

BEDDINGTON CONSERVATION SCIENCE GROUP
Minutes of Meeting

Date : **Friday 1st March 2019; 10:00-15:00**

Place : Viridor Offices, Beddington Farmlands

Present:

David Warburton [DW]	London Borough of Sutton (Chair)
Peter Walker [PW]	Viridor Waste Management
Marcus Kohler [MK]	MKA Ecology
Derek Coleman [DC]	Sutton Group of London Wildlife Trust
Roy Dennis [RD]	Beddington Farmland Bird Group
Martin Boyle	Mitcham Common Conservators
Ian Crump [IC]	Thames Water
Fiona Lander [FL]	London Borough of Sutton (Planning Enforcement)
Alan Johnson [AJ]	RSPB

The Chair welcomed Alan Johnson, RSPB South East Regional Conservation Manager, who gave a brief description of his role.

1. Apologies

There were no absences

2. Minutes of Last Meeting to be agreed and actions undertaken

Actions of the last meeting were covered under the agenda items, except:

4a(i) - Action → **PW to remove bird scarers from SC areas ASAP.** PW confirmed that this had been undertaken.

4c(i) - DW reported back that he had provided contact details for the Downlands Partnership to PW but had had no luck in contacting Richard Bullock of the WWT London Wetland Centre. MK stated that he thought Richard's input would be useful and would try to contact him.

Action → MK to contact Richard Bullock and invite him for a site visit to discuss grazing possibilities and constraints.

In regards the following action:

Action → PW to draft grazing plan for Phase 1 wet grassland to be agreed at the March CSG, PW confirmed that this had not been undertaken but he had contacted the Rare Breed Survival Trust to invite them onto site to provide additional perspective on grazing.

Action → PW to arrange site meeting with RBST and invite DW & MK.

7h -MK & DC confirmed that 35 of 40 tree sparrow boxes had erected, with one area outstanding. MK stated that he wished to erect the remaining 5 boxes on Cuckoo Lane but this would require a ladder. DC was not of the opinion that these were likely to be used by TS but MK stated that there had been disturbance near their previous breeding area and that giving them an opportunity in this relatively undisturbed area may be of some benefit, even if the boxes were most likely to be used by great tit etc.

This then led to a discussion on the ability of DC to utilise a ladder on site for checking the boxes, given that previous instructions were for a 'no ladder' rule. PW confirmed that he was not in a position to grant permission for ladder use and it would need to be discussed with the Site Operations Team whether a RA would cover checking those boxes

Action →MK & DC to discuss with Site Operations Team whether a ladder can be used to check any boxes erected on Cuckoo Lane. Given the imminent breeding season, this needs to be undertaken by 08/03/2019, with boxes erected here (or elsewhere) the following week.

3. CAMC update

DW updated that since the LBS meeting with Viridor Pennon on 08/01/19, DW and FL had discussed the CAMC with Andrew Turner at the end of January. DW asked AT to provide an update for the CSG, which is as follows:

"I am very sorry not to share the more formal update with you, however I can confirm that Dan Cooke and Terry Murphy (Directors of Sustainability and Landfill) will shortly invite members of the CAMC to an extraordinary meeting - at which they will share the enhanced roadmap to 2023 for activity at the Farmlands, along with discussing with the members how they would like the CAMC to be involved in the works. I will of course invite you [DW] if you feel appropriate. The outcome of this meeting - will be, hopefully, for the elected members to feel comfortable with an AGM taking place and then formal meetings to restart there after."

The CSG collectively is very concerned about the lack of a functioning CAMC. DW agreed to write to Andrew Turner to formally raise those concerns.

Action → DW to write to AT by end 8/03/19.

Update 04.03.19 → AT has confirmed that the extra-ordinary meeting will take place on 10/04/19

Update 12.04.19 → CAMC meeting now scheduled for 02.05.19

4. Wet Grassland discussion

DW invited AJ to lead the discussion on wet grassland.

AJ stated that, in his opinion, the wet grassland proposals comprised 3 small, isolated areas, with poor aspect, in an urban area with likely heavy predation pressure and geographically separated from other populations of target species. AJ then posed the question, 'What is sustainable?' Wet grassland for waders requires intensive and nuanced management.

