



Reserve Management Plan 2025-2030



Brown Hare leveret (Lepus europaeus) - Foxglove Covert wildflower meadow summer 2024

Foxglove Covert Local Nature Reserve

Management Plan 2025 – 2030

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Introduction

Nature is in crisis, but as Professor Sir John Lawton highlights in his introduction to the 2024 State of Yorkshire's Nature report "...we can do something: we must do something".ⁱ The crisis is evident from the most cursory glance at a few headline statistics. 118,000 miles of hedgerows have disappeared in the UK since 1950ⁱⁱ; 97 per cent of the nation's meadows have been eradicated since the 1930s, with popular species like wild strawberry, ragged robin and harebell facing steep declinesⁱⁱⁱ.

All this despite the best efforts of large organisations such as The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (established in 1890), The National Trust (1895), and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (1946). Internationally, the Conference of the Parties (COP) had its 29th meeting in November 2024, but global warming, species extinction and habitat degradation continue apace. Many well intentioned people talk about the damaging effects of climate change and biodiversity loss at great length, without taking effective action against human impacts upon nature.

Foxglove Covert Local Nature Reserve is in a uniquely advantageous position, established in 1992 and now with an impressive mosaic of habitats across a relatively small area, boasting over 3000 different species and with close links to our local military and civilian populations. Within this context and as an independent charity, we have the opportunity to develop as an exemplar site for nature conservation. We can follow and inform environmental best practice, trialling and monitoring the effect of new ideas in order to enhance nature conservation within and beyond our boundaries. With such strong local links, and by forging new links with national networks, we can help lead and inform those who strive for a better future for nature by all we do at Foxglove Covert. Through our work and planning we will adhere to the adage, "Think globally, act locally".

Reserve Management Plan – Summary

This document serves as an overview of the priorities and work to be undertaken at Foxglove Covert Local Nature Reserve (the reserve) over the next five years. The following information forms the framework by which the reserve will be managed in the medium term.

The management plan is dynamic and will be reviewed at least annually^{iv}. While the plan covers a minimum period of 5 years, there are indications of longer-term aims where these are useful. It is acknowledged that continued access problems to the reserve make long-term planning extremely difficult, though a new entrance is due to open in winter 2025/6. As with all nature reserves, work is often reactive – storm damage needs to be risk assessed and dealt with promptly where appropriate and weather will often prevent work from taking place at the ideal time. Work schedules will be adjusted accordingly.

The following Management Plan themes are outlined:

Policies and principles of the Foxglove Covert Foundation; visitors to the reserve; volunteers and volunteering roles; partners including our key relationship with the MOD; habitats and habitat management; species and species monitoring; funding core and project work; measuring success and the impact of this management plan.

Policies and principles

Foxglove Covert Local Nature Reserve is:

- **A space for nature to recover and thrive in a time of challenge.**
- **A place for people to connect with nature and enjoy better health and wellbeing, where they can learn new skills, meet new friends and feel at their best.**
- **A site that is an exemplar in halting biodiversity loss, in practicing and promoting informed and innovative land management, in environmental education and in natural inspiration.**
- **A natural haven for all.**

This management plan complements the constitution of the Foxglove Covert Foundation (FCF) CIO - https://www.foxglovecovert.org.uk/images/uploads/Foxglove_Covert_Foundation_Constitution.pdf the key aims of the constitution are:

To promote, encourage and facilitate for the benefit of the public in and around Foxglove Covert Local Nature Reserve:

- i. the conservation, protection, improvement of the physical and natural environment;
- ii. research and learning for the advancement of knowledge in the natural sciences and biodiversity;
- iii. educational and social value of the environment.

A full list of policies relating to the FCF is available from a member of staff, or one of the Trustees upon request. In addition to FCF policies, the reserve is also directed by Ministry of Defence (MOD) policy, especially with regards to security.

An overriding principle of reserve management at Foxglove Covert is that environmental best practice will be followed. Where management options are available which offer the opportunity for 'wilding'^v they will be prioritised, researched thoroughly before implementation and monitored as to their effect. Actions will be carried out with as little negative impact on the natural environment as is feasible.

We are aware of our role in combatting climate change and mitigating biodiversity loss and will work to make the reserve an exemplar of best practice, enhancing its reputation and educational value while also benefitting nature. We are also aware of the need to reduce the carbon footprint of our management operations. Careful thought will be given to the use of hydrocarbons, and where petrol driven machinery such as chainsaws, the quad bike and strimmers have previously been the norm, appropriate and less damaging tools or equipment will be substituted where this is possible. This approach is better for the environment, for the operatives and for those who visit the reserve. Reduced noise and disturbance are better for wildlife and are key factors in promoting mental wellbeing in humans. Inevitably there will be times where capacity or contingency mean that

powered tools will be used, but this should be an option taken out of necessity and when less harmful options are no longer feasible.

Sustainability must be at the core of what we do and how we do it.

This management plan introduces a Biosecurity Policy at the reserve for the first time (see [Appendix E](#)). Trees and plants in Britain are increasingly vulnerable to a range of new pests and diseases, and outbreaks can seriously threaten sustainable habitat management, with a consequent negative effect on biodiversity. *Phytophthora* is known to be present in juniper on site, and because of ash die-back over 150 ash trees have recently been felled and removed from the reserve. In addition, there is also a risk of spreading disease each time a plant is introduced from another site. Avian influenza remains an ongoing risk, particularly in the winter. Improved biosecurity procedures will now be put in place in accordance with the new Biosecurity Policy.

Appropriate care will be undertaken to avoid any impact on the downstream water ecology in accordance with the principles of the Water Framework Directive. For the purposes of this Management Plan only, Risedale Beck is excluded from the generic descriptor 'waterbodies'. This decision is based upon the need to conveniently divide habitat management areas into zones by geography.

Management Actions

Policies and Procedures will be kept under regular review by Staff and Trustees. Specific review dates are included in key documents. Other reviews may be necessary if legislation changes.

Visitors

The reserve is situated on the periphery of Catterick Garrison ([see Appendix A](#)), the largest settlement in the immediate area (population 13,000 – 2017 estimate). As such, it not only has the benefit of its unique military catchment, but also of the surrounding civilian population. Footfall is estimated to be a little below 10,000 visits per annum, in part because of the security required by the MOD (visitors leave photo ID with the Pass Office on entry to the site), which while necessary has a clear deterrent effect and has a suppressing impact on visitor numbers. Accurate visitor numbers to the reserve are not known, as from the inception of the reserve no systematic, regular recording method has been in place. The site and facilities could cater for many more visitors, though the MOD will always have a controlling influence on visitor numbers. Marketing should be focussed on local people, but with the Yorkshire Dales National Park and other tourist destinations in the vicinity, we must not miss the opportunity to attract visitors from further afield.

Foxglove Covert has an extensive network of permissive footpaths (there are no formal Public Rights of Way across or adjoining the site) that are used by visitors to access parts of the site. The marked footpath routes have been tailored to suit different user abilities and distances:



Map 1 Visitor access routes

Red route – Easy Access Route is a 1.1km accessible route suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs.

Yellow Route – Discovery Trail is a 2.2km route taking in more of the sites features and the wetland hide.

Green Route – Explorer Trail is a 4km route taking visitors to outer areas of the site

The access routes and visitor features (hides, pond dipping platforms) have been developed to balance the visitor experience with minimal disturbance to wildlife. The layout and nature of access was prescribed in the former Higher Level Stewardship agreement with Natural England, which ended in early 2023. The end of the agreement offers an opportunity to review access arrangements within the boundary of the reserve.

The reserve is a huge asset for the interface between the local military and the public, including educational and vocational opportunities. It is an important leisure destination for military families, and the site is popular with dog walkers and picnickers along with wildlife enthusiasts.

A programme of events and activities is run from the Field Centre with its indoor classroom, ranging from school holiday craft sessions to species identification workshops.

A popular school visit programme exists, which includes traditional activities such as pond dipping and mini-beast hunting. Increasingly, climate change and sustainability are becoming central to environmental education. Every year GCSE and/or Sixth-form students are given work experience placements, working alongside staff and volunteers.

Staff and volunteers also give group presentations about the site and its work to several interest groups around the North East and North Yorkshire.

We host weekly activities with groups with specific needs (youth and adult), and less frequently with youth offending services. All groups carry out specific projects to help support the management and development of the reserve; whilst supporting their own individual requirements.



Local school children inspecting the observation beehive

Management Actions:

Security and therefore access to Foxglove Covert is dictated by the priorities of the MOD. Reserve staff will continue to play an active role working with MOD partners, particularly Garrison Security at the Pass Office and our host regiment (until the newly built entrance is in use – see Appendix G), the Royal Lancers to maximise secure public access.

Some visitor infrastructure is directly within the purview of the MOD (e.g. the Field Centre, security gate, perimeter fence, access road) as such, maintenance is the responsibility of one of a number of contractors (e.g. Landmarc, Vivo, Severn Trent). Established systems exist in the case of emergency or repair through wear and tear. We are badly affected by frequent failures of the security gate, a barrier which is far from desirable from the perspective of the Foxglove Covert Foundation, but which is a necessity for the security of Catterick Garrison. Gate failures have resulted in the reserve being closed to the public for months at a time, though this will not have such an impact in future, when visitors enter the reserve without having to enter MOD secure areas.

Visitor facilities outside of MOD responsibility will be maintained where practical by staff and volunteers (including external groups e.g. when the reserve hosts Employee Action Days). Hides can be repaired, and preservative applied on volunteer task days, though when working at height a risk assessment will be made before deciding if work should take place. Boardwalks will be repaired where this makes sense, but diversion of paths should be considered where appropriate to increase the longevity of any work undertaken. Hard surfacing should be considered as a long-term solution to boardwalk decay. The three coloured access routes should be maintained, though alterations to existing routes can now be made where this is helpful (for example the expansion of the easy access

Red Route through to the new reserve entrance. Access for wheelchair users and pushchairs will be maintained on the red route, and Spigot Mere hide will remain accessible for visitors in wheelchairs, though due to stock gates they will still need to be accompanied with an able-bodied companion. It is inevitable that wooden structures such as hides will need replacing over time, which will become apparent through regular inspections. Plans will be made on a case-by-case basis, with decisions as to whether there should be a like-for-like replacement or whether better options are now available. Any work of this nature will be dealt with as a separate project, needing external funding and with the input of external contractors.

