



# LANGOLD COUNTRY PARK

## MASTER PLAN DRAFT

Prepared by **Roaring Tree Ecology & Community Engagement**  
For **Bassetlaw District Council**



**Bassetlaw**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL  
— North Nottinghamshire —

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# Introduction

This master plan for Langold Country Park was commissioned by Bassetlaw District Council in July 2020. The purpose of the master plan is to highlight the positive aspects of the park and identify important areas with real potential to develop and improve. Langold Country Park already has a strong identity rich in features valued by a diverse park user community. The plan will identify actions on a wide range of development themes.

The driver for developing the park is to achieve lasting benefits to local communities (both long established residents and recent arrivals) and the wider communities within the park's catchment area from the 'whole of Bassetlaw' and beyond. Looking beyond immediate benefits to park users there are other vital aspects within the plan such as meeting the needs of biodiversity and addressing climate change issues.

## 1.1 Local and Regional context:

Langold Country Park is one of three destination parks in Bassetlaw and is the only country park managed by Bassetlaw District Council. In some respects the park needs to 'grow into' its destination park status and become more formally recognised for its significance in Bassetlaw and beyond. The two other destination parks are; The Canch in Worksop and Kings' Park, Retford, both town centre parks.

The park is also considered to be a 'gateway site' into the countryside of Bassetlaw/North Nottinghamshire and is included within published planned walks by neighbouring local authorities and numerous walking groups.

Langold Country Park sits within Natural Area 23, the Southern Magnesian Limestone. This is an important Natural Character Area as defined by the statutory body, Natural England. The limestone ridge runs south to north from Nottinghamshire to North Yorkshire. This character area has regional, national and international significance as a rare geological landform, especially when exposed by the action of water at surface level. The park and its surrounding area are also fully assessed within the Bassetlaw Landscape Character Assessment and the 6 Local Wildlife Site areas and Dyscarr Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest are described within the Bassetlaw Green Infrastructure Strategy.

The vast majority of this master plan is focussed on site specific development issues. There is however, a need to consider landscape scale 'connectivity' with other areas in Bassetlaw and beyond from access/recreation, landscape character and ecological perspectives. The true relevance of Langold Country Park becomes even greater when it is seen as part of something much bigger and connected beyond its boundaries.

## 1.2 Relevant previously commissioned work:

Parts of this master plan may also be informed by relevant studies commissioned by Bassetlaw District Council in recent years. This includes:

**Training Opportunities in Four Bassetlaw Parks 2018** – Identifying the potential for conservation and other practical training opportunities using parks as venues to achieve regeneration, community cohesion/social inclusion and other outcomes in Bassetlaw. Langold Country Park was identified as a particularly important venue for conservation work. This document was produced as a scoping exercise for a potential Reaching Communities, Big Lottery funding bid (this funding source is now called Community Fund). References will be made to this document in the relevant master plan sections.

**Botanical Survey of Access Routes in Langold Country Park 2019** – Botanical survey work around footpaths, tracks and access routes into the heart of the park from the A60, Doncaster Road entrance. This was preliminary work relevant to potential, but currently unknown future changes and as an update for areas of the park under-recorded in existing botanical survey work.

**Langold Country Park: In comparison with three former coalfield country parks managed by different district or county authorities 2019/20** – This scoping document was produced to identify the relative strengths of three different country parks in former coalfield areas, comparing them with Langold Country Park itself. This comprehensive scoping exercise considered many key themes now important to the master plan and will be referenced in relevant sections.

### **1.3 Establishing a baseline for the plan using generic themes:**

The master plan uses a 'baseline' of generic themes relevant to nearly all country parks. They were also shared by the former coalfield, comparison parks visited and evaluated in the already mentioned 2019/20 study. These themes hold the main development issues that once addressed will contribute to the park being maintained and developed sustainably.

### **1.4 Covid 19 and the re-evaluation of parks:**

Access to semi natural greenspace during the full lock down from late March 2020 and ongoing restrictions in 2021 has led to a major re-evaluation of the role parks play in the health of communities. Parks have been shown to play a vital role in securing both physical, mental health and overall well being outcomes across all age groups. This has been widely featured in many studies and publications even before its huge importance became more highlighted during Covid 19 national lockdowns.

Some organisations have calculated the value of parks in monetary terms, in one case (The Wildlife Trusts) suggesting that for every £1 invested in parks there can be savings of up to £6 in reduced NHS costs and positive impacts on the local/wider economy through securing greater well being and reduced work days lost.

It is important to note that the ongoing Covid 19 situation is a window of opportunity where local authorities and central government are seeing the true value of parks being brought into ever sharper focus. This also includes calls for greater investment in green infrastructure, equality of access and questioning whether parks provision should now be redefined as a statutory rather than discretionary service.

### 1.5 The funding landscape 2020 onwards:

There have been huge changes in the entire funding landscape over the past decade. This includes substantial reductions in central government funding to local authorities, austerity measures and major development funding from other sources becoming harder to access. Discretionary services such as Parks and Open Spaces have seen budgets cut while still having to deliver the bulk of their responsibilities with fewer resources.

One consequence of funding cuts is that every type of venture or development must be sustainable. This includes buildings, enterprise ideas and community activities needing support. The master plan is written fully recognising the funding landscape in which parks are run and will keep a focus on sustainability.

The concluding of the Brexit process means that previously widely available major European funding sources for regeneration have already or are ending soon. These funding sources (European Development Fund, European Social Fund etc.) have been used extensively in former coalfield areas and parks across this region, some of which were visited for comparison purposes with Langold Country Park.

Section 106 developer contributions remains a limited potential source of funding. Access to capital and revenue funding sources such as The Big Lottery (Heritage Fund and Community Fund) allow local authorities to apply for funding for project work outside of their core responsibilities. These projects must deliver far reaching community benefits with outcomes that can be measured and proven. Reference to these funding sources will be made within the master plan and the outcomes the funders expect to see being achieved in project delivery.

To make it easier to understand where different features of the park are located in relation to cardinal points on the compass, the following fixed features have been used:

- The lakes as the park's most prominent feature follow in a line from south west (Upper Lake) to north east (dam of Lower Lake)
- The A60 Doncaster Road runs from Worksop through Carlton in Lindrick and Langold in a directly south to north direction

The following master plan sections proceed in a logical sequence starting with a recap of Investment in the Park. This is followed by the history section that sets the scene for the historical and ongoing importance of Langold Country Park in terms of heritage, recreation and biodiversity.

# 1: Investment in the Park

Meeting the present and future needs of park users it is essential that sustainably drives investment in the park. This emphasis on sustainability means investing in quality for future proofing whilst providing the best value outcomes from resources used.

The most obvious evidence of investment will always be physical improvements in park facilities and play equipment. The play offer at Langold Country Park is exceptional by the standards seen at other regional country parks when developing this master plan. Facilities such as the incredibly popular water splash park confirm Langold's destination park status. These major examples of investment are part of an ongoing process of continuous improvements.

Less obvious examples of investment include biodiversity improvements for the Local Nature Reserve within the park's numerous individual Local Wildlife Sites and the Dyscarr Wood, Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Investment in the park within recent years includes:

- Developing a new children's play area
- Constructing the popular water splash park facility
- Providing a purpose built building for on-site toilet facilities
- Installing a skate park accessible from the Doncaster Road pedestrian and vehicle entrances
- Creating a new junior football pitch playing area
- Providing good quality fishing points around the Lower Lake including accessible fishing area for disabled anglers
- Renovating the 1950's bandstand as an important park heritage feature
- Ecological improvements including creating Church Street Meadow and Cadet Field Meadow as part of the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust Blue Butterfly Scheme
- Working with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust for managing Dyscarr Wood under service level agreement

Future investment will include more emphasis on health and well being priorities alongside the more obvious physical improvements. These priorities have been highlighted through the important role parks have played during the 2020 and 2021 Covid 19 national lockdowns as people began to reconnect with green spaces. Langold Country Park increased its share of visitor numbers throughout those periods as the need to access recreation and wider open space areas became more apparent. The park was able to offer a vital role in terms of both physical and mental well being for a large number of Bassetlaw residents in these challenging times.

# 2: The History of Langold Country Park

## 2.1 Introduction:

The history of Langold Country Park in the master plan is being told in a way that gives a fuller background to the park's true heritage value. This may also help reveal the significance of 'hidden heritage' which can be understood better with the story behind both seen and less visible clues. The history of the park goes back over 200 years and begins with a never fully realised grand landscape vision that was eventually abandoned. The twists and turns along the way and the power of coal to turn a landscape upside down from its finding, exploiting the resource, and the final giving up on it, all play their parts in the story of the modern park today.

It is essential that the history of the landowners' whose vision created much of the landscape of the modern park is told properly. Despite the vision being for the enjoyment of a privileged few, without it the park enjoyed by so many today would probably not even exist. Many of the surviving features from the original vision have become the Local Wildlife Sites of today and the Lower Lake is the honey pot location for a circular walk that has been enjoyed by generations of park users.

As a country park in a former coalfield area it is unusual because much of its land has not been scarred and reclaimed after industrial uses, it has developed alongside them. This side by side relationship goes to the heart of the park's very important social history. This is woven within the development of Firbeck Main Colliery and Langold village that started the park's evolution and development through nearly 100 years of use. This has all contributed to what we see today as the modern country park. The park's social history should be treated with equal

importance to every other story because parks are about people. The human story has another fascinating aspect; how people got to settle in the newly built village, where they came from and how secure work and housing with decent standards drew a diversity of people from every corner of the United Kingdom.

Using the enduring remains of the original designed landscape to understand the park's physical history is fairly straightforward. Much harder to grasp is the hidden heritage which is all about people and the legacy of the colliery that has left just photographs and memories with only faint physical clues.

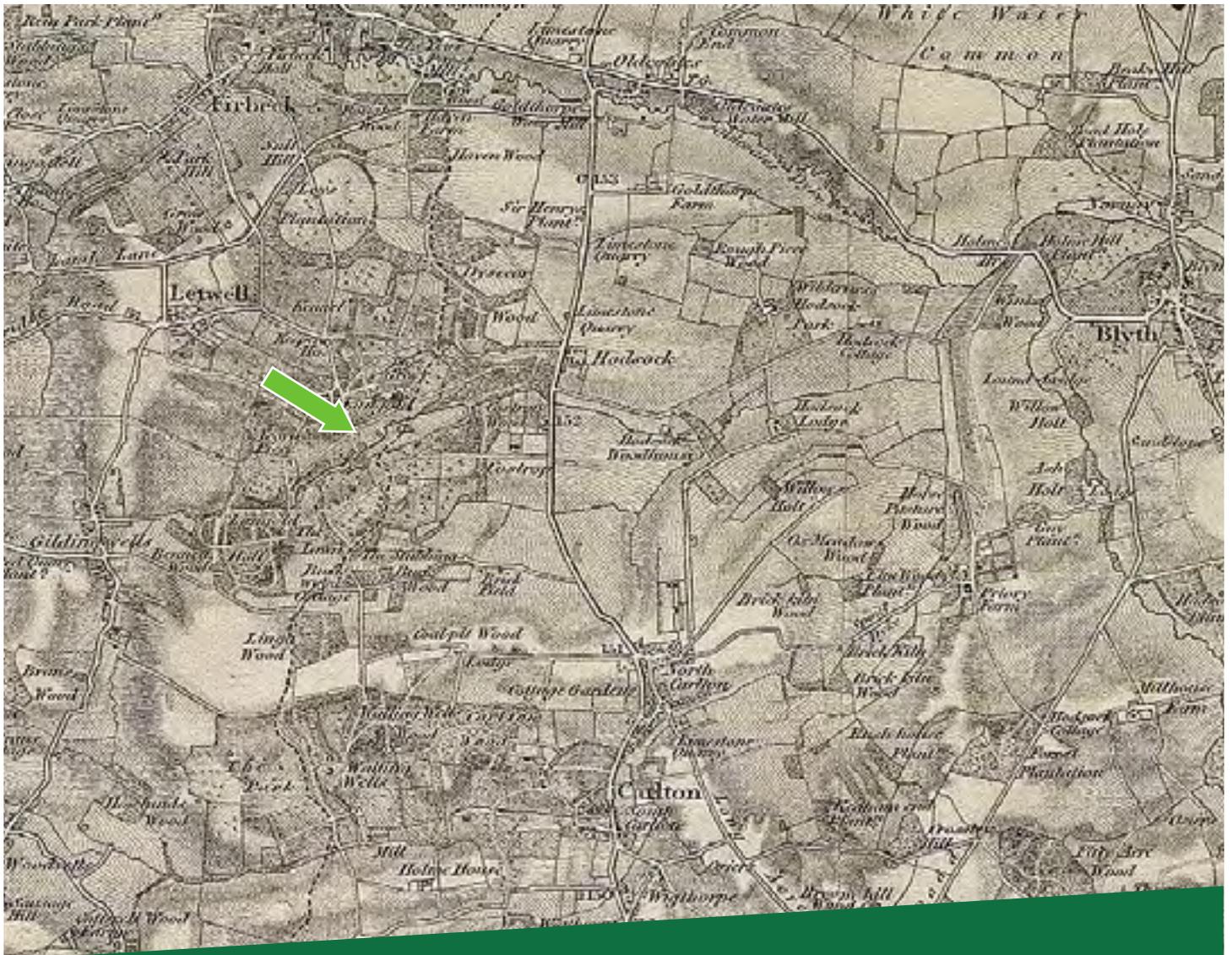
The history of the park as a timeline of change is neither a straight line of progress or coming full circle. It seems to be a mix of both. The story it tells includes the development of leisure time and recreation for ordinary people and changing attitudes to nature. The formal designed landscape which was to be a prized symbol of wealth and prestige is now prized for the enjoyment of park users and the biodiversity that makes homes in these landscapes as habitats. In the modern park, nature is no longer something that struggles to endure in spite of human activity, most of the park is now a Local Nature Reserve.

Telling the history of the park within heritage is not a competition between different stories, it is one where the significance is shared. The people who spent days walking over 100 miles to find secure work and housing that could transform the lives of their families and the people who created a landscape vision that started in the 1750's, and still seen in the park today can both share the same page.

## 2.2 Langold before the Model Village and Langold Country Park:

Langold village itself came into being as the Model Village built to house the workers and their families for the Firbeck Main Colliery, developed from 1923. The new village took its name from the Langold Estate which long predated it.

The name Langold is derived from either **'Langholt'** meaning long wood or **'Langhald'** which means long shelter. The earliest mention of a settlement at Langold is recorded in 1246. The whole area for a number of miles around Langold is steeped in history and the neighbouring village of Carlton in Lindrick was well established in Saxon times.



1840 Ordnance Survey map of the area around the Langold Estate (the lakes are shown by the arrow)

This work is based on data provided through [www.VisionofBritain.org.uk](http://www.VisionofBritain.org.uk) and uses historical material which is copyright of the Great Britain GIS Project and the University of Portsmouth



St John the Evangelist Grade 1 listed church in Carlton in Lindrick with Saxon tower

Until the Dissolution of Monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII, there was a Benedictine Nunnery founded in the 12th century at Wallingwells. Only a few miles north-west of Langold in South Yorkshire, are the preserved ruins of the Cistercian 12th Century Roche Abbey. Nearby historic country houses include Hodsock Priory and Firbeck Hall.

A useful starting point in understanding how both the village and the country park fit within a timeline leading to today is to present names and dates connected to the early history of the country estates in the local area. This helps in understanding how the Langold Estate developed amongst its neighbouring country estates. These estates formed patterns of land ownership and prestige that shaped the area's built environment, landscape and social history. From the 1750's, the succession of Langold Estate's owners and their enterprises (failed and successful) has paved the way for both Langold Country Park and the village to exist in the way they are seen today.

The following timeline gives the names and connections of land ownership that developed until the point where the park's early history starts to emerge:

- Roger, son of Robert de Langholt is mentioned in the reign of Henry III (1216 – 72)
- Cecilia Langald and Gilfrida Langald are living at Letwell in 1379
- In the 14th Century, Letwell, Firbeck, Dinnington and Tickhill are listed in the estates of the barons Segrave
- Three inquisitions record familiar place names: 1st inquisition in the reign of Edward II (1307 – 1327) naming Nicholas de Segrave
- 2nd and 3rd inquisitions in the reign of Edward III (1327 – 1377) naming John de Segrave and Walter Manny
- In the reign of Henry IV (1399 – 1413) William de Terrington let all his lands in the village of

Langhall to Hugh Cressy. The Cressys were the second lords of Hodsock

- The Langold Estate now belongs to the Burton family, the marriage of Robert Burton is recorded in the reign of Elizabeth I (1558 – 1603).
- Thomas Burton (gentleman) sold the estate to Sir Ralph Knight in around 1650
- Sir Ralph Knight purchases the neighbouring Letwell Estate in 1652
- The death of Sir Ralph Knight occurs in 1691, he is succeeded by his second son Isaac. With the death of Isaac in 1721, his son, another Ralph inherits the estate
- The Mellish family purchase the Hodsock Estate in 1765 with farms, Hodsock Priory and considerable property in Carlton in Lindrick
- In 1765 the Mellish family sell property in Carlton in Lindrick to Ralph Knight and John White of Wallingwells

During the 1750's period of the timeline, Ralph Knight begins the development of Langold Park as a picturesque formal landscape with lake, plantations, stables, Palladian house and a planned mansion. This is the point from which the modern park's legacy of inherited 'designed landscape' features begins.

- Ralph Knight dies in 1768 leaving the mansion only started. Elizabeth, Ralph Knight's sister inherits both the Firbeck and Langold estates.
- Elizabeth is married to Dr Henry Gally. Their 2 sons John and Henry later incorporate Knight into the family name and coat of arms to become 'Gally Knight'.
- In 1774 the Mellish family sell property in Carlton in Lindrick to the Ramsden family
- John Gally Knight, barrister, magistrate and MP lives at Langold Hall and dies in 1804 leaving the estates to his younger brother Henry

- Around 1805 Henry Gally Knight commissions renowned Landscape Gardener Humphry Repton to design a major landscaping scheme for Langold Park
- The son of Henry Gally Knight, also called Henry has direct involvement in the landscaping project, directing works etc.
- Henry Gally Knight (senior) dies in 1808 followed by his widow Selina in 1823. Their son, Henry had inherited the estates.
- The son, Henry continues to work with Humphrey Repton and \*commissions architect Sir Jeffry Wyatt to create plans for a mansion in the Langold Estate, receiving designs in 1814 and 1817 (Baker et al undated)
 

\*The account of commissioning Sir Jeffry Wyatt as architect differs from the account of Eyres P & Lynch K, 2018 where Mr Wilkins (the younger) is cited as initial choice of architect with the comment; **“nothing appears to have come of this”**. Both accounts include Wyatt as the architect providing final plans for the Langold Park mansion.
- In 1812 Henry Gally Knight commissions John Webb, Landscape Gardener to design the substantial lake extension which later fails (now the Dry Lake)
- The landscape vision and plans for a mansion are finally abandoned permanently and Henry Gally Knight moves to Firbeck Hall in 1826 which he renovates and extends
- Henry dies in 1846 leaving the Langold Estate to his friend Sir Thomas Wollaston White (of Wallingwells) and the Firbeck Estate to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners
- The estate is inherited by Sir Archibald Wollaston White after the death of his uncle in 1907
- In 1911 the newly formed Wallingwells Boring Company begins drilling in the search for the Barnsley Seam of coal on the eastern shore of

the Lower Lake in Langold Park.

- The Wollaston-White, Mellish and Ramsden families are some of the main royalty owners for 10,000 acres of mineral rights for the Firbeck Main Colliery Company Limited
- In 1923 the Firbeck Main Colliery Company sinks the two shafts for the colliery and reaches the Barnsley Seam in 1925. The modern history phase linking Langold village, the colliery and what would become the country park begins.

Later progression through this timeline shows the developing shared interests between local landowners enduring into the twentieth century. This includes the main landowners raising capital together and becoming the main royalty holders in Firbeck Main Colliery Limited which was developed on the Langold Estate. Later sections within this historical account give an idea of the commercial importance of coal driving its exploration and leading to the establishment of the colliery company.

Within less than a decade after developing the Firbeck Main Colliery and Model Village, the private country estate begins the early evolution of its use for community recreation. This starts with using the inherited legacy of the lakes for fishing and swimming long before the site becomes more recognisable as the modern country park.

### 2.3 The landscape vision, part completed and later abandoned:

The beginnings of the modern park's legacy of designed landscape features starts in the 1750's where Ralph Knight, the grandson of Sir Ralph Knight begins the development of Langold Park as a planned formal landscape. That vision remains (in its later form) as one of the park's most important heritage assets up to the present day. The original vision to create a picturesque formal landscape with lake, plantations, stables and Palladian house was achieved but a planned prestigious mansion was started but never meaningfully realised in Ralph Knight's lifetime.

At the very beginning of the nineteenth century the brothers John and Henry Gally Knight (descendants of Sir Ralph Knight) are both involved in plans for major landscaping works using the services of renowned Landscape Gardener Humphry Repton. The brothers die within four years of each other (John in 1804 and Henry in 1808) and the son of Henry Gally Knight

(also a Henry) will continue the work began by both his uncle and father.

It appears that the work began by Ralph Knight had already produced an enduring landscape legacy to improve upon through the fresh vision of his descendants. Repton is reputed to have said:

**"the groups of oaks, thorns, yews and other trees are more picturesquely combined at Langold than at any other spot in the country".**

In a family letter dated September 1805, the impression left on Repton is given as follows:

**"I think Langold is looking particularly green and beautiful this year & the foliage is so fine. Mr Repton (who has been here) admires it all extremely – he has put down some stakes for the continuation of the Lake turning the road and planting off the stables, which will be a great improvement – he will send us the drawing very soon"** (Eyres P & Lynch K 2018).



The Boathouse and rebuilt Upper Lake weir (shot on black and white film)

In 1806 the family had received designs from Repton in what was called 'The Red Book'. This included before and after drawings for which Repton was paid £52 and 10 shillings. The Red Book for Langold has never been traced so the only way to envisage its contents has been through reading correspondence between Repton and the Gally Knight family (Eyres P & Lynch K 2018).

The summary of main works carried out with Humphry Repton's involvement between 1806 and 1810 is understood to include:

- Reworking the pre-existing lakes to create what is now the Upper Lake with levelling and shrubbery planting
- Creating a substantial new lake, now the Lower Lake requiring the construction of a large dam
- Creating new walkways for enjoyment of the lakes
- Constructing a rustic stone weir between Upper and Lower Lakes
- Constructing the dressed stone Boathouse (still present on the park)
- Mass tree and shrub planting works with over 16,500 trees purchased for planting in 1809 – 1810

Henry Gally Knight was known to have a very keen interest in and extensive knowledge of architecture and was well travelled throughout Europe, including provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Prestige and the desire to show off wealth and good taste would undoubtedly have driven the landscape vision since the days of Ralph Knight. The neighbouring Hodsock Estate and the prestigious Hodsock Priory with moat and gatehouse may have set a standard to equal and even exceed, or just as likely, the properties and estates of other landowners within their social circle. Henry Gally Knight's ambitions for the Langold Estate seemed only to grow in scale as the initial design works of Humphry Repton were completed.

In 1812 the Landscape Gardener John Webb was commissioned to design a huge extension to the existing lakes. The new lake extending in all directions from the north eastern end of the Lower Lake was a massive undertaking. The entire play areas, car parks, playing fields and named meadows between the modern park's Church Street entrance and Costhorpe Plantation would be under a significant depth of water. The lake would extend north into the park areas accessed from the A60 Doncaster Road entrance and across the south western edges of Costhorpe Plantation too.

An extensive clay and limestone bank 30 feet high (nearly 10 metres) was built along the western edge of Costhorpe Plantation to hold the water. This elevated bank now forms a raised footpath through the woodland. This ambitious phase of landscaping was beset by problems of leakages and the expected completion date in 1814 was not achieved. By 1815 the lake was still not completed but it appears that Henry Gally Knight was still persevering telling John Webb in 1816; **"I must set about my house and trust to you for the success of the lake"** (Eyres P & Lynch K 2018).

In 1817 Gally Knight receives plans from Jeffrey Wyatt for the new mansion and the old house began by Ralph Knight is demolished. The problems of leakages were never resolved and the lake refused to consistently hold water. It has been suggested this could be due to a geological fault. Henry Gally Knight was also unhappy about the poor colour of the water. Even on today's Lower Lake the water looks muddy in windy weather as sediment is churned up. In a letter to his friend Lord Fitzwilliam of Wentworth Woodhouse, Gally Knight says;

**"been obliged to stop building at Langold... the lake is the cause – the leakages increase rather than diminish and the colour, especially opposite where the foundations were laid is extremely bad... I shall keep Langold just as it is, preserve the idea of building at some time, &.... observe, for some years what becomes of the lake."**

By 1818 Henry Gally Knight appears to abandon the remaining vision of the final lake and mansion. The landscaper John Webb denies responsibility for the leakages in the lake and demands payment. Gally knight seeks legal advice and an acrimonious dispute rumbles on until 1821 where Webb accepts a payment of £100 "promising never to open his mouth on the subject again" (Eyres P & Lynch K 2018).

The failed lake is said to have cost £30,000 which on a simple average inflation rate calculator adds up to just under £3,000,000 in today's money. The real amount may be even higher when the greater purchasing power of the original sum for goods and services from that point in time are taken into account.

In 1826 Henry Gally Knight moves to Firbeck Hall which he renovates and extends as his main residence. On his death in 1846 his friend Sir Thomas Wollaston White of Wallingwells inherits Langold Estate. The Firbeck Estate is left to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. By the time Sir Archibald Wollaston White inherited the Langold Estate from his uncle in 1907, Worksop was becoming surrounded by working collieries (Mantaj 1987).

The Wallingwells Boring Company founded in 1911 began immediately drilling to find the Barnsley Seam of coal in a field on the eastern shore of the Lower Lake. This field was part of Costhorpe Farm which would later sacrifice a large part of its land for the development of the Firbeck Main Colliery. Within a decade from 1925, Langold Park as the remains of a formal landscape would have began its long evolution into what becomes recognisable as Langold Country Park today.

The abandoning of the final parts of the landscape vision and grand mansion that began in the 1750's raises the following important question:

### **What would have happened if the full vision for Langold Park was realised, would there still have been a colliery and Model Village developed and a later park to provide recreation?**

The answers to this question cannot be known with certainty but it seems unlikely that the successive owners of what could have been one of the most prestigious houses and grounds in the country would choose to have their view spoiled by extensive colliery workings. Langold Park as a 'failed vision' appears to have lacked the necessary value to be preserved against the power of coal to generate wealth. An entirely different future from the original grand vision has given rise to the modern park.

### **2.4 Surviving features in the modern park:**

The features surviving in the modern park include both those associated with the landscape vision of Ralph Knight and the Gally Kinght family along with later essential alterations. There are also historic features surviving from other land uses within the Langold Estate and features added as the modern park begins to emerge.

#### **The Boathouse and weir:**

The original 19th Century dressed stone Boathouse remains as an impressive heritage feature at the south western end of the Lower Lake. The original rustic stone weir between Upper and Lower Lakes has been completely rebuilt sometime in the early 1980's. There are no records of Humphry Repton's original design for the weir. The new weir is built from reclaimed granite sets and was carefully designed to be sympathetic with the period boathouse. The design also allows level access to continue unbroken on the circular walk footpath around the lakes.



The Boathouse and rebuilt weir between Upper and Lower Lakes

## Lakes and islands:

The Upper and Lower Lakes remain with their outline on maps very similar to when they were originally completed in the time of Humphry Repton and Henry Gally Knight. The main difference in today's modern park is that the Lower Lake dam has been rebuilt with reinforced concrete and steel piling. Past and present recreational use has also left pontoons and fishing pegs around its shores. The lakes while still appreciated for their beauty have over time become much more than purely ornamental.

