RBBC's Latest 5-Year Plan for Mere Pond

by D Larner, Chair Pond Sub-Comm.

January 2026. Updated 31/3/26

Walton on the Hill Village Forum

Interim Chair: George Curry

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1. INTRODUCTION

Starting in March 2025, RBBC issued 3 successive versions of their 5-year plan for Mere. I critiqued the first 2 versions and issued reports. This report reproduces the latest, December 2025 version, critiques it, and offers more advice.

My thanks to RBBC for accommodating some of my ideas and copying 8 of my pictures in their latest Plan.

2. SILT REMOVAL

Some highlights are:

1. Drying out during the 2020 drought revealed silt in the Pond. It was also revealed, but to a lesser extent, in 2025.
2. The MD of the leading silt removal firm visited and advised that silt should be surveyed for (a) volume and (b) toxicity. Then results should drive decisions on removal, where a small volume of desirable silt (for horticultural purposes) could be removed at modest cost but a large volume of toxic silt could be expensive and disruptive to remove.
3. CIL funding of £500,000 was set in 2022 to de-silt 5 of RBBC's ponds, and this was expanded to 7 ponds.
1. Councillor Ben Green recently said CIL funds are still locked in, so he expects silt works will take place before RBBC disappears in April 2027.
2. I gave advice on silt with regard to RBBC's first 2 Plans.
3. RBBC's latest Plan had these 4 comments about silt and dredging:
   a. Suggesting (page 10 of this report) silt will be removed, but the frequency will be reduced by the installation of silt traps:

   "Periodic removal of accumulated silt to maintain depth and water quality. (RBBC to mitigate the need with the installation of a silt trap)"

   b. Suggesting (page 8) silt will be removed:

   "Leaf litter and debris will be removed by dredging, to prevent build-up of excess nutrients and promote pond health".

   c. Suggesting (page 9) no desilting in the near future:

   "Desilting of the pond is not currently required".

   d. Suggesting (page 14) silt will only be monitored:

   "Action Plan - silt levels are (to be) *monitored and recorded - where access allows".*

My recommendations are:

A. Silt should be surveyed per Point 2.2 by independent firms at a cost of about £4,000.
B. RBBC should copy results to WVF and liase with them before any decision is made.
C. Other relevant authorities could be involved, perhaps BCC and WHGC, because horticultural quality silt might be used by them (would save on removal costs).
D. CIL funding should continue to be locked in.
E. RBBC to re-visit these points, clarify their position, and hopefully make tangible progress before they disappear next year.

3. TREE SURGERY

RBBC's plans to monitor trees and do selective surgery are given on pages 8 and 11. They speak about objectives *"the role of trees in shaping landscapes - enhance the beauty of our greenspaces* [objective 1] - *to maintain important sightlines* [2] - *ensuring that public safety - reported by the public - identify and address any risks"* [3].

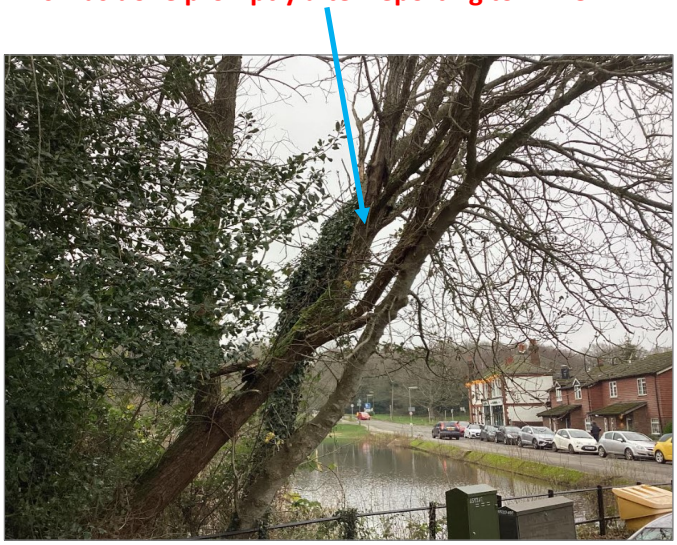
I have obtained advice from the Tree Consultancy firm of SJA Trees in Tadworth, and my recommendations are given below.

SJA said fell this Ash at Withybed Corner because it has Dieback disease and is at risk of falling onto the road [objective 3]. RBBC had previously said it is on private land. I challenged this with a Land Registry map showing private gardens, and asked the council to identify the aledged owner, so that they can be notified. More input is requested of the Council.

SJA said monitor this Ash because it has Dieback disease [objective 3].

SJA said moderately trim trees like this (on the western bank of Mere) to promote their health, but take care to preserve their ecological value because they contribute to the beautiful vista when viewed from across the pond in Walton Street [objective 1].

SJA said fell these trees in Sandlands Road (near the junction with Walton Street) because they are dead, and are at risk of falling onto the road [objective 3]. **This was done promptly after reporting to RBBC.**



SJA said remove ivy from these 2 trees because it disturbs the attractive vertical appearance of the trees [objective 2] and increases wind loading where this amplifies the risk of wind damage. I can do this by removing sections of ivy at ground level (DL). **Done**

Fell this lone dead tree because it is un-attractive [objective 1] and is at risk of falling into the pond.

4. NOTICE BOARDS

RBBC's plans for notice boards are given on pages 10 and 14. This page gives my recommendations.

The Plan speaks of temporary notices. They have already been posted and these photo shows the results.

Obviously, something more durable and attractive is needed. The next picture shows my recommendation, originating some years ago.

Page 10 of the Plan says "*collaborating with WVF ensures the signs are appropriately designed, located and tailored to local needs*" so this report asks what more is needed from Walton, before RBBC proceed.

