

Saxtead Green Management Recommendations

Based on the surveys carried out by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust in April and June 2011, the following recommendations have been suggested as a way forward to both maintain some parts of the Green in its current condition and to improve some parts of the Green in others. By improvement it is intended to increase the amount of grass sward that is returned to an annual hay cut. This will be achieved by either:

- i) Managing existing trees by crown lifting branches or thinning out unwanted saplings, to increase the area of grass accessible to the tractor.
- ii) Cutting back invasive scrub, thus restoring recently lost areas of grass
- iii) Re-introducing the annual hay cut to those areas currently being over managed, contrary to the Stewardship agreement. With the co-operation of those Saxtead Green residents who are currently cutting the grass in front of their properties throughout the spring and summer it is hoped that a new regime can be introduced. This would mean locals agreeing to only cut their grass from mid July (post hay collection) through to the end of October. This way, residents get approximately 8 months of short sward; the Green has 4 months of medium to long growing sward, before being cut in early July.

Area 1



Description: The narrow strip of green in front of the terrace of ex-council bungalows, consisting of grass, bramble, scrub and some trees.

The rank grass growth is dominated by false oat grass and cocksfoot, merging with bramble, hawthorns and occasional ornamental plantings e.g. daffodils, rowan, white beam, etc. Flocks of ever rarer house sparrows use the bramble. There is a patch of regularly mown grass.

Recommendation: Quite good rough grass/scrub interface, suitable for rotational mowing/coppicing in sections on a 3-4 year cycle leaving mature scrub and trees intact. Keep strips of grass cut either side of paths and driveways

Area 2



Description: Small area of rank vegetation inc. grass sp., nettle, false oat grass and bramble. This area includes the old telephone box, a parish noticeboard, post box and litter bin located on roadside edge of this area.

Recommendation: To regularly mow this area to keep the rank vegetation from re-establishing. Could be an area where villagers might like to plant cowslips or bulbs.

Area 3

Looking east from west end of area 3 (April)



Looking west from east end of area 3 (June)



Description: A small area of herb rich grassland (a lot of ox-eye daisies and lesser stitchwort), but a relative abundance of competitive species like false oat grass and hogweed suggest this area could be under-managed, as in not receiving an annual cut and rake and it is just being topped. Around the edges the grass grades into blackthorn and bramble scrub, which contains some young trees.

Recommendation: A priority area for hay/cutting and raking.

If it is not viable for a tractor to cut and bale, it will need to be cut and hand raked. Cut back the scrub, where it has encroached, so as to increase the area of grassland to make it a more viable hay cutting unit. Rotationally coppice the cultivated bramble at western end. Remove young poplars as they will soon exceed the space available, be a detriment to the grassland and scrub and create a management problem in the future, as did the previous poplars that were planted at the eastern end of the green some decades ago. These were subsequently removed at great cost when they began to fail and shed branches in strong winds.

Species recorded:

Knapweed (F), False oat grass(A), Cow parsley (O), Cowslip (F), Oxeye daisy (F), Meadow buttercup (F), Cocksfoot (F), Red fescue (F), Hogweed (F), Sorrel (O), Ribwort plantain (O), Lesser stitchwort (O), Mouse-ear (O) Yarrow (O), False oxlip (R).

Comma butterfly recorded.

Chaffinch and house sparrow using scrub .

Area 4

Looking west from east end of area 4



Description: An area of unauthorised close mown grass in front of Green Farm and around telegraph pole at eastern end of area 3. It would appear that grass clippings are being collected and no fertilizers or herbicides are being applied.

Recommendation: This area is only cut short between mid-July (post hay cut) and Oct 31st and returned to the hay cut schedule as per the Stewardship agreement.

Species recorded: hairy woodrush, cowslip, and oxeye daisy, in area east of drive. Area to west of drive cowslips and primroses on boundary ditch bank.

Area 5

Looking west from drive of 'The Pightle'



Description: An area of non hay grass, with flora similar to area 3, but also containing a lime tree and bramble.

Recommendation: Remove the lime tree and bramble to create a viable hay cutting area and return to hay cut schedule. If unviable for a tractor cut, then to be cut and rake annually in July by other means

Species recorded:

Brimstone and meadow brown butterflies

Area 6

looking east from 'The Pightle' drive



Description: Reasonably well drained, species rich grassland

Recommendation: Cut for hay

Species recorded: oxeye daisies, red clover, cowslip, meadow buttercup, barren strawberry, ground ivy, bulbous buttercup, common vetch and yarrow (indicating good drainage).

