



**Barlow Common**

**Management Plan**

**2013-2023**

## **1: VISION STATEMENT & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The majority of Barlow Common Nature Reserve is a reclaimed ballast tip, formerly owned by British Rail, rising around 15m above the surrounding land. The low lying parts of the reserve along its northern and western boundaries are remnants of the original common and form a mosaic of wetland and woodland.

Habitat management in this plan focuses on three key habitats: Woodlands will be managed to improve their diversity, both in structure and composition. Grassland will be managed to aim to improve its botanical diversity, with a long term aim to introduce conservation grazing across the area. Wetlands will be managed for their biodiversity, with invasive species being controlled within the ponds, and a management regime being put in place on the reedbeds.

Visitor engagement also forms a key part of this plan, with lots of opportunities to improve the information visitors receive on site, and the ways in which they are involved with the reserve and with YWT.

## **2: POLICY STATEMENTS**

The reserve will be managed according to the Trust policies. Current relevant Trust policies can be found within the document 'Policies of the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust'. The following wildlife policies are the most relevant to this reserve:

- Visitor and facilities strategy
- Control of Species
- Collection of Specimens on Reserves
- Feeding of Wild Animals on Nature Reserves
- Introduction of Alien Flora
- Plant and Animal Rarities
- Species Introductions to Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Reserves
- Volunteer Policy

- Health and Safety Policy
- Acquisition of Nature Reserves and Management Agreement Sites

Control of species, health and safety and volunteer policies can be accessed in file 5 'Policies and Procedures' in the Y-drive on the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust computer system.

### **3: DESCRIPTION**

#### **3.1: General information**

##### **3.1.1: Location & site boundaries**

<b>County</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>District</b>	Selby
<b>Parish</b>	Barlow
<b>Local planning authority</b>	Selby District Council
<b>Watsonian vice county</b>	VC64 Mid-west Yorkshire
<b>Grid reference</b>	SE 630 288 (reserve centre)

Barlow Common is located in North Yorkshire, in Selby district, Watsonian vice county VC64. It is approximately 2.5 miles south east of Selby itself, close to the village of Barlow. The reserve area is 32.4ha. See map at Appendix 1 for location and site extent.

##### **3.1.2: Tenure**

This is not a legal document, but does form part of the lease agreement with EA. Please refer to the original tenure documents (copies held on the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust electronic files) before taking any decision or any action which may have legal implications.

**Owners:** Selby District Council

**Type of Holding:** Leasehold

**Leaseholder:** Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

**Area:** 32.4ha

**Lease date:** 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013

**Payment:** One peppercorn per annum (if demanded).

**Access:** Rights of access along railway line and to use car park within area edged in blue on plan

Appendix 2 shows map of leasehold area in red, and area over which there are access rights in blue. Part of the area sub-let to Scouts - see lease and map at Appendix 3

### **3.1.3: Management/organisational infrastructure**

Day to day management of the site is currently the responsibility of the Vale of York wetlands officer, overseen by the Vale of York regional manager. The regional field officer will also have some responsibility for assisting in leading work days, and carrying out tree safety surveys and any resulting works.

### **3.1.4: Site infrastructure**

The reserve has two car parks – one for visitors with disabilities located at the north west corner of the mere, accessed from Barlow Common road. Provision for approx 6 vehicles. A second car park for general use is located at the south-eastern corner of the reserve, with access off Barlow Road. This has provision for approx 50 vehicles. This second car park is not within the leasehold area, but YWT have full rights for them-selves and their visitors to use.

A surfaced track runs between the two car parks for vehicle access. This access is gated at both ends and only accessible by key holders (currently YWT, Selby District Scouts Association and the fishery manager of the mere).

Buildings on site comprise of the visitor/information centre. Located close to the mere and disabled car park. This is made up of an exhibition/activity/classroom, male and female/disabled toilets, a small office, a utility room/kitchen and a tool store. There is also a small store in the main car park.

Within the area sub-let to the Scout Association there are several portable buildings, units and containers managed, maintained and insured by the Scout Association.

