

APPENDIX A. WELSH HARP / BRENT RESERVOIR MANAGEMENT PLAN: ACTION PLAN FOR 2023-2024

The Management Plan outlines the management considered necessary to sustain the Welsh Harp for wildlife, recreation, landscape, flood-control, economic and other benefits of the reservoir. These are achievable over varying timeframes, though many are not affordable in the short term.

The Action Plan here tracks current year progress on the existing Management Plan while also highlighting projects with a longer timeframe.

Progress is indicated within the text and may include the priority of the issue, risks and progress.

Action	Lead	Budget	Approximate timetable	Progress: 2023-24 to 14 th March 2024
Welsh Harp Vision	Canal and River Trust, Barnet Council, Brent Council, Thames 21, London Wildlife Trust, Greater London Authority.	Funding and/or resources for the Vision have been provided by the partner organisations.	Published in late July 2023.	Developing a vision and options for the Welsh Harp.
Implementation of the Welsh Harp Vision	Canal and River Trust, Barnet Council, Brent Council, Thames 21, London Wildlife Trust, Greater London Authority.	The Vision team are investigating potential grant sources. The first is a potential application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.	On-going	In discussion.

River Brent Catchment Management Plan – the Brent Reservoir is on the River Brent.	All; led by Environment Agency / Thames 21 / London Boroughs within the River Brent Catchment.		Ongoing since 2011.	River Brent Catchment Partnership Action Plan published at: https://www.thames21.org.uk/catchment-partnerships/brent/
Dam wall and reservoir: statutory responsibility to maintain dam wall, associated structures and the dam	Canal and River Trust (CRT)	Canal and River Trust	Works: October 2023 to February 2024.	Dam wall and mechanism maintained to operational and statutory standards. Statutory inspection and works conducted in January to February 2021. Works, involving pre-drawdown of the Reservoir, commencing October 2023.
Maintain open water for water sports	Welsh Harp Sailing Association (WHSA)	Undertaken by volunteers of the (WHSA)	On-going	Monitoring and actions by Welsh Harp Sailing Association.
Sailing Infrastructure: club-houses, boats, and service areas.	Sailing Clubs	Maintained by the Canal and River Trust; and by the sailing clubs.	On-going	The Welsh Harp Sailing Association and clubs maintain the water sports infrastructure. See also Phoenix Canoe Club.
Bird hides: maintenance of the hides; the surrounding vegetation (sightlines) and habitats.	Welsh Harp Conservation Group / others		On-going	The WHCG organise winter projects at and near to the hides.
Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre	Brent Council, Thames 21		Brent Council are leading on the future of the Education Centre, while Thames 21 are currently maintaining a presence.	Refer to: Brent Council Cabinet, May 2023 report. Brent Council are working on details for a new Welsh Harp Centre building as a post-16 skills resource centre, with a focus on horticulture, work experience and volunteering opportunities. There is the potential for use of the site at other times by third sector and community organisations.

Allotments	Brent, West Hendon Allotment Society	Brent: refer to Allotments and Food Growing Strategy. Barnet: West Hendon Allotments are Self-Managed by the holders.	Allotments are maintained. There are some areas for biodiversity within the Dors Close Allotments.	Barnet Council: West Hendon Allotments are Self-Managed. Brent Council: Allotments Strategy: Birchen Grove Allotments and Dors Close Allotments.
Open spaces, pitches, paths, Capital Ring, and parks furniture.	Barnet, Brent	Existing maintenance resources. Barnet; and Brent public realm budgets.	On-going.	Maintenance, particularly of the well-used paths and features.
Signage; and interpretative signage.	Brent / Barnet.		The C&RT have a series of interpretative signs in design.	Maintained. The Canal & River Trust are currently preparing a set of interpretative panels, for installation in 2024.
Parks infrastructure	Brent / Barnet			Parks infrastructure is checked at appropriate frequencies. Birchen Grove Car Park: Mini-humps installed in January 2020. Silver Jubilee Park Car Park: resurfaced and line-marked: January 2020. Cool Oak Lane Car Park: Barnet.

