

## **The Kilmington Common Management Plan**

The following guidelines have been discussed and proposed by the EDDC AONB team to protect and reintroduce the Lowland Heathland area within Kilmington Common, whilst ensuring the area can also be enjoyed by residents. These have been refined and agreed in a meeting, between Kilmington Parish Council and the lead work party volunteers, on site on 19/07/23. Lowland heathland requires some kind of human intervention if it is to persist. Over the last few decades, this intervention has largely been instigated by conservationists in an attempt to save the meagre 20% of lowland heathland that survived the last two centuries.

### **Tree Management Policy**

The Parish Tree Management Policy shall be applied across the entire common area.

### **Perimeter Edges**

- Along the edge of Shute Road a border of around 5m wide, from the road edge to the footpath, should be left long. This may help to discourage vehicle parking on the verge which is eroding the common edge. If a cut is made to tidy, it should be between 5 -10cms high. Arisings should be removed, taking them to a suitable, sustainable composting site. This will reduce the nutrient level, encourage more diversity and reduce dominance of tough grasses and thatch.
- Along Roman Road, trim as necessary the hedge line to prevent brambles etc. encroaching into the road.
- Maintain some gorse and bramble areas on boundaries but keep under control pulling new plants to prevent spreading and allow heather to grow.

### **Grass Triangular Point 'A' – shown in purple**

- Regularly cut the grass triangular point 'A' and area around the public bench at the junction of Roman Road and Shute Road.
- Consider further ways to protect the verges and perhaps introduce a flower display and /or a display information board.

### **Eastern Wooded Area 'B' – shown in blue**

- In the area towards Roman Road, one cut a year in the Autumn between 5-10cm high will probably be needed, remove arisings, taking them to a suitable, sustainable composting site. The rest is shaded out by the trees and needs only occasional irregular cutting, but not when spring flowers are present, to maintain it.
- Random tall gorse and bramble should be cut as necessary to tidy and control the area.

### **Central Grass Area 'C' - shown in yellow**

- Along the edge of Shute Road, a border of around 5m wide from the road edge to the footpath, should be left long. This may help to discourage vehicle parking on the verge which is eroding the common edge. If a cut is made to tidy, it should be between 5 -10cms high. Arisings should be removed, taking them to a suitable, sustainable composting site. This will reduce the nutrient level, encourage more diversity and reduce dominance of tough grasses and thatch.
- Cut only the existing footpaths (see plan) regularly to provide good pedestrian access across the common and to the public benches, remove arisings. Keep the immediate areas around the benches clear of brambles and stinging nettles.
- The remainder of the central grass area 'C' may need little cutting if the weather has limited the growth. Cut only from late summer onwards, ideally after everything has flowered and seeded. Cut this area between 5-10cm high and remove arisings, taking them to a suitable, sustainable composting site. This will reduce the nutrient level, encourage more diversity and reduce dominance of tough grasses and thatch.
- Remove 'ground' bramble and small saplings from the open grass area 'C', to maintain open heathland.
- Trees should not be planted within the open grassland area.
- Leave the grass area 'C' for two years to see what dormant plants emerge. Then only consider possible reseeding of lowland heath plants recorded here in the past. Seek further guidance from EDDC /AONB and botanist who is currently surveying the site as representative of the volunteer group.

### **Western End Tree Covered Area 'D' – shown in red**

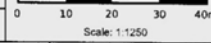
- Scrape excess topsoil off the Roman Road entry track and explore how to keep the track surface mud free for pedestrian use.
- Leave approximately half of the tree covered area 'D' towards Roman Road / stream uncut. This area was previously used to bury village rubbish which remains under the surface and is best left alone. Leaving the area undisturbed has already encouraged bird nesting and wildlife.
- Control and eradicate the Japanese Knotweed in this area.
- Cut back the remaining bramble area towards Shute Road to manage and control its growth. Remove cuttings taking them to a suitable, sustainable composting site. This should encourage the existing spring flowers to bloom again. Monitor progress.
- Temporary storage of arisings and cuttings before collection for removal from the common, should be positioned away from the area of Japanese Knotweed.

