

Agenda Item ES5 – Allotments Report

At the last Estates Committee meeting (14 April 2025), it was resolved that, for health and safety reasons, the old workshops used by the Allotment Association be closed. The council agreed to begin discussions with the Association about removing their stored contents.

Resolution:

Proposed by Cllr Thompson, seconded by Cllr Mackie –
That the building be closed and discussions held with the Allotment Association to arrange removal of their contents.

Carried: 3 in favour, 1 abstention.

Reasoning:

A report from Croner advised that the building's condition and poor housekeeping posed unacceptable risks. The building is without power or water. Croner recommended giving the Association four weeks to clear the premises.

Background:

The Allotment Association has occupied the building since 2007, when it was provided to replace the building on Ringden Allotments which was given as an "allotment improvement" following the partial sale of Kent Close allotments. Legal advice from NALC confirms this improvement does not create an ongoing obligation on the council.

PW & District Lions now use the old building on the allotments for storage.

Meeting Notes (with Cllr Thompson, Town Clerk Nichola Reay, Dale Neve, and Jonathan Mace):

- All agreed the building is no longer fit for use.
- DN and JM questioned the adequacy of the Croner report and raised concerns about structural issues and safety (e.g. children climbing on the building).
- They confirmed the building is no longer used as a shop.
- Legal advice was shared; JM suggested the Association might chose to seek independent legal counsel.
- DN and JM raised the possibility of returning to their original building on the Ringden site, currently used by the Lions.
- Temporary alternatives (e.g. a shipping container) were discussed but previously deemed unsuitable. JM suggested it could be reconsidered as a temporary measure.
- The potential for a joint renovation project with the Garden Therapy Group was explored.
- NR asked if the Association would consider leasing and managing the allotments themselves. DN and JM felt this was not viable.

Agreed Actions:

- Building to be fenced off, with supervised access only. Safety signage to be installed.

- PWTC to consider whether the Ringden building can be returned to the Association.
- A letter to be sent outlining the council's position and legal advice.
- DN to carry out an inventory of contents.
- NR to provide DN's details to the Garden Therapy Group for further discussion.

Garden Therapy Group Meeting Summary:

- Interested in establishing a therapy garden on the Ringden site.
- Ideally would like more than one plot due to the intensive use required.
- Discussed using the adjacent (former bonfire) space for storage or a structure (shed, cabin, or container – though costs may be prohibitive).
- Interested in access to the cricket pavilion for year-round indoor activity (e.g. seed sowing, crafts) with facilities.
- Also discussed possible after-hours access to the Community Centre kitchen.
- Insurance and liability cover were discussed.

Joint

Proposal:

A shared project between the Garden Therapy Group and the Allotment Association to renovate and co-use the old workshop building may be feasible, as neither requires the full space.

Next

Step:

A professional survey (estimated cost: £1,000–£1,200) is needed to determine if renovation is viable.

Decisions Required:

1. Should the council ask the PW & District Lions to vacate the former allotment building at Ringden, enabling its return to the Allotment Association?
2. Should the council explore a joint renovation project with the Therapy Garden Group and Allotment Association?
3. Should the council commission a building survey (subject to Full Council approval due to lack of budget)?

Nichola Reay
Clerk to the Council
3rd June 2025

AGENDA ITEM ES8 GREEN LANE PLAYING FIELDS

Background

Following the Forward Plan meetings held on 23 November 2024 and 15 February 2025, involving council members and officers, the Clerk and Estates Manager were tasked with consulting the two local football clubs and the rugby club that currently use Town Council-managed pitches. The primary objective was to explore options for upgrading and improving sports facilities in the long term.

Due to frequent flooding at Elm Tree Playing Fields, which often makes the pitches unusable during wet weather, alternative site usage was considered. One proposed solution was for PWFC (Paddock Wood Football Club) to relocate from Elm Tree to Green Lane, while the Rugby Club would move from Putlands to Elm Tree. The Insulators would remain at Memorial Field, and Putlands would be reserved for training and overflow matches.

Initial discussions were held with PWFC. After visiting the Green Lane site, the Club Chairman expressed concerns about the site's size and did not wish to explore the proposal further. PWFC will therefore remain at Elm Tree Playing Fields.

