

**Friends of Leckhampton Hill
&
Charlton Kings Common
(FOLK)**

**Health & Safety Statements
and
Risk Assessments**

Issue 7
28 February 2025

Approved by the FOLK Executive:

Date next review due: February 2027

Revision Register:

Issue	Date	Comments
1	May 2002	First Issue
2	March 2014	Major review, restructuring and rewriting of the risk assessments and inclusion of safety statements
2a	April 2014	Additions related to flora and fauna surveys
3	28 May 2016	Amendments to existing text to reflect review comments. Addition of Sections on litter picking and working with children, vulnerable adults and persons with disabilities.
4	16 May 2018	Amendments to text to reflect review comments, e.g. Risk Assessment RA06 has been extended to reflect the different types of chemical applicators that could be used, including dabber bottles.
5	6 July 2020	Minor amendments to reflect review comments. Link to separate COVID19 risk assessment added.
5a	19 July 2021	COVID 19 addendum (RA13) rescinded
6	15 Sept 2022	Minor amendments and updates to reflect review comments
7	28 February 2025	Change to Work Party leader organisation, New Mower, Defibrillator and addition of tick remover for first aid kit.



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Health & Safety Statements

FOLK is a volunteer conservation group with specific interests in, particularly, Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common but also Daisy Bank Fields, Cowslip Meadow, Reversion Fields and Hopkins Fields. FOLK has no formal/legal responsibility for these areas but works in partnership with Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) which is the legal owner of these areas and which has full responsibility for their management and care.

A key activity of FOLK is to hold regular conservation working parties on these areas. The following health and safety statements, and the risk assessments also included in this document, are mainly related to these work parties (other FOLK activities such as Guided Walks & Other Site Visits and Public Meetings are also mentioned).

Working Party Management

- FOLK work parties are planned and organised by a designated Working Party Coordinator and a team of co-leaders, who are advised by a FOLK Management Sub-Committee and CBC (normally via their Senior Ranger).
- A forward work plan, normally covering 6 months, is prepared by the Working Party Coordinator and CBC Senior Ranger, with advice from the Management Sub-Committee.
- The Working Party Coordinator identifies the work to be undertaken by each working party, the specific location of the work and the tools required (normally provided by FOLK) in advance of the working party.
- Each working party is led by one or two experienced Working Party Leaders. The primary duty of the Leader is to brief and supervise the working party members and he/she will normally be identified by wearing an orange high-viz jacket/vest.
- Volunteers will be encouraged to wear yellow high-viz vests, provided by FOLK, during work parties.
- At the start of each working party the Leader will brief the volunteers on the work planned for that session and identify any special issues or risks that apply.
- A list of all volunteers attending will be recorded by the Leader at the start of each working party.
- New volunteers will be given a fuller briefing on the way of working and will be subject to closer supervision until they and the Leader are confident in their abilities.
- The Leader will be in possession of the following during the working party:
 - o The list of volunteers attending;
 - o A list of volunteer contact details including emergency contact details;
 - o A list of volunteers with First Aid Training;
 - o A defibrillator- batteries to be tested periodically.
 - o A whistle (to attract attention);
 - o A first-aid kit;
 - o A mobile phone (to enable contact with emergency services if required);
 - o A list of evacuation points agreed with the emergency services;
 - o Eye protectors in case volunteers wish to use them;
 - o Spare gloves if volunteers forget to bring their own.
- The Leader will decide, in consultation with the volunteers, if it is safe and appropriate to start or continue working, e.g. due to weather or ground conditions.



- At the end of the working party the Leader will check that all volunteers have finished working and safely left the site.
- Lone working will not be allowed other than in exceptional circumstances, e.g. where the volunteer is very experienced and the Leader has confidence in their ability.
- Public liability and personal accident insurance is taken out by FOLK to cover the working parties.

Flora and Fauna Survey Management

- Regular flora and fauna surveys (e.g. related to plants and butterflies) are undertaken by volunteers under the direction of Survey Leaders.
- Survey Leaders are responsible for identifying and training/guiding their volunteers and allocating survey areas, techniques to be applied and frequency of surveys.
- Surveys can involve lone working and hence Volunteers need to take due care and attention.

