

## **Dobcroft Nature Reserve Access Statement**



### **Introduction**

'Dobcroft' Nature Reserve, a 5-acre site, has been statutorily required for the conservation of a population of the protected species known as Great Crested Newts (GCN) in mitigation for the loss of habitat in the adjacent Cottam Hall Brickworks development site. This requirement is subject to the terms of a Natural England Licence. Capture and transfer of GCN to the Nature Reserve, creation of their habitat and their security, and the maintenance measures required are the subject of the method statement known as the Habitat Creation Enhancement Monitoring and Management Plan (The "Habitat Plan"). The statutory requirements covered by Natural England are those elements relating to the safety of GCNs and the conservation of habitat conducive to their survival.

Maintenance is divided into the initial intensive maintenance period up to 30 June 2018 while the Nature Reserve establishes itself; and long term maintenance which continues thereafter. The Seller, Cottam Hall Properties, has completed the capture and transfer of GCN and the creation of their habitat and its security and has started the initial monitoring and management programme. CHP will continue with the obligation of initial monitoring and management to its completion on 30 June 2018. Ecological obligations of Intact following the completion of the initial maintenance by CHP on 30 June 2018 are: Long-term protection and monitoring/management of the Nature Reserve and Intact will also ensure responsibility for all aspects of public safety.

### **Location**

The site, a former brown field site, is now beginning to transform into a small piece of nature within an urban area. Being situated on the outskirts of Preston, the area is isolated from other green spaces though does connect with an area of land owned by the Woodland Trust. The land, which is situated behind the Intact Centre, on Whitby Avenue, was handed over to Ingol and Tanterton Community Trust (Intact) in perpetuity, on behalf of the local community. It was felt the natural learning opportunities of the site would be mutually beneficial to the young and elderly, those needing emotional well-being, those involved in research projects and the local community in general. Had this transfer not taken place the Reserve would have gone into private ownership and be lost to the public, especially the communities of Ingol and Tanterton.

Access to the Reserve is from the Intact Centre, 49 Whitby Avenue, Ingol Preston, PR2 3YP



### Arrival and Car Parking

There is on street car parking available. On arrival all visitors must report to the Intact Centre reception to sign in and to receive further information about the Reserve. Visitors have access to the Centre's toilets and café during their visit. Further details of the Reserve and our Centre is available on our website [www.intact-preston.org.uk](http://www.intact-preston.org.uk)

**Please Note:** Please check prior to your visit details of specific access throughout the year. There will be both restricted and unrestricted access as outlined in the access statement below.

### Access Statement

The general public will be able to freely access and enjoy the site. Ingol and Tanterton Community Trust will ensure the safety of all the Reserve's inhabitants, through careful husbandry, volunteer training, and educational information for visitor interest, such as presence of wildlife and seasonal changes. Once visitors have signed in at the Intact centre, access is gained via a gate just down the right hand side of the Centre.

**Gate 1**

**Path up to the Reserve Entrance**



## Gate 2 – Reserve Entrance Path preparation at Entrance



Work is still underway on the paths and boardwalks, ensuring the safety of all visitors. It is important that all who visit the site keep to the paths and do not wander off into other areas which may disturb the Great Crested Newts and other wildlife.

### Points of Interest

#### Welcome Pond



#### Prepared Pathways



**Unprepared Pathways**



**Pond Dipping Platform**

**Specific Features**

**Safety Rail Bridge**



**Drakes Haven Pond**

**Various Ponds**

**Dragons Fly Pond**



## Other Features

### Proposed Outdoor Classroom



### The Scrape



### What to expect:

1. The Reserve will have a mixture of different types of paths that are both flat and undulating where walks can be enjoyed
2. The paths will be a minimum of 1.2m with the occasional passing places for wheel chairs and children's buggies at 1.8 m wide.
3. The main part of the Reserve will offer easy walking through woodland and wetlands with a variety of ponds, boardwalks and viewing platforms from which to observe the wildlife.
4. All trails will be clearly signposted.
5. Information boards giving details of the wildlife, local history and the landscape will be available along the trail. These will vary in size but all will have large print and illustrations. Those designed for children will be at ground level, and for some, it may be necessary to lift a rubber cover to reveal information.
6. Volunteer Wildlife Guides/Rangers will be on hand to help with information.
7. A map of the trails, with accessible routes shown, will be made available at the Intact Centre reception desk or alternatively can be downloaded from our website [www.intact-preston.org.uk](http://www.intact-preston.org.uk)

## Specific Access Requirements

In order for access to be managed so as to minimise disturbance to nature and wildlife the following will be abided by:

1. There will be no dogs allowed on site
2. There will be no bicycles, horses and motorbikes able to enter the site
3. Access to the general public will be most restricted during the amphibian spawning period and the bird breeding season

**\*The CIRIA "wildlife calendar" highlights the sensitive periods as being from:**

1. The beginning of March to the end of July for breeding birds
2. The beginning of March to the end of August for Great Crested Newts

## **Access to the Site – Open and Closed Access**

The following sets out an explanation of how and why the site will be closed for certain parts of the year and the days and time periods that it will be open to the general public.

### **Restricted Access:**

\*Access to and for the general public will be restricted to during the sensitive periods i.e. March to the end of August.

**\*This is a specific requirement as specified in the Nature Reserves Head of Terms which states that Intact will be responsible for all access to the site and will ensure that it is controlled to ensure that the GCN and its habitat isn't interfered with.**

### **Controlled Access:**

Using trained Staff and Volunteer Rangers controlled access will be available throughout the year through a programme of events, activities and workshops i.e. approximately 12-15 days per annum. These will be listed on our website, but please ask staff for more details, including accessibility.

\*\*The Reserve will also be available for visits from clubs and vulnerable user groups such as schools, adults with learning difficulties and user groups with disabilities. (approx. 15 visits a year).

**\*\*At such times the Reserve will be closed to the general public.**

### **Unrestricted Access**

Access to the site will be unrestricted to weekdays between the hours of 9am – 4pm from the beginning of September to the end of February.

### **Points for Future Consideration**

1. Any construction works will be completed in the winter months between November and February to minimise disturbance to Great Crested Newts and other amphibians and invertebrates on site as per the 10 year management plan and the guidance available at gov.uk
2. The site could be split into zones that highlight their sensitivity (e.g. on a scale of 1-5, or just low medium and high) to nature from disturbance, especially to Great Crested Newts
3. Fencing will be considered as a safety measure around one of the ponds which is steep sided (for GCN reasons).
3. There will be safety information notices at the entrance to Reserve and on viewing or dipping platforms, one of which is at said pond
4. Wheel chair access will be available along all pathways using a wide (mountain bike) tyre for comfort.