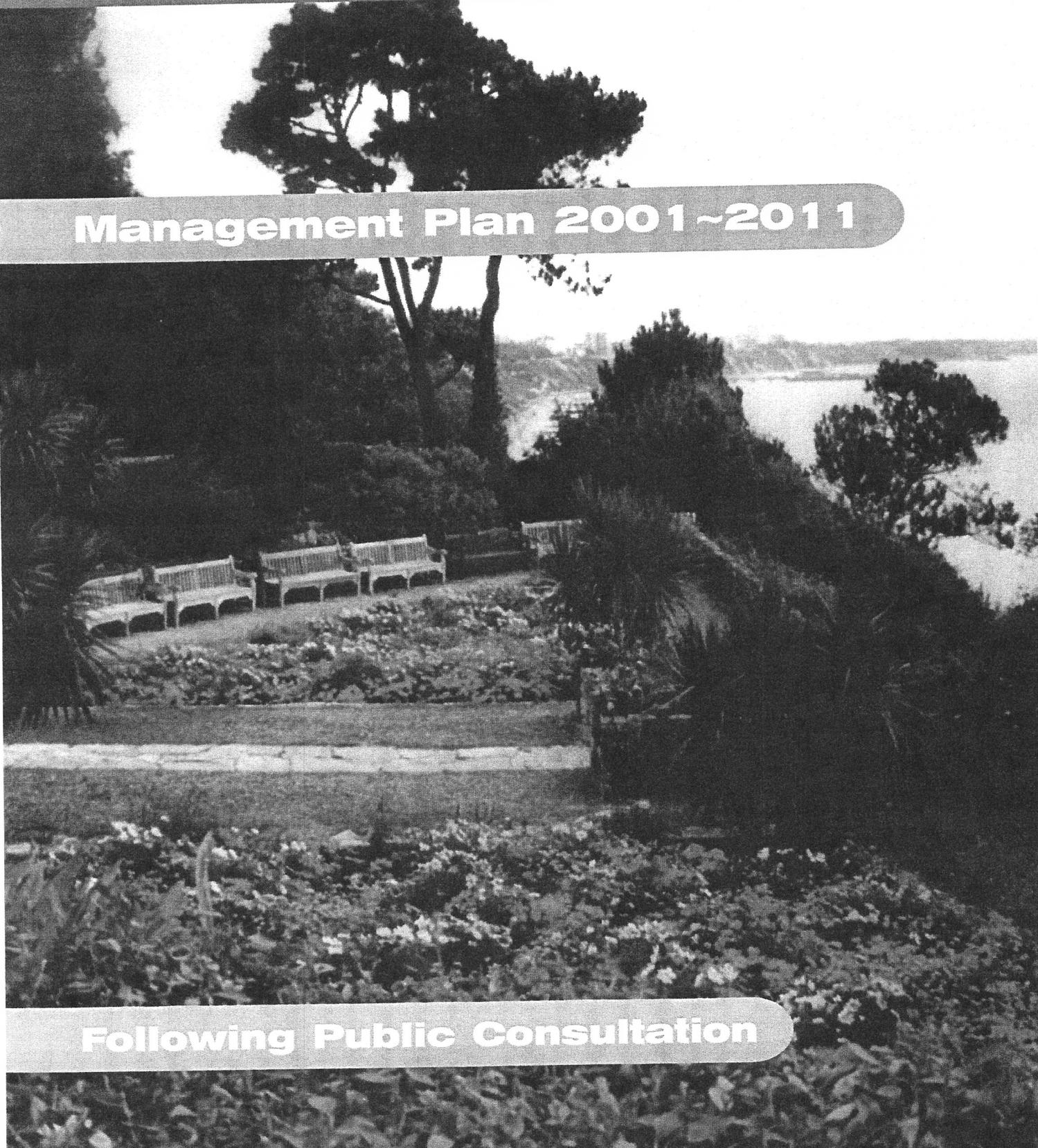


**Branksome Chine Gardens, Branksome Park Woods,
Pinecliff Gardens, Martello Woods & Beach Road Woodland**



BOROUGH OF POOLE

Management Plan 2001~2011



Following Public Consultation

Leisure Services



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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Much of the information provided in this Plan is a summary of more detailed reports and surveys. A list of supporting information sources is shown below. They are too bulky to attach to this document or copy.

They can be viewed by appointment during normal office hours at:

Leisure Services,
Northmead House,
30-32 Northmead Drive,
Creekmoor,
Poole
BH17 7RP.

Telephone Number: 01202 261303
Internet: www.boroughofpoole.com

- 1 Open Space Strategy**
- 2 Play and Youth Strategy**
- 3 Legislation, Council Procedures & Requirements**
- 4 Branksome Park Woods Management Plan 1994**
- 5 Structural Surveys**
- 6 Poole Local Plan August 1998**
- 7 Spring 2000 Consultation**
- 8 Tree assessment report**
- 9 Results of Public Consultation on Draft Plan (Autumn) 2001**

1. INTRODUCTION

The Council believes that it should work closely with local communities to manage and improve open space in Poole. In preparing Management Plans and consulting local people the Council aims to involve the users of an open space and people affected by its use in the decisions about its future. These decisions may be about day to day management or may include ideas to enhance the site.

A Management Plan for Branksome Park Woods was prepared in 1994. This Plan has been reviewed/incorporated as part of the overall site Management Plan.

The Council wishes to ensure that any change in management style or future development of the open space meet the changing needs of users and local people, whilst guaranteeing that the history and conservation values of the area are preserved.

The Draft Management plan was prepared with assistance from the Branksome Park, Canford Cliffs and District Residents Association and distributed to Ward Councillors prior to full public consultation. Following on from this a detailed consultation process was undertaken in the Autumn of 2001 prior to the production of this Management Plan. Before any works commence agreement of the final document has been gained from Ward Councillors.

