



Old Deer Park Biodiversity Management Plan

2026 – 2030





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1.0 Introduction

This management plan has been written by Richmond Councils' Ecology Officer as part of the Councils' commitment to the preservation and enhancement of biodiversity. Each site is managed in accordance with the habitat and species action plans of the Richmond Biodiversity Action Plan (*Appendix 1*), the London Local Nature Recovery Strategy, general good habitat management practice and current legislation.

1.1 Caveat

The implementation of prescriptions in this management plan will be subject to available budget.

2.0 Terms of Reference

This management plan is designed to inform the restoration and maintenance of Old Deer Park from nature conservation, landscape and visitor perspectives. It focuses on the parts of Old Deer Park which are managed primarily for nature conservation, which include 'Twickenham Road Meadow' – the part of the park which lies south of the A316, and the low-lying south-western floodplain areas of the main park. The management plan will be delivered by Richmond Council working in conjunction with contractors and community organisations.

Throughout this management plan our goals are to:

1. Restore and enhance the site to make it an attractive leisure and environmental asset for residents and visitors.
2. Protect and enhance the ecology of the mixed habitats with appropriate management and planting.
3. Enhance the visitor experience by creating an attractive natural space which invites exploration and food production.
4. Support the Old Deer Park Working Group (ODPG).



To deliver these goals, this plan considers the sites' history, ecology and visitor use; drawing on existing data, it sets out refined objectives and the prescriptions to deliver and maintain the site over the next five years.

The management plan should not be regarded as fixed; the prescriptions provide a framework and guidance that enable reaction to changing conditions. Reviewing progress and monitoring key features on a regular basis is important in ensuring the site is managed appropriately and in a sustainable way, as such as a management review will be carried out by the Council annually.



3.0 Site Description

3.1 Site details

Location	Old Deer Park, Richmond, Greater London TW9 1QG
Grid Reference	TQ 17599 75181
Ownership	The Crown Estate
Designation	Site of Borough Importance for Nature Conservation (# RiL17)
Area	12.1 ha approx.
Key habitats	Meadow grassland/parkland, ancient and veteran trees, floodplain wetland/marshy grassland and scrub/woodland edges
Key species	Bats, song thrush, stag beetle, pollinators including solitary bees

3.2 Site description

3.2.1 Main park floodplain

The majority of the main park on the north side of the A316 is utilised for sport. However, the lower third towards the River Thames is periodically inundated and therefore cannot be used for sport. Until 2023, the entirety of the grassland area was managed as short-mown amenity grassland, however it is now managed for biodiversity on a biannual hay cut cycle, and the lowest lying part of the meadow (*Compartment G* of the Management Map, Section 7) is left completely unmown as it is gradually succeeded by tall riparian herbs such as purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and rosebay willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*). Non-native invasive plant species occur in this lower part of the meadow including Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and beggarticks (*Bidens frondosa*).

There is little tree cover in this part of the park, however an avenue of large London plane (*Platanus x hispanica*) borders the ha-ha, a water channel which runs parallel to the River Thames along the entire length of Old Deer Park from Old Palace Lane north to Kew Gardens. Additionally, six native black poplar clones



were planted in 2024 as part of a Richmond Biodiversity Partnership project to preserve the genetic uniqueness of the black poplar population of the riverside. At the time of writing, feasibility studies are underway for a large floodplain improvement project at this section of Old Deer Park, details of which can be found here -[Rewilding Arcadia – Thames Landscape Strategy \(thames-landscape-strategy.org.uk\)](https://thames-landscape-strategy.org.uk).

3.2.2 Twickenham Road Meadow

The Twickenham Road Meadow consists of two connecting smaller sections of the much larger Old Deer Park, they are situated between the A316 and the very southern end of Old Deer Park where it finishes at Old Palace Lane, bisected by the railway line. The two sections are quite different; the section between Old Palace Lane and the railway bridge has two extremely large mature London Planes (*Platanus x hispanica*) which over shades much of the site, restricting the type of vegetation that can thrive. A hazel hedge forms the northern boundary with the neighbouring allotment but this has been lost to bramble scrub encroachment.

The larger section between the railway bridge and the A316 has much more of a grassland meadow, with scattered large trees, some of which are veteran trees with many features suitable for roosting bats. Part of this lies on the steep highway bank of the A316 (indicated as *Compartment B* of the Management Map in Section 7). The lower end is characterized by marshy/wet grassland that is regularly inundated, and dense stands of purple loosestrife and other tall riparian herbs are well established. A linear drainage channel directs standing water underneath the surfaced footpath and back out into the ha-ha.

