

# Open Space Condition Assessment

Little Stanion Farm Management Company

Little Stanion, Corby, Northamptonshire



Ref: 19-2117  
Version: V1  
Date: 10/02/2020

Arboriculture

Ecology

Forestry & Woodland Management

Landscape & Green Infrastructure

Minerals & Waste Restoration

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Sophie Lockhart	28/01/20	11/02/20	V1

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## Purpose of Document

Lockhart Garratt Ltd was commissioned by Little Stanion Farm Management Company to undertake an independent condition assessment of the existing public open spaces at Little Stanion, Corby.

This document presents the findings of this assessment and provides, where relevant, remedial works or ongoing management recommendations for each open space type within each area.

## Executive Summary

Since the last annual survey, it is clear that the site has been well managed and is generally in a tidy and clean condition. As further construction of new pathways is underway, it is clear that the grass has been damaged in some locations, although it is clear that following the last survey, recommended measures have been undertaken and as such, it is considered that ongoing management will see these areas fully established going forward.

The bottom section of Long Meadow still shows signs of disturbance, which has resulted in the loss of large sections of grass. This section is considered to be in most need of attention once activity has ceased within this part of the site.

Overall, all open spaces are well kept and it is clearly apparent that remedial action has been undertaken on issues arising from the continuing construction process.

This report makes the following recommendations to ensure the continued improvement of the amenity and biodiversity value of Little Stanion:

- Application of herbicide and clearance of French drain where vegetation has overgrown.
- Herbicide treatment of any broadleaved species growing along the edge of footpath. Care is to be taken to minimise herbicide contact with the adjacent grass sward, e.g. by use of a weed wipe or similar.
- Poisoning and removal of willow species from swales and basins to avoid encroachment within the mid-section of Long Meadow (it is noted that some trees appear to have been marked for removal since the last assessment).
- Patches of broad-leaved species developing within the mid-section of Long Meadow to be sprayed off with a suitable translocated herbicide, e.g. glyphosate and grass sward to be reinstated.
- Ground levelling within the bottom section of Long Meadow and reinstatement of grass sward, with additional ground levelling and reinstatement of grass required within the northern section of the southern bund.
- Grass reseeding in damaged areas.
- Removal of litter from swales and grates to ensure that flow of water is not restricted.
- Repairs to fence recommended to discourage deer and unpermitted access.
- French drain within northern section of Southern Wooded Bund to be repaired and ground levelled before reseeding.
- Replacement of damaged tree ties and removal of cable ties on trees to ensure growth is not impeded.
- Ongoing management and removal of litter/fly tipped material from the small section at the rear of properties along Roman Way.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Instruction

1.1. The following open space areas of Little Stanion are currently open to the public and were considered as part of this assessment:

- Top Meadow;
- Long Meadow;
- Southern Wooded Bund;
- Short Meadow;
- Badger Alley; and
- Northern Wooded Bund.

1.2. The locations of these various areas are shown on Plan Ref. M14-1237 v3 at **Appendix 1**.

### Scope of Assessment

1.3. This report relates to the condition of the above public open spaces as judged at the time of survey(s), which were carried out on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2019 and 10<sup>th</sup> January 2020. It wholly assesses the public land within the control of Little Stanion Farm Management Company, and excludes all public open spaces, incidental open spaces, play areas, and all other land within Little Stanion that falls under the control and/or ownership of third parties.

### Limitations

1.4. This is a landscape management assessment report and therefore any comments made in relation to hydrology, engineering or other disciplines should be taken as general comment or observation for referral to appropriate specialists.

1.5. This report is an assessment of the management of the resources currently in place at Little Stanion and does not cover the creation of additional landscape treatments or open space areas.

## 2. TOP MEADOW

### Description

- 2.1. This area is located on the north-western boundary of Little Stanion. It is a linear strip of amenity grassland bounded to the south, west and north-west by adjacent woodland (offsite). The eastern boundary is defined by a post and rail fence beyond which lie the existing properties associated with the north eastern boundary of Little Stanion.

