

Management Plan for St. Nicholas' Churchyard

2023 to 2033



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Management Plan brings together a wide range of information about the St Nicholas' Churchyard both in terms of its day to day management and also the governance and policies that guide it.
- 1.2 The format and content of this Management Plan follows guidance provided in “Raising the Standard” – *The Green Flag Award Guidance Manual (updated 2009)* and *A Guide to Producing Parks and Green Space Management Plans* by Cabe Space.
- 1.3 This plan:
 - Informs all stakeholders on the management approach of the site and highlights how the local community can work in partnership with the Parks Service to maintain and improve the site.
 - Provides a framework for decisions to enable management to react proactively and positively to changing circumstances and provides parameters in which the Parks Service can operate to ensure that improvement opportunities can be acted on promptly.
 - Identifies future actions, which are listed in the action plan. .
- 1.4 The purpose of this updated Management and Maintenance Plan is to:
 - Explore and adapt the way in which the site is managed and maintained, to ensure an enjoyable experience for present and future users
 - Identify and address who is responsible for each aspect of management;
 - Identify, discuss and resolve issues relating to infrastructure, site users and available resources
 - Support future funding bids to further improve the site and its facilities
 - This Plan will cover a period of 10 years, although it will be regularly reviewed and updated

Structure and scope

- 1.5 The remainder of this Management Plan is set out over five chapters beginning with a description of the site, an overview of the historic context and significance of St Nicholas' Churchyard along with the present strategic and policy background information.

- 1.6 Following assessment of the issues and opportunities identified, the proposed management arrangements and maintenance requirements are described to ensure the objectives are achieved. These will help to safeguard the landscape for the future and to provide an enjoyable experience for visitors to this site.

Study area

- 1.7 St Nicholas' Churchyard covers just over one acre (4,317.5M²) not including the church building, is within the London Borough of Sutton, located in South London, and sits on the junction of St Nicholas Way and Gibson Road.
- 1.8 The address for St Nicholas' Churchyard is: St Nicholas Way, Sutton SM1 1ST. Map reference: Grid Reference 525782 X (Easting), , 164159 Y (Northing)
- 1.9 A plan of the site is provided in Figure 2.1, which also shows the boundary and site features including built structures.

2 Background information

Figure 2.1 - Site plan



Physical Description

- 2.1 This section provides a baseline understanding of the site through identifying the physical properties of the site as well as the current management and conservation of the site.
- 2.2 The site has three entrances via footpaths but is not gated. There are two notice boards for the church, one in the south east corner and one in the north east corner
- 2.3 There are a number of litter bins of the boxed variety.
- 2.4 This area is fairly tree covered with lots of grave stones across the whole site.

Specific Features of St Nicholas' Churchyard

Church

- 2.5 Rebuilt between 1862 and 1864 in the gothic revival style this Grade II* listed church dominates this site (L129 Sutton Local Plan).

Graves/Grave stones

- 2.6 There are graves across the site, both upright slab type stones as well as larger memorials.

War Graves

- 2.7 There are no war graves at St Nicholas' Churchyard on the Commonwealth War Graves website.
<https://www.cwgc.org/visit-us/find-cemeteries-memorials/cemetery-details/44548/benhilton-all-saints-churchyard/pollards>

The Entrances

- 2.8 The churchyard is an open site with no gate and can be accessed from St Nicholas Way, Gibson Road and Robin Hood Lane via an alleyway footpath.

Photograph 2.1 Church information sign



Natural landscape

Geology

- 2.9 The churchyard lies at the foot of the dip slope of the North Downs and the topography is generally flat with a gentle slope downwards from south east to north west and height ranging from approximately 60 to 53 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) within the south-eastern corner.
- 2.10 The underlying geology of the site is Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation, Seaford Chalk Formation And Newhaven Chalk Formation (Undifferentiated)

Hydrology

- 2.11 The site is on chalk and is also on high ground and as such is not prone to flooding or waterlogging.

Biodiversity and Ecology

- 2.12 The churchyard is a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (Grade III) For Ecology policy and legal considerations Biodiversity and Ecology see Appendix 1

Designations

Environmental designations

- 2.13 **Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (Grade III) (SINC 43, L3)** - “A valuable open space in the centre of Sutton, with some mature trees and interesting gravestone lichens” (Sutton Local Plan 2016 - 2031).
- 2.14 **Public Open Space** - St Nicholas' Churchyard is designated and protected as Public Open Space (Sutton Local Plan 2016 - 2031)
- 2.15 **Closed Churchyard** - St Nicholas' Churchyard is “Closed Churchyard” This is where a churchyard can be passed to the local authority for ongoing maintenance. It is likely that St Nicholas was informally closed to burials in December 1882 (see appendix 2) and formally closed by Order in Council in 1954 (agreed between Southwark Diocese and The London Borough of Sutton (Sutton and Cheam Borough Council as was)) under the Burial Act 1853.
- 2.16 In addition to the maintenance requirements if any structural works are to be carried out at the site would not only require planning permission, but may also require a faculty agreement from the diocese.
<https://southwark.anglican.org/support/for-our-churches/buildings-dac/faculties/online-faculty-system/>

Historic designations

2.17 Listed buildings are designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 by the Secretary of State for their special architectural or historic interest. The local planning authority are required to have 'special regard' to the desirability of preserving any listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Listed building consent is required for all demolition work and all alterations which affect its character as a listed building.

