

## **Prestwick Road North Outline Proposals 2013**

### **Site Description**

Formerly a mosaic of open ground, scrub and scattered trees the site was ratified as a County Wildlife Site (90/038) in 2003 due to the presence of Slow Worm. Developing secondary oak woodland with scattered willow and larger pioneer oak standards now dominate, as a result the Wildlife Site has been deselected due to a loss of supporting habitat. Heavy London Clay soils retain standing water in areas across the site with localised ponding. Garden species have become established and are becoming invasive. Limited public access is afforded by an unsurfaced path which bisects the site and is used to access Prestwick Road on foot.

### **Assessment**

Review of previous survey data and a site visit conducted in January 2013 confirm that much of the previous grassland interest of the site has been lost. Re-establishment of this habitat type across the site would be costly and the isolated location of the site limits potential for re-colonisation of reptile species.

A number of large, open grown pioneer oak standards are present and represent a significant biodiversity interest. More recently recruited oak stocks are of good form and would benefit from a first thinning to enable them to develop further. Multi-stemmed willows are present adjacent to the informal path, regular rotational coppicing would act to open up the path and regenerate the stools. Some evidence of recent management of woody vegetation was visible but its objectives were unclear. A number of small areas of standing water were evident along with a more significant, low lying area in the centre of the site. Excavation of these areas would enable them to hold water for longer periods and may provide suitable breeding habitat for amphibians.

There are currently no formal visitor facilities, ownership is unclear and right of entry not indicated. Access is severely limited by ground conditions, however the current desire line path appears well used. The southern entrance point is steep and slippery, evidence of a more formal stepped entrance point is present but overgrown and unusable.

A substantial area of litter has accumulated in the south western corner. This area is becoming dominated by garden species indicating previous tipping activity.

### **Proposals**

To establish a long term habitat management regime based on sound woodland management principles. To include:

- Retention of large "pioneer" oak trees to senescence
- Retention of standing and fallen dead wood where safe and practical
- Thinning of developing secondary oak stocks to enable continued growth and maturation of retained stems
- Investigate use of woodland produce on site or potential income through firewood sales
- Creation of a 2m permanent grassland zone, regularly maintained either side of the main access routes
- Regular coppicing of a 5m transition zone of scrub species and willow stools on rotation to maintain varied size diversity and light levels adjacent to the main access routes
- Eradication of non-native invasive species

Creation of a number of ponds of varied sizes, profiles and depths where conditions allow. Creation of physical links from these areas to surfaced paths and newly established play area to improve drainage and water retention.

Establish a simple design for welcome signage to be installed at all 3 entrance points. Signs should create a welcoming threshold to the site and establish ownership.

Installation of approximately 150m of all weather pedestrian paths to a minimum width of 1.5m. Path to follow the existing desire line and link to the proposed development site to the north-west. Creation of a flared stepped access to the south to match those of Prestwick Road LNR.

Removal and disposal of litter and tipped materials from the site. Information regarding site ownership and residents responsibilities/opportunities regarding waste disposal to be distributed locally.

Once on-site improvements are complete, addition of the site to the Prestwick Road Meadows LNR designation.

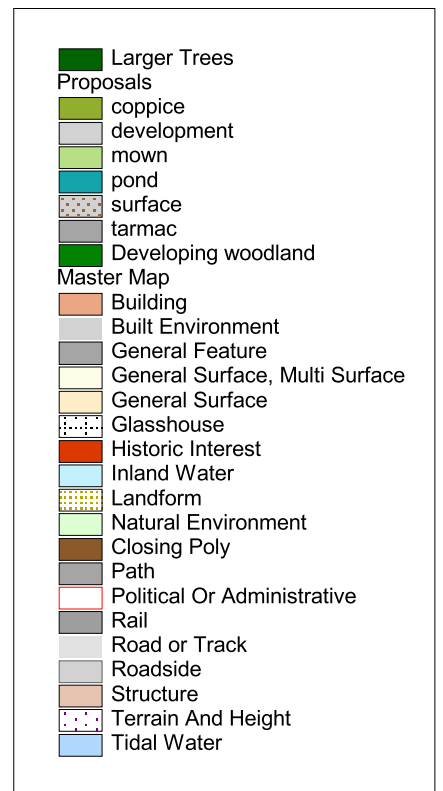
### Indicative costs

| item   | quantity      | costs            | comments   |
|--|---------------|------------------|--|
| Tree thinning                                | 0.75Ha        | £1500            | 30 % of secondary oak  |
| Create mown zone                             | 300lm         | £400             | Clearance and 1 <sup>st</sup> cut, 2m width each side.   |
| Create coppice zone                          | 280lm         | £600             | Coppicing, secure dead wood piles, chip and remove brash, 5m width each side.  |
| Litter clearance                             | 1No           | £500             | Contract or community clear up with skip hire, supervision, promotion etc.   |
| Chemical control of invasive plant species   | 2No           | £300             | 2 visits by qualified contractor.  |
| Pond excavation                              | 3No           | £1000            | Excavation and landscaping   |
| Path construction including French drains    | 150lm<br>50lm | £10,000<br>£1500 | Specification to take into account ground conditions, French drainage linked to new ponds, spoil removal and disposal. |
| Remove old stepped entrance and install new  | 1No           | £750             | New for old, re-site to central position.  |
| Design, produce and install entrance signage | 3No           | £750             | To be based on simple Oxhey Woods design.  |
| Community consultation/information TBC       |               |                  |  |
| Community involvement TBC                    |               |                  |  |
| <b>Total</b>                                 |               | <b>£17,300</b>   |  |

All of the above costs are indicative and assume that works are undertaken by contractor. Some elements such as construction of steps, installation of entrance signage and smaller scale tree and coppice works could potentially be undertaken by trained CMS mid-week volunteer groups.

Contract supervision could be undertaken by CMS officers through our agreed annual work programme subject to capacity, or as an additional activity with agreed fee.

# Outline Proposals Prestwick Road North



1:750