

LONG MELFORD PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Offices, Cordell Road, Long Melford, Suffolk CO10 9EH
Tel: 01787 378084 Email: clerk@longmelford-pc.gov.uk



Full Parish Council Minutes of Meeting

Meeting called for **7:30pm, Thursday 2nd July 2020**
Location **Conducted by remote videoconferencing due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Councillors present **I. Bartlett, M. Clayton, R. Delderfield, J. Ewbank, R. Kemp, L. Malvisi, C. Michette, R. Michette, J. Nunn (Chair), L. Tipper, D. Watts, J. Watts**

Councillors absent **J. Lines**

Also attending **D. Lovelock (Parish Clerk)**

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:33pm. The following Agenda items were addressed.

20/07-1 Apologies for Absence

The Clerk advised that no apologies for absence had been received.

20/07-2 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation

No declarations of interest were made by Councillors.

The Clerk advised that no requests for dispensation had been received.

20/07-3 Confirmation of the Accuracy of Minutes

Cllr. D. Watts noted that while the minutes were accurate, there had been a proposal at the 4th June meeting to consider a civic award during the current meeting but it was not on the Agenda. Cllr. Bartlett explained that it had subsequently been established that civic awards had to be dealt with under the Council's Civic Awards Policy. The Clerk confirmed this to be the case, and said that he would circulate a copy of the Policy and award nomination forms to Councillors within the next few days.

Resolved – That the minutes for the Full Parish Council Meeting held on 4th June 2020 be accepted and signed by the Chair as providing an accurate record.

Resolved – That the minutes for the Extraordinary Full Parish Council Meeting held on 11th June 2020 be accepted and signed by the Chair as providing an accurate record.

Signature to be done at a later date due to COVID-19 measures.

20/07-4 Public Participation

No members of the public joined or participated in the meeting.

20/07-5 County Councillor's Report

In addition to his written report, Cllr. Kemp stated that recent figures showed that Suffolk had the lowest level of coronavirus infection in the whole of the East of England.

The Council received and noted Councillor's Report. (Appendix 1)

R.V. M.

20/07-6 District Councillor's Report

In addition to her written report, Cllr. Malvisi raised the following matters.

- It was recommended that the Council tested its toilet facilities for legionella prior to re-opening them as Babergh District Council (BDC) had discovered the bacteria's presence in facilities very close to Melford.
- The Council should be implementing scheduled checks for legionella as a matter of course.
- BDC and Suffolk County Council had action plans in place to be implemented in the event of the locality being hit by a second COVID-19 wave.

The Council received and noted the District Councillor's Report. (Appendix 2)

20/07-7 Accounting Checks

The Council noted that accounting checks for the period 1 January to 31 March 2020 were undertaken by Cllr. Ewbank on 6 May 2020, that the checks for the period 1 April to 30 June 2020 were due to take place on Monday 22 July, and that the RFO would invite two members of the Finance Committee to undertake these checks.

20/07-8 Cash Book Report

The Council received and noted the Cash Book Reports for April 2020 and May 2020.
(Appendix 3a and 3b)

20/07-9 Payments Schedule

The Council agreed the Payments Schedule for July 2020. (Appendix 4)

20/07-10 Motion: Adoption of the Melford Country Park Management Plan

Cllr. Ewbank advised that the Plan had been circulated for comment to the Council, volunteers, the Park Ranger and LMOS. Feedback had been received and two minor changes to the document, suggested by Cllr. D. Watts, were proposed:

1. The text regarding access restriction to a proposed wildflower meadow be revised to make it clear that viewing access would be available for the public from the meadow boundary.
2. The text regarding the proposed Park Dog Policy (Agenda Item 20/07-11) be revised to remove reference to recent events and make it "timeless".

Agreed - That the Council offers LMOS, the Park Ranger, and the volunteers a vote of thanks for their hard work in maintaining the Country Park over a period of many years.

Agreed – That the Council thanks Cllrs. Bartlett, Ewbank and Tipper for their efforts preparing the Park Management Plan.

Resolved - That subject to revisions 1 and 2 being made to the document, the Council adopts the Melford Country Park Management Plan as presented. (Appendix 5)

20/07-11 Motion: Adoption of the Melford Country Park Dog Policy

Cllr. Tipper provided a detailed explanation regarding the rationale for the Policy's measures and requirements. The Council agreed that it would review the Policy six months after formal implementation, during April 2021, to ascertain its effectiveness and revise it if necessary.

Resolved - That the Council adopts the Melford Country Park Dog Policy as presented.
(Appendix 5)

20/07-12 Motion: Approval of Reason for Councillor's Absence and Consequent Granting of a Leave of Absence to the Councillor

Resolved - That the Council approves the reason for Cllr. Jayne Lines' absence from Council duties and meetings as being due to serious ill health.

Resolved - That a leave of absence from Council duties and meetings be granted to Cllr. Lines due to her serious ill health, with the term to be effective from 02/07/2020 and to be reviewed as required, but in any event not to extend beyond 31st May 2021.

R.V.M.

20/07-13 Motion: Appointment of a Council Temporary Vice-Chair

Resolved - That the Council appoints Cllr. Richard Michette as Acting Vice Chair, to deputise for Cllr. Lines during her absence due to ill health, and to hold the position until such time as Cllr. Lines resumes it or a new Vice Chair is appointed.

20/07-14 Motion: Agreement to Purchase New Signs for Melford Walk

Cllr. R. Michette advised that he now considered an estimate for the signs that he had obtained from Filcris, in the sum of £9,000 (Appendix 7), to be untenable. Consequently, he wished the Council to consider an alternative estimate from Auto Innovations, which was for seven signs manufactured from plastic laminated steel, for a maximum cost of £1000 in total.

Resolved - That the Council agrees to purchase the signs for the Melford Walk from Auto Innovations in accordance with its estimate, contingent upon Cllr. R. Michette first obtaining a mock-up of the signs from the supplier for the Council's approval regarding the final design and wording.

20/07-15 Motion: Agreement of Further Village Centre Improvements Related to Melford in Bloom

Cllr. Ewbank clarified that the proposal was for the works to be undertaken and funded by the Parish Council to build upon the work completed under the Melford in Bloom project, and not that it be done as an extension of Melford in Bloom's activities or by the provision of further funding to it. The proposed works were as set out in the document 'Proposal for Repair and Improvements to Four Central Mini-Greens' (Appendix 8) and were in summary:

- The removal of a dead tree on Small Green by Lime Gallery and replacement with a new tree.
- Installation of posts on three small greens to protect them from vehicle damage, coupled with modest repairs to the green edgings.

Resolved - That a committee consisting of Cllrs. Bartlett, Ewbank and D. Watts be formed to investigate the viability and cost of the proposed works and report back to the Council.

Councillor Kemp made his apologies and left the meeting at 9:26pm.

20/07-16 Motion: Establishment of the Criteria Under Which the Council Offices Can be Re-Opened to the Public

The Clerk recommended that the Council undertake a risk assessment to establish what needed to be done to make the Council Offices COVID-secure, to protect the staff and so they could be safely re-opened to the public. Cllr. Malvisi confirmed this was the responsibility of the Council as employer. She suggested that Mr Dave Crimmin, who had previously acted as locum Clerk for the Council and had experience conducting risk assessments, should be engaged for the task.

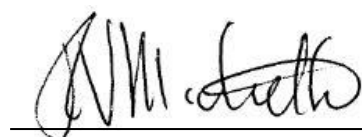
Resolved - That the Clerk contact Mr Crimmin and ask him to undertake a COVID-19 risk assessment of the Council Offices.

20/07-17 Details of the Next Meeting

The time and date of the next Full Parish Council Meeting, to be held remotely, was confirmed as 7:30pm, Thursday 6th August 2020.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the Meeting at 9:35pm.

Signed: _____



R. Michette

Acting Vice Chair, Long Melford Parish Council

Date: _____

06/08/2020

Long Melford Parish Council

Meeting of the Full Parish Council

7:30pm, Thursday 2nd July 2020

Agenda Pack

AGENDA ITEM No.	DOCUMENT	-
20/07-3	Ordinary FPC Meeting Minutes, Dated 4 th June 2020 (Document 00)	
	Extraordinary FPC Meeting Minutes, Dated 11 th June 2020 (Document 0)	
20/07-5	County Councillor's Report (Appendix 1)	
20/07-6	District Councillor's Report (Appendix 2)	
20/07-8	Cash Book Report April 2020 (Appendix 3a)	
	Cash Book Report May 2020 (Appendix 3b)	
20/07-9	Payments Schedule (Appendix 4)	
20/07-10	Melford Country Park Management Plan 2020 v7 (Appendix 5)	
20/07-11	Melford Country Park Dog Policy v1 (Appendix 6)	
20/07-14	Filcris Signage Estimate (Appendix 7)	
20/07-15	Proposal for Repair & Improvements to Four Central Mini-Greens (Appendix 8)	

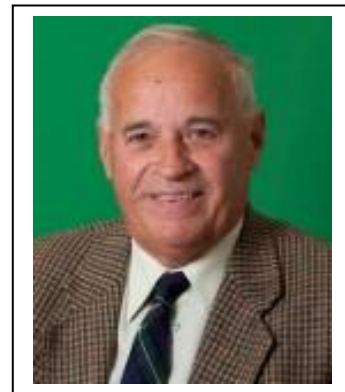
NOTES

Parish Report July 2020

Councillor

Richard Kemp

Tresco
New Road
Long Melford
Suffolk
CO10 9JY
01787 378149
richard.kemp@suffolk.gov.uk



COVID-19 UPDATE - Summary

Latest Government advice is available here: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Latest SCC information is available here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Suffolk's resilience partners continue to provide PPE equipment where most needed

As Suffolk's response to the Covid-19 pandemic enters its fourth month, the team set up in March to source and distribute Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to support service providers across the county continues to operate from Suffolk County Council's offices in Ipswich.

To date, this PPE 'cell' of the Suffolk Resilience Forum (SRF) has distributed over 2.3 million items of PPE across Suffolk. Over 1.9 million of these items have been distributed for use in the care sector to support some of Suffolk's most vulnerable residents.

This equipment is directly supporting a range of staff every day, providing them with the masks, gloves and other disposable protective items needed to ensure safe working and effective infection control, working in care settings, social care, special schools, emergency services and health organisations.

As service providers increase contact with residents and reopen or plan for buildings to open in weeks to come, Suffolk's PPE team will continue to purchase and distribute equipment where there is a shortfall in supply or where organisations identify an urgent need.

Domestic Abuse helpline available 24/7

The existing Domestic Abuse Outreach Service, run by Suffolk County Council and Anglia Care Trust, has extended its **0800 977 5690** freephone number to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Anyone with concerns including professionals who may be supporting clients, as well as friends and families who are concerned for loved ones, can access this local support.

People in Suffolk to benefit from a virtual care response

Suffolk County Council, in partnership with RETHINK Partners and Alcove are providing virtual care and support to vulnerable or shielded people.

The service is provided through the rapid roll-out of the Alcove Video Carephone, a simple communication device that allows people with little or no technological ability to have two-way video contact with care workers, family members and other approved service providers. This will help with tasks that don't require face-to-face visits and therefore limit their exposure to infection. For example, carers can check visually if medications are being taken, set prompts and reminders or carry out welfare and wellbeing checks.

