



# All Saints Churchyard

## GREENSPACE ACTION PLAN, 2022 - 2027

### BRIEFING DOCUMENT

Produced by:



On behalf of:



HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

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A five-year Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) is being produced for All Saints Churchyard. This briefing document provides an overview of how the GAP will be produced and sets out how stakeholders can contribute to shaping the plan.

GAPs are essentially map-based management plans that provide focus and direction for the running and improvement of open spaces. They provide a clear, logical process to determine the activities that should take place over a stated period of time to achieve the objectives for the site.

The GAP is being produced by the Countryside Management Service (CMS), part of Hertfordshire County Council's Countryside and Rights of Way Service, on behalf of and in partnership with Hertford Town Council. The completed document will inform the management actions to be undertaken over the next five years, commencing in April 2022.

Engaging communities is integral to the production of GAPs, to ensure that stakeholders are fully aware of and able to interact with the plan production process. This briefing document initiates and supports this community engagement.

The engagement period will run from 23<sup>rd</sup> August to 13<sup>th</sup> September. A further engagement period in October 2021 will provide an opportunity to assess the draft version of the GAP. Please use the contact details in Section 6 to comment on the aspirations for the site.

This document has been broken down into easy to read sections:

Section 2 provides an overview of the site and location map.

Section 3 reviews recent management of the site.

Section 4 contains the core objectives for the All Saints Churchyard GAP.

Section 5 summarises the public engagement methodology, setting out how and when stakeholders can contribute to the plan.