2.18 The listed buildings and structures are detailed below in Table 2.1

Table 2.1: Built structures and status

Feature name	Status
St Nicholas' Church	Grade II* listed Sutton Local Plan
The Gibson Mausoleum	Grade II listed Sutton Local Plan
Headstone with a relief carving of the Good Samaritan, in the churchyard of St Nicholas https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search?postcode=SM1%201ST&clearresults=True	Grade: II List Entry Number: 1449875
Tomb of Elizabeth Beacham, in the churchyard of St Nicholas https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search?postcode=SM1%201ST&clearresults=True	Grade: II List Entry Number: 1449874
Tomb of Cecil Talbot in the churchyard of St Nicholas https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search?postcode=SM1%201ST&clearresults=True	Grade: II List Entry Number: 1449867

Tomb of the Hall family in the churchyard of St Nicholas https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search?postcode=SM1%201ST&clearresults=True	Grade: II List Entry Number: 1449841
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Current use

Public access

Entrances and access

2.19 The churchyard is freely accessible to the public at no cost.

Footpaths

2.20 A number of footpaths cross the site and include a Public Right of Way (PROW 15), St Nicholas Road to Gibson Road.

Cycleways

2.21 Cycling is forbidden within the churchyard.

2.22 There is a designated contraflow cycle route in Gibson Road which is also part of London Cycle network 76 (Orpington to Ewell)
<https://cycling.waymarkedtrails.org/#route?id=7494836&map=13.0/51.3614/-0.1112>

Transport links

2.23 St Nicholas' Churchyard can be reached through the use of public transport with the following stations/stops nearby:

- **Rail:** Sutton Station is located approximately 430m (¼ mile) to the south-south east of the site.
- **Bus:** The following routes stop near the churchyard on St Nicholas Way:
 - 80 - Belmont to Carshalton
 - 151 - Wallington to Worcester Park
 - 164 - Sutton station to Wimbledon Station
 - 213 - Kingston to Sutton
 - 280 - St Georges Hospital Tooting to Belmont
 - 407 - Sutton to Caterham via West Croydon
 - 413 - Sutton Bus station to Morden Station
 - 420 - Sutton bus garage to Gatwick south terminal

- 470 - Colliers Wood station to Epsom High Street
- S1 - Banstead to Mitcham
- S3 - Belmont to Malden
- S4 - Roundshaw to St Helier station
- N44 - Aldwych to Sutton

2.24 Travelling by car: The churchyard lies between St Nicholas Way and Gibson Road, Sutton. There is no car park on site, but there is a multi storey car park in Gibson Road.

Stakeholders

2.25 Stakeholders identified for St Nicholas' Churchyard:

- The Rector of St Nicholas Church, Sutton
- The Parochial Church Council for the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Nicholas Sutton
- The Friends of St Nicholas Churchyard
- Site Users
- Councillors from both Sutton Central ward, and Sutton West & East Cheam ward
- Lead Member for Parks
- Sutton and Cheam MP
- Grounds Maintenance Contractor - Idverde
- Carshalton & District History & Archaeology Society
- Safer Sutton Partnership

Bye-laws

2.26 The London Borough of Sutton adopted bye-laws for their pleasure grounds, public walks and open spaces . The various sections comprise of the following:

1. General
2. Protection of the ground, its wildlife and the public
3. Horses, cycles and vehicles
4. Play areas, games and sports
5. Waterways
6. Model aircraft
7. Other regulated activities
8. Miscellaneous

Ownership

2.27 The land is the subject of a closed Churchyard Order applied for by the Diocese of Southwark and transferring maintenance responsibilities to the London Borough of Sutton, under Section 215 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Planning context

National Planning Policy

- 2.28 The National Planning Policy Framework¹ (NPPF) was published in 2021 replacing the previous version from 2019 . The NPPF explains the statutory provisions and provides guidance to local authorities and others on planning policy and the operation of the planning system.
- 2.29 The framework outlines 16 core planning principles aimed at guiding plan-making and planning decisions at the national and local level; some of the more relevant details relating to our parks are set out below . Please see the full document for further details:
- Promoting healthy and safe communities
 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Promoting healthy and safe communities (Open space and recreation)

- 2.30 Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.
- 2.31 Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless
- an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
 - the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
 - the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 2.32 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
- Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity⁶¹; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation⁶²; and

¹ [National Planning Policy Framework, 2021](#)

- promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

2.33 Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

Regional planning context

The London Plan ²

2.34 The London Plan, published in March 2021 is the Spatial Development Strategy and is the overall strategic plan for London. London Boroughs are required to prepare development plans (usually referred to as Local Plans), and make planning decisions that conform to the London Plan. Many of the policies within the London Plan affect parks and open spaces and their use and protection but the most relevant planning policies to Suttons parks on a daily basis are:

- Policy HC1 Heritage Conservation and Growth
- Policy G1 Green Infrastructure
- Policy G2 London's Green Belt
- Policy G3 Metropolitan Green Land
- Policy G4 Open Space
- Policy G5 Urban Greening
- Policy G6 Biodiversity and Access to Nature
- Policy G7 Trees and Woodland

All London Green Grid: The Wandle Valley Area Framework ³

2.35 The document sets out a number of programmes for the creation of the All London Green Grid, Wandle Valley Area.

² [London Plan 2021](#)

³ [All London Green Grid](#)

*Sutton's Local Plan 2016 - 2031*⁴

- 2.36 Sutton Council has adopted a Core Planning Strategy which sets out the spatial development for the Borough. The following provides a summary of the most relevant policies and strategic objectives:
- **SO4:** To control urban sprawl and protect green belt and metropolitan open land, back gardens and rivers, to improve the provision and quality of open spaces, and, to protect and enhance biodiversity and habitats throughout the Borough; and
 - **SO6** To achieve the highest standards of sustainable design and construction in all new development by...protecting and enhancing local habitats and biodiversity etc.
- 2.37 With the Core Planning Strategy now adopted, the key delivery policies for achieving these Strategic Objectives are Core Policies PMP9 on 'The Open Spaces Network', PMP5 on 'Wandle Valley', PMP2 on 'Suburban Heartlands' and DP2 on 'Planning Obligations'.

