

RESTORATION OF ROUND POND

<u>Report of the:</u>	Streetcare Manager
<u>Contact:</u>	Samantha Whitehead
<u>Annexes/Appendices</u> (attached):	Annexe 1: Proposed location of a dog friendly pond
<u>Other available papers</u> (not attached):	Restoration of Round Pond Agenda Item 21 November 2016 Lower Mole Project – Ponds Works Agenda Item 27 January 2014

REPORT SUMMARY

To seek approval on behalf of the Lower Mole Project to bid for funds to fence off and gate the Round Pond and to convert the Sparrow Farm Road picnic area in to a dog socialisation area which will include a dog friendly pond.

RECOMMENDATION (S)

- (1) To grant permission for the Lower Mole Project to bid for funds to fence off and gate the Round Pond and if successful, to commence fencing works during the summer 2017**
- (2) To convert the Sparrow Farm picnic area to a dog socialisation area**
- (3) To construct a small, dog friendly trial pond in the Sparrow Farm area.**

Notes

1 Background

1.1 In November 2016, the Joint Management Committee received a report outlining a phased approach to restore the Round Pond.

1.2 The two phases and the benefits of each stage are as follows:

Phase 1:	During the autumn/winter 2016 after the bird nesting season in order to reduce shading, some tree cover on the south side of the pond should be removed, whilst retaining the rest of the trees and scrub as habitat.
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Phase 1 result:	The return of emergent and marginal vegetation due to additional light.
Phase 2:	During spring/summer 2017, the construction of a post and rail fence around the pond, with stock fencing and a field gate for tractor access.
Phase 2 results:	To allow the pond weed and bank side vegetation to return and become established, minimal disturbance would result in a decrease in turbidity as the water clarity improves due to the sediment settling. This would enable the great crested newts to return and use the pond as an egg-laying site.

- 1.3 The committee granted approval for Phase 1 of the project, which allowed Future Woodlands, the Nonsuch Voles and Park staff to complete the tree works over the winter period.

2 Reasons to Fence off the Round Pond

- 2.1 The clearance of trees and vegetation will now provide much needed light to the Pond and will bring improvements to the quality of the water and pond life.
- 2.2 In order to provide an unofficial indication of the current water quality, the Nonsuch Voles recently carried out water quality tests at the Round Pond and Balancing Pond using testing kits provided by the Freshwater Habitats Trust. The results shown below:

Round Pond:
Nitrate less than 0.2 parts per million i.e. no nitrate pollution
Phosphate 0.2 to 0.5 parts per million i.e. this is categorised as high phosphate pollution present.
Balancing Pond:
Nitrate less than 0.2 parts per million i.e. no nitrate pollution
Phosphate 0.1 to 0.2 parts per million i.e. some phosphate pollution present (but less than Round Pond).

- 2.3 The Freshwater Habitat Trust analysed the results and commented that whilst the nitrates were nice and low, the phosphates were very high, which is a sign of significant pollution.
- 2.4 The Freshwater Habitat Trust explained that phosphate pollution generally comes in the form of detergents (soap) and sewage, but other sources come from agriculture and high density livestock farming.

- 2.5 Further research by the Nonsuch Voles in to the possible sources of phosphate pollution revealed that when Hampstead Heath carried out extensive water quality testing of their ponds, they found that they had a high phosphate result and dog faeces and leaf litter were cited as contributing factors.
- 2.6 Whilst there appears to be sound ecological reasons for fencing off the Round Pond, Officers are aware that this action would displace the dog walking community who regularly use the pond and allow their dogs in to the water.
- 2.7 If Members grant approval to fence off the Round Pond, Officers are keen to provide an alternative location for dogs to have access to water and have been exploring the possibility of creating a new, dog friendly pond at the Sparrow Farm picnic area.

3 Creation of a Dog Friendly Pond

- 3.1 The Sparrow Farm picnic area is a fenced off, dog free area near the Sparrow Farm entrance to the park. Unfortunately, the area is not ideal for its intended purpose, as it is prone to flooding and often waterlogged.
- 3.2 If the Joint Management Committee were willing to redefine the Sparrow Farm picnic area as a dog socialisation area, this location would be ideal for the creation of a new, dog friendly pond. The proposed location for the pond is shown in Annexe 1.
- 3.3 The creation of a pond in this area would have a dual benefit. It would help to alleviate some of the flooding in this part of the park and would give the dog walkers an alternative location to let dogs run free and have access to water without causing environmental harm.
- 3.4 If the Committee are in agreement it is proposed that the area is rebranded as a dog socialisation area and a small, trial pond is created over the summer using existing equipment and manpower resources.
- 3.5 An update on the trial pond will be provided to the Committee in autumn and if successful, a plan to increase the size and make it a more permanent feature will be put forward at this stage.

4 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 4.1 The funds to provide and install the fencing and gate for the Round Pond will be dependent on the Lower Mole Project securing a successful bid application.
- 4.2 The cost of rebranding the Sparrow Farm picnic area and creation of small, trial pond will be accommodated from existing manpower, resources and budgets.

- 4.3 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** The funds for this work will come from a combination of a successful bid application by Lower Mole Project and use of existing manpower and resource budgets. There will be no additional demand on the Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee budget.

5 Partnerships

- 5.1 This project relies on the strong partnerships that we have in place with the Lower Mole Project and the Nonsuch Voles.

6 Risk Assessment

- 6.1 There is a risk that the Lower Mole Project will not secure the funding required to provide and install the fencing and gate around the Round Pond. If this is the case, this element of the proposal will be deferred until alternative funds can be found.

7 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 7.1 It is recommended that the Committee agree to carry out Phase 2 of the Round Pond project and install a fence and a gate around the Round Pond.
- 7.2 To accommodate the dog walking community and help to alleviate flooding in the Sparrow Farm area of the Park, it is recommended that the Sparrow Farm picnic area is rebranded as a dog socialisation area and a small, dog friendly trial pond is created using existing manpower and resources.

WARD(S) AFFECTED: Nonsuch Ward;