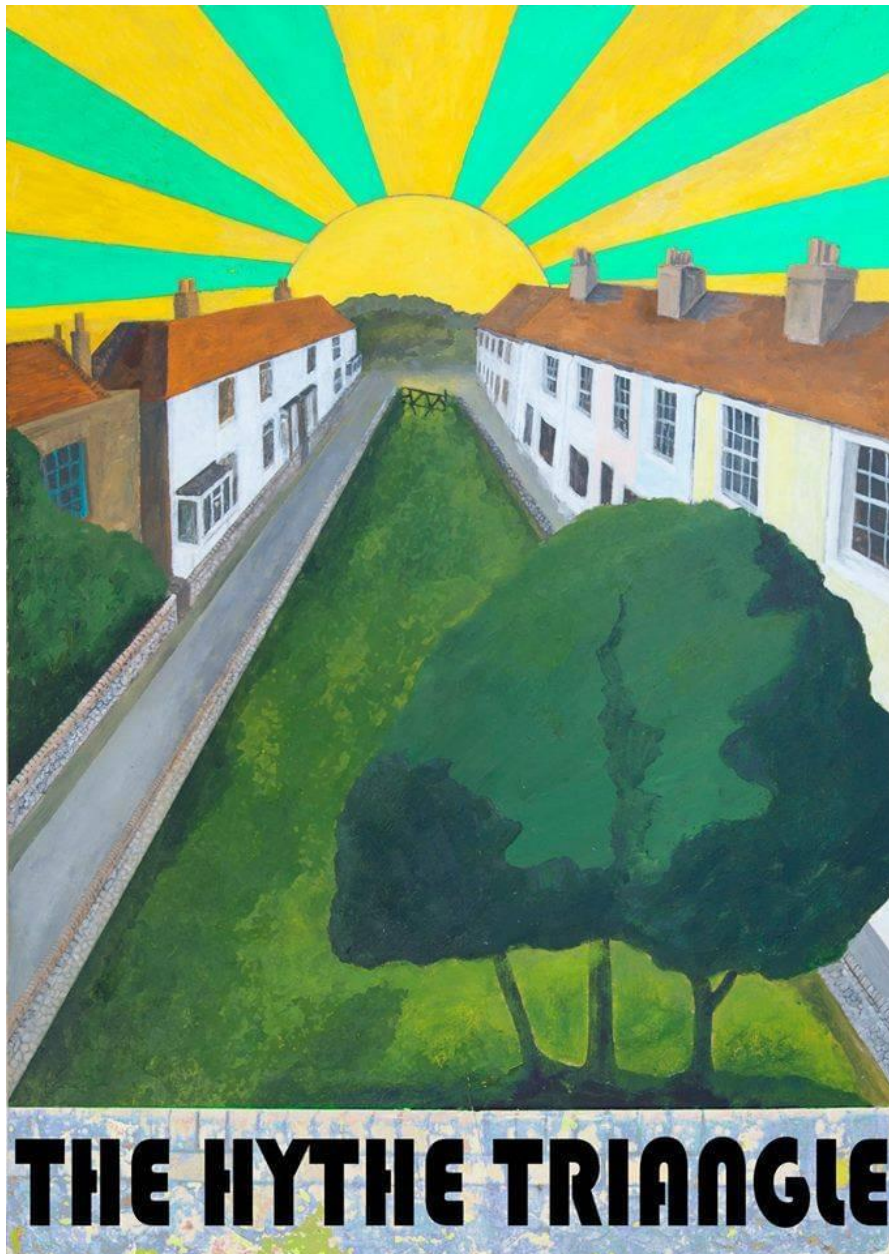


Hythe Triangle Community Garden

St Leonard's Road, Hythe, Kent

## Interim Management & Maintenance Plan



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## Site location and context

Hythe Triangle is a small private open space (approximately .0345 hectares). It is located in a triangle of land between St Leonard's Road, Albert Road and Windmill Street. It lies on the central southwestern part of Hythe along St Leonard's Road, between the Royal Military Canal and seafront. It is framed on three sides by predominantly two storey 19<sup>th</sup> century houses, a small block of flats, a popular local public house (The Three Mariners) and a social club. It is grade 2 listed and owned by the Hythe Triangle Community Garden, a registered Charity.