The depth of the lakes has reduced over the years due to the natural process of silting and the Upper Lake has become shallow and heavily vegetated. This is part of a natural process called 'hydroseral succession' where any still water body without intervention eventually returns to a solid land state. At one time sludge from the colliery's coal washing slurry

tanks overflowed into the lake, this combined with ongoing silting has reduced the depth of the Lower Lake at its deepest point from 36 feet (11 metres) deep to 18 feet (5.5 metres).

The original design of the lakes was cleverly thought through. The two islands in the Lower Lake split and slowed down the flow of water. A submerged clay barrier cutting across the lake at the north eastern end of the larger island was included to retain silt and prevent it entering the deeper part of the lake. One account tells of people being able to wade across to the island on the top of this hard clay barrier. Dried silt was removed from the top of the clay barrier in the summer of 1935 where it had formed a footpath to the island (Baker et al undated). The Lower Lake is a Local Wildlife Site known simply as; 'Langold Lake'. Sub aqua teams have located at least two springs feeding water into the Lower Lake.

The Upper Lake is now very shallow and natural aquatic and marginal vegetation has been allowed to fully develop. This lake provides excellent habitat for nesting birds and is the park's Local Wildlife Site known as; 'Langold Lake Extension'.



Waterfowl on the Lower Lake

### **Dry Lake raised bank:**

The final and most ambitious lake which failed is now the large area of the park called Dry Lake. By 1835, some years after the failed lake was finally drained, it was removed as a feature on Ordnance Survey maps. Later maps name the area of failed lake as 'Dry Lake'. This area now includes two of the park's Local Wildlife Sites, these are Langold Dry Lake Extension (Church Street Meadow) and Langold Dry Lake and Costhorpe Plantation. The eastern raised bank of the failed lake remains as a 30 foot (10 metre) high walkway through Costhopre Plantation. In places this runs alongside the main footpath through the plantation leading to the modern park's Lower Lake and play areas. Both sides of the bank have been colonised by trees and ground layer vegetation. Without interpretation it would be impossible to understand that this is part of an ambitious humanly constructed feature involving thousands of tonnes of clay and limestone, all worked by hand.

### **Ponds:**

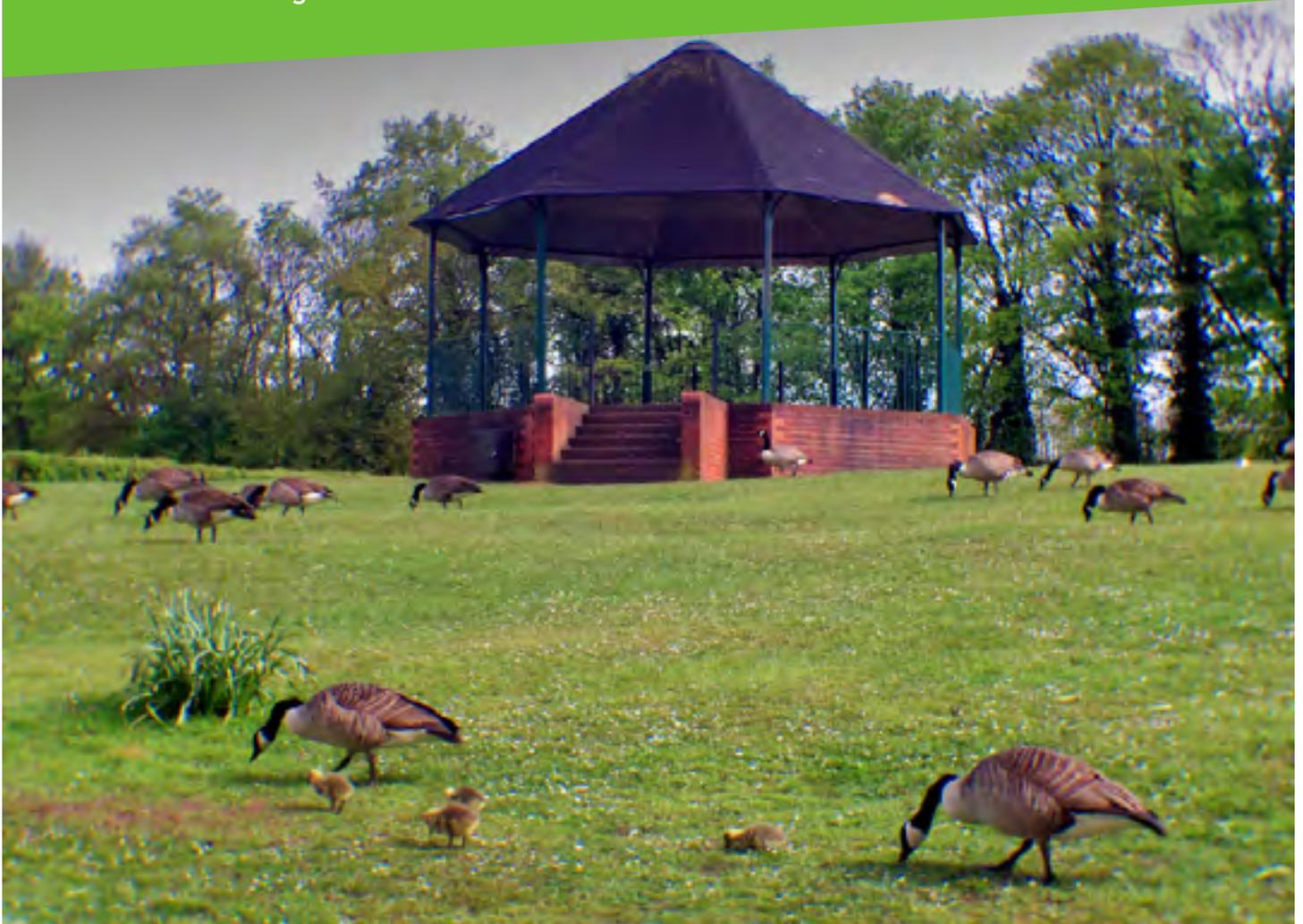
There are two surviving ponds in the park. They both appear to have been linked in some way to the lakes in the past. The first smaller pond is located in the vicinity of the Boathouse on the opposite side of the broad footpath. The pond is largely hidden by trees and undergrowth so enjoys less human disturbance. This pond could have been originally linked to the Upper Lake by an outlying strip of water. The pond has been left to nature as a breeding ground for amphibians such as frogs, toads and newts.

The much larger pond is located near the southern edge of Costhorpe Plantation and could mark the furthest point in which the failed third lake reached eastwards. Much like the Upper Lake, this was again an outlying strip of water. An alternative suggestion is that the pond pre-existed the lake and provided fish for the Langold Estate. This substantial pond has no obvious feeder stream and almost completely dries up in summer before water levels rise again in winter.



Surviving hedgerow on the north western edge of the Cadet Field

### Feint undulations of ridge and furrow in the Bandstand Field



#### Ridge and furrow field system:

In the Bandstand field there are the feint remains of a ridge and furrow field system. This gently undulating result of old or possibly ancient cultivation has not been entirely lost by modern ploughing. This field are likely to have been in continuous use as grazing land over a long period of time for the ridge and furrow to have survived, even as a feint feature. The undulating effect can be seen in the short mown grass with a keen eye. With the sun low in the sky it is also much easier to pick out this feature.

#### Dyscarr Wood and dyke:

These features pre-date the landscape vision for the Langold Estate. The importance of this woodland as the park's only statutory designated habitat justifies a full description within section 2.5.

## 2.4a Surviving important 20th Century features:

### Lower Lake dam and steel piling:

The original Lower Lake dam constructed from clay and limestone is known to have failed in 1929 in the sluice and well area. This required the lake to be drained to allow major repairs to take place. Water was pumped into the Dry Lake area which remained under water for many weeks. The dam was repaired again following further subsidence in the 1960's (Baker et al, undated). Following the Reservoirs Act 1975, Bassetlaw District Council carried out a complete overhaul of the dam and spillway using reinforced concrete and steel piling.

The use of reinforced concrete puts function over form and creates an 'industrial look' at the north eastern end of what was designed as an ornamental lake. The now statutory obligation to maintain the safety of the dam and introduction of annual inspections puts the priorities of long term durability and safety above all other considerations.



Concrete and steel piling in the Lower Lake's north eastern dam

Carrying out annual safety and maintenance checks is an important part of making sure the dam continues to safely perform its main function. In November 2020 the water level of the Lower Lake was reduced to enable a full inspection of the dam. The shores of the lake had what looked like 'muddy beaches' for a time until water levels were allowed to rise again.



The Lower Lake with water level substantially reduced for dam inspection

### **The Park Bandstand:**

The bandstand was built around the time of enacting nationalisation of the coal industry in 1947. The latest it was built is now considered to be some time in the early 1950's. It was used for performances by the Firbeck Colliery Band at Langold's Galas and other events. Bandstands are an iconic feature of many parks for community entertainment. Full restoration was completed in 2013 by Bassetlaw District Council to preserve an important heritage feature of the park for ongoing use as a performance area.

### **Borehole well:**

The Borehole Well is an important surviving feature tying the modern park to the colliery and everything that followed. Without the boreholes that successfully located the Barnsley Seam of coal and the development of Firbeck Main Colliery the park would never have evolved from a recreational resource for the mining community into the modern country park. Further detail is included within section 2.8, The Beginnings of Mining.



The newly restored bandstand in use 2013

## 2.5 Dyscarr Wood, the park's ancient woodland:

Dyscarr Wood is a 14.39 hectare area of ancient woodland within the modern park's Local Nature Reserve boundary and part of the former Langold Estate. Its definition as 'ancient woodland' means that it has been in continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD (over 400 years) and may well be older. This area of woodland long predates both the park and the grand landscape vision that began over 200 years ago. A point of confusion with defining an area as 'ancient woodland' lies in the fact that the woodland will not necessarily contain any very old or veteran trees. This is certainly the case with Dyscarr Wood where the felling of trees (presumably for their lumber value) has occurred into the mid twentieth century.

The name Dyas Car or Dyscarr may be derived from the Old English words 'dic' (ditch, trench or embankment) and 'scir' (shire, county or administrative division). In certain places the Anglo Saxon ditch is still visible and this remains the boundary between South Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire extending north and south of the woodland (Mantaj 1987). The term 'carr' derived from Old Norse word 'kjarr' for brushwood is also used both in place names and in ecology to describe a stage in the succession from marshland habitat to woodland. However the woodland's exact name was derived, it is likely that the area being of limited value to agriculture has spared it from being cleared of trees and ploughed.

Dyscarr Wood can be clearly seen on the 1840 Ordnance Survey map and the 1925 aerial photograph of the Model Village under construction. This woodland area points northwards like an extending arm from the main area of the park and is an important continuous landscape feature both for the park and Langold Village. With the help of volunteers during the 1970's it was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), its citation states:

**"The site comprises one of the best examples of a calcareous ash-wych elm wood in Nottinghamshire and is representative of semi-natural woodland on limestone soils in the English North Midlands".**

Now in the modern park, and probably unlike any previous time in Dyscarr Wood's known history, the woodland has full legal protection from damaging operations such as felling mature trees. Parts of it are now managed by the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust under a service level agreement. The woodland is the biodiversity jewel in the park's crown, a place for appreciating wildlife in a more natural setting.

Dyscarr Wood with its SSSI designation best represents the changing attitude to nature found in the modern park. Biodiversity now has a value in its own right and recreational use is encouraged for walking and nature watching to leave only footprints in these areas. While much of the park's landscape history is about reshaping nature, there has probably never been a time in its history where 'nature enduring in spite of' has changed to something where 'planned to co-exist and flourish' is becoming the accepted norm.

## 2.6 Firbeck Main Colliery and Langold Country Park - introductory facts:

In 1923, the sinking of the Firbeck Main Colliery shafts began and building essential infrastructure commenced parallel to the A60 Doncaster Road within Costhorpe. By 1925 the colliery was ready for production only a relatively short distance from the eastern side of today's park. Costhorpe itself sits between Carlton in Lindrick and Langold villages, all of which have developed alongside the A60 main road linking Worksop to Doncaster.

The main physical impact created on the park by mining was from the infrastructure needed for transporting coal by rail. Extensive sidings to hold coal wagons occupied a large area of the park extending from the colliery itself (east of the park)

and towards the north eastern corner where the railway line exited the park under the A60. This area now includes short mown amenity grassland, the skate park, cafe and car park that are accessed from the A60 Doncaster Road entrance. There is now very little direct physical evidence to be seen in the park because the whole sidings area has been reclaimed, landscaped and put to the recreational uses seen today.

The visual impact of the colliery would have been huge with its 55 metre (180 feet) tall chimney, twin headstocks and spoil heap which reached an eventual height of over 80 metres tall. These features would have created a major visual impact seen from many areas of the park.



Aerial photograph of Firbeck Main Colliery circa 1925  
note the southern end of the lakes in the top right corner

The importance of mining in relation to the park is not in its physical impacts and remains. It is because it drove the park's evolution and planned development for the recreation of miners and their families. Within less than a decade from when the colliery came into production, the park's recreational role has been evolving and reshaping to fit within each generation's changing needs and expectations. Some aspects of the park's current play offer would have been completely alien earlier in its development. This includes the very popular, high tech water splash park, and the modern skate park situated where some of the colliery sidings would have been located.



Memorial plaque at the former Silverhill Colliery site commemorating Nottinghamshire's 65 main collieries (including Firbeck)

## 2.7 The need for coal driving colliery development:

Coal had been powering much of Britain's Industrial Revolution since the eighteenth century and was still needed in ever increasing quantities well into the twentieth century too. Earlier sources of industrial power and fuel such as water and charcoal from managed coppice had largely been replaced in some form by coal. The demand for coal in generating electricity was steadily increasing as was the quantities required for steel manufacturing where Britain was still a world leading producer.

Steam engines were still used extensively in virtually every area of industry including railways, shipping, road building, and agriculture, engineering works, water and sewage pumping. These steam engines needed the high calorific value of good quality coal to

generate enough heat to produce steam. Coal was also used extensively for domestic heating. By the end of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century there was just over 1 million men employed in mining throughout Britain.

The need for ever greater quantities of coal meant that deposits closer to the surface had long been worked out and much deeper mines needed to be developed. At the time of its sinking in 1854, Shireoaks Colliery in Nottinghamshire was one of the deepest in the country at 515 yards (470 metres deep). In contrast, the Firbeck Main Colliery shafts sunk in 1923 reached the Barnsley Seam of coal at 828 yards (757 metres) in 1925 meaning that Firbeck's colliers were working half a mile below ground to win coal! By the time Thoresby Colliery closed in 2015 (the last Nottinghamshire Colliery), there had been over 60 main collieries in Nottinghamshire. Some of these were producing over 1 million tonnes of coal per year.

## 2.8 The beginnings of mining:

Mining was already a long established major industry in both Nottinghamshire and the entire midlands region by the time exploration for coal began in 1911 on the eastern shore of the Lower Lake. The purpose of exploration conducted through the newly founded Wallingwells Boring Company Limited was to locate the Barnsley Seam which was already being exploited at numerous other collieries in the region. Initial boreholes were drilled by a Lancashire company, later replaced by mining engineers from a German consortium headed by Herr Stines. They had already been involved in mining operations at Harworth and were using a secretive patent freezing process. The drilling process was carried out night and day, cutting through over 200

rock strata layers, eventually a workable coal seam was found. The German engineers were interned as enemy aliens at the outbreak of World War One in 1914 and it appears that all further exploration to exploit the resource ended until sinking the shafts for Firbeck Main Colliery commenced in 1923.

In the locality of where the exploratory bore holes were drilled, a spring still brings water up to the surface. The water has a sulphide aroma and has generated numerous local stories around its beneficial properties. A small stone enclosure and a pipe for the water have been built in more recent times, although this whole feature is now in need of restoration.



The location of the boreholes on the east side of the Lower Lake, note the cylindrical drill cores in the middle of the photograph

### The Borehole Well on the eastern shore of the Lower Lake



The Firbeck Main Colliery Company was established by 1915 and the chief royalty owners for 10,000 acres of mineral rights were Sir Archibald Wollaston White (Langold Estate owner), Colonel Mellish and Messrs Ramsden, Riddel and Glebe. There are gaps in understanding the full timeline from drilling the first boreholes in 1911 to sinking the colliery shafts in 1923. Approval for the Firbeck Light Railway Line in 1916 meant surveying could begin for a temporary railway line which would link the future Firbeck Main Colliery with Harworth Colliery and wider coalfield rail links including to coastal ports. In 1924 five and a quarter miles of temporary track were laid to a junction west of Harworth, this was upgraded to permanent track in 1927.

The impact on progress created by World War One 1914 - 18 is not known but may have been significant and could have continued during

peacetime due to the residual effects of the war. What is known with a degree of certainty is that until the formation of the Industrial Housing Association Limited in 1922 (which enabled the building of mass housing), there would likely have been no realistic means to build the large number of houses required for the colliery workforce. This provides additional and possibly the strongest explanation for the years lost between drilling the first boreholes in 1911 and shaft sinking in 1923.

Further research is needed to unpick gaps in the timeline and what exact commercial arrangements were made in relation to leasing the land in what is now the modern park and how the planning and physical development of the colliery fits within this. It is known that Sir Archibald Wollaston White sold the estate to Thomas Place of North Allerton early in 1927 who sold the land to the Firbeck Colliery Company in July of the same year.

## 2.9 The mass felling of trees:

One of today's unseen impacts occurring up to and beyond developing the Firbeck Main Colliery was the mass felling of mature trees. This was presumably for their value in lumber as a remaining asset in the park. There is one written account of this tree felling as follows:

**"An old newspaper cutting tells us of a twin oak and ash – the oak eight feet in diameter and the ash six, being united both root and branch. By 1919 the tree had fallen, along with many others, prey to the axe and death duties"** (Mantaj 1987).

The conclusive evidence for this written in the modern park's landscape is the lack of fully mature trees and the relative youth/early maturity of much of the park's tree cover. In a planned formal landscape of this age, even left to nature would hold some impressive old trees. The creation of the colliery railway line with embankment and sidings would obviously have involved clearing trees and preventing any re-growth. Less clear is the full extent to which the colliery exploited the timber resource available within the park under lease and later fully owned by them. There is an account of the woodland being in poor condition in the early years of the colliery and large oaks being felled and dragged away by Shire horses for use by the colliery company (Baker et al undated). The fact that the colliery company had its own sawmill confirms they were fully equipped to convert the trees they felled into useable timber.

The past action of major tree felling (however it came about) has left the present park without its legacy of mature and potentially some veteran trees. It has been suggested in planning for today's park that managing the early mature trees on the park today should be done to reinstate a heritage legacy of mature and potentially veteran trees for future generations. This could be a wonderful opportunity to

purposefully undo the damage of history rather than lament the losses.

## 2.10 The Firbeck Main Colliery from construction to operation:

The focus of the history of the colliery from construction to operation is mainly about what directly impacted the park both physically and visually with other information included. The existing good quality and detailed accounts of the Firbeck Main Colliery's development should be referenced for more in depth information specific to the colliery itself (see references for details).

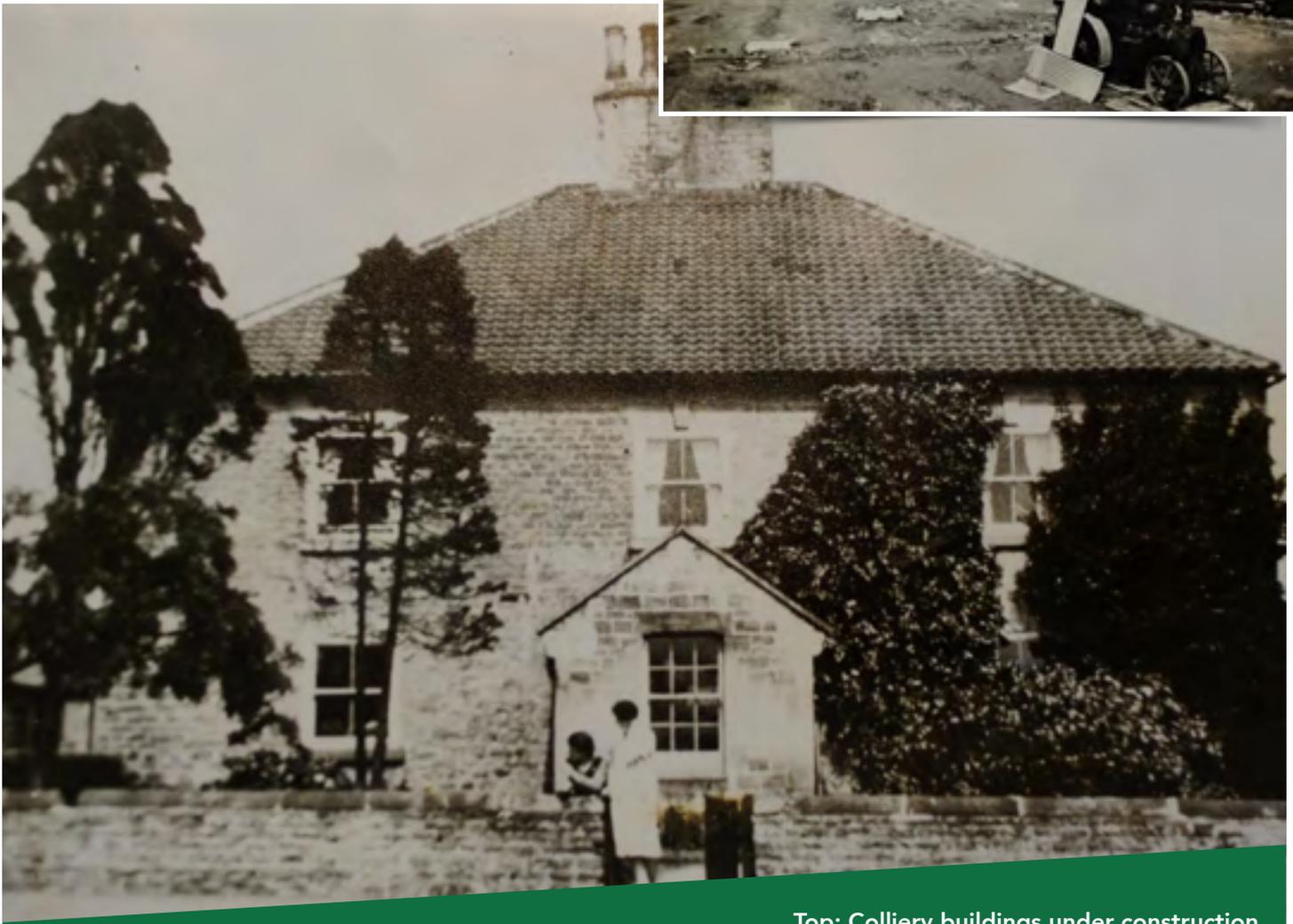
The colliery development required a large area of land in what was Costhorpe Farm and 200 acres (91 hectares) out of 305 (139 hectares) of farmland was acquired for the extensive colliery infrastructure. The sinking of two 20 feet 6 inch (6.25 metre) diameter shafts that began in 1923 had reached the Barnsley Seam at 828 yards (757 metres) depth by 1925. Colliery infrastructure construction included:

- Twin steel lattice headgears 75 feet 3 inches (23 metres) tall
- Large power house and engine house with 12 boilers
- 180 feet (55 metres) high chimney - completed in only 13 weeks
- Coal washing plant and slurry tank
- Heavy and light stores buildings
- Blacksmiths, fitters, joiners and saw millers buildings
- Offices
- Railway line into/exiting the site
- Extensive sidings running north and south
- Pit head baths (constructed 1933)
- Pit tip area for spoil and coal waste\*

\*The pit tip area would have been an essential part of the colliery even though it would not have been 'constructed' in the same sense as other infrastructure. It is highly likely that for every tonne of coal produced at the colliery over its operational life, there would have been at least an equal amount of waste generated and possibly far more. The pit tip would eventually hold many millions of tonnes of spoil and reach a height exceeding 80 metres high before being landscaped around 1970 after the eventual closure of the colliery in 1968.

Although not within the park boundary, it is now a place connected by footpaths with the park

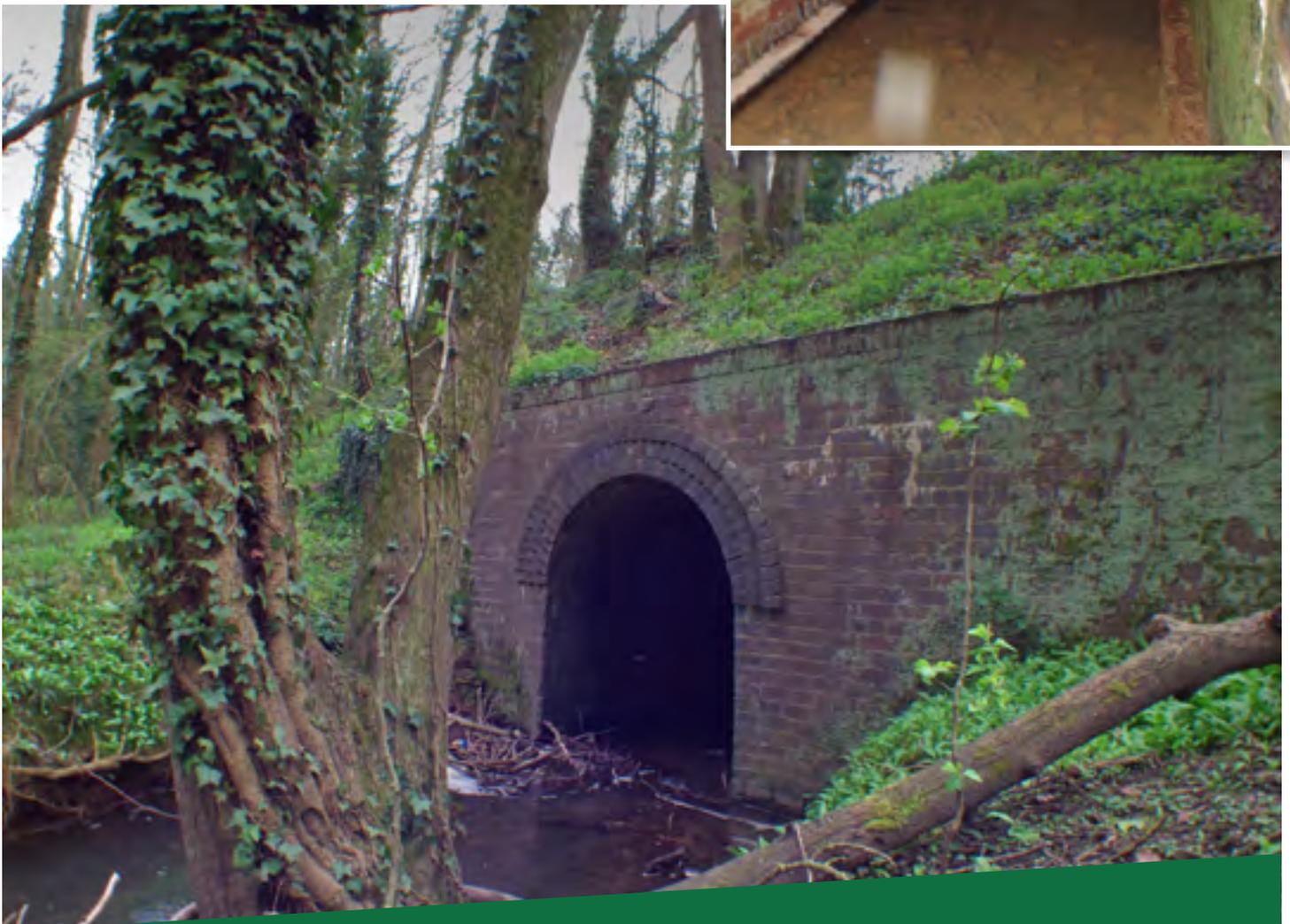
allowing commanding views across the park and the wider countryside of Bassetlaw. What was once coal spoil now supports trees on its lower slopes and wildflower rich habitats over its open areas.



