

# MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE STATEMENT 2009 - 2014

## 1. SITE DETAILS

### 1.1 Site reference and name

- Site name: *Linder's Field Local Nature Reserve*
- Site code: *EPM019*

### 1.2 Ownership

- *Epping Forest District Council*
- *Contact: Countrycare, EFDC. Tel: 01992 788203*

### 1.3 Date of survey *August 2009*

### 1.4 Site location / map

- Local authority: *Epping Forest*
- Location: *Buckhurst Hill*
- Grid reference: *TQ 415 945*
- Site area: *3.85 ha*
- Altitude: *57m*
- Conservation status: *Statutory LNR (17/8/2000)*
- Location map:

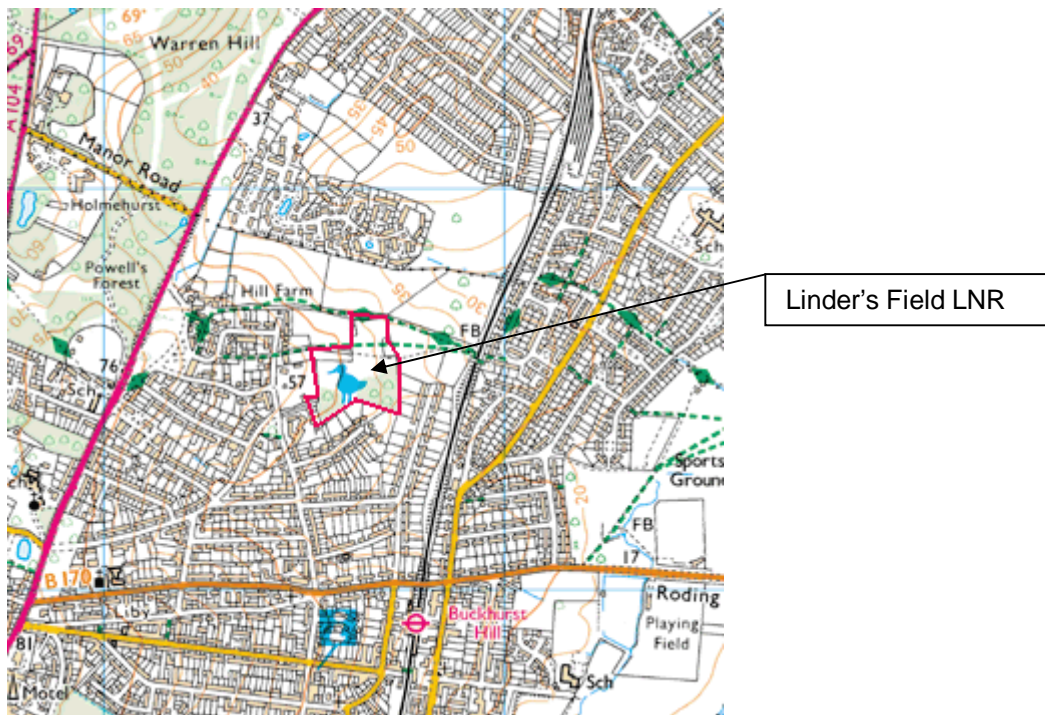


Fig 1: Location map of Linder's Field Buckhurst Hill  
Scale: 1:25,000  
(Reference: [www.getamap.ordnancesurvey.co.uk](http://www.getamap.ordnancesurvey.co.uk))

### 1.5 A site description

Linder's Field is located on the slope of the Roding Valley between the Epping Forest ridge and the River Roding. Despite its name, Linder's Field is in fact half woodland (1.96h = 51%) of which 68% is ancient woodland. The remainder of the site comprises a mosaic of unimproved grassland (1.39h = 36.1%) and scrub (0.5h = 12.9%). Situated in the relatively secluded residential area of Buckhurst Hill, the site is bordered on two sides by housing and on the remaining two by fields now owned by the Corporation of London and classified as buffer land.

Linder's Field has unrestricted public access over the whole site and is open 24 hours a day. One definitive footpath, (Buckhurst Hill footpath number 47), crosses the fields in a north-south direction.

