



Pyl Brook

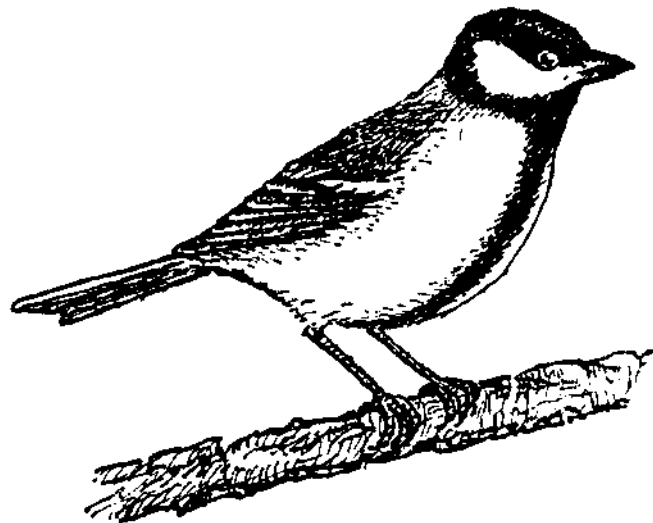
Nature Reserve

Morden

Management Plan

2001-2010

January 2001



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Contents

- Introduction.....3
- Part 1: General Information4
- Part 2: Description5
 - Physical5
 - Biological.....5
 - Cultural.....6
- Part 3: Potential and Objectives.....7
 - Objectives7
- Part 4: Principles and Policy8
 - General principles on ecological issues8
 - General principles on community and amenity issues.....9
 - General Principles on Management Practise9
- Part 5: Management Prescriptions 12
 - Compartment 1: Pyl Brook..... 12
 - Compartment 2: Woodland 13
 - Compartment 3: Grassland 14
 - Compartment 4: The Ponds..... 15
 - Compartment 5: SE Section 15
 - Work Schedule Check List 17
 - Annual Schedule of work 18
- Part 6: Management Committee..... 19
- Appendix 1: Site Location 20
- Appendix 2: Habitat Map (NW Section) 21

This management plan has been prepared for the London Wildlife Trust by Pete Guest,
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Introduction

The Pyl Brook Nature Reserve comprises a strip of land of approximately 2Ha in extent and lying between the Pyl Brook and the back gardens of houses along Rutland Drive, Morden. Following local opposition to proposals to put a public footpath through the site in the mid 1980's, the London Wildlife Trust (LWT) came to an agreement with the Council to adopt the site as a reserve, managed by a local residents group in 1987. In 1989, it was agreed that an additional area lying the other side of the central public footpath up to the railway embankment be added to the reserve. This area is referred in this plan as the SE section with the original area as the NW section.

Until the establishment of the reserve, the land had remained unmanaged since the allotments of which it partly consists were abandoned. In the last ten years since the establishment of the reserve considerable progress has been made in the NW section with two ponds created, the grasslands brought into management, and a variety of trees planted. There are three main vegetation types, mature hawthorn scrub, woodland with areas of suckering elm and tall herb rough grassland. The SE section consists mainly of largely unmanaged suckering elm scrub, providing a contrast with the more intensively managed NE area.

Part 1: General Information

1-1 Name	Pyl Brook Nature Reserve
1-2 Location	See map 1. The site lies approximately 1km SW of Morden between the A24 trunk road and the Waterloo to Rosehill railway in the London Borough of Merton. Rutland Drive lies to the southwest.
1-3 Grid Reference	TQ 252 669 (centred)
1-4 Access	A long unused and locked gate exists in the fence at the end of the reserve adjacent to the A24. Formal access is via gates on or near the footpath that runs between the two parts of the reserve. Some householders have formed informal access where their back gardens abut the site.
1-5 Vice County	Surrey (no. 17)
1-6 Maps	1:50,000 OS sheet 176 1:25,000 TQ 26/36 Geological Survey IGS 1:50,000 sheet 270
1-7 Tenure	Owned by the L. B. Merton (Education & Recreation Dept.). Maintenance of the Pyl Brook is the responsibility of the Environment Agency.
1-8 Legal Factors	Non known
1-9 Status	Site of Borough Importance Grade 2 in UDP
1-10 Access	Restricted to work parties and local residents at present.
1-11 Public rights of way	None
1-12 Information	A site file is maintained by London Wildlife Trust
1-13 Services	No surface water or foul drains affect the site. No other services are known to affect the site.
1-15 Boundaries	Pyl Brook – EA hold responsibility. The responsibilities for maintenance of the fenced southern boundary lie with the individual house owners.
1-16 External Factors	The site is surrounded by cultivated gardens and allotments, thus the invasion of non-native species can be a problem. Local people have in the past used the site for dumping mainly garden refuse but also some domestic refuse. Chemicals used on the allotments and in the gardens may drift into the reserve. A triangular area of land adjacent to the SE section was the subject of a failed planning application in 1991/2.

