

Wallingford Castle Meadows Management Plan

Appendix 2

Strategies

Interpretation Strategy

Tree Planting Strategy

Education Strategy

Wallingford Castle Meadows Interpretation Strategy.

Theme

“Wallingford Castle Meadows is a unique opportunity to discover Wallingford’s rich heritage and experience the special wildlife of lowland meadows in a beautiful peaceful outdoor environment on the banks of the Thames.”

Learning Objectives

After visiting WCM, the majority of visitors will:

- Be able to navigate around the site using orientation devices.
- Know that one of the largest, strongest, royal castles in Britain once stood here.
- Understand that the site has over 1,000 years of history of people using it.
- Know that the site is managed as a traditional hay meadow.
- Understand why hay meadows are special and why they are threatened.
- Understand that ditches and the pond are managed for wildlife.
- Understand that the site is managed for wildlife, the scheduled ancient monument and the public in a fine balance.
- Know that WCM is owned by SODC and managed by the Earth Trust following a management plan, which is available on the websites.
- Understand that WCM is a part of the castle site, and ties in with Castle Gardens and the rest of the town.

Behavioural Objectives

When visiting WCM, the majority of visitors will:

- Take care near water bodies.
- Treat site resources with a sense of respect and stewardship.
- Not climb on the standing remains, dig holes, cycle, set fires or litter on the site.
- Want to visit the site again.

A smaller percentage of visitors will leave:

- Wanting to join local efforts for historical research and preservation.
- Wanting to visit Castle Gardens and Wallingford Museum to see and find out more.
- Wanting to join the volunteer wardening scheme.

Emotional objectives

After visiting WCM, the majority of visitors will:

- Feel that WCM is a pleasant site for quiet enjoyment.
- Feel a sense of pride in Wallingford’s royal history and our efforts to preserve it.
- Feel that lowland flood meadow is ‘special’ and worth preserving.



Site Index: H1

Site Name: Queen's Tower.

Site Location: Top of bank above ditch (see map)

Site Description: Remaining fragment of curtain wall from the royal castle.

Interpretive significance: This is the only remaining known original fragment of the royal castle. The strategic significance of having a single wall here can be seen from this location.

Interpretive theme or topic:

- One of the largest, strongest royal castles in Britain stood here
- People have been using this site for 100's of years.

Interpretive objectives: The majority of visitors will:

- Treat this resource with respect and not climb on it.
- Learn that one of the largest strongest royal castles in Britain stood here.
- Know that this is the curtain wall, and what that means.
- Understand why this site was chosen to build a castle.
- Feel pride in Wallingford's history and our efforts to preserve it.
- Want to visit the museum or join TWHAS to learn more.

Interpretive media objectives:

- An A1 interpretive panel located near the wall fragment with a view onto the flood plain.
- Make this a stop on self-guided walk leaflet.

Site Index: H2

Site Name: 'Other wall fragment'/ inner bailey.

Site Location: (see map)

Site Description: Wall fragment of unknown provenance, and inner bailey – heart of the castle in peacetime.

Interpretive significance: Visual chunk of wall. Inner bailey was where all the action happened in peacetime.

Interpretive theme or topic:

- One of the largest strongest royal castles in Britain stood here.
- People have been using this site for 100's of years.

Interpretive objectives: The majority of visitors will:

- Treat this resource with respect and not climb on it.
- Learn that one of the largest strongest royal castles in Britain stood here.

- Learn about life inside the castle in peacetime and more recent history.
- Learn about the 3 walls of the castle.
- Feel pride in Wallingford's history and our efforts to preserve it.
- Want to visit the museum or join TWHAS to learn more.

Interpretive media objectives:

- Make this a stop on self-guided walk leaflet.

Site Index: B1

Site Name: Victorian pond and ditches

Site Location: (see map)

Site Description: Victorian pond in 'grotto' with snowdrops, bluebells etc. Ditch running alongside.

Interpretive significance: Feature of site with safety issues. Managed for wildlife. Worked on by Green Gym to create access.

