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 **RISK ASSESSMENT & METHOD STATEMENT (RAMS)**

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| Name of Assessor:  | David Shaftoe | Date: | 10th March 2022, Version 2 |
| Task Being Assessed: | **BRUSHCUTTER (OR STRIMMER) USE, various locations, year-round** |
| Other RAMS to refer to: | **BCS AUTOSCYTHE, CONSERVATION WORK, COVID-19, MINIBUS, WORKING WITH DISABLED PEOPLE** |
| Risk v Benefit analysis: | A brush cutter is a useful piece of equipment for managing path edges, stands of vegetation and churchyards (the latter being a niche area we are keen to develop). There are some risks, mainly due to manual handling, cuts and hearing damage. Wildlife can also be inadvertently harmed by the blade. |

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| What is the hazard? | Who might be harmed | How might people be harmed | Existing risk control measures | Risk Rating | Additional Controls | New risk rating (Residual) | Action / monitored by whom? | Action / monitored by when? |
| L | C | R | L | C | R |
| **Manual handling** | StaffVolunteers | Cuts from bladeBack strain | Ensure any blade guard is in place prior to moving the machineUse harness to prevent back strain | 2 | 3 | 6 | Buy better harnessToolbox talk | 1 | 3 | 3 | Activity leader | Every session |
| **Use of Machinery**  | StaffVolunteersMembers | Back strainCuts to bodyHearing damageElectrocutionInitiation cord not fully deploying, causing injury to fingers and hands  | Machine should only be used by competent, trained and signed-off people – staff or a volunteerMachine operators and other workers who are nearby should wear the correct PPE, including ear defenders and steel toe-capped footwear Ensure machine is annually serviced, well maintained and safe to use The task must have two non-disabled people to accompany the leader who is usually the Brushcutter operatorA talk is provided by the task leader prior to commencing work, detailing how to use the tools safely and information about site safetyLarge ambulance dressings are taken on site and kept near the operator Remove spark plug before carrying out maintenance or cleaningWear gloves when cleaning or changing over the headsUndertake a dummy pull first to turn the engine over before exerting maximum force. Grip the toggle between the fingers at the 1st knuckle Ensure safe working distances between people and the machine | 2 | 5 | 10 | Toolbox talkFormal training of volunteers to ensure cover and allow for operator rest breaks  | 1 | 5 | 5 | Activity leader | Every session  |
| **Flammable materials** | StaffVolunteersMembers | Fire due to poor storage, pouring & transport of petrol & oil | On site, ensure machine is not exposed to sources of naked flamesStore spare petrol away from machine and sources of naked flamesInstruct smokers to smoke away from machine and spare fuel. Extinguish cigarettes properlyWhen filling petrol tank, ensure it is done in an open, well-ventilated area, and use a funnel to minimise spillsStore and transport petrol in a suitable container, clearly marked so people know what is containedStored away from naked flames - in a van vault, which is kept locked | 1 | 5 | 5 | None identified | 1 | 5 | 5 | Activity leader | Every session |
| **Vibration** | Operator | Injury from HAVS due to vibration | Take regular breaks every 30 minutesAvoid rough, uneven surfaces which increase vibrationWear good, thick glovesDon’t use brushcutter for more than 4 hours in one day | 2 | 4 | 8 | Formal training of volunteers to ensure cover and allow for operator rest breaks | 1 | 4 | 4 | Activity leader | Every session |
| **Hand tools**  | StaffVolunteersMembers | Injury | Tools should be checked before use and kept clean and well maintained Ensure that tools are stored safely on site (e.g. forks facing downwards) and in a designated areaA count of tools should be taken at the beginning and end of the day to ensure all tools are accounted for | 1 | 4 | 4 | None identified | 1 | 4 | 4 | Activity leader | Every session |
| **Slips, trips or falls** | StaffVolunteersMembers | Cuts, bruises, slips, trips & falls, fractures & dislocations | Reccie the site before-hand so the leader is aware of potential risks and can make the group aware of them Keep routes clear of debris, brash and tools Do not rush participants and walk to the individual’s comfortable speed Ensure there are enough helpers to number of people in need of assistance Take regular breaksCarry at least one first aid kit and ensure presence of a first aiderEncourage the use of appropriate footwear | 2 | 3 | 6 | Toolbox talk | 1 | 3 | 3 | Activity leader | Every session |