Although the Plan does not speak about ***"keep off dangerous ice"*** signs:

A. They were posted after I raised the matter during the last icy snap.

B. I have taken the last one down and need more copies from RBBC.

C. Then I will mount them on stiff boards and display them at appropriate times in the future.

D. If I am away, I will ask others to help.

5. BULLRUSHES

RBBC's plans (pages 12 and 18) say: *"Bullrushes will be selectively managed to form protective islands for water-fowl - establish island features of Bullrushes - Bullrushes to be managed - rotational reed cut to improve sightlines of Hydrangea".*

Page 7 speaks of "*control invasive - species*" so Bulrushes qualify for treatment [1].

Bearing in mind that Bullrushes have trebled in size annually, and are hiding the beautiful bank of Hydrangeas, leaving some in the southwest area will result in a continual problem with spreading and hiding hydrangea. So I continue to recommend complete removal of Bullrushes, and restoring the area with its former attractive stand of Yellow Iris.

Then, if some Bullrushes are desired, some could be transplanted to a suitable area where they will not be a perpetual nuisance.

These areas in red and green copied from page 15 are RBBC's designated areas for *"Willow - Bogbean"* control, but as shown in the photo below there is very little Willow or Bogbean: these areas are dominated by Bullrushes that need removal. I can continue with 'first aid' control measures, as in the past, ahead of RBBC's work.

Footnote 1. On the RHS website, Bulrushes are declared as "*Potentially Invasive Plants*" having a "*potential to become a nuisance*" because they "*grow very quickly - spread - form large clumps - self-seed abundantly*".

6. FISH

I continue to record fish (and any terrapin) sightings and I report monthly to RBBC.

Fish population has been low since the 2022 drought, but needs watching in case distress occurs then first aid measures can be taken, potentially resulting in removal by a licenced contractor as in the past.

Fish and terrapins are addressed by RBBC on pages 8, 10 and 12, to which I would add:

A. Regarding page 12 *"explore costs for removal by specialist provider or charity",* angling clubs have said to me they cannot help, and I can a name a specialist contractor who has removed fish from Mere in the past.

B. See also "Notice Boards" on page 3.

7. MONITORING

The table shows my testing, starting several years ago, compared to RBBC's recent requirements. I will liase with RBBC's Countryside Team to explore increasing my testing.

Topic	Common name	Requested by RBBC	Being done by me
Chemistry			
O2	oxygen	Yes	Yes
Temperature		Yes	Yes
Ph		Yes	Yes
NH 4	ammonia	Yes	**
NO 2	nitrite	Yes	Yes
NO 3	nitrate	Yes	yes
Phosphates		Yes	**
Chlorine			Yes
Hardness			Yes
Carbonate			Yes
Level, rainfall and flows			
level		Yes	Yes
rainfall		Yes	Yes
inflows			Yes
outflow thru grill		Yes	Yes [1]

**** Done by RBBC**

Footnote 1. I am checking whether the grill in Walton Street is restricting flow into the overflow pond.

