

AREA 8 COMMITTEE – 14th May 2014

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| Title of paper: | “Rewetting Fairham Brook Nature Reserve” – Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust | |
| Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s): | John Kelly, Corporate Director, Communities | Wards affected: Clifton South |
| Report author(s) and contact details: | Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust 0115 958 842 | |
| Other colleagues who have provided input: | Eddie Curry, Head of Parks & Open Spaces 015 876 4982 James Dymond, Parks Development Manager 0115 876 4983 | |
| Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority: (you must mark X in the relevant boxes below) | | |
| World Class Nottingham | | |
| Work in Nottingham | | |
| Safer Nottingham | | |
| Neighbourhood Nottingham | | X |
| Family Nottingham | | X |
| Healthy Nottingham | | X |
| Leading Nottingham | | |
| Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users): | | |
| The report summarises Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust’s (NWT) proposals for management of Fairham Brook Nature Reserve. | | |
| Recommendation(s): | | |
| 1 | That the Committee supports the proposals. | |
| | | |

1. BACKGROUND

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust is seeking funding of approximately £36,000 to improve the biodiversity (wildlife habitat) of Fairham Brook Nature Reserve, Clifton.

The total funding for this work will hopefully be a mixture from SITA Trust, Nottingham City Council, and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT). It is anticipated that NWT will hear on the success of their funding bid to the SITA Trust in July 2014. If the application is not successful it is planned that they will seek alternative means of funding this work.

The nature reserve is located adjacent to Green Lane and Farnborough Road, and forms the eastern boundary of the old Fairham School. It is approximately 10.8ha in size, stretching along the Fairham Brook for around 1.3km. Fairham Brook nature reserve has been designated as a biological Local Wildlife Site (LWS), with the following description: "A valuable area of scrub, grassland, ponds and swamp, with a length of the adjacent Fairham Brook".

The main aim of this proposal is to rewet the area of fen habitat at the northern end of the nature reserve, which has dried out considerably and this scarce habitat is in danger of

being lost. The Fairham Brook watercourse within the reserve was deepened in the 1970s to improve its drainage function for the adjoining agricultural land but it has had the effect of draining the reserve also, which is one of the few areas of fen habitat remaining in Nottinghamshire.

Fen is a Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat and all efforts should be made to protect and restore the areas that are remaining. It is for this reason that it is important to implement this project to bring water onto the reserve to recreate that which once occurred naturally i.e. occasional inundation and retention of water in the floodplain to maintain and enhance the habitats on site to allow them to attract and support the species that depend upon them. Lowland Fen is also a UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat.

The Project

“Rewetting Fairham Brook Nature Reserve” has 1 biodiversity target:

- **To enhance the condition of Fairham Brook LWS including its fen habitats.**

This will be achieved by:

- Creation of 640m of ditches, as laid out in appendix 1. The ditch will be no more than 1metre wide at the top, sloping to approximately 30cm wide at the base, with a depth of between 1 and 1.5metres. This will result in a maximum excavation of 960m³ of spoil, all of which will be removed from site. The ditch will be connected to the Brook at the inflow and the outflow with 400mm twinwall corrugated HDPE pipe. The inflow will be set with the bottom of the pipe at around 1.2m above the normal water level, allowing it to take water into the ditch system only at times of high flow. The outflow pipe will be set towards the top of the ditch to allow the system to retain water.
- Four new ponds will be created, totalling no more than 0.05ha in size, with a maximum depth of 1.5m (locations are marked on the site plan and in figure 1). These will be connected to the ditch via shallow spillways no more than 250mm deep, in order to assist with keeping them wet. The existing ponds on site will be managed to create areas of open water in amongst the existing vegetation.
- The creation of a raised stone path, with culverts to convey the ditch underneath, will be needed to enable continued use of an existing desire line through the site. The culvert will consist of two 300mm twin wall HDPE pipes laid side by side, with a raised stone pathway being built over the top (approximately 20 metres long and 2.5 metres wide). This will slightly raise the height of the existing path, which is already lower lying, to enable it to be used year round (except at times of exceptionally high water – this area is currently prone to inundation in periods of flooding). The stone used will be MOT Type 1 recycled stone.
- There will be an element of scrub and tree removal within the proposed project. Currently the area where the ditch will be located is quite heavily scrubbed over and contains a number of mature willow trees. In addition to coppicing scrub in order to clear the route of the ditch, it will be necessary to control further scrub and willow trees to create a mosaic of habitat of different ages, and to prevent further drying out of the fen through evapotranspiration. In order to maximise the biodiversity potential of the willow, pollarding and coppicing will be carried out where possible and the majority of dead wood will be retained. This will provide the appropriate management prescriptions for the site as per management recommendations (Kirkby 2003).
- Full topographical surveys will be carried out prior to starting work, however all excavated spoil will be removed off site so there will be NO increase in flood risk.

