

# Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park Local Nature Reserve Management Plan 2022- 2032

*To secure the long-term future of Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park Local Nature Reserve (BBVPLNR) by conserving and enhancing both natural and designed landscapes and promoting its continued enjoyment by the public.*

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## 1. Introduction by Friends of BBVP

Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park is a linear park stretching for two miles through south Edinburgh. One of seven Local Nature Reserves in Edinburgh, the park covers 28 acres in the South East of Edinburgh. It includes large stretches running through the most deprived 20% of SIMD datazones (Gracemount, Burdiehouse, Southouse, Hyvots, and Gilmerton) and smaller stretches in less deprived areas (Gilmerton South, The Murrays, Liberton East). This makes investment into community activities in the Park of particular importance in bridging cultural and social divides.

There is a strong Friends group which grew out of community activism in the 1980's. A major focus of recent activity has been to buy (under asset transfer legislation) the derelict Park-keepers hut from the Natural Heritage Service, creating capacity for Friends to increase volunteering (including litter picking), physical activity, mental health, and biodiversity in area of dense council housing. Existing strong links with a wide range of groups will be enhanced by dedicated meeting space and tool storage, designed to incur minimal running costs.

The Friends of Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park is a constituted group supporting the Natural Heritage Service to deliver a high-quality park and local nature reserve for the benefit of the people of South Edinburgh. Our group has been run on voluntary basis for over 10 years by people living within walking distance of the Park. We have gained the Green Flag Award for the last five years.

## 2. Management/ Information

### 2.1 Site Information

Site name	Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park
Grid reference	NT 283 682 (Centre): 1:50,000 OS66
Area	26 Ha
Area Designation:	South Neighbourhood, Liberton/ Gilmerton Ward

Site maps can be found within Section 5.1, Appendix A.

#### 2.1.1 Location and Access

The park can be naturally divided into two main sections:

- Burdiehouse/ Southhouse: From Burdiehouse Road to Lasswade Road (including the Dip area)
- Gilmerton: From Lasswade Road to Gilmerton Road (including Hyvots area and Ellen's Glen hamlet)

The Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park LNR (BBVPLNR) is a long linear greenspace feature occupying the valley of the Burdiehouse Burn between the housing areas of Moredun, Gilmerton, Burdiehouse, and Southhouse, located to the south of Edinburgh city centre, and can be easily accessed by most of the population of Edinburgh.

The park contains a network of paths generally following the line of the burn while passing through the woodland features and amenity grassland. The park is orientated northeast to southwest. The Burdiehouse Burn flows northeast, to its end in the Firth of Forth in Portobello.

The area is served by a system of paths. Most of the primary path routes are tarmac and the 20 or so access points are often, although not universally, in the form of ramps into the valley to cater for multi-user access. The paths cross the Burdiehouse Burn via several bridges providing access to both sides of the valley along the burn.

A number of schools are located nearby with a new development of the St. Crispins School being located on the edge of the Park.

The LNR covers the area mainly along the Burdiehouse Burn from Burdiehouse Road at its southern extent, to Gilmerton Road at the north.

#### 2.1.2 Ownership/ Tenure

The Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park project began in 2002 when the South Edinburgh Partnership (SEP) responded to community concerns about the poor condition of the park. A Steering Group (SG) consisting of representatives from the local community and other stakeholders was set up and a seven-year development plan commissioned. This provided the blueprint for a development programme, which saw over £750,000 invested in the park from a variety of grant giving bodies.

The park achieved Local Nature Reserve Status (LNR) in February 2007 due to sightings of otters in the Burn.

The Local Nature Reserve (LNR) as shown on the boundary map, Appendix A, is owned and managed by City of Edinburgh Council, Place Directorate, Forestry and Natural Heritage (CECFNH) with active input from the Friends of Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park (FBBVP).

The impact of so much housing around the LNR cannot be underestimated. Consequently, maintaining good relations with adjacent landowners is critical.

### *2.1.3 Recreation*

The area is well used by local people as a place to take children, to walk dogs, to appreciate nature, and to exercise. The area of previously designated football fields, now a skate park and open play area, is popular with locals. However, work will have to be undertaken to bring the area, especially the skate park, up to a good standard as currently it suffers from antisocial behaviour and vandalism. It is proposed that FBBVP and Edinburgh Council develop a plan for refurbishing the Dip for young people.

All the paths are well used by walkers enjoying the opportunity to experience the park and countryside within the city. Regular use is made of the site by dog walkers.

The CECFNH and volunteers monitor access and recreation through semi-regular patrolling. The insight gained is used to prioritise works requiring to be carried out by CECFNH and the various groups that they work with. Any work that cannot be carried out by the Natural Heritage department of CECFNH, such as tree work (e.g., involving climbing), will be passed to the Forestry section. In addition, funding will be sought to bring in contractors for larger projects e.g., repairs or the upgrading of paths. FBBVP is particularly active in drawing issues to the attention of CECFNH due to their daily usage which is a major boon to the limited service.

## *2.2 Partnerships*

**Stakeholders:** BBVPLNR is open to all members of the public who wish to use the site in a responsible manner, particularly the local community in the form of the FBBVP who take a very active role in managing and looking after the reserve.

**Main users:** The site is used by many different user groups including walkers, schools for educational activities, dog walkers, cyclists, runners, horse riding and as a location for events such as orienteering competitions and geocaching.

**Adjacent Landowners:** The LNR is fringed mostly by private properties, some with sizeable gardens containing a variety of ornamental and indigenous flora. A section of the park contains the new St. Crispins development which will be an additional support school. FBBVP is keen to see Park boundaries extended to include the Murrays woodland (as previously agreed with the developer) and possibly the Lime Kilns field in the long term.

### *2.2.1 Outdoor Education*

Local schools make regular use of the LNR. The children are regularly taken on walks so that they can appreciate nature throughout the year and as a regular route to access Gracemount Leisure Centre. They also make field visits to the site to support their class work. The CECFNH and FBBVP work to facilitate schools and community groups on site and make it as welcoming as possible.

A forest school programme has run on the site for several years with local schools and nurseries visiting and other groups sometimes running forest school programmes during the holidays.

## *2.3 Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park Local Nature Reserve*

### *2.3.1 Designations*

BBVP was awarded Local Nature Reserve Status in 2007, under the terms of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. As such, the park now enjoys statutory protection as a nature

reserve. It was listed as a Local Biodiversity Site in the Edinburgh City Local Plan which was adopted in 2016.

Within the LNR there are additional designations, including the Ancient Woodland of Semi-Natural origin that makes up Moredun woods, and semi natural greenspace.

This wildlife site has been evaluated against, and passed, the CEC Local Biodiversity Sites (2006+) assessment system for identifying sites of local importance for nature conservation and is recognised and protected as a Local Biodiversity Site (Local Nature Conservation Sites) in the Planning Authority's Development Plan.

The CECFNH uses spreadsheets, which enables them to record flora and fauna on the sites they manage. The information about individual sites is then used to monitor species and manage the habitats on these sites. Occasional specialist wildlife surveys of the site take place and other records from visits of groups such as the Edinburgh Natural History Society, and The Wildlife Information Centre (TWIC) the local biological records centre.

It is a Local Biodiversity Site notable for the following characteristics:

- Diversity of habitats
- Diversity of species
- Rarity of habitats
- Rarity of species
- Naturalness of site
- Extent of site

The site also contains fragile habitats, has educational potential and amenity value.

## 3. Management Delivery

### 3.1 Overall Management Aims

In depth prescriptions can be found in 6.1 – Management Aim Prescriptions

1. To maintain and enhance the nature conservation interest of the different semi-natural habitats which occur within the site.
2. To safeguard and where necessary enhance the populations of any threatened, endangered or typical species.
3. To maintain the aesthetic value of the site.
4. To provide educational opportunities for the local community, schools, and visitors through interpretation.
5. Continue and increase community involvement.
6. To encourage responsible access and manage conflict.
7. To meet all legal obligations with regards to the site.

CEC carries out quality assessments of its parks and gardens annually. The results are recorded as a Park Quality Assessment (PQA) score. The scoring system and criteria used is based on the Green Flag Award. BBVPLNR scores are steadily increasing each year, scoring 62% in 2016, 56% in 2017 66% in 2018 and 69% in 2019, and 70% in 2021. The Green Flag Award is the national standard for parks and green spaces. The Green Flag scheme in Scotland is currently administered by Keep Scotland Beautiful (see <http://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org>) and CEC holds 26 Green Flag Awards.

