



Wingerworth Lido Consultation

Executive Summary

The following is the response from Derbyshire Wildlife Trust following a request for consultation regarding the future management of Wingerworth Lido.

Wingerworth Lido is a Local Wildlife Site currently in unfavourable-declining condition, having been under inappropriate management for a number of years. The site's biodiversity has significantly declined over time due to management factors, exacerbated by the use of blue dye and lack of a suitable management plan. Common toad and white-clawed crayfish have declined in numbers, and local residents are concerned for the state of the Lido. North East Derbyshire District Council (NEDDC) have a legal obligation through the Statutory Biodiversity Duty to protect, restore and enhance this priority site for biodiversity. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust urges NEDDC to take urgent action to halt further decline in the condition of the Lido and take steps to restore the site for wildlife and for people.

Local Wildlife Site Designation

A Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is an area of land that is considered to be especially important for its habitats and value to wildlife within a county, acting as key corridors for wildlife and forming the basis of high value ecological networks.¹ Derbyshire Wildlife Trust manages the Local Wildlife Site system on behalf of Derbyshire's Local Planning Authorities. Through this agreement, the Trust undertakes a programme of surveys and monitoring to assess the condition of Local Wildlife Sites in Derbyshire for the government indicator of positive management (Single Data List Reference 160). The Local Wildlife Site System has been in place since 1984, and the Single Data List monitoring system since 2011. As a result, the Trust has an in depth understanding and dataset on the habitats at these sites, and their condition, across the county. The aim of the Local Wildlife Site system is to ensure that sites of high wildlife value are protected and managed sympathetically.

¹ [Local Wildlife Sites | The Wildlife Trusts](#)

Wingerworth Lido (NE037) was designated as a Local Wildlife Site in 1984 for its reptile/amphibian assemblage (Am2), due to its population of common toad (*Bufo bufo*), common frog (*Rana temporaria*) and smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*). In 2000, exceptionally high numbers were recorded by volunteers running the toad crossing at the site, who counted 815 toads, 596 frogs and 99 smooth newts. Additionally in 1998, 91 clumps of frog spawn were recorded in the north-west corner of the lake.

Value of Ponds

Ponds are bodies of freshwater, natural or man-made, which range in size from 1m² to 2ha - Wingerworth Lido falls at the latter end, measuring 1.8ha in size. Despite their overall small size, ponds can support more biodiversity than larger waterbodies like rivers and lakes.² Two thirds of all freshwater species can live in ponds, including many tiny invertebrates, mayflies, dragonflies, freshwater mussels, toads, frogs and newts, as well as water voles, otters and grass snakes.³ The species which rely on ponds for life then form a key part of the food web, further supporting species of birds, bats and terrestrial mammals.

As stated in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), only 20% of ponds in Derbyshire are in good condition.⁴ More widely, across the UK 500,000 ponds have been lost over the last 100 years,⁵ with 80% of remaining ponds in poor condition.⁶ We know that Derbyshire's native flora has also been severely impacted by habitat loss, with 245 species now extinct, rare or in decline; many of these species depend on sympathetic management of habitats such as wetlands, watercourses and ponds which can support rare and uncommon plant species.⁷

As well as the overall loss of ponds to development, ponds have been lost, or declined in quality, due to neglect and poor management. Those that remain are threatened by drought as a result of climate change, contamination by pollutants through run off from roads and

² [Ponds - Freshwater Habitats Trust](#)

³ [Ponds - Freshwater Habitats Trust](#)

⁴ Derbyshire County Council. 'Thriving with Nature. A Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Derbyshire: Statement of Biodiversity Priorities.' [Date Accessed: 12/11/25]

⁵ [Ponds | The Wildlife Trusts](#)

⁶ [Ponds - Freshwater Habitats Trust](#)

⁷ Derbyshire County Council. 'Thriving with Nature. A Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Derbyshire: Statement of Biodiversity Priorities.' [Date Accessed: 12/11/25]



agricultural land, as well as invasive non-native species (INNS) such as Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and New Zealand pygmyweed (*Crassula helmsii*), among others.

For many habitats that we see in decline in the county, initiatives focussed on enhancing, restoring and maintaining existing sites should be the priority.⁸

⁸ Derbyshire County Council. 'Thriving with Nature. A Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Derbyshire: Statement of Biodiversity Priorities.' [Date Accessed: 12/11/25]

Decline in Condition

Through more recent monitoring surveys, an amphibian survey was conducted in June 2023 by an ecologist at the Trust to assess the Lido for adult toads, frogs, newts and spawn, as well as terrestrial search of nearby habitats for juveniles of these species. No adults, juveniles or spawn of any of these species were found during this survey. Supporting data that Derbyshire Amphibian and Reptile Group (DARG) supplied to the Trust at the time showed that there were toads using the crossing in 2023. However, the numbers had been sharply decreasing since 2018, where there was a peak of over 1400 toads crossing, following a long steady climb, then a sharp drop to just 200 in 2023. The decline of the common toad population is now critical and in our view the Lido requires sympathetic management to give the toads, one of the key reasons for the site's LWS designation, the best chance of recovery.