All work will take place in the autumn and winter months (late September to early March) to avoid disturbing breeding birds and mammals.

This project requires planning permission and permission from the Environment Agency, both of which have been applied for.

1,023 Wildlife Trust members in the local area have been contacted regarding the project, and a flyer with details of the plans has been delivered to all local residents with an invitation to comment on the plans, and to attend an open afternoon which is being held on the Nature Reserve on Tuesday 29th April from 4pm to 6.30pm. Letters are also being sent to local organisations. Posters have been displayed on the reserve.

Letters of support have been received from Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group, Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board and the Environment Agency, and 25 emails in of support have been received from local residents. Comments from these emails can be found in Appendix B.

Contacts:

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Southern Reserves Officer (covering all Clifton sites), Chris Kennedy
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Development Officer, Suzie Rees
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Notes

SITA Trust is an ethical funding organisation dedicated to making lasting improvements to the natural environment and community life. The Trust is a not-for-profit company, a registered and accredited environmental body that operates under the Landfill Communities Fund distributing funds contributed by the recycling and resource management company SITA UK.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

To improve the biodiversity of the site in line with the Council's "Ambitious for Wildlife" biodiversity statement.

A community consultation event was held on site at Fairham Brook Nature Reserve on 29th April between 4pm and 6.30pm. A number of local and interested people attended (around 20-25), to look at the proposals and ask questions. There was a mixed reception to the proposals, with some people having concerns which were addressed through talking to staff. Comments on the proposals received at the event are included as Appendix C, the majority of these are positive, with some neutral. Although some negative comments were received verbally, none of the people making them wished to record them at that time.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

None.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

NWT have applied for funding of over £32,000 towards a project worth almost £36,000.

The total funding for this work, which is subject to final confirmation, will be a mixture from SITA Trust, Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust.

5. **RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS)**

None.

6. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Has the equality impact been assessed?

Not needed (report does not contain proposals or financial decisions)

