



CRANLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

Beryl Harvey Field Conservation Area Plan Approved by Council 19 April 2018

Conservation Area Plan History

The Parish Council commissioned a Conservation Area Plan in 1995. The annual work plan covered a period of five years 1995 – 1999. The plan included a botanical survey, future work programme and budget. It was structured according to the standard set for minimum management plans in the 'Site Management Plans for Nature Conservation – A Working Guide' published by the Nature Conservancy Council (now Natural England) in 1987.

A baseline was established by G. A. Povey through a botanical survey in 1993 to monitor any changes made to the Conservation Area through the work programme.

Original Conservation Plan Objectives

- To provide as valuable and accessible, a nature reserve as is possible within the constraints of finances and of the site itself.
- To enhance the habitats present, i.e. neutral grassland, hedgerow, scrub and woodland and dead wood for the benefit of invertebrates, birds and to a lesser extent herpetofauna and mammals.
- To introduce additional habitat in the form of a pond.
- To highlight the possibilities for active participation by local groups, in conservation tasks and educational work.
- To establish a system for monitoring the success or otherwise of wildflower introduction to the site.

Site Description

Grid Reference TQ 057386

The Beryl Harvey Field is 1.4 hectares of which approximately two thirds is dedicated to nature conservation. The area has been in agricultural/horticultural use since at least 1841 from cartographic evidence, with a pond in the north-west corner in the 1890's.

The Beryl Harvey Field was given to the Parish Council by Mr G C Harvey in memory of his late wife, Beryl Harvey for the purpose of a recreation ground for the parish of Cranleigh (provided always that until such time as the Council can achieve that purpose the Council may use or let the said land for the purpose of agriculture or for allotments).

The Parish Council has further protected the site by dedicating the Beryl Harvey Field with Fields in Trust as a public playing field and recreation ground for the benefit of the inhabitants of Cranleigh and thereabouts and the site will be titled Field in Trust Protected site, Beryl Harvey Field.

The site is bounded to the west by Knowle Lane, to the south by a housing development known as Oaklands, to the east by private agricultural land and to the north by Snoxhall Fields recreation ground.

The Beryl Harvey Field is shielded from Knowle Lane in the west by a strip of woodland, known locally as the Copse. Its southern boundary with Oaklands is a planted double hedgerow and iron fence. Its eastern boundary is marked by an old barbed wire fence which has disappeared under thick brambles. The allotments are bounded by fencing on their eastern boundary, but it should be noted that the extent of the Beryl Harvey Field boundary is further east within the brambles, which had previously been a footpath from Snoxhall Fields to the conservation area. The northern ditch follows the ditchline at Snoxhall Fields which contains hazel coppice stools, mature oaks and brambles.

The Beryl Harvey Field is between 55 and 60 metres above sea level and forms a gentle north facing slope. The northern part of the field forms the statutory Beryl Harvey Allotments site.

The site is underlain by weald clay, which in this area contains lenses of sandstone and the soil is classified as Wickham 5 association (711i). This is represented by a range of soil types from watergley soils to drier medium and coarse textured soils over sandstone and fine textured reddish soils. The site has had a long history of agriculture and back in 1995 the soil samples indicated a slightly acidic fertile loam (pH6), which led to problems with dock, stinging nettles and creeping thistles.

There is a mixture of woodland, scrub and dry neutral grassland. There is a mature fallen oak tree which provides a natural deadwood habitat.

Management Objectives

- To maintain and continue to improve the nature conservation interest of the site.
- To link the site to other wildlife habitats via the Downs Link and adjoining hedgerows, e.g. along the western and southern boundaries of Snoxhall Fields.
- To encourage sympathetic participation/enjoyment of the site by the local community.
- To utilize all materials from the Beryl Harvey Field, copse area and car park from different working groups (Conservation volunteers, Parish Council, contractors).

To raise the nature conservation interest of the site

To do this, it is necessary to consider the six different habitats of the site: grassland, scrub, hedgerows, woodland, deadwood and ditches and pond.