Users are being supported to set up the Alcove Video Carephones remotely and their friends and family members can also be added during set-up. The Council is working closely with care providers and partners to identify the most appropriate people, to receive the device.

District Councillor's Report

Dear Councillors

There has not been much to add to my last report but as I write this month the PM has announced major funding to help kick start our economy.

I very much hope that some of the funds will make their way to our area but that will only become apparent in the weeks to come.

Also in a week's time I will be presenting the action plan decided upon by the Climate Change Taskforce to BDC Cabinet who I very much hope will agree it. We will then move onto the Biodiversity across our District and its impact on everything.

Today Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of WHO is quoted as saying 'the worst of the pandemic could be "yet to come", as numbers globally escalate.'

Today Leicester has gone back into Lockdown.

Of concern is that Covid19 is spiking in the County of Suffolk, although the actual numbers are small (I think it is 10) up against period of zero increase it makes for concern.

So please all do take seriously the advice from Government from your own perspective, that of your family and friends and obviously as Councillors with a responsibility to the wider community.

Coronavirus is with us until such time as it can be eradicated through vaccination and until then we have to anticipate the worst and take care.

In the meant time BDC is moving forward with;

1. **The Tree for Life scheme which offers a free tree for new parents**, is now open for 2020 applications please encourage those you know who are expecting or adopting to go to www.babergh.gov.uk/environment/tree-for-life/ and find out all about how to apply.

The scheme will help those who have been or felt isolated and to look forward to their new arrival while at the same time giving them an opportunity to help the environment.

It is open to all families in the district who welcome a new arrival between 1 January and 31 December 2020, but in addition also to parents who may have lost a child during the same period to apply for a remembrance tree.

It aims to benefit families, communities and the environment by boosting tree coverage across the district.

The Tree collection events were held in Stowmarket and Hitcham, where expert help was on hand to advise families on their tree choice and aftercare at home.

District Councillor's Report

Open to all including those without a garden, a selection of trees were also planted with families at key locations in the districts including Needham Lake, Shotley Golden Wood, Broom Hill in Hadleigh, Gallowsfield Wood in Haughley and Sroughton Millennium Green.

According to the Office for National Statistics, that means around 30% of families with newborns in our districts applied for the scheme, but now the councils are encouraging even more people to claim their free tree this year.

2. **The Team for Economic Growth** continues to work hard and with today's news will continue to help develop our economic growth.

The grants schemes recently issued are now coming to an end due to Lockdown restrictions being eased but this presents our town and village centres with new concerns hence the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund, aimed at helping town and village centres to open safely. Lavenham, Hadleigh and Sudbury have made use of the fund to ensure that visitors to their village/town centres are safe and able to adhere to the 1 or 2 metre rule whichever might apply.

To date the Grants team have responded to 98% of applicants and have paid out in excess of £101.3K and included in this is more than £15,000 to food banks.

www.babergh.gov.uk/communities/grants-and-funding/how-to-fund-your-project-and-advice/

3. Which brings me to the issue of Waste and Fly tipping.

We all suffered as a consequence of the selfish panic buying at the outset of Lockdown which emptied our supermarket shelves in an unprecedented fashion only for much of it to later find itself fly tipped beside bins all over the district.

It appears that many of our residents believe that if they put the waste beside a bin it will magic its way into the appropriate waste vehicle.

Recently the bottle banks in our village were swamped by empty bottles piled high adjacent to the bins. This is fly tipping! It is also environmentally damaging since the sweet smell of alcohol attracts vermin. Once the bottle bank is emptied each of those bottles will have to be lifted and placed into the empty bank taking a lot of time which the collection company will then charge to the Council!

We are hoping to run a Fly tipping campaign on the back of this episode across the district.

We have just completed the #FoodSavvy competition which saw primary children compete by demonstrating how they are able to be pictorially creative about saving and valuing food.

On average, households across East Anglia waste £810 worth of food every year.

To [find out more information on the Food Savvy website](#).

The Winners will be announced by the 20 July.

District Councillor's Report

4. [Minor adaptation grants](#) are available to support urgent minor adaptations such as ramps and stairlifts to residents' homes to help avoid hospital admissions and assist in getting patients discharged.

West Suffolk Hospital are supposed to inform patients of these Grants when they are about to be discharged but it would appear that this has not been happening as was evidenced by two Melford families recently.

I have brought this to the attention of the WSH board and hopefully people will be better helped.

5. [Register to be a Trading Standards Consumer Champion](#)

Unfortunately, opportunistic traders and scammers are taking advantage of the vulnerability of those panicked by COVID-19. If you'd like to help make Suffolk a safe place to live and work, register to be a Trading Standards Consumer Champion and receive a weekly email alert that provides information on scams as well as any doorstep rogues calling at properties in the local area so you can alert your neighbours or residents. It might be something that the Neighbourhood watch would like to include.

Cashbook report showing all income received and payments made in April 2020

How paid received	Payer	Description	Amount	VAT	Net Payment
Council receipts during April 2020					
BGC	Babergh District Council	Precept and CIL monies	95,624.92	0.00	95,624.92
FPI	Emma Fenelon	C&P Woods Sec D: U10	350.00	0.00	350.00
FPI	Save Our Skylarks	Defibrillator donation	242.17	0.00	242.17
			£96,217.09	£0.00	£96,217.09
Council payments during April 2020					
DD	British Gas	Electricity to 12/3/20	47.12	2.24	44.88
DD	British Telecom	Cemetery mobile	16.80	2.80	14.00
FPO	Ernest Doe	Thinners and paint	65.99	11.00	54.99
FPO	Groundwork UK	Refund of unused 2019/20 grant	2,037.50	0.00	2,037.50
FPO	idverde	March toilets maint	684.53	114.09	570.44
FPO	Sudbury Office Supplies	A3 laminator	97.85	16.31	81.54
FPO	Suffolk Assn of Local Councils	Audit training PM & DL	48.00	8.00	40.00
FPO	TA Accounts	April payroll	5,941.40	6.80	5,934.60
FPO	Timberscape Tree Surgery	pollard Limes, remove Holly	1,350.00	0.00	1,350.00
DD	Lloyds Bank Chargecard	Pdf editing software for Clerk	55.57	0.00	55.57
DD	British Gas	Electricity to 31/03/20	110.06	5.24	104.82
DD	British Telecom	Office telephone	199.20	33.20	166.00
DD	EOn	Electricity to 14/04/20	13.99	0.67	13.32
FPO	Alan Sawyer	Expenses April 2020	131.56	18.08	113.48
FPO	Heelis and Lodge	2019/20 internal audit fee	300.00		300.00
FPO	Jonathan Ewbank	30m coiled wire	194.11	32.35	161.76
FPO	P Crawford	Hedge cutting Old Sch car park	150.77	25.13	125.64
FPO	Rialtas Business Solutions	Year end closedown	432.00	72.00	360.00
FPO	WJ Green Ltd	Cemetery equipment replacement	1,579.20	263.20	1,316.00
			£13,455.65	£611.11	£12,844.54

Cashbook report showing all income received and payments made in May 2020

How paid received	Payer	Description	Amount	VAT	Net Payment
Council receipts during May 2020					
500448	Donor	Defibrillator donation	250.00	0.00	250.00
500449	Donor	Defibrillator donation	100.00	0.00	100.00
500449	Jennie Hunnaball	Cemetery fees	55.00	0.00	55.00
500449	Hunnaball	Cemetery fees	1,050.00	0.00	1,050.00
500449	Coop Funeral Services	Cemetery fees	1,050.00	0.00	1,050.00
FPI	H & AW Palmer Ltd	Cemetery fees	575.00	0.00	575.00
FPI	H & AW Palmer Ltd	Cemetery fees	575.00	0.00	575.00
			3,655.00	0.00	3,655.00
Council payments during May 2020					
DD	British Gas	Electricity to 12/4/20	45.08	2.14	42.94
DD	British Telecom	Cemetery mobile	16.80	2.80	14.00
DD	Wave	Water cemetery	3.93	0.00	3.93
DD	Wave	Water cemetery	8.18	0.00	8.18
DD	Wave	Water cemetery toilets	48.90	0.00	48.90
DD	Wave	Water - Country Park	83.96	0.00	83.96
FPO	Alan Sawyer	War memorial maintenance	80.00	0.00	80.00
FPO	Holmes & Hills	Cricket Club lease	1,920.00	320.00	1,600.00
FPO	ICCM	ICCM Council subscription	95.00	0.00	95.00
FPO	Jonathan Ewbank	Neoprene sheeting	17.00	0.00	17.00
FPO	SBW & T Poole	MIB: Labour and materials	610.00	1.00	609.00
FPO	SBW & T Poole	Lawn mower, blades and fuel	229.36	0.00	229.36
FPO	Suffolk Assn of Local Councils	2020/21 NALC subscription	218.16	0.00	218.16
	Suffolk Assn of Local Councils	2020/21 SALC subscription	786.84	0.00	786.84
FPO	TA Accounts	May payroll	6,215.00	6.80	6,208.20
DD	British Gas	Electricity to 30/04/2020	91.48	4.35	87.13
			10,469.69	337.09	10,132.60

Long Melford Parish Council
July 2020 payments schedule
Presented to the Parish Council meeting dated 2 July 2020

01/07/2020: 09:54

Delegated RFO decisions since the last meeting		Amount	VAT Accrual	Net Payment
Nationwide Building Society	Transfer of funds from Lloyds Bank to Nationwide	£85,000.00	£0.00	£85,000.00
Lloyds Bank Commercial Banking	Business chargecard annual fee	£32.00	£0.00	£32.00
		£85,032.00	£0.00	£85,032.00
Payments authorised by the Clerk since last meeting under Financial Regulations		Amount	VAT Accrual	Net Payment
X2 Connect	2x Payphone kiosk door retaining strap	£43.92	£7.32	£36.60
SLCC	Clerk membership subscription	£217.00	£0.00	£217.00
PVC Safety Signs	Self adhesive litter bin stickers	£19.62	£3.27	£16.35
		£280.54	£10.59	£269.95
July 2020 payments for authorisation				
Payee	Description	Amount	VAT Accrual	Net Payment
Susanne Dixon	Paper hand towels	41.98	7.00	£34.98
Alan Sawyer	Expenses incl paint, petrol, keys and padlocks	225.29	31.14	£194.15
Jonathan Ewbank	MIB: compost, hanging basket waterer, cart anchor	129.10	9.52	£119.58
Sudbury Town Council	MIB: Hanging basket installation	120.00	20.00	£100.00
Gryphon First Aid Unit	2x defibrillator, rescue kits and cabinets	2,916.00	486.00	£2,430.00
Babergh District Council	2020/21 Council tax for Cemetery building	558.43	0.00	£558.43
SBW & T Poole	Tree trim on Hall St and removal of cuttings	80.00	0.00	£80.00
SBW & T Poole	MIB: 3 grass cuts	75.00	0.00	£75.00
Paul Wilson Handyman Services	Renovate x2 telephone kiosks for defibrillator use	777.28	15.38	£761.90
Acton Sand and Soil	MIB: Topsoil to mend mini-greens on Hall St	216.00	36.00	£180.00
ISF Fire Protection	Annual Fire Extinguisher (x2) service	64.80	10.80	£54.00
SLCC	RFO membership subscription	140.00	0.00	£140.00
Trustees Hyde Parker Resettle*	Old School car park lease from 2014/15 to 2018/19	125.00	0.00	£125.00
Trustees Hyde Parker Resettle*	Old School car park access licence 2019/20	5.00	0.00	£5.00
WJ Green Ltd	Cemetery equipment	2,543.79	423.97	£2,119.82
Grown in Suffolk	Additional plants for oak planters	431.00	0.00	£431.00
Sudbury Office Supplies	Black XL printer cartridge	36.04	6.01	£30.03
		£8,484.71	£1,045.82	£7,438.89

