

PROPOSAL TO DEVELOPE A WILDLIFE POND AT BRUNDALL COUNTRYSIDE PARK

Wildlife ponds make an important contribution to the biodiversity of an area in a number of ways. In particular they provide important habitat for a range of insects, amphibians, birds and mammals.

Almost 70% of the UK's natural ponds have now been lost and species such as dragonflies, water bugs and the great crested newt have declined rapidly over the last 40 years.

Ponds also provide a valuable link between people and wildlife. In local parks, ponds are a place for people to watch dragonflies and other species, or simply relax. Ponds can therefore contribute positively to peoples' well-being.

The number of good wildlife ponds in the UK has declined in recent years due to changes in the way we manage our countryside and increasing pressures within towns and cities. By creating new wildlife ponds we can help to reverse these declines and therefore positively improve biodiversity.

Creating and restoring healthy ponds is one of the simplest and most effective ways to protect or enhance biodiversity.

In its 2023 annual report, Brundall Parish Council's Biodiversity Working Group (BWG) recommended that consideration be given to creating a wildlife pond at a suitable location within the Countryside Park. Such a pond would contribute significantly to the biodiversity of the Park, and the wider area.

Preliminary Feasibility Study, Siting and Costs

An initial site visit by a wildlife pond development contractor identified areas of the site which are in principle suitable for locating a wildlife pond. In addition, specialist ecologists appointed by SWECO in connection with funds for biodiversity enhancements linked to the A47 Improvement Project, visited the site in 2024. The advice from these specialists was that it should be feasible to develop a wildlife pond within the Countryside Park with an optimum location in the south eastern section of the site (see figure 1)