Outline history

- 2.38 St Nicholas Church in Sutton is a Grade II* listed parish church. The site has been used as a place of worship since Saxon times. The current building was constructed between 1862 and 1864 in the Gothic style, with dressed flint and stone dressings. It was designed by the architect Edwin Nash.
- 2.39 The previous church on the site was a smaller stone building that dated mainly from the 14th or 15th centuries. It had a tower, porch, and chancel. However, it was in poor condition and too small for the growing congregation, so it was demolished and replaced with the present church.
- 2.40 During the London Blitz, the church suffered some damage during an air raid in September 1940. A bomb fell near the church and destroyed many graves in the northeastern part of the churchyard, but the building itself remained largely intact.

⁴ [Sutton Local Plan 2016 - 2031](#)

3 Existing management and maintenance arrangements

- 3.1 This section describes the current structure and roles of the teams involved in managing St Nicholas' Churchyard. Figure 3.1 at the end of this chapter illustrates the existing management frameworks with brief role descriptions.
- 3.2 In February 2017 Sutton Council contracted the maintenance services for all its parks to Idverde UK until 2025.

Management and staff resources

For Sutton Council

- 3.3 The internal team linked to this site comprise:

- Parks Contract Manager
- Contract Officer
- Contract Support Officer
- Technical Services Manager
- Arboricultural Team
- Biodiversity Team
- Project Support and Volunteer Coordinator

Safer Sutton Partnership

- 3.4 Sutton, works in partnership with the Metropolitan Police, and was the first Council in the country to integrate its community safety staff with local police under a single management structure. It brings together everyone involved in community safety from both police and the Council, to form a single unit for the benefit of local people.
- 3.5 Council staff and police officers are located in Sutton Police Station. The teams working together include police safer neighbourhood teams, drug and alcohol abuse services, Safer Parks Teams, domestic violence services, police community support officers, special constables, police volunteers, schools liaison, youth crime, Civic Security, and truancy liaison officers.

For Idverde UK

- 3.6 The Idverde staff managing delivery of the Idverde contract at this site comprise:

- Contracts Manager
- Contracts Supervisor

Idverde staff

- 3.7 St Nicholas' Churchyard is maintained by mobile teams of staff.

Volunteers

3.8 There is currently a good level of volunteering and community participation in the management and maintenance of St Nicholas Churchyard.

- The Friends of St Nicholas Churchyard
 - The Friends of St Nicholas Churchyard seeks to promote for the benefit of the public the conservation and appreciation of the Churchyard, church and environs of St Nicholas Church, Sutton as a place of remembrance, historic importance and natural beauty.

3.9 A Project Support and Volunteer Coordinator (VC) was employed as Part of a Heritage Fund project at Beddington Park, but to deliver on the legacy commitments the VC has from the end of 2020 been seeking opportunities to expand into other sites across the borough with volunteers and friends groups. In addition to this the Tree Wardens who were formed in Beddington Park are also starting to look at opportunities to work on other sites.

Training

3.10 Staff from all areas of our work are trained to do their jobs effectively and confidently through a comprehensive package of training both continuous professional Development (CPD) and on the job training which includes:

Idverde staff

- New starter small plant training
- First aid
- Lantra supervisor training
- Small plant Training
- Hand held power machinery
- Driver assessment
- Machinery maintenance
- Topple Testing
- Manual handling
- Various types of machinery training

Sutton Council Parks Team including biodiversity and trees, training and qualifications

- First Aid
- Information Security / GDPR
- Prevent training
- Level 4 Arboriculture
- RHS Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Plant Growth, Propagation and Development
- Level 4 Data Analysis apprenticeship
- PGCE
- MSc & DIC Advanced Methods in Taxonomy and Biodiversity
- Chartered Biologist (CBiol & MRSB)
- 1 x Member of chartered institute of ecologists (MCIEEM)

- 1 x CPD for Royal Society of Biology (RSB) and 1x CPD Chartered Institute of Ecologists and Environmental Managers (CIEEM)
- Manual Handling
- Fire Warden Training
- NPTC Chainsaw (CS30 & CS31)
- LANTRA / NPTC Brush Cutters / Strimmers
- LANTRA / NPTC Tractors
- LANTRA / NPTC PA1 & PA6(A)
- NPORS 10t 360 excavator
- MBA –Management
- Level 7 Diploma in Management Studies
- APM Project Management
- All parks management staff are IOSH qualified, and a number also have playground safety qualifications.
- All Arboricultural officers are qualified to minimum Level 3 Arb.

Maintenance

Annual site inspection

- 3.11 An annual site inspection is carried out by Sutton Council Contract Officers. The inspection looks specifically at health and safety, and urgent repair issues on the site, but also looks at general standards, and anticipates problems. This is managed via a spreadsheet held in the parks office with links to photographs. The spreadsheet is discussed at Parks Service team meetings to progress work.

Site Maintenance by Idverde

Grass cutting

- 3.12 Mowing is carried out as required throughout the year, to be kept within a height of 70mm. Arisings are removed from footways, roads and hard surfaces.

Peat

- 3.13 The Parks Service specifies that no peat is contained within soil bought for its parks and open spaces. This includes all soils and dressings purchased for use on sports surfaces such as bowls greens, and all soil improvers and composts used within formal areas.

Integrated Weed Management Plans

- 3.14 Sutton Council has adopted Integrated Weed Management plans as a means to identify current practice and to look at alternatives to herbicides, or ways of reducing it. It also helps to have a repository of information on types of weed infestation to try to understand tolerance, and to concentrate efforts on issues such as invasive weeds that can be eradicated, and thereby reducing future herbicide use.

