

Leavesden Country Park Management Plan
Appendix G Essential Reading - - National Lottery Heritage Fund
Activity Plan and Conservation Plan

The following details are to be read in conjunction with the Leavesden Country Park Management Plan and all its Appendices to provide additional background information.

A full evaluation of the delivery of the Activity Plan, Conservation Plan and Capital Works, will be carried out in Winter 2021, led by independent, external specialists. The final evaluation report will be produced based on all the evidence collected at the end of the project, assessing the National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes and project aims to judge the progress made. The report will serve as a milestone document for further planning, as well as on the progress of the project.

This evaluation report, will form the bedrock of the achievements for delivery against the National Lottery Heritage Fund project and prove to be a document to help develop and deliver future programmes. As part of the evaluation process for National Lottery Heritage Fund, a map will be produced to show the full outcomes around the park.

Activity Plan

The Activity Plan is a guidance document for the project team and others involved in the process. It is necessary in order to present all the elements of a National Lottery Heritage Fund project which are not related to capital works. Its focus is on how the National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes for the project can be met through engaging people and communities for the mutual benefit of themselves and the project.

For audience identification, the results of all consultation work are summarised and analysed in the Activity Plan so that the future audiences and activities can then be outlined and formulated into the Action Plan which is a formatted schedule of activities, costs and impacts.

Objectives of the Conservation Management Plan

In terms of programming, the plan informs the team of the detail of activity programming covering events and activities, volunteering, training, interpretation and promotion. It also includes detail on the costs per activity and how the activities will impact on beneficiaries and support the National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes.

The majority of these activities use the Leavesden HIVE as a hub for starting, ending or indeed delivering the activities.

A detailed action plan is set out covering all aspects of the Activity Plan with respect to audience development, volunteer participation, training and learning. We have considered the number of events and activities that will be run and the level of participation and set out the full detail. . These outputs are summarised in the tables below. Below is a summary of the number of events and participants calculated for the plan:

	2018-19 No. events	2019-20 No. of events	2020-21 No. of events	2021-22 No. of events	
Evaluation	0	2	1	2	5
Interpretation	2	8	0	0	10
Marketing & promotion	1	4	4	4	13
Volunteering	0	8	7	6	21
Heritage Trail	0	7	3	3	13
Event	0	18	18	18	54
Activity	0	28	25	24	77
Education	0	20	30	40	90
Community Archaeology	0	5	2	0	7
Event (medium)	0	1	7	6	14
Oral History Project	0	5	1	0	6
Training for Volunteers	0	3	2	2	7
Training for Staff	0	1	1	1	3
Total	3	110	101	106	320

Summary of audiences

Below are extracts from the full Activity plan, for reference:

7 Target Audiences & Future Audiences

Comparing current and potential audiences from the research outlined earlier, we can summarise the target audiences as:

7.1 Education Sector

Covering all types of educational organisations including schools, special schools, nurseries, colleges and universities.

7.2 Families

Within the catchment area there are high numbers of Dormitory Dependables (older families with children under 18 & older singles and mature families with children under 18; Commuterland Culturebuffs (older families) and Trips and Treats (younger and older families).

This suggests that a key group to engage is families. However, due to the scale of new house building in the area, this audience is split into two categories, covering both 'established families' who have been living in the area for some time as well as 'new families' who are those representing new communities.

7.3 People with a disability

This includes people who may have a link to the site from its previous history, as well as new audiences within this category who would benefit from engagement in a green space or would be interested in taking part in an activity or volunteer programme.

7.4 People with a mental health need

This covers visitors who could have memories of having attended the Leavesden Hospitals and therefore have a link to the country park already.

7.5 Older Visitors

This includes the proportion of audiences in the catchment area which fall into the Homes and Heritage category of Audience Finder (older people living in rural areas). As is shown from the previous section, they are represented in significant numbers in the area.

7.6 Special interest

This covers two groups closely associated with the site's past, under the theme Hospitals: those who worked, trained or attended any of the former hospitals on site and Aerodrome: people who worked at Leavesden Aerodrome or Rolls Royce.

8 Audience Engagement

Based on our analysis set out above and supported by consultation, we propose the following: Table Audience engagement

Target Audience	Rationale	Why this audience is important	How we will engage this audience	Barriers for this audience and how resolved
Education Sector	The schools survey shows that there is potential for more school visits and work already done with special schools indicates the same. The benefits of engagement with the country park is also key in assisting schools in preventing ill health of children. Taking this opportunity to work with schools to reduce the barriers they experience will also assist in enabling more of them to engage.	If school children engage more with the park it will have an ongoing impact toward increasing the value of the park within the local community, as the children will feel more ownership of the space and may go on to encourage parents and siblings to visit as well. Increasing their understanding of this valuable natural asset in their community will also assist with ensuring the country park is valued in future.	Through organised activities led by the park ranger and designed to include key elements of the curriculum relevant to the classes visiting. We will develop and produce an education pack specifically for this purpose.	Access to information about what the park offers, resolved by targeted development of an Education Programme. Provision of the Heritage Wildlife Centre to support activity.

