

**Graham Flexman**

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**From:** Mandy Hayes <mandyhayes.tiptoe@btinternet.com>  
**Sent:** 16 August 2023 13:44  
**To:** Graham Flexman  
**Cc:** Bob Lord; pampetherbridge8@gmail.com; Ann Gorman; Steve Clark  
**Subject:** Local Nature Reserve Status - Cost Benefit Analysis - Ballard Water Meadow and Barton Common  
**Attachments:** Cost Benefit Analysis v.1.xlsx; LNR Proposal Final 2023.pdf

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Dear Graham

As you know, The Friends of Ballard Water Meadow are keen to progress the proposal for Local Nature Reserve Status for Ballard Water Meadow and Barton Common. Bob Lord mentioned to me that you would like to see a Cost Benefit Analysis of the project and I have now had the opportunity to work on this.

Please find attached the spreadsheet I have prepared. My notes are as follows:

1. There are two tabs. One for Financial and one for Non-Financial. Obviously there are many advantages to this project that can not be costed in financial terms but which have huge benefits for the community.
2. I have set up the Financial spreadsheet to allow you to enter your own costings as obviously I don't know the costs of administration etc at NMTC. The blue cells can be amended and the spreadsheet is set up to calculate the cost at the bottom. If you'd like to run through this, please do give me a call!

We had a FWBM Committee meeting yesterday evening and discussed this. Our thoughts were that should NMTC like to proceed with the project, FBWM would be willing to make a contribution towards the set up costs and we would be happy to discuss this with you. And, as previously stated, we would be very happy to help with any administration/form filling etc!

I've also attached our original proposal which should be read in conjunction with the spreadsheet. Do let me know if you require any further information.

Would you be able to confirm whether this will be on the next Amenities Committee meeting in September and that you are able to circulate this information to Councillors in advance?

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Kind regards

Mandy Hayes  
The Friends of Ballard Water Meadow  
07552 834770



# **The Friends of Ballard Water Meadow**

**Proposal to designate  
Ballard Water Meadow & Woodland  
and  
Barton Common  
as  
Local Nature Reserves**

March 2023





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# 1. Overview

The Friends of Ballard Water Meadow (FBWM) would like to support New Milton Town Council (NMTC) with their designation of Ballard Water Meadow & Woodland and Barton Common as Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) in 2023.

Both sites were classified as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in the late 1990s. Since then, many people have been involved in the planning, wildlife surveys and habitat management work for both wildlife and community benefit. Over the years, the knowledge of their habitats and wildlife has increased enormously.

Both sites are extensively used and loved by the local community.

Land is under constant pressure for housing and development, so it is a miracle that both these sites, situated in a semi-urban location, and more extensive in the past, have survived.

With the current dramatic loss of wildlife and threat to the climate, the FBWM feel strongly that it is our duty, the duty of NMTC and the desire of the whole community to ensure we retain as much land for nature as possible. Designating the two sites as Local Nature Reserves will provide statutory protection over and above their classification as SINCs and ensure their future.

## Did you know....

- The Friends of Ballard Water Meadow worked 1582 voluntary hours in 2022 at Ballard. This does not include the Committee admin time and community liaison.
- About 100 species of flowers and grasses have been identified at Ballard.
- 40 species of birds have been identified at Ballard, 25 of which hold breeding territories.
- The woodland at Ballard has a number of ancient woodland indicator species such as bluebells and wood anemones. It is likely that Woar Copse has been a woodland since at least the 1600's.
- Wildflower meadows in the UK have declined by 97% since the 1930's. This makes our meadow at Ballard even more special.



*Data is currently being collated for Barton which is new to the management overseen by Bob Lord.*



## 2. The Benefits

The benefits for wildlife and nature generally, the community, NMTC and all involved at the two sites are numerous. These include:

