	0	0	0
Repairs to Lighting - along the access road and Car Park		300	500	500	500	500
Bin Replacement		3600	0	0	0	0
Signage	20, 21	2300	2800	2000	200	200
Play Area Grass Reinstatement - matting		6300	0	0	0	0
<b>Plants and Materials</b>						
Purchase Hedge Whips		100	100	0	0	0
Shelters and Stakes		150	100	100	0	0
<b>Miscellaneous Costs</b>						
Play and Skate Equipment Annual Inspection Cost	22	92	92	92	92	92
Water – Berkhamsted Bowls Club Reimbursement		100	50	0	0	0
Flagpole - purchase and Installation		1012	0	0	0	0
Green Flag Award.		175	175	175	175	175
Wild Flora and Fauna Survey (Ecology Survey)	15	1500	0	0	0	1500
Friends re-launch event	4	0	500	0	0	0
Volunteer events	5	0	300	300	300	300
Bat Survey	16	0	300	0	0	300
DDA improvements	17		1000	3000	500	500
Assessment of the cost and feasibility of improving footbridges	18		0	0	1000	0
<b>Cost of Grounds Maintenance</b>		40,000	40,800	41,616	42,448	43,297
<b>Marketing is Corporately Funded.</b>	6, 7, and 8					
<b>Pesticide Policy to be funded by a separate budget</b>	13					
<b>Totals</b>		<b>65729</b>	<b>57217</b>	<b>55283</b>	<b>55715</b>	<b>54364</b>

<b>Income</b>						
<b>Miscellaneous Income</b>						
Chiltern Chalk Stream Contribution to Phase Four Tree Work (coppice and pollard of Poplar trees).	400	0	0	0	0	0
Bowls Club Water Charge	400	450	500	500	500	500
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£800</b>	<b>£450</b>	<b>£500</b>	<b>£500</b>	<b>£500</b>	<b>500</b>
<b>Capital Budget</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	
<b>Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	
<b>Infrastructure Improvement Project Costs:</b>						
Reinstatement of the Existing Footpath from the Car Park to Opposite the Football Club.	19500	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Construction of a New Footpath from Opposite the Football Club to Broadwater	16000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Construction of New Infill Sections to Footpath from the Car Park to the Skate Park Field	1000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Relocation of Existing Picnic Tables	£6300	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Reinstatement of Defective Areas of the Carriageway	£3500	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Renewal of French Drainage to Car Park	£7000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Installation of New Kerbstones on the Canal Side of the Car Park	£2250	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
New Line Marking to the Car Park	£7800	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Installation of Coloured Tarmac to the Pedestrian Route Through the Car Park	£3800	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0

New Footpath from the Playground to the Car Park and to Footpath Across the Main Recreation Field.		£3600	£0	£0	£0	£0
New Soakaway for the Path Adjacent to the Play Area.		£3000	£0	£0	£0	£0
New Soakaway to the front of 2 Tennis Cottages		£4000	£0	£0	£0	£0
Clean out Existing Soakaways		£1000	£0	£0	£0	£0
New Bollards to Car park		£4500	£0	£0	£0	£0
New Kerb to Path Leading to the Skate Park		£2200	£0	£0	£0	£0
Contingency Sum		£8000	£0	£0	£0	£0
<b>Project Total</b>		<b>£93450</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Miscellaneous Work</b>						
Purchase and Installation of Inclusive Swing		£8766	£0	£0	£0	£0
Est. Waitrose Footbridge Repairs * Capital funding application to be submitted for £25,000	24		£0*	£0	£0	£0
<b>Total Capital Expenditure</b>		<b>£102216</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Capital Grants Income</b>						
Capital for Infrastructure Improvements		£93450	£0	£0	£0	£0
Dacorum Play Strategy Funding		£8766	£0	£0	£0	£0
<b>Total</b>		<b>£102216</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>

## 5.0 Monitoring and Review



**The Millennium Garden, designed, installed and managed by Berkhamsted Town Council.**

## **5.0 Monitoring and Review (How will we know when we have arrived?)**

### **5.1 Monitoring and Review of the Action Plan and Financial Plan**

The five-year Action Plan will be monitored quarterly and progress reported to the Canal Fields Liaison Group. It will be reviewed and updated annually. The Financial Plan will also be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure there is sufficient financial resource to deliver the Action Plan. Success will be measured by feedback from regular contact with stakeholders, by further customer research planned, and by the retention of Green Flag status.

### **5.2 Review and Revision of the Management Plan**

The full management plan will be reviewed by the Parks and Open Spaces Team in consultation with stakeholder groups in 2013/14, and a new revised plan will be developed to cover the next five-year period from 2014.