

Turnpike Field Working Group

Site meeting of Maintenance sub-group on Monday 24th October at 10.30 am

Present: Jean Stainthorpe(chair), Adrian Leighton, Chris Lewis. Peter Morgan

The group walked the fields, identifying the habitats as described in 'Turnpike Fields Maintenance Plan based on Wildlife Habitat' Feb 21 and discussed maintenance requirements.

It was agreed that the maintenance needs would be reviewed at TFWG meeting each month and that nominated person(s) would take actions forward.

1. Green Car Park area

Nothing to report

2. Grassland 1

2.1 Proliferation of Ragwort has been a serious problem this year. A number of volunteer sessions were held to handpull as much as possible but it is anticipated there will be wide proliferation next year. Action: to apply weedkiller using a weedroller.

2.2 When mowing leave a strip at base of hedges see item 3 below

2.3 Paths are becoming poached; recommendation to cut 2 metres wide where appropriate instead of current 1.5 metres

2.4 Thistle patches at foot of hill near pond – herbicide (Grazon)) to be applied, rotavated and wild flower seeds sown

2.5 Grass cuttings (everywhere apart from wild flower patch) to be removed to avoid nutrients entering the soil

2.6 Newly planted trees on Grassland 1 – replace the 4/5 dead ones this autumn

3. Hedgerows

Noted the hedgerows on Green Lane and Whitchurch Road have been trimmed both sides, contrary to the plan. Action: ensure the contractor is advised to cut the hedges each year on the road side, sloping upwards towards the field side, and to cut the field side in sections rotating every three years as per the plan dated Feb 21.

4. Edges

4.1 When mowing leave a strip max 2 metres wide at base of hedges. Note a strip has been left in most places but not along the Whitchurch Road and Green Lane hedges.

4.2 The Edge bordering houses on Green Lane needs to be contained from spreading any further by mowing

4.3 Spoil Mound

To be left uncut, but edges mown to avoid it spreading

4.4 Wetland

Manage the alders as they are very prolific and too many saplings are growing; this will allow paths to be cut through the area to enable walkers enjoy the wide variety of plants growing there. Plant some willow saplings .

5. Pond 1

Maintenance needed to manage the plant growth within the fence; alders to be reduced as endangering light from the south reaching the pond.

6. Grassland 2

6.1 As above, cut paths wider in places to avoid poaching, and higher on bank immediately over bridge.

6.2 Unless growth rate changes, ragwort to be treated by pulling as not too prolific.

7. Boggy Land

Reduce number of alders.

8. Banks of stream

Himalayan balsam will need further management by pulling next year (and anywhere else it spreads)

9. Floating Bog

No special action

10. Pond 2

Maintenance needed – alders, horses tail etc

11. South Field Trees by canal edge

No action

12. Canal edge

Regular maintenance to trim edge

13. North Field Embankment

13.1 Regular maintenance to trim edge

13.2 Cut path up hill wider to help walkers negotiate wet area

14. North Field Hedgerow

Regular maintenance to trim edge

15. Steps to canal at Lock

Maintenance to lower steps needed

16. Gateway

To improve accessibility and safety for agricultural and maintenance vehicles investigate setting gate back to enable a splayed entrance.

17. Trees

17.1 A tree inspection is overdue, see TFWG notes 5 Sep 22 note 8 – to be followed up

17.2 Ivy is growing extensively and too high on some trees. Plan to cut back in rotation, ensuring contractors take care not to damage the bark.