Volunteer Requirements

- Volunteers are strongly advised to wear stout footwear and tough gardening gloves, and advised to wear appropriate clothing, e.g. long-sleeved tops and long trousers to give protection against thorny and stinging vegetation. Other suggestions: footwear with good ankle supports can help when working on slopes; kneepads can help when kneeling on damp or hard surfaces; use of gaiters and hats can provide protection when working close to prickly plants.
- Volunteers are advised to have had a complete course of tetanus inoculations
- Volunteers are sent a link by email to a copy of this document which is held on the FOLK website and are requested to read it and discuss with the Working Party Coordinator any aspects they have queries, comments or advice on. A record is kept of when each new volunteer is sent such a link, and when each existing volunteer is notified of an update to this document.
- Volunteers should assess their own competence and fitness to undertake the planned work and advise the Working Party Leader of any concerns. Volunteers are not obliged to undertake any work or duties they are not comfortable with.
- Volunteers should take rest breaks when they feel the need.
- Volunteers who arrive after the start of a working party session or who leave before its end should advise the Working Party Leader so that the list of attendees can be amended accordingly.
- Volunteers are advised not to bring pets, e.g. dogs, along to work parties unless they are required for assistance purposes, e.g. hearing dogs.
- All volunteers are asked to respect their fellow volunteers, and any other persons they come into contact with during their volunteering, and not indulge in any inappropriate behaviour. Should any behaviour be considered inappropriate it should be reported to the Working Party Leader or Working Party Coordinator, or, to a member of the FOLK Executive Committee who will give it due consideration, consulting others as appropriate. Any volunteer deemed to have acted inappropriately could be banned from FOLK and working parties. The final decision will be made by The Officers of FOLK.

Other Information

- Other information related to work parties and other FOLK activities can be found on the FOLK website www.leckhamptonhill.org.uk, e.g. related to the public liability and personal accident insurance policy.



Risk Assessments

The risk assessments listed below have been prepared and are detailed in the following pages:

- RA01 – General Access
- RA02 – General Working
- RA03 – Use of Hand Tools
- RA04 – Use of Powered Tools
- RA05 – Use of Fires
- RA06 – Chemical Handling
- RA07 – Interactions with Other Workers
- RA08 – Interactions with the General Public
- RA09 – Guided Walks and Other Site Visits
- RA10 – Public Meetings
- RA11 – Flora & Fauna Surveys
- RA12 – Litter Picking
- RA13 – COVID-19

RA01 to RA08, RA12 and RA13 relate mainly to the FOLK conservation working parties and risks, primarily, to the FOLK volunteers. RA09 and RA10 relate to other FOLK activities. RA11 relates to survey work.

Risk Assessment RA01 – General Access

Leckhampton Hill, Charlton Kings Common, Daisy Bank Fields, Cowslip Meadow, Reversion Fields and Hopkins Fields have a wide variety of surfaces and topography: unmade roads, bridleways, footpaths, tracks, grassland, scrub areas, woodland; level areas, gradual inclines, steep slopes, sheer cliff or quarry faces; dry areas, wet areas (particularly after rain). This risk assessment is associated with working party members moving between the meeting point and the site of the planned work, commonly carrying tools.

Hazard/Issue	Risk Control Measure
Slips, trips and falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear stout footwear suitable for the conditions • Be aware of the extant conditions, e.g. slippery or muddy surfaces, the potential for rocks, roots, holes, etc. • Watch your footing and avoid being distracted • Avoid approaching close to steep or sheer drop-offs • Take particular care when traversing steep slopes • Apply general common sense
Carrying tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers to only carry tools (types and numbers) that are well within their capability • Carry tools in such a way as to avoid injury to self or others in the event of a slip, trip or fall, e.g. keep a safe distance from others when carrying pointed tools such as forks
Vehicles, horse riders, cyclists, runners, dog walkers, walkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of the potential to come across other users of the site, potentially appearing silently, suddenly or from behind, and give them space • Attract the attention of other volunteers if they appear unaware of such approaching interactions
Grazing animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware that grazing animals, e.g. cattle, are allowed to roam relatively freely on Charlton Kings Common at certain times of the year although their movements within the physically fenced areas may be controlled by the NoFence system¹. At times the cattle may be moved into other areas on the site including the Reversion Fields, Cowslip Meadow and Hopkins Fields. • Avoid getting too close to the animals if they appear to be unaware of your presence • Avoid walking through groups of animals or between mothers and their young

¹ The NoFence system comprises collars worn by the adult cattle which are GPS controlled by an App operated by the Grazier which allows invisible fence lines to be drawn to further restrict the movement of the collar-wearing cattle. Note that the young cattle that may accompany the adult cattle may not be wearing collars and hence can move outside these electronically restricted areas.



