

Jellyfields - Pre Plan Consultation Feedback
June 2020

Headlines:

- **Easy Access – Peace and quiet**
- **Careful management for wildlife**
- **Tree management requirements**
- **Improve and maintain paths, gates and boundaries**
- **Work with dog walkers to reduce issues**
- **Establish a Friends of Group**

What people like about Jellyfields
Jellyfields is a wonderful, natural space, but I think with some investment, development and active management, it could also be a functional space, an educational space and an entertaining space.
Hearing the birds and watching the squirrels.
It is a quiet area which allows Nature to thrive in its natural habitat. Although small, it has a wildness about it and does not feel too cultivated. The natural growth of nettles, brambles etc add to its ability to house small mammals, birds and insects.
The Nature Reserve is an oasis of calm full of birdsong, varying flora and fauna as well as various small creatures. The sound of running water from the shallow Walditch Brook is very therapeutic while small children love looking to see whether they can spot anything in the water. It is very green and shady in places while the two benches; one inside and the other by the main entrance; are a restful place to sit.
The abundance of wildlife, especially the variety of Birds. A lovely view for the residents in the Bungalows opposite.
What I like best about the reserve is the fact of the wildlife; I have seen many species of birds and look forward to the arrivals of chiff-chaff (some of which are beginning to over-winter here), white throat and Blackcap each summer. Swallows, martins and swifts also visit.
Having public access to a site that combines wet woodland, damp open areas, and a small area of flower meadow is interesting and enjoyable.
The Natural Look of the area.
It's natural – Don't change it.
The paths make a pleasant alternative walking route to and from Bridport, away from Lower Walditch Lane, and one can enjoy birdsong and relative tranquillity of the reserve.
I like the slightly wild feel of the area and the feeling of solitude.
Quietness, meandering paths, dark woods, the brook. Loneliness.
The Brook running through the area, wildflower meadow, Hawthorn and Elderflower blossom, peace and quiet.
Good 'dog on lead' walking.
"I like climbing trees" (Dylan age 4) – "I like the wildlife around me" (Rowan age 8)

What are the issues/concerns the Management Plan needs to address?

About the Management Plan
I see this reserve as an essential part of the network of areas within the town which have the potential to form a significant resource for both wildlife and people
It is a lovely space, much appreciated by many people, but suffering from a lack of maintenance. Light touch, sensitive and informed measures with ecological knowledge would bring huge benefits.
The management up to now has not been too intrusive and the reserve has the appearance of a fairly natural piece of countryside
We feel that Nature should be given priority over all else in order to maintain its natural state for animals, birds and insects as, in our opinion, it is too small to facilitate any commercialisation.
Thus nature will be allowed to take it's course and the area will not become over-managed. Whatever is growing there now should be allowed to continue to grow, unless there are trees causing safety issues for example. There should be no construction work undertaken, no paths made of building materials and nothing done to promote it as a site for hordes to visit – and destroy it as a nature reserve.
The reactive maintenance has worked fairly well, fallen trees cut or moved. I think it would be a shame to over manage and formalise the area.
We should be very cautious about changing it too much. I know wild areas could possibly be improved as a local nature reserve but all places do not need to look tidy. – I hope your approach will be sympathetic with minimal change.
I think that Jellyfields is a great space for both wildlife and people. It is certainly very popular with dog walkers and local residents. I wouldn't want to see any drastic changes.
Divide the site into three areas: The first area probably in the middle preserving the original atmosphere, even if it is overgrown now somewhat. The second area with designated pathways with benches set at regular intervals. The third area to be landscaped and planted with wild flowers and suitable trees, hedges but maintained.
A shame this maintenance work has not been extended from the Howard Road entrance up Lower Walditch Lane to the 3rd top gateway.
Please keep it wild – no tarmac!
I am no Ecologist, so perhaps I am not sufficiently valuing areas overgrown with stinging nettles. However I feel the Nature Reserve could probably spare some areas.
Can I recommend that all of those involved in deciding the plan for Jellyfields read "Wilding" by Isabella Tree? Having done so, do absolutely nothing to it other than keep the footpaths clear to allow people to walk through and be amazed by nature's ability to look after itself without us 'helping it on its way