The 2023 surveys were sparked by NEDDC staff who had received complaints from the general public about the repeated use of blue dye in the Lido. The dye has reportedly been added to the water by the angling group to control growth of aquatic vegetation to aid fishing at the site. Members of the public expressed concerns regarding the impact of the blue dye on amphibians and although formal research on this topic is limited, there are potential risks to amphibians, particularly if dye is used in higher doses than recommended for managing algal blooms. Our understanding is that the blue dye was used at the Lido to manage vegetation growth, and not to control an algal bloom. This suggests that the blue dye could have been used at a higher dose than is recommended, resulting in a notable impact on vegetation growth, and that this can have further implications for amphibians, such as:

- Through darkening the water, shading out aquatic plants and preventing their growth, this simultaneously darkens the water for amphibians.
- The reduction in aquatic plants may contribute to lower oxygenation levels in the pond, which amphibians rely on to breathe through their skin in developmental stages, and still as adults in frogs.
- Reduction in oxygen availability in the water may impact other freshwater invertebrates, a vital food source for developing and adult amphibians.

- Reduction in aquatic plants as shelter for amphibians, particularly in a pond with a large population of predatory fish.

Due to these concerns, an assessment of the pond's habitat quality was completed by the Trust in August 2023 as requested by NEDDC, through the Predictive System for Multimetrics (PSYM) methodology. A full copy of this report has been provided. The key finding showed that the Lido's condition, measured as a Biotic Integrity Score of 67%, was moderate. This compared to a moderate condition Score of 72% at the previous PSYM survey in 2010, thus confirming a slight decrease in the quality of the habitat at the Lido over this period. Fewer dragonflies (Odonata) and alderflies (Megaloptera) individuals were found in 2023, though there were more beetles (Coleoptera) individuals in 2023. A significant difference in the surveys is also the reported area of shade on the Lido, in 2010 just 1% shade compared to 5% shade in 2023. Though this may seem a small proportion to the rest of the pond, the area of shade that has increased is the northern edge of the pond, which has seen significant shade cover caused by overhanging trees from the bank. This is the area that in 2000 was reported to have 91 clumps of frogspawn. It is possible that the increase in shading in this area has prevented the necessary sunlight and warmth that frogspawn require to develop properly.⁹

Since the 2023 surveys, the LWS Wingerworth Lido is considered to be in 'unfavourable-declining' condition, as the key feature of its reptile and amphibian assemblage is in decline.

We are also concerned that the use of the blue dye is suppressing normal plant growth, reducing the abundance and diversity of plants. Our surveys have highlighted the very low proportion of submerged, emergent, marginal and floating aquatic plants present. The PSYM surveys undertaken indicate that the Lido is not supporting a diverse range of plant species and that this aspect of the site's biodiversity should be a focus for enhancement.

A healthy pond should have 60-85% cover of plants, with a diversity of submerged, floating, emergent and marginal species.¹⁰ However, the 2023 survey recorded just 5% emergent species cover, and just 2% in 2010. A high coverage of plants growing in a pond:

- drives oxygenation of the water;

⁹ [All you need to know about frog spawn | North Wales Wildlife Trust](#)

¹⁰ [Pond restoration and management | Suffolk Wildlife Trust](#)

- absorbs nutrients which can prevent eutrophication;
- prevent erosion;
- traps sediment which can reduce turbidity; and
- provides vital shelter, food and breeding grounds for freshwater invertebrates, amphibians and birds.

There is substantial evidence that the health of the Lido and the species assemblage has been struggling for many years, and that a sympathetic management regime is needed to try and restore and enhance the pond and its associated flora and fauna. The introduction of the blue dye brought this to NEDDC's attention, and though this may not be the only cause of decline at the site, there are concerns over the use of this substance which has led to the pressing demand to step in and restore the site. The period of time for incremental changes has passed, and there is now a requirement for an urgent change in management.

Biodiversity Duty & The Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The Statutory Biodiversity Duty came into force under the Environment Act 2021 and Local Authorities have legal obligations as a result. The Duty means that a public authority must:

- Consider what it can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity;
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on its consideration; and,
- Act to deliver its policies and achieve its objectives.¹¹

In order to comply with the Duty, the local authority must check how the organisation complies with the following strategies:

- Local nature recovery strategies;
- Species conservation strategies (to be published);
- Protected sites strategies (to be published).¹²

¹¹ [Complying with the biodiversity duty - GOV.UK](#)

¹² [Complying with the biodiversity duty - GOV.UK](#)

Although the national species conservation and protected sites strategies are yet to be published by government, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy does present priorities and measures for both species and protected sites which are detailed in the National Planning and Policy Framework and Local Nature Recovery Strategy sections below.