Part 2: Description

Physical

Topography

The site is a flat table of land approximately two metres above the level of the brook which has steeply sloped and toe-boarded banks.

Geology & Soils

Weathered London clay dominates the surface geology of the area. This results in a heavy clay loam locally, but the soils of the site are likely to have been heavily disturbed by its previous use allotments disrupting the soil profile.

Hydrology

Normally very shallow (less than 0.1m deep), the Pyl Brook can rise significantly (to 0.5m) after heavy rain. Run off from the reserve drains directly into the brook, although the clay soils may suffer localised waterlogging.

Biological

Vegetation

Three main vegetation types exist:

1. Stands of mature hawthorn are scattered throughout the site. These are quite dense in places and have a poor ground vegetation due to the dense shade cast. The banks of the brook support some particularly dense hawthorn, together with mature crack willow, ash and field maple in places. On the southern side elder, blackthorn and bramble are present amongst the hawthorn, particularly around the numerous clearings.
2. Suckering elm scrub of mostly uniform age forms an almost continuous band along the brook and in much of the SE section. At the western end, sycamore is succeeding the elm and mature trees now form a higher canopy over the elm scrub. The ground flora beneath the elm scrub is dominated by ivy and cow parsley with some dense bramble, elder, cuckoo pint and wood avens. Abundant rotting wood lies on the ground and provides a valuable habitat for invertebrates and fungi. Other vegetation present within the elm scrub includes seedlings of oak, yew and holly with a few larger field maple, horse chestnut and fruit trees. Some blackthorn also exists towards the centre of the reserve and hazel, guelder rose and dog rose whips were planted in selected groups in 1987 and since. The SE section is mainly suckering elm scrub, which is constantly re-infected by Dutch elm disease but also has a few specimens of hawthorn, oak and cherry.
3. Various rough grass species (e.g. couch, cocksfoot and timothy) dominate the glades or clearings which are bordered by bramble scrub and some nettle and raspberry stands. Common vetch is abundant in the north east corner of the reserve. Tall herbs present include willowherb, thistle and hogweed, with a few exotic tree species such as cypress and contorted willows on the north western bank.

Fauna

The fauna of the site has not been specifically surveyed, but mammals present include foxes and bank voles, and other common small mammals are likely to be present. The commoner bird species resident include woodpigeons, dunnocks, greenfinches, robins, thrushes, tits and wrens. A great spotted woodpecker is regularly seen especially on the larger crack willows by the stream. The invertebrate fauna has not been surveyed; but banded snails are common and the caterpillars of small tortoiseshell butterfly are often found on the nettles. The brook is normally relatively clean and supports some crustacea, but these do suffer from the occasional pollution incidents. The abundant dead wood and herbs in the glades attract numerous insects.

Natural Trends

If not managed the site would tend towards becoming dense elm and bramble scrub of relatively lower value to wildlife. Active management to control this and to maintain a variety of habitat types is therefore necessary.

Mature elms previously present have been destroyed by Dutch elm disease, and the replacement suckering scrub shows no signs of providing replacement standards, with the disease having a debilitating effect on the trees once they begin to mature. The dense elm scrub has prevented other species from establishing, and the policy of clearing this and underplanting with whips of indigenous species should continue. In some areas the hawthorn forms too dense a canopy for ground flora to succeed, and much bare ground exists especially adjacent to the stream.

The grassland is dominated by coarse grasses and other grasses and herbs will be lost from the clearings if regular management does not control this. Encroachment of trees, bramble and other scrub vegetation into the open clearings also occurs unless managed.

The banks of the stream are revetted with elm boarding, much of which is collapsing. The bare soil behind the boarding provides little opportunity for marginal vegetation to establish due to the combined efforts of the shading by the canopy (elm, hawthorn), the elm boarding and the lack of sources of waterside vegetation from upstream. The Brook is also subject to regular flash floods, and these prevent aquatic and streamside vegetation from becoming established.

Cultural

Prior Land Use

Before management began, the site had been unused for some time, with four abandoned allotments of wartime origin having been overrun by couch grass etc. Some large elms dominated the site until killed by Dutch elm disease.

Archaeology

No features of archaeological interest are known to occur on the reserve.

Public Interest

The site is a locally interesting area of suburban countryside and it provides an opportunity for local people to manage their own nature reserve. This will continue to foster an interest in nature conservation and the principles and practises of reserve management.

