

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Woodcote Parish Council
Greenmoor Ponds Restoration Committee**

Thursday 23rd January 2025 at 19:30, Rally Room, Woodcote Community Centre

Public Session (Prior to the Start of the Meeting)

MoP1: Summarised that W.J.Hatt Limited (the fifth and final contractor) was not made aware of the submission deadline.

Members Present:

Chair	Cllr K Davies (KD)
Members	Cllr T Over (TO)
	Cllr K Byrne (KB) – Substitute Member
	Mrs R Sanderson (RS)
	Mr J Godfrey (JG)

Officers Present

None	In the absence of a Clerk, a recording was taken of the meeting in order to write the minutes.
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Public and Press At least 1

Meeting Started: 19:34

Immediately prior to the start of the meeting, co-opted members to sign the declaration of acceptance of office.

24.11.1. Election of Chair

24.11.1.1. To receive the declaration of acceptance of office of co-opted members [LGA 1972 s83(4)]

Received by the Chair of the Council, who will deliver to the Clerk.

24.11.1.2. To elect a Chair for the year ahead [LGA 1972 ss15(2) and 34(2)]

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to elect Cllr Davies as Chair of the Committee.

24.11.1.3. To receive Chair's declaration of acceptance of office [LGA 1972 s83(4)]

The Chair of the Committee signed the declaration of acceptance, which was countersigned by two councillors. It was **Received** by the Chair of the Council, who will deliver to the Clerk.

24.11.2. To receive apologies for absence. [LGA 1972 s85(1)]

Apologies were received in advance of the meeting from Cllr Booker, Cllr Byrne attended as a substitute as allowed by the Terms of Reference of this committee.

24.11.3. Declarations of Interests [LA 2011 s31]

24.11.3.1. To receive declarations of interest for items on this agenda

R Sanderson declared an interest as a TOE employee.

24.11.4. To review the proposed restoration plan methodology, to approve formal recommendation to the Council on with methodology to progress and/or agree actions.

A full summary of the Briefing Document sent to the potential Contractors was given. All came strongly recommended by Freshwater Habitats Trust (FHT).

Committee was reassured that the most logical and cost-effective methodology was in place.

A Tender Evaluation summary (excluding costs) of the 4 quotations received so far was presented. The current favourite was Whitehorse, but the Committee still had some further questions for clarification and decided it would also be correct to wait for the quotation from the local Woodcote contractor W.J.Hatt Limited.

Thanks were offered to the member of Woodcote Conservation Group for their extensive and continued support co-ordinating all the quotations.

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to make recommendation to the Council to follow methodology Briefing Note 13th December 2024 & Supplementary Note detailing reduction in clay volume, as below.

24.11.5. To receive, and enter into the record, any feedback from the Woodcote Conservation Group Public meeting of the evening of 22nd January 2025, and agree actions arising.

A total of 43 members of the public attended, x3 PC members attended (KD/TO/KB), a reporter from the Henley Standard, and the Editor of the Woodcote Correspondent.

The Presentation by the WGC was very well received by the attendees. The geological summary of the Ponds and Woodcote was of particular interest, and it was proposed it may form a great article for the Correspondent for a future edition.

It was noted RS will be managing the flow of information from that meeting to the Henley Standard.

Briefing Note

Lower Greenmoor Pond Restoration Project

Client: **Greenmoor Pond Restoration Committee on Behalf of Woodcote Parish Council**