Infra structure Improvements
The existing paths have been encroached upon by vegetation. The vegetation needs to be cut back, the pathways need to be widened and re-gravelled to make them wheelchair accessible.
The paths can become difficult to pass in the summer months when the plant life reaches shoulder height and begins to fall across the track; the margins need to be regularly cut back from late spring through the summer months. This is particularly important where nettle growth encroaches on the track.
The stone paths are generally in good condition, but the undergrowth is unchecked and encroaches on the paths in a number of places. With current social distancing rules this makes passing people difficult. I understand that the reserve should be accessible to all, but it is not currently usable by people with buggies or wheelchair users and small children are at risk of being stung by the nettles. There are several points where fallen trees are either very low or completely blocking the path.
There are three areas of the path that need attention as they become very muddy and difficult to traverse. I also think that the gates should be held shut to stop dogs from going on to the road.
Continuing the footpath following the brook until it reaches Lower Walditch Lane, enabling walkers to stay off the road longer
It would be nice if the track leading to the old gate at the far (eastern) end of the present path could perhaps be improved – possibly into a boarded walk as it's both very rough and muddy during the winter months.
Reinstating the kissing gates at the top and bottom of the path to the village to prevent cyclists from using the narrow path; it is dangerous for walkers and causes erosion.
The addition of one or two wooden benches in areas where the landscape naturally allows it without the need to cut back the vegetation.
Small amount of seating to sit and enjoy the area.
I would also like to see additional seating in the form of benches installed at intervals all around the Nature Reserve. I would like to see an area mown and turned into a dedicated picnic area, with picnic tables.
Make it easier and safer for me to cycle through on my bike (Rowan aged 8)

Wildlife enhancements
I have recorded seven species of butterfly so far this year, and at least 15 bird species. I have found several interesting fungi, including Scarlet Elf Cup. Nothing very unusual, but all seem to thrive. There would be more chance of a greater variety of wild flowers if the large invasive species such as Pendulous Sedge and Hogweed were controlled. Nettle and Bramble are good for butterflies but again are spreading unchecked.
Renovating the wild flower meadow which used to lead from the boundary of Lower Walditch Lane (the mini-roundabout to the start of the cemetery) down to the stream. This meadow is now entirely overgrown with trees, saplings, brambles and nettles. When I moved here in 2008 it was full of wild flowers which provided a perfect habitat for insects, butterflies, and moths which were in abundance.
The diversity of the plant life might be enhanced by some careful management. The soil is probably quite nutrient rich and the and vigorous plants tend to dominate the flora. The growth of nettles perhaps could be reduced over a period of several years by cutting and removing the cut plants instead of leaving them to rot in situ, so the nutrients are not just recycled into the soil, instead they should reduce over time. The flower meadow could also be treated in the same way so the soil there too eventually becomes less rich and the wild flowers will become less overwhelmed by the grasses. The damp, open areas, where for example cuckoo flower/ lady's smock attracts orange tip butterflies in spring, would benefit from occasional scrub removal if it is to be kept free of trees and brambles.
It is sad to see that the memorial wildflower meadow planted a few years ago has been overwhelmed. I'm not an ecologist, and I'm not suggesting total clearance, but I feel that some sensitive and careful management would bring rewards
The rank weed patch is an insult to the fallen whose memory it is suppose to honour. Suggest remove nettles and docks, keep flattish top mown short, plug pant sloping sides
I believe Jellyfields would be vastly improved as a nature reserve by encouraging insects through providing clear, open spaces from the boundary of the mini roundabout, along Lower Walditch Lane as far as the cemetery wall.
I'd hate to see it taken right the way to the far end, which is at the moment inaccessible – I feel it's important to reserve at least a part of the area solely for wildlife; over the years, I've noticed a lot less wildlife in the area
The Memorial Wildflower Meadow to those who died in the First World War, but for want of maintenance it has become an overgrown mess of weeds and stinging nettles.
The wildflower meadow doesn't seem to have any wild flowers in it and I feel that could be improved.
The creation of a pond with attendant wildlife using Walditch Brook as the source of water.
More Bird and Bat boxes
Look to increase diversity in different parts of the reserve – Zoning?
Designated seating areas away from wildlife
Planting of indigenous wildflowers; Dog Rose, King Cups in boggy areas and native fruiting trees
Clear the brook so that it runs faster and helps drain the boggy area – if not, duck boards to walk on.
Trees
Keep the deciduous woodland and scrub areas to promote diversity.
Trees within the southern part of the reserve should be kept at a reasonable height - not obscure the outstanding view to the hill from the gardens along the lane.
Topping the trees, especially further up the lane as it gets very dark on the walk up toward walditch.
Some trees are too close to each other but we need new planting – Trees need to be the right sort in secure soil not to near the stream.
Badly needed branch trimming of larger Trees that overhand the lane and residents property - inhibiting light to people's homes. Not to mention the thousands & thousands of seed pods all over the banks/gardens/gutters etc.
Remove non native trees, plant more Hawthorn, Hazel and maybe Elderberry and Holly.
I'm also concerned about the state of the trees. As you probably know, the sycamore avenue in Walditch Road is suffering badly from sooty bark disease.