## 3.2 A Welcoming Place

### 3.2.1 How to get there

BBVPLNR is well served by the local bus routes on nearby Burdiehouse Rd, Lasswade Rd, Gilmerton Dykes Rd and Gilmerton Rd, see <https://lothianbuses.co.uk> for up-to-date details. There is car parking on many of the surrounding streets with good links to the cycle ways for walkers and cyclists. Visitors are encouraged to walk or cycle to the area if they live locally and to make use of the cycle racks or use the bus.

### 3.2.2 Equal Access for All

There are more than 20 access points to the park. Main access points for the site are on the main roads listed above and further access points include access from Burdiehouse Street, the Murrays, Guardwell Glen and Ellen's Glen. Most of the access points have been specifically designed for wheelchair access. Efforts have been made to improve all the entrances and as much of the site as possible to ensure that it is as welcoming and accessible as possible.

### 3.2.3 Interpretation, Marketing, and Communication

The main audience to this area is people who live in the local area and visit regularly. There are occasionally visitors and tourists from further afield, and even local people do not always know much about the area's history. The message conveyed by any interpretation should reflect the park's fascinating history, geology, and importance of the past to people. Today it is home to a surprisingly wide range of animals and plants.

The CECFNH manages 13 sites throughout the city and wishes to keep interpretation on these sites within recognisable style guidelines. They are also to be brought in line with the Parks, Greenspace and Cemeteries branding guidance. With this in mind:

- The interpretation should match the style and colouring of interpretation produced on other parks
- Made from sustainable hard-wearing material, vandal proof, can either be easily replaced or cleaned
- Must include CEC logo and the logo of any grant providers
- Fonts must be easy to read and distinguish letters in good contrasting colours
- Must be physically accessible and comply with government legislation

The content and final media which would be used will, within the guidelines, be decided in conjunction with the Friends' group. This may include a variety of media or keep to only one; the decision will be made once the local community have been consulted. The content will include information about the history of the area as well as the wildlife that uses it today; the past and present will be explained through interpretation – either by an interactive trail, art or other media. For more detailed plans there is the Friends' Community plan.

To ensure the involvement of members, the FBBVP produces and circulates a newsletter "Parklife" to all members and to the local community. They issue all newsletters by email and Facebook to reduce paper usage. Friends posts are reaching between 1 and 3 thousand people each time. Additionally, FBBVP events are publicised on posters at key locations.

Marketing and events are currently taken on by the CEC Natural Heritage Service (CECFNH), with significant input from the Friends group and Edinburgh & Lothian Greenspace Trust (ELGT). CECFNH, ELGT and the FBBVP organise events such as history walks, foraging workshops and educational engagement. Marketing of the site is carried out through the Friends website and social media



streams as well as the My Parks Scotland and Edinburgh Outdoors information webpages. Interpretation on site will be done through a mixture of official CEC means and the Friends' group.

### 3.3 Healthy, Safe and Secure

#### 3.3.1 Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour is a common occurrence across Natural Heritage sites. Unfortunately, BBVP is one of the harder hit sites when it comes to antisocial behaviour. The park sits in the middle of several SIMD <10% demographic of Edinburgh and suffers from a lack of engagement and education as a result of this. There are often large gatherings with open fires in "The Dip" area of the park as well as other lesser hotspots around the park. When in use, these are reported to and interfaced with by the Police, community officers and the natural heritage officers as often and wherever possible to attempt to reduce the misuse of the site. One of the aims of this management plan is to increase usage so spots like this are used less for activities of a disruptive nature and more productively by these groups as a safe place to gather and socialise safely.

To help alleviate some of this behaviour Edinburgh CECFNH and FBBVP will work in partnership to develop the Dip for young people. A consultation has been commissioned to clarify what is wanted by the community. Provisionally we have proposed the refurbishment of skate park; an enclosed all surface football/ basketball court; additional play equipment; and an outdoor gym. We are also consulting on the security and safety of the skate park and play area with proposed CCTV and lighting.

#### 3.3.2 Fire

The lighting of fires is a regular activity even though it is advised against doing so by The City of Edinburgh Council's Park Management Rules. Liaison is undertaken with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service as required enabling access for fire appliances, 4x4 vehicles and fire-fighters on foot, where sources of water can be found, and the logging of incidents attended by, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Any woodland work or conservation activities where arisings are generated are kept from path edges/accessible areas at the request of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

#### 3.3.3 Enforcement

The Police and Environmental Wardens who are based within Localities through the Community Safety teams assist CECFNH by providing a visible presence, if required, with the aim of reducing dog fouling, littering offences, and antisocial behaviour. FBBVP are particularly active with regular behavioural campaigns on these issues. Safety teams will take enforcement against anyone found to be contravening the Dog fouling (Scotland) Act 2003. Any person found failing to pick up immediately after their dog is issued a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60, reduced to £40 if paid within 28 days. They also take the issue of littering very seriously. Leaving or depositing litter is a criminal offence, therefore anyone seen to be contravening the Environmental Protection Act 1990, will be issued a Fixed Penalty Notice of £50.

#### 3.3.4 Road Safety

The Park is bisected by a major road, creating issues for walkers and cyclists. It has been a long-held ambition to get a pedestrian crossing added at the crossing point to support full use of the Park. As it is a linear Park, the road has a substantial impact on use and enjoyment of the Park – Traffic moves fast on this road despite its residential nature of the road and is heavy at rush hour.

The crossing was approved by CEC Committee in 2015 and precedents for crossings placed more closely together exist on South Bridge and Gilmerton Rd. The proposed crossing is c200m to nearest

crossing; South Bridge and Gilmerton Rd both have c160m between crossings. Other ideas for the combining of the separate areas of the park are also being considered.

The Portobello to Pentlands cycle route proposes to use this section of the Park which would require cyclists to cross this road with bicycles. It is likely to come up in the feasibility study being undertaken [Pentland to Portobello Feasibility Study – Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust \(elgt.org.uk\)](http://elgt.org.uk). While this proposal is not a CEC one, CECFNH and Cllr Macinnes are supportive of the cycleway and encouraging active travel is a keystone of the 2030 Net Zero target Edinburgh has set.

### 3.4 Well Maintained and Clean

#### 3.4.1 Grounds and Structures Maintenance

This aspect is managed by CECFNH. Work is identified and if it cannot be remedied immediately while on site it is then reported and prioritised. Alternatively, volunteers may be brought in to assist or a contractor used, depending on the requirements. Areas and Responsibilities include:

- Cut grass and strimming – CECFNH/ Estates team
- Entrances and around furniture – CECFNH/ Estates team/ FBBVP
- Biodiversity/ Meadow - Cut and raked by CECFNH/FBBVP/Volunteers
- Woodland – CECFNH Forestry service/ FBBVP/ Volunteers
- Path/hard Standing – CECFNH/ FBBVP/ Volunteers
- FBBVP maintain a park base, The Bothy, just off Gilmerton Dykes Street for the use of all green groups and CECFNH supporting the park.

#### Paths

Paths are maintained and upgraded by a combination of work from volunteers, FBBVP and NH (using contractors when necessary). Specifications for paths are more and more coming under the outlines guided by Paths for All as a single, understandable way of both creating and informing users about paths and what kind of terrain they cover.

#### Play Structures

Designated play structures are overseen by NH but tested for compliance by the wider CEC Play section. There are designated play areas in “The Dip” area of the park and CECFNH and FBBVP are committed to improving this area to improve play facilities for young people within the park. This includes the proposal of a new concrete skate park; all weather and play area with good lighting and CCTV such as those at Saughton and Portobello.

#### Meadows

There is currently one meadow in BBVP which lies behind the houses at the south end of Burdiehouse Street. Meadows are ideally cut and lifted 3 times per year following SNH guidelines for unimproved meadow cultures. These cuts should be around March/April, August/September and October/November, giving time either side to allow flowers to bloom and drop seed before cutting. The task of cutting is carried out by NH estate team with raking often being taken on by volunteers from organisations such as SNH, SWT or FBBVP. If that is not possible, it is passed back to NH estate team. Once the construction of the St Crispins School is complete, there will be a new area of flat, low land which has the possibility of being either a living landscape or a wildflower meadow depending on community and NH decisions.

#### 3.4.2 Litter Maintenance/Confirm

There are litter bins available for visitors at most main entrance points. They are emptied on a regular basis by Waste and Cleansing. Litter is picked by CECFNH staff while carrying out site

inspections and any fly-tipping is removed as soon as possible. The FBBVP and other local organisations such as the Tiphereth Peregrine Group, Brownie/Guide and Cub/Scout groups also undertake litter sweep of the site. This ensures that the site is kept to as high a standard of cleanliness as possible. There is an expectation that all users are responsible and take their rubbish home with them or use the bins provided.

