Protecting Richmond Park's Biodiversity in a Changing Climate

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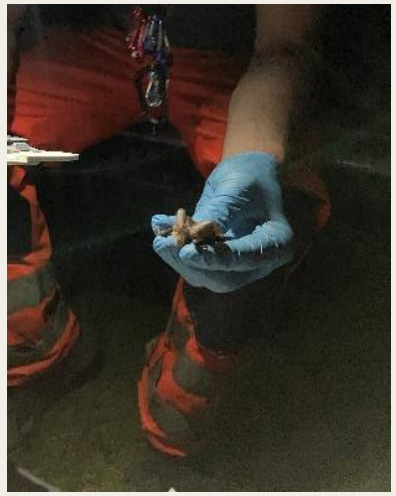
THE ROYAL PARKS
RICHMOND PARK

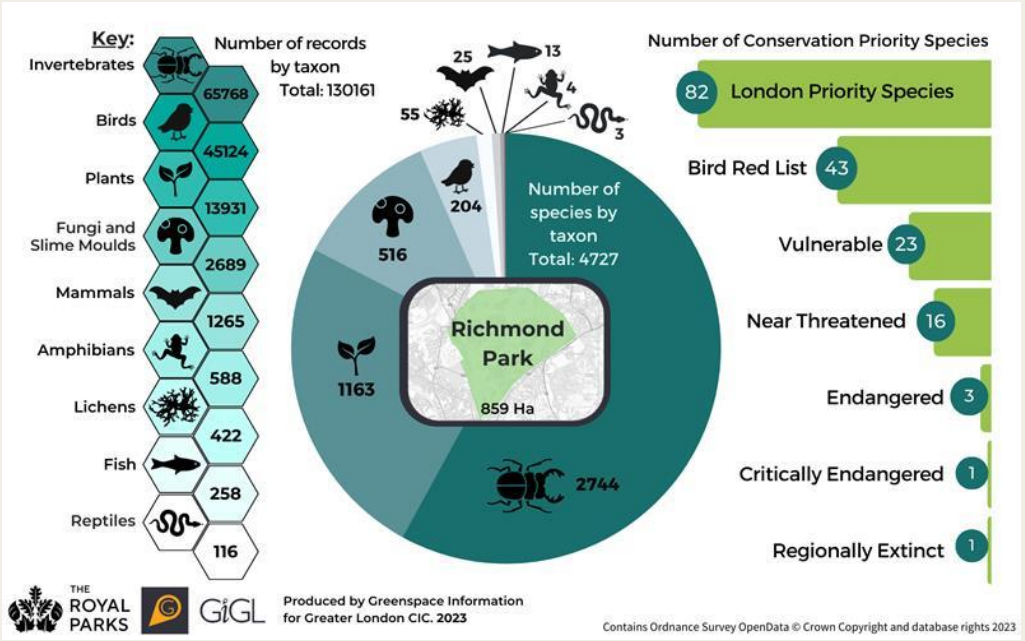
THE BIODIVERSITY OF RICHMOND PARK

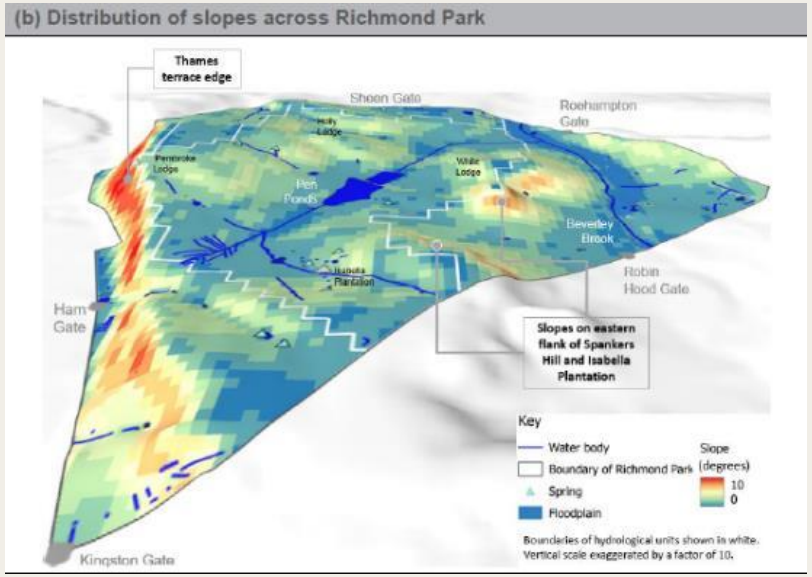
- Designated as of National and International Importance (NNR, SSSI and SAC)
- Acid Grassland and anthills
- Veteran Trees and dead and decaying wood
- Diverse range of species, including many rarities
- Value in an urban setting, a refuge for wildlife
- Access to nature