Electric fences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An electric fence is installed around Charlton Kings Common and is normally activated when cattle are present. Occasionally temporary fenced areas may also be installed. Volunteers should avoid touching the fences with their persons or by tools.• If working close to electrified fences, if appropriate, the Working Party Leader should arrange for the fence to be temporarily turned off
Adders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be aware that adders exist on the site, can be distinguished by their diamond markings, and have a poisonous bite• Although the likelihood of seeing one is low, if spotted leave well alone• Wear stout footwear• If bitten, notify the Leader and seek immediate First Aid² and A&E treatment
Ticks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check for ticks. Most common in wet and warm weather in spring and summer. Tick remover to be added to First Aid kit.

² Keep the part of the body that has been bitten as still as possible to prevent the venom spreading around the body. You may want to secure the bitten body part with a sling (a supportive bandage) or a splint (a rigid support that helps keep the body part stable).

Remove any jewellery or watches from the bitten limb because they could cut into your skin if the limb swells.

Risk Assessment RA02 – General Working

The locations where work is undertaken during the working parties can be varied as described under RA01 above. Therefore the hazards identified above under RA01, and the associated risk control measures, are applicable during the working phase of the working parties. Additional hazards are addressed below.

Hazard/Issue	Risk Control Measure
Uneven work surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure footing is stable before working • Wear stout footwear with appropriate soles • Take care when moving around the working area and on steep slopes
Thorny, stinging vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear suitable clothing, e.g. long-sleeved tops and long trousers • Wear tough gardening gloves or similar • Wear hats and/or eye protectors (carried by the Leader) where appropriate
Lifting, carrying, dragging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only move items well within your capability • Divide loads or share with others • Apply good manual handling techniques, e.g. bend legs and not the back • Take care with footing and choose a suitable route
Exposure to weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear suitable protection for sun, rain, snow, cold, etc. • If wet, rain, frost or snow conditions, assess the situation and decide if it is safe to work, e.g. too slippery to work on slopes
Others working nearby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of volunteers working nearby and any potential interactions • Keep a safe distance between workers when swinging or long-handled tools are being used • Ensure area is clear when felling saplings or small trees (see RA03 below) • When working on slopes be aware of the potential for items to roll downhill and their potential effects on others • Warn others working nearby when felling saplings/trees or rolling items downhill
Rock falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid working in areas where there could be rock falls (rock falls are not common but not all rock faces are fully stable) • If working nearby such an area is necessary, a lookout with a whistle is to be posted to warn of any problems • If working close by or under such areas, hard hats should be worn
Tiredness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers should take rest breaks to avoid tiredness • Repetitive movements should be varied or broken

Risk Assessment RA03 – Use of Hand Tools

Working parties are normally undertaken using hand tools provided by FOLK. These include: loppers, saws, shears, slashers, forks and rakes for scrub and sapling/tree clearance; drivealls (post rammers) and crowbars for fencing work; spades, hammers and saws for footpath and step maintenance.

The general working hazards and associated risk control measures identified above in RA02 apply when working with hand tools. Additional hazards are identified below.

