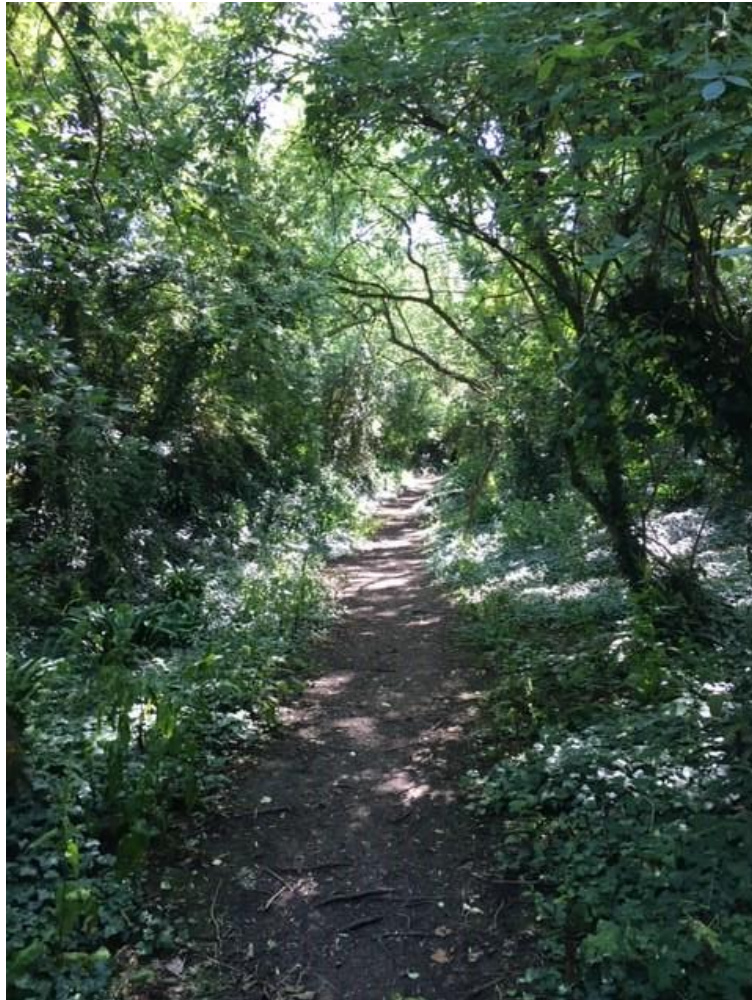


**Bridport Town Council
Bothenhampton Nature Reserve
Management Plan
2022-2027**



This version FINAL (revised September 2022)

Content

	Page
1. Background	3
2. Management Plan Consultation	6
3. Vision for Bothenhampton NR	8
• Plan Objectives	9
4. Management Plan	10
• By Habitat Type	10
• By Management Block	12
5. Appendix	15

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. The 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).

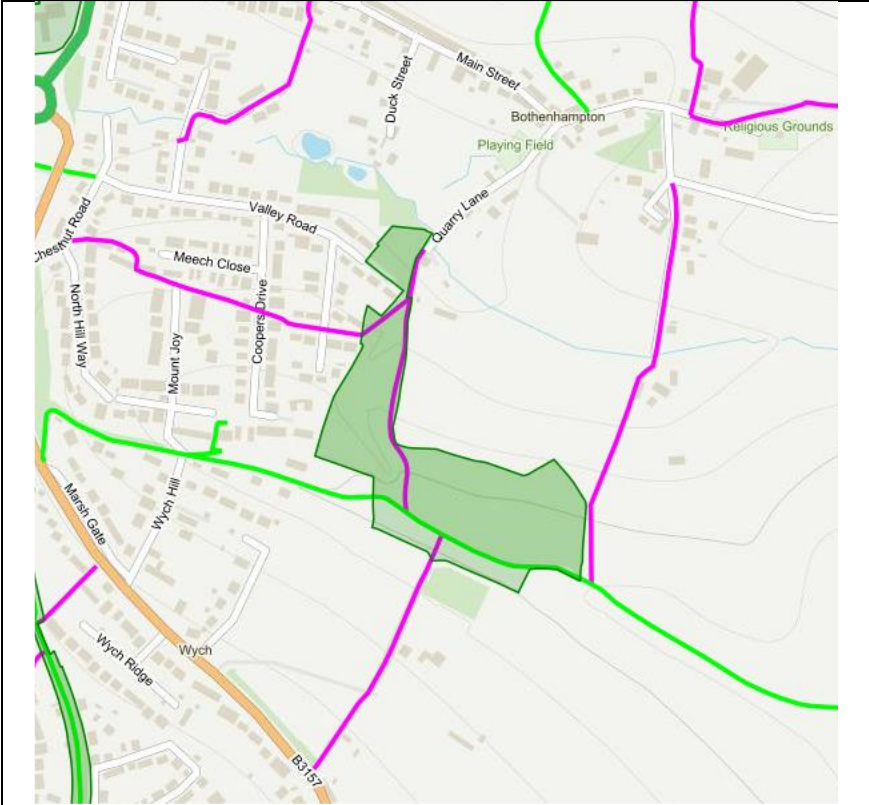
The Nature Reserve covers some 4.31 Ha of old quarries south of Bothenhampton village. The beds of limestone were worked for many centuries to provide building stone, known as Forest Marble. The strength and “waterproof” quality of the Forest Marble has been utilised for foundation stones in the local area. [Wanderwell Quarry](#) was notified as a Regionally Important Geological Site in 1996. A former Limekiln was restored in the mid 1990’s to further support education and understanding about the industrial heritage of the Nature Reserve.

