

APPENDIX A

**DESK STUDY REVIEW OF SITES WITH SIMILAR ISSUES TO
HAZELEY HEATH**

DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR HOOK COMMON AUGUST 2001

A.1 The site is owned by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. The whole site has four compartments, is registered as common land and includes two SSSIs, namely, Hook Common and Bartley Heath SSSI and Butter Wood SSSI. A range of commoners rights exist for the reserve but none appear to be exercised. The whole area leased by the Trust is intended to be managed as a nature reserve and for informal recreation by public.

Issues

A.2 There were problems with antisocial activities with joyriding, dumping of stolen cars and fly tipping. The site did not have a strong landscape value, the most valuable areas being woodland areas and individual mature trees.

A.3 Management responsibilities lay with the reserves manager and volunteers with little localised management taking place. Little management has taken place in recent years specifically aimed at maintaining heathland. Some areas of birch were cleared but as there was no follow up management these areas have reverted back to birch scrub. It is recognized that grazing needs to be re-introduced in order to prevent the site reverting back to woodland. The reserve is divided by resulting in four compartments making the management of the site more difficult. Grazing should however, be feasible in the larger compartments.

A.4 The reserve has a series of power lines and, as the vegetation needs to be kept low beneath these areas, this has ensured the openness of the heathland has been maintained in small areas. External pressure from development may cause problems in the future.

A.5 The public has right of access to the whole site by foot and horse and the reserve was used for walking, exercising dogs and horses and for access to different areas. The reserve has also a number of public footpaths but no bridleways or byways open to traffic across any part of the reserve. The area is not easily accessed by public as lack of management has resulted in densely vegetated areas and difficult conditions underfoot.

A.6 The site has potential to be used as a resource for local schools. The site has been used for environmental studies by local colleges and universities. There have been no interpretation, education or entrance signs on the reserve. In 2001 there was a bid for a Project Officer to oversee the reserve. If this is successful there could be a potential for signage, interpretation and guided walks to be developed as well as the site in general.

- A.7 Bartley Heath owned by the Trust is in close proximity to the site and is an example of how the site could be managed in the future (see below). The positive results achieved there could be used to persuade the local community of the management tools such as fencing and grazing.

Management objectives

- To return the *Molinia* habitat to wet heathland and then to manage it in favourable condition.
- To return the ancient semi-natural woodland areas to favourable conditions
- To enhance populations of notable species
- To fulfil all legal and administrative obligations
- To encourage use for informal recreation where this does not conflict with nature conservation interest.
- To encourage use for education where this does not conflict with nature conservation interest.
- To encourage a return to traditional commoning management of the site where this does not conflict with nature conservation interest.

BARTLEY HEATH AND NORTH WARNBOROUGH GREENS MANAGEMENT PLAN

- A.8 There are three SSSIs covering the reserve. The reserve is owned by the Hampshire & I.O.W. Wildlife Trust. The whole of the reserve is registered as common land in three compartments which are divided into seven management compartments. The site has one purpose-built car park. The site is dissected by the M3 and other local roads. There is one trough on the site for the use by livestock and no visitor facilities or toilets.

- A.9 The whole of the Trust-owned area is now a nature reserve and is also used for informal recreation by public. There is also a BMX track in one of the compartments. Management infrastructure is in place with a volunteer reserve manager on site. Local volunteer groups meet on site once a month and other volunteer groups can be drawn upon. In addition to this, contractors are brought in for specialist projects when required. As part of the management of the reserve, parts of it have been returned to grazing by commoner’s livestock.

- A.10 The site is used for recreation such as walking, jogging and wildlife watching and the use has increased since the site has been actively managed with improved access

and information about the site. There are a number of public rights of way crossing the site.

- A.11 The reserve has entrance welcome boards at all access points and more specific interpretation boards about habitats and species present at strategic points. An illustrated explanatory leaflet is also available. The Trust organizes guided walks throughout the year which are advertised in the Trust magazine and by posters on the site. Throughout the year the reserve's activities and special features are publicised locally in the village monthly magazine. This has had an effect on the numbers taking part in the walks, other events and working parties and has raised the profile of the Trust and its reserve in the village. In general relationships with neighbours and the local community have been good and locals and volunteers have been supportive of the reintroduction of grazing.
- A.12 The site is not currently used as an education source. This could be due to lack of knowledge about the site, distance to the site from schools and lack of facilities such as toilets. There is potential to improve this, particularly as the surrounding area continues to grow. The site is used as a research facility by local colleges and universities and individual naturalists and a number of scientific studies have been undertaken on the site. Several plant surveys have been done on the site and Farnborough College of Technology established permanent quadrats in 1989. A Phase II NVC survey is needed for the North Warnborough Green.