Housing forms the southern-western and half the eastern boundaries. Wooden fencing separates the gardens from Linder's Field. An old hedge line can still be identified on the remaining northern and the eastern boundary. Cattle fencing erected by the Corporation of London on their land enforces this.

The wooded areas of Linder's Field can be divided into three main categories.

**Parkland** – (Southwestern corner) This area of Linder's Field is dominated by around 20 widely spaced mature Oaks (*Quercus robur*) that are all approximately 200 years of age. The herb layer is dominated by grass and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), but Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) occur in places. There is some Oak regeneration and a number of Sycamores (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), which will need to be monitored. There is also a number of small wild Service Trees (*Sorbus torminalis*). The largest Oak within this area has a girth at breast height (90cm from the ground) of 2.65m.

**Mixed High Forest** – (Southeastern corner) This area of the nature reserve is possibly the most important from a nature conservation perspective as it is almost certainly ancient woodland i.e. it is at least 400 years old. According to the National Vegetation Classification it can be described as W10 *Quercus robur* - *Pteridium aquilinum* - *Rubus fruticosus* woodland.

A number of ancient woodland indicator species exist within the wood that helps to support the theory as to its age. These include trees such as the Wild Service Tree and Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*). The ground flora includes Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*) and Bluebell, all of which are indicators of ancient woodland in Essex. A large maiden veteran Oak over 3m in girth is located on the northern boundary of the wood.

Historically coppicing of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) was practised in this section of the wood. Recently a slow removal of some trees to allow in more light to the woodland floor has resulted in a spread of ground flora and the regeneration of Field Maple and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*).

**Regenerating Oaks** - Oak has begun to regenerate rapidly in areas adjoining the two blocks of woodland described above. This has occurred between the two areas of wood and along the woodland edge on the northern boundary.

Other habitats consist the following:

**Mixed thorn scrub** – Scrub forms a band on the site's eastern and northern boundaries with occasional trees present within the grassland itself. Typically, scrub trees present include Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Oak with occasional Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) and Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*).

**Grassland** – It is likely much of the grassland is unimproved or has been grassland for a considerable period of time. Overall, the grassland sward has suffered through lack of management and common species such as Birds Foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) and Black Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) are present in low numbers. The one notable plant found on the site is Sneezewort (*Achillea ptarmica*), a species indicative of old, unimproved grassland in Essex.

## **Fauna**

Linder's Field is especially notable for its invertebrate populations with good numbers of butterflies, dragonflies, grasshoppers and crickets including Roesell's Bush Cricket (*Metrioptera roeselii*). Amphibians are well represented as well and the site's two ponds combined with the mosaic of grassland, scrub and woodland provide ideal habitat for healthy populations of Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*), Toad (*Bufo bufo*) and Common Newt (*Titurus vulgaris*). Reptiles including Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix*) and Slow Worm (*Anguis fragilis*) have also been

recorded by local residents. The most represented group are the birds with a healthy population known to exist. The species list for the fauna is increasing, but more surveying needs to be done.

### **Communities**

Linder's Field comprises a number of different communities, which forms a rich mosaic. One major habitat type is unimproved grassland and scrub (1.89h), which makes up just over half of the site. Some areas are quite open and free from scrub, whilst other areas of grassland are more enclosed. Within this area are two ponds, which add to the site's habitat diversity. The remainder of the site is woodland, described above, and ranges from ancient woodland in the "high forest" area through to "parkland woodland" and secondary woodland.

In 1990, with interest from Countrycare and local residents, small scale management works on the site began improving the site for both people and wildlife.

**Condition:** Favourable

**Threats:** Overgrown and dominant scrub.

**Selection Criteria:** HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland  
HC5 – Woody Scrub  
HC16 - Ponds

**UK BAP Priority Habitats:** Lowland mixed deciduous woodland  
Ponds

## **2. MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

### **2.1 OVERALL OBJECTIVES:**

- Maintain Linder's Field LNR as an area of public open space for the enjoyment of all residents of Buckhurst Hill.
- Maintain and enhance the nature conservation value of Linder's Field LNR.
- Promote the use of Linder's Field LNR for education and its role within the context of the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan.