Shrub beds

- 3.15 Beds are kept free of weeds, fallen leaves, dead or dying plant material, litter and debris and shrub material is pruned throughout the year where it starts to grow across any path or causes an obstruction. Beds are mulched annually to a depth of 75mm.

Green waste

- 3.16 All green waste is recycled by the contractor, Idverde, through an external green waste recycling facility.

Litter picking and bins

- 3.17 The park is litter picked weekly. The contractor is responsible for disposal of litter collected from the site. Bins will be emptied at a rate which does not allow them to overflow. All bins are washed with water and suitable cleanser to remove all residues and detritus left on all bins, a minimum of four times a year.

Tree Maintenance

- 3.18 The Arboricultural Section, along with the Council's arboricultural contractor, maintains all the trees in the Churchyard. Trees are inspected by the Council's Arboricultural Officers, on a 2-yearly basis with works planned every four years unless a problem is identified as being urgent. Inspections take the form of a (ground based) visual tree assessment of the biomechanical features of the tree. Where a more detailed inspection is required, the Arboricultural Section has access to a range of specialised equipment to identify areas of potential decay within a tree.
- 3.19 The Council's most recent Trees and Woodlands Strategy was approved by the Committee in November 2019 as part of the wider Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.
- 3.20 Following the inspection, necessary works are recommended based on a risk assessment of the hazard potential and industry best practice guidance. All works are carried out within the guidelines set by British Standard 3998:2010: Recommendations for Tree Work. Any decisions regarding the planting of new stock are made in conjunction with the Parks Contract Officer and in line with the Mayor of London Tree and Woodland Framework (right tree right place).
- 3.21 Under the Occupiers Liability Act '57 the Council has a duty of care to ensure that, wherever practicable, that trees in their care do not cause undue risk to persons or property (within the park). The Council currently fulfils this duty by carrying out regular inspections of their trees and carrying out proposed remedial works to minimise the risks.
- 3.22 The Council only uses suitably qualified and experienced staff or contractors to carry out inspections.

Tree descriptions

- 3.23 Although not dense enough to be a woodland there are a considerable amount and mix of trees on this site with sixty one identified, which are an interesting mix of woodland and ornamental species.
- 3.24 Significant trees on site include:
- Yew tree - although there are a number of yew trees (18) on the site one to the north west of the church building is particularly impressive.
 - Mature Cedar (*Cedrus deodara*)
 - Sweet Cherry (*Prunus avium*) There are thirteen of these, some of which are planted quite close to the street light and are problematic.
- 3.25 There are just over 61 individually recorded trees as well as groups of trees recorded on site.

Tree Planting

- 3.26 Any decisions regarding the planting of new stock is made in conjunction with the Contract Officer for the site. The planting of new trees will be in keeping with existing surroundings and landscapes.
- 3.27 The Council's aim is to ensure that any new tree planted is in accordance with the principle of '*Right Tree, Right Place and for the Right Reasons*' and that a full management plan is agreed and funding secured to ensure the trees are successfully established and will flourish into the future.
- 3.28 There is limited space to plant any additional trees as the canopy cover is already dense. Any further planting would either cause problems with proximity of other trees or deplete the already low amount of open area which would reduce the opportunity for biodiversity on the site.
- 3.29 Any future planting should consider the above and look to provide ways to enhance biodiversity.

Paths

- 3.30 Paths are inspected regularly and essential repairs carried out. Paths are kept swept, free of leaves and detritus. Hard surface cleaning/sweeping takes place monthly from March – October, with leaf clearance carried out three times from October – December.

Site furniture

- 3.31 There are currently a number of benches on the site; two metal ones on main footpaths and a wooden bench in the north east corner. There is also a large circular bench around a memorial stone.

