

The Lunches

A proposal for Local Nature Reserve Status



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1. BACKGROUND

Site Name: The Lunches

District: Parish of Leek Wootton and Guys Cliffe

County: Warwickshire

Proposing Authority: Leek Wootton Parish Council Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group.

Area: Approximately 11.5 ha

Site Location: See Figure 1

Site Boundary: See Figure 2

Site Ownership: Warwickshire Police Authority

1.1 Site History

Much of Warwickshire was part of the Forest of Arden and before that in prehistory the vast forests that covered much of southern and middle England. Archeological Findspot 2545 which describes the discovery of flint tools indicates that the site was in use between 4000 and 701 BC.

Both the woodland and Woodcote are first documented in 1086 in the Domesday Book. The land was divided between the Count of Meulan, Leofric and Kenilworth Priory.

By the 12th century the woodland had become part of an estate based around Woodcote Manor (Now Warwickshire Constabulary Police Headquarters). The manor was originally deeded to the Earl of Leicester. It passed through a number of families most notably the Wises in the 19th Century.

During the war Woodcote Manor was loaned to the Red Cross and used as a convalescent home. It was bought by the Warwickshire County Constabulary and has been managed by the Local Police Authority ever since.

The desire to designate the site a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) status came from Sandra Whitlock, she proposed this to the County Ecologist in 2004.

Leek Wootton and Guys Cliffe Parish Council have established a Steering Group to support a Parish Biodiversity Action Plan of which The Lunches LNR would form an integral part.

2 FLORA, FAUNA AND HABITATS

2.1 Fauna

Many fauna species such as beetles, dragonflies and damselflies remain unrecorded on the site and it is likely that substantial invertebrate species are present. It should be a key priority to improve the species lists for all taxa as soon as possible.

Mammals

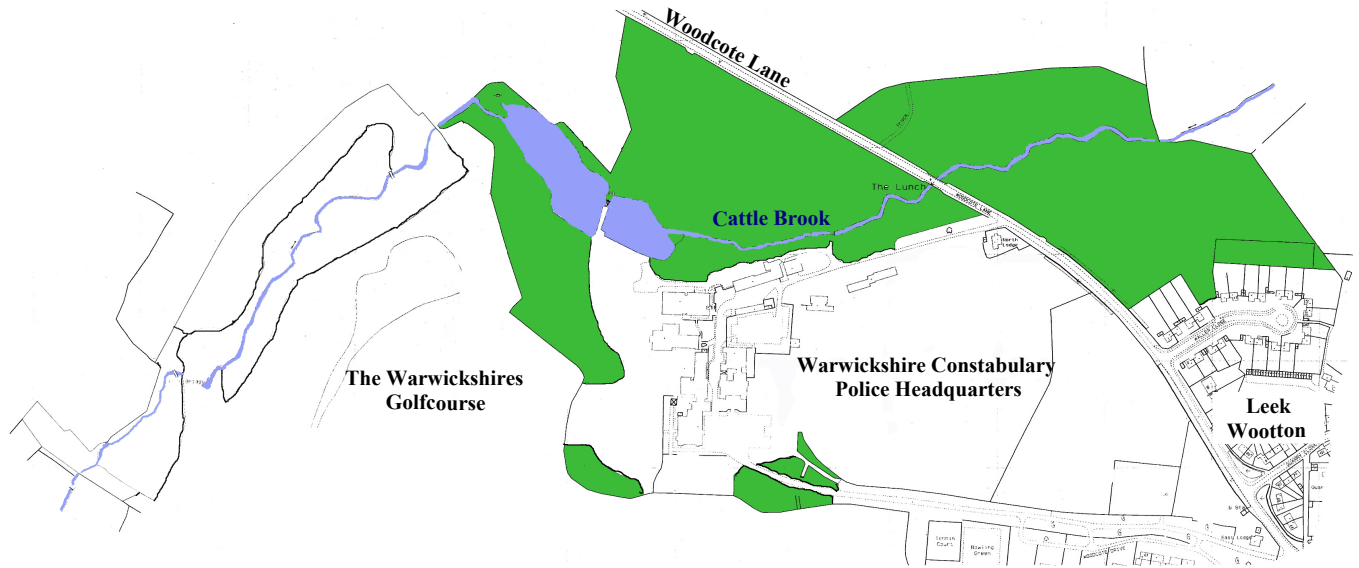
No formal survey of The Lunches has been made, however a number of casual sightings and signs indicate the species that are present. Of the species identified 4 are protected species under Wildlife and Countryside Act and Conservation (Natural Habitat) Regulation Legislation's

