

BISHOPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Bishopstone Pond & Island Management Plan

Approved by Parish Council on 14 November 2011

Introduction

Bishopstone Pond and Island is held in the legal ownership of Bishopstone Parish Council, for the benefit of all residents of the Parish. As with much of the village of Bishopstone, the Pond & Island enjoy conservation area status.

When ownership of the Pond & Island was transferred from the Church Commissioners to the Parish Council in 2004, the Parish Council delegated management responsibility for the area to the Pond & Island Committee; that responsibility was handed back to the Parish Council in July 2008.

It is therefore the responsibility of the Parish Council to ensure that:

1. The Pond & Island are properly maintained as a peaceful and attractive village amenity, for the benefit of all residents of the Parish
2. The natural biodiversity and heritage of the Pond & Island are maintained
3. Arrangements are in place to ensure an appropriate degree of safety, including insurance cover.

The shed on the Island is the property of Bishopstone School (“the School”), who also installed the raised allotment beds and the surrounding fence; other areas of the Island are used from time to time by the School for educational purposes. These arrangements are not covered by any documentation, and are therefore currently at the discretion of the Parish Council. It is therefore intended, to regularise the position, in the best interests of all parties, including residents of the Parish.

Aim

The aim of this document is to introduce a management plan for the Pond & Island, to ensure that the above responsibilities are met. It will replace the Bishopstone Pond & Island Handbook, of which the Parish Council has seen a draft copy dated Spring 2008.

Usage by the School

The Parish Council is content that the School should enjoy usage of the fenced-off area, including the allotment beds and their shed for storage of tools and equipment, subject to:

1. Continuation of the current high standards of cultivation and appearance
2. An annual statement of intent to be given to the Parish Council that the School wishes the current arrangements to continue
3. Acceptance of the maintenance and notice arrangements as detailed below
4. Formal review by the Parish Council every three years

Maintenance responsibilities

1. **The School.** As the allotment beds within the fenced-off area are intended for the cultivation of flowers and vegetables, the Parish Council requires that this area and the shed be maintained to a high standard appropriate for such purposes and in recognition of the overall use of the Island by residents of the Parish. Should there be a falling off of these standards, this will be brought to the attention of the School, if appropriate in writing, by the Parish Council, and a reasonable timescale agreed for correction. If the standards of maintenance continue to decline and following a written reminder, notice to quit may be served by the Parish Council.
2. **Parish Council.** The Pond & the remainder of the Island will be maintained by the

Parish Council to a standard that is commensurate with it being an amenity for parishioners to enjoy and a safe area and habitat for as much wildlife as possible. Grass will be left long and cut to a height about 6 inches in July (after any wild flowers have set seed) and September, with the mowings raked off and composted. Tree maintenance will be carried out from time to time, with the approval of the Arboricultural Officer of Swindon Borough Council and further guidance will be sought as necessary from relevant countryside organisations.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Parish Council cannot take any responsibility for the shed, any contents, the allotment beds or the surrounding fence; these items are not covered by the Parish Council's insurance policies.

Notice Arrangements

It is possible that the Parish Council may at some time in the future require the space occupied by the allotment beds and the shed for other purposes. Equally, it is possible that the enthusiasm and current high standards of cultivation and maintenance displayed by the School may reduce to the extent that it may wish these arrangements to end.

Having regard to the above, at least six months' formal notice to quit may be given by the Parish Council. If notice to quit is given, both parties will enter into discussions about the future ownership, maintenance and use of the shed and allotment beds, with a spirit of goodwill.

Funding

The Parish Council will endeavour to set aside sufficient funds each year through the precept for its responsibilities, and to maintain adequate reserve funds to deal with unforeseen contingencies.

Safety

A risk assessment will be carried out by the Parish Council in conjunction with the School, (whilst they remain in occupancy) and reviewed annually or in the event of an incident.

The level of public access will be determined by the Parish Council in light of the risk assessment and the available insurance cover.

Insurance Cover

It is the responsibility of the Parish Council to ensure that appropriate insurance cover is in place, including third party/public liability insurance cover, with an indemnity limit recommended by insurers and agreed by the Parish Council.

Review

This management plan will be reviewed annually, on the anniversary of its adoption, or as required.