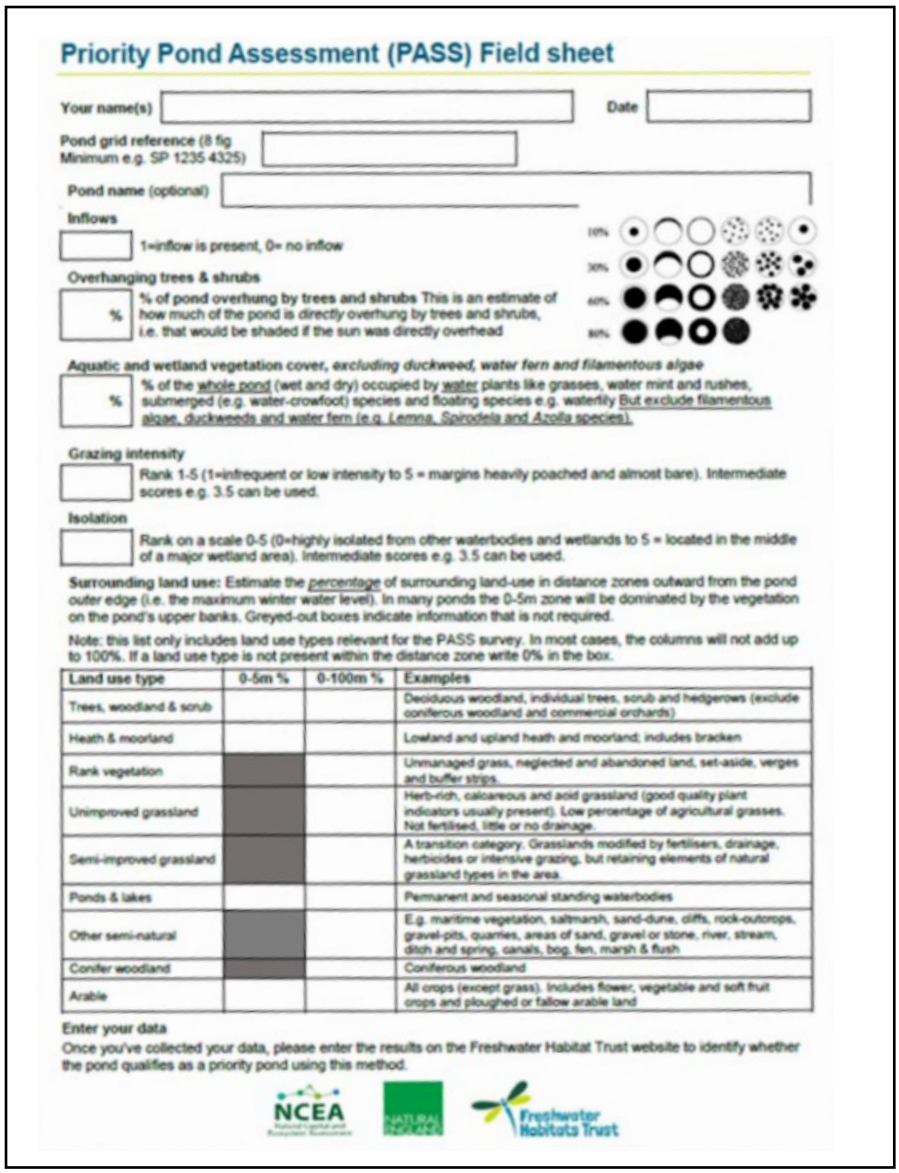
8. STATUS AT THE END OF CALENDER 2025

The latest Plan has been updated compared to the September 2025 version, but the latest "*Action Plan tables*" on pages 11 to 14 are only slightly different to the earlier version. The status of planned and completed works per these "*Action Plan tables*" was summarised on page 2 of my 24th September 2025 report, and this is reproduced below. Also see comments in **bold red** in this report.

			Done by me (DCL)	Done by RBBC (to my knowledge)
1. TREES and TERRESTRIAL				
1.1	Manage Willow spread	Nov - Mar, starting 2024/25		
1.2	Create deadwood piles	When logs become available		
1.3	Survey trees	Summer 2025		
1.4	Remove non-native plants	Identify 2025, implement 2026		
2. AQUATIC FAUNA and FLORA		Investigate 2025		
2.1	Improve diversity	2025/6/7		
2.2	Monitor fish and terrapins	Summer	Done by DCL	
2.3	Duck house, move	2025 or 26		
2.4	Control Bogbean	Sep to Dec 2025	Needed ?	
2.5	Bullrush control	Annually in autumn or winter		
3. DRAINAGE				
3.1	Monitor outflow grate	Annually Sep -Dec 2025	Done all m'ths by DCL	
3.2A	Improve inflow, Withybed	Investigate 2025, implement 2026	Looks ok	
3.2B	Improve inflow, Sandlands	Investigate 2025, implement 2026	Partly done by DCL	
3.2B	Make silt traps	Investigate 2025, implement 2026		
4. MONITORING & RECORDING				
4.1	Build profile of wildlife and flora	3 times every summer		
4.2	Monitor water level and condition	Every summer starting 2025	Done by DCL	
4.3	Understand water chemistry	Monthly Mar - Sept, start 2025	Partly done by DCL	
4.4	Monitor silt level	Annually		
4.5	Record data	Annually	Partly done by DCL	
5. SIGNAGE				
5.1	Instal noticeboards	Investigate 2025/6, implement 2026/7		

9. PRIORITY

Page 10 says RBBC will use monitoring and the PASS (Priority Pond Assessment) scheme of the Freshwater Habitats Trust to determine whether Mere qualifies as a "priority" pond and if so, further actions (presumably to accelerate the present 5-year plan) will be taken. I will monitor this. The form used to apply for priority status is shown below. **Done by RBBC without identifying Mere as a priority pond.**



Priority Pond Assessment (PASS) Field sheet

Your name(s) Date

Pond grid reference (8 fig Minimum e.g. SP 1235 4325)

Pond name (optional)

Inflows

1=inflow is present, 0= no inflow

Overhanging trees & shrubs

% **% of pond overhung by trees and shrubs** This is an estimate of how much of the pond is *directly* overhung by trees and shrubs, i.e. that would be shaded if the sun was directly overhead

Aquatic and wetland vegetation cover, *excluding duckweed, water fern and filamentous algae*

% % of the whole pond (wet and dry) occupied by water plants like grasses, water mint and rushes, submerged (e.g. water-crowfoot) species and floating species e.g. waterlily But exclude filamentous algae, duckweeds and water fern (e.g. *Lemna, Spirodela and Azolla* species).

Grazing intensity

Rank 1-5 (1=infrequent or low intensity to 5 = margins heavily poached and almost bare). Intermediate scores e.g. 3.5 can be used.

Isolation

Rank on a scale 0-5 (0=highly isolated from other waterbodies and wetlands to 5 = located in the middle of a major wetland area). Intermediate scores e.g. 3.5 can be used.

Surrounding land use: Estimate the *percentage* of surrounding land-use in distance zones outward from the pond outer edge (i.e. the maximum winter water level). In many ponds the 0-5m zone will be dominated by the vegetation on the pond's upper banks. Greyed-out boxes indicate information that is not required.

Note: this list only includes land use types relevant for the PASS survey. In most cases, the columns will not add up to 100%. If a land use type is not present within the distance zone write 0% in the box.

Land use type	0-5m %	0-100m %	Examples
Trees, woodland & scrub			Deciduous woodland, individual trees, scrub and hedgerows (exclude coniferous woodland and commercial orchards)
Heath & moorland			Lowland and upland heath and moorland; includes bracken
Rank vegetation			Unmanaged grass, neglected and abandoned land, set-aside, verges and buffer strips.
Unimproved grassland			Herb-rich, calcareous and acid grassland (good quality plant indicators usually present). Low percentage of agricultural grasses. Not fertilised, little or no drainage.
Semi-improved grassland			A transition category. Grasslands modified by fertilisers, drainage, herbicides or intensive grazing, but retaining elements of natural grassland types in the area.
Ponds & lakes			Permanent and seasonal standing waterbodies
Other semi-natural			E.g. maritime vegetation, saltmarsh, sand-dune, cliffs, rock-outcrops, gravel-pits, quarries, areas of sand, gravel or stone, river, stream, ditch and spring, canals, bog, fen, marsh & flush
Conifer woodland			Coniferous woodland
Arable			All crops (except grass). Includes flower, vegetable and soft fruit crops and ploughed or fallow arable land

Enter your data

Once you've collected your data, please enter the results on the Freshwater Habitat Trust website to identify whether the pond qualifies as a priority pond using this method.