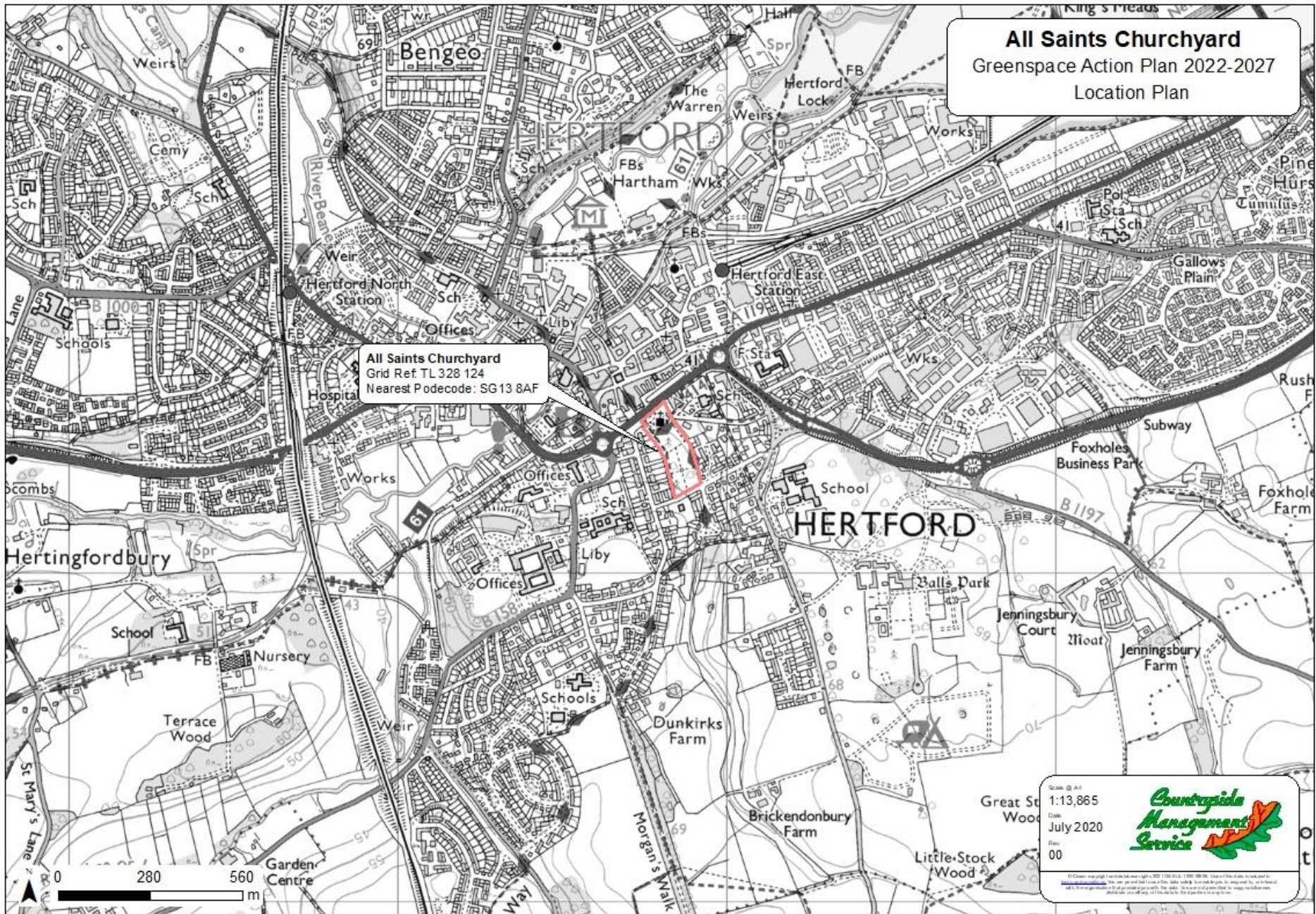
## 2. BACKGROUND

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All Saints Churchyard is owned by All Saints Church and managed by Hertford Town Council and it covers approximately 2.32 hectares. It is located close to the centre of Hertford, just off Gascoyne Way, accessed via Queens Road. It has great historical interest and provides habitat for a range of wildlife. The busy Gascoyne Way is located to the north, Queens Road is located to the west and Hagsdell Road to the south. The Churchyard is thought to date back to at least the 1600s and in the 1960s it was separated from Hertford town centre by the building of Gascoyne Way. The Pearson memorial can be found within the churchyard towards the south end forming a centre to four pathways. This is a memorial to the Pearson family who lived in Brickendonbury House which was the house of the Liberty of Brickendon in which All Saints Church used to stand.

The churchyard has three main management types. Most of the churchyard is close mown grass, there is a small area of grass which is cut and collected annually and some of the area to the south of the site is left unmown. Most of the site is designated as a wildlife site because of the presence of semi-improved neutral grassland with a mix of grasses and herbs. There is a public footpath which runs along the west boundary of the site.

The overall appearance of the churchyard is of headstones in amongst long grass, insects buzzing about and birds in the mature trees. There is line of lime trees parallel to the boundary on the east side of the site. The current management is based on previous advice from the Countryside Management Service and is sympathetic to wildlife. There is a desire to formalise the management of areas defined as conservation cut and lift, close-cut grass or left to be more natural and to put in place a management plan that reflects this. There is desire to further improve the aesthetic and ecological value of the site and update interpretation. This Greenspace Action Plan will provide a structured and targeted approach to future management for the period 2022-2027.



### 3. REVIEW OF PROGRESS

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The site is managed by a grounds maintenance team based at Herford Cemetery. Current management of the site is based on previous advice by the Countryside Management Service and previous surveying based on the Local Wildlife Site designation. Current management operations include:

- Regular cutting of grass around headstones and along the edges of pathways at north end of churchyard.
- Annual cutting of conservation cut and lift (wildflower meadows) areas.
- Areas to the south of the churchyard allowed to become wild.
- The planting of new and replacement trees, at the times required.
- Routine winter maintenance tasks such as leaf clearing, pruning and memorial stability.
- Sweeping and keeping clean and weed free all paths, paved areas and hard surfacing.
- Trees are surveyed and assessed every 3 years with remedial works prioritised undertaken.

The grass on site has been left to grow long over the 2021 growing season, at the request of All Saints Church and in some areas, brambles are beginning to dominate. Also, self-set trees are starting to appear particularly towards the southern end of the site. These small self-set trees are normally removed during the winter months. The GAP will look to formalise some of this existing management processes to ensure that the site remains a safe and welcoming environment.

