

## Risk Assessment for Bush Craft Programme.

<b><u>Bushcraft Foraging, Fire Lighting Techniques, Cooking and Shelter Building.</u></b>						
Hazard/Risk	Who could be affected by hazard.	Likelihood of being affected	Worst consequence of being affected	Risk Level	How hazard/risk is mitigated	Residual risk level
Burn or scald from fire.	FST VSA VC GCS	2	40	80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire contained within fire pit, or metal container.</li> <li>• Exclusion zone around the fire of at least 2m in every direction. This to be increased in windy conditions and at night, as well as group specific under guidance from VSA.</li> <li>• VSA and FST to ensure a 'Fire Watch' at all times to prevent unauthorized individuals entering the exclusion zone.</li> <li>• Seasoned hardwood logs to be burned on the fire, if not a greater exclusion zone to be ensured by the FST.</li> <li>• Fire managed so flames get no higher than knee height, OR 0.5m on raised area, by not allowing further wood to be added to the built fire after lighting it.</li> <li>• Fire to be positioned away from other flammable materials and overhanging trees and branches.</li> <li>• A fire extinguisher, bucket of water and sand available.</li> <li>• FST to light, tend and re-stock fire using suitable gloves and fire irons.</li> <li>• The area within and immediately surrounding the exclusion zone should be clear of any trip hazards.</li> <li>• Ensure first aid bag and water for treatment of burns are situated in easily accessible location.</li> </ul>	LOW
Burn or scald from hot food or cooking	FST VSA VC	5	5	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only small amounts of food to cooked at any one time to avoid excessive weight or over balancing.</li> <li>• Oven glove or similar to be used at all times by FST</li> </ul>	LOW

pot/equipment.					<p>when working with fire.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Size of fire to be kept to a minimum.</li> </ul>	
Food allergy, or other reaction, causing allergic reaction or anaphylactic shock.	FST VSA VC	1	75	75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FST to check group file prior to session and ensure foodstuff removed from working areas.</li> <li>• FST and office staff to clearly mark on group program to food allergies in red pen to make as obvious as possible.</li> <li>• All foodstuffs of similar type to be stored separately in sealed containers to avoid any cross contamination. All VC to wear surgical gloves to pick nettles, and avoid any contact with skin.</li> </ul>	LOW
Stomach upset or illness caused by eating bush craft food. Including hedgerow rations.	FST VSA VC	2	20	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FST, VSA and VC to wash hands with anti-bac soap and water prior to cooking and handling all foodstuffs.</li> <li>• Any open cuts or injuries to be covered before handling foodstuffs with blue detectable plasters and surgical glove if necessary.</li> <li>• Suitable foodstuffs to be washed prior to use.</li> <li>• All food to be thoroughly cooked prior to eating.</li> <li>• All ingredients (common use eg flour and sugar) to be changed regularly, and if content is uncertain after use.</li> <li>• FST and assistants to ensure all foodstuffs are kept in suitable conditions to prevent deterioration and/or contamination. Including nettles never to be sprayed.</li> <li>• All cooking equipment to be washed thoroughly after use and storage.</li> <li>• All tables and floors to be washed down and swept. Regular cleaning with anti-bac spray.</li> </ul>	LOW
Knives or other sharp utensils	FST VSA	8	5	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FST to warn of danger and to demonstrate the safe method of use, sawing on steady protected surface,</li> </ul>	LOW

causing cut or other type of injury.	VC				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no stabbing or chopping.</li> <li>The use of sharp knives to be directly supervised (after demonstration) by FST or VSA.</li> <li>Only blunt edge type utensils to be used where possible.</li> <li>Scissors to be used to cut vegetables etc.</li> <li>No running or rushing in cooking areas.</li> <li>Utensils to be kept on tables during session. Only removed to be washed up.</li> </ul>	
Respiratory difficulties due to excessive smoke.	FST VSA VC	1	75	75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FST to ensure the prevailing weather and wind conditions are taken into account when setting up the exclusion zone to allow for smoke and wind.</li> <li>VSA to ensure any VC with severe asthma and/or respiratory difficulties are kept out of smoke and at a safe distance.</li> <li>Whenever possible seasoned hardwood logs to be burned on the fire.</li> </ul>	LOW
Hazard caused during collecting of firewood e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Eye pokers</i></li> <li><i>Scratches (from bramble or sticks)</i></li> <li><i>Foot injury</i></li> <li><i>Splinters</i></li> <li><i>Nettle sting</i></li> <li><i>Wandering off</i></li> </ul>	FST VSA VC	2	40	80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate sizes of wood to be collected, both thickness &amp; appropriate to the age of the VC.</li> <li>FST to remind VC, VSA to walk slowly and pick up feet.</li> <li>FST to show VSA/VC brambles &amp; nettles, warn of scratches and stings. Ask young people to avoid touching these plants.</li> <li>Ensure VSA/VC know the safe boundaries of the activity area and ensure VSA help monitor this.</li> </ul>	LOW
Extinguishing fire Causing burns and/or scalds.	FST	1	40	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only adults should carefully extinguish fire.</li> <li>Leave area as it was found whenever possible, particularly on beach or in woodland.</li> <li>FST to ensure plenty of water used to extinguish</li> </ul>	LOW

