



The Parkland Walk Wildlife Trail

The Parkland Walk

The Parkland Walk is a linear park and local nature reserve. It has, along its length, a variety of different habitats, although the diversity of the habitats is limited.

For many users it is little more than a pleasing green route between Highgate and Finsbury Park or a running track. The real nature reserve aspects often go unnoticed and with the exception of some noticeboards, the content of which is aimed at adults, there is little to engage younger users.



At times the 'Walk' can seem like a busy highway with runners and cyclists eager to get on their way.

Due to the linear aspect of the walk even small groups of people stopping on the path cause congestion to other users, some of whom, notably some runners and cyclists, do not manage this delay well.

There are few locations where people can leave the path. Some school groups use the Walk as part of their field study projects although those schools are not in contact with the Friends or the council.

Proposal

The Friends of the Parkland Walk propose the construction of a nature trail to the side of the main Parkland Walk path. This would take the form of a meandering path that passes through a number of carefully arranged habitats.

These differing habitats would, amongst other things, illustrate the role of early flowering plants or late fruiting shrubs. The area would include a pond/wet area - one of the most beneficial features for healthy habitat. There are currently no ponds on the Nature Reserve. A seating area in the centre of the site would be designed to accommodate educational groups.



Flattish areas are not so common on the Wlk despite its size.



Freshwater habitats hold more than 40% of the world's known species. This pond is at Camley Street in King's Cross

The site would be bounded by hedging adjacent to the main path to prevent access by dogs, a small gate providing access to the trail.

The path would be interspersed with small informal information boards to help identify flora and fauna and would also include a series of nature related questions along the route to encourage consideration of ecological and environmental issues.

Much of the information will be aimed at young children although the questions will make many an adult think hard!

Low budget interactive research from Camley Street Nature Reserve, King's Cross



A Hedgehog house.
They like to do
things properly at
RSPB Flatford Mill

Visitors will be able to consider how their own gardens could be more nature friendly so that gardens are seen as an extension of the larger green spaces in the borough and not exclusive of the wider environment.

There will also be 'bee hotels', stag-beetle habitats, bird and bat boxes and hedgehog shelters.

A small meadow area will be sown with wildflowers to encourage insects and butterflies.

The site

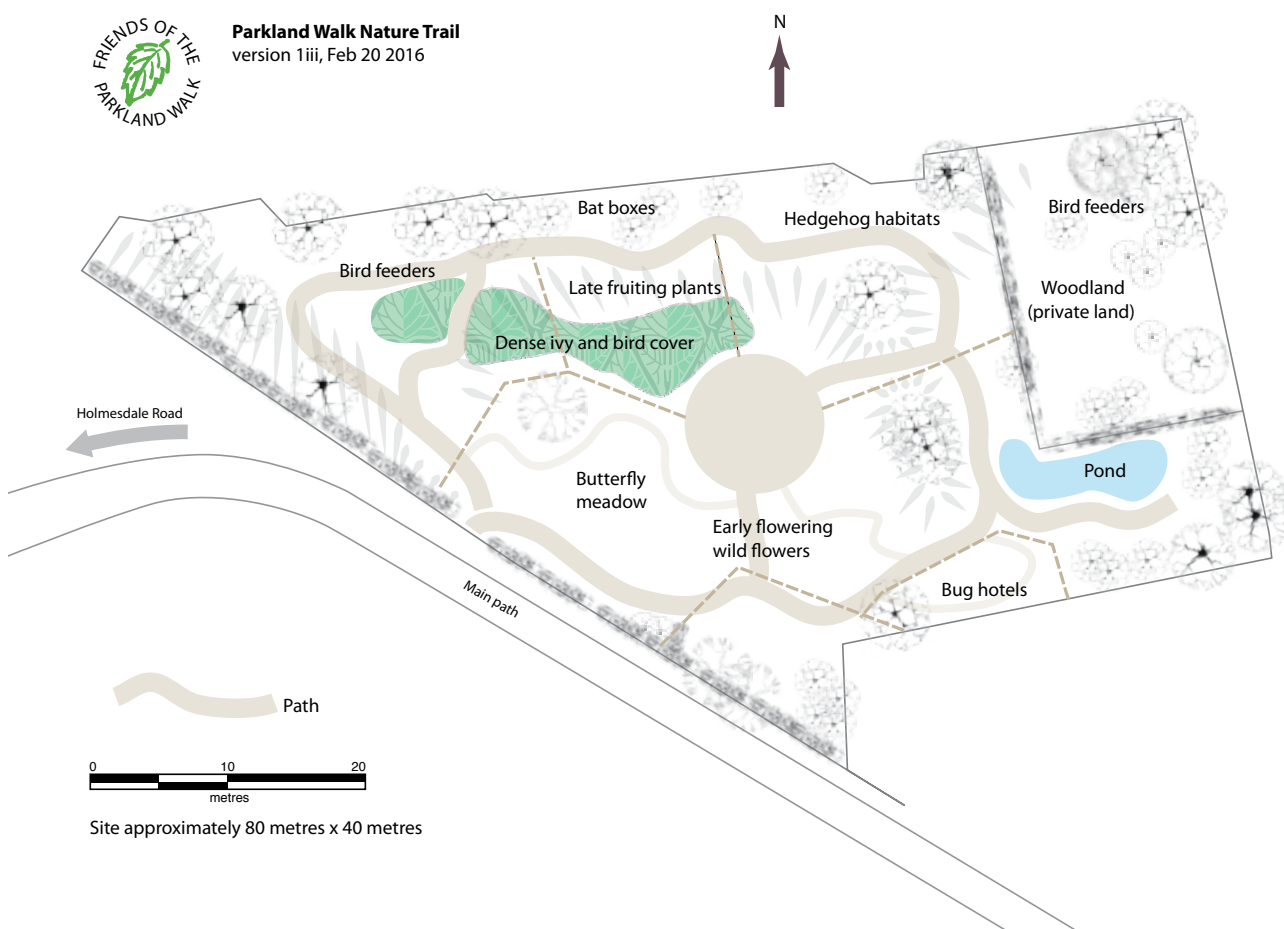
Unlike much of the Walk which is formed by steep embankments or cuttings, the location we have chosen is on gently sloping ground off the main path shortly after entering from Holmesdale Road.