Part 3: Potential and Objectives

Site Potential

There remains further potential for increasing the value of the area for wildlife and amenity by suitable management. This is especially true in the SE section where the elm scrub could be reduced in extent and underplanted to encourage the formation of a more diverse broadleaf woodland habitat in both species composition and structure.

It is also desirable to find ways to improve the habitats along the brook, and the co-operation of the Environment Agency and Merton Council should be sought in achieving this. A combination of removal of over-shading canopy, re-profiling the banks to create a more varied flow regime and planting of suitable marginal vegetation would provide valuable new habitats. The Environment Agency is presently conducting studies into flood alleviation along the Beverley Brook and its tributaries (including Pyl Brook). The London Wildlife Trust has suggested that this could include the creation of a wetland area after the brook emerges from under the railway, as well as some re-profiling of the banks of the brook. Some reduction of the existing woodland in the SE section could be expected from this, but this would be greatly outweighed by the creation of areas of wetland habitat.

Continued management of the grassland areas and glades is necessary to prevent invasion by bramble and to steadily increase their diversity.

Objectives

Long Term Aims

- To conserve and increase the wildlife value of the site by appropriate management.
- To improve the vegetation and habitats of the Pyl Brook.
- To provide a means whereby local people can have direct experience of managing a site for wildlife, increasing their appreciation of the natural world.

Continuing Aims

- To diversify the woodland structure by selective felling and planting – especially in the SE section.
- To maintain and diversify the grassland areas.
- To enhance the ecology of the Pyl Brook through appropriate management.
- To control invasive vegetation such as sycamore and raspberry.
- To keep the reserve clear of rubbish and garden waste.
- To maintain access through the reserve by means of a well maintained path.

Part 4: Principles and Policy

General principles on ecological issues

Dead Wood

Both standing and fallen dead timbers represent important and threatened habitats for invertebrates in particular and should be retained on site as a matter of policy. Where a dead tree is considered likely to pose a safety hazard, such as when above a designated path or close to the fence, the minimum possible reduction should be undertaken leaving as much standing timber as is possible. Dead elm stems can continue to be used to make edging for the path network.

Species Management and Control

The control of highly invasive species such as raspberry is desirable, but much of the other non-native vegetation does not cause any serious conflict with the wildlife interest and can be left. Some exotic conifers have been planted in the past and this practise should be discouraged, as these have little benefit for wildlife.

Introductions

It will be necessary to introduce some further new plant material to the site to diversify the woodland and improve the Pyl Brook. Care should be taken to ensure that such material is native to the London area and of local provenance if possible. Uncommon or rare species should generally be avoided. No introductions of fauna should be undertaken.

Herbicides

There is a general presumption against the use of herbicides and other chemicals. If the use of herbicides becomes necessary to control invasive or undesirable species, then their application should conform to local authority and London Wildlife Trust policies and guidelines and should only be undertaken by suitably qualified personnel. Consultation with the relevant London Wildlife Trust Conservation Officer must take place before any such proposed use.

Boundaries

The hawthorn hedges planted on the boundary will enhance the security of the site and contribute to the habitat diversity. Any vegetation abutting the neighbouring back gardens must be suitably managed to avoid possible conflict with the residents and co-operation from both sides is needed here.

Hedges

A hedge has been planted on the eastern boundary, and this should be continued along suitable stretches of the southern boundary. This provides additional security for the site as well as additional habitat for a wide range of animals. Species to be maintained in the hedge include blackthorn, hawthorn, holly, and wild rose. The hedge should be allowed to grow to a height of c.2m at the eastern boundary, but along the boundary with the footpath it should not impede the views onto the site by interested passers by.

Artificial Bird Boxes

Many hole nesting bird species are limited by the availability of nesting sites and the provision of bird nesting boxes may be valuable. If erected the use and success of

these should be recorded and should be checked and cleaned out each Autumn/Winter.

General principles on community and amenity issues

Access

It is not currently intended to open the reserve for public access, and the gate in the western fence (A24 boundary) will remain locked. It should however be an aim of the management committee to arrange at least one well publicised open day or evening on the site annually.

There are two locked gates to the NW section, one at the western end, the other in the alleyway at the south eastern boundary, and one to the SE section also in the alleyway. Keys should be held by the Council as well as by local LWT members to allow access for work parties, events and wardening.

Footpaths

The path through the site should be maintained in good condition, particularly near to the entrance area to demonstrate that the site is being cared for, and a regular programme of repair / reconstruction should be included in the maintenance programme. Funding has been achieved to replace the first section of the footpath with a good quality gravel construction, and this is expected to be in place by the end of March 2001.

Litter

Litter and garden refuse dumping are less of a problem now than when the site first became a reserve but there still are occasional problems. Increased awareness by local residents of the nature reserve status will hopefully continue to reduce this problem. Litter clearance will continue to be a part of the work programme.