AJ then outlined three broad options for 'wet grassland'

- 1) Create wet grassland (requires high grazing levels and timely hydrological management)
- 2) Create reedbed (remove grazing, high water levels)
- 3) Create a fen / swamp habitat (low grazing levels), which, in AJ's view, was the most likely to be sustainable and would provide suitable habitat for target species such as reed and sedge warbler, reed bunting and grasshopper warbler.

AJ stated that lapwing productivity needed to be 0.6-0.8 fledglings per year to maintain a source rather than sink population. Was there any productivity data? MK & DC outlined the surveys that were undertaken around lapwing. DC stated that lapwing have been on site for a very long time and that prior to landfilling activities, very few pulli were seen, whereas during landfilling, more pulli were seen. Philip of BFBG monitors the SE Corner / SAM site but it is difficult to follow chicks through to flying young despite his intensive monitoring; fledged lapwing have been seen but not very many and it is difficult to know whether these are from the site or immigrants.

MK asked AJ if there was a defined methodology for lapwing.

AJ responded there was and would provide details

Action → AJ to send lapwing productivity monitoring methodology to DW for dissemination

Update → sent to DW 29.03.19, DW disseminated to PW, MK & DC on 01.04.19

AJ stated he was surprised at the numbers of lapwing on site, given the constraints. MK stated that the original design by Roger Wardle was aimed at target species and lapwing specifically but the WWT design that has superseded it is more of a generic wet grassland design.

AJ commented that wet grassland creation, as per Phase 1 looked good so far but didn't consider the ridges of the ridge and furrow to be of particular use. He also stated that we may need to go with the grain of what the habitat wants to be but the

above 3 options will always be there for the current design.

DC stated there was tremendous pressure to create the wet grassland of phases 1 and 2 and any changes would cause further delays. On the wet grassland of Phase 3, he considered it too small and enclosed by landfill and trees so was likely to be useless for waders.

DW replied that the Council's view on Phase 3 as a wet grassland, rather than reedbed, as initially proposed, was that it would be easier to modify a wet grassland to reed or swamp, rather than the other way around. DW also stated that there were possible links with the SE Corner / SAM site and the Beddington Lane Ecology Reserve (Prologis 'offsetting' site) but it was vital to get long-term management of the SE Corner / SAM site up and running, via Thames Water buy in.

AJ then outlined the main consideration for creating optimum wet grasslands

- 1) Maximise the extent (which, on site, was constrained)
- 2) Maximise the openness, which AJ noticed was constrained in areas due to scrub and woodland planting
- 3) Annual management
 - a) Ensure sufficient early season cattle grazing to create necessary sward heights and mosaic and monitor grass growth to keep the heights and mosaic at the necessary levels
 - b) Ensure there is surface flooding up to June each year to provide lots of muddy edges for Chironomid flies and other prey items, ensuring high biomass
 - c) Undertake predator control, which may need to be lethal. c.80% of predation is via foxes. Fencing is vital to start to address terrestrial predator control.

Action →AJ to send fencing details to DW

Update → sent to DW 29.03.19, DW disseminated to PW, MK & DC on 01.04.19

Corvid control may be an issue and can be dealt with via Larsen Traps but is likely to account for c.20% of predation.

Aftercare then needs to be fully implemented, which involves

- controlling weed burden
- dealing with rush infestation
- soil compaction
- ensuring rill edges are kept as bare ground
- maintaining ephemeral water bodies to provide high prey item biomass

DW asked PW when the designs for Phase 2 were likely to be undertaken. PW confirmed that the design money had been signed off. The CSG agreed that getting AJ and WWT Consulting together to discuss Phase 2 would be very useful and

prevent a number of the problems that arose when considering the design of Phase 1.

Action →PW to invite AJ and WWT Consulting to a kick-off meeting in the next 4 weeks, to get a draft design to the CSG for the June meeting.

DW thanked AJ for leading a very useful and interesting discussion.