NCEA Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment — Freshwater Habitats Trust

10. RBBC's LATEST 5-YEAR PLAN

I have copied RBBC's Plan on the following pages numbered 7 to 19 with the following improvements:

1. 11 pages of dialogue have been condensed onto 4 pages (without losing any words)
2. New titles and sub-headings have been added where appropriate, shown as "added"
3. A sub-report is contained within the main report, which I have coloured blue.
4. A rationalised numbering system has been added to distinguish between main and sub-headings.

Mere Pond Management Plan 2025 – 2030

CONTENTS

1. *Introduction*
2. *Five-Year Work Programme* (added)
3. *Vision & Objectives*
4. *Site Summary*
5. *Trees*
6. *Aquatic Fauna and Flora*
7. *Drainage and Water Levels*
8. *Ecological Appraisal & Improvements* (added)
9. *Signage and interpretation*
10. *Monitoring and Review*
11. *Action Plan*
12. *References (*added)
13. *Appendices*

13.1 Feature locations and cyclical works locations

13.2 Pond inflows/outflow & water sampling locations

13.3 Water Quality and Observation form

13.4. Marginal vegetation additional information

13.5 Water Level Datum (added)

1. INTRODUCTION

This management plan supports the implementation of our Greenspaces Strategy priorities and Priority 2.1 - Strengthen measures to protect and enhance local biodiversity, develop the size of wildlife populations, and contribute to the broader ecological network.

The Mere Pond Management Plan has been designed to inform and identify key management tasks and actions for the next 5 years that have been identified as high priority for nature conservation and amenity value. Priorities have been collated and updated from existing site-specific documents and issues raised by interested user groups. This document will lay out actions and timeframes required in a single format with accompanying diagrams.

This adaptive, nature-based management plan aims to balance conservation with practical maintenance, ensuring a resilient and biodiverse pond ecosystem.

For additional in-depth information regarding Mere Pond and the management tasks please refer to the 2018 Surrey Wildlife Trust Ecological Services Habitat Management Plan, and the Mere Pond Hydrological Report, produced for the Walton Village Forum (WVF) by David C Beale MSc November 2022.

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council (RBBC) thanks members of the Walton Village Forum for their feedback and contributions in producing the Mere Pond Management Plan 2025-2030.

2. FIVE-YEAR WORK PROGRAMME

The Works Programme below outlines the high priority tasks required to ensure continued improvement and protection of Mere Pond. The programme is split into 5 sections

- *Trees*
- *Aquatic Fauna and Flora*
- *Drainage & Water Levels*
- *Monitoring and Recording*
- *Signage and Interpretation*

This is document is intended to be a 'live document' and as such will be added to as works progress and further information from surveys, monitoring and works completed come available. In time it will be incorporated into the Water and Wetlands Management Plan which is being developed following the October 2025 approval of the Greenspaces Strategy.

3. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Vision

Our vision encapsulates what we aim to achieve for the pond and is supported by the objectives and action plan.

By 2030, Mere Pond will be maintained as a thriving pond ecosystem which has high biodiversity and amenity value, with a diverse range of native flora and fauna, supported by good water quality and minimal presence of non-native invasive species. The pond will remain as a key landmark within the designated Conservation Area.

3.2 Objectives

1	*Improve and maintain habitat available for invertebrates*
2	*Manage the treescape to promote social and environmental value*
3	*Control invasive and non-native species, including fauna and terrestrial plants*
4	*Improve and maintain aquatic and marginal flora diversity*
5	*Maintain the Duck House in suitable condition for waterfowl*
6	*Improve and maintain drainage systems*
7	*Build a portfolio of survey data to inform future/ adaptive management*
8	*Promote awareness of the pond's history and current management*

4. SITE SUMMARY

Mere Pond is in the north of the Conservation Area of Walton on the Hill and is considered a local landmark because "it forms an important entrance feature", with a view from Walton Street. Historically, it functioned as the village's water supply and continues to hold ecological and social value.

The pond serves as a habitat for various wildlife species, with margins supporting typical riparian vegetation, including reeds and willows. The surrounding area features trees, grassland, a small beach area, and sitting areas. There is no documented evidence of invasive species in Mere Pond.

5. TREES

Our approach to tree management is based on priorities, ensuring that public safety, conservation and community value are balanced.

5.1 Public Safety

Trees are inspected on a regular 12 to 18-month cycle, unless specific safety concerns are reported by the public in the meantime. The purpose of these inspections is to identify and address any risks to public safety. RBBC will not remove a healthy tree unless there is a demonstrable safety risk that cannot be mitigated in other ways. Some of the trees to the northern side of the pond are under private ownership and remain the responsibility of the landowner.

5.2 Conservation

Once the trees have been checked for potential hazards, our next priority is to manage trees in ways that enhance habitat and biodiversity. This can take many forms, including leaving standing deadwood where it is safe to do so, or creating habitat piles, without disturbing existing undergrowth. These practices contribute to ecological resilience, supporting insects, birds, and other wildlife that depend on natural woodland environments. We recognise that this approach may sometimes appear as "neglect," but it is in fact a deliberate method of encouraging natural biodiversity.

5.3 Visual impact

RBBC considers the role of trees in shaping landscapes, vistas, and amenity value for the community. Where possible, management will seek to maintain important sightlines and enhance the enjoyment our greenspaces, provided this can be done without compromising safety or biodiversity.

This approach ensures that our tree management practices protect people, promote wildlife, and enhance the beauty of our greenspaces.

