

## **Cotesbach Village Pond Pond Management Plan November 2019**

This document captures the purpose and management of Cotesbach Village Pond to ensure it remains an appealing village asset. It has been created with guidance from the Freshwater Habitats Trust and Gavin Bennett, an Ecologist who lives in the village.

### Vision

Cotesbach village pond will provide a peaceful and attractive place for villagers and visitors of all ages to enjoy and relax alongside. The pond will support native aquatic flora year round including flowering species to increase its aesthetic value and provide refuges for wildlife. The area surrounding the pond will be maintained to allow easy access and viewing for visitors and provide further habitat for native species. The village pond will encourage biodiversity within the village and act as a key amenity space at all times of year.

### Pond purpose

The pond should do the following:

- Be an area for villagers and village visitors of all ages to look at and relax by
- Contain attractive flora to enjoy
- Encourage biodiversity of interest

### Pond background

- The pond is on land owned by Cotesbach Estate, and leased to the Parish Council free of charge until 2060 free of charge (see appendix for a copy of the lease).
- The pond is recognised by the Parish Council as a Council asset, and is the Parish Council's responsibility to manage as a village amenity.
- In 2016/17 the pond was improved through funding from Gazeley (Magna Park owners) after a number of years of limited investment. The improvements, carried out by AquaServe UK, included:
  - New lining
  - Marginal matting
  - Wood chip pathways
  - Garden benches with padlock and chains
  - Re-planting of marginals
- The pond has been maintained approximately twice a year, organised by the parish council. Usually the same small group of 5-8 people help on the "clearing days", including children.
- "Clearing days" are in the spring and autumn / winter and involve strimming all vegetation surrounding the pond, weeding the pathway, clearing leaves and adding chalk to the water.

Good things about the pond that should be maintained and maximised include:

- The pathway
- Benches
- It's not "precious", i.e. requires a lot of work
- Biodiversity of the pond – amphibians, dragonflies and damselflies breed in the pond, and local birds and mammals use it as a source of water

## Current problems

Areas of improvement could include:

- Messiness of vegetation – overgrown trees / nettles / marginal
- Cleanliness of benches – algae / moss
- Risk of falling in – insecure marginal matting
- Pond weed
- Water level fluctuation leading to visible pond lining
- Non-native species – snowberry on the bank to the rear of the pond is spreading and shades out native species. A cherry laurel is also creating similar issues on the banks of the pond
- Lack of aquatic plants leading to high levels of algae growth on the pond

## Outline landscaping plan



### **East bank**

- Limit sycamore cherry laurel size
- Encourage holly
- Keep pathway clear

### **Marginals**

- Promote marginal matting surrounding pond

### **South bank**

- Keep snowberry cleared
- Limit nettle spread
- Plant native wildflower species, mix of evergreen and perennials

### **North and west bank**

- Plant native wildflower species, mix of evergreen and perennials

## Longer-term landscaping plan

**2019 / 2020**

- Clear overgrown areas
- Ensure pathways are kept clear
- Clean benches
- Remove Snowberry from the bank
- Remove Cherry Laurel and Sycamore amongst Holly
- Plant native species on rear bank
- Improve marginal vegetation on banks

## 2020/2021

- Follow cutting plan to ensure new / good species are retained
- Top-up any planting on banks and marginal
- Re-cover pathway with new bark chippings

### Outline annual maintenance schedule

<b>Time of year</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Early Spring (March / April)	Weed pathways Strimming around / to the rear of benches to ensure clear Bench cleaning Additional planting if required Chalk spreading
Early Summer (May / June)	Selecting cutting and weeding to ensure pathways clear and viewing possible from benches
Summer	Regular lawnmowing
Autumn (October)	Selective pruning to keep larger shrubs / trees a reasonable size Pathway clearing and wedding

### Who is responsible for the pond management

- The Parish Council suggests the maintenance dates
- A small group of volunteers help with the pond maintenance when they are available (see below)
- The whole village is told about the maintenance days so anybody can take part
- Gavin Bennett advises on the pond maintenance when possible, and reviews the pond management plan each year

### Main pond maintenance volunteers

- Aubrey Adcock
- Stephen Adcock
- Cambell Lean
- Barry McHugh
- Ed Hunt
- Margaret Wild
- Gavin Bennett
- Tom Haywood

### Indicative budget

- Up to £2000 could be secured for immediate costs for any additional planting needed
- The Parish Council should ringfence c. £100 per year for any ongoing pond maintenance