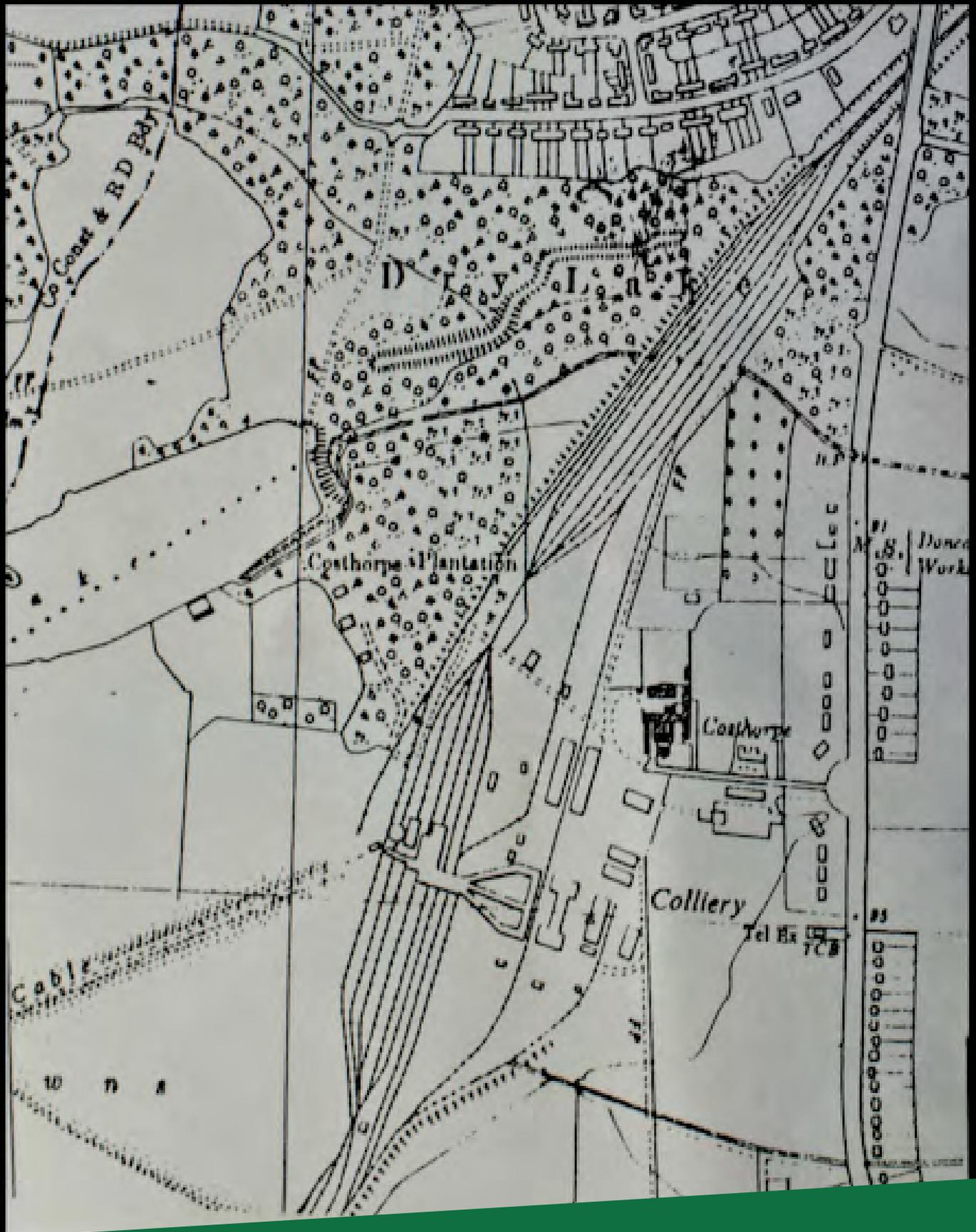
Top: Colliery buildings under construction  
Bottom: Costhorpe Farm which became the Colliery Manager's office and telephone exchange

### 2.10a Surviving colliery features on the modern park:

There are only two physical reminders of the colliery surviving within the modern park. The first is a railway embankment running north to south along the eastern edge of Costhorpe Plantation. This is now a broad, straight footpath significantly elevated above the surrounding woodland. The second is a large brick lined culvert directing the stream fed by overflow water from the lakes under the embankment and what would have been the northern part of the colliery sidings. The culvert now runs under the service road from the A60 Doncaster Road entrance car park. Here the water emerges as a stream again and leaves the park.

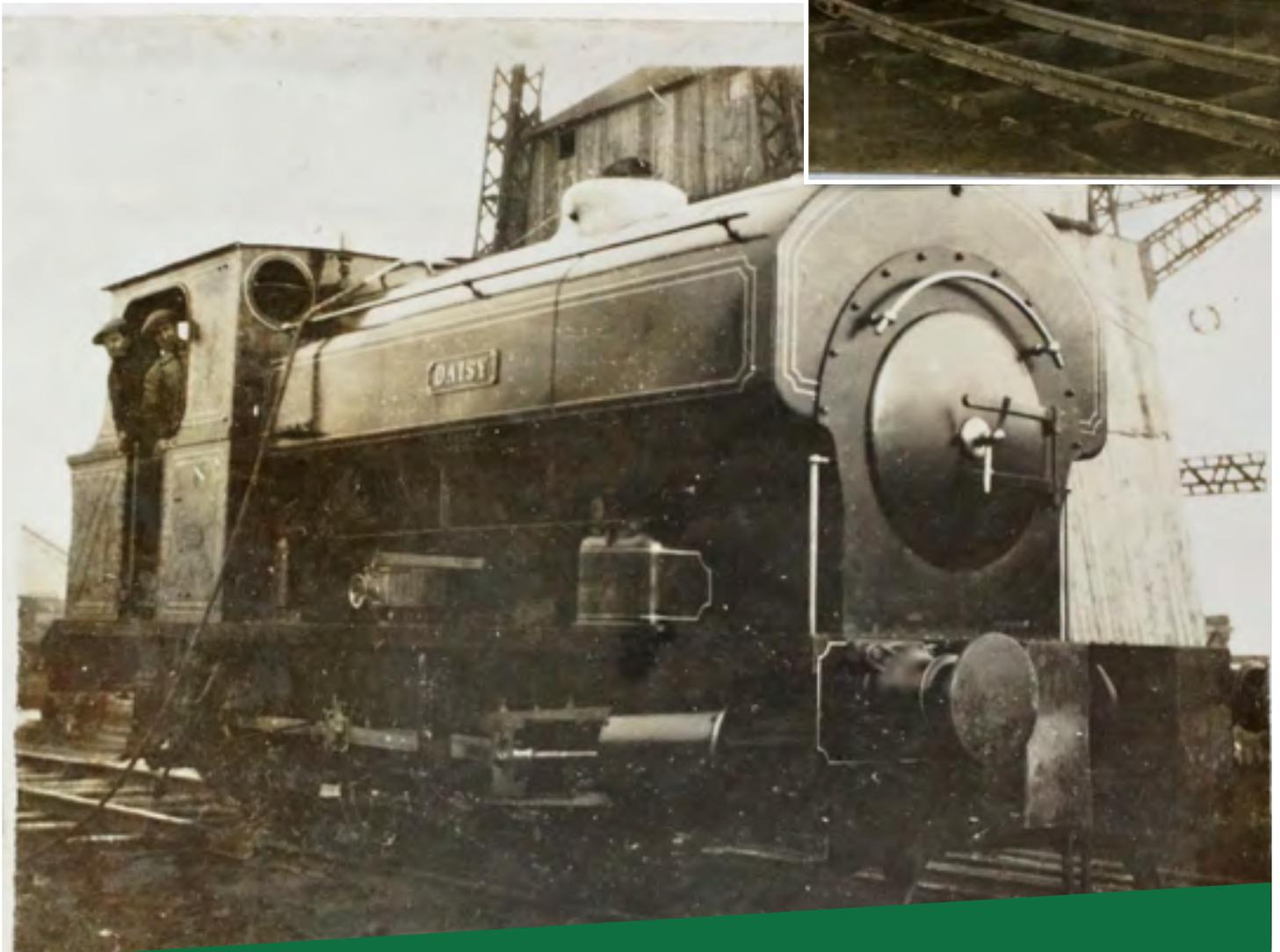


Top: Inside the culvert exit near the Doncaster Road park entrance  
Bottom: Brick culvert entrance in Costhorpe Plantation under the railway embankment



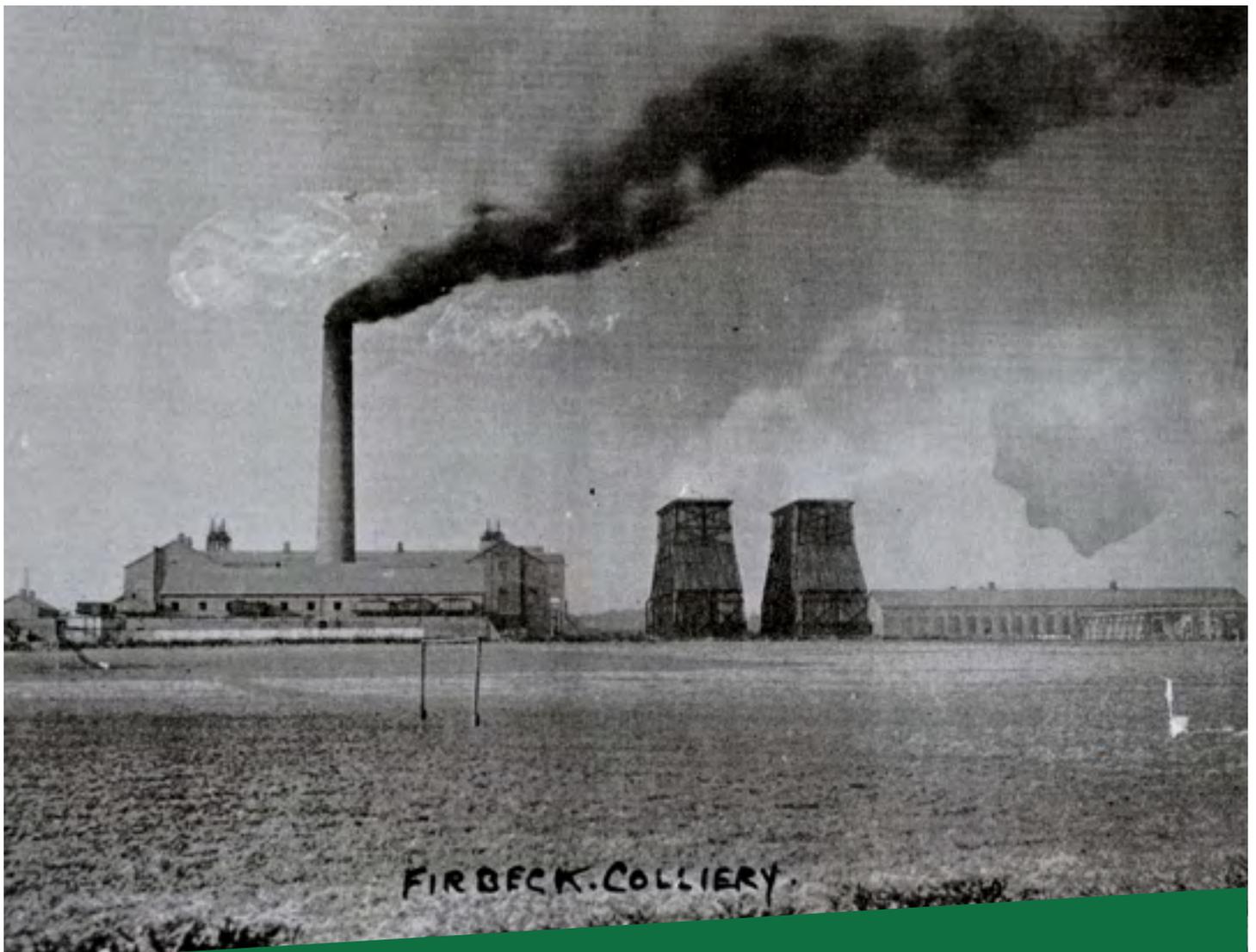
Collery railway sidings including those within the modern park boundary

It would have been essential that all tree cover was removed in the sidings and embankments areas and any re-growth strictly prevented during the time of colliery operation. Much of the tree cover in these areas of the modern park is relatively young including trees within the Doncaster Road Plantation.



Firbeck Main Colliery steam locomotives – Albert Edward (top) and Daisy (bottom)

For the entire 45 year operating life of the colliery from shaft sinking to eventual closure, steam powered locomotives were used without changing over to diesel power. These locomotives would have been moving through the whole sidings area and railway line on the embankment through Costhorpe Plantation in today's park. It is hard to visualise the smoke, dust and noise of industry in contrast to the peaceful and leafy park of today. On the eastern edge, but not within the park boundary, there is a bowling green still in use and cricket pitch. Further south and immediately east of what was the colliery there is a football field. These are surviving amenities associated with the former colliery's sports clubs provision.



Colliery railway sidings including those within the modern park boundary

## 2.10b Working at the colliery

Peak coal production at the colliery was in excess of 500,000 tonnes per year and in 1953 1448 men were employed below ground with 393 surface workers. At the coal face men were working nearly half a mile below ground and conditions were hot, dusty and with little light. This was a very dangerous job with a high risk of serious injury. Over the operating life of the colliery there were 64 fatalities and many serious injuries. As was common for the time, ponies

were used in the colliery. At Firbeck there were 200 pit ponies working at the colliery up until the mid 1950's. The ponies pulled coal tubs which were loaded by hand shovelling the coal. There were 100 ponies below ground at any one time with 100 above ground in fields near the lake or taken to grazing land elsewhere around the village. The men are known to have been fond of the ponies and taken care over their welfare in the dangerous conditions they shared.



**Back to the Stables**

Painting produced by a local artist from original period photograph showing pit ponies and handlers (Firbeck Main Memorial Garden)

The underground coal faces and network of roadways extended in all directions below the above ground colliery buildings. These would eventually join up with Dinnington Main Colliery a few miles to the west of Langold. Some of these workings extended under the park itself. The fact that men (and ponies up until the 1950's) were working nearly half a mile below the park is difficult to envisage. The contrast between enjoying the beautiful environment of today's park with the harsh conditions so far below ground is something deserving to be remembered within the heritage story of the park.

Before mechanisation all coal had to be won by hand using pick and shovel. This would have been back breaking work in the heat and dust below ground. The miners had to pay 2d (2 old pennies) per week for pick sharpening. In 1933 the pit baths were built meaning the miners could get clean when their shift finished instead of returning home for a bath. This privilege cost them a further 6d (sixpence) per week stopped from their wages. From 1935 this would be the equivalent of £1.80 per week or £90 per year in today's money.



Diagram of underground workings, some of which extended under the park itself

### 2.10c The Firbeck Main Colliery Memorial:

The history of the colliery in relation to the park must include The Firbeck Main Colliery Memorial Garden located on the A60 Doncaster Road, opposite the main parade of shops in Langold village itself. This is a beautiful, respectful and thoughtfully created memorial to the 64 men who lost their lives during the colliery's years of operation from shaft sinking in 1923 to closure in 1968. As well as being a fitting memorial it is also provides a wonderful insight into colliery life and gives recognition to the community doctors and nurses who went above and beyond their duties to serve the colliery community.

The memorial was created by huge voluntary community effort and vision with supporting funding through the Big Lottery Awards for All

programme. The garden received substantial in kind support from many individuals and businesses working for free or at cost only. The memorial garden was officially opened in July 2019. The following annotated photographs are obviously limited in their ability to do full justice to the special way in which this memorial has been realised:



Top: The memorial garden viewed from the northern end.  
Bottom: The bespoke main gates with Firbeck Main Colliery name and dates of operation.



Coal tub and tensioning wheel viewed through the specially bred memorial roses.



Coal truck with locally created paintings based on original period photographs.



The memorial plaque to the 64 miners who lost their lives at the colliery.



Interpretation panel with key dates from the operating life of Firbeck Main Colliery



The existing memorial to Dr Ryan set on consecrated ground and funded by the mining community now sits in the centre of the new memorial garden. Dr Ryan would attend to the medical emergency needs of miners below ground.

## 2.11 The Model Village – and an expanding Langold:

The building of the Model Village from 1924 and its newly arrived and expanding community were what drove the early evolution and later development of the park into an increasingly complete place of recreation. The whole concept of quality leisure and recreation for the working classes was still as much emerging as was the opportunity and right to live in decent housing. The District's two other major parks (later known as 'destination parks') were The Canch in Worksop developed in 1912 and Kings Park, Retford, created through public subscription in 1938. Even some years after the Model Village was built, Langold Country Park both in name and as the fully formed park seen today was still decades away from existing in any recognisable form.

Colliery owners had been providing housing on a large scale for their workers since at least the nineteenth century where the new, much deeper collieries required a very large workforce. In common with other major industries, the provision of this housing could not meet demand, often leading to building as many houses as possible on the smallest footprint of land. In many cases the needs of the people who would live in this housing was somewhere down the list compared to other priorities such as speed of building and cost.

In the worst examples building standards were poor with inadequate sanitation and overcrowded conditions.

This was not always the case and some colliery owners acting out of social conscience were more enlightened. They realised that a well housed workforce would be healthier, happier and more productive. The concept of Model Villages for industrial communities had already been born with numerous examples being found in what became colliery towns. This included those at Bolsover and Maltby and industrial areas further afield all over Britain. These early examples were built on a vision of philanthropy, sometimes mixed with using the provision of quality housing to incentivise workers from other coalfield/industrial areas in the UK to relocate.



Model Village Plan for Langold

The Firbeck Main Colliery under development and coming into full operation would require a substantial workforce that needed housing. The rural location of the colliery meant the only viable option would be to build the houses needed. In 1922 the Industrial Housing Association Limited was formed. This provided a means through which numerous colliery companies could work to address the housing shortages that were preventing the full development of their collieries at a time when demand for coal was ever increasing.

This venture allowed a mix of government loans through the Public Works Loan Board and private investment capital to be used to create planned mass housing where the best modern standards were applied in terms of design, amenities and

environment. This would drive the twentieth century's development of Model Villages that provided homes for mining communities in places such as Shirebrook, Creswell and Langold itself. By 1927 twelve thousand houses had been built, 800 of these were in Langold.

The quality of these houses with spacious gardens, electricity, bathrooms and indoor toilets would help attract a workforce from other mining areas in Britain. Rents were set at a fair level within a 30 year lease agreement between the colliery owners and the non-profit Industrial Housing Association. Following colliery nationalisation in 1947 the National Coal Board would inherit a substantial stock of housing and in 1952 the Coal Industry Housing Association was formed to manage and develop colliery housing.



Aerial photo of the Model Village under construction circa 1925, Dyscarr Wood is visible

House building started in 1924 and by April 1925 around 128 houses had been completed and were occupied. With the expansion of housing other necessities such as shops followed. Many of these started out on an improvised basis as stalls, huts or were run from private homes. In 1925 the Worksop Co-operative Society opened their first shop and a full range of purpose built shops were soon established to service every need within a growing community. Road names in the village included those of local landowners who were also main royalty owners in the Firbeck Main Colliery. These names still in use today include; Mellish Road, White Avenue and

Ramsden Avenue.

There was sufficient land allocated for house building to serve an eventual population of 15,000 in Langold but this full allocation was not in the end needed. Even with a lower than originally anticipated population Langold had expanded to become a large and thriving village. The majority of the male population were employed either below or above ground in the colliery and the park would slowly begin to evolve and develop from this time onwards as a recreational resource for mine workers and their families.



1945 Ordnance Survey map of Langold including the Model Village street plan (arrowed)

This work is based on data provided through [www.VisionofBritain.org.uk](http://www.VisionofBritain.org.uk) and uses historical material which is copyright of the Great Britain GIS Project and the University of Portsmouth

On Church Street which forms the current north-west/northern boundary and current main vehicle access route into the park, there was land allocated for 4 churches. St Luke's Church (Church of England) which was built in 1928 is still in regular use today and its commemorative/ foundation stone was laid by Miss Mellish of the Hodsock Estate. Other churches included a Salvation Army Hall and a chapel (later put to a secular use).



Top: Ceremonial trowel and key  
Bottom: Commemorative stone for St Luke's Church

St Luke's was originally built as a 'temporary church', and would likely have become the church hall to a 'planned as permanent' building. The temporary church endured as the permanent place of worship, quite possibly this is linked to the population not reaching its originally anticipated size. The reason for placing special emphasis on St Luke's Church is because some people feel it shares a legacy with the park. During a meeting to research the history of the country park and planning a community 'peace garden project' at the church, a number of local people gave an insight into its importance as follows:

**"The church and Langold Country Park are the two remaining constant features in Langold**

**that directly link to the founding of the Village".**

With the demolition of the surviving colliery buildings early in 2021 for a housing development, these sources of continuity become ever more important as symbols of local identity. This also underlines the need to include new residents within understanding local heritage and build bridges between people and place. The modern park telling its heritage story really well can have a valuable role to play in achieving this.



St Luke's Church in 2020, the country park is beyond the rear fence

## 2.12 The long walk to Langold:

When researching the mining history of Firbeck Main Colliery and how people from many different mining communities migrated to Langold, it unfolded that some people had to travel on foot to get there. This does not appear to be just a few isolated cases but the two examples included are those for which a verbal account was given.

One now retired miner who worked at the colliery recounted how his grandfather came over from Ireland to Liverpool and then walked 5 days to get to Langold for work on the shaft sinking operations in 1923. His grandfather intended to settle and have his family join him at a later date. The person cited as having walked the furthest was a Welsh miner who walked all the way from Merthyr Tydfil, a distance as the crow flies of over 145 miles. Travelling by the available road network of the time would likely mean a distance over 190 miles.

A number of local residents explained that many people would not have been able to afford to pay for train fares to any nearby major town and public transport would simply not have existed in the connected way we are accustomed to in modern times. The use of the modern park as a venue for 'walking for leisure', 'walking for health' or a stopping off point for ramblers contrasts in a very poignant way with the people who endured long and physically exhausting walks to find employment, decent housing and a

more secure future in Langold.

## 2.13 The Park as a recreational resource:

With the development of Firbeck Main Colliery and building the Model Village to house its large workforce, Langold Park with its surviving formal landscape could slowly begin to find its potential for recreational uses. The order in which recreation based in the park begins with fishing, then swimming and boating, all of which would later become highly organised on the lakes.

The colliery company provided numerous sporting facilities and 2d (2 old pennies) per week was taken from the men's wages as a subscription to the Colliery Sports Club. Using an inflation calculator this would make 2d in 1935 worth 60p in today's money (£30 per year). Sports included; football, cricket, tennis, boxing, archery and bowls. Some of these sports took place on facilities developed close to but outside of the park itself, others within it.

The park would also become the venue for a hugely popular annual gala. With the later additions of play facilities, bandstand and lido, the park was gradually becoming an ever more complete place of recreation for all.

### 2.13a The lakes and their evolving recreational uses:

The inherited legacy of the lakes from Langold Park's formal landscape gave the earliest opportunity for recreation. In the early years of the colliery the lake was said to be in a poor condition and was heavily silted. The use of the lake for fishing began in an improvised way. The miners themselves made crude piers and began clearing vegetation from the water using long strands of barbed wire. The colliery company began to realise the lake's potential for recreation and installed permanent fishing piers. The lake was soon well stocked with fish and attracted anglers from other collieries too.

The earliest use of the lake for swimming involved wading through mud to get to open water. When fishing became more organised access to the water could be reached from the numerous piers. The lake was used for swimming lessons where in the early days women and children would walk into the lake holding onto

ropes. As recreational use of the lake developed on a more organised basis a Swimming Club was formed. In 1944 Jack Revill formed The Firbeck Life Guards Club, teaching a large number of young people lifesaving skills and developing an internationally adopted method of underwater resuscitation known as the Revill Method. In 1956 he even performed a lifesaving demonstration in front of Princess Margaret and The Queen Mother. The British Long Distance Swimming Association Championships were traditionally held at Langold Lake, putting the venue on the national map for swimming along with its existing importance for lifesaving.

Boating had also developed fully by 1935 on Langold Lake with the colliery company hiring out rowing boats. The various pontoons and the surviving brick built boathouse on the shores of the lake are a reminder of the time when rowing would have been a very popular activity.



Rowing boats for hire on Langold Lake

### 2.13b Catching trains from the colliery sidings:

From the 1920's to 30's, annual day trips to the seaside involved large numbers of the mining community catching trains from the railway sidings in the north eastern side of the park near Doncaster Road Plantation. The resorts included Blackpool, Cleethorpes and Skegness. Trips were also organised to FA cup finals from the colliery sidings.

For some of the day trips up to 3 trains were needed with the first train leaving a 5.00 AM and then hourly. These community outings were organised both by the colliery company and the local Working Men's Club. It is important to remember that these trips would have been a very major event for most people in the community. Langold village is a long way from any English coastal resort and disposable incomes for miners at that time would likely have made such a trip done independently

unthinkable.

### 2.13c Developing into a recognisable park:

The time where a more clearly 'recognisable park' begins to emerge is in the 1940's. This gathers pace after 'enacting' nationalisation of the coal industry following Vesting Day, January 1st 1947. Soon after nationalisation, the Bandstand and a greatly improved recreation ground with the latest play facilities were installed. Play facilities included swings and slides, roundabouts, flying boat and swinging plank. There was children's bathing pool and sandpit too.

During the 1950's a Lido was built which was a hugely popular park feature into the following decades. The Lido's gradual decline in use with reduced revenue and increasing maintenance costs, led to its eventual closure in 2002.



Catching a seaside train from the railway sidings, circa 1929

### 2.13d Langold Galas:

The first Langold Gala was held in 1929. It is reputed that in its heyday there may have been 10,000 visitors to the galas. The early galas featured swimming events, displays and competitions, later incorporating synchronised lifesaving demonstrations and even underwater races using aqualungs.

The world renowned high wire daredevil the Great Alzana once performed his high wire act across Langold Lake early in his career. The Great Alzana's real name was Harold Davis who had left

school at 14 to work down Maltby Colliery. He practiced his high wire skills in his back garden with his sisters who performed with him under the collective name 'The Great Alzanas'. When performing at Langold Lake the high wire was not properly tensioned leaving him at the mercy of the cross wind. After quickly retreating to the platform the wire snapped, had he not got to the platform, it seems he would almost certainly have been killed. Once the wire was properly re-attached and tensioned he went on to complete the act for his fee!



Harold Davis 'The Great Alzana' practicing with his sister in his Maltby back garden

Harold Davis, The Great Alzana always insisted that life on the high wire was 'less dangerous than working in the pits'. In 1946 he went on to achieve international fame with the world's largest circus Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey.

Dramatic stunts were part of the Langold Gala tradition even including a mock aerial bombing raid over the bell tents by a light aircraft with ground detonated charges. In another year, submarine explosions in the lake were set by a colliery official as a frogman. Langold's lifesaving pioneer Jack Revill performed a high board dive from 35 feet into burning petrol on the lake

every year up until 1978.

The last Langold Gala took place in 2018, this was 89 years after the first annual gala was held in 1929.



Langold Gala in 2017, taken from the western side of the Lower Lake

### 2.13e The modern Country Park:

The closure of the Firbeck Main Colliery in 1968 left only a small workforce to carry out salvage work. Shaft filling and landscaping of the pit tip were completed before the local authority took over the park in 1970. The large areas of colliery sidings would become reclaimed as part of the park rather than somewhere out of bounds. With the colliery headgear taken down, the huge chimney demolished and many of the old colliery buildings later repurposed as industrial units, the more obvious visual reminders of the colliery were disappearing. This is the point in time from where the modern Langold Country Park develops.

The intervening years since 1970 have seen the park living up to the 'Country' part of its name by being designated as a Local Nature Reserve with 6 Local Wildlife Sites and 1 Site of Special

Scientific Interest. This has given Bassetlaw District Council both recognition for the biodiversity value of the park and future obligations the private colliery owners before 1947 and National Coal Board after that date would have been able to give far less, if any priority.