Target Audience	Rationale	Why this audience is important	How we will engage this audience	Barriers for this audience and how resolved
Families	<p>The Audience Finder tool has identified a key audience to engage in this area as being families of different types. We hope to also use this opportunity for children and young people to be brought into more contact with local wildlife, engage in more exercise.</p>	<p>Attracting this audience will help to spread the word to other families and neighbours to begin to make the country park more appealing as a place to visit for local people. In addition to this, we hope that the engagement of families will limit the further development of antisocial behaviour in the country park in future years.</p>	<p>Family activities and events as well as family friendly volunteering will be organised to attract these groups. Furthermore, we will ensure that marketing is targeted specifically to engage the new communities who may be less aware of what is on offer and of methods for staying informed of activities within the country park.</p>	<p>Not available at all times due to school and work commitments, this will be addressed through scheduling family events at weekends or during holidays.</p> <p>Often busy so clear information needs to be provided to this group.</p>
People with a disability	<p>Given some of the barriers outlined in the Boxmoor Trust report, it would be good to engage this audience and facilitate better access. In addition to this we would like to engage visitors with learning disabilities and for the site to be beneficial to their wellbeing through increased health benefits brought about by exercise, socialising and engagement with nature.</p>	<p>This audience group has been part of the history of the country park and we aim to continue a strand of positive engagement and benefit to those with a disability through the activity programme and as an ongoing aim for the country park into the future.</p>	<p>Through learning disability focused activities such as Learning Disability Day and general activities of interest and benefit to this group. Also through volunteering and training.</p>	<p>Access to the site, to be addressed by repair and restoration of paths and physical elements, as well as buildings and facilities which are accessible.</p> <p>Long lead in times for enabling organisations to plan for visitors from this group to attend, due to red tape and processes. Encouragement of initial engagement through one off events as a lead in to also invite to volunteering and more regular events.</p>

Target Audience	Rationale	Why this audience is important	How we will engage this audience	Barriers for this audience and how resolved
People with a mental health need	People with mental health needs benefit from engagement outdoors and we aim for the site to be beneficial to their wellbeing through increased health benefits brought about by exercise, socialising and engagement with nature.	The site has traditionally had a link with people who have mental health issues and some of the people who were at the hospitals may still have memories of the site in the past.	Through mental health awareness activities connected with Mental Health Awareness Week, and via volunteering and training.	Lack of positive engagement and support to attend the site. Key to enable engagement will be good communication and accessing via established groups for attendance to themed events such as those to be offered during Mental Health Awareness Week.
Older Visitors	There are currently high proportions of older visitors in Abbots Langley, and from the Audience Finder tool we can see that some of the older people in the catchment have an interest in heritage. The project also aims to attract more older visitors in order to assist in enabling them to live a healthier more active lifestyle through use of the country park.	<p>Given that many within this audience type have an overview historically of the Leavesden site, it is key for the project that they are engaged. They will be invaluable in terms of sharing knowledge of the site's history across generations.</p> <p>This audience is also important because there are valuable gains to be made in terms of their overall health if they are helped to be more active through engagement in the project.</p>	Through the heritage activities and targeted exercise activities through the outdoor gym. They will also be engaged as part of the Oral history project.	<p>Possible digital barriers to being informed about the park, so plans for promotion of the project include more traditional methods such as community newsletters as well.</p> <p>Access to the site, to be addressed by repair and restoration of paths and physical elements, as well as buildings and facilities which are accessible. Provision of the Heritage Wildlife Centre</p>
Special interest	Local residents and their families and predecessors have in different	In order to create cohesion around the heritage and future of the park,	These audiences will be engaged through the various heritage activities	Previous negative memories of the site, to be resolved by offering activities

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	<p>capacities had a connection to the old buildings and land which made up Leavesden Country Park before it was designated as such. This category recognises the ongoing relationship these groups may wish to retain with the park and includes key groups such as former hospital workers, patients or trainees, and those who worked at the aerodrome site in its varying forms.</p>	<p>it is vital that we engage those who already have a connection and love for the area. Their experiences and engagement will be the base upon which the ongoing story of the country park is told. Excluding this group would mean a loss of local cultural heritage.</p>	<p>such as the Shared Heritage event and heritage trails outlined in the Action Plan, and in particular in the oral history project.</p>	<p>linked to the heritage features which emphasis positive elements and through engaging them to share stories as part of the Oral History project in a sensitive manner.</p>

Conservation Plan

The full conservation plan can be viewed on the Council's website.

Objectives of the Conservation Management Plan

The Conservation Management Plan was commissioned by Three Rivers District Council to inform the development of detailed design and activity proposals as part of a National Lottery Heritage Fund Bid under the Heritage Grants programme which commenced in 2017 until October 2021.

A Conservation Management Plan assesses and sets out in summary what is important about the landscape and significance based upon readily available information. The information gathered is then considered in an assessment of cultural significance, for the site as a whole and for its various parts, with a statement of significance. The plan is designed to inform the conservation, repair, use, management and future improvements of the Park.