6. AQUATIC FAUNA & FLORA

Flora (added)

Our approach to managing and maintaining Mere Pond and surrounding areas are focused on enhancing biodiversity, supporting wildlife, and maintaining ecological balance through targeted planting, monitoring, and maintenance.

Native aquatic and marginal plants will be introduced [1] in phased areas to diversify habitats, while bullrushes will be selectively managed to form protective islands for waterfowl; and Bogbean will be retained as an important refuge but controlled annually to prevent competition as required.

Leaf litter and debris will be removed by dredging, to prevent build-up of excess nutrients and promote pond health.

Bankside Willow will be managed as short rotation coppice (SRC), on a 4-year cycle, for environmental benefits. Benefits of SRC willow include improving the water quality - through filtration; absorption of pollutants and excess nutrients, and soil stabilisation – and enhancing biodiversity, as it serves as a shelter and food source for a range of fauna (Dimitriou, et al., 2011) (Vanbeveren & Ceulemans, 2019) .

Fauna or fish and terrapins (added)

It is important to note that Mere Pond prioritises native aquatic invertebrates, plants, and amphibians by excluding or removing fish and other non-native species that can harm the pond's ecosystem.

Fish and terrapin populations will be monitored, and removed, where possible. Residents and user groups are encouraged to report sightings of fish terrapins to the RBBC's Greenspaces Team. Terrapins are considered an invasive non-native species [2] . Fish (or any other animals) must not be introduced into the pond, because under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 [3] , this is an illegal activity and can negatively impact existing aquatic habitats.

If terrapins, or any other animals, that have been released are sighted, the RSPCA or relevant practice will be contacted. Reports of non-native animals, including terrapins can be submitted to the National Centre for Reptile Welfare (NCRW), Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) or the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

Footnotes

1. *Plant species, incorporate the use of emergent native aquatic plants such as Purple Loosestrife, Water Mint, Marsh Marigold, Water Plantain, Flowering-rush, Floating Sweet-grass, Reed Sweet-grass, Gipsywort, Amphibious Bistort, Common Water Crowfoot, Lesser Spearwort, Celery-leaved Buttercup and Brooklime.*
2. *Listed under the EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).*
3. *And the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019, relating to non-native species only.*

7. DRAINAGE & WATER LEVELS

Mere Pond was originally constructed as a dew pond. As a rain fed dew pond, the pond by design is very shallow. Due to the topography of the site and surface geology there is little natural inflow into the pond 4 .

RBBC acknowledges the importance of maintaining the inlets and outlets of Mere Pond. There are 2 main sources of inflows into Mere Pond, most significantly from direct rainfall and secondly highway drainage from Sandlands Road and Walton Street impermeable areas.

The main outlet from Mere Pond is located adjacent to Walton Street, RBBC will continue to monitor outflow as and when water levels in the pond reach the outlet point. During incidents of higher water levels, further investigation works can proceed to identify the current infrastructure for any restrictions. Surrey County Council (SCC) Highways are responsible for the maintenance of the roadside drainage gullies and connections. The Greenspaces Engineer will maintain contact with SCC in relation to future inspections.

In the hydrology report (2022) it was noted that, both before and during the recent droughts (2022, 2025) concerns were raised about the level of silt in the pond with one measurement estimating that a 600mm thick layer of liquid silt existed at the base of the pond. The drying up of the pond has reduced the silt to a 10mm thick, possibly thicker in the deeper pond areas, Therefore, it is considered that the desilting of the pond is not currently required.

However, Greenspaces Officers are planning to install a silt trap at the Sandlands Road inlet point to prevent silt entering the pond. In addition, there are considerations for additional planting to act as a filtration system to prevent harmful elements within the road run off entering the pond, which will in time improve and enhance water quality.

RBBC have recently commissioned a study for all ponds throughout the Borough, which included Mere Pond as part of our continuing 5-year pond enhancement project. The findings are below for future consideration.

8. ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL & IMPROVEMENTS REPORT

This is a separate report within the main report coloured here in blue. It repeats some material in the main report.

Mere Pond is a central feature of Walton-on-the-Hill, serving as a community focal point and a habitat for various wildlife species. Historically it functioned as the village's water supply and continues to hold ecological and social significance. This report evaluates the current ecological status of Mere Pond and proposes strategies for its enhancement.

8.1 Biodiversity Assessment

8.1.1 Aquatic and Semi-Aquatic Fauna (added, or birds)

Observations indicate the presence of common waterfowl such as mallards and moorhens. Anecdotal reports suggest occasional visits by grey herons, indicating a functioning aquatic food web. However, comprehensive surveys are lacking, and systematic monitoring is recommended to establish baseline data on species diversity and abundance.

8.1.2 Flora

The pond's margins support typical riparian vegetation, including reeds and willows. The surrounding area features ornamental plantings and grassland. A detailed botanical survey would identify native and non-native species, informing management practices to enhance native biodiversity.

8.1.3 Water Quality

Water levels in Mere Pond fluctuate seasonally, with notable reductions during dry periods. Recent efforts to unblock inflow pipes from the Sandlands Road catchment have improved water supply. However, no formal water quality monitoring data is available [5]. Implementing regular testing for parameters such as pH, dissolved oxygen, nitrates, and phosphates is essential to assess and manage water quality effectively.

8.1.4 Invasive Species

There is no documented evidence of invasive species in Mere Pond. Nonetheless, routine inspections are advisable to detect and manage potential invasions by species such as Canadian pondweed (Elodea canadensis) or signal crayfish (Pacifastacus leniusculus), which could disrupt the pond's ecological balance.

8.1.5 Current Management

The pond is maintained by the RBBC Greenspaces team, with activities including vegetation control and litter removal. These efforts contribute to the pond's aesthetic appeal and ecological function.