A better system for establishing visitor numbers and their motivations will be developed. Visitor counts and engagement surveys around the site will be planned into the work calendar for staff and volunteers on a biannual basis. Visitor surveys will be available in the Field Centre, online, and be conducted off-site (Richmond Marketplace, National Park Centres, Tesco/Aldi car parks – where permission is granted). Most visitors will want to help us make the visitor experience even better.

Improved data about visitor numbers, type and motivation should feed into a new Marketing Group, formed from staff, Trustees and volunteers, enabling informed decisions to be made about reserve promotion and positioning. This will enable the development of a new reserve Marketing Plan.

Responsible dog walking is welcomed at the reserve (commercial dog walking is not permitted). In order to prioritise the welfare of wildlife, livestock and other visitors we require dog walkers to: keep their dog under close control and on a short lead at all times, to pick up, bag and remove dog waste from the reserve.^{vi}

Volunteers

The reserve would not be able to function without its dedicated groups of volunteers. They are a talented, experienced group and a huge repository of knowledge. With only two full-time staff, school group visits, habitat management, infrastructure maintenance, species monitoring, and events would be limited without the input of significant numbers of volunteers. Volunteers have also helped to guide the contents of this Management Plan.

A volunteer group meets every Tuesday, undertaking practical habitat work and infrastructure maintenance. This group is remarkably diverse, covering a wide range of ages and experience. University students and younger students from local schools sometimes join tasks during the holidays, with the bulk of volunteers being local people of retirement age.

Species recording volunteers are on site for organised recording on Wednesdays, though casual recording can happen on any day of the week. They are involved in moth recording, butterfly transects, dragonfly monitoring and general species recording walks. Monitoring of this type is essential to collect data and build up temporal and spatial patterns, allowing more accurate analysis of the impact of habitat management and of other natural factors such as climate change in influencing species' presence and abundance.

Volunteers from the Personnel Recovery Centre (formerly Help for Heroes) visit the site on a frequent basis as a part of a programme of rehabilitation. A visit typically involves practical tasks to aid physical and mental recovery from combat stress or injury, followed by a relaxing walk around the varied habitats the reserve has to offer. Additional volunteering from other military units and

contractors takes place on an occasional basis, with two or three large groups (c.50 personnel) attending each year. While being excellent for participant team building, the reserve also benefits from these events as larger jobs can be undertaken in as short a time as possible (e.g. removal of pond vegetation from a large waterbody), reducing the time during which disturbance to wildlife takes place.

Regular family sessions of crafts and games, along with pond dipping have taken place in school holidays thanks to specialist volunteer input.

Occasional bird ringing continues on a casual basis where the weather is suitable. This ties Foxglove Covert back to its origins and is beneficial in terms of data collected as well as being excellent for public engagement. Releasing newly ringed birds is especially inspirational for young visitors. Sest boxes are also checked by the ringing group.



Foxglove Covert volunteers, taking a rest on some newly bailed hay

Management Actions: Continue celebrating and further training our existing volunteers. Where in-house training is available (Induction Days, tool talks etc) ensure all receive up to date instruction and guidance. Where more technical training is needed (e.g. Graphical Information Systems) then appropriate external courses should be sought and offered to interested volunteers.

Opportunities for volunteer recruitment are varied. Active opportunities exist such as military family days, local events off-site (Open Farm Days, Richmond Eco-day) or 'Worky Days' held in the winter, when most habitat work is undertaken. More passive recruitment will take place through the website, social media and leaflets. There is no doubt that word of mouth remains the most effective method of volunteer recruitment.

As with most countryside sites, turnover of volunteers is often rapid, so retention needs to be considered. The best approach is to work with volunteers as individuals looking for opportunities for

new experiences to develop skills and keep interest levels high. Where high turnover is caused by volunteers gaining work or undertaking a qualification in the environmental sector, this should be celebrated.

The reserve has constant and changing needs for volunteer input, but the following is a guide to the situation at this time:

Specific volunteer job roles – noting that one person might adapt/combine roles:

Admin – helping in the office with paperwork, reproduction, posters, phone calls (sensitive and personal data would not be handled by any volunteer)

Education – helping plan and deliver school visits at the reserve, assist with school work experience placements and off site assemblies/activities to promote Foxglove Covert and environmental themes. Helping to plan, resource and deliver family activity days during school holidays.

Fundraising – generating general donations, specific project funding, online crowd-funding, local sponsorship

Newsletter – editing undergrowth, helping with circulation and ideas for articles, preparing articles for the Garrison Gazette and Sanctuary magazine, looking for photo opportunities.

Website – web editing, helping with blogs and vlogs, keeping up to date, looking for opportunities to link to other organizations.

Publicity – getting the word out locally and through interest groups, doing surveys to target the right people.

Community talks – promoting Foxglove Covert, general wildlife/conservation/eco-gardening talks to communities/interest groups.

Trustees – we need more Trustees and a wider range of skills, good to have knowledge of ecology.

Weekends – volunteering on Sundays would help staff do less lone working, increasing the collaborative output. Meet and greet to help people enjoy their visit. Helping with visitor surveys.

Walks leaders – heath/wellbeing walks etc. Themed nature walks

Bird surveyors – new bird survey scheme to be introduced in 2025

Events leaders – photography, crafts, children's events, ID tuition

Partners

Our main partners include the MOD, Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), defence contractors (e.g. Landmarc, Vivo, Babcock), while veterans and recovering MOD staff also have a key role at Foxglove Covert with the Personnel Recovery Centre being of high importance.

Working in collaboration with other environmental organisations is fundamental to our work, such an approach further validates what we do and enhances our profile within the environmental sector.

We currently work with the Homedale Nature Network, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, the British Earthworm Society, the Badger Trust, Yorkshire Dales National Park, Nosterfield LNR, Plantlife International, North Yorkshire Council, the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, The Forestry Commission, The Conservation Volunteers, the North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre and Natural England. In addition, we have close relations with specialist Vice-County species recorders.

Building local links with local private sector organisations and businesses is also of increasing importance e.g. Big Sheep Little Cow, a farm in Aiskew, which focusses on family visits. Where we contract work in, we would like to prioritise local businesses, strengthening our ties to the local community and helping to reduce negative impacts on the environment. Fewer road miles will help reduce our carbon footprint.

Our patron is Lord Zetland, and we would like closer links to the Zetland Estate. As outlined later in this document (Habitats and their management), the estate could be an important donor for heather plants and seeds and could help to improve biodiversity in areas currently lacking in wildlife interest.



Senior staff from Catterick Garrison on a visit to Foxglove Covert

Management Actions: Foxglove Covert staff will prioritise work with the MOD where this is beneficial to both parties, and our approach is outlined in [Appendix D](#).

Foxglove Covert makes an excellent venue for meetings, workshops and events, so we will advertise our facilities with this in mind. This is an important stream of income for the reserve. Staff will not

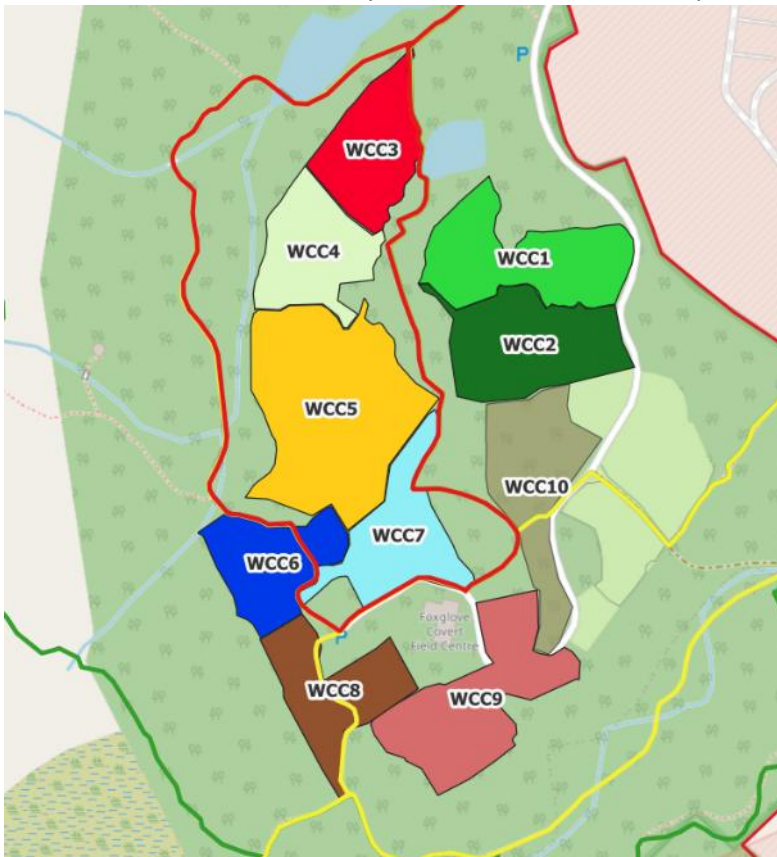
only attend partnership meetings, such as the Catterick Training Area Conservation Group, but seek further opportunities for working with wider nature networks. We are now a partner organisation with Plantlife International, helping to develop a network of expertise in wood meadow creation and management and we are also have links with Buglife through their B-lines initiative.

Habitats and their management

The reserve can be conveniently divided into habitat zones and associated management actions:

- a) Willow Carr
- b) Risedale Beck
- c) Mixed woodland
- d) Conifer plantation
- e) Waterbodies
- f) Heathland
- g) Grassland
- h) Site-wide issues
- g) Conservation grazing

Willow Carr – there is an extensive area of Willow Carr at the heart of the reserve, one of the best examples in the local area. Rotational coppicing has taken place over recent years with strict demarcation of ten coups, following commercial and standard environmental practice. Past management has included use of chainsaws and woodchippers. Species such as birch and hawthorn are very common within these coups.



