

LEVENHALL LINKS MANAGEMENT PLAN

2023-2027

(Public Consultation Stage)



CONTENTS

	Page
1. Introduction	2
2. Description	4
3. Council Strategies	10
4. Evaluation	12
5. Management Considerations	18
6. Vision	22
7. Policies	23
8. Action Plan	28



1. INTRODUCTON

Levenhall Links is an 134 hectare area of mixed grassland, woodland, scrub and wetland situated on the East Lothian coast on the eastern side of East Lothians' largest town, Musselburgh. The site is a former landfill site, on reclaimed intertidal foreshore, originally used for disposal and of pulverised fuel ash (PFA) from Cockenzie Power Station. The area has been designed and landscaped to provide land with both recreational and nature conservation value.

The site is popular with local people who use it for informal recreation due to the site's proximity to Musselburgh. In addition, there are regular visits from those interested in natural history and organised groups of water sport enthusiasts. A Countryside Ranger is employed on site, the post is funded by East Lothian Council. The Ranger is responsible for the day-to-day management of the site and also provides a programme of educational events and volunteering opportunities throughout the year.

Levenhall Links attracts huge numbers of birds and as a consequence has gained a reputation of being one of the finest birdwatching sites in Scotland, if not Britain. The site attracts visitors from throughout the U.K. and abroad, and regularly features in bird-watching natural history media.

The conservation value of Levenhall is perhaps best illustrated by bird records for the Musselburgh grid square NT37. The current list stands at 262 which is over 70% of the 362 species ever seen in the Lothian's.

Since its creation Levenhall Links has been seen as an attractive site for developers. Racecourse extensions, golf courses, sports grounds and football academies are some of the numerous proposals that have been suggested for Levenhall in recent years.

History

Work started in 1963 to create the site now known as Levenhall Links. A breakwater of 2km was constructed and an area of roughly 120 ha was annexed from the sea. The reclaimed area was formerly intertidal mussel beds, sand and mud - the reclamation thus reduced the area available for feeding waders and wildfowl by c.50%.

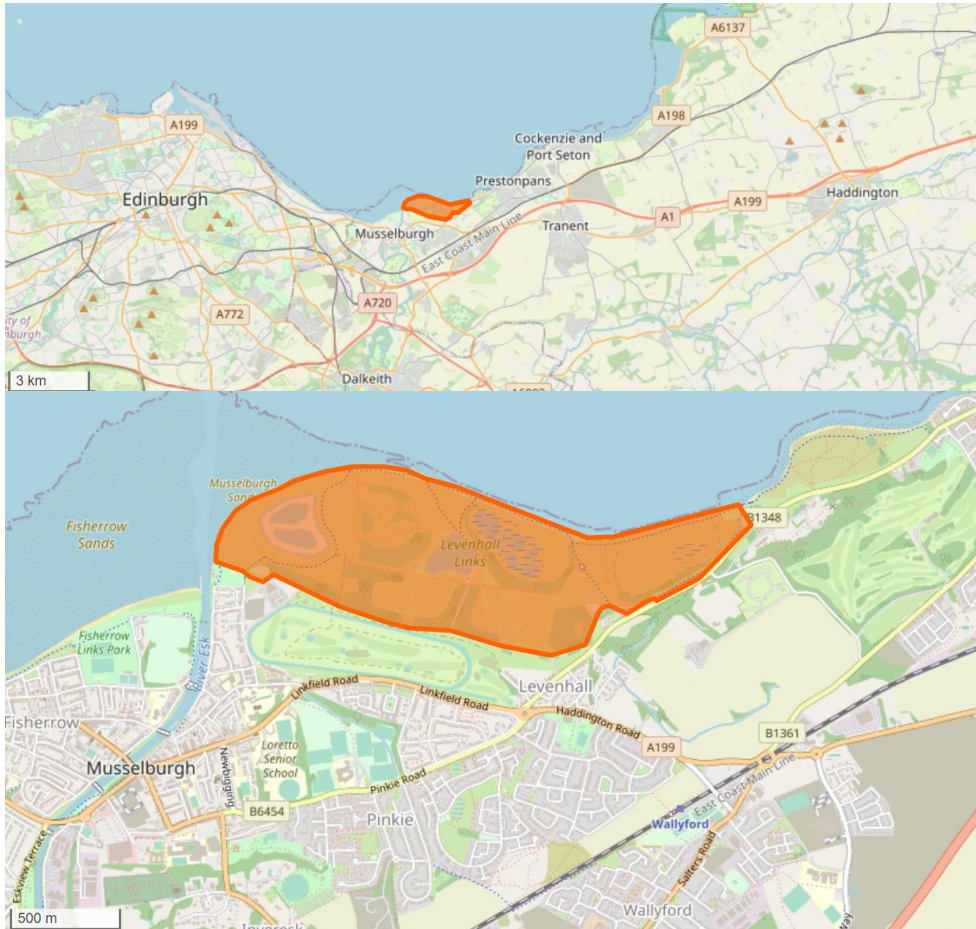
This new area of land was created to provide a disposal site for Pulverised Fuel Ash (PFA) from Cockenzie Power Station. Electricity production started in 1968. Behind the breakwater four ash settlement lagoons were constructed. These settlement lagoons are the origin of the historic name "*Musselburgh Lagoons*". At Cockenzie Power Station, PFA was mixed with seawater. From there it was pumped west to the settlement lagoons where the PFA was deposited and the sea water drained back into the sea. When the ash was first brought to the area causing dust and what was commonly known as "Levenhall throat". Due to the Power Stations lifespan being extended by 20 years a further four settlement lagoons were added on top of the original four.

Once lagoons reached capacity they were handed back to East Lothian Council under the 1963 Musselburgh Town Council Agreement. The agreement outlined that the land handed back to the local authority is to be used for recreational pursuits. To this end large areas of amenity grassland and woodland were created, along with a boating pond for informal and organised water-based recreation. In recognition of the loss of habitat for waders and wildfowl a dedicated conservation area, the Bird Reserve or Wader Scrapes, was constructed in 1993. This area was further developed in 1999 with the creation of three bird-hides and improved footpaths allowing full access for people of all abilities.

2. DESCRIPTION

2.1 Location

Levenhall Links is located on the East Lothian coastline between the towns of Musselburgh and Prestonpans and can be easily accessed both by bus from the B1348 and nearby Wallyford train station.



Levenhall Links (highlighted in orange) as shown in proximity to Edinburgh, Haddington and Musselburgh (source - OpenStreetMap)

2.2 Geology

Beneath the deposits of PFA the underlying geology consists of drift deposits of contemporaneous beach material, underlain by blown sands of Flandrian age, deposited roughly 10,000 years ago. The solid geology below this consists of Carboniferous sediments of the Scottish Middle and Lower Coal Measures Formations, Passage Formations and Upper Limestone Formation. The Coal Measures are made up of cyclic sequences of sandstones, siltstones, mudstones, coals and seatearth of variable thickness.

2.3 Soils

Topsoil has been imported from various unspecified sites including local roadworks and graveyards. Soil depths vary considerably. Beneath the topsoil the pulverised fuel ash is moderately alkaline with an average pH of 8.1.

2.3 WILDLIFE

2.3.1 Birdlife

The Links and neighbouring areas are well known for their bird life, sufficiently so for the wader scrape and Number 8 lagoon, as well as adjacent shore to be included within the Firth of Forth Site of Special Scientific Interest. These areas have also been included in the Firth of Forth Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar designations.

Fisherrow Sands, between the Harbour and the mouth of the River Esk, is an important low tide feeding ground for wetland birds:

- The exposed sands and mussel beds support both migratory and an overwintering assemblage in excess of 8000 birds and at times up to 20,00, comprising 31 species, including 25 qualifying species of the Firth of Forth SPA :
- Large numbers of bar-tailed godwit, knot and oystercatcher are regularly recorded at low tide.
- Winter low tide populations of, ringed plover, grey plover, redshank, turnstone, curlew, Slavonian grebe, goldeneye, velvet scoter, teal and widgeon are also significant.
- Despite the limited availability of roosting habitat, Fisherrow Sands can support significant numbers of turnstone, redshank and widgeon at high tide.

