

Vision for Canvey Lake Open Space

Introduction

The Canvey Lake open space is a public open space and provides a local focal point for informal recreation for the population of Canvey Island and has an important role in environmental education and drawing wildlife into an urban environment. There is an abundance of wildlife within the open space, however, there is also an ongoing issue with fly tipped litter which not only impacts the amenity but also the wildlife.

The open space is within the central area of Canvey Island. It forms a green space amongst residential housing which stretches from Link Road in the west to Central Wall Road to the east and can be accessed by many small residential roads along the whole site. The site is approximately 2 kilometres long and in its widest points 90 metres wide. A water body dominates the eastern side of the site which has an abundance of reedbeds around it and on its islands while the west comprises amenity grassland and trees. The site is approximately 3 metres above sea level and is approximately 15 hectares in size, with the water body consisting of 4.4 hectares of this. The area is a designated local nature reserve and is designated for reedbed and marshland.

Vision – 5-year plan

Over the next five years the Town Council wish to build on its work on the lake and with ongoing improvements create a wonderful place for residents and visitors, enhanced to create a family friendly open space which will also encourage tourism and educational possibilities for schools and local groups. It will have an abundance of existing and new wildlife with the development of the existing site with better water quality and enhanced biodiversity with the use of natural resources such as aquatic plants, vegetation and improved banks to create a clean and safe environment for all those that visit.

Ongoing Vision

The future vision is to conserve, enhance and reconnect the site to wildlife and people and involve the community in the conservation of their local environment. The Council wish to:

- Deliver a range of benefits for wildlife, people and the local community.
- Positive management of the open space which will benefit wildlife and people within Canvey Island.
- To encourage the local community to use the land with public access and to be proud of its conservation and heritage value.
- To safeguard and connect all existing habitats within the landscape to make them more robust and sustainable.

Delivery

The vision will be delivered by the Council and organisations and individuals working together on projects that will achieve agreed objectives, for the benefit of the landscape, wildlife, and people of Canvey Island.

Objectives:

The vision will be achieved through the following objectives:

- To enhance the value of the open space and the wildlife whilst accommodating public access to the site.
- To encourage community cohesion, community pride and enthusiasm. To work with the residents of Canvey Island to better understand the site and in turn explain how we will address those needs within the resources and powers on the Council.
- To promote the social, economic, educational, leisure and tourism aspects of the open space including education of the welfare and nurturing of local wildfowl.
- To protect and improve the environment and promote sustainable development without jeopardising the function of the water body.
- To maintain and where possible enhance the populations of notable plant and animal species that are resident on the site to enable key species to develop more robust and sustainable populations.
- To improve the quality of the water by introducing appropriate aquatic plants and measures to prevent algae blooms including the permanent removal of fish and to monitor the quality of the water to determine condition and status and to assess the effectiveness of future conservation management.
- To stabilise and reinforce the banks of the lake to prevent further erosion, to enhance and repair damaged grass land and review future preventative measures with consideration of safety and ecological impacts.
- To continue to maintain reed flailing annually with consideration of future enhancements to remove areas of reeds periodically whilst avoiding bird nesting season and protecting existing species and the current range of micro-habitats.
- To continue to maintain the sites infrastructure and street furniture with consideration of future enhancements in line with the Councils biodiversity policies.
- Increase the involvement of schools in their local open space by developing an initiative in Canvey Island to help educate school children in biodiversity and local wildlife protection and habitat.
- Promote the value of the open space and opportunities for informal recreation to visitors, for the benefit of locals and tourism.
- To be accountable, approachable and visible and to ensure that the resources at the Council's disposal are used to the most effective degree possible ensuring cost effectiveness and value for money.