

OPEN SPACE CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Little Stanion Farm Management Company

Little Stanion, Corby, Northamptonshire



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Arboriculture

Ecology

Forestry & Woodland Management

Landscape & Green Infrastructure

Minerals & Waste Restoration

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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 has taken place within the open areas, and new pedestrian bridges and a playground have been introduced, some damage has clearly been caused to the existing grass, however it was noted that these disturbed areas have been reseeded and are expected to recover fully.

The bottom section of Long Meadow has been heavily disturbed by construction traffic, and has resulted in loss of large sections of grass. This section is considered to be in most need of attention once construction activity has ceased within this part of the site.

Overall, all open spaces are well kept and it is clearly apparent that remedial attention 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 broad-leaved 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.
- Patches of broad-leaved species developing within the mid-section of Long Meadow to be sprayed off with chemical such as glyphosate and grass sward to be reinstated.
- Ground levelling within the bottom section of Long Meadow and reinstatement of grass sward.
- Herbicide treatment of broad-leaved species around tree stations and clearance of overgrown vegetation at the small section at the rear of properties along Roman Way.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Extent of Assessment

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;
- Short Meadow;
- Front Wooded Bund;
- Rear Wooded Bund;
- Badger Alley; and
- Welcome Centre Green.

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, which was carried out on the 17th December 2018. 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 to the north-west of the development extent 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 and property boundaries, with the exception of the boundary with the highway, which is open. There are no other features of note.

Assessment

Grassland

- 2.2. The grass sward is fully established and recently cut to amenity height. Ground was wet in places, although this has not caused establishment issues. No remediation is necessary.
- 2.3. Some broadleaved species developing along the edge of the footpath, and in some patches to the north-west near the entrance to the public footpath. This is to be sprayed off. (Fig.1)



Fig.1

Litter

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

French Drains

- 2.5. French drain notably overgrown with vegetation in a few patches along the residential fencing in the north-east. This is to be cleared out with a line of herbicide applied. (Fig.2)



Fig.2

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 recently cut to amenity height. It is visible that new seed has been applied within several areas of Long Meadow within its top and middle section, as grass has been damaged due to the installation of the new bridge and playground.
- 3.4. At the south end of Long Meadow meeting Roman Road, two new French drains have been installed. Application of grass seed is necessary.
- 3.5. The bottom section of Long Meadow closest to the Lake was observed to be highly compacted and water logged. A large section of the grass has also been completely destroyed by construction traffic. It is recommended that once the construction process is complete, the ground is to be levelled and grass reinstated. (Fig.3)
- 3.6. Some broad-leaved species noted to have developed in 3 patches within the middle section of Long Meadow. It is recommended that these be cleared and grass reinstated. (Fig.4)



Fig.3



Fig.4

Swales and Ephemeral basins

- 3.7. The swales have been colonised by rushes, reeds, and willows, and are becoming well established wetland habitat. This has improved the appearance of Long Meadow considerably. However, cut and poison application to the willow species is recommended, to avoid encroachment, blockage and excessive leaf drop.

Lake

- 3.8. As with the swales and ephemeral basins, the lake has become colonised by willow and reeds. The overall management of the vegetation in the lake is of good standard, and has created a favourable habitat for wetland birds.

Fencing

- 3.9. Post and rail fences lining Long Meadow in good condition.

Litter

- 3.10. At the time of survey all areas were generally litter free.

4. SHORT MEADOW

Description

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

Assessment

Grassland

- 4.3. Grass has recently been cut to amenity height, and is overall well established.

Swale

- 4.4. No shrubs or trees are established within Short Meadow swale. Some water was observed to be pooled on the surface at the bottom of swale due to recent weather conditions.

Litter

- 4.5. This area was litter free at the time of survey.