3.3 Designation

The Twickenham Road Meadow part of this site between the A316 and railway bridge is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, full details can be found in Appendix 4. It is an aim of this management plan to secure SINC designation for the floodplain area of the main park.



3.4 Ecological interest and features

There are several scattered veteran oak trees in amongst semi-improved neutral grassland, along with some beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), poplar (*Populus sp.*) and plane trees (*Platanus x hispanica*). Alongside the deadwood and standing deadwood that is present, these provide excellent habitat for a range of invertebrates and fungi.

The drier, northern part of Twickenham Road Meadow has a range of wildflowers, including spotted medick (*Medicago arabica*) and Wild carrot (*Daucus carota*).

The recently established meadow grassland area of the main park has been identified by a local entomologist as a site of particular interest for a wide variety of solitary bees and wasps. It is rich in common cat's-ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*) and hawk's-beard (*Crepis sp.*), which has resulted in the recording of *Nomada facilis*, otherwise known as the hawk's-beard nomad bee, a species which is new to Britain and was first identified in Lewisham in 2017.

The old brick walls of the railway viaduct support some interesting plants including, pellitory-of-the-wall (*Parietaria officinalis*), ivy-leaved toadflax (*Cymbalaria muralis*) and four species of ferns: wall-rue (*Asplenium ruta-muraria*), maidenhair spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes*), male-fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*) and hart's-tongue fern (*Asplenium scolopendrium*). The first two of these are scarce in London, usually growing only on old walls such as this.

The ha-ha which borders the site may host the German hairy snail (*Pseudotrichia rubiginosa*) or two-lipped door snail (*Alina bimaculata*). Both snails are rare red listed species, but surveys will be required to confirm presence.

3.5 Community involvement

The Old Deer Park Working Group comprises representatives of The Richmond Society, The Kew Society, The Friends of Richmond Green, The Friends of Old Deer Park and The St Margaret's Estate Residents Association.



3.6 Access and visitor experience

On the south side of the A316, pedestrian access to the site can be reached from the car park off the A316 and from the riverside on Old Palace Lane. The main central path runs from the Old Palace Lane entrance to the car park and was surfaced with gravel in 2024. A boardwalk was also created underneath the A316, leading into the main area of Old Deer Park on the northern side of the road. Care must be taken towards the river due to the tidal inundations, but all areas can be reached easily, allowing easy access for both the public and for any conservation work to take place.

In the main park, one tarmac footpath adjoining Twickenham Road with the Thames towpath runs diagonally through the meadow area. In addition, a number of mown unsurfaced paths are maintained through the meadows to provide users with access to nature, and to allow various running events to take place.

3.7 History

Old Deer Park is steeped in history and more information can be found in the following reports:

- [Old Deer Park Supplementary Planning Document](#)
- [The Old Deer Park Richmond – Landscape Strategy, 1999](#) (by Kim Wilkie Associates)
- [Old Deer Park Study - Conservation Area No.57](#)
- [List of local views - London Borough of Richmond upon Thames](#)
- [The Old Deer Park, Richmond – A Framework for Future Conservation and Enhancement, 2012](#) (Old Deer Park Working Group)

3.8 Constraints

The supporting walls of the railway line are very attractive for graffiti, and National Rail have in the past exercised authority to maintain a small strip of cut vegetation along the supporting wall for inspection and work access purposes. Japanese



Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and winter heliotrope (*Petasites pyrenaicus*) can be found growing on the TfL owned bank supporting the A316, along with Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) in the ha-ha and floodplain areas and snowberry (*Symporicarpos sp.*) to the northern end of Twickenham Road Meadow.

3.9 Evaluation

The key features of the site are the ancient and veteran trees, the semi-improved neutral grassland, and wet/marshy grassland. The recent creation of a new surfaced footpath and boardwalk, and the relaxation of mowing in the lower-lying areas of the main park have been successful improvements to the ecological value and visitor experience of the site.



4.0 Policies

4.1 Strategic Principles for Parks and Open Spaces

The borough has the largest area of public open space per head of population of any London borough. We have a local and national reputation for quality and leadership in the delivery of excellent parks. To ensure the quality of our Parks and Open Spaces remains at a high level, following public consultation, we have developed a series of strategic principles by which parks will be managed.