Fisherrow Sands is one of the largest intertidal habitats on the Lothian side of the Firth of Forth and, combined with the adjacent roosting habitats of the Links, the area represents one of the most important over-wintering grounds for wetland birds within the Firth of Forth SPA. The Links complex is an important habitat for roosting wetland birds and supports large numbers and a high diversity of both qualifying and non-qualifying species of the SPA, particularly during high tide when Fisherrow Sands are covered. Its position located close to the extensive feeding grounds therefore provides a high tide roost that can

be reached by many birds with the minimum expenditure of energy. The wader scrapes also provide a habitat in which some waders can feed throughout the tidal cycle.

- Lagoon No. 8 was designated as an important roosting ground for oystercatcher. Historically it was possibly the most important site in the entire Firth of Forth supporting at times 12.7% of the wintering SPA oystercatcher population. Since the cessation of ash production the lagoon successional vegetation has made Lagoon 8 unsuitable for roosting waders. The restoration of Lagoon 8 to a functioning wetland is key to maintaining the integrity of the SSSI designation.
- Oystercatcher now roost on the wader scrapes which represents an important secondary roosting site for this species. The wader scrapes are also regularly occupied by significant numbers of roosting bar-tailed godwit, black-tailed godwit, knot redshank, curlew and lapwing. The scrapes are also an extremely important habitat for roosting terns, especially sandwich terns whose numbers can exceed 1000 in late summer.
- Lagoon No.6 is of less significance for roosting waders. Although at times has supported numbers of oystercatcher, lapwing and ringed plover. The boating pond and the wader scrapes support widgeon over the winter months.
- The Links are an important roosting ground for wetland birds and are one of the most important roosting sites on the Lothian side of the Firth of Forth. At its peak, when four active ash lagoons were operational, the Links held up to one third of the Firth of Forth wader population at high tide.

Offshore, the waters are particularly important for significant populations for several open water species at both high and low tide. These include Slavonian grebe, red-throated diver and velvet scoter

as well as occasional large flocks of wigeon. Significant numbers of turnstone are also recorded along the Links seafront at high tide.

Over the years several scarce and rare species have been recorded from the seawall including American white-winged scoter, surf scoter, black-necked grebe, little auk, Brunnich's guillemot, black tern, Sabine's Gull, Mediterranean gull and Forster's tern.

The amenity grasslands are important alternative terrestrial feeding grounds, occasionally supporting feeding oystercatcher, curlew and wigeon. In addition, areas of short grassland provide valuable winter roosts for waders, particularly when other on-site roosts suffer disturbance.

They also provide nesting sites for skylark and grey partridge – both Priority Species in the East Lothian Biodiversity Action Plan.



Oystercatchers in flight over the reserve

2.3.2 Invertebrates

Of the 25 resident butterfly species in East Lothian 19 of them are present at Levenhall.

Other invertebrates are under recorded on the site but it would be desirable to allocate more time to recording their presence.

Lagoon 6 was surveyed in 2015 and 346 species were recorded. 5 species were identified which were new to Scotland. The capsid bug *Sthenarus rotermundi*, the leaf beetle *Bruchidius villosus*, the weevil *Mecinus labialis*, and two Dipterans, the parasitic fly *Phasia obesa*, and the Picture-winged fly *Sphenella marginata*. A further 84 species were identified that were first records for East Lothian.

2.3.3 Roe deer

Levenhall Links supports a small population of roe deer. Their impact and numbers are monitored. Further guidance regarding roe deer strategy can be found in East Lothian Council Deer Management Statement.

2.3.4 Woodland

Planting commenced in spring 1985 with the following mixture over 6 ha:

- Aspen 17%
- Common alder 16%
- Sycamore 14%
- White poplar 13%
- White willow 11%
- Hawthorn 8%
- Goat willow 7%
- Ash 5%

- Silver birch 4%
- Other species 5%

There are now approximately 17ha of woodland. Some wind-blow has occurred, particularly in older plantations, which has allowed small clearings to develop. A programme of woodland thinning started in 2008. This has improved the ground flora and made the woodlands more accessible to the public.

Extensive suckering is occurring in uncut grasslands bordering woodlands. Suckering is particularly prevalent in species such as white poplar and aspen.

The woodlands attract wildlife. As they have matured the diversity of bird species recorded has increased. Nesting birds include sparrow hawk, long-eared owl, long-tailed tit, blue tit, great tit, whitethroat, bullfinch, chiffchaff, willow warbler, grasshopper warbler and blackcap. Throughout the woodlands broad-leaved helleborine can be found, a species which is rare in East Lothian. Foxes, grey squirrels and roe deer have been recorded and native hedgerows introduced, replacing now defunct fence lines. The hedgerows provide a wildlife corridor with shelter for invertebrates, small mammals and birds.

2.3.5 Grassland

Much of the grassland is maintained as amenity grassland and is cut regularly throughout the year. Other areas, around the boating pond, lagoons 8, 6 and woodland edges, remain uncut. Lagoon 7 has, since 2001, been managed as a hay-meadow. Over summer the vegetation is allowed to develop naturally and a single cut is taken in late August. The area has also been the site of wildflower seeding trials.

The areas of long grass are interspersed with wildflower species, including meadow cranesbill, bird's-foot trefoil, hop trefoil, clovers and

vetches. These areas are important wildlife habitats, attracting a range of butterflies, other invertebrates and small mammals. Breeding birds include meadow pipit and reed bunting, and they also provide nesting sites for skylark and grey partridge – both Priority Species in the East Lothian Biodiversity Action Plan.

2.3.6 Wetland

The boating pond and its surrounding grassland are the focus of much of the recreational activity on site. Over the years the boating pond has become increasingly busy. As a result the pond attracts relatively little wildlife over the summer, although mute swans, mallard, grey heron and the occasional common sandpiper can be seen. Swifts and hirundines regularly feed over the water. Over winter the pond hosts wigeon as well as tufted duck, red-breasted merganser and the local feral greylag and Canada geese populations. Little grebe winter annually and kingfisher are recorded annually.

Common frogs and toads breed in the boating pond and the water supports a healthy population of sticklebacks. Larger fish are reported occasionally but are probably not present in large numbers.

The SSSI designated Bird Reserve, or Wader Scrapes, forms what is currently the most important conservation area at Levenhall. The scrapes consist of six shallow clay-lined pools, which are fed by a freshwater supply from the River Esk. Water can be pumped into the scrapes using the irrigation system that Scottish Power previously used to suppress windblown PFA on site. The pools can be filled individually, and each has a sluice which allows water to be drained. This allows rotational management of water levels to maximise marginal feeding areas for waders, whilst permitting flooding to prevent colonisation by vegetation and to maintain good water quality. At high tide the Wader Scrapes support good numbers of common waders such as oystercatcher, dunlin, bar-tailed godwit, lapwing and curlew, additionally they provide important feeding for migrant and

scarce species including black-tailed godwit, whimbrel, greenshank, ruff, wood sandpiper, green sandpiper, curlew sandpiper, garganey, little stint and spotted redshank.

The Bird Reserve has attracted an impressive number of rare migrant birds. Marsh and western sandpiper, Wilson's phalarope, red-necked phalarope, royal tern, American golden plover, white-rumped sandpiper and buff-breasted sandpiper are some of the highlights the Bird Reserve has attracted over the years.

Other than birds, the fauna of the scrapes includes frogs, toads and sticklebacks. Invertebrates recorded in the pools include *Daphnia*, pond snails, water boatmen and several species of water beetle. The vegetation around the water attracts damselflies and common darter dragonflies.

Management issues that affect the Wader Scrapes are the build-up of silt and the prevention of successional marginal vegetation. Species such as common spike-rush, grey club-rush and reed mace are unaffected by rotational flooding that keeps terrestrial vegetation in check. Since 2005, these species have been successfully controlled by herbicide. Initially they were treated annually, but in recent years, as the succession has been brought under control, every second year has been sufficient to keep large areas of open water available.