1. **Recognition.** Awarding Local Nature Reserve status would be wonderful recognition for the many hours, and years in some cases, invested by all the people involved including FBWM, local volunteer groups, New Forest Land Advice Service, the local community and NMTC.
2. **Coronation Legacy.** 2023 is the year of King Charles III's Coronation. With Charles' love of nature and retaining and restoring habitats and wildlife, creating two Local Nature Reserves in the area would be a fitting tribute and legacy for NMTC in this very special year.
3. **Wildlife protection.** Helping to safeguard both sites for nature for generations to come with a statutory designation. With fewer places for wildlife, nature in decline and the threat of climate change, this is more important than ever.
4. **Education.** The designation of Nature Reserve at both sites will indicate their educational value and it is hoped that this will encourage more schools and young people to visit and get involved.
4. **Green Infrastructure.** New Milton has been lucky to have been chosen by New Forest District Council (NFDC) to pilot a Green Infrastructure initiative. Linking in the Local Nature Reserves would further demonstrate NMTC commitment to this project and wildlife protection in general.
5. **Respect.** Simplification of the names to Ballard Nature Reserve and Barton Common Nature Reserve immediately signals to users the very special nature of the sites and the respect they deserve.
6. **Local Pride.** Many of the surrounding areas have both Nature Reserves and Local Nature Reserves: Milford on Sea, Lymington and Keyhaven, Christchurch. Why not New Milton? A project for the whole community to be proud of.

The FBWM can see no disadvantages to this proposal, only advantages for wildlife and people in future.

### 3. What would change with LNR designation?



1. Currently both sites are known as SINCSSs, which are classified, in Hampshire, by Hampshire County Council and provide a minimum level of protection. Designation to LNR status will provide statutory protection. This not only provides an extra level of protection for the actual sites, but also ensures that any adjoining development proposed nearby, may be far more sympathetic towards increasing or extending biodiversity locally, especially in close proximity to these special sites.
2. The signage at Ballard is currently being updated by NMTC and this provides an ideal opportunity to make this change in 2023. Most people do not understand what a SINC is and a change of name to Nature Reserve would make it immediately very clear about the status and what is so special about the sites. It would also make the names much shorter and the notice boards more elegant!

**Ballard Water Meadow & Woodland, A Site of Importance for Nature Conservation**

would become

**Ballard Nature Reserve**

and

**Barton Common, A Site of Importance for Nature Conservation**

would become

**Barton Common Nature Reserve**

*Note*

By keeping the name for Ballard short, it may be advantageous should the Local Nature Reserve be extended in future to include adjacent wildlife habitat, also held by NMTC and currently classified as SINC.

## 4. What would stay the same with LNR designation?

1. Visitor access would remain the same. There would be no plans to restrict the amenity to the public.
2. Management Plans and the adopted Habitat Management Policies for both sites would remain unaltered

## 5. The Cost

1. The cost to designate both sites should be minimal.
2. The signage is currently being updated at Ballard so no further costs for signs would be incurred at this site. When and if the signage at Barton Common is updated to the new heritage-style board, this could be included.
3. There would be some small costs involved in advertising the change of status such as local press advertisements and the admin time to respond to any queries.
4. Any celebratory event cost should also be minimal and we are sure that FBWM and the local communities would be willing to help with this.





## 6. The Process of Creating a LNR

Outline steps (for full details of the process see Appendix (iii))

Please note that FBWM would like to provide as much support as possible during this process.

1. Contact the local Natural England expressing interest in submitting Ballard Meadow and Woodland and Barton Common forward for Local Nature Reserve status.
2. At the same time as (1) above, contact NFDC's legal team for authority to proceed with the declaration
3. Contact local residents for support and feedback
4. Inform Environment Agency, Local Wildlife Trust and New Forest Land Advice Service at the same time the public consultation starts
5. Once the consultation period is over, contact Natural England to request written approval.
6. Celebrate!





## 7. Support/People/Contacts



The Chairman of the FWBM, Bob Lord, would be happy to discuss the process further with NMTC and provide support throughout the process. Bob Lord has extensive experience in creating LNRs and this further supports the reason to move forward with this initiative in 2023 whilst we can all benefit from having Bob at the helm.

### **Friends of Ballard Water Meadow**

- Bob Lord / robertlord123@btinternet.com / 07905 249587
- Mandy Hayes (admin/support) /mandyhayes.tiptoe@btinternet.com/07552 834770

### **Natural England**

- Liz Allison / Liz.Allinson-Thomas@naturalengland.org.uk
- David Jeffrys /david.jeffrys@naturalengland.org.uk

**New Forest District Council:** customer.services@nfdc.gov.uk

**Environment Agency:** paul.newman@environment-agency.gov.uk

**Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust:** Beechcroft House, Vicarage Lane, Curdridge, Hants SO32 2DP

**New Forest Land Advice Service:** enquiries@nflandadvice.org.uk

## 8. Appendices

Link to Local Nature Reserves in England: A guide to their selection and declaration	Appendix (i)
Link to Biodiversity duty: public authority duty to have regard to conserving biodiversity	Appendix (ii)
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## **Appendix (i) Link to:**