1. Our parks and open space management will have biodiversity, climate change and sustainability at the forefront.
2. Community participation with our Friends and Community Groups will continue to be encouraged and supported.
3. Our parks will promote active, healthy living and social inclusion for people of all ages and abilities.
4. The management of Parks and Open Spaces will create a sustainable legacy for future generations.
5. The quality of our Parks and open spaces will continue to define LBRuT.
6. Richmond will lead in the delivery of excellent parks and open spaces services.
7. Through innovation, the future development of the parks will be ensured.
8. Richmond's Parks will offer positive experiences to all visitors.

All Council owned and managed parks and open spaces are controlled by Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs). These orders impose various restrictions to dog control and other activities in our parks and open spaces, these can be found online here:

https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/parks_and_open_spaces/parks_enforcement_and_legislation#pspo.



4.2 Nature Conservation Policy

During 2019, Richmond Council adopted a Nature Conservation Policy in which the Council recognises the special and diverse wildlife found within its Borough and its' duty to protect and preserve biodiversity. The Policy outlines the ways the Council will achieve this through management of its land, planning obligations and monitoring. The policy can be found in *Appendix 2*.

4.3 Tree Policy

Richmond Council has a tree management policy which recognises the benefits of trees and outlines a responsible management approach towards trees within the Borough. This can be found at *Appendix 3*. There is also a specific Tree Planting Plan for the Old Deer Park.



5.0 Site Vision and Objectives

5.1 Site vision

To conserve, maintain and improve the quality of the meadow grassland, wetland, ancient and veteran trees and scrub habitats, whilst improving the visitor experience on site.

5.2 Objectives

From the site goals (*Section 2.0*) and informed by the site description and research into key areas, the following objectives have been developed to cover every aspect of the work to be done:

5.2.1 Objective 1: Nature conservation

Maintain and improve the habitat quality on site to ensure key species are in optimum conditions.

5.2.2 Objective 2: Visitor access

Maintain the pathways, boundaries, infrastructure and cleanliness.

5.2.3 Objective 3: Publicity, communication, and community involvement

With support from Habitats and Heritage (H&H) and the Old Deer Park Working Group, raise the profile of the lesser-known Twickenham Road Meadow part of Old Deer Park and communicate with residents and interested parties.

Ensure volunteering work parties are available and tasks are wide ranging to cater for different abilities.

5.2.4 Objective 4: Monitoring and Management planning

Monitor the key habitats and species to ensure management action is achieving the site vision.

Review the management regularly and amend work plan as appropriate to ensure site vision is achieved.



6.0 Maintenance Prescriptions

The following detailed prescriptions are designed to manage the site features to deliver the site vision and objectives. The management is not set in stone and must be reviewed and updated based on evidence observed on site, so that management is in response to the observed condition or any environmental change.

Key to terms used within the prescriptions and work programme

AC	Arboricultural Contractor
GMC	Greenspace Management Contractor
H&H	Habitats and Heritage
LBRuT	London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
NCC	Nature Conservation Contractor
ODPG	Old Deer Park Working Group
Minor trees	Trunks and limbs with a diameter of 10cm or less at 1.3m height off ground (Diameter at Breast Height)



6.1 Objective 1: Nature conservation

Prescription details	Description
<u>1. Scrub and minor tree maintenance</u> Responsibility: NCC	<u>Tasks</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prevent bramble leaders or scrub encroachment onto grassland and wetland areas. - Remove any exotic species present and use stump treatment to prevent regrowth. <u>Considerations</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Works should be carried out outside of bird nesting season unless a pre-works bird nesting survey has been conducted by an Ecologist. - All stems must be cut to ground level to avoid creating any trip hazards. - Any cordwood should be stacked for habitat/deadwood value; small brash piles should be created.
<u>2. Management of trees over 10cm DBH (diameter at breast height/1.3m)</u> Responsibility: AC	<u>Tasks</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survey and manage tree stock in accordance with LBRuT policy. <u>Considerations</u>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AC to liaise with Appropriate Council Officer and NCC before undertaking any works on site.
<u>3. Ancient and veteran tree management</u> Responsibility: LBRuT	<p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commission a survey of ancient and veteran trees at Old Deer Park - Manage trees in line with the recommendations of the survey report. <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This management plan should be updated according to the results and recommendations of the ancient and veteran tree survey.
<u>4. Hedgerow management</u> Responsibility: NCC	<p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lay hazel hedgerow in first year of management.
<u>5. Meadow grassland maintenance</u> Responsibility: NCC	<p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grassland to be cut twice a year, during April and September, to a sward height of 10cm. - Remove all cuttings from the site or add to designated composting area on site.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove undesirable weeds such as burdock and creeping thistle during mid-summer, and top off seedheads of other vigorous species such as hogweed prior to grassland cutting. <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10% of meadow habitat should be left uncut each year, alternating between areas. - A litter pick must be undertaken before cutting grass. - Meadow cutting must not be carried out during high winds or extreme wet weather.
<p>6. Invasive species management</p> <p>Responsibility: NCC</p>	<p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pull Himalayan balsam and 'beggarticks' (<i>Bidens frondosa</i>) from floodplain areas. - Remove snowberry and winter heliotrope. <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report any new occurrences of non-native species to the Appropriate Council Officer. - Co-ordinate with Thames Landscape Strategy's balsam pulling programme.



