

## Document Control

Adopted date: March 2026

Next review date: March 2027

# Community Wood Working Parties - Risk Assessment

**Location:** Community Wood

**Organisation:** Parish Council

**Activity:** Volunteer woodland working parties

**Assessment carried out by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Review date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## 1. Description of Activity

Volunteer working parties may carry out light woodland management tasks such as:

- Path clearance
- Bramble and vegetation cutting
- Litter picking
- Tree planting
- Habitat management (e.g., dead hedge building)
- Minor path maintenance

Only low-risk activities suitable for volunteers should be undertaken. Work requiring specialist skills (e.g., chainsaw use or major tree works) must be carried out by qualified contractors.

## 2. People at Risk

- Volunteers
- Parish councillors supervising activities
- Members of the public using the woodland
- Children accompanying volunteers

## 3. General Safety Arrangements

Before each working party:

- A working party leader is appointed.
- A tool safety briefing is given.
- Volunteers sign in and provide emergency contact details.
- First aid kit is available.
- Mobile phone available for emergencies.

- Weather conditions are checked.

## 4. Risk Assessment

### **Hazard: Use of hand tools (loppers, saws, spades)**

Who may be harmed: Volunteers

Risk: Cuts, minor injuries

Control measures: Only suitable tools used; safety briefing provided; gloves worn; safe tool spacing between volunteers

### **Hazard: Slips, trips and falls**

Who may be harmed: Volunteers, public

Risk: Minor injuries

Control measures: Awareness of uneven ground; sturdy footwear recommended; avoid hazardous areas

### **Hazard: Manual handling (logs, tools, materials)**

Who may be harmed: Volunteers

Risk: Strains or sprains

Control measures: Volunteers advised to lift safely; heavy loads shared; avoid lifting large logs

### **Hazard: Brambles and vegetation**

Who may be harmed: Volunteers

Risk: Scratches, eye injuries

Control measures: Gloves and long sleeves recommended; eye protection where appropriate

### **Hazard: Sharp objects / litter**

Who may be harmed: Volunteers

Risk: Cuts

Control measures: Litter pickers used; gloves worn; sharps not handled directly

### **Hazard: Tree branches / falling debris**

Who may be harmed: Volunteers

Risk: Head injuries

Control measures: Work areas assessed; avoid working in high winds; helmets if working beneath trees

### **Hazard: Contact with public during work**

Who may be harmed: Public, volunteers

Risk: Minor accidents

Control measures: Clear working area; tools kept under control; awareness of public access

### **Hazard: Weather conditions**

Who may be harmed: Volunteers

Risk: Cold, heat, dehydration

Control measures: Volunteers advised to dress appropriately; regular breaks

### **Hazard: Ticks / insects**

Who may be harmed: Volunteers

Risk: Minor illness or bites

Control measures: Awareness of ticks; long trousers recommended

**Hazard: Children present**

Who may be harmed: Children

Risk: Injury

Control measures: Children supervised by parents; not permitted to use tools unless supervised

## 5. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Recommended PPE for volunteers:

- Sturdy footwear or boots
- Gloves
- Long sleeves / trousers
- Eye protection (when cutting vegetation)
- High visibility vest if working near paths

## 6. Tools and Equipment

Only appropriate hand tools should be used, such as:

- Loppers
- Bow saws
- Secateurs
- Spades
- Litter pickers

Rules:

- Tools must be checked before use.
- Tools must be carried safely (blade down).
- Tools must not be left on paths.

Chainsaws or powered equipment must only be used by trained personnel.

## 7. First Aid and Emergencies

The working party leader will ensure:

- A first aid kit is available.
- At least one volunteer has basic first aid knowledge if possible.
- Emergency access routes are known.

In case of serious injury:

1. Call 999
2. Provide woodland location details
3. Direct emergency services to the site

## **8. Environmental Considerations**

Working parties should:

- Protect wildlife habitats
- Avoid disturbing nesting birds (March–August where possible)
- Retain deadwood where safe to support biodiversity

## **9. Insurance**

The Parish Council must ensure volunteers are covered under the council's Public Liability Insurance and Volunteer Insurance.

## **10. Briefing to Volunteers**

At the start of each session the leader should cover:

- Planned tasks
- Tool safety
- Site hazards
- Emergency arrangements
- Public access awareness

## **11. Review**

This risk assessment should be reviewed:

- Annually
- After any accident or near miss
- If activities change