

## **BGSMP: Ongoing Tasks and Maintenance**

### **ROADSIDE VERGES**

The importance of managing roadside verges is gaining increasing attention, especially as local councils begin to recognise the potential for cost saving through environmentally friendly maintenance. Our verges provide a safe roadside margin for pedestrians where required, whilst helping to enhance the parish appearance and provide habitats for wildlife.

Our roadside verges can be found in several locations, including Apple Hill / High Cross (Site of Interest for Nature Conservation), Thurgarton Road, Main Street leaving Bleasby toward Gibsmere, around the Railway crossing, the Ends at Four Ways (Gibsmere), Goverton junction and top of High Cross, the corner of Gypsy Lane and Main Street and then along Main Street adjacent to Glebe Field.

#### **Ongoing Tasks / Maintenance:**

- Collaboration with N&SDC, County Council and Network Rail regarding responsibilities and maintenance schedules
- Grass cutting regime – presently managed by local volunteers and carried out by contractors
- Maintenance and cleaning of signage along verges
- Ensure the “grips” on Apple Hill are kept free from blockage to ensure adequate drainage

### **FERRY END**

The small seating area by the River Trent, on the official Trent Valley Way, is owned by BPC but there is presently no agreed maintenance or future development plan in place. Boat Lane, leading to Ferry End, is unofficially maintained by the caravan site.

The area is intended to offer a place to rest, relax and enjoy the Trent vista, together with providing an understanding of the history and significance of the location. Therefore, it needs to be presentable, accessible and safe to all visitors.

#### **Ongoing Tasks / Maintenance:**

- Upkeep of benches and fencing
- Maintaining growth of vegetation to allow visitors to enjoy vista onto river
- Larger willows and other trees to be maintained to ensure safety and vista preservation
- Leaves to be cleared in autumn
- A regular mowing regime needs to be maintained
- Routine litter pick

### **GLEBE FIELD**

Glebe Field is owned by BPC and jointly maintained by volunteers and sub-contractors.

The area acts as a village green for picnics, events and recreation, has a small orchard and a basic play area.

#### **Ongoing Tasks / Maintenance:**

- Grass to be well kept throughout the year - presently managed by volunteers and the cutting undertaken by contractors
- Established hedges to be maintained at 1.5m height and 2m breadth - pruning / laying regime needs agreeing
- Newly planted hedges need ongoing care keeping clear of cleavers and nettles
- A preventative maintenance plan needed for benches, play equipment, gates, fences and the memorial

- Complete project to improve the playground area.
- The new Christmas tree and oak require regular watering for the first 2 years
- The dyke and culvert adjacent to Gypsy Lane to be kept clear – explore adoption by Trent Valley Drainage Board

### **St MARY'S CHURCH**

As such, the land around St Mary's is the responsibility of the church. However, it is seen very much as an important greenspace for the parish and is dependent on the work of volunteers to carry out regular maintenance tasks.

### **Ongoing Tasks / Maintenance:**

- Annual review to ensure priorities for providing support with maintenance are understood.
- Presently volunteers are used for mowing grass, removal of ivy from trees, hedge trimming, keeping paths clear of leaves, nettles and bramble, pruning trees for access, maintaining memorial flower trough and bonfires. A back-up plan is required to cover the situation where volunteers are no longer available.

### **JUBILEE PONDS**

The area was originally rented by BPC in 1977, prior to purchasing in 1987, to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee and provide a lasting village memento and facility for nature conservation and the quiet recreation of parishioners.

The title deeds owned by Bleasby Parish Council include a conveyance of the fishing rights, originally to two Angling Societies, latterly to Bleasby Carp Syndicate.

Management of the area was undertaken by a committee of local representatives, reporting to BPC, until around 2015 when the group disbanded.

Today, Jubilee Ponds provides a wonderful space for improving well-being, gentle recreation and interaction with our environment, yet only a small number of the community appear to take advantage of what's on offer.

Independent advice from organisations, such as Notts Wildlife Trust, has been sought with regard to the ongoing enhancement of the wildlife habitat; along with existing reports and personal experience of long-term residents and volunteers who have managed the area since inception.

Formation of Bleasby Grasshoppers in 2021, along with recently improved collaboration with Bleasby Carp Syndicate and sub-contractors has laid good foundations for the future maintenance and development of Jubilee Ponds with the hope to attract more users from the community.

At around 20 acres, Jubilee Ponds is the largest green space in the parish and consists of several specific areas.

### **Boundary Hedges, Fences & Gates – Jubilee Ponds**

There are boundary hedges and fences throughout the perimeter of the site, mainly adjoining private land.

### **Ongoing Tasks / Maintenance:**

- Understand boundary ownership, rights of access and agree a maintenance plan along with responsibilities to meet the needs of all involved
- Define parameters of each perimeter boundary (hedgerow, fences & gates) to help provide a consistent maintenance schedule e.g. height / width, stock proofing, laying
- Identify which boundaries require external contractors to maintain and which can be managed by volunteers

### **Paths, roads & verges – Jubilee Ponds**

The network of main paths provide passage for all visitors. There are number of smaller tracks leading off the main paths which provide access to wilder areas and may not be suitable to all visitors.

### **Ongoing Tasks / Maintenance:**

- Ensure main access path surfaces are maintained and their verges kept clear of bramble and other encroachment from trees and shrubs to allow visitors to safely pass each other
- Provide safe vehicular access to the parking areas

### **Entrance to Site & Parking Areas - Jubilee Ponds**

The site entrance from Borrow Bread Lane should provide a welcome to visitors along with information about Jubilee Ponds, safety, conservation, fishing, dog walking and recreation. It should also act as a meeting point.

There are two designated parking areas to be used by Bleasby Carp Syndicate and local volunteers. Restricted access is controlled through a locked gate.

### **Ongoing Tasks / Maintenance:**

- Update, maintain and develop the information boards for visitors
- Review surface areas and decide on any maintenance

### **Woodland Areas & Trees - Jubilee Ponds**

The woodland areas throughout Jubilee Ponds make up a significant area surrounding the water. The three areas which have a specific designation, Centenary Woods, the bird-hide and the den building area, have their own management plans.

The remaining woodland requires ongoing maintenance, carried out by the collaborative involvements of volunteers, contractors and Bleasby Carp Syndicate.

### **Ongoing Tasks / Maintenance:**

- A sustainable plan needs better defining through a fresh survey & evaluation of the woodland areas. As far as possible, it is proposed to clear understory of brush, removal of senile blackthorn and to allow native woodland flowers to develop

### **Centenary Wood - Jubilee Ponds**

A memorial wood was developed in 2014 through planting of new oak and hazel, holly and yew amongst established oak.

#### **Ongoing Tasks / Maintenance:**

- Maintenance of hazel and oak
- Regular mowing of grassland around trees and perimeter path to ensure visitors to the area can freely roam around the memorial plantings
- Keep base of trees clear, especially on younger specimens
- Process for upkeep of tree labels and a map identifying those being remembered

### **Den Building area - Jubilee Ponds**

This area was started by Bleasby Grasshoppers in 2021 as an area to encourage children to engage with the wildlife and nature on their doorstep, whilst having creative fun through building dens and hideouts from natural woodland materials.

#### **Ongoing Tasks / Maintenance:**

- Develop more permanent boundaries
- Control vegetation at entrance to den building area
- Regular checks for safety, materials, boundaries etc
- Monitor trees for signs of disease, decay and dangerous limbs

### **Bird Hide area - Jubilee Ponds**

This area was built by Bleasby Grasshoppers in 2021 as an area for local residents to engage with the birds at Jubilee Ponds. It should also provide some focus to develop bird watching activities in general and encourage engagement with the local community.

#### **Ongoing Tasks / Maintenance:**

- Improve screening around the area
- Information and sightings boards
- Regular checks for safety, access & boundaries
- Agree sourcing and budget for bird food

### **Main Meadow - Jubilee Ponds**

Although Main Meadow has been neglected in recent years, over 20 species of wildflower were identified in 2021. It is the only open space on the site and has wonderful potential to be reinvigorated to increase the population of perennial wildflowers. There is also an opportunity to use the meadow for educational purposes, community engagement and for wellbeing activities. Development and regeneration of the area will enhance botanical diversity and encourage wildlife.

#### **Ongoing Tasks / Maintenance:**

- Annual scythe hay cut (July/August) and removal / baling
- Scheduled mowing regime (September to March) and arisings removal to reduce fertility and encourage growth of perennial wildflowers
- Introduce yellow rattle to help suppress growth of aggressive grasses
- Monitor flower and wildlife species
- Cut paths through meadows for visitor access and viewing
- Maintain hedge at around 2-3m high but allow to thicken / grass cuttings can be stacked under hedge as will encourage wildlife corridor
- Keep area surrounding carved bench clear and vista open

### **Meadow Triangle - Jubilee Ponds**

There is a second, smaller meadow area situated towards the back of the site. It is thought this area may be the only undisturbed and original meadow at Jubilee Ponds and is therefore of significant interest. Adjacent to the area is a large bonfire pit and space that can be used for collecting debris prior to burning.

#### **Ongoing Tasks / Maintenance:**

- Keep path cut through grass and around edges to allow access
- Allow grass to grow each year between March and August and then keep cut throughout rest of the season
- Ensure blackthorn ingress is controlled
- Maintain the single old hawthorn and dogrose
- Introduce yellow rattle to help suppress growth of aggressive grasses
- Maintain bonfire area for storage of debris and keep safe for use

### **Ponds and Fishing - Jubilee Ponds**

The fishing rights at Jubilee Ponds are owned by Bleasby Carp Syndicate (**BCS**) under a conveyance agreement with BPC. As such it is the right of the syndicate to manage the fish stock and the surrounding bankside vegetation in the interests of the members rights to fish.

There are several "swims" around the water edge which have been established by BCS and can be enjoyed by the local community. There are also some stunning vistas to be enjoyed from various locations around the water edge.

Clearly the water environment is an integral part of the ecosystem at Jubilee Ponds and therefore needs to be carefully considered as part of this plan to maintain and develop the area.

BCS have indicated their willingness to work with BPC, GH and the parish community to help achieve the objectives of The Plan.

#### **Ongoing Tasks / Maintenance:**

- Continue to ensure there is a clear and consistent line of communication between BCS, BPC and GH
- Continue to extend community understanding of BCS and the contribution their members make towards the upkeep of Jubilee Ponds
- Work towards a better means of addressing any issues between BSC and the community as they arise

### **The Ride - Jubilee Ponds**

These are the wider openings through woodland or scrub, originally created for the passage of horses, horse drawn vehicles, herded stock etc, which would not normally be surfaced.

They make particularly valuable habitats in that a graded transition from grassland to herb to scrub to woodland provides sunning, feeding, breeding and sheltering opportunities for a wide range of insects, birds and mammals.

#### **Ongoing Tasks / Maintenance:**

- Define a cutting regime to allow free passage

### **The Reed bed (phragmites) - Jubilee Ponds**

The existing area has received quite effective management in the past but is now more extensive and needs ongoing management. It provides a wonderful wildlife habitat and without a significant effort risks becoming unkempt and a less productive environment.

#### **Ongoing Tasks / Maintenance:**

- Annual cutting back of reeds to allow access for bird surveys
- Manage encroaching willow and birch
- Assess “quicksand” in this area

### **Holme Dyke - Jubilee Ponds**

The dyke runs to the east of the area and needs to be maintained by Trent Valley Drainage Board (TVDB).

#### **Ongoing Tasks / Maintenance:**

- Ensure easy access to by Trent Valley Drainage Board by removal of saplings and overhanging branches
- Ensure that gate entrance is accessible
- Annual inspection monitor for pollution - communication with TVDB