6.2 Objective 2: Visitor Experience

Prescription details	Description
<u>7. Amenity grassland and pathside maintenance</u> Responsibility: GMC	<p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 0.5m pathside strips to be maintained as per the standard specifications of the Greenspace Management Contract. - Cut back overhanging vegetation along pathways and around the edges of amenity grassland area up to a height of 2.4m, as specified in the Greenspace Management Contract. - Benches and park furniture to be neatly strimmed round. <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tree issues involving larger branches or the necessity to work at height will need to be referred to the Appropriate Council Officer for liaison with the Arboriculture Contractor.
<u>8. Maintain pathways, boundaries, check site and structures</u> Responsibility: NCC	<p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carry out weeding along pathways. - Keep paths clear of overhanging obstructions.



	<u>Considerations</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Infrastructure and signage should be checked regularly, and any defects reported to the Appropriate Council Officer within 7 days unless urgent.
<u>9. Litter collection</u> Responsibility: GMC, NCC	<u>Tasks</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Litter picks to be carried out on a regular basis, any large / hazardous items or fly tip to be reported to Appropriate Council Officer within 24 hours. - Bins will be emptied by the Parks Cleansing Team.

6.3 Objective 3: Publicity, communication, and community Involvement

Prescription details	Description
<u>10. Publicity and communication</u> Responsibility: NCC	<u>Tasks</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise profile of the lesser-known Twickenham Road Meadow through social media and on-site posters in the main park.
<u>11. Community involvement</u> Responsibility: NCC/LBRuT	<u>Tasks</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage community participation through appropriate social media and events.



6.4 Objective 4: Monitoring and Management Planning

Prescription details	Description
<u>12. Habitat and species monitoring</u> Responsibility: LBRuT	<p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Every year identify a key ecological community or species group to monitor to inform management success. Expert help should be sought where required. <p><u>Considerations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report any incidental sightings of species to H&H. - Where a sighting is imminently important to the management of a site (such as bird nesting or badger setts), the NCC must inform the Appropriate Council Officer prior to continuation of work.
<u>13. Review management and work plans</u> Responsibility: LBRuT/NCC	<p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Twice yearly site visits will be undertaken with the Appropriate Council Officer and NCC to assess work progress and any issues encountered. - At the end of each calendar year, the Management Plan and Work Programme will be reviewed and updated as necessary.



6.5 Table 1 – Old Deer Park Work programme 2026 – 2030

Prescription	Priority	Year and compartment					Usual Timing	Lead resource	Prescription details	Comments
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030				
P1: Scrub and minor tree maintenance	1	All	All	All	All	All	Oct - Feb	NCC	Cut back encroaching bramble and woody scrub from grassland areas. Remove and stump-treat exotic species.	Consider impacts to nesting birds
P2: Trees over 10cm DBH	1	All	All	All	All	All	As required	AC	Carry out tree safety works as required, in liaison with Appropriate Council Officer and NCC.	Consider impacts to bats and nesting birds
P3: Ancient and veteran tree management	1	All					All year	LBRuT	Commission an ancient and veteran tree survey to determine an appropriate management programme.	