There is approx 1.2 miles of surfaced paths, several seats, picnic benches, steps and a stretch of boardwalk for use by visitors.

Infrastructure around the mere consists of 18 fishing pegs, one suitable for three anglers with disabilities.

A perimeter fence exists around the site and several small enclosures have also been fenced within the body of the reserve.

### **3.1.5: Map coverage**

1:50 000 OS Landranger 105 York & Selby

Digital maps and an aerial photo of the area are held on the YWT computer server drives.

### **3.1.7: Zones or compartments**

The reserve can be split broadly into three habitat types – woodland and scrub, grassland and open areas and wetland.

The reserve is not easily split into compartments as these habitats are scattered across the site at various locations. It does perhaps make sense to zone off the mere and consider this as a separate management parcel – as it will be managed by a licensee. The Scout Association area can also be considered as a separate compartment. This is managed by the Scouts, but should fit with YWT's wider aims for the reserve and nature conservation therein. There are some small fenced off enclosures across the reserve, which were installed by the Selby Ranger Service when they managed the site. These are numbered and mapped as will be referred to later in the plan. See appendix 4

## **3.2: Environmental information**

### **3.2.1: Physical**

#### *3.2.1.3 Geology*

The Vale of York was extensively glaciated during the last Ice Age and Triassic Bunter Sandstone is overlain by approximately 15 metres of drift comprising sands, gravels, silts and clays.

#### *3.2.1.4 Geomorphology*

<http://www.naturalareas.naturalengland.org.uk/Science/natural/profiles/naProfile16.pdf>

The ballast tip forms an artificial plateau rising 15metres above the mostly flat farmland which surrounds it.

### 3.2.1.5 Soils

<http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/>

Soils are derived from the drift rather than the bedrock. The resultant soils in the Barlow Common area are sands, mostly with a high ground water table, underlain by clay at 1-2 metres. This is seen in the soils of the original common on the northern and western boundaries. The tip overlies these soils. The tip was capped with earth to seal in hazardous blue asbestos, and this soil was excavated from a neighbouring field of similar soil type. It was applied and spread at random, so there is variety in the top soil on capped area of the reserve from solid clay to pure sand. Some of the more clay-ey soils were consequently covered with sandy soils at a later date.

## 3.2.2: Biological

### 3.2.2.1: Habitats/communities

#### **Woodland and scrub:**

Occurs in patches and shelter belts across the reserve. Much of this was planted as shelter belts and copses after the reclamation of the tip in the early 1980's. Some semi-natural woodland is also present on the lower margins of the site, on the remnant of the original common. The woodland areas can be split as follows:

**Semi-natural woodland:** Located outside of the capped tip on northern fringe. Mostly silver birch (*Betula pendula*) with English oak (*Quercus robur*) and some goat willow (*Salix caprea*) and rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*). Ground flora reflects the acidic sandy conditions with wavy hair grass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*) and tomentil (*Potentilla erecta*) present.

**Shelter belts:** Originally planted in 1984 to help prevent wind erosion on the reclaimed tip surface. These are bands of woodland predominantly around the edges of the capped area. Predominantly made up of grey alder (*Alnus incana*), white willow (*Salix alba*) and goat willow (*Salix caprea*) with occasional common alder (*Alnus glutinosa*). Hawthorn (*Cretaceous monogyna*) and elderberry

(*Sambucus nigra*) were included in the original planting scheme, though reportedly few of these survived.

**Coppice/block planting:** Carried out between 1988 and 2002 to supplement the shelter belts, and are mostly contiguous with the belts. Species present are silver birch, English oak, common alder, wild cherry (*Prunus avium*), rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), hawthorn and hazel (*Coryllus avellana*).

**Boundary screening:** Black Italian poplar (*Populus X euramericana*) were planted around much of the boundary, put in by British rail to screen the ballast tip. These are some of the largest, most mature trees on the reserve.

