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Landscape Condition Assessment

Little Stanion Farm Management Company

Little Stanion

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REVISION HISTORY

Rev	Description of change	Date	Initials
1	Original draft	23/10/2023	CB
2	Quality Check	23/10/2023	ID
3	Version 1	23/10/2023	CB

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1. PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

- 1.1 Nicholsons was commissioned by Little Stanion Farm Management Company to undertake an independent condition assessment of the existing public open spaces at Little Stanion, Corby.
- 1.2 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.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Overall, the site is well maintained and tidy. It is evident that all general maintenance such as mowing, strimming, litter picking, weeding, etc. are all kept well in-hand and that periodic maintenance such as lake / swale clearance and tree maintenance have been undertaken where and when required or are being managed on a rotational basis.
- 2.2 The site is also being developed with new tree planting and new areas of wildflower meadow being introduced.
- 2.3 Outstanding issues that should be addressed are the incomplete inlet into the lake, which requires a security grill and landscaping and the SUDS at the bottom of short meadow, which requires re-landscaping following clearance and the completion of nearby building works.
- 2.4 Most of the tree planting has become well established and some areas are becoming, or have the potential to become, overcrowded and either require thinning or will do in the next 2-3 years. We would recommend a woodland survey to identify trees to be thinned. Ash dieback has the potential to become a problem and the woodland survey should also identify which should be removed to give the healthiest trees the best opportunities. There are also some mature ash trees on site which should also be assessed as part of any survey, which will provide recommendations for their ongoing management.
- 2.5 There are several willow trees on-site, in the swales and lake edges, which are becoming mature and are likely to require pollarding on a rotational basis if they are to be retained. An arboricultural survey should identify which trees should be prioritised and any that are likely to pose a risk.
- 2.6 Despite there being deer fencing around the western and northern edges of the site, it is evident deer are encroaching on the site and causing damage. The condition of the deer fencing should be assessed and repaired where required. We'd also recommend seeking further advice on the management and control of the deer.
- 2.7 There are a few feature trees which have become damaged and the ongoing health of these should be monitored and the trees replaced as required.

3. INTRODUCTION

Extent of Assessment

3.1 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
- Rear Meadow
- Front Wooded Bund
- Rear Wooded Bund
- Badger Alley
- Hare Bund
- Welcome Centre Green

3.2 The locations of these various areas are shown on the plan at Appendix 1

Assessment Methodology



3.3 The assessment was undertaken as an on-foot survey on 28th September 2023, in which each area was visited and comprehensively walked. The condition of the various landscape treatments (grassland, wetland, etc) was recorded, as well as general observations such as the presence or absence of litter. Illustrative photographs were taken and are displayed throughout this report in the relevant sections.







Assessment Limitations





3.4 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.






3.5 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.