August 2023

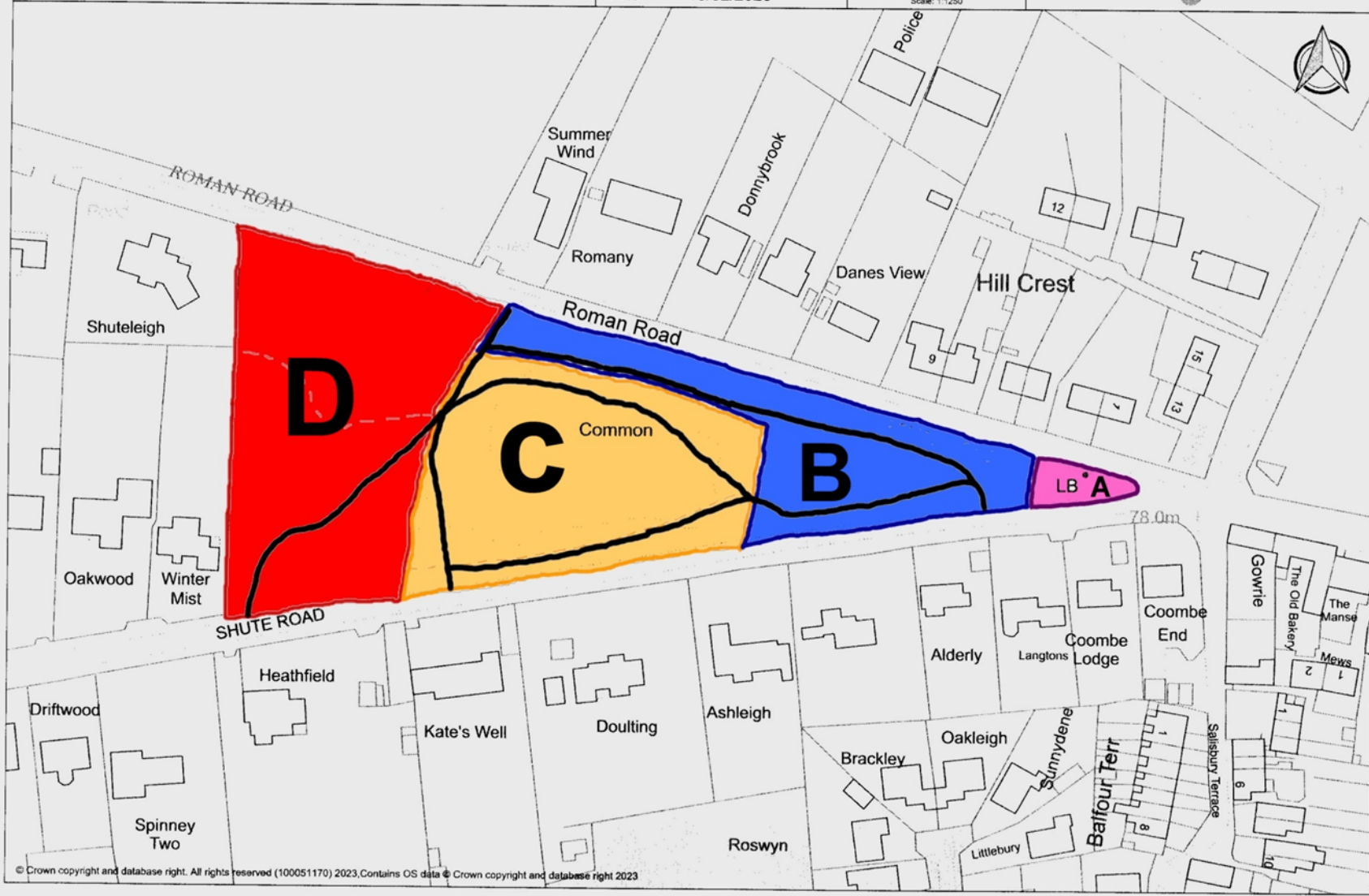
Kilmington

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