Hazard/Issue	Risk Control Measure
Worn or damaged tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FOLK tool store contents (including brushcutters and the mower referenced in RA04) to be inspected at least annually and any worn or damaged tools to be repaired or disposed of and replaced. Records should be kept of such inspections. • Damaged or faulty tools (e.g. loose handles, blunt saws with missing teeth or insufficient blade tension) are not to be used, • Volunteers to check tools before and during use and report any problems to the Working Party Leader
Incorrect tool usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the most appropriate tool for the job • Use a saw rather than loppers for thicker materials (the recommended maximum cutting capacity for loppers is about 2-3cm or about the thickness of an adult thumb) • Use extending loppers to improve reach and not to provide additional leverage • Keep a good distance from others when working • New volunteers to be advised by the Working Party Leader in the correct use of tools and monitored until deemed to be competent
Tree felling and branch removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The maximum size of trees to be felled by FOLK volunteers using hand tools is 4in or 10cm diameter and 20ft or 6m height (this is a condition of the third party liability and personal accident insurance policy) • When felling large saplings, small trees or branches, ensure that other workers are a safe distance away • Ensure that any damaged or hanging branches are fully cut and removed • Ensure that felled trees and removed branches are left in a safe position at the end of the work, e.g. that they can't fall or slide any further
Overhead working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take care if working with tools overhead so as to avoid strain and tiring work • Use appropriate tools to avoid stretching, e.g. extending loppers or pole saw • Work from a position where harm will not be caused by falling objects



Use of drivealls (post rammers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Care to be taken when lifting a rammer on to a post, the person steadying the post to keep hands well clear• Preferably 2 people rather than just 1 to operate the rammer• Avoid one person standing lower than the other• Don't lift the rammer too high while ramming so as to avoid the rammer coming off the post and potentially falling on an operator
Use of swinging tools (e.g. slashers, hammers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep a safe distance from other people - the safe distance away is at least twice the combined length of your arm and the tool that you are using. Be aware of those around you. Stop if anyone comes too close• If you need to attract the attention of someone using a slasher, call out: do not walk up to them.• Consider removing gloves to achieve a better grip, particularly when wet
Tools not in use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When tools are not in use, or put down temporarily, ensure they are left in a safe condition and visible position
Untidy site	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep the site, tools and materials reasonably tidy• Keep work areas clear and reasonably tidy, removing clippings/cuttings frequently• Check the site at the end of a work party to ensure that all tools have been collected and that the site is left safe and tidy

Risk Assessment RA04 – Use of Powered Tools

FOLK own and use powered brush cutters and a powered all-terrain mower. These pose potentially significant risks that require control measures, e.g. brush cutters have partially exposed fast-rotating blades. The mower does not have exposed blades but is heavy and power driven.

FOLK volunteers do not use chainsaws but may work in proximity to those who do (see RA07 below).

Brush Cutter

Hazard/Issue	Risk Control Measure
Operator training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers are not allowed to use the brush cutters without having received training from a certified instructor and being able to demonstrate competence At least one volunteer should have undergone formal training in brush cutter use and should be the lead trainer(s)/assessor(s) for other volunteers A volunteer new to using brush cutters should initially receive instruction from another experienced volunteer and be supervised during their initial usage until they have demonstrated adequate competence A register will be maintained by the Working Party Coordinator to record the names of all those trained and competent to use brush cutters, and those deemed capable of training new users
Operator protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operators to wear stout footwear, tough gardening gloves, long trousers, dedicated brush cutter harness, a hard hat with mesh face guard and ear defenders and safety glasses Operators to check the machines before use for any faults or damage, e.g. that handles are correctly positioned and secure and that blades are not unduly damaged. Faulty machines are not to be used Operators to maintain firm footing, especially on slopes or potentially slippery surfaces Operators to check the area for any potential hazards before starting work to be aware of and avoid the blade contacting items that could cause damage to the machine, e.g. rocks, trees, wires, posts, walls Operators need to be aware of dog waste bags left in areas they are working in. The engine is to be stopped before removing the cutter from the harness, e.g. to clear away debris or cuttings from around the blades or work area, and when refuelling



Protection of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All persons to remain at least 10m away from an operating cutter (there is potential danger from the rotating blade and items thrown up by the cutter)• A dedicated assistant is to be allocated to brush cutting to act as a lookout, i.e. eyes and ears, for the operator/s, e.g. to warn of others approaching, and to assist with clearing cut materials from the working area.• The assistant is to approach no closer than 5m to the operator without attracting the operator's attention and the operator ceasing cutting and disengaging or stopping the motor.• The operator is to maintain awareness of the location of the assistant and be prepared to react to any signals from them• The assistant to maintain attention to the operator/s and surroundings and be prepared to warn the operator
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All Terrain Mower