2.4 Recreation

The site is well used by local people for a variety of recreational activities. The most prevalent uses include walking, dog-walking, birdwatching and paddle sports. Organised groups such as ELC's Outdoor Learning Service, Levenhall Radio Controlled Yacht Club, North Berwick Kayak Club and Venturing Out are just some of the many groups that regularly use the increasingly busy boating pond.

Levenhall is one of the top birdwatching sites in Scotland and as such regularly attracts many organised bird club groups from throughout Scotland and the north of England. The biodiversity, accessibility, good transport links and good views from both the hides and seawalls make it an excellent place to visit for both novice and experienced bird watchers.

In general, the recreational use of the site is very informal. Formal recreation is encouraged around the boating pond and on land to the south of the boating pond. Land to the north of the boating pond is managed primarily for nature conservation and informal recreation. Motorbikes and other motorised vehicles are barred as are unmanned aerial vehicles and model power boats.



People enjoying canoeing on the boating pond

2.5 ACCESS

Vehicular access is gained from the B1348 east of Levenhall roundabout. The access road leads to two carparks on site.

Parking was formalised in 2018 in a car park east of the shinty pitch. There is restricted parking available at the boating pond car park. There is limited vehicular access to the site on Racecourse days, with emergency access, and site evacuation route through Hope Place. There is additional parking available at Morrison's Haven. There are currently no motorhome parking spaces or associated wastewater disposal on site, although there are facilities at Drummohr Holiday Park nearby.

The combined John Muir Way and National Cycle Network Route 76 join Levenhall at Goose Green and continues east along the seawall before exiting at Morrison's Haven on the east of the site.

A regular bus service runs along the B1348 and the nearby railway station at Wallyford provide excellent public transport options for visitors to the site.

Access is restricted within the Bird Reserve in order to reduce disturbance to wildlife. Visitors are expected to use the footpaths and bird-hides and are not allowed in the area around the wader scrapes.

Access on site is good. Tarmac footpaths allow access to the seawall from the car park and the access road. A similar path allows access to the Bird Reserve, and the bird-hides were designed to be wheelchair user friendly.

As well as benefitting as an urban fringe location with close facilities in town (public toilets, shops, other facilities), existing visitor facilities can be located close to the site at the Racecourse, Golf Course at the west end of the site, and at Prestongrange Museum to the East of the site.

Until restoration work is complete on Lagoons 6 and 8 and the land is formerly handed over to East Lothian Council, the seawall access road and Lagoons 6 and 8 remain under Scottish Power ownership and are exempt from the Land Reform Act Scotland 2003.

3. COUNCIL STRATEGIES

East Lothian Biodiversity Action Plan

Levenhall Links provides an important function within East Lothian; as an area rich in biodiversity with nationally and internationally important species and habitats, and also as an area with important recreation and amenity benefits. The site therefore requires careful management, monitoring and enhancement to balance these diverse functions.

The East Lothian Biodiversity Action Plan identifies priority habitats and species and considers wider habitat connectivity within the context of the climate and ecological emergency. Levenhall Links contains large areas of wetland, woodland and grassland habitats which are important for a range of species, as well as forming part of the green network. As Priority Habitats they are subject to specific action plans which provide a mechanism for delivery of management objectives at a local level, with the broad aim of protecting and enhancing these habitats in a consistent way across East Lothian. The ELBAP complements other relevant Council policies and legal requirements to promote and safeguard natural heritage assets (e.g. the Green Network and Climate Change Strategies, Water Framework Directive etc.)

Relevant Council Strategies & Policies

- East Lothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Climate Change Strategy 2020 - 2025
- Green Network Strategy SPG
- Coast and Countryside SPG
- Open Space Strategy ([Download PDF here](#))
- Core Path Plan ([Core paths | Core paths | East Lothian Council](#))
- Special Landscape Area SPG (Area 31 – Fisherrow Sands)

- Forest & Woodland Strategy ([Draft](#))
- Physical Activity Plan
- Local Economic Strategy ([East Lothian Economic Development Strategy 2012-2022 | East Lothian Council](#))
- National Strategy for Economic Transformation
- STID – East Lothian Visitor Management Plan (RTIF)
- NPF4 Policy ([National Planning Framework 4 \(www.gov.scot\)](#))
- ELC Active Travel and Sustainable Transport Plans ([Local Transport Strategy 2018-2024 | East Lothian Council](#))
- Musselburgh Flood Protection Scheme ([Home - Musselburgh Flood Protection](#))

Local Development Plan ([Local Development Plan 2018 | East Lothian Council](#) [Local Development Plan 2 | LDP2 and Local Place Plans | East Lothian Council](#)) – particularly relevant policies:

- DC6: Development in the Coastal Area
- DC10: The Green Network
- NH1: Protection of Internationally Designated Sites
- NH2: Protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest & Geological Conservation Review Sites
- NH3: Protection of Local Sites and Areas
- MH16: Levenhall Proposal

National Legislation:

- Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003
- Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended)
- Water Framework Directive

- Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (2011)

Designations:

- Levenhall Links Local Biodiversity Site
- Firth of Forth SSSI
- Firth of Forth Ramsar
- Firth of Forth SPA
- Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex SPA
- Special Landscape Area 31

East Lothian Council Climate Change Strategy 2020-2025

There is a mounting body of evidence that shows how our global climate is changing in unprecedented ways and how that might impact on both people and our natural environment. Enhancing our natural environment and habitats is an important part of the solution to tackling climate change and reducing the impacts of climate change.

Levenhall Links should be seen as a site of best practice, aligned with the East Lothian Council Climate Change Strategy 2020-2025.

Over the course of this plan we will look to encourage carbon accounting on site. Sequester carbon through planting of native tree / shrub species and positive habitat management. Reduce vehicles on site and promote active and sustainable travel. Raise awareness of climate change through environmental education. Assess our waste reduction strategy and work towards reducing, then eliminating our use of plastics and chemicals.



Grayling butterfly (*Hipparchia semele*)

4. EVALUATION

4.1 SITE

Formed land. Levenhall Links is an area of land claimed from the sea. Most of the land has been shaped and laid out for specific end uses and needs. The extensive and artificial nature of the site means that it offers management opportunities not available in smaller and other, more natural or sensitive areas. The lack of an historical or traditional land-use also reduces the constraints on management options.

Coastal position. Virtually all of the East Lothian coast is designated for its natural heritage importance yet it is intensively visited throughout the year. A key aspect of whole coast management is recognising sites as sensitive or robust in relation to visits and or activities. Though not solely, the Links provides for the visitor a coastal experience and it also provides by design a protected habitat for coastal wildlife. Indeed in creating the wader scrapes, for example, it fulfils both by being a safe haven for waders it is also an excellent bird watching facility.

Position – Levenhall Links is situated in a predominantly urban environment, being effectively surrounded by the towns of Musselburgh, Wallyford and Prestonpans. It has a large visitor hinterland, as it is readily accessible from these towns, the rest of East Lothian and Edinburgh.

Open character. The site forms an important open 'green space' for the local community in an area that lacks extensive and expansive open land. Visitors are attracted to the site by its informal character and are, largely, free to explore the site, as they choose, not being restricted to a few paths.

4.2 USE

Accessibility. For pedestrians the site has virtually open access, although some restrictions exist with regard to the active ash lagoons and the wader scrapes.

Being a relatively level area, the site is suitable for all ages and abilities. Disabled access has been enhanced by the creation of suitable paths between the car park, sea wall and wader scrapes. The bird hides are designed to be accessible to wheelchair users.

Safety. As an artificially created site, the risks associated with the site are more readily known and assessable, compared to a natural site.

The area has been designed for both recreation and nature conservation and has therefore been developed with public safety in mind. It has few of the natural dangers associated with some sites. The boating pond presents some safety concerns though the design of the pond, including shallow depth, safe edging and no submerged hazards reduces risk to the public.

Visitor vehicular access is restricted to the road leading from the B1348 to the car park south of the shinty pitch. There is restricted access to the boating pond car park.

