

**Bridport Town Council
Bothenhampton Nature Reserve
Management Plan
2020-2025**



This version FIRST DRAFT - August 2020
Online version with questionnaire response form available:
<https://www.bridport-tc.gov.uk/jellyfields-and-bothenhampton-nature-reserve/>

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Cover photo credit -

1. Background

Bothenhampton Nature Reserve is a locally important semi natural woodland with remnants of calcareous grassland on former stone quarry sites. Woodland comprising primarily of Ash of varying ages, Field Maples and Sycamores. Dormice have been recorded on the site.

Bothenhampton Nature Reserve is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) with the priority habitat being Deciduous Woodland. The Nature Reserve provides a valuable matrix of woodland, scrub and patches of remnant calcareous grassland home to a range of common and notable species. (see Appendix Species Listing).

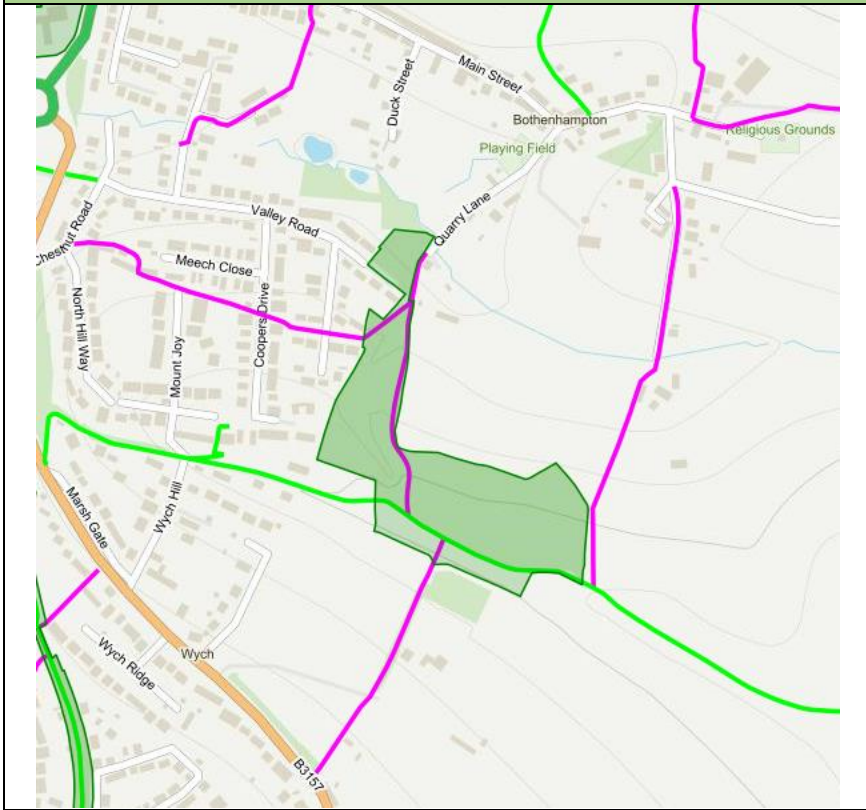
The Nature Reserve covers some 4.31 Ha of old quarries south of Bothenhampton village.. The beds of limestone were worked for many centuries to provide building stone, known as Forest Marble. The strength and “waterproof” quality of the Forest Marble has been utilised for foundation stones in the local area. [Wanderwell Quarry](#) has been designated a Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS). An old Limekiln was restored in the 1990’s to further support education and understanding about the industrial heritage of the Nature Reserve.

The Nature Reserve is close to Bothenhampton village and can be accessed from three Public Rights of Way making it popular for walkers.

Following the declaration of a Climate Emergency all management plans for Bridport Town Council green spaces are being reviewed. The reviews consider current uses and look to improve the areas for wildlife, carbon storage and community use.

What people like about Bothenhampton Nature Reserve:	Issues to be addressed:
A well used and much loved nature reserve	The site demands sensitive management for wildlife; including tree management requirements
A source of peace and connection with nature	Maintenance of paths, hand rails and steps
Views and Quarry heritage	A need for up to date surveys to inform the management plan
Sense of wildness	Re establish a volunteer group and work parties Establish a Friends Group to help with management.

Management Plan Area with Rights of Way:



Brief history of the site:

2020 Dorset County Council transferred site to Bridport Town Council

1990's site designated a Local Nature Reserve

1970's Quarrying activity ends

1750 or earlier Quarrying activity for building stone

Aerial Photograph of Nature Reserve 2018



2. Management Plan Consultations

It is important that the management plan for Bothenhampton Nature Reserve ensures that the interests of wildlife and the local users are balanced and mitigations are put in place to address community concerns.

