

GROUNDWORK SOUTH CONSERVATION WORK UPDATE – November 2022

Appendix 8a

This report has been produced following a meeting with Stewart Pomeroy (Colne Valley Park Managing Agent for Groundwork South) on Tuesday 8th November 2022. As such, the progress section is correct to that date.

Contents:

1. Background
2. Progress Update – November 2022
3. Next Steps

1 Background

Groundwork South (based at the Colne Valley Regional Park Centre, Denham) has a partnership agreement which was updated and agreed at the May 2022 Annual Parish Council Meeting and the Parish Council has made a contribution, as agreed (minute 020/22), to Colne Valley Regional Park of £5,000. This has been paid for 2022/23. At this meeting Cllr Ciarán Beary & Cllr Julie Cook took responsibility as TIPC representatives to CVRP (as identified in Annex 1 of the meeting minutes).

Groundwork South provide resource for ground maintenance and conservation work at four locations within The Ivers (Swan Meadow, Hardings Row, Mud Wharves & Iver Allotments Conservation Area). This is budgeted for within our Open Spaces & Highways budget.

Management Plans are produced and yearly a schedule of tasks and resource / time is produced. This is the basis of the progress section of this report.

For 2022/23, the previous year's management plans was adopted for this year as part of the process of covid recovery and for operational reasons and as such has been followed this year and progress indicated in this report. In the final section of this report you'll see my recommendations for the future from 2023/24.

Stewart Pomeroy has been very frank in highlighted the difficulties he has had operational difficulties and this has led to the inability for all tasks to be completed earlier this year. The tasks that were not completed have been highlighted as 'strikethrough' in the next section of this report. At the recent meeting he seemed confident that these difficulties were beginning to ease and was confident tasks identified for the future would be completed to the timescales indicated. He has been keen to liaise with the Deputy clerk throughout the year highlighting progress and the difficulties experienced.

2 Progress Update – November 2022

Progress Key:

~~Strikethrough~~ = Not completed

Bold = Completed

Italics = Future

Area	Objectives / Tasks	Progress – 2022/23
Swan Meadow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain and where possible improve the Northern Meadow area with a rich assemblage of positive indicator species - Cut back bramble Islands to keep different age of brambles and increase important/valuable 'edge habitat' - Maintain the wildflower area around sculpture - Monitor water level in the bog area and keep weed free - Maintain Bug Hotel, Hibernaculum & Rubbing post - Cut back Holly in woodland 	<p><u>Site Tasks – 8.5 person days</u></p> <p>June (0.5 person day)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ecology survey - Remove any no desirable plants in the northern meadow. <p><u>September/October (4 person days)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Northern meadow strim area leaving 10 -30 % uncut on rotation. Rake off all cuttings, leaving on site - Cut, dig over and re-sow wildflower area around sculpture. - Monitor bog area(check water levels and any species which are growing). Remove weed species from the area. - Monitor/maintain bug hotel <p><i>Feb (4 person days)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>- Cut up to 20% of the bramble island in the northern meadow</i> <i>- Holly control in wood</i> <i>- Inspect bug hotel, hibernaculum and rubbing posts. Repair, replace as required</i> <i>- Monitor bog area(check water levels and any species which are growing). Remove weed species from the area.</i> <i>- Monitor/maintain bug hotel</i>

Area	Objectives / Tasks	Progress 2022/23
Iver Mud Wharves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Maintain access path through first section of the site down to the Colne Brook and through woodland to Colne Brook at the southern end of the land owned by the parish. - Remove invasive species from within the river channel(including Pennywort and Himalayan balsam) - Improve species diversity along river banks through promoting desirable species. - Thin out 10% of Elder - Remove Litter 	<p><u>Site Tasks - 7 person days</u></p> <p><i>May (1 person day)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep access path around site clear - Cut access paths down to the Colne Brook - Clear any fallen trees in wood - Litter pick site <p><u>September (2 person day)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cut back ¼ the area of bankside vegetation and rake. Pile cuttings in neat piles. - Mow access paths down to Colne Brook - Litter pick site <p><i>November (4 person day)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>- Thin 10% of elder trees using cut material to create log piles and hibernaculum's</i> <i>- Litter pick site</i>

