

Canvey Wick: Works Information Sheet

The RSPB manage the 19 hectare Canvey Wick nature reserve with support from Buglife, on behalf of the owner, The Land Trust. This brownfield site, a former oil refinery that has been reclaimed by wildlife, is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which was designated by Natural England in 2005. This came about after community action and a campaign based on recognising the uniqueness and importance of the site for nature, including rare and scarce invertebrates such as the Shrill Carder Bee.



Habitat Restoration Works

It is an exciting time for Canvey Wick, as earlier this year the RSPB took on the management of the remaining 74 hectares of the SSSI. There are now extensive and bold plans to restore this land and incorporate it into the existing nature reserve. However, it has been largely unmanaged for decades and the habitats have been changing from a mosaic of open, flower-rich areas and wetlands, into trees and scrubland, which are not ideal for its special wildlife. Under the SSSI designation there is a responsibility to maintain the open character of the site. The RSPB and Buglife are commencing a 3-year project of habitat restoration works to transform Canvey Wick and improve it for wildlife and visitors.

Work plan 2022/23:

The land has been sectioned into seven compartments and work will begin this autumn in C1 & C2. These areas have become overgrown, with the tarmac bases disappearing under encroaching vegetation. Contractors will be used for the larger works to push back the scrub and remove establishing trees and dominant grasses. They will also be disturbing the ground, creating bare areas that provide ideal habitat for the ground burrowing and basking resident species.



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The nature and timing of the works has been informed by surveys conducted on site to identify species of conservation interest and to ensure that our restoration plans do not impede the lifecycles of any of these creatures.

The first phase of the works will take place from October 2022 to February 2023 and bare ground creation will follow in March-April 2023. During this time, there will be contractors and machinery on site along with temporary public information boards to advise visitors of what is happening, to take care and to avoid the compartments undergoing restoration works.



The Buglife Canvey Wick Community Warden will be publicising the restoration works to the people of Canvey Island and the wider Castlepoint community via our websites, social media channels, local community hubs and events across the district. Over the winter, to help generate enthusiasm for Canvey Wick there will be outreach activities to inform, engage and enthuse local schools and nurseries, youth and community groups, health and well-being organisations and residents. An events plan and contact details will be made available online and via local networks to ensure we reach a wide, varied and representative range of the Canvey Island population.



Outcomes:

To increase the populations of our nationally important species at Canvey Wick- assessed through an on-going programme of surveys.

The provision of a community resource that is used by a wide variety of the Canvey Island residents- measured through increased footfall to the site.

The local community to be proud of having such a unique and special wildlife haven on their island and to champion the site to family, friends and visitors- monitored via feedback from user groups.

To maintain the SSSI favourable status for the Canvey Wick nature reserve- assessed by Natural England.



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