The Council is also preparing an Open Space Strategy. So that all open space across the Borough is considered and resources allocated fairly, taking into account amounts of provision and needs in different areas of Poole. There will always be more demands and requests for facilities than can be met from limited resources.

The Open Space Strategy will review the quality and distribution of public open space in Poole, and decide which local areas or parks require most improvement. It will identify any new opportunities and ways of working with the community. The strategy will also establish Council policy and procedures for some of the major issues that affect the management of open space.

The Management Plan for Branksome Chine Gardens, Branksome Park Woods, Pinecliff Gardens, Martello Woods and Beach Road Car Park will take the emerging Open Space Strategy as one of its principal starting points.

Poole Local Plan August 1998

Section six of the Poole Local Plan August 1998, The Natural Environment outlines a number of objectives. Three of these objectives are particularly relevant to this site management plan. They are as follows:

- to protect green space in the urban and coastal areas, and conserve its character, landscape quality and wildlife value;
- to ensure, as far as possible, the satisfactory management of trees, open spaces and natural habitats, and to encourage and educate public interest in conservation; and
- to carry out an on-going programme of environmental improvements aimed at upgrading the natural environment of the Borough.

Extent of Plan

The plan includes the management of the gardens and woodlands along with associated facilities within the area.

The plan excludes management of the beach and promenade at Branksome Chine. This matter will be investigated as part of an overall strategy for the management of Poole's beaches at a later date.

The plan also excludes issues related to car parking in surrounding roads and car parks.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 LOCATION

The collection of sites included in this Plan are situated in the Canford Cliffs Ward of the Borough of Poole. The land which makes up the site runs from Penn Hill to the sea front at Branksome Chine.

Maps of the sites indicating boundaries and surrounding roads are included on pages 6 & 7.

2.2 CONTEXT

The woodland and gardens are designated as public open space, owned and managed by the Borough of Poole. Except for a section of Martello Woods that is subject to a lease agreement.

The combination of these sites form the largest public open space in the Canford Cliffs Ward, measuring 25.6 hectares (63.3 acres) in total. This constitutes a major open space.

All of these sites are included within the boundaries of the Branksome Park Conservation Area.

2.3 HISTORY

The majority of Branksome Chine Gardens, Branksome Park Woods and Martello Woods was acquired by the Council in 1895 from F.G.Bury. Additional areas were added between 1921 and 1954. A section of Martello Woods is subject to a 99 year lease from the Branksome Park Association which took effect in 1931.

The wood is likely to be 120 to 150 years old, originating from plantations as part of the Branksome Park estate.

The bowling green and pavilion were constructed in 1925 and subsequently the Branksome Park Bowling Club was formed in 1926. The Tennis Courts and Pavilion are believed to be from the same period.

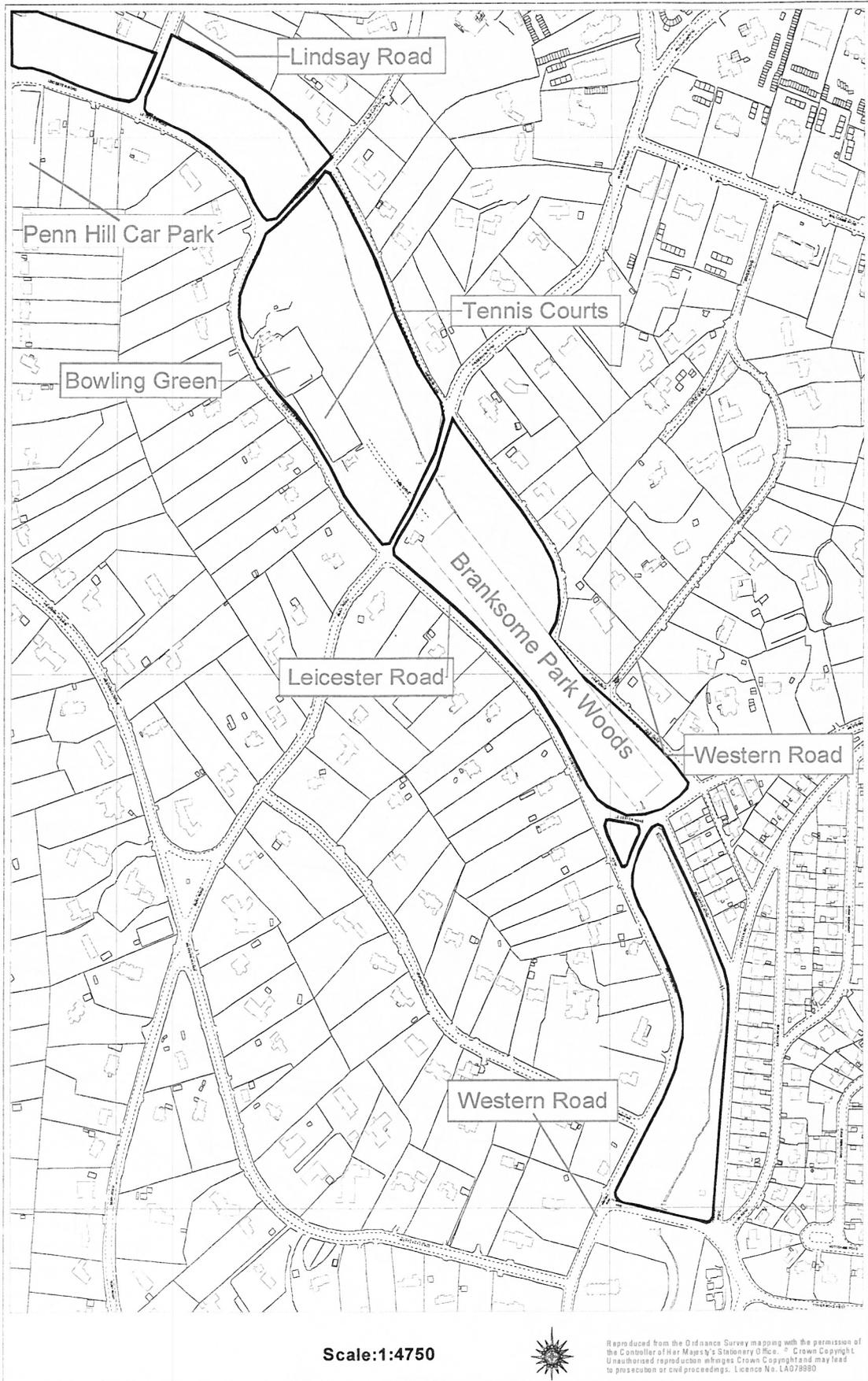
The stream which is lined with Purbeck stone is situated at the base of an old river valley that slopes to the South. The channel was constructed in the 1930's as a measure to carry surface water from various roads in the Chine and Park district to the seaward outlet.