### **Ideal Management Objectives**

- A)** To maintain and enhance the biodiversity of the woodland.
- B)** To maintain and enhance the biodiversity of the scrub.
- C)** To maintain and enhance the diversity of the grassland.
- D)** To maintain and enhance the biodiversity of the ponds.
- E)** To safeguard populations of notable species with appropriate management, monitoring and review of management works.
- F)** To collect data on the flora and fauna of the site and promote regular recording.
- G)** To promote positive links with the local community and usage of the reserve.
- H)** To maintain and improve access across the site for all the community.
- I)** To enhance the educational value of the site and increase the number of educational visitors.
- J)** To meet legal and health and safety requirements.

## 2.2 OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

### **A) To maintain and enhance the biodiversity of the woodland**

The overall management aim for the woodland is to conserve and enhance the variety of woodland species, whilst providing safe informal recreational and educational use. Each area of woodland requires management specific to the age of the stand and species present, but overall the aim will be to thin trees and coppice to create a more diverse structure of age and height. Bramble will be controlled in the more sensitive areas so that the ground flora can establish.

### **B) To maintain and enhance the biodiversity of the scrub**

Scrub is an extremely underrated wildlife habitat. It is not only excellent for nesting birds, but it also provides good habitat for a whole range of invertebrates such as moths, beetles, bugs and flies as well as a few butterfly species. However, it does need to be managed. If left it will simply revert to dense secondary woodland that offers only limited value until it matures. For scrub to be its most useful a range of ages and heights needs to be achieved along with open and dense areas providing light and shade.

Ensure scrub belts on the fields are not too dense and dark and they do not advance too far into the grassland areas.

The overall aim of scrub management will be to create a mosaic of trees and grassland and have scrub in a long term coppice rotation. With this strategy trees and bushes will be cut down to ground level every 5/10 years and then allowed to regenerate.

### **C) To maintain and enhance the diversity of the grassland.**

Mowing by tractors has been in place since 2001. The overall aim for the grassland will be to improve its diversity and quality by reducing the vigorous coarse grasses in favour of finer varieties and wildflowers. This will be achieved by cutting as soon as possible in the year, ideally early May. In 2 or 3 years this will make a significant difference.

### **D) To maintain and enhance the biodiversity of the ponds.**

The ponds are prone to drying out. They also suffer from dogs which constantly jump in the ponds causing them to be cloudy which in turn restricts light and effects the temperature of the pond.

The overall aim with the ponds will be to try and ensure that some areas of open water (ideally 60%) are maintained and that they hold water for as long as possible. Maintain about 25% of the pond free from vegetation. This will involve vegetation removal and some form of re-excavation will be needed in the central pond.

### **E) To safeguard populations of notable species with appropriate management, monitoring and review of management works.**

Notable flora of the site includes Sneezewort, Bluebell, Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Midland Hawthorn, and Wild Service. Of the fauna Grass Snake, Slow Worm, Toad, Common Frog, and Smooth Newt make it a special place. Of the invertebrates Roesell's Bush Cricket is a notable species.

It will be important to record the populations of these species so that we can assess and change management regimes if necessary. One example is the Bluebell. Currently there are both the native Bluebells and the alien Spanish Bluebell that has come in from nearby gardens. If left unchecked hybridisation will take place and eventually all the native species will be lost.

### **F) To collect data on the flora and fauna of the site and promote regular recording.**

The last full survey of the sites flora was undertaken in July 1998. A request will be made to the Essex Field Club for help in undertaking a follow up survey. The recording of the site's fauna is another project that needs addressing. The use of volunteers here would be ideal.

### **G) To promote positive links with the local community and usage of the reserve.**

In October 2001, a management liaison group was formed. This group now known as the Friends of Linder's Field comprises representatives from the local community. The group meets twice a year to discuss all the management issues for the reserve.