Following the end of active quarrying the area was used for a range of purposes, primarily grazing animals before slowly being abandoned and reverting to the scrub and secondary woodlands we find today.

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

What people like about Bothenhampton Nature Reserve:	Issues to be addressed:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A well used and much loved nature reserve• A source of peace and calm• Quarry heritage• Sense of wildness and connection with nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The site demands sensitive management for wildlife; including tree management requirements• Maintenance of paths, hand rails and steps• A need for up to date surveys to inform the management plan• Re-establish a volunteer group and work parties and establish a Friends Group to help with management.

Management Plan Area with Rights of Way:



Brief history of the site:

2022 Dorset County Council transferred site to Bridport Town Council

2004 Designated by Dorset Wildlife Trust as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)

1996 Wanderwell Quarry was registered as a Regionally Important Geological site (now known as a Local Geological site, LGS).

1994 site designated a Local Nature Reserve

1920's commercial quarrying activity ends

C13th/14th 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, heritage and the needs of local site 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. A formal public consultation on a draft management plan ran from August to September 2020. Report available for download at:

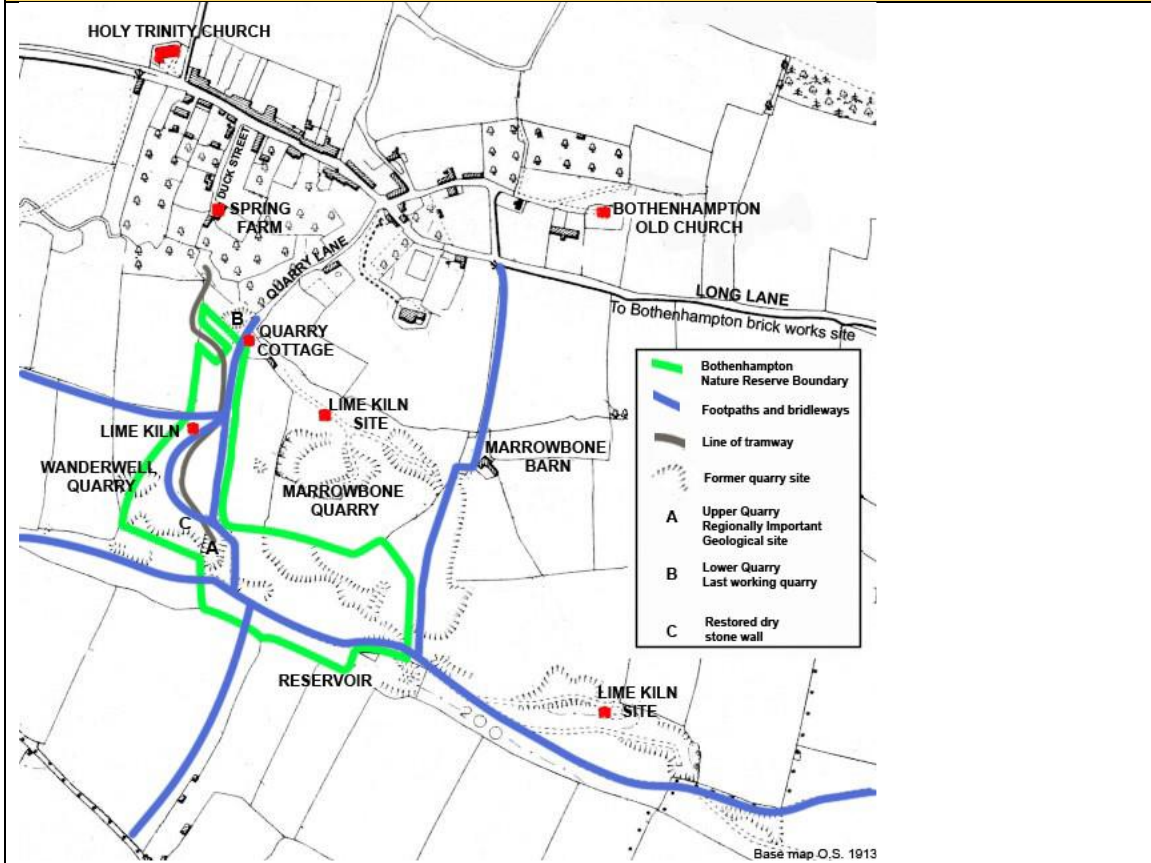
<https://www.bridport-tc.gov.uk/jellyfields-and-bothenhampton-nature-reserve/>

This final management plan was presented to Bothenhampton & Walditch Parish Council and Bridport Town Council for adoption in Winter 2020.