**Scrub:** Patches of gorse (*Ulex* sp) and broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) scrub have developed within some of the exclosures that have been erected on the reserve. There are also patches of bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg) and scattered hawthorns, with some planted within two of the exclosures recently.

#### **Grassland:**

Grassland covers much of the reclaimed tip surface. It appears to be dry and acidic in character and probably reflects the sandy soils capping the tip, on which it grows. Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*) appears to be dominant in places. Much of the sward is grazed very hard by rabbits. Some exclosures have been created, keeping rabbits out, where the grassland is able to grow longer. One of these exclosures appears to have been sown with a wildflower seed mix. Others are rough grassland with scattered planted hawthorn. There are some areas within the grassland that were never capped and ballast is still exposed. Rabbit digging has added to this.

#### **Wetland:**

**Semi-natural wetlands:** Outside of the capped tip there are several areas of semi natural wetland. To the western edge of the reserve there are several shallow pools, surrounded by what looks to be a thriving reedbed. The most southern of these is the deepest and is know as 'Reedmace pond', for obvious reasons.



In the north east part of the reserve are two pools under or next to the woodland. The most easterly of these (known as 'the marshes') is dominated by reedmace (*Typha*) in its southern half. Common reed (*Phragmites australis*) and *Typha* also cover much of the western pond (or 'Crowfoot pond') too.

**The Mere:** Open water covering approximately 1.5ha. Originally an arable field, this pool was created as a borrow pit when soil was dug from here to cap the ballast tip. The pond was created with deep areas to benefit fish stocks, and shallow areas for wildlife. The Mere is managed as a fishery.

### 3.2.2.2: Flora

An impressive list of over 200 species of wildflowers has been recorded at Barlow Common, and this is excluding grasses, sedges, rushes, tree and shrub species.

There are many species typical of open and wasteland such as teasel, soapwort, weld and great mullein. Some finer plants of interest such as zigzag clover, hare's-foot clover, salad and great burnet, kidney vetch and burnet saxifrage have all been recorded.

### 3.2.2.3: Fauna

There is a good list of bird species using the reserve. Great spotted (*Dendrocopus major*), green woodpecker (*Picus viridus*) and cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*) regularly breed. Farmland birds including grey partridge (*Perdix perdix*), skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), tree sparrow (*Passer montanus*), yellow hammer (*Emberiza citronella*), corn bunting (*Miliaria calandra*) and linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*) have all bred. Reed bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*), reed warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*), sedge warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*) and willow warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) are associated with the carr and wetland. Teal (*Anas crecca*), shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) and wigeon (*Anas penelope*) use the wetlands, but few ducks breed. A full list of bird records is held on the YWT Y drive in the files for the site.

Great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) have been recorded in the pond known as 'Crowfoot pond', as has water vole (*Arvicola terrestris*). Field signs of otter have recently (Mar 2013) been recorded around the Mere.

The wetlands also provide good habitat for damsel and dragonflies. Twenty species of butterfly have been recorded on the reserve, the most notable of these being purple hairstreak (*Quercusia quercus*).

### **3.2.3: Cultural**

#### *3.2.3.1: Archaeology*

There are no archaeological records on site.

#### *3.2.3.2: Past land use*

Barlow Common nature reserve is mostly a reclaimed former ballast tip, formerly owned by British Rail. Reclamation of the tip took place in the early 1980's. As described earlier in the plan the ballast tip was capped with local soils of clay and sand to help contain the blue asbestos found there. The mere was created when this soil was excavated. The lower lying northern and western fringes of the reserve are outside of the ballast tip, and are remnants of the original common land.

Selby District Council acquired the site in 1986 when it saw its potential as a nature reserve and area for recreational activity. The site was officially opened in 1990. Since then it has been managed as a nature reserve for wildlife and for local residents to enjoy.

#### *3.2.3.3: Present land use*

The site is managed as a YWT nature reserve.

#### *3.2.3.4: Past management for nature conservation*

**Woodland:**

As detailed in section 3.2.2.1 parts of the reserve have been planted up with shelter belts and blocks of woodland.

