

**Beddington Farmlands Conservation and Access Management Committee meeting minutes  
Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020 14.00**

**Attendees, members of the CAMC:**

Cllr Tim Foster – Chair, London Borough of Sutton  
 Cllr Ben Andrew – Vice-Chair London Borough of Sutton  
 Cllr Jillian Green, London Borough of Sutton  
 Tom Sweeney – Community Representative – Beddington North Neighbourhood Forum  
 Lysanne Horrox – Community Representative – Hackbridge and Beddington Corner NDG  
 Norman Jones Community Representative - Hackbridge and Beddington Corner NDG (deputy)  
 Derek Coleman – CSG representative on the CAMC.  
 Mathew Frith – London Wildlife Trust – Director of Conservation  
 Rosemary Waugh – Thames Water – Corporate Responsibility Manager  
 Adrian Frost – Viridor – Head of Major Projects

**Advisory panel:**

Robert Overall – London Borough of Sutton - Strategic Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration  
 Andy Webber – London Borough of Sutton - Head of Planning  
 David Warburton – London Borough of Sutton - Chair of Conservation Science Group  
 Charlie Owens – London Borough of Sutton – Beddington Farmlands Warden  
 Simon Chalcraft – London Borough of Sutton - Planning Enforcement  
 Marcus Kohler – MKA Ecology  
 Jonathan Downs – Viridor – Engineering Graduate Manager  
 Andrew Turner - Madano, supporting Viridor

**Guests:**

Christina Peake – Hackbridge resident and local artist

Item		Action
1.0	<b>Introductions &amp; Apologies</b>	
1.1	<p>Viridor welcomed members of the Conservation and Access Management Committee (CAMC) to the virtual video call. Cllr Foster welcomed attendees to the call.</p> <p>Cllr Foster welcomed Robert Overall from the London Borough of Sutton; it was noted that Robert was supporting Simon Latham’s role for the coming months.</p>	
1.2	<p>There were apologies shared from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Paul Rowland – Viridor - Head of Major Contracts and Landfill</li> <li>● Richard Aylard – Thames Water – Sustainability Director.</li> <li>● David Mellor – ProLogis – Development Director</li> </ul> <p>Cllr Foster confirmed that he was disappointed that Viridor and Thames Water were not represented by senior business leaders. Paul Rowland had been called away to Taunton at the last moment but had intended to attend the CAMC. It was agreed that Viridor would ensure Paul Rowland would attend the next meeting of the CAMC.</p>	<b>AT</b>
1.3	<p>Cllr Foster noted that it was important to recognise progress had been made on the habitat creation project in 2020, with noticeable improvements and enhancements. However, he would like this meeting to focus on measurable deliverables and clear staging points in 2021 to continue the programme of restoration.</p>	