### 3.4.3 Ezytreev

Ezytreev is a data management tool used by CECFNH Trees and Woodlands Officers for onsite tree data collection, surveying and reinspection. Tree works can be ordered and budgeted. Enquiries can be logged on a complaints management system. There are digital mapping and GIS capabilities and it provides a complete tree risk management strategy. Trees may need to be felled for public safety due to storm damage or the age of some of the trees and their susceptibility to disease. Wherever possible these are left as monoliths to maintain as much biodiversity value as possible in addition to stumps and felled wood being retained on site as habitat piles where possible.

## 3.5 Environmental Management

As BBVPLNR is a Natural Heritage Park, it does not use plantings that require peat. Leaf litter, tree branches and fallen wood are left in situ if this is safe, or moved to areas away from paths if necessary, but are not taken away as waste. Any large items of rubbish removed from the park, particularly any fly-tipping, are taken to the local recycling centre where it can be separated rather than deposited in landfill.

This site is fortunate in having limited invasive species present which are managed in different ways. These include:

Russian Vine – Pulled, cut, and burned

Giant hogweed – reported to and sprayed by CEC

Japanese knotweed - stem injection

Himalayan balsam- pulled by hand (very little left after years of targeted approach by FBBVP)

Chemical herbicides are not used on site, volunteers and NH Estate teams attempt to sustain path edges and weed control. Herbicide application is only used when cultural practises will not provide adequate control. Only affected areas are treated and only then using strategies that are sensitive to the needs of the public and the environment. All operatives are trained to the approved certification level for the application of chemicals. Arisings of regular management (grass cutting, etc) are disposed of discreetly on site and not disposed of off-site. Arisings from INNS are disposed of in a way that they have a lowered chance of recurrence. E.g. Himalayan balsam is stacked in piles to decompose.

## 3.6 Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage

### 3.6.1 Woodlands

The mixed deciduous woodland on the site is of several distinct types and ages. The majority is dominated by young woodland planted in November 2000, as part of the millennium woodland planting. The shrub layer within this is what can be expected from a young and non-natural woodland – planted species include hawthorn, holly, and hazel, providing an almost solid barrier to the woodlands which comprise of a mix of deciduous species. The makeup of these compartments when planted was:

20% Alder	15% Silver Birch	15% Ash	15% Oak
10% Scots Pine	5% Gean (Cherry)	5% Rowan	5% Willow
3% Holly	3% Hazel	3% Hawthorn	

The composition will be slightly different now due to pruning and disease (especially ash).

FBBVP and volunteers manage access to this woodland where possible with new community orchards and tree planting planned during the life of LMP. This young woodland can be found from the boundaries at Burdiehouse Road in the South-west, to two-thirds of the way up the park, around the rear of the properties at Guardwell Glen.

At this point, the woodland transforms into the mature - ancient woodland at the north-east of the site passing from the Lime tree avenue which are possibly around 150 years old, of a date with the Hyvots mill previously located in the area. This woodland is complemented on the other side of Ellen's glen by the ancient woodland of Moredun, previously known as Goodtrees, until reaching Gilmerton Road.

Regeneration is occurring throughout the ancient woodland, though slowly, giving a decently well mixed age structure to the woodland. The main canopy species are all older, between 50-100 years, but in good health, leading to a middling average age of the woodland, though this is still relatively young in comparison to the City's other LNRs. There have also been some unusual historic planting decisions at areas within Moredun Woods, i.e. the planting of predominantly Norway maple at the north entrance (Gilmerton Road end) back around the 1980's.

#### *3.6.4 Grassland*

The areas of the site not taken by woodland are made up of grassland, having previously been an amenity grassland park. Thus, much of the area is of common grass species. There has been some effort to create a relaxed grassland cutting regime which allows species other than amenity grass to grow and thrive among the longer grass. At the Meadow site yellow rattle and other species have been spread and planted by FBBVP to help improve biodiversity. Yellow Rattle is also being introduced into the wider grass areas to improve the grassland biodiversity.

#### *Edinburgh Living Landscape*

The Edinburgh Living Landscape is a partnership project that creates, restores and connects green areas of the city to make attractive and biodiverse landscapes. Landscapes will be healthy, nature rich and resilient to climate change.

The project involves measures such as:

- creating annual and perennial meadows
- reducing how often some areas of grass are cut and allowing natural grassland to thrive
- mowing pathways through areas of longer grass so they can still be explored and enjoyed
- planting trees and creating woodlands
- increasing our use of herbaceous perennial planting
- planting bulbs.

Allowing grassland habitats to develop in a more natural manner in urban settings by reducing grass cutting or sowing flowering plants offers increased biodiversity as birds, mammals and insects are attracted to wilder or more natural areas reduced costs of maintained areas of grassland added colour to the cityscape as we plant flowering species a reduction in CO2 release due to less cutting, which also helps lock-up carbon in soils.

#### *3.6.6 The Burdiehouse Burn*

The Burdiehouse burn flows from Swanston to its confluence with the Firth of Forth at Eastfield. It has a total length of 15.3km and a catchment of 25.55km<sup>2</sup>. There has been a significant amount of historical realignment and straightening of the burn due to the many mills which were found along

its length. Due to this, there are several places along the length of the burn, several present within the Nature Reserve, which are unnaturally heavily incised, leading to a disconnection from the natural flood plain.

With the building of the new St Crispins School, a substantial project to attempt to return nearby sections of the banks and surrounding area to wetland is under development by CECFNH. This will be part of the Blue/Green Project put forward by SEPA with the help of ELGT. It will allow different species to colonise and create what will hopefully be a good wetland habitat and will encourage further diversity within the park.

Continuous efforts are being carried out by CECFNR and FBBVP to strengthen banking by planting willow, specifically where the Burn erosion threatens the main path running through the Park. In May 2021 a Hydromorphology scoping report carried out by SEPA as part of the Blue/Green Project concluded that the burns length, from Swanston to Portobello, could go from its current, moderate ecological potential to good potential with a good amount of positive input. Much of the groundwork was instigated by this scoping report as well as a greening plan from ELGT which will work together to identify projects moving forward to improve the network. These projects can and will be taken forward with any pots of funding available fitting the criteria, by CECFNH, ELGT, and (in the longer term) SEPA.

The Burn is crossed by several footbridges and FBBVP are intent on creating additional bridges to the privately-owned Murrays woods. In addition, to engage children with the Burn aquatic life a dipping platform will be reinstated in Moredun woods as well as others constructed at various locations along the length of the burn.

### 3.6.7 Fungi

Species of fungi are abundant in the LNR. All the records come from recorders and the general public and are passed on to The Wildlife Information Centre (TWIC) where we have a list of species found. Some such as dead man's fingers *Xylaria polymorpha* and tar spot fungi *Rhytisma sp.* are common, and often reflect the healthy nature of the mature woodland to the north on the Park. FBBVP are looking to colonise young woodland with fungi to encourage biodiversity.

### 3.6.8 Soil

The area consists predominantly of Brown forest soils with gleying, non-calcareous gleys (poorly drained and leached grey soils). Various areas around the burn have concentrations of pebbles in clay surround showing the deepening of the valley from the Burns original course.

### 3.6.9 Geology

Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park's geology is dominated by a bedrock of limestone laid down around 330 million years ago, firmly within the Palaeozoic Era. This was a time when the supercontinent of Pangea dominated from pole to pole, surrounded by 1 vast ocean. South Scotland would have been sitting near the tropics and been predominantly lakes and temperate lagoons. It was also the perfect place for coal seams to begin forming, leading to the coal mining seams found around the south of Edinburgh. This bedrock is overlain by superficial til from Quaternary Period ice age conditions from around 2mya.

### 3.6.10 Mammals, Invertebrates, and Species of Note

The LNR is host to a wide range of mammals and invertebrates including, but not limited to, Otters, Kingfishers, Bats, Birds, Badgers, and Butterfly. The area hosts a healthy variety of both transient and resident populations of birds. The woodland regularly supports large populations of finches, *Fringillidae*, and often green and spotted woodpeckers, *Picidae*. Several species of bat can be found on site, with the pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* being the most common. Butterflies can also be found around the park, especially during warm summers around the wildflower meadow. You can

find species such as the Red Admiral, *Vanessa Atalanta*, and Peacock butterfly, *Aglais io*, as well as many others. You can find a full species list by request from CECFNH, FBBVP or TWIC.

### *3.6.11 Historical Context*

The park is rich in history, so much so, that the Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park Steering Group commissioned a local historian/ author to capture the heritage values of the park and its association with life (in all forms) in Liberton Gilmerton over the years. A booklet was produced (“The Burdiehouse Burn Park, A history of the area.” Dr M.P. Collingwood TD) and has been widely circulated to the public through schools, libraries and local events.