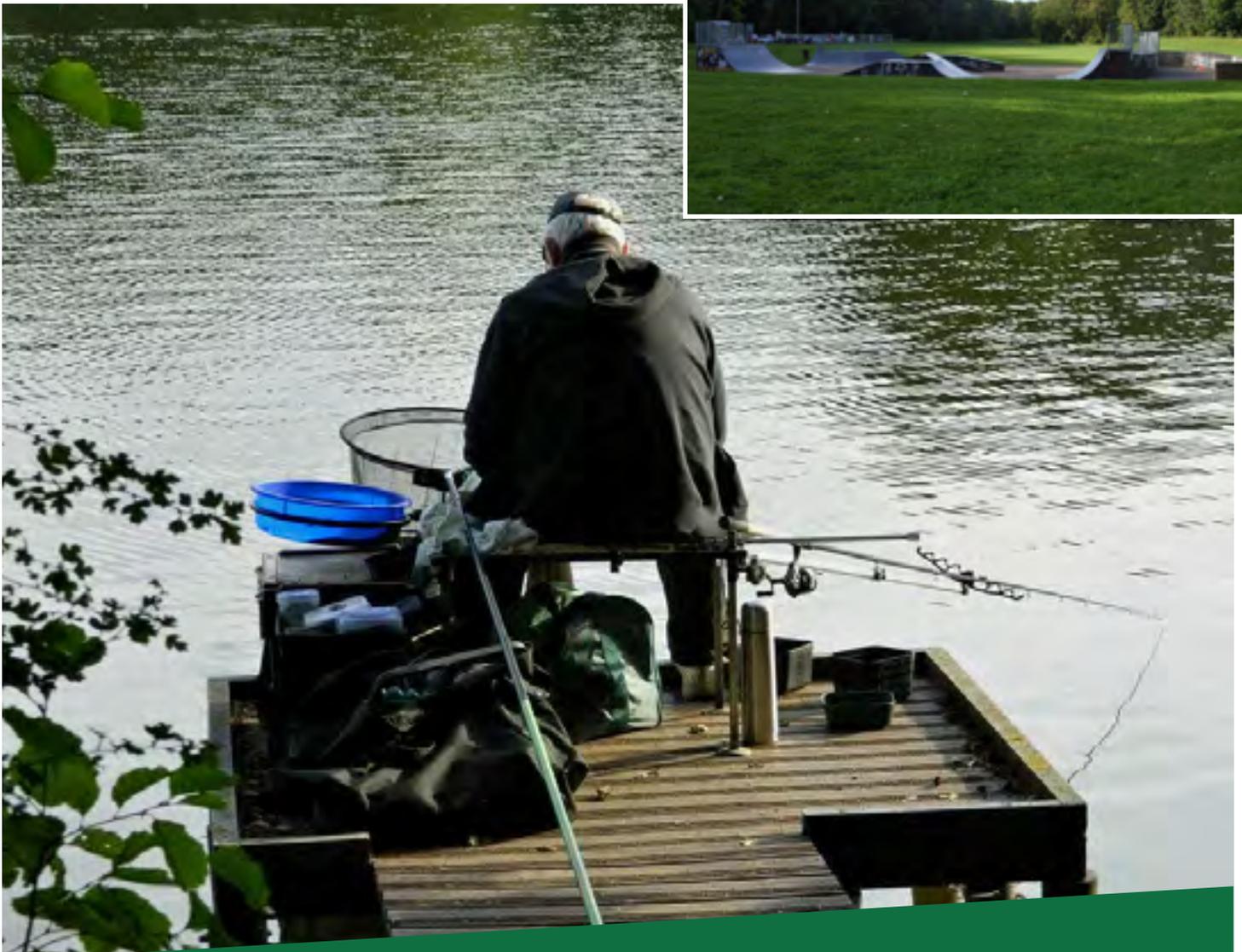
Moving into the 21st Century, the challenges of continuing to support much cherished features of the park such as the Langold Lido could no longer be sustained in the face of declining use and mounting maintenance costs. Other iconic features such as the 1950's Bandstand needed renovation and between 2012 and 2014 the Bandstand was restored, the old Lido removed and a high tech Water Splash Park was installed as a completely modern and more sustainable way to keep the park's very important links with water and recreation very much alive.



The Water Splash Park in use even without the sun out

Fishing on the lakes continues to be an important source of recreation from the very early days of the colliery and into the modern park. The fishing pegs around the Lower Lake have been improved with rot proof recycled plastic decking and now include purpose designed 'accessible fishing areas' for disabled anglers. A major difference in the modern park to previous times is that fishing is now promoted without destroying the biodiversity of the lakes. The herbicides used to control aquatic vegetation up until 2005 to make fishing easier have been replaced with concerted efforts to hugely improve marginal vegetation and the naturalness of the lakes.

A modern skate park has been installed close to the Doncaster Road entrance for the park to meet demand for a youth oriented activity. The skate park is set in the park's largest area of short mown amenity grass. The popularity of skateboarding has endured across generations from its beginnings in the 1970's and Langold's robust and future proof skate park will continue to take the rigours of use for many years to come.



Top: The Skate Park set in extensive short mown grass area  
Bottom: 21st Century fishing on the Lower Lake

The park of today exists in a time where the definition of recreation is wider than active play and sports. Recreation now includes walking in all its forms, whether with a dog, walking for health or just to enjoy the natural environment. The park has created way marked dog walking routes developed with The Dog's Trust and planned circular walking trails throughout the park. The recreational value of the park for health and well being is now being recognised more clearly than ever before as a venue for exercise from gentle to more strenuous forms. There is also more understanding of how access to the natural environment can create mental calm and promote better mental health.

The huge biodiversity value of the park makes it a wonderful place for nature watching as a form of recreation. The park attracts a very wide range of bird species and groups such as the SK58 Birders promote its use as a venue for bird watching. The North Nottinghamshire Bat Group also supports the park's significant value and interest as a habitat for bats. There is no need to be an expert on wildlife to appreciate the beauty of the woodlands and wildflowers and a number of areas in the park are now managed as wildflower meadows instead of being neatly short mown. In the modern park, the needs of wildlife and people are mixed together in ways that prove both things can often be achieved in the same space.

## 2.14 Summary:

The modern country park has developed around surviving parts of the original landscape vision of Langold Park. These landscapes are now blended with a host of recreational uses enjoyed by thousands of visitors each year. At this point in the history and development of Langold Country Park, It is perhaps worth asking the following question:

**“Would Ralph Knight and his Gally Knight descendants be pleased with ‘what’s been done with the place?’”**

The answer to that specific question will never be known but they must surely be pleased that many parts of their original vision endure as a ‘designed landscape’ heritage legacy for the park. Seeing the modern park through the values of their day, they may struggle to understand today’s mix of many uses. Some of these uses such as children’s play are quite rightly noisy and energetic!

The designed landscapes legacy is a central part of the park but it only truly comes to life with people using and enjoying them! When this legacy is blended with the human stories behind the colliery, Model Village and developing a good quality park with a rightful place for nature too, the combined heritage story becomes compelling.

As the park’s role in recreation continues to develop after nearly 100 years of use, a better vision has emerged. Today’s vision is more complete because it is about keeping the best of the past with an eye on the future, including everyone and securing a place for nature too.

## Acknowledgements:

Special thanks go to Margaret Mantaj for her in depth knowledge of local history and the development of the Langold Estate from very early times. Thanks are also due to Graham Coe and Carol Bower for giving supporting information and insights into the history of the colliery, Model Village and St Luke's Church. Without all their invaluable help the task of producing this account would have been an even greater challenge. Thanks are also due to others who loaned documents and photographs from personal collections.

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[www.artsandculture.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/exhibit/cao-a-record-of-an-industry-historic-england/OAlITrz67amhJQhl=en-GB](http://www.artsandculture.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/exhibit/cao-a-record-of-an-industry-historic-england/OAlITrz67amhJQhl=en-GB)

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Planned Industrial Settlements Zone – Summary of Dominant Character

[www.sytimescapes.org.uk/zone/rotherham/R18](http://www.sytimescapes.org.uk/zone/rotherham/R18)

Accessed 18.12.20

## Other material accessed:

Private collections of historic original and copied photographs, with context and dates included.

Copies of original documents and correspondence relating to the Firbeck Main Colliery in respect of title, specifications and purchase of woodland directly related to the park.

Personal communication recorded during research including both lived experience and passed down oral history.

# 3. Heritage Plan

## 3.1 Introduction - What is heritage?

The most useful starting point for a heritage plan is defining 'what is heritage?' This is to make it clear that the definition of heritage and how it might be celebrated is broader and deeper than a static history lesson on selected aspects of the past that were built or altered by human activity.

The UNESCO World Heritage Centre defines heritage as:

**"Our legacy from the past, what we live with today and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration".**

The Council of Europe's Framework Convention on the value of cultural heritage defines cultural heritage as:

**"A group of resources inherited from the past which people identify independently of ownership, as a reflection of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time".**

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has a wonderfully simple and to the point definition as:

**"Heritage can be anything from the past that you value and want to pass on to future generations".**

Out of 11 Heritage Fund, heritage categories at least 5 clearly apply to the park, these are:

**"Nature - Designed Landscapes - Industrial, Maritime and Transport - Oral History - Historic Buildings, Monuments and the Historic Environment".**

These three heritage definitions need to be fully understood and embraced because they emphasise that all types of heritage exist as part of a dynamic relationship between past, present and future as a broad and ultimately forward looking process. The types of heritage outcomes expected by funders such as The Big Lottery Heritage Fund will be explored later in the heritage plan.

## 3.2 Baseline facts about heritage on site:

While some heritage features such as the lakes and boathouse remain highly visible, many other aspects of heritage have left only faint or indeed no clues other than memories and photographs, this therefore requires interpretation to draw out and make it possible to envisage the many stories. At this early stage the only physical heritage asset in very obvious need of restoration is the Borehole Well on the eastern bank of the Lower Lake.

### The Borehole Well in obvious need of restoration



Condition surveys of the park's small number of built heritage assets will be required to inform whether the assumption is correct. The main capital/other costs already identified as likely appear to be as follows:

- Producing and installing interpretation panels/ production of digital based media
- Designing and producing features within a possible heritage trail
- Specialist services to carry out heritage condition survey of boat house
- Renovation of built heritage features

Full park user consultation will be used to guide priorities and the form in which heritage could be presented and celebrated.

### 3.3 Proposed Heritage Vision:

The proposed vision underpinning the heritage plan for the park is as follows:

**“To create a compelling and deeply meaningful heritage experience within the park based on active park user participation. This heritage experience would develop as a trail and become one of the best in any public park in the region; not because of its grandness but rather its park user involvement, relevant content, thought behind design and its completeness”.**

### 3.4 Potential heritage themes:

The following heritage plan draws out what appears to be the obvious key heritage themes from the history section of the master plan. The chosen themes are the elements of heritage that could most 'resonate', move people and inspire interest. These broad themes are not the final word on what should be celebrated as 'the heritage' of Langold Country Park. The themes are proposed as a useful starting point for developing ideas with the park user community where exact emphasis can be agreed and refined.

### 3.4a Lakes, landscapes and abandoned visions: 3.4b Mining and hidden heritage:

This theme recognises the park's historic landscape as a 'cultural landscape' and as an important heritage asset in itself rooted in over 200 years of history. The rich history surrounding its early establishment as a formal landscape is one of fascinating twists and turns of fate, of passing on the vision through inheritance and its ultimate failure to become the landscaped grounds of a fine country mansion.

The story of influential land owning families and the vision, huge effort and expense put into creating many familiar features still seen in today's park should be included within interpretation and also as a comprehensive online resource. As with all the following themes, the use of digital media can remove the need for using unwieldy amounts of text with on-site interpretation and give park users the option to explore more deeply.

Emerging potential themes include:

- The lakes and enduring features from the park's original vision and the Dry Lake clues in the landscape for the failed final lake.
- The long transition of the lakes from designed formal landscape for enjoyment of the few to cherished central feature in a widely used public country park.
- Where the park's 'modern history' began with the lakeside boreholes.

This theme recognises how the now hidden heritage of mining in today's park could be drawn out to help park users understand the huge changes that have taken place since mining operations began in 1911 and 1923 and following the closure of Firbeck Main Colliery in 1968. The colliery buildings although outside the park boundary were dominant visual features for over 45 years in the life of the park. The chimney at 55 metres (180 feet) tall and now landscaped spoil heap was well over its current 80 metres tall by the time the colliery ceased production. The park existed in what by today's standards would be considered a strange blending of leisure and working landscapes.

Elements of the mining theme can be interwoven into other heritage themes where they fit naturally such as the lakeside boreholes drilled in the search for coal being an essential part of 3.4a. Some aspects could be treated as 'stand alone' themes, especially where mining and transporting coal had a direct physical impact on the park itself. In order to respect the hardships, sacrifices and resilience of people who worked in this industry a comprehensive account as an online resource should be created. This must include the location of Langold's Fribeck Main Colliery Memorial with a full description simply because it is a place of deep meaning and respect created by members of the local community. The memorial is also somewhere that gives a compelling visual insight into mining history and why it should be remembered.

Potential key themes include:

- Industrial and leisure landscapes side by side.
- The long walk to Langold to secure work and today's walking for leisure.
- Hidden mining heritage in the park and half a mile below park users' feet.

### 3.4c Recreation for all:

This is a largely social/cultural heritage theme based on the park evolving from its lost vision as a pleasure ground for the wealthy few and the huge changes seen around the start of coal production at Firbeck Colliery. From this point, the park turned year on year, into an ever more comprehensive source of recreation for generations of mining families and into the present day as a beautiful country park serving all of Bassetlaw and beyond.

This story includes; catching trains from the colliery railway sidings for whole community seaside trips, annual galas with huge attendances, swimming and lifesaving clubs, rowing and fishing on the lake and numerous sports clubs. For some local people this is part of their own, or the lived experience of older relatives. For many park users the story can only be envisaged and understood through interpretation and the sharing of others' lived experiences or passed on memories.

Because heritage is also about looking forward, the theme could also explore the increasing 'extensiveness' and reach of Langold for recreation becoming a country park for all of Bassetlaw and beyond. This also importantly includes how the widely accepted definition of recreation has become broader than active play for young people and children. This can include all ages enjoying bird, bat and nature watching, walking, running and cycling, following self led and event based nature and heritage trails and even conservation volunteering. The continuing relevance of outdoor recreation persists for all ages and for younger people outdoor play endures even against the compelling draw of indoor screen time. There is strong potential to include how those using the park today could be part of its future heritage story.

### 3.4d Nature's comeback and future heritage:

This forward looking theme is very much about the present and future because biodiversity is now a 'planned' outcome rather than something enduring through or 'in spite of' as an afterthought from other activities.

Large areas of the park have naturally regenerated following the closure of the Firbeck Colliery in 1968 and removal of railway tracks and sidings. In addition, many individual trees around the park are reaching early maturity. This adds a very important dimension of natural heritage for future generations where trees on the park today can be actively managed to become the mature and possibly veteran trees of the future. This is especially important when considering that most of the 'nature heritage' of mature trees on site was

lost through mass felling both before and after the time the colliery was being first developed.

Further natural heritage assets include Dyscarr Wood SSSI, 7 Local Wildlife Sites and areas of grassland converted to meadow, managed and protected for wildlife and people.

It is entirely appropriate if not essential to include 'nature' as a heritage legacy ambition which is being actively worked towards in park management even if it is not currently formally described in this way. Potential key themes could be summarised as:

- Restoring the lost heritage of mature trees for future generations of park users.
- Sensitive management of woodland allowing natural processes to thrive.
- Relaxing mowing, establishing species rich meadows and blending the needs of people and wildlife without conflict.

### 3.5 Examples from other parks:

When producing a research document in 2019 to compare the relative strengths of Langold Country Park with three other parks in coalfield areas, the three parks visited were:

- Vicar Water Country Park, Clipstone, Nottinghamshire
- Brierley Forest Park, Huthwaite, Nottinghamshire
- Shipley Country Park, Heanor, Derbyshire

The manner in which heritage was celebrated in these parks was evaluated, held many factors in common and showed opportunities which could be exploited in Langold Country Park. The factors held in common included:

- Heritage is a key factor in creating sense of place and local distinctiveness.
- Each site holds a mix of heritage features, some pre-dating mining and its impact.
- The healing power of nature over dereliction and increasing richness of biodiversity as a 'balancing' forward looking heritage theme.
- Visitor centres where information on site heritage can be accessed.
- Public art and heritage are intertwined.
- All sites followed an uncluttered, 'less is more' approach.
- A huge widening of site access from locally to district and even regional level.

The profile of physical heritage assets in these parks has not always been fully exploited. Other than the use of on-site interpretation panels

there were no formal heritage trails with brought in, designed features. The back story of mining heritage sometimes combined with recreation is often being told using online resources and printed or online documents for download.

Other parks and open spaces were also visited and examples from these are also shown where relevant. The following photographic examples from a mix of sites show useful approaches and material choices to make heritage a living theme that tells an engaging story that adds beauty and is able to withstand the rigours of both use and misuse.

#### 3.5a Robust materials and design:

The use of very durable materials is essential where site features cannot be placed in a protected environment. This design aspect is also important where thought is given to not creating weak points that can be broken off through wear and tear or intentional abuse.

The example over page (bottom) is an exceptionally robust stone bench which has the words of the **Bread and Herring Pit** poem carved into the back rest and seat. Apart from needing occasional cleaning with non abrasive or non caustic materials to ensure the words can be easily read this bench makes a powerful social history statement about the hardships endured by mining communities before modern standards of welfare and safety were embraced. The words are written by the nationally renowned poet Benjamin Zephania. The art of poetry and fabulous craft skills are blending heritage and public art with form and function.

The Dog Walker sculpture (4 metres tall) was created as an 'anchor point' on the highest part of The Ranges to celebrate the transformation of Linby and Hucknall Collieries' former pit tips into a prime walking location. Consultation with the community over design showed

they wanted to have a forward looking theme to the sculpture reflecting the park's use now rather than a memorial to mining. This was largely driven by the fact that Hucknall has a beautiful and comprehensive mining memorial in a prominent town centre location. The material choice and design using galvanised heavy gauge steel tubing is incredibly robust and has remained in good condition since installation in 2007. This is despite the location experiencing persistent anti social behaviour. On a number of site visits it was observed how walkers are drawn to and past The Dog Walker anchor point.



Top: The Dog Walker, The Ranges, Hucknall  
Bottom: Bread and Herring Pit bench at Brierley Forest Park

### 3.5b Low cost and replaceable materials:

On a number of levels it is often desirable to use low cost and easy to replace materials where features in a heritage trail cannot be protected from vandalism or theft. Where funding is limited there is also the opportunity to create meaningful features the value of which belies their monetary cost.

The opposite memorial stones and plaques are perfect examples of creating vandal and theft resistant features at very reasonable cost. The rough hewn stones are too heavy to move without machinery and the printed resin plaques have no value to thieves compared to ones cast or engraved in a non ferrous metal. In the event of the plaques being vandalised they can be easily replaced as would be the case when over time the elements cause the text to fade or the plaques to become brittle. Duplicate plaques for future use can be ordered at the same time as the originals were for immediate use.



The Miners' Stone at Brierley Forest Park and memorial stone at Poulter Country Park

There is a definite sense that any memorial should be created with best quality (high cost) and long lasting materials. The unfortunate reality is that in a country park setting, thieves can easily spend large amounts of time undisturbed removing plaques or indeed anything that can be converted to an attractively high scrap metal value.

### 3.5c Defensive positioning:

More vulnerable features can be located in high visibility locations or where there is a physical barrier preventing access. Easily damaged features such as murals and mosaics can be located within the footprint of a well designed visitor centre (i.e. in a quadrangle) where they can add value, sense of place and are fully protected.

The Dragonfly sculpture celebrates nature heritage and also gives a nod to the dragonflies known to have flown over the Carboniferous Period swamps where coal was formed. It was designed with local school involvement and despite being constructed from steel contains numerous less robust elements that could easily be intentionally damaged. The choice of location is in the middle of a large pond therefore eliminating problems of vandalism. It seems obvious that should a feature celebrating the recreational use of Langold Lake be proposed, a vandal proof location could be created in the lake itself! Note the use of a large rough hewn stone and a simple, low value plaque to name the sculpture and acknowledge community involvement.



Dragonfly sculpture at Poulter Country Park

### 3.5d Symbolism:

The use of symbolism can be very powerful where the message is something that is not overly cryptic and can be visualised without needing prior insight into the mind of the artist. In most cases there needs to be simple low key interpretation to help people understand the symbolism. In all cases the visual appeal of a symbolic feature should be sufficient to allow for its enjoyment with or without understanding the deeper meaning.

Breaking The Mould is a 'marker sculpture' representing regeneration; there are 21 of these identical sculptures in England produced around the time of the millennium in 2000. The sculptures symbolise new potential in communities where industries that defined the whole area have been lost and a different future is emerging. The intended message is that the large cast iron

seed released from its mould and the remains of the mould with the shape of the casting spread around are symbols that represent a new future.

The sculpture creates a real visual impact and children use it as a play item. The only problem is that people may not understand the symbolism and there is no interpretation on site to explain its meaning. While taking this photo, a park user asked "What is it meant to be?" After explaining its meaning the following comment was given; **"I've been coming to this park for over 20 years and did not know what it meant until you told me!"**

There are clearly risks of creating something visually engaging and enjoyable to play on but the message behind its design is not being understood.



Breaking The Mould sculpture Brierley Forest Park, Huthwaite

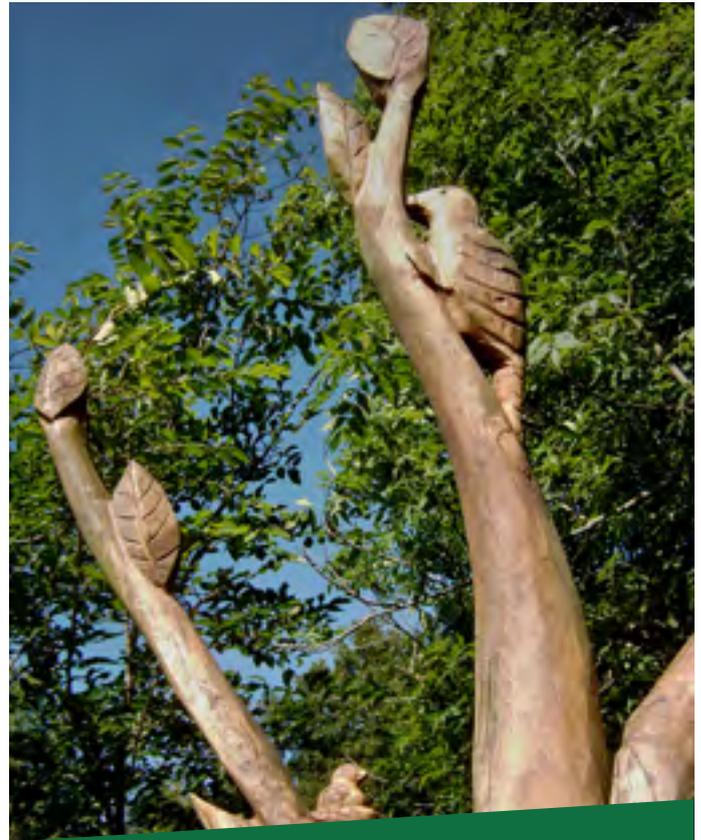
**'Fern Fossils' at Poulter Country Park****3.5e Past, present and future converge:**

Because heritage is about passing on cherished legacies to future generations and including everyone now, the way heritage is presented should join up past, present and future. This principle keeps heritage alive and makes it relevant through active participation so ownership widens to everyone.

Some of the photographs already shown such as The Dragonfly and Breaking The Mould already embrace the principle. The following example from Poulter Country Park shows perfectly how public art combines powerfully with heritage to create a feature that while also being symbolic can be enjoyed on a wide range of levels. The four metre high sculpture is called 'Fern Fossils' and is inspired by both the fossils frequently found in mined coal and the symbolism of ferns

unfurling which is very relevant to the park today as a space for nature and people reclaimed from industrial dereliction.

The above sculpture forms part of a 'sculpture trail' around the park and acts as a marker giving connectivity and focal points in extensive open areas divided by blocks of woodland. On site maps and interpretation at the main park entrance along with extensive online resources means the Fern Fossils and other elements of the sculpture trail can easily be understood and valued for their meaning as well as visual appeal.



Mining and nature heritage jointly celebrated, Brinsley Headstocks Country Park, Brinsley

The above sculpture has been carved by a chainsaw artist from a standing dead tree. It demonstrates perfectly how past, present and future converge using easy to interpret symbolism. The obvious visual references to a long mining history also include the forward looking symbolism of a rising phoenix and elements of the park's rich natural heritage enjoyed widely by visitors. This relatively low cost sculpture has remained in good condition for many years and is not showing significant signs of deterioration.

### 3.5f Making it personal:

In some of the parks visited 'personal touches' from the people involved in creating features that celebrate heritage have been designed in and included. This adds a very human feel and helps to move heritage from being something experienced by enthusiasts and experts to an experience designed and demonstrated to include all.

Making it personal is not trivial; it goes right to the heart of what funders want to see in terms of including people and demystifying heritage.

The Top of the World sculpture is sited on the highest point of the park. It symbolises Woolly Rhinoceros horns and Hyena jaw bones found as fossils in the area. The park will link by a trail to Creswell Crags and already joins the Archaeological Way from Pleasley Country Park. This is the 'anchor point' of the park and draws walkers and cyclists to rest there and enjoy panoramic views of the countryside for miles around.

The sculpture is beautifully personalised with the carved hand prints of participants. This completely unnecessary feature seems to make a statement that the feature is all about people and is not yet another high brow, art installation concept piece.



Top: Personalising using carved outlines of participants' hands  
Bottom: Top of the World sculpture Poulter Country Park

### 3.5g Markers:

The use of simple and relatively low cost markers around any site can create connectivity within a trail, become mounting points for low key interpretation and help unify features within a theme in any park. They can also be used to mount QR Codes for scanning by mobile phones thus becoming a bridge to online content in the right place at the right time.

The following photographs show a mix of styles used in sites not previously featured:

The markers in the photographs are relatively low cost and replaceable. The markers used extensively in the Woodland Walk at the Tramway Museum included raised embossed plaques allowing younger visitors to take crayon rubbings too. The small interpretation plaque on the Giants' Trail marker is made from a low cost material and is easy to replace with a duplicate.



Simple marker for nature heritage at Critch Tramway Museum



Giants' Trail marker for 'named' iconic tree at Sherwood Forest



Top: Example interpretation at Vicar Water Country Park  
Bottom: Existing information board at Langold Country Park

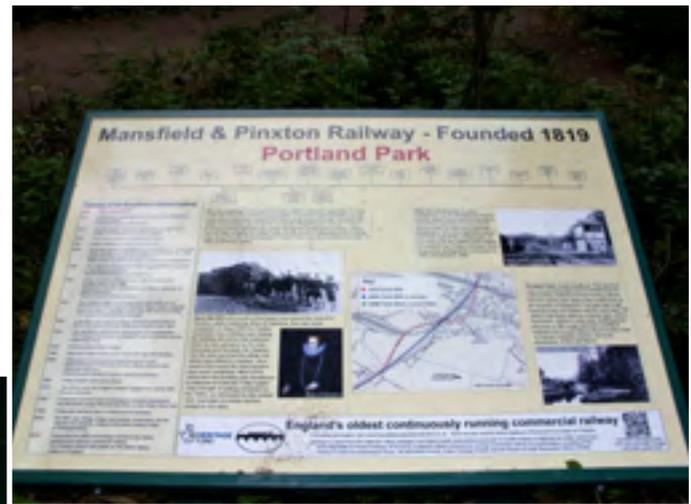
### 3.5h Interpretation panels:

On Langold Country Park there is currently one information board containing the site map and some basic interpretation and references to where further information can be accessed. It would appear that some information could be confusing such as naming Firbeck Main Colliery as 'Costhorpe Colliery' and the former play area has now become the skate park. The information board is of a pleasing design and was sponsored by a local company. The board is housed in a very high quality metal frame with the park's name raised and an 'industrial' feel to its construction. Any future upgrade should consider retaining and renovating the frame.