The pedestrian gateway now sited on Pine Drive at the Bowling Green car park was formerly located at the County Gates where it was erected by Charles Packe of Branksome Towers. The gateway was re-erected on Pine Drive by volunteers of the Society of Poole Men between 1986 and 1990.

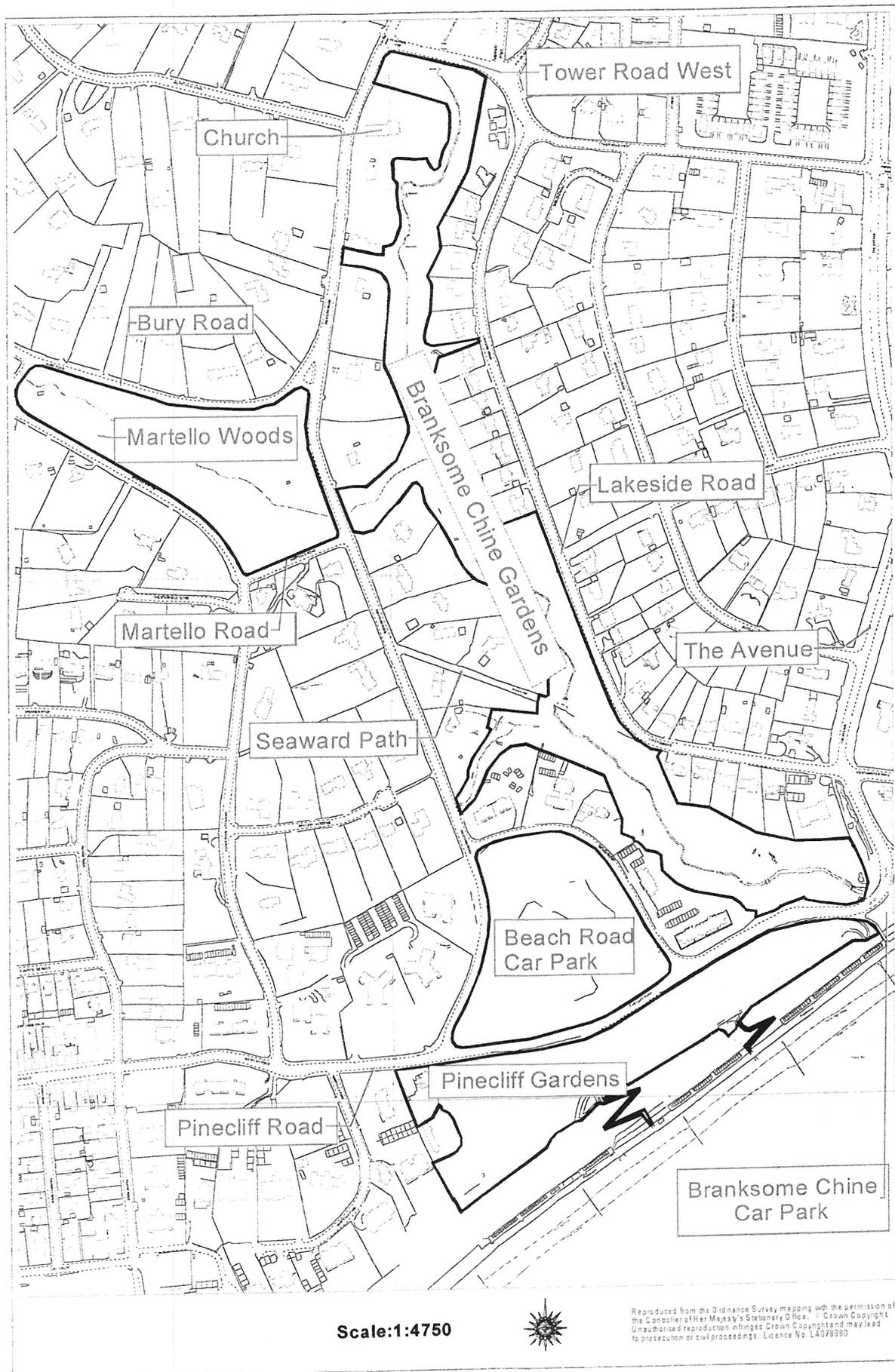
2.4 MAIN FEATURES

- Bowling green which is managed by Branksome Park Bowling Club
- Tennis Courts managed by a concessionaire
- Native flora and fauna
- Woodland walk which extends from Penn Hill to the sea front
- Mature tree cover, including both deciduous and evergreens
- Ornamental trees and shrub planting to the South of Tower Road West
- Stone walled stream and associated ornamental bridges
- Slopes and banks to the South of Tower Road West which dictate the site layout and landscape. The word 'chine' means a 'deep, narrow ravine cut through soft rocks by a water course descending steeply to the sea.
- Surrounding residential properties with mature tree cover
- Long and relatively narrow site broken into section by the road network
- Sunken garden and zig zag steps/pathways leading to beach
- Views from cliff top, including the Isle of Wight.