UNDERSTANDING THE PARK'S BIODIVERSITY

- Environmental surveys (e.g. hydrology and soil studies)
- Wildlife surveys
  - Wildlife recording groups
  - Citizen science
  - Formal surveys (e.g. Bat Conservation Trust, specialist consultants)
  - Research organisations







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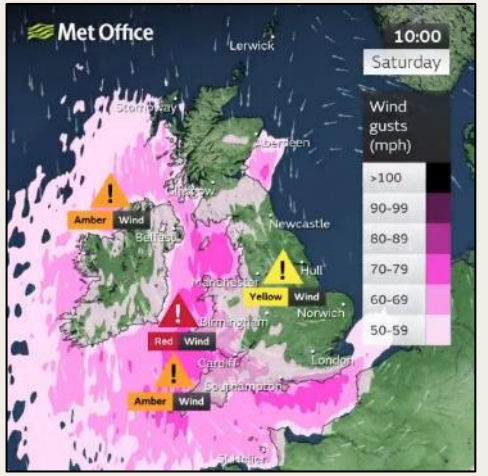
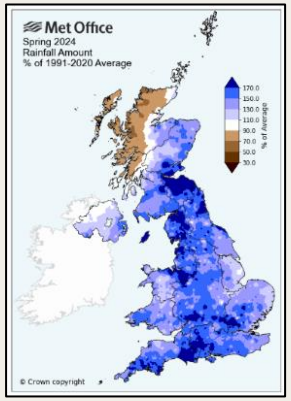
IMPLICATIONS OF A CHANGING CLIMATE

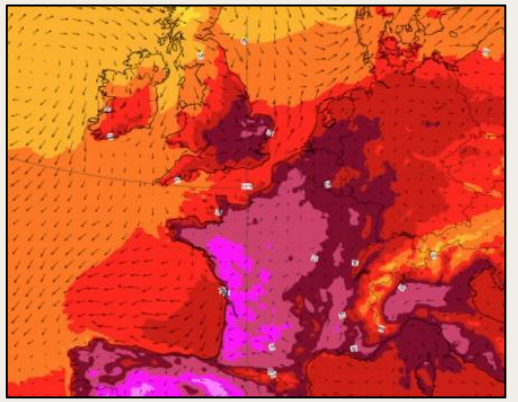
- Our climate is changing now
- 2022 July heatwave, first record exceeding 40°C
- 2024 warmest February and May on record, and the wettest Spring
- March 2025 one of the driest, high wildfire risk
- Oct – December 2024 Storms Ashley, Bert and Darragh
- Trends for warmer, wetter and more extreme weather to continue
- By 2070:
  - by 2070, the chances of exceeding 40°C are similar to the chances of exceeding 32°C thirty years ago.
  - by 2070, the threshold for issuing flash flood alerts will be exceeded twice as often than in 1990.
- Implications for the park's wildlife and landscapes, and how we address these

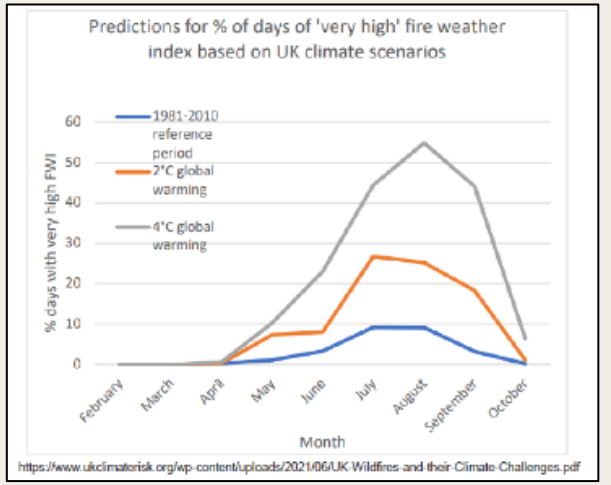
  Two examples:

  - Hydrology and water management
  - Tree and woodland management



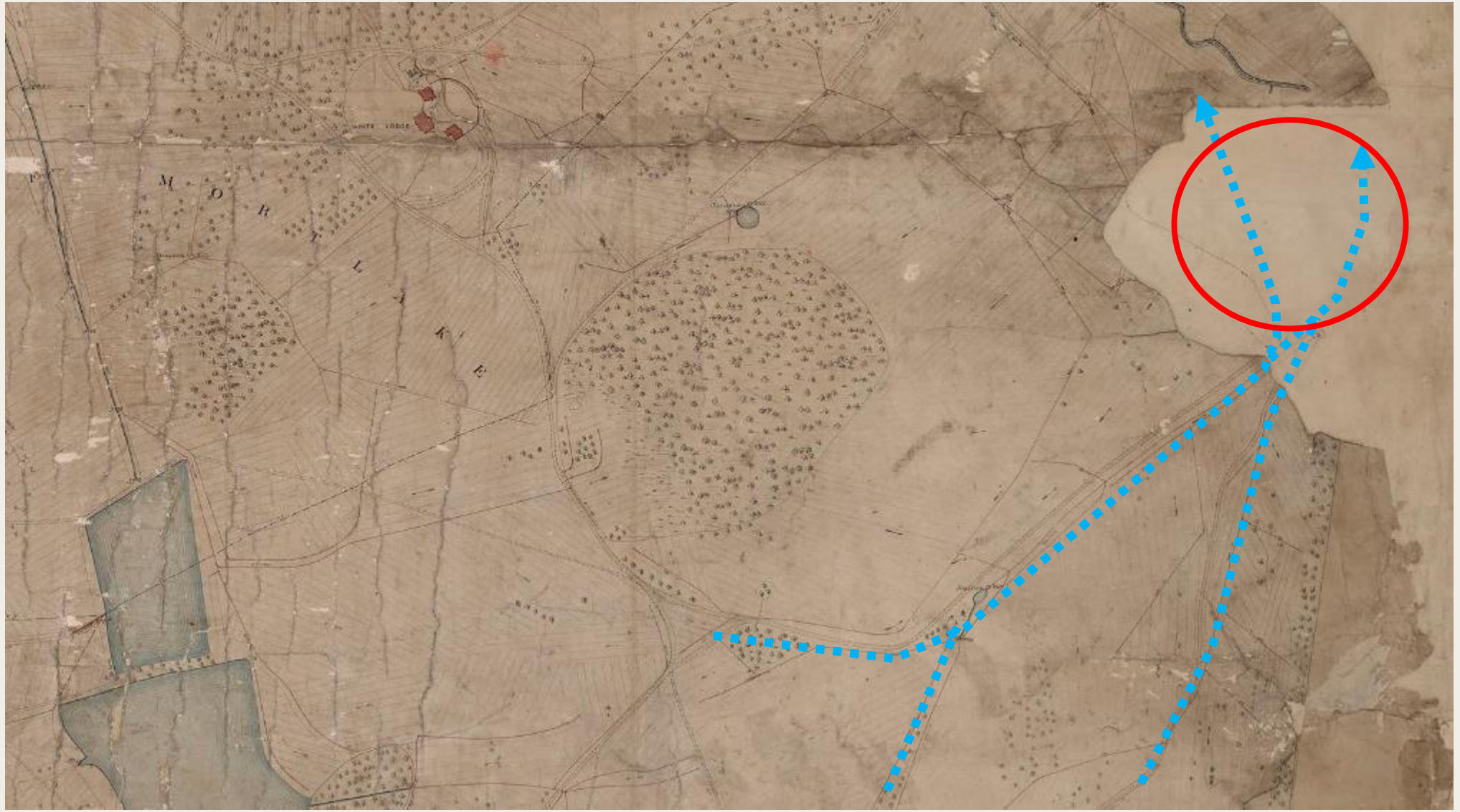






WATER MANAGEMENT – 2023 ROBIN HOOD FLOODING

- A lot of change / potential change to consider
    - Climate
    - Condition / future of infrastructure
