

Site Management Plan
for
Ketley Paddock Mound

Produced
by

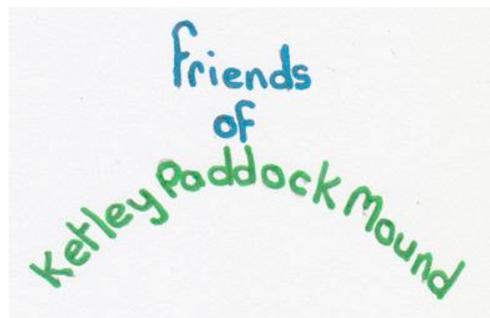
Friends of Ketley Paddock Mound

in association with

Ketley Parish Council

18th November 2014
v1.0

KETLEY
PARISH COUNCIL
TELFORD, SHROPSHIRE



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Notes on this version (v1.0) of Ketley Paddock Mound Site Management Plan.

Although not necessarily an integral part of the Site Management Plan this brief section is included in order to provide an insight into the background and context within which this document has been produced.

This initial version of a joint management plan has been based on the only known extant plan at the time of writing, produced by Telford & Wrekin Council (Parks and Open Spaces), dated August 2012.

Given the recent developments in terms of responsibility for the site – namely the leasing of the site by Ketley Parish Council (KPC) from Telford & Wrekin (T&W) and the partnership established between KPC and the local community group known as Friends of Ketley Paddock Mound (FoKPM) – this plan is unique insomuch that it is the first joint plan between KPC and FoKPM.

Copies of the 'FoKPM Constitution' and the 'Memorandum of Understanding between KPC & FoKPM' may be found at Annexes C and D respectively.

In light of this unique relationship, and the fact that this plan has been written right at the start of that relationship, it will, out of necessity, be subject to regular reviews and amendments. These reviews and amendments will be recorded within the body of the document.

KPC/FoKPM are arranging for a series of ecological surveys to be undertaken (2014/2015) to better inform management proposals put forward herein

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v1.0 dated 18th November 2014

Information

1.1 Location

Site Name: Paddock Mound

Ward: Ketley

Parish: Ketley

Adjacent Land: Ketley Paddock Mound is adjacent to the housing developments of Red Lake and Ketley. To the north of the site is the latest housing development known as Millennium Community. The site is bounded by the A/B518 (check road classification) Holyhead Road to the north and by Shepherd's Lane to the east. The south of the site is intersected by a public footpath known as Red Lees. The western fringes of the site fall into private ownership.

Access: Access may currently be gained to this site from several (5) locations; either from Shepherds Lane (x2), directly from Holyhead Road (x1) or from Red Lees (x2). All of these current access points pose car-parking problems. Travelling visitors wishing to access the site from any of these 5 points are restricted to leaving vehicles in most inappropriate areas, thus blocking pathways, accesses, or risking the dangers of parking on the main road, which is usually very busy. A small (20 vehicle) car park may be accessed off the A518, adjacent to the Ketley Youth Club. The site is in an ideal situation for use by local residents, and it seems appropriate to retain the seclusion of the area.

Grid ref: SJ 687108 (confirm)

***** Insert map here or as an annex*****

1.2 Tenure

Owned by: Telford & Wrekin Council

Leased to: Ketley Parish Council (KPC)

Legal Rights of Access: The site is public open space and has public right of way over footpath 149, Red Lees to Shepherds Lane, and footpath 152, Red Lees to Shepherds Lane. (need to check numbering)

Leases/Agreements:

- MEB (Western Power?) have rights to clear under power lines.
- KPC have leased the site from T&W, currently expires 2039 (check expiry date)
- There are currently two grazing leases in effect (two separate leases or one covering both sites)

Conservation Status: The site was declared a Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) 'Site of Ecological Value' (SoEV) in 1980s. This is currently being reviewed against the current SWT 'Wildlife Site' status.

2. Description

2.1 Physical Attributes

Size: 4.4 ha (10.87 acres)

Topography/Aspect: Paddock Mound takes the form of a hilly outcrop running north-west to south-east. It is, in fact, a *mound* created by pennystone (iron ore) mining in the 18th and 19th centuries. In 1837 the Coalbrookdale Company alone had more than 30 such mines in this area (Brown, 1990)¹. From the summit incredible views could be gained both towards and beyond Lilleshall and its monument, and also to the Wrekin in the opposite direction. On a clear day Snowdon could be viewed. Some of these views are now obscured by unchecked tree growth.

The site is approximately 450 ft above sea level.

Visual Character: The area is rich in wildlife and contains a mosaic of habitats, linked by formal and informal footpaths. These consist of secondary woodlands, hedgerows, grassland, heather patches, meadows, pools and scrub. There is also a stretch of the disused Ketley Canal (check name) that has previously (did it get done?) been dredged and cleared. Some grassland is presently let for grazing by horses.

Geology/Soil: The surface of the site has, in the main, been dumped on by mining spoil. Acidic clay soils have developed on the spoil. The underlying geology is coal measures.