* payment subject to solicitor confirmation

Payments due prior to next meeting

Purchase of polytunnel for school costing £484.00 from £500 SCC grant already received

Direct debit and standing orders approved by the Council in March 2020

July 2020 salary, pension and HMRC payments

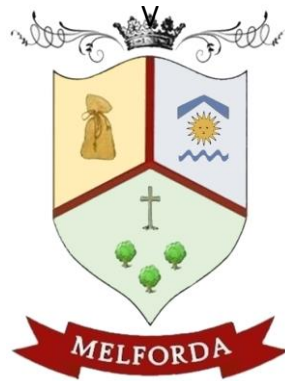
Contractual payments arising from prior decisions of the Council

Payments arising from decisions of the Council on 2 July 2020

The payments above were authorised at the Parish Council meeting dated 2 July 2020

Councillor Signature:

MELFORD COUNTRY PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020



Contractor Logo to be placed here when Management Plan adopted

MELFORD COUNTRY PARK

MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020

INTRODUCTION

Melford Country Park, a Local Nature Reserve formerly known as Rodbridge Picnic Site, is situated within the flood plain of the River Stour, between Sudbury and Long Melford. The site comprises approximately 8 Hectares of flooded former gravel workings, grassland and deciduous woodland.

Although it is a relatively small site, the Park has a range of habitat types which support a variety of common plant communities and associated animals. It also complements other nearby ecologically important sites in this part of the Stour Valley (see Section 1.7 below).

Whilst the Park is primarily a Local Nature Reserve it is used extensively by the local population of Long Melford, Sudbury and the surrounding area for informal recreation and attracts around 112,000 visitors a year.

It includes a number of areas of ecological significance and the proper management of these areas should be central to this Management Plan, albeit with careful attention to the ongoing amenity of the Park and its accessibility to visitors.

This Management Plan has been compiled by Long Melford Parish Council (LMPC) which, through its 99 year lease signed in 2012, has overriding responsibility for the Park. However the Plan is not aimed solely at any organization, contractor, individual or group of volunteers but is instead, a template for the Park as a whole. All those who work or help at the Park are therefore expected to support the ethos of the Plan and to help achieve its principal aims.

The principal aims of the Management Plan are:

- To ensure that management of the Local Nature Reserve fulfills all legal and other obligations.
- To conserve and enhance the ecological value of the site and its biodiversity, with its mosaic of scrub, woodland, ponds and grassland.
- Specifically to conserve and enhance the flora and fauna associated with the habitats of the site and to promote and support native British species.
- To encourage public access and promote the Country Park to the local community for recreation and as a study-site, but this access should be managed in a way that protects the flora and fauna of the site.
- To maintain the value of the Country Park as a landscape asset by sympathetic management of boundaries.
- To provide a good level of service to Park visitors.
- To provide new conservation and recreation opportunities.

LMPC wishes to acknowledge the significant input of the Park Ranger, the contractor, Long Melford Open Spaces (LMOS) and, in particular, the team of volunteers who over several years

have provided many hours of commitment and effort, and who regularly face the challenge of helping LMPC to meet its responsibilities towards conservation whilst, at the same time, providing the Park's many visitors with recreational amenity.

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

1.1. Location

Site name: Melford Country Park (Rodbridge).

Site Status: Local Nature Reserve (The Railway Walks). The Railways Walk LNR designation is stated as - The Railway Walks (4 parts): Rodbridge Picnic Site (the Country Park); Valley Walk; Lavenham Walk; Melford Walk LNR.

Note: The Railway Walk is now known as The Melford Walk.

County: Suffolk/Essex.

District: Babergh (Suffolk) / Braintree (Essex).

Parish: Long Melford (Suffolk) / Borley (Essex).

OS Grid Ref: TL 858437

Note: A small area of the site (0.14 Hectares) is in the County of Essex. This is a result of a river diversion on the construction of Borley Mill.

1.2. Land Tenure

Ownership

- LMPC acquired a 99-year lease in October 2012 from Suffolk County Council (SCC).
- SCC acquired the site in 1973 from the former West Suffolk County Council. (Originally acquired in 1925).
- Covenants: Manorial rights of the Manor of Melford were excluded from the sale.

Management

- LMPC is responsible for the management of the Country Park, working with the Park Ranger and a contractor of its choice.
Contact: The Parish Clerk, Long Melford Parish Council, The Parish Offices, Cordell Road, Long Melford CO10 9EH.

Park Ranger: Susanne Dixon: Part-time responsibility for day to day running of the site alongside the chosen contractor and a team of volunteers.

The Park Ranger and volunteers are encouraged to participate in Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) courses and to join with species experts who are invited to the Park to review and record particular species. LMPC can be approached to provide funding for appropriate courses.

Contractor

- LMOS, a Community Interest Company.
Existing contract with LMPC in place to 30th September 2020.
Contact: The Company Secretary, LMOS, 37 High Street, Long Melford, Suffolk, CO10 9BD.

Management Partners

- Environment Agency.
- SCC Rights of Way Section.

Buildings and Structures

- **Public Toilet Block.** Built 1984. Mains services. (Sewerage pumped to sewer main) Open all year apart from Christmas Day, from dawn to dusk. Cleaning carried out by Ranger. Repair and maintenance carried out by local contractors and paid for by LMPC.
- **Wooden footbridge.** Carries Public Right of Way over pond. Repair and maintenance carried out by SCC Rights of Waysection.
- **Car Park.** Capacity 40 cars.
- **20' Containers.** Two 20' containers (owned by LMOS) – one providing a café/information centre and the second a workshop.

Planning Matters

- The land was approved for use as a picnic site in 1967.
- Erection of public toilets (B/1063/83) was approved in 1984.
- The site became a Local Nature Reserve in 2003.

Rights of access

- Public Right of Way (W-383/001/0).
- UK Power Networks for access to 11 kV overhead power lines.
- Environment Agency for access to the River Stour.

Map Coverage

- 1:50 000. Ordnance Survey Landranger 155 Bury St Edmunds and Sudbury.
- 1:25 000. Ordnance Survey Pathfinder 1029 Sudbury and Lavenham.

Photographic Coverage

- Aerial photographs 1986 and 1991 held at SCC (Environment Department).
- Ground photographs 1976 to present day held at Clare Castle Country Park.

1.3 Lease Covenants

The following Ecology Covenant Clauses are drawn from the 99 year lease between SCC and LMPC (October 2012):

- The Tenant will not use the Demised Premises other than as a Nature Reserve within the meaning and in accordance with the provisions of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
- The Tenant will manage the Demised Premises by taking account of the "Management Policy For Rodbridge (part of the Railway Walks Local Nature Reserve)" annexed to (the) Lease as Appendix 1. [This reflects what was in the initial Management Plan attached to the lease].
- The Tenant will permit the general public to enter the Demised Premises at all times for all purposes associated with the proper use of the Demised Premises as a Nature Reserve SAVE THAT the Tenant shall be permitted to restrict access for the purposes of LNR management.
- (The Tenant must) keep the Demised Premises and all building erections hedge fences and gates upon the Demised Premises save for which are the Landlord's responsibility in good and substantial repair and condition and with all drains and ditches upon or under the Demised Premises duly cleaned and scoured
- (The Tenant must) use their reasonable endeavours to encourage dog owners accessing the Demised Premises to control their animals and not disturb the flora and fauna or educational groups that may be visiting the Demised Premises
- (The Tenant) shall instruct their employees and any contractors in carrying out any work (including game-keeping or pest control) to carry out and observe strictly the obligations under this Covenant and to use their best endeavours to ensure that such instructions are observed and carried out.

The Tenant is LMPC but these clauses apply to this Management Plan as a whole and should be heeded by the Park Ranger, any contractor and any volunteers who assist the Ranger or contractor.

1.4 Site Status

- Local Nature Reserve (since 2003).
- Recognised as a picnic site in 1967 by the former West Suffolk County Council. Inherited by SCC on its formation following local government re-organisation in 1973.
- Bylaws for the picnic site made under Section 41 of the Countryside Act, 1968 by the West Suffolk County Council.

1.5 Land Use

Historical

Gravel began to be extracted from the site during the Second World War for use in construction of local airfields. Prior to this the land was used for arable farming. After 1945 extraction soon became uneconomical and the pits were closed down.

In the twenty years following extraction the site was virtually unmanaged and became derelict although the ponds which subsequently formed were used informally and probably stocked by Sudbury angling club. In 1967 it was established as a picnic site by the former West Suffolk County Council, formally opening as Rodbridge Park Picnic Place two years later. In 1973 SCC took over management of the site and for a while it became one of the Clare Group of Countryside Recreation Sites managed from Clare Castle Country Park.

In 2003 the site became a Local Nature Reserve and it was leased to LMPC by SCC on this basis, via a 99 year lease, in October 2012.

Since 1973 the site has gradually been improved to increase access and visitor services. In 1984 a toilet block was built.

Present Day

Now known as the Melford Country Park, the site is a Local Nature Reserve whilst also providing recreation, the main activities being picnics, dog walking, fishing, walking and observing wildlife. It is a convenient place to break a journey and typically, such visitors tend not to venture far beyond the car park. The Valley Walk, a path/cycle route following the former Stour valley railway into Sudbury, begins at Rodbridge and walkers and cyclists can use the Park as a base for their walk or ride, although cycling is not permitted on the public footpaths or in the Park itself (except children on small bikes in the mown picnic area) .

The Park is recognised as an important area to study and observe wildlife. It is common for local natural history and recording groups to visit the site.

1.6 Landscape

Grassland

There are two areas of grassland.

An area of maintained grassland to the north and west of the site, and nearest to the car park, is managed as an informal recreation area. Picnic tables are provided.

Towards the southern end of the site is an area maintained as rough or 'natural' grassland. This area is bounded and crossed by fairly narrow mown paths but the remainder is allowed to grow naturally.

River Stour

The River Stour forms the western boundary of the site. Towards the southern end of the site the river has been diverted in the past to a former water mill at Borley. Remains of the old riverbed still exist and the county boundary between Suffolk and Essex still follows this course, hence a small part of the site is in the county of Essex.

The riverbank is lined with mature White Poplar of considerable size, some of which have suffered wind damage. There is a flat area immediately adjacent to the river which provides a river walk before the land rises steeply to a flat meadow area. Scattered scrub grows on this bank.

