

From: [Harris, Matthew \(Ecology Officer\)](#)
To: [Jenny Singh](#)
Cc: [Cooke, Jacob \(Senior Planning Officer\)](#)
Subject: RE: Celtic Lakes Grassland Compensation Area
Date: 18 September 2024 12:18:41
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

Hello Jenny,

I agree with your analysis below that the existing grassland in the Grassland Compensation Area is of low condition and that it can be enhanced with suitable management. I also agree that the extent of this grassland can be increased by the removal of low-lying scrub and tall ruderals. The resulting grassland compensation is sufficient in terms of extent to meet the requirement set out in our Wildlife & Development SPG for a 1:1.5 ratio of habitat lost : re-created.

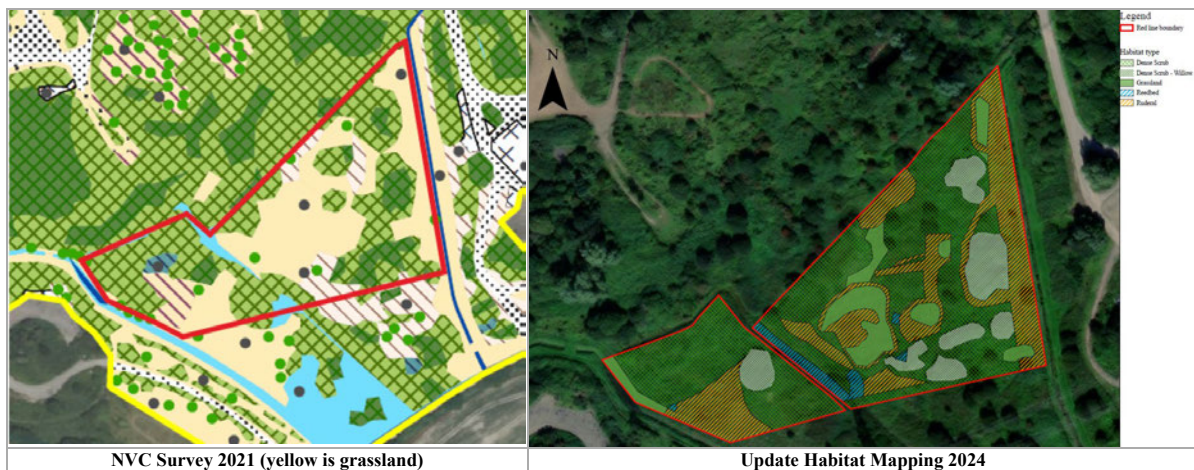
The location of the grassland restoration / re-creation compartments as set out below are logical in that they allow for larger more coherent areas of grassland, while retaining scrub of value for Dormice, rather than attempting to micro-manage a more granular mosaic of grassland and scrub.

Matt

From: Jenny Singh [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, August 13, 2024 10:51
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Jennifer.Low [REDACTED]; lindsay.neville [REDACTED]; David Leak <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Celtic Lakes Grassland Compensation Area

Hi Matt,

I hope you are well. We have now completed the updated habitat mapping that I had proposed for the site at Celtic Lakes. The following images indicate the current habitat distribution within the scheme's red line boundary for the grassland compensation area vs the habitats recorded during the NVC survey in 2021.



As you will see, scrub/ruderals have increased in extent from the survey undertaken in 2021, with only pockets of grassland remaining. The species composition in the main area of remaining grassland is dominated by false oat grass and Yorkshire fog, with abundant Timothy, Angelica, hogweed, ragwort, greater willowherb, nettle and smooth tare. frequent cleavers, meadow vetchling, occasional couch grass and rare soft and hard rush.