Selby District Council's Management Plan for the site covering the period 1992 – 2007 list aims for the management of the woodlands including:

- Thinning the birch in the semi-natural birch/oak woodland and encouraging oak regeneration.
- Thinning of shelter belts and planted woodland blocks. Favouring native species over *Alnus incana*. Further thinning plus replanting appears to have taken place within some of these blocks more recently.
- Inspecting and keeping safe the trees, especially the mature boundary poplars.

**Wetland:**

Aims for the wetland in the same plan were as follows:

- Controlling emergent vegetation where it becomes invasive – including *Phragmites* and *Typha*.
- Removing Himalayan balsam where it occurs on the west of the site
- Maintaining *Typha* in the shallow southern half of Crowfoot pond.
- Measuring water depths
- Creating an un-fished zone around the northern and eastern boundaries of the mere and establishing a zone of marginal vegetation. These edges still remain free of fishing pegs, but look to have limited value for wildlife at time of writing.
- Excavate an area of 700 square metres to a depth of 60cm within the reedbed annually. Though this doesn't look like it has taken place recently.

**Grassland:**

Aims from 1992 – 2007 plan:

- Cut sward annually in second half of September to 10cm. Dense cuttings to be raked and removed.
- Existing isolated shrubs will remain

Since this plan it appears several enclosures within the grassland have been set up. One has been planted with a wildflower seed mix and has reportedly been cut in parts each year. Other enclosures have established areas of scrub mostly consisting of broom, gorse and bramble, which look to have been unmanaged. Two enclosures near the visitor centre contain grassland with planted scattered shrub species. The management of these are unclear, but presumably the enclosures were set up to release the pressure from grazing rabbits and improve diversity in habitat type, structure and in species present.

#### *3.2.3.5: Past status of the site*

None

#### *3.2.3.6: Present legal status of the site*

Local Nature Reserve/Site of Interest for Nature Conservation

### **3.3: Current public use & interest**

#### **3.3.1: Public interest/relationship with local communities**

It is estimated that Barlow Common receives approx 15,000 visits a year. Regular users seem to come from the very local villages, but also from Selby itself and the wider Selby area. I expect that little is known of the site much further afield. Though naturalist groups such as East Yorkshire RSPB group have visited the site regularly over the last 10 years or so.

The reserve is used a lot for dog walking and there are dog bins at both car parks that are emptied by Selby District Council.

Angling is a key interest here with the Mere being well used by local fishermen. Selby District Council ran the angling there on a non commercial basis, letting tickets at cheap rates and using their on site staff and volunteer bailiffs to help warden the angling. Following a tender process YWT have licensed the fishing to a local resident and fisherman Peter Taun. He will be running the fishery on a non-commercial

basis, and his initial license is dated for a period of three years from 18<sup>th</sup> May 2013. Details of the license and his management proposal are held on YWT's electronic files.

Selby District Scout Association sub-lease a part of the site – the lease currently needs renewing with YWT (April 2013). Their interest is principally in their leased parcel, but scout groups have helped with some site management in the past and we hope to work in partnership with them in future.

### **3.3.2: Access & tourism**

Access is good around the reserve with surfaced paths providing an easy circular walk round. Other none surfaced tracks exist, and some of a previous way marked nature walk remain. The main car park and disabled car park allow access for all. Though the track leading up onto site from the disabled car park is rather steep for self propelling.

### **3.3.3: Current interpretation provisions**

Interpretation panels installed by Selby District Council can be found by the visitor centre and when leaving the main car park. Some leaflets, again produced by Selby District Council can still be found in the visitor centre. YWT have installed some limited welcome signage and branding at entrances to the reserve and around the visitor centre.

### **3.3.4: Current educational use**

The site was well used by school and community groups in the past, and has the potential to be so again in the future. With the classroom space in the visitor centre, and easy access on to site there are opportunities for this to occur.

### **3.3.5: Current research use & facilities**

None known.