Area	Objectives / Tasks	Progress 2022/23
Hardings Row	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain and where possible improve the different habitats of Hardings Row for the benefit of wildlife, while maintaining public access. - Manage the meadow area using methods to improve the assemblage of positive indicator species and prevent Invasive/non desirable species such as brambles/bracken encroaching. - Ensure access around the site is maintained through cutting back of vegetation along paths. - Allow pond 2 to succeed into a bog area to help filter and hide discolouration. Cut willows around edge to prevent shading. - Maintain ponds 1, 3 & 4 to keep 50% open water and prevent trees and shrubs out shading the area. - Reduce shading on streams which run through site to allow more plant diversity. - Look for opportunities to increase positive indicator species onsite. - Monitor Flora, Fauna and pond areas onsite. Using the information gained to make informed decisions e.g. areas of bramble to cut based on areas reptiles are present. - Monitor trees onsite, inform the parish before undertaking remedial work. - Keep areas of bramble in horse field under control. 	<p><u>Site Tasks - 24 person days</u></p> <p><u>April Conservation tasks 1 person day, General Visit 0 days (1 person day)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly conservation task (task weed wildflower area) <p><u>May Conservation tasks 1 person day, General Visit 0 days (1 person day)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly conservation task (task Pull Bracken encroaching into meadow area maintain dead hedges) <p>June Conservation tasks 1 person day, General Visit 1 days (2 person day)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly conservation task (task Pull bracken in meadow) - Biological survey - Mow back path edge to keep good access around the site. - Pull bracken. <p><u>July Conservation tasks 1 person day, General Visit 0 days (1 person day)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly conservation task (task remove any Brambles growing in Meadow) <p><u>August Conservation tasks 1 person day, General Visit 0 days (1 person day)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly conservation task (task Collect seeds, cut back along paths as required). <p><u>September Conservation tasks 1 person day, General Visit 2 days (3 person day)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly conservation task (task raking meadow area)

- Mow back path edge to keep good access around the site.
- Strim and rake meadow area
- Cut back encroaching brambles and scrub

Oct Conservation tasks 1 person day, General Visit 0 days (1 person day)

- Monthly conservation task (task work in pond 1)
- Pond 1 cut back encroaching Marginal vegetation, remove invasive grass.
- Pond 1 Prune trees around pond creating shade(as required).

Nov Conservation tasks 1 person day, General Visit 4 days (5 person day)

- Monthly conservation task (task working within pond 2)
- Pond 2 cut back encroaching marginal vegetation, remove invasive grass.
- Pond 2 Prune trees around pond creating shade(as required)..
- Pond 3 cut back encroaching marginal vegetation, remove invasive grass.
- Pond 3 Prune trees around pond creating shade(as required).

- Cut back marginal vegetation to allow more light on stream running south to north from pond 2.

Dec Conservation tasks 1 person day, General Visit 4 days (5 person day)

- Monthly conservation task (task working within pond 3/4)
- Pond 4 cut back encroaching marginal vegetation, remove invasive grass.

- Pond 4 Prune trees around pond creating shade(as required)..
- Create succession pond.
- Cut bramble thickets in Horse grazed meadow.
- Cut back marginal vegetation to allow more light on stream running south to north from pond 2.
- Keep water course free of blockages (compartment 2)

Jan Conservation tasks 1 person day General Visit 0 person days (1 person day)

- Monthly conservation task (task repairs and maintenance to dead hedges onsite)

Feb Conservation tasks 1 person day, General Visit 1 days (2 person day)

- Monthly conservation task (task cutting back hedge/vegetation in entrance area)
- Prune Fruit Trees
- Cut back along entrance area.
- Cut back brambles in northern section

March Conservation tasks 1 person day General Visit 0 person days (1 person day)

- Monthly conservation task (task weed ensure access around the site is clear)

Area	Objectives / Tasks	Progress 2022/23
Iver Allotment Conservation Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove blackthorn saplings encroaching on the site to keep a more open grassland around ponds and scrapes. - Cut back hedges and brambles on rotation to create a mosaic - Create log pile hibernaculum 	<p><u>Site Tasks – 3 person days</u></p> <p>June (½ person day)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Removal any bramble or Blackthorn sapling - Litter pick site - Survey for reptiles/record plants in area. <p><u>September/October (2 person day)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strim/cut back access path and around perimeter of wildlife areas. Remove saplings and invasive species from within pond areas. - Cut back sections of hedge and vegetation to create a mosaic of different ages of vegetation. - Cut back vegetation. - Strim/cut back around perimeter. - Survey for reptiles/record plants in area. <p><i>(Ongoing - there is some slippage of this timescale)</i></p> <p><u>March (½ person day)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Removal any bramble or Blackthorn sapling - Litter pick site - Survey for reptiles/record plants in area. - Running repairs to hibernaculum

3 Next Steps

- The Deputy Clerk to continue to liaise with Stewart Pomeroy on Progress and place this progress report to the Councillors Open Space & Highways SharePoint area and update monthly on progress.
- Deputy clerk to share the Management Plan documents again via Councillor SharePoint
- The Deputy clerk, resource dependent (on the appointment of a permanent Clerk / RFO from January 2023), to work with Stewart Pomeroy in conjunction with the councillor representatives during Quarter 4 to ensure all management plans are update for the 23/24 onwards and that the tasks identified are relevant and meet our desired conservation expectations.

'Resource dependent' means that there is enough time in the workload of the Deputy clerk to focus on this and he is freed up from duties and tasks that would otherwise be done by the Clerk / RFO role thus this activity can be prioritised amongst other work and day to day duties.

Jeremy Day
Deputy Clerk
November 2022