

Miss Whalley's Field – Management Plan

Date	April 2017
Date of Next Review	April 2018
M'ment Plan produced by	Friends of Miss Whalley's Field
Land Owner	Lancaster City Council

1. Background Information

1.1 Location

Nearest Town	Lancaster
Grid Reference	SD 485620
Total Area	5.4 Hectares

1.2 Historical Information

In 1938, Miss Whalley bequeathed a sum of money to purchase a piece of land in accordance with the provisions of the Recreation Grounds Act 1859, “for the use and enjoyment and benefit exclusively or mainly of children residing in the said Borough of Lancaster”. She bequeathed the money to commemorate the death of her father and brother who died of his WW1 battlefield wounds on 1st December 2017. The land was acquired in 1951. Shortly afterwards, by an order of the Minister of Education, trusteeship of the land together with an endowment fund for its upkeep was transferred to Lancaster Corporation, to be held in perpetuity as public ground, (Trust covenant dated 3rd September 1951 between the executors of Miss Whalley’s estate and the Mayor, Aldermen and citizens of Lancaster).

The Friends of Miss Whalley's Field group was established in April 2015 with the aim to keep the spirit of this gift alive through encouraging and recording local use of this land to protect it for future generations.

1.3 Description of the Landscape

Miss Whalley`s Field is located 1.0 km east of Lancaster city centre and sits between the Freehold and Ridge areas of Bulk Ward.

The field is comprised of rough grassland, a closer mown flat area, stands of trees and a small apple orchard.

Woodlands occupy approximately 20% of the total area of 5.4 hectares

The site is roughly rectangular, measuring approximately 280 metres east – west and 90 metres north - south.

Drainage discharges into a watercourse known as the River Midge then ultimately via culverts into the River Lune estuary.

Access to Miss Whalley`s Field is via public roads which border the east (Derwent road) and west (Keswick road). A 5 metre wide path (mown by Lancaster City Council) runs east – west and is mainly used as the through route. Other smaller grass tracks cross the site and provide access.

1.4 History Of Management

The field has been managed by Lancaster City Council since the Field was trusted to Lancaster City by Miss Whalley in 1951. Management by the City Council has included the cutting of the specific parts of the grass during Summer.

An invasive species, Japanese Knotweed, was identified in the area 2 as shown on Map No 2. This species is currently being sprayed. The records of spraying is listed in section 5 (Invasive Species record).

Little or no woodland & grassland management has taken place.

There was an outline survey in July 2015 to identify the existing flora & fauna & invasive species in order to inform improvement plans

More detailed descriptions and locations of flora are provided in Map No 2, showing 6 sub areas.

2. Securing The Fields Future

2.1 Vision, Management & Strategy

2.1.1 Vision

To protect the Field in perpetuity from development, maintaining and improving the flora & fauna, whilst ensuring that the Field remains a community resource.

2.1.2 Management Objectives

- Attain Town Green Status as per “The Commons Act 2006”.
- Secure Lancaster Green Spaces Designation.
- Provide an accurate plan of the field.
- Attain protection under “The Fields in Trust”

2.1.3 Strategy

Town Green Status

- Complete & dispatch Town Green Application to Lancashire County Council, responding as necessary.
- Collect affidavits from local residents and the Gregson Community Committee to verify past usage of the field.
- Gather onward data to confirm continuing usage of the field.

Investigate other means of protection

- Investigate & apply for protection under the “Fields in Trust” and any other options that may be available.
- Apply to Lancaster Green Spaces for added protection.

Provide an accurate plan of the field

- Arrange for the field to be accurately mapped both in size and topography, accurately detailing all aspects of the field.

3. Flora, Fauna & Woodland Information

3.1 Background Information

The areas of woodland are located within specific areas (see Map No 2) and are generally of a young age, having been planted within the last 10-20 years. The woodlands consists mainly of native species plus an apple orchard. Small groups of trees and single trees are also located in various locations particularly around a “woodland walk” alongside the stream. Recent natural regeneration of trees, mainly oaks, has occurred in area 1. There are plans to develop swathes of wild flowers alongside the mown path bordering areas 1 & 2

3.1.1 Woodland Information

Area	Species
1	Small oaks
2	Ash, oak and other saplings
3	Willow
4	Willow, apple orchard, hornbeam, silver birch, ash, cherry and horse chestnut
5	Hornbeam, apple
6	Hornbeam, ash, pear, willow.