Species recorded in June – sweet vernal grass, knapweed, ox-eye daisy, cowslip, red clover, goat's beard, Yorkshire fog, red fescue, germander speedwell, lesser trefoil, white clover, ribwort plantain,

meadow buttercup, bird's foot trefoil)

Area 7

Description: Close grown grassland in front of Manor farm – Possibly re-seeded.

Recommendation: Return to hay cut schedule

Area 8



Scrub belt at western end



east of scrub belt in area 8 looking east



looking west from 'Ambleside' drive



east of Ambleside drive in area 8 looking east

Description (scrub): At the western end it is mainly self sown ash with field maple and bramble. (see photo)

Recommendation: Rotational coppicing of scrub to allow it to thicken up.

Description (grass): The grassland is quite rank in this area, with the exception of either side of the drive to Ambleside, where it is close mown and dominated by celandine. One of the reasons for the rank nature of the grass in this section is the line of self set ash, prohibiting tractor access and therefore management by hay cutting.

Recommendation: To selectively thin ash trees, retaining the occasional tree of potential good form. This would enable access by tractor and thus areas could be returned to the hay cut schedule. There is potential to coppice/layer the field maple hedge along the boundary between Ambleside and green, so as to thicken the hedge.

Area 9



Looking west from east end (April)



Looking west from east end (June)



Looking west from just beyond mid point



looking east from opposite Manor Farm (June)

Description: Comparatively species rich grassland perfect for hay, which appears damper than the green on other side of the road. Heavily rabbit grazed over winter. It also contains a lot of self set trees and bramble. Parts of the boundary hedge are sparse.

Recommendation: The grass would benefit from sensitive thinning/removal of some trees and the pushing back of scrub/bramble to increase hay cutting potential. May need to control rabbits to prevent damage to hay – but may be eased by some pushing back of encroaching bramble. Thicken up the sparser parts of the boundary hedge by either coppicing or planting. Continue hay cut schedule.

Species: Mases of oxeye daisy, + knapweed, meadow buttercup, sorrel, cuckoo flower and cowslip, Yorkshire Fog, cock's foot, false oat grass, knapweed, meadow buttercup, sorrel, red clover and quite a lot of creeping thistle and broad leaved dock.

Area 10



Looking west across Area 10 (April)



Looking west across area 10 (June)

Description: Area of grassland, which is Rabbit grazed in winter, with a valuable block of blackthorn scrub west of 'North Pells'

Recommendation:

Area 11

Description: Very scrubbed up and with mature trees

Recommendation: Some scope for rotational coppicing of scrub.

Area 12

Looking west (April)



Description: Much of this area has been lost to the planting of exotic trees, including Norway Maple, which has minimised the area of grass available to be cut for hay. Floristic diversity of this area seems to decrease as you go west.

Recommendation: Suggest sensitive selective thinning and where feasible raising crowns of trees to create more grassland and glades. Push back where bramble is encroaching . Cut for hay where possible.

Looking west (June)



Looking west (April)



Looking west (June)



Looking east (April)



Species: meadow barley in area of green just west of public footpath, Timothy, Yorkshire fog, tall fescue , meadow vetchling, sweet vernal grass, hard rush and yellow oat grass.

Area 13

Looking west before pub drive (April)



Looking west before pub drive (June)



Wet area just to east of pub drive



Area 13 cont.



Description: This is a drier and less species diverse area of grass with some self set ash trees, although just to the east of the pub drive there is a very wet area with an over blown willow. The green in front of the pub is regularly cut short and clippings

collected.

Recommendation: Selectively thin unwanted ash trees and coppice/cut back scrub to create more viable hay cut grassland. As the pub is one of the main focal points of the village, regular cutting in front of pub should be allowed to continue, as long as clippings are collected to maintain the floristic diversity.

Species: Wet area includes, false fox sedge, meadow fescue, flag iris. Mown area in front of pub includes yellow oat grass, bird's foot trefoil, sweet vernal grass, self heal, silverweed (indicating dampness). A lot of house sparrows in scrub east of pub

Area 14



Looking west from pub (April)



Looking west from pub (June)



Looking southwest on Earl Soham Road

Description: This area could possibly be semi-improved grassland. It is very heavily rabbit grazed in places (even into the summer) and at the south west end the grass is very rank and planted up with poplars. In places there are some mature oaks and ashes which almost resemble wood pasture.

Recommendations: Crown lift all trees in this area to improve tractor access. Consider creating new pollards with some of the younger oak? Cut grass for hay where viable.

Species: Agrimony, knapweed, meadow buttercup, cuckooflower and patches of hard rush.