Subsequently, Paddock Wood & East Peckham Rugby Club was approached and expressed interest in relocating to Green Lane Playing Fields as their new home ground.

The Insulators' only requirement is access to a site for occasional additional matches, which can be accommodated at Putlands.

Proposal

It is proposed that **Paddock Wood & East Peckham Rugby Club relocates to Green Lane Playing Fields from September 2025.**

Currently, **£530,054 (plus indexation)** of Section 106 (S106) funding is held by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) for improvements to the Green Lane site.

Short-Term Works (Before September 2025)

- Relocate rugby posts from Putlands to Green Lane.
- Move existing football posts from Green Lane to the current rugby pitch at Putlands.
- Re-line pitches to suit new usage.

Estimated cost: £1,000.

These actions will allow the Rugby Club to begin the new season at Green Lane.

Long-Term Development (2–3 Year Timeline)

- Undertake drainage improvements to maintain pitch usability.
- Level the northern section of the site to create a second pitch, allowing for club growth.
- Refurbish the existing pavilion.
- Extend the car park to support increased use.

Initial discussions with contractors have taken place regarding the levelling and drainage work. However, **technical support from a specialist company is required** to develop specifications and invite tenders.

A proposal for this technical consultancy has been received and is available for discussion.

Confidential Matters

Under **Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960**, the following item is exempt from press and public attendance due to legal privilege and commercial confidentiality:

To discuss the tender as received.

Coppicing

A Traditional Woodland Management Technique

Coppicing is a time-honoured method of woodland management used to revitalise areas that have become overgrown or where ground-level vegetation is sparse. By selectively cutting trees down to their stumps, light is allowed to reach the woodland floor, encouraging the growth of a wider variety of plants and significantly increasing biodiversity.

This process not only supports a healthier woodland ecosystem but also provides a renewable supply of wood for fencing and other on-site uses. Remarkably, the trees respond by sending out multiple new shoots from the cut stumps, effectively regenerating themselves. In fact, trees that are coppiced regularly can live for many hundreds of years—much longer than those left to grow unchecked.

European Hornet



Coppice stool
7 years later



Coppice stool
after 3 years



Ash

Coppice stool in
its first summer



Hazel Dormouse



Fallow Deer

Historically, coppicing was carried out every 5 to 7 years. Today, due to changes in land use and conservation priorities, the cycle has been extended. At Foul Hurst Wood, a 23-year coppicing cycle is in place. The first cycle began in 2006 and is ongoing.

This carefully planned approach helps maintain a rich, diverse environment that benefits both wildlife and the local community for generations to come.



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Barsleys
WAITROSE
& PARTNERS

Sponsors:

- No fires
- No barbecues
- No camping
- No cycling
- No scooters
- No dogs

Foul Hurst Wood is owned by Paddock Wood Town Council and managed by them with a group of volunteers.