It includes an appraisal of the heritage value of the designed landscape, largely in the context of it being the grounds of the former Metropolitan Asylum for Imbeciles which was built between 1868-70 and known later as Leavesden Asylum. The report examines the main conservation-related issues and outlines guidelines for the future management of the site. It is used in conjunction with the Management and Maintenance Plan and the Activity Plan.

Based on all of this information and opinion, the Management and Maintenance Plan and Activity Plan, have been established to inform the conservation, repair, management and use of the feature according to best conservation practice.

The Plan has involved considerable engagement with the two Historical Associations and other members of the Steering Group who are extremely knowledgeable and active in conserving their local heritage.

Understanding the Heritage

The Country Park was formerly part of the grounds of Metropolitan Asylum for Imbeciles which was built between 1868-70 and known later as Leavesden Asylum. Today the Country Park consists of four connected sites. North and South Park form the main park area and are divided by College Road. The Horses' Field is located to the west of Langley Lane and East Lane Cemetery at the northern end of the site.

The Country Park is a well-used and valued green space in Abbots Langley, used by a wide range of local people including residents from Abbots Langley and in particular adjacent housing, local schools and nearby businesses including Warner Bros. Studios Leavesden.

As well as being important for wildlife and biodiversity the Country Park is an important recreational green space linking to countryside to the north. The Country Park is open all year with two free car parks at the northern end of the site. The Park provides two main play areas – one outside Leavesden HIVE and one in the Horses' Field, tennis courts, outdoor gym and the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), a football pitch and a range of opportunities for informal recreation or play.

Apart from the tennis courts and MUGA, which can be booked through the YMCA, the facilities are freely available.

Conservation of wildlife – Natural Heritage

The site comprises a mosaic of habitats: amenity grassland, semi-improved grassland, scattered trees, woodland, scrub, wildflower meadows, two orchards and hedgerows.

Trees

Leavesden Country Park includes ornamental trees in parkland and areas of woodland to the north. Three Tree Preservation Orders cover the site. A targeted individual tree survey was carried out in two key areas as part of the National Lottery Heritage Fund project and forms the basis of the conservation section in the Management and Maintenance Plan.

Woodlands

The main woodland blocks are found in the north of the site and consist of small plantations although it is not known how much was planted or whether the majority is a result of natural regeneration. The woodland structure is dominated by Sycamore with occasional Oak and Silver Birch. There is very little under storey, where it does exist it comprises of Hawthorn and Elder. Natural regeneration consists of Ash, Holly and occasional Yew. The perimeter of the site is formed by mixed plantations containing a variety of species including Field Maple, Guelder Rose, Hawthorn and Hazel.

Grasslands

The ground flora is dominated by Bramble with Nettle. Some interest does exist along the woodland edge where Red Campion and Male Fern persist. Wild Garlic, Snowdrop, Bluebell and Wood Anemone have been introduced site wide and will continue to do so as part of both the Activity Plan and the Management and Maintenance Plan.

Wildlife

The site has potential to support a range of protected species, notably bats and reptiles and had limited potential to support Great Crested Newts. Twenty-seven species of bird were recorded within the site which reflected a typical Country Park assemblage for late winter, and there is limited potential for the site to support specially protected breeding bird species which were noted from the data search. The site is very likely to support Hedgehogs habitats but no signs of badger were recorded during the initial survey.

Actions to support the conservation of the natural heritage, wildlife, trees and plants are shown in the Management and Maintenance Plan.

Activities and Events - Social Heritage

The Park is also an important venue for a range of events and activities including wildlife, history walks and talks, heritage open days, sporting events and community activities.

All of these are detailed in the Activity Plan which are frequently reviewed and updated to reflect the current need.

Facilities – Restoration of Built Heritage

Restored Heritage facilities include:

- **Leavesden HIVE building** – this provides a base for both the Park Ranger for wildlife education and a hub for Leavesden Hospitals Heritage Association for heritage activities.
- **Restored Orphanage Railings** – local craftsmen have reinstated the railings on the south side entrance to the park with authentic pier caps to match the existing original railings.
- **Edwardian Garden Steps** – the steps and handrails have been restored to include fir cone shaped finials to reflect the Alexander Mackenzie Edwardian Design
- **Font** – restored the existing structure and its surroundings to its former state as was used when the hospitals were open.
- **East Lane Cemetery** – restoration of the Lychgate to its former glory as an imposing entrance, reinstated pathways, lifted the tree canopy, restored the grave markers, reset the grave stones, and renewed the centrally planted and grave marked area to include a memorial wall with memorial plaques.
- **Site Wide Interpretation Boards and site maps** – to enhance the visitor experience, site maps provide walking routes to ensure they can visit all the heritage features with the interpretation boards providing important historical, conservation and wildlife information.
- **Covid-19 Snake** – for future heritage, an individual stone based snake sculpture set in a pathway, has been created by the local community to mark the impact of the pandemic and record this moment in time.
- **Site wide Street furniture**- this includes benches that are in keeping with the Edwardian Garden and sympathetically designed new benches and picnic furniture across the site.