Area 15-

Description: A narrow verge with a young boundary hedge

Recommendation: Too narrow for hay cutting, so to be cut annually in summer by mower or strimmer. The new boundary hedge has potential for layering.

Area 16

Description: A triangle of grassland bound on all 3 sides by roads, which has continually been cut for hay, therefore it has a good selection of grassland species equal to that of the designated County Wildlife Site area of grass adjacent to the mill. The edges are affected by eutrophication from verge mowing, traffic exhaust and salt.

Recommendation: Continue to cut as hay.

Species: Knapweed, Meadow buttercup. A few cowslips, field woodrush, ribwort plantain, dandelion, false oat grass, red clover, hard and soft rush, lesser stitchwort, mouse-ear, marsh thistle, hairy sedge, silverweed, tall fescue, way hairy grass, cocksfoot, creeping bent, cuckooflower, agrimony, Yorkshire fog, velvet bent (wet clay standing acid), meadow foxtail, sweet vernal grass, hoary ragwort, bird's foot trefoil, meadow buttercup, yarrow, carex nigra, yellow rattle. Relatively few forbes compared to grasses.

Area 17

Description: This is a large area of grass, which includes the part of the green designated as a County Wildlife Site. Despite being annually cut for hay it looks rather undermanaged with considerable thatch in places. There are some interesting damp hollows and wet areas. Floristically it appears similar to Area 16, which is interesting as areas 16 and 17 receive different management. The area to south of the windmill's is dominated by false oat grass and very rank and appears undermanaged, but merges with scrub so provides valuable structural diversity to the green.

North of the windmill drive the diversity seems to improve but it is patchy. There is an excellent graded scrub edge on the boundaries with edge of green and pond and very good graded edge with bramble and blackthorn scrub to the north west of the drive to Canham's farm. There are also excellent ash pollards here too.

Recommendations: Cut all grass for hay. Consider selective thinning of balsam poplars to increase grass area and reduce eutrophication from leaf fall and removing some of the self-set willows encroaching on to grassland.

Species: Sneezewort, silverweed, soft and hard rush, false fox sedge, a patch of marsh bedstraw in an inundation area near the drive entrance to Canham's farm, isolated pyramidal orchids and yellow rattle near Canham's farm drive. Grasses in this area include meadow barley, sweet vernal, and meadow foxtail, but Yorkshire fog is fairly dominant in this section. Also of interest is tufted vetch and meadow vetchling.



Looking north west towards Canham's farm



Looking south. Windmill just to right

Area 17 cont.



just to south of Canham farm drive



Example of self set willow that could be removed?



Looking north east across area 17 from Canham's farm

Area 18

Description: An area of drier grassland than area 17, but with occasional damp areas. The June '11 visit showed this area is excellent floristically and better fits the CWS description. SWT suggest that the boundary of the CWS is amended to include this area.

Recommendation: Continue to cut for hay

Species: red clover, cowslips, yarrow, meadow buttercup, hairy woodrush, knapweed, oxeye daisy, crossword, common vetch, sorrel, quaking grass, pepper saxifrage, common broomrape, yellow oat grass, meadow vetchling, glaucous sedge, carex nigra, ox-eye daisy, sweet vernal grass, hoary ragwort, common bent, sorrel, tufted vetch, spiny rest harrow, meadow fescue

Area 19

Description: Known as the football pitch, this is a semi-improved area of grass that is cut regularly as the village recreation area, but there are vestiges of good flora.

Recommendation: This area has the potential to be brought back into the hay cutting schedule, but it is not in the current Stewardship scheme and it is not intended to be entered into HLS and so will continue to be cut regularly throughout the growing season by the Parish Council.

Species: wavy hair grass, sorrel and cuckooflower.

Area 20

This area is drier, but comparable to areas /12/17/18 and includes an excellent pond.

The grassland on corner from where several roads meet the B1119 round to the pond is particularly good floristically. This is the only area of green where lady's bedstraw was found.

Recommendation: Continue to cut for hay and consider extending the CWS to include this area.

Species: cowslip, spiny restharow, pepper saxifrage, red clover, oxeye daisy, agrimony, knapweed, yellow oat grass, meadow barley, goat's beard.

Suffolk Coastal District Council

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Saxtead Green Management Compartments 1-12

Scale 1:2000

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Saxtead Green Management Compartments 13-16

Scale 1:2000

Map produced on 25 October 2011 at 14:31



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Saxtead Green Managment Compartments

17-20

Scale 1:2500

Map produced on 25 October 2011 at 14:33