5. Site Restoration update- check against 2018 work plan

The CSG agreed with the update provided by PW (**Appendix 1**) in regards what was achieved in 2018 was accurate but noted there were substantial areas that had not been achieved, had been delayed or deferred.

FL commented that the Beddington Park Entrance ('define design of crossing with access gradients...') had not been deferred to future years, as claimed on the summary but was part of the RMP addendum.

DC commented that the format of the plan was difficult to see on paper below A3 size and on screen. Could changes be made to reduce scrolling?

6. 2019 work plan - draft

PW had prepared a programme of work for delivery prior to the 2019 breeding season and discussion areas (as added to the [Agenda](#)).

PW stated that the southern stockpile would be moved as capping in the next few months down to ground level, although PW couldn't commit to a date this would be completed by. He is due to have a meeting with Thames Water about the lagoon infill but assumed this would occur over the summer and be completed by autumn.

A. Discussion Areas

MB noted that Acid Grassland was blank on the discussion table. PW provided the following update:

The trial methodology had been agreed as a way forwards by DW and MK. Samples were taken in January 2019. These (c.40 samples) identified areas with similar characteristics. The flank over the lakes & MEC overflow was solid clay. The cap on top of the landform through the middle had a high clay content, as well as sands and gravels. Cell 1 was sludge cake and had high nutrient content. The initial findings from the samples was that the material over the majority of the area for acid grassland / heath creation had low permeability, due to high clay content, which, again, initially, suggests that these areas are not suitable for treating with an acidifying agent to lower pH values. The geochemical contractors are returning w/c 4/03/19 to take in situ samples of the material from Phase 1 wet grassland not already extracted, which may be able to be used as a 200mm 'cap' to those areas with low permeability.

The soil profile of the acid grassland areas is specified in the RMP (4.5). It appears as though this has not been followed, given the initial findings of high clay content. As such, if suitable material can be extracted to provide a cap that could be acidified, this could address this problem. If suitable material is not available, soil cores will be required to determine if the soils structure is in accord with that laid out in the RMP. If not, that would be a breach of Condition 42.

DW stated that he needed regular updates from PW in regards progress on this. PW said there was a meeting on 06/03/19 and would invite DW.

Action →PW to invite DW to site meeting

Update → DW attended meeting on 08.03.19

Of the remaining items, these would be progressed as the year went on.

B. Pre-breeding works

PW outlined the work programme (**Appendix 2**)

MK stated that now is the time to undertake scrub clearance, before breeding starts but each area needed treating on a case by case basis

Action →MK & PW to discuss all necessary actions

Action →PW to start fencing from the top of the northern lake, moving south, to lesson possible disturbance, ASAP.

PW reported that the causeway in the northern lake was too thin to get a 360 excavator across to the main island to clear it and that the causeway needed remediation before this could occur. The southern channel would be remediated during the crossing works.

Action →PW, MK & DW to look at southern channel before April 2019 to determine if there are works that could be undertaken to make this area better (i.e. increase inline pond sizes etc.)

DC asked about clearance of scrub in front of the sand martin bank. PW confirmed this would take place in the next few weeks.

The CSG asked AJ if he had any thoughts on why sand martins were not using this bank.

Action →AJ to check with his ecologist to see what variables there may be that could possibly be addressed

PW reported that the hides were being fabricated, as was the cladding and would be installed for immediate use before April 2019. Areas for hides 1 and 3 were clear and would be undertaken on the first visit of the contractors, with hide 6 being delivered on their second visit.

7. **Site Monitoring**

MK provided the 2017/18 Annual Ecology Report and the NVC / Common Standards report for the meadowlands.

Action → All to provide feedback on both reports, especially the NVC / CS.

Action → DW & MK to undertake site visit on meadowlands in spring / early summer to work out way forwards.

MK reported that there had been significant changes of habitat, mainly through the SDEN works, which may have impacted wintering passerines.

MK stated that there needed to be habitat flexibility in a number of areas and this isn't necessarily reflected in the RMP.

DW commented that the Meadowlands Management Plan, for instance, provided nuanced variation to the RMP and that each compartment / sub-compartment would also require a management plan. DW was hopeful that the Warden would start this process.