## Long term vision

The long-term vision is to provide a high-quality open space that promotes the conservation and protection of the grade 2 listed asset and a community garden for leisure and recreation. To achieve this requires consideration of site options, community consultation, any statutory consents and fund raising. Subject to costs and funding availability works may need to be phased. These details will be subject to a separate public consultation and plan.

## Purpose of this document

The main purpose of this document is to provide a written framework to institute regular cleaning, management and maintenance of the site in the interim period. Secondly to identify additional works or actions necessary to maintain the site in a safe and reasonable condition, pending implementation of a long-term plan.

This document is based on best practise for good site management of similar open spaces, and also intended for promotional and consultation purposes.

This management and maintenance plan will need to be altered and updated when a long-term plan is agreed, which will change the site characteristics and introduce some form of public access.



## Key features of the site, short term improvement works, cleaning and maintenance

The main features of the site are the two trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders, an historic wall, metal entrance gate and a temporary notice board. The remainder of the site is now being taken over in places by an invasive sumac tree/bush. There are some stumps of trees demolished by the previous owner which are starting to grow back. There are a variety of native and non-native plants growing including bay leaf, yucca, bamboo grass, small cherry tree, flowering shrubs, foxglove and other seasonal plants, including wildflower, as well as some unspecified plants. The ground floor cover is dominated by overgrown bramble, bindweed, alexander and diminishing areas of visible stone and gravel (which were a predominant feature of the site).

The larger of the two TPO trees is towards the centre of the Albert Road side and is a sycamore. The smaller tree at the corner of Albert Road and Windmill Street is an apple tree. Both trees need routine inspection for pruning, removal of any dangerous and damaged limbs, especially where any actionable nuisance is being caused (such as any damage to adjoining structures and interference to the public highway). The apple tree needs particular care and attention as is at a lower level and can interfere with passing traffic, causing branches and apples to break off onto the road. Aside from some pruning as required, the side of the highway will be swept near these trees to clear any falling branches, leaves and apples.

The historic wall is in a poor condition and requires repair and rebuilding. Listed building consent has been obtained to repair the wall on all three sides, including the rebuilding of the demolished section in Windmill Street. This section has been prioritised for phase 1 repairs to make the site safe and secure and is unaffected by any long-term plans. Works will be carried out by a contractor. To assist with this the Charity will clear 500-1000mm inside the wall in this location in advance of rebuilding and repair works, followed by clearance to other sections as required. All sections of the wall itself will be regularly cleared of bramble, other wild plants and weeds and its condition checked during each cleaning and maintenance day. This includes the highway side, which will be swept and cleared of any weeds. Ragstone from the demolished wall and other pieces of ragstone brought to

the site are scattered nearby. These will be put into an orderly pile on site and discreetly located or made into a temporary feature.

The metal entrance gate is of little historic value in terms of its design, which is modern. It is rusting and the wire covering is broken off and bent in places. This is unsightly and a potential safety hazard. This will be repaired/refurbished and possibly painted to improve its appearance pending long term plans, which will require new gates. The ground at the entrance gate is untidy and requires levelling for the gate to open and close properly. A chain and lock will be provided.

The invasive sumac and its roots will eventually need to be removed, along with a protective membrane and gravel as part of long-term plans to level, landscape and replant the site as a publicly accessible community garden. Subject to a survey and detailed plans this is likely to result in the removal of most if not all the other plants on site, aside from the two protected trees. In the interim all existing plants will be retained and managed to maximise the attractiveness of the site, both in terms of its appearance from the street and for biodiversity purposes. The invasive sumac might be cut back or removed in some places, including other plants where appropriate (for example the non-native yucca), and there might be some temporary seeding. This will be determined by the trustees with recommendations from the lead gardener.

Where plants have died off or appear overgrown these will be cut back or cleared. Growth of dominant and unruly vegetation such as bramble and alexander will be generally controlled.