Map 2 Willow coppice coups

Management Action - Some continuation of rotational coppicing, though opportunities for a less prescriptive approach will be sought (e.g. creation of butterfly glades in coups where coppicing does not take place). Use of hand tools will be prioritised to lower the carbon footprint of the activity, create less pollution and reduce noise pollution. Where cut material can be used as a product, on or off site, this should be prioritised. If woodchips are needed

around the reserve (e.g. for path surfacing), use of a woodchipper is justified. Willow should not be used for fencing posts or dam support posts due to likelihood of regrowth but cut material can be used judiciously for leaky dams, dead hedges and screens, habitat piles or for firewood. As a woodland field layer develops naturally only at a very slow rate and in adjacent localised areas, we will transplant species such as primrose, wood anemone and bluebell to help develop floristic diversity. Wildflower seed can also be spread later in the year. Monitoring of glades will help evaluate their impact and inform any further glade creation.



[See Appendix B for work schedule.](#)

Risedale Beck – a moorland valley cut into a plateau of glacial till, a tributary of the River Swale. The banks and valley slopes are well vegetated with a range of largely native deciduous trees and scrub. The understory is comprised of typical woodland species.

Management Action – the area furthest east is alder woodland which has traditionally been a ‘non-intervention area’. This approach will continue, though species monitoring should be undertaken at least annually. Five areas have been identified as hazel coppice coups, though a range of other plant species are present. Coppicing here will take place every two or three years, depending on the health and condition of the hazel. Minimal intervention practices will be followed, though active intervention could be needed to maintain public access (e.g. footpath work following storm damage or flooding). The south-western corner of the reserve has south facing slopes below the wetland boardwalk which are excellent for primroses. Scrub will be removed at least every other year, to encourage the primrose bank to flourish. This will both be attractive to visitors and beneficial for early nectar feeding invertebrates.



[See Appendix B for work schedule](#)

Mixed woodland – several areas around the reserve show the characteristics of mixed woodland (sycamore, alder, hazel, hawthorn, ash, rowan, oak), with a typical field layer of plants such as bugle, ransoms, cow parsley, Lady fern and bluebell.

Management Action – minimum intervention – removal of storm damage to maintain access paths, repair of footpaths, as necessary. Where storm damage occurs, succession should be allowed to take place and should be monitored, rather than tree planting. Through natural regeneration species will germinate and grow which are most suited to the soil type, elevation and aspect. Allowing natural succession is preferable to human intervention. Planting woodland mixes from outside the reserve introduce some risk of disease ([see Appendix E](#)). Favouring natural regeneration also negates the need for unsightly plastic tree guards and their later removal. Huge number of saplings germinate and grow each year, and the resident deer population is small enough that any clearings are likely to regenerate successfully.

Conifer plantations – over time, the reserve has expanded to include a significant amount of this largely unproductive habitat. Spruce, pine and larch were historically planted to create an MOD training area to simulate arctic warfare. Planting was typically over-dense, so there is little wildlife here, and trees are most often poor specimens.



Management Action – to date management has largely been to remove storm damage (particularly after storm Arwen in 2021), an action which will continue where necessary. In addition, work will be planned to create glades and standing deadwood. Through the simple action of ringbarking (using hand tools such as axes and drawknives) trees located away from paths and on the reserve’s periphery can be selectively ring-barked, mimicking the action of large herbivores, which would strip the bark as they browse. The resultant loss of foliage over several years will allow light to the ground layer, creating better conditions for the seedbed to germinate.

The Forestry Commission granted a felling licence for this thinning work in December 2024, and have advised around 20% of the Sitka Spruce and Scots Pine should be ring-barked. Biodiversity will improve as a result not only of the increase in wildflowers (and invertebrates), but also as a consequence of an abundance of standing deadwood. The few broadleaves present will be helped by haloing – the removal of adjacent conifers to improve tree health.

Species monitoring will be a key part of the work undertaken in the plantation, from an initial baseline survey to specific species surveys covering plants, fungi, invertebrates, birds and mammals (especially bats) so that biodiversity net-gain can be gauged. Partnership work with the Zetland estate through harvesting of seeds and plants should result in better fringe habitat through the introduction of bilberry plants and seeds in newly ring-barked areas.

[See Appendix B for work schedule](#)

Waterbodies – Any habitat management taking place at the reserve in or near waterbodies needs to be mindful of downstream waterbodies and their overall water ecology (including Risedale Beck – see earlier section). Impacts on quality could include anything from changes to biological or chemical quality as well as hydromorphological quality (including impacts on quantity and dynamics of flow, beds and banks, and the ability to support aquatic life). Appropriate care will be undertaken to avoid any negative impact on the downstream water ecology in accordance with the principles of the Water Framework Directive^{vii}, which are broadly:

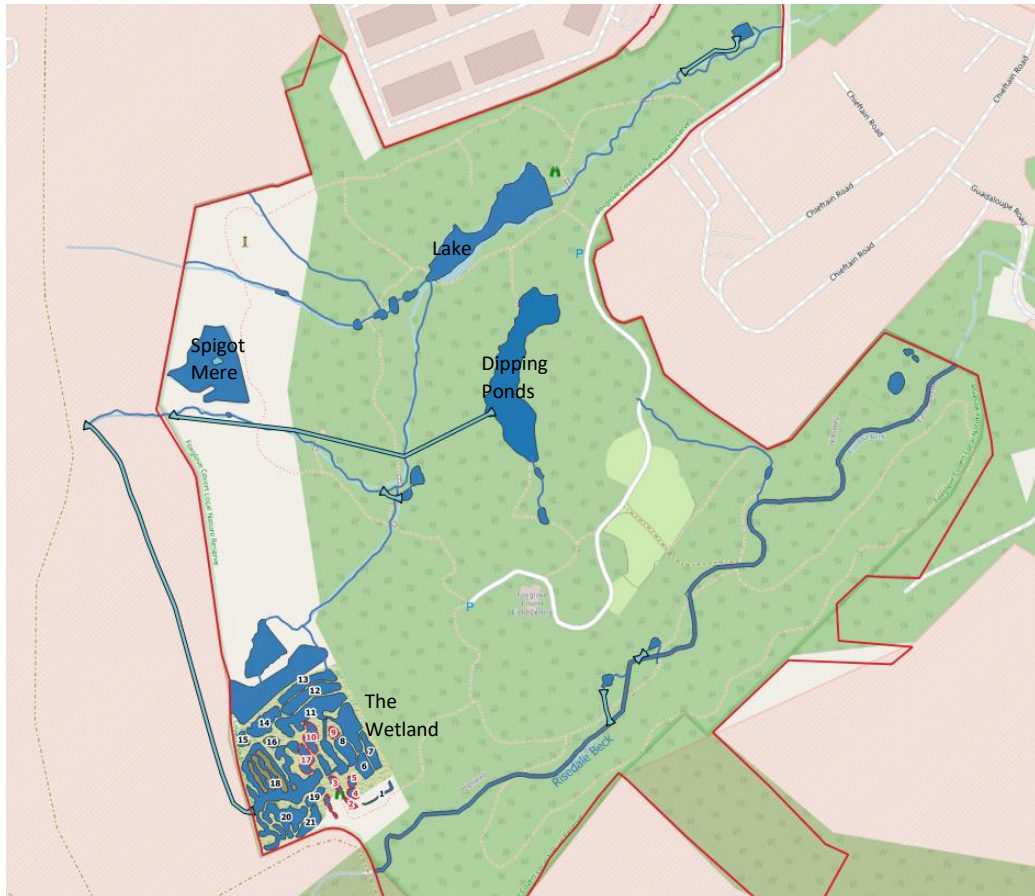
- to prevent deterioration and enhance status of aquatic ecosystems, including groundwater
- promote sustainable water use
- reduce pollution
- contribute to the mitigation of floods and droughts

Foxglove Covert LNR sits within the Humber River Basin District, which is divided into 18 'Management Catchments'. Foxglove is part of the 'Swale, Ure, Nidd and Ouse Upper' Management Catchment, which again is broken down into 10 operational catchments, the Swale Middle being the relevant one for Foxglove. The Swale Middle catchment comprises 16 'waterbodies', including the 'Colburn Beck/Risedale Beck from source to River Swale'.

A high proportion of the reserve is wet (the proportion changes with the seasons and prevailing conditions). Water catchment is from Barden Moor to the west. Water drains from the moor through to 'The Wetland', Plovers Pool, the New Pond, Spigot Mere, then by streams to the Cascading Ponds to the Lake and exits the reserve through Leadmill Beck. In addition, reedbeds about the dipping ponds and minor streams cross the reserve. The Lake is an original man-made feature, dating back to the First World War when Catterick Camp was established, while the other channels, pipes and waterbodies have been developed since 1991.

Wetlands are the biggest habitat priority on the reserve. Current issues include the continual deposition of silt into the Lake, exaggerated by a system of channels and pipes allowing rapid flow of water and a high load of sediment transport from the west to the east of the site, often in relatively straight lines. Some of the artificially created wetlands are problematic and a large project is needed to rectify the issues. 'The Wetland' area includes steep sided ponds, plastic pipes, unnatural metal dams and has limited wildlife value. Water levels are dependent on rainfall levels and blockages in pipes – they are not deliberately managed for the benefit of nature.

The Wetland is interspersed with 'flagship ponds', which have suffered from a lack of management with resulting encroachment of scrub (gorse/hawthorn/willow). These ponds are isolated from the surrounding Wetland ponds in an attempt to preserve their particular characteristics.