## **4. GREENSPACE ACTION PLAN (GAP) 2022-2027**

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All Saints Churchyard GAP 2022-2027 will be a simple, easy to read plan for use by officers of Hertford Town Council and members of the public and will act as a guide to the work of volunteers. The plan will be largely map based, with sequential, annual management maps to show the actions planned for each year. The resulting change will be represented on the map for the following year. The document will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and relevant. The plan will be costed, and potential funding sources identified to enable the plan to be delivered.

The aim and objectives based on Green Flag assessment criteria are set out below.

### **Aim**

To provide a welcoming and tranquil setting, attractive and rich in wildlife, where people can come to be with their loved ones or simply relax in peaceful surroundings.

### **Objectives**

#### **A. A welcoming place**

To provide a tranquil and welcoming setting for visitors to All Saints Churchyard.

- A1 Appropriate management of the grass, trees, and shrubs on site so that the appearance of the site is one of a maintained and welcoming space.
- A2 Maintain a network of paths around the site.
- A3 Provide suitable informative signage at the entrances.

#### **B. Healthy, safe and secure**

To ensure that visitors feel safe and secure in the Churchyard.

- B1 Footpaths must be well maintained and safe to use.
- B2 Headstones and monuments must be safe and monitored to ensure that they continue to be safe.
- B3 Ensure that grounds maintenance staff are trained in the use of all machinery and have suitable PPE.

#### **C. Clean and well maintained**

To ensure that the cemetery is clean, tidy and is well maintained.

- C1 Ensure that an effective grounds maintenance regime is in place to uphold the maintenance standards of the site.
- C2 Ensure that the cemetery infrastructure is kept in good condition.

#### **D. Sustainability**

To ensure that the management of the site is as sustainable as possible.

D1 Funding obtained where required for capital works.

D2 Management operations in the cemetery are to be carried sustainably.

D3 Management operations should have limited impact on the surrounding environment.

#### **E. Conservation and Heritage**

To ensure that the habitats present on site are maintained to enhance the biodiversity of the site whilst maintaining the overall character of the site.

E1 Maintain current hedgerows and trees to provide space for wildlife whilst ensuring their safety.

E2 Manage grassland to increase the benefit to biodiversity whilst ensuring that the site remains a feeling of being well maintained.

E3 Relaxed management of areas to the south whilst ensuring maintenance of tended graves.

#### **F. Community Involvement**

Enable bereaved families and volunteers to get involved in the development of the site.

F1 Provide opportunities for CMS practical volunteers to be involved with the management of the site.

F2 Provide opportunities for local community and bereaved families to get involved with the site.

#### **G. Marketing**

Raise awareness of the site and what it has to offer.

G1 Install new interpretation to inform visitors about the management, history and wildlife present.

G2 Promote the site via the website.



## 5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PLAN PRODUCTION PROCESS

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Effective community engagement is at the centre of successful management plans. The value of a GAP is maximised when it incorporates and balances the aspirations of stakeholders and interest groups.

