

**Bridport Town Council
Riverside Gardens Management Plan
2020-2025**



**This version DRAFT FOR COUNCILLORS
February 2020**

Content

	Page
1. Background	3
2. Management Plan Consultation	5
3. Vision for Riverside Gardens	6
• Plan Objectives	7
4. Management Plan	8
• By Habitat Type	8
• By Management Block	9
5. Annual Action Plans	12

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1. Background

Riverside Gardens is a 1.4 Ha green space running either side of the river Asker. The gardens provide both pedestrian and cycling access from East Street through to Sea Road North.

The River Asker was re aligned in the 1980s creating a reconfigured open space. Financial support was provided at the time by Bridport Rotary Club which helped establish a new layout for the Riverside Gardens and benches.

Recent investment in cycle routes has seen the introduction of a second access path through the Gardens linking East Street with Sea Road North and onto the [Sustrans Cycle Route 267 and 2](#).

Following the declaration of a Climate Emergency all management plans for Bridport Town Council green spaces are being reviewed. The reviews consider current uses and look to improve the areas for wildlife, carbon storage and community use.

It is 20-30 years since the overall design and management of Riverside Gardens was considered by Councillors. This new management plan process, including community consultation, looks to define aims, objectives and actions for the next 10 years.



The river Asker is part of the West Dorset Catchment and is subject to an Environment Agency Flood Defence Scheme. Around 420 properties are within the 1% annual probability flood extent (ignoring the influence of defences). In the future, this number is expected to increase to 590. In general the degree of flood hazard is low, with a small number of properties at risk from a moderate or significant hazard due to deep or fast flowing floodwater. In more extreme flooding up to 700 properties are at risk.

The ongoing operation of the Flood Defence scheme will impact on the ambitions and delivery of this management plan. It is essential that the Environment Agency are fully engaged in the consultation and delivery of this plan.

Brief history of the site:

Dorset County Council transferred site to Bridport Town Council

1980 river re aligned and current Gardens laid out

1997 Heritage interpretation installed



Image credit: S.Herring 2020

2. Management Plan Consultations

It is important that the management plan for Riverside Gardens ensures that the interests of wildlife and the many users are balanced and mitigations are put in place to address community concerns.

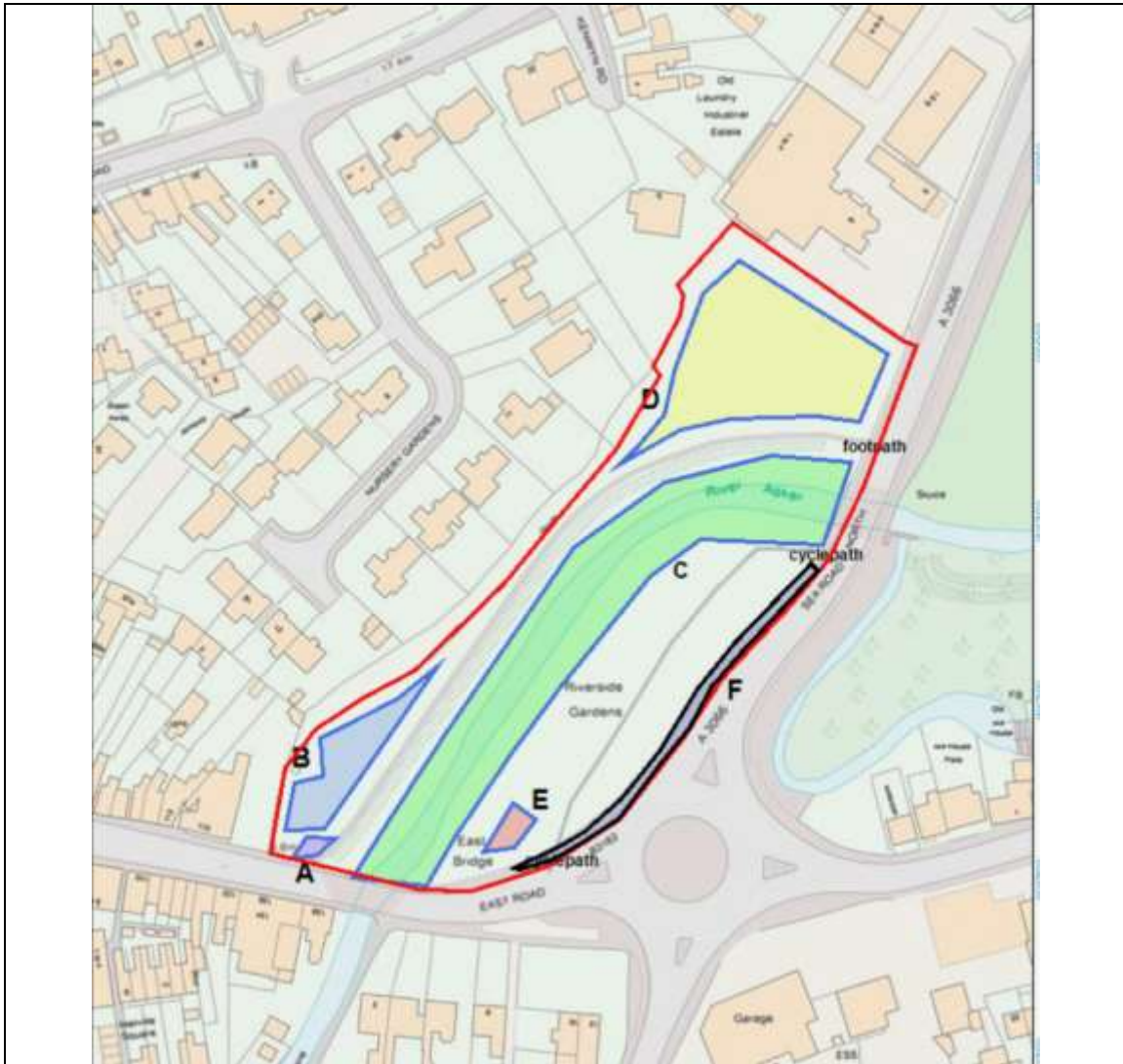
During November/December 2019 a consultation exercise took place to gather the views of users and residents about the management of Riverside Gardens. This was followed by a formal public consultation on a draft management plan that ran from January to February 14th 2020.