Interpretation

An interpretation board, preferably with some provision for local notices giving local contacts and information on workdays etc. should be installed close to the path between the two sections of the reserve.

General Principles on Management Practise

Fires

There is a general presumption against the use of fire to dispose of cut material. Wood should be dealt with as detailed above, and all cut vegetation put onto fixed compost heaps. If no alternative can be found to burning then only one site should be used for this purpose.

Recording / Monitoring

All planned management work should be checked for compliance with the objectives set out in this management plan. If possible, biological records, including specific survey data, should be maintained and responses of the wildlife to management evaluated.

Health and safety

All staff and volunteers working on the reserve should be aware of the relevant aspects of LWT's health and safety guidelines. Key elements of this are that:

- all those involved should be properly trained and equipped to undertake any particular practical management activity (e.g. grass-cutting, scrub-bashing, tree-felling)
- only certificated or appropriately trained staff, volunteers or contractors should operate power tools or machinery (e.g., chain-saws, reciprocal mowers, strimmers)
- no one should ever work alone on the site
- a qualified first-aider (and first-aid kit) should be available on all arranged workdays, and all participants should be made aware of the location of the nearest telephone in case of an emergency.

Tools

All tools used on the site should be of good quality and properly maintained. Tools should be counted before and after use to ensure none are mislaid or left on site. When not in use tools should be in a safe position in an easily visible location and not on a path or where someone could consequently trip or fall.

Power tools

There is a general presumption against the use of power tools on London Wildlife Trust reserves. Only properly trained staff or volunteers are permitted to use power tools and people working alone must never use them. When using strimmers, chainsaws, mowers etc. a 'look-out' person must accompany the power tool operator to ensure the safety of other people and the operator. Great care should be taken to prevent spillage of oil, petrol or lubricants, particularly near ponds or watercourses. The use of vegetable-based lubricants for chain-saws, etc. should be encouraged.

Clothing

All volunteers should wear appropriate protective clothing when undertaking practical site management. Stout boots (preferably with steel toe-caps) are a minimum requirement; tough gloves should be available (but not worn when using hand-tools with wooden handles) and hard-hats issued to those involved in tree-felling or using sledge-hammers, mells or pick-axes.

When using power tools or hazardous substances (e.g. herbicides, solvents, wood preservatives, etc.) additional protective clothing is required. Supervisors and operatives should be aware of the appropriate regulations and follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

Inclement weather

Staff and volunteers should not undertake practical management site when weather conditions may pose a safety hazard. This might include extreme heat when sunburn or heat stroke might result, severe cold when dexterity might be impaired or heavy rain when conditions underfoot become slippery and hazardous.

Disposal of cut material

Herbaceous material resulting from cutting of meadows and material resulting from the cutting of marginal or aquatic vegetation should be piled in suitable areas to create 'compost heaps'. Cut woody vegetation should be dispersed within or

adjacent to areas of scrub or secondary woodland or used to form dead hedges in appropriate locations.

Tree-felling & scrub work

The felling of trees that are over 3m in height should only be undertaken by appropriately trained and experienced persons. Smaller trees can be dealt with by volunteers, but they must be properly trained and equipped for this. Tree felling is a potentially hazardous operation and appropriate measures should be implemented to ensure safety. Due regard should also be given to the potential damage to paths, fences or neighbouring property and the possibility of large amounts of debris falling into the Pyl Brook. In order to avoid the bird-breeding season and minimise any adverse impact on the nature conservation value of existing habitats, all tree management work (coppicing, scrub clearance, tree-felling, etc.) should be outside of March-August unless urgent for health and safety reasons.

If tree-felling or other such operation is being undertaken close to paths 'look-outs' should be posted to prevent anyone walking into the danger-zone and/or the area closed off with warning signs.

Volunteers

Almost all of the practical management work on the reserve is undertaken by volunteers. The Trust has always recognised the value of volunteer involvement, and endeavours to ensure that their contribution is supported and appropriately rewarded.

The London Wildlife Trust's Equal Opportunities Policy aims to encourage and facilitate the involvement of people of all abilities in the conservation of the reserve. The Trust will do its best to provide the necessary training and tools, ensure a safe and secure working environment, and ensure that first-aid facilities are on hand at all times. A designated task leader will be responsible for volunteers at all times. Children under the age of 16 can only attend if accompanied by a parent or guardian (no more than 3 per adult) who will be responsible for their actions and safety. Volunteers should not be expected to tackle tasks outside of their capabilities or experience, or those usually undertaken by appropriately insured contractors. The contribution of volunteers must be recognised in reports relating to the reserve.