Grassland

Due to the long history of agricultural/horticultural usage, the Beryl Harvey Field had previously had a low plant species diversity. A range of wildflowers and grass seed was introduced planted randomly along the path ways and in drifts in the main grass areas to achieve a relatively natural effect in the 1990's and now 25 years plus there is a conservation meadow. There are now over 80 plant species and numerous trees and shrub species. A survey of the wildflower and grasses that have established on the conservation field since the original survey can be found in appendix A.

Mown Pathways

The conservation area has a variety of routes and places to sit and appreciate the nature conservation of the site. The Parish Council maintain the mown pathways to provide safe access that avoids treading on vulnerable plants or wildlife and makes the area look more maintained. The conservation cut will be done, weather dependent, in stages during October through to January. The Parish Council will notify the Conservation Volunteers when the cut has been done, to enable the Conservation Volunteers to collect up the arisings and avoid them rotting down on the primroses and bluebells. The regular cuts of the pathways will be done with a collection box, provided that a site can be found within the Beryl Harvey Field for a small compost area, dedicated to the use of the Conservation Area only. Care needs to be taken to avoid the Common Spotted Orchids & Cowslips where possible.

There are already stone pathways suitable for wheelchair and buggy access from the car park through the copse north to south, around the northern and eastern sides of the conservation area and a branch to the seat above the pond.

There is also a path alongside Knowle Lane in the copse, linking to the footpath on the other side out to Alfold Lane, and to the path across the ditch near the north west corner into Snoxhall Fields, to avoid pedestrians having to walk on Knowle Lane, which has no pavement.

Meadow

The meadow was planted in drifts to cover approximately 30% of the area to give a natural effect and allow for further colonization in future years. The Conservation Volunteers will identify patches of dominant species that need selective mowing to reduce their dominance such as knapweed and willowherb. The Conservation Volunteers will contact the Parish Council to arrange the mowing.

The arisings from mowing the meadow will be removed to the compost area to prevent the arisings increasing the fertility of the soil, which then favours nettles, dock and thistle which are undesirable as they will crowd out wildflower species.

Scrub

The scrub on site plays an important role as habitat for birds and invertebrates. Different species require scrub of different ages from freshly cut to closed canopy. A varied age structure will maximize the range of habitat niches for both birds and invertebrates. The aim of the management of these areas should be to create a patchwork fringe around the site with a scalloped edge and a variety of age and hence height/density structures. To obtain this, the scrub will need to be cut back in rotation as the dense areas will become leggy. Management should be low key and avoid the bird nesting season of March to September inclusive. Cutting should be avoided in the autumn and first half of winter if any berry crop is likely to be lost. The optimum time is from early December until March.

The Conservation Volunteers will cut back the hazel and willow in rotation every three years, with an annual prune to prevent it overshadowing the allotments. All arisings will be left on site to be used within the Conservation Area.

Hedgerows

Management should take place outside of the bird nesting season March – September inclusive.

There is a central hedge planted in 1988 and a southern boundary hedge. The southern boundary hedge is planted beneath mature trees and needs a regular trim to maintain its shape and to thicken it up. The Parish Council maintains the southern side, and the owner of Oaklands maintains their side of the hedge.

The original plan said that the central hedge lends itself to hedge laying which will cause it to become more dense thereby providing more niches for wildlife. This is done on a twenty year cycle – it should be trimmed regularly until it appears thin at the base, thereafter it should be allowed to grow to double its height at which point it can be laid. The Conservation Volunteers have traditionally laid this hedge one third at a time and it provides a variety of nesting sites and sources of food.

In the longer term, stock proof hedges should be planted around the field and should be of native provenance.

Hedgerows are valuable habitats in their own right, they provide microclimates of shelter and shade, nesting niches and food sources. In addition many animals use them as corridors, e.g. bats.

Woodland

Management should take place outside of the bird nesting season March – September inclusive.

The woodland occupies the western side of the Beryl Harvey Field and as known as the Copse. There had been a serious problem of Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) invasion but its removal and burning as a regular winter task, has all but eradicated it. The ground flora is now improving well.

The coppicing of the Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and maintenance of the oak (*Quercus robur*) and Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) is recommended. Any fallen trees should be left in situ as should standing deadwood as long as it presents no danger to the public. The original plan requested the removal of the laurel to open up the canopy to increase the ground flora, as the Laurel leaves a toxin in the soil which suppresses the establishment of other plants. This is now largely complete.