Interpretive theme or topic:

- Take care near water.
- Pond and ditches on the site are managed for wildlife.
- People have been using this site for 100's of years.

Interpretive objectives: The majority of visitors will:

- Take care near water.
- Learn that ponds and ditches on the site are managed for wildlife.
- Understand the history of the pond and its relevance to the rest of the site.
- Learn some of the plants/animals in the pond area.
- Learn about the recent construction of the path & steps by the Green Gym.

Interpretive media objectives:

- An interpretive panel located by pond.
- Make this a stop on self-guided walk leaflet.

Site Index: H3

Site Name: North end of Upper meadows.

Site Location: (see map)

Site Description: View down avenue of Victorian tree plantings.

Interpretive significance: Good view down 'avenue' of trees. Good opportunity to discuss planting strategy.

Interpretive theme or topic:

- Understand that the site is managed for wildlife, history and people in a fine

- balance.
- Understand that the site has 100's of year's history of people using it.

Interpretive objectives: The majority of visitors will:

- Understand the history and scheme of the Victorian tree plantings.
- Understand that in line with the management plan we are putting in new, young trees to replace older ones.
- Understand the difference between native and exotic trees.
- Feel a sense of respect and stewardship.
- Feel pride in Wallingford's history and our efforts to preserve it.
- Understand some of the management of the older trees, value of older trees and value of deadwood.

Interpretive media objectives:

- Make this a stop on self-guided walk leaflet.

Site Index: B2

Site Name: Lower Meadows

Site Location: Near Upper & Lower meadows link gate, in Lower Meadows (see map).

Site Description: Recreated wildflower meadows.

Interpretive significance: "Special scheme for recreating wildflower meadows".

Interpretive theme or topic:

- Know that the site is managed as a traditional hay meadow.
- Understand why hay meadows are special and why they are disappearing.
- Name 5 plants unique to hay meadows and understand that they are part of an ecosystem.

Interpretive objectives: The majority of visitors will:

- Know that the site is managed as a traditional hay meadow.
- Understand why hay meadows are special and why they are disappearing.
- Leave the site with a sense of respect and stewardship.
- Feel that lowland flood meadow is special and worth preserving.
- Want to follow the rules, and feel good about doing so.
- Want to help by joining volunteer warden scheme.

Interpretive media objectives:

- Make this a stop on self-guided walk leaflet.

Site Index: O1

Site Name: North Riverside Gate.

Site Location: North Riverside (see map).

Site Description: Entrance gate on Thames path.

Interpretive significance: Often a first contact point, especially with those walking on the Thames path.

Interpretive theme or topic:

- Wallingford Castle Meadows is a unique opportunity to discover Wallingford's rich heritage and experience the special wildlife of lowland meadows in a beautiful peaceful outdoor environment on the banks of the Thames.

Interpretive objectives: The majority of visitors will:

- Be able to navigate around the site using orientation media.
- Feel welcome.
- Find out that WCM is owned by SODC, managed by Earth Trust following a management plan which is available on the websites.
- Feel good about sticking to the rules and understand why they are in place.
- Realise that Wallingford Castle Meadows is a unique opportunity to discover Wallingford's rich heritage and experience the special wildlife of lowland meadows in a beautiful peaceful outdoor environment on the banks of the Thames

Interpretive media objectives:

- An A1 interpretive panel in current location.
- Orientation point on the leaflet.

Site Index: O2

Site Name: South Riverside Gate.

Site Location: South Riverside (see map).

Site Description: Entrance gate on Thames path.

Interpretive significance: Often a first contact point, especially with those walking on the Thames path.

Interpretive theme or topic:

- Wallingford Castle Meadows is a unique opportunity to discover Wallingford's rich heritage and experience the special wildlife of lowland meadows in a beautiful peaceful outdoor environment on the banks of the Thames.