4. SURVEY REPORT

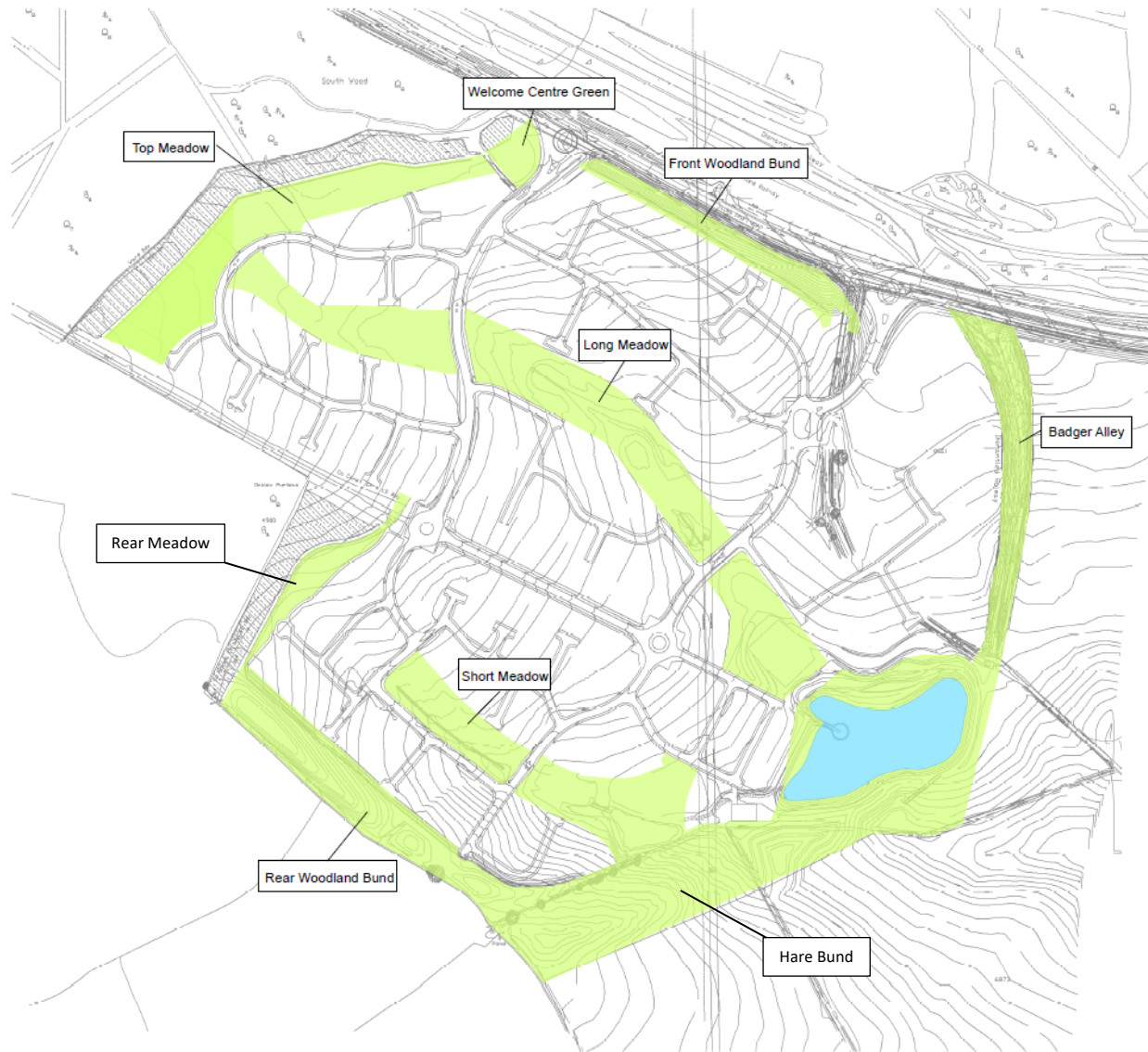
Location	Element	Condition / Observations	Remedial Actions / Recommendations	Illustrative Photographs
Whole Site	Litter	Very little litter observed throughout the site.		
	Fencing	Generally in good condition. Visually, deer fencing on the site perimeter looked in good condition but evidence of deer within the site would indicate there are gaps or damage that could not be seen on walkaround inspection. Some damaged post and rail fencing was observed on the boundaries of the communal spaces, but it should be noted this was outside the area of responsibility of the LSFMC.	Further investigation of deer fencing to identify extent of deer access points and carry out repairs. It is advisable to continue to minimise deer activity onsite to prevent damage to existing trees and to protect future planting.	
	Paths & Tracks	All surfaced paths in good condition, well maintained and kept weed free. Some informal unsurfaced paths have the potential to become muddy in places.	Consider applying waste woodchip (produced from other activities on-site) to localised areas	
	Bridges	All bridges in good condition.		
	Amenity grass	All amenity grass areas are well managed and maintained. In recent years more areas are now being developed as wildflower meadows and not regularly mown, particularly swale margins. This is strongly encouraged and should greatly improve the biodiversity within the site.		
	Play Areas	Overall, well maintained with evidence of repairs to surfaces. Free of litter. Equipment looks in good condition but not inspected beyond visual inspection. Fencing well-maintained and evidence of weed management by spraying		
Top Meadow	Meadow	In recent years some areas have been converted from amenity grassland to wildflower meadow and some tree planting carried out.	Recommend some infill tree planting into recently planted areas to replace losses and fill gaps. Recommend this area be developed as scrub so suitable UK native species should be selected. Whips or feathers should be used.	
Long Meadow	Swale / SUDS	Established with wildflower and aquatic marginal species which are cut annually at an appropriate time of year. Incursion of bullrush could impede the function of the swale and suds basins in time. Some self-set willow trees have become well-established and others are establishing. There is evidence that the channel entry and exit points are regularly cleared of plant growth, silt, and debris on a rotational basis.	Condition of trees should be regularly inspected as part of an ongoing tree management plan. Recommend coppicing of established willows on rotation. Smaller willow trees should be cut or removed to prevent domination. Bullrush will require periodic digging out to prevent over-domination. Current regime of channel clearing to continue.	

