

Wallingford Castle Meadows

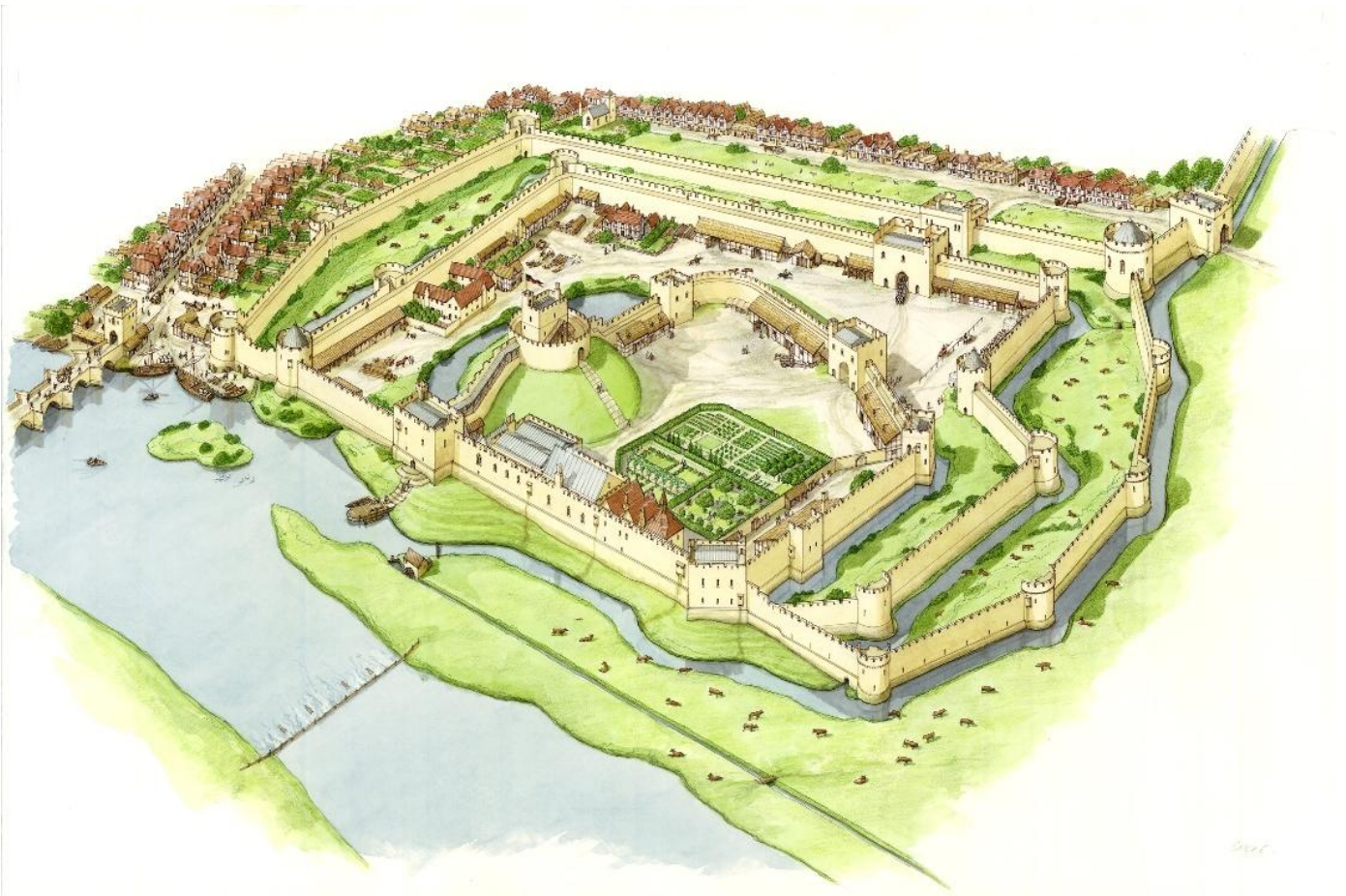
Executive Summary

of the

Site Management Plan

2012 - 2017

Prepared by Earth Trust on
behalf of South Oxfordshire
District Council



Artists impression of Wallingford Castle in the late 13th Century

Introduction

Wallingford Castle Meadows cover some 16.6 hectares on the banks of the River Thames in Wallingford. The meadows contain the site of Wallingford Castle, which has a long and complex history. The site contains a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) and two sections of wall which are Grade I listed buildings. The whole site lies within a Conservation Area.