Map 3 Foxglove Covert waterbodies

Management Actions – it is the top priority to deal with hydrological problems across the reserve. Silt is currently carried through the site, depositing substantially in the Lake. A series of leaky dams, replicating the action of fallen trees or even beaver dams have recently been installed, using material derived from coppicing and storm damage clearance, using the labour of volunteers. Speed of flow through the site will now slow, with streams less able to carry sedimentary load downstream. Leaky dams will also act as filters, trapping sediment higher up the catchment, enabling removal by hand or mechanical means. There will also be potential biodiversity gains from this approach. Sediment in the bottom of streams can be vital to invertebrate breeding efforts, and marginal sediment will encourage wetland plants to thrive. Each year coppiced material will be used to add new and maintain old leaky dams.

Vegetation within water bodies (Wetland ponds, Plover’s Pool, Spigot Mere and ‘The Scrapes’) needs to be managed by removal of one fifth to one third of the vegetation in each waterbody – particularly the removal of common reed and greater reed-mace. Some of this can be done manually by hand pulling, or with scythes or maigs, but contractors will need to be used for larger areas in some years to remove silt deposits. Increased open water, fringed by vegetation will create a better wetland structure.

‘The Wetland’ is to be treated as a large-scale project (Wetland Recovery Project c.£200,000) to improve the area for people and for wildlife. We aim to remove scrub from the fringes of the ‘flagship ponds’ and remove some of the sedges and rushes preventing open water. For the wider network of connected ponds, major work is needed to merge several of these and

reprofile them, making them much more attractive to breeding and passage waders. In place of the plastic pipes, shallow, open interconnecting channels should be excavated creating new habitats for invertebrates and improving connectivity for wildlife. See Appendix

It is vital that water levels are controlled and that pond edges are shallow profiled, including undulations to create mud islands as water recedes. Through the introduction of sluices, water levels can be adjusted, creating muddy edges – ideal for invertebrate egg-laying and the feeding ground for wading birds. Through this project biodiversity will increase considerably in an area which is currently underperforming for wildlife.

Possible funding for this project could come from Defra's Species Recovery Programme, from National Highways Designated Funds and from private donors. Specialists (Dragonfly Vice-county recorder; Freshwater Habitats Trust etc) will be closely consulted throughout this project. The first year of work will involve baseline ecological surveys, alongside identifying potential funding streams, but work should have been completed by the end of the third year of this plan, allowing further surveys to be undertaken as the site recovers from this major intervention.

Our current tower hide is not accessible to all of our visitors, is difficult to maintain and the view is lacking in interest to the casual visitor, due to the inadequate nature of the wetland habitat over which it stands. A key part of the new wetland project is the creation of a new, lower profile hide close to a large, shallow body of water. Low islands within the larger water bodies will encourage birds such as snipe, redshank and avocet – providing a wildlife spectacle worth visiting. This part of the project could include the involvement of local schools in the design of facilities and interpretation.



[See Appendix B for work schedule](#)

Heathland – also known as The Paddocks. Early in the history of the reserve, this area attracted important species such as nightjar, with historic records of great-crested newts. The area has suffered from encroachment by pioneer species, particularly gorse and birch. One area has now lost all of its heather altogether.

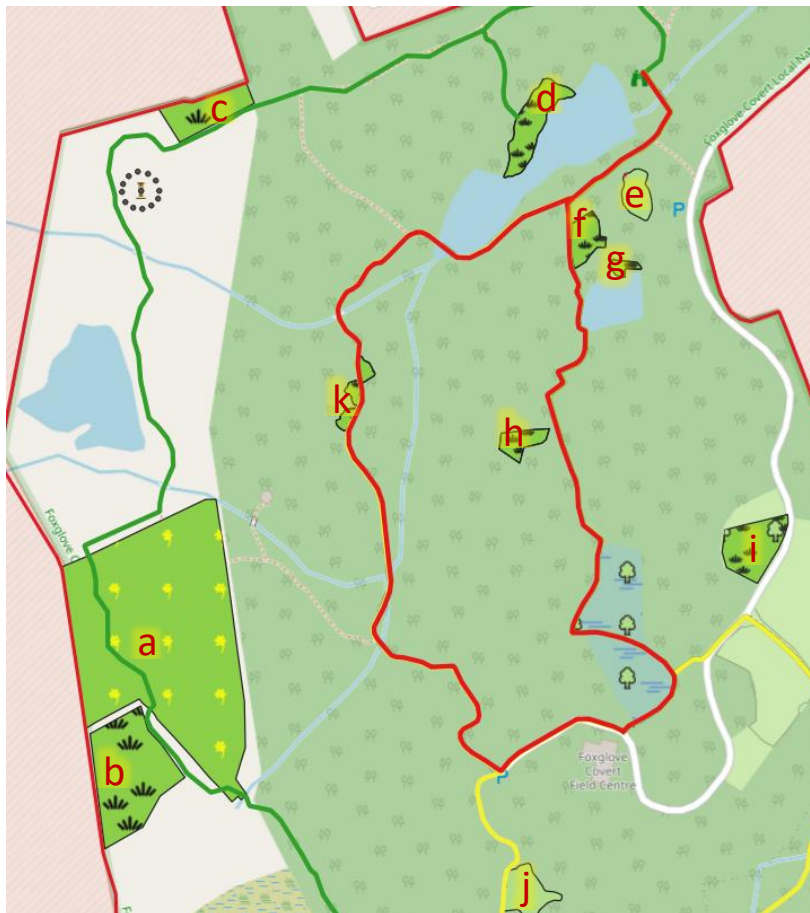
Management Action – The area devoid of heather has successfully been put forward for a grant from Plantlife International. Working with the Personnel Recovery Centre and local volunteers, we will help this area to develop into woodmeadow (once the dominant habitat type across much of Europe, but now rare). Using plants and seed from across the reserve, we will introduce berry-bearing plants such as guelder rose and rowan to provide a food source for wildlife in the autumn and winter. Seeds collected from nearby will be sown in order to improve the diversity of wildflowers. Maintenance will then be by annual scything. Removal of the stock fencing will be considered, helping to soften the transition between the new woodmeadow and the surrounding area.

The two remaining paddocks still have significant but struggling heath. Management options are to allow succession to proceed (minimum intervention) or to make a significant effort to restore the heath. Earlier efforts (seed spreading) failed to prepare the ground sufficiently. However, with turf stripping and collection of seed and plants from the Zetland Estate, reinstatement may be possible and desirable. Before a final decision over intervention or succession, careful surveying of the site will be necessary, with some experimental turf stripping to gauge the likelihood of success.



[See Appendix B for work schedule](#)

Grassland – In addition to the main wildflower meadow (formerly Middle Moor) there are a considerable number of smaller meadows and areas of unimproved grassland scattered across the reserve. Some areas benefit species dependent upon a wetter environment, such as ragged robin, while other patches are abundant in late flowering species, such as scabious and hemp agrimony, benefiting pollinators late on into the season. Unimproved grassland is principally of interest for wildflowers, but two areas (GR SE158973 - 380 m² and GR SE157969 3,000 m²) are particularly good for waxcap fungi, which require a different approach to management.



Map 4 Grassland areas

- a) Wildflower meadow
- b) Large waxcap meadow
- c) Small waxcap meadow
- d) Lakeside
- e) Orchard
- f) Peacock meadow
- g) Blockhouse meadow
- h) Fritillary meadow
- i) Woodmeadow
- j) Orchard
- k) Mini-meadows

Management Action – The main meadow, as a large unit of land will need to be cut and baled by tractor or Allen scythe and baler attachment when conditions allow. Cutting and baling should be done in early to mid August, depending on when later flowering species such as scabious set their seed. In particularly wet years, where taking a hay crop is not possible, the meadow will be topped by and then raked, stacked and baled by the volunteer force. If conservation grazing can be introduced, baled hay will provide much needed winter feed, otherwise bales could be sold to generate income. Smaller meadows – can be scythed and baled, or in extremis cut by strimmer before raking. Seeds should be collected, dried and used elsewhere on site. Areas managed for waxcaps will receive two or three cuts earlier in the season, in order to create nutrient deficient conditions, favourable to this family of fungus.

[See Appendix B for work schedule](#)

Site-wide issues and longer term work –

- Dealing with potential hazards – (eg decaying Heligoland trap)
- Reducing prevalence of timber features – longer term solutions to be sought (eg hard path surfaces rather than boardwalks)
- Dealing with hard edges to habitat areas – movement towards transition zones
- Soil sampling – to improve decision making
- Occasional water surveying and sampling – to monitor species and water quality
- Keeping paths clear
- Mapping – for interpretation, reports and habitat/species monitoring.
- Checking integrity of perimeter fencing.
- Site interpretation

[See Appendix B for work schedule](#)

Conservation Grazing

The benefits of conservation grazing are many, but the reserve does not own any livestock. Thus, any plans outlined below will need to be a joint arrangement with livestock owners who are happy for their livestock to graze at the reserve.

Grazing has not taken place at Foxglove Covert for some time, following difficulties with managing cattle and ponies at the reserve. Without any conservation grazing, invasive scrub will encroach upon habitats such as the wetland, the wildflower meadow and the waxcap meadows. If left unchecked, succession will take its course, the scrub will take over, eventually becoming woodland, impacting on our varied habitats and making areas less favourable for biodiversity. Physical management through cutting and raking by staff and volunteers will mitigate this to an extent, but grazing will result in additional benefits.

Conservation grazing creates vegetation at different heights, and small areas of bare ground. This makes grazed areas suitable for a wide range of wildlife. It allows wildflowers to grow,

flower and set seed each year. This provides pollen and nectar for invertebrates and increases invertebrate food available for birds. The hoof prints of livestock create hollows where germination of a broader range of plants is likely due to a variety of micro-climates.