Photograph 3.1 Circular bench



3.32 A schedule of current maintenance tasks with frequency and timing are shown in **Table 3.1** below:

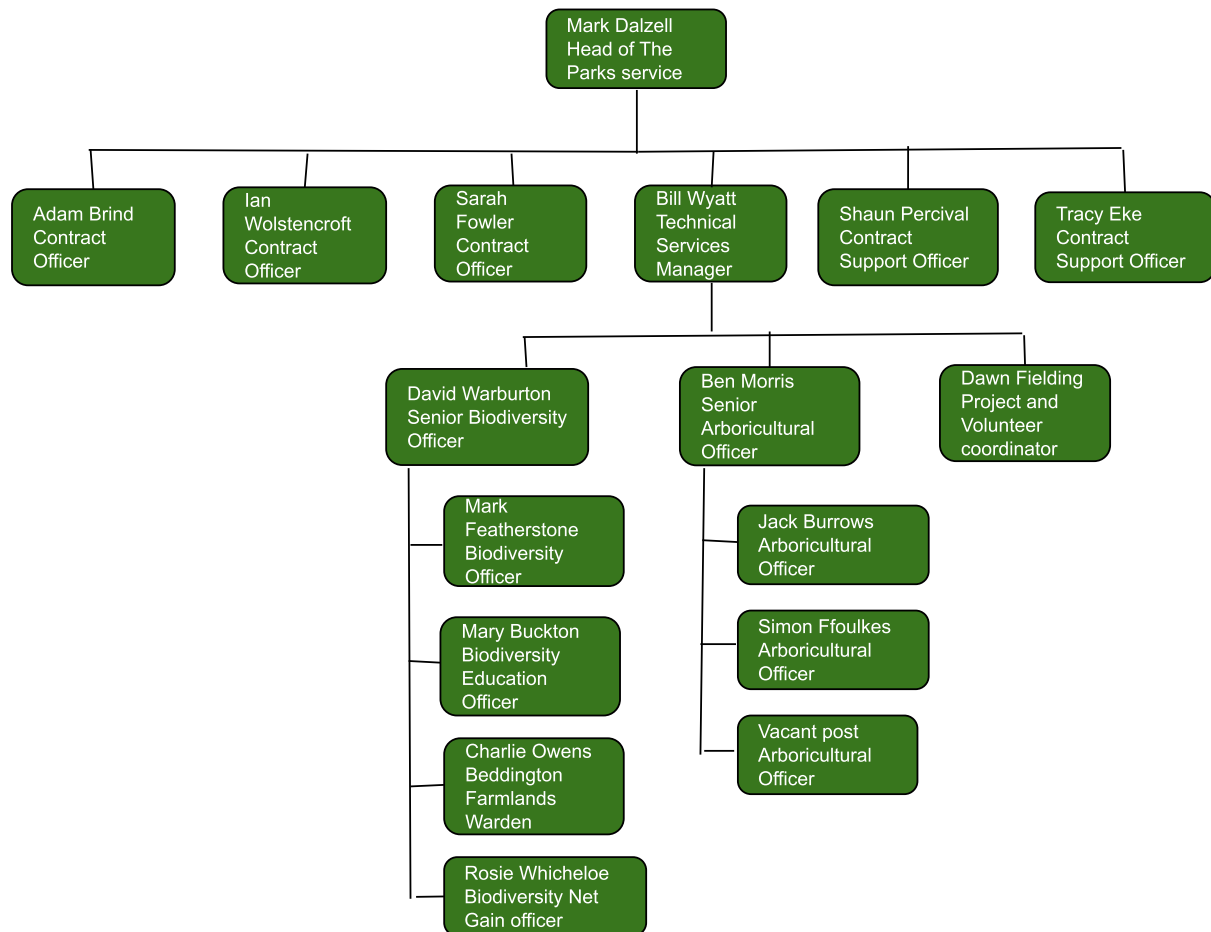
Table 3.1: Current grounds maintenance schedule for the parks

Frequency and timing of tasks													
Task	Indicative frequency and periods												
	Frequency	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
General Duties													
Litter picking	Weekly	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Bin emptying	Whenever full	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Graffiti removal	When required	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Hard standing weed killing	As required				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Hard surface cleaning/sweeping	Monthly in season			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Leaf clearance	Three times in a season										Y	Y	Y
Grass cutting													
Amenity grass mowing		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Shrub beds													
Edge shrub beds	Once a year												
Trim edge	As required	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Weed shrub beds	Monthly	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Prune shrub beds	As required												
Mulch shrub beds	Annually												

Existing management and maintenance costs

- 3.33 The total management and maintenance costs for the park are contained within a wider contract price for the management and maintenance of all of Sutton's parks and open spaces.
- 3.34 St Nicholas' Churchyard is funded from a pooled budget for all parks and open spaces and financial resources are limited.

Figure 3.1: Existing management framework for Sutton Council Parks Team



4 Management objectives and Action Plan

4.1 This section outlines the supporting objectives which will guide the future management of this site. It suggests aims and objectives for future management arrangements to:

- Ensure the parks are managed and maintained in a manner which reflects not only its local importance, but which also promotes biodiversity, recreation and the amenity value of the sites.
- Allow effective management and respond to change in the future.

Vision for Sutton's Parks

4.2 *"The borough's parks and open spaces and trees will be well-maintained; support good public health, local culture, social activities and biodiversity and where possible opportunities will be taken to improve access to open spaces, facilities and activities."*

Action Plan

4.3 This programme will be carried out to meet the strategy above. It lists each management objective, how each will be achieved and who is responsible for achieving them. Where appropriate a timescale is given. The programme will be reviewed annually, and targets monitored to ensure timescales have been achieved. Delivery timescales are defined in the table below.

4.4 In assessing the issues and formulating actions for managing the site as both a heritage resource and as an amenity for visitors we make reference to the guidance used by the Green Flag Award organisation as the principles on which they judge entrants for the award can be used as a benchmark national standard for the management of parks and green spaces in the UK⁵

⁵ Green Flag Award Website, 2015. Available at: <http://greenflagaward.org/judges/judging-criteria/> [Accessed 27 July 2015]

Table 5.1 St Nicholas' Churchyard action plan

A Welcoming Place					
Aim: Positively welcome people into the park, in terms of both physical and social access whilst balancing the need to provide a sanctuary for wildlife in their natural habitats					
Ref.	Objective	Implementation/Task	Timescale/frequency	Responsibility	Review
1.1	Maintain entrances to ensure they are visually clear and promote a sense of arrival.	Manage vegetation in accordance with the maintenance schedule.	As required	LBS Contract Officer	
1.2	Continue to provide equality of access compliant with the Equality Act 2010.	Ensure surfaces are stable, level and obstruction free.	As required	LBS Contract Officer Idverde	
1.3	Improve Church boundary to create an area that stands out as one with historic significance and to prevent it blending in with Town Centre	Paint industrial metal railings at the front of the Church on the B2230 black Restore the wooden bollards that run along the Gibson Road boundary and remove the hanging chains for safety purposes Restore the flint wall that runs along neighbouring gardens to the right of the main entrance. Note this wall is not historic and has flint stones to be in keeping with the Church building	When funds allow	LBS Contract Officer Site Friends Group	
1.4	Ensure areas of overgrowth are cut back and maintained including trees that overshadow lighting	Ensure that area is as open as possible with natural light and that street lighting is not overshadowed and effective to make the area feeler safer to visitors	When funds allow	LBS Contract Officer Site Friends Group	