### Assessment

#### *Grassland*

- 2.2. The grass sward is established and is cut to amenity height. The ground was waterlogged and heavily saturated in places, with evidence of water pooling as shown in Figures 1 and 2 below. This is considered to be the result of a period of prolonged wet weather rather than a failure of the site and as such no remedial action is proposed.



Figure 2



Figure 1

- 2.3. The grass within Top Meadow was patchy in places, with some areas of bare earth evident. This will need reseeding.



Figure 3

#### *Boundary Fence*

- 2.4. The boundary fence with the adjoining properties was damaged in places, with some rails missing. In addition an access gate from the adjoining properties was noted within this fence. It is unclear whether this access was permitted. Remedial actions will see the missing rails in the fence replaced and the access gate removed should this not be a permitted feature.



Figure 5



Figure 4

***Litter***

- 2.5. At the time of the survey the area was free of litter and dog mess.

***French Drains***

- 2.6. A French Drain appears to have been installed in a localised area adjacent to one of the property boundaries along the southern edge of Top Meadow where water appears to have been draining across Top Meadow and towards the rear garden of this property. Debris associated with this installation remains adjacent to the garden boundary at this point. If this drain is permitted then debris should be removed, and the drain formalised along this boundary.



Figure 6



Figure 7

***Pathways***

- 2.7. No ruts were evidenced on or adjacent to the pathways within Top Meadow at the time of the survey. Water was, however, covering the pathway in places.



Figure 9



Figure 8

### ***Area of Tree Planting***

- 2.8. The area of tree planting was identified along the western edge of Top Meadow by the link to the Roman Road. It was confirmed that a number of trees adjacent to residential property No. 73 had been queried by the residents as lying too close to their property. As such a number of trees (orange sprayed) were identified to be relocated away from the property. Remedial action will see these trees relocated away from the property.
- 2.9. Some waterlogged areas were evident within this planted area, and any trees that subsequently fail as a result of this are recommended to be replaced.



**Figure 11**



**Figure 10**

### 3. LONG MEADOW

#### Description

- 3.1. Long Meadow accounts for the largest area of open space within the site. It bisects the site from Top Meadow in a south-easterly direction, and is centred on a primary swale and associated ephemeral basins.
- 3.2. This area comprises amenity grassland for much of its length, although the south-eastern part is meadow grassland. There is a large detention basin at the lower end of Long Meadow.

#### Assessment

##### *Amenity Grassland*

- 3.3. The grass sward is well established and has been cut to amenity height. Areas of poor grass cover were evidenced throughout this area, primarily adjacent to pathways. Application of grass seed will therefore be required.



Figure 12



Figure 14



Figure 13

- 3.4. Some broadleaved species are noted to have grown adjacent to pathways where grass has failed. It is recommended that these be cleared and grass reinstated.



Figure 16



Figure 15

- 3.5. The ground within the southern section of Long Meadow was noted to be heavily compacted and waterlogged. Grass in this area is incredibly patchy (Fig 17&18) with areas adjacent to the lake completely destroyed by construction traffic (Fig 19&20). It is recommended that when construction is complete, the ground is to be levelled and the grass in this area reinstated.



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 17

### ***Trees***

3.6. Throughout Long Meadow the majority of planted trees were in good condition with no obvious defects. There were however, a number of trees towards the lower end of the Meadow whose crowns had been snapped, or who had missing tree ties. A number of trees had also been cable tied to their canes and were now displaying signs of affected growth as a result, with the ties cutting in to the trunks. Cable ties on all trees are therefore to be removed. Damaged trees are to be replaced and damaged tree ties to be replaced.



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23

### ***Swales and Ephemeral basins***

3.7. Within the SUDs basins a number of trees appeared to have been marked. It was unclear as to whether this was for removal, however it is considered that a number of trees within these drainage channels were either damaged or growing too large for the area and so removal is recommended.