Management action – There are currently three scenarios whereby conservation grazing can be introduced at the reserve once more, if none of the following are possible because of financial barriers or other objections, grazing will not take place:

- a. **New fencing** – in its current condition is inadequate for livestock . The western boundary fence at the back of the wildflower meadow is a stock fence, topped with barbed wire. However, a high proportion of the fenceposts are rotten and the height of the fence has previously been proven to be inadequate for cattle when they become scared by noises from the adjoining military training area. This stock fence is part of the perimeter fencing of the reserve and so is entirely the responsibility of the MOD. The state of MOD finances suggests that a new, higher fence for the reserve is highly unlikely. Continuing to use the current fenced grazing units would also miss the opportunity to create greater variety in our grasslands.
- b. **Electric fencing** – the introduction of electric fencing would have a range of benefits. Smaller specific areas can be temporarily fenced, resulting in the ability to graze selected areas to differing sward heights (paddock grazing). The resultant more varied structure would be beneficial for wildflowers, invertebrates and birds. Careful signage and clear explanations would be needed to prevent conflict with visitors, especially those walking dogs.
- c. **No-fence collars** – a more recent technology, allowing paddock grazing in grassland but also in woodland understory. Beasts are trained with a collar which emits an audio signal, followed by a small electric shock. In this way they are trained to stay within an area surrounded by a virtual rather than a physical boundary. Boundaries can be moved through the use of an app. Appropriate signage and information would inform visitors about this technology.



Belted Galloway cattle wearing No-Fence collars



Species

Protected species

International

European protected species (EPS) confirmed present at Foxglove Covert on the Catterick Training Area include great crested newt and otters. Bat surveys have been carried out at some specific locations in the Training Area, revealing the presence of Noctule, Whiskered bat and Natterer's bat. Historically White Clawed Crayfish have been reported in the watercourses, however no recent sightings have been reported.

National

Badgers occur within Foxglove Covert. 250 Water Vole were re-introduced onto the site in 2007, but due to the 'island' nature of the site, and with no local water vole population with which to interbreed, the mammal is now thought to be extinct here. Other reintroductions should be carefully planned bearing this in mind.

All nesting birds are protected in the breeding season. A number of birds are listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act (WCA) and receive additional legal protection from disturbance. Species recorded at Foxglove Covert include kingfisher and barn owl.

Foxglove Covert has made a significant contribution to wild bird conservation. The site has been one of the foremost Constant Effort Ringing Sites in Britain with over 150 nest boxes maintained and recorded on site, together with those in other areas on the Catterick Training Area. Bird ringing is no longer a core function of the reserve, but the Swaledale Bird Ringing Group undertake occasional ringing sessions to aid reserve and national data, and for public demonstration.

Reptiles and amphibian species that are not EPS are partially protected under the WCA, including common lizard, common toad, common frog, smooth newt, and palmate newt. As of 2024 systematic surveying for reptiles and amphibians will be introduced, following Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) procedures.

Recording of invertebrates is on-going and records to date for all species is just under 2,700. While in the past moth trapping in the same area on consecutive nights has taken place, this potentially harmful practice will end in 2024.

Other notable species found at Foxglove Covert include Pond Mud Snail (listed as endangered at International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)), Pillwort and Marsh Stitchwort.

84 species present are listed as being of 'principal importance in England' in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006 ([see Appendix C](#))

Management Actions: Work has already begun on improving our monitoring of site species. Historic recordings have been based on sightings, often lacking date, number and location. As such, we are now starting to build baseline data, so that spatial and temporal patterns relating to species monitoring can be used to inform and improve habitat management – the fundamental basis of any nature reserve management. Staff and volunteers are being trained in the use of Graphic Information Systems (GIS) - this will help map the reserves' species alongside habitat types.

Moth monitoring – trapping will take place following best practice. Moth trapping takes place on a Tuesday night, with identification and release following on Wednesday. Where trapping takes place more than once a week, the location of the traps will be altered to avoid re-traps, which has the potential to skew data collected and can be harmful to individual moths (with potential effects to reproductive productivity). To facilitate volunteers who wish to trap on consecutive days, we have two portable traps, which can be deployed away from previous trap sites. Trapping should be used to monitor habitat work, (e.g. in coppiced areas) to help inform practical habitat management.

Butterfly monitoring – a transect route registered with the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme covers most of the habitat areas around the reserve. The route is too large and has the potential for sub-division. Weekly butterfly monitoring should be undertaken where weather conditions and access permit. Casual records will continue to be recorded, with targeted effort on newly created glades.

Bird monitoring – bird ringing is undertaken by members of the Swaledale Bird Ringing Group. Foxglove Covert is just one of the sites used by the group, with attendance now infrequent. Ringing is a major part of the history of the development of Foxglove Covert, used as a Constant Effort Scheme site for 30 years. Ringing is very welcome, not just because of the data supplied to the British Trust for Ornithology, but also as an excellent engagement tool with the public. The experience of releasing a newly ringed bird could be the key to engaging with wider environmental issues. Monitoring of nest boxes is undertaken by members of the ringing group. Records are an important part of the Adopt-a-box scheme, which helps to raise funds for the reserve. Casual bird sightings are recorded on the monthly observations board. There is an opportunity for better data collection on birds at the reserve, along the lines of the BTO's farmland bird survey, or the breeding bird survey.

Reptile and Amphibian surveys – survey routes have been established and pilot surveys have been carried out in 2024, with full surveying following ARC protocol & timelines to begin in 2025. The goal is to contribute to national and site data sets in a systematic manner to better inform our understanding of trends in our population and allow for monitoring following any significant management changes in the future.



Dragonfly monitoring – a survey route has been established (as of 2024) and baseline data is being gathered, following monitoring advice from the British Dragonfly Society.

General species identification and recording – a number of volunteers are highly skilled in species identification (including wildflowers, fungi and invertebrates). Observations made from visits to the site are recorded on the observations board and collated at the end of each month. The data from all of these observations are key to making informed decisions on how to manage the site.

Funding

The reserve no longer receives funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). A Higher-Level Stewardship agreement ended in 2023 and after consultation with Natural England, it was decided that Foxglove Covert's land parcels were too small to make a renewed or new agreement financially viable. The newest iteration of government funding, Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) is targeted at the farming community, rather than nature conservation organisations. Core reserve funding comes from the MOD, a vital source of income which currently keeps the reserve afloat. The contribution was traditionally put towards staff salaries and 'greenworks', but without recent uplift now supports staff salaries.

Trees and funding for tree planting are being offered from multiple sources, but the reserve has nowhere left to plant them. Even if it did, the best way to deal with gaps in woodland created by clearance due to storms or disease is through natural regeneration, as outlined above. Those species most likely to flourish will germinate and grow, avoiding unsightly plastic tree tubes – an environmental problem in their own right, particularly with regard to their disposal. Grants for tree planting at Foxglove Covert will not be considered for the foreseeable future.

New sources of funding need to be secured. Despite the lack of finance to support environmental work nationally, there is the potential to gain funding from government schemes such as the Species Recovery Programme (grants from £50,000 to £500,000). A wetland recovery project (outlined above), focussed on wetland species listed in the NERC Act could be eligible for Species Recovery Programme funding.

Beyond environmental grants, the reserve must take the opportunities offered by health practitioners. The 'Natural Health Service' should be at the heart of what we do, whether improving physical health through working outdoors, or mental health through contact with the natural world. Green Social Prescribing could be an important source of funds going forward, as well as broadening the appeal of the nature reserve.

In order to maximise fundraising, a new group should be formed (from staff, Trustees and volunteers) to identify and explore opportunities and apply for grants. Once the full management plan is finalised, it should be organised in such a way that projects are easily identified and then adapted to speed the grant application process.

Opportunities for raising funds:

Visitors' (including online visitors) spend – A revised Friends of Foxglove scheme incorporating elements of the Adopt-a-Box scheme. Improvements in the shop at the Field Centre, with more carefully considered stock – pocket money items for school visits. A full review of our scale of charges should take place. As with many charities, realistic pricing is currently 'uncomfortable' – but quality services and experiences do command a premium.

Crowd funding – a form of revenue raising which has great potential, alongside sponsorship (see below). Specific projects – e.g. *making homes for nature* (bird boxes, otter holts, bat boxes), *helping nature thrive* (bird seed, wildflower seeds) will appeal to the public and are likely to be successful if we attempt to crowd fund. Equally, improving the facilities for visitors – e.g. raising funds for a new hide provide the sort of ‘good news/good deed’ project that might appeal.

Private funding and sales – local businesses – Nature conservation is highly appealing to business – it is a good way for business to illustrate care for the environment and locality. Sponsorship of infrastructure (e.g. by a local timber merchant) would help improve the visitor experience at Foxglove Covert and is an excellent opportunity to publicly promote partnerships with local businesses. Foxglove Covert also produces products in an environmentally positive way, we bale cut hay by hand, produce willow and hazel through winter coppicing and could produce biochar for local gardeners. All of these have saleable value within our locality. Most businesses have a corporate responsibility fund, and so a proper scale of charges (with reference to donation levels) should be developed for Corporate Workdays. These currently happen, but without income to the reserve.

Events – admission charges for events should be more realistic if they are to raise funds for the reserve. Technical events such as scythe training are already successfully run with a higher level of donation towards admission. Craft events should also be run with a higher admission donation level – though there should also be plenty of opportunity given to those from the local community on lower incomes.

In addition to the above outline, it will be of prime importance to scope ‘off the peg’ planned projects. Funding should be sought for projects under the themes of nature, people, wellbeing, sustainability, military communities (and other reserve priority areas).