RBBC are aware of community groups that undertake litter picking activities on a regular basis and the Walton Village Forum collects data from the pond in terms of water quality, the findings are sent to the Greenspaces team, and the data is recorded.

Footnote 5. No water quality date was made available.

8.2 Recommendations

8.2.1 Buffer Zones

Establish native vegetation buffers around the pond to filter runoff, provide habitat, and reduce erosion.

8.2.2 Desilting

Periodic removal of accumulated silt to maintain depth and water quality. (RBBC to mitigate the need with the installation of a silt trap)

8.2.3 Structural Habitat Enhancements

Install features such as floating islands or submerged logs to provide habitat diversity.

8.3 Recreational Use

Mere Pond is a popular site for passive recreation, including walking and wildlife observation. Feeding of waterfowl by visitors is common, which can lead to nutrient loading and water quality issues. Educational signage to inform the public about appropriate feeding practices and the ecological impact of overfeeding is recommended.

8.4 Proposed Improvements Overview

Aspect	Recommendation	Timeline
Biodiversity	Conduct comprehensive flora and fauna surveys	Short-term
Water Quality	Implement regular monitoring program	Short-term
Invasive Species	Establish routine inspection and rapid response plan	Ongoing
Habitat Management	Create vegetative buffers and install habitat features	Medium-term
Recreational Use	Develop educational materials and signage	Short-term

8.5 Conclusion

Mere Pond holds ecological and social value for Walton-on-the-Hill. By implementing the recommended actions, the local council can enhance the pond's biodiversity, water quality, and recreational appeal, ensuring its sustainability for future generations.

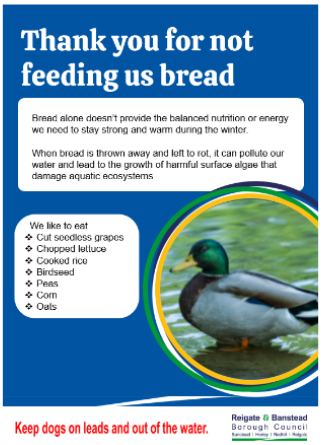
9. SIGNAGE & INTERPRETATION

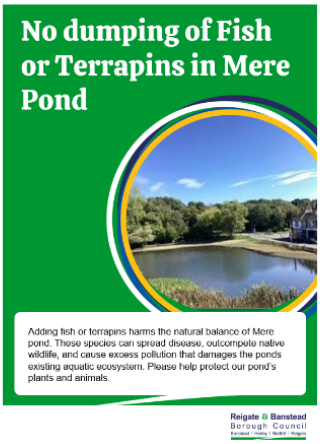
Information signs play a vital role in the management of Mere Pond, by promoting education and conservation. They inform residents and site users about the pond's history and ecological importance, while clearly communicating rules such as keeping dogs out of the water and avoid incorrect feeding of wildlife, especially bread to waterfowl, which can harm their health and the pond's ecosystem.

Collaborating with the WVF ensures the signs are appropriately designed, located, and tailored to local needs, supporting both environmental protection and community engagement.

RBBC will place temporary signage at various locations around the pond informing residents the importance of not reintroducing fish or terrapins and feeding waterfowl more nutritious foods.

Temporary signage to be placed





10.MONITORING & REVIEW

This management plan will be reviewed annually with actions recorded and reported to the portfolio holder for Greenspaces and Sustainability, specifically on actions that have not been completed.

Reviews will be against the Action Plan to monitor the progress towards achieving the objectives. The assessment of the progress will be through quantitative and qualitive methods, covering implementation of planned tasks, habitat condition and survey outcomes.

Using our 2025 pond survey as a baseline, monitoring the quality of the pond will highlight improvements required. The 2025 survey will be used to support the Priority Pond Assessment (PASS) via the Freshwater Habitats Trust, to determine whether Mere Pond is a priority or non-priority pond. If Mere Pond is identified as a priority pond through the PASS system, further actions will be taken to acquire additional protection for the habitat.

11. ACTION PLAN

This plan, having 4 tables, is reproduced on the following pages.

KPI	Task	Timescale	Responsibility
Extent of willow is controlled.	1.1.1 Selectively manage emerging willow sapling spread Coppice saplings at lowest point Phased areas shown on Appendices 1.	Nov – Mar 2025	RBBC
Dead wood piles created at various locations and standing dead wood left in-situ unless found to be a safety risk.	1.1.2 Identify small discrete areas for tidy log and brush piles, some in shaded areas, others in full sun. 1.1.3 Leave decaying standing wood and branches if possible. 1.1.4 Decaying floating wood to be secured bankside to enhance habitat. 1.1.5 Leaning trees over the water to be retained for habitat	Ongoing	RBBC
Regular tree surveys completed	Carry out negative Survey of whole site on an 18-month cyclical programme and pass works to Tree Team to action.	Summer 2025	RBBC Tree Officer
Presence of non-native terrestrial plants is minimal	Site to be surveyed for any undesirable plant species and removed if they are inhibiting native species.	Identify in 2025; remove in 2026	Countryside Officer & WVF
Improve and maintain aquatic and marginal flora	Replant identified areas with aquatic plants on Appendices 1. Interplant between Bogbean plants 20-30% of area in the north and west of the pond.	Determine locations and water depths in	Countryside Officer and Greenspaces