| **People** | StaffVolunteersMembers Public | Anxiety from machinery useInjury from machineCollision with other site usersInjury/assault from public | Group leader to instruct everyone to stay clear of the brushcutter operator A spotter is appointed, who is the only person who can approach the operatorAdequate support and supervision should be given to participants by leaders and volunteers. Steel toe-capped footwear should be wornStop the activity when necessary and explain dangers to participants calmly but firmly. Maintain close vigilanceMake volunteers / staff and carers aware of participants needs. Remain calm and patient, taking breaks and rest periods where needed. The noise of the brushcutter may cause unease. Reassure people and keep them well away from the working area, if needs be giving them other duties on site. Possibly issue with ear defendersUse of barrier tape and warning signs to warn members of public and other site users that work is in progress | 1 | 3 | 3 | None identified | 1 | 3 | 3 | Activity leader | Every session |
| **Fatigue** | StaffVolunteers | Brushcutter use is physically draining | Encourage short breaks and rest periods Operator to bring plenty of food and drink and leaders should take spare water | 2 | 4 | 8 | Formal training of volunteers to ensure cover and allow for operator rest breaks | 1 | 4 | 4 | Activity leader | Every session |
| **Weather conditions** | StaffVolunteersMembers | Extreme weatherSunburn / heat exhaustion / heat strokeDehydrationHypothermia / hyperthermiaSlippery surfaces | Note weather conditions of the day and check everyone is fully equipped before leaving Be aware that conditions could change significantly after heavy precipitation or freezing temperatures Take spare woollies and / or sun protection and offer them for loanMake participants aware of the forecast and make adjustments to the day if necessary Make everyone aware of slippery surfaces. Slow down / stop as necessary Wellies with steel toe caps should be provided by Open Country and worn for most activities. Socks are available for loan A survival bag, vehicle or indoor space should be nearby in case of exposure related illness (e.g. hypothermia/hyperthermia) | 1 | 5 | 5 | None identified | 1 | 5 | 5 | Activity leader | Every session |
| Method Statement: | 1. Activity leader to ensure they are familiar with related risk assessments and toolbox talks. Brushcutters should only be used by trained people with a current ticket. Refresher training to be carried out every 3 years. Check adequate insurance cover is in place.
2. Follow manual handling guidelines for using equipment.
3. Check all equipment is in a serviceable condition – serviced at least annually.
4. Leader should be familiar with the site. Where are the nearest toilets?
5. All participants should have filled out a Personal Information (PI) form which is taken on the day, detailing emergency contacts, doctor’s details and medical information. This information is confidential to the group leader (normally staff) and emergency services. The group leader should be a first aider and will administer first aid if necessary. As the group leader will usually be the mower operator there will ideally be a 2nd qualified first aider on site.
6. Store extra tools and petrol in a designated area, away from smokers.
7. Give a Toolbox talk. Make the group aware of the potential risks and keep them updated and calm if necessary.
8. Appoint a Spotter for the session, to ensure no one approaches the machine operator whilst the machine is in use. Warning signs and barrier tape may be used on some sites.
9. Operator wears appropriate PPE – ear defenders, thick gloves and steel toe-capped boots.
10. Be mindful of slips, trips and falls when using the Brushcutter. Also be aware of the dangers from unsafe gravestones when working in churchyards.
11. Be careful not to injure animals when working - hedgehogs, amphibians and small mammals.
12. Monitor your physical condition, mood and hydration levels. Regular breaks should be taken.
13. Leave the site tidy and safe at the end of the day.
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| Signature of Reviewer: | David_Sig.jpg |

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|  | Severity of impact / consequences |
| Trivial | Minor injury | Over 3 day injury | Major injury | Incapacity or death |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Likelihood | Highly unlikely | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Unlikely | 2 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 |
| Possible | 3 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 12 | 15 |
| Probable | 4 | 4 | 8 | 12 | 16 | 20 |
| Certain | 5 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 |

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| Document Owner | **David Shaftoe** | Classification | **Internal Use** |
| Date of Issue | **03/07/20**  | Date of next review | **31/03/23** |