

**From:** Alistair Baxter <alistair.baxter@aspect-ecology.com>  
**Sent:** 04 September 2020 17:57  
**To:** Juliet Hynes  
**Subject:** RE: Oakhurst rise/St Edwards Prep School field  
**Attachments:** TN12 Framework Man Plan vf.pdf

Dear Juliet,

Many thanks for your time on the telephone yesterday. As discussed, I am in receipt of Gloucestershire's Wildlife Trust's consultation response dated 01 September 2020 in respect of the above site. The purpose of our call yesterday was to clarify a couple of minor points. Firstly, as per the heading of the letter, you have confirmed that you are familiar with the proposed site layout and accordingly your comments are made in this context.

Secondly, in regard to Ladies Bedstraw, we discussed today that it is located in various patches in the east of the site as well as in the area north-west of the ice house as highlighted in the GWT correspondence. This particular area is located within the proposed woodland belt or beneath built development and so would not be retained in the submitted scheme. Accordingly, you have helpfully clarified that preservation in situ could equally be maintained by translocation of turfs containing Ladies Bedstraw to the area of retained grassland to be retained by the school.

In terms of the retained grassland, as acknowledged in the GWT correspondence, this will be restored under the proposals to a species rich sward. To provide a further indication of how this will be achieved, I attach a Framework Management Plan for your review which sets out a proposed structure for a full Management Plan which will be secured by way of a planning condition, alongside key management actions likely to be included to restore the grassland. We would be pleased to receive any comments you may have on this so we can reach an agreement where the Trust can endorse the Framework Management as exactly what you are looking for from the site.

The framework management plan would then be submitted to CBC so that it can be specifically referred to in a planning condition.

I trust the above and attached is of assistance and I look forward to speaking to you on Monday afternoon in respect of any comments the Trust may have.

Regards

**Alistair Baxter**

Director

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# Framework Management Plan

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Project: Oakhurst Rise, Cheltenham

## Technical Briefing Note TN12: Framework Management Plan for Restoration of Retained Grassland and Associated Habitats

Date: 04 September 2020

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### 1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Aspect Ecology is advising the applicant on ecological matters relating to the site at Land Adjacent to Oakhurst Rise, Cheltenham. The site is proposed for residential development and associated landscape enhancements (planning application ref: 20/00683/OUT). The site is subject to a recent LWS designation.
- 1.2 Under the proposals, which are to develop only part of the site, an opportunity is available to restore the retained area of existing grassland shown edged red on the accompanying plan to herb rich meadowland. The details of how this is to be carried out will be secured by way of a planning condition, to require the drafting and implementation of a Grassland Management Plan (or similar description). This will be attached to a grant of planning permission requiring the submission of the Management Plan for the approval of the LPA. The submission of the Management Plan pursuant to a planning condition will become available for public consultation. The Management Plan will also secure the management of the other associated habitats within the site.
- 1.3 The purpose of this note is to set out a framework for the Management Plan.

### 2. Structure for Management Plan

- 2.1. The management plan will be structured using a similar series of headings to the following:
  - 1) Introduction
  - 2) History to the site
  - 3) Existing ecological baseline
    - a. Botanical survey data
    - b. Faunal survey data
    - c. Fungi, lower plants and other groups
  - 4) Management overview
    - a. Aims and objectives
    - b. Areas covered by the management plan
    - c. Site tenure
    - d. Responsibility
    - e. Management structure
    - f. Ecological constraints
  - 5) Soil testing
  - 6) Meadow Restoration prescriptions (capital works)

- 7) Pond creation (capital works)
- 8) Ongoing conservation management of meadow
- 9) Ongoing conservation management of other habitats
  - a. Pond
  - b. Trees
  - c. Hedgerows and scrub
  - d. Refugia and hibernacula
- 10) Conservation management prescriptions for faunal species groups
  - a. Bats
  - b. Badgers
  - c. Reptiles
  - d. Amphibians
  - e. Birds
  - f. Invertebrates
- 11) Control of invasive species and weeds
- 12) Management to prevent public access (land edged red)
- 13) Funding arrangements

### **3. Considerations for inclusion in grassland restoration prescriptions**

- 3.1. Soil testing will be undertaken to assess existing nutrient levels within the soil and levels of compaction. This will inform future restoration management actions.
- 3.2. At the present time, a rank closed grassland sward dominates the meadow. In order to open the root mat, a close grassland cut will be undertaken followed by light to moderate scarification through harrowing to break up the thatch and root mat. It may be necessary to harrow a number of times.
- 3.3. Harrowing will have the effect of activating the existing seedbank which is present allowing any herbs which persist in the soil which have been suppressed by the thick root mat to germinate.
- 3.4. Natural germination will be supplemented with an appropriate neutral grassland herb rich native seed mix, sourced from a local meadow or a commercial supplier, which will be sown post harrowing. Yellow rattle will be included as a component in the mix to suppress subsequent vigorous regrowth by coarse grasses. Sowing will be timed so that germination is successful e.g. in spring, when subsequent rainfall is likely. Otherwise watering will be necessary.
- 3.5. Currently, some vestigial grassland interest is present, with a number of herb species reduced to just a single specimen or small numbers of individuals e.g. Ox-eye Daisy, while other herb species are patchy within the sward such as Ladies Bedstraw. Turfs and plug plants of Ladies Bedstraw from 2 patches to the north west of the ice-house will be translocated into the area of meadow (land edged red).
- 3.6. Aftercare will be undertaken involving regular grass cutting (with removal of the arisings) e.g. every 2 – 4 weeks, during the period the restored sward establishes. Supplementary weed suppression will be undertaken as necessary.
- 3.7. Long term conservation management will be based on a hay cut regime of a cut in mid-July post flowering and seeding with the hay baled and removed. An additional early spring cut in late April or early May and/or an early autumn cut in mid to late September will control vigorous grasses. Alternatively, the meadow could be lightly grazed post the hay cut in July (but not before) until the end of October.

- 3.8. As part of the above, consideration will be given to the faunal interests present including reptiles, Badger and invertebrates, with appropriate safeguards put in place.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 A management plan based on the above framework will lead to the development of a botanically species rich meadow while its associated habitats e.g. hedgerows, scrub, pond and trees will also be managed to maximise their ecological potential. Benefits for faunal species will also be incorporated with funding for ongoing conservation management of the habitats secured as part of the development proposals. In conclusion, these prescriptions will provide a varied resource for wildlife that secure and enhance the interest of the Local Wildlife Site.





Key:  
 Retained Grassland for Restoration



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Land Adjacent to Oakhurst Rise,  
Cheltenham  
Location of Retained Grassland  
for Restoration

5487/RGR1

September 2020

PROJECT  
TITLE  
DRAWING  
NO.  
REV.  
DATE