Every other site visited followed a restrained use of interpretation panels. A less is more approach keeps interpretation relevant and

where QR codes are also included they can enrich the experience of those park users who want to know more through digital materials downloaded or directly accessed online in real time while on site. \*Note that the strength of mobile signal should be assessed from a variety of network providers before embarking on wide scale use of QR codes and GPS location guided content.

The above right photograph shows one of the well designed interpretation panels used sparingly at Vicar Water Country Park. Each panel combines a range of information on nature and history, also giving contact details for problem reporting and the park ranger's contact details for volunteering. Note the large text used.



Railway themed interpretation at Portland Park, Kirkby in Ashfield

The above interpretation panels from Portland Park are very different in style and content from those used at Vicar Water Country Park. The use of text is much more extensive and reflects Portland Park's huge regional and national significance in terms of railway history. There are simpler panels based on nature themes around the park which are more accessible with

a potentially wider appeal. The top photograph shows a QR code in the bottom right corner of the panel where further content can be accessed digitally.

Where multiple panels are used on a site it is good practice to follow a 'family of print' unified style.

### 3.6 Funding and meeting expected outcomes:

This section of the heritage plan focuses on funding and draws attention to the fact that any funder will expect to see that certain 'outcomes' are genuinely worked towards and achieved. The outcome examples given are those expected to be seen and backed up by evidence for The Big Lottery Heritage Fund. This organisation has funded a huge diversity of heritage projects all over Britain including many historic parks. Much of the wording used within the heritage plan points to the approaches towards heritage that would make accessing funding possible. The wording reflects how heritage should be accessible to all, widen involvement so heritage is experienced by those previously not engaging in it and become something dynamic and meaningful. This funder truly recognises that where heritage strengthens sense of place and local identity it can play a part in an area growing in forward looking self confidence, even leading to economic regeneration.

The Chief Executive Officer of The Big Lottery Heritage Fund, Ros Kerslake, speaking in July 2020 stated;

**"Heritage is vital in creating economic prosperity, in making local communities better places to live and in supporting our own personal sense of well being".**

At the present time, Langold Country Park is a blank canvas for developing an exceptional heritage experience. Subject to full park user consultation and wider involvement it is highly likely that a key part in achieving a wonderful expression of the park's rich heritage legacy could be through developing and submitting a funding bid to this funder.

#### 3.6a The Big Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes:

There are eight outcomes listed below and 'a' is the single mandatory outcome. To some degree heritage work on the park can achieve every single outcome. However, the outcomes committed to with the funder should be the ones that can be completely achieved with clear and solid evidence provided.

- a. A wider range of people will be involved in heritage (mandatory)
- b. Heritage will be in better condition
- c. Heritage will be identified and better explained
- d. People will have developed skills
- e. People will have learnt about heritage, leading to change in ideas and actions
- f. People will have greater well being
- g. The funded organisation will be more resilient
- h. The local area will be a better place to live, work or visit

It is already clear even at this pre-consultation stage that outcomes a to c, e and h are obviously achievable. This is likely to be a sufficient number of outcomes for which robust evidence could be achieved.

These outcomes act as a blueprint for an enlightened approach to heritage regardless of whether funding is accessed through this particular funder.

Full park user community consultation is a mandatory requirement of this funder to ensure that the heritage funding applied for delivers against the wants, needs and choices of this wider community. It is also needed to demonstrate that they actively support the funding bid process and they feel ownership at every stage including implementation and beyond.

It is important to point out that Bassetlaw District Council is required to match fund between 5 and 10% of any amount applied for in a funding bid.

### 3.7 Action Plan:

The following table outlines key preliminary actions needed to begin implementing the heritage plan as an action plan for 'on the ground' outcomes. Actions are listed in time order with initial suggestions for who may deliver. The Parks and Open Spaces Team are abbreviated to 'P&OST'.

ACTION	DELIVERED BY	NOTES
Develop suggestions for heritage trail with possible locations of features for consultation and to invite further ideas	Consultants	Use the Heritage Plan as a stand alone document for bids etc.
Design consultation materials and include young peoples' voices for ideas and intergenerational participation in project	Consultants, and P&OST	Approach Bassetlaw Youth Council to include their participation
Deliver consultation on support for bid and content of heritage trail. Collate and interpret data with report for use in funding bid	Consultants, Youth Workers and P&OST	Check the reach of consultation to ensure full involvement
Identify suppliers and prepare initial costings for all works	Consultants	Use suppliers with known and proven track record of quality work
Identify specialist suppliers/ designers for digital content and assess mobile signal coverage on site for all main network providers	Consultants	As above
Commission a condition survey of Boathouse and weir area	Heritage Consultancy	As above
Produce Expression/s of Interest to funder/s	Consultants	
Develop funding bid, secure letters of support etc. and projected delivery timescales	Consultants	

### 3.8 Summary

Avoiding being prescriptive about what will be delivered and when is essential at this very early, pre-consultation stage. Therefore all suggested actions and timescales must be treated as being flexible. What is known with certainty is that Langold Country Park has an incredibly rich heritage story which is currently untold and is largely difficult to interpret 'on the ground' without a good degree of local and specialist prior knowledge.

It is clear that doing justice to the park's incredible heritage legacy will require a substantial funding bid to be developed. The site has the advantage of being a completely blank canvas in terms of how heritage is currently celebrated. This means that whatever is implemented with funding can be done to the highest standards in terms of park user involvement, meaningful and future proof content, and designed in sustainability.

A heritage trail can become the glue that holds a joined up park together. The park can become more connected because the features telling the story belong in every corner of the park and fully include nature too. The contribution of the park with its heritage trail to the visitor economy of Bassetlaw District is certain to substantially increase. There is absolutely no doubt that a Heritage Trail in Langold Country Park could become the best in any country park throughout the region!

# 4. Community Engagement and Education Plan

## 4.1 Introduction:

The meaning of 'community engagement' when used in terms of developing Langold Country Park is best described as follows:

**"Community engagement seeks to better involve the community to take an active part in developing and using the park in ways that benefit everyone, bring its full potential to life and make it more sustainable".**

The community engagement and education plan identifies the strategies and actions through which the park's full value to people can be better developed. For the purposes of the plan, education is part of community engagement. It becomes another means of reaching out to and involving a greater diversity of people and organisations in the park.

Improving community engagement in the park increases the levels of involvement and ownership felt in a widening diversity of park users. This has many benefits in terms of sustainably managing the park because people will protect what they value as their sense of ownership grows. A positive change in relationships may also develop where the park service user and service provider see themselves more as partners.

Similarly to the Heritage Plan, this section is also written to include the approaches needed that make the park an ideal venue for delivering funded projects. The costs (including financial) of not treating community engagement as a priority are difficult to measure but are known with certainty to be real. The plan will treat community engagement as being of equal importance to any other high priority improvements.

## 4.2 The community engagement vision:

There needs to be a clear vision behind the planning, effort and resources put into securing greater community engagement. The proposed vision for community engagement and education is as follows:

"To secure much greater community involvement through planned volunteering, education and health and well being activities on the park. To work as partners where everyone involved is valued and can know they are making a positive contribution to the park".

### 4.3 The extended social purpose:

The 'value to people' or social purpose of parks has been evolving from the early days where providing a pleasant venue for recreation gave a completely new experience for most working people. Over the years a lot has changed in society and the value of parks to people has taken on a much deeper meaning from when they were first created. This 'extended'

social purpose means involvement in parks can bring a host of social benefits beyond purely recreation. The benefits that can be found or developed in Langold Country Park can be summarised as follows:

- A venue to enjoy contact with and a widening understanding of nature
- A place where a wide range of therapeutic benefits can be experienced
- A project venue for delivering physical and mental health outcomes
- A place to include marginalised people, both locally and in Bassetlaw more widely
- A venue where people who may feel they have 'little to offer' to society can make a positive contribution and access opportunities to raise their self esteem
- A place to involve young people where they can exert a positive influence on others/ reducing anti social behaviour
- A venue for intergenerational working e.g. local young people gaining a sense of shared ownership in the heritage mainly seen as belonging to the older generation
- A place where the mental health impacts of Covid 19 can be reduced
- An inspiring place to access education, training, leisure learning and arts

### 4.4 The need for support and enabling:

The full value of the park to people is easier to achieve where there is a means to support people to come together and get involved in available opportunities. Someone working in this community engagement or development role has a large part of their job described as being an 'enabler or facilitator'. This is someone who helps join the dots, connecting people with each other and the support they need. This also includes helping individuals and groups with capacity building so they can access the benefits of using the park under their own steam. It may also include training, supporting and helping coordinate delivery of activities until people have the capacity to do it themselves. In the case of making volunteer groups sustainable, the long term aim is for groups to develop their own identities and ability to self lead.

Some groups may need much more support, especially where there are significant barriers to participation. Supporting these groups would be linked to externally funded project work. Every area of potential work clearly points to the need for a person in a dedicated facilitator role to achieve it.

In the three former coalfield parks visited for the comparison study with Langold Country Park, each employed a dedicated full time Park Ranger. It was no surprise to find that in each park there were very high levels of community engagement, educational activities and direct volunteer involvement in park improvements, enhancing wildlife areas and other small scale work. Volunteer work adds value to each park beyond the capacity and basic maintenance remit of paid staff members.

#### 4.5 Park Ranger/Development Worker via an external funding bid:

It is clear that there needs to be a person employed within a dedicated role to fully develop volunteering, education, therapeutic and other outcomes on the park. Knowing the budget restraints in these difficult times, this would be a bold and forward thinking investment. It is proposed that early within the master plan timeframe a Destination Parks Ranger/Development Worker post is created with the post holder working in all three of Bassetlaw's destination parks. This would initially be linked to an external funding bid where the role becomes fully developed and embedded within the parks. This would provide a much needed 'template' for keeping the role as a permanent one.

A Park Ranger/Development Worker type role would also help achieve health and well being or other important social outcomes in Bassetlaw. Other benefits may include reduced vandalism through widening the sense of ownership in the park. These outcomes all add weight to the argument for creating the role in the most appropriate way. This is currently through a major 5 year external funding bid to the Big

Lottery Community Fund.

This role is a multi skilled one where great community engagement experience with excellent practical skills are stand out qualities of the post holder. The person would typically be educated to HND level or higher in a relevant discipline and have a proven track record of working in similar country park or equivalent settings.

**Important note on funding:** Many funders now expect to see funding bids that directly include helping communities to overcome many of the impacts of Covid 19. This may include the mental health impact of social isolation and job losses or long term health problems such as Long Covid. The community engagement approach of using project work that can include everyone and directly work for health and well being and other social benefits will strengthen any bid hugely.

#### KEY ACTIONS NEEDED:

- Develop a job description for the Destination Park Ranger/Development Worker role to include within a funding bid
- Prepare 5 year funding bid for submission to include Langold Country Park as the key venue for conservation skills training

#### 4.6 Develop a volunteer work programme:

Developing a volunteer work programme will be the main starting point on which greater community involvement is built and creates a major part of the Park Ranger/Development Worker role in 4.5. The following summary includes a range of tasks where volunteers can create very special value to the park:

- Carrying out sensitive and labour intensive habitat management work in various designated wildlife areas around the park
- Invasive species control in woodland and meadows
- Enhancement planting in meadows etc.
- Supporting the running of events
- Reporting problems and maintenance issues

- Supporting remedial work in areas of high foot traffic and erosion
- Wildlife surveying
- Any other appropriate tasks where volunteers want to be involved and make a visible statement of their ownership
- Specialist volunteering linked to higher education \*See notes

\*Detail on the role of specialist volunteers linked to higher education within the conservation and ecology sectors will be included within the Ecology Plan. Other specialist volunteering could include short internships to develop web based resources and research.



The now little used Lifesaver Hut has been suggested as a potential 'volunteer base' so volunteers could have somewhere to change footwear and access PPE, to get warm, eat lunch in comfort, wash hands etc. The building has all basic amenities and using it for this purpose and other community uses would bring the building back into productive life for the park.

Volunteering is a central part of an externally funded project with health and well being

and social inclusion outcomes. For the park this project would be developed into a training programme with potential to include employability, reducing social isolation and mental health interventions. A scoping report has already identified the huge potential of the park to play a part in these areas using conservation skills training. The funding bid is still being developed and requires park user consultation to establish the level of support locally.

### KEY ACTIONS INCLUDE:

- Identify good quality and meaningful volunteer opportunities throughout the park which can suit a diverse range of capabilities and needs. Develop and deliver a volunteering programme where tasks identified form a 'prospectus' both for community and specialist educational volunteers/other involvement.
- Create volunteer events for wider community involvement.
- Develop partnerships with referring agencies such as Bassetlaw CVS and health and well being projects in order to have Langold Country Park recognised as a quality venue for volunteer referrals.

#### 4.7 Deliver consultation for funding bid:

The need to fully involve the park user community in consultation on any funding bids is a mandatory part of bid preparation. This is essential for both external funding bids mentioned in the master plan. These are the volunteer training project and the heritage trail.

The use of digital media will be important because ongoing Covid 19 restrictions make face to face/paper based consultation unsafe. The need for using online consultation should be seen as an opportunity to develop the method effectively and increase reach.

#### KEY ACTIONS NEEDED:

- Deliver consultation (prioritising online methods during Covid 19 emergency) to establish support for external funding bids.

#### 4.8 Create a database of groups as a baseline for development and outreach:

Creating a database of all existing groups using the park will give a useful baseline of how the park is currently used independently of support and facilitation. There are already established groups using the park for nature watching, walking and Walking for Health. Other informal groups such as day care providers use the park as a therapeutic venue for their service users. Having reliable information is very important as it shows what participation there is to build on, and which sectors of the community are under-represented. This also helps avoid reinventing the wheel when identifying priorities for partnership building, promoting the park and outreach.

The practical application for a database includes the following:

- Developing a mailing list for outreach and increasing access to web based updates
- Sharing important updates on access issues due to weather etc.
- Publicising events
- Sharing plans for each year/season
- Inviting participation in consultation
- Recruiting volunteers
- Future recording of important social outcomes relevant to Bassetlaw i.e. health and well being
- Sharing information from partner organisations in Bassetlaw District

#### KEY ACTION NEEDED:

- Create a baseline database of groups using the park and update existing records to use within volunteer programme, funded projects and health and well being initiatives

#### 4.9 Develop educational opportunities with schools, playgroups etc:

The park has great potential for use as an educational resource for planned self led and guided visits with schools and other groups. There is also scope for more informal use by playgroups, nurseries, childminders and home education providers where the semi natural environment of the park has huge value in child development.

There is a very natural fit within the National Curriculum for Early Years, Foundation and Key Stages 1 and 2 where Discover the World and a huge part of the Science curriculum can be achieved in inspiring ways within a beautiful setting.

Historically, there has been a low number of school visits to Bassetlaw's other two destination parks, even where schools are within easy walking distance. The value of the park is likely to lie more in visits with a nurture and therapeutic focus for smaller numbers of children. There is great potential for visits of this nature by special schools where transport is available and high staff ratios and small class sizes remove barriers to participation.

The longer term aspiration to develop of a visitor centre with Changing Places provision would

remove the barrier of not being able to meet the intimate care needs of some students from special schools. A visitor centre could also make larger organised visits by mainstream schools far easier by having access to a covered venue with toilets, dedicated space to assemble, leave belongings and eat communally.

There is also potential to involve students from Key Stage 5 upwards who are accessing alternative curriculum programmes with a more practical focus. This may include students at risk of exclusion who are being supported by targeted interventions. These students could participate in volunteering on the park and make a positive contribution to its development. In some cases this may have benefits in reducing anti social behaviour by participants having a positive influence on other young people where a sense of ownership, pride and value is generated through the work completed.

The park also has considerable potential to become a Forest Schools venue where child led learning takes place with specialist, trained facilitators. This is being done at Vicar Water Country Park which was included in the comparison study of former coalfield area parks with Langold Country Park.

#### 4.10 Developing a visitor centre as a future aspiration:

This development is being suggested as a medium to long term 'future aspiration' because it has such huge potential to become a park community hub. A visitor centre is mentioned within the Income Generation and External Funding Plan where it could be the natural host for enterprises in the park. This would need to be developed with a private sector partner and external grant funding.

The results of consultation from the Halloween in the Park event in October 2019 showed only 22% of 100 respondents supported the development of a visitor centre.

The suggestion of developing a visitor centre is that it should be revisited at a midpoint within the timeframe of the master plan. This would take place after implementing numerous aspects of the plan such as; developing a heritage trail, establishing the volunteer work programme, developing education, leisure learning and access improvements.

At the present time it feels like 'putting the cart before the horse' because natural demand has not yet been created. Any future consultation should include what the potential advantages

are to the park, concept ideas and possible locations.

Potential advantages include:

- Becoming an all year round park community hub and Information centre
- A base for organised visits by schools, Day Services etc.
- A base for leisure learning and Family Learning
- A fully accessible building with Changing Places facilities

A well designed visitor centre is in many ways the missing ingredient within a visit to the park. Where natural demand is in evidence, the idea should be more fully developed.

#### 4.11 Develop resources for self led activities:

Self led activities with resources to the park's wildlife and heritage features is a great way to involve the park user community and combine recreation with Family Learning. As mentioned in the Heritage Plan, the use of online content could become an important way to access and interpret a future heritage trail. Having resources available online adds a low carbon approach where using mobile phones reduce the need for printed resources and also means that the park can be accessed any time independently. Examples of self led activities are as follows:

- Tree trail with leaves, bark and buds for all year round access
- Wildflower trail for spring and summer
- Scavenger hunts
- Geocaching using mobile phones or dedicated GPS devices
- Joining up the heritage trail throughout the park
- Active Families exercise trails

At Shipley Country Park which was included in the Former Coalfield Parks comparison study with Langold Country Park, there is a well developed use or resources for self led activities. These can be accessed as printed activity sheets for trails around the park.



Part of a self led 'caterpillar trail' at Shipley Country Park

#### KEY ACTION:

- Develop initial resources for tree and wildflower trails around the park. Make these available as online resources to use guided with mobile phones or printed on paper. Where possible enlist volunteer support to develop through the park user community or volunteers from higher education

#### 4.12 Leisure learning and arts:

This is a very wide area of activity with the potential to broaden the role of the park as a community asset. There are obvious links to a volunteer work programme and potential to deliver some leisure learning activities as Family Learning. Some areas of leisure learning can rightly become a small source of income generation to reinvest in the park. This is especially the case where traditional skills are taught by an increasingly limited base of specialist tutors.

The inclusion of 'arts' is important because involvement in arts can become a transformational experience for participants and those appreciating the resulting works. In the park setting, Art in the Park would work like any other community arts programme by including people completely new to expressing themselves through art.

The potential links between art projects and designing and developing the public art elements of a future heritage trail are also considerable.

Leisure learning and art could include any or all of the following:

- Wildflower walks and botanical identification skills
- Bird identification and other wildlife walks
- Wildlife photography
- Woodland skills – coppicing, hurdle making, willow weaving, pole lathe wood turning
- Hedge laying, bushcraft skills
- Land art – fleeting creations made from found materials as an installation trail and possible online displays supported by good quality photography
- Bee and bug, bird and bat boxes as family learning

There are numerous possibilities for volunteer led activities where experienced people from special interest groups share their passion for wildlife. This could benefit these groups in recruiting new members.

#### KEY ACTIONS:

- Use the database of groups using the park to identify wildlife interest groups who could support guided walks
  - Develop Art in the Park as an annual event
- and create opportunities for involvement in designing public art related to a heritage trail

#### 4.13 Events:

Events can have value in achieving community engagement outcomes, especially where they are linked to volunteer action days etc. They also act as a useful way to include consultation, especially where activities are provided that occupy children while adults' complete surveys. Consultation results from the last event held (Halloween in the Park, October 2019) showed that nearly 52% of 100 respondents wanted to see more events and activities.

Developing well resourced events linked to a volunteer work programme has the potential to be rewarding in very different ways than events more designed to entertain. The opportunity to make a positive contribution to the park could for many people have a long lasting impact.

#### 4.14 Summary:

There is huge scope for improving community engagement within the park. Volunteering, education, leisure learning or any other interactive activity gets people involved on a deeper level in the park. The links to a funding bid based around volunteering also highlights that the park can be used to achieve major social benefits to people beyond purely recreation.

A problem with promoting community engagement within the master plan as a priority is that there are no 'immediate big ticket' infrastructure improvements created in the park as evidence. What would be achieved instead would be huge volumes of essential conservation work, greater use of the park for education and deeper involvement by people in developments on the park. When health and well being and other social benefits are included the value of this whole area of work becomes even more essential.

# 5: Income Generation and External Funding

## 5.1 Introduction:

This section explores the different ways additional income can be generated to create surpluses to reinvest for park improvements. Another important area is applying for external funding. This has grown in importance for project work delivered in parks where physical improvements and social benefits to people are secured together. Volunteering is also included because it can be used as match funding in kind when submitting funding bids.

- Generating surpluses to reinvest through enterprises
- Adding value through volunteer activities and match funding
- Securing external funding for projects with major social outcomes

## 5.2 Income generation vision:

**“To find sustainable ways to generate income for reinvestment and actively apply for external funding for project work that improves the park and at the same time achieves major social benefits within**

**Bassetlaw”.**

## 5.3 General principles followed:

Parks across the country are operating in challenging times for funding and need to find income generation opportunities. This applies equally in Bassetlaw District where income generation options are entirely about generating surpluses to reinvest in the park. Where enterprise ideas are to be developed, one of the most important principles considered is their long term sustainability. Any enterprise must be viable and be able to operate without being subsidised in some form. In general enterprises will be run as concessions where a private company delivers the service and pays a rental charge to be used as income for the park.

Facilities such as a visitor centre will only be developed with externally sourced grant funding and a private sector service provider to run it. The criteria that make a visitor centre viable for a private sector operator are equally relevant to one run by Bassetlaw District Council. The numbers have to stack up regardless of who operates the building.

#### 5.4 Existing catering concessions:

The park currently holds 2 catering concessions that generate a rental income for the park. These are The Kiosk by the Water Splash Park operating seasonally and Andy's Cafe open all year round. In the event of a future visitor centre being developed on the park, any catering outlet would be operated as part of a wider rental income arrangement.

There is potential to introduce additional catering at events such as diverse and interesting 'street food' concessions. In all cases there needs to be much greater emphasis on the food offer including more healthy options that compliment the park's role in promoting health and well being.

#### 5.4a Fishing on the lakes:

Fishing continues to provide the park with an income from anglers using the lakes. The infrastructure investment has been in place for some years and is sustainable through the use of low maintenance materials such as good quality recycled plastic decking. Accessible fishing areas for anglers with disabilities have also been invested in. Future investment in maintenance will be needed to sustain the income stream.

#### 5.4b Charges for parking:

It is now widely accepted that it is perfectly reasonable for non commercial service providers and not for profit organisations to recover costs and generate surpluses by making a fair charge for the parking they provide. Parking is currently provided free of charge

At the Halloween in the Park event in October 2019 where park users were consulted, initial consultation results from 98 respondents showed 47% were in favour of introducing parking charges to the park. Those against were 32% and not sure responses totalled 21%.

The benefits to Langold Country Park from reinvesting surpluses generated from parking charges could include the following:

- Upgrading the overflow car park to make it suitable for all year round use
- Contributing to the costs of employing a Park Ranger/Development Worker
- Supporting more events on the park

Many destination parks managed by different local authorities in the region charge for parking to recover maintenance cost and generate income for reinvestment. This included Shipley Country Park featured in the comparison study of 3 former coalfield parks with Langold Country Park. At this park and other destination parks managed by Derbyshire County Council's Countryside Service, the parking charge by hour is structured in what appears to be a fair and reasonable manner. Charges compare in cost to car parks outside the peak charging areas of town centres. They are certainly much cheaper than any typical city centre charges.



Parking charge tariff sign at Shipley Country Park

### Example 1

The charging structure for parking at Shipley Country Park is as follows:

Free parking for vehicles displaying a blue badge

Free parking outside charging times 9.00 AM to 5.00 PM November to March and 8.00 AM to 8.00 PM April to October.

Up to 2 hours - £1.60

Up to 4 hours - £3.60

All day - £4.80

Enforcement of parking contraventions is in operation. Payment is cashless by debit card meaning that parking machines are no longer being broken into and there are no costs associated with staff emptying cash every day, administration and banking costs arising from handling cash.

### Example 2

Vicar Water Country Park:

At Vicar Water Country Park (also featured in the comparison study) a parking contribution in the form of a £1.00 voluntary donation paid by cash into a parking machine is invited. It is assumed that the full time Park Ranger empties the parking machines daily to prevent theft and associated damage to machines. It is not known how much income is generated through the voluntary parking charges after administration and banking costs are taken off.

### Example 3

Brierley Forest Park:

At Brierley Forest Park (also featured in the comparison study) parking is currently provided free of charge. Parking at busy times negatively impacts residents on numerous roads close to the park. At the time of writing parking facilities at the park have been extended and parking remains free.

By evaluating park user dwell time data from existing consultation and future surveys it may be possible to work out how best to structure charging. This is to ensure a fair approach where costs are not punitive and cause parking to be displaced into the village.



August 2019 - The overspill car park at Langold in use on a late morning weekday

## ACTIONS NEEDED:

- Complete further survey work with park users to establish the duration and frequency of visits and where they are driving from. The assumption that most visitors are local is no longer correct and more accurate information is needed.
- Combine information with existing consultation data to create a fair charging structure based on patterns of park use
- Install ticket machines and all signage needed

## 5.5 Generating surpluses to reinvest through new enterprises:

### 5.5a Enterprise ideas already suggested:

There are a number of enterprise ideas that have already been suggested in the previous master plan document. This included cycle hire, boat hire, touring caravan facilities, heated indoor swimming pool and growing biomass crops. These existing suggestions have been subject to some initial financial appraisal. Some of these suggestions (cycle and boat hire) have been presented as enterprises that are 'cross subsidised' by paid staff working in a new visitor centre managing them along with their other duties. The larger enterprise (heated indoor swimming pool with visitor centre, new access roads and parking) would have needed a very substantial capital investment. The level of risk in these capital investments would be especially high in the current funding landscape with unproven demand.

The best starting point for judging the viability of an enterprise suggested for Langold Country Park is to evaluate ideas already proven to work in a diverse range of regional country parks. This will give a good idea of what works where. If country parks of the same size as Langold, with similar features are not including these enterprises or are struggling to operate them successfully, this shows a need for caution and to research more extensively to make informed decisions.

### 5.5b The chicken and egg situation:

Some of the enterprise ideas suggested in this master plan present a 'chicken and egg' type situation where there needs to be a venue to host them or provide basic facilities such as those found within a visitor centre. This major development would need comprehensive financial viability planning to further develop the idea and take it forward. Financial viability planning is crucial because running visitor centres can become a liability along with being the largest single cost within many country park budgets.

### 5.6 Visitor Centre as a venue for enterprise:

Constructing a visitor centre on the park could create an attractive venue to draw visitors to the park and become a hub from which they start or conclude their visits. A high footfall of visitors is essential for enterprises based in a visitor centre to be viable. Various enterprises could 'naturally fit' and be housed or served from the building. Enterprise ideas directly observed as being successfully delivered from visitor centres in other regional parks and some featured in the coalfield parks comparison study document are as follows:

- Catering outlets operating as rent paying concessions \*See note on social enterprise option
- A retail space with offer appropriate to park/countryside setting
- A venue for leisure learning – charged for courses and activity sessions
- Gallery/display space charging commission on sales
- Meeting rooms for hire etc.
- Trumper Hire (all terrain mobility scooters)

\*The catering outlet at Vicar Water Country Park featured in the country parks comparison document is run as a social enterprise delivering training to young adults with learning difficulties/disabilities or experiencing other disadvantages.

