

The Fence around Sharphill Wood

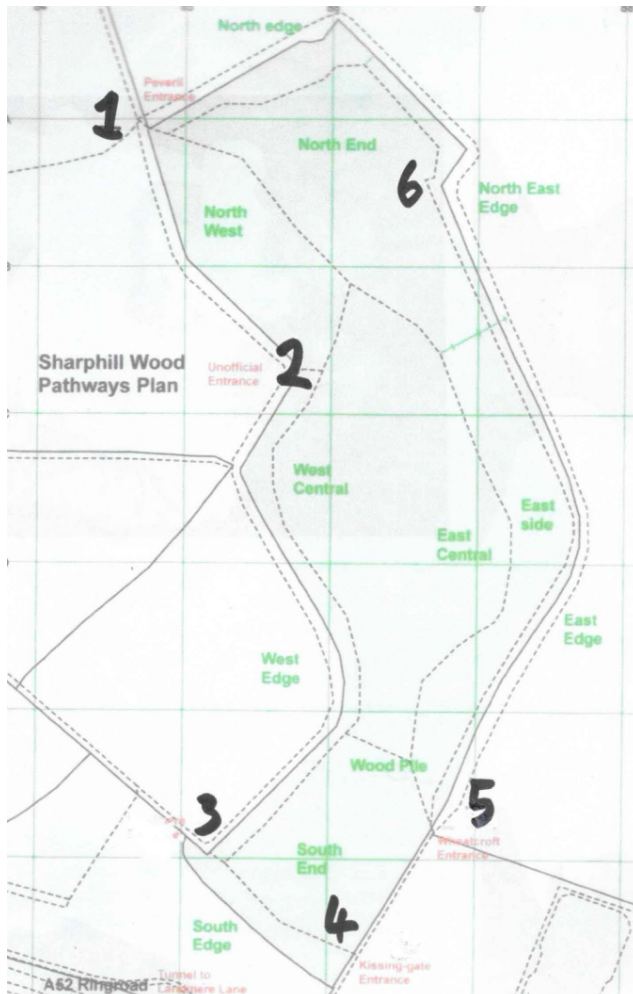
This report documents the state of the post and rail fence 'encircling' Sharphill Wood, installed in the summer of 2018, as it was found to be on 10-11 November 2023, with an update added to the first row of the table below on 28 January 2024.

The report has been produced following a Sharphill Stakeholders meeting held at the Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC) offices on Wednesday 18 October 2023, when the condition of the fence around the wood was raised by representatives of The Friends of Sharphill Wood (FoSW).

In particular, FoSW referred to the extremely poor quality of the fencing, an extensive amount of which is in considerable disrepair and/or missing. In response, it was asserted by a representative of RBC's Planning Department that the fence was in good order and had been reinforced by the addition of extra nails to fix the rails to the posts. This response was delivered in such a manner as to give the clear impression that the Planning Department representative considered the FoSW information to be disingenuous. The report below has therefore been produced to document the actual state of the fence at the present time, supported by photographic evidence.

It is important to bear in mind that this fence was a key component of the measures laid down to mitigate the effects of the Sharphill development on the integrity and value of this Local Nature Reserve.

The fence was erected in the summer of 2018 and has been a cause of concern (poor construction, missing sections, vandalism) ever since. Some gaps in the fence, and stiles/dog gates incorporated, were completed in the spring of 2022.



Although some sections of the fence are still in good repair, in many places the rails have come away because they were poorly attached to the posts. Also many posts are now unstable or have come out of the ground altogether, presumably due to rotting of the sections that are in the ground.

Whilst examining the fence many photos of the fixings were taken and these are presented alongside the Grid References. Over 99% used a single-nail method. In fact during the tour of the fence only 19 instances were observed where a double-nail method was employed. These were at corner sections of the fence and at the newer section of fence beside point 2.