**H) To maintain and improve access across the site for all the community.**

Major works were undertaken in 2002 and 2003 on the site's accessibility. This work will be maintained.

**I) Enhance the educational value of the site and increase the number of educational visits.**

Every effort will be made to maintain links established with local schools and staff will try to encourage greater use of the LNR on organised school visits. Countrycare will hold activity days on the LNR to encourage more use by families.

**J) To meet legal and health and safety requirements.**

It is desirable to establish bylaws for the site so that any antisocial behaviour can be followed through the courts if necessary. A formal annual tree inspection will begin and a public safety risk assessment for the LNR will be produced.

The important features and management guidance are summarised in the following table.

## 2.3 OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

### A) Woodland management projects

Year	Project	Work Schedule	Responsibility	Notes/Action taken
2010, 2012, 2014	<b>A.i)</b> Maintain the open character of the parkland area by removing invasive Sycamore and reduce the areas of bramble to promote the ground flora.	September to February	Countrycare	Review annually to assess extent of clearance works.
Annually	<b>A.ii)</b> Encourage natural regeneration by putting shelters on trees, which in time could replace the existing larger trees.	Anytime	Countrycare	
Annually	<b>A.iii)</b> Undertake coppicing and pollarding to create diverse, multi-layered woodland, especially on the edges.	October to February	Countrycare	
Annually	<b>A.iv)</b> Thin single stemmed Oak trees, where groups of two or more exist within an area of 10m <sup>2</sup> .			1/2 trees per year only.
Annually	<b>A.v)</b> Monitor past work undertaken to hornbeam stools on the eastern boundary.	October to February	Countrycare	
Annually	<b>A.vi)</b> Maintain standing, hanging or lying dead wood <b>except</b> where deemed to be a hazard to the public.		Countrycare / Leisure Services	Assessed on the annual inspection.
Annually	<b>A.vii)</b> Monitor the effects of management.		Countrycare	Note effects on tree regeneration and spread of the ground flora. Control bramble to allow establishment of the ground flora.

**B) Scrubland management projects.**

Year	Project	Work Schedule	Responsibility	Notes/Action taken
Annually	<b>B.i)</b> Restrict development of scrub within the open grassland areas by mowing and hand pulling of pioneer trees.	May to October	Countrycare	
Annually	<b>B.ii)</b> Maintain a woodland edge interface between the scrub, grassland and woodland. Monitor the encroachment of trees onto the fields and halt any further encroachment by pulling, cutting and mowing.	October to February	Countrycare	This is to be achieved by the introduction of coppicing in a belt along the edge of the scrub. Cut blocks of 2 - 5 metres wide by 20 metres long in rotation every three years.
Annually	<b>B.iii)</b> Thin scrub to create more open glades.	October to March	Countrycare	This is to be achieved by coppicing the thorn trees in blocks of 30m <sup>2</sup> and the thinning of standard trees. Selecting the best individual standard tree to eventually have just one standard per 10m <sup>2</sup> .
2009	<b>B.v)</b> Improve structure of hedge on the northern boundary by coppice, thinning, felling and planting.	October to March	Countrycare	
2010 2012	<b>B.vi)</b> Review management of the scrub		Countrycare	

**C) Grassland management projects.**

Year	Project	Work Schedule	Responsibility	Notes/Action taken
Annually	<b>C.i)</b> Cut the fields at least annually to promote the diversity of the field.	Early cut April/May	Countrycare	If possible/needed a second cut will take place in September/October
Annually	<b>C.ii)</b> Control scrub across the grassland by coppicing (eg islands).	October to March	Countrycare	
Annually	<b>C.iii)</b> Monitor and record the species present within the grassland. Undertake a full survey in 2010.	April to September	Countrycare	Undertake a full survey in 2010
2010 2012	<b>C.iv)</b> Review management of the grassland.		Countrycare	