Interpretive objectives: The majority of visitors will:

- Be able to navigate around the site using orientation media.
- Feel welcome.
- Find out that WCM is owned by SODC, managed by Earth Trust following a management plan which is available on the websites.
- Feel good about sticking to the rules and understand why they are in place.
- Realise that Wallingford Castle Meadows is a unique opportunity to discover Wallingford's rich heritage and experience the special wildlife of lowland meadows in a beautiful peaceful outdoor environment on the banks of the Thames.

Interpretive media objectives:

- An A1 interpretive panel in current location.
- Orientation point on the leaflet.

Site Index: O3

Site Name: Cemetery Lane Gate

Site Location: Cemetery Lane (see map)

Site Description: Entrance gate by parking area

Interpretive significance: Entrance gate by nearest parking area – used mostly by locals.

Interpretive theme or topic:

- Wallingford Castle Meadows is a unique opportunity to discover Wallingford's rich heritage and experience the special wildlife of lowland meadows in a beautiful peaceful outdoor environment on the banks of the Thames.

Interpretive objectives: The majority of visitors will:

- Be able to navigate around the site using orientation media.
- Feel welcome.
- Find out that WCM is owned by SODC, managed by Earth Trust following a management plan which is available on the websites.
- Feel good about sticking to the rules and understand why they are in place.
- Realise that Wallingford Castle Meadows is a unique opportunity to discover Wallingford's rich heritage and experience the special wildlife of lowland meadows in a beautiful peaceful outdoor environment on the banks of the Thames.

Interpretive media objectives:

- An A1 interpretive panel in current location.
- Orientation point on the leaflet – and one of the start points.

Site Index: O4

Site Name: Entrance on Castle Lane Bridge.

Site Location: Castle Lane Bridge (see map).

Site Description: Entrance from castle gardens, which also contains part of castle site.

Interpretive significance: Entrance from castle gardens, which also contains part of castle site.

Interpretive theme or topic:

- Wallingford Castle Meadows is a unique opportunity to discover Wallingford's rich heritage and experience the special wildlife of lowland meadows in a beautiful peaceful outdoor environment on the banks of the Thames.

Interpretive objectives: The majority of visitors will:

- Be able to navigate around the site using orientation media.
- Feel welcome.
- Find out that WCM is owned by SODC, managed by Earth Trust following a management plan which is available on the websites.
- Understand that WCM contains a part of the castle site, and ties in with Castle Gardens and the rest of town.
- Feel good about sticking to the rules and understand why they are in place.
- Realise that Wallingford Castle Meadows is a unique opportunity to discover Wallingford's rich heritage and experience the special wildlife of lowland meadows in a beautiful peaceful outdoor environment on the banks of the Thames.

Interpretive media objectives:

- An A1 interpretive panel in current location.
- Orientation point on the leaflet.

Wallingford Castle Meadows – Tree Planting Strategy.

The Wallingford Castle Meadows Management Plan states:

“The parkland landscape to the north of Wallingford Castle was singled out in the South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment as a particular priority for maintenance and restoration.”

- Considerable detail of the plantings is visible on the 1876 Ordnance Survey 25inch map.
- Replanting will need to be done skilfully to maintain character.
- No detailed estate maps of the original full planting scheme appear to exist.

The objective in the management plan is to maintain the parkland landscape and historic landscape planting in favourable condition, where:

1. There is a good mixture of trees of different ages across the site.
2. The species composition of the parkland trees approximates to the original planting scheme.
3. The pattern of landscape planting is maintained.
4. There is no deterioration in the visual quality or 'romantic' landscape feel of the site.

The purpose of this strategy is to look in some detail at the historic information related to the site, modern constraints and the wishes of site users to inform a Tree Strategy which will form the basis of future tree planting on the site.

Historic Information

Considerable efforts were made to track down historic documentation and maps which may have thrown some light on the Hedges original tree planting schemes. The results of this research were however not conclusive. No formal plans or documentation seems to exist which show anything recognisable as a planting scheme. The various documents and maps which were discovered do provide some possible clues as to other features (such as an apparent avenue running N-S parallel to Castle Street) but nothing conclusive that helps to understand the original intentions behind the treescape which we see on site today.

