



WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

BUCHAN COUNTRY PARK

MANAGEMENT PLAN

1st January 2014 – 31st December 2018



MANAGEMENT PLAN – Buchan Country Park

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1: INTRODUCTION

This management plan for Buchan Country Park will run for a period of five years from 1st January 2014 to 31st December 2018. It supersedes the previous plan which expired on 31st December 2013.

This plan covers the entire park the freehold of which is held by West Sussex County Council (WSCC). The land owned by WSCC was purchased in 1969 to secure the route of the proposed Crawley south-west bypass. Part of the park is notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI – see glossary) for its rich dragonfly fauna which includes two notable species. Currently the SSSI is considered by Natural England (NE) to be in an unfavourable but recovering condition. WSCC declared the remainder of the park a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI – see glossary) in December 2000.

The park is a microcosm of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB – see glossary) and comprises a mosaic of habitats.

The SSSI and restored heathland are open access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000. Crawley Angling Society (CAS) has a licence to fish Douster Pond.

Since 2010 the park has held the Green Flag Award (GFA – see glossary). The award is the benchmark national standard for parks in the UK. In 2011 the Friends of Buchan Park (FoBCP) was formed. The group is made up of local people who enjoy Buchan Park and are keen to promote the site

Historical features include a pillow mound (see glossary) and evidence of iron ore mining. These features may be late medieval to early modern (17th century). Thomas Erskine former Lord Chancellor and 1st Baron Erskine first built a house here in the late 18th century. Erskine's father was the Earl of Buchan and it was in honour of these Scottish connections that the park derives its place name today. The remains of 19th century rifle range stop butts are found on Target Hill.

In 1882 a new house, Buchan Hill, was built by a French merchant F R Saillard. Part of the park is considered a historic parkscape formerly associated with Buchan Hill house. The house was sold in 1926 to the Pearl insurance company. After World War 2 the house was taken over by Cottesmore School.

Management of the park will concentrate on the

- conservation and enhancement of the flora, fauna, physical and archaeological features to achieve and maintain favourable condition for the entire site within the context of the wider landscape and NE prescriptions
- promotion and provision of facilities for the enjoyment of the park by the general public.

A proposed five-year work programme is included which will be underpinned by the detailed annual work plans which will be realistic and achievable. The work will be supported by the park advisory board and the Friends of Buchan Park.

The management plan will be reviewed annually at the park advisory board.

2: POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

Buchan Country Park forms part of the larger Buchan Hill Ponds SSSI which was designated in 1954 and revised under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) in 1985.

Most of the park lies within the High Weald AONB, the legal framework for which is provided by the **CRoW Act** 2000. The heathland at the park is designated as open access land also under the CRoW Act (appendix 8.5).

The SNCI is a non-statutory designation. SNCI's are important because they contain species and habitats that are uncommon in West Sussex.

Horsham District Council (HDC) issued a dog designation order that included the park in 1998 under The Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act (1996). This makes it a criminal offence if an owner fails to clear up after their dog.

Douster Pond is covered by the Reservoirs Act (1975). The Environment Agency (EA) is the enforcement authority. Under Section 10 (2) of the Act the supervising engineer produces an annual statement. The annual inspection is carried out in April. The area panel engineer is charged with producing a 10 year inspection. The last inspection was carried out on 29th March 2006. The next inspection must be undertaken before 29th March 2016. WSCC is responsible for the safety of the embankment, maintaining monthly records of water levels, monitoring seepage and implementing recommendations from the annual statements and 10 year inspection.

Under the Forestry Act (1967) a Forestry Commission felling licence (019/395/12-13) is held. The licence expires on 21/02/2018.

Under the Aquatic Animal Health Regulations (2009) Douster Pond is a registered fishery with the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS). Registration number EW048-D-519F

Due to the presence of non-native pumpkinseed fish (*Lepomis gibbosus*) WSCC holds a licence, E ILFA 753 v3, under the Import of Live Fish Act (1980). This licence is valid for an indefinite period.

WSCC Facilities Management is responsible for the condition and structure of all buildings and the car park ensuring that all works are compliant with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and Disability Discrimination Act (1995).

Under the Highways Act (1980) WSCC Highways and Transport is responsible for the maintainable bridge over the A264 (bridge 1590).

Under the Occupiers Liability Act (1957 & 1984) WSCC is obliged to hold public liability insurance and has a duty to take reasonable steps to give warnings of known dangers or discouraging persons from incurring risks.