### **Local Nature Reserves in England: A guide to their selection and declaration**

*(copy and paste to go to document)*

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20140605125415/http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/31039?category=15005>

## **Appendix (ii) Link to:**

### **Biodiversity duty: public authority duty to have regard to conserving biodiversity**

*(copy and paste to go to document)*

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-duty-public-authority-duty-to-have-regard-to-conserving-biodiversity>

## Appendix (iii) LNR Designation The Process in Detail

1. Contact the local Natural England team (Liz.Allinson-Thomas@naturalengland.org.uk) copied to the national lead (david.jeffrys@naturalengland.org.uk) expressing interest in submitting Ballard Meadow and Woodland and Barton Common forward for Local Nature Reserve status, enclosing the Management Plan, a map showing the TCs land holding, length of tenure etc., as well as information on the FBWM as community volunteer group and any survey information. Also provide information on existing HLS Agreement (start date, ref number, end date etc). See below pro-forma used for applicants to complete, which may help, to be attached to documents for NE assessment (partly-completed in red). Basically, as much information as possible to make NE's job a bit easier, which always helps.
2. In the meantime contact NFDC's estates and legal team for authority to proceed with the declaration. The Town Council may or may not need this, but as the site is technically NFDC land, leased to NMTC, this would be out of courtesy. I see no reason why NFDC should refuse, as they've supported other land for declaration within the District (eg Milford on Sea, 2008).
3. Contact local residents within a limited radius of the sites by mailshot, or wider via the website, on-site notices or local press announcements of the proposals to declare the site LNR. Set a deadline of a month and have ready responses to allay any fears with regard to concerns or comments. For example::
  1. Encouraging more people/destroying nature, more dogs etc
  2. Cul-de-sac car parking, blocking roads. Parking issues along Lake Grove Road (currently restricted during 11:00 – 11:30).
  3. Restricting access in future, more about nature than people etc
  4. More paths created, destroying more of the area?
  5. What's wrong with it as it is, wasting money on formalising the site
  6. Letters of thanks for support for the proposal
4. Whilst not statutory consultees, inform Hampshire County Council (HBIC), Environment Agency, Local Wildlife Trust and New Forest Land Advice Service at the same time the public consultation starts, again out of courtesy.
5. Once the consultation period is over and all is right with the world, fears allayed and concerns addressed, contact Natural England to request written approval to formally declare the site under section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (or the more modern equivalent if amended).
6. Following approval from Natural England the way is clear to formally declare the site. A plaque, a certificate, press release, launch event at a suitable venue (Mayor's speech, Amenities Committee chairman speech, FBWM representative speech – the list goes on.....) fanfare, trumpets, buns, champagne, fireworks etc for New Milton's first (of many, perhaps) Local Nature Reserves.



# Appendix (iv)

## Suggested Cover Note to Natural England re Ballard

(insert address of Local Team/e-mail local contact)

### LOCAL NATURE RESERVES – Informal Proposal (*example is Ballard Nature Reserve*)

New Milton Town Council understands that it is helpful to Natural England to have as much information as possible in order to assess the proposal for Local Nature Reserve status.

Name of Site: *Ballard Nature Reserve* Area (ha): *4.25ha*

OS Grid Reference (centre of site): *SZ240957*

County/District/Parish: *Hampshire/New Forest/New Milton*

Declaring Authority: *New Milton Town Council*

Current status: *HCC classified Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (1998)*

Is a map attached at min 1:10,000 scale showing the site boundary: *Yes/No*

Tenure: *Owned/Part-owned/Leased/Other (please describe below)*

Other interested parties: *New Forest District Council/Friends of Ballard Water Meadow*

Have habitats/species been surveyed/mapped: *Yes (please refer to HBIC surveys and expand below)*

Are there geological features present: *Yes/No*

Is the site used by schools: *Yes*

Are there public rights of way: *No* Open access: *Yes*

Is there a Management Plan: *Yes (please attach the full plan – not extracts)*

Does the Plan include the following:

Site description: *Yes*

Past use of the site: *Yes*

Known constraints (wayleaves, tenancies, common rights etc): *Yes/No*

Management policies/objectives/prescriptions: *Yes*

Capital/revenue costs: *Yes/No*

Staff complement: *Yes/No*

Access management: *Yes*

Links/liaison with local community/volunteers: *Yes*

Tenure – please describe arrangements if necessary:

*Landowner New Forest District Council. New Milton Town Council, 999-year lease from 2005*

*Continued/...*

## Appendix (iv) Suggested Cover Note to Natural England re Ballard / Page 2

Any other information (surveys etc): Please attach.