Branksome Chine Gardens, Branksome Park Woods, Pinecliff Gardens, Martello Woods
and Beach Road Woodland Management Plan



Branksome Chine Gardens, Branksome Park Woods, Pinecliff Gardens, Martello Woods
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3. SITE ASSESSMENT

A number of assessments have been carried out by specialist's within Leisure Services and elsewhere in the Council. Also information has been drawn from the 1994 Branksome Park Woods Management Plan. Using this information a number of **proposed objectives** have been reached and a **draft action plan** formulated.

3.1 SOCIAL CONTEXT & AMENITY VALUE (USABILITY)

Adult Active Recreation (For example: Playing fields)

Limited provision - Tennis Courts and Bowling Green

Passive/Informal Recreation (For example walkers, enjoy the peace and quiet, visual amenity)

Need catered for, but perceived fear for personal safety deters users.

Dogs

Site actively used by dog walkers.

Bowls and Tennis

Very important central facility

Children's Play

This age group is not catered for.

Youth Recreation and Play

This age group is not catered for and not perceived as a problem.

Social interaction and Meeting place

Good potential, but lacks focus/poor facilities such as park furniture.

Through route (For example access to shops and work)

Very important during day, perceived as dangerous at night. Well-used route to and from sea front.

Family Recreation

Good potential but lack of facilities may deter use.

Events

Site not suitable for holding events, excluding those associated with the Tennis Courts and Bowling Green.

Disability

Some facilities are accessible to disabled users although land contours pose a problem. Room for improvement.

3.2 PREVIOUS PETITIONS & SURVEYS

An initial survey was undertaken in Spring 2000. Questionnaires were distributed by the Branksome Park, Canford Cliffs and District Residents Association with their newsletter. Surprisingly less than 5% were completed and returned. (155 respondents). Of the respondents:

45% used the site once or twice a week	76% were retired
40% visited for between half and one hour	75% were 55+ years of age
78% visited on a weekday	73% visited for walking

The respondents main concerns surrounded maintenance of planted areas, paths and the stream, along with issues surrounding dog, litter, anti social behaviour and cycling.

3.3 PHYSICAL ACCESS

Pedestrian access to the site is freely available. Formal provision for car parking is available at a number of locations in and around the site. Vehicular access into the site at other location is not permitted. Cycling is not encouraged within the open space.

Parts of the Woodland and Chine are accessible to disabled and disadvantaged users although difficulties may be encountered by the gradient of the landscape particularly to the South of Tower Road West. Sections of the path network were upgraded as part of the 1994 Branksome Park Woods Management Plan. Difficulties may also be faced in Pinecliff Gardens with the sloping paths and zig zag steps and path down the cliff to the promenade.

Bournemouth Borough Council have produced a self-guided trail incorporating Alum Chine, Branksome and Branksome Dene Chines. Copies available from Bournemouth Borough Council.

3.4 STREAM & DRAINAGE

The Purbeck stone lined stream/channel runs for 2.3 km (1.4 miles) from Lindsay Road through Branksome Park Woods and Branksome Chine Gardens to the sea.

The channel forms a vital part of the district's drainage system. The majority of water entering the channels is from the surface water system (from surrounding roads and developments). With the result that during dry periods parts of the channel will dry out leaving other areas with minor flow from natural ground water. An investigation in 1967 by the then Borough Engineer concluded that around 950 acres drain to the stream.

No major alterations have been made to the stream since construction. Minor developments have seen the introduction of bar screens to collect storm debris and the construction of an access point into the stream close to its final outlet that allows mechanical dredging. Major mechanical cleaning where the stream outlets the gardens can only be undertaken between October and April to avoid discoloured water discharging onto the beach.

3.5 ARBORICULTURE

A guidance leaflet entitled "Woodland Guidelines for Branksome Park" has been produced by Planning Services which enumerates appropriate woodland management principles for the area. These are summarised as follows;

1. The character of the area should be retained by planting both conifers and broadleaves in roughly, equal proportions.
2. Native and naturalised species are to be encouraged.
3. Weed species should be controlled.
4. Under-story shrubs should be encouraged.
5. Native herbaceous plants are to be encouraged.

The area South of Tower Road West contains many ornamental trees and shrubs, however the overall mature tree canopy is mainly comprised of even aged pines with the occasional broadleaf. The area to the North generally has a more open canopy. Remnants of the original pine canopy exist interspersed with open areas that are being colonised by broadleaves. There is very little sign of pine regeneration at present.

The limited age class distribution presents an ageing tree population with an estimated useful life expectancy of between approximately 10-40 years. To preserve the amenity value of the area and ensure public safety a long term proactive management regime will need to be adopted.

3.6 LANDSCAPE

The contours of the site are level at the Northern most part and gradually steepen either side of the watercourse to form more of a valley landscape at its Southern end. The open space is informally laid out providing a mixture of native and ornamental planting, woodland and sports provision.

Ornamental planting in the Chine and Pinecliff Gardens includes seasonal bedding, bog garden, magnolias, species rhododendron and azaleas.

3.7 ENVIRONMENTAL

Branksome Park Woods and Martello Woods are managed in a way to encourage native flora and fauna, with non-native species such as sycamore being discouraged. The 1994 Management Plan resulted in a number of native tree and shrub planting exercises. In addition the clearance of non native shrubs has encouraged natural regeneration of native species.

Branksome Chine Gardens on the other hand is planted with many ornamental tree and shrubs, although native species are encouraged where it is practical to do so.

The zig zag paths which travel down the cliff to the promenade from Pinecliff Gardens form part of a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) and has also been identified as a reptile sensitive area.

3.8 BUILDINGS

There are five buildings on the site excluding the Wessex Water pumping station and three electrical sub stations. The Tennis and Bowls Pavilions plus three shelters, one at the bottom end of Branksome Chine Gardens and two in Pinecliff Gardens, are owned by the Borough of Poole. However the two pavilions are subject to lease agreements.