This revised management plan was presented to Bridport Town Council for adoption in March 2020.

Bridport Town Council with input from the local residents and users will review the delivery of management plan actions on an ongoing basis with a view to undertaking a formal review of the management plan aims and objectives in 2025.

3. Vision for Riverside Gardens

A well-used green open space with enhanced tree planting providing a range of community uses.



Key:

- Area A – Information/ Interpretation
- Area B – Wildflower Planting and Remembrance planting
- Area C – Riverside/ Flood Area
- Area D- Woodland Planting with Natural Play and Fitness Equipment
- Area E – Community Tree Nursery
- Area F – Roadside Boundary Planting

3.1 Objectives of the Riverside Gardens Management Plan:

Maintain and enhance the open spaces for the community to enjoy.

Safeguard walking and cycling access along the river corridor.

Undertake tree and wildflower planting to provide wildlife interest and structure.

Enhance community uses of the site; interpretation boards and a community tree nursery.

Provide natural play and fitness opportunities as well as additional seating to encourage people to enjoy and get to know the area.

4. Management Plan -2020 -2025

<p>4.1 Overall Plan</p> <p>Accessible, green open space with enhanced tree and wildflower planting and enhanced community use.</p> <p>Management plan objectives in priority order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access for all • Extended areas for tree planting & wildflowers • Greater community use of the Gardens • Provide natural play and fitness opportunities 	
<p>4.2 By Habitat Type:</p>	
<p>Access/ Paths/ Boundaries</p>	<p>Maintain and promote open access for all.</p> <p>Re surface and widen pedestrian path through the Gardens.</p> <p>Maintain cycle path and promote as Link route to Sustrans route 267/2.</p> <p>Maintain 1.5m cut margins to all access routes through regular mowing.</p> <p>Repair northern boundary with the 'Old Laundry' site and maintain an access strip to all boundaries.</p>
<p>River banks</p>	<p>Maintain Riverside 8m margins as clear green space as part of Environment Agency flood management scheme</p> <p>Plant replacement trees (Alders/Willows) along riverbank.</p>
<p>Trees/ Tree planting</p>	<p>Manage safety issues through a 5 yearly insurance arboricultural survey. Deal with dangers, leaving dead wood either standing or on site.</p> <p>Plant native standards alongside the river to replace trees removed due to health issues.</p>

	<p>Plant a new native broadleaved woodland block in Area D and regularly maintain for 10 years. Thin new woodland planting after 5, 10 and 15 years re stocking with native broadleaves.</p> <p>Plant standard trees along Old Laundry site boundary</p> <p>Add remembrance/ commemorative trees as requested in Area B.</p>
Wildflower Area	<p>Plant native spring bulbs and native wildflower plugs in Area B. Cut grass following flowering in June and again in October each year.</p> <p>Maintain a 3m cut/scalloped margin from footpath.</p>
Other grassed areas –	<p>Maintain as amenity grassed areas, Regular mowing 1.5m - 3m from all path margins.</p> <p>All grassed areas to be cut in late October with cuttings to be removed.</p>

4.3 By Management Block:	
AREA A – INFORMATION & INTERPRETATION	<p>Rationalise, restore and where required provide new interpretation information to inform Riverside Garden users about the site and local features of historic interest.</p> <p>Renovate and re locate Bridport Rotary Club stone to better accompany other interpretation/ information.</p>
AREA B – REMEMBRANCE/COMMEMORATIVE and WILDFLOWER PLANTING	<p>Maintain remembrance/ commemorative tree plantings.</p> <p>Plant areas of native spring bulbs and wildflower plugs in natural sweeps.</p> <p>Maintain area by mowing and removing cuttings in late June and again in October each year</p> <p>Maintain a 3 metre ‘scaloped’ cut margin alongside path through this area and onto Area D.</p>
AREA C – RIVERSIDE FLOOD ALLEVIATION	<p>Maintain 8m riverside margin as clear green space as part of Environment Agency flood management scheme.</p> <p>Plant replacement trees (Alders/Willows) along riverbank.</p> <p>Provide natural seating (logs) to encourage peaceful contemplation of the river.</p>