Figure 1 Site Location Map



Figure 2 Site Map

Site Map of The Lunches. The woodland is bounded on one edge by the Golfcourse and the Police Headquarters and Farmland on the other.



these are Badger (*Meles meles*), Daubentons Bat (*Myotis daubentoni*) , Whiskered Bat (*Myotis mystacinus*) and Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*). See Appendix for full list.

Butterflies

The Lunches is in tetrad SP26Z it was surveyed between 1995 and 1999 as part of the New Millennium Project. The work was conducted by Butterfly Conservation.

19 species were identified in the survey of which four species (Purple Hairstreak, Comma, Speckled Wood and Ringlet) have a close association with woodland and are likely to be present on the site. The Purple Hairstreak is particularly scarce in Warwickshire. See Appendix for full list.

Birds

No formal surveys have been made of bird species although several observations of the species have been documented.

The most notable species include Kingfisher which are protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Tawny Owl and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, the latter of which is a county rare species.

Upcoming British Trust for Ornithology Atlas survey work and other surveys are likely to highlight even more species.

See Appendix for full list.

2.2 Flora

The Woodland is a mixture of Deciduous, Mixed and Coniferous Plantations with some patches of parkland species. The site was once part of an estate and the presence of ornamental species such as Sweet Chestnut and Rhododendron reflect that.

The dominant tree species are Scots Pine, Sycamore and Oak, but there is a wide range of native species.

The understorey is dominated by young trees and a large mix of scrub species such as Hawthorn, Blackthorn and Bramble. There is also Hazel and Elder.

The ground flora is flower rich in places. Certain areas are dominated by swathes of Bluebell whilst in others ferns and flowering plants such as Foxglove, Yellow Archangel and Enchanters Nightshade prevail. Where Beech and Pine are dominant there is little ground flora.

The pools are lined by a number of reed and sedge species. The banks are lined with Yellow Flag Iris, Willow and Alder.