During April and May 2020 a pre plan consultation exercise took place to gather the views of users and residents about the management of Bothenhampton Nature Reserve. Report available for download at:

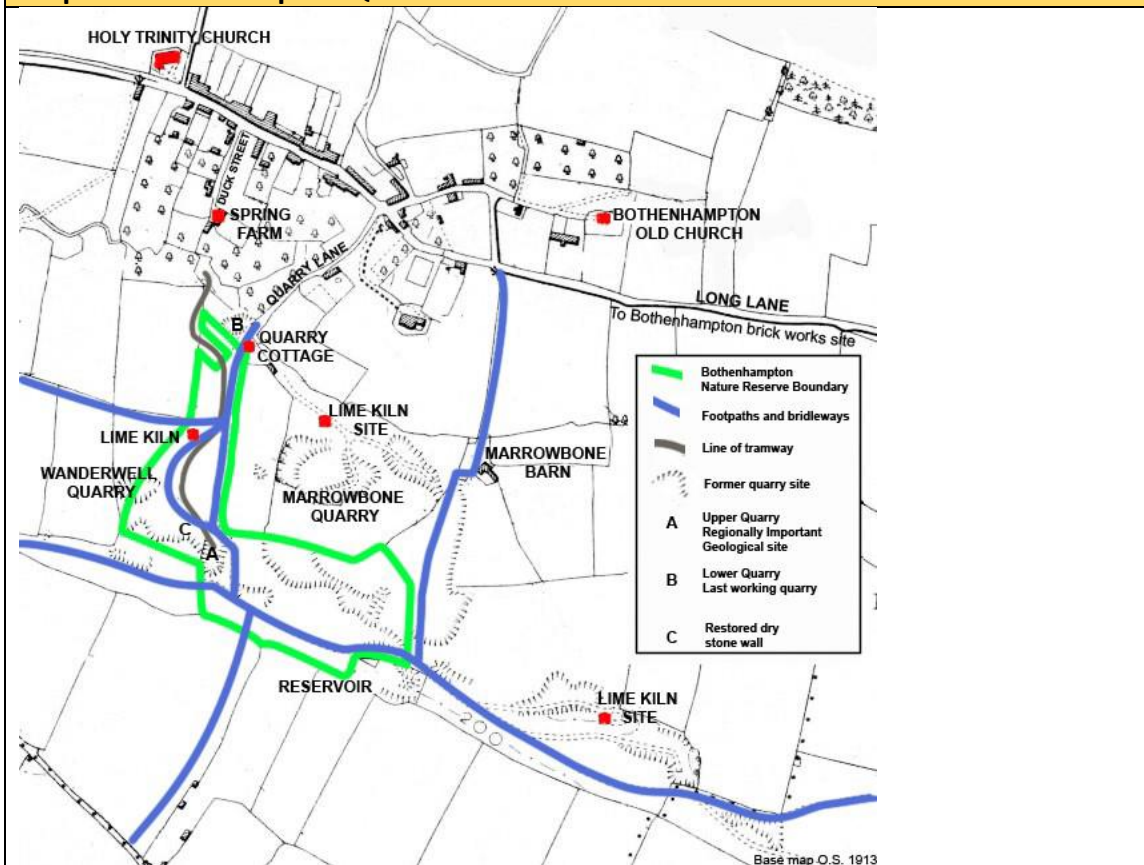
<https://www.bridport-tc.gov.uk/jellyfields-and-bothenhampton-nature-reserve/>

A formal public consultation on a draft management plan ran from August to September 2020.

A revised management plan will be presented to Bothenhampton & Walditch Parish Council and Bridport Town Council for adoption in October 2020.