*HBIC habitat surveys 1998-2011*

*Plant surveys 2019-2022*

*Insect Survey 2020 and 2021*

*Common Bird Census 2020-2022*

*Butterfly transect 2019-2022*

*Stream Survey (Chemical analysis and invertebrates)*

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Higher Level Stewardship documents (Ref No:        )

Form completed by:

Date:

Contact details:

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# Appendix (v) Example of Statutory Notice

09/2008

## New protection for Milford Pleasure Grounds and common



**A green future: horses graze on Studland Common in front of the Pleasure Grounds**

MILFORD-ON-SEA Parish Council will soon reach a target set six years ago when it officially designates one of the village's beauty spots as a Local Nature Reserve.

The council first announced its plans for the designation in 2002 when it teamed up with residents to compile a village design statement. Now, empowered by New Forest District Council's cabinet, it will make the move on November 1st to protect the Pleasure Grounds and Studland Common.

The desire to maintain the 20.59 hectares of ancient semi-natural woodland and rich grassland common as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) was also one of over 50 community aspirations in Milford's Parish vision 2020 Action Plan.

Despite the LNR declaration, dog walkers will still be allowed on the land as long as they pick up after their animals and keep them under control. Unwanted developments can be kept away, however, while the council and volunteers continue in their bid to enhance biodiversity for wildlife and preserve the footpath network for use by the wider community.

The parish council owns the woodlands and common and manages it under a Forestry Commission English Woodland Grant Scheme. It has been helped by the Milford Environment Group (MEG), the Wildlife Recording Group (WRG), Hampshire Conservation Volunteers (HCV), New Forest Conservation Volunteers and Natural England.

The Local Nature Reserve designation has been brought about by the community for the community and is testament to the dedication of local volunteers and the parish council who work tirelessly in the woodlands and on the common to provide an area of out-

standing beauty for people and wildlife," said parish clerk Keith Metcalf.

Mr Metcalf also expressed the council's thanks to all the voluntary groups, particularly WRG chairman Tony Locke, MEG chairman Phil Gossling and county councillor Alan Rice.

"Tony, Phil and Alan attend just about every task day session and can be seen turning their hands to any task that requires doing. Without our volunteer help, the parish council work on these amenity open spaces just wouldn't be possible without digging much deeper into the budget coffers."

The woodland management work will continue with the HCV commencing a five-year plan this weekend to gradually unweave an ancient boundary ditch and a former drovers trackway. Set between the common and the woodland, the track was originally used to collect and drive animals between the low waterside pasture and the higher heath / common pasture.

It is believed that the cleared area will enable the floristic and faunal diversity to re-establish. The conservationists will annually tractor-hill the recreated trackway, along with all the grass footways on Studland Common, to keep it open for residents and visitors to use.

Five-year-old steel access barriers, which have either been vandalised or are beyond repair, will also be replaced using a joint county council and New Forest National Park partnership grant. Access points will be upgraded to include 'squeeze-gaps' and two-way wooden gates large enough for mowing equipment and dumper trucks to get through.

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

#### **National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 DECLARATION OF NATURE RESERVE**

PARISH OF: Milford-on-Sea  
COUNTY OF: Hampshire

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN in pursuance of Section 19 and 21 of the above-mentioned Act that by the Local Nature Reserve Declaration Pleasure Grounds and Studland Common No. 1 Declaration made on the 15th day of September 2008, 20.59 hectares or thereabouts situated at the Pleasure Grounds and Studland Common in the Parish of Milford-on-Sea in the County of Hampshire is in the ownership of the Parish Council and is the subject of an Agreement entered into with the New Forest District Council under Section 5.21 of the above-mentioned Act and that the said land is being managed as a Nature Reserve.

Certified copies of the said Declaration with plans attached have been deposited for public inspection free of charge at the Parish Office of 2 Park Road, Milford-on-Sea and are available for inspection Monday to Friday 10am till noon.