Significant features: Prior to the construction of the Council housing estates of Burdiehouse, Southhouse, and Gilmerton Dykes in the 1950s the area that forms the Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park consisted of farms, country estates, and open countryside. Numerous villages and hamlets were also to be found in and around the valley in which the burn flows. The 2.5 miles of burn has an impressive heritage with geological discoveries, alleged links to Mary Queen of Scots, several corn and flour mills, witches burnt at the stake, and one of the leading estates, gardens and landscapes of its time. Remnants of this history can still be seen in the Park to this day. Some examples include (from the history booklet “The Burdiehouse Burn Park, A history of the area.” Dr M.P. Collingwood TD):

#### *Burdiehouse Limekilns*

“Limestone was found at Burdiehouse about 1740 (Pirnie 1982) and obtained by open cast mining until 1800 when underground mining began. The lime at Burdiehouse differed from that nearby as it the fossils found in the area showed it to have developed in fresh water and not salt. Sir Archibald Geikie, who became president of the Geological Society in 1890, claimed his interest in geology stemmed from the time when he found a fossilised fish at Burdiehouse. The limestone, once extracted, had to be heated in vast kilns to extract the useable lime. At first the kilns were constructed from turf, earth and other types of stone but these lasted only one burning and stone kilns were constructed sometime in the late 18th century (Pirnie 1982). The remains of three of these kilns remain today.”

#### *Broken Brigg*

“Following the burn, the next group of houses is at Broken Bridge. This hamlet is described by the ordinance surveyors in 1848 as being merely a few thatched cottages (ONB 1878) and although shown on early maps little is known about it. It stood at the side of the Burdiehouse Burn and looking at the area today it can be seen where the bridge might have been. However, no record can be found explaining how and when it came to be ‘broken’.”

#### *Signs of quarry activities: coal and limestone and shape of the valley*

“Those living in Burdiehouse in the 18th and 19th centuries worked mainly for the Burdiehouse quarries and lime works, either directly or as carters. Coalmines and limeworks had existed in the area from time immemorial stretching around Gilmerton from Moredun Mains to Hyvot Mill and then to Muirhouse and Burdiehouse.”

#### *Remnants of mills (and lades) along the burn (sometimes only the name remains)*

“First mill: Having crossed Lasswade Road, the next feature from the past is the site of Hyvots Mill. This corn and flour was powered by the burn and was recorded by the ordinance surveyors in 1848 (ONB1878).

Second mill, near Stenhouse quarry, before Ellen’s Glen Loan: Near the stone outcrop water from the burn was diverted into a sluice to the Stenhouse mill. The sluice covered a considerable distance and its brick wall remains today although no water flows in the channel.

About Ellen's Glen Loan mill: The park path enters the hamlet at the point where until 1947 the corn mill stood. This had been powered by water from the Burdiehouse burn and, although there is no trace of the mill building, the sluice walls remain.

Forth and last mill: The park moves into this area in what is now the Moredun Woods following the burn to the site of the Moredun corn mill at the area where the water crosses under Gilmerton Road and the Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park ends. [...] The mill was converted to a laundry in 1947 (Edinburgh Corporation 1947) and demolished in the 20th Century. Nothing is left today and the area has been returned to the tranquil dell of a century before."

#### *Lime Tree Avenue*

"This line of Lime trees was planted as a feature to landscape a major path or road leading to a building. The location of the trees suggests that they were planted along the access to Hyvots mill as the trees can be seen now upstream the stone bridge, between Gilmerton Dykes Crescent and Guardwell Glen."

#### *Stone Bridge at Hyvots*

The stone bridge is assumed to be associated with Hyvots mill:

"No trace of the mill remains but the banks by the wooden bridge show significant stonework, which may relate to the mechanisms for the waterpower."

#### *Ellen's Glen hamlet*

"The burn now flows through the ancient hamlet of Stenhouse where, although the name has changed to Ellen's Glen Loan and Road. This hamlet has a rich history with a lot of stone engraving still visible today to the public walking through it."

#### *Moredun wood and old estate wall*

"Burdiehouse Burn Park walk now enters what was part of the garden of Moredun House. Although there had been a mansion at this site possibly from the 12 century, the one shown below [see history booklet] was built by James Stewart when it was called 'Goodtrees'. The estate was renamed 'Moredun' after a hill in Perthshire when it passed to David Stewart Moncrieff who came from that area."

#### *Via Regis*

"Ellen's Glen Loan is actually a part of a very old road - the Via Regis or King's Highway which was the path from Newbattle Abbey into Edinburgh, and was, according Ferenbach (1975) and Good (1893) first mentioned in 1253. It was later the path used by the carters of Gilmerton to reach Liberton Kirk (Good 1893) or parts of Edinburgh. Only a very small portion of the path between Stennis Gardens and the Malbert estate remains recognised by name today although the path continues from the hamlet to Gilmerton. Good (1893 p136) described it as coming south from Melville Grange, passing 'the old farm house' (unnamed) before running through the west side of the village of Gilmerton. It then 'continued along by Moredun Dykes' and 'through Lower Stenhouse' before 'passing on the west side of Liberton [Free] Church' which was in upper Stenhouse."

### **3.7 Community Involvement (Co-written by Friends of BBVP)**

In 1991 a community group named the Better Burdiehouse Burn Community Project (BBBCP) was carrying out practical conservation activities to engage with the local communities around the Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park living from Straiton Road to Lasswade Road. Their objective was to improve the park as a recreational area and doing this involved as large a part of the neighbouring community as possible. The BBBCP carried out various activities in the park, with the support of the Edinburgh Greenbelt Trust (now known as Edinburgh and Lothian Greenspace Trust) from burn clean

up and bulb planting, to the organisation of Gala events and the creation and installation of large wooden sculptures in the Dip area. The group was represented at the park's Steering group and Management group meetings and dissolved in 2008.

Some members joined the new FBBVP group which takes care of the whole length of the Local Nature Reserve but shares similar values and objectives with the BBBCP. The group was established with an inaugural membership base of 20 members. They are a constituted group supporting the Natural Heritage Service to deliver a high-quality park and local nature reserve for the benefit of the people of South Edinburgh. The group has been run on voluntary basis for over 15 years by people living within walking distance of the Park. The park has gained the Green Flag Award for the last four years. FBBVP have undertaken a range of projects including litter picking, fruit tree, bulb and wildflower planting, burn clean up and management, bird habitat checking, woodland and wildflower meadow management, educational walks and fundraising for events, and capital projects. They are on social media and can be found on Facebook and Twitter. The elected committee tries to maintain a balance of efforts between urban and youth projects and supporting a range of projects that improve the biodiversity of the Park.

A major focus of recent activity has been to buy (under asset transfer legislation) the derelict Park-keepers hut from the Natural Heritage Service, creating capacity for FBBVP to increase outdoor volunteering opportunities, physical activity, mental health and wellbeing, plus improving biodiversity in an area of dense council housing. Existing strong links with a wide range of groups will be enhanced by dedicated meeting space and tool storage, designed to incur minimal running costs.

The Friends have placed considerable effort into developing a strategy to sit side by side with this document, that allows both CECFNH and FBVVP to plan their priorities around the agreed workplan that creates the annual plan.

### **Friends of Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park v3 Strategy 2020 - 2030**

This strategy is built around the following outcomes:

- 1. People living along BBVP feel an improved sense of ownership and respect of the Park**
- 2. The Park environment is improved, and biodiversity increased**
- 3. Young people and community members have an increased understanding of green agendas**
- 4. Local people improve their health and wellbeing through outdoor activities**
- 5. Local people and strategic leaders have an increased understanding of the value of BBVP**
- 6. We represent the local community in commenting on strategic issues relevant to the local area**
- 7. We increase the numbers and capacity of the Committee**

- 1. People living along BBVP feel an improved sense of ownership and respect of the Park**
  - We will complete the refurbishment of the Bothy as a space for community activities with a green agenda and tool storage.
  - We will develop a plan and policies for usage of bothy, including developing a small revenue stream from renting it out to local groups.
  - We will reduce fly-tipping from neighbouring properties, working with CECFNH to raise awareness and, where necessary, take enforcement action.
  - We will develop and distribute regular newsletters on social media.
  - We will support the improvement of security around the Skate Park and youth area to encourage use
  - We will integrate new St Crispins effectively into the Park



- We will deliver appropriate signage to increase enjoyment of the Park and recognitions of the Friends (also of relevance to this outcome - litter campaigns and clear ups, dog poo campaigns, social media)