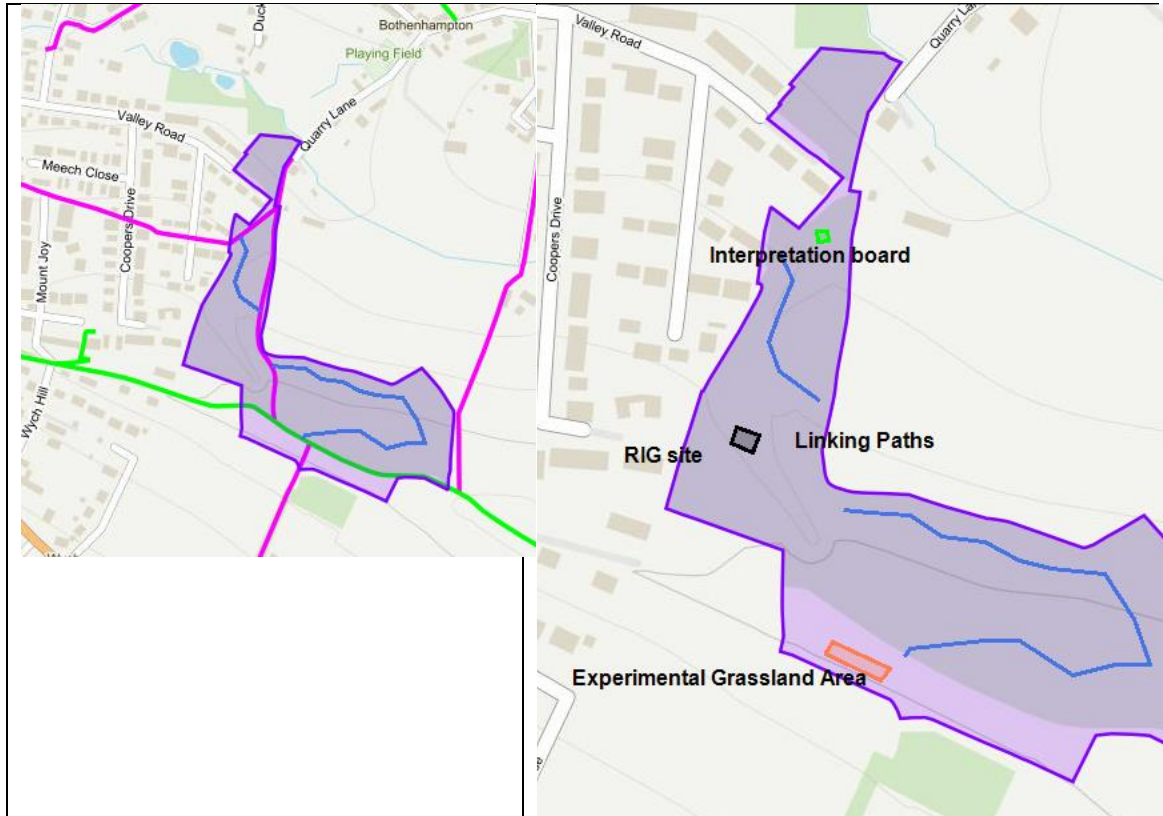
Bridport Town Council with input from the local residents and users will review the delivery of management plan actions on an ongoing basis with a view to undertaking a formal review of the management plan aims and objectives in 2025.

Map of Bothenhampton Quarries



3. Vision for Bothenhampton Nature Reserve

A semi natural deciduous woodland with well managed paths and areas of open space, glades and rides. A Nature Reserve providing informal recreation for the local community, including contact with nature and heritage connections to the former quarry industry.



- Green – Bridleway W5/15
- Pink – Footpaths W5/16 and W5/18
- Blue – Linking paths
- Black – RIG site
- Orange – Area for experimental grassland restoration

3.1 Objectives of the Bothenhampton Management Plan:

Maintain easy access path network through a programme of surface, step and handrail repair and enhancements.

Commission a silviculture survey and produce a detailed tree and woodland management plan by 2021. Address Ash dieback concerns and any public safety issues as a matter of priority but endeavour to retain dead standing trees as well as any felled wood on site.

Actively encourage natural re generation and control invasive species such as Himalayan Honeysuckle and Buddleia.

Define areas of former calcareous grassland and experiment with scrub clearance and control to promote diverse ground flora. Establish appropriate cutting regimes for rides and selected glades.

Enhance the educational offer of the site through initiatives related to the Geological and quarrying history.

Re-establish Volunteer Workdays to help with range of activities, including path maintenance, scrub clearance, surveys and installing bird and bat boxes.

4. Management Plan -2020 -2025

<p>4.1 Overall Plan</p> <p>To deliver the vision for Bothenhampton Nature reserve by prioritising the following management interventions over the next five years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Silviculture Survey and produce a Forest Commission standard Tree and Woodland Management Plan • Deal with any public safety issues • Initiate a programme of footpath maintenance and repair through re-establishing volunteer workdays • Define areas of former calcareous grassland and glades for experimental scrub clearance and control • Undertake surveys of flowering plants and invertebrates 	
<p>4.2 By Habitat Type:</p>	
<p>Trees</p>	<p>Commission a Silviculture survey of Bothenhampton Nature Reserve.</p> <p>Pursue a continuous cover approach to tree management and produce a Forest Standard Woodland Management Plan.</p> <p>As part of the Woodland management plan develop a tree management programme to deal with to tree health and public safety issues.</p> <p>Establish a policy to leave dead wood standing where possible, otherwise removing limbs or reducing to approx. 5-10m height. All cut wood to be retained on site.</p> <p>Identify areas of natural regeneration and provide additional support to promote tree growth (clearing/mulching/ rabbit guards)</p> <p>Identify areas of former calcareous grassland to experiment with clearing back Blackthorn/</p>