The presence of a Countryside Ranger provides a welcome for visitors and a sense of security.

Recreation. Visitors regularly and increasingly use the extensive open space for passive and informal recreation. There are some active and formal recreation.

The sea wall road between the River Esk and Lagoon 6 forms part of the John Muir Way.

Boating Pond. There are only a few inland water bodies in East Lothian that can accommodate water-based activities and wildlife. The location of the boating pond makes it one of the most accessible locations in East Lothian.

It also forms the focal point for much of the formal and informal recreation at Levenhall Links.

Its safe design and ease of access makes it highly suitable for water sports particularly for beginners and instruction or training. As such groups and individuals use it regularly. Levenhall Radio Controlled Model Yacht Club often holds club and national events on the pond.

The pond is comparatively remote, permitting activities to take place without significant impact on communities.

Community Engagement. The area is one that the local community readily identifies with and, in response, use the site in increasing numbers. Friends of Musselburgh Links are a group who have an active interest in the long term management and future of the area.

Tourism. The coast and its wildlife is one of East Lothian's greatest tourism assets. The Links, both the waders scrapes and the sea wall, is a must visit destination for birder watchers coming to Scotland. This will be even further enhanced by the no. 8 restoration. The proximity to Prestongrange Museum and its café and visitor facilities provide for shared visitors to the sites, and for the local community.

4.3 NATURE CONSERVATION

Wader Scrapes. An artificial wetland area created as a safe undisturbed roost site as well as an educational resource, is unique in the Lothian's. The scrapes, by providing suitable habitats for roosting and feeding waders, attract large numbers of waders such as

redshank, curlew and bar-tailed godwit. The three bird hides provide good views of the scrapes.

Wildlife conservation. Levenhall Links is an important site for local nature conservation providing an urban population with an experience of wildlife usually associated with rural areas. Areas such as the Links form valuable habitats and havens within increasingly urbanised environments. The site hosts nesting skylark, grey partridge and sand martins – all of which are priority species in the East Lothian Biodiversity Action Plan

The Links form the only major high tide roost on the southern shore of the outer Forth between Cramond and Aberlady Bay. As such, it regularly hosts a significant proportion of the Forth's wader populations. Its position near the mouth of the River Esk means that it is located close to extensive wader feeding grounds. The site therefore provides a high tide roost that can be reached by many birds with the minimum expenditure of energy.

The wader scrapes also provide an area in which waders and wildfowl can feed throughout the tidal cycle.

Getting closer to nature closer. With strong elements of wildlife established at the core of the Links experience there's there are many opportunities to bring nature closer to people and vice versa. With waterbodies, meadows, artificial nest sites, hedge planting and mowing regimes visitors gain an enhanced experience. The Links warrants Local Nature Reserve status.

Natural history designations

SSSI – The wader scrapes and Lagoon 8 are included in the Firth of Forth SSSI along with the inter-tidal area of the SSSI that is adjacent to the seawall over a distance of approximately 2km. Notified for its inter-tidal and grassland habitats; botanical and invertebrate species;

breeding birds, migratory birds, wintering wildfowl, waders and geological features.

SPA- The wader scrapes and Lagoon 8 are included in the Firth of Forth SPA (Special Protection Area) along with the inter-tidal area of the SPA that is adjacent to the seawall over a distance of approximately 2km. The estuary is of European importance for its wintering assemblies of 25 species of divers, grebes, waders, waterfowl and post breeding sandwich tern.

Ramsar The wader scrapes and Lagoon 8 are included in the Firth of Forth Ramsar designation along with the inter-tidal area of the Ramsar designation that is adjacent to the seawall over a distance of approximately 2km.

The Firth of Forth qualifies for Ramsar status by regularly supporting over 20,000 wildfowl and internationally important wintering populations of eight species of grebes ducks and waders.

4.4 LEGAL, DESIGNATIONS, POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Legal and Planning determinations

As land claimed from the sea and abutting the former Musselburgh Common Links legal opinion is that whatever is formed on Levenhall Links must primarily reflect the Common Links and its use; and be of benefit to the people of Musselburgh. The eastern half of the number 6 lagoon was out with the Musselburgh town boundary and is not constrained by this determination.

Planning conditions require the ash lagoons to be “restored” to a landform determined by ELC, which is to be for recreation and nature conservation reflecting the values of the Links Common Ground prior to the lagoons being built.

Land responsibilities

Musselburgh Common Good originated in the 15th century and represents a substantial portfolio of land, property and investments and by law continues to exist for the common good of the inhabitants of the former Musselburgh town.

All of the Links land is managed by ELC on behalf of Musselburgh Common Good apart from that still the responsibility of Scottish Power:

- No. 6 lagoon; which has planning consent for a meadow
- No. 8 lagoon; which has planning consent for a wading bird refuge as a requirement of its designated status
- The sea wall and adjacent road which will become an ELC responsibility
- Small pockets of ground associated with all of the above

Once “restored” and out with a defects liability period these areas will become part of the Links and land forming will be complete.

All of the Links will revert to Musselburgh Common Good apart from the very eastern section of no. 6 lagoon which is in Scottish Power’s ownership and out with Musselburgh boundary. This small section will be transferred to ELC. Scottish Power may be required to undertake long term monitoring after handover.

Musselburgh Agreements 1998 and 1963

These exist between, as now are, East Lothian Council and Scottish Power plc. The Agreement was originally drawn up in 1963 and updated in 1998 lasting for a further 30 years. Clauses stipulate conditions on the continued operations of depositing fly ash. They also detail the handover process of the newly formed

land to the Council. It also identifies responsibilities now and in the future for structures such as the sea wall.

Natural Heritage designations.

No. 8 lagoon and waders scrapes are designated as part of the Firth of Forth

- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); a UK designation and notified for its inter-tidal and grassland habitats; botanical and invertebrate species; breeding birds, migratory birds, wintering wildfowl, waders and geological features.
- Special Protection Area (SPA); a European designation This complex of sites contains a variety of coastal and estuarine habitats which attract large numbers and a wide diversity of over-wintering and passage wetland birds (waders and waterfowl) to the area.
- Ramsar site; an international designation for specific wetlands that are important for birds.

As such operations and proposals depend on a plan or proposal having a likely significant effect on a European Site, which would need to be consented by Scottish Natural Heritage and or be the subject of an Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the European site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

Pollution Prevention Control Permit responsibilities

All of the new Links land is still classed as a landfill site by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. The PPC Permit currently in place for the site requires Scottish Power as the Permit holder to carry out continuing environmental monitoring at and around the lagoons site until such time as can be demonstrated that there is no ongoing impact on the environment. SEPA need to

be assured that nothing in the landfill will have an impact on the environment now and in years to come. Once SEPA is satisfied that this situation has been reached with a Closure and Aftercare Plan in place then an application can be made to surrender the Permit. It is usual for the Aftercare Plan to require the operator to undertake long term monitoring.

Planning framework

As valued open space the links is supported by the OS1 Protection of Open Space policy: *"The loss of areas of open space that have significant amenity or recreational value will be resisted by the Council, unless their function is not harmed or appropriate alternative provision can be made locally."*

The enhancement of existing open spaces is supported where this would address need in an area or lead to them becoming more multifunctional."

In the 2018 Local Development Plan the Links is specifically covered by Proposal MH16 Levenhall Links to Prestonpans: Area for Habitat Improvement states that *"The Council will continue to manage the land at Levenhall Links to Prestonpans to improve the availability of suitable habitat for qualifying interests of the Firth of Forth SPA"*.

National Planning Framework 4, although a national plan, it is part of the development plan for the area. It's policies supercede those of LDP 2018 other than where an issue is not covered by National Planning Framework 4. It's policies will be important for any development that is proposed.

The Local Development plan also recognises the Links as a Local Biodiversity Site designated for its wetland, grassland and woodland.

Various consents over a number of years require restoration by Scottish Power to a landform for public recreation and nature conservation as determined by East Lothian Council and reflecting the use of the Links ground prior to the lagoons being constructed.