Ahead of land transfer in 2022 a meeting was held with representatives of Bridport Town Council and Bothenhampton & Walditch Parish Council to consider minor amendments to the Bothenhampton Nature Reserve Management Plan.

Once this management plan is operational Bridport Town Council, with input from the local residents and users, will review 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 2027.

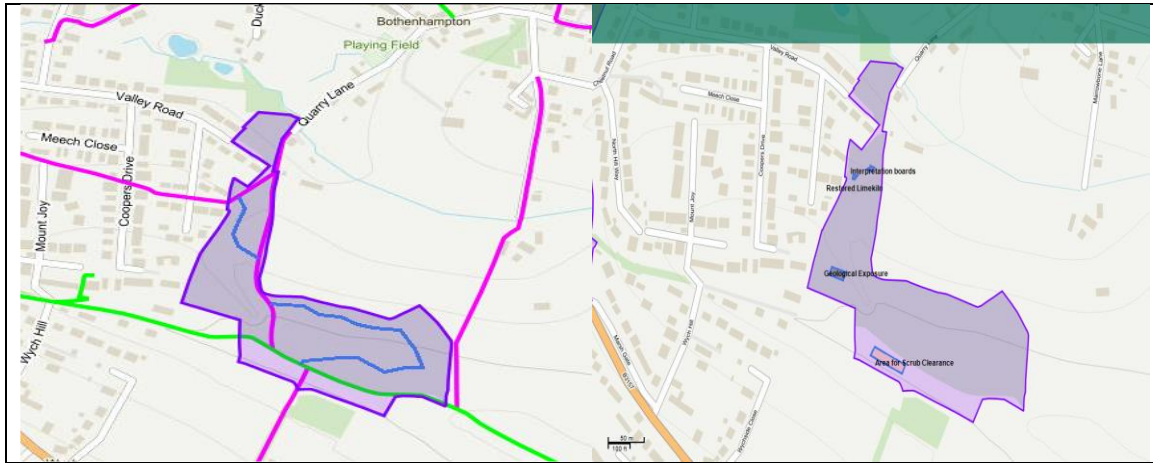
Map of former Bothenhampton Quarries



‘© Reproduced by permission of P.A. Snelgrove, D.I.G.S. Group’.

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, geology and heritage connections to the former quarry industry.



- Green – Bridleway W5/15
- Pink – Footpaths W5/16 and W5/18
- Blue – Linking paths
- 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.

Safeguard and enhance the two local designations; SSCI and LGS through an active programme of management.

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

Define an area of former calcareous grassland for experimental scrub clearance and control to assess value of clearance work to promote a more diverse ground flora.

Establish appropriate cutting regimes for rides and selected glades.

Enhance the educational offer of the site, in particular those related to the geology and quarrying heritage of the area.

Support more Volunteer Workdays to help with a range of activities, including path maintenance, scrub clearance, surveys and installing bird and bat boxes.

Maintain and enhance wider ecological links to other green/ semi natural open spaces across the Bridport area.

4. Management Plan -2022 -2027

<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, • Continue the programme of footpath maintenance and repair achieved through volunteer workdays, • Undertake surveys of flowering plants and invertebrates, • Work with DIGS to safeguard educational access to Wanderwell Quarry LGS and other quarrying heritage features, such as the Lime Kiln. 	
<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 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>

	Install Bat and Bird Boxes.
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 Nature Reserve 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/drying effect of any muddy sections. Consider need for installing cross drains in places to reduce path erosion.</p> <p>Maintain and replace gates as required.</p> <p>Maintain 1m cut margin to 'easy access path' through regular mowing during the summer growing season.</p>
INFORMATION & INTERPRETATION	<p>Commission a 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 boards and look to update with revised map and text during the next 5 years.</p> <p>Work with DIGs to design and install a new geological interpretation board in Wanderwell Quarry.</p> <p>Maintain bench with view over West Bay from Bridleway W5/15.</p>

<p>GRASSLAND</p>	<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 with local graziers the option of using stock to maintain cleared areas.</p>
<p>WOODLAND</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/ Bramble scrub and creating structural diversity through mini glades development.</p> <p>Install Bat and Bird Boxes.</p>
<p>Geology and Industrial History Features</p>	<p>Work with Dorset RIG Group to ensure that the area designated as a Local Geology Site is appropriately managed for scientific and education purposes.</p>

	<p>Extend areas of the visible geological exposure in Wanderwell Quarry and install a new interpretation board to explain the geological importance of the site</p> <p>Undertake occasional scrub clearance in Wanderwell Quarry area to maintain safe access and visibility of the geological exposure.</p> <p>Remove a proportion of the Himalyan Honeysuckle and Buddleia each year and control the spread of Tutsan (<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>).</p> <p>Undertake annual maintenance of the Lime Kiln, removing any damaging vegetation from the walls and top.</p> <p>Replace the existing temporary cover over the Limekiln pot with a permanent one to prevent water penetrating and destroying the walls.</p>
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5. 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*).