Other non enterprise features adding value include:

- Changing Places – (mandatory to include in all new developments)
- Information centre
- Volunteer hub
- Interpretation displays – park history etc.
- Other themed displays and public art
- Wildlife sightings board

Having a visitor centre on the park, especially a distinctive eco build design could be an incredible asset to the park. Where a mix of enterprises both large and small are used to offset its running costs and generate surpluses to reinvest in the park, the building can become a sustainable asset rather than a liability. A visitor centre can provide an all year round attraction for visiting the park.



Top: The Brierley Forest Park visitor centre as a more prominent park feature  
 Bottom: The Shipley Country Park visitor centre blending in with the landscape

### KEY ACTIONS NEEDED:

- Explore the viability of a visitor centre at the midway point in the master plan timeframe where other key actions are being implemented i.e. heritage trail and funded volunteer work programme
- Establish the feasibility of key enterprises associated with a visitor centre with initial emphasis on high return enterprises such as catering and room hire

## 5.7 Other enterprises – leisure learning and Forest Schools:

The potential for generating income from leisure learning and charged for activity sessions can be developed on the park even without a visitor centre. The Lifesaver Hut with a suggested use as a 'volunteer hub' could also be used for some indoor leisure learning activities. There are also a wide range of potential activities mainly based outdoors where the Lifesaver Hut could provide a base to leave bags, change footwear, provide toilet and hand washing facilities and a place to eat lunches. The Community Engagement and Education Plan has listed a range of potential activities in **4.12** ranging from wildlife photography, hedge laying to bushcraft..

Delivering Forest Schools sessions also represents a potential regular source of income where schools pay for outdoor learning in woodland for their children. This requires investment in fully training a staff member to deliver the sessions within the specialised child led learning style of Forest Schools. Both leisure learning and Forest Schools have the potential to bring in useful income to reinvest in the park. The advantage of these activities is they completely fit within the park environment and bring people in to appreciate the nature value of the park on a deeper level.

### 5.7a Events hosted in the park:

The park as a host venue for events delivered through specialist 'events companies' is a potentially valuable source of income for the park. Appropriate and well attended events held on other parks visited for the comparison study with Langold Country Park included the following:

- Food and Drink Fairs
- Woodland and Eco Festival events
- High quality Art and Craft vendors/ demonstrators (included in both of the above)

Where events companies run these activities, they will pay a significant rental fee and professionally manage the events with all the logistics in place. This includes risk assessments, insurance, stewards, traffic management, security and waste and recycling.

Appropriate events chosen to run could add real value to the life of the park along with generating income.

### ACTIONS NEEDED:

- Develop leisure learning opportunities to include income generation opportunities
- Develop the park's potential as a venue to host Forest Schools including training for staff delivery
- Identify the viability of different events and potential events companies to include this as a feature of income generation opportunities for the park

### 5.8 Adding value through volunteer activities:

The potential importance of volunteering activities to the overall life of the park cannot be underestimated and its true value cannot be brought down to a simple financial one. The most important outcome from volunteering is engaging the park community, including everyone and building a strong sense of ownership in the park's development. Volunteering can also be used as 'match funding in kind' for external funding bids.

For the purposes of in kind match funding of grants The Big Lottery Fund recognises the monetary values for volunteering in the following way:

- Unskilled work - £10.00 per hour - skilled work - £20.00 per hour
- Professional service volunteering - £50.00 per hour

Recording the value of volunteer work in this way may be important for the two funding bids referred to in the plan which both need match funding which is likely to be a mix of both money and in kind contribution.



The Cadet Field meadow starting to show a need for Ragwort pulling

Care should always be taken to respect all volunteer work equally because the regular volunteers turning up to carry out routine tasks will always provide a greater cumulative benefit to the park than those attending sporadically for tasks with a higher status.

### KEY ACTIONS NEEDED:

- Record all volunteer work to use as match funding in kind for funding bids

## 5.9 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):

Well facilitated CSR activities on the park that involve staff volunteering from locally and Bassetlaw District based businesses can achieve a wide range of physical benefits to the park. These activities can be a form of 'in kind sponsorship' where the value to the park goes beyond just the physical work achieved on action days. This may include the following:

- Creating supportive partnerships with the business community wishing to give back to the communities from which their workforces are drawn
- Difficult to achieve labour intensive tasks can be completed allowing staff working on the park to concentrate on other priority skilled work
- The profile of the site becomes raised and supportive relationships develop with long term benefits to the park

## 5.10 Securing external funding for projects with major social outcomes:

Applying for external funding for a major volunteering project and a heritage trail have been detailed in the Community Engagement and Education along with the Heritage Plans. The combined bids will be substantial with the Big Lottery Community Fund bid for the volunteering project having a potential value of £400,000. The results achieved on the park through funding will be huge. An important consideration when applying to many external funders is that any funded work cannot be the day to day running tasks that form the Parks and Open Spaces Team's regular workload. The funders want to see major social benefits or 'outcomes' including health and well being, regeneration and social inclusion to name just a few. This will apply to any future funding bids too.

Some preparation work has already been done to access funding from The Big Lottery Community Fund. Initial consultation has been delivered related to the funded project in two parks and will be carried out in Langold Country Park itself to develop the bid process further. It would be useful to deliver a small pilot project to strengthen the funding bid process. This is particularly relevant to the volunteering project but may be useful for the heritage trail too.

The funding bid process is very time consuming and Bassetlaw District Council has to fund the major task of bid writing and other work needed within the whole process. They will also need to provide some match funding (5 – 10%) which makes match funding in kind very important.

### ACTIONS NEEDED:

- Make formal approaches to local and Bassetlaw District businesses to offer volunteer action days within the park as options within their potential CSR activities
- Identify suitable tasks for action days

### ACTIONS NEEDED:

- Explore other funding sources needed to deliver pilot activities for the volunteering project so they can be evaluated to strengthen funding bids
- Identify activities for a small pilot project

### **5.11 Summary:**

This section has presented existing and potential ways in which value can be added to the park either through income generation or external funding. As with many areas of the master plan the need for sustainability is a high priority for both enterprises and externally funded projects. In all cases where something positive and beneficial to the park is started, it must be able to carry on sustainably. This applies to funded project work where funders will expect the projects to carry on successfully beyond the initial funding.

# 6 Access and Connectivity Plan

## 6.1 Introduction:

Access is a very broad theme within managing a country park and for the purposes of the plan this will focus on a limited number of key areas. The access plan will use the following key themes as headings:

- Access to and into the park for vehicles and pedestrians
- Access improvements for greater inclusion
- Access to information both prior to and when visiting the park

The plan will also address considerations of 'connectivity'. This can be an important aspect of access within the park and also in developing the site as a 'gateway' into the wider countryside of North Nottinghamshire/Bassetlaw/local interest closer by. The relevant headings for connectivity are as follows:

- On site connectivity for a joined up park
- Strategic connectivity as a Gateway Site

## 6.2 The access and connectivity vision:

**"To carry out phased improvements to access and connectivity for the park over the timeframe of the master plan, joining these up with access to information for planned visiting"**.

## 6.3 Access to and into the park for vehicles and pedestrians:

There are two vehicle entrances to the park. The main entrance with brown direction signage is through Church Street which is a residential road in Langold Village. The second entrance (without signage) is on the north eastern side of the park via the A60 Doncaster Road. Both of these entrances are also used by pedestrians. There is a dedicated pedestrian entrance in the far north eastern corner of the park which is also on the A60 Doncaster Road. There are also multiple pedestrian access points from footpaths leading in from and out to the countryside surrounding the park and some from built up areas too.

The purpose of including access to the site in the master plan is to ensure that getting into (and out of) the park is efficient, sustainable, has minimal impact on local residents and creates a welcoming first impression to the site.

### 6.3a Changes to the main Church Street vehicle entrance to the park:

In the previous master plan it was suggested that the main vehicle access route from Church Street should be changed to create a completely new access route via the Cadet Field into the park leading to a newly developed visitor centre with adjacent car parking.

The proposal included retaining pedestrian access via Church Street and providing vehicle access for disabled visitors only. The overflow car park would then have been converted to meadow. None of these proposed changes were implemented.

Negative issues continue with the current access route because of the high volume of vehicles using the Church Street residential road. There are parking conflicts at busy times, road safety and air quality issues along with likely impacts on quality of life for local residents.

The greater visitor numbers experienced during both Covid 19 lockdowns has reinforced the importance of resolving long term issues within the master plan. Visitors have been parking throughout Langold village, and then walking into the park. This situation is made worse because the overflow car park on reinforced grass is not suitable for high volumes of traffic in winter and has been closed due to persistent

wet weather that has made its use impossible.

There are a range of short term actions that can ease the persistent problems in gaining vehicle access into the park via Church Street. There needs to be full research carried out through park user surveys to establish patterns of visiting, where people are driving from and why they park using the Church Street entrance. This also links with the survey work to establish a fair charging structure for the potential introduction of parking charges.

There needs to be a long term vision behind vehicle access to the park where commitments made today do not conflict with future aspirations such as developing a visitor centre in response to demand. The suggested actions for the Church Street entrance are linked to substantially upgrading the A60 Doncaster Road entrance area.

#### ACTIONS NEEDED:

- Carry out full survey of park users to establish patterns of use, where driving from and reasons for using Church Street entrance
- Upgrade overflow parking capacity in the Church Street entrance area to provide greater capacity all year round, link to introduction of parking charges
- Promote greater use of the Doncaster Road vehicle entrance for able bodied park users with substantial improvements to this area

### 6.3b Improvements to the A60 Doncaster Road entrance:

The A60 Doncaster Road park entrance has no signage to indicate that it provides access to the park and it is easy to drive past the entrance without noticing. This entrance route is of good size and layout. The entrance road itself cuts through the Doncaster Road Plantation and is wide enough for two cars to pass each other if the entrance road has not been double parked on. There is a small car park with a capacity for around 20 cars and a tarmac service road usually closed by a barrier that leads to a rough aggregate surfaced area. This was previously used for car parking is now used to store chipped brush from tree works. There is no signage to direct visitors to walk into other areas of the park.

A major upgrading of the A60 Doncaster Road could reduce the pressure on the Church Street entrance especially where its use is promoted and essential improvements are made to ensure it genuinely feels like a worthwhile alternative route into the park.

There is currently no footpath access across the short mown amenity grass area linking the existing A60 car park with Costhorpe Plantation. This could act as a connecting pedestrian route between the south west and north east of the park. The creation of an appropriately surfaced footpath that joins with both main access paths through Costhorpe Plantation could also have considerable benefits in creating a more joined up park.

There is clear potential to create a second more accessible circular walk in the park by using the east side path in Costhorpe Plantation constructed on a former railway embankment and following this route back around to the A60 car park using an existing level path through Doncaster Road Plantation. This whole area of the park has significant heritage links for the sidings and railway line connected to the Firbeck Main Colliery and the whole community catching trains for planned outings to the coast in the 1920's and 30's.



The service road between Doncaster Road Plantation and Costhorpe Plantation

Costhorpe Plantation seen from the A60 entrance car park and without footpath access



### ACTIONS NEEDED:

- Install entrance signage on the A60 clearly showing this is a main vehicle route into the park.
- Update website information to promote greater use of the upgraded A60 entrance advising disabled visitors to continue using the Church Street entrance
- Create a large and distinctive Langold Country Park sign to install in the immediate vehicle entrance area
- Create wide footpath access from the A60 Doncaster Road vehicle entrance to both main footpaths through Costhorpe Plantation.
- Install signage directing visitors to use existing footpath routes to access the lakes and play areas.
- Increase car parking capacity by 100% with a high specification, all weather reinforced grass surface and improve existing areas of rough aggregate surfacing
- Clear all brash and tree waste from the former car park area at the end of the service road and use this area as an overflow car park at busy times
- Develop a well signed and promoted circular walking route through Costhorpe Plantation and back to the car park via Doncaster Road Plantation.

The development of 400 houses on the former Firbeck Main Colliery site will create the need for greatly improved footpath access into the park. Footpath improvements suggested from the Doncaster Road vehicle entrance will also be beneficial and will link with those from the new housing development. There is a very clear need provide good access to prevent multiple tracks appearing as desire lines that damage woodland and meadow areas.

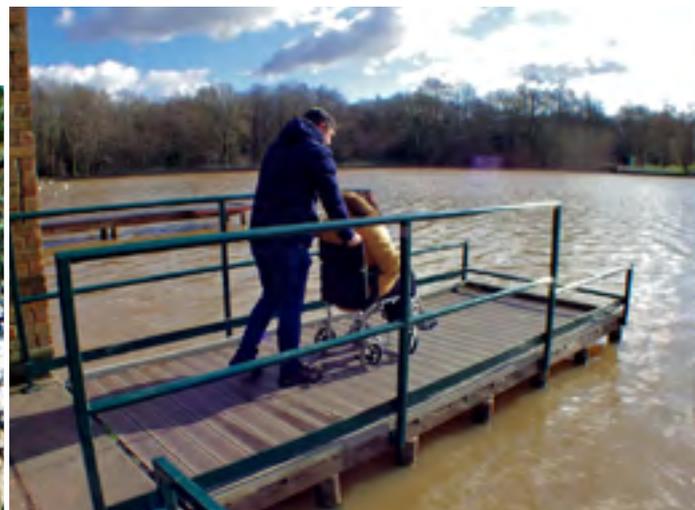
### ACTIONS NEEDED:

- Create new footpaths from the housing development with signage to direct new residents into the park
- Create a footpath to the Cadet Field through the south east corner of Costhorpe Plantation to prevent multiple small paths developing
- Improve signage from Honey Hills/former Pit Tip to direct visitors to the park

## 6.4 Access improvements for greater inclusion:

There are multiple physical access improvements which would benefit all park users and the need to make access more inclusive is a challenge shared by all country parks, including those featured in the comparison study with Langold Country Park. Currently, the circular walk around the lake is the most easily accessible route within the park where most of

the pathway is over 2 metres wide, surfaces are high traction with some loose stones and there is one gently inclined area. It is no surprise that the lakes are the park's 'honey pot' attraction used by the perhaps greatest diversity of visitors.



Top: Accessible fishing peg  
Bottom: The inclined area on the north west end of the lake

The diversity of park visitors who will benefit from improving access is as follows:

- All park users regardless of ability status
- People with limited mobility through numerous health conditions and hidden disabilities
- Wheelchair users
- People with temporary mobility issues e.g. through injury
- Visitors with visual impairments
- Visitors supported by carers
- Organised group visits from Day Services, Special Schools etc.

The access ramp from the main entrance car park to the lakes



The biggest access challenge for country parks is in providing and maintaining paths and tracks that are in keeping with the setting and can be managed sustainably with the resources available. The most durable and long life 'bound surfaces' are extremely costly to install on a large scale and are visually far more appropriate for town parks. The semi bound, fine material surfaces widely used in country parks have a relatively short lifespan and high maintenance liabilities arising from problems of water scouring and frost heave. Without immediate reactive maintenance, these paths and tracks can become less accessible than where a free draining coarse aggregate is used. When these issues are combined with changing climate leading to wetter winters and more extreme weather events, it becomes easier to see the extent of the challenges faced.

Improvements based on whatever is 'reasonably practicable' within resources available need to be done. The starting point to accurately identify improvements required will be an Access Audit. In research for the master plan, the approach taken by The Sensory Trust who have extensive experience of supporting access improvements in county parks and who have worked in partnership with Natural England seem to offer a proven, realistic and good quality of service. Their audits are offered at two levels beginning with an Outline Review to create a general baseline of what is being done well and where improvements are needed through a brief report. The next level is Detailed Review which is a more in depth process with a fuller report.

### ACTIONS NEEDED:

- Commission an Outline or Detailed Review - Access Audit within the park to identify strengths and investment priorities for access

## 6.5 Access to information both prior to and when visiting the park:

Park users requiring access to information includes all of those already mentioned who would benefit from physical access improvements. Information needed includes:

- Availability of public transport to access the park and locations of bus stops etc.
- Availability of accessible toilets or Changing Places
- Disabled parking and access beyond car parking areas
- Access to other site facilities, opening times etc.
- Gradients, path widths, surfacing and cross falls/cambers
- The effects of weather on path surfaces
- Access ramp gradients and lengths
- Resting points and distances between benches, perches and frequency, especially in relation to gradients
- Obstacles likely to be encountered such as chicanes, gates and stiles
- Interpretation materials to bring a visit to life

Visitors can check in advance that the park is suitable to meet 'personal access needs'. All information must be objectively accurate so people can know in advance what they will find on site. This is so expectations are not raised only to be disappointed if they are not being fully met.

The best example of how providing this information can be done was seen at Vicar Water Country Park (included in the comparison study). Their walk leaflets and online content gives a comprehensive account of access throughout the site. This includes path and trail surfacing, gradients, rest points, obstacles etc. and would easily allow for planning a visit and choosing which areas of the park will most meet personal access needs.

Other important information includes interpretation to enable access to understanding the value of the site in terms of history, heritage and ecology. A combination of physical interpretation panels on site linking to online content can be used including accessible language with strong visual elements to support understanding. The Heritage Plan has also included the possible development of an audio visual tour to support a heritage trail. This could have significant value for visually impaired visitors and others who may not wish/be able to engage in text based materials.

### ACTIONS NEEDED:

- Develop gradient and surface mapping information for paths around the site so visitors needing access information in advance know what to expect on site in planning their visits.
- Develop a full access description for the park's most reasonably accessible circular walk around the lakes including possible adjustments and assistance for organised group visits.

### 6.6 On site connectivity for a joined up park:

There are presently some good elements within the park that promote or achieve internal connectivity. This includes the Dog's Trust way marked dog walking trails, walks leaflets, existing interpretation showing a range of circular walks and wildlife leaflets (also available online) promoting the whole use of the park for nature watching.

There is however, a real sense from site visits that the north east side of the park from the A60 Doncaster Road entrance is disconnected from the south west side with the 'honey pot' lake location and play areas. This has been raised in **6.3b** where the lack of signage or footpath linking the A60 car park to Costhorpe Plantation is highlighted. The same situation applies to the A60 Doncaster Road pedestrian entrance where the footpath ends at the short mown amenity grass area rather than completing a connection either to Costhorpe Plantation or the skate park.

There are numerous elements in this area which have become unsightly through lack of appropriate use and vandalism. This includes a number of raised bed features that could possibly benefit from a change of use either as part of a mitigation strategy related to potential park developments or within a heritage trail to recognise this location's former use as railway tracks and sidings for the former Firbeck Main Colliery.

The A60 pedestrian entrance



Developing some features within a heritage trail on this side of the park and creating connecting footpaths fits very well within the Heritage Plan, where heritage has the potential to become the glue that holds together a joined up park. The fact that heritage includes all the key ingredients (including nature) found within the park, extending to every corner makes its achievement possible. Heritage can play its part in being a catalyst to drive 'whole park' exploration because the features of interest will not be just around the 'honey pot' location of the lakes.

The potential to also create designated picnic areas in the park (mentioned in the 7.4 of the following Ecology Plan) also creates a further opportunity to spread visitors more evenly into other areas of the park.

### ACTIONS NEEDED:

- Extend footpaths from the A60 pedestrian entrance right through the short mown amenity grass area to join up with both paths through Costhorpe Plantation
- Install direction signage to indicate that this is a main pedestrian route into the park
- Ensure north east to south west connectivity features are designed in within a heritage trail to link both sides of the park.
- Redevelop unsightly areas of redundant raised beds as features within heritage trail

## 6.7 Strategic connectivity as a Gateway Site:

Strategic connectivity in relation to Langold Country Park is about how it sits within its own immediate location and has connections within the surrounding countryside. This is important because the park is a Gateway Site. This means that visitors may use the park as a starting point, end point, or as a staging post within exploring the surrounding countryside. As a Destination Park, Langold Country Park has an important role in attracting visitors and contributing to the visitor economy of the district. The park can have an important role with a potential to reach way beyond its boundaries.

No country park can develop to its full potential where it exists as a self contained 'island'. This is simply because many visitors will outgrow the site once they feel they know it well and look for a more connected and extensive experience elsewhere.

Different park visitors want and need different things. For many a regular dog walk, a stroll around the lake or using the play equipment with children meets their needs. For others, the expectation would be that Langold Country Park is the start, middle or end point of a much wider countryside experience. The aspiration for developing a visitor centre on the park could become a major attraction to people 'making a day of it' within the countryside.

What every individual wants and needs from the park is equally valid. The important point to remember is that the limits of what some park users want should not define the wants, needs and choices of everyone. This is especially the case for those who want a joined up experience exploring the countryside of the whole area more widely.

When visiting the three former coalfield parks to research and produce the comparison document with Langold Country Park, a stand out feature with all of them was their connectivity which ranged from very good to absolutely astounding! Two of these parks had had the good fortune to have developed close to other former colliery sites with extensive disused railway tracks for transporting coal which became linked with connecting trails between parks.

What they all had in common was that each local authority worked with neighbouring Borough or District Councils and the relevant County Council to develop cross boundary countryside access plans which benefited each site. These plans were then developed and in some cases the linked up trails between parks added up to many miles of walking or cycling with further connections planned.

The work to fully identify a range of walking routes or possible trails within and beyond Bassetlaw's boundaries using Langold Country Park as a gateway is going to be a major piece of work. The need to develop connectivity from Langold Country Park as a priority for strategic planning within Bassetlaw's green infrastructure is clearly identified.

Some research and scoping was carried out for the master plan in terms of how neighbouring councils include the park within their walks leaflets and how other regional parks connecting to and within the Magnesian Limestone Character Area have exploited their connectivity, this can be made available on request. Some initial ideas considered within research included:

- Identifying a 'Stepping Stones Trail' starting at Langold Country Park and connecting with Bassetlaw District Council managed LWS's on former quarry/other sites reaching to Worksop, Rhodesia and possibly further to Creswell
- Making more of the park's connections by footpath within the immediate countryside

including the reclaimed Firbeck Main Colliery former pit tip for use as an elevated 360 degree viewing point over the whole area

- Partnering with walking groups using the park to identify and publicise extensive walking opportunities with Langold Country Park included as a start, staging or end point

Carrying out further scoping to establish the extent of how the park fits as a connection within the countryside for walkers and looking at national walking initiatives such as Slow Ways to learn from good practice elsewhere in generating connectivity is likely to be the most useful next step. This process will take time but could be further developed within the timeframe of the master plan.

### ACTION NEEDED:

- Formally propose that Langold County park is fully included as a priority within green infrastructure planning to develop its connectivity within the Bassetlaw District countryside and its role in developing the visitor economy.

### 6.8 Summary:

In common with other areas of the master plan, there are a number of chicken and egg situations with inter-related potential developments which mean careful planning is needed to ensure improvements happen in the right locations and order to ensure they are future proof.

Some of the actions proposed around developing information and Access Audits are achievable regardless of other actions. Investing resources to achieve these actions is just as

important as anything else where there is an immediate physical result on the ground.

The single strategic action on the connectivity of Langold Country Park as a Gateway Site involves engaging in a long term process of 'thinking beyond the gaps'. There are many highly achievable actions on the park itself that can make it feel more connected within its boundaries as a joined up park.

# 7: Ecology Plan

## 7.1 Introduction:

Ecology should always be a priority in managing Langold Country Park. The simple facts of having 'Country' in the park's name and the vast majority its area being designated as a Local Nature Reserve are common sense enough reasons to begin with. Further importance is added with survey results showing that visiting the lakes and woodland are reasons for visiting the park almost as much as for the play opportunities. The park contains many species rich habitats and attractive semi natural areas. These provide good quality contact with nature experiences for park users. Many of these areas are attractive and hold a good sense of 'naturalness'. Visitors can experience seeing wildflowers blooming throughout spring and summer both in woodland rides and meadow areas.

All these areas are purposefully managed for their flowering plants, insects and a chain of wildlife depending on them. There is a high proportion of closed canopy early mature woodland with a good diversity of tree species and a fully established shrub layer. Opportunities for nature watching include the abundant bird life found throughout the park and 7 species of bats.

The designed landscape elements of the park such as the Upper and Lower Lakes are the main 'honey pot' area attracting a high volume of visitors to walk around them. The lakes represent the most reasonably accessible semi natural area of the park. Despite the lakes being humanly created, their diverse marginal vegetation and trees provide a natural feel. The lakes support a good diversity of water fowl that allow almost guaranteed chances for visitors to see and enjoy familiar bird species and some possible rarities.

The overall ecological value of the park on a District level is considerable, not only for the specific value of important habitats but because they are accessible for the enjoyment of Bassetlaw residents. The park offers an authentic experience of semi natural habitats that most people will not find in many other greenspaces accessible at this level.

The 'Langold Country Park - Management Plan for Nature Reserve' can be referenced for all detailed descriptions of ecological values and management prescriptions. The purpose of the Ecology Plan is to join up the ecological value of the site alongside other development aims where ecology naturally overlaps.

### 7.2 The ecology vision:

The following ecology vision statement brings together the needs of wildlife and people.

**“To ensure the park becomes a flagship site for nature and people. To create a volunteer programme with conservation at its heart ensuring that increasing biodiversity and benefits to people go hand in hand. Adding to this, the park’s contribution to the District’s biodiversity and Climate Change targets will be fully recorded”.**



Langold Country Park site map showing habitats areas within the LNR (map is not to scale but areas are in proportion)

### 7.3 Baseline information:

It is necessary to provide some baseline information from the management plan and observations on site in order to underline the huge ecological importance of Langold Country Park as a biodiversity hotspot in Bassetlaw District.

The majority of Langold Country Park is designated as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) covering an area of 49 hectares. The whole site sits within Natural England's 'Southern Magnesian Limestone' Natural Area 23 Landscape Character designation. This designation holds District, County, National and International importance as an extremely rare surface level geological landform.

There are 3 Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) – Priority Habitats under Habitat Action Plans (HAP's) and 1 Priority Species grouping under Species Action Plans (SAP's). These are as follows:

- Eutrophic and Mesotrophic Standing Waters\*
- Mixed Ash Dominated Woodland
- Calcareous Grassland\*
- Bats

\*See definitions

\*Eutrophic means nutrient rich, Mesotrophic means a middle nutrient level between rich and low (Oligotrophic). \*Calcareous refers to a richness of the mineral calcium found in soils overlying the Magnesian Limestone geology of the area. These are typically lower nutrient soils favouring a greater diversity of plant species.

Brief designated habitat descriptions are as follows:

**Dyscarr Wood** covers 14.39 hectares and is the LNR's single statutory Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The SSSI citation describes the site as; "one of the best examples of a calcareous ash-wych elm woodland in Nottinghamshire". This is species rich semi natural woodland with a ground flora indicative of ancient woodland and a wide range of associated habitats supporting a very good diversity of floral and faunal species.

There are 6 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS's). Dyscarr Wood also holds this LWS designation alongside SSSI. The other LWS's are as follows:

**Langold Dry Lake and Costhorpe Plantation** covers a combined area of 12 hectares and includes damp, mixed broadleaved woodland with a typical ground flora of familiar woodland species. There are a number of broad access routes which act as rides through the woodland, these provide abundant and attractive displays of woodland wildflowers.

**Langold Lake** comprises 6.5 hectares of standing water with relict marginal vegetation.

**Langold Lake Extension** is the upper (or second) lake which is in a much more advanced state of succession to dry land through accumulating sediment and vegetation.

**Langold Dry Lake Extension** is a species rich meadow close to the Church Street main park entrance managed as a summer meadow under the Blue Butterfly Scheme.

**Langold Grassland II** is part of the Cadet Field also managed under the Blue Butterfly Scheme with notable species such as Bee Orchid.

\*It is important to note that both the Cadet Field and in the adjacent Bandstand Field, there are the faint remains of a ridge and furrow field system. This is another example of natural and human created features that are important within the heritage of the park.

**Non designated habitats/other land uses** form the remaining areas of Langold Country Park and this includes short mown amenity grassland, play areas, roads and car parking. The habitat areas around these features should not be dismissed as being ecologically irrelevant because they do not hold a recognised designation. Even areas of short mown amenity grassland provide feeding opportunities for birds and many 'bread and butter' common wildflowers will grow in marginal areas providing contact with nature through familiar, easy to find species. These areas contribute to the Sustainable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) that are important for high impact recreation that would ruin the value of more sensitive designated habitats.

