

## Keston Common, Ravensbourne Open space and Padmall Wood Site Report

FoKC AGM March 2019

### Site Report and Management

#### Management

Steven Lofting RSPB Biodiversity Advisor has now been in post for around 18 months and has been the site manager of Keston common for this duration. *idverde* have now been awarded the 8+8 contact for parks and greenspaces and will continue to look after Keston for this period. As *idverde* have been successful in being awarded this contract they have also renewed their partnership with RSPB, retaining Steven as the Bromley based advisor.

#### Site condition

Keston remains the most important site for rare, priority species and habitats within the London Borough of Bromley reviews of the management identified key areas for management in 2017-2018 and this continues into 2018-2019 with further works and initiatives being carried out.

#### Meadows

This year has seen remedial work being carried out in the reduction of scrub encroachment to take them back to their original size, whilst still retaining a valuable margin of scrub. This has primarily focused on ROS1 and the wet meadows and will now make the scrub more manageable back into a regular rotation and enhanced priority habitats on site although the issues with bracken will still present an ongoing challenge to control.

#### Woodland

A range of woodland work has been undertaken focused on range of key objectives to improve habitat health and structure.

Invasive non-native species (INNS) reduction allows for better control of their spread and facilitate the restoration of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland and it's associated ground flora. The key area for this has been alongside the river in ROS7 reducing *Rhododendron ponticum* and Cherry laurel by means of felling and treated, under planting with native Hazel will be undertaken here.

Woodland thinning to open up the mire area to meet restoration targets allowing more light in to enhance the flora and reduce leaf litter in this area. Additionally thinning works to create a more coherent habitat transition between heathland and woodland has also been undertaken focussing on holly. A program of holly thinning has also begun to be undertaken on main common to restore structure to woodland and reduce completion around ageing veteran trees.

Biomass has sadly stalled this year due to issues with contactors however has been reprogrammed for coups 3 and 7 Padmall wood to be coppiced in winter season 2019-2020. In better news Padmall wood has been put into countryside stewardship for the next 5 years under the woodland improvement grant scheme this will allow significant improvements for the benefit of biodiversity to be undertaken in this area as per the management plan which would otherwise not have been achievable.

### Heathland

Following the management in conjunction with advice given by Nigel Symes, RSPB heathland expert. This year's winter friends work days have focussed on heathland restoration, with emphasis on the south east corner of the heathland removing the gorse and thinning the edge. This has seen a vast change in the area and works in the 2019-2022 season will focus on the next area of Heathland over.

Inspections by Historic England have identified work to be done the schedules ancient monument management agreement for this is being agreed.

### Ponds

The ponds provide a challenge to the sites management with their high recreational pressure. The focus of their management this year has been to address access and antisocial issues in conjunction with LBB and ward security.

### Bog and Valley Mire

We have been fortunate this year to have been able to work jointly with London Wildlife Trust volunteers from the water wildlife project, this has allowed for work continue on opening up the south end of the bog through felling and reducing scrub along it edges as well as this work to tackle the molinia and rush has also been continued making scrapes and areas of open water/ pools. Select felling of 3 scots pine has also been undertaken by contractors.

### Access management

The damaged pathway in ROS has been re-surfaced like for like and remedial work to this is likely to be done in 2019-20 however no further pathway works of this kind in other location are planned so as not to compromise the rural feel of the site.

### Surveying

This year has also seen the reinstatement of the butterfly and reptile transects onsite with some promising but patchy first year results, it will be great to make this a strong area of improvement in 2019.

Joyce Pitts botany group have also undertaken some walk over floristic surveys with great results. Joyce's was also very grateful to you all for your hard work on the Gravel Pitts glade above Westerham Rd car park improve the habitat there for the rare *Potentilla argentea*.

### **Outlook for 2019-2020**

- Continued management in the bog acting on advice
- Bog restoration to focus on improvements needed to the Mire area.
- Continued program of INNS removal
- Continued woodland thinning programme
- Woodland work to include coppicing in Padmall wood as a part of the biomass trial and other CS prescriptions.
- Gorse and especially bracken control

In addition to the physical task continued surveying is greatly need and I am sure Bob and Tudor would appreciate support with this, two more survey training days have been planned for the spring/ summer.

### **Volunteer work days**

Volunteer workdays remain strong with average attendance being between 10-15. BCV have also supported the site giving several full day's of work in key areas of the site. Volunteer input to the site. Combined for both BCV and FoKC is estimated to be worth in the region of £31,000 per year based on 2018.