Periodically throughout the year, mainly at times of low rainfall, the natural flow of the river is enhanced by water transfer via the Ely/Ouse system, or from upstream bore holes.

In times of flood a weir in the south-western corner of the site is topped and the flow of the river is partially diverted into the old riverbed around Borley Mill.

Pits

There is one main flooded pit situated in the centre of the site. It is divided into two (pits P1 and P2) by a narrowing at which point a wooden footbridge has been built. The northern part of this pit (P2) is mainly open water with Willow Trees and scrub around its edges. The southern part (P1) is shallower and has been entirely invaded by Willow, much of which blew down in the storm of 1987 and this state remains to the present day.

Several other smaller flooded pits (pits P3, P4, P5 and P6) are situated at the northern end of the site, most of which dry out in the summer. These have also been invaded by Willow and mixed scrub.

The nature of the soil means the pits are porous and the water levels monitor the ground water levels. Prior to 1998 water levels would fluctuate some 2 metres, summer to winter, with all but pit P2 drying out during a dry spell. In 1998, in partnership with the Environment Agency, a pipe was installed between the river and the pit system thus ensuring a constant supply of 'top up' water. Water levels are now much more constant.

Woodland

A narrow strip of deciduous woodland grows along the southern and most of the eastern edge of the site. This woodland is natural regeneration occurring since the pits were closed, forming an even-aged semi-natural stand. Some planting has been carried out in the past as a replacement for Elm trees felled due to Dutch Elm Disease.

High tension power lines cross the woodland area in the south-eastern corner of the site and coppicing is carried out below the wires.

The invasion of Willow into pit P1 has created a woodland feature in its own right although the natural progression may be halted somewhat following the regulating of water levels by the installation of the pipe feeding water into the ponds from the river.

1.7 Ecology

Although it is a relatively small site the Park has a range of habitat types which support a variety of common plant communities and associated mammals, birds, reptiles, invertebrates and insects. It also complements other nearby ecologically important sites in this part of the Stour Valley such as the Sudbury waterside meadows to the south, Glemsford Pits to the Northwest and The Melford Walk Local Nature Reserve on Station Road, Long Melford.

The following sections review the ecology of the site in accordance with the compartments shown in the map below (Fig. 2: Site Boundary and Management Compartments):

Grassland

Maintained Grassland: Compartment 3

The maintained grassland nearest the car park is managed primarily for recreational purposes although growth of the edge habitat around the car park is encouraged. There are picnic tables in this compartment. The area is grazed by rabbits and moles are in evidence, while Green Woodpeckers visit to feed on the ants and small invertebrates that live in areas of short grass.

Occasional Bee Orchids has been recorded in one marginal area of this compartment.

This section includes a small pond adjacent to the car park where the pond surround is again left to grow, providing habitat for a variety of insects, reptiles, birds and mammals.

As the compartment stretches in a southerly direction, up a small hill, the environment is more suited to longer grass and this signals that the visitor is gradually moving from the more recreational section of the Park into the heart of the reserve.

Rough Grassland: Compartment: 8

The origin of this habitat is unknown. Regular mowing or 'improvement' has not taken place since the early 1970's and the result is semi-natural grassland.

The area is not rich in floral species but the diversity is gradually increasing. There is however a profusion of commoner species such as Knapweed, various thistles and umbellifer's, Field Scabies and Ox-eye Daisy. These in turn attract a variety of butterflies and other invertebrates. 22 species of butterfly have been recorded on the site of which many require grassland, including the Speckled Wood (first recorded on the site in 1993 and now common) and the Small Heath, which has become uncommon locally.

An area within this section has been identified by SWT to try to encourage a wildflower meadow.

River and Riverbank

Compartment: 4

The River Stour at this point is relatively deep in the centre of its course so aquatic plants tend to be concentrated towards the banks. Yellow Water Lily and Arrowhead are evident while the banks themselves are thickly populated with Reed Grass.

The river landscape of the Park is very open with no trees or bushes on the opposite bank and with grazing meadow beyond, therefore the scrub on the Park side affords shelter and protection to wildlife species.

Plants growing along the riverbank area including Water Forget-Me-Not, Water Figwort and Butterbur.

The Pits

Compartments: 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

In the years following gravel extraction the pits have been allowed to regenerate naturally. The workings were not deep and there is evidence that overburden was deposited into worked out areas, thus creating irregular boundaries, shallow margins and mid water banks to the subsequently formed ponds. These shallow areas support a variety of emergent and aquatic vegetation, which in turn attract insects and water birds.

The ponds are rich in aquatic insect life with all common species present. Common and Great Crested Newts are resident at the Park.

Dragonflies and damselflies are numerous although the exact number of species present is unknown. This area of the Stour valley is particularly rich in Odonata species and the Park could be significant in this regard. LMPC is engaged in sourcing a local expert on Odonata to visit the Park to work with the Park Ranger in a review of species.

Common water birds such as Mallard, Mute Swan and Moorhen are resident all year while Tufted Duck, Pochard, Teal and occasionally Water Rail are recorded in the winter months. The emergent vegetation provides breeding sites for Coot, Little Grebe, Moorhen and Mute Swan. Kingfishers are regularly seen but there is no evidence of nesting within the site.

Water Vole was present on the site up to the mid 1990's but has not been seen in recent years. This is probably due to predation by Mink. The habitat remains suitable for the Water Vole and it is possible they may return.

Otters are present in this part of the Stour Valley and regularly pass through the site.

Fish stocks have suffered severely over the years due to the large fluctuations in water levels. During very dry summers fish in distress have been removed to other nearby locations. However, since the pipe from the river has been installed fish stocks have increased with Roach, Bream, Tench and Pike all present. This attracts fish eating birds such as Heron, Great Crested Grebe and the occasional Cormorant.

Pit P1 is the shallower of the two larger pits and thus it regularly dried out in the summer before water levels were improved. This resulted in a natural progression to Willow scrub and trees. During the storm of 1987 this whole area was flattened and the decision was made not to clear it but to allow the Willow to regenerate. This has resulted in an impenetrable thicket. This area is very attractive to migrant warblers providing breeding and/or feeding sites for Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Blackcap, Garden Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Common and Lesser Whitethroat. Migrants on passage have also been recorded including Grasshopper Warbler and Savi's Warbler. Greater Spotted Woodpeckers are regular seen in the dead Willow.

Pits P3, P4, and P6 are not connected to the main pond system and are not therefore fed from the river. The water levels in these pits are still subject to ground water levels and regularly dry out in the summer. The ground flora is poor due to the extreme fluctuations in conditions and these pits are dominated by nettles, bramble and thorn scrub, providing valuable nesting sites for birds.

No Reptile/Amphibian survey has been carried out for the site but Common Frog, Common Toad and Grass Snake are in evidence. Determination of the presence of Newt species would be desirable. LMPC will arrange for a survey to be carried out.

Water Mark Disease is endemic in the Willow trees in and around the pits. Affected trees are felled and burnt on site as instructed by Essex Country Council who legislate the control of this disease.

The Scrub/ Woodland

Compartments – 7 and 9

The retention of the scrub/woodland is vital to many species that have adapted to the conditions provided by this habitat. It is important that these areas of scrub are maintained and expanded upon where appropriate and that grass edges are left uncut to grow, beneath existing scrub. These edges should be cut on a two or three year rotation and no more, to stop the encroachment of scrub into areas of grassland. Any new tree planting would be best located in wooded areas, to ensure grassland areas are not damaged by shading and leaf fall.

The woodland is natural regeneration originating from the late 1940's when the pits were closed. The species are mixed including Ash, Oak, Aspen and Sycamore. There was a high proportion of Elm trees but these all contracted Dutch Elm Disease in the 1970's and were removed. Some Scrub Elm still exists. The woodland is not entirely closed and scrub of Hawthorn, Blackthorn and Dogwood occurs.

Some planting has been carried out to increase the diversity of the woodland habitat, which provides feeding, and breeding sites for a variety of birds. With new planting, an aim of this Plan is to encourage native British woodland species.

The scrub/woodland areas provide a variety of nesting/roosting structures throughout the site for a range of species. The growth of Ivy assists this. Mature trees, dense scrub and standing dead-wood are particularly important as habitat for a variety of birds, bats and invertebrates such as Stag Beetle, as well as insects.

The northern border to this compartment represents the front boundary to the Park. The boundary is predominantly made up of trees, shrubs and quite dense scrub, all of which provides good habitat for wildlife. There is one small area just east of the entrance to the park which has been cut back and where a wildflower project is planned, using guidance provided by SWT. If this small section does not remain as a wildflower area then the scrub is to be allowed to re-establish itself.

1. SITE OBJECTIVES AND KEY TASKS

The Park Ranger, any contractor and the volunteers who help at the Park, in following the ethos of this Management Plan, should seek to meet the following Principal Objectives and should work together to implement the following Key Tasks.

1.1. CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT:

Principal Objectives:

- To conserve and enhance, through correct management, the range of habitat types on the site.
- To maintain and enhance populations of notable species.
- To identify suitable areas, and carry out correct management, to encourage the diversification of species.
- To identify specific flora and its position in the Park and to protect it in the future.
- To keep disturbance of wildlife species from recreational activities (in particular from dogs), to a minimum.
- To ensure adequate water levels in the pits, maintaining open water in P2.
- To maintain safe working conditions for all who work and volunteer in the Park. No volunteer should work alone with potentially dangerous machinery or with tasks such as clearing obstructions from water or work on trees. With heavier tree work, LMPC will engage specialist tree surgeons. If in doubt about site safety, volunteers should consult with the Ranger or with the representative team from LMPC.

Key Tasks:

- **Maintained Grassland: Compartment 3**

(a) Lower Section

For the picnic area from the car park up to the brow of the hill, shorter grass is permitted but mowing should be carried out no more than once a month. In exceptional growing conditions and with the approval of the appointed representative team from LMPC, this may be increased.

The grass beneath the trees immediately adjacent to the car park can be cut in accordance with this monthly regime, subject to retaining a 0.5 metre ring of longer grass around each tree, thus reducing the prospect of mower damage and damage to the trees themselves.

The edge habitat to the car park and picnic area should be left to grow as should the full area on the slope surrounding the small pond in this compartment. Autumn only mowing of these areas in accordance with a 2 or 3 year cycle is permitted, similar to the Rough Grassland compartment (see below), to avoid the build-up and encroachment of scrub.

The grass beneath the trees to the left of the brow of the hill (looking up from the car park) should be left to grow, beneath the canopy of each tree.

The boundary fencing between this compartment and the pits should also be left largely unmanaged, albeit the fencing can be repaired and the fenced viewing area which looks over the pit from the maintained grassland, can be kept clear of scrub. This will encourage the movement of air which can be beneficial to the management of algae within the pit below.

(b) Upper Section

To the rear of this compartment, beyond the brow of the small hill that leads up from the car park to the point a few yards beyond the small bench where Compartment 8 starts, a regime of autumn mowing on a 2 or 3 year cycle should be followed, similar to with the Rough Grassland compartment. This is to include the ground beneath the line of fruit trees towards the western edge of this compartment.