Location	Element	Condition / Observations	Remedial Actions / Recommendations	Illustrative Photographs
	Trees	Generally, most feature trees are establishing well and looking healthy, however some show evidence of damage (vandalism or wind) and some look like they are struggling.	Monitor ongoing growth and consider replacement where no longer viable.	
Short Meadow	Trees	Generally, most feature trees are establishing well and looking healthy, however some show evidence of damage (vandalism or wind) and some look like they are struggling.	Monitor ongoing growth and consider replacement where no longer viable.	
	Swale	The swale is mainly populated with grass species and is trimmed/mown once a year. It is free from trees and bullrush.	Debris to be cleared from exit channel.	 
	SUDS basin	Evidence that this is in the process of being cleared of bullrushes and de-silted although further work is still required to clear the main inlet and complete landscaping.	Complete clearance work. Re-landscaping of areas around the SUDS will be required following recent building work and clearance of the SUDS.	 
Rear Meadow	Meadow	Well established grassland meadow with mown paths all in good condition.	One willow tree near the path should be inspected as part of a tree survey to assess its safety and advise on management.	

Location	Element	Condition / Observations	Remedial Actions / Recommendations	Illustrative Photographs
Front Wooded Bund	Woodland / hedges	<p>Hedgerow well established and well maintained. Most trees have become well established. Some areas are starting to become overcrowded although there are also some losses creating some thinner areas. Ash dieback is a potential issue and could lead to gaps in the woodland if not correctly managed over the coming years.</p> <p>The eastern end of the bund has been planted more recently and more sparsely with non-native, more ornamental species.</p>	<p>Recommend a woodland survey is undertaken to identify trees to be thinned and advise on management of the ash trees.</p>	
Rear Wooded Bund	Woodland	<p>Well established and at a point where thinning of some trees is required as there is some overcrowding. There are a few losses in places and possible evidence of ash dieback but overall, the woodland has successfully formed a largely dense coverage of the bund.</p>	<p>Recommend a woodland survey is undertaken to identify trees to be thinned and advise on management of the ash trees.</p>	
Badger Alley	Whole	<p>Hedgerows are well managed for wildlife and have been allowed to grow out and only trimmed when encroaching too far.</p> <p>Mature ash tree has had dead limbs but those over the path have been removed.</p> <p>Paths are kept mown through the grass.</p>	<p>Recommend an arboricultural survey is undertaken to advise on tree condition and any potential actions.</p>	
Hare Bund	Woodland	<p>Becoming well established, not significantly overcrowded but thinning may be required in places. There are a few losses in places and possible evidence of ash dieback but overall, the woodland is successfully forming a largely dense coverage of the bund.</p>	<p>Recommend a woodland survey is undertaken to identify trees to be thinned and advise on management of the ash trees.</p>	
	Viewpoint area	<p>Recently planted trees have been damaged by vandalism.</p>	<p>Replace.</p>	

Location	Element	Condition / Observations	Remedial Actions / Recommendations	Illustrative Photographs
	Hedgerow	Pre-existing hedgerow generally in excellent condition however it contains 3 mature ash trees which all contain dead wood.	Recommend an arboricultural survey is undertaken to inspect these trees and provide further recommendations on their management or, if deemed appropriate, removal (subject to any TPO)	
Lake	Lake	The lake looks to be maintained in excellent condition with good proportions of open water. The trees around the lake are being managed successfully so that they are not over encroaching.		
		The inlets are being well maintained and are generally clear of plant growth, debris and silt having been recently cleared.		
		A new inlet has been constructed but not completed and is currently surrounded by temporary mesh fence. The outlet currently has no safety grill.	Work should be completed on this to make safe and landscaping tidied up.	
Welcome Centre Green	Ornamental borders	Some planting in front of the visitor centre has been badly damaged by deer. The bed on the left of the centre doorway is too shallow to provide much space for plants and as such they are struggling.	Consideration should be given to some replanting; For shrubs, yew or holly, which deer generally don't like, or dogwood, which will recover quickly from damage. For perennials, recommend bearded iris and lavender which would suit this sunny spot and are low maintenance.	

5. APPENDICES: 1-SITE MAP (NOT TO SCALE)



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