<p>AREA D – WOODLAND PLANTING</p>	<p>Plant a native birch woodland to commemorate the School Strikes for climate action that began in 2019.</p> <p>Provide natural play equipment and a mini fitness trail where planting allows.</p> <p>Maintain tree planting and undertake thinning at 5, 10 and 15 year intervals to create glades and space for new planting.</p>
<p>AREA E – COMMUNITY TREE NURSERY</p>	<p>Work with Bridport Tree Group to plan and construct a small community tree nursery (10x5m) for the storing and care of trees for planting in the Bridport Area.</p> <p>Maintain area and monitor use ahead of management plan review in 2025.</p>
<p>AREA F- ROADSIDE BOUNDARY</p>	<p>Maintain planted area to serve as a visual and noise barrier between the Gardens and the A35 roundabout.</p> <p>Support the planting of native shrubs and wildflower bulbs to enhance and diversify the roadside boundary.</p> <p>Mow the roadside banking on a regular basis leaving time for bulbs to flower and set during March – June each year.</p>

5. Action Plan - Actions Year by Year:

5.1 2020/21 Actions

What	When	Who
<p>Trees</p> <p>Plant native broadleaved trees to create small wooded copses</p> <p>Maintain new tree planting, watering and removing growth competition</p>	<p>March 2020</p> <p>Summer</p>	<p>BTC with volunteers</p> <p>BTC with Volunteers</p>
<p>Wildflower Area</p> <p>Plant native spring bulbs and wildflower plugs in natural sweeps</p>	<p>Autumn</p>	<p>Volunteers</p>
<p>Grassed Areas</p> <p>Mow 1.5 -3m margins to all paths</p> <p>Cut wildflower and tree planting areas</p>	<p>Monthly Increase to 2 weekly May- Aug</p> <p>Oct</p>	<p>BTC</p> <p>BTC</p>
<p>Community Tree Nursery</p> <p>Define area and install rabbit proof fencing</p>	<p>Spring</p>	<p>Tree Group</p>
<p>Information/ interpretation</p> <p>Remove old interpretation boards, restore and re site</p>	<p>Summer/ Winter</p>	<p>BTC</p>
<p>River</p> <p>Repair or remove broken seating across Riverside Gardens</p>	<p>Winter</p>	<p>BTC</p>
<p>Boundaries</p> <p>Repair and make good the northern site boundary with Old Laundry Site</p>	<p>Spring</p>	<p>BTC</p>

5.2 2021/22 Actions

What	When	Who
Access Re surface and extend the pedestrian path	Autumn	BTC
Trees Plant native trees along river bank Maintain new tree planting, watering and removing growth competition Introduce natural play and fitness equipment	Winter Summer Winter/Summer	BTC with volunteers BTC with Volunteers BTC
Wildflower Area Plant native spring bulbs and wildflower plugs in natural sweeps	October	Volunteers
Grassed Areas Mow 1.5 -3m margins to all paths Cut wildflower and tree planting areas	Monthly Increase to 2 weekly May- Aug Oct	BTC BTC
River Repair or remove broken seating across Riverside Gardens Install new 'natural' seating in Area C	Spring Spring/ Summer	BTC BTC

5.3 2022/23 Actions

What	When	Who
Trees Maintain new tree planting, watering and removing growth competition	Summer	BTC with Volunteers
Grassed Areas Mow 1.5 -3m margins to all paths Cut wildflower and tree planting areas	Monthly Increase to 2 weekly May- Aug Oct	BTC BTC
River Repair or remove broken seating across Riverside Gardens Install new 'natural' seating in Area C	Summer Summer	BTC BTC
Roadside Boundaries Create opportunities to diversify planting with native shrubs	Winter	BTC

5.4 2023/24 Actions

What	When	Who
<p>Trees</p> <p>Maintain new tree planting, watering and removing growth competition</p>	<p>Summer</p>	<p>BTC with Volunteers</p>
<p>Grassed Areas</p> <p>Mow 1.5 -3m margins to all paths</p> <p>Cut wildflower and tree planting areas</p>	<p>Monthly Increase to 2 weekly May- Aug</p> <p>Oct</p>	<p>BTC</p> <p>BTC</p>

5.5 2024/25 Actions

What	When	Who
<p>Trees</p> <p>Maintain new tree planting, watering and removing growth competition</p>	<p>Summer</p>	<p>BTC with Volunteers</p>
<p>Grassed Areas</p> <p>Mow 1.5 -3m margins to all paths</p> <p>Cut wildflower and tree planting areas</p>	<p>Monthly Increase to 2 weekly May- Aug</p> <p>Oct</p>	<p>BTC</p> <p>BTC</p>