In return, the London Wildlife Trust expects that all volunteers respect certain codes of behaviour and do not antagonise or upset others, or the spirit of the team. It is up to the task leader to monitor behaviour and take the necessary action to warn and, if required, ask anyone breaching this code to leave.

Management plan review

This management plan should be reviewed annually as part of the annual report to ensure that the work is being carried out and that it is having the desired effect. The plan should be fully reviewed after the elapse of ten years in 2010.

Part 5: Management Prescriptions

For management purposes the reserve is divided into five compartments.

1. The Pyl Brook (including its banks)
2. The larger woodland areas including the clearings and glades
3. The open grassland areas
4. The two ponds
5. The SE (additional) section of the site

Compartment 1: Pyl Brook

Description

This normally shallow stream is about 1m wide but often flows relatively swiftly preventing aquatic and emergent vegetation from colonising. The present flora and fauna of the brook is thus limited to filamentous green algae, a small amount of water starwort and a few invertebrates. The banks of the brook are revetted with toe boarding approximately 40cm high with the ground behind the boarding sloping steeply to approximately 2m above water level. The eastern end of the stream is banked with mature hawthorn and their dense canopy has resulted in the undergrowth and ground vegetation being very sparse. Some large crack willows (with ash and field maple) break up the hawthorn dominance in places with the ground flora being dominated largely by cow parsley, grasses and some horseradish.

The toe boarding is collapsing in places and it is proposed that consultations take place with the EA with a view to considering their removal to allow a more natural bank to develop. In the longer term it is to be hoped that major improvements might be achievable including a more natural stream and associated wetland habitats, which may require some loss of other small areas of the reserve. This proposal will need to ensure that the requirements for flood prevention in the area are not compromised.

Objectives

- To recreate a more natural stream and associated wetland habitats (longer term)
- To open up the canopy along parts of the stream
- To encourage suitable marginal vegetation along the stream banks

Management

The dense canopy (elm scrub and willows particularly) should be divided into four to five sections and each coppiced or pollarded (particularly the crack willows) annually or bi-annually in rotation. This should open the banks and encourage the growth of marginal vegetation, some of which may need to be introduced. Some appropriate tree planting (e.g. various willows and alder) in places would also be valuable in diversifying the bankside habitats.

In a number of places the wooden toe boarding is collapsing, presenting the opportunity of allowing the channel to become more natural. There is also the possibility of enhanced work to create small wetland areas but both will need the co-operation of the Environment Agency. The EA is considering a large scale project to alleviate flooding problems on the Beverley Brook, and this may provide an opportunity to achieve these plans. Any such areas could be planted with an interesting and valuable range of emergent and bankside vegetation including sedges, rushes, yellow flag, and other waterside plants native to this locality.

In the short term, agreement with the EA can be sought for removing several of the collapsing toe boards as an experiment to see how the channel responds.

Willow Management

The large crack willows growing by the brook will eventually become over-mature and collapse. Pollarding these trees before they become dangerous would be advisable, and should be done in rotation to produce structural diversity. Some additional willows and sallows could be planted along the brook margins and then coppiced on an approximately 3-5 year cycle to maintain young thicket growth along the brook. The products of the coppicing can be stacked as woodpiles or could be used to manufacture fencing panels for use on the site or elsewhere locally.

Compartment 2: Woodland

Description

The woodland area is still predominately elm and hawthorn scrub with small grassland and bramble scrub clearings. The elm is mainly even aged with little diversity and there is a fairly species poor ground flora dominated by cow parsley and ivy. The glades are all prone to such scrub invasion.

A number of other tree/scrub species are present in the woodland. Elder and blackthorn are well represented with some sycamore, cherry and other fruit trees probably left over from the previous use as allotments. A range of seedlings and saplings are present, including oak, holly, yew, horse chestnut, sweet chestnut hazel, guelder rose and wild roses and these should be encouraged.

Much of the hawthorn woodland in this area is mature and its dense canopy prevents the formation of a ground flora. The hawthorn does however provide food and cover (including nesting sites) for some bird species and overall it does not dominate to the detriment of the sites interest. Thus, it is proposed that the mature hawthorns be retained as a valued feature of the site.

The glades and clearings create interest in the woodland, although at present they are supporting a limited vegetation community dominated by various coarse grasses, nettles, cow parsley and bramble.

The area adjacent to the A24 was proposed for management as grassland in the previous management plan, but this has not proved possible and the area is now dense bramble scrub. It is proposed that this change is accepted and that the area be left largely unmanaged, except for any necessary work to prevent damage to boundary fencing etc.

Objectives:

- To diversify the structure and species composition of the woodland including temporary and permanent glades.
- To install and maintain a number of bird nesting boxes.

