Ash Priors Common

Management Specification Summary

Taunton Deane Borough Council

December 2003

Greenwood

Environmental
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Ash Priors Common – Brief Management Specification

Introduction

The Ash Priors Common 10-year management plan was written in 1997. This document re-assesses the specification after 6 years of management and aims to simplify the main work items.

Specification

General Items

- Cut back vegetation from official paths in the growing season as necessary.
- Maintain the car park, paths, gates, stiles, interpretation boards, signs, etc. as necessary.
- Collect and remove rubbish regularly as necessary.
- All cutting and clearance of scrub and trees should be carried out during October to March inclusive.
- All clearance of ponds and watercourses should be carried out in the period October to March inclusive – ideally during the months of November and December.
- All cut vegetation should be removed from site for composting or placed in compact habitat piles on old piles or in areas of low botanical diversity and away from mammal tunnels, etc.
- Vegetation along roadsides to be trimmed back as necessary.
- Maintain, clean out and replace bird and dormouse nestboxes as necessary.
- The cutting below the power lines in compartments 3, 4, 6, 7 and 10 should be carried out by the electricity company operatives with all trees and shrubs coppiced to ground level with cut material stacked in compact habitat piles or shredded (material used for surfacing paths).

Compartment 1 (note chamomile in north eastern corner)

- Grassland to be cut and removed after mid-August as a hay cut.
- 50% of grassland margins to be cut and cleared annually on rotation.
- Small marginal areas of scrub to be coppiced if necessary.
- Ditches to be maintained as necessary.

Compartment 2

- Grassland to be cut and removed after mid-August as a hay cut.
- 50% of grassland margins and grassland clearings at the northern end of the compartment to be cut and cleared annually on rotation.
- Small marginal areas of scrub, including gorse, to be coppiced if necessary.
- Ditches to be maintained as necessary.
- Interpretation panel, benches, etc. to be maintained as necessary.

Compartment 3

- Main grassland "ride" to be cut and raked off once annually in Autumn (after September – cut vegetation to be stacked under the hedge along the southern roadside).
- Small blocks of scrub to be coppiced annually on rotation in bays along the northern edge of the ride.
- Coppice and/or pollard occasional shrubs and saplings to thin or create clearings/edge bays to improve the structural diversity of the woodland/scrub.
- Lay sections of scrub along the roadside annually.
- Seedlings and saplings of non-native tree species, especially Turkey oak, should be pulled or cut and treated with Garlon until eradicated.
- Barriers at the end of the ride to be maintained as necessary to prevent vehicular/horse access.

Compartment 4

- Coppice or lay small blocks of scrub, especially blackthorn, on rotation at the western end of the compartment to maintain sunny bays with fresh scrub growth.
- Non-intervention in the woodland except for dealing with unsafe trees near the road.

Compartment 5

- Cut and remove vegetation from the northwestern 60% of the grassland after mid-August (non devil's-bit scabious area).
- Cut and remove vegetation from 50% of the remaining grassland (devil's-bit scabious area) annually on rotation.
- 50% of grassland margins to be cut and cleared annually on rotation.
- The thin "hedge" of ash along the road to be maintained by coppicing and/or laying individual saplings as necessary.
- Maintain roadside ditches as necessary.

Compartment 6

- Coppice blocks of scrub/woodland along the track annually on rotation to maintain a wide ride and add to the structural diversity of the wood edges.

Compartment 7

- Cut and remove vegetation from 50% of the open grassland/heath annually on rotation – target bracken dominated areas. Retain some small dense blocks of gorse.
- Coppice occasional blocks of scrub to maintain and enhance the woodland edge. Re-pollard and/or create pollard trees to add to diversity.

Compartment 8

- Cut and remove vegetation from 50% of the open grassland/heath annually on rotation – target bracken dominated areas. Retain some small dense blocks of gorse.
- Coppice occasional blocks of scrub at the margins to maintain and enhance the woodland edge. Re-pollard and/or create pollard trees to add to diversity.
- Cut the bracken glade (towards eastern end) annually in summer/autumn.
- Clear excess silt and weed from the pond and ditch as necessary.
- Maintain the bridge across the ditch as necessary.

Compartment 9

- Coppice small blocks of scrub/woodland and create edge bays along the electricity "rides" to maintain the structural diversity.

Compartment 10

- Cut and remove vegetation from the ride annually in autumn.
- Coppice small blocks of scrub/woodland at the edges of the ride to create bays and enhance the structural diversity of the woodland edge.

Compartment 11

- Remove excessive silt and weed and possible fallen trees from the watercourse as necessary to prevent flooding.

Compartment 12

- Remove excessive silt and weed and possible fallen trees from the watercourse as necessary to prevent flooding.
- Maintain the water flow through the pipe from the main watercourse and into the ditch – check regularly.