3.9 STRUCTURAL SURVEYS

A number of structural engineering surveys have been undertaken through the sites. These were undertaken primarily for insurance purposes, but the results can also be used to identify any necessary repairs. These include the entire watercourse, various bridges, stone steps, zig zag steps on cliffs, sunken garden and the Smugglers Well.

4. MANAGEMENT ISSUES

4.1 SITE MANAGEMENT

Branksome Chine Gardens, Branksome Park Woods and Martello Woods form a public open space managed by Leisure Services, Borough of Poole.

The physical ground's maintenance works on site is carried out by Continental Landscapes Ltd. Who has a long term contract to maintain all the parks and open spaces in Poole (except for Poole Park). Because of this, there is no individual contract for the site. In addition to this tasks are also undertaken by the Countryside Wardens. The activities and standards of this contract are flexible and are continually reviewed and amended to provide the best possible service with the available resources.

The maintenance of the Bowling Green does not form part of this contract and is managed by way of an annual grant to the Bowling Club.

Branksome Park Bowling Club have a lease for seven years from 1st April 1996 for the use of the bowls pavilion and green. Provision for public use of the green is made within the lease.

A concession also exists for the management of the Tennis Courts with G.C. Facilities.

4.2 BASIC POLICY STATEMENTS

In deciding how to manage the open space and work with the contractor, the Council takes its guidance from a number of basic policy statements:

- Work with the community
- Protect the environment
- Balance the recreational pressures against the nature conservation needs
- Improve community safety
- Promote public health and well being
- Manage and enhance services in a sustainable way
- Provide a comprehensive range of recreational facilities appropriate to the needs of the local population

Following on from its basic policies, the Council has prepared or is preparing three major strategic documents that effect how it manages and allocates resources to parks and open spaces.

4.3 CULTURAL STRATEGY

The Council is working across services to prepare a Cultural Strategy for Poole which aims to promote the cultural well-being of the area. This covers services such as parks and open spaces as well as tourism and arts to name but a few and should lead to better co-ordinated policies and service provision.

4.4 OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

The Council is also preparing an Open Space Strategy. So that all open space across the Borough is considered and resources allocated fairly, taking into account amounts of provision and needs in different areas of Poole. There will always be more demands and requests for facilities than can be met from limited resources.

4.5 PLAY AND YOUTH RECREATION STRATEGY

The Council recognises that there is a continuing demand in many of its parks and open spaces for equipped areas for outdoor children's play and also for informal recreation facilities catering for young people.

The Play and Youth Recreation Strategy will look at this subject from a borough wide perspective instead of just local demand. This will help to ensure that any resources available are used on the most deserving projects, and where there is greatest need. Funds for this particular purpose will be allocated on the basis of the approved strategy.

In the context of this Plan the Council has no plans to provide facilities of this type. *The strategy has identified Sandbanks Pavilion Gardens as a suitable location for this type of facility within the ward. The nearest existing facilities are located at Alexandra Park and Princess Gardens.*

4.6 OTHER MANAGEMENT ISSUES

In addition to Council strategic policy, the management of the open space is influenced on a day to day basis by a number of pieces of statutory legislation, local byelaws and recognised Council procedures.

4.7 CONSTRAINTS

The day to day management of the site is the responsibility of the Grounds Maintenance Contractor, who also looks after another 1200 or so sites. The Park also receives periodic visits from the Countryside Team, Park Ranger Team and Animal Welfare Officers along with numerous other sites. For these reasons the area is always in competition with other sites for staff time and ultimately financial resource.

If the Plan is adopted it may not be practical to carry out improvement and restoration works to a set time scale due to financial constraints. However this Plan should identify necessary and realistic improvements that may only be implemented as and when resources become available. Also any increase in facilities or services may need to be matched by an appropriate increase in revenue (the annual budget for care and maintenance) by the Council. Due to funding limitations the Council will seek to keep the maintenance costs of the site to the same level. The very nature of the habitat types also make rigid time scales for work impracticable. Extra costs may have to be met by savings elsewhere on the site.

5. OBJECTIVES FOLLOWING CONSULTATION - AUTUMN 2001

5.1 PROPOSALS

With the assistance of the Branksome Park, Canford Cliffs and District Residents Association a number of provisional proposals were listed in the Draft Management Plan. These have been subject to consultation and the results are shown below each proposal. The intention of this process being to identify and agree priorities and then seek funding.

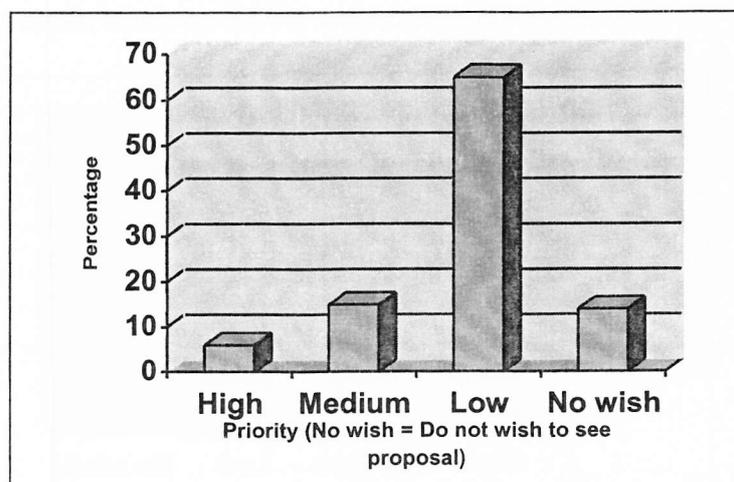
Each respondent to the questionnaire distributed with the Draft Management Plan were asked whether they considered the proposal to be of high, medium or low priority or whether they did not wish to see this type of facility within the area covered by the Plan.