Management

Whenever any area of elm scrub becomes dominated by dead saplings, it is proposed they be cleared, taking care to avoid damage to any other tree saplings, and some limited further broadleaf tree planting (birch, field maple, hazel, cherry) undertaken. The elm must be cut at ground level and the cut wood stacked as woodpile habitats or else used for path maintenance.

The permanent glade areas will require control of scrub encroachment to encourage floral/herb diversity. Ideally three or four such areas should be clearly identified, and then cut and cleared in rotation on an 6-8 year cycle with one area cleared every two years, so that a variety of stages is always present on site.

Vegetation must be prevented from running over the fence into alleyway (SE boundary). This work should be undertaken each autumn with the vegetation cut well back such that a years regrowth will just reach the fence again.

Those areas where native tree species (ash, oak, willow) have already been planted are to be left to mature into broadleaf woodland, with the only management work being elm cutting if this proves necessary. Additional planting of oak, ash, field maple and willows and understory species such as holly, elder, hawthorn and cherry can be considered if natural regeneration is poor, or previous plantings fail. During their first few summers, any planted trees should be kept clear of vegetation to prevent their being choked.

A number (at least ten) bird nesting boxes, suitable for hole nesting species such as tits, should be installed in the woodland areas. These should be cleaned out and checked each autumn.

Compartment 3: Grassland

Description

This area broadly comprises an area of approximately 80m by 20m, with a variety of grasses, tall herbs and scrub species, many derived from previous uses as an allotments or from neighbouring gardens. Course grasses dominate here with other vegetation including creeping thistles, raspberry and a range of other herbs together with tree saplings and scrub species (bramble, rose, blackthorn).

Objectives

- To maintain the area as mainly open grassland habitat, with a number of small areas of bramble, rose and other scrub species
- To increase floral/herb diversity

Management

The area is to be divided into two halves, with each half biannually cut and raked off in June, to reduce the dominance of the course grasses. The whole area should then also be cut and raked off in autumn (September / October). All cut material should be piled into one or two compost heaps, which should be in static positions.

Scrub patches, particularly bramble, wild rose and blackthorn should be mainly confined to the periphery of the area, to provide cover for birds, small mammals and invertebrates. A few small patches or individuals (particularly wild roses) should be retained in the centre of the grassland for added interest.

Compartment 4: The Ponds

Description

Ponds are a vitally important resource for much wildlife (notably amphibians) in suburban areas and two ponds have been created in the NW section. The older is small but has been successful in maintaining a population of amphibians (mainly frogs and smooth newts) but is now rather choked by vegetation and needs to be cleared out annually in autumn. The second and larger pond was created in the early 1990s in the grassland area but the liner has been badly damaged and it no longer retains water.

Objectives

- To improve the biodiversity of the site by encouraging amphibians and wetland invertebrates
- To create a central focus for the site adding interest for visitors

Management

The small pond should have excess vegetation cleared every autumn such that at least 70% of the surface area is open water. The removed vegetation should be left by the side of the pond for 24 hours to allow invertebrates to return to the water before the vegetation is removed and placed on a compost heap.

The large pond needs to be completely rebuilt with a new heavy duty liner installed and buried under a layer of sand and subsoil. It will be acceptable if this reduces the size of the pond, but one end should be shallow to create a marshy area. This pond also had *Typha*, which is too vigorous for small ponds and should be removed annually should it re-occur.

The work should be scheduled to take place in late summer or early autumn. A number of plants can be introduced the following spring, including yellow flag, water mint, water plantain, and lesser spearwort on the margins, and purple loosestrife, marsh marigold and ragged robin in the marshy area. Once re-established, the large pond should only need annual clearing of excess vegetation in autumn as routine maintenance.

The small pond may be topped up during dry summers, but the large pond may be generally allowed to dry out in late summer.

Compartment 5: SE Section

Description

This area is mainly elm sucker scrub with a little hawthorn and other species present in places. Much of the elm scrub is infected with the Dutch elm disease that killed the original trees and which will continue to prevent any from reaching maturity.

Objectives:

- To maintain the majority of this area as regenerating elm scrub
- To diversify the rest of the woodland structure, especially at the edges
- To open up sections along the Pyl Brook (long term)

Management

The elm scrub can be diversified by some selective felling and replanting along the edges, particularly of scrub and hedgerow species such as hawthorn, hazel and elder. This will help to reduce problems from dead elms threatening to fall over the fence.

There is a possibility of further enhancement of the Pyl Brook, which may involve some land take for creation of small wetland areas in co-operation with the Environment Agency. As this is uncertain, no work should be undertaken along the brook until the EA has established what it intends to do.