Hazard/Issue	Risk Control Measure
Operator training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteers are not allowed to use the mower without having received training and being able to demonstrate competence• A volunteer new to using the mower should initially receive instruction from another experienced volunteer and be supervised during their initial usage until they have demonstrated adequate competence• A register will be maintained by the Working Party Coordinator to record the names of all those trained and competent to use the mower, and those deemed capable of training new users
Operator protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The operator to wear stout footwear; gloves are optional, the key is to have a firm grip on the mower handles• The operator to check the machine is in a suitable condition prior to use• An appropriate gear to be selected so as to ensure the machine speed is such as to be able to maintain control at all times.• Operator needs to be mindful of exposed scythe blades on the new mower• The mower is not to be used if the ground is too rough or steep, or the vegetation too thick to cut correctly
Protection of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All persons to keep at least 5m away from the mower• The operator to maintain awareness of the location of others and to stop the mower if getting too close.• All to be aware that the new mower has exposed scythe blades.

General

Hazard/Issue	Risk Control Measure
Operator tiredness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Machine operation is tiring work. The operator should take regular breaks or handover to a fresher competent operator



Fuel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spare fuel (petrol/oil mix) is to be kept in an appropriate container placed in a visible location away from the working machine/s and any ignition sources, e.g. fires• The motor is to be stopped, and the engine allowed to cool if necessary, before refilling away from any ignition sources
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The machines are to be regularly inspected and maintained/serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's handbook

Risk Assessment RA05 – Use of Fires

A regular working party activity is scrub clearance with the resulting debris being burnt in bonfires. Fires are not used by volunteers for in-situ clearance purposes.

Hazard/Issue	Risk Control Measure
Fire spreading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fires are to be located where there is minimal risk of damage to any of the important conservation features of the site and on as level a site as possible • The fire site should be chosen with care to minimise the risk of fire spreading, e.g. use previously used sites, keeping clear of dry vegetation and overhanging trees or scrub • Fires should be kept small, or not started at all, under very strong or gusty wind conditions • The fire should be kept to a manageable size and fed steadily with suitable cut-down sized items
Fire control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A designated fire attendant should remain with the fire throughout the working party and be in control of its feeding and size • Fire attendants should wear suitable non-flammable clothing • Volunteers should be aware that fires can emit sparks and hot particles which can land on clothing and exposed skin. Protection, such as wearing hats, and keeping a suitable distance from the fire can mitigate any damage. Also, it should be noted that standing too close to a hot fire can impair modern plastic lens coatings • Long handled forks should be used to move/arrange items on the fire so as to avoid working too close to the fire • A helmet with face guard will be available to wear in close proximity to fires • Flammable liquids are not to be used to assist starting fires; fire lighters are acceptable • Flammable liquids, e.g. fuel for powered tools, are to be kept well away from fires • Dangerous materials, e.g. aerosol cans, are not to be added to fires • While the fire is burning the fire attendant will watch out for any sparks, blown embers or flames that might spread the fire and put out any that occur. Fire beater tools should be located near the fire site when circumstances dictate. • At the end of a working party the fire should be allowed to die down and the edges made tidy • A fire should only be left after it has died down and there is confidence that the fire will not spread

Risk Assessment RA06 – Chemical Handling

The main chemicals used during working parties are for stump poisoning after cutting to prevent regrowth, and potentially weed killers.

Hazard/Issue	Risk Control Measure
Correct usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least one volunteer on a work party where chemicals are used should have undergone formal training in chemicals application. Such trained volunteers can direct and supervise the application of chemicals by other volunteers Only chemicals and concentrations appropriate for the desired treatment are to be used The Material Safety Data Sheet for the specific chemical is to be obtained and the stated requirements/recommendations are to be complied with A register will be maintained by the Working Party Coordinator to record the names of all those who have undergone formal training in the use of chemicals
Mixing of chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) should be worn when mixing chemicals and filling spraying equipment (face guards, nitrile gloves and coveralls are available within FOLK's equipment inventory) Dye should be added to chemical mixes to aid identification of sprayed surfaces Only a person having undergone formal training should handle full strength chemicals Other volunteers not having undergone formal training should only handle suitably diluted mixes
Knapsack spraying of chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate PPE is to be worn when spraying, e.g. wellington boots, nitrile gloves, etc. Spraying equipment should be checked before use, e.g. for leaks Others should be kept a suitable distance away from the spraying In order to avoid damage to flora and fauna, spraying should be carefully targeted on the plants to be treated
Hand spraying of chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gloves should be worn when using hand sprayers Sprayers should be held away from the body and face when being used Attention should be paid to the wind direction and potential for bounce-back of spray and appropriate adjustments made to body and hand positions
Use of 'dabbers' for chemical application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dabber bottles with sponge applicators are the preferred method of chemical application as they are easier to control and they minimise the quantity of chemical used Dabbers are smaller and less robust than hand sprayers and care needs to be taken to ensure that they are not damaged Gloves should be used when handling dabbers