Measuring success

(A) Health of the reserve:

Habitats and species:

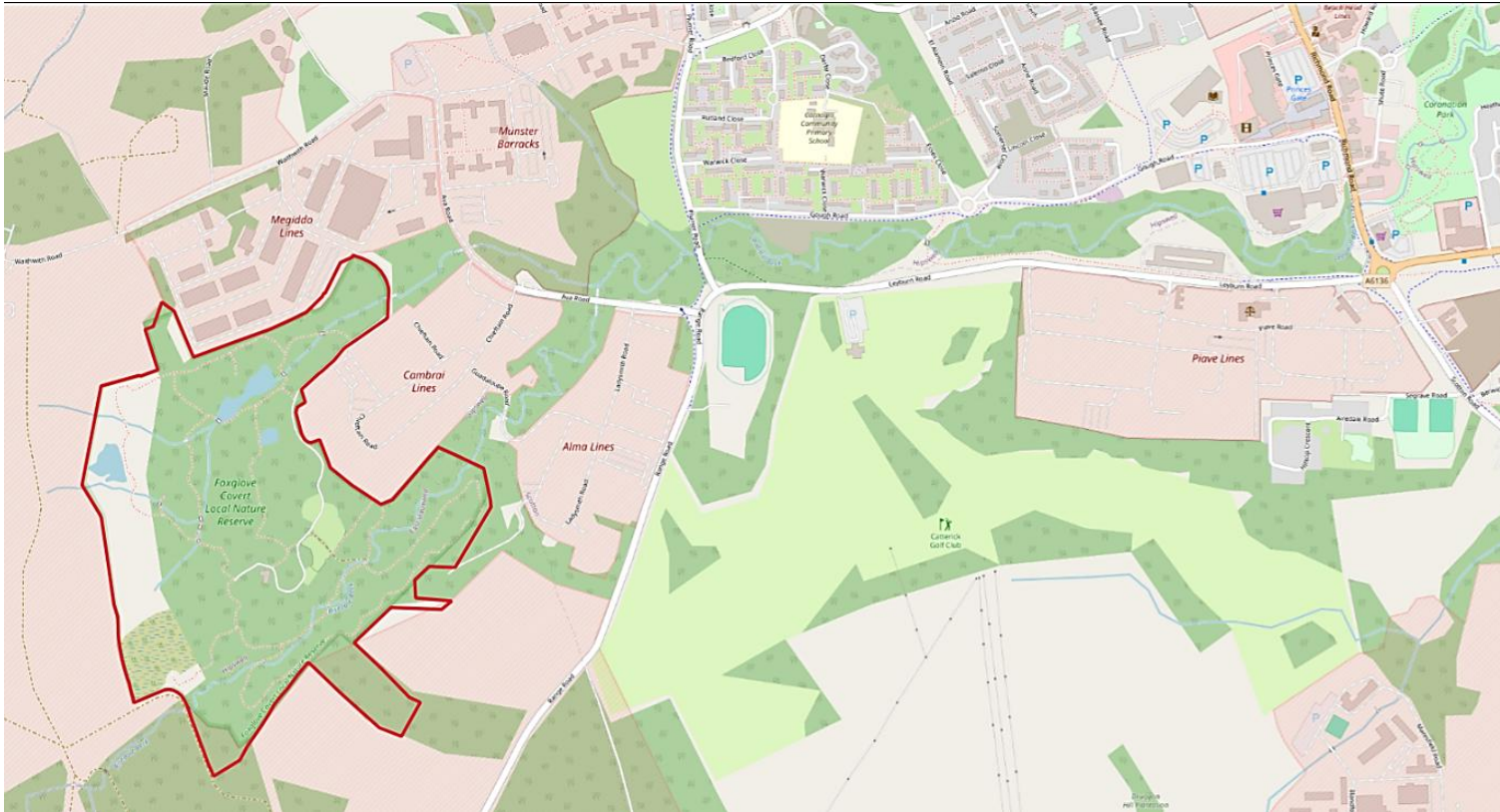
- Data is compiled on a weekly basis through work undertaken by the Species Team and thorough specialist input (eg odonata surveys/butterfly transects) all of this is held on a the master species database and much is now mapped through the QGIS mapping of the reserve. Reserve staff review this data regularly, and an annual Species meeting is held each December to review the impact of habitat work on the reserve. Further feedback comes from our partners – such as the Ministry of Defence/Defence Infrastructure Organisation, Forestry Commission, Plantlife and the Environment Agency.
- Trustees will be updated on progress with the Annual Work Plan each time they meet with staff.
- Trustees will undertake a reserve tour on at least an annual basis to evaluate developments.
- *Visitors:*
- Measurement by type and volume. Proxy measurement through car park income, possible use of ‘people counter’ at new car park.
- Volunteer days and numbers captured in reserve’s daily log

- Engagement with the military captured in daily log and reported 6 monthly at Catterick Training Area Conservation Group meeting.

(B) Performance against delivery:

- Outturn against the annual budget to be break even or better and this will include income from on-site activities.
- Delivery of the Annual Work Plan – Part A “Seasonal Work; Part B “Developmental Work”

Appendix A – site location and details



Site Details:

Reserve location – Off Ava Rd, Catterick Garrison, DL9 3PZ

Area – 39.77 hectares (98.23 acres)

Grid Reference – SE160970

Local Planning Authority – North Yorkshire Council

Conservation status – Declared Local Nature Reserve; Site of Local Conservation Importance; Ministry of Defence Conservation Area

what3words (Field Centre) – cheesy.mentioned.attitudes

Appendix B - Seasonal work calendar

Willow Carr

| Action | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--|-------|-------|-----|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-------|-------|
| Rotational coppicing/pollarding | Green | Green | | | | | | | | | Green | Green |
| Understory transplantation/seedling | | | | | Blue | Blue | | | Red | Red | | |
| Glade creation (where appropriate) | Green | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Monitoring | | | | | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | | | |
| Wood chipping (where appropriate) | Green | | | | | | | | | | | Green |

Risedale Beck

| Action | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Reactive repairs (failing dam, bank erosion, fallen trees) | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green |
| Hazel coppicing | Green | | | | | | | | | | Green | Green |
| Control of undesirable species (creeping thistle, bracken etc) & clearing primrose bank of scrub | | | | | | | Green | | Green | | | |

Mixed woodland

| Action | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Visual inspection of trees near paths | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green |
| Control of undesirable species (bracken) | | | | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | Green | | | |

Conifer plantation

| Action | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Removal of storm damage near paths | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ring barking 20% of tree stock, haloing broadleaves | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sowing of bilberry seeds | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Monitoring plantation for species following habitat improvements | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Waterbodies and associated habitats/infrastructure

| Action | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Seasonal removal of vegetation from ponds | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Maintenance of dams/pipes ¹ | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Control of undesirable species | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Monitor lake dam for damage | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Develop major wetland recovery project | | | | | | | | | | | | |

¹ Project work will reduce the number of pipes and solid dams. As the site develops, it will be necessary to maintain open channels and control water levels through sluices.

Heathland

| Action | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Scrub removal | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Turf stripping | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> seed collection and sowing | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Grassland

| Action | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Cutting, raking and stacking/baling for wildflowers | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cutting, raking and stacking/baling for waxcaps | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Path cutting | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Seed collection | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Seed distribution (where necessary) | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Other site-wide management actions

| Action | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Grass cutting – paths and selected net rides | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pollarding of selected net rides | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tool maintenance | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Site safety checks including timber inspection (boardwalks, hides, benches, gates, fences etc) | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Appendix C – Species of principal importance

Species recorded at Foxglove Covert LNR and listed as being of ‘principal importance in England’ in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006

| Common name | Taxon group |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Common Toad | Amphibian |
| Great Crested Newt | Amphibian |
| Sky Lark | Bird |
| Tree Pipit | Bird - infrequent |
| Nightjar | Bird - historic |
| Lesser Redpoll | Bird |
| Linnet | Bird |
| Hen Harrier | Bird - infrequent |
| Hawfinch | Bird - infrequent |
| Common Cuckoo | Bird - infrequent |
| Yellowhammer | Bird |
| Reed Bunting | Bird |
| Herring Gull | Bird |
| Grasshopper Warbler | Bird - infrequent |
| Spotted Flycatcher | Bird |
| Curlew | Bird |
| House Sparrow | Bird - infrequent |
| Tree Sparrow | Bird- infrequent |
| Grey Partridge | Bird |
| Willow Tit | Bird |
| Marsh Tit | Bird |
| Dunnock (Hedge Accentor) | Bird |
| Bullfinch | Bird |
| Turtle Dove | Bird - historic |
| Starling | Bird |
| Black Grouse | Bird – wider conservation area |
| Song Thrush | Bird |
| Lapwing | Bird |
| Dwarf Bristle-moss | Bryophyte |
| Small Heath | Butterfly |
| Wall | Butterfly |
| Brown/Sea Trout | Fish - bony |
| Water Vole | Mammal – historic (introduced) |
| Hedgehog | Mammal |
| Brown Hare | Mammal |

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Otter | Mammal |
| Noctule | Mammal |
| Soprano Pipistrelle | Mammal |
| Mud Snail | Mollusc |
| Grey Dagger | Moth |
| Knot Grass | Moth |
| Flounced Chestnut | Moth |
| Beaded Chestnut | Moth |
| Green-brindled Crescent | Moth |
| Ear Moth | Moth |
| Mouse Moth | Moth |
| Dusky Brocade | Moth |
| Garden Tiger | Moth |
| Sprawler | Moth |
| Centre-barred Sallow | Moth |
| Dark Brocade | Moth |
| Mottled Rustic | Moth |
| Crescent | Moth |
| Small Square-spot | Moth |
| Small Pheonix | Moth |
| September Thorn | Moth |
| Dusky Thorn | Moth |
| Autumnal Rustic | Moth |
| Spinach | Moth |
| Garden Dart | Moth |
| Double Dart | Moth |
| Ghost Moth | Moth |
| Rustic | Moth |
| Rosy Rustic | Moth |
| V-moth | Moth |
| Broom Moth | Moth |
| Rosy Minor | Moth |
| Shoulder-striped Wainscot | Moth |
| Powdered Quaker | Moth |
| Large Wainscot | Moth |
| Shaded Broad-bar | Moth |
| White Ermine | Moth |
| Buff Ermine | Moth |
| Hedge Rustic | Moth |
| Feathered Gothic | Moth |
| Blood Vein | Moth |
| Cinnabar | Moth |
| Sallow | Moth |
| Red Carpet | Moth |

| | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Heath Rustic | Moth |
| Cornflower | Vascular plant |
| Early Marsh-orchid | Vascular plant |
| Juniper | Vascular plant |
| Pillwort | Vascular plant |
| Marsh Stitchwort | Vascular plant |

Appendix D - Baseline statement of Ministry of Defence/military engagement.