No

Yes – Equality Impact Assessment attached

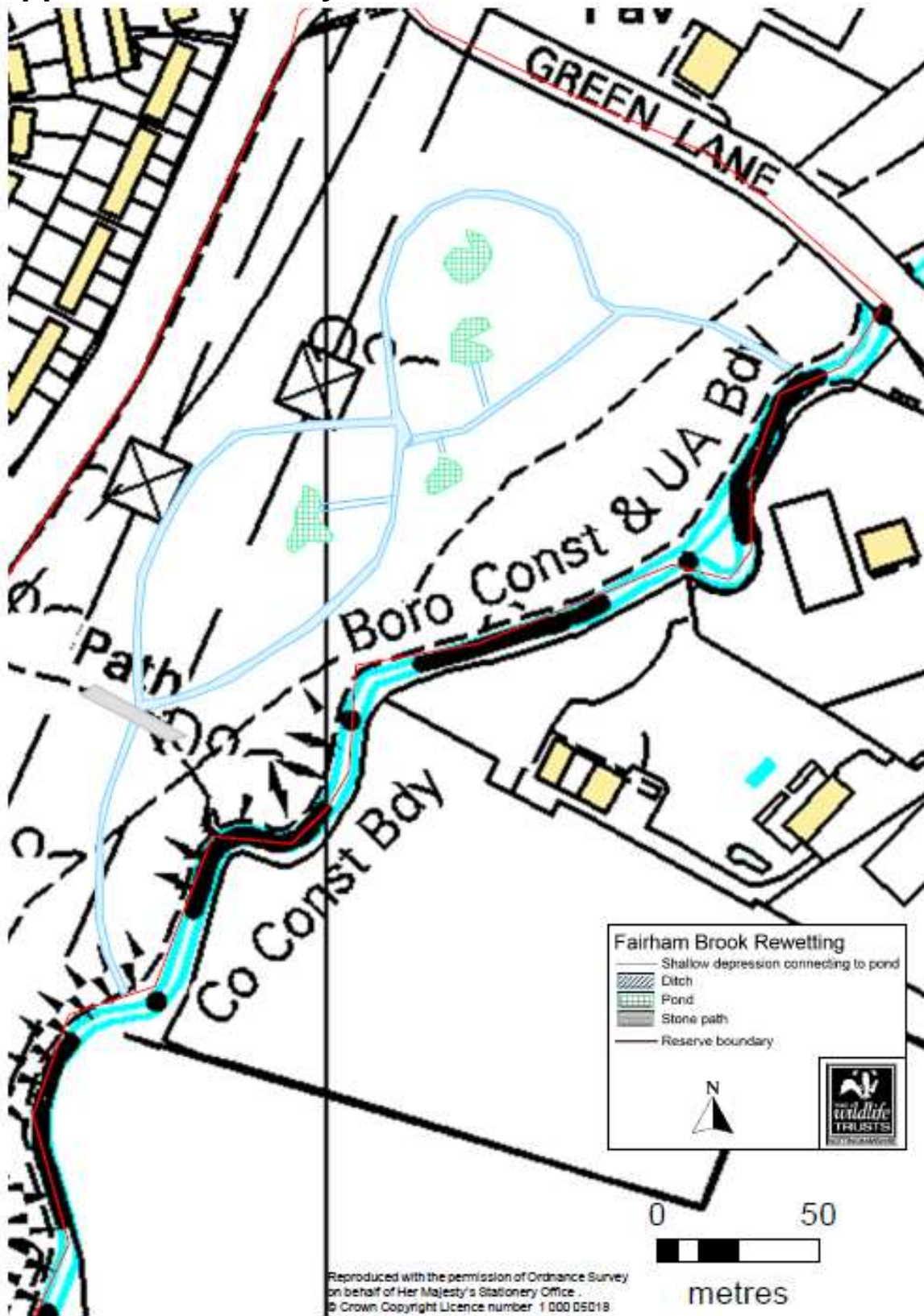
7. **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION**

None.

8. **PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

None.

Appendix A: Site Layout



Appendix B: Support for Project

| Count | Comment |
|-------|--|
| 1 | Thank you for inviting me to comment on plans to develop this habitat. I fully support such development on a number of levels. We are living in an increasingly built environment where we have to travel further afield to feel we are in 'the countryside'. Rural areas nearby are farmed and so our opportunities to interact with with wildlife are becoming more limited. The benefits for adults and children of access to wild areas are enormous in both our physical and mental wellbeing. Properly managed habitats are great for the wildlife and attract visitors to the area. This in turn brings about local prosperity and pride. Really, what's not to like? |
| 2 | This sounds a very worthwhile project to enhance this reserve and I am all in favour of this improvement. |
| 3 | I would like to add my support to the funding bid for the above project. I grew up in that area and know it well. I also support the Trust and its work through membership and volunteering on a weekly basis and am keen to help endangered habitats and the flora and fauna they support in any way I can. I hope that you receive the response required and that the funding bid will be successful. I also hope that I may be involved in some of the work there in the future as part of my volunteering activities. |
| 4 | I am very much in favour of the plan to make enhancements to Fairham Brook Nature Reserve in Clifton. |
| 5 | I very much support your application for funding. I live in West Bridgford and my son and daughter in law with our 3 grandchildren live in Clifton. I agree that the Fairham Brook is an invaluable green area in one of the less and deserves attention. If and when the go ahead is given I'd be very pleased to offer some muscle power! I'll write to Nottm City Council planning department. |
| 6 | I am in favour of any development in the improvement to this nature reserve. Bringing water via a shallow ditch seems a good idea |
| 7 | I should like to add my wholehearted support for the proposed important development of the Fairham Brook nature reserve. This site is an important amenity especially for young people to learn about nature on their doorstep. |
| 8 | I would support fully the enhancements proposed by Notts Wildlife Trust to Fairham Brook - it is very fortunate for us to have a habitat like this in Nottingham City and it will benefit local people much more if the work is done in my opinion. As an aside, I would also like to say that I've looked at the Flicker pictures of this reserve and noticed what looks like wooden stiles situated at the entrance to the reserve. As a wheelchair user there is nothing I hate the sight of more! If anything could be done to make access to the reserve more inclusive too that would be great. |
| 9 | Hello Friends Just a short note to offer my support to you in the quest to protect Fairham Brook Nature Reserve in Clifton, please continue your great work and I shall be offering my support to the planning application. |
| 10 | This is to express my total support for the enhancements to the Fairham Brook Nature Reserve in Clifton. I am totally in favour of this work being done to improve this valuable wildlife habitat. |
| 11 | I support the enhancements proposed by Notts Wildlife Trust |
| 12 | Please acknowledge that i am in favour of funding for the above. |