#### D) Pond management projects.

Year	Project	Work Schedule	Responsibility	Notes/Action taken
Annually	<b>D.i)</b> Monitor and record species present within the ponds	February to October	Countrycare	
2009 2011 2013	<b>D.ii)</b> Control excessive plant growth as necessary, especially the alien introductions to the ponds.	September & October	Countrycare	Hand pulling and digging to achieve 25% open water.
2010	<b>D.iii)</b> Clear around pond-dipping platform – coppice.	October – February	Countrycare	

#### E) Notable species projects.

Year	Project	Work Schedule	Responsibility	Notes/Action taken
Annually	<b>E.i)</b> Monitor the effects of management on notable plants and tree species		Countrycare	
Annually	<b>E.ii)</b> Monitor effects of management on notable reptiles and amphibians.		Countrycare	
2010 2012	<b>E.iii)</b> Monitor effects of management on notable invertebrates.		Countrycare	

#### F) Flora and fauna recording projects

Year	Project	Work Schedule	Responsibility	Notes/Action taken
2009	<b>F.i)</b> Undertake a full survey of all the grassland and woodland flora	Spring/ Summer	Countrycare	Request will be made to the Essex Field Club for help.
2010	<b>F.ii)</b> Collate a proper list of bird sightings.	All year	Countrycare	Will need a volunteer to undertake this.
2009 2011	<b>F.iii)</b> Make an assessment of the amphibian population of the site.	February and March	Countrycare	
2009 2011	<b>F.iv)</b> Undertake a butterfly survey	Summer	Countrycare	

#### G) Local community projects.

Year	Project	Work Schedule	Responsibility	Notes/Action taken
Annually	<b>G.i)</b> Hold at least 2 meeting of the management group / “Friends Group” each year.	March and September	Countrycare	The “Friends” group was formally adopted in October 2001
Annually	<b>G.ii)</b> Hold a minimum of 2 volunteer days per year on the reserve.	All year	Countrycare	
2010 2012	<b>G.iii)</b> Organise regular events on the fields to encourage a sense of public ownership and promote the management work being undertaken on the reserve. Organise a minimum of 2 educational events.		Countrycare	

**H) Access projects.**

Year	Project	Work Schedule	Responsibility	Notes/Action taken
Annually	<b>H.i)</b> Maintain all on site countryside furniture to a good standard including pathways, signs, gates, fencing and dipping platform. Provide more seating, in keeping with the site, at suitable locations within the field. (Eg. near pond dipping platform and on western edge.)		Countrycare	
2009	<b>H.ii)</b> Repair the main footpath through the woodland that is becoming eroded by usage. This should be done using granite chippings.	May	Countrycare	Ongoing
2010	<b>H.iii)</b> Create ramp on northwestern edge where steps exist presently.	June	Countrycare	
2010	<b>H.iv)</b> Erect interpretation board in northwestern corner.	June	Countrycare	

**I) Educational projects.**

Year	Project	Work Schedule	Responsibility	Notes/Action taken
2009	<b>I.i)</b> Establish links with local schools and involve them in educational events on the fields. Encourage a school representative for the Friends Group.		Countrycare	
2009	<b>I.ii)</b> Produce an interpretive plan for Linder's Field which will give consideration to the suitability of information/notice boards and leaflets The objectives for interpretation would include a) promoting the field for informal recreation, b) raising awareness of its wildlife value and of the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan and c) reducing misuse of the site.		Countrycare	

**J) Legal and health and safety requirements.**

Year	Project	Work Schedule	Responsibility	Notes/Action taken
Annually	<b>J.i)</b> Clear any wind blown trees and unstable branches that are in close proximity to a footpath. Survey the pathways on a regular basis for hazards and rectify as soon as they become apparent.	All year	Countrycare	Regular inspections needed

Annually	<b>J.ii)</b> Undertake an annual tree safety inspection to identify any potentially hazardous trees within the woodland areas	Inspection in the autumn each year	Leisure Services & Countrycare	A proper assessment by a qualified arboriculturist needs to be made annually and inspections also made after adverse weather.
2009	<b>J.iii)</b> Declare bylaws for the site.		Leisure Services & Countrycare	
2009	<b>J.iv)</b> Produce a public safety risk assessment.		Countrycare	

A record of work done to any of these main features would be sufficient to qualify as actual evidence of positive management which would confirm PCM.