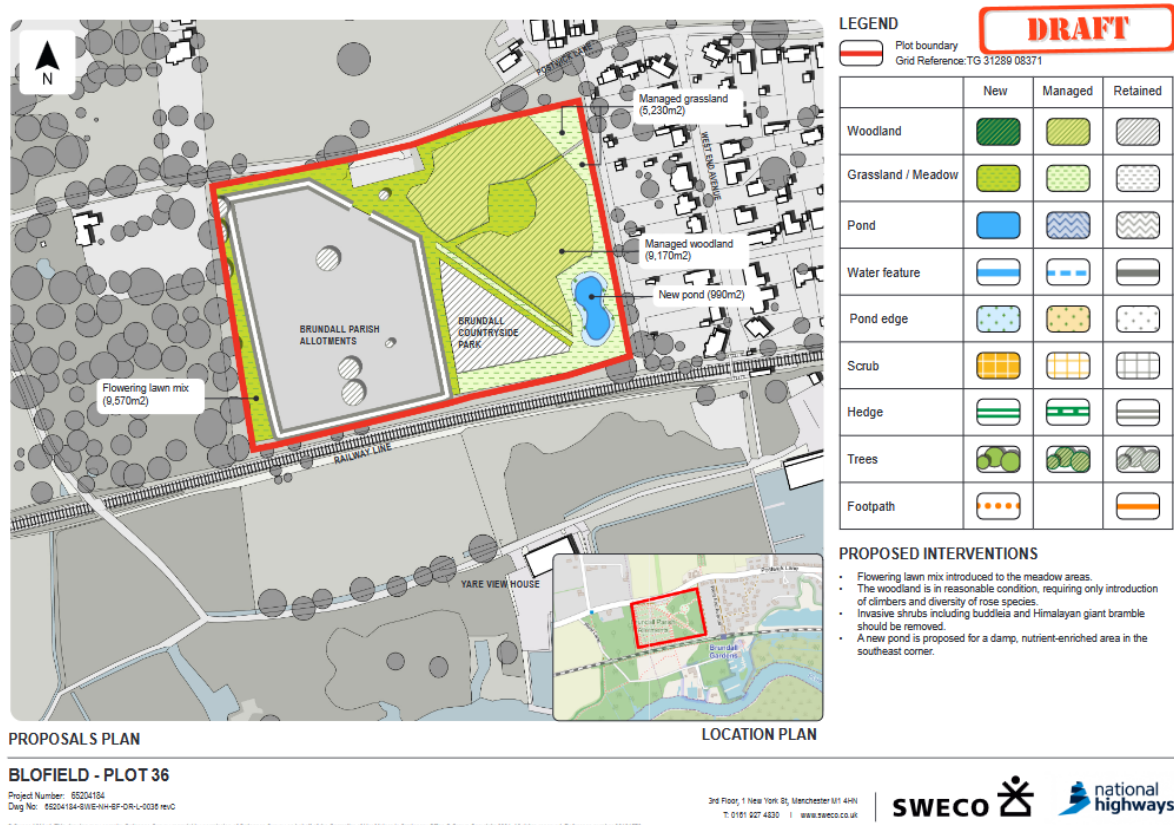


FIGURE 1: Proposed Wildlife Pond Location

There are a number of things to consider when developing a wildlife pond and optimising its biodiversity potential. These include overall size and shape of the pond, its depth and bottom profile, source of water to supply the pond, whether or not a lining is required, seasonal factors affecting water levels and vegetation planting plan. It is also important on a site like this to address the various users of the Park and how they may interact with the pond. For example, it is likely the pond would need to be fenced to prevent dogs from entering the water and churning up the sediment with negative effects on water quality.

The preferred source of water for the pond is natural filling by rainwater. Changes in water level can be expected due to evaporation and seasonal factors. The pond will need to be deep enough to accommodate these changes, whilst maintaining a viable aquatic ecosystem and marginal habitat.

Preliminary estimates indicate a pond depth of around 2m (max) will be required and the overall size suggested is 15m x 10m. A pond of this size is likely to cost in the order of £10,000 to £12,000.

Form and Structure of the Proposed Pond

The size, shape and layout of the proposed pond will be based on detailed design and engineering. This will take into account the various land use and constraints at or near the proposed pond site, as well the ecological/biodiversity design objectives to be established at the detailed stage. Figure 2 illustrates the key features of a typical wildlife pond and Figure 3 provides an illustration of how the concept may be applied at the Countryside Park

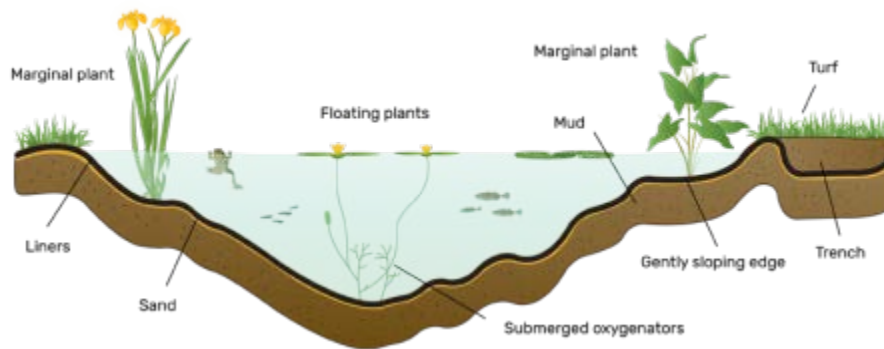


FIGURE 2: Typical Structure of a Wildlife Pond

Source: Surrey Wildlife Trust



FIGURE 3: Illustration of a Typical Wildlife Pond in-Situ

Stakeholder Consultation.

Brundall Countryside Park is owned by Norwich County Council and leased to Brundall Parish Council. It is currently used for various activities including a Park Run held every Saturday, dog walkers and for general recreation. A large area to the east of the site is used as allotments for the residents of Brundall. These various uses are planned to continue for the foreseeable future and it is important that any proposed wildlife pond does not interfere with or compromise these established uses.

A site meeting was held with representatives of the Countryside Park Steering Group and the Allotment Committee to discuss the proposal for a wildlife pond and to seek views on the proposal. The response from these consultations was generally positive although one local resident did express concern about the impact the pond might have on flooding of adjacent gardens. Although unlikely to be a concern, flooding will need to be addressed at the detailed design stage, if the proposal is taken forward.

As the site is not owned by Brundall Parish Council, it will be necessary to seek the consent of the land owner (NCC) before proceeding further with this proposal. Brundall Parish Council therefore needs to formally approach NCC seeking their agreement, in principle, to development of a wildlife pond on the site.

Recommendations

This proposal is consistent with Brundall Parish Council's Wildlife and Biodiversity Vision and presents an opportunity to positively enhance biodiversity in the area. It is therefore recommended that this proposal is supported by the Environment Committee.

Brundall Parish council should formally seek consent of NCC for the creation of a wildlife pond at the Countryside Park.