Dated this 30th day of September 2008

Keith Metcalf  
Parish Clerk

# The Friends of Ballard Water Meadow Proposal to Designate Ballard Water Meadow & Woodland and Barton Common as Local Nature Reserves

## Cost Benefit Analysis

### Non-Financial Factors

Category	Benefit	LNR Status
Social	Recognition	Awarding Local Nature Reserve status would be wonderful recognition for the many hours, and years in some cases, invested by all the people involved including FBWM, local volunteer groups, New Forest Land Advice Service, the local community and NMTC. In 2022, the Ballard volunteers worked 1582 hours. Does not include any of the admin time to manage this project.
Social	Loyalty	LNR status encourages volunteers to be loyal supporters of the management plan. It provides a sense of worth of the project.
Social	Education	The designation of Nature Reserve at both sites will indicate their educational value and it is hoped that this will encourage more schools and young people to visit and get involved.
Social	Local Pride	Many of the surrounding areas have both Nature Reserves and Local Nature Reserves: Milford on Sea, Lymington and Keyhaven, Christchurch. Why not New Milton? A project for the whole community to celebrate and be proud of providing a sense of 'place'.
Social	Coronation Legacy	2023 is the year of King Charles III's Coronation. With Charles' love of nature and retaining and restoring habitats and wildlife, creating two Local Nature Reserves in the area would be a fitting tribute and legacy for NMTC in this very special year.
Environmental	Wildlife Protection	Helping to safeguard both sites for nature for generations to come with a statutory designation. With fewer places for wildlife, nature in decline and the threat of climate change, this is more important than ever.
Environmental	Green Infrastructure	New Milton has been lucky to have been chosen by New Forest District Council (NFDC) to pilot a Green Infrastructure initiative. Linking in the Local Nature Reserves would further demonstrate NMTC commitment to this project and wildlife protection in general.
Environmental	Respect	Simplification of the names to Ballard Nature Reserve and Barton Common Nature Reserve immediately signals to users the very special nature of the sites and the respect they deserve.
Economic	Increase in visitors to New Milton Eco Tourism	Although an unknown quantity, the raising of the status of Ballard to Local Nature Reserve will raise interest in the area and give people another reason to visit the town. Barton Common in particular may benefit with its proximity to the ECF (England Coast Footpath)

# The Friends of Ballard Water Meadow Proposal to Designate Ballard Water Meadow & Woodland and Barton Common as Local Nature Reserve

## Cost Benefit Analysis

### Financial Factors

(Change blue cells to update spreadsheet)

Item	Current cost	LNR cost	Notes
LNR NMTC annual maintenance cost	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,000.00	
LNR NMTC annual insurance	£ 500.00	£ 500.00	No change from current maintenance of Ballard
LNR Signage update	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,000.00	No change
LNR Administration of LNR set up	£ -	£ 100.00	No change. The signage is in the process of being updated. There is obviously a cost to this but no extra cost will be incurred if LNR status is awarded.
LNR Advertising	£ -	£ 50.00	Much of the administration can be prepared by FBWM for free with NMTC sending out the necessary forms and letters. Cost by NMTC hourly rate for doing this?
LNR letters to local residents	£ -	£ 100.00	Advertisement in A&T - cost?
LNR Responding to public enquiries	£ -	£ 100.00	We have been advised that when Eastleigh Borough Council (Hocombe Mead) went through the process, they sent out letters to 517 local residents, posted 3 notices at access points and advertised on their website. They received 16 responses and only 6 people raised concerns.
LNR Ongoing administration	£ 250.00	£ 250.00	FBWM can help prepare the answers to most queries that may be raised by the public and help in preparing responses. Cost by NMTC hourly rate for doing this?
LNR Volunteer Hours	£ 16,484.00	£ 16,484.00	No change from current administration of Ballard
			Ballard Volunteers worked 1582 hours in 2022. At minimum wage of £10.42 this equates to £16484. It is hoped that a LNR status would encourage more people to become involved and increase the number of hours worked. This could well offset any extra administration cost to set up the LNR.



LNR Celebration	£	-	£	-	FBWM can arrange an event along the lines of Meadow Day. Contributions gratefully received from NMTC but not necessary.
Totals	£	19,234.00	£	19,584.00	
<b>Total financial cost of LNR</b>			<b>£ 350.00</b>		<b>This could be offset by more community involvement.</b>