

Management Recommendations

Malthouse Openspace, Kingsclere



Sarah Jackson
February 2019

Acknowledgements

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Front Cover: Pool at Malthouse Openspace by Sarah Jackson

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Arcadian Ecology & Consulting Ltd were contracted by Parish Councillor Nicki Peach, Kingsclere Parish Council, on behalf of the parish council to provide management advice and recommendations for the Malthouse Openspace, Kingsclere.

1.2. Site Description

The Malthouse Openspace comprises a spring-fed pool and greenspace in the village of Kingsclere, Hampshire (SU 52462 58636), covering approximately 0.2 hectares (Map 1).

The area is bounded by houses to the north and south, and St Mary's church and churchyard to the east. The pool joins a small chalk stream to the west, which is a tributary of the River Enborne.

The site is owned by Basingstoke Borough Council but is managed under agreement by the Parish Council.

1.3. Remit and Scope of the Report

This report provides recommendations for the management of the Malthouse Openspace, with the vision to enhance the site for wildlife whilst creating a peaceful and aesthetically pleasing environment for visitors.

2. METHODOLOGY

A site visit was conducted on 15th November 2018 by Sarah Jackson, Senior Ecologist (MCIEEM) of Arcadian Ecology & Consulting Ltd.

The site visit comprised walking around the area with Councillor Nicki Peach and Vicky Fletcher to discuss the history and aspirations for the area.

3. MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The two tables below provide management recommendations for the spring-fed pool and greenspace at the Malthouse Openspace. Recommendations have been separated into short and long term recommendations, with each recommendation identified as to whether it is a priority or not.

The aim of the recommendations is to provide a space for both people and wildlife, that is an asset to the local community. Recommendations include those that are aspirational and funding dependent.

Further sources of information and advice linked to the recommendations are provided in appendix 1, and are visually presented on Map 2 (for indicative purposes, not to scale).

3.1. Short-term Management Recommendations

Location	Recommendations	Notes	Outcome	Priority
<p style="text-align: center;">Pool</p>	<p>Creation of platform with barrier over pool</p>	<p>Barrier could have a gate, allowing groups e.g. schools, cubs, brownies and youth groups, to pond dip.</p> <p>A wooden decking platform with bitumen grip would be suitable. Photo below is an example from HIWWT's Testwood Lakes nature reserve. As there is a larger drop at the pool, in addition a lip around the edge of the decking and wooden rail fence should be installed.</p>  <p>Advice should also be sought from supply/installation companies.</p>	<p>Remove H & S risk of somebody falling in pool</p> <p>More attractive area</p> <p>Public engagement opportunity</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">High</p>

	Installation of sluice structure to retain water within pool	<p>To increase water levels within open pool and reduce silt entry into river</p> <p>Raising water level should naturally control vegetation growth based on tolerances of species to submersion</p> <p>Will create wet grassland / bog garden in northern pool area</p> <p>Contractor would advise of any permitting requirements associated with these works</p>	<p>Deeper water able to support more species diversity</p> <p>More attractive</p>	High
	Create a bog garden	<p>As the drier area of the pool is of limited depth before reaching brick rubble, leave current soil/vegetation in place and allow to get damp as water level rises from installation of sluice structure.</p> <p>Initially leave to see if/what plants colonise. After 1 – 2 years, consider additional planting of local, native species if required.</p>	<p>Interesting natural habitat created</p> <p>Structurally and species diverse site</p>	Low
Greenspace	Reduce nutrients in grassland triangle	<p>Area currently nutrient rich and dominated by nettles. Tackle nettles and reduce nutrient load by cutting and collecting nettles. Cut up to 4 times during the year and remove arisings.</p> <p>The top layer of soil could also be removed to reduce nutrient load.</p>	Increased diversity in a currently neglected area	High