Higher Level Stewardship

The site is currently in the middle of a 10 year Higher Level Stewardship agreement. This puts certain constraints on the management of some areas. Tree planting in these areas will need to be in consultation with Natural England. If Natural England says no, planting in these areas will have to take place after 2021.

Public opinion

In 2006 the visitor survey on the site asked the question:

A new tree planting scheme is proposed for the site, would you prefer:

	% of respondents answering 'yes'
Native trees	77
Exotic trees	0

A mixture of native and exotic trees	13
No opinion on the tree planting	10
Other, please state:	
In keeping with heritage of site	
Prefer broadleaf/deciduous	

From the management plan objectives, it is clear that the maintenance of the current planting patterns and species composition is an important consideration. To achieve this plantings will need to start now and be spaced into the future to create the desired age structure across the site.

Other considerations

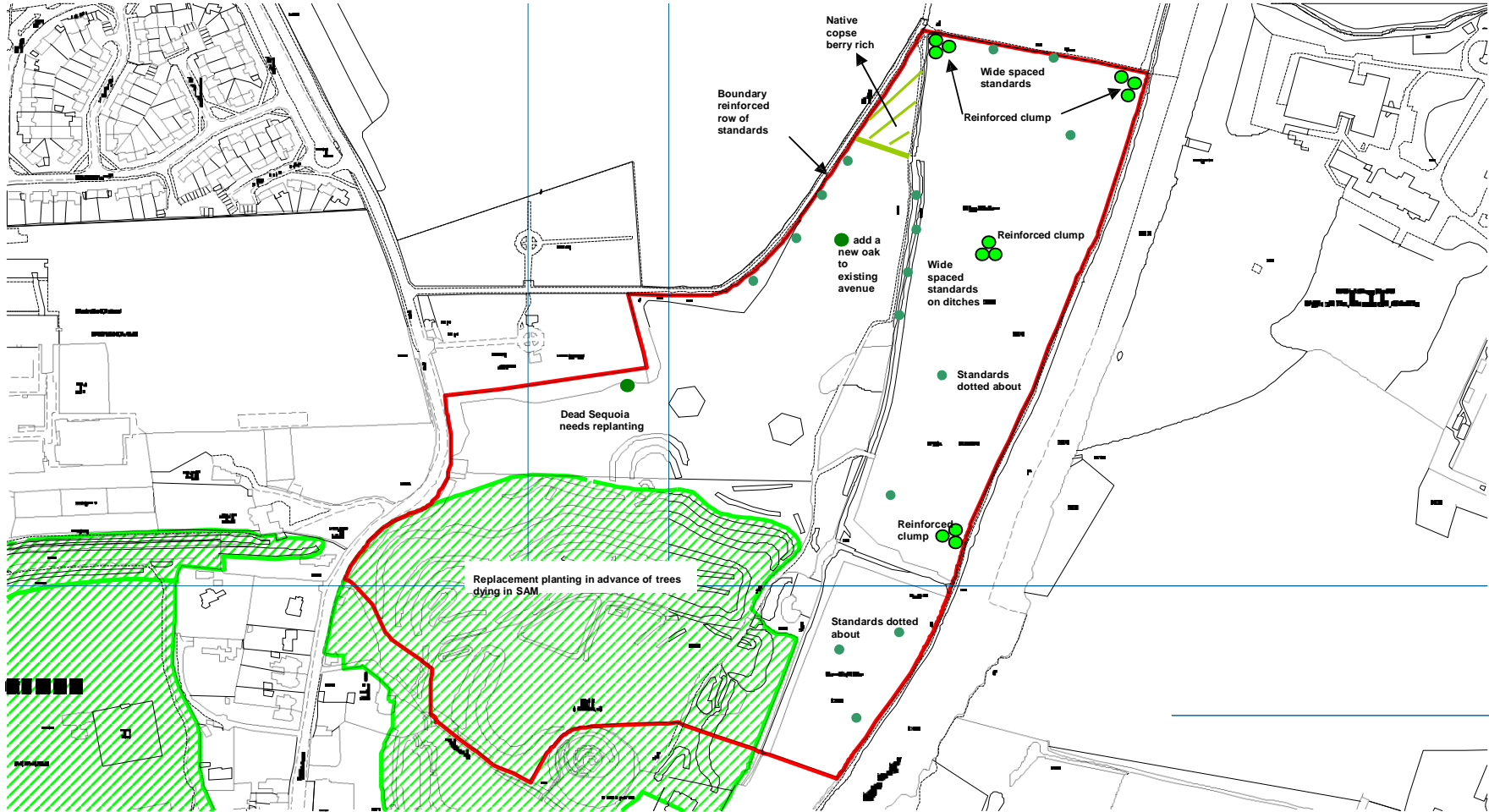
There are concerns about trees being planted within the area of the SAM. However, English Heritage has granted consent for replacement planting within the SAM in the past on the basis that if there were no replanting then there would eventually be no trees on SAM sites. So although planting in the area of the SAM is limited the aim should be to allow for replacement of existing tree stock as and when it begins to deteriorate.