					fire.	
<b><u>WEAVING:</u></b> Cut or other puncture type injury caused by sharp points on natural materials.	FST VSA VC	5	5	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FST to warn of risk.</li> <li>• FST to collect materials that don't harden into sharp points.</li> <li>• FST to select soft blade grass, e.g. purple moor grass , rather than coarse pampas type blades.</li> </ul>	LOW
<b><u>FLINT AND STEEL:</u></b> Using strikers to make sparks to ignite small amounts of tinder e.g. Cotton wool ball.	FST VSA VC	2	40	80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FST to provide suitable number of metal catchers for struck sparks.</li> <li>• FST to ensure area around striker group is clear of other flammables.</li> <li>• A fire extinguisher, bucket of water and sand available.</li> <li>• FST to remain vigilant and never leave working group unless directly supervised by VSA with clear instructions.</li> <li>• FST/VSA to ensure only very small amounts of tinder, e.g. 1 cm square</li> <li>• FST/VSA to ensure that no other material is added to the tinder to begin a real or more substantial flame.</li> </ul>	LOW
<b><u>TEAM FIRE BY FRICTION:</u></b> Small groups of VC working together using drill and bow saw to create friction.	FST VSA VC	2	20	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FST to warn areas of equipment will get hot due to friction and smoke/smell should be used as an indicator of heat rather than physically touching areas.</li> <li>• FST to demonstrate safe practice for use of the bow saw indicating that it must be controlled by 2 VC, whilst brace is held securely by 2 other VC.</li> <li>• FST to ensure that there is a VSA to oversee the group working to ensure safe practice, special care should be taken to ensure speed of 'drilling' is controlled limiting the chance of drill bit leaving anvil.</li> </ul>	LOW

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FST to ensure that the equipment is set up away from thoroughfares and paths to limit risk of tripping over long poles, bows and/or carpet squares.</li> </ul>	
Slip, trip or fall.	FST VSA VC	1	40	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The fire should be positioned where access can be gained by illuminated path.</li> <li>The area within and immediately surrounding the exclusion zone should be clear of any trip hazards, including spare wood.</li> </ul>	LOW
<b><u>MAGNIFYING LENSE AND PARABOLIC MIRROR FOCUS OF SUNS RAYS.</u></b> Burn from suns rays, blindness caused by sun	FST VSA VC	1	40	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FST must emphasise that at no point should anyone look directly into the sun.</li> <li>Any materials onto which the sun is focused must be placed into a metal tray.</li> <li>FST/VSA must ensure that no one focuses, even momentarily, the sun directly onto themselves or others, including clothes.</li> </ul>	LOW
<b>Improvised Shelter Building on site or at Hooke Park</b>						
VSA/VC separated from group and lost in local area.	FST VSA VC	1	20	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FST to ensure that the risk is outlined to their group. That the group should never separate or split up.</li> <li>When moving from one location to another the FST should ensure that the VSA conduct head counts before and after move. The FST should also ensure that either they or VSA are positioned at the back and front of the party.</li> <li>The FST should clearly point out the boundaries of the area of activity to their group. Hooke Park has</li> </ul>	LOW

					<p>marked the trees at the edge of the area and these should be pointed out to both VSA and VC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The FST should establish a method of recall for the group whilst they are working. This may be a whistle or other loud noise. The FST should recall the group at their discretion to conduct head counts and further instruction if deemed necessary.</li> <li>• The FST should outline to the VSA/VC what to do in the unlikely event of becoming separated from the rest of the group. Remain where you are and the rest of the group will come to find you.</li> </ul>	
Collision with car or other vehicle on route to woods or on return journey to centre.	FST VSA VC	1	75	75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FST to warn of dangers involved in walking along the road.</li> <li>• FST establish system of signaling when a car is coming, e.g. a loud whistle blast, and instruct VSA/VC on routine. All to step to the side of the road, face the traffic and wait until it has passed.</li> <li>• FST to ensure VC understand not to wave at or distract drivers in any way.</li> <li>• FST should exercise extreme caution in low light, foggy or misty conditions. They must use their discretion when deciding whether or not to use a torch to help with group visibility.</li> <li>• FST to ensure that a VSA or FST is positioned at the back and front of the group to signal when car is coming. They should also be wearing high visibility jacket.</li> <li>• FST to ensure group is all on the same side of the road, and change sides of the road at blind spots on corners.</li> <li>• FST/VSA to ensure that VC walk in pairs along the road.</li> <li>• FST use their discretion when instructing VSA where to accompany VC, options include back and</li> </ul>	LOW