P4: Hedgerow management	1	D	D	D	D	D	Oct – Feb	NCC	Lay hazel hedgerow	
P5: Meadow grassland maintenance	1	A D E F	A D E F	A D E F	A D E F	A D E F	Apr – Sep	NCC	Undertake bi-annual hay cut in spring and autumn months.	Leave 10% of meadow uncut.
P6: Invasive species management	1	A C E G F	A C E G F	A C E G F	A C E G F	A C E G F	As required	NCC	Pull Himalayan balsam and beggarticks from floodplain areas and remove snowberry. Report any new occurrences of non-native species to the Appropriate Council Officer.	
P7: Amenity grassland and pathside maintenance.	1	All	All	All	All	All	April - Nov	GMC	0.5m pathside strips and overhanging vegetation along pathways to be cut as per GM contract specification. Ensure benches and park furniture are neatly cut round.	



P8: Maintain pathways, boundaries and check structures	1	All	All	All	All	All	All year	NCC	Keep paths clear of overhanging obstructions, keep borders clear of weeds.	
P9: Litter collection	1	All	All	All	All	All	All year	NCC GMC	Litter pick when on site, any sharps/inappropriate/ large/bulky litter and fly tipping to be reported to Appropriate Council Officer.	Sharps have previously been identified on site
P10: Publicity and communication	2	All	All	All	All	All	All year	NCC	Raise profile of Twickenham Road Meadow through social media and on-site posters.	Work with LBRuT Comms, H&H and ODPG
P11: Community involvement	1	All	All	All	All	All	All year	NCC LBRuT	Encourage community participation through appropriate social media and events.	H&H and ODPG to provide support where necessary
P12: Habitat and species monitoring	2	All	All	All	All	All	As appropriate	LBRuT	Monitor key ecological communities and species groups to inform management.	H&H and ODPG to provide support where necessary



P13: Review management plan and work programme	1	All	All	All	All	All	Nov	LBRuT NCC	Biannual site meeting to discuss progress. Annual review of management plan prescriptions.	
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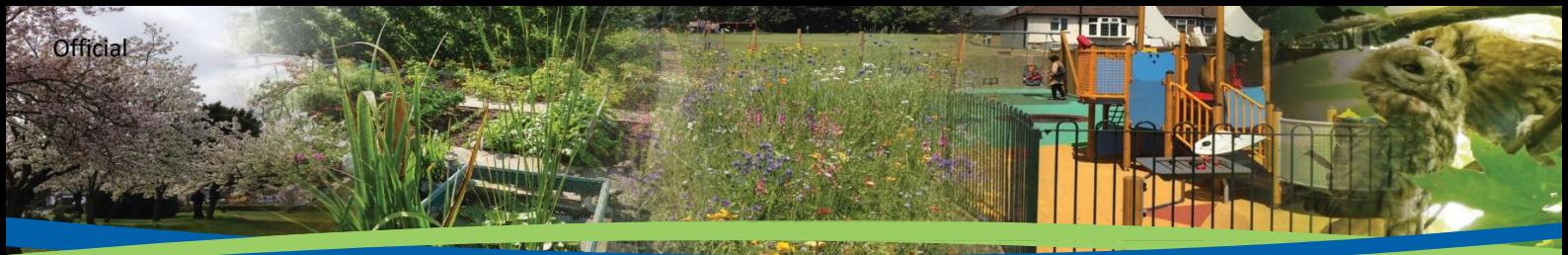
6.6 Priority levels

- 1** – Very important for the maintenance of the key habitats, species or visitor amenity (i.e. annual meadow cut) and should reflect the bare minimum of what should be achieved each year.
- 2** – Of secondary importance to the key tasks, to be done if more time / resources are available (i.e. coppicing / thinning a secondary woodland boundary to a meadow, or additional survey work); priority 2 tasks could become 1s if not completed for a number of years.
- 3** – Luxury, wish list tasks: nice to do but not important if resources are not available; these items might become priority 2s over time if not completed but are unlikely ever to reach priority 1 unless significant change in other factors.



7.0 Management Map





8.0 References

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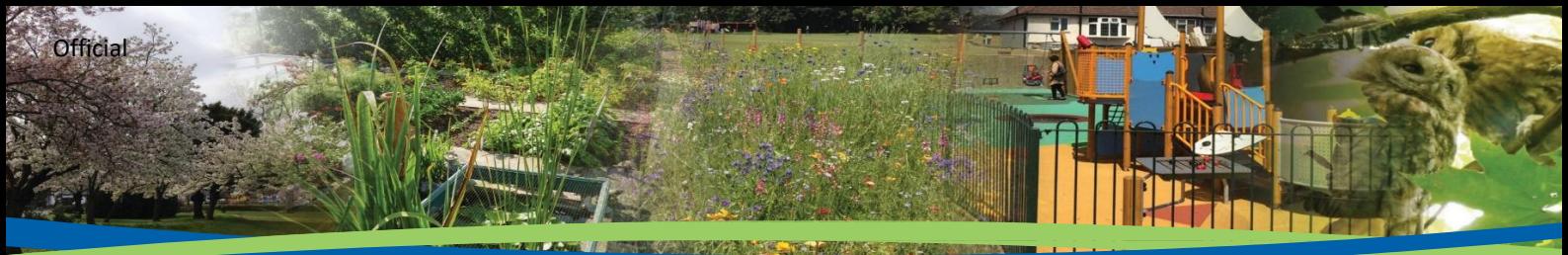
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9.0 Appendices