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| 13 | Just a quick line to register my support for this project. As warden of the nearby Wilwell Farm Cutting Nature Reserve which also contains fragments of marshland habitat . Thus the work at Fairham Brook would hopefully improve the quality of that sites remaining wetland habitat and at the same time complement the marsh areas at Wilwell and for that matter at the adjacent Wilford Claypits. These fragments are in my opinion amngost the rarest and most vulnerable and should be preserved wherever possible. |
| 14 | Please record my support for the proposed development. |
| 15 | I am totally in favour of the improvements you are planning for Fairham Brook Nature reserve. We live on Clifton Road, Ruddington which is an extension of Green Lane where the reserve is situated. |
| 16 | <p>Thanks for sending me information about Fairham Brook Nature Reserve.</p> <p>My wife and I - we are both members of Notts Wildlife Trust - are in favour of your proposed enhancements to the valuable wildlife habitat at this site.</p> |
| 17 | <p>After reading your information letter regarding the proposed enhancements to the Fairham Brook Nature Reserve I would like to say how pleased I am that this hopefully will be happening.</p> <p>I feel that this is a very important area that needs to be looked after and cared for to improve the habitats of many species of animals. I do hope that you gain funding to enable you to go forward with this project.</p> |
| 18 | <p>I am writing to support drainage work that must be carried out at Fairham Brook.</p> <p>This work is necessary to restore and improve the Brook and its surrounds as an important wetland area.</p> |
| 19 | <p>Dear Suzie/ whoever this may concern</p> <p>I think any wetland development is of great value to local communities, particularly in quite a developed area like Clifton so I welcome the developments at Fairham Brook. We need more wetlands to balance out the impermeable urban surfaces.</p> |
| 20 | I've been reading Nottingham wildlife trust proposals for Fairham Brook and confirm my support for the proposals. So much damage has been done to local wildlife sites recently with tram & other development it's vital we maintain the sites that still remain |
| 21 | I support your attempts to enhance our wildlife habitats along Fairham Brook Nature Reserve in Clifton and Ruddington. |
| 22 | You definitely Have our support for this project and if we can lend a hand by getting our wellies on we would be happy to send a team of enthusiastic volunteers ! |
| 23 | Would you please add my name to the list of those who support work on this project? |
| 24 | Please add my name to those who are supporting the planned enhancements to Fairham Brook Nature Reserve. |
| 25 | I very much support your project to make changes to the flow of water into the Fen area of the reserve, and so preserve and protect the habitat for the flora and fauna that rely on it. |

Appendix C: Comments Received at Consultation Event, 29th April 2014

| Count | Comment |
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| 1 | Very supportive - more than happy to help out with regeneration of woodlands |
| 2 | This is such an important habitat, so rare in Nottinghamshire - I'm very supportive of the plans |
| 3 | Very informative |
| 4 | A great project |
| 5 | Wetland is one of the rarest habitats in the area, the alternative is scrub woodland |
| 6 | Great idea - hopefully will provide a wildlife haven here! |
| 7 | In full support of what's being done (Clifton All Whites) |
| 8 | - (details provided but no comment left) |
| 9 | -- (details provided but no comment left) |