



## Buckenhams Ancient Woodland Trust (BAWT) Risk Assessment

USE OF HAND TOOLS – RISK ASSESSMENT		
Activity	Use of Hand Tools	
Team	Buckenhams Ancient Woodland Trust - Practical Woodland Work Volunteers	
Location	BAWT section of Buckenhams Wood.	
Other Related Documents	General woodland work and manual handling by volunteers – Risk Assessment.	
General Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Hand-tools are an essential</b> part of the management work in Buckenhams Ancient Woodland. Although items such as garden forks and loppers etc. are familiar to most of us, other specialised equipment may be in use.</li> <li>▪ <b>All Volunteers must</b> work under the Lead Volunteer's advice and use tools only when instructed to do so. Less familiar tools, such as the tree pullers, need some simple, but necessary, training in their safe use.</li> <li>▪ Other items like the telescopic <b>Pole-saw must only be used</b> by qualified and authorised volunteers.</li> <li>▪ Chainsaws and brush-cutters can <b>only be used in the wood by those authorised to do so</b>, and only then by qualified and licensed volunteers.</li> <li>▪ Suitable gloves and <b>stout foot-wear should be worn</b>, and any personal protective equipment (PPE), if issued and instructed to wear by the Lead Volunteer.</li> </ul>	
People at Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ General public visiting Buckenhams Ancient Woodland</li> <li>▪ BAWT Volunteers</li> </ul>	
Date of Assessment	2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2025	
Assessed By	Robert Morgan	

What are the hazards?	How could the hazard cause harm?	What are the actions required to reduce the possibility of harm and who should complete them?
General tools use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cuts</li> <li>▪ Loss of limbs</li> <li>▪ Severe injury</li> <li>▪ Death</li> </ul>	Volunteers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Wear appropriate PPE</b> when issued (gloves and stout boots are required for woodland work)</li> <li>▪ Keep <b>safe working</b> distances</li> <li>▪ Ensure <b>good communications</b> between other volunteers in the work area or close vicinity</li> <li>▪ Ensure tools are <b>well maintained</b> and not modified in anyway.</li> <li>▪ Use tools <b>only for the purpose</b> they are designed.</li> </ul>
Maintenance of tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cuts</li> <li>▪ Loss of limbs (fingers)</li> </ul>	Volunteers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Follow instructions</b> and guidance on tool up-keep and storage.</li> </ul>
Tool use as part of work party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Severe injury</li> <li>▪ Severe bleeding</li> <li>▪ Death</li> </ul>	Volunteers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Wear appropriate PPE</b>, particularly when issued and instructed to do so.</li> <li>▪ Follow good practice and the Lead Volunteer's advice concerning <b>placing tools on the ground</b> (in leaf litter tools can easily be mislaid. Sharp saws etc. may end up hidden in vegetation, when unseen and picked up with vegetation may result in cuts and injury).</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Always place blades and points facing down</b> when not in use, or stuck in the ground with handles facing up.</li> <li>▪ <b>Leave spades, pitch-forks and garden forks stuck</b> firmly in the ground, and together, when not in use.</li> <li>▪ Rakes should be laid with their <b>tynes or 'teeth' facing into the</b> ground. Tools should not be left where they may create a trip hazard.</li> <li>▪ <b>Ask for help</b> with a tool they are not familiar with.</li> <li>▪ <b>Always follow instructions</b> given during the initial 'tool-talk'.</li> </ul>
<b>Terrain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cuts/grazes</li> <li>▪ Broken bones</li> </ul>	<p>Volunteers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Be aware of their surroundings</b> (see General Risk Assessment and Manual Handling).</li> </ul>
<b>Strain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Back injury</li> </ul>	<p>Volunteers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Refer to <b>Manual Handling</b> Risk Assessment</li> <li>▪ <b>Only use tools</b> they are comfortable with</li> <li>▪ <b>Follow instructions</b> of the Lead Volunteer.</li> <li>▪ Only operate tools they <b>have been trained and</b> instructed to use.</li> </ul>
<b>Tree fall – branch fall and use of pole-saw.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crushed; internal injuries</li> <li>▪ Broken limbs</li> <li>▪ Death</li> </ul>	<p>Volunteers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employ <b>safe working distances</b> and take note of all instructions given by the Lead Volunteer.</li> <li>▪ <b>Not enter</b> a working area unless instructed to help undertake the work to make a tree / branch safe.</li> <li>▪ <b>Agree safe working</b> method with others before starting work</li> <li>▪ Ensure all equipment required is accessible before starting work.</li> <li>▪ <b>Only use the telescopic pole-saw if qualified</b> to do so, and PPE, including forestry hard-hats, must be worn by all involved in pole-saw work.</li> </ul>
<b>General Public</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Serious injury</li> <li>▪ Death</li> </ul>	<p>Volunteers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Never allow</b>, dogs, children or the general public into the working area.</li> <li>▪ <b>Consider</b> posting a 'banks-person' or look-out.</li> <li>▪ <b>Always stop work</b> if approached by a member of the public.</li> <li>▪ <b>Do not allow a member</b> of public to join a work party, or take part in any activity without authorisation and proper instruction by the lead volunteer.</li> </ul>