MK reported that after his knee operation, he had not been able to undertake winter monitoring for January through March inclusive and this was being undertaken by Andy Symes. MK was looking to share the monitoring aspects with Andy going forwards. MK acknowledged there had been issues with recorder bias in previous years (prior to MK returning to MKA Ecology and resuming site monitoring) and that MK was monitoring the survey data to ensure there was a close correlation between his data and that generated by Andy.

MK also noted that with the effective closure of the landfill, there was a highly significant drop in gull numbers on site since December.

8. Thames Water

IC reported that he had had confirmation from Savills (TW's planning agents) that there were no corporate plans for 100 Acre and SE Corner / SAM site up until 2025 (the term of forthcoming AMP7, which runs from 2020 to 2025).

IC reported that with TW's Environmental Net Gain Policy and performance commitments, there may be a possibility that these parcels could attract funding as 'offset' sites for TW work elsewhere.

DW stated that this appeared to give greater stability to Viridor, as leaseholders, that the chances of these parcels of land being returned at 6 months notice seemed lower, which would enable a longer term view for their management. DW also stated it was imperative, given IC's comments, that the upper echelons of TW made a commitment to the site.

Action → DW to ask his senior management for a meeting with Thames Water CEO etc. to get buy in.

Update → DW met with new CE on 26/04/19

9. AOB

- A. ToR - DW reported back that there had been no further suggestions in regards the draft ToR sent around. DW stated that he had not included anything about governance and asked for feedback on this. The remainder of the CSG were happy that the Council Officer should be Chair of the CSG. DW was hopeful that the Warden would be able to take minutes at meetings, rather than him.

The CSG also agreed to DC's modifications in regards membership.

Action → DW to modify ToR accordingly and issue to CSG

Update → ToR issued by email 06/03/19

- B. SDEN - PW reported that c.80% of the tree planting had been completed, with the final area by Hackbridge station requiring clearing and planting with heavy standards to be completed by 08/03/2019, as few days after the completion due date. The grassland would be seeded when conditions were suitable, likely to be April / May.

- C. Steward / S106 warden - DW had sent out the job advert text for the Warden position and asked for comments back by 05/03/2019. After that, DW would put the position out nationally.

PW reported that they were currently utilising operational resource but from April 2019, this would enable PW to advertise for a Steward, which is hugely positive.

Update 04.03.19 → Viridor advise that 'occupation' of the ERF is now not going to be until late May / early June, rather than the previously advised end of March 2019. This may delay sending out the job advert. DW has asked Viridor for increased clarity about the s106 payments, to provide greater certainty on when someone could be employed, especially if the occupation date is pushed further back.

- D. Barn owl box - The barn owl box was vandalised last year, Reinforcement of the area and photo-monitoring would be useful. IC reported that the area was being fenced and he was seeking a gateway from Beddington Farmlands onto TW land but had not, as yet, been able to get this agreed.

Action → IC to liase with MK, DC & RD

8. **Date of next meeting:** Friday 24th May. The meeting will be at 10.00 am at Viridor Offices, Beddington Farmlands.

Meeting dates were agreed for 6th September and 6th December 2019.

Action → DW to send out calendar invites

With no further business, the meeting closed at 13:30

Site visit

A site visit was undertaken to view the wet grassland, which is progressing well but still has a lot of work to be undertaken before the area can be seeded, including installation of the weirs off the main channel, which are likely to be installed towards the end of the summer.

[Photos](#)

APPENDIX 1 - [2018 work summary](#)

APPENDIX 2 - [2019 work programme](#) (pre-breeding season)