125 completed questionnaires were returned following consultation. Results are shown below each proposal.

A. Work with the community

- Work with the local community to make the best use of resources. Keep them informed about proposals, changes and the facilities provided

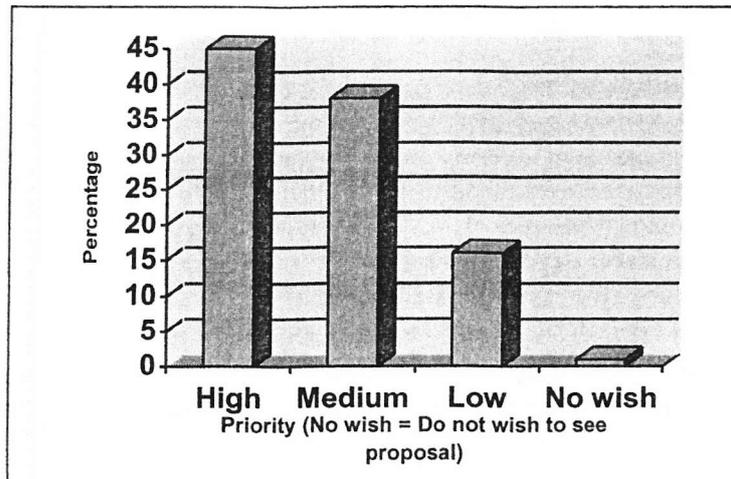
Proposal: Information leaflet: Provide an information leaflet on site, indicating facilities, works and contacts.



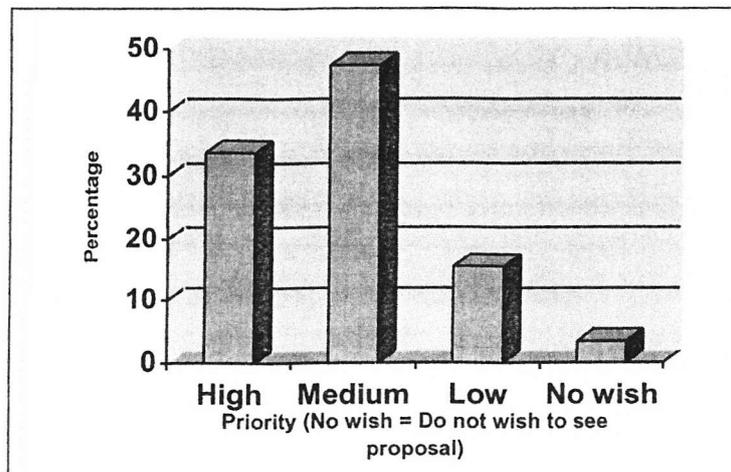
B. Protect the environment

- Enhance the environmental and conservation value of the Woodland and Chine. Manage the woodland as a mixed (deciduous & coniferous) high canopy woodland with a diverse age structure and healthy under-story.
- Control non native and invasive species.
- Enhance the habitat and character of the wood to the benefit of the flora and fauna

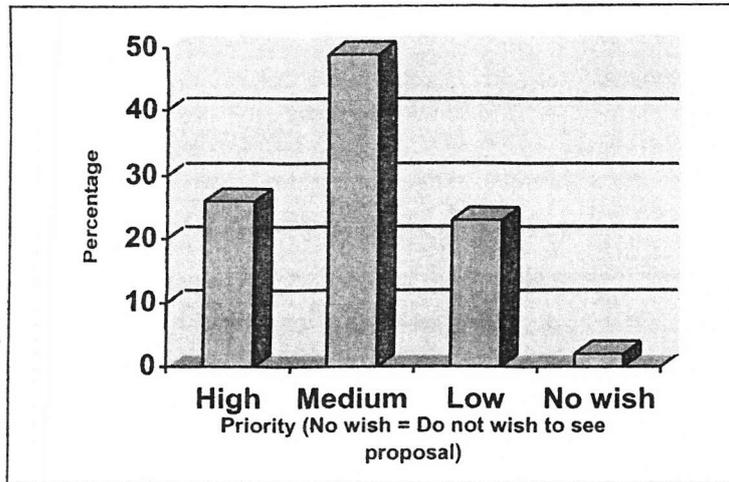
Proposal: Noxious and invasive weeds: Eradicate noxious and invasive weed such as Ragwort, Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed as and when they occur.



Proposal: Rhododendron, sycamore and laurel: Reduce cover to encourage regeneration of native species and to provide planting sites.



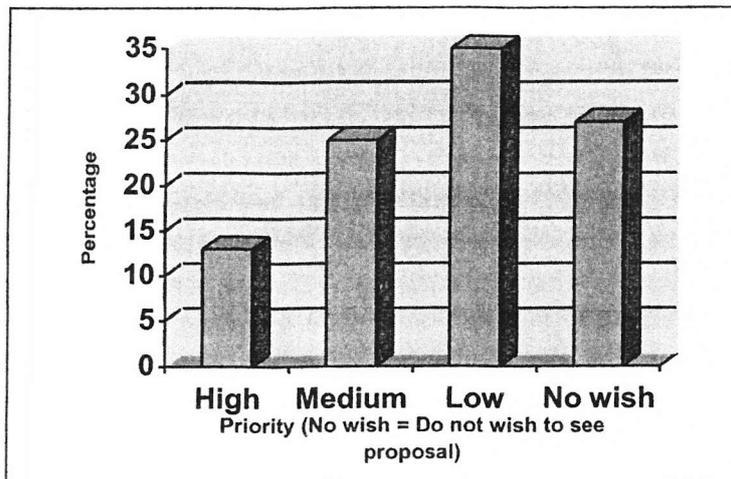
Proposal: Donation tree planting: Promote donation tree planting scheme within the woods and gardens.



