

LITTLE STANION

OPEN SPACE CONDITION ASSESSMENT



Ref: 26-067

Client: Little Stanion Farm Management Company

Site: Little Stanion

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1. INTRODUCTION

Terms of Reference

- 1.1 Rowellian Environmental Consulting Ltd was instructed by Little Stanion Farm Management Company to undertake an independent condition inspection of the areas of public open space under its management.
- 1.2 The areas of Little Stanion considered are as follows:
 - Top Meadow
 - Long Meadow
 - Short Meadow
 - Badger Alley
 - Long Croft Road Wooded Bund
 - Southern Boundary Wooded Bund
- 1.3 This report summarises the results of the inspection in each area in terms of general observations and any issues, lists any required remedial actions to maintain compliance with the agreed management plan, and makes recommendations for optional further improvement of these areas.
- 1.4 Surveys were undertaken on 7th and 8th May 2026. Weather conditions were fine and dry.

General Comments

- 1.5 The open spaces at Little Stanion are generally in good order, being well maintained and largely free of litter. No safety hazards were observed.
- 1.6 Grass mowing is appropriate to the prescribed treatment within each area and shrub beds and hedges have been kept well-trimmed such that they do not obstruct public routes.
- 1.7 Tree losses have been replaced throughout the meadow areas, and pruning has been undertaken to remove deadwood.
- 1.8 Path surfaces are generally in good condition and no significant cracking or weed intrusion was observed.
- 1.9 Play areas were in good working order and the Management Company was able to confirm a satisfactory schedule of regular internal and annual external safety inspection.
- 1.10 The management of the open space resources is generally compliant with the agreed management plan, with few required remedial actions, none of which prevent the safe enjoyment of the public open space areas.

2. TOP MEADOW

General Description

- 2.1 This area largely comprises a combination of close mown amenity grassland and meadow grassland. A compacted aggregate path runs the length of the meadow from west to east, with a connection to Arden Close and Long Meadow to the south. Benches are located next to the path, and outdoor gym equipment is located opposite the Arden Close connection. Loose groups of trees are located at its western end. Encroaching willow trees from the adjacent woodland have been cut back and arisings chipped.



Grassland

Required Actions

Eastern meadow area is struggling to establish. Cultivate in following autumn and re-seed with a suitable lime tolerant meadow mix such as Germinal WFG5 at 5g/m². Targeted herbicide treatment of thistle if it persists.



Recommended Actions

There are a small number of undesirable weeds in the western amenity grass area, such as spear thistle. To be treated with spot spraying with a suitable herbicide to prevent spread.



Trees

Required Actions: None

Recommended Actions: None

Hard Landscape

Required Actions: None

Recommended Actions: None

3. LONG MEADOW

General Description

- 3.1 This is a linear open space running through the centre of the village on an approximate north-south alignment. It is divided into three parts (northern, central and southern) by the northern and southern parts of Roman Road.
- 3.2 The area mostly comprises close mown amenity grassland for public recreation, including a sports pitch at its southern end. The open space supports a Sustainable Urban Drainage System comprising a series of vegetated swales and drainage basins, which flow into a lake in the southern part. Fenced concrete headwalls are present where the water passes through underground pipes, with screening shrubs. Goat willow trees have established within the swale and there is evidence that these have been coppiced and pruned to prevent blockage of the system.
- 3.3 Ornamental shrub beds are located in the northern and central parts, and amenity trees are scattered throughout the northern and central areas.
- 3.4 Tarmac paths provide year-round access through the northern and central parts, with two timber bridges crossing the swale system within the central part. The paths are flanked with gravel French drains to receive and convey surface water.
- 3.5 A Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) is located at the northern end of the central part, comprising a safety surface and play equipment for primary age children, surrounded with bow-top fencing with gates for access. Benches are located within the northern and central areas.
- 3.6 The lake is a naturalistic water body set within amenity grassland with reedbeds and scattered willow and alder trees on its margins. A compacted aggregate path provides a circular walking opportunity, with benches along its length and connections to Brecon Close, the boundary woodland and Badger Alley. Water enters and leaves the lake via fenced concrete headwalls. Bins have been provided for litter and dog faeces.



Grassland

Required Actions

An area of amenity grass has been damaged in the southern area by vehicle tracking, leading to compaction. Area to be cultivated and re-seeded with a suitable amenity grass mix, e.g. Germinal A19 at 35g/m².



Recommended Actions: None

Shrubs

Required Actions

Some species have died in an area of shrubs to the west of the LEAP in the central part. Dead plants to be removed, the areas weeded and re-planted with suitable native woody shrub species such as spindleberry (*Euonymus europaeus*) or guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*).



Recommended Actions: None

Trees

Required Actions: None

Recommended Actions

Coppicing of goat willow trees within the swale system to continue, with phased cutting to ground level to ensure a balance between the function of the system and the provision of shade and screening. It is also recommended that a third of the willow trees surrounding the lake be coppiced each year on rotation.



Hard Landscape

Required Actions

An ash sapling, rosebay willowherb and irises are establishing close to a headwall in the central part, south of the LEAP that will obstruct the system if not removed. Plants to be dug out.