3.1.2 Flora & Fauna Information

Area	Flora Species	Developments
1	Various wild flowers, rough grass, buttercups, docks and nettles.	Daffodil bulbs planted Autumn 2016
2	Common spotted orchids Various wild flowers, rough grass, buttercups, docks and nettles.	Daffodil bulbs planted Autumn 2016
3	Rough grass, buttercups, docks, nettles	Daffodil bulbs planted Autumn 2016
4	Rough grass, buttercups, docks, nettles and brambles	Daffodil bulbs planted Autumn 2016
5	Rough grass, buttercups, docks, nettles and buddleia	Daffodil bulbs planted Autumn 2016
6	Rough grass, buttercups, docks, nettles	

Fauna identified throughout the field include:

Birds – magpies, jays, jackdaws, woodpeckers, wood pigeons, gulls, kestrels, and a variety of smaller birds such as blackbirds, thrushes, starlings, robins, wrens, tits, sparrows, finches.

Mammals – moles, rabbits, bats, field mice, hedgehogs and grey squirrels. In addition there are alleged sightings of deer and foxes.

Amphibians – frogs, toads and newts.

Invertebrates – a variety of species of butterflies, moths, bees, wasps, spiders midges and damsel flies.

3.2 Site Description

Geology, Soils and Water Course

The soil generally tends towards being acidic.

The River Midge runs east to west down the field and eventually drains into the River Lune.

This is a very small watercourse, no more than 1 metre wide and less than 20 cm deep. The primary source of water is from land drainage from the field itself and further upstream from higher land to the east. There is some evidence of ferrous input from the land drains, indicating a tendency towards an acidic water quality. The bed of the river is soft and mobile limiting the potential for invertebrates and aquatic flora. Amphibians are known to be present.

Climate

The average annual rainfall is approximately 1044mm (483 mm in the summer half year and 561mm in the winter half year. The number of rain days (rainfall > 1mm) is approximately 160 days per year.

Annual average temperature is approximately 10 degrees Celsius with frost present on the ground for approx. 90 days.

Land Use

The land is used for recreation, dog walking, sports activities, as a through way to other areas. Also larger community events (bonfire/picnics etc) estimated to be used by between 3000 – 5000 people annually.

3. Vision, Management and Strategy

3.3.1 Vision

To develop the orchard , woodlands and field ensuring they are managed for recreation, visual appearance and biodiversity, whilst always having regard to the historic values of the field.

3.3.2 Management Objectives

- Provide an attractive, accessible, stimulating and safe environment for all visitors
- Maintain woodland areas, increase biodiversity, provide and maintain floral species to improve the environment and visual appearance.
- Identify invasive species, ensuring that correct procedures are followed to control and where possible eradicate.
- Explore any opportunities to engage with the local community to encourage more people to use the area and become involved in protecting and improving the flora and fauna.
- Plant additional trees to complement existing trees in the woodland walk area to provide interest and diversity.
- Encourage diverse flora and fauna in different areas of the field, ensuring balance across the different seasons
- Provide an analysis where possible, of the quality of the River Midge, identifying any species inhabiting the river.
- Improve pathways and access to encourage use by all members of the community.
- Ensure that the field is kept clean from litter and rubbish.

3.3.3 Strategy

Woodland walk

- Improve the pathway , keeping the grass maintained and ensuring that any self-seeding is managed
- Maintain woodland trees to ensure safe passage, trimming branches where required. Control any brambles, invasive species and overgrown shrubs.

Orchard

- Manage fruit trees, removing and replacing any diseased trees.
- Keep the grassland suitably maintained to allow easy access.

Flora

- Maintain and develop existing planted beds and natural flora.
- Identify any additional areas for improvement. i.e Planting to augment natural regeneration and to introduce species that are desirable.
- Plant management that encourages fauna.

3.3.4 Protection & Maintenance

Invasive Species

- Monitoring and recording of existing Japanese Knotweed
- Arrange for annual spraying of Knotweed to halt the spread and eradicate
- Check for any other invasive species e.g. Hogweed

Diseased Trees

- Check for any diseased species, reporting them to relevant authorities where required.

3.3.5 Invasive Species Management Record

3.3.5.1 Japanese Knotweed

Designated Area	Area Affected	Dates Sprayed	Sprayed By	

4 Communications Management

4.1 Vision, Management & Strategy

4.1.1 Vision

To utilise relevant methods of communication to ensure that all interested parties are fully informed of the field's present activities and future plans. Informing all concerned of present & future events and of the historic links of the field.

4.1.2 Management Objectives

- Work to the Constitution
- Arrange Annual General & Committee Meetings
- Keep up to date list of members & organisations (where given permission) to allow the communication of information
- Make all aims & achievements of FMWF available to all
- Establish links with like-minded groups
- Make contact with local schools to inform & educate where possible.
- Provide information panels to display information on the field, its history & events past, present and future.