Given the above indicates that the remaining grassland is in poor condition and could be enhanced through management/seeding, I have reviewed the areas of habitat enhancement that were agreed as part of the planning submission to develop some revised mitigation proposals, which provide grassland compensation whilst minimising impacts to dormice (through removal of scrub habitat):

- The grassland compensation area covers a total area of 2.28ha. The planning submission showed delivery of a 1.02ha gain in grassland habitat through removal of ruderal/reedbed/scrub habitat followed by management/seeding, with the remaining 1.26ha of 'grassland' being subject to management (e.g. mowing) but was not considered as part of the compensation due to lack of evidence of it being in poor condition (Hopefully I have understood this correctly based on our last discussion).

The proposed alternative delivers approximately a 1.02ha gain in new grassland habitat (i.e. equivalent to the 1.02ha originally proposed) through removal of ruderal/reedbed/scrub habitat, and 0.19ha enhancement of grassland in poor condition. Note that this 0.19ha is the total area of remaining grassland within our red line boundary in the SSSI. This would be combined with ongoing management to avoid further scrub encroachment, but the remaining 1.04ha of the site would remain as scrub.

- The mitigation proposed on the main site remains unchanged, therefore I have not included any narrative on that here.

The attached drawing is indicative at this stage as I would like to discuss the details of the habitats being targeted for enhancement and also just agree on the scale of clearance works before refining the mapping further. The areas shown on the plan below are those where I am proposing habitat clearance and seeding/green hay (ruderals/reedbed/scrub) and mowing (grassland in poor condition) in line with the management proposals in the draft Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), given that they could feasibly be return to grassland and retained in that state. The approach to management would still be phased, but given the reduction in scrub loss there is scope to reduce the timescales (currently extended over 7 years). Note that given the scale of habitat succession over the past couple of years I have opted to create a large area of grassland as opposed to small 'patches' as I feel that these would be very difficult to maintain into the future (due to scrub encroachment), but again I would welcome your thoughts.

I appreciate that the above needs further discussion - please can you let me know your availability over the next couple of weeks to have a Teams meeting to progress this?

Kind regards,

Jenny

From: Harris, Matthew (Ecology Officer) <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, July 8, 2024 10:47 AM
To: Jenny Singh <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Celtic Lakes Grassland Compensation Area

Hi Jenny, I'm looking at this now and will get back to you shortly.

Matt

From: Jenny Singh <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 28 June 2024 13:15
To: Harris, Matthew (Ecology Officer) <[REDACTED]>
Cc: lindsay.neville <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer.Low <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Celtic Lakes Grassland Compensation Area

Hi Matt,

I hope you are well,

Following on from the discussion we had on 6th June I have had a look through the baseline information we have for the grassland compensation area. An NVC survey was undertaken in 2021 and 5 quadrats were completed within this area (25, 26, 27, 28 and 50). I have picked out the relevant information from the NVC report in the attached word file for reference.

I have also contacted Peter Sturgess who completed the survey in 2021; his view was:

"The grassland in that area was mostly very tall and not very diverse, so I'd agree with you that it would be possible to increase its flora diversity (and value for invertebrates) if grazing or other management could be introduced. If left unmanaged it will continue to get taller (especially with Creeping Thistle and Greater Willowherb and Bramble, and perhaps some with Greater Pond-sedge or Common Reed) and less diverse, and eventually just turn to scrub."

My suggested next steps are therefore as follows:

- Undertake a site visit to update the habitat mapping across the grassland compensation area, on the basis that further tall ruderal/scrub encroachment has occurred over the past couple of years. I am not proposing that this is a full update to the NVC survey, but we will note species present within the grass sward and compare against the original NVC survey results.
- Appreciating that you are very busy, I think it would be beneficial for you to visit the site if you are able. This could be timed to coincide with the

above survey or could take place separately.

- Discuss and agree with you any areas of grassland that can be considered for enhancement and review the area of grassland compensation required, hopefully reducing the amount of scrub clearance required.
- Review these updates in terms of impacts to dormouse habitat and mitigate accordingly.

Kind regards,

Jenny

Jenny Singh
Associate

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