	<p>Bramble scrub and creating structural diversity through mini glades development.</p> <p>Install Bat and Bird Boxes.</p>
Grassland Areas	<p>Define an experimental area for calcareous grassland restoration on either side of the Bridleway W5/15 near the existing bench.</p> <p>Cut back and control Blackthorn/Bramble growth.</p> <p>Undertake annual surveys of cleared areas to record re emergence of flowering plants.</p>

4.3 By Management Block:	
PATHS	<p>Maintain and promote open access for all.</p> <p>Maintain Public Rights of Way W5/15, W5/16 and W5/18 through the Nature Reserve. In addition maintain the linking paths between W5/18 and W5/16, W5/16 and W5/15 through Marrowbone Quarry as well as the path to the RIG site.</p> <p>Initiate ongoing/ rolling repairs where surface is deteriorating. Remove leaf fall and open up sections to light and drying effect where mud accumulating.</p> <p>Maintain 1m cut margin to 'easy access path' through regular mowing during the summer growing season.</p>
INFORMATION & INTERPRETATION	<p>Commission Photographic survey of Bothenhampton Nature Reserve as a record and means of monitoring change for future management plan processes.</p>

	<p>Replace Dorset Council site entry boards with new Bridport/ Bothenhampton & Walditch Council boards.</p> <p>Maintain existing interpretation board and look to update with revised map and text during the next 5 years.</p> <p>Maintain bench with view over West Bay from Bridleway W5/15.</p>
GRASSLAND	<p>Define an experimental area either side of Bridleway W5/15 (Wych Hill to Burton Bradstock) as areas to clear and control scrub growth with volunteer labour.</p> <p>Undertake annual surveys of cleared areas.</p> <p>Explore the option of limited grazing cleared areas with livestock?</p>
Semi Natural Deciduous WOODLAND	<p>Commission a Silviculture survey of Bothenhampton Nature Reserve.</p> <p>Pursue a continuous cover approach to tree management and produce a Forest Standard Woodland Management Plan.</p> <p>As part of the Woodland management plan develop a tree management programme to deal with to tree health and public safety issues.</p> <p>Establish a policy to leave dead wood standing where possible, otherwise removing limbs or reducing to approx. 5-10m height. All cut wood to be retained on site.</p> <p>Identify areas of natural regeneration and provide additional support to promote tree growth (clearing/mulching/ rabbit guards)</p>

	<p>Identify areas of former calcareous grassland to experiment with clearing back Blackthorn/ Bramble scrub and creating structural diversity through mini glades development.</p> <p>Install Bat and Bird Boxes.</p>
<p>Regionally Important Geological site</p>	<p>Work with Dorset RIG Group to ensure site is safe for educational visits.</p> <p>Undertake occasional scrub clearance in Wanderwell Quarry area. Removing Himalyan honeysuckle and Buddleia and controlling spread of Tutsan (<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>).</p>

5. Action Plan - Actions Year by Year:

Appendix Survey Data

SNCI surveys 1997/2003

Tree species present in the canopy include frequent **Ash** (*Fraxinus excelsior*), **Field Maple** (*Acer campestre*) and **Sycamore** (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). In the understorey, **Blackthorn** (*Prunus spinosa*) and **Privet** (*Ligustrum vulgare*) are frequent to locally abundant, **Hazel** (*Corylus avellana*) is frequent and **Tutsan** (*Hypericum androsaemum*), **Elder** (*Sambucus nigra*), **Wayfaring Tree** (*Viburnum lantana*) and **Dogwood** (*Cornus sanguinea*) are occasional. Due to the time of year, the ground flora was quite sparse; **Ivy** (*Hedera helix*) is frequent and **Wood Avens** (*Geum urbanum*), **Soft-shield Fern** (*Polystichum setiferum*) and **Hart's-tongue Fern** (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*) are occasional.

In the areas of calcareous grassland, grass species present include frequent to locally abundant **Cock's Foot** (*Dactylis glomerata*), frequent **Tor Grass** (*Brachypodium pinnatum*), **Common Bent** (*Agrostis stolonifera*) and **Red Fescue** (*Festuca rubra*) and occasional **Yorkshire Fog** (*Holcus lanatus*) and **Tall Fescue** (*Festuca arundinacea*). Other species found in the sward include frequent **Common Bird's-foot Trefoil** (*Lotus corniculatus*), **Red Clover** (*Trifolium pratense*), **Black Knapweed** (*Centaurea nigra*) and **Oxeye Daisy** (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) and occasional **Agrimony** (*Agrimonia eupatoria*), **Glaucous Sedge** (*Carex flacca*) and **Burnet Saxifrage** (*Pimpinella saxifraga*).

Site Visit 2020

RIG site area – Himalayan Honeysuckle, Buddleia, Tutsan (*Hypericum androsaemum*), *Carex sylvatica*.