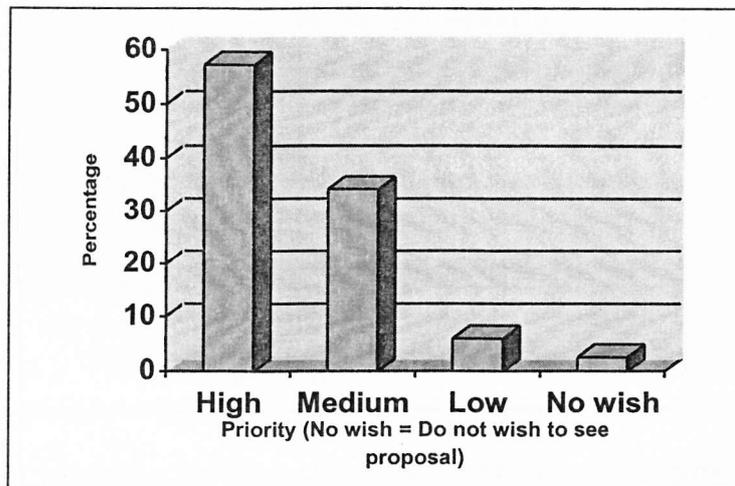
C. Balancing the recreational pressures against the nature conservation needs

- To allow people to enjoy the wood without detriment to the wildlife and to provide an opportunity for people to increase their understanding of the wood.

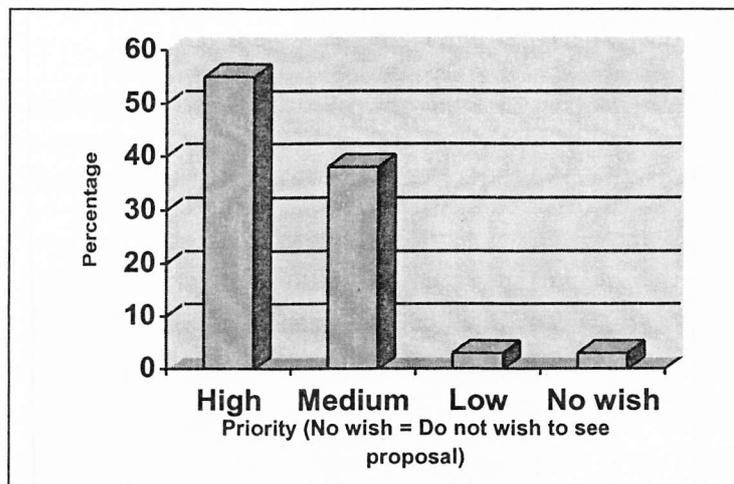
Proposal: Pathways: Encourage use of main pathways by clearance of undergrowth and repairs to surfacing, so reducing pressure on sensitive areas. Widen main pathway between Penn Hill and beach to act as central walkway.



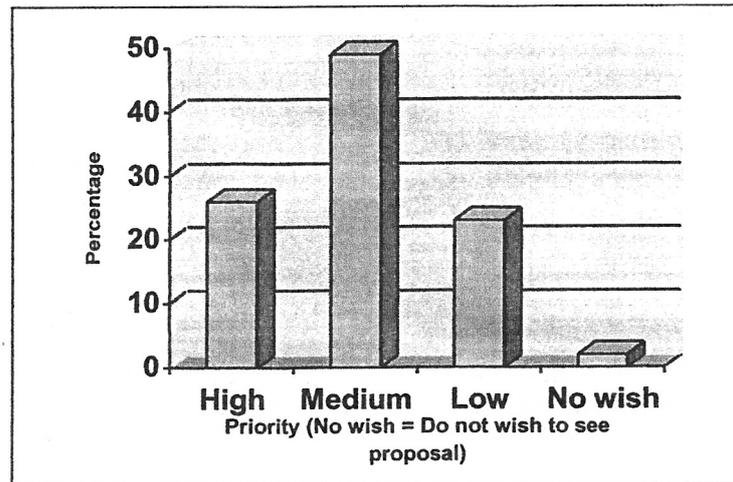
Proposal: Woodland management: Undertake appropriate woodland management including, thinning, pruning, replanting exercises and other necessary Arboricultural works to maintain and develop a healthy woodland environment.



Proposal: General maintenance: Maintain existing facilities and infrastructure and aim to improve general tidiness and care of site.



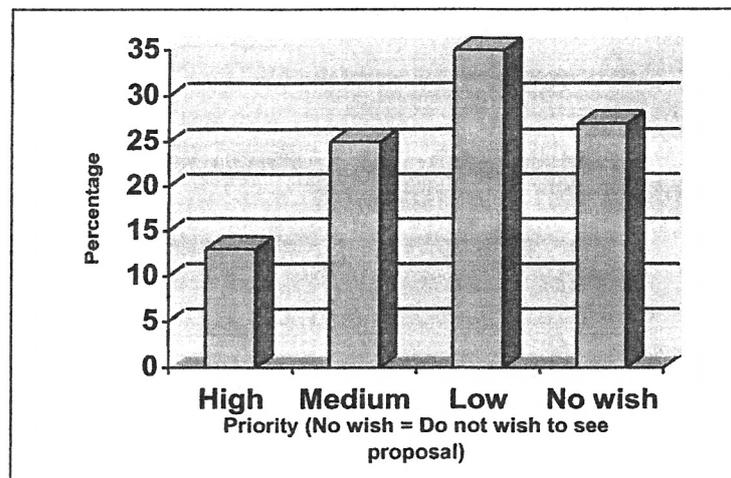
Proposal: Donation tree planting: Promote donation tree planting scheme within the woods and gardens.