	<p>Enhance grassland to north with creation of ecotone</p>	<p>Transitional habitat from grass to woodland ground flora, leading to a scrub/shrub boundary to the adjacent houses.</p> <p>Species along the boundary could include native, locally sourced blackthorn, hawthorn, dogwood, hazel, guelder rose, holly, fruit trees and honeysuckle.</p> <p>Ground flora needs to be shade tolerant and grow in nutrient rich soil (currently nettle dominated), possibly including woodland species (native bluebells, wood anemone, foxglove) and some scented species (such as rosemary, wild marjoram, wild basil, mint species) to create a full sensory experience of smells, sights and sounds.</p>	<p>Shelter and food source for birds, small mammals and invertebrates</p> <p>Improved connectivity around the site</p> <p>Aesthetically pleasing area for residents and visitors</p>	<p>Low</p>
<p>Site</p>	<p>Interpretation panels</p>	<p>Provide information on history and species found on the site.</p> <p>One panel could be located on new pool platform.</p> <p>Link to area of parish webpage for more information and for more up-to-date information, such as works that are happening, interesting sightings etc.</p>	<p>Understanding of wildlife value and management activities by locals</p>	<p>Low</p>

3.2. Long-term Management Recommendations

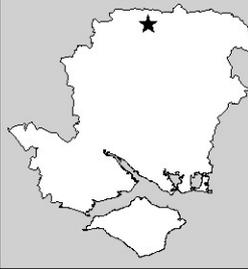
Location	Recommendation	Notes	Outcome	Priority
Pool	On-going management of sedge to stop encroachment	Maintain sedge levels to ensure they do not become dominant but provide cover. Raising of water level should naturally contribute to the control.	Diverse habitat structure Habitat for wildlife	High
	Installation of 'dog-dip' on stream	Create designated entry point to reduce bank erosion Can also be used by children in the summer wishing to paddle in the stream	Protect river banks Safe access into stream	Low
	Botanical species diversity in pool	Monitor botanical species number and extent within pool in response to water level change. Management may be required to remove excessive weed/vegetation growth. Removal could be conducted by volunteers – no more than 1/4 to 1/3 removed at a time, and material left on bank for 24 hours so any wildlife can move back into pool. Works should be undertaken over winter.	Interesting and diverse habitat able to support a range of species such as dragonflies and damselflies	Low
	Create 'shelved' edge along southern bank of pool	Create shallower area for emergent plants which are particularly suitable for dragonflies and damselflies	Habitat for wildlife	Low
Greenspace	Provide additional habitat for wildlife	This could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bat / bird boxes Invertebrate houses Hedgehog boxes Boxes could be made by local school children or groups. Discuss with neighbours with fences about putting small holes to allow movement of wildlife e.g. hedgehog street	Supplementary habitat for wildlife Community engagement	Low

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Site	Create conservation volunteer group to undertake management tasks	<p>Volunteers could undertake:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pool maintenance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clearing of excessive weed/vegetation growth - removal of small overhanging branches - planting in bog garden • Greenspace <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building a compost bin - Pruning of hedge 	<p>Locals engaged and take ownership of site</p> <p>Presence of group deters anti-social behaviour</p>	Low
	Install compost bin	<p>Build and locate compost bin along northern fence / new hedgerow for volunteers to use during management works.</p> <p>Have sign on bin informing public of what it is and how it helps the environment</p>	<p>Recycling materials</p> <p>Public engagement / awareness raising</p> <p>Additional habitat for wildlife</p>	Low
	Botanical & species survey of site	<p>Undertake survey pre-works and on-going monitoring visits to record changes in relation to works.</p> <p>Could be undertaken by professional or trained volunteers</p>	<p>Monitor effects of works – disseminate to community</p>	Low

MAPS

Location within county:



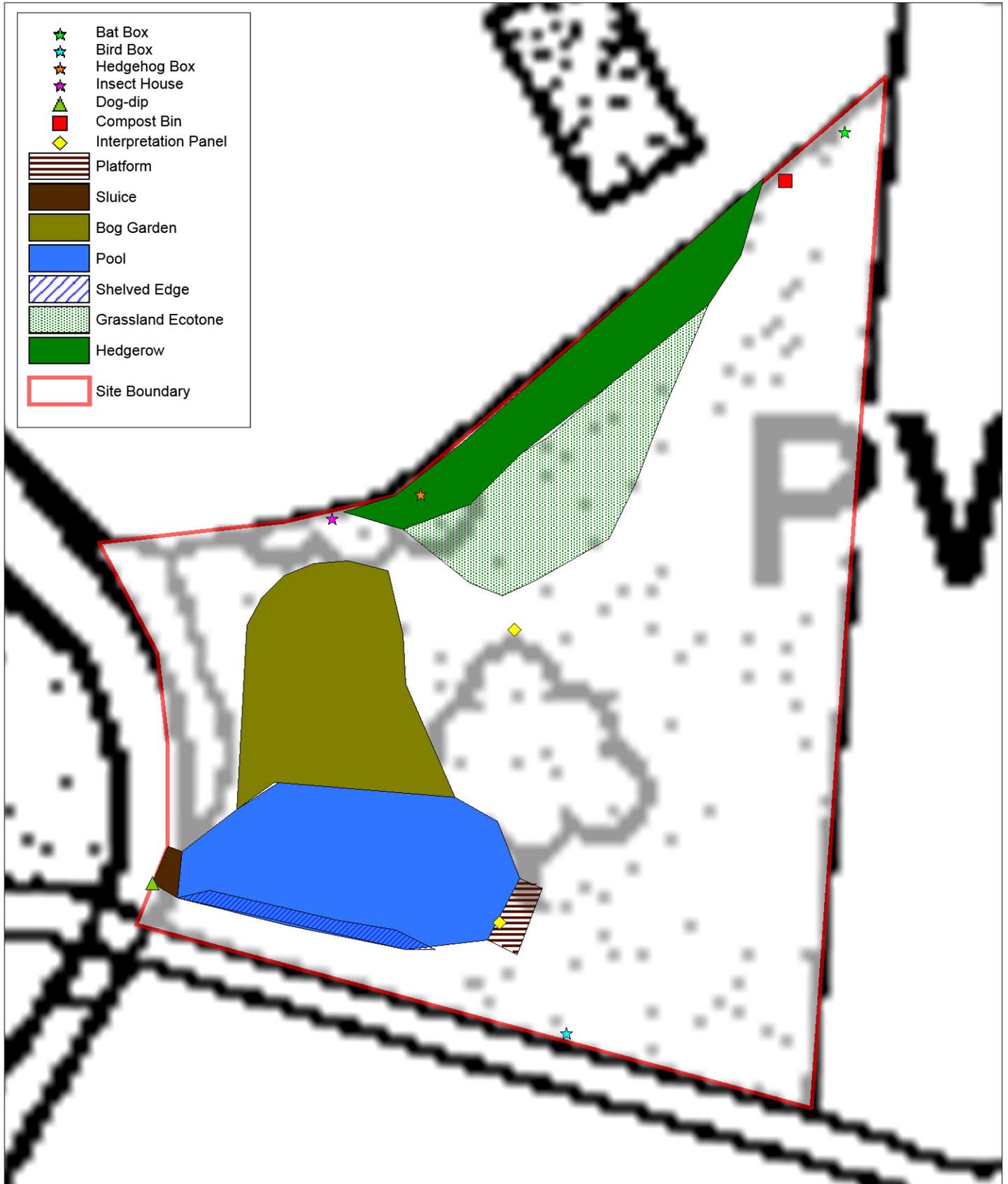
Map 2. Management Recommendations

Malthouse Openspace, Kingsclere

Scale 1:350



- Bat Box
- Bird Box
- Hedgehog Box
- Insect House
- Dog-dip
- Compost Bin
- Interpretation Panel
- Platform
- Sluice
- Bog Garden
- Pool
- Shelved Edge
- Grassland Ecotone
- Hedgerow
- Site Boundary



