

RISK ASSESSMENT  
**Scything**

**Risk assessment: Scything**

**Date: 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

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**Reviewed on: 24<sup>th</sup> April 2026 by Maria Gill**



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## RISK ASSESSMENT

### Scything

Hazards	Risks	Who might be harmed	Risk level	Control measure already in use	Effectiveness of those control measures
<b>Using Scythes (assembling, scything, honing)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Incorrect assembly, damage to tool or person</li> <li>- Cuts and other personal injury</li> <li>- Injury to other people</li> <li>- Tiredness from over working</li> <li>- Muscle strains</li> <li>- Damage to scythe</li> </ul>	<p>Staff, Volunteers, Participants, Public</p>	<p>Moderate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trained instructor to work with scythe participants at all times</li> <li>- Participants required to wear a glove on the hand whetting the blade</li> <li>- Put tools in designated place when not in use – do not hang it from branches, etc.</li> <li>- Clean and check blade before and after use</li> <li>- Maintain safe working distance from other people – 2 tool lengths</li> <li>- Scythe for a maximum of 10 minutes continuously before short break</li> <li>- Mow in a semi-circular motion, cutting the vegetation rather than hacking at it</li> <li>- Make sure snath is the right length for the user and the handles are positioned in the correct place for user</li> <li>- Never scythe with a dull blade</li> <li>- Never hack aggressively at vegetation, whet or sharpen the blade until it cuts with little effort with a medium or fine stone</li> <li>- When honing, work from the beard of the blade (nearest snath) to the point with short overlapping strokes on each side</li> </ul>	<p>Moderate</p>
<b>Scything in areas with public access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personal injury to passers by</li> </ul>	<p>Staff Volunteers Participants Public</p>	<p>Moderate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Close path if scything near a busy path</li> <li>- Work must stop if any unauthorised person enters the scything area.</li> <li>- If a high traffic or narrow area use trained 'look out' standing 5 meters away from worker to warn passers by</li> <li>- Cordon off areas for scything</li> <li>- Scythes to be stored safely when not in use</li> </ul>	<p>High</p>
<b>Rakes and forks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Injuries from tools</li> <li>- Injury to other people</li> <li>- Tiredness from over working</li> <li>- Muscle strains</li> <li>- Damage to tools</li> </ul>	<p>Staff Volunteers Participants Public</p>	<p>Moderate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tools to be left in safe and visible place when not in use</li> <li>- Participants trained in correct tool use</li> </ul>	<p>Moderate</p>



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Hazards	Risks	Who might be harmed	Risk level	Control measure already in use	Effectiveness of those control measures
<b>Adverse weather – extremes of hot, cold, wet</b>	sun stroke/hypothermia, slipping on wet floor	Staff Volunteers Participants Public	Moderate	-Spare waterproofs, sun screen, umbrellas and warm clothes available from the Centre. -All staff & volunteers will look out for anyone showing signs of being affected by the weather, and suggest that they borrow relevant items if they seem unprepared, or to seek first aid if signs severe.	High
<b>Dog faeces</b>	Toxocara Canis (micro-organism in dog faeces which can cause blindness in children)	Staff Volunteers Participants Public	Moderate	-Check paths and areas to be used, clear of dog waste prior to the event if possible -Warn participants of the hazard. -If dog faeces come into contact with skin or clothes, wash with soap and water without delay	High
<b>Litter, metal, glass, hypodermic needles</b>	Cuts, puncture, toxic poisoning	Staff Volunteers Participants Public	Moderate	-Inspect site prior to event -Use litter-pickers for removal of litter, glass etc -Volunteers to be told not to touch hypodermic needles but report finding to member of staff for safe removal	High
<b>Uneven paths, steep paths, steps, ground, bicycles</b>	Slips, trips, falls, collision with bicycles on cycle path	Staff Volunteers Participants Public	Moderate	-Paths and steps checked regularly for obstructions etc -Inspect areas to be used prior to event -Ensure volunteers do not walk on steep sloped paths -For volunteers with physical impairments that effect walking i.e. those with walking sticks, wheelchairs, walkers, mobility scooters etc., ensure they know which paths are accessible for them and which aren't. Not all paths are wheelchair accessible. -Nature walks participants cautioned about potential hazards, including moving bicycles	High



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