    - Principles of land management and understanding of nature
    - Public access and changes in use
    - Expertise for delivery
    - Biodiversity – habitat condition, declining/vulnerable species, invasive species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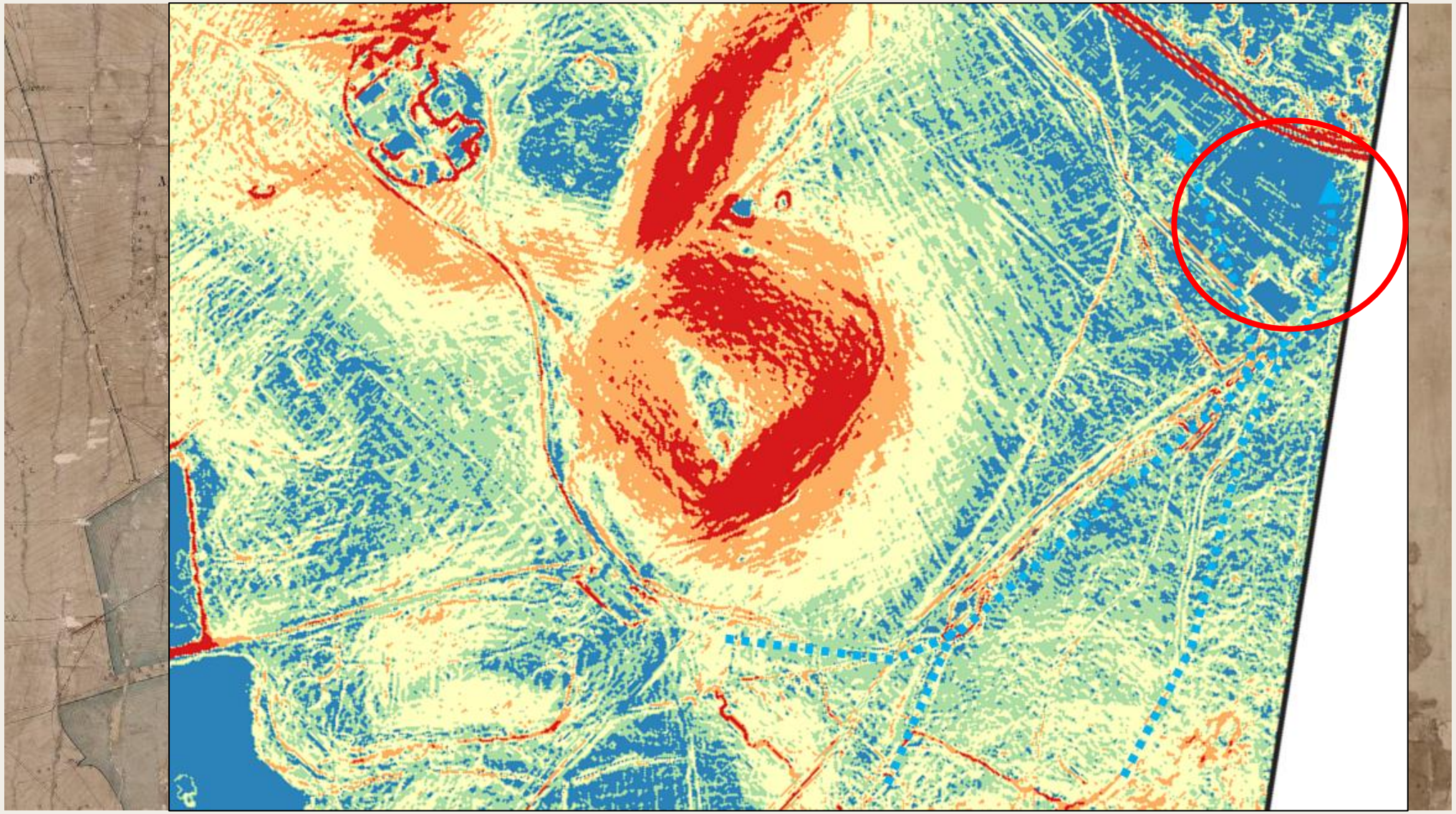