## **2. The Park environment is improved and biodiversity increased**

- We will commission a modest Woodland management plan and schedule in implementation over coming decade. For example, ensure Moredun Woods canopy managed appropriately in conjunction with CEC Forestry. Plan for an increased woodland area using mix of native species around the Dip and Burdiehouse.
- We will fundraise and install a community orchard at Burdiehouse (and use as commemoration of Gilbert Clark's work on the Park) and behind Morrisons.
- Path survey to be commissioned by Forestry and Natural Heritage (CECFNH), providing details of path maintenance (eg. Moredun Woods, Ellen's Glen) and scheduled works plan, including the repair and maintain of steps throughout Park. With Murrays residents we will improve the path networks in the privately owned Murrays woodlands, that lie adjacent to BBVP and form an integral part of the site. FBBVP will undertake to carry out some of this work.
- We will carry on work to prevent erosion of Burn banks. We think the focus should be on where Burn is threatening existing paths. (Eg. Narrows and Ellens Glen at end of gabions). FBBVP will schedule works to support this task where but require support from CECFNH specialists to advise where willow weaving is insufficient and to remedy accordingly.
- We will plant and naturalise wildflowers including bulbs throughout the Park. We consider plugs grown on by Inch Nursery would improve chance of sustainability.
- We will carry on improving biodiversity in Park by installing bird, bat and bug boxes. Review with Biodiversity and Natural Heritage officers other tasks that could improve environment.
- We would like to record and benchmark flora and fauna in the Park. We will try to do this by engaging with specialist groups (eg. Universities, Buglife) to support and direct us.
- Improve Park entrances with better signage and statement access, improve and add another two noticeboards to ensure up to date activities listed. We will fundraise and develop a programme of Art in the Park (eg murals at bridge and bothy; sculptures to commemorate geological and historical landmarks, benches)
- We will examine if we can set up a dedicated BBQ area around the Dip

## **Young people and community members have an increased understanding of green agendas**

- We will run a programme of Activity mornings every second Saturday of the month throughout the year.
- We will continue to campaign on public issues such as Litter and dog waste. Once a year we will have a focused campaign involving community in our Spring Clean.
- We will run a programme of educational walks each year. (eg history of Park, fungi, bird, bats). In winter we will run evening/ afternoon workshops for young people on flora/ fauna, climate and the environment.
- We will work with CECFNH to refresh the Parks Interpretation boards and fundraise to install additional boards. To do this, we will work with CECFNH to create an interpretation strategy and fundraise to implement.
- We will engage with local secondary/ primary/ Forest schools/ Scouts/ Woodland Folk and any other group that supports young people learn and engage in nature.

## **Local people improve their health and wellbeing through outdoor activities**

- We will publicise activity days in advance, using posters and social media to ensure awareness.
- We will support local walking groups (eg. Mothers and buggies) and run a programme of Park walks.

- We will support Edinburgh and Lothian Greenspace Trust, South Edinburgh Partnership and Lothian National Health Service in their endeavours to improve health and wellbeing using the Park as a resource.
  - We will review the strategic placement of benches to encourage the elderly and disabled to make more use of the Park. We will fundraise for benches as part of our Art in the Park commitment.
  - We will fundraise to develop an outdoor gym circuit in the Park. The circuit will be spread over six locations with twelve to sixteen pieces of equipment.
- 3. Local people and strategic leaders have an increased understanding of the value of BBVP**
- We will work with CECFNH to increase our use of corporate volunteers, Dirty Weekenders, Green Team, ELGT and others in delivering on our priorities.
  - We will increase our presence and impact on social media to keep people informed of what is happening in the Park and how they can contribute
  - We will access Planning Gain funds to improve the Park and to achieve this strategy.
  - We will develop a leaflet with a map of the Park and key information. This will raise awareness and provide a tool for managing activities.
  - We will maintain the Green Flag award and strive to improve our Parks Quality Assessment rating.
  - We will maintain a positive relationship with immediate neighbours and businesses.
  - We will use bio-diversity data to drive improvement in the Park.
- 4. We will represent the local community in commenting on strategic issues of relevance to the local area**
- We will liaise effectively with Natural Heritage Service and other CEC departments to ensure infrastructure is maintained (eg. Paths, bridges, walls, woodlands) and Management Plans are developed and implemented with timelines.
  - We will attend Edinburgh Greenspace forum and engage with other Friends groups in Edinburgh
  - We will maintain a watching brief with local Neighbourhood Partnership and Community Councils and engage when appropriate
  - We will support and develop the Pentland to Portobello route
  - We will comment on local planning applications that may affect BBVP Local Nature Reserve
  - We will comment on and mostly support CEC plans and programmes that improve green space in Edinburgh (eg. Active Edinburgh, relaxed grasslands, biodiversity, million tree initiative)
  - We will continue with a major fundraising programme to achieve all the above objectives and prioritise our efforts on behalf of local area.
  - We will negotiate with CECFNH for an officer to attend three Activity days every year to ensure our most pressing concerns are drawn to their attention.

**The Committee will operate in accordance with best practice and aim to increase numbers and capacity**

- We will move to becoming an SCIO in order to resolve outstanding issues with legal form.
- We will use social media to raise awareness of gaps in skills and capacity and seek to fill them.

*3.7.1 Outdoor Education*

The local nursery school makes some educational use of the LNR. The children are regularly taken on walks so that they can appreciate nature throughout the year. Local schools make field visits to the site to support their class work. The CECFNH work to facilitate schools and community groups on site.

A forest school programme has run on the site for many years with local schools and nurseries visiting and other groups running forest school programmes during the holidays. The new St Crispins special needs school (2022) will make regular use of the Park.

## 4. Project Delivery and Workplan

Despite the range and number of actions that could be undertaken on BBVPLNR, the plan is meant to be implemented in the real world of financial restrictions and limited staff availability. These actions focus on those which are specific, realistic, and achievable. However, some scope for achieving projects outwith those limitations should be noted, as conditions change as funding challenges do, often on a yearly basis. It is with these outliers in mind that larger scale projects are mentioned but with a broader overview.

A yearly report on the actions of the workplan should be undertaken and recorded by CECFNH to ensure knowledge of actions and objectives is kept up to date. The management plan should be reviewed after 5 years to account for any major changes that would affect operations.

### 4.1 Project Priority

#### Partners

The City of Edinburgh Council Forestry and Natural Heritage

Friends of Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park

Volunteers

Scottish Environmental Protection Agency

#### Acronyms/Abbreviations.

CECFNH

FBBVP

Vols.

SEPA

## 4.2 Workplan – 10 year

Objective	Actions	Actioned By	Year(s) for action										Report/Comments	Cost (£)
<b>Hydrology/Wetlands</b>														
To conserve and enhance the wetland habitats of the LNR.	Leave overhanging trees as areas of protection for smaller aquatic birds/fish/amphibians	CECFNH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	Improve biodiversity and burn cleanliness by introducing semi-aquatic plants. Marginals, emergents, and submergents.	CECFNH & FBBVP & Vols		2				6						
	Monthly litter clearance	CECFNH & FBBVP & Vols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	Monitor and remove invasive vegetation within waterway	CECFNH & FBBVP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	Develop a new wetland beside St Crispins.	CECFNH & FBBVP	1	2	3	4								
	Conduct regular monitoring of water quality	SEPA & CECFNH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
To improve public safety awareness at water features	Ensure, where appropriate, measures taken against accidental falls into watercourse – fences/barriers/etc.	CECFNH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	Work to prevent recurrence of serious flooding damage from Stenhouse Burn at Ellen's Glen caused by grate	CECFNH, CEC Flood Prevention Team & FBBVP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		

Geology and Geomorphology														
To preserve the geological and geomorphological landforms	Monitor site regularly through patrols, ensure no potential damaging operations take place.	CECFNH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	Improve designation and interpretation of prominent geological features of the park				3	4	5							
To enhance public awareness about geology	Propose geological guided walks across the LNR	British Geological Survey & CECFNH			3		5		7		9			
Soils														
To increase knowledge of soil profiles in LNR	Facilitate research projects and collect information	CECFNH and Tertiary Education Groups		2			5			8				
Woodland														
To ensure the woods have a diversity of age structures and species mix.	Initiate actions proscribed in the CEC "Trees in the City" Trees and Woodland Action Plan.	Trees and Woodlands officer, Forestry Team, CECFNH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
To retain the landscape design elements of the woodlands	Retain tree avenues, replacing as necessary	CECFNH and Forestry Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
To ensure the woodland is kept in a safe condition	Removal of Elms affected with Dutch Elm Disease,	Forestry Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		

	outside the breeding bird season																
	Clearance of dangerous limbs and trees	CECFNH and Forestry Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					
To conserve the woodlands as a habitat for native flora and fauna	Continue to leave dead wood in situ, where safe	CECFNH and Forestry Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					
	New tree plantings to be species of native stock & high wildlife value, with FBBVP particularly keen on planting community orchards	CECFNH & FBBVP & Vols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					
	Apply relevant actions to enact Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan	CECFNH & Volunteers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					
	“Beat up” areas already planted with trees	CECFNH, FBBVP & Volunteers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					
	Thin plantations to form glades/rides	CECFNH, FBBVP & Volunteers				4				8							
	Ensure survival of existing shrub layer species by thinning/pruning as required	CECFNH, FBBVP & Volunteers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					
	Update species lists for the wood	CECFNH & Volunteers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					
	Protect shrub layer by removing undesirable regeneration and garden escapes.	CECFNH & Volunteers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					