Fencing

- 4.6. Fencing was found in good condition overall, with the exception of 2 broken rails besides the corner property where Mendip Way meets Short Meadow. (Fig.5)



Fig.5

5. NORTHERN WOODED BUND

Description

- 5.1. 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.
- 5.2. 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

- 5.3. The trees are establishing well, with no requirement for remedial action.
- 5.4. Grasses and broadleaved weeds have started developing around the bases of trees, and therefore herbicide application may be required in March and July as per standard practice.
- 5.5. Bottom edge of the bund, along the rear gardens of properties along Roman Road, is overgrown and unmanaged. It is recommended that this area be strimmed off and then mowed as part of the site wide regime. Some fly tipping over garden fences was also observed in this area, and regular maintenance will assist in deterring this activity. (Fig.6)



Fig.6

Hedgerow

- 5.6. The hedge has been recently clipped to a height of around 1.3m, and is in good condition, with a small gap visible where hedgerow has been planted more sparsely due to services set up below. No requirement for remedial action.

Litter

- 5.7. The area was litter free at the time of survey.

6. SOUTHERN WOODED BUND

Description

- 6.1. 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, and a small percentage of evergreen broadleaf.
- 6.2. The deer fencing running along the length of the woodland area has been recently removed, as the stock is now sufficiently established.
- 6.3. A glade has been left unplanted at the southernmost point of the site and views of the surrounding landscape are obtainable from this point.
- 6.4. A large undergrounding pylon is present to the east of this area.

Assessment

Woodland

- 6.5. The woodland trees are well established, with very few failures dotted along the tree lines.
- 6.6. It was noted that the majority of tree guards have been removed since last inspection. Some tree guards are left on a small proportion of the trees, with some trees overgrowing them, and therefore these should be removed.

Path

- 6.7. The French drain previously installed appears to be functioning well in conveying rainfall from this area. A few patches where water has pooled on the surface have been noted, most likely due to recent weather conditions.

Litter

- 6.8. The area was free of litter at the time of survey.

7. BADGER ALLEY

Description

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

Assessment

Meadow Grass

- 7.3. Grass sward is in good condition and has been mown at the end of the growing season. It was observed to be fairly wet at the time of survey, however based upon historic knowledge of this area there is no reason to assume surface water would be a potential issue.

Hedgerows

- 7.4. These hedges have been left unmanaged for biodiversity benefit. Overall, they are mostly well established with some very few gaps due to seasonal changes.

Litter

- 7.5. The area was litter free at the time of survey.

8. WELCOME CENTRE

Description

- 8.1. The Little Stanion Welcome Centre building is located at the northern extent of the site. The associated open space comprises amenity grassland with a small number of planting beds.

Assessment

Amenity Grassland

- 8.2. Grass sward is well established and recently cut to amenity height. The area was tidy and well maintained.

Herbaceous Planting

- 8.3. All shrub planting is well established. Perennial species are entering dormancy, although appear to also be well established. It is recommended that dead growth noted be trimmed back as well as lavender beds, in order to provide best results once in season.

Fencing

- 8.4. Overall in good condition, two rails need replacing behind Welcome Centre. (Fig.7)



Fig. 7

Litter

- 8.5. The area was litter free at the time of survey.

9. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

- 9.1. The current management of the site, as observed, is considered to be of a high standard. All areas were tidy and litter free, and continue to establish well. Grass has been well managed in all areas and kept to a good height, with the evidence for new seed being planted in patches where existing grass has been disrupted by construction. A small number of recommendations are made to ensure that this trend continues, and these are listed below.

Recommendations

Top Meadow

- 9.2. Application of herbicide and clearance of French drain where vegetation has overgrown.
- 9.3. Herbicide treatment of any broad-leaved 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.

Long Meadow

- 9.4. Poisoning and removal of willow species from swales and basins to avoid encroachment within the mid-section of Long Meadow.
- 9.5. Herbicide treatment of patches of broad-leaved species developing within the mid-section of Long Meadow and reinstatement of grass sward.
- 9.6. Ground levelling within the bottom section of Long Meadow and reinstatement of grass sward.