Figure 25



Figure 24

- 3.8. Rubbish and debris was found within the SUDs basins with evidence of plastic waste and, within the lower basin, a child's car seat. A large proportion of this litter was caught in one of the grates along the SUDs channel with the potential to restrict flow should this level of debris increase. This debris should therefore be removed and grates cleared.



Figure 26



Figure 27

### ***Planted Beds***

- 3.9. Within the planted beds there was evidence of weed growth and so this will need to be monitored, with weeds removed as required. As the site observation was undertaken in winter, plant health was not able to be identified and as such further summer assessment will be required. Mulch within these beds was also running low in places with some bare earth evidenced in patches. Mulch will therefore need to be topped up in these locations.



Figure 29



Figure 28

***Hedgerows***

- 3.10. In the assessment it was noted that a number of canes were missing from the hedgerow planting that sat against footpath routes. These canes will therefore need to be replaced.

***Lake***

- 3.11. The Lake to the bottom of Long Meadow was for the most part in good condition. Minor evidence of littering was found with some debris noted along the northern edge of the lakeside and this will require removal.

## 4. SOUTHERN WOODED BUND

### Description

- 4.1. This area of young planted woodland defines the south-western and south-eastern boundaries of Little Stanion. It also continues partway along the north-western boundary. It comprises a number of native tree species, including a small percentage of evergreen broadleaf.
- 4.2. A glade has been left unplanted at the southernmost point of the site and views of the surrounding landscape are obtainable from this point.
- 4.3. A large undergrounding pylon is present to the east of this area.

### Assessment

#### *Woodland*

- 4.4. The woodland appears well established, however a number of damaged trees were evidenced along the eastern edge of this bund, with snapped or broken guards and missing crowns, potentially as a result of deer damage. These will therefore need to be replaced.



Figure 32



Figure 31



Figure 30

#### *Fences*

- 4.5. Some fence damage was observed along the northern and eastern fence line. Along the western boundary a number of accesses were also evidenced. It was not clear whether these are permitted however. Remedial access will therefore require repairs to the fence and blocking of unpermitted accesses to the wider landscape to the west.



Figure 34



Figure 33

#### *Paths*

- 4.6. The pathways in this area are relatively well maintained however within the northern section the ground is heavily saturated and well-trodden with grass mostly destroyed. Deer slots are also evident within this areas. Grass to be reseeded.



Figure 35



Figure 36

#### ***French Drain and SUDs Channel***

- 4.7. Within the top section of the Southern Wooded Bund the French drain that crosses the path appears to have been significantly deteriorated with water spilling across the path towards the swale along the eastern edge of this boundary. The land at this point appears to be significantly rutted and the grass too appears to have been destroyed. This land will need to be levelled and grass reinstated.



Figure 38



Figure 37

## 5. SHORT MEADOW

### *Description*

- 5.1. Short Meadow is located within the south-western part of the site and runs approximately parallel to Long Meadow.
- 5.2. It mainly comprises amenity grassland, although a swale runs along its south-western boundary.

### **Assessment**

#### *Grassland*

- 5.3. The grass in this area is generally well established, although some of the grass adjacent to the pathways is patchy and has been somewhat deteriorated with some additional areas of deteriorated grassland evident close to the roadway that bisects this section. Grass is to be reseeded in these locations.



Figure 39



Figure 40

- 5.4. Evidence of ground saturation and pooling was also found throughout this section, due to severe weather preceding the survey(s). No remedial action required.

#### *Trees*

- 5.5. The majority of trees within this section are healthy and well established however, as within Long Meadow, a number of tree ties have been damaged. A number of trees had also been cable tied to their canes and were now displaying signs of affected growth as a result, with the ties cutting in to the trunks. Cable ties on all trees are therefore to be removed and damaged tree ties replaced.