Strategy

(Please refer to the attached map for further details.)

1. Replacement planting should be carried out on SAM in advance of trees dying. Species will be similar to those currently present except where these species may no longer be considered most suitable due factors such as climate change or disease susceptibility. All plantings in this area will have to be subject to Ancient Monuments consent.
2. The pond area is bound by light considerations, so there will be no planting here for the time being.
3. The ditches have few constraints except considerations for water voles (?), ideal planting here would be widely spaced standard trees. Species choice will be composed primarily of native standards.
4. Small triangle at northern end of UM3: This area has been planted as a copse. The intention here will be to replace any failures as they occur and eventually utilise the area as a working copse for the production of materials for craft courses at the Earth Trust.
5. The boundary of compartment U3 will be reinforced with a line of standards – a mixture of spp. including exotics would lend itself to this.
6. U3 – the ‘avenue’ – The 2 sequoia at the northern end need regular monitoring as they may need replacing in time.
8. A new oak will be added to the southern end of the existing line of oaks in compartment U3.

9. Lower meadows – The existing clumps of trees here are in decline and these will be reinforced with new planting. This is HLS dependant. In 2001/2 a number of new black poplar were planted on the lower meadows and it is the intention to add a few more to this to provide good new landscape trees (up to a maximum of four additional trees). Wide spaced planting of native trees will be carried out along the northern boundary of Kings Meadow. Numbers will be limited in order to ensure views up the river along the meadows are not compromised.



Wallingford Castle Meadows Education Strategy

Philosophy

The mission of the Earth Trust is to:

- Educate and engage people in their local landscape and inspire them to take action to protect it.
- Demonstrate sustainability in a way that integrates production from the land, wildlife habitats, and natural systems.

This philosophy makes the drafting of a formal Education Strategy for Wallingford Castle Meadows an important step in the overall strategic aims of the Earth Trust.

Introduction

Wallingford Castle Meadows is perfectly situated in the centre of Wallingford town with one secondary and four primary schools on its doorstep, as well as numerous schools in outlying villages just a short drive away. There is clear potential for using the site for outdoor education across a wide range of subjects. Whilst the obvious beneficiary subjects are archaeology and history, the site provides an excellent resource for science and geography, especially regarding settlement, communications, water and the environment.

Context

The Earth Trust already has longstanding relationships with many of the organisations that would benefit from this Education Strategy through its Education Department, Wild Waste Show, Energy Busters, and Countryside Stewardship programmes. We also have an ongoing working relationship with Wallingford Museum, who has collaborated on all of the interpretation materials for Wallingford Castle Meadows.

Limitations

The Earth Trust already delivers a programme of outdoor educational activities across a wide range of the curriculum either through its education centre at the Wittenham Clumps or through its outreach work with the Wild Waste Show and Energy Busters. A number of schools may feel that their environmental education requirements are already being met by this facility. The Wallingford Castle Meadows Education Strategy does not seek to duplicate or undermine this but to offer schools additional opportunities in the Wallingford area and to extend educational opportunities to other sections of the local community.