Monitoring: wildlife, and indicators	WHCG; and public authorities.	Mainly by volunteers of WHCG.	On-going	See the most recent 2022 report (published in June 2023) by the Welsh Harp Conservation Group, available on their website and via the following link: Publications – Welsh Harp Conservation Group (wordpress.com) Programme of activities led by Welsh Harp Conservation Group for: refer to the website.
Grasslands and cutting	Barnet, Brent	Maintenance: within existing resources. Restoration work is currently unfunded.	On-going – seasonal effects with various cutting frequencies for different types of grassland.	Grasslands: A grassland maintenance schedule introduced by Brent Council across the Borough (including at Neasden Recreation Ground) from spring 2018 includes emphasis on improving biodiversity value of amenity grassland. Sown areas of bee-friendly plants were added in 2019. Cutting of these areas is usually in September or October. There are also rough-grassland habitats both at Neasden Recreation Ground and at the Welsh Harp Open Space.
Grasslands: paths cutting	Barnet, Brent	Maintenance: within existing resources. Restoration work is currently unfunded.	Spring to autumn.	Paths maintained but some have narrowed with scrub growth, particularly at Neasden Recreation Ground (see notes on Marshland). The lower grassland path at the Welsh Harp Open Space is narrow. Work in 2020 aimed at reducing encroaching scrub, but the path width could benefit from occasional cutting.
Sailing and sports development	WHSA: Welsh Harp Sailing Association and constituent clubs.	Undertaken by volunteers of WHSA.	On-Going	Led by the sailing and water sports clubs. Phoenix Canoe Club are working on proposed improvements to their club facilities for water sports, particularly for educational use; and for a café accessible from the Welsh Harp / Capital Ring path.

Litter	Brent Council. Barnet Council. Canal & River Trust. Thames 21. Environment Agency.	Landowners: Brent Council, Barnet Council, Canal & River Trust. Leaseholders. Also, much volunteer involvement.	On-going.	<p>Several clean-ups have been organized since January 2021. The Canal & River Trust have cleared some larger items from the reservoir itself, while the C&RT and community organisations have held several clean-up events of the margins of the reservoir.</p> <p>During the current de-watering of the reservoir, from late 2023 into early 2024, a number of safety-supervised events have been organized to clear litter from the margins of the reservoir.</p> <p>There remains, in addition to litter and rubbish in the reservoir; fly-tipped waste in the wooded wetland on the southern shore of the reservoir; and issues related to the inflow of waste on the Silk Stream and River Brent. A proportion of that waste is of materials fly-tipped into the rivers upstream.</p> <p>Litter and fly-tipping onto the public open spaces of the Welsh Harp is a responsibility of the grounds maintenance contractors of either Barnet or Brent Council. For Brent, instances can be reported using the FixMyStreet app, but please select 'Parks' on the first set of options which takes the user to a dedicated page for parks.</p>
River trash traps: at inflows of Dollis Brook, and Silk Stream	Environment Agency	Budget provided by the Environment Agency	Maintenance of Priestley Way trash screen - weekly.	<p>The Environment Agency clear accumulations of litter from the trash screens on the tributary rivers entering the reservoir, at the Silk Stream and at the River Brent.</p> <p>The Environment Agency clear and remove the material on a maintenance schedule; which for the Priestley Way (Staples Corner) trash screen is once fortnightly. As the screens collect waste that has been deposited in the river upstream, frequent and large quantities of waste can continue to accumulate in the river upstream of the screens. Inevitably, some smaller items will flow through the screens into the reservoir.</p>

Clean up projects	The community		On-going.	As noted above, where safe to do so, litter clean-up projects have been organized over several years by the Welsh Harp Litter Pickers and by residents near to Neasden Recreation Ground. More recently that has involved also The Friends of the Welsh Harp; and The Welsh Harp Group at Neasden Recreation Ground and other volunteers.
Bird rafts, islands. There are approximately 20 rafts.	Welsh Harp Conservation Group (WHCG)	Volunteer projects are held annually to maintain, repair or renew rafts. .	On-going. Autumn / winter.	WHCG have a programme for maintenance of bird rafts. Works are outside of the bird breeding season of March to August inclusive. Recent problems with access to the rafts for maintenance due to alluviation.
Reedbeds: remove young trees	WHCG – volunteer projects. Canal & River Trust.	Volunteer projects are held annually to maintain the reedbeds.	Remove young trees. On-going. Autumn / winter.	The Canal & River Trust reduced and removed in early 2022, some willows in the reed bed in the eastern marsh.
Reedbeds: remove young trees and marginal encroachment	Canal and River Trust	£85,000 PPL funding	Removing young trees and vegetation overhanging margins	In early 2022, The Canal & River Trust made improvements in the eastern marsh including removal of some debris and reduction of willow growth where that is causing obstructions or affecting other habitats. There is more to be done.
Reedbeds: increase	All	Natural growth is encouraged, so costs are low, but need to remove young trees.	Periodic reviews as part of Biodiversity Action Plans.	Habitat maintained. Estimates from GIS aerial images suggest that the area of reedbed increased by 0.09 ha between 2008 and 2016. As at 2021 there are reedbeds on the main arm of the reservoir in the eastern marsh, on the shore of Neasden Recreation Ground near to the dam wall; and on the shore of the Welsh Harp Open Space. 2023: CRT works to create alcoves in the reedbed in the Eastern Marsh.