Appendix 1

Richmond Biodiversity Action Plan, habitats and species relevant to Old Deer Park, [online] available at - FINAL-RBAP-2025-2_compressed-2.pdf

Appendix 2

Richmond Council Nature Conservation Policy [online] available at https://www.richmond.gov.uk/media/16895/lbrut_nature_conservation_policy.pdf

Appendix 3

Richmond Council Tree Policy [online] available at - https://www.richmond.gov.uk/media/6899/tree_policy.pdf

Appendix 4

Twickenham Road Meadow (Old Deer Park) designation

Site Reference: RiL17

Site Name: Twickenham Road Meadow

Summary: A narrow strip of grassland with scattered trees, part of which floods regularly.

Grid ref: TQ 174 750

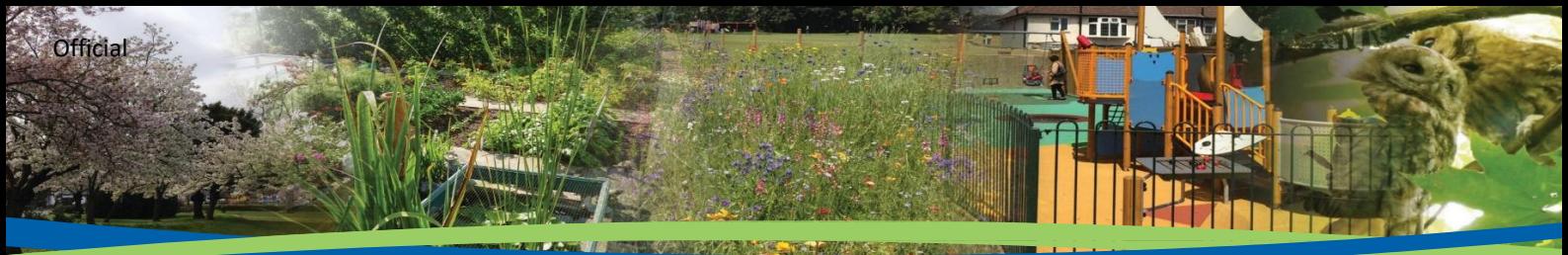
Area (ha): 2.16

Borough(s): Richmond upon Thames

Habitat(s): Scattered trees, Semi-improved neutral grassland, Vegetated wall/tombstones, Wet grassland

Access: Free public access (part of site)

Ownership: The Crown Estate

**Site Description:**

This narrow strip of rough grassland lies between Twickenham Road and the railway, just east of Twickenham Bridge. It was formerly part of the Old Deer Park, but is now cut off from the Old Deer Park Recreation Ground by the main road. The southern part of the meadow, beside the River Thames, floods regularly. The sward is rather rank and not particularly diverse, but is likely to support some interesting invertebrates. A few willows (*Salix* sp.) add variety to the habitat.

The drier, northern part of the meadow has a slightly better range of wild flowers, including spotted medick (*Medicago arabica*). A number of trees, including oak (*Quercus robur*), beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and poplar (*Populus* sp.) have been planted.

The old brick walls of the railway viaduct support some interesting plants including, pellitory-of-the-wall (*Paretaria judaica*), ivy-leaved toadflax (*Cymbalaria muralis*) and four species of ferns: wall-rue (*Asplenium ruta-muraria*), maidenhair spleenwort (*A. trichomanes*), male-fern (*Dryopteris felix-mas*) and hart's-tongue (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*). The first two of these are scarce in London, usually growing only on old walls such as this.

Site first notified: 01/01/1993

Boundary last changed: 01/01/1993

Citation last edited: 17/01/2007 **Mayor Agreed:**

Defunct: N **Last Updated:** 09/08/2019



Boundaries of SINC designation.