### **3.4: Landscape**

Barlow Common lies within a large area dominated by intensively managed arable farmland, typical of much of the Vale of York. Only about 3.5% of the land in Selby District supports semi-natural vegetation. Barlow rises around 15m above the surrounding flat landscape, being an obvious landmark, though well landscaped by trees.

## **4: FEATURES OF INTEREST**

### **4.1: Identification/confirmation of nature conservation features**

#### **4.1.1: List of recognised conservation features**

(Taken from the SINC citation for Barlow Common)

Woodland & scrub

Neutral to acidic grassland

#### **4.1.2: Provisional list of additional conservation features**

Wetlands

#### **4.1.3: Evaluation of additional features**

Wetlands:

There are several wetlands at Barlow Common including small ponds, larger pools and lakes, a reedbed and the mere. These are found off the capped area of the reserve, mostly on the remnant common. The wetlands support a semi-natural vegetation, breeding bird species, great crested newt, water vole and otter. Without management these wetlands would ultimately go through the process of natural succession and lose condition. For this reason they should be considered within the management plan.

#### **4.1.4: Confirmed list of the conservation features**

Woodland and scrub

Grassland – neutral to acidic in character

Wetlands

### **5: SERVICES, FACILITIES, OBLIGATIONS ETC.**

#### **5.1: Identification/confirmation of other focus points of plan**

##### **5.1.1: Provisional list of other focus points of plan**

Access, interpretation and education.

Legal obligations

##### **5.1.2: Evaluation of other focus points of plan**

#### **Access, interpretation and education:**

Barlow Common is well accessed by locals, and has been used by local school groups and for environmental education in the past. The site has facilities for visitors and groups. These facilities need to be managed and there is much scope and desire to improve the information available to visitors and the experience they have at the reserve, so for this reason needs to be included in the management plan.

#### **Legal obligations:**

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust must comply with all relevant legal obligations; some of the most relevant are listed below:

## 1. Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended 1986; CROW Act 2000)

Under this act generally it is an offence to kill, injure or take any wild bird, take, destroy or damage any nest, or take or destroy an egg of any wild bird. However there are specific schedules that details exceptions to this general rule. Schedule 1 lists birds that are protected by specific penalties and birds that can not be shot during the closed season. Schedule 2 list birds that can be shot during the open season and birds that can be shot by authorised persons at all times. Management operations, including monitoring, must take these into account.

## 2. Occupier's Liability Acts (1957; 1984)

The 1957 Occupiers Liability Act applies to both invitees and licensees (including visitors), laying down a common duty of care:

*"The common duty of care is a duty to take such care as in all the circumstances of the case is reasonable to see that the visitor shall be reasonably safe in using the premises for the purposes for which he is invited or permitted by the Occupier to be there."* (Section 2(2))

The Occupiers Liability Act 1984 applies to non-visitors (i.e., trespassers). A duty is owed to the entrant if:

- a) the Occupier knows of a danger on his land, or has reasonable grounds to believe that it exists;
- b) the Occupier knows, or has reasonable to believe the entrant is in, or may come into, the vicinity of danger;
- c) the risk is one against which, in all circumstances of the case, he may reasonably be expected to offer the entrant some protection.

Where these three conditions apply, the duty owed is *"to take such care as is reasonable in all circumstances of the case to see that the entrant does not suffer injury on the premises by reason of the danger concerned."*



### 3. The Weeds Act (1959)

This act empowers the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to serve upon the occupier of the land a notice in writing, requiring him, within a specified time, to take such action as may be necessary to prevent the spreading of injurious weeds on agricultural land. The Act applies to the following:

Spear Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)

Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)

Curled Dock (*Rumex crispus*)

Broad-leaved Dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*)

Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*)

### 4. The Town and Countryside Planning Act (1990)

This empowers the Local Planning Authority to require '*the proper maintenance of land*' (Section 215).

### 5. Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act, employers have a duty to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, welfare and safety at work for all employees. The Trust has a duty to manage the reserves in a manner to ensure that non-employees are not exposed to any risk to their health and safety.

