**Meeting Notes 5th June 2020 Scholes Lodge Field**

Ian Sanderson (Principal Archaeologist) Robert Masheder (Senior Ecologist)

Attendees from Parish; Karen Dales, Graham Slater, Stella Walsh, Janet, Horkan. Apologies Paul Remmer.

* Heritage site, not protected but seen as very valuable by LCC and any building and changes to the character of the land would be challenged.
* Archeologic level 2 site with best preserved moated site in Leeds.
* The archaeologist and ecologist opinion both clearly indicated that the planting of trees on this site would be detrimental to the heritage site (which is extremely important to Leeds) and the grassland. Increased density of trees would cause problems for management of the site and in particular mowing the grass. The LCC initiative to encourage more tree planting for climate change purposes was raised, both experts agreed that the number of trees proposed would be insufficient to make any difference to this policy. Moreover, the historical site and grassland were much more significant to protect.
* Footpath erosion just move the path slightly as people like to walk the same path, suggestion mow one side then the other to move the path to avoid erosion
* Bog areas, suggestion to use a contact weed killer, which would help reduce the chemical release into the watercourse.
* The ecologist noted the excellent range of different mix of grasses, and that the different levels of grass sward helps attracts different species. A number of different grass species were pointed out for example Meadow Foxtail grass and explained that some grasses like it short, others take over. Reemphasised retain and keep grassland, further trees would reduce this. (See Appendix 2 notes).
* There is a plant called pignut small white flower that he would like to see spread more by collecting seeds and planting them in mole hills.
* The cutting needs to be undertaken to ensure that the various species remain and are not taken over by a specific species. Possibly use bigger machine in some areas. Tree and grassland in same environment require small mowers. Example of good practice noted; Woodmeadows Trust Escrick, York. May be useful to contact or visit. Roach Lime Hills, Kippax also noted as a good example of good practice.
* Management must consider how to remove the cut grass, to help prevent the thatch build up. Take off in sections if appropriate. Back end of year, top it.
* Yorkshire Wild Life Trust have the equipment to cut and bale the grass it was bought with lottery funding (need to pay them to cut it and pay for the bales to be removed). Karen Dales to contact to find details.
* If grass cut cannot be baled and removed off site, further option to remove grass and form compost pile.
* A suggested list of wild flower seeds was suggested to enhance the wild flower mix, see Appendix 1 below. <https://wildseed.co.uk/>
* Some discussion about mix and use of bespoke mix and establish them in small areas. Use of the mole hills was encouraged as these are ideal no need to clear the area and will improve the field species.
* Owl pole; no expertise in this area suggested box has not been up long enough, move it back into the corner as the foot path is very near it.
* A tree in orchard confirmed as a willow, not sure which species. Inappropriate near the orchard so may need to reconsider position.
* Strategy for pruning the trees in future was raised. Orchard Project provide circuit of professionals to help.
* One piece of yellow rattle has grown its very hard to germinate.
* Discussion the new whips planted in the hedge a mix of trees and hedge plants silver birch and rowan not usually used but not a problem. Elder not normally planted in hedge. Honeysuckle nice to see.
* Possible site for a picnic table would be around the orchard area.
* Use of woodchips around base of trees raises the problem of fungal problems. Need to strim carefully to pre vent damage to tree base.
* Hedge laying was discussed as a future plan. This would require a professional to be hired. Consider reducing the height or coppice at ground level.
* The issue of livestock was discussed. The use of horses and cows was seen as detrimental to the archaeological parts of the site as they cause damage. The use of sheep at low density would be the most appropriate. It was suggested a fence could be placed down the foot path so grazing could take place with kissing gates at top and bottom for access.
* Leave moles.
* Need for sound meadow management regime.

Appendix 1

<https://wildseed.co.uk/>

EM2 – STANDARD GENERAL PURPOSE MEADOW MIXTURE

* Composition
* This meadow mixture contains species that are characteristic of traditional meadows across a wide range of soil types.
* Wild Flowers

