

Management Considerations arising from the site visit on 26 October 2015

Habitat

Under the CWS designation the site is identified as predominantly chalk grassland and scrub, a priority habitat under the UK BAP. Other habitats in addition to dense and scattered scrub include a tree belt, hedgerows with trees and scattered trees (See plan)

The site is rapidly scrubbing over to the extent that it is threatening the existence of this lowland calcareous grassland habitat, especially from the more invasive and alien plant species. Urgent action is required to arrest and push back scrub encroachment to an acceptable level.

Tree Belt

Along northern edge of site adjoining Lime Kiln Way housing, will eventually form a major feature on the skyline. Thin down to 5-6m centres, favouring the retention of native species. Thin more heavily immediately adjoining gardens to the north to reduce shading

Scattered Trees

Include sycamore, ash, whitebeam, hawthorn, walnut and apple cv's, all arising from natural regeneration/invasion. Remove all invasive species – ash, Norway maple and sycamore – from site. Retain a few scattered trees including selected walnuts as, although a large tree, they do not cast dense shade.

Hedgerow with Trees

Mixed native species hedgerows define the east and west boundaries to the site, latter separating/ protecting it from Odstock Road. Trees will eventually define the site and punctuate the skyline

Open Grassland

Manage primarily as open grassland with a mosaic of different age scrub habitats cleared on a rotational basis. Can controlled grazing be achieved by agreement with the travellers? Site can support no more than two tethered ponies.

Scattered Scrub

Manage on a rotational basis to provide perching, nesting and feeding sites for birds. Favour retention of hawthorn, purging buckthorn, spindle and wayfarers tree, remove/control the more invasive/suckering species - bramble, old man's beard, sloe and dogwood. Lift canopies as necessary to allow light to reach the grass/herb layer below isolated plants.

Dense Scrub

Associated with the hedgerow and woodland belt around site perimeter and at the three corners of the site, retain and manage on a rotational basis to provide a mix of young and mature scrub. It is an important food source and cover for small mammals, reptiles and invertebrates. Open up clearings in dense scrub where the growth is relatively thin.

Anthills

As far as possible protect anthills from scrub encroachment and damage from mechanical operations with the exception of those occurring within the principal footpath system which could be maintained with 3-4 cuts per season.

Specific Species Requirements

Further work is required to identify site specific habitat/plant requirements for specialist species e.g. brown hairstreak. See provisional species lists for birds, butterflies and plants. More work required on invertebrates generally, small mammals and reptiles

Community Access and Use

Open up and maintain a principal footpath system through site, maintain informally with 3-4 grass cuts per season. Seek to replace existing physical barriers to site - banks and ditches - with field, bridle or kissing gates as appropriate.

The site will provide an important area for informal recreation, providing contact with nature whilst offering magnificent views across Salisbury to the high ground beyond including Old Sarum and Cockey Down.

L Lipscombe October 2015