The Skate Park and short mown amenity grass areas close to the A60 entrance



#### 7.4 Balancing the needs of wildlife and people:

At the heart of the Ecology Plan is recognition that the needs of people and wildlife must be worked on together in the country park. A useful tool is called 'Sustainable Alternative Natural Greenspace' (SANG). This helps in managing the needs of people and wildlife by identifying priorities based on how different areas of the park are used. It is entirely appropriate that visitors can go to the park for ball games; walking, running, cycling and picnicking without feeling they are harming the ecological/wildlife value of the park.

Some areas of the park can be defined under SANG where their use for higher impact activities is accepted. It is perfectly reasonable that for many people the reasons for visiting the country park will not be for consciously enjoying quality contact with nature. By accepting that some limited areas on the non statutory designated habitats under persistent heavy use may need to be managed to accept higher impacts helps in using resources sustainably. Areas designed for recreational uses such as ball games and picnics on short mown grass can be promoted and further relaxing of mowing to extend meadows should not encroach on these areas.

#### ACTION NEEDED:

- Allocate areas of the park that can be designated under SANG where higher impact activities can take place or be accepted, leaving more sensitive areas enjoying reduced disturbance. Provide education with a long term aim of raising understanding of why these areas need gentler use and respect to protect them from human impacts.
- Create designated picnic areas and provide tables (including wheelchair friendly) in areas such as the Bandstand Field. Encourage fuller use of the park away from honey pot locations such as the lakes.

## 7.5 Developing the volunteer work programme for ecological and human values:

The volunteer work programme described in the Community Engagement and Education Plan is largely built on conservation work to improve the ecological value of the park. The emphasis on conservation work ensures that volunteer tasks are 'adding value' and are different from the bulk of work delivered by paid staff. Beyond work such as meadow mowing, access management and tree safety work, many important long term ecological improvement tasks will be largely reliant on volunteer work.

The very labour intensive nature of many areas of ecological work and in some cases the sensitivity needed makes the work almost impossible to achieve purely with paid staff where resources are already stretched to achieve core delivery.

Appropriate tasks identified from the management plan include the following:

- Enhancement planting in meadow areas
- Uprooting Sycamore seedlings and scrub clearing on pond margins
- Managing vegetation in glades and rides, creating habitat piles
- Removing arisings from meadow cutting where needed
- Enhancing marginal vegetation around lakes and ponds

The volunteer work programme will be linked to a funding bid where the health and well being, employability and social inclusion for participants are the main outcomes being funded. Funders will expect to see that the work programme

delivers results for the ecological value of the park while being an enriching, credible and professionally managed experience where the benefits to participants can be clearly measured alongside the ecological value achieved on site.

There is also scope to include student volunteers from higher education establishments studying for level 4 and 5 (or higher) qualifications in ecology/conservation and who need venues on which to complete their Independent Study research projects or their practical volunteering modules. Identifying suitable habitat areas in need of their specialised input could provide valuable ecological information to inform management. \*See examples:

### EXAMPLE 1:

Invite academic volunteering for an Independent Study project on the Upper Lake to inform the management/prevention of succession to dry land through accumulating sediment and vegetation. Survey aquatic invertebrates, marginal and aquatic vegetation and develop management suggestions to enhance the ecological value of the upper lake and prevent succession.

### EXAMPLE 2:

Invite academic volunteering for botanical survey work in meadows and woodlands to develop baseline data and for measuring the success or otherwise of managing habitats.

### ACTIONS NEEDED:

- Identify locations and conservation work tasks for the volunteer work programme in each LWS linked to management plan to create work programme.
- Liaise with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust to see if coordinated volunteer input in Dycarr Wood SSSI can be included to compliment their work delivered under SLA.
- Identify Independent Study project themes and specialist volunteer opportunities to help develop an 'offer' or prospectus to regional colleges and universities to attract student input.

## 7.6 Linking ecology with Nature heritage ambitions:

The joining up between ecology and 'Nature' and 'Designed Landscapes' Heritage Fund categories highlighted in the Heritage Plan is directly linked to a proposed heritage funding bid. This is a great opportunity to overcome the artificial distinction between the needs of wildlife and people.

The Heritage Plan highlights 'Nature' heritage legacy ambitions such as;

'managing trees to become the future legacy of mature or even veteran trees to replace those lost in mass felling when the Firbeck Main Colliery was

developed'. The plan also highlights integrating ecological management with protecting and enhancing the 'Designed Landscape' heritage. Placing nature on the same footing as historic landscape, social and built heritage removes the dividing line between the worlds of human interest and nature.

This is completely in tune with the increasing awareness that what is good for nature is good for people.

### ACTION NEEDED:

- Refine the planning of ecological outcomes within a potential heritage funding bid ensuring that actions stated link to the LNR management plan. Liaise with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust to ensure their input and support is achieved for the bid process.

## 7.7 Measuring outcomes:

As is the case for many areas of developing the park described elsewhere in the master plan, there is a pressing need to be able to measure outcomes. In ecological terms this usually means surveying for species diversity to create baselines and ongoing monitoring for changes. Essentially, without baselines and ongoing monitoring there is no way of identifying problems in management or for knowing 'what success looks like'.

Botanical and faunal surveys are expensive to commission and given the extent of habitats within the park the cost could be considerable in terms of achieving the full data sets required. There needs to be a full exploration linked to

'creating a baseline of groups using the park' as suggested in the Community Engagement and Education Plan. This would be to identify and strengthen relationships with groups who survey wildlife on the park and surrounding areas. Some of these groups such as the SK58 Birders are already known.

The possibility of linking with academic volunteers has already been mentioned in this plan and the scope to train other volunteers could also be more fully explored. The latter suggestion could be more achievable where a suitably qualified and experienced Park Ranger/Development Worker could bring these skills within a future potential role.

The use of ecological baseline and monitoring data is also essential where Langold Country Park's contribution to Bassetlaw District's Biodiversity and Climate Change Strategies are evaluated. There is an increasingly pressing need to produce accurate and current data sets to measure the effectiveness of how these strategies are being implemented. This could be achieved by using:

'Representative sample areas for measuring species diversity and quality of habitat'.

These areas could be used as 'indicators' by for instance; relating low habitat disturbance to carbon storage in trees, deadwood, developed shrub layer, leaf litter and soils in woodland.

It is very unlikely that work to create baseline and ongoing monitoring data sets will be achieved without commissioning professional ecologists; this will need to be given priority for investment. Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust who already operates in the park also runs an ecological consultancy service and may be able to put together a package of specialist services.

### ACTIONS NEEDED:

- Develop formal links with wildlife groups using the park and academic volunteering for species monitoring.
- Commission botanical/other survey work to create quality baseline and monitoring data for use in managing the site and contributing to data required at District level for Biodiversity outcomes
- Develop systems for measuring carbon storage in woodlands and meadows ensuring all ecological management provides data for District Climate Change strategies.
- Include Climate Change objectives in all ecological management practices e.g. increase areas managed as meadows, increased tree planting

### 7.8 Summary:

It is clear from reading the LNR management plan and through direct observations around habitat areas of the park that combining the needs of people and improving the ecological value of the site will always present challenges. This plan has avoided being drawn into the management plan details of enduring problems such as fly tipping, vandalism, intentional habitat disturbance and similar issues related to inappropriate use of the site. The plan focuses on promoting direct park community involvement in conservation work. This involvement will ultimately prove to be the most effective way to reverse persistent problems

which are mainly linked with wider social issues and cannot be tackled through enforcement.

It is easy to mistake the suggested actions within this plan section as being fairly low key because they do not achieve immediately visible infrastructure improvements. When looked at more deeply they represent large commitments of time capacity and in some cases, substantial other resources. These are collectively important actions that will improve the park both visually and for wildlife and provide evidence of its real contribution to the District's Biodiversity and Climate Change agendas.

# 8: Mitigation Plan

## 8.1 Introduction:

Environmental mitigation is simply defined as:

**“Actions or activities intended to remedy, reduce or offset known negative impacts to the environment”.**

Where any kind of development on a country park is proposed there are numerous potential environmental impacts that must have planned mitigation. This is to make up for any biodiversity losses and ensure that at least ‘net zero’ impacts of carbon emissions are worked towards and achieved. These mitigation measures are vital to ensure that Langold Country Park plays a full and active part in achieving increasingly ambitious and important Climate Change actions within Bassetlaw District.

Examples of potential impacts in need of mitigation could link to the following:

- Upgrading of main vehicular access points to the park and car park improvements
- Installing and upgrading pedestrian footpaths and wider site access improvements in the park.
- The future aspiration of a visitor centre and potential changes to main access routes

## 8.2 Mitigation vision:

The vision for mitigation measures on the park is as follows:

**“To prevent environmental impacts through careful management of the park and having a planned safety net of creative mitigation options where impacts cannot be prevented. To ensure the park plays an important role within increasingly ambitious Climate Change targets identified for Bassetlaw District”.**

## 8.3 General principles:

Most direct mitigation measures for country parks are to do with any kind of biodiversity loss. As greater awareness of the global Climate Emergency and local measures to reduce the impact of Climate Change increases, it is also important to think beyond biodiversity loss only and include wider impacts.

The management of any country park creates carbon emissions through the use of vehicles, machinery and consumable materials essential for its safe running and maintenance. When the impacts created by visitors travelling to the site and generating waste are added, the impacts can add up significantly.

Because country parks contain a lot of semi natural areas, their environmental impact is reduced because actively growing trees and lightly managed grassland absorb (sequester) some of the carbon emissions. When this factor is added to the more environmentally sensitive way they are managed, country parks have lower impacts than any equivalent sized built up area devoted to housing or industry.

This plan only highlights general principles of mitigation. More detailed assessments and technical specifications for mitigation measures arising from buildings in use and travel to site are a specialised field of work. This would require the require the input of sustainability/ environmental consultants.

#### 8.4 Main potential environmental impacts:

Applying different development actions of the master plan will create a range of impacts. The main potential environmental impacts envisaged are:

- Possible increased carbon emissions through greater visitor numbers travelling to the park by car
- Carbon emissions associated with all forms of construction on site i.e. materials used, transportation, construction waste arising etc.
- The carbon footprint over the lifetime of buildings, i.e. water use and waste, heating and lighting, catering, maintenance and waste disposal
- Net losses to biodiversity in any area subject to development, i.e. within the building footprint, areas set aside for car parking and any areas impacted during construction including materials storage beyond any building footprint.
- Net losses to biodiversity from changes to pedestrian footpaths and increased foot traffic, disturbance etc.

#### EXAMPLE 1:

##### **Building design/efficiency to mitigate impacts:**

It is now increasingly common to engage the services of architects who can design 'carbon neutral or negative' buildings which are totally appropriate to a country park setting where there is an ever increasing expectation that Climate Change obligations will be ambitiously addressed. With careful design in terms of materials choice and procurement, use of renewable energy, thermal efficiency, passive solar etc. it is possible to create a visitor centre that may even become carbon negative during its use. The quality of design and its implementation can create a relatively short time frame for the building realising its full design potential. This can be calculated in terms of the years required to mitigate the carbon footprint associated with its construction, even without other measures in place.

#### EXAMPLE 2

##### **Potential positive impacts from efficient vehicle access:**

Not all impacts are negative. Some localised reduction of vehicle emissions is likely where new or upgraded access is smooth and efficient and removes the need for driving to the park's current main entrance along the narrow residential road (Church Street) and resulting congestion/parking conflicts at peak times of park usage.

There will also be positive impacts on local residents in terms of reduced air pollution, improved road safety and quality of life outcomes.

## 8.5 Inventory for biodiversity mitigation:

The main emphasis within this plan is identifying general areas of the park where mitigation of biodiversity losses can be achieved and turned into net gains over time. The following headings are intended to act as an 'inventory' of habitat types and locations that can be included within mitigation strategies. These areas may also become linked with other areas of work to enhance the overall biodiversity value of the park.

### 8.5a Hedgerows:

There are a number of well established old hedgerows around the park. This includes some derelict remnants of hedgerows running parallel to the A60. Where any loss of hedgerows takes place (including derelict), the following mitigation measures could be used:

- Reinststate a phased implementation of traditional hedgerow management through hedge laying to improve the long term health and longevity of existing hedges
- Planting up gaps in derelict hedgerows and encouraging growth of well spaced standard trees within hedges where appropriate
- Relaxing mowing to within 2 metres of each hedgerow to create an 'ecotone' or natural grading into short mown grassland

This mitigation element also links with community engagement/education strategies and potential hedge laying courses or community action days.



Example mature hedgerow on lakeside boundary of Cadet Field

### 8.5b Meadows - relaxing mowing and enhancement:

There are numerous areas of the park where further work to increase the scale and quality of annually mown meadows can take place. The prime mitigation example is the existing overspill car park. If at a future time the main vehicular access route into the park changes, this location could easily be reinstated as a mitigation measure to a mixed use area of short mown grassland and meadow. Mitigation measures associated with meadows are summarised as follows:

- Introduce further annually mown edges to woodland areas to create transitional habitats (ecotones) grading into short mown grassland
- Enhance existing meadows with further planting, seeding etc. following survey work
- Convert existing overspill car park to a mixed use short mown and meadow area with ecotone to woodland edge if new access/ parking area is created in the future

Community engagement links include action days for enhancement planting and invasive species pulling i.e. Ragwort etc.



Existing reinforced grass  
overspill car park

### 8.5c Low nutrient habitat creation:

There are a small number of open, low nutrient habitats within the park. These can support a high diversity of flowering plants adapted to challenging growing conditions. These areas often have shallow soil and high volumes of imported aggregates, degrading concrete etc. and could have been used as hard standings or similar. They often provide ideal conditions for orchids and rare plants which cannot compete with vigorously growing, nutrient demanding species.

The potential loss of these habitats such as the area currently used for storing chipped brush at the end of the service road from the A60 entrance does require identifying other locations where this habitat type could be recreated.

These habitats can be recreated through stripping topsoil and adding low nutrient materials such as finely crushed brick or concrete. This type of mitigation could also be applied to other problem areas in the A60 entrance side of the park and can link with wider mitigation beyond the park boundaries such as that being considered for the redevelopment of the former Firbeck Main Colliery site.



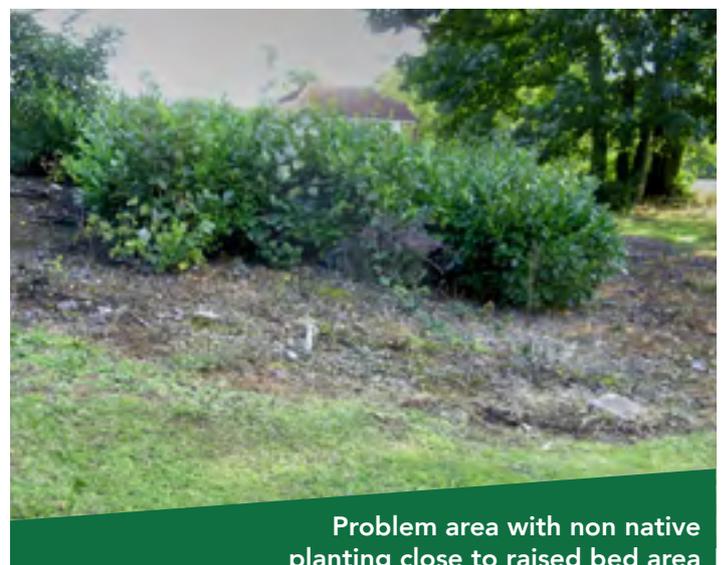
Raised bed and steps in poor condition near skate park

### 8.5d Woodland:

Where any impact on existing tree cover takes place there needs to be replacement tree planting at a higher density to make up for the losses. Where woodland planting is connected to more ambitious Climate Change strategies, the use of 'mini forests' otherwise known as 'Myawaki Forests' could be considered. Their first advantage is that they provide an easy to measure result.

Myawaki Forests establish 10 times faster than conventional woodland planting because they are planted at 30 times the density. Biodiversity values during their establishment phase are also considered to be far greater than that of any other conventional woodland planting scheme.

They can become a brilliant community engagement resource through planting by an 'under engaged' target group in the park such as young people. A lasting legacy could be a named young people's forest. Generally they will have a discreet 'marker fence', not to keep people out but more to clearly define the areas during establishment. At tennis court size, they are very useful in finding a positive use for difficult to manage areas with challenging soils and to replace or screen something unsightly. Two location examples close to the skate park (A60 entrance area of park) are shown in the photographs. Both of these areas need improving visually and because of the location close to the skate park could link to a strategy to engage young people positively with the park.



Problem area with non native planting close to raised bed area

### 8.5e Adding value including beyond site boundaries - partnerships:

Mitigation can also include 'adding value' to the site by supporting initiatives beyond the site's boundaries to assist in wider mitigation for biodiversity. This is important because the park is very connected to the wider countryside and the interaction of wildlife goes beyond its boundaries.

The potential to support wider landscape mitigation such as redeveloping the former Firbeck Colliery site includes:

- Using selected redundant buildings as bat roosts following specialist advice on suitability and adaptations
- Creating new or enhancing existing low nutrient habitats to support rare plants

The example of possibly converting the brick built boat house into a bat roost could be a useful way to repurpose an unsightly building that despite its lack of visual appeal, links with the recreational heritage of the park.



Old boathouse building with potential for repurposing as summer bat roost

### 8.5f Improving carbon storage:

Improving carbon storage, particularly within woodland and meadows throughout the park can greatly improve the park's capacity to mitigate its own impacts. This will involve evaluating management practices already in place and making necessary adjustments based on specialist advice.

This could become a quick win especially where management practices only need small adjustments to make a big difference. Whatever is learned through this process could even be replicated on other sites. In common with other areas of the plan there will need to find the best ways to measure and record measuring how well carbon storage is being achieved.

### 8.6 Summary:

The mitigation plan is presented as a starting point from which to develop a future proof system for including biodiversity mitigation and more ambitious ways to join up actions to address Climate Change. The park can clearly make a worthwhile and measurable contribution in Bassetlaw District.

Many mitigation measures also fit perfectly within Green Flag Award criteria for managing the park to reduce environmental impacts. It is also clear that External funders also expect to see ambitious and achievable strategies to minimise environmental impacts fully included in project planning.

No specific actions have been proposed in the Mitigation Plan, these will be included in relevant sections of the master plan where there are obvious links. The Mitigation Plan should be read in conjunction with the Policy Context section where Climate Change is addressed. The Mitigation plan can be updated as Bassetlaw policies and targets are more clearly defined.

# 9: Policy Context

## 9.1 Introduction:

The Policy Context section links or 'maps' the many actions and visioning ideas of the master plan to both Bassetlaw District and wider policy areas. The main focus is on District rather than national policy. This is because national policies have already translated to District level leaving a duty to practically apply them locally.

The District approach to policy in no way reduces the local importance of Langold Country Park for residents in the area; if anything, it strengthens the case for more investment because the benefits will also be felt on a whole District level.

The big four key policy areas for linking to the plan are as follows:

- Health and well being
- Heritage and economic regeneration
- Biodiversity and natural heritage
- Climate Change

There are multiple other aspects of policy relevant to the park but in the interests of managing the size of this section of the plan, those felt to be the most immediately relevant have been prioritised..

## 9.2 The policy context vision:

The vision of how Langold Country Park can best achieve policy outcomes is as follows:

**“To deliver against park based development aims and objectives while joining them up to policy areas that benefit both the local and wider communities in Bassetlaw. To realise the park’s full potential to achieve outcomes within the big four policy areas as a recognised partner venue in Bassetlaw District”.**

Further to the above policy context vision, it could also become a stated ambition that in any future Local Plan, Langold Country Park becomes the first Bassetlaw District Council managed 'destination' to be formally cited as making a major contribution to the District's visitor economy.

## 9.3 Policy documents accessed:

The main documents accessed are as follows:

- Nottinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board – Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018 – 2022
- Health and care in South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw – Sustainability and Transformation Plan
- Better in Bassetlaw: The Bassetlaw Place Plan 2019 – 2021 (draft)
- Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan 2020
- Nottinghamshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee – Public Parks – seventh report of session 2016-17
- 'Nature Nearby' – Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance (Natural England)

Many other Bassetlaw and Nottinghamshire policy documents have been accessed but for the purposes of keeping this section to a manageable size, these are not being directly referenced to and quoted from in the text.

#### 9.4 Health and well being:

The park's main contribution within health and well being policy is in areas that are non-clinical and more community based health and well being approaches. All of the specific health and well being documents and the Local Plan's Policy ST39 "Promoting healthy, active lifestyles" directly reference that access to and the use of greenspace is a natural fit for promoting better health. Langold Country Park with its extensive natural greenspace for walking, exercise, enjoying nature and the 'active play' offer can make a difference to the health and well being of many park users.

The park's full contribution to health and well being outcomes will be better realised where some 'joining up' or formalising of its role takes place. This may happen in stages beginning with creating a database of identified groups directly using the park for well being outcomes (i.e. Walking for Health type groups). This should also include and other groups using the park where gaining a therapeutic outcome can happen, but is not the main reason for visiting. Further stages include information sharing, developing partnerships, networks, promotion and supporting/enabling to increase on site participation.

Another important stage mentioned in the plan would be in further developing an external funding bid to use the park as a venue for a practical volunteering project. This project would have social inclusion, employability and health and well being outcomes worked towards within the practical activities. The project could be linked to social prescribing and targeted referrals where the main beneficiaries are harder to reach groups and individuals.

They would typically need substantial support to overcome barriers to participation and have found it difficult or failed to engage in other interventions.

Quality of life and health and well being outcomes are closely related and the benefits from using the park are not easy to measure accurately. The types of monitoring widely used within externally funded projects are proven to be very useful. These are person centred, attentive and creative and could capture the park's true contribution to health and well being.

The Parliamentary Paper – 'Public Parks' recommends that there should be greater formalisation of the relationship between Health and Well Being Boards and Parks and Open Spaces Teams. This is largely because parks as a 'discretionary service' are at a disadvantage for funding priority despite them playing a major role in achieving health and well being outcomes for park user communities.

## 9.5 Heritage and economic regeneration:

Creating a heritage trail that develops the incredibly rich heritage assets within the park could become a major factor in ensuring the park 'grows into' its destination park status. A heritage trail could also play a vital connecting role within the park by joining up areas away from the honey pot location of the lakes. This could create a more 'joined up' park where heritage becomes the glue holding it together.

The Local Plan states the following strategic objective;

**"To protect and enhance the District's diverse historic built and natural environments recognising the important contribution heritage assets, their settings and archaeology make to securing a high quality environment and to the visitor economy".**

The park can clearly make a positive contribution to achieving the Local Plan's policy areas ST11 Rural Economic Growth and ST12 Visitor Economy. Policy ST12 states;

**"Bassetlaw will be promoted and developed as a destination for visitors".**

As previously quoted in the Heritage Plan, Ros Kerslake CEO of the National Lottery Heritage

Fund states; **"heritage is vital in securing economic prosperity"**.

The heritage plan identifies how both the human created, historic park landscapes, 'hidden heritage' and social history can be made accessible to visitors through interpretation, public art and the restoration of built heritage assets. The plan also proposes that Nature Heritage is promoted equally as a 'legacy' for future generations. It also states that external funding will be needed to achieve the development of a heritage trail and a potential funder would be The National Lottery, Heritage Fund.

The park in terms of heritage is currently a blank canvas; this is a positive factor because it means everything can be developed in a high quality, unified way involving the park user community fully. The policy context fully justifies investment of resources in developing the heritage potential of the park as something to be consciously enjoyed and made accessible to everyone. Fully developing the park's heritage value means it could also take its rightful place as an important venue for driving the visitor economy of Bassetlaw District.



The historic Boat House (right) and more recent but sensitively designed upper lake dam

## 9.6 Biodiversity and natural heritage:

Of all the big four policy areas, biodiversity and natural heritage is possibly the theme which most overlaps with other policy areas of the master plan. The term 'natural heritage' is intentionally used instead of 'natural environment' (as used in the Local Plan) because natural heritage has been included within the Heritage Plan as an important category within a potential future external funding bid.

The relevant strategic objective within the Local Plan is as follows:

**"To protect, restore and enhance the quality, diversity, distinctiveness, biodiversity and geodiversity of the District's natural environment, by creating links within and to the green/blue infrastructure network to create a series of high quality, multi functional well connected spaces, sites and landscapes that improve people's quality of life and where biodiversity can thrive, respond and adapt to change".**

The statutory body Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard policy (ANGSt) is extensively used to inform planning, the design, availability and the overall standards of greenspace from the small urban park to extensive country parks. They state;

**"Conformity to ANGSt at the higher cross boundary level will see benefits to biodiversity and the mitigation of Climate Change effects. Other benefits will see reductions in costs of social and health services, as a result of improvements to health and well being".**

They further add;

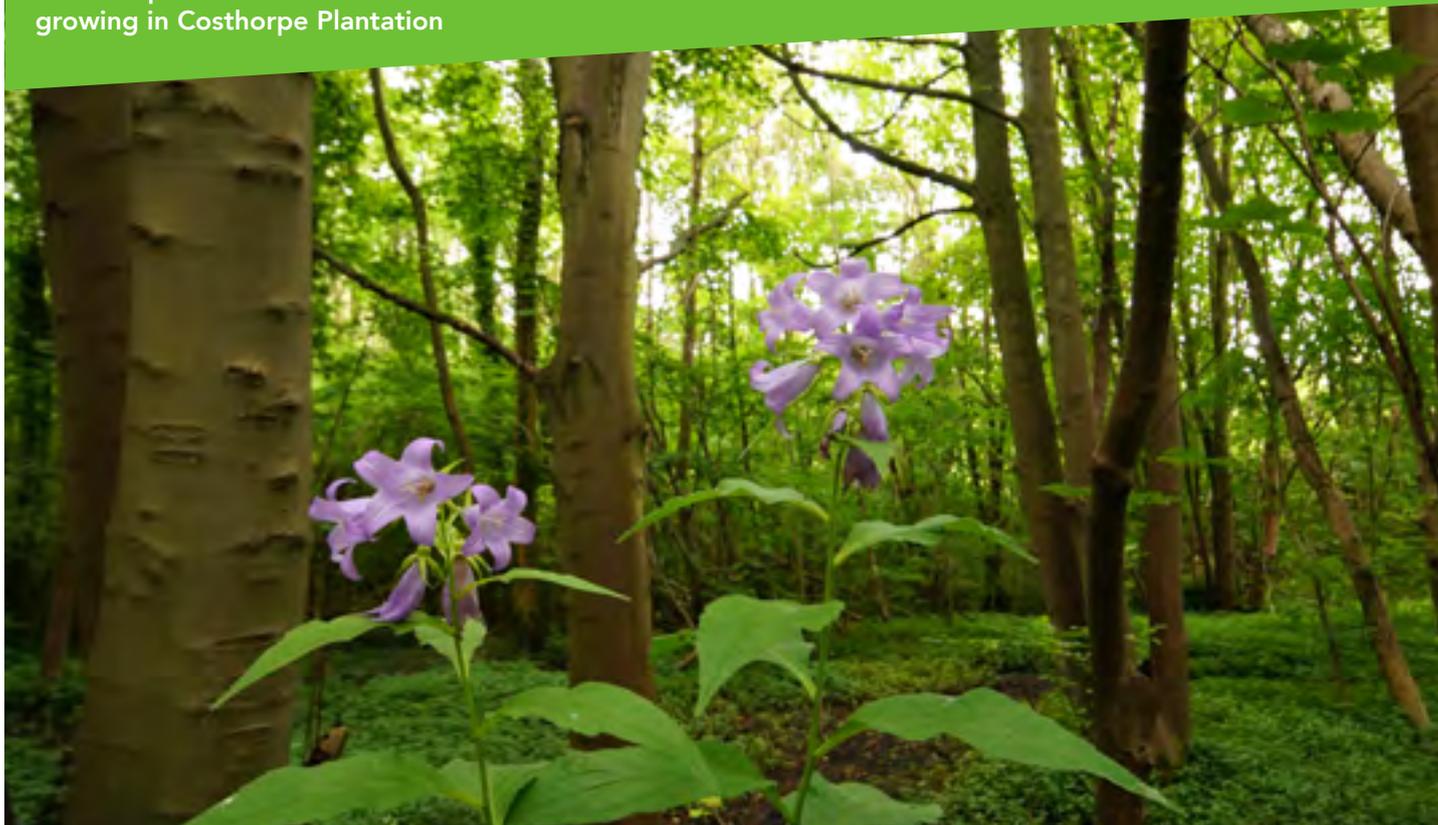
**"Green infrastructure enables us to re-position greenspace from an amenity to a necessity".**

An important part of their standard is increasing the extent of 'naturalness as a necessity' as a defining feature of country parks. Increasing naturalness is in clear evidence at Langold Country Park where the intensity of management has been relaxed to allow natural processes to become re-established within increasing areas of the park. A major driver for further improvements at Langold Country Park is likely to be attaining Green Flag Award and Accredited Country Park status.