Figure 41

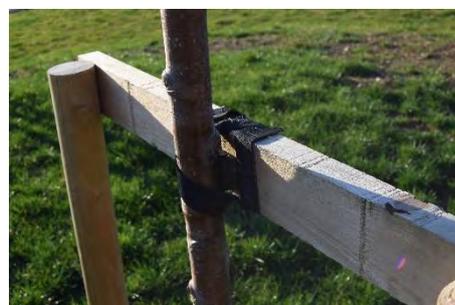


Figure 42

### ***SUDs Basin***

- 5.6. Some evidence of littering was found within the SUDs basin with litter caught within the grills. Litter to be removed.



**Figure 44**



**Figure 43**

## 6. BADGER ALLEY

### Description

- 6.1. This area follows the line of a disused railway, which has since been restored to grassland.
- 6.2. It currently comprises meadow grassland with a central mown path, bounded either side by mature hedges.

### Assessment

#### *Meadow Grass*

- 6.3. Grass was, for the most part, in good condition however heavily saturated and patchy in places due to pedestrian traffic and heavy rainfall prior to the survey. No remedial action required.



Figure 46



Figure 45

#### *Hedgerows*

- 6.4. Hedgerows appear well established and have been left unmanaged for biodiversity benefit.

#### *Litter*

- 6.5. The area was for the most part litter free however several bags of dog foul were evidenced to be hanging from the hedgerow. These are to be removed.



Figure 48



Figure 47

## 7. NORTHERN WOODED BUND

### Description

- 7.1. This feature is located on the northern boundary of Little Stanion with Long Croft Road, and forms one of the main frontages to the site.
- 7.2. It comprises a grassed bund planted with native trees and shrubs, with a hedgerow along its northern boundary on the public highway frontage.

### Assessment

#### *Woodland*

- 7.3. The woodland and trees along this bund are establishing well, a number of trees showed some damage but are not anticipated to require replacement. No remedial action required.
- 7.4. The area to the bottom edge of the bund, along the rear gardens of properties along Roman Road, has been cut back however it is likely that continuous management of regrowth will be required. Evidence of litter and fly tipping was found in this area. This will require maintenance and ongoing management to deter this activity.



Figure 50



Figure 49

#### *Hedgerow*

- 7.5. Hedgerows appeared well established and managed however some gaps in the hedgerow were evident and may require replacement/management going forward.



Figure 51

## 8. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary

- 8.1. The current management of the site is considered to be of a high standard. All areas were, for the most part, litter free, and appear to have been establishing well. Grassed areas have been well managed and have been kept to a good height. A small number of recommendations have been suggested and have been listed below.

### Recommendations

#### *Top Meadow*

- 8.2. Grass to be reseeded in damaged areas.
- 8.3. Relocation of trees (orange marked) away from the property boundary of No. 73.

#### *Long Meadow*

- 8.4. Poisoning and removal of willow species from swales and basins to avoid encroachment within the mid-section of Long Meadow.
- 8.5. Herbicide treatment of patches of broad-leaved species developing within the mid-section of Long Meadow and reinstatement of grass sward.
- 8.6. Ground levelling within the bottom section of Long Meadow and reinstatement of grass sward.
- 8.7. Replacement of damaged tree ties and removal of cable ties on trees to ensure growth is not impeded.
- 8.8. Litter to be removed from swales and grates to ensure that flow of water is not restricted.

#### *Southern Wooded Bund*

- 8.9. Repairs to fence recommended to discourage deer and unpermitted access.
- 8.10. French drain within northern section to be repaired and ground levelled before reseeding.

#### *Short Meadow*

- 8.11. Some reseeding required on areas of damaged grassland.
- 8.12. Replacement of damaged tree ties and removal of cable ties on trees to ensure growth is not impeded.
- 8.13. Litter to be removed from swales and grates to ensure that flow of water is not restricted.