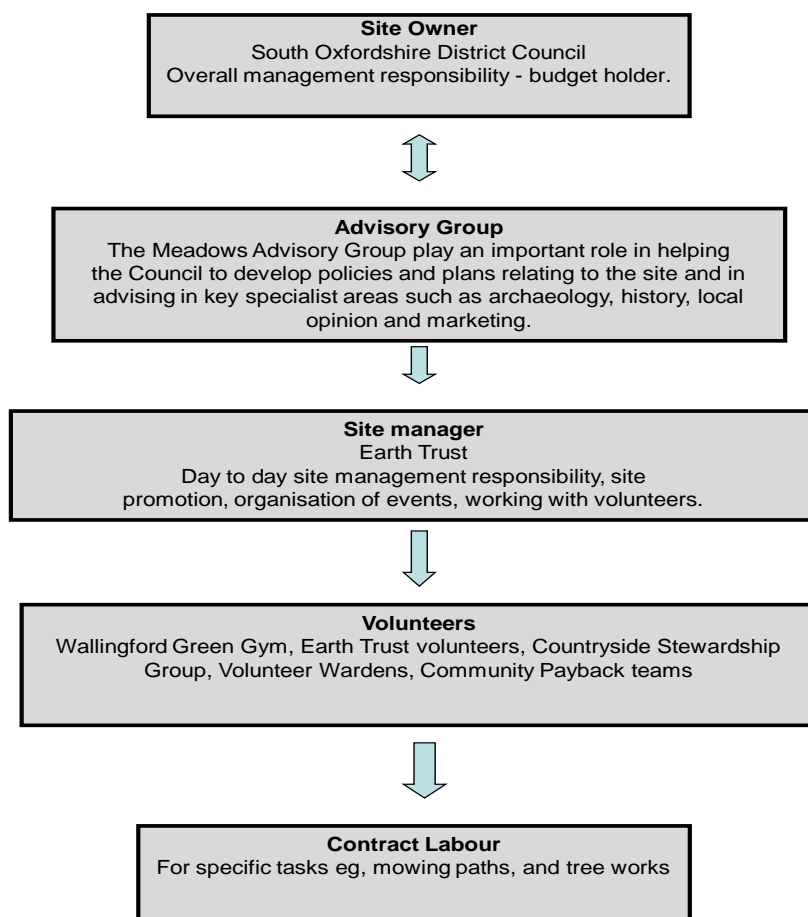
Wallingford Castle Meadows in 2012



South Oxfordshire District Council acquired Wallingford Castle Meadows in 1999 for the benefit of the people of South Oxfordshire. The site is managed for informal recreation consistent with the proper preservation and interpretation of the Wallingford Castle Scheduled Ancient Monument, other historical landscape features, and the conservation and enhancement of wildlife.

The day to day management and running of the site is contracted to the Earth Trust who are responsible for delivering the majority of the objectives and actions contained in the Management Plan and employ a full time site warden. Volunteers play a crucial role in the management and have been responsible for much of the practical work that has been undertaken.

Management Infrastructure



The Meadows Advisory Group was formed to advise the Council in particular areas. The group meets twice a year to discuss the development and running of the site and plays an important role in helping the council develop various areas of site management. The group includes members of the Local Town Council, District

Councillors, English Heritage, the Oxfordshire County Council Archaeologist, local historians and research archaeologists as well as local volunteers, residents and site users.

Research has shown that the majority of our visitors are from the local area although we also get visitors from all over the world. Generally people are very happy with the way the site is managed. As a result we aim to continue to manage the site in the following ways:

Management

Wallingford Castle Meadows are managed as an informal open space with three main objectives in mind:

- 1) Preservation of the historic remains of Wallingford Castle
- 2) To provide informal public access and enjoyment
- 3) To promote nature conservation

The Meadows were entered into a 10 year Higher Level Stewardship Agreement in April 2011. The agreement will provide funding for many of the capital projects on the site including fencing, structural works to the standing remains and replacement tree planting, as well as providing annual payments in return for the Council managing the land to preserve and enhance its historic and nature conservation value.

The management plan sets out the policies and objectives for the site together with detailed management activities to achieve these.



The Meadows

In summary the management objectives outlined above are met in the following ways:

1) Preservation of the historic remains of Wallingford Castle

- Prevention of erosion of earthworks by carefully controlling grazing and the local rabbit population
- Stabilisation of Grade 1 listed structures and regular monitoring of condition
- Protection of historic structures



Remains of the castle



Hereford cattle grazing the meadows

2) To provide public access and enjoyment

- Provision of a wardening service for the site
- Provision of interpretation facilities and leaflets
- Maintenance of access facilities and mowing of preferred paths
- Regular programme of events designed to increase enjoyment and understanding of the site's unique features
- Improvement of signage to the site and external provision of information
- Support and develop volunteering



The Wallingford Green Gym



Guided walks



Interpretation



Volunteers planting a hedge

3) To promote nature conservation

- Management of the grassland to diversify the sward to flower rich meadows
- Management of the ditches as habitat for the water vole
- Management of the tree stock for safety, to preserve the parkland feel of the site and provide nature conservation benefits
- Creation of nesting and roosting opportunities with the erection of nest boxes and bat boxes
- Management of standing and fallen deadwood habitats



Loddon Lily (summer snowflake) – found along ditch banks



Cowslips – found on the ramparts

The full management plan is available to view on the Earth Trust website at www.earthtrust.org.uk If you have any further enquires relating to the site or its management please contact the Earth Trust on 01865 409972 or email admin@earthtrust.org.uk