

# Chambercombe Manor Woodlands

## Proposed Permitted Access

### Project Brief

#### *1. Background & Overview*

Chambercombe Manor has been part of the Chambercombe Manor Trust since 1979, and since then has opened to the public on a seasonal basis. There are at present some 15 acres of inner grounds open to the public during the months April – October annually, however these are closed during the winter months. Due to the layout and nature of Chambercombe Manor and its inner grounds it is not possible to open these grounds other than during the tourist season when staffing and other resources are available. However it has for some time been the desire of the Trust to have the outer woodland grounds available as a resource for the community all year round.

At present there are few woodland areas of this type available in the locality and with such proximity to the town centre, possibly a unique resource to Ilfracombe & and the surrounding smaller community's such as Hele. The woodland also offers wonderfully diverse ecosystems amongst its range of canopy sizes and densities, which the Trust feel would provide a valuable educational resource in the future.

The Trust is currently developing a full woodland management plan which will focus in part on small scale coppice related woodland industry, it is intended that a range of production methods and associated crafts will be regularly practiced in the woodland. The local community and visitors will be actively encouraged to observe demonstrations and where possible participate in woodland craft workshops.

It is therefore proposed to increase permitted public access to an additional 3.2 hectares of Chambercombe Manor woodlands, the project including a Footpath which will at a later date to be offered as a Bridleway also, this increasing the diversity of countryside pursuits available in and around the manor grounds.

#### *2. Proposed Permitted Access*

It is proposed that a footpath /bridleway be laid out through some 3.2 hectares of Chambercombe Manor Woodland; this would amount to some 400m of new foot access being created (See Plan LUP-01-06). As can be seen the route would allow a centralised access beginning amongst mature semi ancient woodland, continuing through mixed aged and younger woodland of Killacleave, all the time having a constant view of the Manor, Upper Hele Valley and the Arboretum currently under restoration. Point D on the attached plan is the area proposed for demonstrations and open air workshops this may also be developed as a picnic area at a later date.

Due to the nature of the proposed woodland site situated on steep incline's and partly covering the old Victorian land fill of Killacleave, installation of this footway is essential to normally traverse the site, as is fencing of several areas identified as unsafe by risk assessments. An area previously laid down as an Arboretum and identified on site plans included in this brief, would also be excluded from this proposal as it is currently under restoration and extremely sensitive to additional traffic, this is likely to be the case for several years to come.

## **Objectives**

- Access for leisure, recreation and education.
- Raise awareness of woodland features, plants and animals, through interpretation boards and school visits.
- Increase in awareness of woodland management practices and crafts through demonstration & workshops
- Creation of employment for local community woodsmen proficient in low impact woodland management
- An additional tourist attraction for visitors to Ilfracombe and Chambercombe Manor.

## **Project Requirements**

- Make site safe by the installation of fencing to isolate identified hazards.
- Install gates at specified points to prevent unauthorised vehicular access yet allow routine maintenance
- Create main Footway / Bridleway.
- Selective felling and removal of dangerous/unwanted trees.
- Install interpretation boards, way marking.

### ***3. Hazards Identified***

The following areas that identified on the attached plans and excluded from the proposal for the following reasons, this requires that fencing of these areas is essential.

- Point 1 Steep incline and drop to road is considered unsafe for unsupervised public access
- Point 2 Outfall pipe from Victorian land fill, although tested must be considered contaminated also long unrestricted fall from upper side
- Point 3 Steep incline to outfall gully
- Point 4 Disused deep vertical sided quarry which has not been stabilised.

### ***4. Future Maintenance***

Maintenance of the woodlands and all elements of the proposal would remain the responsibility of the Chambercombe Manor Trust. The future maintenance of the project is expected to equate to approximately £1,500 pa increase on the Trusts budget expenditure.

Therefore the trust will look to its Green Alliance partners for volunteer support with the issues such as smaller maintenance, events etc. Chambercombe Trust would consider in the future, support of a suitable person in a voluntary position of Woodland Warden, support might be in the form of PPE, Training and Expenses. The Trust would also actively seek the participation of the local Tree Warden.

### ***5. Time Scale For Implementation***

This project can be initiated as soon as approved, however completion would not be seen as achievable prior to Easter 2007, it is estimated that the project will take up to ten weeks to complete during the winter period.