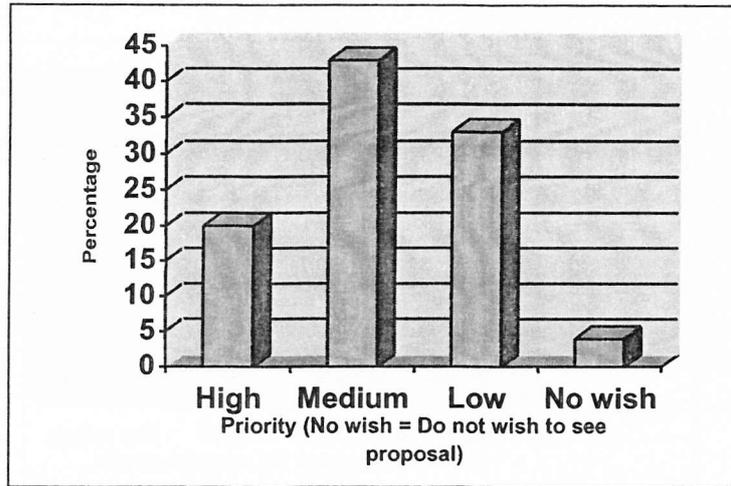
C. Balancing the recreational pressures against the nature conservation needs

- To allow people to enjoy the wood without detriment to the wildlife and to provide an opportunity for people to increase their understanding of the wood.

Proposal: Pathways: Encourage use of main pathways by clearance of undergrowth and repairs to surfacing, so reducing pressure on sensitive areas. Widen main pathway between Penn Hill and beach to act as central walkway.



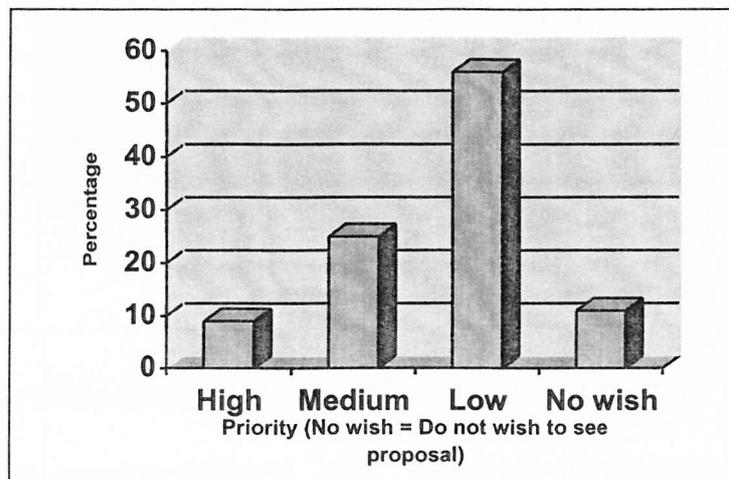
Proposal: Ornamental planting: Undertake a programme of ornamental tree and shrub planting in Branksome Chine Gardens and other ornamental areas.



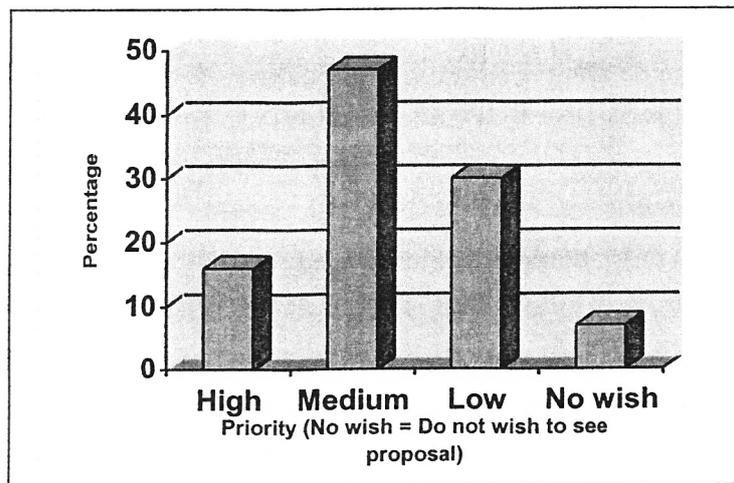
D. Improve community safety

- Encourage use of the site by addressing peoples fears that the area is unsafe.
- Encourage people to use the site for legitimate purpose by providing appropriate facilities. An increase in use would provide casual site supervision and reduce instances of vandalism.

Proposal: Signage: Provide additional signage indicating site facilities/site information boards.



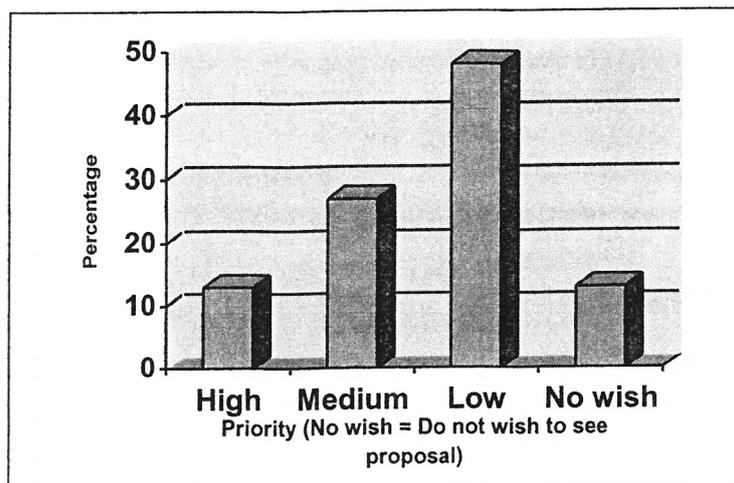
Proposal: Pine Drive: Clear encroaching vegetation from Pine Drive between the bowling green car park and its junction with Withingham Road to open up area and encourage walking.



E. Promoting public health and well being

- Ensure the Chine and Woodland meets the needs of the local population, is accessible to all and provides the best possible facilities.

Proposal: Walking sign walking routes/provide directional way markers.



F. Manage and enhance services in a sustainable way

- Upgrade existing facilities and infrastructure to meet user demand.
- Ensure any investment in the Woodland and Chine preserves and maintains the site for future generations.