In 2018, planning consent was granted to Scottish Power to create a wetland that will primarily function as high tide wader roost with viewing facilities at Lagoon 8. A Habitat Regulations Assessment was undertaken because of the of the likely significant effect of No. 8 lagoon development within the Special Protection Area. Scottish Natural Heritage supported the conclusion of this Assessment.

The same consent determines that the Lagoon 6 will be developed into an invertebrate meadow, which has the capacity to be partially flooded, periodically creating a wet meadow habitat that will benefit invertebrates and wading birds, such as Lapwing.

A more detailed description of the proposed developments of Lagoons 6 and 8 can be seen in Appendices.

Open space

The Links are valuable open space and the Council's Open Space Strategy and the national policy context sets a key objective to "protect and enhance open space, which should be safe, welcoming, appealing, distinctive and with well-connected environments".

The Strategy divides the Links into two separate areas. A significant area to the north of the site has been identified as an area for habitat improvement, meeting the requirements of the 2018 LDP. The Council will continue to manage this land to improve the availability of suitable habitat for the benefit of bird species.



Broad-leaved helleborine (*Epipactis helleborine*) at Levenhall Links

5. MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS – *summarises key management issues.*

The strategic management challenges of Levenhall Links.

There are two key aspects of the Links which need to be recognised as the Links mature:

Sustaining a quality experience for current and predicted volume of visitors.

The Links is very accessible to Musselburgh and the western towns of East Lothian. Approximately 33% of East Lothian's population live within 1.5 miles and this percentage is increasing significantly with the development at the Wallyford development site.

The Links is an extensive area of open space and a green corridor; a scarce resource in the west of East Lothian and east of Edinburgh. This is one of the significant aspects of the Links and recognised in the East Lothian Open Space Strategy. ELC by creating this resource and maintaining it to a high standard are attracting visitors, individuals, groups and events who wish to pursue different activities and interests, both formal and informal. Local old and new communities also increasingly engage with the Links experience.

The result of this is, and despite minimal publicity, that Levenhall Links is now under increasing visitor pressure.

Sustaining the natural heritage interest

Areas within Levenhall Links have been designed and created to be beneficial for bird life reflecting the bird use prior to and during the operation of the ash lagoons. With the wader scrapes and

number 8 Lagoon being designated, the natural heritage importance of these areas has gained a significant level of warranted protection. Within their defined boundaries, control over permitted and prohibited activities can be exercised. Activities and operations out with the designated area can also be controlled if they have a significant negative impact.

The success of these areas should not be underestimated; in an urban setting with many visitors there are rich havens for birdlife. Designation of specific areas and the need for buffer zones to prevent disturbance defines what management is required and what activities can be supported. This to a significant degree this influences the management objectives of the Links.

Sensitive planting, habitat management and maintenance has further enhanced the diversity of wildlife on the Links so much so that getting closer to nature has become part of the many visitors experience and creating linkages outwith the site such as woodland and grassland networks. The current wader scrapes; the management regime and the facilities on site have created a locally and nationally important bird watching area.

Development proposals

There has been a history of development proposals put forward by diverse interested parties often because of the Links position and seemingly minimal constraints. The recurring problem with previous proposals is that they often fail to recognise the importance of providing space for both people and wildlife. Too much is usually proposed in too little space to the detriment of all and the Links itself. The East Lothian Council Countryside Ranger Service should be fully involved with discussions relating to development proposals in the area affecting the site.

Climate Change

Climate mitigation and adaptation issues will also be a challenge. Adaptation of the site to predicted climate change will be considered; as well as the potential for the site to be an adaptive open space, planting used for climate mitigation, while measures to encourage active travel within the site are also mitigation actions, alongside sea wall enhancement to protect the site. The East Lothian Council Countryside Ranger Service should be fully involved with discussions relating to any climate mitigation proposals in the area affecting the site.

Governance

The complexity of the increasing demands on and from the Links requires a well-defined management structure, site objectives and action plan. Also there are many parties involved in shaping Levenhall Links. The Council, Nature Scot, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Scottish Power for example have a formal role, while active and passive visitors, local communities, local interest groups, the Friends of Musselburgh Links and others are also interested parties. Harnessing this diversity would benefit the Links and its management. Advisory Groups have been set up for other important countryside sites in East Lothian such as John Muir Country Park. Consideration should be given in setting up a similar body for Levenhall Links. Collaboration with the racecourse, golf course and Prestongrange Museum is a further requirement.

Zonal management

In accord with the 2018 Local Development Plan the northern part of the Links linking Lagoon 8, the wader scrapes and Lagoon 6 are managed for wildlife, especially for the qualifying interest of

the Firth of Forth SPA birds, roosting waders, breeding grassland birds and as coastal grassland. Also because of the need to regulate activities within and close by the designated areas the more active and formal recreational activities have been catered for in a zone closer to the southern, urban edge of the Links or on the fringes of the Links along the sea wall tracks. Between these two zones and acting somewhat as a buffer passive and informal recreation is accommodated through the central band.

Enhancing visitor experience and safety

Currently vehicles can gain access right to the boating pond car park though the poor condition of the access road deters many. This Plan prescribes walk and cycle as the default restricting all but non-essential vehicles to car parks at the perimeter and the semi-urban fringe. By keeping vehicles to the perimeter, visitors can then have a safe traffic-reduced experience. There are added benefits of less noise and pollution, reduced maintenance costs and also regulating car borne anti-social behaviour at the middle of the Links.

Regulating activities

Dog walking is a specific activity that warrants controls. While responsible dog walking is accommodated, large numbers of dogs lessen the overall visitor experience and can be incompatible with the sites nature conservation aspirations. This situation has been further challenged as the Links has become an increasingly popular venue used by commercial dog walkers to exercise their clients' dogs. Encouraging dog walking in specific areas, creating dog free zones and dogs on leads areas are being considered.

Specific facilities

Wader scrape management

There are three main challenges to address when in managing the wader scrapes:

- Encroachment of marginal, emergent and successional vegetation reduces the amount of open water
- The clay liner that retains the water in the wader scrapes has deteriorated over time and need refreshed. This damage causes the wader scrapes to leak.
- Enrichment, succession and build-up of silt reduces the depth of the scrapes

All of these reduce the opportunities for roosting and feeding birds, as well as the sustainability of the resource. The natural trend is for water bodies to become enriched, encouraging more growth, and reducing the extent and depth of open water suitable for birds.

While techniques will evolve it's likely that major intervention will be needed. This could include merging and or deepening individual scrapes.

Number 6 Lagoon

Planning consent was granted in 2018 to create an invertebrate meadow on Lagoon 6 as part of the Scottish Power restoration plan. Part of Lagoon 6 will be lined and, by using the existing water infrastructure, it will be possible to periodically flood areas of Lagoon 6 to create areas of wet meadow.

Number 8 Lagoon

Lagoon 8 is designated and included in the Firth of Forth SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site. In the past it has functioned as a significant high water roost site for wading bird species. With the cessation of PFA operations on Lagoon 8, favourable conditions for roosting waders have deteriorated, This is reflected in the decline of waders recorded roosting on the lagoon.

Planning permission for the restoration of Lagoon 8 to create an artificial high water roost site was granted in 2018. Two large wader scrapes will be excavated and surrounded by a moat with bunding to screen the wetland. Bird watching hides will be built into the bunding to give members of the public a range of views over the newly formed wetland.

The restoration of Lagoon 8 into a functioning high water roost site with viewing facilities for the visiting public will be a significant step in realising the sites nature conservation and education potential.

The Boating Pond

The boating pond was the first pocket of land restored by Scottish Power and handed back to East Lothian Council in 1985. The ponds original liner is now leaking at the edges, and remedial work is required to sustain a safe and functional boating pond.

The boating pond is increasingly used, both recreationally and educationally, because of an increase in those taking part in water based activities and because there`s a scarcity of suitable inland ponds.

Also since the removal of all aquatic herbicides mechanical weed control is the only option to retain open water. The usual regime is to cut and remove weed in mid-June. This provides open water for

the summer months. A two cut regime would address weed growth early in the season as well.