## Waste and sustainability

The Charity is committed to following environmentally friendly best practice. We intend to shred and store as much green waste on site as possible, subject to equipment and site constraints. Plastic, bottles and other general rubbish will be cleared and removed. We will dispose of all waste in accordance with local authority guidelines where necessary.

After the last volunteer cleaning and maintenance in February 2020 (before Covid 19) garden waste has been left to compost down naturally in mounds. This will be added to when the site is managed again and thereafter on a regular basis, subject to site constraints. Mounds will be reorganised where appropriate to minimise any visual impact, by for example leaving areas of vegetation to grow around them. If these mounds start to detract from the appearance of the site consideration will be given to disposal, subject to funds and/or voluntary assistance.

## Biodiversity and wildlife

The Charity is committed to the conservation of wildlife and encouragement of biodiversity. We are yet to develop biodiversity policy and a planting scheme, which is partly dependent on long term plans. However, protecting and encouraging a greater level of biodiversity, including extending the range of pollinator-friendly plants and developing a wildlife friendly maintenance regime will be taken into account to support mini habitats/measures.

In September 2012 the applicant for a proposed housing development carried out a baseline ecological audit of the site. Birds present were identified as dunnock (amber list), woodpigeon, blackbird, blue tit, long tail, and the site included suitable habitat for bird breeding. Also, shrew may use the site for foraging and breeding, along with voles and other small mammals. Foxes were known to use the site and incidental foraging by bats may occur. The Charity will start to monitor

and record evidence of wildlife and take precautionary measures when managing and maintaining the site with the long-term aim of improving wildlife habitat.

## Health and Safety, including public access

Given the condition of the site, historic wall and gate, and that there is no internal path at present, no public access is proposed in the interim period. This is aside from managed access by trustees and volunteers for cleaning, management and maintenance purposes as set out in this plan and as agreed by the Charity.

The Charity has carried out a risk assessment and survey of the soil conditions. All trustees and volunteers carrying out management and maintenance will be required to wear gloves, suitable footwear and clothing. First aid will be available and general safety advice given before each management and maintenance event, including implications of weather conditions and Covid 19 policy.

## Management, maintenance schedule, volunteers, monitoring and review

Ultimate responsibility for cleaning, management and maintenance rests with the Charity, namely the board of trustees. One or two of the trustees will be given responsibility for organising and managing a programme schedule, on site activities and reporting back to the board of trustees to ensure monitoring and review of the Plan. It is anticipated at least a team of 6 volunteers will be required for each session and these will be approximately every 6 weeks, normally on a Saturday or Sunday. One or two trustees or volunteers will monitor the cleanliness of the site and litter pick, if necessary, between sessions.

Initial responsibility for planning and leading management and maintenance sessions will be with Andy Maguire, one of the trustees who has substantial gardening experience. Given the length of time since the last session and some short-term improvements are proposed, such as the gate and clearance associated with the wall, initially one or two additional sessions might be added.

A start date for the first planned management and maintenance is June or by July, after which an outline timetable will be prepared of further dates. These will be published online and on the site notice board, including further details of each event.

The Charity has found it easy in the past to recruit volunteers from its support base, and is keen to involve young people, either through schools, the Duke of Edinburgh Award or other groups. However, if you would like to be involved, please let us know.

## Budget and fundraising

The budget for cleaning, management and maintenance in the interim period is minimal and relies on the input of trustees, volunteers and donations. Tools and other equipment will be purchased by the Charity.



## Comments and further information

One of the purposes of this document is to make neighbours, local community and authorities aware of the Charity's intention to carry out regular cleaning, management and maintenance, including the associated methodology and approximate timing. Also, to seek comment and feedback to build into monitoring and review of this Plan and encourage volunteers to participate in the programme.

Further information can be found at [www.hythetriangle.uk](http://www.hythetriangle.uk) and Facebook.com/hythetriangle or contact [hello@htcg.org](mailto:hello@htcg.org) and 07843 851236

*Terence Ellames*

*Trustee,*

*On behalf of Hythe Triangle Community Garden*