

PARISH COUNCIL - Village Pond

Zoom meeting - 3rd August 2021

Present:

Jonty Rawcliffe, Strutt & Parker
Ian Petchey
Ann Ward

Village pond and meadow

Ann gave a brief introduction to The Parish Council's plan to establish Dalham as a Wildlife Friendly Village and to set up a volunteer group to work firstly on clearing the pond and create an area for picnic benches etc. Also to use the current set aside strip to the east of the B1085 between the village and pond to create a wildlife meadow and a path to be used as access to the pond.

Jonty is not sure if the pond is on estate land and would need to check the Land Registry but did not think that the Estate would have any objection to the clearing of the pond itself but he was a little reticent on the subject of the meadow and path.

River Kennett

We talked about the fact that the river runs dry most of the time and that this had got much worse in the last 20 years or so. Jonty stated that the Estate were not extracting water from the river and that the only land with irrigation is between Higham and Gazeley and this is from a designated water source.

It was agreed that we would email him a proposal and he would discuss it with his client and also check the land ownership.

Countryside Stewardship (CS) Plan

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship>

Countryside Stewardship (CS) provides financial incentives for farmers, woodland owners, foresters and land managers to look after and improve the environment.

The aim of the scheme is look after and improve the environment by:

- conserving and restoring wildlife habitats
- flood risk management
- woodland creation and management
- reducing widespread water pollution from agriculture
- keeping the character of the countryside
- preserving historical features in the landscape
- encouraging educational access

Jonty described the 5 year plan agreed with the government which includes planting of nectar flower mixes, buffer strips, overwinter stubbles, hedgerow planting and pond creation. The Estate are in year 1 of the scheme. The plans are entirely driven by grant funding and there is no intention to do anything in addition to what the government provides grants for. The driver for the plan is entirely to maximise grants and any amenity to the public is not considered. There is also a 10 year woodland management plan which takes into account the requirements of the shooting business. Via these initiatives, the Estate is aiming to become carbon-neutral.

The buffer strips will be 12 to 24 metres wide and may well include some public footpaths, access to which will remain unchanged. Some of these buffer strips may well be along the river.

One or maybe two ponds will be created but these are unlikely to be near any current footpaths and the public will not be able to access them. When asked if the village pond could be added to the plan Jonty said that the plan was already agreed but maybe it could be added in future years.

There are no plans to include the river itself other than the buffer strips mentioned above.

When asked if the Estate would share the Countryside Stewardship Plan with the Parish Council Jonty replied that the Estate may be willing to share a map indicating the location of the various elements.

NEXT STEPS

1. Ian & Ann to draft a proposal and email to Jonty.
2. Jonty to check ownership of pond land.
3. Jonty to seek agreement from Estate to share the location map for the CS plan.