Recommended Actions: None

4. SHORT MEADOW

General Description

- 4.1 This is a linear area of public open space that is divided into northern and southern parts by Cambrian Lane.
- 4.2 The northern part comprises close mown amenity grassland with a grassed swale running parallel to its western edge. A fenced concrete headwall is located at the southern end of the swale, with screening shrubs. A tarmac path provides access along the length of this area with a spur connecting it with Mendip Way. A Local Area for Play (LAP) comprising safety surfacing and play equipment for nursery age children enclosed within bow top fencing with access gates is located adjacent to this path at the northern end of the space. A group of amenity trees is located at the eastern edge, to the north of the Mendip Way connection.
- 4.3 The southern part is more naturalistic in appearance and comprises a grassed mound with amenity trees in its northern half, and a vegetated swale and drainage basin with scattered native shrubs in its southern half.



Grassland

Required Actions: None

Recommended Actions

There are undesirable weeds in the southern grass area, such as bristly ox-tongue and creeping thistle. To be treated with spot spraying with a suitable herbicide to prevent spread.



Sedge grass is growing close to the headwall in the southern area. To be removed to prevent seeding into the headwall area.



Trees

Required Actions: None

Recommended Actions: None

Hard Landscape

Required Actions: None

Recommended Actions: None

5. BADGER ALLEY

General Description

- 5.1 This is a linear corridor of meadow grassland flanked by native hedgerows, connecting Long Meadow with Long Croft Road. A desire line path runs along the centre of the space, with a timber gate providing access at the northern end. Several ash trees are located in the hedgerows that are suffering from ash dieback disease, with evidence of historic tree surgery.



Grassland

Required Actions: None

Recommended Actions: None

Hedgerows

Required Actions: None

Recommended Actions

Hedgerow shrubs are being suppressed by vigorous bramble growth in places. Recommend targeted cutting back in September/October and removal of cut material to prevent further spread. Gap planting of hedgerows with native shrubs if existing shrubs do not recover.

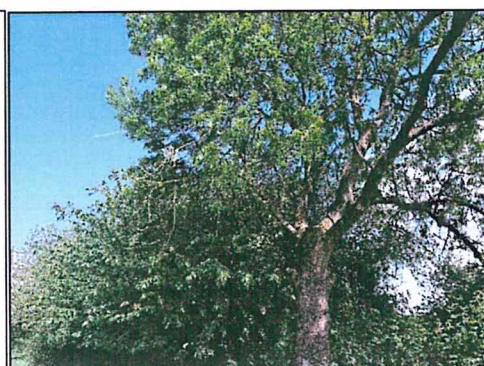


Trees

Required Actions: None

Recommended Actions

Ash trees within the hedgerows are suffering from mild to moderate ash dieback disease. Dead limbs to be removed as necessary to ensure public safety. Monitor and consider tree removal if dieback becomes severe.



Hard Landscape

Required Actions: None

Recommended Actions: None

6. HARE BUND

General Description

- 6.1 Linear bund following the boundary of the village with Long Croft Road to the north. The majority of the area supports semi-mature woodland approximately 15 years of age with an area of open grassland and amenity trees at its eastern end in which the village sign is located. An additional belt of grassland is located at its western end, between the woodland edge and the rear gardens of properties on Kesteven Way. A clipped native hedgerow forms the boundary between the woodland and highway. An unsurfaced path passes through the woodland, following the ridge of the bund.
- 6.2 Light thinning has commenced within the woodland, creating small canopy gaps.



Grassland

Required Actions: None

Recommended Actions

There are a number of spear thistle establishing in the eastern grassland area. Recommend they be treated with spot spraying with a suitable herbicide to prevent spread.



Hedgerows

Required Actions: None

Recommended Actions: None

Trees

Required Actions: None

Recommended Actions

Health of cherry and Norway maple within eastern grassland area to be monitored as some trees are showing signs of decline. Trees to be replaced if decline continues. Progression of ash dieback within woodland to be monitored and deadwood removed if it becomes a hazard.



7. REAR WOODED BUND

General Description

- 7.1 This area comprises a substantial belt of native woodland of approximately 15 years of age wrapping around the southern boundary of Little Stanion. It is mostly on an elevated bund that is profiled at its eastern and western end to meet the prevailing ground level. An area of open meadow grassland is located at its western end, and an open swale sits between the village edge and the open space with bridges providing pedestrian access from Mendip Way and Cambrian Lane.
- 7.2 A surfaced path follows the crest of the bund, connecting with Roman Way in the west and the bottom of Long Meadow in the east, with steps providing access points to the adjacent streets. Bins have been provided along this route for the disposal of litter and dog faeces. A lookout point is located in the southernmost corner of the site, with benches on a compacted aggregate surface to provide a rest point.
- 7.3 The woodland is generally in good condition and displaying vigorous growth and canopy closure. The ash trees are displaying symptoms of ash dieback disease and light selective thinning has been undertaken to remove individual trees displaying strong symptoms, with replacement trees of alternative species planted. Natural regeneration of ash, field maple and hawthorn is also occurring in canopy gaps, which will lead to a varied woodland structure in the future.



Grassland

Required Actions: None

Recommended Actions: None

Trees

Required Actions

Tree ties on some of the replacement trees are beginning to restrict the trees. Ties to be loosened or removed if the trees are sufficiently self-supporting.



Goat willow trees are beginning to establish within the swale and will cause an obstruction if not removed. Trees to be cut and stumps treated with a suitable herbicide to prevent re-growth.



Recommended Actions

Dog rose shrubs at the edge of the path near to the undergrounding pylon are growing close to the path and could snag path users in future. Recommend they be coppiced and re-cut every 5 years to prevent encroachment.



Hard Landscape

Required Actions: None

Recommended Actions: None