As with the Rough Grassland compartment, mower cuttings from the rotation programme should be removed after they have dried, to prevent thatch forming on the sward and to limit nutrients entering the soil.

Reflecting the popularity of this part of the Park with visitors and dog walkers, the main 'thoroughfare' through this section of the compartment can be cut to 4 metres in width (as opposed to the usual 2 metres maximum path width throughout the Park) and this 'thoroughfare' can be straight or appropriately curved, at the discretion of the Ranger and senior volunteers.

Assuming you are standing with your back to the car park, the side path right, to the riverbank, should be maintained at 2 metres in width and likewise two paths off to the left, one heading to the pits and one into the woodland compartment. A path from the woodland entrance back to the main 'thoroughfare' can also be maintained at 2 metres.

These paths and the main 'thoroughfare' are to be mown no more than once a month or, in exceptional growing conditions, as necessary to keep the path edges clearly visible relative to the adjacent areas of longer grass. Every effort should be made to observe the path width limits.

There is a single picnic bench in this upper section of the compartment looking over Pit 2 and an area around this can be cut, matching in width the fencing which frames the view over the water and projecting out just beyond the picnic table. This can be mown monthly, in accordance with the mowing of the paths in this section.

The margins in this upper section are to be left to grow, ideally to knee high length and they should cover a minimum 3 metres width strip, or wider strips in larger areas. The margins should only be cut in accordance with the 2 or 3 year cycle, to avoid the encroachment of scrub.

Appropriate signage will be arranged for this part of the compartment to educate visitors and dog owners as to the reason for sections of longer grass which are for the encouragement of wildlife. The cooperation of dog owners to remove waste will be sought.

The policy whereby significant areas of grass in this upper section are permitted to grow longer will be subject to review between the Ranger and the representative team from LMPC.

- **Rough Grassland: Compartment 8**

For convenience this compartment can be split into two or three parts for mowing purposes, depending on whether it is decided to undertake mowing and raking on a 2 or 3 year rotation. The aim of the mowing rotation is to allow the grass every chance to grow to a good length (e.g. consistently to knee high length) but to ensure that it does not turn to scrub. When mowing does take place it should be in the autumn months.

A cut on a 2 year rotation cycle is in order if the grass in this compartment is growing well to a good length over each 2 year period (e.g. at least knee length) and if there is the possibility of it turning to scrub. This is likely to be exceptional and if longer grass has not properly established throughout this compartment, the rotation should be extended to 3 years. If there is any doubt then a conservative approach and the postponement of a cut into the third year is preferred.

Access paths can be mown and maintained but there should be no more than three paths in the compartment, to allow for the rough grassland to grow as tall as possible. Each path should be a maximum of 2 metres wide and should be mown no more than once a month. In exceptional growing conditions mowing can be carried out as necessary to keep the edges of the pathways clearly visible. Every effort should be made to observe the path width limits but where there is a bench or at some main junctions, a slightly wider cut is in order.

Mower cuttings should be removed to help prevent thatch forming at the base of the sward. This will reduce the nutrient levels of the soil and over time may reduce the occurrence of nettle, potentially encouraging wildflowers to return. However, cuttings should be left to dry for a couple of days before removing, to allow any ripe seed to be shed and insects to make their escape.

It is recommended that at the discretion of the contractor, areas of grassland in this compartment can be left long beyond 2 or 3 years, to provide a greater variety of habitat for a wider range of species. Retaining some areas of long, uncut grass or areas of rough grassland provides seed heads for birds, a habitat for invertebrates and a valuable refuge for small mammals and reptiles.

Strips of uncut grass should be left underneath the canopies of trees, alongside scrub and around grassland edges in this compartment, to act as a wildlife refuge. The margin strips on the grassland edges should be at least 3 metres wide, but wider than this in larger areas.

It is preferable that a reciprocating mower is used when cutting this grassland, as this gives the best finish and it is easier to rake off the clippings. However, strimming followed by a cut with a rotary mower is an acceptable alternative, subject to a prior check of the area for birds, small mammals and reptiles.

Similarly, when cutting areas of long grass the contractor should carefully review the area in advance, to check for resting hedgehogs, other small mammals and reptiles.

Sections of this compartment are prone to dense sections of nettles. These nettle beds should be controlled with periodic thinning by hand so as to remove roots, the aim being to push the nettle incursion back and free up space for grasses and other plants. It is appreciated this task is not easy so LMPC will supply appropriate arm and hand protection and will try to engage extra volunteers to help with this task. Generally, where nettles fall across the 2 metre wide pathways they can be cut back so the paths remain clear.

Compartment 8 is also considered a good area to create a wildflower meadow which can be carried out in accordance with guidance from SWT and with leadership from the Park Ranger.

- **River and Riverbank: Compartment 4**

Mowing of the riverside path should be carried out no more than once a month, unless exceptional growing conditions are being experienced. The path should be a maximum of 2 metres in width except where space is prepared on the riverbank for fishing, permissible annually after 15th June. The grass at these points should be allowed to grow until shortly before the due date but generally, every effort should be made to observe the 2 metre path width ruling in this compartment.

Areas of reed should only be cut back in winter in accordance with advice from a reed specialist (See also the section on Pits, below).

Butterbur should be protected during riverside path maintenance.

- **The Pits: Compartments 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6**

The contractor and volunteers should seek to maintain the open water habitat with a variety of vegetation both in the water and on the banks of each pit.

The contractor and volunteers should conserve marginal and aquatic vegetation in all of the pits and control shading from overhanging trees and scrub. As there are several pits, it may be appropriate to provide a diversity of vegetation within this habitat type, by tailoring the management of each pit.

In Pit P2 within Compartment 5 the Contractor should remove Willow as necessary and control scrub invasion. In this pit, marginal vegetation should be encouraged where possible.

In Pit P1 within Compartment 6, the Contractor should also remove Willow as necessary to control Willow invasion.

In all cases, Willow trees infected with Water Mark Disease should be monitored, felled and burnt on site, in accordance with previous instructions received from Essex County Council.

During winter months, the contractor should arrange for the reeds in the pits to be cut back by a third – this should be carried out by professional reed management team and with the aim of minimum disturbance to wildlife, especially in the breeding season. (The team can also be invited to review the management of any reeds along the riverbank).

- **The Scrub/ Woodland : Compartments 7 and 9**

The scrub/woodland areas provide a variety of nesting/roosting structures throughout the site for a range of birds, bats, invertebrates and insects. The growth of Ivy assists this and Ivy should be left in place unless it resides on deadwood which becomes a hazard to park visitors. Any removal considered essential for safety reasons should be re-located on site to maintain this deadwood habitat.

Scrub and woodland stretches around the eastern edge of the park to the front of the park, on Borley Road which forms the northern boundary. This wooded area at the front of the Park is to be left intact so that shrubs and trees can establish. This area should not be cut or cleared except a small cleared section east of the park entrance which has been set aside for a wildflower project and where limited mowing is permitted, specifically in accordance with guidance from SWT: a cut and rake in Mid-July and a second cut and rake in late September/early October – otherwise the grass to be left to grow. Visitor access to this wildflower section will not be permitted and if this small section does not remain as a wildflower area then the scrub is to be allowed to re-establish itself.

Tree and shrub work is only to be carried out between 1st September and 28th February to ensure the bird breeding period is not encroached upon. Any tree work also requires a bat inspection before commencing work.

Cuttings from any tree work should be primarily used to make habitat piles. Subject to there being ample standing dead wood throughout the woodland compartments, a small proportion of wood that is cut for safety or management reasons, or which falls naturally, can be set aside for the sale of logs as long as the proceeds are used to reinvest in the Park or in equipment used in the Park.

Trees should be inspected annually for safety: an annual tree survey is carried out by a contractor on behalf of LMPC.

New planting of trees should only be native British woodland species and not orchard or fruit trees.

Strips of uncut grass should be left underneath the canopies of trees, alongside scrub and around field edges to act as a wildlife refuge. (See also the section on Rough Grassland).

The use of different bird and bat boxes should be a feature in these compartments.

NOTE: With regard to all the work in this section on Conservation Management, any contractor and all volunteers must note the Principal Objective at the start of the section on safety.

1.2. RECREATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Principal Objectives:

- To provide an open space for public access and the pursuit of informal countryside recreation, without detriment to the site's status as a Local Nature Reserve.
- To provide an enjoyable and rewarding experience to users.
- To use reasonable endeavours to encourage dog owners accessing the Park to control their animals and not disturb the flora and fauna.
- To eliminate any undesirable activities on the site.
- To maintain existing structures and facilities to a high standard, whilst ensuring replacement and additional structures are in keeping with the area.
- To maintain the network of existing paths around the site.
- To provide a safe environment for staff, volunteers and visitors to the Park.
- Whenever possible, and in keeping with the character of the site, to improve access and facilities for the less able.
- To provide a regular Park Ranger or volunteer presence to uphold bylaws, control undesirable activities and provide assistance to visitors.

Key Tasks:

- To keep the site free of litter and rubbish.
- Following approval from LMPC to introduce and then maintain litter bins, dog waste bins, picnic tables and other furniture when necessary and only at appropriate places within the site.
- To implement an effective Policy for the control of dogs at the Park, through engagement with dog owners. (See Appendix 1 for the Dog Policy applicable to the Park).
- To maintain public toilets to a high standard and keep the public toilet area neat and tidy and free from scrub.
- To implement repairs to buildings and structures and maintain all provided facilities. Any replacement or additional structures are to be referred to LMPC in advance.
- To maintain the network of existing paths around the site and not to create new paths unless replacing an existing path, which should then be allowed to return to an unmaintained state.
- To maintain riverside access where this can be achieved, subject to best efforts to provide reasonable levels of visitor safety.
- To improve access, visibility and signage to the Valley Walk.
- To repair or remove instances of vandalism as soon as possible after the event.
- To carry out regular site safety checks in accordance with LMPC and public safety guidelines and to implement remedial work.
- To liaise with SCC Rights of Way to maintain public right of way W-383/001/0 together with the associated footbridge.
- To liaise with Suffolk Police as necessary, to eliminate undesirable activities.
- The Park Ranger, Contractor and volunteers should work together to uphold bylaws, control undesirable activities and provide assistance to visitors. In particular, efforts should be made to control the disturbance of wildlife by dogs off the lead.

1.3. SITE PROMOTION**Principal Objectives:**

- To provide the visitor with quality signage, interpretative material and opportunities to enhance their understanding of the site.
- To provide an educational resource which can be used by schools, groups, families and wildlife enthusiasts.
- To promote the use of other countryside facilities in the area including The Valley Walk and Public Rights of Way.
- To maintain a regular Park Ranger and volunteer presence, providing visibility and assistance around the site.

Key Tasks:

- To support LMPC with the provision and installation of good quality, clear and long term information signage and boards in/adjacent to the car park area and elsewhere as appropriate.
It is recognised that occasional temporary signs may be necessary but these should be kept to a minimum. Any necessary temporary signs should ideally be provided at an appropriate permanent point for such signage and under no circumstances should they be pinned to living trees.
- To introduce and then maintain a nature trail with way-markers and interpretive boards.
- The Park Ranger is to wear distinctive clothing in keeping with his/her position and should patrol the site as necessary, especially in peak times or at times when Ranger visibility is considered appropriate.
- To promote the site as much as possible in all relevant publications.

