NMM PROJECT: VOLUNTEER CONDITION MONITORING FORM GUIDANCE NOTES

Initials and your visit no. – Please fill in your initials and the number of the visit to which this form relates, ie if this is your second visit this will be Visit No. 2. This will enable us to compare observations made by you during your visits.

Date – Please fill in the date of your visit in the form DD/MM/YY.

Site Name: Please use the site names provided to you in the documentation you receive from the project to avoid confusion. If in doubt the site name will usually be the name or type of monument and its location.

Parish - Parish information will be in the documentation provided by the project.

Visit By - Use this box to give us your full name and the names of anyone else who accompanies you and what their official role is, if appropriate.
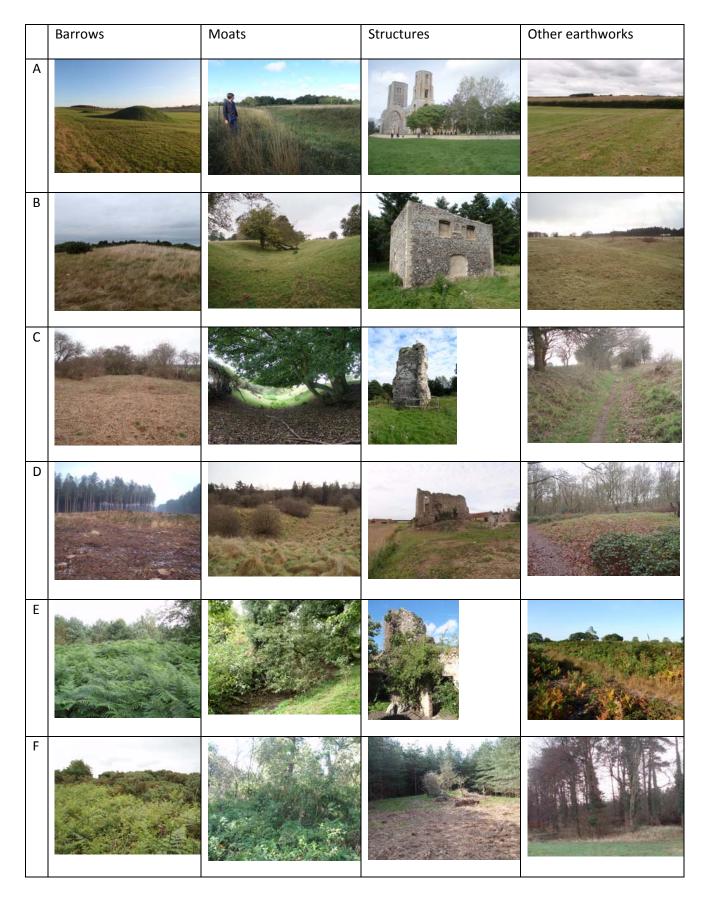
HER Number - This will be in the documentation issued to you by the project. This is a unique identifying number generated by the Historic Environment Record database. This number is very important to identify the monument and for later data collation.

SM/LB No. - The site you are monitoring may be a designated asset ie a Scheduled Monument (SM) or listed building (LB). If this is the case this information will also be in the documentation issued to you by the project. This box is used to record the unique number given to such assets which will begin with either SM or LB. If the site is not designated you do not need to fill in this box although you may wish to cross out the box or write N/A.

Overall Condition - Rating the condition of the monument can be quite a subjective process and will also vary by type of monument. In order to make this easier and more consistent we use a scale from A to F with A being excellent and F being poor.

A series of example pictures have been included below in order to help you determine which letter best applies to the monument you are monitoring.

In the field it will probably be easiest to circle whichever letter you think is appropriate. If you are filling in the form digitally please highlight the relevant letter.

	Barrows	Moats	Structures	Other earthworks
A				
B				
C				
D				
E				
F				

Change in condition since your last visit – This is a straightforward assessment of whether the monument is in better or worse condition than your previous visit. You may need to refer to the photos and the recording sheet from your previous visit in order to help you with this.

If it is possible to you can indicate whether the improvement or decline is major or slight. If you are not sure about this you do not have to fill it in.

If there has been no change in the condition of the monument please highlight none.

If this is your first visit this box will not be applicable and you do not need to fill it in.

Land Use – This section is used to identify the *current* land use of the site you are monitoring. You can highlight as many of the options given as you feel is appropriate. In order to make filling in this section easier a list of definitions has been provided below:

Arable – land which is cultivated for crops

Pasture - land covered with grass or similar vegetation which is suitable for grazing by livestock

Meadow - an area of grassland, often low lying with tall grass, usually used for hay or for grazing of animals

Marsh - a tract of low wet land, often treeless and periodically inundated, generally characterised by a growth of grasses, sedges, cattails, and rushes

Wood – land covered with trees of mixed species, usually broadleaved in this area (but sometimes coniferous), growing in a less organised fashion than a forestry plantation

Forestry Plantation - an artificially established forest, usually of coniferous trees, arranged in a regimented fashion and harvested for sale

Scrub - vegetation consisting of stunted trees, bushes, and other plants

Heath - a large open area, usually with sandy soil and scrubby vegetation, especially heather and gorse

Military – land owned by the armed services for use for activities such as practice exercises or military bases

Buildings – Structures built for human use such as pillboxes, warren lodges etc

Garden - a plot of ground, usually near a house, where flowers, shrubs, vegetables, fruits, or herbs are cultivated

Landscape park – a designed landscape, usually related to, or surrounding, a country house

In many cases in Thetford forest you will be looking at sites which fall under 'Forestry Plantation' or 'Heath'.