### 6. Charities Act (1992)

The Trustees have an obligation to prevent a diminution of the value of the charity's assets. For example, this means that agricultural tenancies or public rights of way should not be created by negligence.

#### **5.1.3: Confirmed list of other focus points of plan**

Access, interpretation and education

## Feature 1 – Woodland and scrub

### Objective 1 – Improve diversity in structure and composition of woodlands and scrub

#### Management Prescriptions

- a. **Fully assess structure and composition of woodlands on site:** Record and map areas that have been recently managed (some areas appear to have been cleared and re-planted) and ascertain species planted into these areas. Record areas that would benefit from thinning – even aged or closely spaced woodlands. Record areas that would benefit from increase in species diversity. For example many of the planted belts and blocks consisted of only two or three species.
- b. **Implement programme of thinning and replanting in planted woodlands:** Plan out a rotational programme over the next ten years to thin and re-plant areas of the planted woodlands. Where non-native *Alnus incana* occurs this should be selectively removed rather than any native species.
- c. **Implement programme of thinning and replanting in semi-natural woodland:** Thin out the semi-natural birch woodland located off the mound, on the old common. Clear around any oak saplings to encourage natural generation of oak. If required oak saplings could be planted into cleared areas. This woodland lacks an understory and species such as hawthorn could be planted in to improve its structural diversity.
- d. **Manage mature Poplars:** Fell and take any side branches necessary from the mature boundary poplars to maintain access to the northern ditch or for health and safety reasons. Retain these trees as much as possible as they are the most mature on site. In time pollarding may be thought suitable to extend the life of these trees.

- e. **Areas of scrub to be retained:** Where gorse and broom have become established naturally these areas should be retained. Some have become rather overgrown with bramble and these may benefit from a little bramble control. Bramble should be cut back where it is invading diverse grassland or swamping gorse and broom, but otherwise provides some good cover and habitat on the reserve. Scattered planted hawthorns planted within the grassland enclosures on site should be retained as breeding and feeding habitat for birds.

**In all woodland work:**

- Felling works should be carried out between 1<sup>st</sup> October and 28<sup>th</sup> February.
- Timber should be left on site to help increase the amount of dead wood. Ideally where it falls, but if this looks particularly unsightly it could be stacked.
- Brash should be burnt in non-sensitive areas, or on any existing fire sites. Fire sites should be kept to a minimum.

## **Feature 2 - Grassland**

### **Objective 2 – To maintain and where possible improve the species diversity of the grassland**

#### **Management Prescriptions**

##### **Short term:**

- a. **Manage open areas of grassland:** Cut a third of the grassland each year and rake up arisings. Grass piles should be left in species poor areas. The grassland looks like it is fairly heavily grazed by rabbits, and may not require cutting. YWT will need to assess the impact of rabbit grazing on this grassland over the first year of the management plan. Rabbit control may be required if the rabbits are having a detrimental effect on the biodiversity of the grassland.
- b. **Manage enclosed areas of grassland:** Enter these areas into a rotational cutting regime. They are fenced off from rabbits, so will not be kept short by their grazing. A third of the area of each enclosure should be cut each year and more if resources allow. Cutting should be raked and removed.

### **All grassland management:**

- Cutting should take place after grassland has set seed – late summer/autumn.
- c. **Control weeds:** Control ragwort and balsam by hand pulling. Control Japanese knotweed by pesticide application. There are other ruderal species that are dominant in places on site such as teasel. YWT will need to assess the value of these plants and a control regime may be implemented if it is thought the grassland would benefit from this.
- d. **Control scrub regeneration:** Cut back and treat stumps where tree and scrub saplings are invading grassland areas. Cuttings can be stacked, or if there are a lot, burnt on fire sites.

**Longer term:** YWT have longer term aspirations to manage the grassland on the reserve in a more efficient manner. We will look to secure funding to help us implement grazing across the whole site. This would require the installation of stock fencing, water supply and stock handling facilities. It would allow for a less labour intensive grassland management – it is envisaged grazing would largely replace cutting. The existing enclosures would be taken out and the grassland grazed as one extensive parcel. Grazing on dry acidic type grasslands usually takes place across the summer months at a low grazing pressure. YWT would look to use rare breed and native stock that are suited to the rough grassland found at Barlow Common.