	Planting of early flowering natives (snowdrops/bluebells) where appropriate	CECFNH, FBBVP & Volunteers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
<b>Grassland</b>														
To conserve and enhance existing grassland habitats	Undertake cuts of amenity areas May - September	CEC Estates Team/ Parks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	Monitor BBVP and repair damaged areas by reseedling with native grass mix	CECFNH & Volunteers		2			5			8				
	Annual cut and lift of the wildflower meadows to retain diversity	CECFNH, Estates team, Volunteers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		100/yr
	Expand and introduce new areas of meadow as appropriate and plant out new grassland wildflower species	CECFNH, FBBVP, Estates team, Volunteers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
<b>Ruderal Communities</b>														
To limit the spread of invasive weed species	Measure status of ruderal communities, and where they are increasing, deploy suitable control techniques, such as strimming.	CECFNH, Estates and Volunteers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	Monitor and reduce identified invasive plant species, e.g. Himalayan Balsam, Giant Hogweed, etc.	CECFNH, INNS team Volunteers, and Estates team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		

	Remove garden escapes, exotic and naturalised regeneration aside from historically planted species.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Flora														
To conserve and enhance the population levels of native flora present within the LNR	Identify important plant species currently extinct or receding through surveys and comparison with historical records	CECFNH & Biodiversity Vols			3		5		7		9			
	Where possible, work towards reintroducing important floral species or protecting small populations where they occur.	CECFNH, FBBVP & Biodiversity Vols			3		5		7		9			
	Implement, where relevant, recommendations of the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan	CECFNH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Fauna														
To conserve and enhance the LNR for native fauna and increase understanding amongst the public.	Monitor and assess habitat boxes, replace or add new ones as necessary to ensure a diversity of habitats	CECFNH & FBBVP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	Undertake Breeding Bird Survey in spring and enter records	CECFNH & Biodiversity Vols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		



	Conduct Butterfly survey and submit records to Butterfly Monitoring	CECFNH & Biodiversity Vols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	Implement, where relevant, recommendations of the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan	CECFNH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	Improve knowledge about less well recorded fauna via survey work	CECFNH & Tertiary Education Groups			3		5		7		9			
	Monitor Bat Boxes	CECFNH & FBBVP	1		3		5		7		9			
	Monitor Bird Boxes	CECFNH & FBBVP		2		4		6		8		10		
	Monitor Badger Setts	CECFNH & Edinburgh Badger Grp	1		3		5		7		9			
<b>The Historic Environment</b>														
To preserve and upgrade the historic features of the LNR	Improve interpretative signage associated with historic features	CECFNH, FBBVP, Vols, Edinburgh Archaeology group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
To celebrate historical landmarks through a programme of art	Fundraise to install artwork celebrating local historical/geological landmarks					4				8				
<b>Access</b>														
To maintain access points and path network in good condition	Path survey to be commissioned providing details of path maintenance required (eg. Moredun Woods, Ellen's Glen) and scheduled works plan, including the repair	CECFNH		2		4		6		8		10		

	and maintenance of steps throughout Park														
	Edge pathways to extend life of path infrastructure	CECFNH, FBBVP & Volunteers		2		4		6		8		10			
	Cut back or trim vegetation along paths 0.5 metres back along each side wherever possible	CECFNH & Estates Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
	Monitor path drainage and repair as necessary	CECFNH, FBBVP & Volunteers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			1000/yr
	Monitor step systems and repair as necessary	CECFNH, FBBVP & Volunteers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
	Undertake path and associated infrastructure monitoring and report any defects to appropriate staff	CECFNH, FBBVP & Volunteers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
	Repair paths where serious erosion occurs.	CECFNH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
Improve safety for walkers/ cyclists at key road crossing point	Seek to install road crossing at Lasswade Rd	CECFNH					5								
To enhance access for Special Needs Groups	Identify requirements and ways to develop access for special needs and disabled groups if required.	CECFNH & FBBVP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			

Monitor, maintain, and upgrade paths	Monitor path network, arrange repairs as required and identify areas requiring major upgrades	CECFNH & FBBVP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	Install benches on site for rest stops	FBBVP		2		4		6		8		10		
Recreation														
To encourage and facilitate responsible access and recreation	Research, consult and Improve Skate Park area: Lighting, CCTV Skate Park, all weather pitch, play equipment & outdoor gym equipment	CECFNH & FBBVP	1	2	3	4	5						(Skate Park figures based on 2019 Portobello structure & lighting quote)	£45,000 150-200k
	Install two dipping platforms (Dip and Moredun Woods)	FBBVP			3									
	Develop closer links to all recreational user groups (ie: orienteering, horse riders)	CECFNH & FBBVP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	Reduce incidence of dog fouling through behavioural campaigns education and interpretation.	CECFNH, FBBVP & Environmental Wardens	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	Regular inspection during site inspections of all physical features, and repairs undertaken as necessary	CECFNH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	Promote user engagement by the addition of new				3			6			9			~£1800 per Notice board (2022)

	interpretation boards and new notice boards.																~£3500 per interpretation board
	Develop detailed map of FBBVP to aid management and access	FBBVP				4											
	Litter bin provision & twice within 4-day shift cycle emptying of all litter bins	CEC Waste (south east)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					
To support and develop the 'Friends' group and assist where applicable in project implementation	Attend and support the Friends of BBVP meetings and events	CECFNH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1 per year minimum				
	Provide updates and information regularly to the FBBVP	CECFNH and other CEC depts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					
	Provision of technical and practical assistance to group projects .	CECFNH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					
	Fundraise to support maintenance and improvement works	FBBVP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					
	Complete refurbishment of Bothy as space for vols activity and tool storage.	FBBVP	1	2	3												
	Support FBBVP and their 12 Activity Days a year	FBBVP and CECFNH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					
	Develop event program	FBBVP & ELGT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					50/2hr 150/½ day

	Continue to update web pages	CECFNH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	Update FBBVP Social Media streams and quarterly newsletter	FBBVP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	Review interpretation	CECFNH & FBBVP				4	5	6				10		
Involve local people in management	Visitor Survey to get locals perception of BBVPLNR	CECFNH, FBBVP, Vols	1				5					10		3,000/ Consultation
	Training for Site inspections and maintenance work	CECFNH		2	3			6				10		
	Survey training	CECFNH → FBBVP				4	5	6					Birds, Wildflower meadows, Bats, Butterflies	
To continue to facilitate a wide variety of educational and interpretative talks and visits to the public.	Promote and support all age/ability groups to use the site.	CECFNH, FBBVP, Vols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	Creation and facilitation of Tertiary Study Programme	CECFNH & Tertiary Education Groups	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Across all Objectives														
	Compile an annual work plan with further detail as required (include actions identified during patrols)	CECFNH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	Creation of up to date species list	CECFNH, FBBVP, TWIC, biodiversity volunteers		2		4		6		8		10		
	To monitor and evaluate success of actions	CECFNH & FBBVP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		

	Conduct a review of the management plan in 2027	CECFNH & FBBVP					5								
	To produce a new/revised management plan for 2032/33	CECFNH & FBBVP											10		
	Regularly update the species list	CECFNH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
	Implement, where relevant, recommendations of the annual Park Quality Assessment	CECFNH & FBBVP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
	Work to secure a Green Flag award for the LNR every year to recognise the high quality of the site as a public park and further site improvements	CECFNH & FBBVP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
	Undertake regular site inspections; identify vandalism, graffiti, dog fouling, littering, fly tipping, garden waste dumping etc. and take remedial action as required	CECFNH - Env Wardens	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
	Seek to extend Boundaries of LNR to include Murrays woodland	CECFNH	1	2	3	4									

## 5. Appendices

### 5.1 Appendix A Ownership and Boundary Map 2022

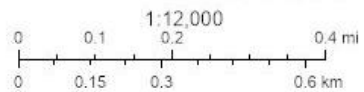
Map A – Current BBVP LNR Boundary

#### BBVP LNR Boundary



28/03/2022, 15:14:26

 Local Nature Reserves







## 5.4 Appendix C Skate Park Development Costs/Spending Plan supported by FBBVP

While the plan is still in development, there is work underway to create an extensive change to “The Dip” area of BBVP. This is set to include a revamp of the Skate Park, along the designs of the Saughton Skate Park as well as the inclusion of an all-sport court, green gym area, and a new design of lighting and security features. This will be the focus of development over 2022/23.