Work Schedule Check List

Comp	Management work	When to carry out task
All	Monitor trees for safety, especially near paths	Regularly during the year. Any suspicious trees should be reported to LB Merton for checking.
All	Path maintenance	This is best carried out during the summer months when most other tasks are not possible.
All	Path improvement	Winter 2001
All	Interpretation board installation	As funding permits
1	Enhancement of Pyl Brook	As negotiated with EA and LB Merton
1	Cutting back of hawthorn	Annually in the winter months (November to February)
1	Introduction of streamside vegetation	In early spring after the relevant area has been cleared
1	Pollarding of willows	One to be done each year in September to November (by LB Merton specialists)
1	Planting of willows (and subsequent coppicing after 4-5 years)	Autumn and winter
2	Dead elm management	Autumn to winter annually (September to February)
2	Glade management	Biannually in autumn
2	Clearing scrub from fence area	Annually in autumn
2	Management of newly planted trees	Clear grasses etc. from around small whips during summer (May to August)
2	Install bird boxes	Autumn / Winter 2001
2	Maintain bird boxes	Each autumn from 2002 onwards
3	Summer cut and clear of alternate half of grassland	June annually
3	Autumn cut and clear of whole grassland and cut back invading scrub	September / October annually
4	Clear excess vegetation from ponds	Annually in Autumn (September to November)
4	Reconstruct large pond	Autumn 2000/2001 as funding permits
5	Clearing elm scrub along edge and replanting with hedge species	Autumn to early winter annually (September to February)

Annual Schedule of work

Month	Appropriate Work
January	Dead elm management Planting of new whips and hedgerow species
February	Dead elm management
March	Path maintenance
April	Path maintenance Introduction of new streamside vegetation
May	Path maintenance (taking care not to disturb breeding birds)
June	Cutting and clearing of 50% of meadow (alternate halves) Clearing around newly planted tree whips
July	Path maintenance and improvement works Clearing around newly planted tree whips
August	Path maintenance and improvement works Clearing around newly planted tree whips
September	Cutting and clearing of 100% of meadow and cut back scrub. Clearing excess vegetation from ponds.
October	Cutting and clearing of Glades in bi-annual rotation Clearing scrub from fence area. Maintain bird boxes
November	Willow Pollarding (probably by contractor / LB Merton) Cutting of hawthorn / hedging etc.
December	Planting of tree whips and hedgerows Coppicing of willows (when needed)

Part 6: Management Committee

Funding

There is at present no specific funding for the Pyl Brook Nature Reserve, so any requirements are met on an ad hoc basis either from London Wildlife Trust general reserve funds, by the London Borough of Merton or by seeking grants.

Management Committee

The Management Committee should meet at least once annually and should consist of:

- a) Local LWT group members
- b) Local residents involved with the site
- c) LWT conservation officer
- d) Relevant Merton Council officers

Annual Report

The management committee should prepare a simple annual report consisting of summaries of work carried out on the site and any proposals for additional work on the site not included in the annual programme of work. This should be agreed by the management committee and sent to the LWT conservation officer and L. B. Merton for approval.

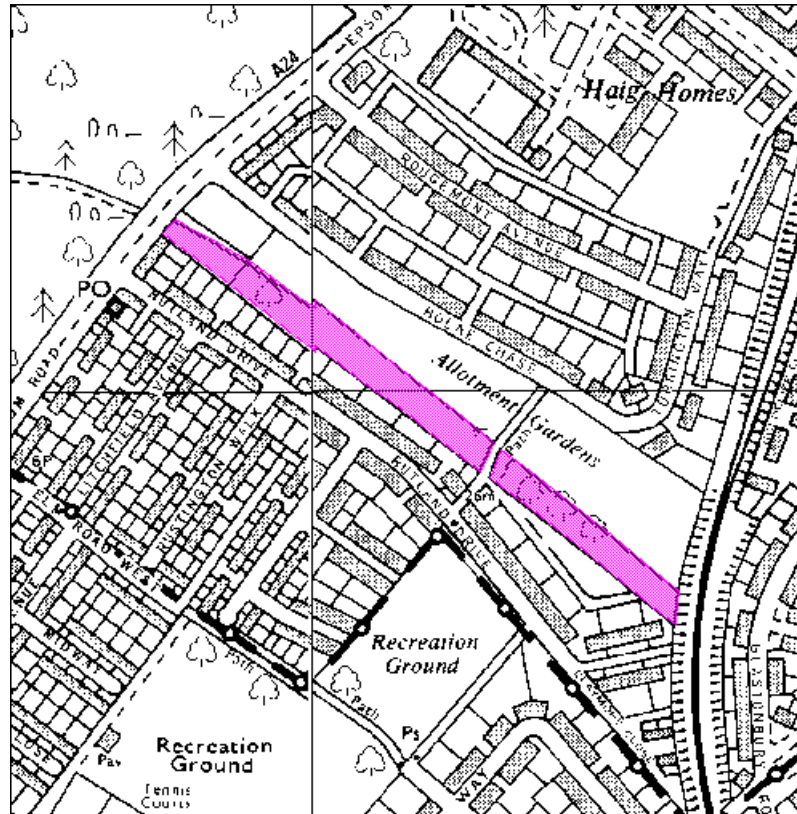
Warden

Local residents should consider themselves as honorary wardens of the site, and should monitor events and wildlife on the site.