Welcome to

Foal Hurst Wood

Owned by Paddock Wood Town Council and managed by volunteers

Paddock Wood's Millennium Legacy

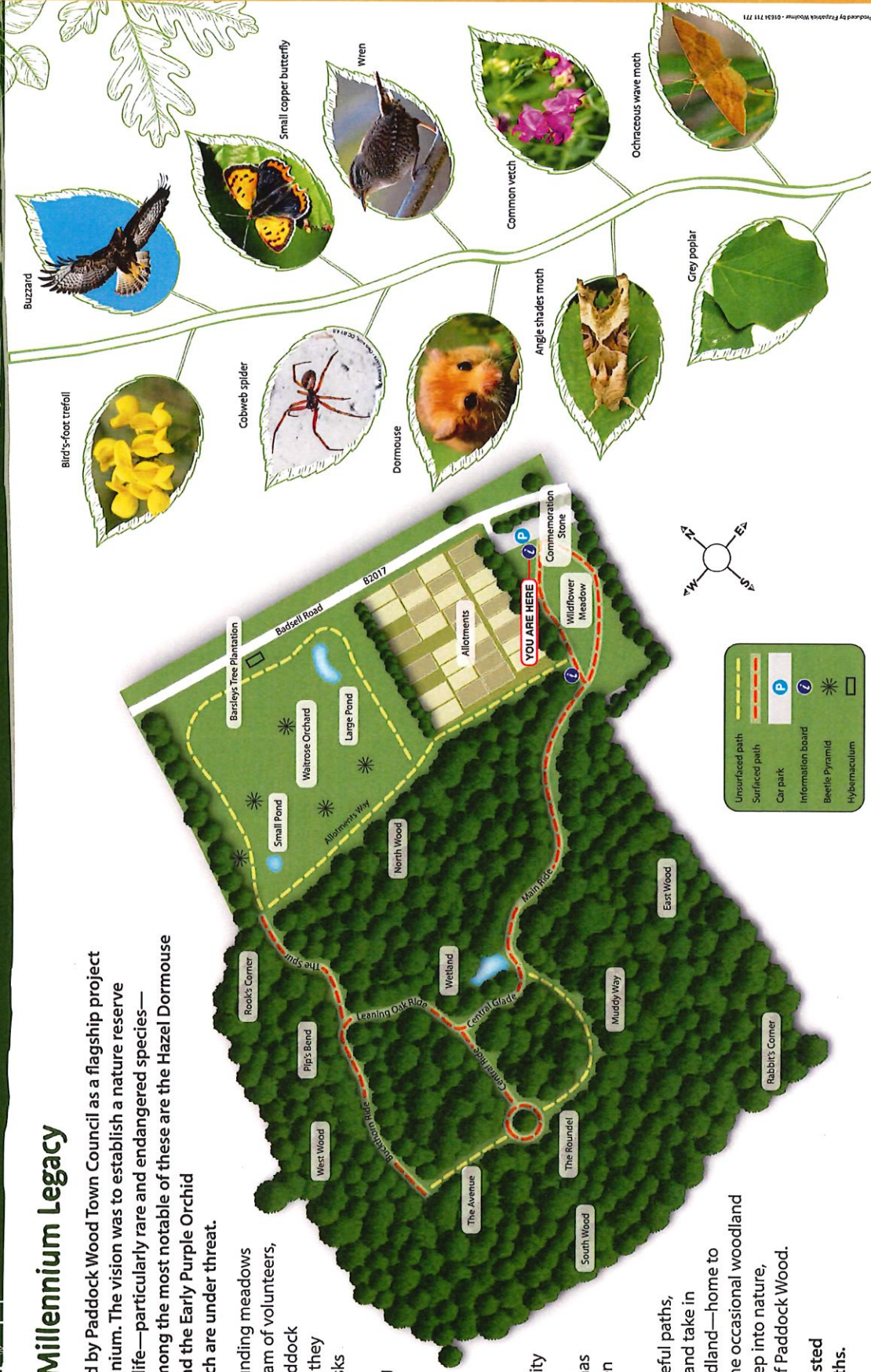
Foal Hurst Wood was acquired by Paddock Wood Town Council as a flagship project to mark the turn of the millennium. The vision was to establish a nature reserve dedicated to conserving wildlife—particularly rare and endangered species—across its 30-acre expanse. Among the most notable of these are the Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) and the Early Purple Orchid (*Orchis mascula*), both of which are under threat.

Today, the wood and its surrounding meadows are cared for by a dedicated team of volunteers, with ongoing support from Paddock Wood Town Council. Together, they carry out vital conservation tasks such as coppicing, managing undergrowth, and maintaining ditches, hedgerows, and pathways. This collaborative effort has created a thriving habitat now home to over 2,500 species.

Thanks to 25 years of community commitment and stewardship (as of 2024), Foal Hurst Wood has become a cherished local haven for both people and wildlife.

We invite you to enjoy its peaceful paths, rest on the benches provided, and take in the beauty of this ancient woodland—home to majestic trees, birdsong, and the occasional woodland creature crossing your path. Step into nature, just moments from the heart of Paddock Wood.

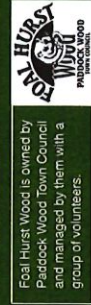
Visitors are respectfully requested to keep to the marked footpaths.



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