Aims

- To develop an education package in conjunction with Wallingford Museum.
- To enhance the Wallingford School Countryside Stewardship programme by working with them on their wildlife area within the school grounds.
- To build on existing links with Fir Tree School, established during the planning and implementation of their Vegetable Garden, by working with them on their Wildlife Garden and to use Castle Meadows to extend this learning into the local environment.

- To contact other local schools in Wallingford and the local area to establish how we can help them with their environmental education packages and outdoor learning.
- To explore ways of working with South Oxfordshire Housing Association's (SOHA) Young Peoples Project that enables them to fulfil their objectives of environmental stewardship and community involvement with the young people of Wallingford.
- To continue facilitating the use of the site by Wallingford Army Cadets for fieldcraft exercises.

Strategy

- Continue exploring opportunities for joint working with Wallingford Museum. This may be in the form of a half-day spent at the museum followed by a half-day of educational activities on site at Wallingford Castle Meadows delivered by the education team or by the warden. This would offer the opportunity to extend history or archaeology topics introduced in the museum or allow students to explore ecology and wildlife, or how land use has changed over time and how it is managed today.
- Contact Wallingford School to discuss the possibility of working in their Wildlife Area. This will allow direct comparison of the two sites and more focused working on specific projects. Following discussions include sessions in the wildlife area in the new Countryside Stewardship programme. Alternatively investigate the option of setting up a "conservation club" either at lunchtimes or after school to include younger age groups and a wider range of pupils.
- Liaise with contacts at Fir Tree School to discuss their requirements for their Wildlife Garden. Following discussions begin working with the school children in the Wildlife Garden or alternatively work in an advisory capacity.
- Send out a preliminary letter to the four Wallingford primary schools and other local schools in the area to introduce Wallingford Castle Meadows. Establish whether we are able to assist them with any aspects of their curriculum or provide expertise to allow them to develop conservation opportunities within the school grounds. This may be in the form of assemblies, teacher inductions to the site, learning resources and printed materials, practical advice, site visits, or on-site educational activities etc.
- Build on preliminary discussions with SOHA to develop a niche for the Earth Trust and Wallingford Castle Meadows within their Young People's Project.
- Contact Wallingford Army Cadets to find out when and how they are currently using the site and how we can help facilitate or develop this use further. Work with the cadets to foster a wider understanding of the site and the need to protect and respect it.

Outcomes

Benefits for children and young people

- Increased awareness of and participation in their local environment
- Opportunity to acquire new skills or improve existing ones, increasing confidence and self esteem

Benefits for local schools

- Outdoor education opportunities within walking distance of the school
- Opportunity to compare and contrast different sites
- Opportunity for cross partnership working to develop or enhance school grounds

Benefits for partners

- Enables Wallingford Museum to offer a wider learning experience in and out of the museum
- Supports SOHA in the development and/or delivery of its Young Peoples Project

Benefits for the Earth Trust and South Oxfordshire District Council

- Fosters a sense of environmental responsibility and ownership of Wallingford Castle Meadows within the local community. This in turn will help to deter vandalism and anti-social behaviour in the future
- Enhances existing relationships with Earth Trust stakeholders
- Gives a broader platform for the Earth Trust's message

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Education Strategy is a working document. Reviews will take place every six months to determine how we are progressing against both the strategy and the outcomes. At this point the plan will be revised accordingly. Feedback from both recipients and partners will be crucial to this process.

Conclusion

The Wallingford Castle Meadows Education Strategy seeks to set out a feasible plan for educational opportunities at Wallingford Castle Meadows and lists potential partners to work with in delivering this plan. Existing relationships are built on and new ones developed to enable us to reach a wide section of the local community. This document should be considered open ended and can be added to or amended as new opportunities arise and are explored, or as current projects reach their natural conclusion.