

## **Document Control**

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# **Guide to Users and Risk Assessment**

## **Community Wood – Woodton Parish Council**

### **1. Purpose of the Guide**

This guide outlines how Woodton Parish Council manages the safe use of the Community Wood. It explains:

- Who may use the woodland
- Expected behaviour from visitors
- Potential risks associated with woodland environments
- How risks are assessed and managed
- Responsibilities of users and the Parish Council

The aim is to maintain a natural woodland environment while ensuring reasonable safety for visitors.

## **2. Permitted Users of the Community Wood**

The Community Wood is intended for passive recreational use by:

- Local residents
- Walkers
- Families
- Dog walkers
- Nature observers
- Educational groups (with permission)

### **Organised Groups**

Schools, community organisations, or clubs wishing to use the wood for organised activities should:

- Notify the Parish Council in advance
- Carry out their own risk assessment
- Ensure appropriate supervision

### **Prohibited Activities**

Unless authorised by the Parish Council:

- No fires
- Barbecues only permitted at the three purpose-made barbecue stations
- No camping
- No motorised vehicles
- No tree cutting or removal

- No organised events without permission
- No littering or fly-tipping

### **3. Woodland Environment – Natural Hazards**

Woodlands are natural environments and contain hazards that cannot be completely removed.

Users should be aware of:

- Uneven ground
- Tree roots and fallen branches
- Muddy or slippery paths
- Low or falling branches
- Insects and wildlife
- Weather conditions

Visitors enter at their own risk and should take reasonable care.

### **4. Responsibilities of Woodton Parish Council**

The Parish Council will take reasonable steps to ensure the woodland is safe.

This includes:

#### **Regular Inspections**

- Annual tree safety inspection by a qualified arborist
- Visual safety inspections by Parish Council representatives
- Checks after major storms

#### **Maintenance**

- Removal of dangerous trees or branches
- Maintenance of paths where appropriate
- Signage installation where hazards exist

#### **Risk Monitoring**

The council will maintain a risk assessment document and review it regularly.

### **5. Responsibilities of Visitors**

Visitors must:

- Take care on uneven ground

- Supervise children
- Keep dogs under control
- Respect wildlife and plants
- Take litter home
- Follow any signage or guidance

## 6. Risk Assessment Principles

The Parish Council follows a balanced risk management approach consistent with guidance from:

- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- National Tree Safety Group
- Local Government guidance

The goal is to:

Manage significant risks without removing the natural character of the woodland.

## 7. Risk Assessment

### 1. Hazard: Falling branches

Risk: Injury to visitors

Who may be harmed: All visitors

Control measures: Annual tree survey and removal of dangerous limbs

Risk level: Low

### 2. Hazard: Uneven ground

Risk: Trips and falls

Who may be harmed: All visitors

Control measures: Natural paths – visitors advised to take care

Risk level: Low

### 3. Hazard: Slippery conditions

Risk: Slips during wet weather

Who may be harmed: All visitors

Control measures: Visitors advised to take care

Risk level: Low

### 4. Hazard: Hidden roots

Risk: Trips

Who may be harmed: All visitors

Control measures: Natural woodland – visitors advised to take care

Risk level: Low

### 5. Hazard: Dead trees

Risk: Falling timber

Who may be harmed: All visitors

Control measures: Tree inspections and selective removal

Risk level: Medium

**6. Hazard: Ticks/insects**

Risk: Minor illness or bites

Who may be harmed: Visitors

Control measures:

Risk level: Low

## **8. Emergency Procedures**

In case of an emergency:

1. Call 999 if required
2. Provide location details (Community Wood, Hempnall Road, Woodton, Bungay, NR35 2NG)
3. Inform the Parish Council where possible

Emergency access routes should be known to council representatives.

## **9. Review and Updates**

This guide and risk assessment should be reviewed:

- Annually
- After any significant incident
- After major storms or tree damage
- When new facilities are added.