(Note: Contractors are not permitted to make grant applications on behalf of the Park and all suggestions for such applications should be referred to the Parish Clerk).

1.4. SITE ADMINISTRATION**Principal Objectives:**

- To ensure the effective management of the site within the resources available.
- To encourage local volunteer involvement in the maintenance of the site.
- Where possible, to implement policies outlined in the SCC Environmental Management System.

Key Tasks:

- To operate within the agreed budget for the site and to ensure the most effective use of available funds.
- To deal promptly and effectively with requests for information and complaints from the public. Once a quarter to remit all written complaints or notes of thanks to LMPC.
- To set up and manage a volunteer group to carry out practical maintenance work on the site, and to ensure that all volunteers have received the appropriate Health & Safety training required to work on site.
- To keep LMPC informed of site management issues in a timely fashion.
- To identify where there is a need for capital bids for specific items or projects and present these to LMPC for approval and further action.

- To liaise with nearby landowners and statutory bodies, obtaining advice and agreement on management objectives, and to help solve management problems.
- To work with LMPC when it is producing a Park Management Plan, as required.

MAPS

Figure 1: Location of Melford Country Park and Melford Walk.

Figure 2: Site boundary and management compartments.

Figure 3: Main habitats and notable species.

Figure 4: Management operations.

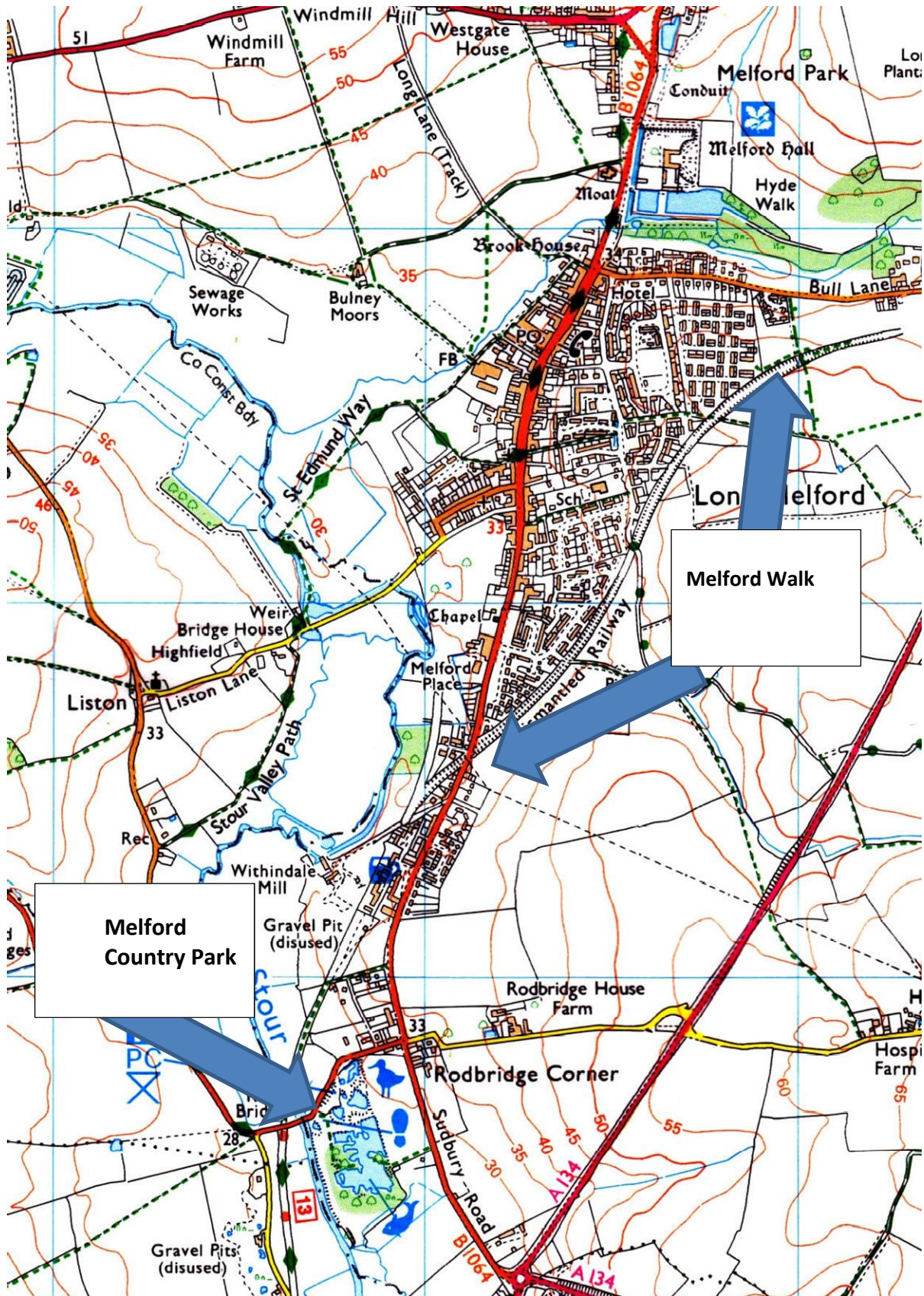


Figure 1: Location of Melford Country Park and Melford Walk

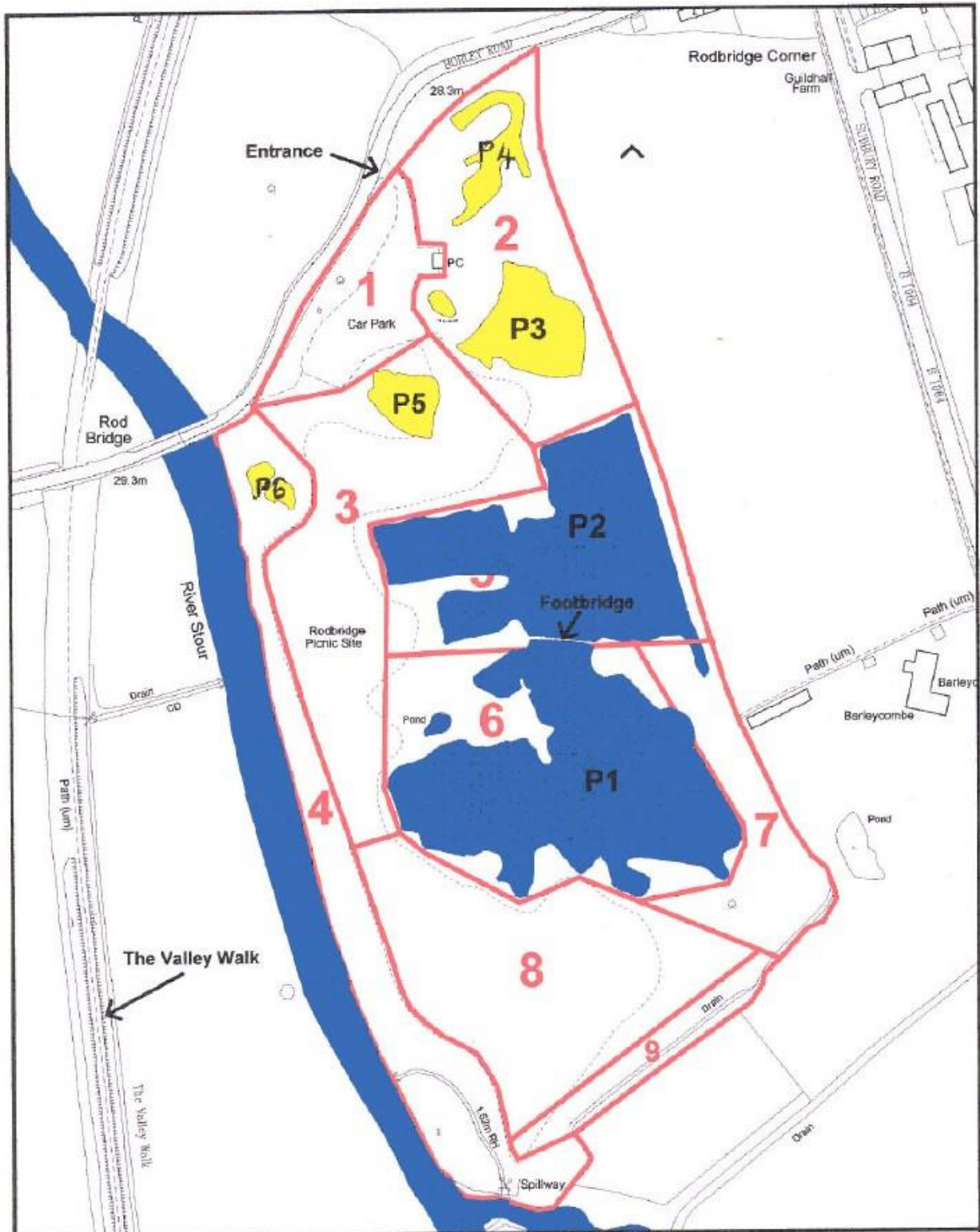


Figure 2: Melford Country Park - Site Boundary and Management Compartments

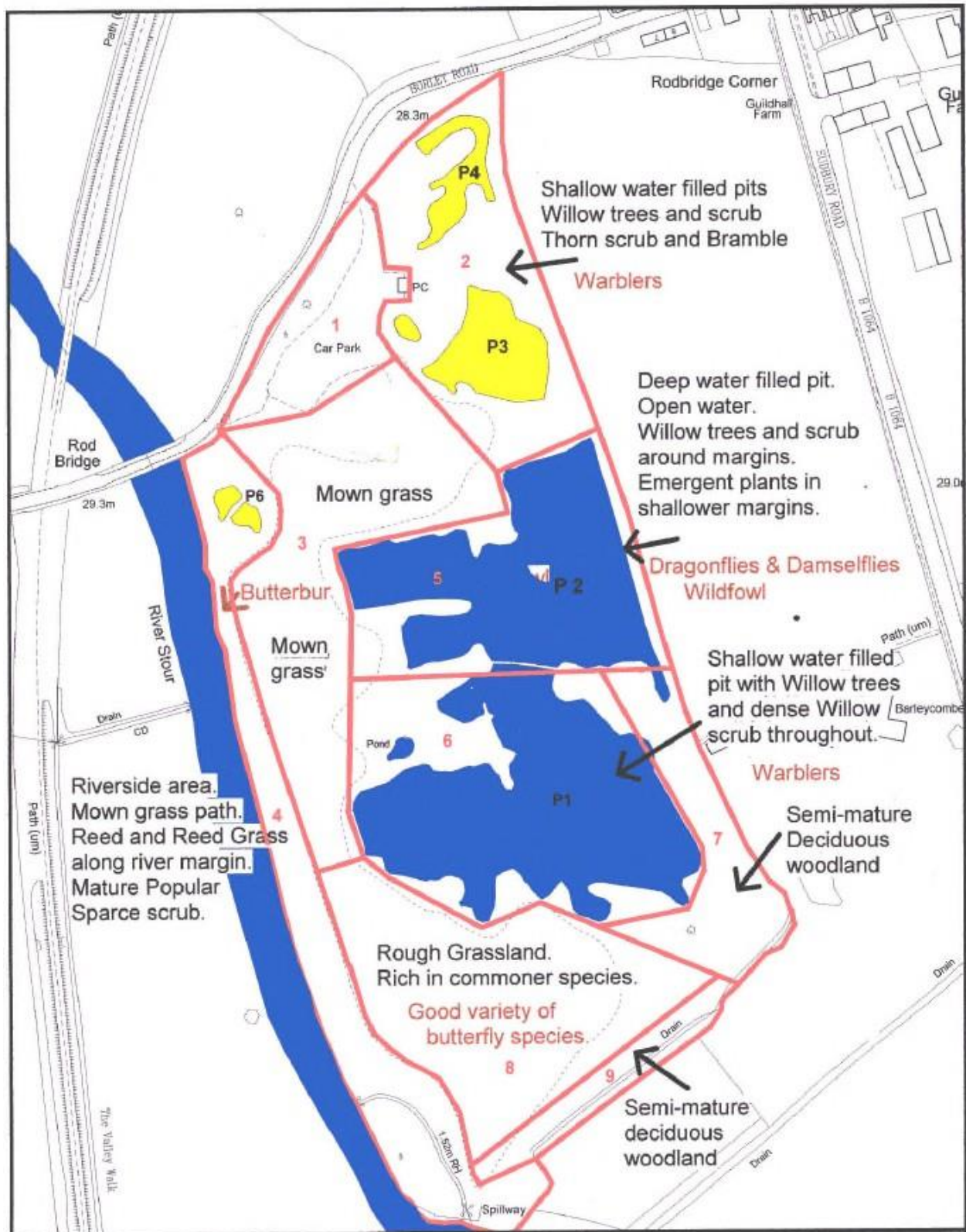


Figure 3: Melford Country Park - Main Habitats and Notable Species

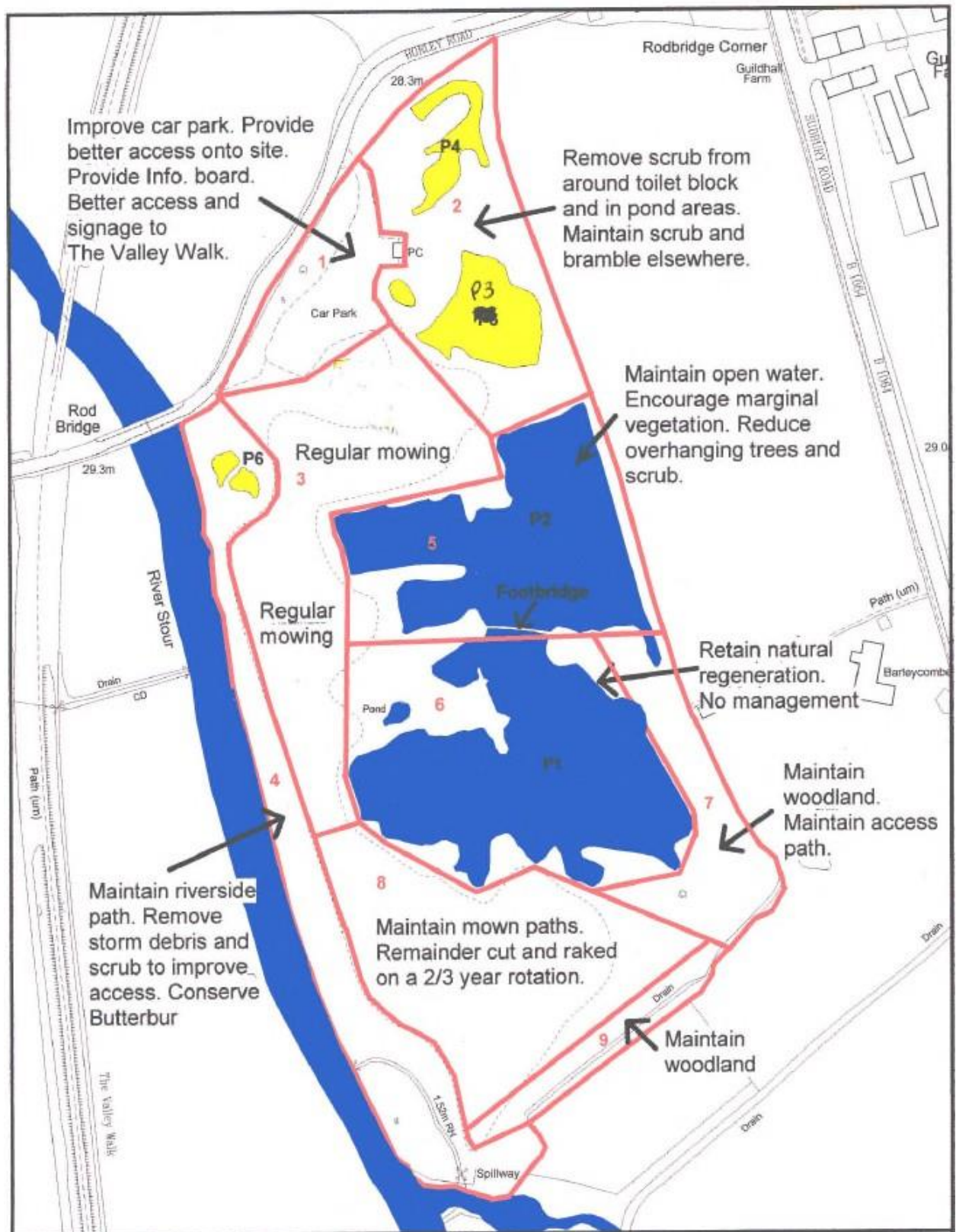


Figure 4: Melford Country Park - Management Operations

Appendix 1

Confirmation of Important Features

The SCC lease documents provides a list of important features found at the site on handover (2013) from SCC to Long Melford Parish Council. This list should be maintained and expanded upon to ensure that the features are protected.

Site Feature	Importance			
	<i>International/ European</i>	<i>National</i>	<i>Regional</i>	<i>Local</i>
Habitats				
Open Water- Flooded pits				X
River				X
Grassland				X
Scrub Woodland				X
Species : Flora				
Knapweed, Field Scabious & Ox-eye Daisy				X
Butterbur				X
Fauna- Mammals				
Otter	X			
Water Vole			X	
Bats	X			
Wood Mouse				X
Mole				X
Rabbit				X
Muntjac				
Fauna - Birds				
Common Water birds plus				
Kingfisher			X	
Water Rail				x
Migrant Warblers				x
Lesser & Gt Spotted Woodpeckers				
Heron				
Gt Crested Grebe				
Cormorant				
Common species such as				
Tits (Blue and Gt)				
Blackbird				
House Sparrow				
Starling				
Fish				
A study of species is required				

Fauna, Invertebrates				
Dragonfly & Damselfly				X
Butterflies				X
Reptiles such as:				
<i>Grass Snake</i>				X
<i>Slow Worm</i>				X
<i>Common Lizard</i>				X
Amphibians such as:				
<i>Great Crested Newts</i>	X			
<i>Smooth Newts</i>				X
<i>Frogs</i>				X
<i>Toads</i>				X

Obligations (Laws Governing the site)

The successful management plan to manage and safeguard the site will depend on compliance with the following legal obligations

- **National Parks and Countryside Act 1949** (sections 16 & 21) and the **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981** sect 39. Site managers to use best endeavours to ensure that the site is managed as an LNR within the meaning and in accordance with the provisions of the 1949 Act and 1981 Act.
- **Habitat Regulations 2010 and European Protected Species** – There is a need to follow Forestry Commission procedure for any tree felling/surgery regards bats.
The otter population: The European otter is the only native UK otter species. It's a European protected species (EPS) and is also fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. You're breaking the law if you:
 - capture, kill, disturb or injure otters (*on purpose or by not taking enough care*)
 - damage or destroy a breeding or resting place (*deliberately or by not taking enough care*)
 - obstruct access to their resting or sheltering places (*deliberately or by not taking enough care*)
 - possess, sell, control or transport live or dead otters, or parts of otters

Similarly, the **Great Crested Newt** is also a European protected species: Things that would cause you to break the law include:

- capturing, killing, disturbing or injuring great crested newts deliberately
- damaging or destroying a breeding or resting place
- obstructing access to their resting or sheltering places (*deliberately or by not taking enough care*)
- possessing, selling, controlling or transporting live or dead newts, or parts of them
- taking great crested newt eggs

Note that the surveying of Great Crested Newts requires the surveyor to hold a GCN license. Any unlicensed person attempting survey could be treated as "creating disturbance", and the above laws would come into force.

- **Health and Safety Act of 1974:** A Hazard Plan and regular Risk assessments are required.
- **Rights of Way Act 1990:** Requires all public Rights of Way to be kept open.
- **Occupiers Liability Act 1984:** Care is to be taken to remove any risk to legitimate visitors & to trespassers. To comply with the act it will be necessary to:
 - Ensure paths, stiles, log piles gates and Equipment left on site are safe
 - Ensure that there are no dead/dangerous trees or timber (including branches) close to paths or the road.
 - Ensure that a site Safety Assessment is available on-site to people using the site for any activity involving more than simply walking on the paths.
- **Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006:** This is the statutory Duty that all public bodies (Inc. Parish Council) have, pursuant to Section 40 of the Act to actively have regard (That is to promote) the conservation of Biodiversity.

Appendix 2

Dog Policy for Melford Country Park

Long Melford Parish Council is responsible for the Melford Country Park and the following Dog Policy is a bylaw of the Park, effective from July 2020,

At Melford Country Park, Local Nature Reserve we have a **Dogs Are Permitted Policy**. If you are planning on bringing your dog to the Park please act responsibly with your dog in order to keep the Nature Reserve safe for wildlife and other visitors.

Dogs are welcome but need to be kept under close control, or on a lead

This helps minimise stress and disturbance to wildlife, especially the wildfowl on the open areas of water.

Always pick up after your dog

Dog mess is not only an unsightly health hazard for our visitors, Park Ranger and volunteers, it also promotes the growth of weeds and discourages the growth of wildflowers. It can also spread disease and pathogens. Dispose of bagged dog waste in one of the many bins provided in the Park.

Do not allow your dog to swim in open water or cause stress to the wildfowl

Over the last few months one of our resident swans has been bitten on two separate occasions by dogs. This has led to vet visits and costs and undue stress for the bird. Ducks have also been found dead with wounds that are consistent with a dog attack.

Consider other visitors

Melford Country Park welcomes a huge variety of visitors, from wildlife enthusiasts to school groups, ramblers and those just wanting to enjoy a day out at the Park. Please be aware that dogs can cause risk to other users, even unintentionally. *Not everyone is fond of dogs and some have severe phobias. Other Park users can feel extremely uncomfortable when a dog runs up to them even though the dog may be friendly and harmless.* Small children are especially in danger from loose dogs, ranging from simply being knocked down by an enthusiastic dog to being bitten or seriously harmed. Please keep your dog close to you and apply a lead if he/she becomes too excitable.

