

Member Briefing

Subject: Invasive Plant Species (Scrub) Clearance Works at Cherry Orchard Conservation Area

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Over recent years Cherry Orchard Conservation Area has lapsed under the overwhelming presence of invasive plants such as Bramble and Dog Rose. These thickets now dominate this landscape taking the place of the Wildflowers that were there before. This winter the City Council has organised scrub clearance works on this site in order to reclaim the Wildflower areas once lost.

Historically this area served as one of Worcester's Landfill sites and on the completion of this purpose was sealed and then planted, turning it into the Conservation area we know today. In the process of this transformation a mixed seed bank of native wildflowers was sown into the soil which capped the landfill. Rather unusually, potentially as a result of the irregular use of the land prior, rare and unexpected species started to emerge from this seed bank. Species such as Pyramidal Orchid, Common Spotted Orchid, Michaelmas Daisy and Coltsfoot could be found on this site (see Appendix A for photographs of plant species). It is this variety of flora and its contribution to the biodiversity of the area that makes this scrub clearance work so important.

The sheer scope of these works can be seen highlighted on the site map provided in Appendix A. It's important to note that the whole area highlighted will not be completely cleared, just the areas that were in the past. Cleared areas will cover approximately 40% of the area shown leaving plenty of thicket habitation for nesting birds, small mammals etc.

In order to complete these works in a cost-effective manner Environmental Operations have reopened a dialogue with the National Probation Service. Small teams of around eight supervised operatives from this Community Services initiative will begin clearing the areas over the Winter months. Commenting on the 10th of November and finishing on the 28th of February. Once the initial clearance has been completed the general upkeep of this site will fall back into the Conservation Team with a tri-annual meadow cut and collect to help this wildflower seed bank continue to flourish.

Undertaking these works in this manner will not only help us reclaim an area of documented natural significance but also presents an opportunity re-establish a relationship with the Probation Service. An opportunity for the City Council to improve biodiversity within the city limits, in line with its Environmental

Sustainability ambitions, whilst supporting our society by employing and providing opportunities for the Community Payback Scheme.

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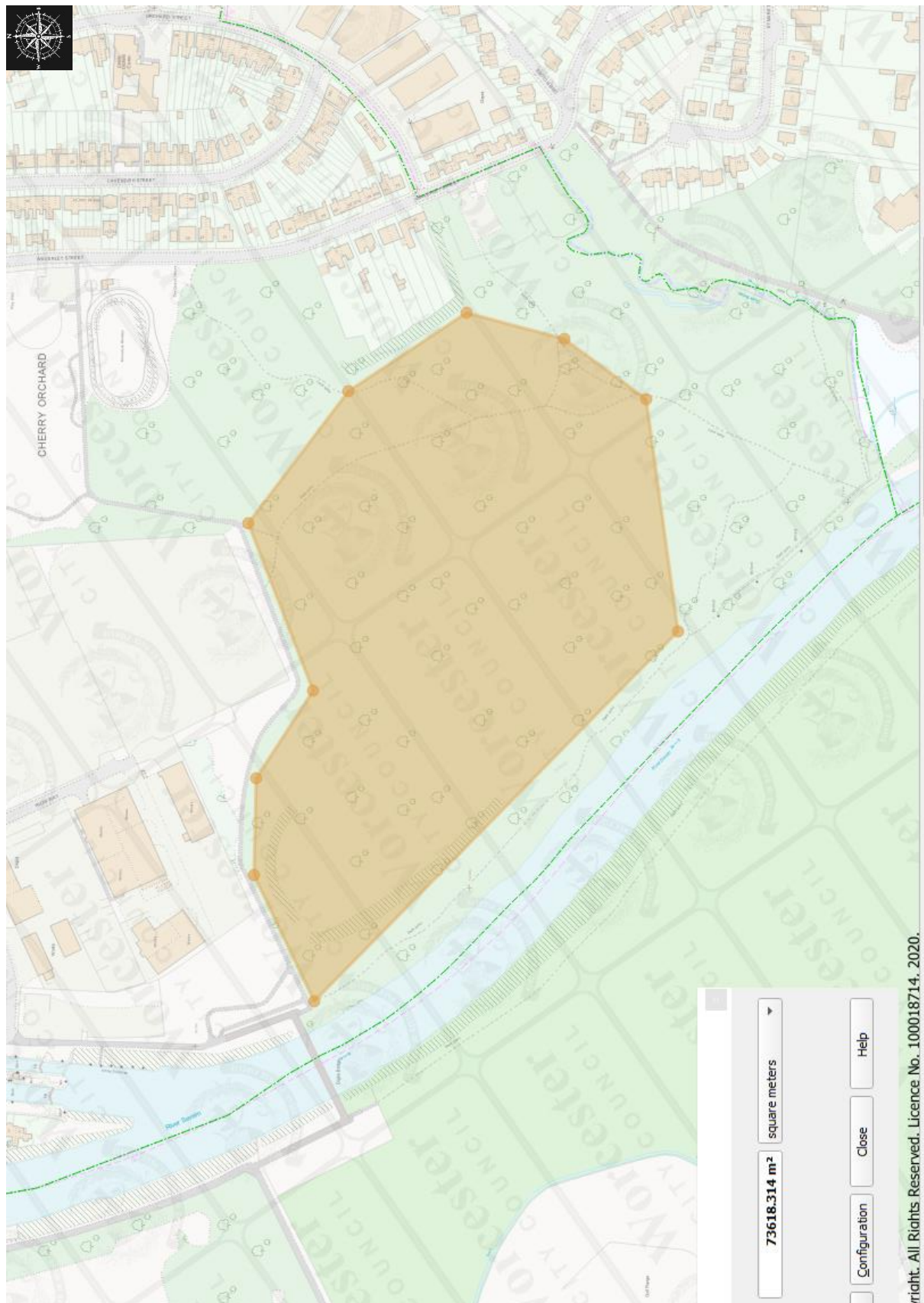
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Appendix A – plan showing the location of the clearance works and photographs of the desired species we wish to encourage as a result of the work.





Common Spotted Orchid



Pyramidal Orchid



Michaelmas Daisy



Coltsfoot