

Harlington Village Pond CWS – Survey and Management Advice



Surveyor: Lewis Dickinson
Date: 22nd June 2021
Grid Reference: TL038305
Size: 0.3 ha

The survey was botanical with site features and management recommendations observed.

Site Description

The site consists of a village pond that has developed in a former small mineral working and is located within a recreational field near to the church. Much of the pond is dominated by reed with some emergent vegetation, there was water in the pond at the time of the survey.

The southern section of the pond is largely dominated by Greater Pond Sedge (*Carex riparia*) with the eastern edge composed of a wider range of species in addition to this species including frequent Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), occasional Yellow Flag Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) and Greater Spearwort (*Ranunculus lingua*) and Gypsywort (*Lycopus europaeus*).

In the past the central and northern section of the pond had contained abundant water mint, frequent bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) and greater spearwort with rare occurrences of celery leaved buttercup (*Ranunculus sceleratus*). Though this wasn't visible on this visit. However, the large stand of common reed (*Phragmites australis*) is still present at the north of the pond and is likely to have increase in size since the last survey.

The northern edge of the pond is shaded by mature Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Crack and Goat Willow (*Salix fragilis* and *S. caprea*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) with occasional Crack Willow on its eastern margin. The pond is situated in a depression, the banks of which are covered with ruderal vegetation dominated by Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and Cleavers (*Galium aparine*) with frequent Greater Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*) and occasional Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), and bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*), and scattered with self-set Ash, and Willow species. A stand of dense blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) scrub is present along the eastern bank with a group of ash trees in the southeast corner. A hawthorn dominated hedgerow with frequent blackthorn and some ash runs along the top of the western bank.

There is a pipe that juts out of the bank at the north east end, which likely connects to the road to drain water at times of high rainfall.

Summary

The pond has water present after a number of years of it being dry. Wet weather conditions over the autumn/winter of 2020 to spring of 2021 are very likely to have contributed to water reappearing in the pond, recharging the groundwater levels after the drought years of 2018 – 2020.

If that is the case, we should be mindful that should low rainfall patterns return and groundwater levels drop, the pond would likely dry again.

In the past reports it was noted the parish council believe there are 3 springs located at the northern end of the pond, which used to feed the pond and maintain a supply of standing water in the pond.

Observations and Management Suggestions

The map at the end captures the suggested management locations and actions.

Pond

In the first instance the pond would benefit from removing the self-set tree species in the pond and on the sloped banks. Stopping these self-sets from becoming trees is important for water resource management. I would recommend that the amount of trees being removed are assessed against felling licence allowances/exemptions and the local Forestry England (formerly Forestry Commission England) and contacting the local area office to do so. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tree-felling-getting-permission> and local area office is East of England based in Suffolk: enquiries.eastfd@forestryengland.uk (0300 067 4500).

It is the desire of the Parish to provide a level of interface between the pond and the public, to allow locals to engage with the nature that the pond provides without disturbing it. The best way to do this would be to utilise existing windows in the perimeter vegetation to open up the pond to the public purely from a viewing perspective, without direct access in order to maintain the balance between people and nature. Siting benches and interpretation boards at these locations could serve to create an amphitheatre style set up, viewing into the pond. Access could be discouraged by reusing any wood cut from self-sets or tree pruning and laying as deadwood piles along the top edge of the pond.

It would still be beneficial to contract a suitably qualified ecologist/hydrologist to ascertain the hydraulic condition of the pond, almost certainly if the pond dries out again. This is a specialist subject and requires someone with the right qualifications. A potential source of information could be the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). This website has a Professional Directory where you can search for qualified people/organisations within a certain area. To carry out a search go to:

<http://events.cieem.net/ProfessionalDirectory/Professional-Directory.aspx>

Hedge

The hawthorn hedge has been partially laid since the last survey of the site. This management should continue for the rest of the hedge where possible to lay.

Where the hedge cannot be laid the height can be reduced to the desired level using tools/machinery.

Management of all the hedgerows going forward should be on a rotational basis, i.e. don't cut the whole hedge in one go. Much like coppice management, the hedge can be divided up into 3 or 4 sections and each section cut back to the desired level in years 1, 2, 3 & 4 for the corresponding section.

Grassland

The grass surrounding the pond is short cut amenity grassland. In order to create a bit more of a blended interface between the 'wild' pond and the amenity grassland. A longer grass border of at least half a metre can be cut around the pond, at a height of over 100mm. Creating a slightly longer grass edge will soften the clear cut between the two land management types.

Grants & Funding

There are potential grants available for carrying out management work through the Newt Conservation Partnership. Now the pond has established water, having a Great Crested Newt survey of the pond next spring (2022) will help determine newt presence and any subsequent funding that may be gained through the scheme.

More information can be found: <https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/projects/newt-partnership/>

Management Feature Map



Bedfordshire
Cambridgeshire
Northamptonshire

Harlington Village Pond CWS Management Features

0 10 20 m



Use of woody material from around the pond can be bundled and placed to discourage access to the pond.

Harlington Pond Features

- Grassland
- Leave longer border to blend interfaces. At least 100mm height.
- Laid Hedge
- Rotational cutting management on a 2/3 yearly regime.
- Scrub/Hedge
- Reduce height on a rotational regime.
- Viewing Point
- Clear overhangs and open up a bit and site benches to encourage a viewing point.
- Pond
- Thin self set trees & cut back some of the reeds.