## **Feature 3 – Wetlands**

### **Objective 3 – Maintain a diverse range of wetlands**

- a. **Manage ponds by maintaining a range of open water, emergent and submerged vegetation:** Maintain ponds at a maximum of 40% emergent vegetation to 60% open water.
- b. **Control non-native invasive species:** Remove Himalyan balsam (*Imaptiens glandulifera*) from wetlands by annual pulling.
- c. **Manage reedbed by introducing a rotational cutting regime:** Survey reedbed to establish management requirements. It would likely benefit from a winter cutting regime to encourage reed and remove thatch. The reedbed should be cut on a rotation of between 3-5 years.

Cuttings should be removed from the reedbed, and could be burnt if a suitable fire site can be found nearby. After survey a rotation period will be established and a mapped plan will be produced.

- d. **Manage Mere with wildlife in mind:** Work with the licensee of the fishing rights to manage the Mere with wildlife in mind where possible. Maintain the northern and eastern margins as no fishing zones. Look at other options to improve value to biodiversity within the mere and it's margins.
- e. **Monitor water quantity and water quality across the wetlands.**

## **Feature 4 - Access, interpretation and education**

**Objective 4 – Engage with visitors to inform them about the reserve, inspire them about the natural environment and pass on YWT and SDC key messages**

- a. **Maintain access routes and infrastructure:** Maintain surfaced paths, roads, steps, gates and benches. Carry out any repairs where necessary. Ensure access gate to car park for visitors with disabilities is opened daily during office hours. This forms part of the license for the fishery management so is carried out through that.
- b. **Manage visitor facilities:** Ensure visitor toilets are opened daily during office hours. This is also forms part of the fishery management license. Maintain visitor centre and use as base for events and for YWT staff when on site.
- c. **Install signage to brand site as YWT reserve (with SDC partnership):** Produce and install welcome signs, basic info boards, branding around the visitor centre, using YWT's design guidelines and incorporating SDC logo.
- d. **Improve interpretation on site:** Maintain the current interpretation panels in good condition. Look to gain funding to improve signage and interpretation on site. There is the potential to produce boards, leaflets, guided trails using digital platforms, website etc. Information in the visitor centre will be updated and renewed, when funding allows too.
- e. **Run a programme of events:** Run events throughout the year to engage with visitors to the site and educate them about the wildlife value of the reserve and the work of YWT & SDC.

- f. Run programme of practical volunteer days:** Regular days throughout the year will be scheduled and advertised as practical volunteer days for locals, members and volunteers to come and help with the site and habitat management at Barlow Common.
- g. Look to form a reserve supporters group:** Work towards having a supporters group for the reserve. A core group of volunteers who may help with practical work, wardening, events, litter picking, informing visitors, local fundraising etc.
- h. Work with fishery manager:** Ensure fishery management is being carried out according to the license and management proposal. Work with fishery manager to promote joint events and activities.
- i. Work with Selby Scout Groups:** Renew lease with the scout group for their holding at Barlow Common. Work with the scout groups to promote joint working and events.
- j. Work with schools when possible:** Although at the time of writing YWT currently do not have the resources to provide for school visits to the reserve, this is an aspiration we would like to aim towards in the future.

## **Feature 5 - Legal obligations**

### **Objective 5 – Ensure all legal obligations are met**

- a. Carry out annual site safety assessment, and ensure any actions/repairs required are carried out.
- b. Carry out annual tree safety survey, and ensure any required works are completed.
- c. Report any damages, repairs, unsafe structures after other visits to site, and repair as soon as possible.
- d. Ensure all staff, volunteers and contractors working on site adhere to health and safety guidelines and practices.
- e. Work with fishery manager to ensure they are meeting their health and safety obligations.