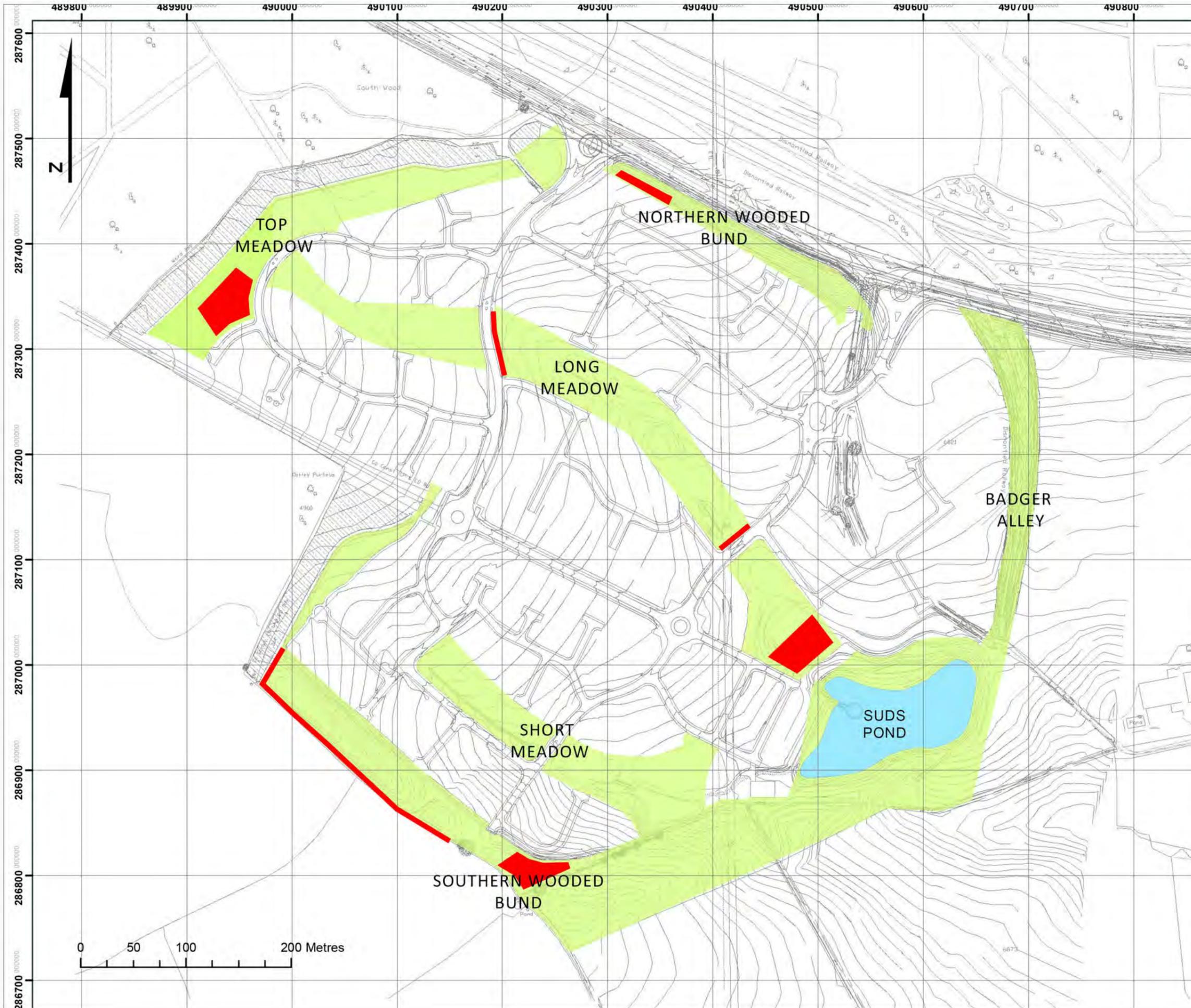
#### *Northern Wooded Bund*

- 8.14. Ongoing management and removal of litter from small section at the rear of properties along Roman Way.

## 9. APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Open Space Plan

Ref: M14-1237



-  Open Space
-  Water
-  Areas for Improvement



TITLE		Open Space Plan	
PROJECT/SITE		Little Stanion	
CLIENT		JME Civils	
MAP REF		M14-1237	
VERSION		v3	
DATE	11/02/20	SCALE	NOT TO SCALE
APPROVED BY:	ID	PRODUCED BY:	SL

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