Others

The Environment Agency has a general responsibility for maintenance of the Pyl Brook.

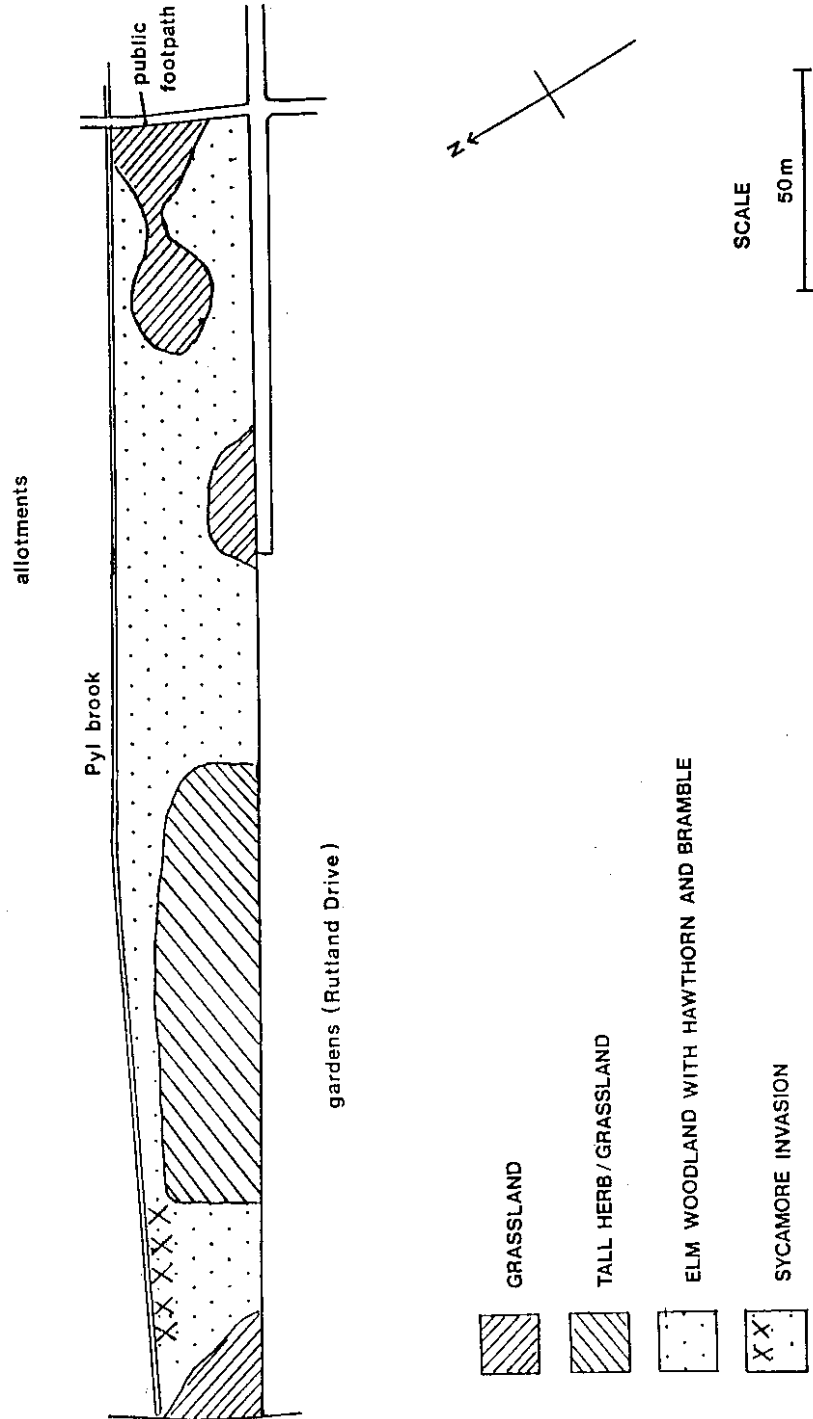
Appendix 1: Site Location



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Produced by the London Wildlife Trust's Biological Recording Project.

Appendix 2: Habitat Map (NW Section)





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