Site Address: **Greenmoor Ponds, Greenmore, Woodcote, RG8 0RN**

Author: **James Godfrey**

Reviewer: **Rachel Sanderson**

Approval Date: **13/12/2024**



Photograph 1: Greenmoor Ponds Entrance off Greenmore

1. Project Summary

Context and Site History	In May 2023, the Lower Greenmoor pond was noted to be rapidly losing water. This culminated in a near full drain down of the pond over a 6-week period leaving the pond almost completely dry by the end of the summer 2023, having previously been a healthy waterbody that was near to its full capacity even during prolonged dry spells. In October 2023 Woodcote Parish Council (WPC), as site custodian, authorised Woodcote Conservation Group (WCG) to progress the restoration of the Lower Greenmoor Pond. WCG members with professional expertise in engineering, hydrology, ecology and fund raising have formed a working group. This group has now been formalised as a Parish Council Committee. Visitors to the site will have noticed that after heavy rain, water accumulates in the base of the Lower Pond, which drains away again when the weather is dry. Hydrological monitoring is ongoing via boreholes, and analysis of the data shows that the ground water levels around the pond is generally high, however those close to the pond are low. The data indicates that something in the base of the pond is causing the loss of water, which confirms the suspicion that the pond's clay lining has been breached. This breach causes the water that has accumulated in the pond to drain away into the underlying sand layer (when it itself is not saturated). Following these hydrological investigations, some physical exploration into the base of the pond was undertaken in September 2024 using an excavator. The purpose of this was to determine the silt depth and the thickness and condition of any underlying clay in the pond base. In the area investigated it was found that the silt/leaf litter layer was approximately 1.00m thick, reportedly underlain by 'blue clay'. The sides of the pond consist of brown clay. The findings support a working hypothesis that the base of the pond may have been lined in the past using a layer of imported clay.
Location and Background Details:	The Ponds at Greenmoor are located at the second highest point of the South Oxfordshire Chilterns and have important historical and ecological value. The site was first recorded in documents dating back to 1109 listing the ponds as possessions of Eynsham Abbey. The ponds are located at NGR: SU646812 W3W: arrive.chief.workbench The site is underlain by bedrock geology comprising Lambeth Group (interbedded clays and sand) overlying the Seaford and Newhaven Chalk Formation.

Aims and Objectives:	The Greenmoor Pond Restoration Committee (GPRC) are looking for a suitable contractor to provide a turnkey project to remove sediment from the lower pond at Greenmoor Hill, and then to re-line and seal the substrate with a new clay in order to restore water retention. The aim is to restore the waterbody to a condition that retains water so that it can continue to form an important local aquatic habitat.
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2. Enabling Works

1	Tree felling works will be undertaken by a contractor on behalf of GRPC in January 2025 before nesting season begins. The aim of the felling work will be to open up a suitable access for plant from the entrance of Green Lane (see Figure 1). The works will create an access route that measures 4m wide with a height clearance of 3.50m.
2	Contractors should attend for a site visit before quoting for the works so that the access and site conditions can be observed to enable an outline scope of works and methodology to be submitted along with an informed tender price.
3	During the works the selected contractor will be responsible for managing all aspects of Health and Safety which will include securing the site and managing plant movements. All reasonable measures should be employed to protect and preserve the condition of the area so it is expected that track matting should be utilised for plant movements where possible. Prior to commencement a safety, health and environmental plan shall be produced by the selected contractor detailing how the works will be completed safely and in a manner that is sympathetic to the sensitive environmental nature of the site. The plan shall be submitted for review by GPRC/WPC in advance of the works commencing.
4	It is expected that the works will take place in summer 2025 (July or August) so that the ground conditions are most favourable for the type of works that are being undertaken. Nevertheless, wet silt and surface water/groundwater ingress can be expected and a works programme and methodology should set out how this will be managed safely and effectively during the work programme.

3. Outline Scope

1	For the purpose of quoting, the following estimates are provided. The contractor will be required to survey and provide their own figures to ensure there is a complete understanding of the scale of works and processes to achieve the project goals: - Estimated surface area at the original pond edge (upper ledge): 750m² - Estimated surface area of the lower area (clay lined): 550m² - Estimated volume of sediment: 650 to 900m³ - Estimated volume of clay required for re-lining: 250 to 450m³
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2	Outline Methodology: • Secure the work area and provide appropriate signage to mitigate pedestrian/public access. • Remove sediment in a controlled manner to expose and examine existing clay lining. • To transport and distribute the sediment to a designated area adjacent to the pond that will be subject to a waste management exemption. • To provide any over-pumping facilities to maintain the area in a de-watered state throughout the project. • Survey and establish the depth of existing clay across the surface area of the pond by core sampling including sealing of the core holes with bentonite pellets. • Carry out any re-profiling required to shore up any weak areas and provide an even contour for the new clay lining. • To supply and install new clay liner. • Puddle (roll) and seal as required.
3	Reinstatement works : • To reinstate the access and area of the works on a like-for like basis repairing any damage caused by plant/machinery. • Retain fencing round the silt deposition area to prevent access to this while the material is saturated. • Demobilise from site and remove fencing/signage.