Natural England initially developed the Green Flag Awards and Accredited Country Park status to create a consistent, rigorous, nationally recognised standards process for parks. There is a clear need for Langold Country Park to attain the Green Flag Award standard and therefore join Bassetlaw's other two destination parks with equal Green Flag Award recognition. The additional Accredited Country Park status should also be applied for. Both of these awards drive standards and justify the investment needed to achieve them as ongoing continuous improvement processes.

Connectivity (as referred to in the Local Plan) extends beyond important biodiversity considerations. On a more human level, Langold Country Park should be promoted as being a Gateway Site. This would help draw visitors into the Bassetlaw countryside beyond the park boundaries. The Access and Connectivity Plan holds more detail on developing the potential for greater connectivity and working towards achieving this policy outcome.

The rare plant Nettle Leaved Bellflower growing in Costhorpe Plantation



In terms of the Nottinghamshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP), Langold Country Park holds 4 Priority Habitat types of county and national importance and numerous Priority Species, some of which are rare and threatened. The site holds 1 Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and 6 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). The majority of the park's area is composed of the 49 hectares designated as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). All of these areas are managed to protect and enhance their biodiversity value along with their vital role in providing 'contact with nature' for park visitors. The key vision within achieving biodiversity outcomes linked to policy is in developing the park as a 'flagship site' for biodiversity and people in Bassetlaw District. This combination of biodiversity with people is vitally important because they are often seen as being mutually exclusive. This misunderstanding goes against ecological fact because much of the biodiversity value on the park results from human management of habitats.

The proposed volunteer work programme suggested in the Community Engagement and Education and Ecology Plans would see people actively involved in sensitive and often labour intensive habitat management work.

This creates opportunities for people to make a positive contribution locally to biodiversity while benefiting their own health and well being. There is also the added benefit that the park provides a place where the public can actively work to reverse habitat and species loss rather than feel like helpless observers of much publicised declines both nationally and wider.

### 9.7 Climate Change:

In step with numerous neighbouring and other Nottinghamshire District Councils, Bassetlaw District Council has now appointed a Climate Change Officer. While Bassetlaw does not currently have a Climate Change Plan document to reference, it is assumed that this will be addressed in the near future and certainly within the early timeframe of this master plan.

It would be useful to update parts of the master plan when they can be matched more fully to outcomes within a Bassetlaw District Climate Change Plan. This would be especially important for directly measurable aspects of carbon storage and where the park's potential role in District wide mitigation strategies is developed further.

The strategic objective on Climate Change in the Local Plan is as follows;

**“To support Bassetlaw’s transition to a low carbon District through the careful planning and design of new development. Promoting tree and woodland planting, minimising waste generation and promoting the use of low carbon, renewable energy and other sustainable technologies, with sustainable construction methods”.**

The ‘design’ and ‘renewable energy’ aspects have particular relevance to any potential new buildings to publicly showcase commitment to a low carbon future by ‘walking your talk’ in terms of creating carbon neutral or even negative building designs.

It is also important that there should not be a purely ‘low carbon’ focus and other priorities are considered such as the investment needed to make the park more ‘resilient’ against the impact of Climate Change. This will include changing management practices in how habitats are managed to protect vulnerable species and also how a wetter climate impacts access in terms of higher maintenance implications for pathways and surfacing in high use areas.

There are also further considerations of ‘measuring’ and being credited for environmentally friendly management and purchasing choices. These should also be recorded as ‘outcomes’ within the wider Climate Change strategy for the district. This may include how recycled materials are used extensively in preference to newly produced materials from high carbon extractive industries. Other procurement choices include maintenance products with low volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions being chosen over conventional, more polluting products where climate impacts are higher than purely carbon emissions. This approach can also add credibility to the evidence provided against the Green Flag Award ‘Sustainability’ criterion where environmentally friendly management practices are recognised.

There is a clear need to ‘join up’ or formalise the role Langold Country Park can play in mitigating Climate Change. The park already plays a significant role as a low impact, sustainable land use, this needs to develop into being ‘recognised’ as a partner venue where its true contribution could lead to further investment in mitigation.

### 9.8 Summary:

The way in which Langold Country Park and other Bassetlaw District managed parks are achieving outcomes against the big four policy areas is very real. The master plan Policy Context section draws attention to the need to measure this more effectively. There needs to be move away from ‘anecdotal’ to more robust evidence in each area. To paraphrase Natural England’s words;

“Local authorities are increasingly being asked to demonstrate evidence of the social benefits of investments; it is entirely possible to create a framework for assessing the social value of investing in natural spaces”.

Having capacity to do everything needed alongside delivering the primary service on the park is another challenge, but the need to do this has been identified clearly.

# 10: Green Flag Award and Accredited Country Park Status

Out of Bassetlaw District's 3 destination parks, only King's Park, Retford and The Canch, Worksop are accredited as Green Flag Award parks. Langold Country Park does not currently hold this status. In various parts of the master plan, improvements suggested have been related to standards judged within Green Flag Awards and it appears that the time is right for the park to join the other destination parks by working towards and achieving this status.

The park is also suitable to apply for Natural England's 'Accredited Country Park' status. Both of these accreditations are designed to drive a process of continuous improvement against judged criteria. There are 27 criteria for judging within Green Flag Award, these are divided into 8 sections. The site's management plan can be structured around these sections which are as follows:

**A welcoming Place - Healthy, Safe and Secure  
- Well Maintained and Clean**

**Environmental Management - Biodiversity,  
Landscape and Heritage**

**Community Involvement - Marketing and  
Communication - Management**

The reasoning behind placing this section at the end of the master plan is simply that many if not all the improvements suggested in the master plan directly or in some way relate to achieving standards in both accreditations. The processes involved in implementing improvements such as consultation also have relevance by involving the park community in decision making. The order in which accreditations are applied for is not prescribed, but it is recommended that Green Flag Award status is achieved first.

A management plan will need to be developed for Langold Country Park in order to be judged within the Green Flag Award and Accredited Country Park processes. Some elements of the master plan will be useful when producing a management plan.

## **ACTION NEEDED:**

- Develop a management plan for the park which fits within the Green Flag Award sections. Follow good practice developed in Bassetlaw's other destination parks to help Langold Country Park achieve accreditation in the shortest possible timescale.

# 11: Master Plan Summary and Action Planning

The master plan for Langold Country Park is an entirely bespoke document and a significant body of work because the park holds such a broad range of development opportunities. This includes some directly linked to external funding bids where a wide range of social benefits are hugely important and will need to be measured.

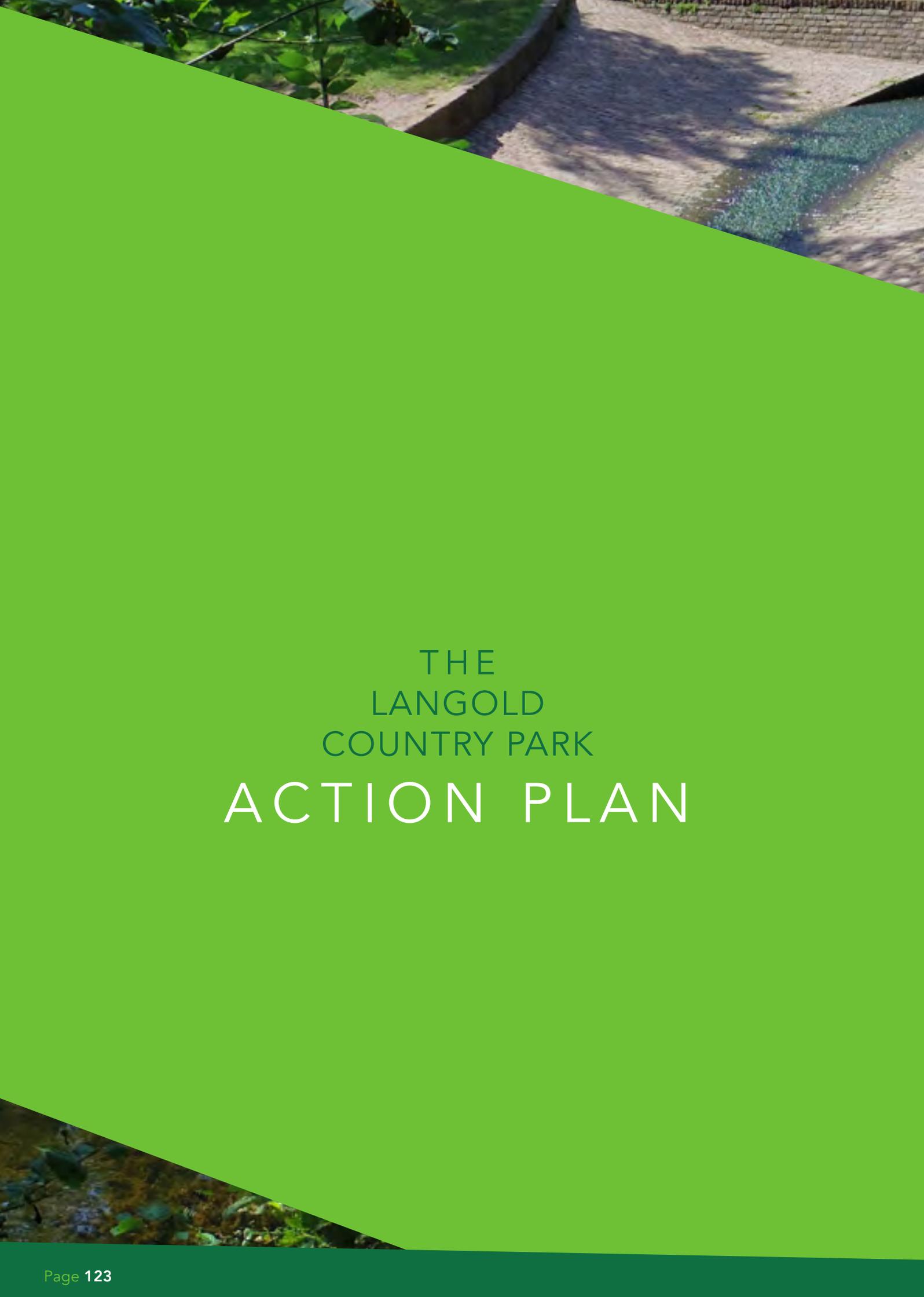
The history of the park over the past 100 years has been about an ever increasing number of people being able to enjoy it. This contrasts with the original founding vision over 200 years ago of becoming a beautifully landscaped showpiece for the pleasure of a privileged few. The park can now be enjoyed by people throughout the whole of Bassetlaw District and beyond. The benefit to them collectively as the park user community is the driver for its continuing development.

This plan has presented all the different development ingredients individually but they are all still connected within the whole master plan. One reason for doing this is because the importance of some ingredients are easily lost within the bigger picture of the overall plan. This is especially the case with community engagement where there is an assumption

that a quick mention in jargon presents it as an easy quick win. This whole area of work is concentrated on people, investing in broadening the way people use the park. This can mean improving their health and well being, volunteering and developing a stronger sense of ownership or any other reason people find fulfilling. These things may be worth far more in the long term than measuring success purely by what gets built in the park.

This also applies to increasingly vital considerations such as Climate Change and Biodiversity where the ecological improvements in the park can bring additional hard currency to the Districts commitments under both Biodiversity and Climate Change policy.

In some parts of the plan such as heritage, the individual plan has been written so it can also be extracted as a 'stand alone' document. This could prove to be extremely useful when applying for external funding bids. The full development of the park's heritage potential is possibly the single most important part of the master plan feeding into the long term future of the park.



THE  
LANGOLD  
COUNTRY PARK  
ACTION PLAN



Heritage

Community Engagement and Education

Income Generation and External Funding

Access and Connectivity

Ecology

Green Flag and Accredited Country Park Status

## HERITAGE PLAN ACTIONS

The heritage plan actions are to develop a heritage trail extending into all areas of the park. The park's untold heritage story being revealed through a beautiful heritage trail is of such huge importance to the park the whole project should start without delay. Bid preparation is a long process involving consultation, submitting expression of interest, identifying suppliers, costing etc. and major bid writing. The action plan assumes that bid writing is successful.

### YEARS 1 - 3 SHORT TERM

#### **Consultation preparation:**

Develop suggestions for heritage trail with possible locations of features for consultation and to invite further ideas. Design consultation materials and include young peoples' voices for ideas and intergenerational participation in project

#### **Consultation delivery:**

Deliver consultation on support for bid and content of heritage trail. Collate and interpret data with report for use in funding bid

#### **Prepare costings:**

Identify suppliers for features and prepare initial costings for all works

#### **Prepare costings 2:**

Identify specialist suppliers/designers for interpretation and digital content. Assess mobile signal coverage on site for all main network providers

#### **Expression of interest to funder/s:**

Produce Expression/s of Interest to funder/s in order to progress with bid

#### **Condition surveys:**

Commission a condition survey of Boathouse and weir area and recommendation for restoring the Borehole Well

#### **Writing funding bid:**

Develop funding bid, secure letters of support etc. and projected delivery timescales

**YEARS 4 - 6 MEDIUM TERM**

Continuing involvement of park user community in developing content and implementing of heritage trail

Recruit volunteers to design public art with artists/fabricators

Developing digital content for heritage trail linked to interpretation

Carry out restoration of Borehole Well

Delivery of heritage trail project to meet funder outcomes. Ongoing reporting to funder

**YEARS 7 - 10 LONG TERM**

Consultation on the results of heritage trail and how the park is improved and enjoyed because of it

Deliver restoration work and heritage improvements in Boathouse area

Monitoring and full evaluation of project for final reporting to funder

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION PLAN ACTIONS

The Community Engagement and Education Plan actions mainly involve greatly increasing park user community involvement in the park and achieving a huge range of social benefits including health and well being. These are especially important now with the added impacts from Covid 19. They also include developing a volunteer work programme supported by a 5 year Big Lottery Community Fund bid that creates a Destination Parks Ranger/Development Worker role to support and deliver the project. The action plan assumes the funding bid is successful.

### YEARS 1 - 3 SHORT TERM

#### **Destination Parks Ranger job description:**

Develop a job description for the Destination Park Ranger/Development Worker role for volunteering project to include within a funding bid

#### **Deliver consultation for bid:**

Deliver consultation (prioritising online methods during Covid 19 emergency) to establish support for external funding bids.

#### **Community Fund bid writing:**

Prepare 5 year project funding bid for submission to the Community Fund with Langold Country Park as the key venue for conservation skills training

#### **Identifying quality volunteering opportunities:**

Identify good quality and meaningful volunteer opportunities throughout the park which can suit a diverse range of capabilities and needs. Develop and deliver a volunteering programme where tasks identified form a 'prospectus' both for community and specialist educational volunteers/other involvement.

#### **Creating community volunteer events:**

Create volunteer events for wider community involvement.

#### **Developing partnerships for referrals:**

Develop partnerships with referring agencies such as Bassetlaw CVS and health and well being projects in order to have Langold Country Park recognised as a quality venue for volunteer referrals.

#### **Develop resources for self led tree and wildflower trails:**

Develop initial resources for tree and wildflower trails around the park. Make these available as online resources to use guided with mobile phones or printed on paper. Where possible enlist volunteer support to develop through the park user community or volunteers from higher education

#### **Volunteer led wildlife walks:**

Use the database of groups using the park to identify wildlife interest groups who could support guided walks

#### **Develop Art in the Park:**

Develop Art in the Park as an annual event and create opportunities for involvement in designing public art related to a heritage trail

**YEARS 4 - 6 MEDIUM TERM**

Continue developing the role through funded work delivered on the park

Ongoing delivery of volunteering project, annual monitoring and evaluation with reporting to funder.

Deliver volunteering project to benefit participants and create a huge positive impact on ecology of the park. Monitor and evaluate benefits to participants and to the park itself.

Develop activities suitable for community and family participation such as enhancement planting in meadows

Take referrals into volunteering project working on conservation tasks throughout the park. Develop health and well being activities linked to conservation, heritage and walking

Extend the range of materials available to suit different ages and abilities

Develop an ongoing wildlife walks programme

Include seasonal activities using the natural environment of the park for Land Art activities, produce online displays etc. Include community art involvement in heritage trail public art designs

**YEARS 7 - 10 LONG TERM**

Develop the role into a permanent Destination Parks Ranger/Development Worker using income generated from enterprises and parking charges

Consultation on the benefits of involvement to individuals and improvements to the park itself. Final reporting and sustaining project work beyond funding

Continue developing

Continue developing

Complete monitoring and evaluation for reporting to funder and work with referring agencies to capture feedback on success

Continue developing

Continue developing

Continue developing

## INCOME GENERATION AND EXTERNAL FUNDING PLAN ACTIONS

The Income Generation and External Funding Plan highlights existing income generation sources such as catering concessions and fishing. Proposals are added for a limited range of low risk additional sources. Any surpluses generated are for reinvestment in the park. Some income sources are dependent on future development of a host venue for viability. More detail on the bids to external funding sources have been more fully included in the preceding Community Engagement and Education Plan. This plan raises the opportunity to strengthen the bids by running a small pilot project.

### YEARS 1 - 3 SHORT TERM

#### **Research for parking charges:**

Complete further survey work with park users to establish the duration and frequency of visits and where they are driving from. Combine information with existing consultation data to create a fair charging structure based on patterns of park use

#### **Install parking signage and ticket machines:**

Install contactless ticket machines and all signage needed

#### **Determining viability of a visitor centre:**

Explore the viability of a visitor centre at the midway point in the master plan timeframe where other key actions are being implemented i.e. heritage trail and funded volunteer work programme. Ensure any potential development includes addressing access issues to the park

#### **Identify the viability of different events and potential events companies:**

Include events as a feature of income generation opportunities for the park. Deliver pilot events.

#### **Record volunteer hours for match funding in bids:**

Record all volunteer work to use as match funding in kind for funding bids

#### **Developing Corporate Social Responsibility activities:**

Make formal approaches to local and Bassetlaw District businesses to offer volunteer action days within the park as options within their potential Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities. Treat CSR as sponsorship in kind. Identify suitable tasks for action days

#### **Delivering a pilot project to strengthen funding bids:**

Explore other funding sources needed to deliver pilot activities for the volunteering project so they can be evaluated and results included to strengthen funding bids Identify activities for a small pilot project

## YEARS 4 - 6 MEDIUM TERM

Periodic survey work to monitor changes in patterns of travel and park use

Monitor use of car parks, respond to issues arising, making necessary adjustments where possible. Reinvest surpluses in upgrading the overflow car park for all year round use

Monitor changes on the park such as increased visitor numbers, community involvement, changing needs and broad demand for a visitor centre in order to progress. Establish the feasibility of key enterprises associated with a visitor centre with initial emphasis on high return enterprises such as catering and room hire

**Developing leisure learning opportunities:**  
Develop leisure learning opportunities to include income generation opportunities

**Developing Forest Schools on the park:**  
Develop the park's potential as a venue to host Forest Schools including training for staff delivery

Monitor the value brought through events both financially and enhancing the life of the park to inform future development of events

Include within the role of the Destination Parks Ranger/Development Worker for delivery alongside the volunteer project. Include volunteers as a development opportunity

## YEARS 7 - 10 LONG TERM

Continue monitoring

Use surpluses generated to invest in the park, to pay towards the Park Ranger role or access improvements

Continue developing

Include within the role of the Destination Parks Ranger/Development Worker in a post funding permanent role

Continue developing

## ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY PLAN ACTIONS

The Access and Connectivity Plan highlights the broad range of improvements needed to make the park more accessible to everyone. This also includes how connected the park is within its own boundaries and to the countryside around it.

### YEARS 1 - 3 SHORT TERM

#### **Research to inform improvements to vehicle access:**

As needed to research parking charges; carry out full survey of park users to establish patterns of use, where driving from and reasons for using Church Street entrance

#### **Upgrading Church Street overflow parking and promoting use of Doncaster Road entrance:**

Upgrade overflow parking capacity in the Church Street entrance area to provide greater capacity all year round. Promote greater use of the Doncaster Road vehicle entrance for able bodied park users with planned substantial improvements to this area

#### **Installing Doncaster Road entrance signage:**

Install entrance signage on the A60 clearly showing this is a main vehicle route into the park.

#### **Increasing car park capacity at Doncaster Road entrance:**

Increase car parking capacity by 100% with a high specification, all weather reinforced grass surface and improve existing areas of rough aggregate surfacing.

#### **Updating website information:**

Update website information to promote greater use of the upgraded A60 entrance advising disabled visitors to continue using the Church Street entrance

#### **Improved footpaths and signage from A60 car park:**

Create wide footpath access from the A60 Doncaster Road vehicle entrance to both main footpaths through Costhorpe Plantation. Install signage directing visitors to use existing footpath routes to access the lakes and play areas.

**YEARS 4 - 6 MEDIUM TERM**

Periodic survey work to monitor changes in patterns of travel and park use. Link future major changes to access to viability study for potential visitor centre

Monitor use of both car parks, respond to issues arising, making necessary adjustments where possible.

**Install distinctive Langold Country Park sign in entrance area:**

Create a large and distinctive Langold Country Park sign to install in the immediate vehicle entrance area

**Create overflow car park at end of service road:**

Clear all brush and tree waste from the former car park area at the end of the service road and use this area as an overflow car park at busy times

Update as necessary

Monitor usage

**YEARS 7 - 10 LONG TERM**

Update as necessary

Monitor and maintain

## ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY PLAN ACTIONS (ctd)

### YEARS 1 - 3 SHORT TERM

#### **Develop footpaths from new housing development:**

Create new footpaths from the housing development with signage to direct new residents into the park

#### **Plan features within bid for heritage trail promoting connectivity:**

Plan actions within bid to achieve corner to corner heritage features within trail

#### **Promote the park as a Gateway Site:**

Formally propose that Langold County park is fully included as a priority within green infrastructure planning to develop its connectivity within the Bassetlaw District countryside and its role in developing the visitor economy.

## YEARS 4 - 6 MEDIUM TERM

### Develop and upgrade footpath to Cadet Field:

Create a footpath to the Cadet Field through the south east corner of Costhorpe Plantation to prevent multiple small paths developing

### Commission an Access Audit:

Commission an Outline or Detailed Review - Access Audit within the park to identify strengths and investment priorities for access. Implement in stages

### Develop gradient and surface information for park:

Develop gradient and surface mapping information for paths around the site so visitors needing access information in advance know what to expect on site in planning their visits. Develop a full access description for the park's most reasonably accessible circular walk around the lakes including possible adjustments and assistance for organised group visits.

### Extend footpaths from A60 pedestrian entrance to Costhorpe Plantation:

Extend footpaths from the A60 pedestrian entrance right through the short mown amenity grass area to join up with both paths through Costhorpe Plantation  
Install direction signage to indicate that this is a main pedestrian route into the park

### Use heritage trail features for connectivity when delivering bid:

Ensure north east to south west connectivity features are designed in within a heritage trail to link both sides of the park. Redevelop unsightly areas of redundant raised beds as features within heritage trail

Continue promotion

## YEARS 7 - 10 LONG TERM

### Install better signage from old pit tip:

Improve signage from Honey Hills/former Pit Tip to direct visitors to the park

Continue implementing access improvements

Continue updating and developing with access improvements

Promote the use of this entrance to pedestrians and monitor use

Include connectivity outcomes within bid reporting

Continue promotion

## ECOLOGY PLAN ACTIONS

The Ecology Plan highlights a broad range of actions that link directly with both the Community Engagement and Education and Heritage Plans. All three plans are linked to 2 funding bids. This plan explores ways of improving the ecological or wildlife value of the park and includes how it might contribute and be recognised for its contribution to biodiversity and Climate Change on a District level.

### YEARS 1 - 3 SHORT TERM

#### **Clearly allocate areas for high impact activities:**

Allocate areas of the park that can be designated as Sustainable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) where higher impact activities can take place or be accepted, leaving more sensitive habitat areas enjoying reduced disturbance. Provide education with a long term aim of raising understanding of why these areas need gentler use and respect to protect them from human impacts.

#### **Create designated picnic areas as part of SANG:**

Install picnic tables (including wheelchair friendly) in areas such as the Bandstand Field. Encourage fuller use of the park away from honey pot locations such as the lakes and play areas.

#### **Develop volunteer conservation work programme around management plan:**

Identify locations and conservation work tasks for the volunteer work programme in each LWS linked to management plan to create work programme.

#### **Identify ecological academic volunteer opportunities:**

Identify Independent Study project themes and specialist volunteer opportunities to help develop an 'offer' or prospectus to regional colleges and universities to attract student input.

#### **Ensure that Nature Heritage is properly included in heritage trail bid:**

Refine the planning of ecological outcomes within a potential heritage funding bid ensuring that actions stated link to the LNR management plan. Liaise with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust to ensure their input and support is achieved for the bid process.

#### **Improve link with wildlife groups and develop academic volunteering for monitoring:**

Develop better links with wildlife groups using the park and academic volunteering for species monitoring.

## YEARS 4 - 6 MEDIUM TERM

Promote the use of these areas for high impact activities (ball games etc.) and monitor for any reductions in impacts on sensitive areas

Monitor use and extend provision to other areas of the park as needed in response to demand

**Liaise with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust over work in Dycarr Wood:** Liaise with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust to see if coordinated volunteer input in Dycarr Wood SSSI can be included to compliment their work delivered under SLA.

Develop fully within funded project

Ensure Nature Heritage takes an equal share of heritage themed locations within heritage trail

Continue to develop and include in recording

**Commission ecologists for monitoring work:** Commission botanical/other survey work for species monitoring and measuring success

**Fully develop systems to record how the park contributes to Climate Change strategies:** Develop systems for measuring carbon storage in woodlands and meadows ensuring all ecological management provides data for District Climate Change strategies. Include Climate Change objectives in all ecological management practices e.g. increase areas managed as meadows, increased tree planting

## YEARS 7 - 10 LONG TERM

Continue monitoring and evaluate

Continue work after funding ends

Continue developing and promoting after funding ends

Include any innovation or learning about how Nature Heritage was better included when submitting final bid reporting

Continue to develop and include in recording

Monitor and maintain recording with developed volunteer input

Continue developing and refining

## GREEN FLAG AWARD AND ACCREDITED COUNTRY PARK STATUS

Langold Country Park needs to achieve the same Green Flag Award status as Bassetlaw's two other destination parks. This can be followed up by applying for Accredited Country Park status, possibly within the master plan timeframe.

### YEARS 1 - 3 SHORT TERM

Carry out master plan actions, funded project work and link improvements to working towards Green Flag Award status

**YEARS 4 - 6 MEDIUM TERM****Produce management plan to support Green Flag Award application:**

Develop a management plan for the park which fits within the Green Flag Award sections. Follow good practice developed in Bassetlaw's other destination parks to help Langold Country Park achieve accreditation in the shortest possible timescale.

**YEARS 7 - 10 LONG TERM**

Apply for and achieve Green Flag Award status. Follow by applying for Accredited Country Park Status



**Bassetlaw**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL  
— North Nottinghamshire —

January 2021