

Greenspace 3- Elemore Vale, Easington Lane

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Elemore Vale Greenspace is designated as a Local Wildlife Site. It is a hidden wildlife haven with a mosaic of interesting habitats including grasslands, fen, scrub, woodland and watercourse. The grassland is largely unmanaged, and is a mixture of acid grassland, neutral grassland and fen with encroaching scrub. There is open access grassland and plantation woodland which is used by local people for dog walking. There are signs of anti-social behaviour, litter, flytipping and use of motorbikes. Elemore Vale is a gateway out to wider countryside with a network of formal and informal paths. The site is on the edge of the Sunderland boundary.



2.0 Location and Accessibility

2.1 Elemore Vale is accessed from Elemore Lane just off Elemore Road between Easington Lane and Elemore Vale, situated at the southernmost edge of the Sunderland City. There is housing to the east, greenspace to the north, allotments and farmland to the west, and plantation woodland to the south. The site has no formal identity with a lack of signage or information about the site.

3.0 Existing Management and Maintenance

3.1 The greenspace is managed by the City Council but, overall receives limited management.

4.0 General description and observations

4.1 Elemore Vale is a particularly special greenspace due to the combination of different grassland habitats, woodland, fen and a water course. There is the potential to support a diverse range of wildlife including invertebrates and birds. Elemore Vale has a very natural feel due to being in a valley, surrounded by woodland and disconnected from adjacent housing. There has been a lack of management on site, other than recent interventions as part of the Healing Nature project. Elemore Vale does suffer from some anti-social behaviour including regular dumping, motor bikes and occasional fires.

4.2 Parts of the Elemore Vale have become dominated by hawthorn scrub, which does provide good habitat for birds but has the potential to reduce the quality of surrounding grassland. Therefore, a two-year programme to remove scrub (particularly from sensitive areas) would be very beneficial. The surrounding plantation woodland is close to the housing and is subject to some anti-social behaviour. The trees are very even aged and ground flora is poor. Work to remove any damaged or non-native trees and thin out the plantation, to let more light onto the ground would be positive. Removal of flytipping and litter would take place at the same time. Opening-up dens and improving sight lines in to the woodland may help dissuade people from dumping waste and damaging trees.

4.3 The grasslands on Elemore Vale are important habitats and require regular management to enhance them and then ensure that management continues. Grasslands need to be cut in late summer and have the arisings removed. Purchasing specialist machinery would enable this to happen and support longer term management.

Access and Interpretation

4.4 There is no signage or site identity, and passers-by may not realise it is there or feel unsure if access is permitted. There is a network of unsurfaced paths or desire lines across the site which link up to the surrounding countryside, woodland plantations and the rights of way network. Orientation is confusing due to site layout and lack of designated routes. Routes are overgrown in places, are muddy and there is evidence of motor bike use. There is a barrier across the stream which it is assumed was installed to deter motorbikes. Therefore, carrying out works to reduce motorbike use would be beneficial.

4.5 The site is separated from Elemore Park and associated greenspace by Elemore Lane. However, with better signing there is the potential to create a network of promoted walking routes to link residents from Easington Lane to both Elemore Vale and Elemore Park.

5.0 Proposed Works

5.1 Habitat Management aims at Elemore Vale:

- To plan and implement a programme of woodland management on areas of plantation woodland to the east of the site adjacent to the housing.
- To remove scrub and ruderal vegetation from fenland habitat and create areas of open water.
- To manage areas of scrub, creating a more diverse age structure, particularly where scrub is encroaching onto sensitive grassland habitats.
- To improve quality of other areas of grassland by planning a programme of scrub management to maintain open areas, putting in place suitable grazing or mowing regime
- To implement small-scale interventions on the water course.

5.2 Access and Interpretation

- To erect site signage and waymarks to give Elemore Vale greater identity
- To develop promote routes linking Elemore Vale, Elemore Park and associate greenspace.
- To reinstate motor-bike barriers to reduce access.
- To improve some sections of footpath, particularly sections subject to motorbike misuse.

6.0 Budget

Source of Funding	Amount (£)
Section 106	54,798
Area Committee	-
NECF	-
NLHF	50,019
Total	104,817

Habitat	Project	Season Delivered	Budget (£)
Woodland Management	Thinning out plantation woodland	October – March	8,818
	Removal of flytipping	Anytime	1,782
	Understory planting	March - June	1,800

Grassland	Implement programme of cutting	August – September	3,021
Scrub	Scrub management	October – March	22,500
Fenland management	Scrub management	October – March	9,000
	Ruderal vegetation management	Spring/Summer	
	Scrape creation	October – March	900
Water course interventions - WRT cost combined	Woody debris	Anytime	6,379
	Earth Bund	Anytime	
	WRT Man Fee	-	3,217
Footpath repairs	2 sections of footpath 300m & 170m	Anytime	27,184
Access Improvements	Upgrade Entrances	Anytime	4,102
	Entrance Signage	Anytime	3832
	Promoted routes & waymarkers	Anytime	
Contingency – DWT		-	5,002
Contingency – SCC		-	5,480
Total			104,317

The specification for each area of work is outlined in the Specifications Links with Nature document and details of future maintenance and management are outlined in the Maintenance and Management Plan document.