If you are seen to be ignoring the policy The Park Ranger and Park Volunteers will have the right to point out that the policy needs to be followed and if you are in continuous breach of the policy Long Melford Parish Council reserves the right, by bylaw, to ask you to leave the Park.

Long Melford Parish Council (July 2020)

Melford Country Park – Proposed Dog Policy

Background

It's extremely unfortunate that over the last few months at Melford Country Park – LNR, one of the resident swans has been bitten on two separate occasions by a dog (this was confirmed by a vet) and two ducks have been found dead, presumed to have been killed by dogs, but not confirmed. There have also been some complaints about large dogs running round off lead and scaring children. I have also seen many occasions of dogs too far away from their owners to enable the owner to a) have control and b) see what the dog is doing. There are a small minority of owners and dogs that are causing issues for the wildfowl, the nature and wildlife and the visitors to the park as well as the majority of sensible and considerate dog owners and dogs.

The park is seeing heavier foot traffic than usual under the lockdown period as local residents and day trippers are keen to be outside and enjoy the park, but this has meant quite a high increase of number of dogs coming to the area. This isn't likely to abate anytime soon so we need to look at a sensible approach and a 'joined up' dog policy.

At the moment the signage and information are piecemeal, unclear and at the car park the information board is a mess of laminates and various different posters about what visitors can and can't do. As a first time visitor to the park it's not clear what the rules are about dogs and what you are entering. There are 4 entrances to the park and each entrance needs a good quality, concise and nice looking notice/board/sign explaining that they are entering a Local Nature Reserve and what the dog policy is, e.g. Welcome to Melford Country Park, Local Nature Reserve. Please keep you dogs under close control.

This is what the SCC/LMPC lease states by way of covenant that the tenant (LMPC) has to do in relation to dog owners and their animals.

"To use their reasonable endeavours to encourage dog owners accessing the Demised-Premises to control their animals and not disturb the flora and fauna or educational groups that may be visiting the Demised-Premises."

What are other bodies doing?

Having done some research these are some good uses of education and policy combined.

This is from the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales

<https://www.welshwildlife.org/dog-walking-wildlife-trust-nature-reserves/>

The key points to note here is that there is a full dog policy that tells owners what to do but also explains why. Education is key!

Another informative and educational dog policy is below – from Great Fen Wildlife Trust

<https://www.greatfen.org.uk/explore/information-dog-walkers>

We propose that we do the following:

1. Have a 1-page policy regarding dogs (see attached) which is agreed by the LMPC
2. Use the Local Press and Social Media to explain why this policy is being introduced
 - a. To protect the wildlife and the nature reserve
 - b. To ensure that the park is a pleasant place for all to visit – those with dogs but also those who aren't with dogs and perhaps aren't keen on dogs
3. Print up leaflets that can be handed out at the park by a group of volunteers who are able to chat to owners and explain why a new policy is being introduced. A leaflet drop could also be done in the village or an insert in the Melford Magazine, although we recognise the park is used by people that come from all over the place
4. Encourage others to call out behaviour that isn't right, such as letting your dog run wild or not picking up after it

Some councillors consider that we should introduce a more rigid policy of 'All Dogs On Leads' but this could be detrimental for many reasons, such as:

- a. The more draconian the policy is the less likely it is to be followed (you go to Arger Fen which has a Dogs on Lead policy and most dogs aren't on leads at all. Same at Sudbury Meadows – there are always those few that will ignore any policy)
- b. Who would enforce this policy? We have a part time Park Ranger who is carrying out many other tasks at the park – would she really have time to follow up on all dogs off lead?
- c. The backlash from a significant number of residents could be very unpleasant – much easier to explain why we have to introduce 'Keep Dogs Under Close Control' rather than going straight to 'All Dogs on Leads'.
- d. Volunteers should have the power to confront dog owners that aren't adhering to the policy and there should be support from the Parish Council to 'call out' persistent owners breaking the policy and even banning them from using the park – just because there are a few bad owners shouldn't mean that every owner is penalised. There are plenty of well-behaved dogs off lead in the park that are kept under control.

Lisa Tipper, Ian Bartlett and Jonathan Ewbank (June 2020)

Dog Policy for Melford Country Park

Long Melford Parish Council is responsible for the Melford Country Park and the following Dog Policy is a bylaw of the Park, effective from July 2020,

At Melford Country Park, Local Nature Reserve we have a **Dogs Are Permitted Policy**. If you are planning on bringing your dog to the Park please act responsibly with your dog in order to keep the Nature Reserve safe for wildlife and other visitors.

Dogs are welcome but need to be kept under close control, or on a lead

This helps minimise stress and disturbance to wildlife, especially the wildfowl on the open areas of water.

Always pick up after your dog

Dog mess is not only an unsightly health hazard for our visitors, Park Ranger and volunteers, it also promotes the growth of weeds and discourages the growth of wildflowers. It can also spread disease and pathogens. Dispose of bagged dog waste in one of the many bins provided in the Park.

Do not allow your dog to swim in open water or cause stress to the wildfowl

Over the last few months one of our resident swans has been bitten on two separate occasions by dogs. This has led to vet visits and costs and undue stress for the bird. Ducks have also been found dead with wounds that are consistent with a dog attack.

Consider other visitors

Melford Country Park welcomes a huge variety of visitors, from wildlife enthusiasts to school groups, ramblers and those just wanting to enjoy a day out at the Park. Please be aware that dogs can cause risk to other users, even unintentionally. *Not everyone is fond of dogs and some have severe phobias. Other Park users can feel extremely uncomfortable when a dog runs up to them even though the dog may be friendly and harmless.* Small children are especially in danger from loose dogs, ranging from simply being knocked down by an enthusiastic dog to being bitten or seriously harmed. Please keep your dog close to you and apply a lead if he/she becomes too excitable.

If you are seen to be ignoring the policy The Park Ranger and Park Volunteers will have the right to point out that the policy needs to be followed and if you are in continuous breach of the policy Long Melford Parish Council reserves the right, by bylaw, to ask you to leave the Park.

From: Richard Michette [mailto:richard.michette@gmail.com]
Sent: 17 June 2020 16:09
To: sales@filcris.co.uk
Cc: clerk@longmelford-pc.gov.uk
Subject: Signs for Melford Walk

Dear Sirs,

Would please send me a quotation for ladder sign with the wording etc as attached in your "Park Ladder style" with supporting posts and a width of 1.3 metres.

In total 7 to 8 signs will be required.

My phone no. is 017897 377164 if you need further information or to discuss this.

Yours faithfully,

Cllr. Richard Michette

On 23 Jun 2020, at 17:48, Chris Went <chris@filcris.co.uk> wrote:

Hi Richard

Thanks for your enquiry. The signs you propose are quite 'text heavy', which means that they will need to be quite large and will be very expensive.

I have worked out the price of the letters and pictorials alone (i.e. before we factor in the cost of the planks and posts and the assembly) and they work out very expensive

Details	No Letters	Price per letter	Total ex VAT
LONG MELFORD PARISH	24	£3.50	£84.00
THE MELFORD WALK	14	£3.50	£49.00
LOCAL NATURE RESERVE	18	£3.50	£63.00
PUBLIC FOOTPATH ONLY	18	£3.50	£63.00
PLEASE KEEP YOUR DOG UNDER CONTROL	29	£3.50	£101.50
PLEASE RESPECT THE WILDLIFE	24	£3.50	£84.00
Pictorial signs: No Cycling, No Horses, No Motor Vehicles	3no. Logos	£25.00 per sign	£75.00
Total (text and graphics only)			£519.50

Estimated Cost inc Labour			£9,000.00
---------------------------	--	--	------------------

I will have to lay out the signs to see how much material is needed but I estimate the cost including materials and labour to be in the regions of £1000.00 plus VAT per sign. Do you want me to continue with this further or is this not viable?

Regards

Chris Went

Director
Filcris Ltd,
The Old Fire Station,
Broadway
Bourn
Cambridgeshire, CB23 2TA
Tel: 01954 718327 / Mob: 07802 911716
Email: chris@filcris.co.uk
Web: www.filcris.co.uk

Proposal for 'Repair and Improvements to four Central Mini-Greens'

As part of the work that has accompanied Melford in Bloom, John Nunn and I have identified the following two potential projects which apply to the small greens which are owned by the Hyde Parker family but essentially have been unmaintained for a while now and have contributed to a rather shabby look to parts of the village centre.

M in B is a scheme designed to improve morale generally and help brighten the village, so visitors in 'staycation' Britain are encouraged to come to Melford, thus providing potential opportunities for our businesses. To build on this John and I would like to encourage the PC to support the following, assuming the funds are confirmed to be available:

- One of the mini greens that has two M in B barrels is the one just south of Lime Gallery. There is a dead tree on that green and the suggestion is that the dead tree is felled and a new tree, suitable to the location, is planted by M in B. (Estimated cost c£100 to be covered by M in B 2020/21 budget).
- Repair work has been carried out on several mini-greens which had been affected by motor vehicles parking badly and cutting corners and by pedestrians routinely walking across them. As a temporary solution new grass has been sowed on the greens concerned (and is still being watered regularly). However the greens concerned still look quite scruffy (especially those near the Co-op) and with the temporary posts and tape removed now, ingress damage from cars and people has started up again - see photos attached.

The recommendation now is that composite material wood 'look-a-like' posts are placed around three central greens (near the Co-op) at intervals to protect them from cars. Also the edges will be straightened using topsoil and then new turf will be laid (and watered). To see how this might look see the attached photo of the green already repaired and posted by a private arrangement with Dudley Kemp (at no cost to the PC).

The greens concerned are the quite long one opposite the Co-op where there is a sleeper planter from M in B and a barrel (by Lady Jane), the one just north of the Co-op by the Famous Old Gallery and the one just south of the Co-op that has a small silver birch on it and two M in B barrels (all of which will remain on that green). They would then match the neighbouring green above that has already been repaired and posts added.

It is further pointed out that as an additional option, the posts could have smart jute/hessian ropes added to them - see example photo attached from another village and example of rope through wooden post. The ropes will minimise car door damage c/w chains. They will look neat and unobtrusive but will help keep vehicles and pedestrians off the grass.

For these three mini-greens, three competing quotes would be obtained and the anticipated total cost including posts, soil to repair each green and straighten the edges, turf and labour is c£4,000 - £4,500 (depending on if we buy some spare posts for future use) - This is beyond the M in B budget and the recommendation is that it is covered by available PC General Funds if confirmed as available by the RFO. If the ropes are added the cost would be c£400 higher.

We have a contractor in place to continue cutting and maintaining all the mini-greens. so they can look smart over the summer.

Feedback to M in B volunteers for the work we are doing to smarten the village has been outstandingly positive so we are looking to build on that goodwill and give the village a further boost.

We have raised these matters with William Hyde Parker and he indicated that he is amenable to these suggested works but he has advised that Melford Estates would not be prepared to contribute to the cost. This is not the same as potential future repair work to the large green from where the HPs derive some income. With that work it would be reasonable for them to contribute towards costs.

John Nunn and Jonathan Ewbank

