



Fishlake Meadows

Opportunities and options for site management

How to comment

We would like to receive your comments on the ideas presented here, as well as any ideas and thoughts you may have regarding the management of Fishlake Meadows. All comments are welcome.

Online:

Complete the online comment form which can be found at:

www.testvalley.gov.uk/fishlakemeadows

Email:

fishlakemeadows@testvalley.gov.uk

Post:

Fishlake Meadows
Community and Leisure
Test Valley Borough Council
Beech Hurst
Weyhill Road, Andover
Hampshire
SP10 3AJ

Romsey Waterways Partnership is a group of organisations who are working together to improve the various rivers and channels throughout the town. These organisations include: **Test Valley Borough Council; Hampshire County Council; Environment Agency; Natural England; Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and Romsey, and District Society.**

For more information

For further information about Fishlake Meadows visit:

www.testvalley.gov.uk/fishlakemeadows

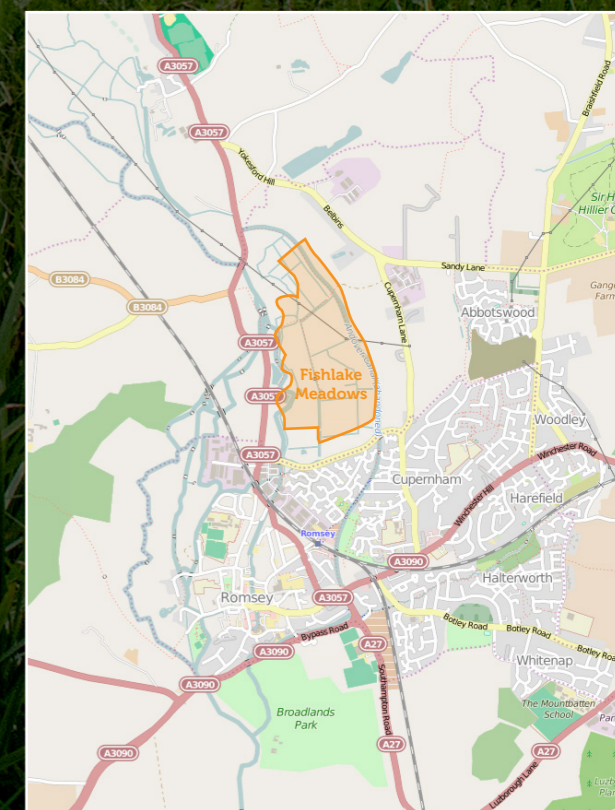


About Fishlake Meadows

Fishlake Meadows is situated to the north of Romsey and is approximately 60 hectares in size. The site is a rich mosaic of wildlife habitats, comprising areas of open and standing water, reedbeds, swamp and flood plain marsh which is criss-crossed by a network of rivers and ditches.

As part of the planning consent for development at Oxlease Farm, the land at Fishlake Meadows will be transferred to Test Valley Borough Council to manage as a nature reserve. This presents a unique opportunity to manage a site rich in history where residents can come into contact with some of the UK's most treasured wildlife. It is a very special place and we want people to be able to access it and enjoy it.

This leaflet provides an introduction to Fishlake Meadows and includes information about the site and how it could be managed to balance wildlife and public access. Your comments and thoughts are needed to help shape the future of Fishlake Meadows.





Cetti's warbler
(David Kilbey)



Water vole
(Dave Foker)



1
Grazing cattle



Volunteer activity



2
Observation screens

For wildlife

Fishlake Meadows is a special place for wildlife. Arguably the most outstanding feature is its bird life, with more than 150 species recorded so far. These numbers include 66 bird species listed as either red or amber on the list of birds of greatest conservation concern. Notable bird species include osprey, Cetti's warbler and grasshopper warbler.

It is not just about the birds. Species including otter and water vole are also resident, as well as 19 recorded species of dragonfly and damselfly, and 115 recorded plant species.

The wetlands have evolved as a result of the cessation of pump drainage in the 1990s. Without management the quality of habitats and diversity of wildlife which rely on them will decline over time. Scrub will encroach on the open water areas and reed bed, and the value of the grassland to the north of the site will be diminished.

A management plan will be created setting out specific ways in which the site will be managed. This will include detailing where work will take place. Operations will include scrub management, grazing using cattle and reed bed cutting.

Involving the community

Educational access including interpretation boards, viewing points and dipping platforms could be created to encourage people to learn about the site.

An education programme could be developed to encourage school groups to visit the site and learn more from knowledgeable staff.

Specific interest groups could be supported to continue work on site.

Volunteer tasks could be organised to encourage participation and a sense of community ownership of the site, with a view to forming a Friends Group.

Key

- Public footpath
- Permissive path



An accessible place

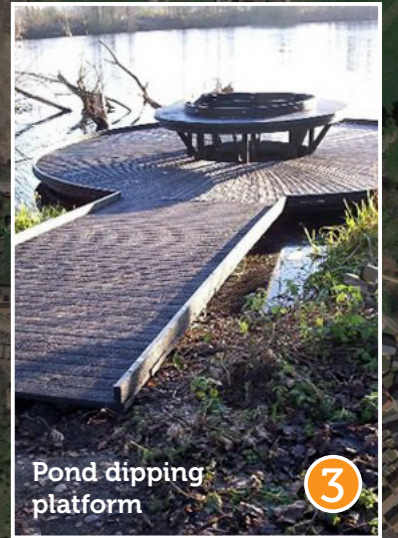
Fishlake Meadows presents a unique opportunity to protect an accessible natural asset on the edge of Romsey. Improvements to the site could include:

- Site viewing platforms with seating to allow stunning views into the site (point three).
- A linear permissive route to allow access into the centre of the site (point four). This could be a combination of a raised pathway and boardwalk, leading to a central viewing platform promoting visual access to the wettest and most inaccessible part of the site.
- Improvement to the surface of the canal path including an upgrade to a shared footpath and cycleway could be developed. This could offer a scenic and safe route out into the countryside. Improvements to footpath nine, which connects Cupernham Lane, with the A3075 would be made.

Longer term, a circular path using some existing and some new access routes could be created. An upgrade of the canal tow path to encourage cycling could create a wonderful off-road family friendly route from Romsey out into the countryside.

Visitor car parking will be located on the Oxlease Farm development with direct access to the canal tow path.

Dogs will be welcomed on the permissive path on a lead. This will ensure the safety of dogs is maintained and disturbance to wildlife is minimised.



3
Pond dipping platform



4
Boardwalk



5
Canal walk



View along footpath nine