	<p>The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed, Andrew Turner noted that David Warburton and Charlie Owens had kindly shared feedback and this was included in the document. It was agreed that the minutes of the last meeting were representative and were signed off. Andrew took the action to upload the minutes to the Viridor website.</p> <p>The actions from the previous meeting would be discussed at the relevant agenda item of the meeting.</p>	<b>AT</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Update from Charlie Owens – Beddington Farmlands warden</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	Charlie Owens shared an update of the activity he had overseen since the last meeting. Charlie noted that he had now finished his period of COVID-19 isolation and returned to site.	<b>AF/AT /DW</b>
<b>2.2</b>	It was explained that Charlie had worked with David Warburton and Viridor to undertake habitat management activities on the lake islands, by clearing vegetation. This was intended to provide suitable conditions for breeding lapwing in the 2021 season. Charlie showed a number of images of the works, and Andrew asked David Warburton to clarify the terms of his engagement on site.	
<b>2.3</b>	David confirmed that volunteers managed by the London Borough of Sutton had undertaken works across the Beddington Farmlands in the past, and in the past weeks David had taken an oversight role to ensure the works to the lake islands were completed safely and to the required standard, whilst Charlie was onboarding into his role. In addition, David's contribution was necessary to provide technical provision (i.e. Charlie is not yet trained in some of the machinery / skills that were required) and that the works were a prelude to inducting volunteers onto site. David added that he had proposed three options to Viridor in relation to his time spent at Beddington Farmlands. Charlie further	
<b>2.4</b>	noted that LBS were, on a temporary basis, having to provide tools and equipment to carry out these works. and the London Borough of Sutton will agree a form of partnership where a donation may be made to the Sutton Nature Conservators in return for support with habitat management in future.	
<b>2.5</b>	Charlie showed images of derelict tern rafts that were found on the islands, and Charlie explained that the vegetation was removed from the islands to encourage lapwing to breed on the sparse islands. Charlie noted that lapwing were spotted on the islands during the works, but their disruption was limited to flying out of the immediate work area and returning once the works were complete. Other species, such as green sandpiper and snipe were displaced due to the works but noted to be in suitable habitat in the Hundred Acre area of the site.	
<b>2.6</b>	Anti-predation fencing was briefly discussed, and Cllr Foster was keen to understand a timeline for the installation of the anti-predation fencing on phase 1 of the wet grassland. Adrian confirmed it would take 3-4 weeks to install once an order had been placed. It was anticipated to be installed in February 2021. Cllr Andrew asked if the phases 2 and 3 of wet grassland would also require fencing. Adrian confirmed they would need predation control which could be further fencing, detail unconfirmed at this stage.	
<b>2.7</b>	Charlie added that in the future small teams of volunteers would be best suited to completing the lake island management. Derek noted that this work to the lake islands had made a big positive difference to the view from the middle bird hide.	
	Charlie updated members that progress had been made on the displacement habitats in the historic sludge beds – highlighting that they are now being managed with a focus on lapwing habitat maintenance, rather than as a sludge treatment operation.	

<p><b>2.8</b></p> <p><b>2.9</b></p> <p><b>2.10</b></p> <p><b>2.11</b></p>	<p>Marcus and Charlie confirmed that Viridor were working to enhance the suitability of the Hundred Acre and South East Corner historic sludge beds for lapwing. One of the projects underway was to combine the smaller beds into larger formations. This was something that the lapwing found attractive. Viridor had also installed a network of pumps to create a larger area of contiguous habitat. In the past Viridor had to manually relocate pumps, but now pumping could be a continual process based on water availability from the MEC. Marcus added that the work Viridor’s contractor had completed in the historic sludge beds had made them much better-quality habitat.</p> <p>David noted that these were vital works to the Hundred Acre and South East Corner and that over the past three years, the CSG and Beddington Farm Bird Group had discussed the importance of this work and the need for a long-term management plan.</p> <p>It was noted that this management would need to continue post-2023, and that it would be the responsibility of Thames Water once the wet grasslands were established. David suggested that Viridor could share the experience of costs and management of Tonka with Thames Water.</p> <p>Rosemary Waugh updated members on the progress of Aquatic Engineering’s work and the water flows across the wider site. It was confirmed that the original brief didn’t include the wider site water flows and now further work will include this. Rosemary will report back to future CAMC meetings. Rosemary also highlighted that Thames Water had planted a large number of trees across their works totalling 7000, this was largely in native hedgerows. Rosemary confirmed that Beddington was a flagship site for Thames Water in terms of sustainability.</p> <p>Andrew and Charlie noted that the White Stork, released from the Knepp Wildland project had been present onsite for a number of weeks. It was approximately two years old and Charlie had been keeping the Knepp project updated to its progress. It was confirmed that the stork had been looking in poor condition. Mathew Frith noted that another stork from the project had been found dead in East Sussex.</p> <p>Charlie confirmed that he had completed a beat-up survey to assess the levels of success of the tree planting project associated with the SDEN works. Losses are around 65%. Andrew noted that Viridor would be seeking to develop and agree an integrated habitat management plan for the permissive footpath habitats and SDEN planting requirements as part of the access strategy work.</p>	<p><b>AF/ RW</b></p> <p><b>RW</b></p>
<p><b>3.0</b></p>	<p><b>The public access strategy working group and cycleway update</b></p>	
<p><b>3.1</b></p> <p><b>3.2</b></p>	<p>Andrew confirmed that since the last meeting, Viridor had progressed the work on the project to relocate proposed cycleway along the permissive footpath – this work had occurred slower than anticipated and Viridor was yet to request a pre-application planning meeting with the London Borough of Sutton.</p> <p>Viridor left the last CAMC understanding that in principle the community were supportive of deploying the Sustrans quality cycleway along the permissive footpath, subject to Viridor committing to set standards of surfaces for the internal routeways. It was also acknowledged that the east/west pathway and internal access would be a focus post-2023 to enable the habitats to establish suitably.</p> <p>The access strategy working group met in December with the community presenting a proposal for altered access routeways around the lakes (figure of 8) and across the</p>	