Dogs
The walk through has been monopolised by dog-walkers who don't have the decency to pick up and dispose of their dog-mess considerately. There is zero enjoyment for those of us without dogs, and therefore we do not walk through there anymore. Such a shame
It is a place where dog walkers can safely walk their dogs with facilities to dispose of any excrement
My experience to date is that it is mostly used as a dog toilet. Cars appear with owners and dogs and they wander into Jellyfields and reappear later. Who knows whether they clear up after their pets.
Should be enjoyed as a nature reserve not a dog loo – We don't go there now as all we see are dog walkers.
Dog mess is a constant hazard. Some councils issue a spray "dye" so that the hazard can be seen by walkers and path clearers. A warden who intermittently patrols and issues fines to offending dog owners would be a welcome addition to the area generally.
A serious effort needs to be made to tackle the dog faeces problem. I would suggest the installation of additional dog poo bins at intervals around the Nature Reserve along with additional signage warning people to pick up after their dogs or face penalty fine
Jellyfields is largely used as a dog walking area. I have no objection to this although I don't feel it is a safe space for me to take my toddler due to dog poo and lots of dogs running free in the space. I would like to see it as more of a family friendly area, where families can enjoy the natural environment.
Information & Interpretation
Information board and directions – a small visitor building to house birds and animals.
some encouragement for Bridport schools to visit, but without building classrooms and other non-natural environments and only on a limited basis, e.g. no more than 10 pupils at a time, it might remain as intended – a local nature reserve, where humans leave nature to get on with it's own business.
The creation of a Website with regular updates and short informative videos on YouTube.
The seeking of sponsorship of local businesses with a sign(s) with their names.
The First World War Memorial Meadow I would like to see replaced with a stone monument or a statue of a First World War soldier.
Maybe the addition of small wooden plaques giving information about: the wildlife that lives at Jellyfields, the varieties of trees and plants, the ownership of the Nature Reserve, contact numbers should anything need to be reported.
Bird watching areas/information boards for children about the wildlife in the area.
Volunteer Group
The creation of a Friends organisation with an annual subscription besides providing a possible pool of volunteers.
A local volunteer group organised by a suitably experienced leader could probably undertake much of the routine maintenance with hand-tools. A small group used to help the Dorset Council rangers.

Other comments
I have to say that whoever did the coppicing / fencing has done a great job.
Preserving the character of the combe in which Jellyfields is situated. The name Walditch refers to the 'wall' meaning the high hill, and the 'ditch' i.e. the stream flowing at the bottom of the 'wall' through Jellyfields. The surrounding site contains strip lynchets: the view to which is now completely obscured. If the management of the site can conserve this archaeological component the site would be improved for visitors.
I was very pleased to learn that the Town Council arranged to have the boundary hedge laid along Lower Walditch Lane during last winter. It has really enhanced the look of the site and hopefully will help enhance the diversity of the wildlife in that area
it is so overgrown I don't feel safe walking in Jellyfields - it has become a place for dogs to be exercised and drug users to meet.
This is a residential area and therefore anything that increases traffic, pollution and nuisance must be avoided especially as that does not align with the reasoning behind leaving areas to nature.
I would like to see traffic calming measures, specifically speed bumps and a Pedestrian Crossings installed. I would like to see Lower Walditch Lane heading East changed from a National Speed Limit road to a 20mph Speed Limit.
I would like to see a playground with play equipment such as swings, slides and a climbing frame built.
Child friendly but in a natural way to encourage children to appreciate nature. Natural play trail among the trees (like the one at Corfe Castle when walking from the car park, along the river, up to the castle) https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/corfe-castle/lists/corfe-castle-top-ten-things-to-do-for-families Clear areas where families can picnic/enjoy the surroundings.
I was told once that there is the remains of a brick-built sheep washing area on the stream that is currently completely overgrown. I am not sure if that is true, but if so, is it known whether there is enough of interest remaining to make clearing that small area worthwhile to reveal something of past agricultural activity?
It would also help if the residents across the road from Jellyfields didn't consider it their personal compost-heap, and refrained from using it as a cheap way of getting rid of their garden waste.
The hedge laying often takes place in Spring when the birds are starting to nest. I think that this should be done in late Summer or early Autumn.
We love the water, cooling our feet and splashing. Can we encourage a pond or swimmable area?
What about a meeting circle space – like the one in Allington Hillbillies created? We'd like to more involved in projects for families.