### 3. PAST MANAGEMENT

#### 2004 - 2005

Staff organised three volunteer days at which 45 staff hours and 202 hours of volunteer time were given. These projects involved both the regular Countrycare Group and the 1<sup>st</sup> Buckhurst Hill Guides.

The following was undertaken;

- In June, volunteers and staff cut a third of the grassland and contractors cut the rest. In October, contractors cut the entire field for a second time (1.39h).
- Clearing the site's pathways and main alleyway.
- Repairing a 30m section of the woodland path.
- Planting a new tree at the main entrance.
- Installing a site notice board and bench.
- Thinning regenerating oaks by the main path.
- Clearing bramble from the bluebell area in Pluckett's Wood.
- Felling a dangerous hornbeam tree (Contractors) (6 hrs).

#### 2005 - 2006

Over this year, six volunteer days have been organised involving the regular Countrycare volunteer group, the "Roots"volunteers and the 4<sup>th</sup> Epping Elm Cub pack. A total of 82.5 staff hours, 273 hours of volunteer time and 10 hours of contractor time were given to the LNR.

The following was undertaken:

- Half of the grassland was cut (0.7h). Scrub was cut on the northern field boundary beside the "old" garden and the footpath that runs through it. Contractors felled two Oak trees in Pluckett's Wood and volunteers cleared blackthorn and bramble. Woodland area managed: 0.1h.
- A new 30m section of hedgerow was planted beside the fence on the LNRs eastern boundary.
- The main pond was cleared of excess pond vegetation.
- Repair of 30m of pathway in the woodland and clearance of bramble and thorn bushes around the Powell Road entrance.
- Repaired viewing platform beside pond.

## **2006 – 2007**

In total 239 staff hours, 6 contractor hours, 722.5 volunteer hours and 18 children hours were dedicated to the LNR.

The following was achieved over 10 project days;

- Resurfaced 75m of the alleyway entrance from Powell Road with volunteers from the Scout Association in partnership with the Epping Forest Centenary Trust. Constructed a new 30m section of pathway from the bottom of the alleyway into the reserve.
- Staff and volunteers cut and raked 0.3 h of the field.
- Began construction of new post and rail fencing down the main entranceway from Roebuck Lane and planted 300 holly trees.
- Cleared pathway through the “old garden” from Powell Road entrance.
- Contractors spent 15 hours on safety maintenance to the footpath through Pluckett’s Wood.
- Essex Wildlife Trust cut the whole field with a forage harvester (10.11.06).
- Repaired boardwalk and attached non-slip mesh.

## **2007 - 2008**

Staff organised four volunteer days involving a range of groups from the regular Countrycare volunteer group through students from Capel Manor College. In total 43 staff hours and 292 volunteer hours were dedicated to the LNR.

The following work was undertaken;

- October 2007 – Construction of 25 metres of post and rail fencing beside the main entrance.
- November 2007 – Cleared the bluebell area in Little Pluckett’s Wood of bramble and installed 3m of fencing beside the entranceway. Planted 30m of hedgerow on the eastern boundary.

## **2009**

- January: Replaced fence rail near entrance. Planted 30m of mixed species hedge along field boundary. Felled one hornbeam in bluebell area. Selective thinning oaks. Removal of laurel.
- February: Tree planting with Brownies.

## **4. MAP OF SITE (following)**

#### 4.0 MAP LINDER'S FIELD



SOUTH WEST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
 Mr. Stuart M. C. IER, M.B.E.H.  
 Head of Environmental Services  
 24-28 High Street  
 Exeter, Devon EX1 1EX  
 TEL: 01392 984629

**Map 6.5 Existing habitat and important species**

**Note:**  
 The map is compiled from other maps including the Air Distance Survey map and plans issued to the Council of the National Society and the Devon County Council and is not a substitute for a professional survey. It is provided for information only and is not intended for legal purposes. © S.W.D.C. 2005