

Keston Common, Ravensbourne Open space and Padmall Wood Site Report

FoKC AGM March 2018

Site Report and Management

Management

In June 2017 Ian Wright changed role to community manager. This allowed the creation of a new role for a partnerships opportunity with the RSPB. Since the end of June Steven Lofting has been in post as RSPB biodiversity advisor to idverde and has taken over the site management responsibilities for Keston.

Site condition

Keston remains the most important site for rare, priority species and habitats within the London Borough of Bromley. Changes in site manager have allowed for a fresh pair of eyes to review the management of the site and has seen improvements in the overall condition of habitats.

Meadows

Management of meadows has seen a reduction in encroachment to take them back to their original size, whilst still retaining a valuable margin of scrub. Rotational ditch clearance also reinstated into the wet meadows.

Woodland

Woodland work has focused on complimenting the restoration of the surrounding habitats as well as the control of Non-native Invasive Species (NNIS). NNIS reduction allows for better control of their spread and facilitate the restoration of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland and it's associated ground flora. Work has included woodland thinning to open up the mire area to meet restoration targets. Additional works to create a more coherent habitat transition between heathland and woodland has also been undertaken.

Heathland

October allowed for Nigel Symes RSPB heathland expert, to take a look at Keston and suggest some potential management solutions. Gorse, Bracken and Bramble control remains the most common tasks needed to be undertaken. There is the possibility to trial bracken bruising and rolling as an alternative to pulling.

Ponds

The ponds provide a challenge to the sites management with their high recreational pressure. Pond four is the last the chain and has been neglected for some time, this has been the focus of management and has seen tree work to allow more light into the pond as well as control of vegetation in the pond and bankside. This work has received positive comment from the public and has greatly improved this area of the ponds quality.

Bog and Valley Mire

Work has been stepped up to reduce the scrub encroaching into the bog on its margins as well as reducing the dominance of purple moor grass. Advice from the RSPB on open water creation and water retention has been sort and some actioned, restoration is still going to be a long term process. Woodland work has begun to open up the area around the mire area.

Outlook for 2018-19

- Continued sensitive scrub management
- Remedial works to pond 4
- Continued management in the bog acting on advice
- Bog restoration to focus on improvements needed to the Mire area.
- Continued program of NNIS removal
- Woodland work to include coppicing in Padmall wood as a part of the biomass trial.
- Holly thinning.
- Gorse and bracken control

Surveys are vitally needed to inform site management and record information on the species and habitats present. idverde plan to undertake several surveys however any volunteers willing to undertake surveys would be welcomed.

Volunteer workdays remain strong with average attendance being between 8-12. 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 £30,000 per year based on 2017.