

Item for Submission to:
St Stephen Parish Council

Full council

Date of Meeting:20 February 2025

Agenda Item 2425/102(a)	New wild edge for Greenwood Park meadow on the A405 boundary
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1. Introduction

Improved boundary fencing in Greenwood Park particularly near roads was identified as a concern in the 2023 Community Consultation. SSPC already has a project in place to lay hedging along the A414.

This proposal is to consider an option for the A405 boundary from the end of the football area to the start of the A414 fencing, which has become a pressing issue following recent works on the A405 as part of the Segro/Hertfordshire County Council's Park Street Roundabout development.

2. Current Situation

The A405 boundary is currently managed through ecotones, which create transitional zones between different habitats. However, wildlife habitat remains limited and the existing concrete post and 2-rail fence offers limited protection along the path. The work undertaken last week by Segro/Hertfordshire County Council has removed many of the trees which were providing a natural barrier on the other side of our boundary. While the area holds significant potential for enhancement, the boundary requires a more robust and defined structure to better protect the meadow and support biodiversity.

3. Proposal

We propose a rewilding project along the A405 boundary of Greenwood Park meadow to enhance biodiversity, strengthen the park's ecological resilience, and establish a more secure and natural boundary which will mitigate the removal of the trees on the A405 side. This initiative will restore native plant species, create thriving habitats for wildlife, and minimize human interference to allow nature to regenerate organically.

Additionally, by reinforcing the boundary with natural vegetation, we aim to improve park security while maintaining an aesthetically pleasing environment. This project will contribute to the ecological balance of the park, enriching both the natural landscape and the experience of its visitors.

This re-wilding project is designed to contribute to the long-term health and sustainability of the meadow ecosystem, providing significant ecological, social, and educational benefits.

By following these steps, we aim to improve both the ecological health and security of the meadow, benefiting both wildlife and park users.

This project will significantly contribute to the long-term ecological sustainability of the meadow, while also improving the safety and enjoyment of the park for all visitors.

4. Project overview

- **Design and Planning:** Liaise with Projects Officer for HCC, finalise the stock fence design and assess the planting area for native species.
- **Installation of a New Stock Fence:** Secure the boundary with a new stock fence, ensuring it blends with the re-wilding effort and enhances safety. A new fence along the path edge will both protect the newly created habitat and ensure the safety of park visitors.
- **Wildlife Habitat Creation:** Incorporate bird boxes, insect hotels, and other habitat features to foster a thriving ecosystem.
- **Native Planting:** The area between the new stock fence and the existing boundary fence will be planted with a diverse selection of native species suited to the local environment, to support wildlife and promote biodiversity across seasons by offering resources such as food and shelter.
- **Ongoing Maintenance and Monitoring:** Regularly monitor plant health and wildlife activity, adjusting maintenance plans as necessary to ensure the long-term success of the project.

5. Outcomes

- **Increased Biodiversity:** Reintroducing a variety of native plant species to support local wildlife, providing food, shelter, and habitat, ultimately enhancing ecosystem resilience.
- **Enhanced Soil Health and Water Management:** Utilise deep-rooted native plants to improve soil structure, increase water retention, and reduce erosion, fostering a healthier landscape.
- **Strengthened Public Safety:** Installing a boundary fence to clearly define the meadow's edge, ensuring the safety of park users while integrating with the natural environment and planting trees to compensate for the loss following the removal of a large number of trees as part of the recent work.

• **Improved Aesthetic and Landscape Function:** Transition from a managed landscape to a more natural, self-sustaining environment, improving the aesthetic value of the meadow.

• **Increased Community Engagement:** Involve local groups in environmental education, hands-on activities and volunteer efforts to foster community engagement and contribute to on-going maintenance ensuring the long-term sustainability of the project.

6. Financial Considerations

An estimated total project cost not exceeding £15,000. This budget will cover:

- Materials for the stock fence
- Procurement of native plants
- Wildlife habitat creation

We will be exploring funding support through the **Environmental Works Grant (EWG)**, available from the County Council, which could potentially assist in covering a significant portion of the project costs. (max award £3000).

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Council approve the rewilding project for the A405 boundary of Greenwood Park and allocate the necessary budget from reserves. The total estimated cost of the project is not expected to exceed £15,000.

It is also proposed to explore alternative funding options, including the **Environmental Works Grant (EWG)**, to help support the project and reduce costs.

Report of	Matthew Huddleston and Assistant Clerk	Date 17/02/2025
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Appendix 1 Map of area

Appendix 2 Image of stock fence

Appendix 3 Images of current boundary fence

Appendix 4 Image of trees removed along A405

Appendix 1



Appendix 2



Appendix 3



Appendix 4