The lower section near the main path is suitable for easy access for those with mobility issues and we hope to improve the access to the steeper sections so that those same people can access the whole area with some assistance.

The current ground is considered poor in terms of habitat and would benefit from intervention. The aim would be

to increase light to the southern section by removing some large trees that are overshadowing the site, and plant a variety of trees in the eastern section to create a woodland area.

The boundary would also be planted up with thorny shrubs and small trees to screen the site from the surrounding houses, providing both privacy and security. We would like to establish a functioning pond that can be supplied by a Sustainable Drainage Scheme (SUDS). This would involve collecting rainwater from surrounding houses to supply a 1000 litre water butt to provide water in dry periods.





Bringing the community together makes the work much more fun as well as helping residents recognise this is their green space.

Who will benefit?

This site would be beneficial to all visitors, school parties, ramblers, young and old and would accommodate wheel chair users. But through educating the young we invest in those who will look after our green spaces in the future.

This project presents the opportunity to deliver relevant parts of the National Curriculum. Key stage 2 for example requires use of fieldwork to observe, measure, record and present the human and physical features in the local area using a range of methods.

We would like to involve the community as much as possible especially with a view to ongoing maintenance and would like to form a 'Trail Team'



who would act under the guidance of conservation professionals and management guidelines.

We would hope that people in the community with specific skills might come forward during the planning stage such as landscape architects and possibly that some schools may be able to develop and design teaching materials as part of an art/design project.



Construction

Although some aspects of the project, notably the path, require a degree of expertise, we would envisage seeking the support of volunteer groups to aid in the construction as much as possible.

This could include corporate volunteer groups under guidance, but local volunteers will always be preferable. We are talking to The Conservation Volunteers and Groundwork, both organisations working within the borough community and are also looking at local professionals where skilled labour is required.

We will make the most of the summer months and local fairs to promote the trail project and sign up people to help in the preparation and construction phases. We hope that we can engage local school groups in the process of planting. Individual schools might be able to adopt plots for plant maintenance and their own nature projects





The Bags of Help Initiative

Tesco has teamed up with Groundwork to launch its Bags of Help initiative in hundreds of regions across England and Wales. The scheme will see three community groups and projects in each of these regions awarded grants of £12,000, £10,000 and £8,000 – all raised from the 5p bag charge.

Bags of Help offers community groups and projects in each of Tesco's 390 regions across the UK a share of revenue generated from the five pence charge levied on single-use carrier bags. The public will now vote in store from 27 February until 6 March on who should receive the £12,000, £10,000 and £8,000 awards.

The Friends of the Parkland Walk have been successful in the first round and are now guaranteed a grant for £8,000

The terms of the grant mean that we can supplement it to the tune of 25%. This means we may be looking at a budget of £8,000 - £16,000.

Naturally we are very enthusiastic about our project and want to secure the best grant available so that we can create something really special. That is now for the public to decide!

The Friends of the Parkland Walk

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