

Environment & Assets Committee

Title:	Rycote Meadow
Date:	2 July 2024
Contact Officer:	Andrea Oughton, Operations Manager Becky Reid, Environmental Project Officer

Purpose of the Report

1. To update progress on the project to open up Rycote Meadow to public access.

Background

2. The project to open up Rycote Meadow (land north of Oxford Road, opposite Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve) to public access includes the creation of a wetland scrape, installation of a path, with a small boardwalk section, a post and wire fence that prevents people and dogs going onto the main part of the meadow to protect the rich biodiverse habitats in this area.
3. The project is being delivered in partnership with Cuttle Brook Conservation Volunteers (CBCV) and Thame Green Living.
4. The project to open this land to public access was approved at the Community Leisure & Recreation Committee on 20 July 2021. At Full Council on 14 May 2024, approval was given to forward fund the project if Section 106 funding was granted but we had to wait for release of the funds subject to the SODC legal team to complete the paperwork associated.

Current status

5. At last report (14 May 2024 to Full Council), TGL had secured Trust for Oxfordshire Environment (TOE) funding of £9,377 towards the project, and a Section 106 funding bid for the balance of funds needed to complete the project - £31267¹ - had been submitted.
6. On 24th June 2024 we received confirmation that the S106 application was approved and signed off by the relevant Cabinet member. We are now waiting for SODC's legal team to prepare a funding agreement to enable them to be released.
7. As agreed at Full Council, Thame Town Council is now able to forward fund the work and so the first stage of the project started on Wednesday 26 June, with CBCV starting to excavate the wetland scrape.
8. The work to install the path and fence elements will follow completion of the work by CBCV first stage, subject to contractors availability.
9. During the week beginning 17 June 2024, Thame Town Council were informed that the gate at the far end of Rycote Meadow, to connect it to Thame Meadows estate, had been installed by Bloor. We were unaware that this was going to happen at this time and so action was

¹ The value of these works is made up of separate suppliers and contracts in line with Financial Regulations

taken to padlock the gate shut until the works within Rycote Meadow are completed. This will protect members of the public from accessing a site that may not be safe, as well as protect the meadow from dogs or people until the fence has been installed. A sign has been placed on the fence to advise the public accordingly. However, it will mean that the link through to the Thame Meadows estate will be fully completed on completion of our project.



Gate at far end of Rycote Meadow, connecting through to Thame Meadows estate.

Action:

- i) To note the report.*