| **%** | **Latin name** | **Common name** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 0.5 | [Achillea millefolium](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/1) | [Yarrow](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/1) |
| 1.6 | [Centaurea nigra](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/32) | [Common Knapweed](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/32) |
| 3 | [Daucus carota](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/44) | [Wild Carrot](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/44) |
| 3 | [Galium verum](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/57) | [Lady's Bedstraw](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/57) |
| 0.3 | [Knautia arvensis](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/71) | [Field Scabious](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/71) |
| 0.3 | [Leontodon hispidus](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/75) | [Rough Hawkbit](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/75) |
| 2.5 | [Leucanthemum vulgare](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/76) | [Oxeye Daisy - (Moon Daisy)](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/76) |
| 3 | [Malva moschata](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/85) | [Musk Mallow](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/85) |
| 0.8 | [Plantago lanceolata](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/102) | [Ribwort Plantain](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/102) |
| 1 | [Poterium sanguisorba - (Sanguisorba minor)](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/121) | [Salad Burnet](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/121) |
| 0.6 | [Primula veris](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/106) | [Cowslip](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/106) |
| 0.3 | [Prunella vulgaris](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/108) | [Selfheal](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/108) |
| 0.8 | [Ranunculus acris](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/110) | [Meadow Buttercup](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/110) |
| 1.2 | [Rhinanthus minor](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/2) | [Yellow Rattle](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/2) |
| 1.1 | [Rumex acetosa](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/117) | [Common Sorrel](https://wildseed.co.uk/species/view/117) |

**Appendix 2** Notes from Robert Masheder (Senior Ecologist)

Just a few ecological bullet points from today’s meeting.

1. The site is generally looking better than my visit about 5 years ago. There is a good range of typical native grasses including sweet vernal grass, crested dogstail, meadow foxtail, Yorkshire fog and cocksfoot. The frequent pignut is good to see. This would be a good species to continue to spread by collecting the seed in late June and sowing it into the mole hills. It was also nice to find some field woodrush on one of the archaeological banks. Both of these species will benefit from cutting in early July and the cuttings being raked off.
2. It would be very useful to cut some of the better areas with the softer grasses at least once in early July and rake off the cut material. You might ask Yorkshire Wildlife Trust if they could be contracted to do this work as they have the right cutting machine, a power rake and mini bailer. If you cannot manage the whole site at least make sure that you have some areas which you manage like this every year. These are fixed and will be the best areas to target for enhancement planting. These areas should also be cut again in September and ideally the cuttings removed again.
3. For the rest of the site try to top the grass a few times during the growing season and ideally undertake some low intensity summer sheep grazing. Your current regime of leaving some areas missed during some cuts is enhancing structural diversity particularly for species like the brown butterflies such as meadow brown and ringlet. Butterflies would also benefit from planting bird’sfoot trefoil in the shorter sward areas. Make sure that no areas are left uncut for more than two years. This is to reduce scrub encroachment.
4. Get a small amount of Emorsgate EM2F a neutral grassland wildflower mix with no grass component. Spread it in the areas in 2 with the better meadow management regimes. Try a bit in the mole hills. If the farmer cutting the meadow does not like the moles roll the grassland earlier in the year. Mole control results in moles moving around and digging more mole hills. There tends to be less digging once their runs are established.
5. The wetter areas near Leeds Road could have a few additional species added. Great burnet, greater bird’sfoot trefoil, wild angelica, water mint, brooklime, water forgetmenot. We would recommend removing the exotic yellow iris and purple iris. They are garden plants and not appropriate to this site.

Hope that these help. Keep trying with the yellow rattle!

**Appendix 3** Notes from Ian Sanderson (Principle Archaeologist)

Regarding the field containing Scholes moated site and associated earthworks.

As discussed on site: the moated site itself is the best preserved example of its type in Leeds District and it is the only surviving example in West Yorkshire where the earthworks of its associated field system can be seen and appreciated on the ground.

The moated site and associated earthworks (the eastern two thirds of the site) are defined as a Class 2 archaeological site on the West Yorkshire Historic Environment Record, which means they are of regional archaeological importance and worthy of preservation in situ.

It is this archaeological designation that prevented the field being allocated for housing in the mid-1990s and it was the fact that house-building was not going to be permitted on the site, that led to its transfer from a developer to the parish council.

The western third of the site (to the west of the large ditch and bank that runs towards Scholes Lodge farm development) is also archaeologically sensitive and there are traces of possible hollow-ways and what may have been a pond area in this part of the site.

The amenity value of the site includes the archaeological remains as an important component. WYAAS would not welcome any further tree-planting on the site (especially in the Class 2 area), as tree-roots disturb archaeological stratigraphy and the trees themselves obscure views of the earthworks and make mowing the site (to keep the grass down, prevent scrub growth and allow the earthworks to be seen) harder to achieve.

There would also not have been trees historically in the areas of the site where ridge and furrow caused by medieval and post-medieval ploughing, would have taken place. These are amongst the last traces of the open field system in Scholes that pre-dated the enclosure landscape that we can see today, with its hedges.

I hope that the above is helpful with regard to agreeing the appropriate future management of the site.