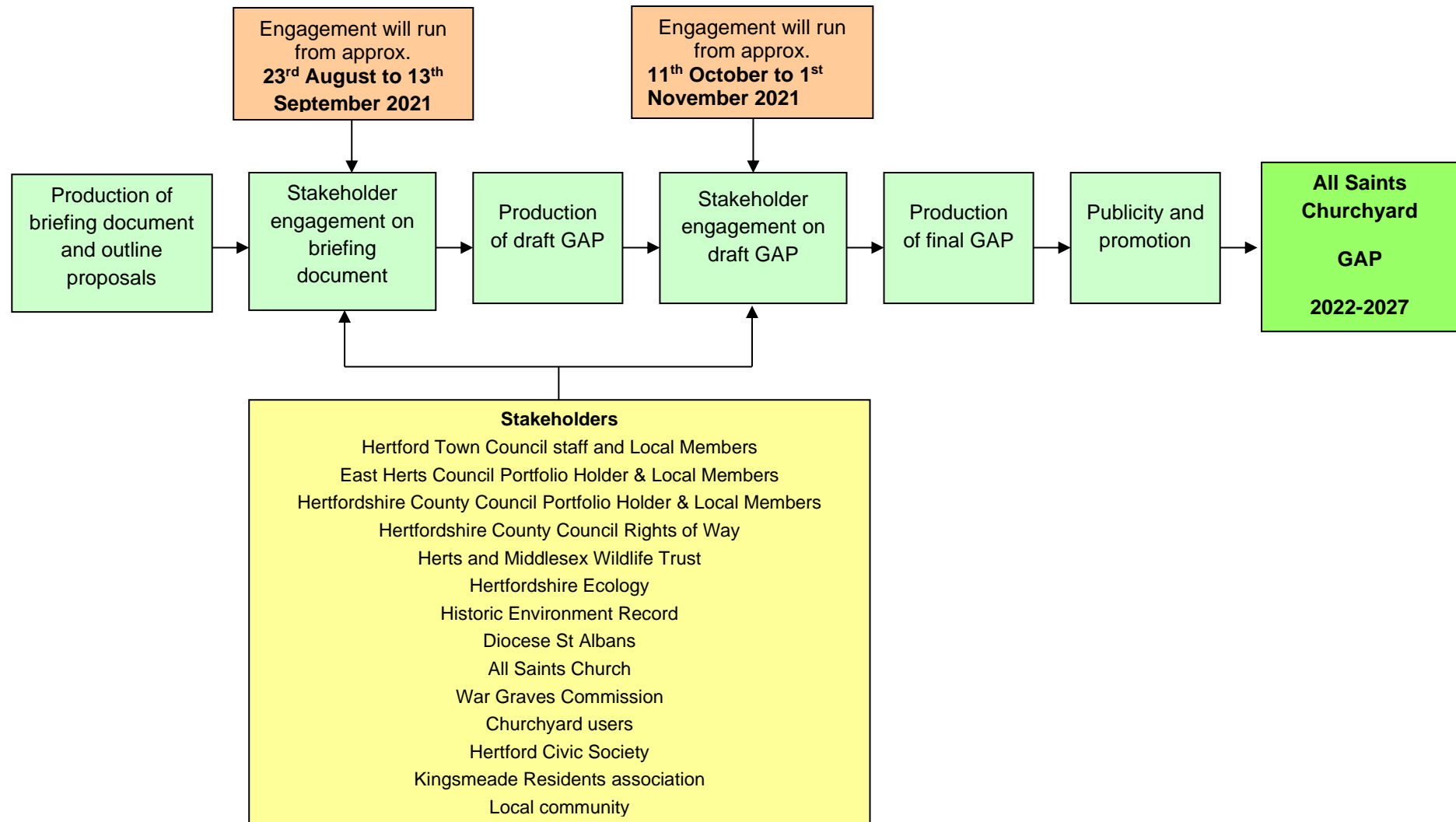
In order to provide all interested stakeholders and groups with the opportunity to feed into the production of the new GAP, we have adopted a structured two-stage approach to community engagement.

- For the first stage (this briefing document), stakeholders and site users will be invited to make comment on the core aspirations in Section 4; it is hoped that any further aspirations and/or issues will be identified through this information gathering process. This first stage of community engagement will run between **Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> August and Monday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021**. Part of this engagement process will involve attending an environment and climate awareness event at All Saints Church on the 11<sup>th</sup> September to provide information about the proposed Gap and answer questions.
- For the second stage, stakeholders and site users will be invited to read through and make comment on the draft GAP, which will include the detailed proposals and actions. This stage is intended to run in between approximately **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> October and Monday 1st November 2021**.

Following the second stage exercise, the final document will be produced, published and the actions will commence.

Please be aware that we will not respond individually to comments received through the public engagements; instead, we will produce a summary of comments, noting any amendments made to the plan as a result. This engagement response document will be published online alongside the briefing document, draft plan and final plan. We will retain contact details only for the purpose of keeping respondents informed about the plan development process.

The diagram on the following page shows the Greenspace Action Plan production process:



## **6. STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK**

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Thank you for taking the time to read this document. We are keen to receive feedback from you on our proposals for the Hertford Cemetery Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) 2022 - 2027.

Please return your comments using the contact details below by **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> September** at the latest.

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