Healthy, Safe and Secure					
Aim: To ensure a healthy, safe and secure experience for park users.					
Ref.	Objective	Implementation/Task	Timescale/frequency	Responsibility	Review
2.1	Ensure health and safety policies and risk assessments are in place, in practice and reviewed.	Carry out health and safety risk assessments of all structures, paths, benches, infrastructure, soft landscape areas and trees.	Annually	LBS Contract Officer Idverde	
2.2		Carry out tree inspections and keep an up to date record.	Minimum every two years	Tree Team	Works have been identified and scheduled July 2023
2.3	Ensure clear sightlines for site users	Carry out works to trees near to street lights to ensure clear vision and well lit paths	Identified during routine tree inspections	Tree officer	Works have been identified and scheduled July 2023
2.4	PROW 15 Ensure clear sightlines and improve lighting etc	The friends group would like to see the alleyway painted between Robin Hood Lane and the Churchyard as an aspiration? That is PROW15, -" that's the mural, the lighting and overhanging vegetation being a hazard for visually impaired people"	Aspirational project for the Friends group	Friends Group and LBS contract Officer	
Clean and Well Maintained					
Aim: To provide a well maintained and clean park.					
Ref.	Objective	Implementation/Task	Timescale/frequency	Responsibility	Review
3.1	Ensure that the site is kept clean and litter free.	Target response times, incorporate recycling, and adhere to specification for emptying bins.	Weekly	LBS Contract Officer Idverde	
3.2	Have procedures in place to deal with vandalism and graffiti.	Respond to acts of vandalism/graffiti.	Within 48 hours or immediately if offensive (during working hours).	LBS Contract Officer Idverde This is covered in both the specification and the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy	
3.3	Grounds maintenance to be delivered to the highest standard	Carry out all maintenance in accordance with the maintenance schedule. Carry out regular inspections to ensure work is of a high standard.	As required by the schedule Daily	LBS Contract Officer Idverde	

	throughout the park with consideration to specialised items of grounds maintenance.	Ensure that all staff are aware of the content of the management plan.	Ongoing as part of new staff induction process		
3.4	Ensure the Grounds Maintenance staff are provided with training and career development in horticulture and landscape management.	The Contractor provides ongoing appraisals and training for their staff.	Annually	Idverde	
Sustainability					
Aim: To improve the environmental quality and sustainability of practices carried out in the park.					
Ref.	Objective	Implementation/Task	Timescale/frequency	Responsibility	Review
4.1	Continue to minimise the use of pesticides and fertilisers.	Complete and annually review the Integrated Weed management Plan.	Ongoing	LBS Contract Officer Idverde Technical Services Manager	
4.2	Encourage waste recycling.	Continue to recycle/ re-use green waste generated on site. Other waste is diverted from landfill to the local Energy Recovery Facility	On completion of the restoration works	LBS Contract Officer Idverde	
Conservation and Heritage					
Aim: Maintain and increase the diverse mosaic of habitats within the park with encouragement of its de-urbanisation. Conserve and promote the heritage value of the park and maintain the historic landscape character.					
Ref.	Objective	Implementation/Task	Timescale/frequency	Responsibility	Review
General					
5.1	Use existing statutory legislation to protect the site and its components.	Be aware of legislation which is applicable to the site and its elements, including its heritage, landscape and ecological significance.	Ongoing	LBS Contract Officer	

Biodiversity					
5.2	Ensure appropriate management of natural features, wildlife and flora, landscape features and structural features.	Ensure all maintenance is carried out according to the details in this Management Plan..	As required by the schedule	LBS Contract Officer Idverde Senior Biodiversity Officer	
5.3	Management and maintenance practices to promote biodiversity.	Tree management will involve active management of the historic and veteran trees.	Ongoing	LBS Contract Officer Idverde Senior Arboricultural Officer	
5.4	Ensure staff are trained to understand environmental issues, principles of sustainability and management practices to increase biodiversity.	Idverde staff as set out above, Parks Team through management plan development meetings, where knowledge and experience is shared.	Ongoing	LBS Contract Officer Idverde	
5.5	Biodiversity officer to visit site and review biodiversity value of uncut areas/Phase 1	Biodiversity to review the site where areas are now left uncut around gravestones and tombs. Biodiversity to advise on the best approach to achieve positive environmental impact whilst keeping the area tidy and inviting.	TBC	LBS Contract Officer Senior Biodiversity Officer	
5.6	Wildflowers	The Friends would like the churchyard to be managed for wildflowers. The grass throughout the churchyard should be mowed twice a year. "We want to allow the grasses and wildflowers to grow long enough to flower and set seed but also prevent saplings and brambles from taking over." The borders of each path should be mowed short regularly to create a contrast between the short grass on either side of the paths and the long grass around the tombstones, which can be visually appealing.	To be considered as part of the plans for the next contract (2025/27)	LBS Contract Officer Idverde Site Friends Group	

Historic, Local Heritage					
Community Involvement					
Aim: Provide opportunities to increase community use and involvement, particularly through events, education, interpretation and building partnerships.					
Ref.	Objective	Implementation/Task	Timescale/frequency	Responsibility	
Marketing					
Aim: Develop the park as a local amenity, a source of pride, which realises the full potential of its historic and natural attributes and ensures effective promotion of the park as a community resource.					
Ref.	Objective	Implementation/Task	Timescale/frequency	Responsibility	
Management					
Aim: Ensure all those involved in the management and maintenance of Beddington Park and The Grange effectively use the Management and Maintenance Plan as a working document.					
Ref.	Objective	Implementation/Task	Timescale/frequency	Responsibility	
8.1	Implement the Management Plan and make available to staff	Copy to be available in the parks office. Other grounds maintenance staff have access to the document.	On completion of the restoration works	LBS Contract Officer Idverde	