4. Figure and Site Photographs



Figure 1 – Site Layout



Photograph 2: Greenmoor Ponds circa 2000



Photograph 3: Proposed plant entrance off Green Lane



Photograph 4: Plant route from Green Lane with trees to be felled marked up



Photograph 5: Southern elevation of the Lower Pond looking North



Photograph 6: Southern elevation of the Lower Pond looking south-east



Photograph 7: Western elevation of the Lower Pond looking south-east

Appendix to the specification – sent to all contractors following their site visit.

Dear X

It was good to meet you at Greenmoor Ponds yesterday, thanks for taking the time to undertake a site visit. As discussed on-site, we have received some queries from another contractor regarding the silt/clay volumes presented in the scoping document and wish to clarify a few aspects here if we may.

You will note from the site visit and the scoping document that volumes are fairly uncertain at this stage, but we wanted to generate some worst-case figures to enable an upper limit quote to be provided so that we are not at risk of needing cost uplifts during the works which might jeopardise the delivery of the scheme and exceed funding allocations.

To give you some background we have used the following assumptions to generate the volumes presented:

- Using lidar data the plan dimensions are ~26 by ~37 m and the estimated surface area is therefore ~564m², we assumed a maximum 1.20m depth of silt to give ~675m³, then added a margin to give an estimated volume of 650 to 900 m³.
- We assumed the required puddle clay would be up to about half the silt volume hence the range 250 to 450m³.

However, as you have probably realised, the above estimates give us some fairly large tonnages which may mean that the scheme ends up being prohibitively costly at quote stage. With this in mind it might be prudent to generate two quotes if this isn't too time consuming for you, one quote using the worst-case figures above (to give us a likely upper cost ceiling) and a second quote using the following more conservative tonnages that may provide a more realistic estimate:

- Going with the estimated surface area of ~564 m² and assuming 1.00m depth of silt in the middle, thinning to 0.50m around the edge, this reduces the estimated silt volume to **~375m³**.
- Allowing for a uniform 0.30m layer of puddle clay the required volume would be **~170m³** (circa 17 loads).

In this situation we would say that it is recognised that the initial volumes provided are cautious overestimates and that actual volumes are likely to be lower as suggested above. We would ask that you therefore please include rates in the proposal to allow for any variation in the actual volumes required above or below the estimated volumes.

Hopefully this clarifies the position, but if you have any queries please do come back to us.

Kind Regards

James

24.11.6. To consider further funding opportunities including grants the parish council could apply for, and agree actions arising.

NOTE: this discussion precludes any crowdfunding which may be completed by the Woodcote Conservation Group, but may include any confirmed donations by any outside bodies, or grants to be applied for.

The potential options for local grants were discussed. Currently TOE has already been approached with an expression of interest.

Action RS. To complete TOE application documentation (including Quotations / Tender Evaluation to date) and send to the WPC Clerk by the 27th January 2025.

Action Clerk. To formally submit documentation to TOE on behalf of Woodcote PC.

It was confirmed Woodcote Conservation group had already transferred £1500 to Woodcote Parish Council as these funds had been donated to the Conservation group by the Woodcote Rally.

Once the target funding had been decided, Woodcote Conservation Group would separately start fundraising with the intention of donating to the Parish Council.

24.11.7. Matters for future discussion.

None.

24.11.8. To consider and, if thought fit, approve the following motion: In view of the confidential nature of the business about to transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to close the meeting due to the nature of business to be transacted, the Chair thanked those present for attending and invited them to leave the meeting.

24.11.8.1. To consider the quotes received, and approve recommendation to the council.

The 4 quotes received were discussed.

Action: JG. To obtain clarification from Whitehorse on pumping and fencing costs.

Action: WGC to be asked to request quotation submission from W.J.Hatt Limited by Friday 13th February 2025.

24.11.9. To confirm the date of the next meeting.

It was confirmed to hold the next meeting on Monday 10th February 1930, and as needed thereafter.

There being no further business to be transacted, the Chair closed the meeting: **20:48**