

Misson Line Bank Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Line Bank sits within surrounding farmland owned by Polybell Organic Farm just out of Misson village with the River Idle as one boundary leading to Idle Stop. The parcel of land was left to repair flood barriers and bridges following the Dutch drainage of the fens so has a long history and is designated a SSSI for aquatic plants within the borrow pit ponds. The woodland includes areas of old coppiced hawthorn, with mature oaks, willow and poplar but with very little sunlight now getting through to ground level to the detriment of its biodiversity. The fenland is important regionally as it forms part of a small area remaining following the flood bank building programme in Nottinghamshire. As the fenland dries out it is reverting to grassland and increasing areas of scrub.

The SSSI is owned jointly by Polybell Farms and a small charity, the Town Estate charity, whose Trustee is Misson Parish Council. The charity has an agreement in place to manage the whole site. The site is split into two parcels for Rural Payments Agency purposes - a woodland area with a Higher-tier Countryside Stewardship award and a fenland/grassland area with a Mid-tier CS grant.

Woodland

A five-year management plan, approved by the Forestry Commission and by Natural England, forms the basis for our Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier grant works which are beginning in winter 2021.

The priority elements over 2021 are to:

1. Manage the bridleway edges up to the end of the ponds. This will include some scrub/bramble cutting; coppicing hawthorn/willow to last coppice points and siding up large trees (mostly oak) on the pond edges to reduce shading of the water.
2. Release 4 veteran oak trees from excessive neighbouring vegetation (bramble and scrub) and do the same for other potential veterans including oak, poplar and old crab apples. This will include bramble and scrub removal and regenerative felling.

Large sidings and felled trees may be removed from site and their value offset against future works. In addition, brash piles, log piles and dead hedges will create homes for wildlife. Brash piles alongside the pond area will mitigate unauthorised access to the water.

Fenland/Grassland

A five-year management programme agreed with Natural England forms the delivery of our Countryside Stewardship Mid-tier grant works, and will deliver increased biodiversity to the area. An area of fenland/grassland will be cut and the arisings removed each year to give a variety of vegetation heights to support a wider range of species. Scrub will be gradually managed to ensure it covers no more than 10% of the area.

For further information please contact Sue Scott, Secretary, Town Estate charity

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