5 Review

- 5.1 The Management Plan will be continually reviewed, revised and re-written. The cycle for the Management and Maintenance Plan is to:
- Write and adopt the Management Plan
 - Operate according to the aims and objectives held within the plan
 - Monitor the operation of the Management Plan
 - Review the working of the Management Plan
 - Revise and improve the Management Plan where necessary to reflect on-going developments such as visitor survey feedback and revised financial projections.
- 5.2 Sutton Council will be responsible for carrying out monitoring to ensure that maintenance work has been carried out satisfactorily. The Parks Contract Officer covering St Nicholas' Churchyard will be responsible for the day to day implementation of the Management Plan and will monitor maintenance standards within the park. They will also ensure that all other relevant council officers are involved in the monitoring and review of management and maintenance work and the plan itself as necessary.
- 5.3 In addition the following methods of monitoring and review will be implemented:
- Site user surveys will be used to monitor the success of the management plan.
 - The Green Flag Award and London in Bloom annual feedback will be used to guide review of the Management Plan if an application for the award is implemented.
- 5.4 The Management Plan covers a period of 10 years. It will be subject to continual review as it is used and Sutton Council will carry out a full review annually to enable any improvements and alterations to be made as necessary. The Management Plan will be formally rewritten in the 5th and 10th year after initial completion.

Appendix 1

Ecology policy and legal considerations

Policy and Legal Considerations - Ecology

Statutory nature conservation sites and protected species are a 'material consideration' in the UK planning process (DCLG 2012). Where planning permission is not required, for example on proposals for external repair to structures, consideration of protected species remains necessary given their protection under UK and EU law.

Natural England Standing Advice aims to support Local Planning Authorities decision making in respect of protected species (Natural England 2012). Standing advice is a material consideration in determining the outcome of applications, in the same way as any individual response received from Natural England following consultation.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 transpose the requirements of the European Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC) into UK law, enabling the designation of protected sites and species at a European level.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) forms the key piece of UK legislation relating to the protection of habitats and species.

The Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 provides additional support to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; for example, increasing the level of protection for certain species of reptiles.

The Protection of Badger Act 1992 provides specific protection for this species.

The Wild Mammals Protection Act 1996 sets out the welfare framework in respect to wild mammals, prohibiting a range of activities that may cause unnecessary suffering.

Species and Habitats of Principal Importance for Conservation in England and Wales and priority habitats and species listed on the London Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and Sutton Biodiversity Strategy are species which are targeted for conservation. The government has a duty to ensure that involved parties take reasonable practice steps to further the conservation of such species under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill 2006. In addition, the Act places a biodiversity duty on public authorities who 'must, in exercising their functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity' (Section 40 [1]). Criteria for selection of national priority habitats and species in the UK include international threat and marked national decline.

The National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2019) states (Section 11), that the planning system should minimise impacts on biodiversity, providing net gains in biodiversity where possible. It also states that local planning authorities and planning policies should:

- Plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.

- Take account of the need to plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries.
- Identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including: international, national and local sites of importance for biodiversity, and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation.
- Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species
- pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity

Bats

All British species of bat are listed on the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 5. It is an offence to deliberately kill, damage, take (Section 9(1)) a bat; to intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat whilst it occupies a place of shelter or protection (Section 9(4)(b)); or to deliberately or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a bat roost (Section 9(4)(c)). Given the strict nature of these offences, there is an obligation on the developer and owner of a site to consider the presence of bats.

All British bats are listed on the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, Schedule 2. Regulation 41 strengthens the protection of bats under the 1981 Act against deliberate capture or killing (Regulation 41(1) (a)), deliberate disturbance (Regulation 41(1) (b)) and damage or destruction of a resting place (Regulation 41(1) (d)).

A bat roost is defined as any structure or place which is used for shelter or protection, irrespective of whether or not bats are resident. Buildings and trees may be used by bats for a number of different purposes throughout the year including resting, sleeping, breeding, raising young and hibernating. Use depends on bat age, sex, condition and species as well as the external factors of season and weather conditions. A roost used during one season is therefore protected throughout the year and any proposed works that may result in disturbance to bats, and loss, obstruction of or damage to a roost are licensable.

Development works that may cause killing or injury of bats or that would result in the damage, loss or disturbance of a bat roost would require a Natural England (NE) Mitigation Licence. Licensed works require evidence that the works entailing detrimental impacts are unavoidable, as well as appropriate mitigation, which may include seasonal constraints and provision of alternative habitat and/or roosting structures. A NE Mitigation Licence application can only be submitted on completion of surveys and receipt of planning consent. The application typically takes six weeks to process, after which mitigation could commence.

All UK species of bat are also listed on the UK BAP. Under the NERC Act, 2006 the Government has a duty to ensure that parties take reasonable practicable steps to further the conservation of these species.

Reptiles

All UK reptiles and amphibians are legally protected from intentional and reckless killing and injury under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Hedgehog

Hedgehogs are protected under Section 6 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Wild Mammals Protection Act, 1996. They are recognised as Species of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity under Section 41 (England) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) and are listed on the London and Sutton BAP. They may not be trapped without a licence from Natural England.

Nesting Birds

Birds and their nests are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This Act gives protection to all species of bird with regard to killing and injury, and to their nests and eggs with regard to taking, damaging and destruction. Certain species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act, are afforded additional protection against protection.

Invertebrates

The majority of invertebrate species are not subject to specific legal protection, although many are identified as being notable given their rarity. This includes species listed as Red Data Book species, or as being Nationally or Locally Notable (identified using criteria established by the IUCN and used by the JNCC). Invertebrate species are also identified as species of principal importance under the Natural Environment and Rural communities Act 2006, or as priority species under local and regional Biodiversity Action Plan Species.