Drainage: The site is prone to waterlogging in certain areas due to a heavy clay composition throughout the site, although virtually all of the major footpath links are presently unaffected.

Ecological Information/Value: The site encompasses a wide range and diversity of habitat features within a relatively small area. Open waters, acid grassland, meadow, heather and scrub areas. Typical pit-mound woodland adorns part of the site, consisting of birch, rowan, whitebeam, sycamore and holly with an understorey consisting mainly of bramble. There are extensive hedgerows of high wildlife value and also scrub areas of lower landscape value.

Bird species believed to inhabit the area are shown at Annex E. Further cross-taxa ecological surveys would be necessary in order to accurately establish floral and faunal species present across the whole site.

Archaeological Value: Possibly the most important feature within this site is the recently restored canal stretch. Its history stems from the first inclined plane (what about history of this aspect?) to be connected to an English canal (late 1780's), and for its time its construction was a considerable engineering feat.

Green Network Links: The site is classed as Green Network as designated within the Telford Local Plan. Links to the wider countryside are hampered by the fact that the majority of the site is landlocked by either housing development or the main Holyhead Road. The most effective green link is to the south of the site, which connects Paddock Mound indirectly to an area known as Mannerley Wood.

¹ Brown, I.J. (1990). The ironstone mines of Shropshire. *Proceedings of the Shropshire Geological Society*, 9, 7-9

2.2 Social Aspects

The site is predominantly used by local residents for either recreational walking, transiting from one part of the parish to another or for exercising of dogs.

There is an organised residents group (now known as the Friends of Ketley Paddock Mound) who endeavour to police the site as far as is possible; they are also willing to manage the site in association with Ketley Parish Council. Both parties are joint signatories to this management plan.

Meadows Primary (confirm title) School have previously used the area for educational purposes such as pond dipping, tree identification and nature walks. They are currently interested in using the site as part of their Forest Schools Initiative.

A local school (confirm name of with Liz) are currently working on a year-long local history project that encompasses all year groups within the school. This is based on the KPM site.

It was apparent that motorcyclists had previously used the site illegally but the installation of cycle barriers remedied this situation. However, these barriers have also restricted access to wheelchair and pushchair users. The condition of fences and stiles across the site should be reviewed and appropriate action taken as necessary.

Key stakeholders:

- Telford and Wrekin Council
- Ketley Parish Council
- Friends of Ketley Paddock Mound
- Ketley History Group (supported by SNCT....check this)
- Shropshire Wildlife Trust
- Meadows Primary School
- Ketley Youth Club
- Other local residents and business owners

2.3 Historical Aspects (check this section for completeness/accuracy with History Group)

Paddock Mount is an area of land upon which was constructed part of the Ketley Canal. The stretch was used to transport raw materials from Oakengates/Snedshill to the Ketley Ironworks.

The canal was an idea conceived by William Reynolds as a means of transporting coal and ironstone from the Oakengates area to his works at Ketley. The poorly metalled road between Oakengates and Shrewsbury via Ketley was constantly churned up by the passage of many coal carts, making it treacherous at all times and often impossible.

Two major difficulties were a fall of 73 feet in the ground between Ketley Works and the Oakengates Works, and the shortage of water in the district due to many years of mining in the area. The 73 feet of fall was overcome by the adoption of an inclined plane between the ends of the upper and lower canals. The idea of an inclined plane was not a new one, but William Reynolds was the first to construct one on an English canal and it is believed to have been sited to the south west of Paddock Mound.

Work began on Ketley Canal in 1787, but unfortunately due to the closure of the Ironworks it became disused in 1816.

Work has been undertaken by Wrekin Council under Land Reclamation grants to improve the site with regard to access and key features within the area. The capping of mine shafts, improvement and installation of footpaths, and gates, dredging and clearance, are all part of the initial rejuvenation. The site is now ready for the implementation of an on-going maintenance regime.

The most prominent mound (how many mounds are there, do they have names? Do we need to clarify/document what we call them hereafter?) with the clearest view was once used as a position for a large bonfire as part of the celebrations for the Queen's Jubilee held in 1977.

There is an aspiration to provide visitors with an overview of both historical and ecological factors appropriate to their point of entry to the site through the use of interpretation boards. Furthermore visitor's information leaflets will be produced and positioned at appropriate locations around the local area.

3. Site Management

3.1 Evaluation of current status

The following elements formed the basis of the previous T&W plan and will need to be reviewed in consultation with appropriate T&W land managers prior to KPC/FoKPM determining how best to address the current challenges.