4.1.3 Strategy

Committee & Management

- Update constitution as required
- Maintain a committee with regular minuted meetings
- Arrange for public AGMs with invites for all interested parties

Communications

- Create a contact list all members, interested parties and organisations (where permission given), to enable efficient liaison and circulation of relevant information
- Provide regular updates & information via a variety of methods.
- Ensure all members, & interested parties have access to information via preferred option. Use of printed information, newsletters, posters, e mail, information boards, local shops & pubs & social media
- Expand communications by use social media. i.e Set up a Facebook page and design and set up own website.

Establish links with like-minded groups

- Contact other groups to share information, discuss common causes, methods of fundraising and best practices.

Make contact with schools

- Contact local schools to educate and inform the pupils of the historic links of the field
- Invite schools to include visits to the field to:
 - Learn about conservation & helping with field working parties
 - Planting of flora & fauna
 - Checking for & verifying wildlife in the field and River Midge

5. Funding

5.1 Vision, Management & Strategy

5.1.1 Vision

To investigate all avenues of funding to ensure that all improvements and modifications to enhance the viability of the field are attainable. Co-ordinate all funding requests with interested parties, providing the information required to ensure a positive outcome.

5.1.2 Management Objectives

- Identify funding within the local & national community to provide for small, large or extensive projects.
- Arrange for affiliation with the Gregson Community Association.
- Gain charitable status through the Gregson affiliation
- Secure partnerships with other groups to increase our chances of obtaining funding, e.g. Lancaster Green Spaces & Lancashire Environment Fund.
- Search out ways to provide a revenue stream to ensure the day to day viability of the group e.g. donations, raffles & field events

5.1.3 Strategy

Funding (Large Projects)

- Identify groups, that are willing to fund conservation , environmental & green space improvements .
- Draft together the information required to enable a funding request to be implemented.

Gregson Community Association.

- Arrange for an application to be drafted to request affiliation with the Gregson association
- Gain charitable status through the Gregson affiliation

Revenue

- Discuss ways of providing a revenue stream
- Raffles/donations/field events

6. Community Events & Lancaster City Council Responsibilities.

6.1 Vision, Management & Strategy

6.1.1 Vision

To provide community events to involve like-minded people in the conservation, protection and usage of the field. Involve families and school groups in managing the field in order to widen the recognition of the legacy bequeathed to the children of Lancaster.

Liaise with the City Council and agree the roles of both parties. Assist with managing the field to help reduce the financial strain on Lancaster City Council.

6.1.2 Management Objectives

- Provide a calendar of events
- Inform the public via social media of information regarding field events
- Identify and contact Lancaster City Council representative
- Arrange to meet contact on the field to discuss any requirements
- Detail a list of responsibilities for both parties

6.1.3 Strategy

Calendar of Events

Detail a list of events to include:

- Wild flower and daffodil planting
- Tree management & clearance of scrub
- Path management & litter picking
- Community events including the community bonfire
- AGM & Committee meetings
- Surveys

City Representative

- Identify representative
- Meet & discuss areas of commonality
- Provide list & agree responsibilities

7 Review

7.1 Provide a 3 year plan

7.1.1 Vision

To provide a 3 year plan to enable:

- future management plans to be written and published
- funding plans to be drawn up
- enable a rolling vision of field progress

7.1.2 Management Objectives

Year 1: April 2017 - April 2018

- Arrange for safety barrier to be provided on Derwent Road
- Spread wood chips on paths
- Undertake orchard/tree management
- Remove scrub & unwanted self seeded trees
- Produce a user friendly web site and Facebook page
- Erect a bench and information/interpretation board
- Draft and implement a WW1 Centenary commemorative event to

recognise the gift of Miss Whalley to the people of Lancaster

- Apply for grants/funding to survey drainage problems
- Assist with Community events, for example the Gregson Community Association Bonfire
- Arrange for litter clearance
- Hold a public AGM

Year 2: April 2018 - April 2019

- Make pathways more accessible by for example, cutting back vegetation such as brambles and use of wood chips
- Extend bulb/flower planting
- Continue with tree and orchard management
- Arrange for litter clearance
- Assist with Community events, for example the Gregson Community Association Bonfire
- Consider recommendations/proposals for resolving drainage problems
- Consider organising a community fund raising event
- Hold a public AGM

Year 3: April 2019 – April 2020

- Apply for funding to address drainage improvement proposals
- Apply for funding to improve access for all
- Consider other recreational uses
- Consider provision of additional seating
- Make pathways more accessible by for example, cutting back vegetation such as brambles and use of wood chips
- Arrange for litter clearance

- Extend bulb/flower planting
- Continue with tree and orchard management
- Assist with Community events, e.g. the Gregson Festival Group Bonfire
- Hold a public AGM.

MAP N°2

MISS WHALLEY'S FIELD - PLAN
DIAGRAM SHOWING APPROX DIMENSIONS
OF THE 6 AREAS