As a result, NEDDC must:

- Understand how and if these strategies are relevant to the organisation;
- Be aware of how these strategies affect land that it owns or manages, or actions that it could take to conserve and enhance biodiversity;
- Consider how it could contribute to the strategy, where appropriate.¹³

National Planning and Policy Framework

The National Planning and Policy Framework details the ways in which NEDDC should be complying with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy:

- Paragraph 192 - To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
 - Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation.
 - Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- Paragraph 188 - Plans should:
 - distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites;

¹³ [Complying with the biodiversity duty - GOV.UK](#)

- allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in the National Planning and Policy Framework;
- take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and,
- plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

Wingerworth Lido is formally mapped in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy as 'an area of particular importance to biodiversity (APIBs)' which means that this is an area that must be conserved and protected as a part of the existing 'core network' of sites for biodiversity. This means that NEDDC has an obligation to intervene and take action when a priority site under their ownership is not being conserved and enhanced, and at Wingerworth Lido this is compounded by the threat to Priority species common toad and white-clawed crayfish (also a Protected Species).

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

In addition to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy naming Wingerworth Lido as a priority site for white-clawed crayfish, it sets out its priorities and measures for wetlands, as well as priorities and measures for People and Wildlife. Those priorities relevant to Wingerworth Lido state:

- WL-1 - Safeguard and enhance wetland habitats including ponds, lowland fen, swamp, marsh, reedbed etc.
- WL-2 - Existing wetlands are managed and enhanced to support greater levels of biodiversity, for example for amphibians and invertebrates.
- WL-3 - The wetland resource is increased, connected, and existing sites are extended and buffered through the creation of new semi-natural wetlands.
- PW-2 - People have more opportunities to actively engage with the natural environment, supporting and delivering nature recovery in their area.
- PW-4 - Safeguard high quality and sensitive species by reducing the impact from people and managing visitor pressure.

Measures to be taken to achieve this include:

- 076 - Sites are identified and in positive management to maximise their biodiversity value as wetlands and for their associated species.
- 077 - Existing moderate quality and neglected ponds and wetlands are restored and enhanced through biodiversity-focussed management including dew ponds in the White Peak.
- 078 - Investigate and improve water quality (for example through the use of buffer strips) where this is having a detrimental effect on the condition of wetlands.
- 079 - Control and eradicate invasive non-native species within wetlands and promote good biosecurity practices to restrict their spread.
- 083 - Buffer and protect existing and new pond and wetland sites, through the creation and enhancement of complementary habitats (grasslands, rough margins, tree planting) to make space for water, improve water quality and help ensure wetlands can function naturally.¹⁴
- 116 - Conservation volunteering opportunities increase, and there are more people engaged with local green spaces.
- 117 - Communities are engaged to support nature recovery in their area, through 'friends of' groups, community tree planting, 'clean up' events, community wildlife gardens and allotments, community farming etc.
- 130 - Where impacts on high quality habitat and sensitive species are known to exist, develop strategies to reduce and mitigate visitor pressure.
- 131 - Promote public access and divert visitor pressure towards more local and less sensitive locations to reduce harm to more valuable habitats and species.

Within the LNRS, the Lido is identified as one of the few sites in the Derbyshire Peak Fringe & Lower Derwent area with a healthy population of white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*). This is a freshwater crustacean native to the UK is a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, and listed as Endangered on the global IUCN Red List of

¹⁴ Derbyshire County Council. 'Thriving with Nature. A Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Derbyshire: Statement of Biodiversity Priorities.' [Date Accessed: 12/11/25]

Threatened Species.¹⁵ The species is threatened by the non-native North American signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*) which carries the fungus *Aphanomyces astaci*. This pathogen is fatal to white-clawed crayfish and, as well as being transmitted by the presence of the invasive signal crayfish, is also spread via contaminated equipment, clothing and animals.