Foxglove Covert Local Nature Reserve enjoys a unique relationship with the Ministry of Defence and our local military population based at Catterick Garrison. The MOD is much more than just our landlord. Vital support for our nature conservation and visitor engagement work is provided through an annual grant of £50,000 towards staffing costs. Other MOD support through Landmarc's maintenance teams, our Field Centre cleaning, gas, electricity and phonenumber enable us to continue our offer to the local community.

Currently, the site is regularly used by military families when off-duty, by the Personnel Recovery Centre for the physical and mental well-being of their clients and by school children from forces families through on-site educational activity and work experience placements.

High profile visitors are frequent, and their praise is universal – Rishi Sunak MP, “Fantastic! We’ll be back with my girls tomorrow!”; Brigadier N. Dalton OBE, “Wonderful!”; Colonel JD Billings OBE, “What an excellent resource and team!”

Our goal is to build on our positive relationship, but to become ever more relevant to military families. In order to achieve this, and in addition to our existing activities, we will:

- Expand our work with the Personnel Recovery Centre. This group will take responsibility for a part of the reserve (planned as a new wood meadow, in association with Plantlife International). The project will enhance the mosaic of habitats on the reserve through the development of traditional skills, it will also facilitate personal recovery for those involved in creating and managing the wood meadow.
- Work closely with Risedale College to develop additional opportunities for students and families newly arrived to Catterick Garrison. Foxglove Covert offers an excellent way for new arrivals to settle into their unfamiliar surroundings quickly.
- Work closely with Le Cateau, Carnagill, Cambrai, Wavell, Hipswell and Colburn Primary Schools, to ensure that younger children from military families are also given opportunities to enjoy the nature reserve and benefit from outreach work by our staff.
- Develop activities for both children and adult users of the Army Welfare Service. Foxglove Covert should become an integral part of their programme.
- Host military family events, such as ‘Welcome to Our World’, the Month of the Military Child photo exhibition at our Field Centre, working alongside the Service Children’s Champion, the Service Children’s Community Choir and with a VIP day at the reserve for the winning entries. (May 2023). Be a venue for MOD family Welfare Officers to bring their groups for inspiring days out.
- Provide an 6 monthly report to MOD/DIO staff at the Catterick Training Area Conservation Group meeting, placing engagement with MOD into the wider context of developments at the reserve.
- Apply for project funding to help finance and expand our work with military families (eg funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust)

Appendix E - Biosecurity Protocol

Biosecurity refers to a set of precautions that aim to prevent the introduction and spread of harmful organisms. These include non-native pests, such as insects, and disease-causing pathogens, such as some bacteria and fungi.

Pests and diseases can be transported between or within sites via a number of pathways, including:

- live plant and tree products, such as potted plants
- timber and wood packaging materials (WPM), such as shipping crates and pallets
- dirty tools, kit (e.g. pond-dipping nets), machinery and vehicles, such as hand tools, chainsaws, boots and vehicles
- soil and organic material, such as leaf litter
- natural methods, such as wind and water

There has been a significant increase in the number of non-native pests and diseases being introduced to the United Kingdom since the early 2000s. This demonstrates the need to take action to provide habitats and species with greater protection. By implementing appropriate biosecurity measures, we can significantly reduce the risk of introducing and spreading pests and diseases.

In order to manage the risk at Foxglove Covert Local Nature Reserve, we will follow the Check, Clean and Dry procedure:

Check

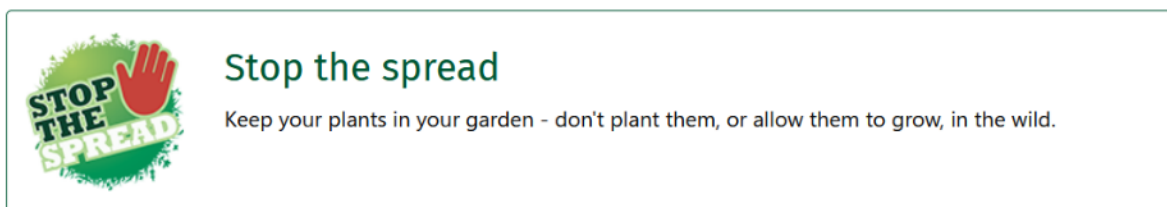
- After finishing your activity check your equipment, clothes and footwear for mud, animals (even small), and plant material.
- Remove anything you find and leave it at the site.
- Make sure you check nooks and hard to reach places on tools, nets and footwear.
- Don't forget to check the dog as they too can carry invasive species from the last place they visited.

Clean

- Once away from the natural environment, clean everything thoroughly as soon as you can.
- Some equipment can be cleaned using hot water. This is a quick and effective method to clean equipment and kit. It is recommended you submerge for about 15 minutes at around 45 degrees. This will kill most aquatic invasive non-native species.
- For everything else, clean using water and a damp cloth or a boot brush. Don't forget the hard to reach places in equipment and footwear.

Dry

- Drain equipment, such as buckets.
- It's vital to dry equipment, footwear and clothing for as long as possible before using elsewhere.



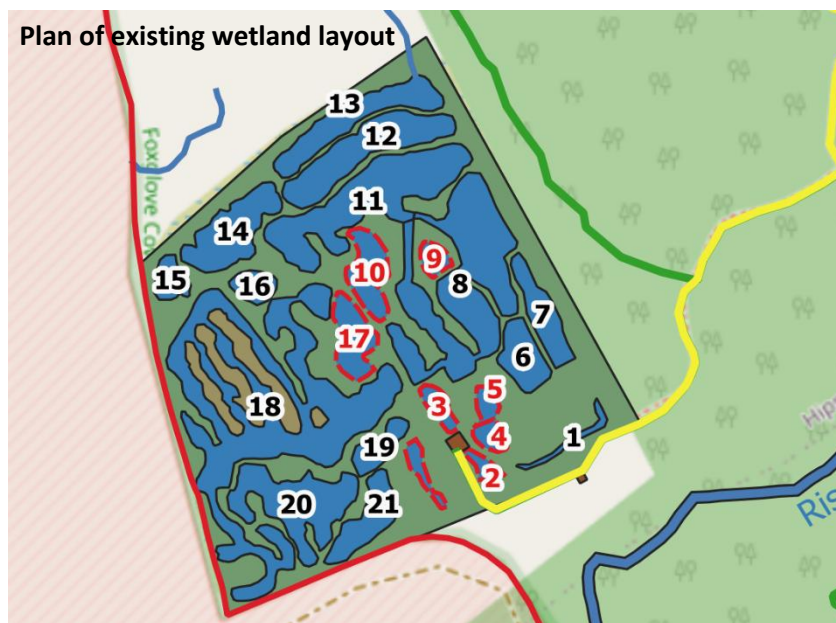
As people visiting Foxglove Covert are a potential main source of biosecurity problems, we will raise awareness of this important issue through posters and information within the Field Centre and hides, along with instructions when families and other visitors book in to do higher risk activities such as pond dipping. We will also introduce a biosecurity policy section to our website.

In addition to the above protocol, Foxglove Covert should keep a stock of:

- Cleankill sanitising spray – approved by the Animal and Plant Health Agency, and known to be effective preventing the introduction and spread of Phytophthora species.
- Virkon S – approved by the Animal and Plant Health Agency, and known to be effective against avian influenza.

Appendix F – Wetland project proposal – habitat works

The existing wetland layout comprises of difficult to maintain, steep sided ponds connected by pipework.



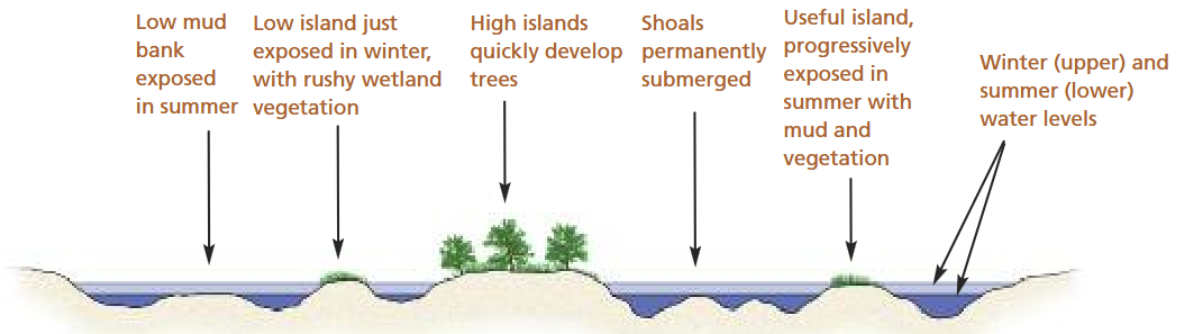
Very few birds use this area due to the lack of feeding areas and visitors using the Wetland Hide have little to see. The project will improve connectivity between the ponds, improve the habitat through the creation of open channels between a larger bodies of water, punctuated by sluices to allow deliberate management of water levels. Improved pond profiles will maximise the availability of mud for

plants, invertebrates and birds. The wetland outline will change over the seasons according to water levels. Undulating drawdown zones will create muddy islands and spits during drier seasons, creating a more valuable space for wildlife.

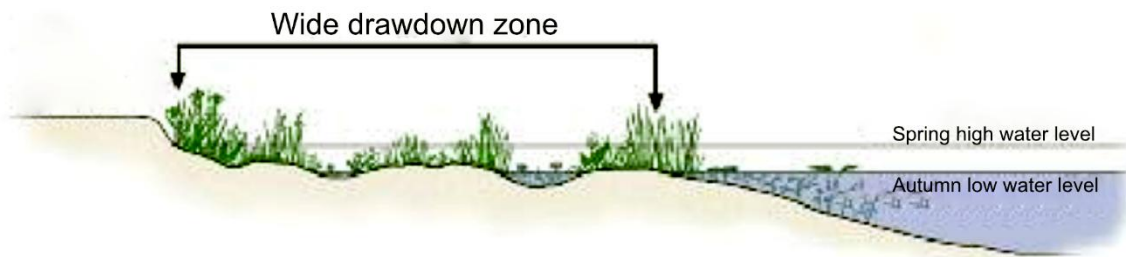
The works should not entail a complete reconfiguration of the wetland, rather a reworking of the existing layout and ponds.