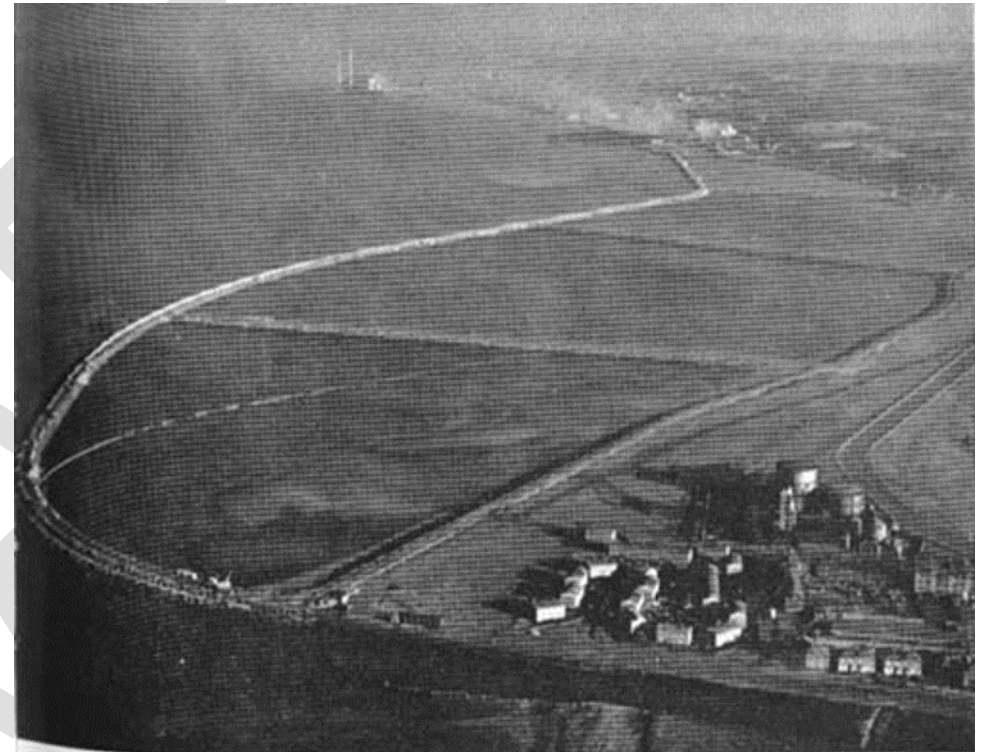
In 2018 the Musselburgh Area Partnership engaged a consultant to undertake a feasibility study into options to restore and or improve current boating pond provision. Four options were proposed. The most feasible and preferred option is to replace the liner.

Handover from Scottish Power

Once the final landforms of nos.8 and 6 lagoons have been created and the associated grading of no.7 completed virtually the whole of the Links will function as one unit. This creates more space to fulfill the aim of the Links. The no. 8 lagoon will be a significant wildfowl and wader reserve; and as such an impressive bird watching and educational asset. The no. 6 lagoon as a meadow will provide a high quality visitor experience in an area of value for flora and invertebrate life.

There will be a period when defects will be the liability of Scottish Power. On completion of this period handback to the Musselburgh Common Good is possible. The condition and handover of the sea wall roadway and area is linked to the Common Good accepting the responsibilities for the sea wall.

Concurrent with this process a SEPA approved Closure and Aftercare Plan will allow Scottish Power to surrender the site Pollution Control and Prevention Permit.



Musselburgh Ash Lagoons – historic aerial image

6. VISION

The overarching vision is to provide a high quality visitor experience whilst conserving the global, national and local natural heritage interests of the Links.

AIMS

1. To conserve the designated areas and supporting habitat for roosting and feeding waders.
2. To maintain and where appropriate enhance the overall nature conservation value of the site.
3. To provide a high quality visitor experience and accommodate appropriate and compatible formal and informal recreational activities that do not conflict with objectives 1 and 2.
4. To promote educational opportunities for all ages.
5. To foster community engagement with the site.
6. To conserve and enhance the landscape and character of the site.



Volunteers managing vegetation in butterfly habitat

7. **POLICIES** – *Provides a directional framework for the fulfilment of the Aims*

1. **Access**

The Links are traffic-free and are inherently safe and suitable for all ages and abilities

- i) The use of sustainable modes of transport and active travel to access the Links will be actively encouraged, developed and promoted in line with any policy East Lothian Council may have for access and transport.
- ii) There are only a few limited needs for using a motorised vehicle on the Links. Car park development should reflect this with careful siting on the perimeter of the site. Motorised vehicles permitted into the site will be limited to 5mph with hazard lights displayed.
- iii) Motorised vehicular access to the access road and boating pond car park will be regulated to key holders only to help maintain a quiet zone in the heart of the site.
- iv) Pedestrian access is allowed in most areas but is restricted in designated areas and land under repair.
- v) Access provision will seek to meet the requirements of all ages and abilities.
- vi) Motorised vehicle access will be via the main access road only other than other than approved events that have gone through the ELC Safety Advisory Group where access via Hope Place, Balcarres or Lothian Villa can be utilised.

2. **Recreational**

To encourage responsible public use of the site:

- i) Informal recreation (walking, picnicking, cycling etc.) will be encouraged.
- ii) Horse riders will be encouraged to use defined routes. Riders should exercise responsibly and only walk/trot their horses.
- iii) The use of unmanned aerial vehicles and internal combustion powered boats are prohibited to minimise disturbance to wildlife and other users.
- iv) Golf practice is incompatible with many users of the Links. It is tolerated and accommodated in defined areas. Its impact will be monitored.
- v) The boating pond can accommodate water sports including sailing, canoeing, windsurfing and model boating. Large groups must book in advance to avoid site conflict. The use of powered vessels is not permitted. Appropriate signage will be provided by the pond. Water quality sampling is regularly undertaken.
- vi) Fishing is incompatible with the majority usage and is not permitted at the pond or any other inland waterbodies on site.
- vii) Sea fishing from the sea wall is permitted.
- viii) Overnight camping is not permitted other than wild camping as defined in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.
- ix) Fire lighting and barbecues are not permitted in the woodlands and will be discouraged elsewhere.

2. Biodiversity

To protect and conserve the faunal and floral interests of the site consistent with the Objectives.

- i) The integrity of the SSSI, SPA and Ramsar designations will be conserved. This may constrain other actions.
- ii) Maintenance operations shall, where possible, be programmed to minimise disturbance to wildlife. If unavoidable appropriate mitigation will be put in place.
- ii) Consideration will be given to conserve, and where appropriate enhance, the biodiversity interests of the site for any development on site.
- iii) Invasive species will be removed from site to prevent colonisation.
- iv) The effectiveness of habitat management will be monitored.
- v) Formal monitoring of flora and fauna will take place. Wader and wildfowl populations will continue to be monitored by a determined regime.
- vi) Herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers should only be used after careful consideration.

4. Documentation

Documentation required for the effective management of the site should include:

- i) A prescriptive management plan subject to regular review.

- ii) An annual report.

- iv) Biological records.

5. Litter Management

Cleanliness can be challenging on the Links. It is a remote, accessible and windswept site.

- i) Visitors will be encouraged to take their litter home. There is a presumption against the provision of additional litterbins as they more than often create untidiness.

6. Dog walking

- i) Responsible dog walking is permitted on site. Due to wildlife sensitivities and the overall visitor experience there may be restrictions placed upon dog walking activities in particular areas and during certain periods throughout the year.
- ii) Commercial dog walking is to be monitored

7. Research

- i) Opportunities should be provided, under appropriate conditions and controls, for research into all aspects of the site. Ideally this research should contribute to the future management of the site or assist nature conservation in its wider context. Production of a report will be a condition of research.
- ii) A research register shall be maintained to guide active management of research

8. Education/Interpretation

Education and interpretation will aim to:

- i) Encourage public understanding of the qualities and importance of the site.
- ii) Manage visitor use of the site.
- iii) Increase visitor enjoyment of the area.