diversity.	Plant up edges which retain some moisture content in periods of low water with marginal plants 10-20% area such as Hemp	2025/6.	Team
Outflow pipe is	**Monitor outflow grate to ensure it does not inhibit output of**	**Throughout**	**Countryside**
Presence/ sightings of terrapins or fish is minimal.	Monitor and record fish & terrapin sightings. Explore costs for removal by specialist provider or charity for Terrapins. Recording form in Appendices 3	In summer months when water level is lower. To be investigated in 2025	Countryside Officer. WVF
Maintain the Duck House in suitable condition for waterfowl	Newly repaired duck house to be towed back to swan island	2025/6	RBBC
The coverage of Bogbean is controlled	Annual review and removal of up to 20% of Bogbean Ensuring the pond always has an acceptable coverage of Bogbean	Sep–Dec annually	RBBC
The extent of bullrush present is controlled	Selective Bullrushes removal Establish island features of Bullrushes to prevent access from predators, Increase the perimeter and promote Yellow Flag Iris and Hydrangeas. Planting of other marginal aquatic species to be investigated. See Appendices 4	Annually on rotation. Autumn/ Winter	RBBC

monitored	**water volume in winter months.**	**Autumn/ Winter**	**Officer, RBBC Engineer**
Inflow pipe condition is improved and kept in working order.	Three inflow pipes See Appendices 2. Inflow 1 to be maintained free of debris (Withybed end). Inflow 2 which takes water from Sandlands Road to be cleared of low vegetation to expose the inflow area. A silt trap to be constructed at point of entry measuring approx. 4 to 5m square. Silt trap area to be planted with reed to aid in water quality as runoff enters the pond. Reed to be cut and arisings removed every 3 years. Inflow 3 this smaller inflow pipe located opposite the Dean Lane junction runs over the beach area into the pond. This area to be kept clear of woody growth to allow flow. Reed bed planting to be planted here, approx. 4m square area of reed to aid in water quality and chemical uptake. Reed to be cut down to the base every 3 years. Area of planting to be protected with aesthetically pleasing barrier whilst reed establishes.	Investigate in 2025 & implement in 2026	RBBC Engineer
Profile of wildlife and flora on site is established/	Carry out annual pond dipping at three different locations around the pond, waterfowl counts and flora surveys of the whole site.	3 times over the summer annually	Countryside Officer & WVF
Water level and	Engage with WVF and Community Groups to record and monitor	June to	Countryside

condition is monitored regularly	water levels throughout the year and more frequently during periods of dry and hot weather. See Appendices 3	September Annually starting 2025	Officer & WVF
water quality is maintained as 'good'	Measure and record results at the same location. O_2, temperature, pH, NH_4, NH_2, NO_3 and Phosphates. See Appendix 2 and 3.	Monthly March to September.	Countryside Officer & WVF
silt levels are monitored and recorded.	Where access allows.	Annually	Countryside Officer / RBBC Engineer
data records are kept up to date.	Create additional appendices with information collected and update interested parties as required.	Annually	Countryside Officer

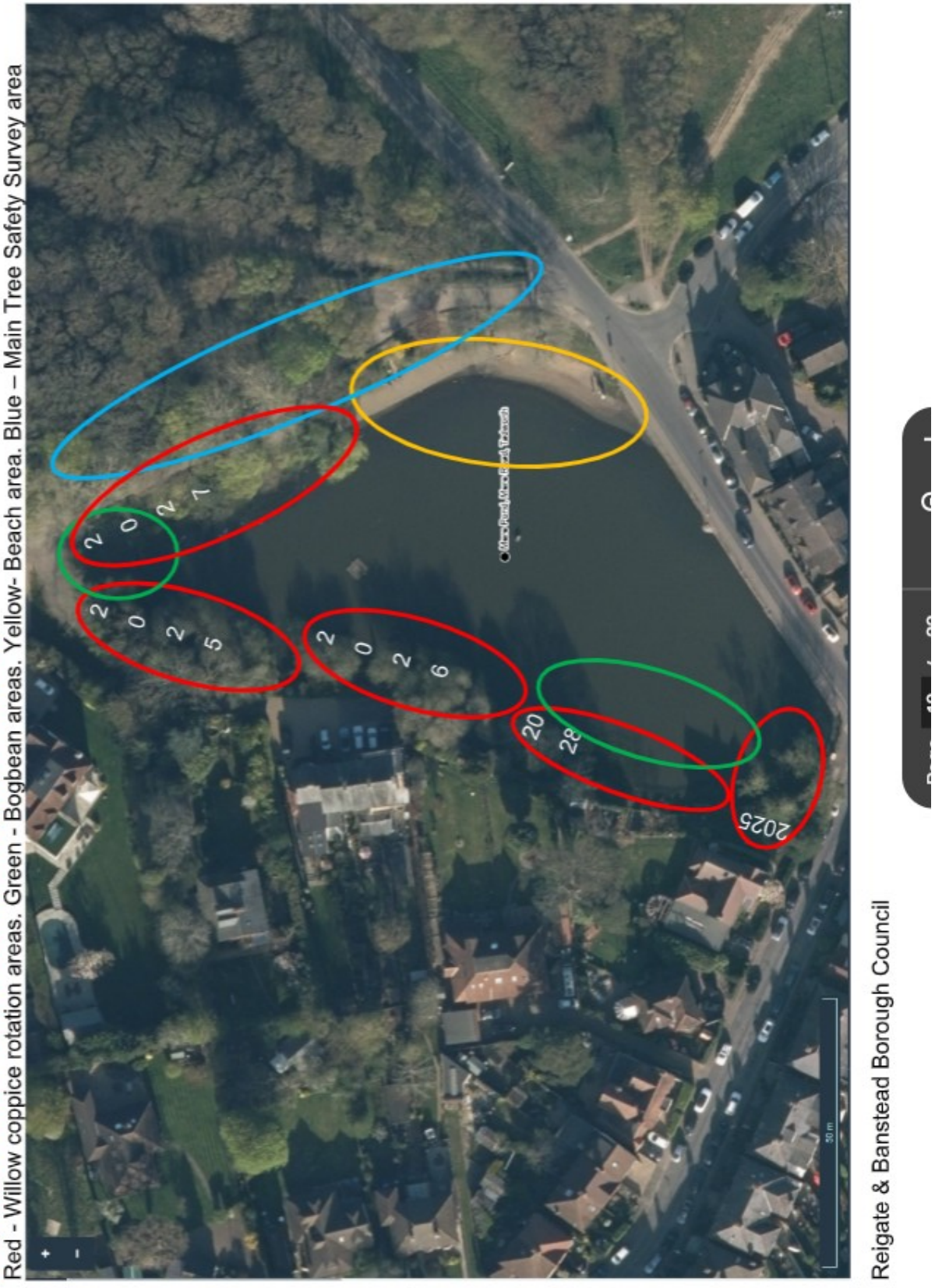
Information boards for education and site history are installed.	Countryside Officer to work with Village Forum identify locations, design and content to be displayed.	Tbc	Countryside Officer & WVF