Past management

- A.13 Since the Trust's involvement began a number of major management changes have taken place, most notably the removal of large areas of secondary woodland and the reintroduction of grazing to some compartments. Large glades have been created in some of the compartments. Fencing has been used around one compartment and a parking area was constructed.

Operational objectives for the future

- Maintain in favourable condition wet heathland communities
- Maintain in favourable condition calcareous fen communities
- Maintain in favourable condition woodland communities
- Ensure Legal constraints and administrative issues are correctly handled
- Encourage a return to traditional Commoning management of the site where this does not conflict with nature conservancy
- Encourage use for education where this does not conflict with nature conservancy

- Encourage use for research where this does not conflict with nature conservancy
- Encourage use for public recreation where this does not conflict with nature conservancy.

ANCELLS MEADOWS NATURE RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN

- A.14 The reserve is a SSSI owned by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. This is a relatively small site isolated from the main group of SSSI meadows to the north of the site. About 30% of the site is informal open space under planning conditions related to Ancells Farm. There is no public right of way through any part of the remainder of the reserve but there is no policy to restrict access. All of the reserve is leased. In the past the site has been managed as pasture and arable land and has evidence of ridge and furrow.
- A.15 In the broad sense four types of habitat occur on the site; grassland, wetland, scrub and woodland. These are changing as new management has been recently reinstated.

Present land use

- A.16 A small part of the reserve is used as open space by local people, but usage is low considering its close proximity to housing. Some families walk the pond on the site during weekends. A large part of the site is still owned by the MoD and can be used for military training by foot. Sporting rights and mineral rights have also been retained.
- A.17 All of the site is now actively managed as a nature reserve to conserve wildlife and rarer habitats. Grazing by cattle has been recently reinstated.

Past management

- A.18 In 1990 a fence was erected to a small part of the reserve and grazing was reintroduced to this area. After a public meeting a voluntary warden started working on the site. After years of negotiations the trust managed to lease the whole site in 1995 and since then grazing, using cattle and ponies, has been introduced to other parts of the reserve as well. Other management of the site has included periodic scrub and birch clearance, turf cutting and pond clearance. Much of the scrub is now under control and a light grazing regime should maintain the ecological interest of the meadow.

- A.19 A circular path was created through the reserve and a boardwalk installed to pond together with a dipping pond. Interpretation panels with brief descriptions and maps have been erected at the two entrances. An interpretation board by the pond was removed after damage by vandals. Very limited car parking is available on site but cars can be parked by nearby shops if needed.
- A.20 The area is under used but it has been observed that there are more visitors when grazing animals are on site. Removal of scrub has reduced antisocial behaviour by opening up the site. Community involvement and interest has been minimal. This may be due to the demographic structure of the population with young families who have to commute for work with little time to enjoy the reserve. Relations with neighbours are mixed, some being supportive of the work carried out on the reserve and some not. Owners of the site appear content with the Trust's objectives to manage the area for nature conservation whilst providing an area for public enjoyment.
- A.21 The site is not used by school groups or by students. Some guided walks are organized. Monitoring of the site is carried out by visiting naturalists and Trust members. The reserve could fulfil a greater role in the promoting the need for biological conservation in the local community. The existence of the reserve is not well known in the area.

Management objectives

- Maintain and enhance the heathland pond.
- Preserve, maintain and enhance the heath/grassland mosaic
- Maintain and enhance species diversity
- Protect and maintain populations of rare species
- Fulfil all legal and administrative obligations
- Encourage use for research where this does not conflict with nature conservation interest.
- Encourage use for education where this does not conflict with nature conservation interest.
- Encourage use for public access where this does not conflict with nature conservation interest.

Management options

- A.22 A number of options are listed for as potential management tools including non-intervention, scrub control, chemical management, burning, raking, mowing, grazing. Some of these options are more optimal for this habitat and location than others.

