

Stonehouse Newt Ponds & Green Spaces; 2 year management plan

(March 2015 to March 2017)

Annual Site Management

The experience gained throughout the duration of the Biffa Award funded project at Stonehouse Newt Ponds has given us considerable insight into the maintenance and management requirements to keep this site in a condition favourable to its very important newt population.

Ponds: September to January (Great Crested Newts (GCN) are in or around the ponds March to late August)

Further concentrated work over the next two years is needed to restore the Main and Western Cutting ponds to 'favourable conditions' for the GCN population. In the mid-term this will mean the work of clearing the ponds will become more manageable, with the long-term objective being healthy ponds supporting not only a good GCN population but a variety of aquatic life.

- Clearance of further reed growth in Main Pond
- Clearance of duckweed and rubbish in Eastern Cutting

Spring: March to May

Main work during this period is clearance of vegetation and footpaths around the ponds.

- Newt surveys (March, April & May)
- Clearing vegetation along ARCO guarding
- Strimming of footpaths ONLY in grassland compartments

Summer: June to September

The main task in this period is maintenance of the Main Pond and Western Cutting grassland areas. The current maintenance programme meets the requirements for GCN habitat – tussocky, grassland sward structure that provides a good foraging habitat for newts and other wildlife.

- Cutting both grassland areas (late June to end of July)
- Cutting boundaries outside Main Pond, Western & Eastern Cuttings compartments

Autumn/Winter: October to March

- Scrub clearance along both Western and Eastern Cuttings
- Cutting back old hawthorn adjacent to public footpath and Western Cutting
- Habitat and hedgerow restoration work (Eastern Cutting)
- Construction of newt refuges
- Continued work in woodland area

Funding

If we apply for funding to carry out a 3 year project to get the site up to a favourable standard we hope this will enable us to maintain the site on an annual basis at a cost of

24 days per year @ £175 per day (project officer + volunteers) = £4200

We would like to apply for funding for a new 3 year project, this project would include project officer for 2 days per week to manage volunteers on site, get the site to a favourable standard and deliver the following

Public Events

- Newt Survey, Friday night/Saturday morning
- Grassland management, cutting and raking
- Wetland Wonderland Open Day
- Hedgerow restoration project Eastern Cutting

Capital Projects/costs

- Construction of small decking platform in Western Cutting pond (Contractor wk, £3000 + VAT, £3600 incl VAT, approximate cost).
- Installing one or two wooden benches, £200 to £300, on-site (1 day per bench, 1 bench per year).
- Buying of multi-head strimmer for on going management at site £300
- Telescopic long handled pruning saw £80
- SVP officer liaison & construction time for creating new ponds,
- Material costs for building new ponds i.e. pond lining, underlay & pond plants.

We have identified Esmee Fairburn as a possible funder for this project and would like to ask Stonehouse Town Council for a financial contribution towards match funding. We estimate the project will cost in the region of £70 to £80K over three years. We would like to ask Stonehouse Town Council for match funding in each financial year of the project, ideally it would cover most or all of the annual maintenance costs of the site.