12. REFERENCES (added)

1. *The Wildlife Trusts (2014) Land Management Toolkit No. 10 Ponds & Lakes*
2. *Surrey Wildlife Trust (2018) Ecological Services Habitat Management Plan*
3. *David C Beale MSc (2022) the Mere Pond Hydrological Report, produced for the Walton Village Forum (WVF)*
4. *Freshwater Habitats Trust (2025) Pond Management Hub, available at: https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/advice-resources/pond-management-hub/*
5. *Ionnis Dimitriou et al., (2011) Quantifying environmental effects of Short Rotation Coppice (SRC) on biodiversity, soil and water*
6. *Stefan P.P. Vanbeveren & Reinhart Ceulemans (2019) Biodiversity in short-rotation coppice. Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews, Volume 111, pp. 34-43.*

13. APPENDIXES

13.1 Feature Locations & Cyclical Works Locations



13.2 Pond Inflows/Outflows & Water sampling locations dependant on water level

13.3 Water Quality and Observation form

Date:	Name:	Weather:	Water Level:	Algae:
Water Temp °C	Observations:			
pH				
Phosphate	Terrapins or fish:			
NH_4				
NO_2				
NO_3				
O_2				

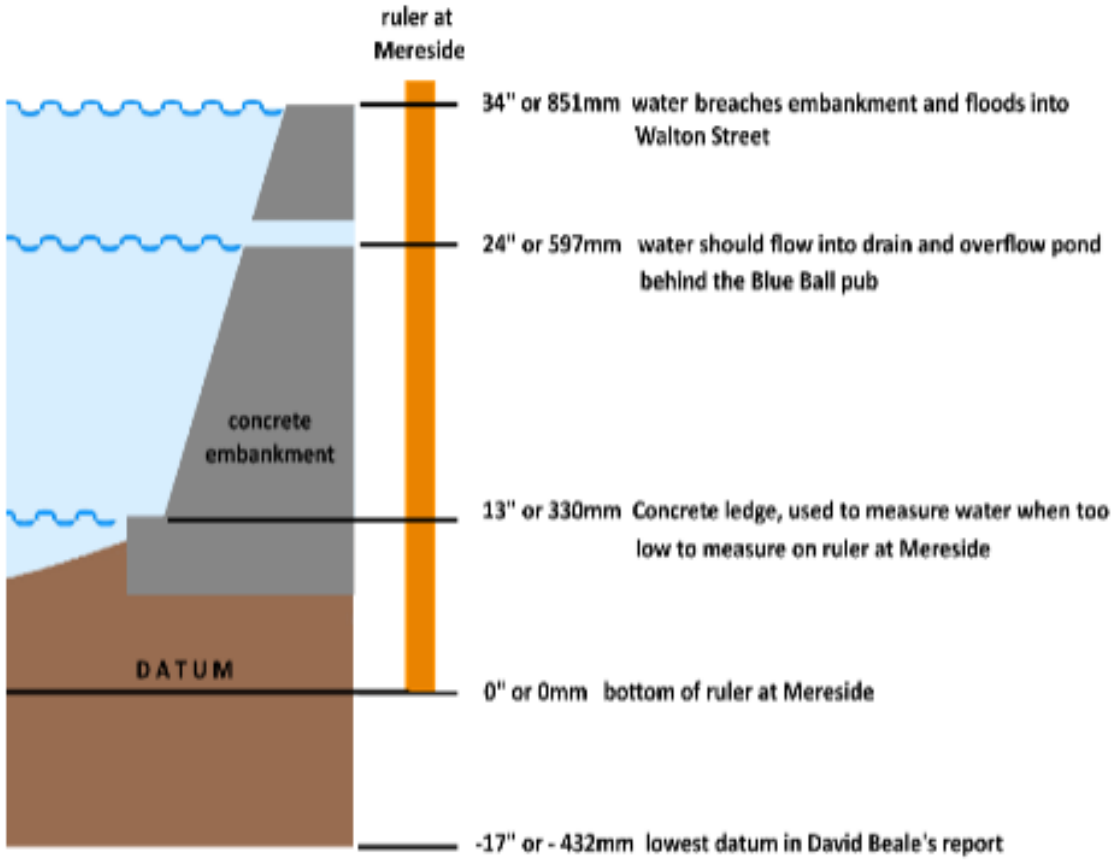
Yellow Iris location

Location of Yellow Iris to be encouraged (not in bloom in this photo)

Bullrushes to be managed as outlined for conservation, improved shelter for nesting but managed to reduce spread and monoculture of species.

Rotational reed cut to improve sightlines of Hydrangea.
Reed to be cut to create island features to stop predator incursion into nesting areas

13.5 Water Level Datum



Height on ruler at Mereside in inches = 13" - Distance from concrete ledge to surface

Height based on lowest datum in David Beale's report = Height on ruler at Mereside + 17" or +432mm

Reigate & Banstead Borough Council