CHOBHAM COMMON (NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE) MANAGEMENT PLAN

- A.23 Chobham Common is part of Surrey CC Countryside Estate, which is managed for the CC by Surrey WT. The Site status includes: NNR, SSSI, SPA, SAC, SNCI, Common Land, Candidate Area of Historic Landscape Value, Area of Special Historic Landscape Value and three Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
- A.24 Communities on site include dry heath, wet heath, grassland, bog communities, carr woodlands, open water (some 30 ponds), scrub and woodland.
- A.25 Day to day management is carried out by a team of people comprising a senior ranger and area ranger, and a team who carry out estate management work. A Management Plan is in place and sets out the management objectives and work programmes for the common.
- A.26 The common is managed in accordance with the agreement between Surrey CC and SWT. In addition the common is managed under the guidelines of EN to improve its lowland heath.
- A.27 The aims set out in the agreement between SCC and SWT are:
- Conservation of semi-natural habitat and landscape.
 - Provision of informal public access and recreation.
- A.28 Other management objectives include:
- Protection of archaeological features and historic buildings.
 - Protection of rare species.
 - Encouragement of active voluntary involvement.
 - Regular review of management aims and work programmes.
 - Consultation and research to obtain the views and attitudes of site users and interested groups.
 - Promotion of sustainable long-term management.
- A.29 A Countryside Stewardship Scheme across the entire site has been agreed for a period of 10 years. This involves large scale scrub clearance to maintain an open character of the site, and the range and mix of habitats necessary to maintain favourable condition.
- A.30 The Common is used by visitors who have the right to roam across the whole common and take a dog if it is under reasonable control. There is an extensive

network of statutory public bridle way and agreed horse rides on the site. Cycling is limited to public bridleways, model aircraft flying is allowed on restricted areas and a fishpool is leased out. Other events and activities are held by agreement.

- A.31 The first management plan was written in 1984. Scrub clearance has taken place since 1970. It was not very effective initially and a more aggressive scrub clearance was adopted in late 1980s. A 1992 management plan took a more positive approach to nature conservation and several grant schemes have been adopted including CSS, WGS and Wildlife Enhancement Scheme covering most of the site. Management under these schemes has included large-scale scrub management, conservation mowing of *Molinia*, bracken control, and several new ponds, scrapes and pools have also been created. Small scale heather cutting and turf stripping (to create bare ground) has also occurred and 30ha has been grazed.
- A.32 Bracken has been successfully controlled on the common by using the specific herbicide Asulox. The site is generally managed for multitude of species rather than for the needs of individual species. Some exceptions are the annual small-scale strimming and raking of *Molinia* to suppress its growth and maintenance of bare soil for wetland species. Grazing is intended to be increased in the future together with increasing the total amount of bare as this is a key to maintaining and improving heathlands and grasslands and their associated species on the site.
- A.33 When carrying out management operations on the site, care is taken to protect and enhance the landscape value of the site. Public use is considered in all management decisions. There is a Chobham Common Liaison Group which meets twice a year and also has an annual tour. A number of volunteer events are held throughout the year and rangers produce quarterly reports. There is a plan for a website that will provide regularly updated information. There are opportunities for educational use of the site by schools and universities. University research projects assist in the collection of data. Interpretation has been kept low key so that it does not affect the character of the site. The main interpretation is at the car parks with information boards and interpretative maps with example areas of different habitats adjacent to one of the car parks together with an easy access trail and interpretative boards. There is also a site leaflet and two long self guided trails with leaflets. Rangers lead regular guided walks and volunteer events on the site.

INGREBOURNE MARSHES CONSERVATION PLAN

- A.34 Following an intensive desk study, site visits and stakeholder and community consultation, a series of opportunities for management and enhancement of Ingrebourne Marshes were identified and a list of policies to deliver these was drawn up.

A.35 The development of the Conservation plan has taken into account natural heritage, landscape issues, cultural heritage and public amenity and education. The plan has tried to solve conflicts between these different aspects and find viable options. The selected proposals were based on the expansion of the marshland area and development of a network of paths, whilst conserving the WWII built heritage on the site. None of these have, however been implemented yet so the success of different management options and policies are not yet known.