<p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p> <p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p>	<p>meadowland – the community had met a number of times and presented a costed proposal to Viridor.</p> <p>Lysanne presented the community proposals document to the CAMC and this was also shown on the screen. Lysanne noted that this map was part of a wider community plan to connect and integrate Hackbridge and Beddington more effectively within the sub-region. Lysanne noted that a number of the proposals would require support from Thames Water. Rosemary Waugh confirmed that she would contact the Thames Water property team to discuss the proposals.</p> <p>Viridor had reviewed Lysanne’s document and it aligned with its own considerations, and how an altered routeway could work internally. Viridor was considering proposing onsite gravels to form the pathways internally and these would be of a similar standard to the Walthamstow Wetlands pathways.</p> <p>Andrew added that Viridor would like to wrap further management of the SDEN planting and habitat management as part of the management scheme for the new cycleway running along the permissive footpath offering an integrated solution.</p> <p>There was a discussion around the use of the proposed east/west cycleway along the south of the site (connecting Beddington Lane and Beddington Park). Tom Sweeney noted that this would be a recreational cycling route rather than a commuting lane. However, it would be difficult to stop commuters.</p> <p>Derek Coleman noted that it was positive to reduce the cycling activity across the Farmlands habitats but was supportive of properly managed cycle access, however at the recent CSG meeting, Martin Boyle expressed concern on behalf of the Mitcham Common Conservators. Andrew confirmed that a meeting would be arranged to brief Martin and agree any clarifications. Norman Jones noted that he had recently been appointed as a Conservator.</p> <p>Andy Webber expressed support for the proposals that had clearly been worked through with the community and encouraged Viridor to secure an informal planning meeting with the London Borough of Sutton to avoid any delays to the deployment of the access arrangements. Cllr Andrew thanked the community for their efforts and was in support of the proposals.</p> <p>There was a discussion around the next steps, and it was agreed that subject to engagement with the Mitcham Common Conservators, Viridor should progress with the agreed scheme.</p>	<p>RW</p> <p>AT</p> <p>AT/AF</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p><b>Wet grassland, lapwing habitat and acid grassland</b></p>	
<p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p>	<p>Adrian updated that in the year Viridor had progressed the wet grassland habitat creation. Adrian noted that he had intended to deliver three wet grassland habitats this year and confirmed that the first phase of wet grassland was now mostly complete (visible from the northernmost bird hide) but still requires tilting weirs to be installed, as well as water gauging boards and final seeding, particularly to the eastern half.</p> <p>Adrian added that access to contractors (and their machinery) due to COVID-19 lockdowns, the ability to spend nights away from home in hotels and poor weather had all played a part in not being able to complete phases 2 &amp; 3 but progress had been made and these areas have been well planned for spring/summer 2021. Viridor was in discussions with its ERF contractors about demobilising from the construction compound (on top of phase 2). The intention would be to welcome Roger Wardle, the wet grassland expert, to</p>	

	<p>the site for a number of weeks to complete phases 2 and 3 along with reviewing the lake islands to advise on any enhancements.</p> <p><b>4.3</b> Adrian noted that the focus was now on ensuring that the anti-predation fence is installed around the phase 1 and part of phase 2 ahead of the breeding season. The lake islands had been partially cleared to restore lapwing breeding habitat along with the process already made to enhancing the historic sludge beds to the north and south east of the site.</p> <p><b>4.4</b> It was also noted that Viridor were in the final stages of securing a recovery permit from the Environment Agency to import inert soils to fill the south eastern edge of the landfill site. Due to the delays in approval from the Environment Agency a revised low-level restoration scheme was being drafted that could still be delivered in the time remaining to December 2023. Adrian suggested that Viridor could reduce the number of vehicles delivering to the site, along with creating additional wetland habitat in the form of a 'moat' to connect the northern and southern wet grassland habitats around the edge of the Thames Water site. This would be known as Phase 4.</p> <p><b>4.5</b> David Warburton and Cllr Foster welcomed the suggestion of a Phase 4 wet grassland that would link into the Thames Water habitats and the Pongo Park area. This received support from the CAMC.</p> <p><b>4.5</b> There was a discussion around the predator management of the wet grassland habitats. Adrian noted that Viridor would install the anti-predation fences around phase 1 and part of 2 ahead of the spring breeding season. Tom Sweeney asked if this would be sufficient to keep dogs away from the wet grasslands. David Warburton confirmed that it would be. Charlie confirmed that he had been advising Viridor using the RSPB guidance on anti-predation fencing.</p> <p><b>4.6</b> The discussion moved towards humane population management, it was concluded that the anti-predation fencing would be one part of the solution, however the fox and goose population was sizeable and would likely impact upon the lapwing breeding success. Viridor had engaged with a humane pest control contractor to understand the process that would likely require a number of morning visits to reduce the predator populations.</p> <p><b>4.7</b> David confirmed that fencing would not be an absolute success, and it was essential that the lapwing experienced a high recruitment (breeding) rate due to Beddington's urban location and fragmented habitats. Mathew Frith added that it would be impossible to eradicate a predator population at a site like Beddington. The CAMC were in agreement that Viridor should take the action to formally investigate the use of humane predator control to give the lapwing the best possible chance of success on the site.</p> <p><b>4.7</b> Charlie confirmed that he was working with Marcus to explore the potential of a study to observe the lapwing to better understand breeding success in relation to location (100acre, Phase 1, north lake etc) and identify the predator pressures in those locations. This may aid the CSG in selecting the correct predator control or prevention approach for the different habitats. This may be something that volunteers could be involved with. Marcus added that this is something he had wanted to progress for a number of years.</p> <p><b>4.8</b> Cllr Andrew asked if the sludge beds would also need to be fenced, Marcus responded that the nature of the surface of the sludge dissuaded the foxes from crossing the beds, however in the very dry spring the sludge dried out enabling a passageway. The new management programme may prevent the beds drying out reducing the risks of mammalian predation.</p> <p><b>4.8</b> Derek Coleman asked whether a falconer could play a role in removing the gull presence from the northern wet grassland. Andrew confirmed that Viridor were exploring how to</p>	<p><b>AF</b></p> <p><b>AF/AT</b></p>
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<p><b>4.9</b></p> <p><b>4.10</b></p> <p><b>4.11</b></p> <p><b>4.12</b></p>	<p>better cover the food waste deliveries nearest the northern wet grassland to reduce the gull population. The consensus was that a falconer would not be appropriate.</p> <p>It was agreed that Viridor would seek further guidance from the London Wildlife Trust and RSPB around humane predation management to give the lapwing the best chance of success at the Farmlands.</p> <p>Viridor updated members into the progress of the acidic grassland workstream. Adrian recapped members that Viridor had been working with its specialists to understand how best to progress the acidic grassland habitat. Further to recent conversations, Viridor had sought expert advice and reviewed the RMP and acidic grassland requirements. Viridor had established that the seed mix required to establish the initial habitat, known as a nursery sward, would be suitable for the soil base at the Farmlands. This seeding would take place in the autumn and would establish a green mass on the Farmlands landfill face, rather than the muddy appearance today. This would also reduce the risk of harmful weed seedlings impacting the other habitats and leading to additional management. Preparation of the landform and the creation/management of a stale seed bed would be progressed upon the weather improving so as not to damage soil structure.</p> <p>There was some confusion around this approach, with David noting that at the last CAMC he had stated that Viridor must engage with the Environment Agency to understand more about the possible leachate issues into the MEC, and thus, Wandle. This has not occurred and was disappointing. The approach proposed at the CAMC was also different to that proposed at the CSG the week before and that this was the first David had heard of this. Adrian noted that Viridor had been progressing its internal discussions and would seek guidance from the CAMC to progress with establishing the nursery swards before reviewing the acidic grassland habitat in 2021.</p> <p>Cllr Andrew noted that he was concerned and confused by the change in strategy for the acidic grassland.</p> <p>Cllr Andrew sought clarification if there was a financial rationale behind the change in strategy. Andrew confirmed that following recent CSG and CAMC meetings, the London Borough of Sutton had initially proposed that should the acidic grassland not be created on the Farmlands, there would be a worst-case scenario compensatory biodiversity payment of c. £13m to be made as part of a new planning application to deliver an alternative habitat. This had been part of Viridor’s consideration to review the habitat creation again. David stated that at the last CAMC, he noted that he had had discussions with MKA Ecology to undertake a full site evaluation and work out how to deliver the necessary ‘biodiversity units’ onsite, as far as possible, to reduce any necessary compensation payments. This had not occurred and instead, a proposal for new meadowland had been made at the most recent CSG.</p> <p>David noted that whilst a nursery sward would be a sensible initial step to prevent weed build up, simply seeding the existing substrate with the proposed acidic grassland mix contained within the RMP would not provide acidic grassland (or heathland mosaic), as the pH levels were far too high.,. David re-iterated that the feasibility of the acidic grassland habitat would still need to be fully explored before Viridor could credibly suggest an alternative approach through a planning application.</p> <p>David added that he had held informal conversations with the Environment Agency catchment coordinator who noted that the relevant leachate and contaminant content of any run-off would need to be reviewed ahead of making any determinations but could possibly be dealt with via a bespoke discharge permit.</p> <p>Cllr Foster sought views from the CAMC, and a consensus was reached that Viridor could progress with seeding the nursery sward seed mix to establish cover on the landfill face in the Autumn.</p>	<p><b>AF</b></p> <p><b>AF</b></p>
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	Adrian also added that Jonathan Downs had been working with Charlie and David to understand and model the various fencing requirements (access, infrastructure, grazing) to deliver a final fencing scheme that can be tabled at a future CAMC meeting. The intention is to reduce the number of replacement fencing programmes required to manage cost.	
<b>5.0</b>	<b>The bird hide graffiti</b>	
<b>5.1</b>	Andrew updated members that Viridor had now ordered replacement information boards to be installed in the bird hides, this was due to be completed in the coming weeks.	
<b>5.2</b>	Christina Peake, Hackbridge resident and artist, entered the videocall and presented her evolution of thinking on the bird hide artwork project. Christina shared a number of slides of her proposals showing a mural of the habitats on the Farmlands painted onto the bird hides (creating the illusion the bird hides were not there).  Lysanne and Charlie noted that the proposed artwork could be combined with the interpretation strategy in the future.  There was widespread support for this concept and Cllr Foster suggested that Christina apply to the Beddington Community Benefit Fund for the resources to complete the work.	<b>CP</b>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Any other business</b>	
<b>6.1</b>	Andrew confirmed that Viridor had worked with Charlie and Derek Coleman to progress thinking around an interpretation board. Andrew added that there was a wide range of options for interpretation and in the coming years a full interpretation strategy would be developed learning from visits to Waltham Wetlands and other nature reserves.  Reflecting the phase of the project, and the best use of resources at this time, it was intended that a pilot board was created to be installed and feedback gathered from users of the bird hide. It was agreed that this pilot board would be shared with members of the CAMC for review ahead of being printed and installed in the northernmost bird hide.	<b>ALL</b>
<b>6.2</b>	There was a short discussion around the use of pesticide on the Farmlands, Mathew Frith noted concern around using glyphosate on nature reserves and specifically the Farmlands, but also the challenges of managing high nutrient habitats without it. Mathew agreed to share the London Wildlife Trust's position on the issue and Viridor would review with a position.	<b>AF</b>
<b>6.3</b>	Robert Overall stated that he was disappointed, given Viridor's stated commitment to the importance of Beddington Farmlands restoration that Paul Rowland was not in attendance. Robert also noted that whilst Viridor had stated they could not get in touch with the Environment Agency, the London Borough of Sutton had managed to engage with the Environment Agency with regards to an informal view on the issues of leaching into the MEC and Viridor should ask if they would like any support the Borough could provide to help Viridor make contact..	
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b>	
<b>7.1</b>	Following a discussion, it was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be held on Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> February at 14.00, Viridor would monitor and observe the Government guidance around meeting in person, however it would likely be held via Microsoft Teams.	

	Cllr Foster noted that this would then lead to an Annual General Meeting of the CAMC in April, and it was likely this would be a shorter meeting held ahead of the next full CAMC.	
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