Previous Management Issues

- There was the opportunity to review the present cutting/mowing regimes throughout the site.
Resultant T&W action: to be determined and recorded
- Some potentially dangerous trees needed to be removed and the remainder monitored.
Resultant T&W action: to be determined and recorded
- Japanese Knotweed was been noted throughout the wooded pitmound in particular. Because of its invasive habit it will need to be removed appropriately.
Resultant T&W action: to be determined and recorded
- Dumping of refuse occurred to periphery of the site and needed to be cleared.
Resultant T&W action: to be determined and recorded
- There was a need to plant new hedgerows and strengthen existing ones within the site.
Resultant T&W action: to be determined and recorded
- The possibility existed to improve the marginal vegetation to both ponds and canal by means of transplantation.
Resultant T&W action: to be determined and recorded
- Where the importance of fresh soils were apparent, it may have been necessary to further improve the appearing growth with a native grass/wildflower mix.
Resultant T&W action: to be determined and recorded
- Several areas had been identified for an attempt to be made to regenerate some of the naturally occurring heather within the site, this would have been coupled with some stability/structure planting.
Resultant T&W action: to be determined and recorded
- The meadow adjacent to the canal was overgrown with willow-herb and bramble; some needed to be removed to improve the floral diversity.
Resultant T&W action: to be determined and recorded
- There was the potential to install a pond dipping platform within the larger pond.
Resultant T&W action: to be determined and recorded
- It was necessary to remove the Rhododendron from the wooded pitmound (name??).
Resultant T&W action: to be determined and recorded
- Access to the larger mound (name??) from Red Lees footpath could have been better facilitated by the installation of a flight of steps.
Resultant T&W action: to be determined and recorded
- In time it may have been necessary to clear areas of the ponds and canal of invasive species of vegetation, i.e. reed mace.
Resultant T&W action: to be determined and recorded
- The site was used by horse riders (previously at a relatively low level).
Resultant T&W action: to be determined and recorded
- There was evidence of occasional small, localised, campfires.
Resultant T&W action: to be determined and recorded

Previous Conflicts

- There appeared to be no major areas of conflict upon this site
- Motorbikes did not seem to be causing a nuisance at present
- Dumping and fly tipping occurs occasionally around the periphery of the site

3.2 Potential of the Site

The site has always displayed relatively high quality landscape and wildlife provision and this is ever more so given the rate of development on every side of the site. The most important aspect continues to be the application of appropriate management regimes to further improve the site's structure and wildlife value. The construction and installation of interpretive panels would undoubtedly improve user awareness and enjoyment.

The site is not only an enjoyable resource for the general public, but is also highly valuable on an educational level (particularly for school groups), given the complexity of the site structure. It is essential that the biodiversity and historical aspects of the site are conserved for future generations.

Consultation

In order to ensure that the wishes and needs of all user groups are taken into account then consultation will be undertaken with those stakeholders identified at Section 2.2 above. This will take many forms and should include:

- Canvassing local residents through questionnaires within the 'Inclined to Inform' parish newsletter
- Using said newsletter to update residents on progress made to date
- Engaging with key stakeholders during appropriate fetes, open days, public meetings and such like in conjunction with other causes
- Specific and focussed consultation activities designed to attract maximum input from target groups
- Communicating aspirations through local press, other 'Friends of' groups, special interest groups and Shropshire Wildlife Trust

Effective consultation will allow both KPC and FoKPM to address not only the wishes and needs of stakeholders but also the fears and reservations of those self-same user groups. Any potential conflicts can thus be understood and addressed through open and honest dialogue with a view to protecting the site for future generations (repeated phrase).

An essential part of this consultation period will be to understand the current condition of the site in terms of not only flora and fauna present but also any aspects of industrial archaeology or historical heritage that need consideration.

3.3 Proposed Site Maintenance

Once the previous management issues (3.1) have been understood and the consultations undertaken to identify the true potential of the site (3.2) then a coherent and effective management regime can be devised. In the meantime the following objectives have been identified in order to prevent the site from deteriorating further through lack of maintenance.

Management and Development Objectives

1. Maintain all existing landscape features
2. Maintain the visual diversity of the site
3. Maintain (and where possible) enhance biodiversity
 - a. conserve the variety of habitats
 - b. enhance the diversity of ground flora, particularly within the grassland areas
4. Maintain (and where possible) enhance recreational value
5. Maintain (and where possible) enhance educational value
6. Encourage community engagement in achieving all of the above

Specific Proposals

Specific activities to achieve the objectives outlined above may be found at Annex A.

On-Site Activity

FoKPM currently undertake two practical work-parties every month within the bounds of the site:

- The xxxxx Wednesday of each month, from xxxx to xxxx hrs
- The third Sunday of every month, from 1000 to 1400 hrs

All members of the community are welcome to join FoKPM at any of these times, details of each event will be publicised locally (where/how/by who).

A copy of the Work Party Programme for 2014-15 may be found at Annex B.

Restrictions

A number of restrictions should be considered in order to protect both the site and personnel using the site, these include:

- No trees are to be cut/removed without authority of KPC (authorised felling only)
- Personnel working on site as part of any management team are to be clearly & readily identifiable as such (hi-vis vests and/or badges to be worn)
- Appropriate PPE is to be made available/worn at all times
- All organised site management activities will be underpinned by appropriate risk assessments and health and safety briefings by 'event leader'
- No tools are to be left where they might cause injury or obstruction to members of the public
- All cuttings and vegetation to be removed to suitable location upon completion of habitat management tasks
- Any group/community activity undertaken on KPM must be covered by their own appropriate insurance