Redington Farmland 2020 pre breeding season work activities

	07 Jan	14 Jan	21 Jan	28 Jan	04 Feb	11 Feb	18 Feb	25 Feb	04 Mar	11 Mar	18 Mar	25 Mar	01 Apr	08 Apr	
															Complete
															Proposed schedule
															Finalize
Wetgrassland bulk dig															See work
Wetgrassland major contours															See work
Wetgrassland phase 1 South major contours															Complete
Wetgrassland phase 1 South east bed collection															Complete
Wetgrassland phase 1 South water level control works															Autumn/Winter
Wetgrassland phase 1 South fencing															
Predator fencing install wetgrassland phase 1 south including farm gates															What would the impact be if this is installed in Autumn/Winter?
Wetgrassland 3rd cut															Complete
Wetgrassland 2nd cut															Complete
Address various areas of differential settlement on meadowland affecting fencing lines															Some material placed, other areas to be assessed when fencing enclosures marked out
Neutral grassland cut															Complete around Southern lake
Clearance of bramble growth															3 sections remaining on Eastern shore of Northern lake and 1 section behind sand martin bank to be completed
Bird feeder stations															Deliveries to site expected w/c 25th Feb. 4 of 5 feeder post feeder tubes already on site
Tree culls															
Bird hole locations prep and footings															
Bird hole install															
Bird hole pathway install & fencing															Fencing install done 25th
Cyathoid vegetation clearance removal excavation of 1/20mm															Can things be put in place or/what needs to be put in place (provided to allow this work to continue post start of breeding season 7 vegetation stage?
Drainage dig 10mm x 10mm x channels under cyathoid															Can things be put in place or/what needs to be put in place (provided to allow this work to continue post start of breeding season 7 vegetation stage?
Lay beams + drainage material and cyathoid base															Can things be put in place or/what needs to be put in place (provided to allow this work to continue post start of breeding season 7 vegetation stage?
Southern flank cyathoid and water crossing															Can things be put in place or/what needs to be put in place (provided to allow this work to continue post start of breeding season 7 vegetation stage?
Metal frame over water crossing															Failure Failure Metal frame to be installed post setting
Entrance to Redington park gate and barriers at both ends															Can things be put in place or/what needs to be put in place (provided to allow this work to continue post start of breeding season 7 vegetation stage?
Section of cycleway North of irrigation gate															Failure Failure To be completed in future year
Stack fencing this winter															Works remaining may dictate length installed. install can be picked up again post breeding season
Security Gates install															Needed by Autumn
Colony prep install															Needed by Autumn
Hedge planting prep															Works remaining may dictate length planted. planting would be picked up again at the earliest opportunity
Hedge planting															Works remaining may dictate length planted. planting would be picked up again at the earliest opportunity
Perimeter path woodland management															Prep work required for future works outside the fence
Perimeter path tree planting															Programme required for future works outside the fence
Perimeter path soil prep and grassland seeding															To be completed Feb. Sprayed in March
Soil test and sample analysis of grassland near irrigation gate															
Clearance and leveling of neutral grassland near irrigation gate															One further area to be completed near MEC overflow outlet
Seed bed prep of neutral grassland near irrigation gate															Seed hole install and new section of perimeter fencing install required first
Seeding of neutral grassland near irrigation gate															Seed hole install and new section of perimeter fencing install required first (see measured at 30mm)
Woodland planting near irrigation gate															To order as track access will be required. 100% track will have to be removed for Wetgrassland phase 1 South
Woodland planting of rose															Autumn/Winter 2019/2020 to follow cyathoid base pin install
Clear Jones Row Road															Complete
Northern lake island clearance hand tool items															Ecology clerk of works booked for w/c 25th Feb
Main island clearance															Ecology clerk of works booked for w/c 25th Feb
Wood translocation															Ground with too wet previously. Will assess again w/c 10th Feb
Southern bund repair															Ground with too wet previously. Will assess again w/c 10th Feb
Removal of material from southern lake plateau															Will be done when Chaffin's on site for other fencing
Southern lake island clearance															Assessment of other material which can be seen from site is ongoing
Gate modifications															Audit and replacement locations have been identified. 40 new boxes are now on site to be fitted
400 grassland trial															Continuing to work through programme but until signs of breeding detected/observed
500 acre and 50 corner ridge bed management															Continuing to work through programme but until signs of breeding detected/observed
Clear fenced section of perimeter pathway outside irrigation gate															Section has large public right across the pathway without the ability to flow over
Clear old tree guards, litter and plastic from previous planting on perimeter pathway															