Certain invertebrate species are subject to legal protection under national legislation. Of particular relevance in London, and to Beddington Park and The Grange, is the stag beetle *Lucanus cervus*, which is protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, and is also identified as an Annex 2 species under the EC Habitats Directive (under which Special Areas of Conservation may be designated for Annex 2 species). Stag beetle is also a London and Sutton Biodiversity Action Plan priority species, with Greater London as one the most important areas for this species in the UK, with its range concentrated in the southern and western borough.

Appendix 2

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THE LONDON GAZETTE, DECEMBER 5, 1882.

Privy Council, to order that no new burial-ground shall be opened in any city or town, or within such limits, without such previous approval, or (as the case may require) that, after a time mentioned in the Order, burials in such city or town, or within such limits, or in such burial-grounds or places of burial, shall be discontinued wholly or subject to any exceptions or qualifications mentioned in such Order, and so from time to time as circumstances may require; provided always, that notice of such representation, and of the time when it shall please Her Majesty to order that the same be taken into consideration by the Privy Council, shall be published in the London Gazette, and shall be affixed on the doors of the churches or chapels of, or on some other conspicuous places within, the parishes affected by such representation one month before such representation is so considered: provided also, that no such representation shall be made in relation to the burial-ground of any parish until ten days' previous notice of the intention to make such representation shall have been given to the Incumbent and Vestry Clerk or Churchwardens of such parish:

And whereas by another Act passed in the session of Parliament held in the eighteenth and nineteenth years of Her Majesty's reign, intituled "An Act further to amend the laws concerning the burial of the dead in England," it is, amongst other things, enacted that it shall be lawful for Her Majesty, by and with the advice of Her Privy Council, from time to time to postpone the time appointed by any Order in Council for the discontinuance of burials, or otherwise to vary any Order in Council made under any of the Acts recited in the said Act, or under the said Act (whether the time thereby appointed for the discontinuance of burials thereunder, or other operation of such Order, shall or shall not have arrived), as to Her Majesty, with such advice as aforesaid, may seem fit:

And whereas Her Majesty was pleased, by Her Order in Council of the seventeenth day of March, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-four, to direct the discontinuance of burials in the churchyard of St. Nicholas, Sutton, Surrey, in the words following:—

SUTTON, SURREY.—Forthwith wholly in the churchyard of St. Nicholas, Sutton, Surrey, except in existing vaults or walled graves, and in such as can be constructed, or in earthen graves which can be opened, without exposing coffins or disturbing buried remains, that every coffin buried in vaults or walled graves be separately enclosed in stonework or brickwork properly cemented, and that burial in the church be wholly discontinued.

And whereas Her Majesty was further pleased by Her Order in Council of the fourteenth day of May, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven, to direct the discontinuance of burials in the church and churchyard of Newchapel, Wolstanton, in the words following:—

NEWCHAPEL, WOLSTANTON.—Forthwith wholly in the church of Newchapel, Wolstanton; and in the churchyard after December thirty-first, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven, except in vaults and walled graves, in which each coffin shall be separately enclosed by stonework or brickwork properly cemented; and except in family earthen graves which can be opened to the depth of five feet without the exposure of coffins, or the disturbance of remains; and that, in the meantime, no exposure of coffins be allowed.

And whereas the Right Honourable Sir William Vernon Harcourt, one of Her Majesty's Principal

Secretaries of State, after giving to the Incumbents and Churchwardens of the said parishes ten days' previous notice of his intention to make such representation, has made a representation stating that he is of opinion that the Orders of Her Majesty in Council affecting burials in the said parishes should be varied in the following manner:—

SUTTON, SURREY.—By the omission of the words after "except" to "cemented" in the before-mentioned Order of seventeenth March, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-four, and by the substitution in their stead of the following words—

"as follows: (a.) In such vaults and wholly walled graves as are now existing in the churchyard burials may be allowed on condition that every coffin buried therein be separately enclosed by stonework or brickwork properly cemented:

"(b.) In such earthen graves now existing in the churchyard which can be opened to the depth of five feet without exposing coffins or disturbing human remains, burials may be allowed of so many of the following relations of those already interred therein, viz., widows and widowers, as can be buried at or below that depth."

NEWCHAPEL, WOLSTANTON.—By the omission of the words after "churchyard" in the beforementioned Order of the fourteenth May, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven, and by the substitution of the following

"except as follows: (a.) In such vaults and wholly walled graves as are now existing in the churchyard burials may be allowed on condition that every coffin buried therein be separately enclosed by stonework or brickwork properly cemented.

"(b.) In such earthen graves now existing in the churchyard, as can be opened to the depth of five feet without exposing coffins or disturbing human remains burials may be allowed of so many of the following relations of those already interred therein, viz., widows, widowers, parents, and unmarried children, as can be buried at or below that depth."

And whereas Her Majesty was pleased by Her Order in Council of the eighteenth day of August last to give notice of such representation, and to order that the same be taken into consideration by a Committee of the Lords of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council on the twelfth day of October, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-two; and such Order has been published in the London Gazette and copies thereof have been affixed as required by the said Act:

Now, therefore, Her Majesty, by and with the advice of Her Privy Council, is pleased to order, and it is hereby ordered, that burials be discontinued in the undermentioned parishes as follows, viz.:—

SUTTON, SURREY.—Forthwith wholly in the churchyard of St. Nicholas, Sutton, Surrey, except as follows:

"(a.) In such vaults and wholly walled graves as are now existing in the churchyard burials may be allowed on condition that every coffin buried therein be separately enclosed by stonework or brickwork properly cemented:

"(b.) In such earthen graves now existing in the churchyard which can be opened to the depth of five feet without exposing coffins or disturbing human remains, burials may be allowed of so many of the following relations