Damage to chemical applicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Care should be taken when using any form of chemical applicator to avoid damage and potential leaks• Applicators should be checked by users for leaks at the start and during the work party• If any applicators are found to be leaking the Work Party Leader should be advised immediately
Contamination by chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any accidental contamination of skin by chemicals should be wiped or washed off immediately• Any clothing or gloves accidentally contaminated should be washed as soon as practicable
Storage of chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stocks of chemicals are to be kept secure in a locked storage area within an enclosed, transparent plastic container of suitable capacity to contain any possible leakage
Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Records are to be kept by the Work Party Coordinator of the type and quantity of all chemicals stored, and, when, where and how much chemicals have been applied



Risk Assessment RA07 – Interactions with Other Workers

FOLK volunteers occasionally work alongside or nearby others such as the CBC Senior Ranger, Community Service people, contractors, Cotswold Voluntary Wardens and the site Grazier. The interactions with these others need to be managed appropriately, e.g. their use of chainsaws, vehicles, etc.

Hazard/Issue	Risk Control Measure
Interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The FOLK Working Party Leader is to liaise with others working in the same area or nearby and;<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Brief the others on what work FOLK is planning to do and the salient risk control measures that will be used, e.g. safe clearance distances;o Establish what work the others are to be doing, what interactions could occur and what controls measures need to be applied, e.g. clearance distance from chainsaw work and tree felling;o Brief the FOLK working party volunteers accordingly;o If appropriate, appoint a FOLK volunteer to monitor interactions and act as a lookout for FOLK volunteers, e.g. to warn if volunteers or other workers are encroaching on safety clearance zones.• FOLK volunteers to keep vigilant when working near others, and respond accordingly to advice from the Working Party Leader and/or FOLK lookout• Be careful when handling and carrying spiky material such as hawthorn.• Carry tools safely to and from tasks – briefing to be given to new volunteers• Occasionally FOLK volunteers are asked to assist the Grazier in moving cattle. In these situations the Grazier is in control, not the Working Party Leader, and will instruct volunteers accordingly• Occasionally other groups, e.g. other volunteer organisations or local company staff, offer to undertake work with FOLK. In these circumstances, FOLK would normally take the lead role and the contents of this document would apply.



Risk Assessment RA08 – Interactions with the General Public

FOLK working parties are undertaken in areas that are accessible to the general public and that can be criss-crossed by paths and tracks used by them. As such it is possible for there to be interactions with the likes of walkers, dog walkers, runners, bikers, horse riders, hang gliders, model aircraft flyers, 2 and 4 wheeled vehicles.

Hazard/Issue	Risk Control Measure
Interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where paths or tracks pass through a work area, if considered appropriate, warning signs are to be positioned on the edges of the work area to warn people entering the area• Depending on the work being undertaken and the potential impacts on or by passers-by, if considered appropriate, appoint a FOLK volunteer to act as lookout and to warn the volunteers, and the passers-by, of each others presence, e.g. by using a whistle• Volunteers should wear hi-viz vests to make them visible to others



Risk Assessment RA09 – Guided Walks & Other Site Visits

Occasionally, FOLK organises and leads guided walks (e.g. tree or bird recognition) and takes other interested groups on to the site. Normally, conservation work is not undertaken during such walks/visits and hence the bulk of the contents of the risk assessments above, other than for RA01 – General Access, will not be applicable. If work is to be undertaken, e.g. during some school visits, then appropriate notice should be taken of all the above risk assessments