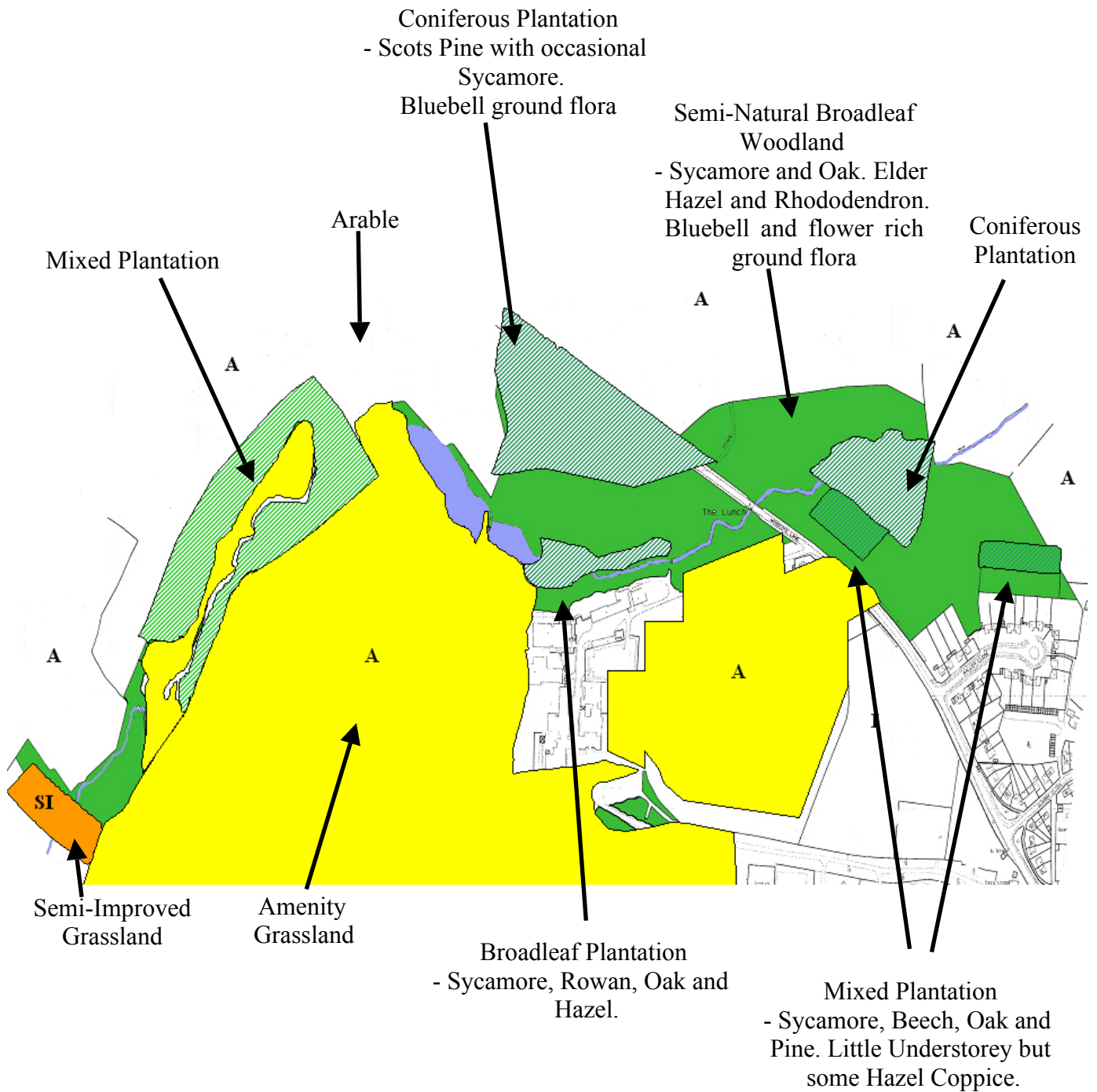
2.3 Habitats

The Lunches and Cattle Brook, are listed by Warwickshire County Council Ecology Unit as Eco-site 16/26. The Site is described as of District Value.

The site contains Woodland and Wetlands both of which are Warwickshire County Council Biodiversity Priority Action Habitats and have associated plans.

The Lunches are mixed Woodland in blocks of Deciduous, Mixed and Coniferous plantings with a flower and fern rich understorey. The ponds are surrounded by *Typha* sp reed beds, Pond

Figure 3 Phase 1 Map



Sedge, Soft Rush and Yellow Flag Iris. Cattle Brook is part of the River Avon catchment and is noted to have breeding Kingfisher.

JNCC Phase 1 survey

The whole of Warwickshire has been surveyed as part of a Biodiversity Audit. Phase 1 Habitat surveys were made of the region between 1998 and 2002 with resurveys. The basic habitats are shown in Figure 3.

3. GEOLOGY AND GEOMORPHOLOGY

Most of the woodland sits upon Ashow Formation with some sandstone divisions. This geology is a Permian formation of predominantly argillaceous material. The southern edge of the wood passes into an outcrop of Triassic Bromsgrove Sandstone with some divisions of mudstone.

A minor fault line runs north-west to south-east across the site through outbuildings associated with the Police Headquarters with the faults down throw on the northeastern side.

There is a borehole situated on the fault line just north of the site beside Woodcote Lane.

4. USE FOR SCHOOL-BASED EDUCATION

All natural spaces are important for education. Woodland in particular provide a range of habitats for teaching a variety of subjects. Ecology is a key part of Key Stages 2,3 and 4 as well as being an integral part of Sixth Form A-level studies. The site would provide an educational resource close to a number of schools in Warwick, Kenilworth and Leamington Spa.

There is a primary school in Leek Wootton itself and a further 5 within 4 miles. There are 7 secondary schools within a similar distance.

