**Vicar’s Wood management plan August 2024**

**Principles**

Preserve existing amenity value but continue to avoid too much human activity away from the main paths; provide more shelter for wildlife by mowing less often and less short, by modifying pruning practices and by applying nest boxes and rotten wood.

Encourage wildlife by gradually reducing the number of exotic trees and shrubs in favour of native plants, chosen to provide not just visual appeal but shelter and food for wildlife.

Use voluntary effort where appropriate to provide both physical help and expertise. Minimise the amount of ‘gardening’ required to save effort, encourage natural habitats and to minimise disturbance.

**Overall plan outline.**

Evolution not revolution, retain all the largest trees forming basic structure. Limited felling and maintenance to ensure there is sufficient light, rather than complete tree cover, to encourage varied habitat and more wildflowers. Retain central area of short grass and keep paths clear of encroaching vegetation, especially if it is thorny or stings.

**All areas**

Allow ivy to climb a few selected trees, prevent it climbing remainder; retain nettles and brambles except where noted. Cut path verges within 0.6 metre of path edge where necessary to prevent vegetation encroaching. Selective removal of nettles and brambles near paths. Leave timber to rot where possible; continue to cut back ash/sycamore regrowth and seedlings. Introduce and maintain more bird and bat boxes.

Council to maintain paths, verges, seats, fences, notices and fund some purchases of plants. Council funded contractor to undertake lopping and felling; volunteers to undertake other tasks, including clearing around new plantings and removing stump regrowth.

A further tree survey is recommended for May 2026.

All volunteer’s complete attendance and Health and Safety paperwork for each workday.

Protective gloves and eye protection to be worn as appropriate.

A detailed short-term plan will follow the advice from the tree survey.

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