As a protected and threatened species in the UK that is present at Wingerworth Lido, there is a duty to ensure that the habitat and management is suitable for the white-clawed crayfish to thrive. Records from the Derbyshire Biological Records Centre show that in 2008 a trapping survey was completed, through which 47 adult white-clawed crayfish were recorded. No further trapping surveys have been completed, however this does confirm that the Lido supported a very strong population of the species in 2008. A torching survey was completed in October 2021 where four individuals were observed, and this year at least five torching surveys have been completed but no individuals have been observed at all. The dry summer in 2025 led to a lower water level in the Lido which may have caused the crayfish to move into the deeper centre of the Lido, less visible from the banks for torching surveys. However, the incredibly low numbers in 2021 and 2025 do suggest that the population could have been impacted in recent years. The Trust believes that the Lido currently presents sub-optimal habitat for white-clawed crayfish, due to a lack of natural refuges, poor water quality and biosecurity risks:

- Refuges - Much of the Lido is very silty with few refuges, which increases white-clawed crayfish vulnerability to predators, particularly fish;
- Water Quality - It is likely that the unnatural balance of predatory fish in the Lido is causing high nutrient levels. The fish also stir up the silt, causing turbid water with silty suspension which makes it poor quality for plants and invertebrates;
- Biosecurity - This is a risk everywhere for white-clawed crayfish but can be minimised. The presence of the angling club can be an additional biosecurity threat for white-clawed crayfish if anglers using the Lido are not strictly following 'check, clean, dry' protocol. Minimising people and equipment in the water is the best way to minimise the threat to white-clawed crayfish.

¹⁵ [White-clawed crayfish | The Wildlife Trusts](#)

The LNRS details the common toad and the white-clawed crayfish as priority species. For the common toad (SP-3), the measures include:

- 013 - Improved signage for toad crossings and support volunteer groups/toad crossing groups;
- 016 - Enhance habitat and connectivity around key ponds;
- 017 - Biosecurity to minimise and address risks of disease.

For the white-clawed crayfish (SP-9) the measures include:

- 036 - Survey watercourses to identify extant populations of white-clawed crayfish and assess threats and options;
- 038 - Protect in-situ populations and prioritise their habitat needs by achieving consistent, steady flows of good or very good water quality;
- 042 - Implement biosecurity measures, particularly for anglers and other people and equipment that enters the water.

The LNRS also details 22 priority threatened wetland flora and fauna (SA-4) for which measure include:

- 093 - Create new wetlands in strategic locations to benefit these species;
- 094 - Improve/protect water quality and habitat to benefit key species.

Conclusion

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust believes that the available evidence strongly supports positive change in the management of the Lido from one that is focused on a single activity to one that takes a holistic approach to resolve the problems the Lido is experiencing and prioritises the recovery of the Lido's key species and habitats.

Urgent action is now needed to arrest and reverse the declines of both common toad and white-clawed crayfish and improve the ecological condition of the Local Wildlife Site.

We feel that there are additional benefits and opportunities for the local community through the restoration and sympathetic management of the Lido that can connect with a broader range of users. Although the Trust is not calling for an outright ban on fishing at the Lido, there is significant evidence that the recent management of the Lido has caused significant damage, and so a change of management driven by nature and evidence is needed.

After a long period of growing concern for the Lido in the community, and within the Trust, it is now time to take decisive action for biodiversity. We must reverse the declines and restore the ecological integrity and diversity of the Lido before it is too late. We urge the council to develop and implement a focussed restoration plan for the Lido.

Interim actions

We recommend taking some interim actions to halt the further decline of the condition of the Lido:

- Halt the use of blue dye in the pond and prevent any future use of the dye;
- Address wildlife welfare concerns, such as injuries to waterfowl that have been associated with fishing gear;
- Removal of fish from the Lido, targeting non-native species and overpopulation of predatory species, to restore natural conditions and restore nutrient levels.

Biodiversity Improvement Plan

Sandy Hill, Main Street, Middleton, Matlock, DE4 4LR

01773 881188 • enquiries@derbyshirewt.co.uk



The Biodiversity Improvement Plan will include a thorough review of the site's habitats, their conditions and set out steps to restore and create appropriate, good condition habitats. We will work collaboratively to create an evidence-led and suitable restoration plan for the Lido, its wildlife and the people who use the space.

Long Term Vision

The Trust's long-term vision for the Lido would be for a thriving biodiversity hub, with wetland habitats restored and in good condition.

The restoration plan actions have been carried out, and the site is now under a wildlife friendly management plan, delivered by local people and the council.

The common toad population, along with other those of other amphibians, has recovered and is stable each year, and the site is reinstated as a key site for common toad in Derbyshire.

The white-clawed crayfish population has recovered, biosecurity threats are minimised and the site is considered to be a safe haven for the species in Derbyshire.

The habitat restoration actions have reinstated lost plant species, and the wetland habitats now support rare and specialist plant species, waterfowl, and many other animals.

The water quality is good, with diverse and abundant freshwater invertebrates that drive the food web and life cycle of a healthy pond. Local people are engaged in the management of the site and feel proud to have played a part in restoring this site for nature.

The Trust welcomes further discussion and engagement with regards to the future of Wingerworth Lido, and we are happy to discuss our concerns. If you wish to discuss any of the comments made, please contact us at wildsolutions@derbyshirewt.co.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Matt Buckler

Executive Director of Strategy and Innovation

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust