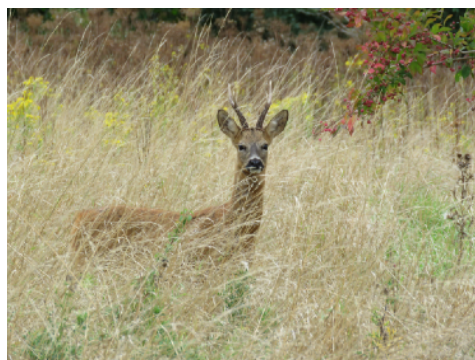


# BNG Management Statement



## Site name: Warwick Spinney

- Size: 1.19 ha (estimated)
- Location: A field to the north of the Elm Bridge roundabout in Benson, where the B4009 meets the A4074. The Ordnance Survey National Grid reference for the site is: SU610920
- Official status: A site managed for community use
- Other designations: N/A
- Ownership: Benson Community Association (BCA)
- Management responsibility: BCA with support from Benson Nature Group



**Benson Nature Group**  
*Caring for Benson's green spaces*

## Maps

### OS Map of Warwick Spinney



The centre of Warwick Spinney (the field) is illustrated with a blue dot

### Aerial photograph of Warwick Spinney (2015)



The centre of Warwick Spinney (the field) is illustrated with a blue dot

Date prepared: March 2018, updated Oct 18 - see section 10 below

Prepared by: Imogen Parker

### **1. Brief description**

The site comprises mainly 'rough' grassland with scattered trees and scrub. There is a plantation area that runs north-east to south-east. The most botanically diverse parts of the field are adjacent to the entrance of the site, at the southern end of the plantation area, where the vegetation is more open and the northern edge where there is more extensive rabbit-grazing.

### **2. Conservation importance/role**

Warwick Spinney represents a key connection/stepping stone between the remaining riverside meadows by the River Thames and proposed new green space associated with the development plans in Benson village. Warwick Spinney is important in a local context as a site that provides habitats for a range of flora and fauna; such as wildflowers and pollinating insects. Warwick Spinney is one site amongst several within Benson that are important for nature locally as they are likely to have a higher diversity of flora and fauna than some of the neighbouring farmland or recreational areas.

The plantation area is good for butterflies as between the trees there are areas of bare ground (for basking and drinking moisture from the soil) and wildflowers for nectar.

### **3. Issues and threats**

#### The main issues

- A lack of management which has resulted in much of the grass sward developing a 'thatch', which has led to low botanical diversity over much of the grassland.
- The site is not yet utilised properly by the community. This is partly because a lot of the population of Benson are unaware that the community can use it and because pedestrian access needs to be improved.

#### Other possible threats

- The site being vandalised or used as a dump for rubbish
- The introduction of invasive species
- A future possibility of the land being sought for development

#### **4. Vision statement**

Our vision for Warwick Spinney is that the site will become more wildlife-rich and will be recognised, valued and used by the community in Benson as an important village green space. Safer pedestrian access will be facilitated, and in due course the site will be physically linked to new green spaces secured through new housing development on Littleworth Road.

#### **5. Objectives**

- To increase the value of the site for wildlife by managing the 'tussocky' grassland which would increase both the diversity and abundance of flowering plants and invertebrates
- To make the site more accessible for people.
- To improve awareness and appreciation of Warwick Spinney amongst members of the community, encouraging its use.
- To encourage wildlife recording at the site as part of a wider push on citizen recording in the village.

#### **6. Review of Progress**

This partnership project between BCA and Benson Nature Group was initiated with a discussion at a BCA meeting in June 2017. A series of site improvements were considered against the published aims and objectives of BCA for Warwick Spinney and agreed. In Mar 18, Wallingford Green Gym began creating the perimeter path, under the supervision of BNG.

#### **7. Key Activities**

Benson Nature Group (BNG) is working with the Benson Community Association and Wallingford Green Gym to make the site more accessible for people and to improve its value for wildlife. This will be progressed by taking forward the following activities:

- Creation of a perimeter path around the site to facilitate access both for public enjoyment and to make management easier;
- Cutting a proportion of old 'thatchy' sward within the grassland and scarifying the ground to improve the area as wildlife habitat. Then cutting and removing the vegetation in this area annually to encourage increased botanical diversity;
- Provision of a new gate to make the site look more inviting;
- Signage to 'announce' the site, improving awareness and providing the community with insight into what it is for; this will be backed up with

publicity through local social media channels, the Benson Bulletin and engagement activities being generated with the school;

- Provision of a wooden footbridge across Elm brook adjacent to McDonalds to support safe pedestrian access, avoiding people having to cross the road on the dangerous bend; Consider planting some more trees and/or scrub where appropriate but still maintaining a largely open grassland area.
- As the trees in the plantation area become more mature (and the grassland within this area becomes more shaded), make sure that there are patches of bare ground adjacent to grassland with wild flowers between scattered trees in other parts of the site (to benefit butterflies and other invertebrates).
- Creation of a shallow pond or scrape in a suitable location in due course to improve the diversity of habitats available.

## **8. Costs**

Some of the work we plan to undertake will require funding, and some will be undertaken using volunteers eg Wallingford Green Gym. Benson Community Association does have some funding available, and we intend to apply to funds such as the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE2) for funding for the more significant projects such as improving access.

## **9. More information:**

Benson Community Association is a charitable organisation, registered with the Charities Commission. Its purpose is to:

PROMOTE THE BENEFIT OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE PARISHES OF BENSON AND BERRICK SALOME AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF SEX, OR OF POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS OR OTHER OPINIONS BY ASSOCIATING THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES, VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS AND INHABITANTS IN A COMMON EFFORT TO ADVANCE EDUCATION AND TO PROVIDE FACILITIES IN THE INTERESTS OF SOCIAL WELFARE FOR RECREATION AND LEISURE TIME OCCUPATION WITH THE OBJECT OF IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE FOR THE SAID INHABITANTS. (FOR DETAILS SEE CLAUSE 2 OF THE CONSTITUTION)

## **10. Date for review: Dec 2019**

Updated Oct 18 by Edel McGurk, following TOE2 advice. Revisions are:

- removal of proposal to create a new parking area inside the entrance. OCC Highways may have road safety concerns given the proximity to the Elmbrook roundabout and the poor visibility, so this will not be pursued at this time.
- inclusion of proposal to create a pond/scrape/damp area

## Annexes:

### Annex 1

#### Survey records

**Flora and fauna species recorded during two walkover survey visits in 2017 (One visit on 12<sup>th</sup> June and another in September) and casual observation at other times during 2017 and 2018**

| Flora                          |
|--------------------------------|
|                                |
| broad-leaved dock              |
| burdock                        |
| cleavers                       |
| cocksfoot                      |
| comfrey                        |
| common daisy ( <i>Bellis</i> ) |
| common forget-me-not           |
| common nettle                  |
| common ragwort                 |
| common vetch                   |
| creeping buttercup             |
| creeping cinquefoil            |
| creeping thistle               |
| <i>Crepis</i> sp.              |
| dog rose                       |
| Dove's-foot Crane's-bill       |
| false oat grass                |
| false wood brome               |
| field bindweed                 |
| ground ivy                     |
| ivy                            |
| Long-stalked crane's-bill      |
| musk mallow                    |

|   |
|---|
| prickly lettuce   |
| primulas (probably planted and near north-eastern boundary) |
| pyramidal orchid  |
| red fescue  |
| ribwort plantain  |
| spear thistle   |
| teasel  |
| weld  |
| white campion   |
| white clover  |
| wood anemone  |
|   |
| <b>Fauna</b>  |
| Asure damselfly   |
| Banded demoiselle   |
| banded snail- <i>Cepaea</i> species                         |
| blackbird   |
| blackcap  |
| black clock beetle  |
| brimstone   |
| brown argus   |
| brown hawker  |
| carrion crow  |
| chiff chaff   |
| cinnebar moths and caterpillars                             |
| comma   |
| common blue   |
| common blue damselfly                                       |
| common crab spider  |
| common darter   |
| common field grass hopper                                   |
| common soldier beetle                                       |
| essex skipper   |
| gatekeeper  |
| goldfinch   |
| grass snake   |
| green-veined white  |
| green woodpecker  |
| holly blue  |
| kestrel   |

|  |
|--|
| ladybird (native 7-spot)   |
| large skipper  |
| large white  |
| magpie   |
| marble teal moth   |
| marbled white  |
| meadow brown   |
| migrant hawker   |
| orange tip   |
| peacock (butterfly)  |
| pheasant   |
| red admiral  |
| red kite   |
| red-tailed bumblebee   |
| ringlet (plantation area)  |
| small blue   |
| small copper   |
| small skipper  |
| small tortoiseshell  |
| small white  |
| speckled wood  |
| southern hawker  |
| White-legged Damselfly   |
| white-tailed bumblebee   |
| woodpigeon   |
| yellowhammer (north-eastern boundary in hedge)   |
|  |
| fox scat seen  |
| rabbit-grazed areas and droppings across the Spinney, particularly in northern area of the field |
| Roe Deer   |
|  |

### Warwick Spinney: Butterflies recorded in 2017/8

| SPECIES     | Max weekly count |      |
|-------------|------------------|------|
|             | 2017             | 2018 |
| Brimstone   | 1                | 0    |
| Brown Argus | 3                | 6    |
| Comma       | 5                | 1    |

|                     |    |    |
|---------------------|----|----|
| Common Blue         | 2  | 7  |
| Essex Skipper       | 2  | 0  |
| Gatekeeper          | 29 | 20 |
| Green-veined White  | 2  | 1  |
| Holly Blue          | 1  | 1  |
| Large Skipper       | 2  | 2  |
| Large White         | 3  | 6  |
| Marbled White       | 18 | 15 |
| Meadow Brown        | 28 | 31 |
| Orange-tip          | 5  | 3  |
| Peacock             | 0  | 1  |
| Red Admiral         | 4  | 1  |
| Ringlet             | 45 | 21 |
| Small Copper        | 0  | 1  |
| Small Blue          | 0  |    |
| Small Heath         | 0  | 0  |
| Small Skipper       | 12 | 3  |
| Small Tortoiseshell | 1  | 1  |
| Small White         | 0  | 2  |
| Speckled Wood       | 1  | 2  |