9. Safety

The Links has few natural but some significant man-made hazards. The sea wall and the boating pond require specific safety measures. Safety management will be based on a risk assessment process, a normal operating procedure and an emergency action plan.

10. Volunteers

The involvement of volunteers in aspects of maintenance and monitoring on site is encouraged. The Friends of Levenhall Links volunteer group and Levenhall Family Rangers meet regularly to undertake conservation activities. With the handover of the two final Lagoons the use of volunteers will complement the Countryside Ranger in the day to day management of the site.

11. Community

The continued involvement of the local community in the site is to be actively encouraged under the guidance of East Lothian Council Countryside Rangers.



People watching a juvenile cuckoo feeding on caterpillars at the new Eskmouth reserve at Lagoon 8

12 East Lothian Council Countryside Ranger Service -
Fundamental for the successful fulfilment of the plan

Countryside Rangers are required to work on their own initiative and to liaise and consult with groups and individuals, both internal and external to the management authority.

The Ranger at Levenhall Links undertakes three main functions:

Visitor Management

To provide information and advice to the general public on responsible access and activity, and to monitor visitor use of the Links.

To create a better understanding and appreciation of the Levenhall Links by providing guided walks and countryside events; giving talks to schools and other groups, and encouraging links with educational establishments and organisations.

To promote an active interest in Levenhall Links and good relations and understanding with visitors and the immediate neighbourhood community.

To attend meetings and assist in the preparation of annual reports, work programmes and revisions of management plans.

To ensure that the Links are a safe, accessible site of a high quality.

To provide a welcoming experience including the collection of litter and undertaking estate type minor maintenance work.

To record the numbers, activities and impact of visitors.

Community Engagement

Fostering community engagement is essential as it helps raise awareness about the importance of the site, the conservation of natural habitats and the species they support. By managing groups and engaging with the local community the Ranger can create a sense of ownership amongst the local community and working closely with local groups the Countryside Ranger can gain valuable insights into the local communities views and tailor targeted conservation actions that reflect the desires of the local community. The Ranger can also promote and deliver activities that benefit community and visitor wellbeing.

Biological Management

Biological management arises from the detailed prescriptions in the annual work plan.

To record species, their presence or absence in time, numbers, activities, areas of activity, breeding status and success, in relation to the Links.

To assess the impact on wildlife of on-site activities or operations and, if required, to modify such activities to minimise negative impacts.

7. ACTION PLAN

Note: 23,24,25,26,27 refer to years (2023, 2024 etc). ELC means East Lothian Council. ELCCR means East Lothian Council Countryside Ranger Service

Objective	Prescription	Task	Action	23	24	25	26	27	Executive	
1. To maintain & enhance protected designated areas for roosting & feeding waders.	A. Maintain wader scrapes as an area for roosting and feeding waders	(i) Monitor bird activity	(a) Record peak numbers per species on and around wader scrapes. (minimum 2 counts per month)						→ ELCCR	
			(b) liaise with and collate wildlife records from other individuals and agencies (e.g. the SOC's local bird recorder).						→ ELCCR	
		(ii) Minimise disturbance within wader scrapes	(a) Control vegetation in front of bird-hides.							→ ELC/ELCCR
			(b) Replace plastic membrane and gravel in front of bird hides		→					ELC/ELCCR
			(c) Maintain fences around the bird reserve							→ ELC/ELCCR
			(d) Provide signage and advice on access.							→ ELCCR
			(e) Regular patrols by Ranger							→ ELCCR
			(f) Liase with community police over anti-social behaviour in bird hides.							→ ELCCR
			(iii) Provide effective management of the wader scrapes.	(a) Maintain water levels to accommodate the best habitats for birds (feeding and roosting) taking into account prevailing weather conditions.						
		(b) Rotate water levels to inhibit colonisation.								→ ELCCR
		(c) Monitor vegetation encroachment within scrapes (including algae)								→ ELCCR

Objective	Prescription	Task	Action	23	24	25	26	27	Executive
1. (contd)	A. (contd)	(iii) (contd)	(d) Investigate other methods of vegetation control						ELCCR
			(e) Control emergent species. Early June every second year as required						ELC
									ELCCR
			(g) Vegetation in front of hides and between scrapes cut but not lifted on a 3 week cycle (March - Sept)						ELC
			(h) Maintain areas of long grass to the north, east and west of wader scrape (March-Sept)						ELC
			(i) Cut and lift vegetation within Reserve during September						ELC
			(j) Maintain the water supply						ELC
			(k) Annual inspection of water infrastructure						ELC
			(l) Seek to develop the Bird Reserve by merging and extending the wader scrapes to develop larger water bodies						ELC/ELCCR
(m) Investigate the option of adding an additional bird hide when scrapes are extended						ELC/ELCCR			

Objective	Prescription	Task	Action	23	24	25	26	27	Executive
1. (contd)	A. (contd)	(iii) (contd)	(n) Maintain a low growing tree belt						→ ELC/ELCCR
			(o) Maintain hides and footpath						→ ELCCR
	B. Maintain the integrity of Lagoon 8 SSSI	(i) Monitor flora and fauna within Lagoon 8	(a) Record peak numbers per species on and around wader scrapes. (minimum 2 counts per month)						→ ELCCR
			(b) liaise with and collate wildlife records from other individuals and agencies (e.g. the SOC's local bird recorder).						→ ELCCR
			(c) Monitor sand martin numbers in the sand martin face						→ ELCCR
			(d) record invertebrates within scrapes						→ ELCCR
			(e) Record vegetation within Lagoon 8						→ ELCCR
		(ii) Minimise disturbance within Lagoon 8	(a) Create wetland as per existing planning agreement	→					Scottish Power
			(b) Control vegetation in front of bird hides						→ ELCCR
			(c) Maintain fences around Lagoon 8						→ ELC/ELCCR
			(d) Ensure moat remains topped up						→ ELCCR
			(d) Provide signage and advice on access						→ ELCCR
			(e) Regular patrols by Ranger						→ ELCCR
			(g) Liase with community police over anti-social behaviour in bird hides						→ ELCCR

Objective	Prescription	Task	Action	23	24	25	26	27	Executive
1. (contd)	A. (contd)	(iii) Provide effective management of Lagoon 8	(a) Maintain water levels to accommodate the best habitats for birds (feeding and roosting) taking into account prevailing weather conditions.						ELCCR
			(b) Rotate water levels to inhibit colonisation.						ELCCR
			(c) Monitor vegetation encroachment within scrapes (including algae) and carry out necessary management						ELCCR
			(d) Maintain water supply						ELC/ELCCR
			(e) Annual inspection of water infrastructure						ELC
			(f) Maintain planting around Lagoon 8						ELCCR
			(g) Maintain hides and footpaths						ELCCR
			(h) Clean out sand martin nest holes over winter						ELCCR
	C. Monitor other wader habitats	(i) Record bird activity	(a) Formal counts of Lagoon 6 and other areas						ELCCR
			(b) Informal counts including offshore and Esk Mouth						ELCCR
			(c) liaise with and collate wildlife records from other individuals and agencies (e.g. the SOC's local bird recorder)						ELCCR

Objective	Prescription	Task	Action	23	24	25	26	27	Executive		
2. To maintain and where appropriate enhance the overall nature conservation value of the site	A.Maintain Lagoon 6 as a conservation area for invertebrates and birds	(i) Monitor flora and fauna	(a) Record vegetation in Lagoon 6					→	ELCCR		
			(b) Set up invertebrate monitoring scheme for Lagoon 6		→				ELCCR		
			(c) Monitor bird activity on Lagoon 6	→					→	ELCCR	
		(ii) Minimise disturbance	(a) Create Lagoon 6 as per planning conditions	→							Scottish Power
			(b) Control public access to allow meadow to become established							→	ELCCR
			(c) Maintain fences around Lagoon 6							→	ELC/ELCCR
			(d) Provide signage and advice							→	ELCCR
			(e) Regular patrols by Ranger							→	ELCCR