Ground and masonry vegetation – This section is for recording the vegetation which you can see on the site at the time of your visit.

A series of vegetation types is listed in the left hand column. The next column has been left blank for you to give an estimate of the percentage of that type of vegetation which is present. For example you may consider that there is 60% of grass and 40 % of scrub on the site. This estimate will not be exact and you should simply give the best estimate that you can. Please give a percentage for each type of vegetation you see, even if you think this may only be 1%. If you discover something which is not listed in the first column please use the row entitled 'other'. All your percentages should ultimately add up to 100.

The third column is also blank for you to fill in with any further observations you have about each vegetation type. For example you may want to note that that grass has clearly been cut recently or list the type of trees present.

Grazing – This section allows you to record any information on current grazing of the site. The first yes or no box asks whether the site is grazed *at any time*, regardless of whether animals are currently present. If no animals are present and you are not sure about this please indicate that this is unknown and move on to the next section (Burrowing Animals). Similarly if you know the answer is no please highlight 'N' and move on to the next section.

If the answer is yes please move on to the box entitled '% of area'. This asks for an estimate of how much of the site is grazed. Again this may not be exact but an indication of area will be useful. If known please record which species of animal is used to graze the site.

The second line in this section relates to the *current* presence of grazing animals at the time of the visit. This initially requires a simple yes or no answer, please highlight or circle as appropriate. If animals are present the following box asks how many, and of which species. It may not be possible to count the number of animals exactly and a good estimate is sufficient here.

The final line in this section asks you to make a judgement about what impact grazing animals are having on the site and gives you a list of options.

'Maintaining ground vegetation' – this describes a situation where grazing is generally beneficial and grass or other vegetation is being kept at an acceptable length on the site.

'Scrub control' - scrub is being kept to a minimum by grazing.

'General poaching/erosion' – The term poaching in this context refers to trampling or cutting up of the ground by hooves. In some cases animal activity can cause quite severe erosion to heritage assets.

'Wallows' – areas of mud or shallow water where animals roll, often causing large depressions with prolonged use.

'Overgrazing' – the grass sward or other vegetation which is protecting the monument is not sufficient to feed the animals present resulting in bare patches of ground.

'Tracks' – the ground has been eroded to bare ground along well-used animal routes

'Feeders' – the ground around feeders or troughs has been eroded to bare ground through constant trampling.

Burrowing Animals – The first box again requires a simple yes or no answer. It may not be possible to establish from your visit whether burrowing animals are present. You may not see any animals but all leave distinctive signs including burrows, mounds and droppings. If you are unsure or the answer is No please make a note of this and move on to the next section (Trees).

If the answer is yes please record which species are present if you know.

The final line asks for an indication of what impact burrowing animals are having. A series of options are given and in some cases are similar to those for grazing animals. Please record any observations you have.

Trees – This section asks you simply to identify the impacts of any trees you can see on the site by circling or highlighting as many as are applicable. A list of options is given on the form but please record any other impacts you can see. If you think it may help you can note the species of any trees.

Structural Remains – The first box in this section asks whether structural remains are present on site. If the answer is no please highlight 'N' and move on the Public Access section. If yes the following box asks you to identify what the remains are eg, church, warren lodge, house etc. If you are not sure please give a brief description of what remains eg ruined walls of a rectangular building, flint revetting around a moat platform.

The second line asks you to record any observations regarding the structural remains. Again a list of options is given on the form; you may highlight as many as are relevant. If there is anything visible that is not in the list please record it under 'Other'.

Public Access – This section relates to access to the monument. Firstly please indicate whether there is public access or not in the Y/N box. If the answer is no please move on to the Digital Photographs section. If the answer is yes the following box asks you to highlight what facilities are present. Again please highlight as many as you feel are relevant.

Digital Photographs - Please use this box to list the photographs which you took on your monitoring visit. The photographs should be numbered so that they can be easily identified and should be given the same numbers digitally. The descriptions of your photographs should include orientations where possible or useful.

Notes – You can use this box to record any other details which you think may be useful for further monitoring or management of the site. You do not have to fill the box but don't be afraid to make further comments!

Completed by and Date - Please fill in your name and the date the form was completed in this box.

Event Record on HER and **Condition Statement on HER** – Please do not fill in these boxes, they are for use by the Historic Environment Service once the completed form has been submitted.