Primary Schools

Leek Wootton School - 0.6 miles

St Johns Middle, Kenilworth - 1.1 miles

St Nichlolas Junior and Infant, Kenilworth - 2.2 miles

Woodloes Junior and Middle Schools, Warwick - 2.5 miles

Milverton School, Old Milverton - 3.1 miles

Secondary Schools

Kenilworth High School - 2.5 miles

Kings High School for Girls, Warwick - 2.6 miles

North Leamington High School, Leamington - 2.6 miles

Trinity Roman Catholic School, Leamington - 3.4 miles

Warwick School - 3.7 miles

Myton School, Warwick - 3.7 miles

Aylesford School - 4 miles.

5. USE FOR COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Wild spaces provide a range of resources for the community. The Lunches would require significant management input which provide the opportunity to involve the wider community. Local wildlife trust and British Trust for Conservation Volunteer work parties could be used in the management. Smaller schemes could also be suitable for Duke of Edinburgh community projects.

6. USE FOR RESEARCH

The Lanches offers the chance to observe a woodland being returned to a natural state. It is of a reasonable size and location to be of use to a number of research interests including general ecology and specific species analysis.

The addition of bird boxes and other habitat improvements provide a platform upon which to assess the impact of such schemes to the wider environment.

7. VALUE TO LOCAL PEOPLE

Natural England suggests that everyone should have access to green spaces within 300 m of their home and that there should be at least 1 site of 20 ha within 2 km. The new site would complement Oakwood Spinney in providing access to those living in Leek Wootton on the Percy and Woodloes Park housings estates in Warwick and those in Kenilworth to woodland.

The site is already very popular with local residents in Leek Wootton. Designation of the site would enable Bye laws to be implemented to maintain the site for the community such as the prohibition of camping and the dropping of litter as well as providing an infrastructure for maintenance of the paths and bridges.

8. OUTLINE MANAGEMENT

Woodland management is complex. It is hoped most management can be conducted by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. They have a Woodland Project Officer who specialises in such schemes.

A number of objectives should be achieved by any management:

1. To maintain and create new wildlife habitats
2. Regenerate Woodland
3. Enhance the local landscape
4. Protect an important part of the Parish
5. To create a public recreation site.

There are some basic management points that need considering

Clearance

1. Removal of Invasive Species

Rhododendron - A combination of cutting and herbicide application in early summer with regular hand pulling of seedlings.

Japanese Knotweed - Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 proscribed species and its cuttings count as controlled waste. Expert advice required by the Environment Agency.

2. Replacement of Non-Native species.

Non-native species such as Sweet Chestnut and Sycamore should be discouraged from the woodland. Seedlings can be hand pulled each season. A natural regeneration of species should be encouraged. Any trees needing replacing should be replaced by a native species.

3. Ponds

Annual Clearance on rotation of bankside vegetation to reduce shading excluding Willow and Alder. Keep marginal vegetation work and any silt dredging to September and October. Maintain shallow margins and bare ground for amphibians.

Habitat Creation

2. Creation of Glades

Encourages butterflies, insects and a greater species diversity.

3. Protection of Veteran Trees

Monitor all veteran trees regularly to assess their condition. Use qualified Tree Surgeons to maintain them in good health.

4. Dead Wood

Leave cuttings, branches and brush in situ where possible to encourage invertebrate life. Where not possible collect in to piles.

5. Bird Boxes

Erect bird boxes for Tawny Owls and small passerines before mid-February and left undisturbed until October when cleaned.

6. Bat Boxes

Retain native trees for feeding and roosting sites. Retain deadwood and Ivy. Ensure woodland maintenance is carried out between March-May and Sept-Nov so as not to disturb bat activity.

Setup bat boxes as artificial roosts.

Access and Recreation

7. Paths

Establish permissive paths through the site. Maintain paths in a safe manner with yearly checks. Way mark the route and use measures such as stiles and gates to control bicycle and horse access.

8. Bridges

Paths will no doubt cross Cattle Brook several times, all bridges will need to meet regulation standards and be well maintained with yearly safety checks.

9. Interpretation Boards

Given the sites historic background and its habitats an Interpretation board is an effective way of involving the community and highlighting interesting sights.

10. Controlled Zoning

As part of access management ensure paths do not disturb breeding birds and leave some of the woodland without any public access.