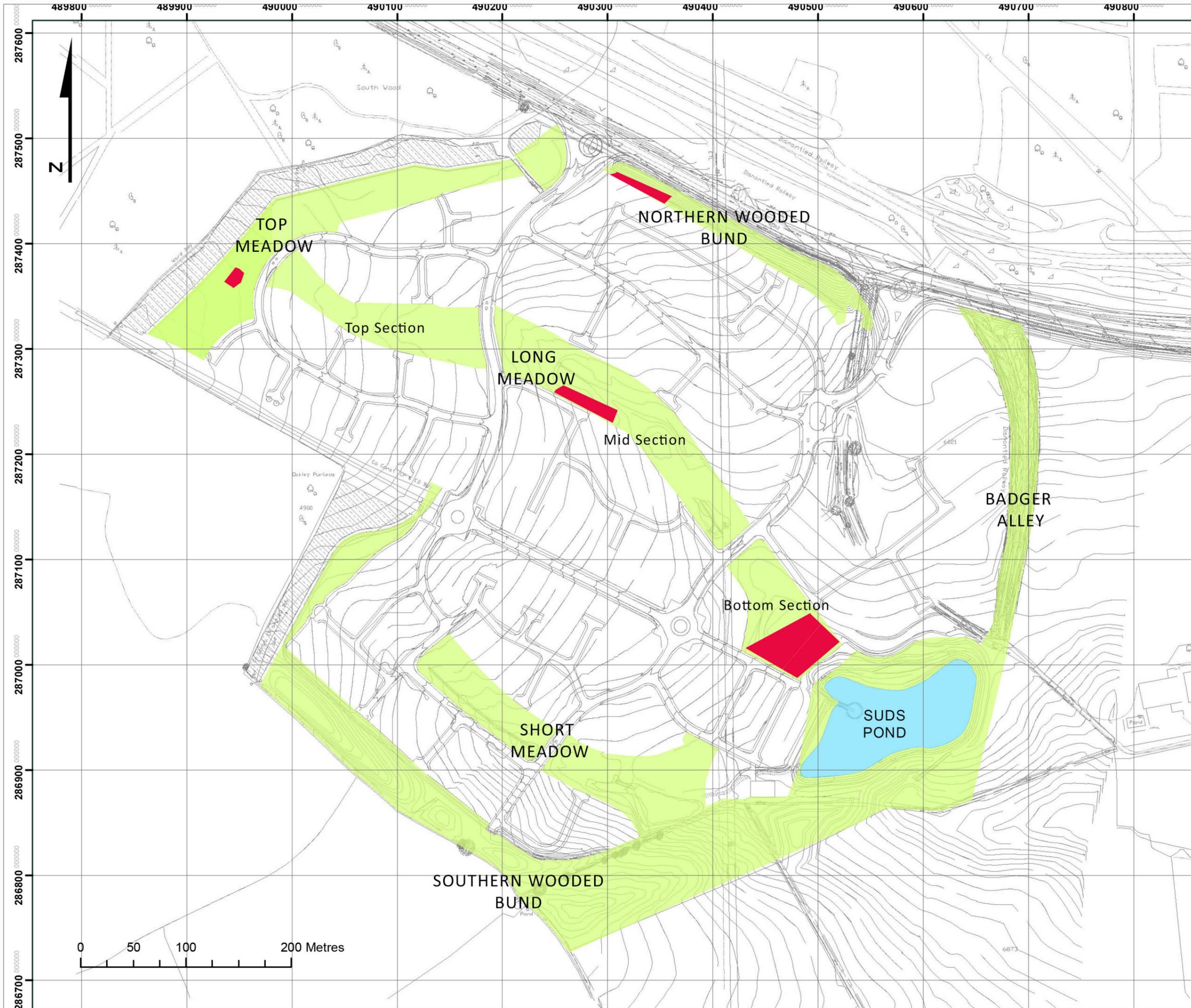
Northern Wooded Bund

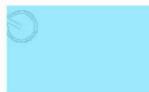
- 9.7. Herbicide treatment of broad-leaved species around tree stations and clearance of overgrown vegetation at the small section at the rear of properties along Roman Way.

10. 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: 08/01/2019	SCALE: NOT TO SCALE
APPROVED BY: IJD	PRODUCED BY: GC
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