DRAFT

Objective	Prescription	Task	Action	23	24	25	26	27	Executive
2.(contd)	A.(contd)								
		(iii) Provide effective management of Lagoon 6	(a) Twice yearly cut and lift as per after care plan						Scottish Power
			(b) Implement a water management regime for Lagoon 6						ELCCR
			(c) Maintain water supply						ELC
			(d) Annual inspection of water infrastructure						ELC
			(e) Investigate grazing regime once meadow becomes established						ELCCR
	B. Maintain Butterfly trial area	(i) Monitor flora and fauna	(a) Record vegetation in butterfly habitat						ELCCR
			(b) Record butterflies present in butterfly habitat						ELCCR
		(ii) Minimise disturbance	(a) Maintain fence around butterfly habitat						ELCCR / ELC
			(b) Provide and maintain signs around the butterfly habitat.						ELCCR
			(c) Regular patrols by the Ranger						ELCCR
		(iii) Provide effective management	(a) Cut and lift vegetation between 2 scrapes during September						ELCCR
			(b) Review effectiveness of yellow rattle as a means of controlling unwanted grasses						ELCCR
			(c) Monitor and control vegetation within 2 butterfly scrapes.						ELCCR

Objective	Prescription	Task	Action	23	24	25	26	27	Executive	
	C. Maintain other areas	(i) Develop and maintain existing wildflower planting on site.	(a) Monitor the various wildflower seed trials carried out on site						ELCCR	
			(b) Create new wildflower areas based on seed trial results						ELCCR	
			(c) Assess the grass cutting regime						ELCCR	
			(d) Keep meadow free of thistle and ragwort						ELCCR / ELC	
			e) Cut and lift existing wildflower areas Sept/Oct						ELC	
		(ii) Develop hedgerows	(a) Replace fences with hedgerows where feasible						ELCCR	
			(b) Maintain hedgerows						ELCCR	
		(iii) Maintain woodlands	(a) Monitor wildlife							ELCCR
			(b) Maintain nestboxes							ELCCR
			(c) Monitor natural regeneration							ELCCR
			(d) Sustain woodland cover							ELCCR
			(e) Selective thinning as required							ELC
(f) Regular patrols by Ranger							ELCCR			
	D. Conserve populations of breeding birds	(i) Maintain sand martin colony	(a) Provide a permanent nesting face for sand martins		→				Scottish Power	
			(b) Monitor sand martin numbers						ELCCR	
			c) Monitor predation on sand martin colony						ELCCR	
		(ii) Maintain breeding bird habitats	(a) Census of ground nesting birds during breeding season			→				ELCCR
			(b) Assess appropriateness of grass cutting regime							ELCCR
			c) Regular patrols by Ranger to minimise disturbance.							ELCCR
			(d) Consider restricting access during breeding season.							ELCCR
			(e) Rotational topping cuts of rough grassland on a 3 year cycle							ELC

Objective	Prescription	Task	Action	23	24	25	26	27	Executive		
3.To encourage the best possible formal and informal recreational opportunities ensuring this does not conflict with objectives 1&2	A. Maintain and enhance a safe user friendly boating pond	(i) Administrative	(a) Introduce a robust booking system for the boating pond.	→					ELC		
			(b) issue keys to user groups wishing to access the boating pond as well as radar key access					→	ELC		
		(ii) Maintenance	(a) Monitor public use	→					→	ELCCR	
			(b) Seek to maintain open water by cutting aquatic vegetation twice per season in June and September						→	ELC	
			(c) Investigate other methods of weed supression and trial						→	ELCCR	
			(d) Repair slipways and jettys							ELC	
			(e) Maintain and review safety provision							ELCCR	
			(f) Cut back over hanging branches around boating pond				→			ELC	
			(g) Repair hard standing in front of containers							ELC	
		(iii) Develop the boating pond facility	(a) Investigate funding opportunities to further develop the boating pond							→	ELC / OTHER STAKEHOLDERS
			(b) Explore funding oportunites to introduce an all ability path around the boating pond	→							ELC / ELCCR

Objective	Prescription	Task	Action	23	24	25	26	27	Executive
	B. Manage recreational areas	(i) Maintain open space for public recreation	(a) Monitor public use					▶	ELCCR
			(b) Regular patrols by the Ranger					▶	ELCCR
			(c) Strim footpaths when necessary					▶	ELCCR
			(d) Cut back overhanging branches along footpath					▶	ELCCR
			(e) Spray edged of all tarmac paths on site in April and October to inhibit vegetation growth					▶	ELC
			(f) Strim around metal bollards in car park throughout the year					▶	ELCCR
			(ii) Promote responsible and appropriate use of the site as a whole	(a) Monitor public use					▶
		(b) Regular patrols by the Ranger						▶	ELCCR
		(c) Advise public on appropriate use						▶	ELCCR
		(d) Monitor the use of the site by commercial dog walkers to inform policy						▶	ELCCR
		(e) Induct registered commercial dog walkers on site						▶	ELCCR
		(f) Provide signage to instruct dog walkers						▶	ELCCR
		(g) Produce a responsible dog walking leaflet for Levenhall Links							

Objective	Prescription	Task	Action	23	24	25	26	27	Executive
4.To promote educational opportunities for all ages	A. Encourage educational use and research	(i) Provide for educational visits	(a)Prepare and lead school groups					→	ELCCR
			(b) Encourage use by local nurseries, schools and universities					→	ELCCR
			(c) Create resources to facilitate educational activities					→	ELCCR
		(ii) Encourage appropriate research	(a) Produce project list					→	ELCCR
			(b) Initiate, assist and supervise research projects					→	ELCCR
	B.Encourage informal education	(i) Provide interpretative facilities	(a) Maintain existing interpretation					→	ELCCR
			(b) Review interpretation	→					ELCCR
			(c) Renew existing interpretation		→				ELCCR
		(i) Provide guided walks and other events	(a) Prepare, promote and lead events					→	ELCCR

DRAFT

Objective	Prescription	Task	Action	23	24	25	26	27	Executive	
5. To foster community engagement with the site	A. Strengthen community association	(i) Create links with the local community	(a) Liase with community interest groups						→ ELCCR	
			(b) Support Friends of Levenhall Links and Levenhall Family Rangers						→ ELCCR	
			(c) Set up a Volunteer Ranger Scheme on site to assist with day to day management		→					ELCCR
			(d) Prepare a programme of events for volunteer groups							→ ELCCR
			(e) Actively promote site and ELCCR							→ ELCCR
			(f) Promote ELCCR through involvement in local events							→ ELCCR
	(ii) Promote links with the visiting public	(a) Regular patrols by the Ranger								→ ELCCR
		(b) Actively promote the site and ELCCR								→ ELCCR

DRAFT

Objective	Prescription	Task	Action	23	24	25	26	27	Executive
6. To conserve and enhance the landscape and character of the site	A. Ensure the site is managed in sympathy with the areas landscapes	(i) Review grass cutting regime	(a) Monitor the success of grass cutting regime for wildlife and amenity						ELCCR
		(ii) Reduce levels of litter	(a) Regular patrols for litter						ELCCR
			(b) Promote policy for taking litter home						ELCCR
			(c) Review litter bin provision						ELCCR
			(d) Empty litter bins regularly						ELCCR
		(iii) Reduce levels of dog fouling	(a) Monitor levels of dog fouling						ELCCR
			(b) Liaise with public to reduce dog fouling						ELCCR
			(c) Enforce dog fouling legislation						ELC
		(iv) Maintain fencing	(a) Report on condition of fencing						ELCCR
			(b) Maintain and repair fencing						ELC /ELCCR
			(c) Remove fences and where appropriate replace with wildlife friendly alternatives						ELCCR
		(v) Maintain roads	(a) Report on condition of access road						ELCCR
			(b) Maintain and improve car park surface						ELC
			(c) formalise new parking areas on the periphery of the site						ELC
			(d) Flail overhanging branches along edge of road every second year						ELC
		(vi) maintain artefacts	(a) Report on condition of gates, barriers etc						ELCCR
			(b) Carry out repairs when necessary						ELCCR