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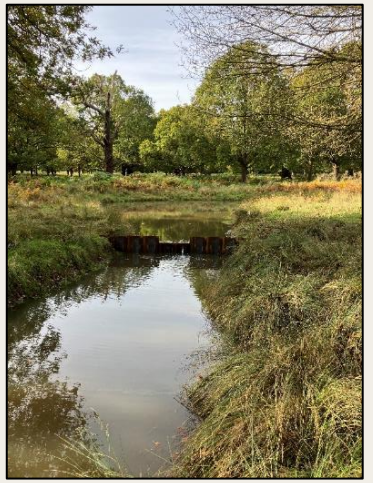
SLOWING THE FLOW- ACROSS THE CATCHMENT

- Address flood risk in sensitive locations, future proof
- Reduce flooding downstream, recharge soils for drought
- Protect vulnerable/designated habitats, invasive species
- Maintain water for deer
- Public access (Tamsin Trail, horse rides, road)
- Restore previous and enhance existing habitats
- Target key species (e.g. Sphagnum moss, amphibians)



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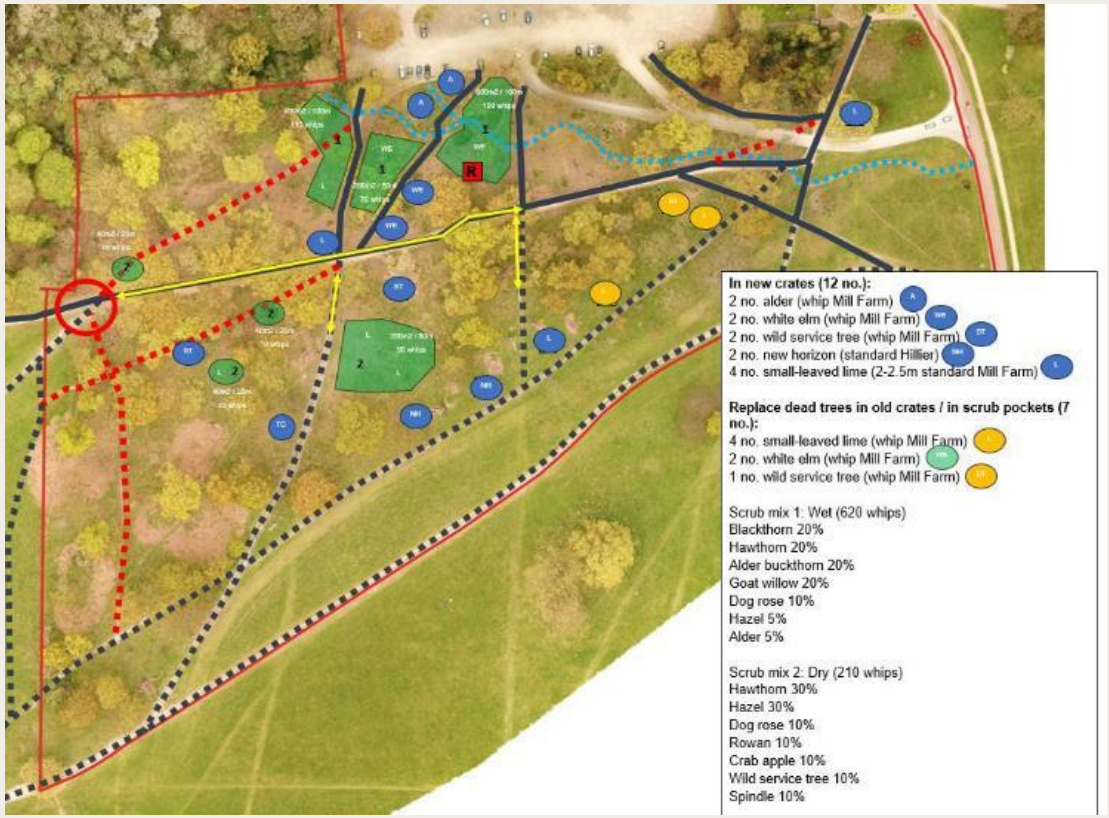
TREE MANAGEMENT - SHEEN WOOD