Hazard/Issue	Risk Control Measure
Briefing and control	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Among the participating FOLK volunteer guides, one will be designated as the Leader for the visit• The Leader will give a safety briefing at the start of the visit covering the issues relevant to the areas to be visited, e.g. their topography and potential underfoot conditions• All visitors to be wearing appropriate clothing and footwear for the conditions• The number of participants should be limited to a maximum of 20 adults or 10 children per guide• Participants should be kept away from any potential hazards, e.g. unstable rock faces or the edges of drop offs• Where visits require close access to hazards then the wearing of appropriate safety equipment should be considered, e.g. hard hats for geologists or fossil hunters investigating rock faces
School parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These will usually be organised by CBC who may ask for assistance from FOLK• Prior to the visit there must be close liaison between CBC and FOLK, and the school as appropriate, to agree particulars of the visit, e.g. development of a specific risk assessment, identification of responsibilities

Risk Assessment RA10 – Public Meetings

FOLK occasionally hold public meetings, normally in public halls, e.g. the annual general meeting and talks.

Hazard/Issue	Risk Control Measure
Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A FOLK member is to be designated and identified as the Leader for the meeting • The Leader should make themselves aware of any particular rules/requirements of the venue owner • The Leader should commence the meeting with a safety briefing, e.g. indicate the emergency exit routes and assembly points • Any equipment or materials brought in or used for the event should be assembled and protected appropriately, e.g. display boards erected on a stable surface and any wiring either routed or protected to avoid trip hazards • At the end of the meeting, the Leader should check that all attendees have left the venue and that all equipment and materials have either been removed or left in a safe condition



Risk Assessment RA11 - Flora & Fauna Surveys

FOLK undertakes regular flora and fauna surveys, e.g. related to plants and butterflies. Such surveys involve the use/carrying of materials such as notebooks/clipboards, species identification charts and possibly quadrats, but do not involve the use of hand or power tools (e.g. as referred to in RA03 and RA04 above).

The general access and working issues addressed in RA01 and RA02 above will apply to survey work and should be taken into account.

Survey work can involve lone working.

Hazard/Issue	Risk Control Measure
Briefing and control	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Survey Leaders should brief the volunteers on the survey areas, routes and methodology they should follow and the proposed frequency of the surveys• Volunteers should report back to their Leader on the results of their surveys and any hazards/issues encountered• Leaders should adjust the survey plans and procedures as necessary to take account of this feedback
Lone Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteers should take particular care when lone working, e.g. with respect to slips, trips or falls (refer to RA01 and RA02 above)• Hand or power tools (as referred to in RA03 and RA04 above) should not be used when lone working• Lone workers should ideally:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o notify someone when and where they are lone working and when they expect to returno carry a mobile phone for use in an emergency

Risk Assessment RA12 - Litter Picking

FOLK on occasion undertake litter picking on the site, and sometimes off-site. The general working hazard and associated risk control measures identified above in RA02 will apply where relevant. Additional hazards are identified below.

Hazard/Issue	Risk Control Measure
Volunteer protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter pickers and strong plastic rubbish bags should be used • Only handle litter when wearing suitable gloves • Take particular care when picking up sharp litter, e.g. broken glass, and when placing it in rubbish bags, e.g. to avoid bags being torn and spilling their contents • Do not touch anything that may be dangerous, including needles or syringes (FOLK has a 'sharps box' that can be used for such items), human and animal waste (unless already bagged), blood or anything that is suspect. Report any such occurrences to the Working Party Leader who will contact CBC for advice and removal • Do not overfill bags so they become too heavy to comfortably handle or potentially split • Leave collected litter in a suitable location for collection/removal by, and in agreement with, CBC



Risk Assessment RA13 – COVID-19

An addendum to cover COVID-19 issues was prepared and formally issued in June 2020. This was held as a separate document as it was necessary to update it on a more frequent basis than the biennial review of the full FOLK 'Health& Safety Statements and Risk Assessment' document.

As of 19th July 2021 the government lifted all legal restrictions associated with COVID 19 and hence this addendum was rescinded. However, as per Government advice, all volunteers are asked to remain cautious and take appropriate precautions to protect their own health and that of others.

Should another pandemic or other national health issue arise in the future then consideration will be given to issuing another appropriate addendum in a similar manner.



