

Purwell Meadows Local Nature Reserve (LNR)– Improving your local greenspace

A project that will deliver improvements for both people and wildlife at Purwell Meadows is set to start this autumn running till April 2014. Led by Countryside Management Service (CMS) for North Herts District Council (NHDC), the project will deliver works identified in the council agreed Greenspace Action Plan (2011) and meeting objectives originally set out in NHDC's Green Infrastructure Plan.

The project will focus on delivering wildlife habitat, access and interpretation improvements at Purwell Meadows, see accompanying map for location of the following works:

1. Cattle grazing is an important tool for managing the grassland to enable this to continue, fencing along the site boundaries of Purwell Lane, Willian Road, Cambridge Road and Chaucer Way will be replaced and cattle handling/loading facilities will be improved on site.
2. The hedgerow along Purwell Lane and Willian Road is currently in a very poor state and has become very gappy with only occasional mature bushes some of which lean in towards Purwell Lane. This hedge will be restored by coppicing (cutting at ground level and allowing to regenerate), layering what bushes can be retained and planting new native trees/shrubs in the gaps to establish a continuous hedge along Purwell Lane, Willian Road and Chaucer Way, this will then be traditionally managed by layering in future years and periodic trimming once established.
3. The wet grassland and marsh of Purwell Meadows are particularly important for wildlife including wading birds like snipe. A shallow scrape will be excavated to improve the feeding and breeding habitat for wetland birds and diversify the vegetation by providing opportunities for variety of wildflowers to establish. The programme of scrub control will continue, as in previous years, with the cutting of bushes within the marsh/wet grassland areas and along the river bank.
4. The river bank has become badly damaged and eroded in several places, these areas will be reprofiled and revegetated, the informal ford area near the Cambridge Road will be formalised with some surfacing to allow access for management works, temporarily fencing will allow vegetation to establish.
5. Water Voles have been seen and signs found in small key areas on the river bank in the centre of the site, these will be fenced to prevent potential damage.
6. Entrance ways will be clearly identified and made more welcoming and accessible with the installation of easy access kissing gates with surfacing, directional signs and new entrance welcome signs. Two new entrance points will be provided off Willian Road and Purwell Lane.
7. Interpretation boards will be erected at each of the main entrances and one near the river interpreting the wildlife and history of the site, with an accompanying leaflet. Notice boards will sit beside the interpretation boards to advertise site events and advise of works.

In addition to the capital works listed above a number of events and activities will be held over the life of the project to showcase the rich wildlife that can be found at Purwell Meadows, provide opportunities for you to be involved in improving your local greenspace e.g. hedge planting through CMS practical volunteer days and learn about wildlife on your doorstep.

To keep up to date on the latest news log on to

<http://www.hertslink.org/cms/getactive/placestovisit/purwellmeadows/>, find us on Facebook @HertsCMS, or follow us on Twitter @HertsCMS.

This has been made possible by a grant secured by CMS from The Veolia Environmental Trust's through the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF) and from Hertfordshire County Council in its role as local flood authority. North Herts District Council's Performance Reward Grant (PRG) has also contributed.