## 5.5 Acknowledgements

Since 1991, the local community, the City of Edinburgh Council Natural Heritage Service and adjacent landowners with financial support from local businesses and numerous urban nature conservation funding bodies, have promoted the primary management of the area as an urban wildlife site. The evolution into a formal Local Nature Reserve in 2007 was the culmination of dedicated and focussed work by all towards the vision of the nature conservation maintenance of, and public access to this important urban natural greenspace resource. It is hoped this good work can be carried on to include the new portions of land and extend the LNR in the near future.

Every year since first obtaining it, the community and CEC have worked hard to be awarded Green Flag status which is testament to the continued hard work and commitment that those noted above have invested in the site to ensure its continued success.

## 6. References/Further Information

### 6.1 Management Aim Prescriptions

#### 6.1.1 Aim 1

**- To maintain and enhance the nature conservation interest of the different semi-natural habitats.**

#### *Habitats*

Management will be undertaken to enhance local habitats and biodiversity whilst also being considerate of the social use of the park. This includes: path erosion and encroachment of undesirable species etc.

#### *Marsh*

Maintain marsh/lowered area created by St Crispins School flood risk plans and aim to increase biodiversity of the area.

#### *Woodland:*

Generally: - Monitor all management and human impact on the woodlands. Monitoring should be recorded in site inspection logs based with the CECFNH at The Hermitage of Braid. This monitoring should be designed to systematically record any vandalism, dumping, fire-raising etc. Any management by the local authority or other landowners can also be noted for comment or action as required.

CEC has information of all mature trees beside paths and buildings, this is available to CEC Forestry through Easytreev.

Management of tree population on the site: - Aim to replace elms *Ulmus sp.* which have been lost due to removal (Dutch elm disease) with woodland species such as Oak *Quercus sp.* or Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*. Several (up to 5 trees) should be planted for each large elm lost to maximise the chances of successful establishment. These trees will need to be thinned in the future if they all survive. Whips should be used to maximise rate of establishment and minimise vandalism. Local seed should be used wherever possible. Possible sources include: on-site seed collection, the Lothian

Conservation Volunteers (LCV) tree nursery, Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT) from Bawsinch Nature Reserve native species arboretum at Duddingston.

- In accordance with the CEC management of dangerous trees these should be reported via CECFNH to the Trees and Woodlands officer.
- Debris which falls from trees (branches) should be kept clear of paths. This debris should not be removed from the site, due to its nature conservation value. However, attempts should be made to give the site a generally cared for look - which can help reduce vandalism. - Fallen and cut trees can be left to be used for building furniture, drainage etc. Branches overhanging paths and trees which show evidence of disease (e.g. fungi) should be removed by CECFNH or if too large for them then reported to the Trees and Woodland Officer to be removed by the Forestry Unit.
- Dead and dying trees should be left standing wherever possible as they provide essential nest sites for birds, roost sites for bats, habitats for invertebrates and fungi.
- Regeneration which is successful in some parts of the site needs to be controlled in favour of native species. Regenerating specimens of natives should generally be left but those of non-natives removed.
- There are some exceptions, even in the woodland, where ash regeneration totally dominates to the exclusion of other trees, shrubs and ground flora. In these circumstances the ash *Fraxinus excelsior* must be thinned and monitored to allow healthy specimens to 'get away'. This is due to CEC's Ash dieback policy which seeks to remove, as quickly as possible, all trees infected. Thinning of young trees like ash *Fraxinus excelsior* can be carried out by CECFNH using groups like FBBVP, Forest School Groups and local schools who wish to help with management of the site.
- Where sycamore, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, is regenerating most should be removed. However, sycamore is a very important element in this woodland. To aim for a native only situation would be rather false, therefore it is best to control sycamore regeneration and encourage other species by the removal of young sycamore trees and saplings.
- Where the desired habitat is woodland selective thinning can be carried out quite quickly by FBBVP unskilled labour or volunteers if trees are first marked.
- Thinning is also required in the plantations carried out by FBBVP & volunteers. Here glades and rides can be opened up to benefit wildlife. This will generate a possible resource for surfacing (shredded brush wood).

Management of the woodland shrub layer: -Protect the newly regenerating shrub layer species particularly holly *Ilex aquifolium* from detrimental over shading. This involves the removal of any less desirable species such as sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* or even herbaceous or other scrub species such as bramble *Rubus fruticosus* from the immediate locality to prevent smothering or stunting of the plants.

-Plant other native shrubs such as honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*, which although expensive to buy can greatly improve the quality of the woodland. Cuttings could be taken on site and grown on. This would ensure the provenance of seed bank is maintained. The addition of fruit trees to site will improve biodiversity with a focus on Scottish varieties with two community orchards planted in 2021.

Management of the woodland ground flora: - typical semi-natural woodland flora such as dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* and bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* should be encouraged to spread into suitable areas where they are lacking (if possible source locally). This can be done by transplantation e.g. bluebell bulbs can be moved after flowering. (Owner's permission essential) Bulbs could also be rescued from sites under threat.

- Control the spread of garden escapes, ground elder *Aegopodium podagraria* and ivy *Hedera sp.* to be monitored and removed in areas where there are no other species growing.

### *Grasslands*

-Mowing of selected areas of grassland: meadow; amenity; and relaxed grassland is recommended. This will continue with the strimming by CEC Parks of the latter two and the strimming by CECFNH of the meadow with the hand removal of cuttings being undertaken by FBBVP & volunteers twice a year in May/ June and late September/October on the wildflower meadows. Wildflower seeding/planting for meadow improvement will occur as appropriate.

### *Open Water*

- Habitat creation will take place where the St Crispins flood defences are being made. This lowered area will hopefully become a thriving wetland with introduced species increasing the biodiversity. FBBVP will take an active role in developing, planting and maintaining this new resource in Park.

### *6.1.2 Aim 2*

**- Safeguard and, where necessary, enhance the populations of any threatened, endangered or typical species**

- It is Council policy to limit the use of chemicals in their local nature reserves, this will continue.
- Control any invasive species.

### *6.1.3 Aim 3*

**- Maintain the aesthetic value of the site**

- Litter removal and other general tidying up projects will be continued, particularly involving local youngsters, FBBVP and volunteers. Further letter drops to local people with an explanation of the problems caused by dumping garden refuse and the legal responsibilities is also recommended in conjunction with CEC Environmental Wardens.
- The FBBVP will continue to raise funds for works and organise at several litter Activity Days each year.
- Grass cutting regime to be continued.
- Regular inspections with the identification of broken or worn items and their replacement or repair

### *6.1.4 Aim 4*

**- Provide educational opportunities for the local community, schools and visitors through interpretation and Marketing.**

- Continue to encourage the use of the site by local schools and groups, particularly repeat visits as this will encourage local children to develop a sense of ownership.
- Practical educational support is provided by FBBVP with regular educational walks and physical infrastructure such as dipping platforms.
- Publicity for any events must be arranged to maximise the profile of the area if it is to fulfil its functions as a Local Nature Reserve. Events at BBVPLNR are marketed, along with other CECFNH events through posters, on notice boards through Council websites and FBBVP social media.
- Continued connection and communication with events such as Environment Week and other City-wide initiatives is recommended. Getting events into their programmes, which must be organised well in advance, is very productive.
- Websites are a useful way of both marketing and disseminating. The CECFNH website can be found at <http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/naturalheritage>. Leaflets and information for teachers and other group leaders can be downloaded and used on site.
- Posters are put up to highlight issues like garden waste, dog fouling and responsible access as required. Environmental Wardens will be called on to deal with issues like illegal dumping of garden waste, dog fouling etc.
- Often the most useful way of promotion and publicity is through FBBVP's social media posts. During 2021 they reached anywhere between 1,000 and 3,000 people.