APPENDICES

Appendix 1.
Additional Information Sources

Appendix 1. Additional Information Sources

Pond management

Sources of information

- Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust – Amphibian Habitat Management Handbook
- <http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/wt-main.live.drupal.precedenthost.co.uk/files/files/Wildlife%20Gardening/A3WildlifePondPack.pdf>
- <http://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/habitats/pond/create-pond/>

Suitable plants for ponds

Taken from 'Creating garden ponds for wildlife' by Pond Conservation & World of Water, 2011

Type of Plant	Species	Comments
Plants next to the pond (for use in wildflower areas adjacent to pond)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cow parsley • Devil's-bit scabious • Hemp agrimony • Teasel • Purple loosestrife • Red valerian • Yarrow 	Provision of food and cover next to the pond Links to other habitats e.g. hedgerows
Low-growing wetland grasses (planted on dry ground or in a few cm of water)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creeping bent • Small sweet-grasses 	
Marginal herbs & rushes (2-10cm depth of water)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesser spearwort • Marsh pennywort • Water forget-me-not • Water mint • watercress 	
Marginal plants with attractive flowers & architecture (2-10cm depth of water)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marsh cinquefoil • Marsh woundwort • Marsh-marigold • Pendulous sedge • Purple loosestrife • Ragged-robin • Water dock • Yellow iris 	
Tall emergents (2-10cm depth of water)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branched bur-reed • Bulrush • Greater pond-sedge • Hard rush • Lesser reedmace • Reed sweet-grass • Soft rush 	Can become dominant in small ponds so regular cutting back necessary
Floating-leaved plants (15-30cm of water)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amphibious bistort • Broad-leaved pondweed • Fringed water-lily • Yellow water-lily 	
Submerged plants (Float in deep water)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common water-starwort • Curled pondweed • Rigid hornwort • Spike water-milfoil • Water-crowfoot 	

Wildlife Homes

Additional habitat provision in the form of bird and bat boxes, bug hotels and hedgehog boxes could be installed in suitable locations within the area.

These could be made by local residents, or through local groups or the school.

There are lots of designs available on the internet such as:

- Kent Bat Box http://www.kentbatgroup.org.uk/Kent_Bat_Box.pdf
- Bird box <http://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/read-and-learn/helping-birds/nestboxes/smallbirds/making.aspx>
- Bug hotel <https://www2.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/garden-activities/build-a-bug-hotel/>
- Insect houses https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/community-and-advice/garden-advice/insects/building_homes.aspx
- Hedgehog house <http://www.hedgehog-rescue.org.uk/houses.php>

Hedgehog street <https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/>

Compost heap

In addition to somewhere to put waste organic material, compost heaps can also provide a habitat for wildlife such as hibernating amphibians and reptiles.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/htbg/module7/making_your_own_compost1.shtml

Bog Garden

Bog gardens are excellent habitats for wildlife, such as for young frogs, due to the dense, damp vegetation they support. They can be stand-alone features, or adjacent to a pond to create an extensive area of suitable wildlife habitat.

Bog gardens need to be permanently damp, so should be created in a naturally wet area or where run-off can collect e.g. in a natural depression. Ideally bog gardens should be located in an area that receives full sunlight for at least part of the day.

Native plants with attractive flowers:

- Bugle (*Ajuga reptans*)
- Common skullcap (*Scutellaria Galericulata*)
- Cowslip (*Primula veris*)
- Lady's smock (*Cardamine pratensis*)
- Lesser spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*)
- Marsh woundwort (*Stachys palustris*)
- Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*)
- Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)
- Ragged robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*)

The list above has avoided large, vigorous growing species, as unless the bog garden is very large they will dominate and out-compete other species.

Sources of information:

- Natural England – Garden ponds and boggy areas: havens for wildlife [http://www.wlhf.org/ne27garden_ponds\[1\].pdf](http://www.wlhf.org/ne27garden_ponds[1].pdf)
- Royal Horticultural Society – Bog gardens <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=356#section-3>