

# Crossbow Park Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan



On behalf of: Frampton Cotterell Parish Council

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#### 1.0 Instruction/Scope

- 1.1 We have been instructed by Frampton Cotterell Parish Council to compile a conservation enhancement report to inform the creation of a 5-year management plan for Crossbow Park, Frampton Cotterell.
- 1.2 The objectives of the report are to:
  - 1.2.1 Identify areas of The Park suitable for conservation and biodiversity enhancement.
  - 1.2.2 Provide recommendations for biodiversity enhancement inclusive to all users of the park.
  - 1.2.3 Link recommendations to existing Local Nature Action Plans.
  - 1.2.4 Recommend opportunities to engage and inform local people on the importance and value of nature conservation and biodiversity enhancement.
  - 1.2.5 Produce a 5-year management plan with a view to enhancing the conservation and biodiversity of the site.
- 1.3 This report is based on a ground level assessment of the site. Except where stated, all dimensions are estimated. An arborecological consultant visited the site on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022. The weather was cold and bright.

#### 2.0 Overview of the Site

- 2.1 The 'Crossbow' Park and Pavilion is a public open space area used for recreation which is owned and managed by Frampton Cotterell Parish Council. It is located at grid reference ST 66058 81770 and covers approximately 7.6 ha. The Park is situated in a residential area and approximately 250m northwest of the River Frome. The site is accessed via School Road to the north with 20 allocated parking spaces including disabled parking. Two large fields face southeast and southwest. The east side of the park is adjacent to a school, and Court Road borders the west end. There are a number of pedestrian access points around the park.
- 2.2 The Park is extensively used by numerous groups and local sports teams providing pitches for football, rugby, netball, and cricket teams. The Park also contains facilities for the public including a skateboard ramp, basketball and tennis courts, and children's play area.
- 2.3 The site consists predominately of amenity grassland which is regularly mowed and maintained for recreational use. Amenity grasslands can be considered as 'green deserts' as



they are generally a species-poor habitat. The regular mowing of grassland areas prevents plants from flowering and seeding providing little to no food sources for bees and other pollinators, resulting in a decline in wildlife populations.

- 2.4 A previous arboricultural survey of the site identified thirteen different tree species amongst seventy-seven trees and one group of trees located around the boundary of the Park. Four of the trees are Ash trees which are infected with Ash Dieback Disease and will in future need replacement.
- 2.5 It is proposed to designate parts of the Park to areas for rewilding. Fig. 1 below shows a map of the park with divisions of five zones. These areas are suitable for creating wildlife habitats without changing the function of the park. The strategy for each zone is discussed in section 3.2 and can be seen in the five-year management (Appendix 1).



Figure 1: Map showing different 'Zones' in The Park for biodiversity and conservation enhancement.



#### 3.0 Conservation Strategy

Biodiversity and conservation efforts should serve multiple purposes including benefits to both nature and all members of the community. This report intends to provide recommendations to engage and inform local people about conservation efforts, which in turn may contribute towards the success of this project, and other endeavours within the wider climate crisis fight. The proposed zones within the park will provide different areas suitable to a variety of wildlife species as well as functional for local people and beneficial to the community. The proposals for each zone are stated below. Proposed projects should be carried out in conjunction with local stakeholders and community groups. An updated plan for the park shall be created and approved before 2027 to ensure continuity of care for The Park conservation. No pesticides or chemical fertiliser shall be used to undertake any of the proposed works.

- 3.0.1 Zone 1 should be excluded from regular mowing and left to create a wildflower verge less than or equal to (≤) 2m wide to avoid encroaching on space used by the Rugby Club. The presence of wildflowers will help pollinators and increase biodiversity. The area should be left to grow and cut twice per year during March and in October. Small areas can also be left uncut over winter. Shrubs may be planted in between existing trees, but be considerate of existing bulb planting for height diversity. Trim hedge lightly where required annually and undertake a main hedge cut every 2 years in years 1, 3 and 5. Volunteers to shear or scythe a 0.5m pathway in the long grass to create a barrier between grass zone and residents boundaries in May, July and September.
- 3.0.2 Zone 2 comprises mainly of trees. Manage the trees and monitor for required works as per the current health and safety tree plan. Exclude from regular mowing, cut March and October.

  Leave some areas uncut in winter. Consider planting more wildflower seeds/plug plants.
- 3.0.3 Zone 3 'Community orchard and sensory/wildlife garden' is a wide area which can be designated for tree planting, wildflower meadow and a sensory wildlife area. Exclude from regular mowing, except for a winding pathway mown through for access. Designated areas within the zone can focus on plants which stimulate the senses and benefit wildlife. The garden is designed to be accessible to wheelchair users and therefore the addition of a hoggin path can be considered in collaboration with the PARCS committee. The accessible mown winding path areas of the garden shall be a minimum of 2m away from neighbouring property boundaries and shall be cut May, July and September. Fruit trees can provide food for people and wildlife. The Frampton



'Magnum' Plum tree is a species specific to the area and can tie into the cultural and historic heritage. This area contains 2 large Ash trees which will eventually fail due to Ash Dieback. It is proposed to monolith the trees to 4-6m and be retained as deadwood which provides a vital habitat. Monitor trees and only remove trees if/when a health and safety hazard arises. Survey for bats before works undertaken. Alternatively, a stump can be turned into a carving or bench. Replace the trees with a fruit and native trees. Volunteers to shear or scythe a 0.5m pathway in the long grass to create a barrier between grass zone and residents boundaries in May, July and September. ensure trees only on margin and not near residents homes. Keep mown pathways away from residents homes.

- 3.0.4 Zone 4 'Crossbow' is in the centre of The Park. It is currently used to discard grass cuttings but has potential to create a wildflower verge. The flowers can be arranged in the design of a crossbow to form a connection with the place. A suitable location for a designated grass cutting site first needs to be established. The old grass clippings should be removed with consideration to the tree roots, and wildflowers and/or shrubs planted. Restore the ditch and hedge.
- 3.0.5 Zone 5 consists of the children's play area and the eastern boundary adjacent to the school. It is recommended to plant a mixed species native hedgerow along the school boundary. This promotes the safeguarding of the school and creates lateral diversity important for wildlife. Details for hedgerow planting is discussed in section 3.5. Do not plant hedging on the boundaries of the houses. Along the housing boundary, allow grass to grow and plant wildflowers as needed. Long grass zones cut in spring and autumn and select areas left uncut in winter. The strip should be excluded from regular mowing creating a wildflower verge less than or equal to (≤) 2m wide. Volunteers to shear or scythe a 0.5m pathway in the long grass to create a barrier between grass zone and residents boundaries in May, July and September.
- 3.0.6 Zone 6. Allow grass to grow in year one and plant wildflowers as needed in subsequent years. Long grass zones cut in spring and autumn and select areas left uncut in winter. The strip should be excluded from regular mowing creating a wildflower verge less than or equal to (≤) 2m wide. Leave grass uncut out to bench zone. Consider laying hedge in sections, one section per year in year 2, 3 and 4. Lightly trim hedge where required in autumn/winter annually. Main hedge cut every 2 years in years 2 & 4.



3.0.7 Zone 7 consists of a thin pathway and hedge. Consider laying hedge in sections, one section per year in year 2, 3 and 4. Lightly trim hedge where required in autumn/winter annually. Main hedge cut once every 2 years in years 2 & 4. Zone 7 should extend up to zone 4. Work with PARCS Committee to accommodate potential MUGA. Ensure area 7 does not encroach on the cricket net facilities.

#### 3.1 **Informing and engaging visitors**

It is important for all people to understand what biodiversity is and how it aids us. This can encourage visitors to be more mindful of their environment and shape understanding of concepts such as rewilding, biodiversity, and conservation.

- 3.1.1 Interpretation Boards are a relatively cheap and useful way to inform and engage visitors. They can provide information on why and how leaving natural areas is so important as well as helping people connect with the landscape. It is recommended to place interpretation boards around the site particularly in areas such as the sensory garden, wildlife verges, and community spaces.
- 3.1.2 A mural could be created with paint or painted tiles on the wall in figure 2 involving local artists, school children and/or youth clubs. The them should be "Save Nature. Save the Planet".
- 3.1.3 A marked information sign trail around the perimeter to record the distance for walkers, habitats, and species you may see day and night. This will encourage exercise and engage users of the site with nature.
- 3.1.4 Begin a Green Dog Walker Scheme.
- 3.1.5 To arrange with the cricket club to have grass clippings from cricket squares bagged for removal. Areas to be allocated to leavr clippings in bags in zone 2 and/or Zone 3. It is recommended to work with the cricket club to arrange this and for Full Council to discuss charging the cricket club for clipping removal. Small piles of grass can be made by volunteers to create reptile habitat.

#### Installing bat, bird, and insect boxes

Providing different types of habitats helps maintain biodiversity and equilibrium among wildlife populations. Organisations such as South Glos Owl and Bird of Prey Conservation are a local volunteer group that can install, maintain, and monitor bird and owl boxes. Bat boxes require a licensed handler once the box is inhabited.

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3.1.6 Bat boxes should be installed at a height of 3-6m facing south or east and receiving between

6-8 hours of sunlight per day. Bat boxes can be placed in trees or on buildings. It is important

to avoid areas where tree branches obstruct access to the roost site and are ideally situated on

buildings and brickwork. Once installed and inhabited, bat boxes may only be inspected by a

licensed bat worker.

3.1.7 Bird boxes should be installed in trees facing a north or east direction. This avoids direct

sunlight and provides shelter from prevailing winds and rain. They should be placed where a

clear line of flight gives access to the box. Each bird box should have a different entrance

hole size to accommodate different bird species. (E.g. 130mm x 130mm entrance hole for

barn owls; 32mm x 32mm for house sparrows; 25mm x 25mm for blue, coal, and marsh tits).

3.1.8 Insect boxes or 'bug hotels' should be placed at a height of up to 2m in a south facing

position, or where it will catch the morning sun. Bug hotels need to properly cleaned and

maintained to reduce the risk of spreading diseases to pollinators. Additionally, brash and log

piles can be placed on the floor in a sheltered position. These piles should be secured for

health and safety reasons.

3.2 **Hedgerow planting** 

Mixed species native hedgerows provide valuable habitats for a variety of wildlife. They

should include rambling species such as bramble, dog rose, and ivy. These provide different

types of food at different times of the year. An example of a good hedgerow and maintenance

is provided below. The new hedgerow stock to be British grown and fully hardened off, and

should consist of:

50% Fagus sylvatica (common beech)

25% Corylus avellana (common hazel)

12.5% Sorbus torminalis (wild service tree)

7.5% *Vibernum opulus* (guelder rose)



5% *Ilex aquifolium* (common holly)

Quercus robur (common oak) standard every 6m.

3.2.1 All hedge bare-rooted transplants 40-90cm planted in double staggered rows at 450mm centres with 450mm between rows. Plantings to be fitted with biodegradable rabbit/shrub guards.

#### 3.2.2 **Topsoil and mulch**

All topsoil to be peat-free "General Purpose Grade' in accordance with BS3882:2015 'Topsoil'.

Topsoil to be supplied at the following depths:

- Hedgerows 400mm minimum
- Tree pits 1200mm diameter x 900mm depth

Apply 75mm depth of settled pulverized bark to all planted areas

#### 3.2.3 Watering and maintenance

Supply a minimum of 50 litres per tree and 4 litres per shrub at planting (prior to the application of bark mulch).

Keep clear of weeds for first 5 years.

Pruning – all hedgerow plants should be trimmed by 10% minimum on second year to encourage strong growth.

All plants that die within 5 years will be replaced like for like if failure occurs.

#### 3.3 Creating wildflower areas

The simplest way to create a wildflower area is to stop mowing it and see what plants grow naturally in that area. The grass can be cut twice a year, once during autumn and again in spring. It is advisable to remove all the grass cuttings to reduce soil fertility. The wildflower areas can also be supplemented with British wildflower plugs and seeds. Species such as yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) or 'meadow maker' is a semi parasitic plant which suppresses the growth of vigorous grasses that would otherwise smother a wildflower area. Meadow seed planting is best done during the autumn.

3.3.1 Cutting twice per year during March and October will help reduce the competition from grasses and help wildflowers become established. All cuttings should be removed from the area to keep soil fertility low. Each zone should be cut approximately a week apart to allow

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wildlife to move from one area to the next. Cutting the meadows at different times will also encourage a wider diversity of flowering plants that will flourish through different times of the year.

3.3.2 It is important to retain some areas of long grass or meadow and avoid cutting altogether to allow some invertebrates to live during the winter, and to retain lateral diversity.

3.4 **Local Nature Action Plans** 

South Gloucestershire Council provide resources and guidance on Local Nature Action Plans for town and parish councils. These projects include hedgehog recovery programs, grassland management, tree planting, and nesting birds which can be implemented into the scheme for The Park.

3.5 Five-year Management Plan

A five-year management plan (Appendix 1) has been created to instruct the project described in this report (PLAN MODIFIED BY FCPC). All suggestions are optional and can be used a guide for other schemes. As discussed above, the park has been divided into zones each with a different function that benefits both wildlife and the community. Years 1-3 focus on establishing the zones into new wildlife areas, whilst years 4-5 (and onwards) have emphasis on maintaining the zones, including restocking and replacement if failure occurs.

4.0 Conclusion

This report has been created to inform the process of biodiversity and conservation enhancement for the The Park, Frampton Cotterell. Schemes have been proposed to create areas for wildlife within the park as well as to bring direct benefits to the community. Community engagement is considered essential in promoting awareness and success for natural areas. This can be achieved through interpretation boards and/or murals, as well as providing areas that people can directly benefit, such as through community orchards or increased wellbeing in a sensory garden.

4.1 Lateral structure and diversity within a site is important for providing different habitats for different types of species that fulfil particular niches. This has been achieved through different heights, such as where trees and wildflower meadows grow together.



4.2 The proposed scheme retains the original function of the park as a recreation and sports ground without imposing on this purpose. The scheme has identified areas outside of this to emphasis and enhance natural areas which will in turn bring more benefits to the wider community. It further provides a safety net for the invaluable service nature and wild areas delivers to us in terms of mental and physical wellbeing, aesthetic appeal, and reduction in natural disasters and climate change.

## 5.0 Appendices

- Five-year Management Plan (2022-2027)
- Accompanying Photos

#### **Deb Randall BSc**

Arborecological Consultant Silverback Arboricultural Consultancy January 2021



## Appendix 1: Contractor and Volunteer Management Plans

# THE PARK CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN – CONTRACTOR TASKS

## NO herbicide, insecticide or artificial fertilisers to be used for any conservation works.

Work to be undertaken in the requested month/season. All work times have been carefully considered to minimise wildlife disturbance.

	ZONE 1	ZONE 2	ZONE 3	ZONE 4	ZONE 5	ZONE 6	ZONE 7
YEAR 1	Allow grass to grow to establish wildflower/long grass 2m wide.  Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*  Main cut of hedge and bramble where required once in Autumn/winter**.  Remove ivy growth from wall spring or autumn.	Allow grass to grow establishing wildflower/long grass area.  Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*  Mow winding pathway through wildlife garden/long in May, July and September. Keep mown pathways away from residents homes.		Maintain brambles and nettles and cut back from paths in play area once in autumn.  Allow grass to grow next to new hedgerow to create wildflower area ≤ 2m wide  Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*	Allow grass to grow establishing wildflower area in line with benches (less than or equal to (≤) 2m wide).  Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones* Light trim hedge & brambles if required once in autumn or winter.	Light trim hedge & brambles if required once in autumn or winter.
YEAR 2	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*  Light trim hedge & brambles if required once in autumn or winter.	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*  Mow winding pathway through wildlife garden/long in May, July and		Maintain brambles and nettles, cut back from paths in play area autumn.	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*  Mow path through long grass bimonthly April-sept.	Main cut of hedge where required once in Autumn/winter**.

	Remove ivy growth from wall spring or autumn.		September. Keep mown pathways away from residents homes.			Main cut of hedge where required once in Autumn/winter**.	
YEAR 3	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*  Main cut of hedge and bramble where required once in Autumn/winter**.  Remove ivy growth from wall spring or autumn.	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*  Mow winding pathway through wildlife garden/long in May, July and September. Keep mown pathways away from residents homes.	Maintenance new wildflower/long grass zones*	Maintain brambles and nettles and cut back from paths in play area autumn.	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*  Mow path through long grass bimonthly April-sept.  Light trim hedge & brambles if required once in autumn or winter.	Light trim hedge & brambles if required once in autumn or winter.
YEAR 4	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*  Light trim hedge & brambles if required once in autumn or winter.  Remove ivy growth from wall Spring or Autumn.	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*  Mow winding pathway through wildlife garden/long in May, July and September. Keep mown pathways away from residents homes.	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*  Maintain brambles and nettles and cut back from paths in play area in autumn.	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*  Mow path through long grass bimonthly April-Sept.  Main cut of hedge where required once in Autumn/winter**.	Main cut of hedge where required once in Autumn/winter**.
YEAR 5	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*  Mow winding pathway through	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*  Maintain brambles and nettles, cut	Maintenance wildflower/long grass zones*  Mow path through long grass bimonthly April-Sept.	Light trim hedge & brambles if required once in autumn or winter.

Main cut of hedge	wildlife garden/long	back from paths in		
where required once in	in May, July and	play area autumn.	Light trim hedge & brambles	
Autumn/winter**.	September. Keep		if required once in autumn	
	mown pathways		or winter.	
Remove ivy from wall	away from residents			
Spring or Autumn.	homes.			

<sup>\*</sup>Wildflower areas/long grass zones to be cut twice in March and October with some areas left uncut. Alternate uncut areas each year. Remove arisings from site. Wildflower zone sizes will be reviewed regularly to ensure they do not encroach on sports pitches.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Hedges to be trimmed outside of bird nesting season and contractors to follow the parish council's bird nesting and bat roosting policy. Hedges only to be trimmed in Autumn and Winter. Main hedge cut on rotation every 2 years, with minimal maintenance (light) trims annually where required to avoid encroaching on footpaths and sports pitches. Some cuttings from hedges can be left in small piles along the edges of the site for wildlife.

# PARK CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN – <u>VOLUNTEER TASKS</u>

	ZONE 1	ZONE 2	ZONE 3	ZONE 4	ZONE 5	NB ZONE 6	NB ZONE 7
YEAR 1	Add blue hearts on verges.  Install wildlife trail signs with brail and distance markers around site.  Shear/scythe a 0.5 meter pathway in July and September between long grass zones and residents houses.	Add blue hearts on verges.  Install Bug Hotel/Box.	Add blue hearts on verges.  Create grass piles for reptiles away from trees. Install wildlife trail signs with brail and distance markers around site.  Shear/scythe a 0.5 meter pathway in July and September between long grass zones and residents houses.	Make and add blue hearts to wildflower verges.  Install Bug Hotel/Box.  Nature themed tiled mural on Pavilion by school children/youth club (near zone 4)	Add blue hearts on verges.  Plant native hedgerow along school boundary after autumn grass cut (do not plant in front of houses, utilities check first).  Maintain new hedge — water, mulch, trim vegetation manually.  Install wildlife trail signs with brail and distance markers around site.  Shear/scythe a 0.5 meter pathway in July and September between long grass zones and residents	Add blue hearts on verges.  Install wildlife trail signs with brail and distance markers around site.	
YEAR 2	Monitor long grass/wildflower zones late summer.	Monitor long grass/wildflower zones late summer.	Monitor long grass/wildflower zones late summer.	Planting of wildflower plug plants and shrubs in Spring or Autumn, consider removal of	houses.  Monitor long grass/wildflower zones late summer.	Lay section of hedge.  Monitor long grass/wildflower zones late summer.	Lay section hedge.  Install wildlife trail signs with brail and distance

	Re seed/plug plant wildflowers where required in autumn.  Plant shrubs autumn and add mulch.	Re seed/plug plant wildflowers where required in autumn.  Install wildlife trail signs with brail and	Re seed/plug plant wildflowers where required in autumn. Manual removal of vegetation.	old grass clippings prior to planting.  Restore ditch and hedge (seek contractor if required	Re seed/plug plant wildflowers where required in autumn. Manual removal of vegetation.	Re seed/plug plant wildflowers where required in autumn. Manual removal of vegetation.	markers around site.
	Shear/scythe a 0.5 meter pathway in May, July and September between long grass zones and	distance markers around site.	Plant 8 new fruit/native trees autumn/winter. Water, mulch. Create grass piles for reptiles away from	to support).  Install wildlife trail signs with brail and distance markers around site.	Replace any failed trees in hedgerow.  Maintain new hedge – water, mulch, trim vegetation manually.	Install wildlife trail signs with brail and distance markers around site.	
	residents houses.  Install wildlife trail signs with brail and distance markers around site.		Plant sensory wildlife garden and install small interpretation boards.  Shear/scythe a 0.5 meter pathway in May, July and September between long grass		Shear/scythe a 0.5 meter pathway in May, July and September between long grass zones and residents houses.  Install wildlife trail signs with brail and		
YEAR 3	Install bat and bird	Install bat and bird	zones and residents houses.  Install wildlife trail signs with brail and distance markers around site.  Install bat and bird boxes	Install bat and bird	distance markers around site.	Install bat and bird	Install bat and bird
TEAN 3	boxes	boxes	Create grass piles for	boxes	boxes	boxes	boxes
	Monitor wildflower verges late summer.  Mulch shrubs in spring and/or autumn.	Monitor wildflower verges late summer.	reptiles away from trees.  Monitor wildflower verges late summer.	Monitor wildflower verges late summer.	Maintain new hedge – water, mulch, trim vegetation manually.  Monitor wildflower	Lay section of hedge.  Monitor wildflower verges late summer.	Lay section of hedge.
			Tree care- water, mulch.		verges late summer.		

YEAR 4	Shear/scythe a 0.5 meter pathway in May, July and September between long grass zones and residents houses.  Monitor wildflower verges late summer.  Mulch shrubs in spring	Monitor wildflower verges late summer.	Shear/scythe a 0.5 meter pathway in May, July and September between long grass zones and residents houses. Create grass piles for reptiles away from trees.	Monitor wildflower verges late summer.	Shear/scythe a 0.5 meter pathway in May, July and September between long grass zones and residents houses.  Maintain new hedge — water, mulch, trim vegetation manually.	Lay section of hedge.  Monitor wildflower verges late summer.	Lay section of hedge.
	and/or autumn.  Shear/scythe a 0.5 meter pathway in May, July and September between long grass zones and residents houses.		Monitor wildflower verges late summer  Tree care- water, mulch.  Shear/scythe a 0.5 meter pathway in May, July and September between long grass zones and residents houses.		Monitor wildflower verges late summer.  Shear/scythe a 0.5 meter pathway in May, July and September between long grass zones and residents houses.		
YEAR 5	Monitor wildflower verges late summer.  Mulch shrubs in spring and/or autumn.  Shear/scythe a 0.5 meter pathway in May, July and September between long grass zones and residents houses.	Monitor wildflower verges late summer.	Tree care- water, mulch.  Create grass piles for reptiles away from trees.  Monitor wildflower verges late summer.  Shear/scythe a 0.5 meter pathway in May, July and September between long grass zones and residents houses.	Monitor wildflower verges late summer.	Maintain new hedge – water, mulch, trim vegetation manually.  Monitor wildflower verges late summer.  Shear/scythe a 0.5 meter pathway in May, July and September between long grass zones and residents houses.	Monitor wildflower verges late summer.	

NB ensure utilities/services checks are up to date (within 1 year) prior to any tree/hedge planting or ditch restoral works.

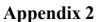






Figure 2 Picture showing proposed location for rewilding mural



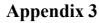






Figure 3: Plan showing footpaths and access into Zone 2

