

## RHSO Maintenance Day Procedures and Risk Assessment

First written on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020 by Rob Richardson

Reviewed on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020 by Rob Richardson

Next review due by 29<sup>th</sup> February 2021

### Scope

This risk assessment covers maintenance activities in the orchard, including:

- Pruning of veteran trees
- Pruning of young trees
- Maintenance of the hedge
- Maintenance of the ditch
- Maintenance of the paths and access routes

Examples of tasks not covered by this assessment:

- Events to which the general public are invited to the orchard (e.g., apple day, wassail).
- Fires on the site (for example, for the disposal of pruned wood).
- Events involving serving of food or hot drinks.

### In the event of an accident, injury or medical emergency

1. At least one person with suitable medical or first aid training must be present at maintenance days. A first aid kit (including eye wash) must be available.
2. The **nearest public defibrillator** is at **High Wych Memorial Hall**. Access code available from 999 operators.
3. The **nearest A&E** facilities are at: **Princess Alexandra Hospital, Harlow**.
4. **Emergency services** should be directed to the **Rivers Hospital** and met by the **access road near the orchard entrance in the southern corner** (over the footbridge). Vehicle access to the site is difficult, so it is likely that casualties will need to be evacuated over the footbridge.

5. The footbridge What3Words location is **///[hang.stud.groom](#)**. The GPS location is: **51.808525,0.132483**.
6. Some mobile phone networks have poor signal in the orchard. The signal is usually much better closer to High Wych Road.

### General Statements

1. This risk assessment should be reviewed: annually; when tasks not covered by this assessment are performed; if an accident occurs; or when methods change.
2. Rivers Heritage Site and Orchard (RHSO) volunteers manage the Rivers Nursery Orchard (the orchard) on community maintenance days. The group consists of several volunteers with varying experience. This risk assessment is to be used in with the management plan and other policy documents (available from [www.rhso.co.uk/committee.php](http://www.rhso.co.uk/committee.php)).
3. In addition to the RHSO committee ([www.rhso.co.uk/committee.php](http://www.rhso.co.uk/committee.php)), the people are involved in managing maintenance days are shown below, although tasks may be delegated to other volunteers with suitable experience. Questions regarding maintenance activities should be communicated to them directly, or via [rhso1725@gmail.com](mailto:rhso1725@gmail.com).

Adrienne Richardson (maintenance day organiser)

Rob Richardson (supervisor of tree pruning)

### General safety rules for orchard maintenance

1. No power tools to be used during maintenance days. Suitably experienced operators (not working alone), or professional contractors may use power tools at other times. Pruning live wood should use hand tools only.
2. All maintenance work is to be conducted by ground level operators using pole tools where needed. No ladders or platforms to be used on volunteer maintenance days. Do not climb trees to conduct maintenance activities.
3. The person responsible for tree pruning must assess large pruning tasks in advance. Professional help should be sought if volunteers cannot conduct the task safely.

4. RHSO must provide suitable safety equipment and PPE (e.g., gloves, hard hats, safety glasses) for volunteers to wear and instruct on its use.
5. Training of new volunteers to conduct work safely is the responsibility of RHSO volunteers overseeing the work. This can be done during maintenance tasks and does not require special sessions.
6. Children (under 18) must be supervised by a named person.
7. Work conducted by children or volunteers with disabilities must be assessed with respect to the abilities of the individuals involved and the RHSO safeguarding policy (found at [www.rhso.co.uk/committee.php](http://www.rhso.co.uk/committee.php)).
8. All tools should be inspected, in good condition and sharpened when necessary. Damaged tools must not be used.
9. Volunteers should not work alone in the orchard on more dangerous tasks, including, but not limited to: use of power tools; pruning of large branches from veteran trees or the hedge; or pruning of any heavy branches above head height.
10. The pruning advice in the management plan is written to minimise risk to the trees, the tools and the operators and must be observed.
11. Volunteers performing maintenance activities must keep watch for members of the public (or animals). If members of the public may be put at risk by maintenance work, work should stop or a verbal warning be given if stopping work will not prevent the danger, e.g., if a large branch has been partially cut.
12. Volunteers not directly involved in the maintenance task should keep a safe distance from the work being conducted.

### **Risk Assessment for Specific Activities**

**Users / operators:** person directly performing a task of using equipment.

**Assistants:** persons assisting a user/operator perform a task.

**Instructors:** Experienced RHSO volunteers responsible for training others

**Observers:** RHSO volunteers watching or being instructed in a task, not directly involved.

**Public:** Non RHSO volunteers who may be present on site.

Instructors / operators are responsible for the safety of trainees/assistants and the public/observers.

### Pruning trees and hedge maintenance

<b>Task / Hazard</b>	<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Who is at risk</b>	<b>Control measures</b>	<b>Risk level (H/M/L)</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
Use of saws / pruners	Sharps	Users Assistants Public	Instruction / training + assessment of individuals abilities Guard tools not in use Safe storage of tools Gardening gloves available First aiders and kit available	L	Instructors Operators
Pruning at height (pole tools only)	Heavy branches	Users Assistants Instructors  Public	Lighten branches Consider paths of falling / swinging branches. Only operators/assistants in work area Hard hats available Stop if public approach, or warn if danger is imminent First aiders and kit available	M	Instructors Operators Observers
	Sawdust	Users Assistants Instructors Public	Eye protection available Stand upwind Eye wash available Stop work or warn public First aiders and kit available  For hedge maintenance, prune trees at the lowest level possible and wear eye protection (branches on neighbouring trees).	M	Instructors Operators Observers

Manual handling (branches)	Heavy loads	Operators	Assess task based on individuals ability	M	Instructors Operators
	Sharp branches	All	Lighten braches or cut into convenient shape Gardening gloves available First aiders and kit available	L	
Pruned branches	Trip	All	Remove branches to safe location ASAP	L	Instructors Operators
Uneven or wet ground	Poor footing	All	Assess if ground is suitable for task beforehand. For hedge maintenance, consider surrounding trees and use eye protection.	L	Instructors Operators
Bees, wasps, etc	Sting Allergies	Operators	Pay particular attention during summer / fruiting months Assess if operators have severe allergies First aiders and kit available	L	Instructors Operators

#### Ditch maintenance

<b>Task / Hazard</b>	<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Who is at risk</b>	<b>Control measures</b>	<b>Risk level (H/M/L)</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
Tools	As above	As above	As for pruning	M	Instructors Operators
Steep sides	Injury	Operators	Adequate footwear Assess ground conditions	L	Instructors Operators
Bees, wasps, etc	Sting Allergies	Operators	Pay particular attention during summer / fruiting months Assess if operators have severe allergies First aiders and kit available	L	Instructors Operators

## Ground maintenance

<b>Task / Hazard</b>	<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Who is at risk</b>	<b>Control measures</b>	<b>Risk level (H/M/L)</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
Grass cutting (hand tools)	Sharps	Operators Assistants Public	Instruction / training + assessment of individuals abilities Guard tools not in use Safe storage of tools Gardening gloves available First aiders and kit available	L	Operators
Bridge	Falls Overgrown branches	All	Keep surface in good condition and non-slippery (in Winter) Prune branches from around bridge	L	Committee
Paths	Overgrown branches	All	Train trees so that branches do not overgrow main paths below head height	L	Committee
Grass cutting (power tools)	Injury	Operators Assistants Public	Ensure tools in good condition No lone working Not to be performed on group maintenance days Operators to be suitable experiences First aid kit available Stop if public approach Only operator to be in the working area Assess ground conditions Adequate footwear	M	Instructors Operators