- Many trees suffering from Acute Oak Decline – a new and complex disease.
- Forest Research site – importance of environmental stress in the disease
- In summer 2024, a number suddenly succumbed
- Urgent action required to address the health and safety risk
- Longer-term, risk to the park landscape and habitats – what is the future for Sheen Wood?

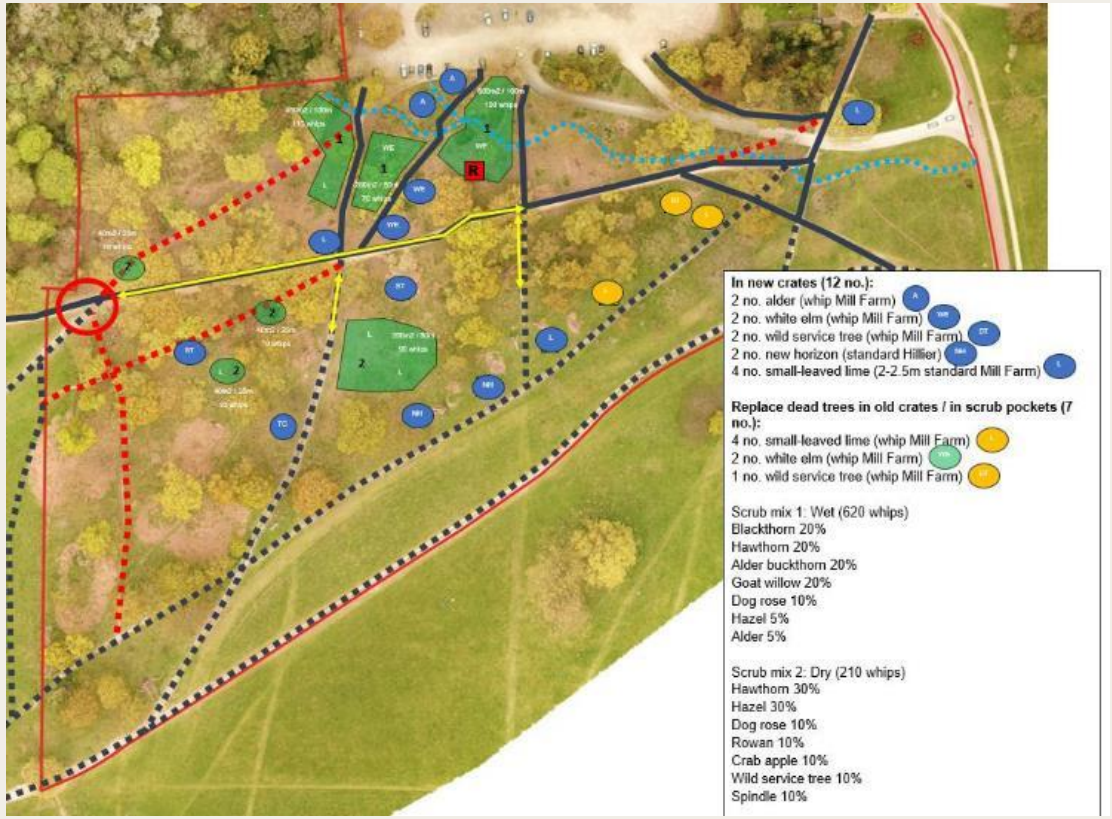
SHEEN WOOD- PLANTING

- New planting
  - Diversify woodland structure and select species mix to maximise biodiversity benefit
  - Planting selection to increase resilience in the face of uncertainty



SHEEN WOOD – SOIL

- Future of existing tree canopy – soil health is key
  - Reduce soil compaction, reduce footfall on roots
  - Protect scrub planting
  - Reduce waterlogging
  - Reduce risk to visitors



QUESTIONS