The proposal aims to keep the existing, isolated flagship ponds which have become degraded through ecological succession. Work outside of this project will aim to improve the condition of these ponds.

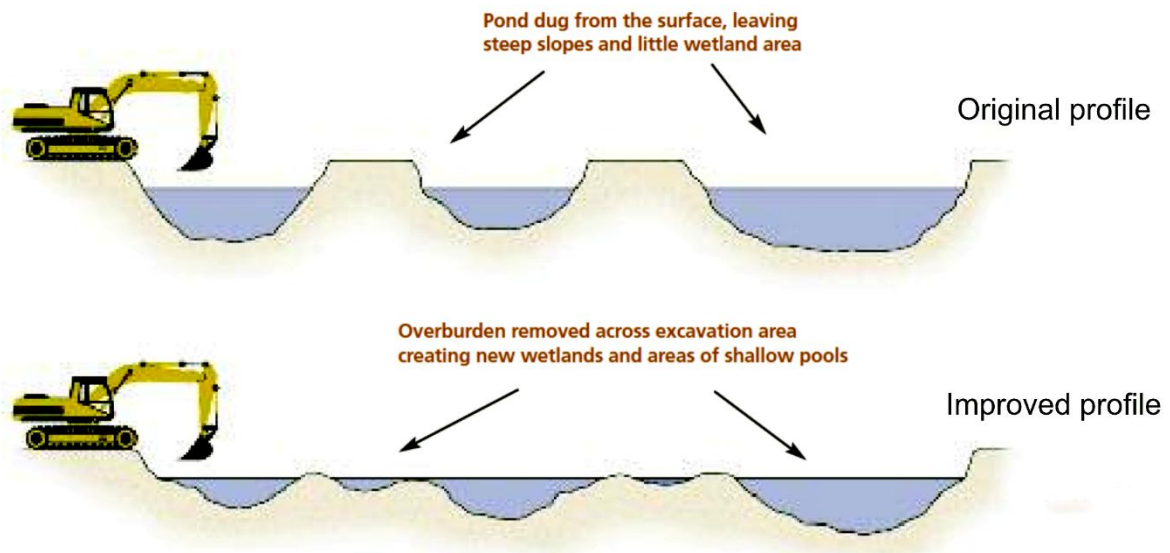




Carefully planned profile work will lead to more varied habitat



Seasonal water level change will benefit and encourage a wider range of species



This project will rework existing pond profiles and layout, rather than digging new ponds – better for resident species

Appendix G – Munster Barracks – planned 2027 building works

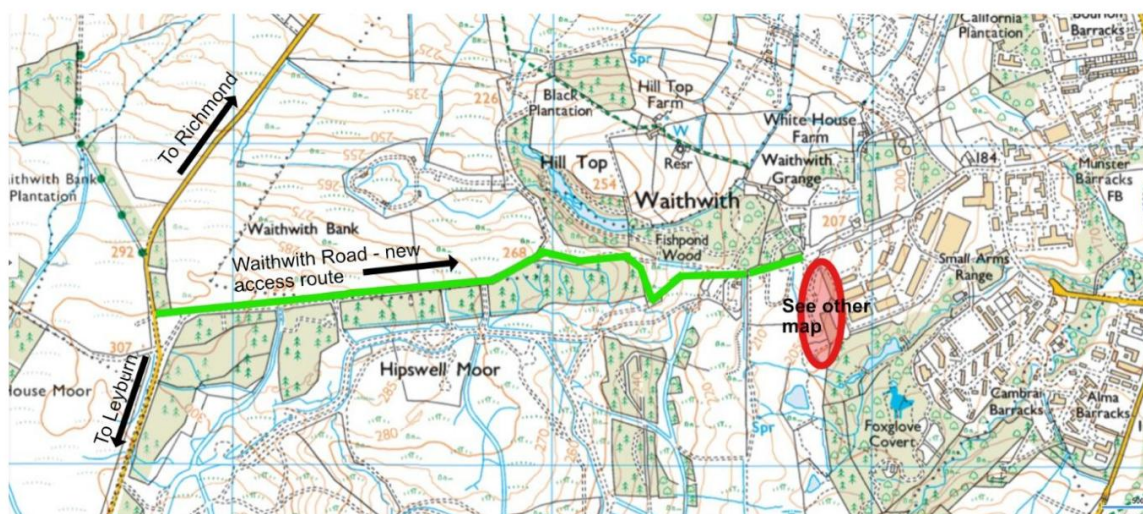
In January 2025 the Foxglove Covert Foundation were informed that following the departure of the Royal Lancers in 2027, a major series of demolition and building works are to take place at Munster Barracks, which adjoins the north-eastern boundary of the reserve. Crucially, this area includes the single point of access to the reserve through the security gate and access track.

The barracks will become home to 1st UK Division, one of three UK Divisional Headquarters, and a base for additional units. Building work is scheduled to take three years, though in reality four years of disruption are anticipated.

Due to the sensitive nature of developments at Munster Barracks and because of the risk to people coming to the reserve through a building site, a new entrance has been developed as a project between the Foxglove Covert Foundation, the Catterick Training Area, Catterick Garrison and Tilbury Douglas Construction Ltd. In August 2025, Tilbury constructed a new car park, access track, coach park and pedestrian linkage paths as a Social Value project at no cost to the Foxglove Covert Foundation or the MOD. Recycled material for the road, car park and paths are from the nearby site of the new Catterick Integrated Care Centre.

The new entrance is accessed from the road which runs from Holly Hill on the outskirts of Richmond, through Brokes, to Halfpenny House near Bellerby. The turn-off for the new car park is heading east along Waithwith Road across the training area, towards the Garrison.

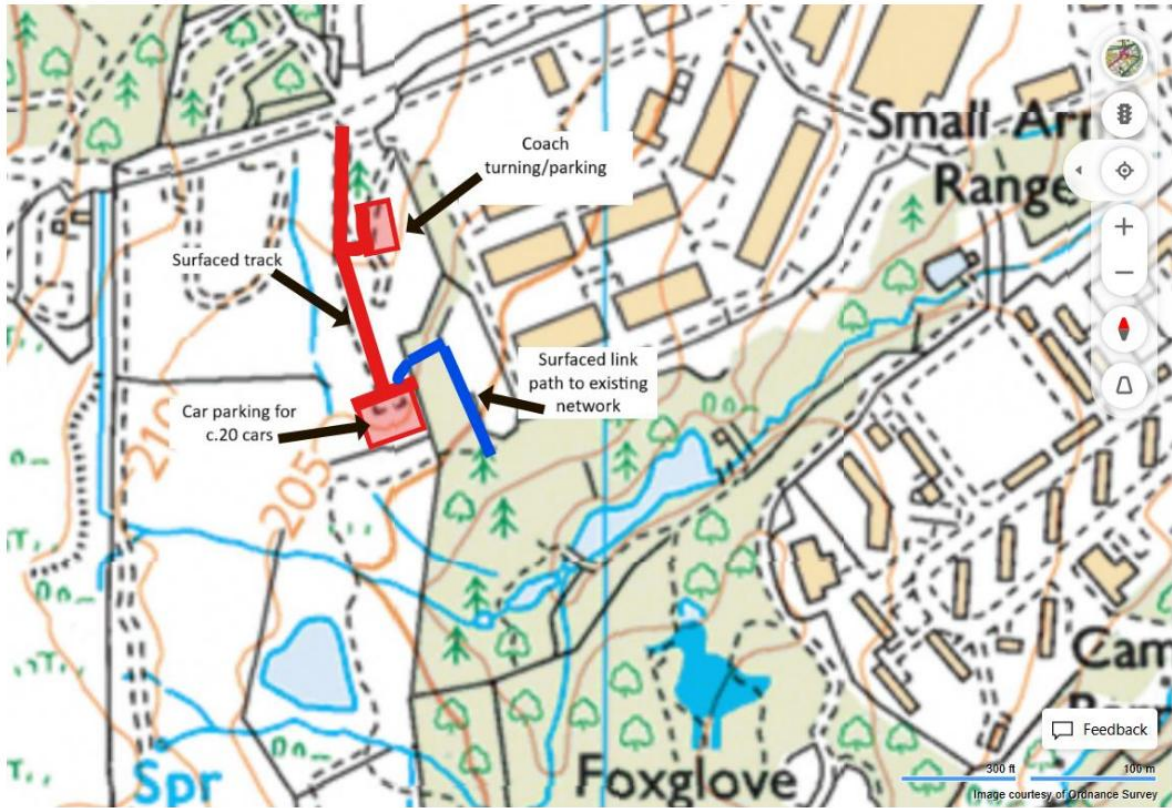
Foxglove Covert LNR new entrance – context map



A number of projects concerning signage, communications, path upgrades and visitor infrastructure are underway at the time of writing, with a view to opening the new entrance in the first half of 2026.

In September 2025, the Foxglove Covert Foundation was informed that it had been successful in bidding for funds from the Ministry of Defence Conservation Stewardship Fund. From April 2026, £30,000 is available to implement accessibility works within the reserve boundary.

Location detail map



Endnotes

ⁱ <https://www.ywt.org.uk/StateofNature>

ⁱⁱ Woodland Trust - [Hedgerows - British Habitats - Woodland Trust](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ The Independent - [Nearly all British wildflower meadows have been eradicated, prompting calls for urgent government action | The Independent | The Independent](#)

^{iv} 1st Review 25/09/2025 – as a result of accelerated project work relating to the new entrance on Waithwith Road

^v Here ‘wilding’ is preferred to the more commonly used ‘rewilding’ as the reserve exists through human intervention and actions. Natural rewilding can be considered (eg Beaver introduction for dams and willow management) but more likely are human interventions replicating the actions of nature eg ring-barking to create standing deadwood.

^{vi} The rationale for our policy on dogs can be found here - https://www.lincstrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-03/dogs_and_nature_conservation.pdf

^{vii} For details of the Water Framework Directive see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/407/contents>