Working with Children, Vulnerable Adults and Persons with Disabilities

FOLK are willing to consider working with children (defined as being under 18), vulnerable adults and those with disabilities but certain constraints have to be applied, see below, and for each potential occurrence the final decision resides with the Working Party Coordinator and the particular Working Party Leader. FOLK volunteers will not normally take responsibilities for such persons during work parties, the onus for this will normally reside with their attending parent, teacher, carer or other responsible adult.

Children

FOLK work parties are covered by Public Liability and Personal Accident insurance. A guidance document previously issued by the insurers provided the following advice, in a question and answer format, which FOLK will follow:

ARE WE INSURED TO WORK WITH CHILDREN?

Yes but we recommend that you are not directly responsible for them and have a teacher, parent or leader present. If this is not possible you should obtain parental consent for the child to be with your group, for them to be carrying out conservation work and for emergency treatment at a hospital or doctors, should it be necessary. Appropriately sized safety equipment and clothing should be made available and risk assessments must cover the fact that children are taking part.

DO WE NEED TO BE DBS (FORMERLY CRB) CHECKED IF CHILDREN ARE ATTENDING OUR PROJECTS?

DBS checks are only required if a group member is having regular, unsupervised contact with a child or vulnerable adult. Regular contact could be daily or weekly over a medium to long period. Unsupervised means an adult left alone with a child. A child is a person under the age of 18.

WHAT SUPERVISION RATIOS ARE ADVISED WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN?

Children under 4 should not take part in practical conservation work.

Children age 4 to 8 must be supervised by one adult to five children.

Groups should not take direct responsibility for children under the age of 8, they should be accompanied by a parent or guardian whenever possible (or teacher/leader in the case of group activities).

Children age 9 to 14 must be supervised by one adult to every 8 children.

Children over 14 only require close supervision when using sharp edged tools, power tools, trimmers and mowers.

ARE THERE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHILDREN USING TOOLS?

Yes, we recommend the following minimum ages for the use of certain tools. Training, close supervision and PPE should be provided at all times.

Children's plastic hand tools – from 4 years.

Gardening tools, small hand saws, pruners and hammers – from 8 years.

Carpentry tools – from 12 years.



Larger sharp edged tools, bill hooks, mattocks and crowbars – from 14 years.

Strimmers and mowers, small power tools – from 16 years.

Power driven machinery including chainsaws, brushcutters, tractors etc. – from 18 years.

On occasions young people ask to join FOLK working parties as part of their efforts to gain Duke of Edinburgh Awards. This is normally welcomed and supported but the above needs to be taken into account. As such the standard practice is to invite the parent, or other appropriate adult, to attend the first working party alongside their child so they can fully appreciate what happens on a typical work party. At this first working party the Working Party Leader will assess the capabilities and aptitude of the child. Provided FOLK and the parent are satisfied with the outcome then the parent will be asked to provide written consent for their child to attend future working parties, unaccompanied if thought appropriate. When the child (normally a teenager) attends future working parties they will be treated the same as other volunteers, albeit with closer supervision and guidance as required.

Vulnerable Adults

Before vulnerable adults are allowed to attend work parties the specifics of the situation should be fully considered by Working Party Coordinator and specific Working Party Leader along with the vulnerable adult's carers, e.g. the planned work, its location, the ground and weather conditions, risks, etc.

Should it be agreed that a vulnerable adult, or adults, be allowed to join a work party then they should be accompanied by their carer/s who will be responsible for them throughout the work party. The carer/s should seek advice from the Working Party Leader about any specifics related to the work being undertaken, the location and the conditions.

Persons with Disabilities

Because of the nature of the working areas, e.g. steep, uneven and slippery surfaces, it may not always be possible to safely accommodate persons with disabilities on working parties.

Before persons with disabilities are allowed to attend work parties the specifics of the situation should be fully considered by Working Party Coordinator and specific Working Party Leader along with the person with disabilities and/or their carers, e.g. the nature of the disability, the planned work, its location, the ground and weather conditions, risks, etc.

Should it be agreed that a person or persons with disability be allowed to join a work party then they should be accompanied, where necessary, by their appropriate support staff/carers who will be responsible for them throughout the work party. The supporters/carers should seek advice from the Working Party Leader about any specifics related to the work being undertaken, the location and the conditions. Should supporters/carers not be necessary then the Working Party Leader will provide appropriate supervision during the work party.