Wet woodland	Canal and River Trust, Barnet, Brent	Largely self-managing.	On-going.	Largely self-managing. Rubbish noted during the water drawdown of Jan-Feb 2021 which needs to be extracted, and the possibility of some additional materials since.
Woodland	Brent, Barnet, WHCG, Canal and River Trust	Largely self-managing. Unfunded: management of woodland to increase diversity, but potential for creative use of material.		Where permanent, woodland at the Welsh Harp is largely self-managing. If resources were available, some areas could be enhanced. However, where willow and other tree species are encroaching onto other habitats, for example marshland or reedbeds, then management is required to maintain the mix of habitats, particularly at the margins of the Reservoir.
Marshland: maintain	Brent Council, Welsh Harp Sailing Association, Canal and River Trust.	Increase the extent of the marshland around the shores of the Reservoir for nature conservation, landscape, and to increase wind for water sports (by Reducing excess growth of trees).	Reduce young tree growth on shores of Neasden Recreation Ground, Welsh Harp Open Space.	<p>During the past two decades, Willow and scrub growth has exceeded the rate of management work on those sections of the shoreline with marshland habitat. Estimates from GIS aerial images suggest that the area of marshland (including fen, marsh and swamp) reduced by 0.3 ha between 2008 and 2016, due to succession to scrub woodland.</p> <p>Discussions from 2018 onwards by the Canal & River Trust, the Welsh Harp Sailing Association and Brent Council, led to a consent for works from Natural England and a programme of winter works from February 2019 to 2021.</p> <p>For the southern shore, a programme of works was detailed by the C&RT Ecologist in early 2024 and discussions are in progress to proceed with works from about September 2024.</p>

Marshland: increase	Brent, Barnet, Brent Catchment Partnership	Investigate sources of finance for long-term restoration of river catchment; and for flood alleviation.	Increase the extent of the marshland around the shores of the Reservoir for nature conservation, landscape, and to increase wind for water sports.	Marshland habitat at risk of scrub encroachment. See the comments for 'Marshland maintain', above.
Marshland: orchids and other marshland plants	WHCG, Brent	Marshland work by Brent Council. Volunteer work by WHCG.	WHCG to provide information.	As for Marshland, above. Several of the species of marshland orchids present at the Reservoir would benefit from relatively open (un-shaded) situations or may have other specific requirements.
Marshland and habitats (northern arm of Reservoir)	Barnet, Barratt PLC		Restoration of shore by Phase 1 of West Hendon Redevelopment.	Refer to Barnet. Discussions are in progress regarding other works in the northern arm of the Reservoir.
South-bank boardwalk	Canal and River Trust	Canal & Rivers Trust budget: periodic work.	As required.	The remnants of the previous boardwalk have been collected by volunteers. A section of the original boardwalk and a small footbridge remain in place after repairs by volunteers.

<p>Invasive species: Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed and other invasive species. Invasive species at the Welsh Harp extends also to a number of other species where growth is across paths, excessively shading marshland or causing other issues.</p>	<p>Canal and River Trust, Barnet Council, Brent Council</p>	<p>Brent Council Parks actions: Knotweed Reduced at the Brent Reservoir including at Neasden Recreation Ground; and Giant Hogweed at the Welsh Harp Open Space. Barnet Council have Reduced Knotweed near to Cool Oak Lane bridge and Giant Hogweed elsewhere.</p>	<p>Control of these species requires continuing attention: timely short-term control; control at the time of other works; and as part of longer-term management.</p>	<p>On-going by Barnet Council, Brent Council, and the Canal and River Trust. The Brent River Catchment Partnership are investigating how to improve control along the whole catchment; and knowledge is shared between partners of the River Brent Catchment Partnership. Thames 21 working with Brent Council and others, have treated some Knotweed and Giant Hogweed on the River Brent section downstream of the dam wall (spring / summer 2021). There are similar projects upstream in Barnet.</p> <p>Spring 2022: Brent: Control of Giant Hogweed at the Welsh Harp Open Space near to Wood Lane. Barnet: Similar work on invasive species.</p> <p>Autumn 2023: Completion of Riverside Connections control programme for Japanese Knotweed and visible Giant Hogweed between Quainton Street Open Space and the foot of the Welsh Harp dam wall.</p>
<p>Cool Oak Lane bridge. Cool Oak Lane bridge and Wood Lane traffic.</p>	<p>Barnet Highways (leading) in consultation with Brent Highways.</p>	<p>Barnet Council and others.</p>	<p>New pedestrian bridge in place.</p>	<p>Pedestrian footbridge alongside historic, vehicular footbridge.</p>
<p>West Hendon Playing Fields</p>	<p>Barnet Council</p>	<p>Barnet Council</p>		