The management of the woodland must be balanced with the duty of the landowner for the health and safety of visitors to the area. The Parish Council had a five yearly basic tree survey undertaken in July 2017 by a professional arboriculturalist and the essential health and safety tree works were completed in January 2018. The Council will ask its tree surgeon to leave log piles of cut wood for the formation of natural habitats in the Copse, but it should be noted that this is a public recreation ground and cut logs are a very popular resource. Ideas to provide an ivy habitat include investigating a metal frame and dedicated area away from the trees.

There are two pathways through the Copse which are regularly cut back by the Conservation Volunteers.

The provision of specific food plants for woodland butterflies should be explored.

Bird and Bat Boxes

There are numerous bird and bat boxes throughout the site to provide for educational opportunities. Care should be taken to ensure boxes are protected with metal plates to avoid nests being pecked out by woodpeckers. The nest boxes should not be made from chemically treated wood.

Men in Sheds will be asked to make bat boxes on the provision of a specification.

Ditches and Ponds

At the time of creating this new Conservation Area Plan, the clearance of ditches has been neglected since the writing of the original plan in 1995. The Parish Council as land owner is catching up on the clearance of the ditch between the Beryl Harvey Field and Snoxhall Fields and Beryl Harvey Field and Knowle Lane, as it has a duty as a riparian landowner to ensure that its ditches run freely. A contractor has been instructed to clear the ditches in their entirety in late April 2018. The specification requires the contractor to scoop up the silt at the bottom of the ditch and leave it at the top of the bank to the ditch to allow any wildlife to migrate back into the ditch. Any trees felled will be left in log piles within the copse area for habitats. No tree or

hedgerow cuttings should be left on the banks of the ditch as these can fall back into the ditch blocking it.

The original site for the pond in the conservation area was to be located in the north west corner, but as there is no water source there and the ditch does not flow with water, the pond was constructed at the bottom of the steepest slope to aid water catchment. There had been a plan to run mole drains down the field to the pond to direct water to it. The pond is constructed with a butyl liner which is in need of repair and care should be taken when working around the banks of the pond not to damage the liner. A pond dipping platform would be a great addition, but care must be taken with installation to avoid damaging the pond liner which runs into the bog area on the eastern side of the pond.

The pond has one of the best populations of Great Crested Newts (*Triturus cristatus*) found locally in Cranleigh, they are a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The pond is also home to smooth and palmate newts, frogs, plentiful toads and grass snakes. There is already a floating nest raft on the pond to provide protection for nesting birds from foxes and stoats.

Allotments

There are 43 allotment plots at the southern end of the site. The allotment site is bounded by hedgerow and fencing.

It is important for allotment plot holders to keep the thriving rabbit population at the Beryl Harvey Field out of the allotments. In order to do this, the allotments boundary fence must be maintained. A 1 metre wildlife corner around the allotment boundary fence is proposed to ensure that the allotment boundary fence can be inspected and maintained. (1m will allow for the cutting of the grass with the Council's pedestrian mower). The area will be mowed regularly to gradually reduce the brambles. Future plans to be considered along this boundary include a dead hedge, living hedge and wild flower border. The hedgerow should be maintained to a maximum of the height of the allotment fence to ensure that it does not shade the allotments. This helps with the flow of air, drier soil and greatly reduced frost damage to crops.

Car Park Area

There is a small car parking area adjacent to the allotments site. It is reached by a short slope from Knowle Lane. The car park area is particularly useful to allotment plotters to bring manure, plants and tools to the allotments site.

The allotment plotters have done a lot of clearing of this site and laid the surface with wood chippings provided from tree surgery. The wood chippings will naturally degrade and will require regular top ups. Wood chippings can be provided from the Parish Council's management of trees on its properties.