Woodland Care

11. Felling and Thinning

Fell and thin trees only where appropriate and allow natural regeneration where possible.

12. Pollarding and Coppicing

Maintain the existing areas of coppicing within the woodland and pollard stream side trees. Look into using the wood generated by such actions as a means to fund the LNR i.e. Selling fire wood, charcoal etc.

Appendix

Mammal Species

Species	Latin Name	Notes
Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	Latrine pits recorded
Grey Squirrel	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	
Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	
Muntjac	<i>Muntiacus reevesi</i>	Possible management concern.
Fallow Deer	<i>Dama dama</i>	
Daubentons Bat	<i>Myotis daubentoni</i>	Roost in grounds, probably feeds over the ponds
Whiskered Bat	<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	
Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Roost in the Police Headquarters and forage in the wood.
Wood Mouse	<i>Apodemus sylvaticus</i>	

Butterfly Species

Species	Latin Name	Percentage of presence in 2 km squares
Purple Hairstreak	<i>Neozephyrus quercus</i>	28
Comma	<i>Polygonia c-album</i>	62
Ringlet	<i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>	77
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	55
Orange Tip	<i>Anthocaris cardamines</i>	99
Green Veined White	<i>Pieris napi</i>	99
Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>	99
Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>	45
Gatekeeper	<i>Pyronia tithonus</i>	99
Small Skipper	<i>Thymelicus sylvestris</i>	92
Large Skipper	<i>Ochlodes venata</i>	84
Painted Lady	<i>Cynthia Cardui</i>	57
Peacock	<i>Inachis io</i>	98
Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	92
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>	92
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	71
Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>	98
Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>	95
Brimstone	<i>Goneopteryx rhamni</i>	61

Bird Species

Species	Latin Name	Notes
Tawny Owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>	
Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Protected by Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopus minor</i>	County scarce species
Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	
Grreat Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopus major</i>	
Coal Tit	<i>Parus montanus</i>	
Long Tailed Tit	<i>Aegithlaos aegithalos</i>	
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubelcula</i>	
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	
Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>	
Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipter nisus</i>	
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapillia</i>	
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	

Tree Species

Species	Latin Name
Scots Pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudopiantatus</i>
Common Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>
Sessile Oak	<i>Quercus petraea</i>
Poplar	<i>Populus sp.</i>
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>
Silver Birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>
Sweet Chestnut	<i>Castanea sativa</i>
Horse Chestnut	<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>
Lime	<i>Tilia sp.</i>
Larch	<i>Larix decidua</i>
Yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>
Elm	<i>Ulmus sp.</i>
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>

Understorey Species

Species	Latin Name
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>
Rhododendron	<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>
Bramble	<i>Rubus sp.</i>
Wild Privet	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>
Laurel	<i>Prunus lawcerasus</i>
Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>

Ground Flora Species

Species	Latin Name
Lesser Willowherb	<i>Epilobium</i>
Rosebay Willowherb	<i>Chamaenerion augustifolium</i>
Bluebell	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>
Nettle	<i>Urtica sp.</i>
Lords and Ladies	<i>Arum maculatum</i>
Lesser Celandine	<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>
Buttercups	<i>Ranunculus sp.</i>
Chickweed	<i>Stellaria sp.</i>
Hedge Bedstraw	<i>Galium mollugo</i>
Cleavers	<i>Galium saxatile</i>
Male Fern	<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>
Dock	<i>Rumex sp.</i>
Herb Robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>
Prickly Lettuce	<i>Lactuca serriola</i>
Foxglove	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>
Yellow Archangel	<i>Galeobdolan luteum</i>
Green Alkanet	<i>Pentaglottis sempervirens</i>
Wood Forget-me-not	<i>Myosotis sylvatica</i>
Enchanters Nightshade	<i>Circaea lutetiana</i>
Water Avens	<i>Geum rivale</i>
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera sp.</i>
Burdock	<i>Arctium sp.</i>
Butterbur	<i>Petasites hybridus</i>
Figwort	<i>Scrophularia sp.</i>
Wood Speedwort	<i>Veronica montana</i>
Wood Millet	<i>Millium effusum</i>
Pendulus Sedge	<i>Carex pendula</i>