#### 6.1.5 Aim 5

##### **- Continue and increase community involvement and work with local FBBVP**

- The FBBVP will continue to represent the community views on the area and will formally seek views from the community each year at their AGM.
- FBBVP has worked in partnership with CECFNH to produce, monitor and act on the document you are reading.
- It is essential to sustain the existing high level of community interest and involvement. The FBBVP will continue to hold community events such as our educational walks, Activity Days and behavioural campaigns.
- It is important that links continue to be maintained with the Community Council and the Neighbourhood Partnership who are very supportive of the LNR.
- In terms of the wider community links will continue to be maintained with the other Friends groups in the city, mainly via Edinburgh Green Space group and ELGT.
- A City Volunteer Ranger Service was set up in 2009, however, the service was unsustainable. CECFNH are considering the sustainability of a new, similar group. They, along with the CECFNH, would monitor the site, record wildlife, carry out minor works, pick up litter and record larger tasks for action through site inspection logs and maintenance sheets which are found at the Hermitage of Braid. Most of this role is already carried out by FBBVP.
- CECFNH to continue to offer BBVPLNR for practical tasks to corporate and other volunteer groups

#### 6.1.6 Aim 6

##### **- Encourage responsible public access and manage conflict**

- Display cases will be erected at the entrances to update changes in the LNR and bring everything under CEC standard.
- Improve access points by rebuilding or replacing old and broken steps and gates.
- Provide information and advice to users and manage the site to reduce conflict.
- Continue to monitor and maintain all paths, identify and action repairs as required or to prioritise larger works.
- Clearly define routes by way markers, as part of a nature trail or simply for a casual walk

#### 6.1.7 Aim 7

##### **- Meet all legal obligations regarding the site**

- Regular patrol and monitoring of the site undertaking repairs as necessary and reporting defects where appropriate, ensuring that the site is safe and well maintained.
- Investigate to determine ownership prior to works being completed with particular reference to boundary wall responsibilities.
- Ensure that actions do not impact on the flora and fauna of the site and enhance biodiversity where possible and practicable.
- Ensure that works do not adversely impact on neighbouring properties.
- Promote opportunities for access for all and consider ways to improve accessibility on the site in any works being carried out.
- Report offences to the appropriate enforcement/governing/ legal body.

## 6.2 Policy and legislative context

### 6.2.1 Legislation

There have been many changes over the years in legislation which affect the management of sites like BBVP, the most notable are:

- Historic Environment (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2011- This Act amends three pieces of primary legislation:

- The Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953;
- The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979; and
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conversation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

The Act harmonise aspects of historic environment legislation with the planning regime; improves the ability of central and local government to work with developers and their partners; and improve the capacity to deal with urgent threats and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of deterrents (Historic Scotland Website). If a monument is both listed and scheduled, only Scheduled Monument Consent is required for any work. However, listed building consent may still be required for any structures outside the scheduled area.

- The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 (WANE) – The Act amends a number of other pieces of legislation including the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and aims to modernise game laws, introduces new wildlife offences (vicarious liability), adds further regulation to snaring, updates to the ways Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) are dealt with, updates to the licensing system, amendments to deer stalking and deer management, strengthens protection of badgers, makes changes to Muirburn practices and operational changes to Site of Special Scientific Interest management.
- The Great Britain Invasive Non-Native Species Strategy 2015 – this document aims to provide a guiding framework for national, regional and local mitigation, control or eradication initiatives helping to reduce the detrimental impact of INNS.
- The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 - This has opened the area up to use by a much wider range of people and recreational pursuits, which, at times can cause conflict. However, the area is regularly monitored by CECFNH and volunteers, who provide advice to users on responsible access.
- The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004: Aspects under the Act for which CECFNH have responsibility in relation to the management of land and water, are as follows:

*Public bodies operating in Scotland are obliged to consider, and account for, the impacts which their activities and policies have on the overall balance and health of the natural biological environment, at a local, regional, national and international level. CEC are required to act, in ways which are consistent with the exercise of their other statutory functions, to ensure that the conservation of that naturally-occurring biological diversity is encouraged and advanced.*

- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 - Badgers and their setts are comprehensively protected by this Act as amended by the WANE Act 2011.

It is an offence to:

- wilfully kill, injure, take or attempt to kill a badger;
- possess a dead badger or any part of a dead badger;
- cruelly ill-treat a badger;
- use badger tongs in the course of killing, taking or attempting to kill a badger;
- dig for a badger;
- possess, sell or offer for sale any live badger;
- mark, tag or ring a badger.

It is also a crime to interfere with a badger sett by intentionally or recklessly causing or allowing:

- damage to a sett or any part of it;
- destruction of it;
- sett access to be obstructed, or any entrance of it;

- a dog to enter it;
  - disturbance to a badger when it is occupying it.
- The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995: The Act aims to end the discrimination that many disabled people face. This Act has been significantly extended, including by the Disability Discrimination Act (2005). It now gives disabled people rights in the areas of: employment, education, access to goods, facilities, and services. The Act requires public bodies to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. As land managers, CEC and must ensure as much of the space as possible is accessible to people who have problems walking, for those who use wheelchairs and buggies.
  - The Equality Act 2010 – The Act requires to ensure decision makers have regard for the desirability of reducing socio-economic inequalities; to reform and harmonise equality law; to enable certain employers to be required to publish information about the differences in pay between male and female employees; to prohibit victimisation in certain circumstances; to enable duties to be imposed in relation to the exercise of public procurement functions; to increase equality of opportunity; to amend the law relating to rights and responsibilities in family relationships; and for connected purposes.
  - Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003: The Act has 2 principal aims. The first of these is to amend the offence of dog fouling so that the offence consists of failing to clear up after a dog rather than of allowing a dog to foul. The second aim is to establish new enforcement provisions relating to the offence by enabling local authorities and police constables to issue fixed penalty notices to persons suspected of committing the offence.
  - Occupiers’ Liability (Scotland) Act 1960: The City of Edinburgh Council’s liability to users of Parks owned by the Council derives from this Act. This act makes provision regarding any hazards or dangers on land. It requires the “owner in respect of any dangers which are due to the state of the premises or to anything done...on them... [to take] such care as in all the circumstances of the case is reasonable to see that the person will not suffer injury or damage due to any such danger.”

Scottish law does not allow the transfer of liability where the landowner is negligent.

### *6.2.2 The Plan in Relation to Council Policies and Plans*

There are several relevant policies and plans that the Council have produced these include:

- Edinburgh City Local Development Plan 2016 - Sets out the Council's policies to guide development in the city and its proposals for specific sites. The Plan covers the whole of the urban area, and part of its rural Green Belt fringe.
- Edinburgh Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2019 – 2021: The Edinburgh Local Biodiversity Action Plan (ELBAP) outlines its context for action in relation to legislation and responsibilities throughout the plan: <http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/biodiversity>
- Edinburgh Core Path Plan 2008: This was produced, through consultation, as a requirement under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. It identifies key routes for non-motorised access through out Edinburgh. It supports sustainable transport objectives, contributes to better health, provides social benefits, and contributes to tackling climate change. Burdiehouse Burn Valley Parks main thoroughfare is a core path.

- Capitalising on Access: An Access Strategy for the City of Edinburgh: The Strategy sets out a framework for developing inclusive access for everyone who lives in, works in, and visits Edinburgh. The priority action outlined by the Strategy relating to this area and relevant to BBVPLNR is:

Linking of greenspace networks with residential areas is vital. Areas such as Holyrood Park and Braid Hills provide excellent opportunities for outdoor recreation close to where many people live. Information and signage can help raise awareness locally, so these areas realise their full potential. The BBVPLNR management plan will consider the relevant management.

- Edinburgh Public Parks and Gardens Strategy (CEC, 2006): The purpose of the Strategy is that it sets realistic aspirations and shows the way forward to achieving them. The Strategy is a means of matching the availability, function and role of parks and gardens with the changing requirements as identified by user surveys. The study focused on parks and gardens within the urban area including BBVPLNR. Under the parks classification system recommended in the Strategy BBVPLNR is classed as a Natural Heritage Park. Natural Heritage parks are described as follows:

*These are generally large areas, the functions of which are determined by topography and ecology. In the main, these parks will tend to be dominated by woodland but also include coastal areas with topographical features such as hills and river valleys. The semi-natural character of these parks means that management for biodiversity is of fundamental importance, many of which are designated or proposed Local Nature Reserves, Urban Wildlife Sites or Sites of interest for Nature Conservation as defined in the Edinburgh Urban Nature Conservation Strategy and Local Plans. Therefore, these areas are well suited to informal environmental education. Access is likely to be via car hence they will generally include designated car parking areas within their boundaries.*

### 6.3 Species List

A Full Species List can be found on the City of Edinburgh Council Website where it will be updated regularly. As a member of the public, up to date species lists can also be obtained for free from The Wildlife Information Centre (TWIC) here: <http://www.wildlifeinformation.co.uk/>