Grid Ref	Notes	Damage	Nails
SK58473509	<p>Point 1 on map</p> <p>Immediately to the right of the "Peveril entrance"</p>	<p>Rails had come away from the posts in October 2023 and in January 2024 a whole section of 13+ posts has fallen to the ground. Inspection of the bases of the posts shows thorough rotting as the cause.</p>  	 
SK58543495	<p>A little way south down the western boundary of the wood.</p>	<p>8 posts loose - whole fence leaning in towards the wood.</p> 	




Grid Ref	Notes	Damage	Nails
SK58563493	<p>Point 2 on map</p> <p>Unofficial entrance part-way down western boundary.</p> <p>At this point the missing section of the 2018 fence was completed + stile and dog entrance inserted in the Spring of 2022.</p>	<p>New fence vandalised and a section destroyed April 2022.</p> 	<p>The small section of new fence adjacent to the dog entrance does have firm fixtures:</p> 
SK58553489	<p>At the next corner - post split in half; fence down</p>	<p>Corner post split in half. Fence collapsed</p> 	

Grid Ref	Notes	Damage	Nails
	Section between listed points	23 posts are significantly unstable indicating likelihood of collapse in the near future	
SK58603472		<p data-bbox="651 369 1107 465">9 posts loose and fence leaning away from wood. One post completely out of the ground</p> 	

Grid Ref	Notes	Damage	Nails
	Between points below and above	Rails detached 	

Grid Ref	Notes	Damage	Nails
SK58533462	<p>Point 3 on map</p> <p>Unofficial entrance; stile and dog entrance erected Spring 2022.</p>	<p>Stile vandalised April 2022</p> 	
SK58493460		<p>6 posts loose and leaning towards wood; rails detached</p> 	
	<p>Section between listed points</p>	<p>4 posts unstable</p>	

Grid Ref	Notes	Damage	Nails
SK5853 3457	Stile and dog entrance erected Spring 2022.	Fence around the stile and dog entrance destroyed by vandals April 2022. 	
	No fence between above point and the "Wheatcroft" entrance at SK58673461 (Point 5 on map) with the exception of a small (intact) section at the "Kissing Gate" Entrance SK58593451 (Point 4 on map)		
SK58673462 SK58713469	Between "Wheatcroft entrance" and Multi Use Games Area	Two instances of rails which are detached  	

Grid Ref	Notes	Damage	Nails
SK58763478	Adjacent to temporary fencing along MUGA construction site	Destruction of fence/vandalism 	
Between SK58763478 and SK58763488	Temporary metal fence erected during construction of the MUGA	Wholesale destruction of plantings made in the winter of 2018/19. This section will need strong, substantial fencing to a suitable height due to the likelihood of ball games in the vicinity and also pressure from MUGA users to access the wood where there is no entrance.	
SK58763490			
SK58743492			

Grid Ref	Notes	Damage	Nails
SK58713500		<p data-bbox="641 203 1120 291">4 posts loose and leaning away from wood; rails detached</p> 	

Grid Ref	Notes	Damage	Nails
SK58703501	Point 6 on map	<p>Large section of fence down: 4 posts missing or horizontal, 2 additional ones leaning heavily</p> 	
		<p>3 Rails detached</p> 	

Grid Ref	Notes	Damage	Nails
SK58583516		Post missing; all three rails detached 	
SK58493511		Rail broken and detached  	

In Conclusion

It is quite clear from the evidence shown above that the fence is not in good order and has not been reinforced by the addition of extra nails. On the contrary, the current condition of the fence is characterised by a large number of defects, including: unstable or missing posts; loose, detached or missing rails; wholesale destruction of significant sections of fencing, and vandalised and/or missing dog friendly stiles.

As a point of comparison and reference, the photographs below show a section of the post and rail fence on the main Melton Road, Edwalton Housing development (at Fairburn Crescent).

Here, the same Developer(s) has constructed similar, but much more substantial, fencing; this is characteristic of the fencing constructed elsewhere on the housing estate, which remains in good condition. It can be seen from the photographs that the rails are double nailed to the posts, and the timber is much more substantial than that used around Sharphill Wood.

It is not hard to understand why the Sharphill Wood fencing has failed, while the housing estate fencing has survived.