					front, on road side of walking VC etc.	
Injury caused by agricultural hardware on route to/from activity site.	FST VSA VC	2	20	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FST are familiar with routes to the woods and regularly conduct visual inspections.</li> <li>FST warn VSA/VC prior to departure against types of fencing e.g barbed wire, and any farm machinery passed along the route.</li> <li>FST avoid the cross-country route if the farmer has used electric fencing.</li> <li>FST/VSA should ensure that all VSA/VC use suitable gates and styles to cross fences and hedges where applicable.</li> </ul>	LOW
Injury caused by farm animals.	FST VSA VC	1	75	75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FST to ensure route taken to the activity site is not through areas where young or aggressive animals are kept. FST should use their discretion to avoid any area of concern.</li> <li>If farm animals are present in any area through which group passes the FST/VSA should keep the group together and move at a steady pace without running.</li> </ul>	LOW
Collision with stationary or moving object, or person/s causing injury.	FST VSA VC	5	5	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FST to warn of risk at the start of the activity, outlining safe practice whilst working in the woods. No running, watch out for slippery mud, low branches, trees etc.</li> <li>FST to outline safe area of activity in the woods. At no time should any group member be beyond the sight of activity area, well away from road and stream.</li> </ul>	LOW
<b>Shelter Building:</b> 1. Object/shelter dropped or knocked onto person/s	FST VSA VC CGS	2	20	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FST to warn of danger to everyone including FST working in the woods.</li> <li>Hooke Court centre to inform Hooke Park of intended use of woods to ensure no tree felling or similar is going on in activity area.</li> <li>FST to instruct VSA/VC on the safe method for carrying and moving branches and building</li> </ul>	LOW

<p>causing injury to individual.</p> <p>2. Injury caused by sharp ends on branches, sticks, hedges, brambles or bushes.</p>					<p>materials for shelters. One at each end, any more and the branch is too big to be used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FST to warn of risks when carrying long branches and sticks, remember as much is behind as in front. They should be carried in a horizontal position, and never used as a spear, javelin or sword.</li> <li>• FST to warn against any materials being thrown in the environment and thus causing possible risk of injury.</li> <li>• FST to ensure that base branches are firmly secure against support tree before building begins.</li> <li>• FST to ensure that VC do not enter a structure until the initial framework of shelter is checked to ensure that it is sound enough for further construction and safe for group members to enter to continue building.</li> <li>• FST to ensure VSA and VC are told not to leave any branch or building material unattended propped against a tree or similar from where it may fall unexpectedly onto individual.</li> <li>• FST to ensure that they do not work alone whilst dismantling shelters, CGS should be used to help if working alone.</li> </ul>	
<p>Reaction to tree or plant pollen causing discomfort/congestion.</p>	<p>FST VSA VC</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>40</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FST to outline potential discomfort to allergy sufferers.</li> <li>• Hooke Court Information to Visiting Staff to include warning to visiting groups so that VSA/VC can take necessary precautions and/or medication taken.</li> </ul>	<p>LOW</p>
<p>Falling branches or trees causing crush injury, or puncture type</p>	<p>FST, VSA, VC CGS</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>75</p>	<p>75</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FST to ensure that they visually check site at beginning of activity to assess any potential hazards from 'hung up' trees or branches and to record any concerns in log book where relevant.</li> <li>• FST to warn of danger caused by low level branches</li> </ul>	<p>LOW</p>

injury to face/eyes/ears.					and twigs, stressing this particularly in low light conditions. Further restrictions may be placed upon moving around the activity site at the discretion of FST. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FST must use discretion in high winds, heavy snow and adverse weather conditions before undertaking activity.</li> </ul>	
Infection in new or existing wound from water, mud or general dirt.	FST VSA VC	2	10	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FST to warn of danger and provide surgical gloves and waterproof plasters to protect existing or new injuries.</li> <li>FST to ensure first Aid kit taken on activity with sufficient supplies to cater for group.</li> <li>FST to remind all VSA VC to wash hands with soap and hot water after activity or before any food is handled.</li> </ul>	LOW
Stomach upset, virus or disease caused by contact or ingestion of water, mud, or general dirt.	FST VSA VC	2	20	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FST to warn of danger to group if they don't follow simple safety guidelines. To include not putting fingers into mouth, chewing pencils etc.</li> <li>FST/VSA to ensure VC do not splash water or mud whilst in or around work site.</li> <li>FST/VSA/VC to wash hands with soap and hot water after activity.</li> </ul>	LOW
Stomach upset, virus or reaction caused by insect/reptile bite, or contact with poisonous plants or fungi	FST VSA VC, CGS	1	75	75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FST to warn of danger caused by snakes and biting insects, VSA/VC must inform FST of anything remotely causing concern.</li> <li>FST to be aware of plants and fungi to be avoided and check site prior to activity taking place for potential hazard.</li> <li>FST to clearly state that nothing should be eaten found in the woods or countryside, even if individuals think they recognise it.</li> <li>FST to be aware of insects which may cause infections/reactions or diseases. Ticks may be found in bracken, and snakes in boggy areas, FST may</li> </ul>	LOW

					use discretion to avoid such areas if possible during spring/summer periods.	
Fall under/from foresters' machinery or woodpiles.	FST VSA VC.	1	75	75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FST to warn of danger and ensure VSA/VC do not tamper or interfere with woodpiles or machinery of any kind.</li> <li>FST and VSA to directly observe and supervise group at all times and keep within visual contact.</li> </ul>	LOW

Date Reviewed: January 2026  
Next Review Date: January 2027