To encourage participation and enjoyment of the site by the local community

Bird watching, wildflower identification, art, pond dipping

Nature Conservation Action Plan

Management Objective	Action	Responsibility
Grassland	Introduce a variety of grasses and wildflowers	CV Completed
Mown pathways	Cutting of pathways in accordance with plan April through to October weather dependent. Grass cuttings to be deposited in compost area. Raking of grass cuttings into piles to prevent it rotting on top of primroses and bluebells	CPC CV
Summer Meadow	Conservation cut October to January in stages weather dependent.	CPC
Scrub	Cut back in rotation Cut back the willow and hazel in rotation, leave arisings for use on site	CV CV
Hedgerows	Trim southern boundary hedge regularly to maintain shape Manage central hedge and lay	Southern side – CPC Northern side - Oaklands CV
Woodland	Management in accordance with five yearly basic tree survey	CPC
Bird and Bat Boxes	Installation of bird and bat boxes around site Plant flowers to attract woodland butterflies	Men in Sheds to create CV to install CV
Ditches	Clearance of Snoxhall Fields and Knowle Lane ditch on a three yearly cycle after initial clearance in April 2018	CPC
Ponds	Install a pond dipping platform	Men in Sheds to create CV to install
Allotment boundary	Chestnut paling fencing and rabbit proof wire mesh to be maintained by the Allotments. 1.0m wildlife corridor to be maintained between allotments fence and hedgerow. Wildlife corridor to be mowed regularly	Allotments CPC CPC

	<p>to gradually reduce the brambles. Creation of dead hedge, living hedge or wild flower border no higher than allotments fence. Hedgerow to be maintained to a maximum height of the allotments boundary fencing</p>	<p>CV CPC</p>
Car park	<p>Regular clearance of scrub and brambles Top up of wood chippings</p>	<p>Allotments CPC/Allotments</p>
Entrances	<p>Clearance of the footpaths from Snoxhall Fields to the Beryl Harvey Field</p>	<p>CPC</p>
Education	<p>Installation of noticeboards Detail on noticeboards Record and report wildlife sightings – add to Beryl Harvey page on Council website</p>	<p>Men in Sheds to create CV to install Naturdayz All/CPC</p>

Risk Assessment

Volunteers working in the conservation area or allotments will need to provide a Risk Assessment for approval by the Council insurer's. Templates will be made available and the approved Risk Assessments will be appended to this plan in Appendix C so that they can be reviewed annually and updated if necessary.

No work can be undertaken at the Beryl Harvey Field until the Risk Assessment has been approved by the Council's insurers.

Insurance

The Parish Council's insurers can only extend cover to volunteers working on the Beryl Harvey Field with the following conditions:

- The insurers must approve the risk assessment for the work at the Beryl Harvey Fields.
- All volunteers must be registered with the Parish Council and provide contact details.
- A nominated person must maintain an attendance register and emergency contact details.

No volunteers can participate at the Beryl Harvey Field without first registering with the Parish Council.

The allotments and conservation volunteers must advise the Parish Council of the person they have nominated to be responsible for their attendance register and holding emergency contact details.

Review of this Conservation Plan

The Parish Council's Working Party will meet annually in October to review this plan including the Risk Assessments and register of volunteers.

Any changes to the Conservation Plan will require the approval of the Parish Council.

Appendix A

Species that have established in the conservation area since the Original Conservation Plan 1995

Grass seed mix

Common bent	Agrostis capillaris
Sweet vernal grass	Anthoxanthum odoratum
Crested dogstail	Cynosurus cristata
Cocksfoot	Dactylis glomerata
Red fescue	Festucarubra
Quaking grass	Brizia media

Also from local sources:

Common bird's foot trefoil	Lotus corniculatus
Ribwort plantain	Plantago lanceolate
Red clover	Trifolium pretense
White clover	Trifolium repens
Daisy	Bellis perennis
Common sorrel	Rumex acetosa
Yarrow	Achillea millefolium
Selfheal	Prunella vulgaris
Autumn hawkbit	Leontodon autumnalis
Rough hawkbit	Leontodon hispidus
Common cat's ear	Hypochaerisradicata
Bulbous buttercup	Ranunculus bulbosus
Black knapweed	Centureanigra
Meadow buttercup	Ranunculisacris
Meadow vetchling	Lathyrus pratensis
Glaucous sedge	Carexflacca
Field wood rush	Luzula campestris
Devil's bit scabious	Succisa pratensis
Oxeye daisy	Chrysanthemum leucanthemum
Bulbous buttercup	Ranunculus bulbosus
Yellow rattle	Rhinanthus minor
Cowslip	Primula veris
Agrimony	Agrimonia eupatoria
Betony	Betonica officinalis
Lady's bedstraw	Galium verum
Black medick	Medicago lupulina
Meadow cranesbill	geranium pretense
Goats beard	Tragopogon pratensis
Sneezewort	Achilleaptarmica

Common fleabane
Hairy sedge

Pulicariadysenterica
Carexhirta

For shorter grass on pathways and under trees:

Germander speedwell
Common dog violet

Veronica chamadrys
Violariviana

In scrub:

Musk mallow
Common teasel

Malva moschata
Dipsacus fullonum

In hedgerows:

Red campion
Greater stitchwort
Primrose

Silene dioica
Stellaria holostea
Primula vulgaris

Appendix B

Wildlife Sightings

Appendix C

Risk Assessments

- Allotments volunteers
- Conservation volunteers

Risk assessment form

Activity: Allotments Volunteers			Assessment date: 21 March 2018	Review date: April 2019	
Hazard and risk	People at risk	Optional controls	Our controls	Risk level	Target date & by whom
Overgrown vegetation - Personal injury.	Allotment tenants Members of the public Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotment Society monitor allotments boundary and ensure that Council is notified of overgrown areas. • General maintenance of plots carried out by employees and/or contractor once a year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On receipt of complaint, site is inspected and level of risk assessed to prioritise work. • Council to ensure that area is cleared. 	L	CPC
Mowing and/or strimming - Personal injury.	Allotment tenants Members of the public Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass cutting and strimming of boundaries and haulage ways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers provided with a copy of the Council's Safe Systems of Work for Strimming 	M	Allotments
Hedgerow clearance - Personal injury.	Allotment tenants Members of the public Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of hand tools including spades, forks, secateurs, loppers, bow saw and wheelbarrow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotment holders to provide their own equipment and PPE • Register of volunteers and emergency contact details to be maintained • Insurance cover updated annually in April 	L L L	Allotments Allotments/CPC CPC
Assessor's signature: Date:			Clerk's signature: Date:		

Risk assessment form

Activity: Cranleigh Conservation Volunteers V3

Assessment date: 09 April 2018

Review date: October 2018

Hazard and risk	People at risk	Optional controls	Our controls	Risk level	Target date & by whom
Overgrown vegetation - Personal injury.	Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer to notify lead of the day of potential hazard. Lead of the day to notify Council of potential tree hazards. Volunteers to maintain boundaries/areas of field as instructed by Lead of the day. Use of hand tools including spades, forks, secateurs, loppers, bow saw and wheelbarrow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On receipt of notification of potential hazard, site is inspected, level of risk assessed to prioritise work with Council ground staff or outside contractors. Lead of the day to ensure relevant training has been carried out as to the tools to be used Lead of the day to ensure First Aid box on site and it is checked quarterly to ensure contents are up to date 	L L L	CPC CV CV
Mowing / strimming / chainsaw - Personal injury.	Volunteers, ground staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grass cutting and strimming carried out by the Council, volunteers. Chainsaw carried out by licenced person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers provided with a copy of the Council's Safe Systems of Work for Strimming Use of power tools by volunteers only permitted once evidence of qualifications for use provided to the Council and approved. 	M H	CV CV
Planting, clearing - Personal injury	Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of hand tools including spades, forks, secateurs, loppers, bow saw and wheelbarrow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead of the day to ensure relevant training has been carried out as to the tools to be used and recorded Lead of the day to ensure First Aid box on site 	L L	CV CV

Hedgerow clearance - Personal injury.	Volunteers, ground staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of hand tools including spades, forks, secateurs, loppers, bow saw and wheelbarrow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation group to provide their own equipment and PPE • Register of volunteers and emergency contact details to be maintained by Lead of the day • Insurance cover updated annually in October 	L L L	CV CV CPC
Slips and Trips -Personal injury	Ground staff, volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey the area where work to be carried out and clear any obstacles • Warning sign for deep water at the pond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead of the day to ensure sensible foot wear to be worn and other volunteers are at a required distance from work being carried out • No lone working in the Conservation Area 	L M	CV CV
<u>Assessor's signature:</u> <u>Date:</u>		<u>Clerk's signature:</u> <u>Date:</u>			